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FINAL ACTIVITY REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Objectives

In most European countries, expectation of life continues to increase at a rate of two years per decade, or a remarkable 5 hours per day. The effect of this continuing change will have a profound impact on our lives and is arguably as significant for European society and citizens as other contemporary issues such as climate change and global terrorism. Unlike the other great challenges of the day, however, population ageing is the product of humanity's success in controlling premature illness and death. The imperative now is to ensure that the extra period of life that European citizens can expect is of as high a quality as possible. Not only will this reduce the much-feared explosion in costs of medical and social care, but it will also help increased autonomy and economic independence.

Understanding the biological mechanisms underlying ageing represents a major priority in health research. Research that can lead to novel intervention to extend the health span and improve quality of life at older age has the potential for enormous impact in an ever-ageing society. The potential impact of biological ageing research is vast but presently under-realised. AGEACTION will work to change this and will seek to bring about the considerable European added-value that is required if European research resources are to be deployed so as to compete effectively on the international stage.

The main objective of the AGEACTION SSA was to structure a process culminating in a high level Conference that would provide a unique opportunity to realise the potential of biological ageing research in Europe. AGEACTION sought to examine how science could help to ensure that the extra years of life are years of good quality, independent and productive living.

AGEACTION has direct relevance for research that aims to improve health and quality of life at older ages. It has relevance also for objectives to develop and exploit the potential of: biotechnology, information technology, nanotechnology and others for European research and business opportunities.

Progress to end of period (31 October 2007)

European collaboration and expertise

In order to foster European collaboration, experts were brought together from across Europe to form 'Sector Panels'. Panel members came from the various disciplines within medicine, biology, social science, technology, industry and finance. The Panels addressed the important connections between each of these sectors and research in the biomedical sciences.

The Sector Panels operated on the basis of open sharing of data and technology in order to achieve the objectives and each played an important role in the preparation of the scientific content of the Conference. Each Panel prepared an authoritative position paper as background for the Conference and participated in debate about these issues during the conference itself. The Panels also assisted in monitoring the success of the post-Conference dissemination activities and in identifying ways to deliver added value from the Conference and its associated outputs.

Conference

The Conference was held on Monday 23 April 2007 at The Sage Gateshead, Newcastle-Gateshead, United Kingdom, preceded by an informal registration reception on the Sunday evening at which entertainment was provided by a locally



based choir ensemble, the Silver Singers, who provided a positive example of participation by older citizens in an activity supportive of health and social networking.

Website

A website (<http://ageaction.ncl.ac.uk>) was set up for delegates to register on-line and to give full background details to the initiative and conference information. Post-conference, the website is being used to support dissemination of the AGEACTION outputs and to provide a medium for continuing debate. At the conclusion of the SSA the website is closed to further updates but will be maintained as a widely accessible source of information in addition to outputs through other media (print articles etc).

Target Audience

The target audience for the Conference and subsequent dissemination was:

- EU policy makers and government officials
- Heads of research and scientists from academia, health and social care and industry
- Funding organizations
- Journalists and other opinion formers
- Representatives of older peoples' organizations
- Students

Potential Impact

European Collaboration

The scientific impact of the project has been intended to come from coordinating inputs from the currently fragmented research activity within Europe. The diversity of European research traditions is potentially a rich resource, but only if these diverse elements communicate with each other and develop ways of working together. It has been expected that in addition to the broad scientific impacts that will result from addressing these key questions, a variety of other, related impacts will result. AGEACTION has made links with a wide variety of activities funded by the EU and others in order to help develop the necessary added-value and momentum that will be needed if Europe is successfully to address the important challenges associated with population ageing.

Raising Awareness

AGEACTION sought to make an impact on the under-recognised scale of the research challenge by making researchers in other fields better aware of the current state of progress in biological ageing research and of the potential to harness this work to help understand 'upstream' mechanisms of age-related frailty, disability and disease.

Multi-disciplinary Research

AGEACTION has taken a strongly multidisciplinary approach in developing the agenda for the conference in order to encourage more researchers across biological, medical, social, financial, industrial and technological fields to recognise opportunities for effective joint research. The aim was not only to understand the end stages of the life cycle but also to address the links between early- and late-life processes, taking account of the extensive evidence (as reflected in the Sector Panel reports) that the factors that can influence health and quality of life outcomes at the end of life are active throughout the life span.

Contribution to Standards, Policy Developments and Added Value



Understanding the biological mechanisms underlying ageing represents a major priority in health research. This is increasingly recognised by individual European governments and by the EU as a whole. However there is still much work that needs to be done to increase awareness among policy makers at all levels of the opportunities for a substantially increased research investment and more effective coordination, as well as for the forging of better links to industry and other agencies such as health and social care providers. The Coordinator recently worked with the UK parliament to review scientific aspects of ageing, which played an important part in population ageing being adopted by the UK government as one of its Grand Challenges. Other members of the AGEACTION team, including Sector Panel members and speakers, have had similar experiences in other EU member states. One of the aims is to build upon the scientific outputs from the conference itself to help support the translation of the SSA into delivering evidence-based pressure for policy development. In this way, it has been intended to deliver added-value and a sustained step change in awareness.

Innovation and exploitation

The field of scientific ageing research is experiencing a time of rapid innovation, as a result of technology advances and a growing conceptual integration of research. In addition, the field is seeing significant advances towards exploitation of discovery in this area, by patenting novel technologies and targets for intervention in age-related diseases. To date, the exploitation of basic biogerontological research has proceeded faster in the USA than in Europe. AGEACTION has actively engaged significant participation from a range of established and emerging European industry with a view to creating increased awareness of opportunities for the formation of new SMEs to exploit the opportunities that will arise from changed expectations of life.

Dissemination

An important aspect of AGEACTION has been the dissemination of important messages about the opportunities for biological ageing research within Europe to engage more effectively with:

- Clinical studies on age-related disability and disease
- Studies on social and psychological factors involved in health ageing
- Industrial and technological groups and companies

The messages about the biological factors involved in healthy ageing have been disseminated to policy makers and stakeholders with an interest in older peoples' issues as well as with the general public. This was done initially via the website then through the conference itself and subsequently via a mixture of directly targeted communications and conference presentations. The richness of the presentations and discussion provided intelligent and informative panel debate. The conference publication (ISBN 978-0-9555755-0-1) is available in hard copy and a downloadable pdf version is available from the website. The Newcastle University Press Office and an external press agency (Axicom) providing media-engagement for the University have been involved in the dissemination of information to journalists.

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues pervade the topic of the SSA and were taken into account both explicitly and implicitly throughout the work. The chair of the final panel discussion at the AGEACTION conference, Dr Tom Shakespeare, is a distinguished bioethicist and he highlighted the relevance of the ethical dimension in all of the material presented.

Gender issues

Gender issues were addressed both as a part of the subject matter of AGEACTION, wherever these were appropriate, and were also fully taken into account in the organization and conduct of the work. It is evident from the membership of the Sector



Panels and from the speaker list for the AGEACTION conference that there was a good balance between female and male contributors, and a similar gender balance was evident among the attendees at the conference. Although consciousness of the need to ensure gender balance was kept clearly in mind during the planning and co-ordination activities, adherence to selection criteria based on excellence and relevance to the SSA were entirely sufficient to deliver a satisfactory gender balance without requirement for special measures.

Project Coordinator

For administrative simplicity the sole partner in this project is Newcastle University. However, participants from 25 European research institutions and businesses were involved as Sector Panel members. The decision to run the SSA with only a single formal partner was made in order to minimise the administrative and budgetary resources required to achieve the deliverables. This has worked successfully since the expenditure incurred by other partners has been reimbursed directly from Newcastle University in respect of receipts. The AGEACTION Co-ordinator is Professor Tom Kirkwood who is Director of the Newcastle Institute for Ageing and Health and during the period of the SSA was also President of the Biological Section of the European Region of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics.

Full contact details for the Co-ordinator are as follows:

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Section 1 – Project objectives and major achievements

Main objective

The main objective of the AGEACTION SSA was to structure a process culminating in a high-level Conference that would provide a unique opportunity to realise the potential of biological ageing research in Europe. This high-level Conference examined how science could help to ensure that the extra years of life are years of good quality, independent and productive living.

Specific objectives

Common Purpose

To set in motion a process that would enable researchers on scientific aspects of ageing to develop a stronger sense of **common purpose** and **shared potential** to deliver the knowledge base that will extend health, reduce dependency, and improve quality of life for Europe's older people

Medicine

To set in motion a process that would identify the links between research on scientific aspects of ageing and the underpinning mechanisms of a very wide range of **medical conditions** (disability, frailty, disease) for which **age is the single biggest risk factor**.

Social

To set in motion a process that would identify links between research on scientific aspects of ageing and **social factors** such as nutrition, education, lifestyle, housing, transport and culture that will help to exploit synergies that can lead to extended health, reduced dependency, and improved quality of life for older people.

Technological

To stimulate new interactions between research on scientific aspects of ageing and **technological innovation** including information technology, nanotechnology and assistive technologies across a wide range that can lead to extended health, reduced dependency, and improved quality of life for older people.

Business

To stimulate closer engagement between research on scientific aspects of ageing and industry across a range of activity – including pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, diagnostics, nutrition, and lifestyle products – leading ultimately to creation of **new business opportunities and particularly the formation of SMEs** to exploit and develop Europe's growing research capability in biological ageing research.

Finance

To create closer interactions between research on scientific aspects of ageing and those involved in **financial planning** (actuaries, insurance companies, pension providers, etc) in order to take better account of new insights into factors that affect life expectancy, health expectancy, and projected financial needs (including health and social support) for older people.

Informing the policy makers

To provide for Europe's **policy makers** a source of clearer understanding of the nature of the ageing process and of the potential arising from the above activities.

Raising awareness for all

To provide for Europe's older people (and younger people – the future old) opportunities for greater awareness and more accurate reporting of advances in



scientific understanding of the ageing process that can lead to **informed decision making and empowerment** to maximise opportunities for healthy old age.

The project's relation to the state-of-the-art:

AGEACTION – *Changing expectations of life* was a one-day Conference focusing on the state of the art and future perspectives of European ageing research.

The increase in life expectancy is the **greatest single change affecting humanity** over the last two centuries. Although this state of affairs is the essentially positive outcome from multiple improvements in health care and socioeconomic circumstances, it nevertheless presents great strains for all member and associated states of the European Union in terms of increasing prevalence of age-related health problems and the growing financial implications for pensions, etc.

In order to meet this challenge there needs to be multidisciplinary coordination of research and development effort. To date there has been little effective linkage between other areas of activity (social, medical, economic, engineering) and scientific ageing research, which aims to understand the nature of the ageing process itself – what causes ageing, what can modify it, what underlies the continuing increases in life expectancy and declines in mortality of the oldest-old across Europe, and how biological ageing interacts with other factors that influence the lives of older people. This lack of interaction has resulted in failure so far to exploit important linkages and to make the most of the enormous opportunities which exist to harness the growing understanding of the biological nature of the ageing process to help improve the health (understood in the WHO sense of complete mental, physical, and social well-being) and quality of life of Europe's older people.

The reasons for the present situation are several. Firstly, scientific ageing research is relatively new and is itself still fragmented. Secondly, recent advances in scientific ageing research have overturned many of the traditional conceptions about ageing, but awareness of this has yet to influence other spheres of activity. Thirdly, there has not yet happened any suitable action to bring together the various groups that need to engage with the difficult but essential task of building the necessary bridges between scientific ageing research and other domains.

Project Coordinator

For administrative purposes the sole partner in this project is Newcastle University. Participants from 25 European research institutions and businesses were recruited to be actively involved as Sector Panel members. The AGEACTION Co-ordinator is Professor Tom Kirkwood who is Director of the Newcastle Institute for Ageing and Health and President of the Biology Section of the European Region of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics.

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Major Achievements

The major achievements of the SSA AGEACTION have been:

1. The recruitment of a wide range of relevant experts and their engagement in delivering the highly informative Sector Panel reports;
2. The organization and holding of a successful conference at a very suitable and prestigious venue;
3. The bringing together of around 450 delegates from a wide geographical range across Europe and a diverse set of ages and backgrounds;
4. The creation of a valuable information resource through the AGEACTION website;
5. Clear evidence of effective dissemination and continuing impacts in important areas.

Expertise

Europe-wide expertise was recruited from areas interacting with basic ageing research, including clinicians, social and economic scientists, industry, technologists, educational groups, research sponsors, medical charities, policy makers, and stakeholder groups including and representing the interests of older Europeans.

From these experts, five Sector Panels were set up in the areas of biology, finance and industry, medicine, social science, and technology. Each Sector Panel contributed to the planning of the scientific content of the Conference and prepared an authoritative position paper from each Sector Panel formed the background document for the Conference.

In addition to the expert panels, a distinguished list of international speakers from each discipline gave their perspective of the area and this contribution to the conference added to the overall debate. Biographies of all Sector Panel members and speakers are included in the conference book which is available for download from the website: <http://ageaction.ncl.ac.uk>.

Conference

The AGEACTION Conference was held on 23 April 2007 and brought together the Sector Panels and other international experts in the fields of medicine, biology, social science, technology, finance and industry who have been considering the topic from a number of different viewpoints.

The target audience was:

- EU policy makers and government officials
- Heads of research and scientists from academia, health and social care and industry
- Funding organizations
- Journalists and other opinion formers
- Representatives of older peoples' organizations
- Students

Around 450 delegates from across the EU with a few from other continents took part in AGEACTION. Whilst every effort was employed to attract the wider European audience, the UK as the host nation provided the majority of attendees. Delegates were from all four countries of the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales) and from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Czech Republic, Finland, France,



Germany, Gibraltar, Greece, Hungary, Ireland (Republic of), Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and USA.

The conference programme is shown in Table 1.

Website

The AGEACTION website (<http://ageaction.ncl.ac.uk>) provides free access to full information concerning the SSA and in particular provides complete access to the full texts of the Sector Panel reports and also to video recordings and slides of the presentations at the conference. By investing in the services of an expert audiovisual service provider (SME), it was possible to provide this information through the website very quickly after the conference, with most of the information being available the next day. This has been an important feature of the dissemination activities (see below).

Dissemination

An important aspect of AGEACTION is the dissemination of important messages about the opportunities for biological ageing research within Europe to engage more effectively with:

- Clinical studies on age-related disability and disease
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The messages about the biological factors involved in healthy ageing have been disseminated to policy makers and stakeholders with an interest in older peoples' issues as well as with the general public. This was done initially via the website then through the conference itself. The richness of the presentations and discussion provided intelligent and informative panel debate. The conference publication (ISBN 978-0-9555755-0-1) is available in hard copy and a downloadable pdf version of the book and the conference presentations are available from the website. Newcastle University PR department and an external press agency also participated in dissemination activities.

Pre-conference dissemination

This was particularly wide, with two aims. Firstly, the dissemination was designed and timed to bring as many delegates as possible to the AGEACTION Conference on 23 April 2007. However, it was also recognised that a large fraction of the target audience for the key messages of AGEACTION would not be able, for a variety of reasons, to attend the Conference itself. Therefore the pre-conference dissemination was also used as a vehicle to make recipients aware of the key agenda through a combination of (i) invitation letter stating strongly and succinctly why the topic is so important (a pdf copy of the invitation letter was also distributed electronically in order that recipients could easily forward this to further networks and contacts, and they were expressly requested to do so), and (ii) reference to the AGEACTION website where background materials providing greater details could be found. Additionally, a pre-conference press release was prepared and disseminated very widely. The dissemination specifically addressed the target audience in the following ways:

EU policy makers and government officials

Advice was sought from the Commission scientific office at an early stage about possible routes of dissemination to this group.

Letters were sent to MEPs with declared interests in relevant areas and/or membership of appropriate parliamentary committees (e.g. Employment and Social Affairs; Environment, Public Health and Food Safety; Industry, Research and Energy). Positive responses were received from several MEPs who declared an interest in the subject; however, it turned out that the day of the Conference was a



plenary session of the European Parliament (not known at the time the date was decided) so no MEPs were able actually to attend.

Letters were sent to members of the European Research Advisory Board.

Several senior figures from the UK civil service (Departments of Health and of Work and Pensions) were also targeted and did attend.

Heads of research and scientists from academia, health and social care and industry

Letters were sent to all members of EUROHORCs, the association of heads of public national research funding and research performing organizations in Europe. Staff from several such organizations attended the Conference.

Letters were sent to the secretariats of all member societies of the International Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology – European Region (IAGG-ER), with a request to distribute information about AGEACTION and the Conference to their memberships. The success of this request was monitored through known society members and in general there was good dissemination via this route.

By agreement with the organizers of past relevant conferences (e.g. European Congress of Gerontology) a large mailing list was assembled for direct emailing to relevant individual academics. Within specific disciplinary areas (e.g. social sciences), supplementary mailing lists were obtained opportunistically wherever possible, facilitated by contacts through the Sector Panels.

A particular effort was made to engage the interests of industry. In view of the extremely large and diverse nature of the target audience, this was done through representative groups. Within the UK the groups contacted were the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, the Institute of Actuaries, the National Association of Pensions Funders, the Pensions Commission, the Confederation of British Industry, the Federation of Small Businesses, regional Chambers of Commerce, the Institute of Directors. Contacts were asked whether they had networks of similar organizations across Europe, and where positive replies were received they were asked to disseminate the information through such networks. The industrial members of the Sector Panels also facilitated direct targeting of relevant contacts in other European countries.

Information was sent to other EU consortia active within the field and to ERA-AGE.

Funding organizations

Public funding organizations were contacted through EUROHORCs as above, and through independent funders such as medical research charities. Within the UK the Association of Medical Research Charities provides a directory of such funders (e.g. Help the Aged, Age Concern, Research into Ageing) and in other European countries, where there is a varying degree of funding by such organizations, informal networks were used to identify as many contacts as possible.

Journalists and other opinion formers

The press agency Axicom assisted with the preparation and circulation of a press release before the Conference to European newspapers and other media organizations. Although there was interest expressed subsequently by several journalists in the subject, it was found that there was not much interest in covering the Conference itself as an event, except by the local media where the Conference was featured on both regional TV channels (BBC and ITV). This was initially disappointing but consistent with the experience of those who regularly engage with the journalists. However, there have been many opportunities to refer journalists to the AGEACTION website for background material both before and after the Conference.

Sector Panel members were particularly asked to identify key opinion formers within their own countries and to use personal connections to make them aware of AGEACTION; this was done in most cases.



Representatives of older peoples' organizations

Sector Panel members were encouraged to disseminate information to national and local older peoples' organizations within their own countries and most of them did so. Within the UK and particularly within the local region, information was disseminated by Age Concern, Help the Aged, the Newcastle Elders Council and Years Ahead (the North-East England regional forum for older people – an umbrella group of 13 organisations). This resulted in strong attendance (around 90) by older people and stakeholder groups.

Students

Since the agenda of AGEACTION concerns young people as much as old, both as 'future old' and as citizens in an ageing Europe, efforts were made to attract students from schools and universities to the Conference. About 20 university students attended. Several local secondary schools showed interest and some individual school students attended, but the numbers were not as high as we wished.

Post-conference dissemination

Many of the dissemination routes used pre-conference were again used post-conference to disseminate awareness that the AGEACTION website now contains the Conference book, which can be downloaded free of charge as a pdf file. The website can also be used to view the entire Conference proceedings.

All Sector Panel members agreed to disseminate information about AGEACTION and the website, and most have reported doing so.

Particular dissemination opportunities have been organised and/or utilised as follows:

Colloquium on Human Enhancement, The Hague, Netherlands, May 2007 (presentation on Lifespan Enhancement).

International Association of Biomedical Gerontology, Spetses, Greece, May 2007 (scientific presentation and promotion of AGEACTION agenda)

Cheltenham Science Festival, Cheltenham, UK, June 2007 (public lecture developing the themes of AGEACTION to lay audience).

European Congress of Gerontology, St Petersburg, Russia, July 2007 (dedicated round table session on 'The EU AGEACTION Initiative and Its Implications' at major biennial cross-disciplinary conference organised by the International Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology).

Workshop on 'A Roadmap for the future of ageing research in Europe', Brussels, Belgium, July 2007 (sharing the messages from AGEACTION with other EU consortia and considering future directions).

BioCity Symposium, Turku, Finland, August 2007 (lecture and discussion on 'Longevity: the big issue of our time' addressing key AGEACTION messages for mixed scientific and industry audience).

World Ageing and Generations Congress, St Gallen, Switzerland, September 2007 (lectures and panel discussion on 'Life Expectancy: Trends and Implications' for major world congress of demographers, economists and gerontologists).

Ageing and Longevity Symposium, Barcelona, Spain, October 2007 (public conference for professional and lay audience).



Impacts

The AGEACTION team, including Sector Panel members, has been monitoring signs of impact and will continue to do so following the formal end of the SSA. Since the information from AGEACTION is freely available from the website, it has been difficult to get the full measure of impacts particularly since journalists and opinion formers are using the information as background, without necessity or obligation to credit the source. This is not a problem, in the sense that the objective was to raise awareness without regard to formal 'ownership' of any agenda, however it has made the tracking of impact more difficult.

Four examples identified by the Co-ordinator within the UK indicate that the SSA has made significant impacts and evidence of further impacts will be sought both within the UK and across Europe:

The new chief executive of the UK Medical Research Council, Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, has indicated in various discussions that ageing will be the leading priority for the MRC in coming years and has made specific reference to the AGEACTION book.

The former chair of the UK government-appointed Pensions Commission, Lord Turner, has referred to being impressed by the AGEACTION book.

The Association for Science Education heard a presentation about the AGEACTION agenda and recently proposed that the science of ageing should be included as a topic within the curriculum for secondary schools, in particular for A-level examinations (final two years of study).

The Chair of Years Ahead (the North-East England regional forum on older people), Jim Edwardson, has reported that following participation in the AGEACTION Conference the forum has begun to establish a research network of as many as 5000 local older people who wish to become involved in a diversity of research projects.



Section 2 – Workpackage deliverables

Workpackage 1 Establishment of Sector Panels and working procedures**Objectives**

Establishment of Sector Panels and working procedures.

Starting point of work

Month 1

Progress towards objectives

Sector Panel Chairs and Vice-Chairs were identified and Sector Panel members recruited for the 5 sectors: Medicine, Biology, Finance and Industry, Social Science and Technology. Panel members are from across Europe: UK, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Hungary, Belgium, France, Finland, Norway, Greece, Germany, Spain, Poland.

Each Sector Panel was designed to comprise 5 members: Chair, Vice-Chair and 3 other panel members. Initially this design was fulfilled for all Sector Panels. During the subsequent activities, one member of the Social Science Sector Panel found it necessary to withdraw from completion of the task because of new commitments, and an additional member joined the Technology Sector Panel to provide particular expertise. Thus, final membership of Sector Panels was 5 (3 cases), 4 (one case) and 6 (one case).

Deliverables

D1.1 – Sector Panels and working procedures in place.

Due date – Month 6

Actual date of completion Month 9.

Milestones M1.1 and M1.2 have been met.

M1.1 Establishment of Sector Panels has been established with its Chair and Vice-Chair

Actual date of completion – Month 6.

M1.2 Memberships, agendas and working procedures for the Sector Panels have been agreed.

Actual date of completion – Month 9.

Workpackage 2 To support and complete Sector Panel working.**Objectives**

To support and complete Sector Panel working.

Starting point of work

Month 7

Progress towards objectives

It was planned that each Sector Panel would meet twice, first for an initial workshop to scope the dimensions of their activities and decide the allocation of tasks among members, and subsequently to review progress and the draft report and to agree the final stages preparatory to the AGEACTION conference. In addition to the meetings, the main work of the Sector Panels was managed through frequent email contacts.

The AGEACTION Project Manager worked closely with the Co-ordinator and Sector Panel Chairs to organise the first Sector Panel workshops, which were held at different locations to meet the convenience of members and to minimise travel times and costs. Prior to these initial workshops, the Sector Panel Chairs were carefully briefed by the Co-ordinator to ensure consistency of the approach and thorough familiarity with the aims, objectives and deliverables that had been set out



for the SSA. In order to avoid imposing too strong an individual perspective on the directions and scope of Sector Panel working, the Co-ordinator made the decision not to participate in the first meetings of the Sector Panels but to be available to answer any queries that might arise. Through subsequent discussions and outputs, it became evident that this approach succeeded in giving each Sector Panel a strong and highly motivated sense both of 'ownership' of its own agenda and also of participation in the shared agenda of the SSA as a whole.

The second meeting of the Sector Panels was organised to bring all Sector Panels together in Newcastle three months before the AGEACTION Conference, in order to review the draft Sector Panel reports both individually and collectively. This provided the opportunity to identify areas of overlap and/or gaps in coverage. It also provided the opportunity to involve the Sector Panel members directly in discussions about the plans to maximise the impact of the Conference and associated dissemination activities.

Deliverables

D2.1 – Sector Panel background papers

Completed – Month 16.

Milestones M2.1 and M1.2 has been met.

M2.1 Agreement of agenda and working procedure for each Sector Panel.

Completed – Month 12.

M2.2 Agreement of content of the background paper. Background papers to be completed and included in Conference materials and on the Conference website

Completed – Month 18.

Workpackage 3 To conduct AGEACTION Conference

Objectives

To conduct AGEACTION Conference

Starting point of work

Month 6

Progress towards objectives

The AGEACTION Conference was held at The Sage Gateshead on Monday 23 April 2007 from 09.00 – 18.00. Registration commenced on Sunday 22 April 2007 at an informal evening reception with musical entertainment by the Silver Singers and light refreshments. 50% of delegates registered on Sunday and 50% registered on Monday.

A reserve conference facility had been planned in case of unforeseen emergency affecting The Sage. This was not required.

Final delegate registration was 451.

Official welcomes to the Conference were provided by the Mayor of Gateshead and Lord Mayor of Newcastle, who emphasised the importance of the subject for their communities (NB. Gateshead and Newcastle are urban regions on the south and north sides of the River Tyne, respectively; Newcastle-Gateshead is thus in many respects a combined city region although for historical reasons they have independent but complementary administrations). The conference programme included presentations by key speakers (not associated with the Sector Panels) who gave lectures in each of the five major areas. Each key speaker lecture was followed by a presentation from the relevant Sector Panel providing highlights of the Sector Panel reports. Contributions were also made on behalf of the EU, World Health Organisation and Newcastle Elders Council. A personal perspective was offered by a senior speaker with previous ministerial responsibility for older people in an EU member state. The Conference ended with a Panel Debate involving senior



figures with broad perspectives on the subject of the Conference and SSA.

The whole proceedings were recorded by an SME audiovisual contractor.

Deliverables

D3.1 – The AGEACTION Conference

Estimated date of completion - Month 18

Milestones

M3.1 Identification of venue and SME Conference organiser **Completed Month 6**

M3.2 Preparation of invitation lists and sending out of invitations **Completed Month 17 (most invitations were sent out between months 12 and 15; however, in a few instances opportunities for further invitations continued to be identified and acted upon until shortly before the Conference).**

M3.3 Advertisement and receipt of applications **Completed Month 18 (advertisement commenced month 9 and pre-registrations were received from month 12).**

M3.4 Completion of successful Conference **Completed Month 18**

Workpackage 4 Dissemination

Objectives

Dissemination

Starting point of work

Month 15

Progress towards objectives

Dissemination was a major activity before and after the Conference. Before the Conference, dissemination included actions to support the recruitment of delegates to the Conference but it was also recognised that such actions would serve the purpose to make people aware of the subject, even if they were not able to come to Newcastle-Gateshead on 23 April 2007.

After the conference, dissemination was via the conference book/website, a variety of dissemination events, and various conference reports by the AGEACTION team and others (e.g. British Society for Gerontology newsletter).

For a detailed description of progress with dissemination activities see pages 9-12 of this report.

Deliverables

D4.1 Conference book, including background papers, media releases and relevant direct mailings. **Completed – Month 18**

Further direct mailings and supplementary actions.

Completed – Month 24

Milestones

M4.1 The first dissemination milestone was reached when the advance materials for the Conference were ready and distributed to the target audiences/readerships.

Completed – Month 16.

M4.2 The second dissemination milestone was reached at the end of the Conference when all of the Conference materials and messages had been transmitted to the delegates and media.

Completed – Month 18

M4.3 The third milestone was reached when the Sector Panels concluded informal reviews of impacts within their areas of interest.

Completed – Month 24

M4.4 The final milestone within the project has been reached with the writing of the final report of



the SSA, which includes description of as many impacts as could be detected by the team that had occurred within the timeframe of the project.

Completion – Month 24

Workpackage 5 (Consortium management) is described in the next Section.



Section 3 – Consortium management

Workpackage 5

Objectives

To establish and operate a reporting system and a financial tracking for AGEACTION SSA and provide workshop and Conference support. **Support commenced Month 1 – reporting system developed Month 10 – on-going until Month 24**

Starting point of work

Month 1

Progress towards objectives

A part time secretary was appointed in December 2005 to cover initial clerical, secretarial and administrative tasks for the Conference. A project manager was appointed in August 2006 to assist the Co-ordinator in the organisation of the Conference. The secretarial burden associated with AGEACTION proved greater than originally anticipated, and this required some extra time but could be met within the overall budget. **(D5.1)**

The project manager has complied with required formal University procedures for financial tracking and audit of EU projects. Budget and cost summaries have been monitored to ensure effective and accurate financial management of the project. No major deviation from budget has occurred.

Audit costs will be incurred at the end of the project. **(D5.3 and D5.4)**

Sector Panel Meetings across Europe have been organised. The project manager has maintained close liaison with Panel chairs in all aspects of panel meetings. E-communication has been an essential part of the project and records of this communication have been kept. **(D5.2)**

Notes of meetings have been kept. **(D5.2)**

The local Conference team, responsible for technical arrangements, registration procedures and financial procedures was established in **Month 15**. Notes of meetings have been kept. **(D5.1 and D5.2)**

The EU and University ethical and gender-equality policies have been complied with. Risk assessment and safety policies concerning all aspects of conference working have been complied with according to the required terms. **(D5.5)**

Deliverables

- D5.1** Recruitment of suitably qualified and competent AGEACTION staff.
- D5.2** Minutes of management meetings (month 1, then frequent)
- D5.3** First AGEACTION progress report (month 12)
- D5.4** Financial report and certification of audited accounts for year 1 (month 12)
- D5.5** Review of compliance with and effectiveness of ethical, gender and safety policies.
- D5.6** Financial report and certification of audited accounts for year 2 (month 24)
- D5.7** Second AGEACTION progress report (month 24)

Milestones

- M5.1** Progress report 1 and 2 **Month 12 and Month 24**
- M5.2** Implementation of the relevant software
- M5.3** Financial report 1 and 2 and audited accounts for year 1 and year 2. **Month 12 and Month 24**
- M5.4** Set up of timetable for all important meetings involved in workshop and Conference



support and the collation of all meeting minutes into a document to form the basis for the final report. **Month 6**
Completion – Month 24



Section 4 – Other issues

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues pervade the topic of the SSA and were taken into account both explicitly and implicitly throughout the work. The chair of the final panel discussion at the AGEACTION conference, Dr Tom Shakespeare, is a distinguished bioethicist and he highlighted the relevance of the ethical dimension in all of the material presented.

Gender issues

Gender issues were addressed both as a part of the subject matter of AGEACTION, wherever these were appropriate, and were also fully taken into account in the organization and conduct of the work. It is evident from the membership of the Sector Panels and from the speaker list for the AGEACTION conference that there was a good balance between female and male contributors, and a similar gender balance was evident among the attendees at the conference. Although consciousness of the need to ensure gender balance was kept clearly in mind during the planning and co-ordination activities, adherence to selection criteria based on excellence and relevance to the SSA were felt to be of the highest priority. Female representation within Sector Panel membership was 25% which was somewhat lower than the target of 40%. On the Conference programme as a whole, 40% of key lecturers were female, as was also the distinguished lecturer giving the personal perspective. Both the Mayor of Gateshead and Lord Mayor of Newcastle were women. Overall, it was felt that the approach followed was sufficient to deliver a satisfactory gender balance without requirement for special measures.



Table 1 Conference programme

08.00 Registration (for delegates unable to attend on Sunday evening)

09.00 Civic Welcome
Mayor of Gateshead and the Lord Mayor of Newcastle

09.10 "Longevity: the big issue of our time"
Tom Kirkwood, Newcastle University

09.30 "EU funding for ageing research"
Octavi Quintana Trias, EC Health Research Directorate

09.45 "Active ageing around the world"
Alex Kalache, World Health Organisation

10.00 Coffee

10.30 "Citizenship and society in an ageing Europe"
James Vaupel, Max-Planck Institute for Demographic Research

11.00 Presentation and debate on report of Social Science Sector Panel
Chaired by Sally Greengross, International Longevity Centre

11.30 "The medical challenges of longer life"
Jean-Pierre Michel, European Academy for the Medicine of Age

12.00 Presentation and debate on report of Medicine Sector Panel
Chaired by Alex Kalache, World Health Organisation

12.30 "Living in an ageing world: a challenge for the individual and society"
Ursula Lehr, University of Heidelberg, formerly German Minister of Health

13.00 Lunch

13.45 "Unlocking the potential of biological ageing research"
Linda Partridge, University College London

14.15 Presentation and debate on report of Biology Sector Panel
Chaired by Nadia Rosenthal, European Molecular Biology Laboratory (Monterotondo)

14.45 "Technologies to enhance older age"
William Mann, University of Florida

15.15 Presentation and debate on report of Technology Sector Panel
Chaired by Wim Dekkers, Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Centre

15.45 Tea

16.15 "Economic opportunities of increasing longevity"
Robert Diamond, Diametric Ltd

16.45 Presentation and debate on report of Finance and Industry Sector Panel
Chaired by Stewart Sutherland, UK House of Lords Science and Technology Committee

17.15 "Changing Expectations of Life: How to Make it Happen"



Panel Debate with Wim Dekkers, Sally Greengross, Alex Kalache, Nadia Rosenthal, and Stewart Sutherland
Chaired by Tom Shakespeare, Policy Ethics and Life Sciences Institute

18.00 Close