

## A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR DISSEMINATING FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY KNOWLEDGE AT NATIONAL AND EU-LEVEL

Cropotova J.<sup>1</sup>  
Schleining G.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Practical Scientific Institute of Horticulture and Food Technology,  
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

<sup>2</sup>ISEKI-Food Association, c/o Department of Food Science and Technology,  
Vienna, Austria

**Janna Cropotova, e-mail: [janna\\_cr@mail.ru](mailto:janna_cr@mail.ru)**

**Abstract:** This study focuses on an assessment of the future role of the ISEKI-Food Association (IFA) for educational, research and industrial food areas of the Republic of Moldova and on an understanding of the proposed opportunities and mechanisms of using the ISEKI resources for Moldavian IFA-members.

To this end, the study explores the main modalities and benefits of participation in the research activities in the area of food science and technology proposed by IFA for students, researches and specialists from the Republic of Moldova. Moreover, it provides facts and figures on the objectives, governance and functioning of the innovative IFA instruments and modalities.

**Key words:** ISEKI, platform, food science, opportunity

### Introduction

Nowadays, universities, research institutions and industrial companies from the Republic of Moldova have a great opportunity to establish a fruitful collaboration with European partners in the framework of international programmes to foster the development of the country and promote mobility across different disciplines and employment sectors.

In order to facilitate this process, one of the possibilities is to use a special European platform dedicated to the food science and technology sector – ISEKI-Food Association.

*The ISEKI-Food Association* (IFA, <https://www.iseki-food.net/>) represents an independent European non-profit organization, registered in Vienna at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU). IFA was established in 2005 by university institutions, research institutes, companies and associations related to food, in order to guarantee the sustainability of the outcomes from more over 10 years network activities funded by the European Union.

The members of IFA are coming now from all over the world, including experts from all sectors in the food area. Some have formed platforms in so called **IFA-SIGs** (special interest groups, <https://www.iseki-food.net/sigs>) which are also open to non-IFA members that would like to actively contribute and collaborate. The aim of the IFA-SIGs is to have a forum for IFA members and non-IFA members as well with similar goals, to stimulate the development of new projects and activities and to establish and maintain a network of experts from Universities, research institutions and companies in the food chain.

The main facts about IFA are as follows:

- IFA is **founding member of EASPA** (European Alliance for Subject-Specific and Professional Accreditation and Quality Assurance, <http://www.easpa.eu>) in 2011;
- IFA was elected as **Standing Committee of ICA** (Association for European Life Science Universities, <http://www.ica-europe.info/>) for the food sector in 2014.

The most significant mission statements of the ISEKI-Food Association are directed towards the continuous support of:

- **Lifelong learning in the food sector**, encompassing both **academia & industry**;
- **Teachers and Trainers** to improve efficacy of teaching;
- **Students** to gain knowledge more easily;
- **Industry staff / Food professionals** to make use of research results;
- **Researchers** to facilitate collaboration.

The main purposes of the ISEKI-Food Association are as follows:

- 1) Establishment and maintenance of a network between universities, research institutions and companies in the food chain.
- 2) Development and carrying out of all activities connected with the sphere of interest of ISEKI, such as:
  - working towards the quality assurance of European Food Studies;
  - tuning curricula in food studies;
  - developing teaching materials and methods in the field of food studies;
  - promoting synergies between research in food science and engineering with education/teaching and industry;
  - development of a virtual community of experts in the field of food, with communication with the general public;
  - establishment of a framework of agreements among the partners, fostering the mobility of students and staff in the field of food science;
  - stimulating the development of further related projects;
  - cooperation in the implementation of quality criteria in the food chain.
- 3) Creation of internal bodies for promoting the integration of science and engineering knowledge in the food chain and for the recognition of outstanding achievements (e.g. through an ISEKI Academy) of scientific and technical expertise.

The ISEKI-Food Association can help to bridge the gap between European and Moldavian research, industry and the market, for example by supporting Moldavian scientists in finding the proper partners for international projects in the field of food science and technology. For young researchers and students (both master and PhD-s) it could create a new possibility for continuous career growth by providing different trainings, summers schools, workshops and conferences with travel grants. Moreover, ISEKI will support innovative R&D ideas in the framework of international projects involving both academy and industry, which will help food companies in the Republic of

Moldova to develop their technological breakthroughs into viable products with real commercial potential.

IFA provides and maintains several products for its stakeholders in the area of Higher Education and Continual Professional Development (CPD) for teachers, students and food professionals.

#### **Innovative materials and methods used by IFA for higher education and continual professional development and dissemination of science**

For higher education and professional development of students, young professionals and researchers, IFA represents a great tool, because includes a **FOOD CAREERS** platform (<https://www.foodcareers.eu/>) developed within an EU funded project (TRACK\_FAST: Training Requirements and Careers for Knowledge-based Food Science and Technology in Europe, <https://www.trackfast.eu/>), where food professionals can register to be supported by food experts on their career path for further qualifications, e.g. quality manager. The platform is now further developing for other qualifications and contains a still growing database of courses from different course providers, which could be used to achieve the missing knowledge and competences.

The criteria and procedures of IFA's European Quality Accreditation System for Food Studies Programmes have been developed to certify high quality first and second cycle food studies programmes and short courses at European level, receiving the EQAS Food Award.

IFA also organizes itself **Training workshops**, either public or tailor made in-house ([https://www.iseki-food.net/general/events/ifa\\_organised/past](https://www.iseki-food.net/general/events/ifa_organised/past)).

Regarding innovative teaching materials and methods, IFA proposes to its members an **e-learning platform** (<https://www.iseki-food.net/E-learning>), based on moodle. Every course can be used at any time by **IFA-members** for free, 40 € per course will be charged for non-members. **IFA-members** have also the possibility to use this infrastructure to interact with their students and/or to create their own courses.

IFA supports its members by maintaining a tool to organize **webinars** or **online meetings** (<https://www.iseki-food.net/webinars/info>) via web browsers with video and audio live-streaming in combination with desktop-sharing to discuss issues with experts from all over the world. It helps reducing travelling while reaching larger audiences around the world. Participation in webinars is **free of charge**, if not mentioned other, **but registration is mandatory**. The collection of **video recordings and presentations of past webinars** can be viewed by **IFA-members** for free or ordered at [office@iseki-food.net](mailto:office@iseki-food.net) against a small handling fee. Any food scientist is encouraged to prepare webinars according to her/his expertise and to share their knowledge with a broad audience. No matter where you are, it is easy to reach audiences all over the world.

A **database on teaching materials** contains files or links to animations, PowerPoint slides, calculators, converters, excel applications, simulators, and books for teachers, students and industrial people. The details are only available to **IFA members**.

The **ISEKI-Food Book Series** published by Springer is a collection where various aspects of food safety and environmental issues are introduced and reviewed by specialists in the field. **IFA members get 25% discount on all Springer books.**

Moreover, IFA offers to its member an exclusive opportunity to publish their research works in the *International Journal of Food Studies* (IJFS, <http://www.iseki-food-ejournal.com/ojs/>) which is an international peer-reviewed open-access journal featuring scientific articles on the world of Food in Education, Research and Industry. This journal is a forum created specifically to **improve the dissemination of Food Science and Technology knowledge between Education, Research and Industry** stakeholders.

### **Results and discussions**

Taking into account all information described above, it becomes clear that the ISEKI-Food Association represents a great opportunity for Moldavian students, specialists and scientists to open a new door into undiscovered world of European scientific activities (projects, trainings, workshops, conferences, summer schools and doctoral programs) in the area of food science and technology, which would significantly contribute to the further development of the country.

### **Conclusions**

The main goal of the ISEKI-Food Organization is to break down barriers between countries and create a new market for dissemination of knowledge, research and innovation between food science and industry.

Through subscribing and taking part in ISEKI-activities, Moldavian scientists will gain a lot of benefits from access to excellent knowledge and database of research activities in the field of food science and technology worldwide, and connection to European-leading scientific networks and research teams.

### **References**

1. <https://www.iseki-food.net/>