

To: [5.1.2e] [5.1.2e] @rivm.nl]
From: [5.1.2e]
Sent: Sun 9/20/2020 7:59:34 PM
Subject: RE: Antw: To NFPs for Training and TSF members / For INFO: Consultation with NFPT and TSF on the Future of the ECDC Fellowship Programme
Received: Sun 9/20/2020 7:59:34 PM

Dank voor deze info, verhaal over proces had ik inderdaad zo meegekregen. Eens met jouw suggesties. Gezien alle commentaren van ander lidstaten en de fellows zelf die er ook zo over denken, wordt dit een zware dobber voor ECDC om dit er zo doorheen te krijgen lijkt me. Ik zal ook tegengas geven!

Groeten,

[5.1.2e]

From: [5.1.2e] <[5.1.2e]@rivm.nl>
Sent: zondag 20 september 2020 11:48
To: [5.1.2e] <[5.1.2e]@rivm.nl>
Subject: Antw: To NFPs for Training and TSF members / For INFO: Consultation with NFPT and TSF on the Future of the ECDC Fellowship Programme

Hoi [5.1.2e]

Fijn dat je het vraagt.

Nee er is geen reactie geweest vanuit het RIVM. Ik heb wel meegedaan aan een van de focus groepen; [5.1.2e] niet.

Het proces is heel merkwaardig gelopen.

Op 10 december is een eerste bijeenkomst geweest van ECDC met vertegenwoordigers van Epiet en Euphem (committee van 4) nav de evaluatie door PWC.

Daarover is geen informatie gedeeld- er zou een ICT probleem zijn maar 9 maanden?- dus het verslag daarvan is onbekend.

Een vervolg in maart werd afgezegd .

Daarna niets- tot op 3 augustus binnen 1 week gereageerd moest worden om mee te kunnen doen in de discussie. Omdat veel betrokken supervisors op vakantie waren hebben veel van hen niet gereageerd.

Na de 4 focusgroep TCs in september kon er nog wel worden gereageerd en een aantal landen hebben dat gedaan.

Inhoudelijk lijkt er geen goede onderbouwing te zijn voor het veranderen van het programma naar 1 programma. En er is bij de supervisors geen steun maar ECDC wil het.

Een experiment zou veel energie vergen terwijl die voor verbeteringen hard nodig is en het team door vertrek aantal ervaren mensen op dit moment onder druk staat.

Ik denk dat het voor het punt : betere verdeling over MS - vooral Oost Europa- nodig is om de fellows die in het MS track zitten te financieren; en mogelijk de supervisors ook.

Maar daarvoor hoef je er geen een programma van te maken.

Een stam met twee takken: dat is het nu en is goed (maar verbeteren kan en moet altijd).

Als je toelichting wilt -praten gaat sneller?

Groet

[5.1.2e]

Van: [5.1.2e] <[5.1.2e]@rivm.nl>
Datum: 20 september 2020 om 11:18:47 CEST
Aan: [5.1.2e] <[5.1.2e]@rivm.nl>, [5.1.2e] <[5.1.2e]@rivm.nl>, [5.1.2e] <[5.1.2e]@rivm.nl>
 <[5.1.2e]@rivm.nl>
Onderwerp: FW: To NFPs for Training and TSF members / For INFO: Consultation with NFPT and TSF on the Future of the ECDC Fellowship Programme

Hoi,

Is er vanuit RIVM ook een reactie verstuurd? Het onderwerp – hoewel ze het proberen te limiteren tot 2 specifieke vragen denk ik niet dat dat gaat gebeuren gezien de zeer kritische reacties op het plan – is ook in het AF gepland van aanstaande donderdag. Ik hoor het graag als jullie nog specifieke, niet eerder genoemde punten hebben

The ECDC Fellowship program consists of two paths, EPIET and EUPHEM, as well as two tracks, member state (MS) and EU-track. While the two paths open the training program for two major disciplines in public health, field epidemiology and public health microbiology, the two tracks allow two very different modes of recruiting and capacity building within member states. With any new developments in the training program, curricular or organisational revisions, the history and organic development of it cannot be ignored.

As fellows, we consider it crucial to provide feedback to the proposed changes in the fellowship programme since we are the product of this endeavour. This makes the fellows and alumnis one of the most important beneficial stakeholders besides the training sites (TS), who benefit significantly from this training program while shaping the workforce they aim to recruit. Additionally, at least the EU track, profits from a financial support for personnel cost of the fellows and their working time dedicated to the TS. We acknowledge the fact that fellows have a high turnover and lack the long-term memory of events that has been collected at the training sites. We compensate this by institutionalised collection of information, a system of cohort representatives that pass on experience and knowledge as well as close contact with EAN.

As fellows, we have continuously advocated for increased flexibility in the fellowship programme. Specifically, when it comes to choice of modules that are path-specific. ECDC has proved to be open for suggestions and allowed fellows from one path to participate in modules of the other path on a case-by-case basis. During the MLCPH module in February 2020, mostly EUPHEM fellows, but also several EPIET fellows, developed ideas for a future fellowship programme and presented those ideas to the Director and the chief scientist of ECDC. We attach our slides for your convenience as they summarise our main points nicely. In a very condensed form we suggested:

1. Implementation of the following new elements:

1.1. Modules and training content

- increase the teaching opportunities for fellows, e.g. by allowing them to facilitate during modules (peer-to-peer approach)
- include elective additional modules or flexible elective elements within the modules, e.g. laboratory systems, biosafety and biosecurity, advanced biostatistical analysis, NGS, bioinformatics and metagenomics, big data analysis
- include interdisciplinary topics, e.g. "One health", social and behavioural sciences, data science
- include more "real world" examples, unsolved "messy" case studies and discuss troubleshooting strategies and decision-making processes
- add emergency and preparedness training. Train fellows for work in limited resource or emergency settings, e.g. upholding services in crisis situations, performing laboratory procedures with minimum resources.
- use face-to-face modules in a TS as opportunity for site visits, showing different elements of the public health system in the respective host country
- Add possibility for rotations within different public health departments, both within the TS and partners like regional public health services or other PH institutes

1.2. Site exchanges and external collaborations

- include possibility for short-term exchanges between the TS, including short-term stays at a different TS targeted at MS track fellows
- Add "intra-European" international assignments, e.g. to sites without a current fellow
- increase possibilities for participation in EU/international network projects, work towards solutions allowing fellows to participate in ECDC-funded network projects
- foster collaborations with other similar programs, e.g. UK-FETP, MediEPIET, EIS, etc

1.3. Flexible fellow's budget

- provide a fellow's budget, similarly to a PhD student budget, that could be used for attending conferences, external courses, short-term exchanges with other TS (see above), fellow-initiated projects at the TS, etc and thus increases the flexibility within the existing fellowship program. A dedicated fellow's budget would also help decrease the inequalities between TSs, e.g. with regards to funds for publishing in paid journals, attending local trainings, etc.
- encourage fellows participation in external courses in relevant topics, e.g. WHO courses, existing MOOCs on R, etc. Work on mechanisms to ensure fellows (in particular MS track) can dedicate time to additional training.
- increase the visibility of the fellowship by providing funding to attend conferences and workshops outside the network, e.g. TEPHINET, ECCMID, etc.

2. Changes/adaptation/improvement of the following elements:

2.1. Modules and training content

- allow more flexibility and participation of fellows from both pathways in other elective (not currently offered for their

pathway) modules

- discuss the target core competencies and target levels (e.g. beginner, advanced, expert) for each fellow during an initial skills assessment
- offer modules sessions at different levels targeted at the different backgrounds, e.g. beginner and advanced/review level, aiming to bridge the gaps between fellows and achieve the same core knowledge in all by the end of the training.
- expand on the training in new technologies and programmes, e.g. R, modelling, social network analysis, biostatistics
- Increase the focus on data analysis skills and interpretation of combined epidemiological and microbiological data together
- attract module facilitators with diverse backgrounds and expertise on relevant topics (also see including fellows as facilitators in new elements above)
- reinforce the on-the-field training, both within the TS country and internationally
- build upon the public health communication, management and leadership training and make it available to fellows from both paths. Include soft skills, intercultural awareness, PH rhetoric and effective communication
- improve online modules quality using experience, fellows' evaluations and feedback from the online modules during 2020. Ensure modules are not shortened due to the online format and fellows have sufficient time allocated to participate fully.
- provide a repository of useful information sources, modules materials and other content easily accessible by all fellows, alumni, supervisors and coordinators, e.g. by building upon EVA or switching to a different better suited platform. Ensure convenient revision (related to modules) and build-up materials are readily available to all in the network.

2.2. EPIET-EUPHEM and inter-TS collaboration

- increase the overall collaboration between EPIET and EUPHEM tracks, and encourage placements of fellows from both pathways together. TSs also benefit from the collaborative environment when EPIET and EUPHEM fellows are placed simultaneously at the same site.
- encourage more shared joint projects between EPIET and EUPHEM fellows, e.g. by including 1 mandatory interdisciplinary project for each fellow
- encourage shared joint projects between fellows from different training sites/countries and foster inter-site collaborations

2.3. Professional recognition and fellowship administration

- improve the professional recognition of the training for fellows from both paths, and work with TS on clarifying how it fits with the countries' system on qualifications for the public health professionals, e.g. check the recognition as part of epidemiology residency programs for MDs or as postgraduate qualification recognised for employment as public servant
- work towards decreasing the administrative burden of the fellowship for all sides: ECDC, TS, fellows. For example, provide a standardised introductory template to all sites to fill in, explaining the TS administration process (obtaining work ID card, schedule and time-tracking, access to facilities, contacts of HR, registration of leave, etc). Currently that gap is filled by the country guides, compiled unofficially by EAN, cohort reps and current fellows.
- work towards shortening the selection process time for the EU track
- establish a mechanism ensuring that MS-track fellows can dedicate time to the fellowship
- improve and provide more guidance from ECDC to TS and supervisors.
- ensure continuity of the supervision, both on site and by the frontline coordinator with sufficient number of supervisors and frontline coordinators, and a system assuring both can dedicate time to guiding the fellows
- improve the overall visibility and recognition of the fellowship outside the ECDC network

3. Maintenance of the following elements:

3.1. Fellowship format:

- one ECDC fellowship with two paths (EPIET and EUPHEM) and two tracks (EU and MS). Both paths have unique expertise and complement each other for an effective collaboration in public health.
- the triangular system of fellow - supervisor - frontline coordinator
- maintain core modules taught to all fellows from both paths in a standardised way, incl. a focus on core competencies like outbreak investigation, surveillance, applied research, etc.
- maintain the balance between modules and work at the TS
- involvement in outbreak investigations
- opportunities for international assignments, providing invaluable experience and diverse interdisciplinary skills
- "learn by doing" format
- combined epi+lab approaches to problem-solving
- possibility and budget to learn the country's language

3.2. Collaborations and networking

- collaborations locally/nationally/regionally and/or with academia
- continue collaborations with GOARN and other external partners offering international assignments opportunities

-networking opportunities among the ECDC, fellowship, and alumni network and TS sites colleagues

We believe all these changes can be achieved while keeping the current format of one ECDC Fellowship Program with two paths (EPIET and EUPHEM) and two tracks (MS and EU). As of now, fellows are already recruited from a diverse set of backgrounds and disciplines, including epidemiologists, medical doctors, veterinarians, pharmacists, social scientists, researchers from the fields of virology and bacteriology, public health microbiologists and more. The mainstay of training lies with the TSS, it is here where the competencies are developed most and this is supplemented with modular trainings for harmonised intensive training in core elements of public health microbiology and field epidemiology. This setup meets both the needs of the TSS and of the fellows.

Ensuring equality between training sites is in our view a topic that is best to be judged by the training sites themselves. As outlined in the initial output of the working groups several important points have been brought forward that need to be addressed. From a fellows point of view, we would like to point out that the future career opportunities at the TSS are very relevant as is the professional recognition of the program. We would like to add that it is as well crucial to provide sufficient time for the MS track fellows to pursue the fellowship programme and related projects. This means not overburdening the MS track fellows with their original job duties. A suggestion for ECDC could be to explore, together with TSS, possibilities of funding so that a temporary replacement can be employed.

Finally, we feel that a discussion on the future of the fellowship should not be rushed and all stakeholders need sufficient time to engage fully in the discussion. For example, on our side we have not been able to double-check that we have summarised well all the cohorts 2018 and 2019 fellows' opinions, nor could we hear from the starting cohort 2020 fellows, during the two weeks provided to submit the response to the ECDC-NFPs-TSF online sessions. In the current pandemic situation, we strongly suggest adapting the timeline to the already overburdened with COVID-19-related tasks sides, and postpone the process to a more suitable time.

Thanks again for the opportunity to get our voices heard and for all the support and work of the fellowship team at ECDC and in the TSS.

On behalf of fellows of cohort 2018 & 2019,
The cohort representatives

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National Institute for Public Health and Environment (RIVM)

Antonie van Leeuwenhoeklaan 9 | 3720 MA Bilthoven | The Netherlands

T 5.1.2e

E 5.1.2e @rivm.nl

I <http://www.rivm.nl>

From: 5.1.2e <5.1.2e@fhi.no>

Sent: 17 September 2020 11:37

To: ECDC Courses <5.1.2e@ecdc.europa.eu>; EPIET OFFICE <5.1.2e@ecdc.europa.eu>

Cc: Country Cooperation <5.1.2e@ecdc.europa.eu>; 5.1.2e <5.1.2e@ecdc.europa.eu>; PHF Public Health Training <5.1.2e@ecdc.europa.eu>; 5.1.2e @sozialministerium.at;

5.1.2e @sciensano.be; 5.1.2e @ncipd.org; 5.1.2e @gmail.com; 5.1.2e @mphs.moh.gov.cy;

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5.1.2e @isciii.es; 5.1.2e @folkhalsomyndigheten.se; 5.1.2e @gmail.com

Subject: SV: To NFPs for Training and TSF members / For INFO: Consultation with NFPT and TSF on the Future of the ECDC Fellowship Programme

Dear Head of Program and Head of Training Section,

We would like to take the opportunity to raise several issues linked to the ongoing consultation process regarding the direction of the Fellowship Training Programme on behalf of the TSF Committee of Four. Our concerns are linked to both the consultation process as well as the content of the suggested direction being presented by ECDC.

The timing of the consultation process is unfortunate, given that so many key actors are over-burdened with managing the ongoing pandemic. If it is essential that critical decisions are made this year that will have long-lasting effects on the programme, more time than would normally be needed should be allocated to consultation with the training sites. In addition, it is an inherently a challenging time to make significant changes to the programme while priorities of the training sites are operating differently than how they would have in previous years and how they will likely be operating in the coming years. While covid-19 has highlighted the importance of programs of EPIET and EUPHEM in training public health professionals, the current focus should be ensuring the programme delivers the same quality of training that fellows in previous cohorts have experienced, rather than introducing a new structural approach at this challenging time.

We also feel that communication between ECDC and training sites remains a problem. For example, the process for hiring new coordinators is an example of something that has a big impact on the program, but which has not been clearly communicated to the training sites. We would encourage ECDC to use the TSF chairs and NFP-T more actively for informal consultation around key issues.

In terms of the concrete suggestions regarding the direction of the programme, we do not see that the rationale is well documented from ECDC. The objective and need for a change should have been made clear and discussed openly prior to the consultation. It should also be made evident how a new direction will meet the objectives of the training programme. However, we do appreciate that introducing more flexibility into the programme is a priority.

As we have not systematically collected feedback from the TSF members regarding these issues, we write now only on behalf of

the TSF Committee of Four. However, we have received feedback from many TSF members that mirrors our concerns and feel that we can communicate that many supervisors at different training sites do not feel reassured that the process has been transparent, nor that proposal is acceptable for the training sites. If ECDC chooses to move the programme in a direction that many training sites oppose, it will be important that ECDC addresses and mitigates the concerns training sites are communicating through various channels.

To summarise, we would strongly encourage ECDC to either slow down or temporarily suspend the process regarding restructuring of the programme and would caution against making significant decisions at this time. We hope that there can be a better process regarding the way forward and that this can happen during a period that is less demanding for all parties involved.

On behalf of the TSF Committee of Four,

5.1.2e

Fra: ECDC Courses < 5.1.2e @ecdc.europa.eu >

Sendt: torsdag 20. august 2020 10:25

Til: 5.1.2e @isciii.es; 5.1.2e @hzjz.hr; 5.1.2e @vzbb.sk; 5.1.2e @gov.mt;
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Kopi: Country Cooperation < 5.1.2e @ecdc.europa.eu >; 5.1.2e < 5.1.2e @ecdc.europa.eu >; PHF Public Health Training < 5.1.2e @ecdc.europa.eu >; EPIET OFFICE < 5.1.2e @ecdc.europa.eu >;

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Emne: To NFPs for Training and TSF members / For INFO: Consultation with NFPT and TSF on the Future of the ECDC Fellowship

Programme

To: National Focal Points for Training (members)
To: Training Site Forum (members)
CC: National Focal Points for Training (alternates)
CC: National Coordinators ECDC Coordinating Competent Bodies (members and alternates)

Dear all,

As the basis for the online sessions of consultation that will take place in September, I am pleased to share with you a concept paper outlining the vision about the future of the fellowship programme, summarised in its title: *One interdisciplinary fellowship programme with maintained diversity and increased flexibility*.

As you know, we had a previous consultation of 10 December with a small group of representatives from NFPT/TSF/AF/EAN (minutes available at the EXTRANET), and further reflections and discussions at ECDC. During the module of “management and communication in public health” of February, fellows had the task of presenting to the ECDC Director an analysis on their own vision about a future programme. The results of their working groups’ discussions complemented their annual surveys with feedback and recommendation to the programme for its improvement. This activity was very refreshing and an important source of inspiration for our team.

The WG of capacity development/underrepresented countries has summarised their work so far and agreed to make it available (see attachment) as basis for the discussions.

Those of you who indicated availability will receive the links for the videoconference links in the next days.

The agenda includes the following points:

- Discussion and conclusion on the future Fellowship Programme concept (“what we aim to achieve”),
- Brainstorm and discussion on actions needed to achieve this, to be included in the roadmap (“how we will get there”),
- Next steps.

We are now looking forward to the consultation, and appreciate your contributions.

With kind regards,

5.1.2e

**European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)**

Gustav III:s boulevard 40, 169 73 Solna, Sweden

Phone [+46 \(0\)8 58 60 10 00](tel:+460858601000) / Fax [+46 \(0\)8 58 60 10 01](tel:+460858601001)

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From: ECDC Courses <5.1.2e@ecdc.europa.eu>

Sent: 05 August 2020 10:02

To:

Cc:

Subject: To NFPs for Training and TSF members / For ACTION: Consultation with NFPT and TSF on the Future of the ECDC Fellowship Programme

To: National Focal Points for Training (members)
To: Training Site Forum (members)
CC: National Focal Points for Training (alternates)
CC: National Coordinators ECDC Coordinating Competent Bodies (members and alternates)

Dear colleagues,

I hope you and your families are doing fine, and wish you enjoy some days of summer holidays, despite the difficulties of the ongoing emergency.

On December 10th we had a first consultation workshop to discuss the proposal for a future ECDC Fellowship Programme based on the recommendations of the external evaluation 2019. Following this workshop, ECDC has been working on a concept note that updates the proposal for a future Fellowship Programme, serving as the basis for a roadmap for changes.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we could not meet in March, but we had a phone call with the Chairs of TSF and the Coordination Committee of NFPT to discuss the methodology for this consultation. Initially we were foreseeing the organisation of a survey, combined with videoconference consultation. However, after considering time and feasibility issues, we have decided to conduct this consultation in the form of **online videoconferences**.

We would like to **invite you to participate to this second consultation to:**

1. Discuss the concept note, and
2. Jointly define the actions needed to implement the required changes.

These inputs will then lead to the ECDC Fellowship Programme roadmap, which we plan to present to the ECDC Management Board in November.

To give everyone the chance to actively participate in the discussions we would like to split the participants into smaller groups of 7-10 people maximum. In [the link](#), we provide dates and timings of the different alternative options to participate in the online consultation. Please indicate all the slots that could suit you, marking your preference, so that we can manage the number of participants per session in the most optimal way. The deadline to indicate your availability is **next Tuesday, 11 August**.

Afterwards, you will receive an invitation for a specific session.

Supporting material (e.g. the updated Fellowship Programme concept note) will be shared with you two weeks in advance of the meeting.

If you are not available in any of the proposed dates, we welcome your input and views by e-mail.

We will continue working with the established WGs of TSF/NFPT on Selection, Curriculum, International Assignments and Underrepresented countries, and I take this opportunity to acknowledge the relevance of those of you contributing.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact [5.1.2e](#) [@ecdc.europa.eu](mailto:5.1.2e@ecdc.europa.eu).

With my best wishes,

[5.1.2e](#)

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