

ECPHM 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (2016-2021)

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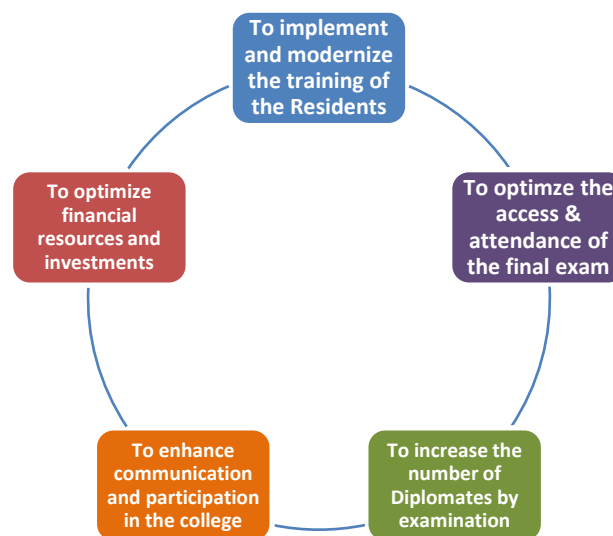
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Introduction

The ECPHM board has recently identified the need of presenting a strategic plan in order to direct and sustain the next phases of the College development. *Sustainable* and *constant* “**growth**” and “**development**” are the corner stones of the continuing progress of the College. Therefore a strategic prioritization of the activities of the College is needed.

This document aims at providing a presentation of the current situation and a description of the main strategic areas that have been recognized as **key objectives** for the next five years. The methodology identified to assure “sustainable and constant growth and development” are also described.

The key objectives and actions to be taken are strictly correlated: 1) to implement and to modernize the training of the Residents; 2) to optimize the access and attendance to the final exam; 3) to increase the number of the Diplomates by exam; 4) to enhance communication and participation in College activities; and 5) to strategically invest resources in learning opportunities for Residents and Diplomates.



Background

The ECPHM¹ is one of the 25 EBVS-recognized veterinary specialist colleges, comprising more than 35 distinct specialties. It was founded in 2004 and provisionally recognized by the EBVS² and awarded full recognition in 2013.

ECPHM counts a total of 157 Diplomates, of which 134 are actively working as European Veterinary Specialists either in one of the 19 EU Countries.

The **mission** of the ECPHM is *“to advance health oriented porcine production management in the herd context in Europe and increase the competency of those who practice in this field, to produce high quality and safe pork products for the consumer in a sustainable animal production providing expert care and welfare”*.

The objectives of the College are:

- Establishing guidelines and standards of training for postgraduate education and experience prerequisite to become a specialist in the specialty of porcine health management
- Examining and certifying veterinarians as specialists in porcine herd health management to serve health and welfare of the animals, the economic outcome of the herd, the production of safe quality products for consumers in a sustainable animal production by providing expert care for pigs
- Encouraging research and other contributions to the science and practice of porcine herd health management including husbandry, reproductive management at herd level, epidemiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis, therapy, prevention, and control of diseases directly or indirectly affecting pigs and the maintenance of healthy and productive pig herds. Porcine health management also includes the impact on quality and safety of pork products and gives special consideration to herd health and production, production systems and targets and the management of pig populations, and
- Promoting communication and dissemination of knowledge related to porcine health management also in cooperation with the European Association of Porcine Health Management (EAPHM).

¹ <http://www.ecphm.org/>

² <http://www.ebvs.eu/>

Current situation

- ECPHM growth is too low to ensure a stable number of Diplomates.
- Every year several *de-facto* Diplomates lose their status of “European Veterinary Specialist in PHM” because they do not meet the credentials during their 5-years re-evaluation (main reason is inactivity in the specific field of practice or retirement).
- The proportion of Diplomates by exam is only 16.6%.
- Some Diplomates are not motivated to attend the Annual General Meeting and the concurrent Symposium.
- The percentage of attendance the AGM ranges from 40 to 73% (2004 – 2016)
- There are 13 ECPHM Residency Institutions, located in Western Europe only.
- Fifty-five residents are under training, but none of them comes from Eastern Europe.
- The majority of the Residents do not sit the exam early after the completion of their training period (four years, compiled by one year of internship and three years of residency). They usually need two or even more years extra.
- The pass rate of the exam is 74% (2008 – 2016)
- Based on external proctors’ reports, the exam is very well organized and fair both in terms of preparation and administration, i.e. delivering to the candidates.
- On a yearly basis a Resident Workshop is organized before the ESPHM. The Residents present and discuss clinical cases. The interaction between the Residents and the Education Committee members acting as opponents is encouraged.
- Every two years a Summer School is organized in September. The program provides formal lessons on key subjects, exercises, practical dissections, open discussion, and also a mock exam.
- The website of the College³, completely re-designed a few years ago, works very well and it is of help for communication with the Diplomates. The website of the EBVS has a link to the ECPHM homepage and vice versa.
- The website has a dedicated area (discussion forum and drop-box) for Residents.
- The Porcine Health Management journal (PHM journal)⁴ is published online with at least two articles per month. Resident are entitled to publish, e.g. case reports, free of charge in this peer-reviewed journal. Article Processing Charges (APCs) for Diplomates publishing their research in the PHM journal is also covered by the College.
- The financial resources are adequate for the support of the current activities. The income from the organization of the annual ESPHM generates a surplus in the budget that increases year by year. Investments and implementation of the activities are possible.

³ <http://www.ecphm.org/>

⁴ <http://www.porcinehealthmanagement.com/>

Vision

The ECPHM is the leading and only respected College recognized by the European Board of Veterinary Specialization (EBVS) that gathers the European Veterinary Specialists in Porcine Health Management. The ECPHM provides and sustains appropriate and approved training programs for the Residents, organizes an examination to be passed for being awarded the title of Diplomate, evaluates the subsistence of the necessary credentials to be called European Veterinary Specialist in Porcine Health Management.

In the near future, we have to:

- Expand various College activities into Eastern Europe (starting with hosting the 9th ESPHM in Prague, CZ)
- Connect residency programs all over Europe with modern technology (distance learning, video conferences, etc.) and financially supported Resident exchanges between program providers
- Apply most recent teaching and learning strategies approved in andragogy, e.g. implementing portfolio tracking for residency programs, etc.
- Standardize and optimize the quality of residency programs and the supervision by Advisors and Supervisors
- Constantly substitute leaving and retiring Diplomates by such Diplomates that have been certified by examination
- Coordinate our PHM activities and potentially link them with activities of other Colleges in the framework of EBVS (e.g. ECVP, ECVCN, etc.) in order to gain from synergy (e.g. common exam settings, etc.)

Strategic (key) objectives

In order to assure “**sustainable and constant growth and development**” and to keep a leading position across Europe in the field of porcine health management, some weaknesses and/or criticisms (see below) must be clearly identified and corrective short, medium and long term strategies and financial investments must be applied.

- to implement and modernize the training of the Residents;
- to optimize the access and attendance to the final exam;
- to increase the number of the Diplomates by exam;
- to enhance communication and participation in College activities;
- to strategically invest resources in learning opportunities for Residents and Diplomates.

1) to implement and modernize the training of the Residents

To implement and modernize the training of the Residents, in addition to the working activities already in place (workshops and summer school), a **series of meetings via web/e-learning** (call conferences, video conferences) will be established. All residents shall be able to access the service and attend the different sessions by a personal computer or a tablet at their home. Two different kinds of web events can be identified: a) guided clinical case discussions with interaction between the attendants and the leader of the meeting; b) formal lessons on advanced topics, including those suggested by the Residents.

These new long distance learning tools do not need physical meetings and give the opportunity to **standardize the Residents’ training** in the different Countries as well.

This is a short term action (by the end of 2017)

The Board of the College has approved the institution of **mobility grants for the Residents** and the Assembly during the AGM held at 7th of June 2016 has ratified it. The institution of mobility grants is aimed at enhancing the opportunity for scientific and professional contacts between Residents of different training programs in different EU Countries, in order to also implement the network within the training Institutions of the College. Financial resources (point 5) have already been allocated for the mobility grants.

This is a short term action (by the end of 2016)

2) to optimize the access and attendance to the final exam

The most critical points not only for the growth and development of the ECPHM but also for the survival is the number of the Diplomates. During the last years, after the discontinuation of the enrollment of the *de-facto* members, the number of the Diplomates has decreased slightly. As mentioned in the section “Current situation”, the majority of the Diplomates of the ECPHM are *de-facto* (>80%). In the last years a slight drop of the number of *de-facto* Diplomates has been registered because of retirement

or non-approval of re-certification. In the meantime, the number of the Residents completing their training period, sitting the exam and passing it has not covered the loss of Diplomates. The strategy to be adopted is strictly correlated with the aforementioned point 1 (implementation of the training of the Residents) and with the subsequent one (point 3).

To facilitate the access to and the attendance of the exam, a series of tools must be available for the Residents. Primarily there is a need for Residents to have the **correct information** and knowledge of how the exam is presented and how to be organized. To achieve this objective, several tools are already available, i.e. a power point presentation clearly explaining how to approach the exam in term of preparation and mentality; the **attendance of the mock exam** (each resident should have at least one opportunity to sit a mock exam during her/his training); and objective and correct information about the real challenge of the exam excluding any exaggeration. Confidence in their solid preparation makes the access to the exam easier for Residents.

Moreover, Resident supervisors should probably pay more attention to the progress in the training of the Residents, **fixing time-based objectives of training**.

This is a medium term action (by the end of 2018)

3) to increase the number of the Diplomates by exam

This strategic measure is a direct consequence of the previous action points 1 and 2. This objective can be achieved only by an increase of effort for Resident education.

A pivotal role in this “not simple process”, namely sitting and passing the exam, is also played by the supervisor and the advisor (if any) of the Residents. The majority of the candidates that fail the exam have a poor performance in the clinical case presentation and mainly in the discussion that follows. An more **accurate preparation of the clinical cases** (ppt presentation) and particularly a better training in holding the **subsequent discussion** based on Q&A with the Examination Committee members could significantly increase the success rate of that part of the examination. The Supervisors and the Advisors are strongly encouraged to carefully consider those actions in the Resident training. In order to focus on and discuss the main criticisms and the potential action points correlated with the exam, a letter for Resident supervisors will be drafted and sent within six months in order to make them aware of the important contribution they can have in the success of the examination.

This is a short term action (by the end of 2016)

The multiple choice session is also demanding, as it aims at evaluating a wide range of knowledge and information that can be achieved by the study of texts and reviews. The amount of knowledge that can be stored and processed is associated to the time devoted to that action. This time period should be at least of 6 months.

Some areas of the requested knowledge can be more difficult than others to be learned. The program of the **Summer School** is mainly focused on covering those disciplines needing more effort, thanks to the help of specific formal and practical lessons.

This is a long term action (by end of 2019)

4) to enhance communication and participation in College activities

To fulfill its aims (sustainable and constant growth and development) the ECPHM has to continue to keep the Diplomates informed about the activities by means of newsletters, to invite them to visit the website, keeping their profile updated and to promote the attendance of the annual Symposium and the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The AGM is the senior legislative body of the College, where the Diplomates participate in the general assembly for proposing, suggesting, discussing and adopting. The role of the Board is to listen to the suggestions of the delegates and feed the discussion on focal points. The activities of the Board will have visibility thanks to specific outcomes and to regular communication by the newsletters.

This is a short term action (immediate)

5) to strategically invest resources in learning opportunities for Residents and Diplomates.

The finances of the ECPHM are favorable. Every year a surplus is shelved from the annual budget as a reserve in a devoted bank account. This positive balance is mainly related to the income of the third part of the surplus from the ESPHM organization.

The ECPHM is a non-profit organization, so we need to reinvest in our main and characterizing activity: the education of our Residents to allow them to be excellently trained Diplomates by exam, to facilitate communication of latest findings in Porcine Health Management by subsidizing submissions to the PHM journal and to **assure “growth and development” to the College.**

The EBVS recommends that a recognized College saves a fund of at least one year's budget. The ECPHM fulfills that criteria having an overabundance of at least 4 years. Thus, in case of a negative balance of an edition of the ESPHM and consequently the need to contribute to the expenses, the finances of the College allows to cover the third part of that.

Moreover, for at least the next 3 years, a surplus can be expected from the budget of the organization of each of the ESPHM.

In that scenario, financial investments on training of the Residents and Diplomates can be programmed, always taking into account the **scrupulosity and diligence of a prudent man**. It means that the extra expenses (investments) beyond the fixed costs will be programmed for the subsequent budget and authorized only based on the availability of the cash based on the surplus of the budget of the previous year.

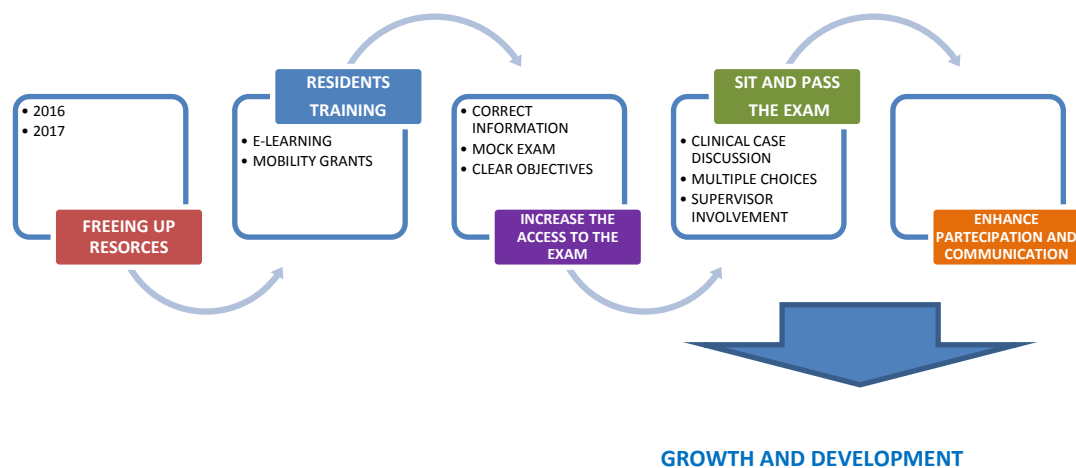
That can assure financial stability and an increased consolidation of the funds saved.

In the light of all the above considerations, a sum of 30,000/40,000 € for extra-costs on investments for the first year can be budgeted, with a 20% of increase in the subsequent annual prevision budget. Increases or decreases can be authorized by the

board and approved by the assembly on the provisional budget based on the income and the costs variability.

This is a medium term action (annual budget 2017)

Deliverables and metrics



Metrics:

- 1) to get a sustainable increase of at least 2 new Diplomates per year;
- 2) to organize two e-learning courses per year;
- 3) to increase the number of the newsletters;
- 4) to increase the financial resources annually devoted to the Residents Education.