

Project Title: Development and capacity building in Occupational hygiene in Turkey and Balkan countries.

Proposal by: Remko Houba (NVvA member), in collaboration with Dr. Yücel Demiral, professor at Dokuz Eylul University Izmir, Turkey (Department of Public Health, Medical faculty).

Introduction:

The occupational health and safety awareness is still very poor in the Western Balkans and Turkey. There are a number of challenges in those nations including the lack of government support for training of OH professionals, establishing the infrastructure and disseminating the good practices especially among the most vulnerable groups like small scale, and informal sectors. It is crucial to further raise the awareness and capacity around occupational health and hygiene in these countries.

In 2010 the OSH-EASTNET project was launched in Turkey, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania & Bosnia Herzegovina, and an assessment of occupational hygiene status in these countries was conducted (Luzzi & Gargiullo, Ital J Occup Environ Hyg 2011;2:96-101). Results of this project have shown that the occupational hygiene is not established as a professional post at local or national level in the above mentioned countries. Occupational hygienists do not have a network in the region and they do not have strong partnership with organizations at European or international level. There is still a lot to gain.

To achieve higher standards in the field of occupational health, the capacity and network in occupational hygiene should be increased. It is necessary to stimulate the creation and the enhancement of capacity to develop partnership activities and network in the field of occupational hygiene at national, regional (Western Balkans and Turkey) and international level.

Therefore the aim of the present proposal is to stimulate a challenge and to improve knowledge and awareness on occupational hygiene in these countries and to help them forward. With the ultimate long term goal to achieve the same standards of EU members in the future. A crucial element will be the ability of professionals and other stakeholders to recognize the inherent risks to occupational health and the importance of occupational hygiene. In addition, a good network will improve the exchange of information and good practices between professionals in the above mentioned countries.

The objectives of this project:

1. To increase the awareness of the importance occupational hygiene in the Western Balkans and Turkey (in accordance to the framework of EU)
2. To develop and strengthen the professional networks in occupational hygiene both regional and internationally
3. To set strategic plan for occupational hygiene in the Werstern Balkans and Turkey
4. To share knowledge, principles and good practices on occupational hygiene both regional (Western Balkans and Turkey) and with Dutch occupational hygienists

Importantly, this project will further built on the foundations of the regional network as has been laid down as part of OSH-EASTNET.

The target groups (beneficiaries) addressed by the programme are:

- Occupational health professionals working as the occupational hygienist in the companies.
- National and local policy makers: public (national and local) government.
- Other interested professionals e.g. engineers, clinicians, academicians, chemists, and allied health workers

Activities in the framework of this project:

1. Organize a three days workshop/conference on occupational hygiene, October, 2015
 - a. Inviting participants from Turkey, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania & Bosnia Herzegovina (making use of the existing contacts within OSH-EASTNET)
 - b. The main objectives of the workshop/conference are:
 - i. To assess the current status of occupational health and safety in Western Balkans and Turkey
 - ii. To strengthen and expand a network of occupational health practitioners/occupational hygienist, in national, regional level and beyond
 - iii. To work towards a sub-regional framework (strategic plan) for further developing the field of occupational hygiene in the Western Balkans and Turkey
 - iv. Sharing principles of occupational hygiene, good models of workplace risk assessment and management and best practices on health promotion in the workplace for professionals
 - v. Awareness raising among national and local policy makers, health professionals and other stakeholders about the importance of occupational hygiene

Contributions from Dutch occupational hygienists is needed in different parts of the programme, especially in the part of raising awareness, sharing principles of occupational hygiene, experience in research, education, and best practices.

2. Follow-up meeting after 3-6 months with a subset of participants aiming at one or two key representatives per country. Main goal of the follow-up meeting is to evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop in October and to further strengthen the network between participants. For the follow-up meeting two options will be explored:
 - a. A second two-day visit of Remko Houba (and maybe one other Dutch occupational hygienist) to Turkey or another Western Balkan country to meet with the key representatives;
 - b. To invite one or two key representatives of the above mentioned countries to the Netherlands to strengthen further cooperation with Dutch occupational hygienists and the Dutch Society for Occupational Hygiene

Coordination and participating Dutch occupational hygienists:

Yücel Demiral will take care of the coordinating activities within the Western Balkans and Turkey. Remko Houba will take care of the coordinating activities within the Netherlands and will be the main Dutch occupational hygienist to participate in this project. The aim is to include a total of three Dutch occupational hygienists in the first visit of the project (Remko and two others). A first inventory among occupational hygienists within the PreventPartner network organization and IRAS shows there is enough interest to contribute to and to participate in the project. The final Dutch delegates will depend on the exact needs which will be discussed when further preparing the workshop/conference.

Other issues:

- Many participants will be able to communicate in English, but this will not be the case for all. It is expected that there will be a need for translators during the workshop. As a result, part of the budget will be spent on translation costs.

Timeline:

- April-September 2015: preparation of the workshop/conference by Yücel Demiral and Remko Houba
- October 2015:
 - Three days workshop
- Approximately February 2016: follow-up meeting (one of the two options mentioned; to be decided)

Budget (budget is only to be used for direct costs; time investment is not part of the budget):

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| Travel costs (plane, local transportation) for three Dutch occupational hygienists for the three days workshop/conference on occupational hygiene | 3 x € 500 = € 1500 |
| Costs for hotel accommodation and food during the visit | Hotel: 3 persons, 4 nights, € 100/night = € 1200 Food € 500 |
| Translation costs during workshop/conference | € 3000 |
| Travel insurance for 3 Dutch occupational hygienists | € 300 |
| Total costs of the first part of the project: | € 6500 |
| Follow-up meeting after 3-6 months As mentioned this cannot only be specified after a choice have been made between one of the two options | A maximum of €3500 |
| Total costs of the full project | A maximum of €10.000 |

All costs will be specified with notes and receipts.

Contact information of the primary applicant (in Dutch):

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