

FUTURAGE

A Road Map *for* Ageing Research

Newsletter issue 1 | April 2011



Welcome to the first newsletter of the FUTURAGE project which provides information on the project activities undertaken so far. FUTURAGE is a two-year project funded by the European Commission, under the Seventh Framework Programme, to create the definitive Road Map for ageing research in Europe for the next 10–15 years.

Drawing on experts and specialists from Europe and beyond, the Road Map will represent the most extensive consultation ever conducted in this field and identify the main priorities on ageing and health from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

Since the project began in September 2009, the partners have undertaken national consultations in ten countries, staged nine workshops across Europe, held two Council of Scientist meetings and four project steering committee meetings. Four scientific themes formed the building blocks for the project: biogerontology, social and economic resources, environments of ageing and healthy ageing. A fifth parallel theme on the engagement of research users, including older people, has also been active during this period.

Six stages of consultation on the Road Map have been completed so far, gathering input from around 700 contributors across Europe. Through this process the project outputs which will form the Road Map have been continually revised and refined.

Since October 2010 the project partners have been involved in an intensive development process, drawing on all outputs generated so far to inform a set of multidisciplinary themes which will be at the heart of the Road Map. The writing of the Road Map, which is currently underway, is a dynamic process with multiple iterations reflecting feedback received during the writing process.

The Road Map is scheduled to be launched in Brussels in autumn 2012.

For more information on our activities, please visit our website

www.futurage.group.shef.ac.uk

'Ageing research is an area of great social, political and economic importance for the European Union.'

'I want to re-focus research and innovation policies very clearly on developing a coherent strategic research agenda which will tackle the grand societal challenges, which include both the promotion of healthy living and healthy ageing.'

'It is not the ageing of the population per se that is the challenge but rather the challenge to keep older people healthy.'

'These challenges can only be confronted if innovative and multi-disciplinary approaches are taken.'

'For example, the 'FUTURAGE' initiative is an FP7 European project which aims to produce a definitive road map which will guide European research on ageing for the next ten years to come. The 'FUTURAGE' programme is undertaking the most extensive consultation ever conducted in this field and it is mobilising stakeholders, including medical practitioners, policy makers, industry and representatives of older people to work out the terms of this road map...'

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn

Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation

15 April 2010

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Between September 2009 and February 2010 ten countries in Europe, members of the European Research Area in Ageing, undertook countrywide consultations to identify research priorities at a national level. Over 315 people or organisations contributed to the consultation in total, estimated – due to variable national response rates – to reflect around a 50 per cent response rate. All contributors answered a set of questions to inform the future development of the Road Map:

- 1) What are the three main research priorities in the themes of
 - Biogerontology
 - Social & Economic Resources
 - Environments of Ageing
 - Healthy Ageing
- 2) What are the major research priorities outside of these themes?
- 3) Which priorities require European collaboration?
- 4) Which infrastructures are required to deliver these priorities?

The range of answers reflected the diversity of Europe with a large number of recommendations received. The responses from the national consultations were provided to attendees at the first scientific and user workshops to help stimulate discussion and shape ideas.

A synthesis of the cross-European issues, and the national summary reports can be accessed from the FUTURAGE website.

National consultations



Social and Economic Resources

Two workshops were held for Social and Economic Resources, hosted by the Italian National Institute of Health and Science on Aging in Ancona, Italy. The first workshop on 25/26 February 2010 focused attention on both the economic roles of older people within society, and the care agenda. The second workshop on 7/9 July 2010 added an extra emphasis on the lifecourse, to represent the dynamic nature of ageing and to refocus discussion away from "old people".

Over 60 attendees from 22 countries took part in the two workshops which was followed by a small and focused expert group who reviewed the workshop outputs. The final recommendations identified ten broad research priorities, and highlighted "burning issues" which were repeatedly stressed during the consultation process:

- Sustainability of welfare systems
- Migration in ageing Europe
- Inequalities and diversity in the ageing process.
- Age discrimination and ageism.
- Volunteering and social participation.

Cross cutting issues identified included: methods and study design, coordination; multidisciplinary; transferability; evaluation; funding; capacity building, and; data accessibility.



Environments of Ageing

Heidelberg University and Lund University collaborated on the Environments of Ageing theme to hold two workshops: on 4/5 March 2010 in Heidelberg, Germany to discuss individual and societal issues and home and out-of-home environments, and in Lund, Sweden on 16/18 June 2010 to focus on methodology and implementation issues and give a larger input to young scholars. The two workshops gathered inputs from approximately 50 senior scientists and early-stage researchers.

Outputs were generated in two main areas: research priorities and cross-cutting issues. Research priorities included: enabling and constraining characteristics of private home environments for the full range of older people; the role and potential of work environments of older individuals; the future of long-term care settings, and; the multi-faceted importance of transport and technology.

The cross-cutting issues included emphasis on:

- theory and methodology development
- diversity of ageing persons and environments
- the lifecourse and cohort perspective
- interdisciplinary research and scientific collaboration
- user perspectives and implementation

Healthy Ageing

There are three partners in the Healthy Ageing workstream: Leicester University, Newcastle University and the University of Sheffield. Two workshops were held in Newcastle on 15/16 March 2010 and on 11/13 July 2010. Almost 50 people from 16 countries attended both workshops. The first workshop focused discussion on: inequalities; interventions; prevention and promotion, and; psychosocial factors and healthy ageing. The second workshop covered gaps that had been identified as not being effectively covered in the first workshop.

The four discussion areas were largely maintained as broad categories requiring future research: monitoring and resolving inequalities in healthy ageing; prevention and promotion to maintain healthy ageing; interventions for improved health and wellbeing with ageing and co-morbidity, and; psychosocial factors and healthy ageing.

In common with the other themes, a set of cross-cutting issues were also identified:

- Central data archives
- European Institute for Ageing
- Multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity
- Harmonisation
- Flexibility of funding
- Implementation research
- Making EU healthy ageing research relevant to all Europeans

Biogerontology

The biogerontology work package has been the result of close collaboration with the FP7 WhyWeAge project, which is creating a European road map for molecular biogerontology. Led by the University of Namur in Belgium, WhyWeAge brought together 16 partners from across Europe and ran from Dec 1st 2008 to May 30th 2010. The project held a series of 11 workshops on topics considered as most relevant to human ageing research by the current and past coordinators of European projects.

**Why
We
Age**

A European road map for molecular Biogerontology

Workshops were held for each of the eleven research areas: Biomarkers of ageing and longevity; Telomere biology, DNA damages, mitochondria biology and senescence; Oxidative stress, protein damage and protein maintenance; Systems biology; Immunosenescence and Inflammation; Metabolism; Nuclear receptors; Vascular ageing; Muscle weakness, sarcopenia and physical exercises; Skin age-related modifications, elastic tissues and skin biotechnology and Clinical Biogerontological studies.

Each workshop brought around 20 leading scientists together to discuss relevant research priorities and required research infrastructure. At a summit meeting all partners came together to agree a negotiated document, a Road Map, of the main research priorities in biogerontology for the next 10 to 15 years.

The WhyWeAge Road Map has been adapted for the FUTURAGE project and fed into the writing process to ensure the biogerontological priorities are fully integrated into the multidisciplinary themes of the FUTURAGE Road Map. WhyWeAge partners are also represented on the Council of Scientists (see page 7).

User involvement

User involvement has been embedded in the design of the Road Map through a separate work package examining the end user agenda in European ageing research. This focus on the end users of ageing research – including policy makers, practitioners, older people and their representatives, product makers – reflects the increased awareness of the importance of the involvement of older people in research.

Developing the involvement of older people and their user organisations with the research community will ensure ageing research is more society driven, give added value to both communities, ensure that research funding is spent as effectively as possible and support the development of useful products for older people. Knowledge translation will also benefit from improving the relationship between research and policy and practice.

The user involvement work package followed the same format as the scientific themes by holding two workshops to generate research priorities and identify key issues influencing the user agenda within the Road Map. Workshop 1 was held in Brussels, Belgium on 25th/26th March 2010 and workshop 2 was held in Barcelona, Spain, 13th/14th July 2010. The workshops were designed to address three aims:

1. To identify the priorities of users of research into ageing, with reference to the priorities set by the scientific workshops
2. To identify what the barriers and solutions are to the participation of older people and other user groups in research
3. To create a lasting model of user involvement for European research on ageing as an integral part of the FUTURAGE Road Map

The combined contributions of 79 delegates from over 20 countries generated: a general recommendation for strengthened user involvement in ageing research; the guiding principles of user involvement; concrete suggestions to overcome the challenges of user involvement; a prioritisation of topics for ageing research and deliberations on future ageing research.



The Council of Scientists provides an important high level oversight for the FUTURAGE project. Members are drawn from project leaders of other major European research projects including FP5, FP6 and FP7 Coordination Actions, Specific Support Actions and other major research projects.

The Council concentrates experience and expertise across a wide range of disciplines in European ageing research from the past decade. The role of the Council is to review and quality control the outputs from the scientific and user involvement workshops, to ensure that the Road Map is definitive in terms of both scientific validity and societal need.

At three scheduled meetings, and via electronic communication, members of the Council of Scientists are asked to review, comment and feedback on the project outputs. So far two meetings have been completed, in April 2010 to examine the scientific workshop reports, and in March 2011 to review a draft Road Map. One final meeting is scheduled at which the Council of Scientists will be asked to sign off on the final Road Map.

The FUTURAGE project would like to acknowledge the generous and invaluable contributions of the members of the Council of Scientists.

- Jean-Pierre Baeyens, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- Brian Clark, University of Aarhus, Denmark
- Dorly Deeg, VU University Amsterdam and VU University Medical Center Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Pearl Dykstra, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands
- Rocio Fernandez-Ballesteros, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain
- Dieter Ferring, University of Luxembourg
- Claudio Franceschi, University of Bologna, Italy
- Stathis Gonos, National Hellenic Research Foundation, Greece
- Beatrix Grubeck-Loebenstein, Austrian Academy of Sciences
- Marja Jylha, University of Tampere, Finland (Chair)
- Tom Kirkwood, Newcastle University, United Kingdom
- Janet Lord, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom
- Ariela Lowenstein, University of Haifa, Israel
- Fiorella Marcellini, Italian National Institute on Ageing
- Jean-Pierre Michel, University Hospital of Geneva/President Elect of the European Union Geriatric Medicine Society (EUGMS), Switzerland
- Heinz Osiewacz, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Germany
- Linda Partridge, UCL, United Kingdom
- Chris Phillipson, Keele University, United Kingdom
- Jean-Marie Robine, University of Montpellier, France
- Emanuele Scafato, ISS, Italy
- Alfonso Sousa-Poza, University Of Hohenheim
- Dietmar Wuppermann, Federal Ministry of Research and Education, Germany
- Leon Zagrean, "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest.



The meeting at the European Parliament

The first FUTURAGE Stakeholder workshop was held on 11 May 2010 in Brussels, and included an afternoon meeting webcast live from the European Parliament. Over 150 policy makers and research funders gathered to discuss the results from the first round of scientific and user involvement workshops, and to contribute their own opinions on the ageing research priorities for Europe up to 2020.

The morning session introduced the FUTURAGE project and gave context and structure to this complex project. The initial results from the four scientific workstreams – biogerontology, social and economic resources, environments of ageing and healthy ageing – and the user involvement theme, were presented to the audience by the scientists involved in each of the workstreams. Attendees heard about the workshops which have been carried out to gather input to the Road Map and were given an insight into the concepts and principles that shaped them, the geographic and disciplinary profile of the experts attending and the resulting priorities for European research, methodology and infrastructure development.

Informed by the presentations and copies of the full workshop reports, the meeting broke into small working groups to enable further discussion of the issues raised. Members of the working groups were asked to provide comment and perspective on: the proposed core principles for the Road Map; the most important research priorities on ageing for the next 10–15 years, and; developments in the European research infrastructure necessary for those priorities to be addressed.

After lunch, the workshop moved to the European Parliament for a session hosted by the STOA panel of MEPs (Science and Technology Options Assessment) to examine the strategic importance of ageing research in Europe. The varied presentations began with an introduction to FUTURAGE and a review of other European ageing research initiatives.

The first keynote presentation on the New Science of Ageing examined how the problems of ageing are being addressed through collaboration between different scientific disciplines and how this approach can enable the elderly to live longer in better health. The second keynote presentation reviewed funding and support for ageing research in the European Union's Research Framework Programmes under current and future funding streams. This was followed by an exploration of a new integrated care system for aged people introduced by the Ministry of Health in Portugal.

The last set of presentations examined the strategic context to the five FUTURAGE themes (biogerontology, social and economic resources, environments of ageing and healthy ageing, and user involvement) with each of the workstream leaders outlining the key issues informing the development of science and policy in their field, and how research in their area has the potential to positively change older people's lives. The day ended with a short question and answer session.

The presentations and webcast can be accessed from the FUTURAGE website.

Activities so far

National consultations: October 2009 to February 2010, Austria/Bulgaria/Finland/France/Italy/Latvia/Romania/Spain/Sweden/United Kingdom

Social & Economic Resources workshop 1: 25–26 February 2010, Ancona, Italy

Environments of Ageing workshop 1: 4–5 March 2010, Heidelberg, Germany

Healthy Ageing workshop 1: 15–16 March 2010, Newcastle, United Kingdom

Towards a model of user involvement in research workshop 1: 25–26 March 2010, Brussels, Belgium

Council of Scientists meeting 1: 27 April 2010 – London, United Kingdom

Stakeholder workshop 1: 11 May 2010, Brussels, Belgium

Environments of Ageing workshop 2: 16–18 June 2010, Lund, Sweden

Social & Economic Resources workshop 2: 7–9 July 2010, Ancona, Italy

Healthy Ageing workshop 2: 11–13 July 2010, Newcastle, United Kingdom

User Involvement workshop 2: 13–14 July 2010, Barcelona, Spain

Council of Scientists meeting 2: 15 March 2011, London, United Kingdom

Next steps

Stakeholder workshop 2: 18 May 2011, London, United Kingdom

Council of Scientists meeting 3: June/July 2011

Launch conference: September/October 2011, Brussels (details to be confirmed)

For more information

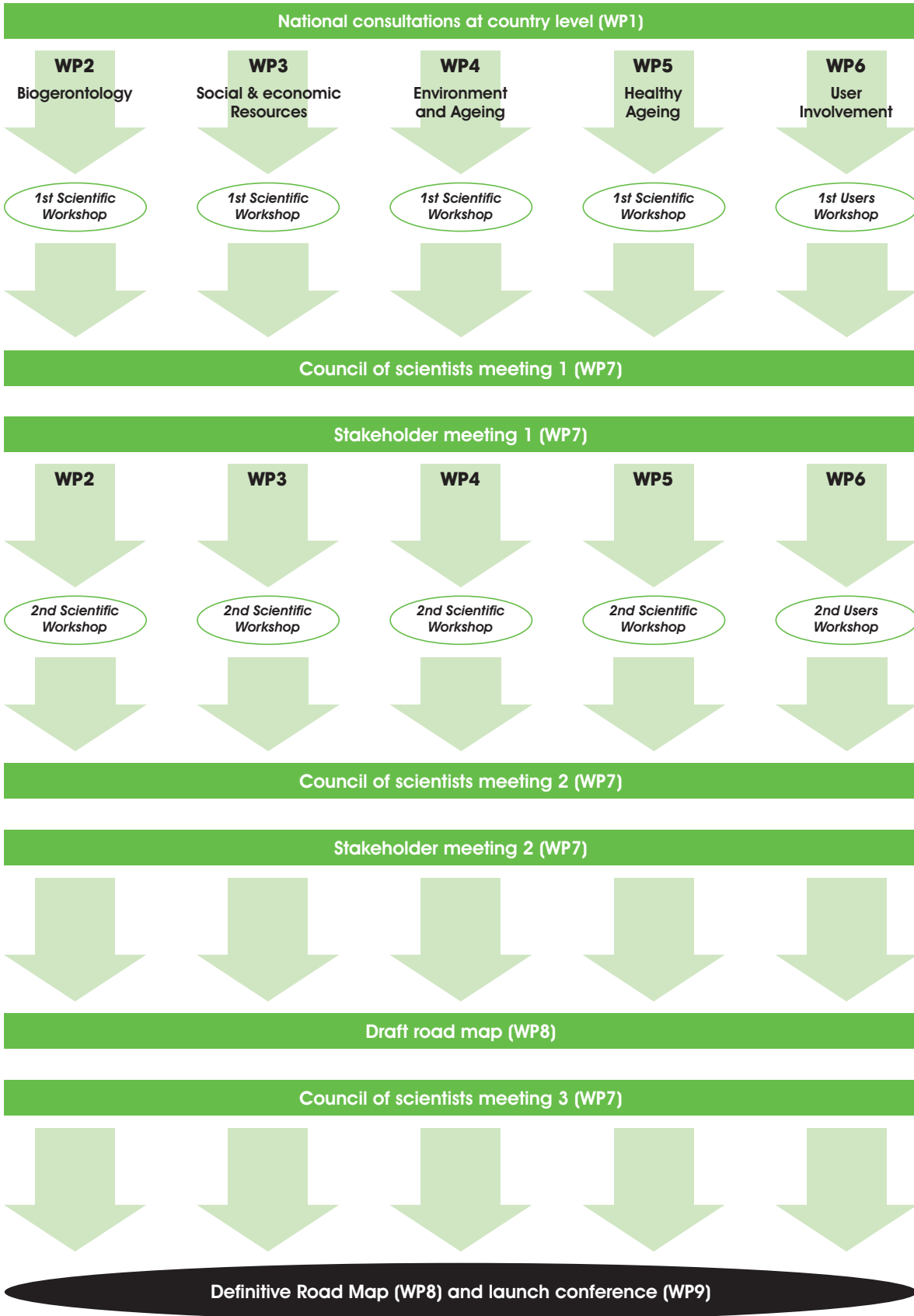
For news, updates, consultation reports and additional information please visit our website
www.futurage.group.shef.ac.uk



FUTURAGE Theme Leaders at a project meeting in March 2011

FUTURAGE: The step-by-step process to create the Road Map

The project contains 11 work packages (WP) which create an iterative process of consultation to develop the Road Map for ageing research in Europe



Dissemination (WP10), Project management and Network Steering Committee (WP11)

Adapted from the original design by Dr Carlos Chiatti at INRCA

Austria

- Austrian Academy of Sciences

Belgium

- University of Namur
- Carlos von Bonhorst – Consultant

Bulgaria

- Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

European Union

- AGE Platform Europe

Finland

- Academy of Finland
- University of Tampere

France

- Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Vieillesse (CNAV)

Germany

- Heidelberg University

Israel

- Israeli Ministry of Health

Italy

- Istituto Superiore di Sanita
- Italian National Institute of Health and Science on Aging
- Laboratorio di scienze della cittadinanza

Latvia

- Latvian Council of Science

Romania

- Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research Development and Innovation (UEFISCDI)
- Ministry of Health

Spain

- Instituto de Mayores y Servicios Sociales (IMSERSO)
- Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación

Sweden

- The Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (FAS)
- Lund University

UK

- Newcastle University
- University of Sheffield (Coordinator)
- Leicester University
- Age UK





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Coordinator:

The University of Sheffield
Sociological Studies
Elmfield Building
Northumberland Road
Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

E-mail: futurage@sheffield.ac.uk

Tel: +44 114 222 6458

Fax: +44 114 222 6492

Coordination Team:

Alan Walker, Coordinator
Juliet Craig, Senior Research Manager
Anouska Kettle, Research Manager
Melissa Nance, Project Secretary
Zoe Nwosu, Financial Administrator

www.futurage.group.shef.ac.uk