Welcome to The Healthcare Waste Manager newsletter

Welcome to first issue of ‘The Healthcare Waste Manager’, a newsletter for professionals in both the healthcare waste management industry and those interested in vocational training in the waste sector.

The newsletter is the official publication of the new EU Healthcare Waste Management Project funded under the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme within the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme by the European Union — Education, Audio-visual & Culture Executive Agency. The newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis and the next one will out in December later this year. The newsletter will be a focal point for disseminating project news and will also feature news from the industry itself from around the EU. There are 12 partners in total and each of the first 6 issues of the newsletter will feature profiles from two of the partners. This issue features the profiles of the UK and Italian partners ICERMS and SINERGIE respectively.

Project Kick-Off Meeting, Largs, Scotland
(Note the rather rare phenomenon of a sunny day in west of Scotland - a good omen for the start of the project)
EU-HCWM What is the Project all about?

‘Developing an EU standardised approach to Vocational Qualifications in Healthcare Waste Management’

The purpose of the project is to provide a unified approach to the development of National Occupational Standards and Vocational Educational Training Programmes for Healthcare Waste Management across the EU Member States. The methodology and the outputs should reflect best practices and best available technologies for the management and treatment of healthcare wastes.

Healthcare waste management is a dynamic field of the waste sector and technology applications have radically changed over the past decades. We have become more aware of the risks posed by healthcare waste in terms of infection control and broader environmental impacts from incineration in low level technical units.

This is an opportunity to improve the skills of the existing labour force and to bring new employees into the industry with the appropriate skills set to perform the duties of a modern healthcare waste manager.

As a result of the project outputs it will be possible to provide an EU labour force in the sector with a set of skills regardless of the member state in which they undertook the vocational training programme. This will ensure that future healthcare waste managers will have genuine EU educational currency and therefore enabling greater mobility within the EU for this specific labour force. In addition this approach to National Occupational Standards and Vocational Educational Training will give employers confidence that candidate selection for healthcare waste management posts is based on benchmarked healthcare waste management vocational training awards facilitating selection between candidates.

As a consequence of this new approach to healthcare waste management training the risks associated with healthcare waste management to employees of the healthcare providers will be reduced significantly. Employees will be better protected as a result of a higher awareness to the risks and the measures needed to negate those risks. Lastly the new approach will bring economic advantages to healthcare providers in these difficult financial times as good waste management practice reduces the direct cost of the waste management function through minimising the production of hazardous waste. Through implementing effective segregation at source the hidden costs of treating hospital acquired infections, personal injury to staff and the associated lost time through staff absence is reduced as a consequence. The key outputs of the project are:

- An assessment of the current VET availability across the EU countries, represented by the partner countries.
- Assessment of the core skills requirements for the role of healthcare waste managers.
- The development of a standardised EU vocational training programme for healthcare waste managers.
- The development of associated training materials to underpin the training programme.
- The development of an e-learning platform to facilitate the remote delivery of the training programme.
- An EU wide network of healthcare waste management professionals will be established.

The project will run for three years and it hopes to engage a broad mix of key stakeholder in that period.
The Project

The EU-HCWM project has been funded in the framework of Lifelong Learning Programme under the LEONARDO DA VINCI action: Multilateral Networks. The EU-HCWM project aims to provide a unified approach to the development of a Vocational Educational Training Programme for Healthcare Waste Management across EU Member States, through the development of a new healthcare waste management qualification framework, training package and e-learning platform.

Project reference no: 541982-LLP-1-2013-1-UK-LEONARDO-LNW

The Project Partners are:

- ICERMS Ltd
- SINERGIE
- IEP-NRI
- SIGMA
- ETLOG
- REC (FYROM)
- Club EMAS
- QKEV
- REC (Slo)
- NHS Confed
- EUPH
- ISWA

Getting down to business at the kick off meeting

Networking is Key

In order for the project outputs to add any real value to the EU VET system and indeed for the healthcare waste sector they need to be relevant and the project team needs to find an appropriate mechanism through which they can be practically implemented into the current situation within member states.

A national network will be created in each participating country. The members of the networks will be representatives of all stakeholders’ target groups, i.e. direct beneficiaries like vocational training providers and potential learners; policy and decision makers; other stakeholders like local communities, healthcare providers, and environmental organizations.

Each member will be asked to register with the e-platform. A complete database of contact details will be created and this will comprise the EU-HCWM network.

The members of the network will be the core recipients of the project activities and outputs. Additionally, they will be asked to participate to the on-line internal evaluation process for the validation of the project products. The network will be continually expanded throughout the duration of the project.

One of the key performance indicators will be the number of members in each of the partner member states networks.

To sign up to the EU-HCWM project network please visit the website and follow the network link.

www.hcwm.eu
 Undertaking the National Surveys

One of the key issues in a multi state project of this nature is to ensure that we start off from a benchmarked position reflecting the situation in each of the partner member states. In order to do this the partners will complete the following tasks:

- Identification of a number of key healthcare institutions from each of the associate partner countries, through which they can conduct the agreed assessments.
- Preparation and use of analysis tools to be used in the evaluation of the chosen key healthcare institutions in order to compile a report for each country.
- Analysis of existing healthcare vocational qualifications and NOS in each of the partner countries
- Assessment of current healthcare waste management VET/NOS in each of the relevant countries

Each partner will be responsible for identifying key healthcare facilities which represent a fair and reliable sample of the broad variety of healthcare institutions which are available in each country for both the private and public institutions. Several factors will be taken into account when choosing appropriate healthcare facilities (e.g. location, size, public/private institutions, staff numbers, etc.) to ensure that a fair representation of healthcare facilities within each country is established. Several key factors will be analysed and this will help create a baseline for the development of the NOS, and determines many factors including: the current and future requirements for a healthcare waste manager qualification, differences in waste management practices across each country, varying degrees of knowledge in correct waste management practices, differences in waste management practices and standards, and differences in waste treatment options. Existing National Occupational Standards or VET programmes available in the healthcare waste management sector will be analysed by each of the partners, in their own country. They will be responsible for identifying the processes involved in vocational education and training within their own country and will produce a report on the NOS/VET systems in their country for comparison. In this way we will ensure that a pan European benchmarked position is obtained and accurate.
ICERMS is the lead partner on the project and as such will be largely responsible for the administration and finance management of the project as well as some key tasks including website design, newsletter production and quality management.

This is a step up for ICERMS who previously were a partner on an LDV funded project on VET in solid waste management where the lead was SIGMA Consultants from Greece who are also on this project.

ICERMS will be responsible for assessing the current situation regarding healthcare waste management and VET for the waste sector in the UK and this will involve the engagement of stakeholders in, not only Scotland, but England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Each of the nations making up our United Kingdom has its own interpretation of how healthcare waste should be managed and there are also differences in our Vocational Education systems. More fundamentally the laws on waste are different within the UK.

ICERMS is a national vocational training centre based in Scotland and has been delivering vocational training to the waste management industry in the UK and overseas for 20 years.

ICERMS is a Scottish Qualification Authority and Waste Management Industry Training & Advisory Board registered and approved Vocational Training Centre for the Waste Management Industry in the UK. In addition the Centre delivers vocational training programmes which are accredited by the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management in regard to Healthcare Wastes Management and Treatment.

As well as providing VET we participate in VET research and development projects as well as offering consulting services in the broader Environment sector.

ICERMS has recently been involved in a number of capacity building projects funded by the European Union in Albania and it sees the delivery of VET to key stakeholders in the environment field as essential to building sustainable capacities at national and regional level.

ICERMS has just finalized the development of a new customized VET award in the delivery of environmental protection services. For more information on our centre please visit our website:

www.icerms.com
SINERGIE
Società Consortile a Responsabilità Limitata

SINERGIE is a not-for-profit Training and Research Centre accredited by the Regione Emilia-Romagna and Ministry of Education University and Research. Founded in 2001 with the aim to foster knowledge and skills development in the field of education and RTD, in particular for the following sectors: ICT, Energy, Environment, Safety and Security, Health, Social Sciences.

Thanks to its experience in ICT sector SINERGIE developed an E-learning Platform through a Learning Content Management System which is used to deliver training modules. Main activities of SINERGIE are:

- development and management of projects in the field of vocational training and higher education;
- organisation, technical and financial administration of projects funded by private and public funds;
- promotion of projects and events for stakeholders;
- collaboration with local authorities, private and public entities in the field of RTD and education;
- support to spin-off and new enterprise creation;
- technological transfer and results dissemination;

As a VET organisation, SINERGIE adopted the system implemented by Regione Emilia-Romagna for the recognition/certification of qualification to assess the final learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, competences and skills.

With reference to the field covered by the project SINERGIE has designed, organised and provided the following training modules both to employees in firms and to individual participants: Waste management; Water management; Environmental management; Greening skills; Green economy.

SINERGIE took part to the following projects: EUSA1E Project (Number 510362-LLP-1-2010-1-IT-LEONARDO-LMP), URBIS Project (Number 518620-LLP-1-2011-1-IT-LEONARDO-LMP), SWFM-QF (Project Number 528022-LLP-1-2012-1-GR-LEONARDO-LMP), EMPOWERING (Project Number IEE/13/697/SI2.645843).

www.sinergie-italia.com

EU-HCWM
Who are we?

The project has a strong team, comprising of 12 partners, representing 11 European countries and two pan European industry associations.

The partnership group represents a broad range of stakeholders with a high level of technical expertise from both the state and private healthcare sectors.

In addition the project partnership includes stakeholders representing both healthcare waste managers and healthcare providers as well as a strong representation from vocational education training.

All of the partners have strong pedigrees in international projects both within the EU and Globally and they are well aware of the challenges in implementing such projects with such a diverse group of stakeholders.

The project has a good starting point with such an excellent group of partners however it will still require to engage a broader stakeholder group in order that the project outputs have a practical value.

The importance of excellent communications and networking both within and outwith the project cannot be overstated. This will ensure that the project achieves its ambitious programme of objectives and within the planned timeframe.
Industry News

In each issue of The Healthcare Waste Manager we will endeavour to bring you the latest industry news from around the EU and across the world wide web. In this September issue we will start the ball rolling with a few hot topics from the UK healthcare waste sector.

To contribute to this section please email articles or links to Scott Crossett by email to scott@icerms.com

Gypsum Waste

Healthcare waste managers have faced challenges in disposing of waste gypsum from plaster casts and dentistry casts following the ban on depositing waste gypsum to ordinary biodegradable landfills and the active encouraging of its recycling. A consortium composed of 16 main stakeholders in the European Gypsum Industry, led by Eurogypsum, the European Association of the Gypsum Industry, were selected by the European Commission (EC) to conduct a LIFE + project entitled “From production to recycling: a circular economy for the European gypsum industry with the demolition and recycling industry”. This project will start in January 2013 for a period of three years ending in December 2015. It is not clear from the project brief if gypsum from the healthcare sector is being included in the study and we will attempt to find out more about this interesting project in the next issue. For more information on the project please click on the following link: http://www.gypsumtogypsum.org

Offensive Waste

The UK Health & Safety Executive have developed guidelines for the management of offensive wastes from the healthcare setting. Offensive/hygiene waste (previously known as ‘sanpro’ or human hygiene waste) is not ‘clinical waste’, ‘hazardous’ or ‘special waste’ (in Scotland) under environmental legislation and not dangerous goods under transport legislation if it is considered non-infectious and it does not require specialist treatment or disposal. Offensive/hygiene wastes are the product of a population which is not known to be infectious. The waste can also be offensive in appearance and smell. When handled, there is a residual health risk, which should be assessed, and appropriate precautions should be implemented. However, provided the waste is appropriately wrapped, properly handled and free from excess liquid, the risk of ill health is considered to be low. The guidance can be downloaded in English at: http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/waste22.pdf

PyroPure

The University of York and a leading pharmaceutical manufacturer has partnered with PyroPure Ltd (UK), the UK pioneer of micro-scale waste disposal, in order to trial its PyroPure technology before the system is made available to the clinical waste disposal industry. The collaboration follows Knowledge Transfer Partnership funding from the UK’s innovation agency, the Technology Strategy Board, which aims to help businesses improve their competitiveness and productivity by capitalising on the UK’s knowledge base. The trial aims to demonstrate PyroPure technology’s capability of destroying the most thermally resistant Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients and is the last step the firm has to take before its viability for pharmaceutically contaminated waste is approved by the Environment Agency. For more info follow the link: http://www.pyropure.co.uk

CIWM Healthcare Waste Management Guidance

Earlier this year the Chartered Institution of Waste Management in the UK published an introductory guide to Healthcare Waste Management in England and Wales. They also produced guidance for healthcare waste auditing and both were published in their monthly journal. They can be downloaded at the links below:


Project Kick-off Meeting, Largs, Scotland, UK

The first meeting of the project team was hosted by I cerms in the small coastal town of Largs in southwest Scotland.

This was an opportunity for many of the partners to meet for the first time and for those who had met before to renew old friendships.

The partners were informed about the project and the tasks to be undertaken by each partner over the period of the project timeline.

This included information about the importance of financial recording and reporting in line with the Executive Agency requirements.

The kick off meeting was spread over 2 days, 6th and 7th February 2014, and there was much discussion and questions on the various aspects of project implementation and administration.

It was an excellent couple of days and the weather, being sunny and relatively cloud free, played its part in showing off the town and its surroundings to best effect.

After such a meeting of minds there were still a few issues to be addressed re the project administration and financing however everyone left Largs energized for the task ahead and there was a genuine buzz about the group.

At the time of going to press on this issue we had just completed the second co-ordination meeting hosted by ETLog in Berlin. The proceedings of this excellent meeting will be reported in the next issue.
Spreading the Word — London, September 2014

Scott Crossett, ICERMS received an invitation from Dr Anne Woolridge to give a presentation on the project at the University of Northampton Healthcare Waste and Resources Research Group. The theme of the event hosted by Bywaters, and sponsored by Frontier Medical and Sharp Smart, in London was ‘Understanding Waste Treatment Technologies and the Recovery of Value’. The event was attended by around 55 delegates from across the National Health Service in England and Wales as well as a number of technology providers and NHS suppliers.

The speakers provided an insight into a variety of issues within the healthcare waste sector including ‘New Technologies’, Peter Selkirk from Pyropure Ltd, the ‘Current Issues’ in the sector Dr Anne Woolridge, ISSL, with an ‘Overview of Environment Agency and New Technology Applications’ in the sector from Matt Wormsley, Environment Agency. In second technical session there were presentations from Anna Sliwinska, Northampton University, on the Energy potential from Healthcare Waste Treatment and finally Andrew Hartley on Green Financing and Opportunities for Technology Providers from the Green Investment Bank. The presentations were followed by a tour around the Bywaters Materials Recycling Facility which processes around 175,000 tonnes of municipal waste annually.

At the event and after the presentation on the EUHCWM project there was considerable interest in the project itself and it is hoped that a significant number of delegates will fully engage the project and form part of the network. Dr Anne Woolridge was also able to link up with a couple of hospitals who were prepared to assist the project in the healthcare waste auditing process and the assessment reporting process.

It was also an excellent opportunity to catch up with some old colleagues, or better to say, colleagues from the past who had since moved on to new and exciting pastures. Andrew Stratton had moved from Grundon to Mitie and was now heavily involved with waste management and cleaning contraction with the NHS trusts and also it was good to catch up with Andrew Howie who had moved from Babtie to Air Products and was now working on a massive Energy from Waste plant for AP ion Teeside.

The Chartered Institution of Waste Management were represented at the event through their technical adviser to their healthcare waste working group, Matthew Smith, and it is hoped that this will be an important relationship in the future as the project starts the qualification framework development. There was also considerable interest in the project from Mr Terry Tudor, Northampton University, the event co-ordinator and the co-ordinator of the Healthcare Waste Resources and Research Group and we look forward to continued collaboration with Terry and the Group. Overall it was an excellent event and extremely professionally delivered.

For more information on the event please visit the EUHCWM project website where the presentations from the event are available in English.