

Net4Mobility⁺



Net4Mobility+

Network of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions National Contact Points for the mobile scientific and innovation community

MSCA Success Stories from Organisations in Widening Countries

Task 4.4 Effective MSCA promotion

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N4M+ project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the grant agreement No 785632

Host organization: University of Malta

Country: Malta

Organization role: beneficiary

Project Acronym: PROTECT

Project start and end date: April 2019 – March 2023

Type of MSC action, H2020: ITN



Your story:

Vasilis Valdramidis (h-index 21) is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Food Sciences and Nutrition (FSN) at the University of Malta. His outputs include more than 70 articles. He is currently an editor in the editorial board of the Journal of Applied Microbiology, Letters in Applied Microbiology, Current Opinion in Food Science, Food Research International, Journal of Food Protection. He is a member of the International Committee on Food Microbiology and Hygiene. He has (co-) supervised 5 PhDs and more than 14 MSc to completion. He was Scientist in Charge for the Marie Curie Career Integration Grant (CIG, FP7) and has been a coordinator of two Erasmus+ programmes in Predictive Modelling, Risk Assessment, and Innovative technologies.

Project objectives and research field:

The overall aim of our Innovative Training Network is to train highly-skilled researchers on a range of predictive modelling tools to evaluate the effects of climate change on food safety (i.e. injurious to health due to mycotoxins/pathogenic bacteria or unfit for human consumption due to spoilage bacteria).

Tell us why the topic is important and/ or how it brings to advancement in your research field:

The programme will ensure enhanced collaboration between public and private sector partners through inter sectorial secondment and with an active and full involvement of the non-academic sector in the training programme. It is therefore expected to develop European Innovation Capacity in the area and signal their ongoing commitment to produce and process safe food for all EU citizens while

maintaining confidence in Europe's largest manufacturing sector. Finally, through the activities of PROTECT technical and training expertise to train 8 highly skilled ESRs will be shared in innovative areas of advanced modelling tools aiming at investigating the impact of climate change on food safety, considering food as unsafe if it is injurious to health (due to pathogenic bacteria or mycotoxins) or unfit for human consumption (due to spoilage bacteria).

What are the benefits of participating in a MSC action?

The industry led training of PROTECT will overcome fragmentation of training at the European level as the Training Network offers a unique combination of training for ESRs in food science, risk assessment, statisticians, microbiology and engineering that would not be available at any institute. ESRs will benefit from the symbiotic training provided by renowned internationally recognised scientists and industrial experts. This Training Network brings together some of the leading researchers in Europe, industry and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in a common goal to develop a world-class system to combat food chain vulnerability to climate change. **Did you encounter any challenges during application/implementation and did you get any help?**

No specific challenges were encountered and NCPs were supportive during the preparation of the proposal, providing specific feedback for improvement and guiding on the development of the proposal. **Would you recommend others to apply? What useful advice/ tips can you give them?**

I will definitely advise to apply. I will encourage them to build a strong consortium of the best experts in the field and involve heavily the industry. Otherwise, if application is not successful the first time, then I will advise resubmission by carefully addressing the comments of reviewers.

What strategies did your organization use to attract the fellow/s? Are they in line with national strategies supporting the widening EC policy? A pro-active approach will be adapted in recruitment and endeavour to ensure that gender balance is considered in recruitment. Particular emphasis will be put on informing both male and female candidates of the career possibilities associated with joining the research team. Candidates with an honours degree in Food Science, Biosystems, Environmental Science, Chemical and Environmental Engineering or related discipline will be sought. All HR policies of beneficiaries ensure fairness and consistency throughout the organisation, and are revised on an on-going basis in order to comply with changes in collective agreements or legislation. The ITN will adhere to the principles of the 'European Charter for Researchers' and the 'Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers' with respect to the recruitment, selection, training and professional aspects of the ESRs. The EURAXESS website will be used to advertise

positions with targeted advertising to women-in-science groups (e.g. IEEE Women in Engineering).