



**Project Number 265873**

**MAITRE**

*Media training for food and nutrition scientists*

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

Start date of the project: 01/04/2011

Duration: 36 months

Organisation name of lead contractor for this deliverable:

MINERVA Consulting & Communication

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<b>Project funded by the European Commission within the Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013)</b>		
<b>Dissemination Level</b>		
<b>PU</b>	Public	
<b>PP</b>	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
<b>RE</b>	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
<b>CO</b>	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	<b>x</b>

### *Publishable summary*

Media Actions for the International Training of Researchers (MAITRE) is a project funded by the European Commission, started in April 2011 and finished in March 2014, aiming to give food and nutrition research a higher profile in Europe, thereby making citizens more familiar with the current state of play of food science.

MAITRE responded the need of stepping up the efficacy of the communication flow originated from research institutions and especially scientists themselves, by exposing the largest possible number of researchers, involved in high profile research projects financed by the EC, to the media trainings and to the importance of communicating with the media and, through them, with the public at a large.

During three years the project organised more than 53 training sessions and trained a group of roughly 643 researchers from research centres and organisations in 27 EU countries (excluding the snowball effect of additional 59 researchers trained by the AZTI's press officer, replicating internally the MAITRE training). The project aim was to step up researchers' capacity to better explain and communicate the scope and results of their research activities, and in this way, contributing to bring science closer to the citizens and to a better understanding of why the integration of European research is beneficial for the whole European society. The seminars were teaching researchers how to take into consideration the point of view of people who are not familiar with scientific disciplines and to put their respective specialties into commonly understandable language.

The seminars' programme has specifically been designed not only to improve food scientists' ability to communicate with the media but also to provide them with target knowledge on media process and functioning. The seminars were held over two full days, with a maximum of 16 researchers so to allow high level interaction. The technique chosen by the trainers was a balance between practical exercises, and lecture-style learning to ensure that participants get a good understanding of the inner functioning of the media. All seminars' themes were structured as active sessions and included: message strategies, media interaction, interview techniques, press releases writing, media relation and online media.

MAITRE also provided researchers and journalists with a platform that acted as an online database of registered food researchers and specialised journalists. Once registered, both groups could access the full details of the other users and contact them to easily get more information about a specific topic or to get to know who the expert in that area is. The platform was an interactive tool that gave researchers and journalists the opportunity to network and created a longstanding collaboration. The MAITRE platform collected contact lists of food researchers and journalists at EU level. The platform fully contributed to reach the expected results coming from the seminars' experience and supports researchers and journalists to keep contacts. In this way, MAITRE gave the opportunity to strengthen the connection between researchers and journalists, enhanced discussion about food related topics and built networks thanks to the social media strategy set up by the consortium.

MAITRE also assessed its progress, in terms of impact on beneficiaries and achievement of project aims. It developed two different evaluation forms, seeking feedback from researchers immediately after the seminars and then six to eight months later via an online survey. The feedback gave important inputs on the applicability of the training content, any improvement

with media relations and self-confidence issues. The responses have been collected and analysed, demonstrating a positive reaction by the researchers even after six months.