Europe Gene Editing Course: Abridged Concept note

When: 11th to 14th of April 2022

Where: Ghent

Participants will learn the role, purpose, and components of a strategic advocacy plan to impact the policy environment for gene editing in the EU. The course will help participants understand how to use their scientific knowledge to become more proactive communicators, engage stakeholders, develop, and deploy science-based messages on gene editing.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the science behind gene editing technologies that are relevant to policy and regulation.
- Understand the international and regional discussion about regulating gene edited products and the different approaches taken around the world.
- Understand the policy options and political dynamics for oversight of GMOs and gene editing in Europe.

Skill-based objectives

- Learn how to participate in the policy process, such as writing a public comment or participating at a government hearing.
- Understand the components and how to implement a strategic advocacy campaign.
- Learn how to craft key messages for an advocacy campaign.

Profile of Participants

- 30-35 Scientists from EU countries that have a passion for engagement on science policy and communication with a focus on gene editing. Participants should be willing to commit time to advocate for science-based policy adoption for a period of 12 months after the course conclusion.

Course Mechanics:

- 3-day in-person course to be held Ghent University.

DRAFT TENTATIVE AGENDA

DAY ONE	
Morning Sessions	***Genome Editing: A look at the science behind the technology.*** *An introduction to the diverse gene editing techniques and how they can produce a variety of end products with different risk profiles.*
	Communicating on Gene Editing: *How do we talk about the technology? An interactive hands-on communication activity.*
Afternoon Sessions	***Genome Editing Regulations around the World*** *An overview of the global debate surrounding gene editing techniques, looking at government's decisions on whether and how to regulate gene-edited products.*
	Gene Editing in the EU Regulatory and Policy Context *Introduction to the biosafety regulation and guidelines for gene editing in the EU, key institutions within the policy landscape in the region and current discussions for a differentiated approach to the technology.*
	How Gene Editing Could Benefit the EU *Approaches for communicating the benefits of gene editing and highlighting messages on sustainability, resilience against shocks, the reduction of our environmental and climate footprint while safeguarding biodiversity.*

DAY TWO	
Morning Sessions	***A Strategic Advocacy Plan*** *An overview of the objectives and elements of an advocacy plan*
	Developing Key Messages for Gene Editing Policy *How to target key messages, build relationships, and engage with a wide variety of stakeholders to promote a science based approach to gene editing.*
Afternoon Sessions	***Public Participation:*** *Why is public participation in the public policy sphere important? What is an effective policy interaction? What makes for an effective public policy comment?*
	Public Participation in Practice: *Participants will carry out a hands-on public participation activity.*

DAY THREE	
Morning Sessions	***Developing Strategic Plans for advocating a science based approach to gene editing:*** *Participants will engage in discussion in plenary and small groups, integrating public participation approaches, key messages and outreach activities to develop strategic plans to promote a science based environment for gene editing policy in the EU.*
Afternoon Session	***Discussion on strategic plans*** *Feedback and discussions on plans with a focus on how to operationalize and deploy knowledge and skills attained through the course.*
	Next Steps and shared engagement activities *Identify opportunities for shared outreach, science communication and relationship building activities with stakeholders. Discussion on how to align participant's plans with EU's relevant policy agendas, such as the "Farm to fork strategy".*