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Newsletter January 2019



FOREWORD

Dear readers,

Allow me to introduce the second issue of the Alliance4Life Newsletter, with wishes for a Happy 2019 that is full of success, prosperity, good health, and personal happiness!

2019 marks the beginning of the second year of our initiative and we are now halfway through the two-year Horizon 2020 project, which helps us to support our activities. Now is the time to report to the European Commission about our achievements during the first year. I am very happy that we are well on schedule with our Work Plan, and are even ahead in some of the tasks of strategic importance for the Alliance4Life future operation for the upcoming years.

The main tasks that we are currently completing are defining good practices, and benchmarking our research & innovation performance. Outcomes of both tasks will be publicly available via two reports by the end of January, and we are happy to share them with the broader European community via our website. We learned that diversity is both a challenge (it's very difficult to harmonise the benchmarking

indicators among ten institutions) and a great benefit (it gives us so many inputs and inspiring practices that can be followed by the individual members and the whole community).

For all of this, I sincerely thank all partners for their contribution to our common work. I hope all readers of this newsletter enjoy the pictures from the Zagreb meeting and information about the Alliance4Life progress.

Zlataše Novotná
Alliance4Life Coordinator

3rd Alliance4Life Meeting in Zagreb, 3-5 December 2018

In the 3rd Alliance4Life Community meeting, which was hosted by the School of Medicine – University of Zagreb in December, we not only learned why Zagreb is the European capital of Christmas markets, but also tackled a tough agenda full of presentations, lectures, trainings and discussions within our Focus Groups and the Strategy Board. The Board discussed strategies for the future and approved, among others, a set of policy recommendations based on inputs received from the Focus Groups that will be further elaborated during the national roundtables with stakeholders, and will be taken into account for the Alliance4Life White paper.

Benchmarking

The comparison of research & innovation performance among Alliance4Life members is being finalized in order to receive a baseline for the future evaluation of progress. For this purpose, a broad set of indicators was defined in the following domains:

- Research excellence,
- Knowledge transfer,
- Funding, including grants and investments,
- Human resources, and
- Core Facilities.

The main goal is to benchmark strong-performing institutions to determine the high performance of particular indicators/domains, and to use the best practice of the high performing institution as an inspiration for Alliance4Life strategies. Below is a summary table that shows aggregated results. The full Assessment Report will be available by the end of January 2019 on the Alliance4Life website.

Indicator	Alliance4Life Average	Min-Max Interval
Average yearly publications per research staff FTE	1.2	0.4 - 4.0
Publications per operational funding, million EUR	38.0	7.3 - 109.0
Q1 publications, % of total number of publications	35.0	20.5 - 54.0
Average Impact factor	3.8	2.9 - 6.4
Publications with external collaboration, %	62.9	32.2 - 87.5
Average yearly awarded funding, thousands EUR per FTE	39.7	5.5 - 92.1
Female %, from total FTE	61.7	53.0 - 72.0

Best Practices in Health Research & Innovation

Another key task covered by the agenda in Zagreb was sharing best practices in order to identify both joint and unique factors that lead to success, as well as peculiarities that need to be addressed. Adopting these best practices would increase health research excellence and innovation capacity at both the institutional and national levels. Each Focus Group (FG) suggested several best practices scenarios (see the table below). The identified best practices will be compiled into the public deliverable, Inventory of best practice, to be integrated into the Alliance4Life strategies and to allow for their dissemination to national R&I communities and policymakers.

The Procedure of Science Evaluation and Benchmarking: transparent, reproducible, regular, and expectable; regular and long-term information collection to provide data about development of the institutional performance; and bonus system for high impact publications and attracted competitive funding.

Ethics and Integrity in Health and Life Sciences: institutional guidelines in order to secure compliance with the EU regulations and respective national legislations; courses and trainings on research ethics/research integrity; clear set of rules for financing; avoiding institutional and personal conflict of interest; and provide consultancy for ethical issues for grant writing.

Funding Opportunities Dissemination: dissemination via mailing list; travel grants for participation in brokerage events and information days; pre-award services to increase grant capture capabilities; dedicated support for ERC (European Research Council) grant applications; and motivational scheme for resubmission of promising proposals.

Progressive Career and HR Policies: open vacancies published internationally; guidelines for new employees on how to navigate the organization; information about employee rights and duties, and possibilities for career development; courses and trainings; English-speaking working environment; and social events for international staff.

Defined Principles for Core Facilities: budgeting, pricing and invoicing, regular reporting, and evaluations and internal reviews; dedicated funding for research infrastructures to ensure long-term sustainability; and participation

in ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures).

Dedicated Funds for IP Protection and IP Protection Policy: institutional committee on IP (Intellectual Property) evaluation and commercialization; courses on IP rights and management; support program for institutional staff starting spin-off companies; development of entrepreneurship skills; fostering science and business collaborations; and royalties to inventors.

Strategy for Effective Dissemination and Exploitation of Research Results: structure the communication plan as an integral part of the institutional framework for PR and Communication; internal communication tools; toolbox (collection) for effective communication - experience of each Alliance4Life partner institution; and media communication with focus on scientific media on the EU level.

National Round Table in Croatia



In November, Alliance4Life member, **University of Zagreb-School of Medicine**, in collaboration with the **Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (CASA)**, co-organised a national round table discussion titled **Biomedical Research in Croatia – Present State and Challenges**. The main topics included the synergy of financing research from the European Structural Funds (ESIF) and the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020, as well as the research workload of the Biomedical Faculty. To read the full press release please visit the Alliance4Life website [HERE](#). Further national round tables will be organised by all Alliance4Life members in their countries during 2019.

Travel Grants

The member institutions of Alliance4Life offer their researchers the opportunity to participate in selected scientific events with a free or reduced registration fee and fully covered travel costs. Information and a list of events can be found on the Alliance4Life website [HERE](#).

Upcoming events:

- [Joint CzechoSlovak Virology Conference 2019 and 1st SK-AT Structural Virology Meeting](#) **13-15 Feb. 2019**
- [Croatian-Slovenian Ultrasound Congress in Vodice](#) **9-11 May 2019**
- [International Conference on Neurological Disorders and Neurorestoration](#) **10-13 May 2019**
- [iNEXT Workshop on Integrated Methodologies and Approaches for Structural Biology](#) **29-31 May**
- [EAA WINTER SCHOOL: "Testis Histology and Pathology for Clinical Andrologists and Embryologists"](#) **3-6 Dec. 2019**

HR Training Session



We are very pleased to announce the training that EU-LIFE institutions, which are also members of the [LIBRA](#) consortium, are providing for Alliance4Life. The training session titled "How to design, implement and follow-up a Gender Equality Plan" will take place in **Vienna, Austria**, on **4–5 March 2019**.

This training is organised by the Focus Group, "Human Resources and Mobility," for all professionals working in Alliance4Life member institutions. **Travel and accommodation costs are covered** for Alliance4Life participants. If you are interested in attending the training, please complete the registration form [HERE](#) no later than **28 January 2019**. The number of participants is **limited to 16** and application acceptance will be confirmed by 1 February at the latest. Please feel free to contact FG Human Resources and Mobility Chair **Eliška Handlířová** at eliska.handlirova@ceitec.muni.cz if you require additional information.

Next Alliance4Life Community & Project Meeting



The next project meeting will be kindly hosted by the [Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis \(LIOS\)](#) in [Jūrmala, Latvia](#) at [Hotel Lielupe](#) from **10–12 June 2019**.

Photogallery



FNUSA-ICRC & Alliance4Life Banner



Speech Given by Telemachos Telemachou



Knowledge & TT FG Meeting



Plenary Session 3



Grants Training Session



Science Evaluation FG Meeting

To see additional Zagreb photos, please visit our [website](#).

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