



Call for nominations to ETPLAS Working Groups to deliver Activities within a EU-funded Pilot grant

Programme concerned

European Commission, DG Environment. Grant agreement No. 07.027741/2018/794340/SUB/ENV.B2. Promoting alternatives to animal testing through accessible and harmonised education & training.

Objective of Pilot

The Education and Training Platform for Laboratory Animal Science (ETPLAS) pools together Member State authorities, course providers and course accreditors, as a unique one-stop-shop in the EU. The key aim of ETPLAS is the provision of information and tools for the delivery and assessment of high quality laboratory animal science training in Europe, in line with the EU Education and Training Framework guidance and this EP Pilot grant. The objective of the pilot project is to facilitate the process of mutual recognition of, and access to quality education and training in LAS in Europe to support the attainment of competence as now legally required by legislation. ETPLAS will develop an IT platform that will deliver tools to enable course organisers to assess whether those persons carrying out procedures on animals have met the required level of competence in theoretical and practical skills.

Deliverables within the Pilot

The Action has 5 key Activities which will build to deliver this objective:

- 1 Development of guidance for producing assessment criteria for learning outcomes
- 2 Development of a database of assessment criteria for core modules and Function A specific modules
- 3 Establishment of a question database for theoretical core and Function A specific modules
- 4 Establishment of a database of assessments of common practical tasks for Function A persons
- 5 Establishment of the required IT infrastructure on the ETPLAS platform

Each of the Activities 1 to 4 will be delivered through Working Groups with representatives of stakeholders from the LAS community such as course providers and members of accrediting/approval/recognition bodies.

Activity 1. Development of guidance for producing assessment criteria for Learning Outcomes

Principles and tools to develop assessment criteria for both theoretical and practical learning outcomes will be produced. These will be built from what is already available within the E&T Framework document (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/pdf/guidance/education_training/en.pdf) and further expanded if felt needed. This guidance

document will go into more detail and specifications for Core and function-specific modules and for practical training of Function A persons (carrying out procedures on animals).

A working group (WG) of experts in education and training and LAS will be tasked to develop guidance on principles and tools needed. This guidance document will then be freely made available through the ETPLAS Website (<https://www.etplas.eu>) to key stakeholders, training providers, course accreditation/approval/recognition bodies, MS competent authorities and ultimately the entire user community. As this action builds on already existing work, it is expected to be relatively fast to complete.

Activity 2. Development of assessment criteria for Core modules and Function A specific modules

A database of *knowledge-based* assessment criteria for LO for Core modules and *knowledge-based and practical skills-based* assessment criteria for Function A specific modules will be developed. The species-specific modules will focus on small rodents and zebrafish. Already, assessment criteria have been formulated and implemented by certain course providers in various Member States. This activity will engage with those course organisers and education and training experts to evaluate, merge, and complement the different sets of assessment criteria for Learning Outcomes. The database of these assessment criteria will be made available to key stakeholders, training providers, course accreditation/approval/recognition bodies, MS competent authorities or individuals through the ETPLAS website.

Activity 3. Establishment of a question database for theoretical Core and Function A specific modules

A database of assessments (questions) for the theoretical modules for Core and Function A Specific modules will be built within a restricted access database. The species-specific modules will focus on mice, rats and zebrafish. A WG will be tasked to make an inventory of the sets of questions that are currently in use with running courses in Member States. They will evaluate, merge, and complement these different sets. That inventory, assembled in a database, will thus contain quality-assessed selected questions that can be used to build the corpus of questions. It should enable course providers to judge the extent to which students have met the theoretical Learning Outcomes. The database of these questions will be made available to key stakeholders, training providers, course accreditation/approval/recognition bodies, MS competent authorities or individuals through a secure (paid) access on the ETPLAS website. This way ETPLAS will propose a common, quality ensured standard for examination across the EU.

Activity 4. Establishment of a database of assessment of practical tasks

A database of assessment of Directly Observed Procedural Skills (DOPS) for common interventions, undertaken in the course of *in vivo* research by Function A persons, will be developed. It will include work on common mammalian species (rat, mouse) and one non-mammalian species (zebrafish). A WG of experts will be tasked to build the content of this database, based on what has already been developed/is available in the field.

It will be analysed whether (and/or which) DOPS should be made available freely or through a restricted access (or a combination thereof) to ensure that the system provides continuity for future expansion whilst being affordable for those who require DOPS for competence assessment outside of the formal training setup.

Sharing these assessment criteria on the ETPLAS website will provide a consistent standard for evaluating the learning of practical skills of Function A persons. Competence can then be assessed after an appropriate period of practising the technique under supervision at trainee's own work environment.

Activity 5. Develop ETPLAS IT Infrastructure

The ETPLAS website will be re-designed and upgraded to host both open access information resources and secure, restricted access resources with ability to monitor access and collect payment for use of content.

This Activity will be carried out in conjunction with other projects from the EP Pilot project that will require IT deliverables (e-learning modules for Project Evaluation, Severity Assessment Framework etc.) to be hosted on the site.

A small team will work closely with an IT consultant.

A User Requirement Specification will be prepared for review by relevant stakeholders.

A Functional Specification will be prepared for review by selected expert stakeholders prior to agreeing to the contract to build the infrastructure.

Programme of Activities

Activities 1 and 2 will commence immediately in early 2019. Material from Activity 2 is needed to allow Activity 3 to commence in Q2. Activities 3 and 4 should commence in Q2. The Action will close at end of 2020.

Formation and Management of Working Groups

The Project Leader (PL) has been identified to be responsible for delivering the Action. This person is Dr. A.D. Degryse, EBVS, Dipl.ECLAM, DACLAM (Hon). Prof. J-B Prins, PhD, has been identified as deputy Project Leader. Working Group leaders will be identified. All these positions will receive ex-gratia payments linked to the hours spent on the task.

Working Groups with representatives of stakeholders from the LAS community (such as course providers, teachers, members of accrediting/approval/recognition bodies and educational institutions with experience in the assessment of students on LAS courses) will be initiated for Activities 1 to 4. The WGs will be tasked to identify key individuals who could offer resources (paid or unpaid) to deliver the material, review outputs and/or trial material. The WG Leaders will report to the PL. The PL together with the WG Leaders will form the Project Team of the Action with oversight from the ETPLAS Stakeholder Board. It is expected that WGs will keep the number of face-to-face meetings at a minimum (with max 10 delegates) and meet mostly using digital platforms (e.g. free conferencing whenever possible). The WGs will assign tasks (specific modules or groups of modules) to sub-groups to expedite the process. Outputs will be reviewed regularly by the Project Team and more widely by appropriate stakeholders, identified from the ETPLAS list of Contacts. A set of modules will be

identified for early completion to permit Activity 3 to commence as soon as possible.

Activity 5 will be delivered by an IT provider together with input from the two other Pilot projects within this call.

Skills & Attributes of Working Group Leader & members

Working Groups 1 to 4 will be populated with members from stakeholder groups within the laboratory animal science community (such as course providers, teachers, members of accrediting/approval/recognition bodies and educational institutions with experience in the assessment of students on LAS courses).

Members of Working Groups 1 to 4 should have knowledge of current practices in training courses of laboratory animal medicine and science, as well as research animal welfare and innovations/progress. They should have specific knowledge and familiarity with the training courses for persons needing to use animals used in research, teaching and testing in their country/Europe. Specialist knowledge will need to be provided by member(s) with in-depth familiarity with the role of accrediting/approval/recognition bodies and international guidelines, policies and regulations.

Activity 5 will require a provider with experience in the design, development and delivery of IT systems.

Members should have recognised written and verbal communication skills through experience in publishing and presentations. They should have experience of working in teams. All members should have appreciation of and ability to function seamlessly in different cultures and with members from different backgrounds. Their character should allow development of trust and goodwill among colleagues from different countries.

In addition, the Working Group Leader needs to manifest strong leadership skills, exercise sound judgment and be able to balance attention to detail with the “big picture” framework. The candidate should ideally have experience in coordinating a training program or research project in a global setting. They should be open-minded and flexible in thinking and have the ability to manage complexity, manage teams and manage change.

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