



Appetite for innovation

The University of Novi Sad (UNS) contains Serbia's only scientific-research unit that specialises in feed technology issues. Lack of investment however has meant that researchers struggle to access EU level projects.

An EU-funded project aims to address this and enable Serbian researchers to realise their potential and actively participate in cross-border initiatives. The project is also of significant strategic importance to the region: the agro-food sector is one of the most important economically, and is one of seven national R&D priorities defined in Serbia's scientific and technological development strategy 2009 to 2014.

The Feed-to-food ⁽¹⁾ project was initiated following the signing of the memorandum of understanding associating Serbia to the EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). Its principal goal has been to reinforce research potential at the Centre for Feed and Animal Products, part of the University of Novi Sad's Institute for Food Technology.

The project, which is due for completion this year, has already achieved a number of positive results, and the project partners say they have many reasons to be satisfied with the progress made so far. Research capacities have been improved, networking with EU research institutions has been increased and researchers now have solid experience of taking part in EU research.

Furthermore, in the scope of project's activities, important EU research institutes have accepted the UNS as a participant in FP7 projects, and the project partners are ready to form new research consortia and to make new proposals. Good communication with project beneficiaries has been achieved, something which will be continued following project completion.

Reinforcement of the research centre has also been achieved through the purchase of pilot plant equipment for activities such as milling, mixing, drying-cooling and vacuum coating. A new research pilot plant laboratory was ceremonially opened on 29 September 2009 by professor Viktor Nedovic, assistant minister for international cooperation and European integration in Serbia's Ministry of Science and Technological Development. The laboratory is now capable of providing training and research opportunities to scientists, researchers and students in the feed and food industry.

The centre has also been able to employ additional researchers, a technician and one experienced researcher. These developments, say the project partners, will significantly strengthen their research potential. The project partners



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are also now highly proactive, and are active members of the European Commission's food cluster initiative.

The Feed-to-food project can therefore already be seen as a success. The project has enabled project partners to reinforce their own research capabilities and has helped to integrate Serbia into the European Research Area.

(1) 'Reinforcement of Feed-to-food Research Center at Institute for Food Technology of the University of Novi Sad.'

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