



Introduction to NovelQ

Since March 1 2006, thirty six project partners have joined forces in the EU-funded Integrated Project "NovelQ" which is designed to stimulate incremental innovations in novel food processing and packaging. In this project, integrated strategic solutions for technical and basic research hurdles are formulated for complex, real food products rather than food constituents.

Enhancements to the state of the art of novel processes focus on high pressure processing (HPP) for sterilisation of food, quantitative studies on the effect of pulsed electrical fields (PEF) on food pathogens and cold plasma as a surface disinfecting method. Other innovative topics include coupling of new packaging concepts to novel processing and solving R&D hurdles in implementation of advanced heating technologies, such as microwave, ohmic heating and radio frequency.

Key scientific emphasis is put on plant-based products, both solid and liquids, including carrot, tomato, strawberry, apple and broccoli. These commodities have been selected because they integrate food structure issues, colour and flavour-related aspects, health-related components, including allergens, and food safety issues. However, the anticipated results have broad applicability to other type of products, to the level of whole meals – including regional recipes that are typical of the rich and diverse European cuisine. To most effectively address these opportunities, further knowledge on consumer perception is crucial.

Communication plan

In NovelQ dissemination and communication focuses on three activities that are grouped together, each of which is crucial if the maximum impact is to be achieved:

- Dissemination: toward the project partners and beyond the consortium,
- Technology transfer: from research to industry, and
- Training and Career Development Network: design to train young scientists from the NovelQ project.

General objective:

To maximise the acceptance of new technologies by dissemination of data, transfer of know-how to stakeholders and training and career development of young scientists in NovelQ.

The above activities have been grouped in a separate subproject consisting of three workpackages (WPs). The partners in these WPs and the WP leaders are primarily responsible for executing the dissemination activities. However, all project partners are actively involved in activities related to dissemination, technology transfer and training activities.

- WP24 Dissemination and interaction with various stakeholders: addresses dissemination towards project partners and dissemination to all potentially interested stakeholders.
- WP25 Technology transfer and Industry Advisory Platform (IAP): the IAP has been established to ensure the most effective transfer of demonstrated novel processing technologies to potential users and to ensure that NovelQ focuses on topics relevant for the stakeholders. The IAP exploits and promotes project results, facilitates discussions with potential constructors and applicants of new technologies. The platform has over 80 members now; they are from SME, multinationals, industrial network organisations and other int. organisations interested in novel processing.
- WP26 Training and Career Development (TCD): focuses on young scientists within NovelQ. TCD has been established to make inventory of the needs of young scientists. Scientific as well as soft-skill tailor-made trainings are organised for the young people from NovelQ that are at the beginning of their career. Mentorships given by their senior colleagues from the project form are also important.

Implementation of communication plan

As described above, the communication within NovelQ is organised in three workpackages without a separate communication manager. During the project, this strategy proved to be working quite well as described below. A special attention has been given to the following dissemination issues:

- Publications in professional food-oriented magazines: as industry does not always read the scientific journals, a special emphasis was put on publications in national and international professional magazines (in English as well as local languages). At the start of the project, especially scientists in universities mainly focused on scientific journals. In order to convert the scientific publications into

more popular ones, a partner (with extensive experience in international networks as well as having industry background) has been chosen to screen the scientific publications of NovelQ on potential for professional magazines. Thereafter, he contacts the authors and helps them translate the results into a more popular version. In order to facilitate the writing process, a guideline on how to write a more popular publication has been developed and made available to potential authors.

- **Dissemination towards industry:** it was recognised that it is quite a challenge to attract industry as partners in a European project. To enhance the communication with the industry, an Industry Advisory Platform was established in which private companies (SME, LE) and other interested networks could relatively easy become a member without being a contractual partner in the project. This turned out to be a very successful formula for communication with and technology transfer to the industry.

Brief overview of the main dissemination and communication results of NovelQ

- **Scientific publications:** At the start of the project around 50 scientific publications were promised. At this moment (January 2011), NovelQ expects over 100 peer reviewed publications featuring NovelQ work. Moreover, two special issues of Trends in Food Science and Technology were published with results of NovelQ, one at the start of the project, describing the state of the art at the beginning of NovelQ and one at the end of NovelQ, showing the project results.
- **Publications in professional magazines:** At the start of the project 12 publications in professional magazines were promised. At this moment, almost 60 publications in professional magazines have been published, including a special issue of New Food dedicated to NovelQ applicable results.
- **Industry Advisory Platform (IAP):** The IAP of NovelQ was set up at the start of the project and has 80 industrial members now. For the IAP members, the following activities were organised: e.g. industry-oriented workshops, special part of the NovelQ website, newsletters, business cases featuring novel processing technologies, decision support tool to select the most appropriate technology, etc.
- **Competitive call for industrial partners:** in addition, in the 1st half of the project, a competitive call for companies was launched so that interested industries could actually join the NovelQ consortium. 5 new industrial partners became partner in the NovelQ project from 1 May 2008.
- **Proofs of principle:** In the 2nd half of NovelQ, IAP members were offered to participate in short-term proofs of principle. NovelQ offered the IAP members to test their products for free by using novel processing equipment located at different partner organizations in Europe. 10 IAP participated in these tests. The main results were described in short public reports and will be used for dissemination.
- **Public workshops and IAP events:** At the start of the project 12 regional meetings were promised. Over 20 public workshops were held in different regions in Europe with different topics: specific technologies (e.g. high pressure in Prague, microwave in Gothenburg, consumer acceptance at BEUC, Brussels ...), focused on industry (e.g. technology tour in Spain, workshops at Anuga in Köln), specific dissemination towards industry (e.g. in Amsterdam, Chipping Campden, Oslo). The workshops were organised alongside large international events (e.g. EFFoST, EHEDGE meetings, ANUGA Köln Messe) to attract a large group or as stand-alone workshops for a specific audience.
- **Young scientists in NovelQ and Training and Career Development Network (TCD):** To stimulate interaction between young scientists within NovelQ and outside the consortium, and to stimulate them to communicate their results, the TCD Network was established at the start of the project. This network turned out to be very successful with over 40 members. Activities include a TCD section at the NovelQ website, newsletters, workshops and training sessions (twice a year) including scientific as well as soft-skill training (how to give a presentations, how to write a publication or how to submit an FP6/7 project). In September 2010, a very successful, large PhD conference was organised at TU Berlin at which PhD students from NovelQ and other EU projects presented their results. The TCD network was recognised by the EC as an important tool, resulting in a specific FP6 call for projects on this topic.
- **Cooperation with other projects:** It was recognised that working together with other European projects on related topics could help disseminating the project results. NovelQ sought contact and (co)organised joint workshops/events with the following EU FP6/FP7 projects e.g. DoubleFresh, HighQ RTE, Healthy Structuring, AgrifoodResults, PathogenCombat and HighTech Europe.

More information:

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