

# BioCapture Introductory Course

Zakopane, Poland 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017

## Introduction

BioCapture is innovative training network (ITN) comprised of 15 highly interdisciplinary institutions. The group's research interests range from polymer and materials chemistry to molecular biologists and diagnostics. In addition, the consortium consists of two small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). The consortium has recruited 11 early stage researchers (ESRs) with a diverse range of technical, cultural and national backgrounds.

BioCapture is the third ITN focused on developing molecularly imprinted materials for bioanalysis and represents the broadest scope and technical expertise. The objective of BioCapture's research is to produce novel capture materials with high specificity and usability for enhanced modification specific proteomics, glycomics and cancer biomarker quantification. With a highly ambitious research goal, teamwork is essential for the successful achievement of BioCapture's objectives. Therefore, this meeting presented the first opportunity for the ESRs to prepare them for the challenges ahead with fun, exciting and unique experiences.

## BioCapture Introductory Course

The first meeting of the BioCapture ITN occurred in Zakopane, Poland. This meeting represented the first time the ESRs were able to meet and brought together the team of scientists in charge of the various research teams. The introductory course occurred over four days in the beautiful southern Polish town of Zakopane and the surrounding areas. The course was evenly split into two day sections; firstly, a review of the project and discussions of each participants role in the consortium. Secondly, a team building course focusing on a range of tasks to strengthen teamwork, coordination, understanding and patience.



## Team Building

A Polish company, Gruppa Focus, ran the team-building course comprised of a unique variety of mental, physical and technical challenges on and along the banks of the Dunajec River. The BioCapture team traveled 1 hour by bus from Zakopane to begin the first day of team building. The first activity was the popular international activity known as geocaching. This involved the use of GPS coordinates to locate “caches” in the picturesque hills of southern Poland. The caches each consisted of tasks that took teamwork and coordination to complete. These tasks included crane building, walking blindfolded through a mind field with guidance from your team and fire starting. Upon successful completion of the tasks, the teams received coordinates to the Dunajec River. On the banks of the river, the team prepared and cooked lunch before setting off on a white water rafting adventure along the Polish-Slovak border with striking views of the forests and mountain ranges including Trzy Korony (three crowns). The rafting concluded downstream at the town of Krościenko nad Dunajcem.





At Krościenko nad Dunajcem the second major challenge was presented to the team: raft building. Provided with wood, inflatable tires and simple tools, the team successfully built a raft capable of successfully traversing the Dunajec under significant time pressure. Further down the river to Adventure Sky, an adventure park was the final team building exercise, the construction of a military tent for the evening's shelter.

The team had one final challenge in the evening, to overcome fear and try something completely different and exciting. This challenge was firewalking. Every member of the team was able to walk along the hot coals at least once.

Following the successful first day, the following day consisted of a variety of team building challenges focusing heavily on team building and promoting the strong coordination of all the members in the team. The day consisted of numerous challenges that tested the commitment of every participant. Every member of BioCapture was able to complete these challenges and were able to leave the adventure park knowing they each contributed to their team's success.

The final evening concluded with a traditional Polish dinner in Zakopane before the first meeting came to a close.





## Future

The BioCapture introductory course was an overwhelming success with the participants thoroughly enjoying the challenges of the team-building course. The participants returned home with many new friends and memories.

BioCapture now moves forward quickly into the research stage with the ESRs settled into their projects. Over the next three years, BioCapture aims to achieve their aim of developing the molecularly imprinted materials for enrichment of biomolecules. This goal relies heavily on the teamwork of all the partners and participants. Therefore, the teamwork learned and friendships made during this introductory course will be invaluable moving forward.

