



Project no. 018340

Project acronym: EDIT

Project title: Toward the European Distributed Institute of Taxonomy

Instrument: Network of Excellence

Thematic Priority: Sub-Priority 1.1.6.3: “Global Change and Ecosystems”

C8.3.2.3 Evaluation report on the pilot expert-in-training programme (Call 1&2)

Due date of component: Month 46

Actual submission date: Month 46

Start date of project: 01/03/2006

Duration: 5 years

Organisation name of lead contractor for this component: 13-RBINS

Revision [Final]

| Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework Programme (2002-2006) | | |
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| Dissemination Level | | |
| PU | Public | x |
| PP | Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services) | |
| RE | Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services) | |
| CO | Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services) | |

Programme description

EDIT provides a number of short-term trainings-on-the-job for graduate students and early career researchers working in the field of taxonomy. EDIT covers the costs of travel, accommodation, and provides a per diem to contribute towards living costs and training-related costs.

Training takes place individually or in small groups. The trainee joins a project team and is coached by an expert who will instruct her/him on 'how to do the job'. The training also includes lectures given by the mentor to the trainee. Depending on the training subject, the training period lasts from one to 4 weeks.

The main objectives of the expert-in-training programme are:

- to provide trainees with a firsthand experience of working in an EDIT institution;
- to provide the opportunity to put into practice knowledge acquired during their studies, and in particular in the field of taxonomy;
- to enable trainees to develop and to strengthen their taxonomic research skills through an on-the-job training.

In **call 1** (2008-2009), the traineeships were offered (1) to **trainees affiliated** by their study or research **to an EDIT partner institution** and (2) for **training** in an **EDIT partner institution** different from the applicant's EDIT institution.

As there was a considerable interest from training providers and trainees with no affiliation to EDIT institutions to join the programme, **call 2** included **also training offers from non-EDIT partners** and granting was not only restricted to applicants of EDIT institution but also offered to **trainees of European institutions/universities**.

For further details on the application process, the evaluation of the applications and the EDIT Selection Committee, we refer to component reporting C8.3.2.2.

Trainees who have completed the training receive a certificate specifying the dates of their training period, the specific content of the training, the training provider and the institution where they received the training.

In order to improve the EDIT expert-in-trainings, the trainees were asked to complete an evaluation form after the end of the traineeship.

This expert-in-training programme is a training component of the Distributed European School of Taxonomy (DEST).

Results of call 1 & call 2 (Fig. 1-7)

The 2008-2009 programme (call 1) was launched in June 2008 and offered 21 trainings in 9 EDIT institutions for trainees from EDIT institutions (Fig. 2). Ten applications were submitted, 9 were granted. The training offer from the NHN Leiden 'Advanced topics in phylogeny reconstruction' was the most solicited by the applicants followed by the training offered by RMCA on 'Cybertaxonomy and biodiversity information'.

The 2009-2010 programme (call 2) was launched in May 2009 and offered 31 trainings in 13 EDIT institutions and in 8 other partner institutions for trainees from European

universities/institutes (Fig. 3). Sixty one applications were submitted. Within the anticipated budget, 17 applicants were granted, equivalent to 36 weeks of training. Out of the 31 training offers, 18 different training subjects were solicited by the trainees. Most applied for (≥ 5) were 'Advanced Biosystematics, Phylogenetics and Biogeography' (NHN Leiden), 'On the job training in family level identification of a hyperdiverse insect group: The Beetles (Coleoptera)' (NHM London), Systematics of freshwater subterranean Malacostraca: Morphology, molecular systematics, and web-taxonomy (Univ. Ljubljana), Tropical Plant Identification Course (RBGK).

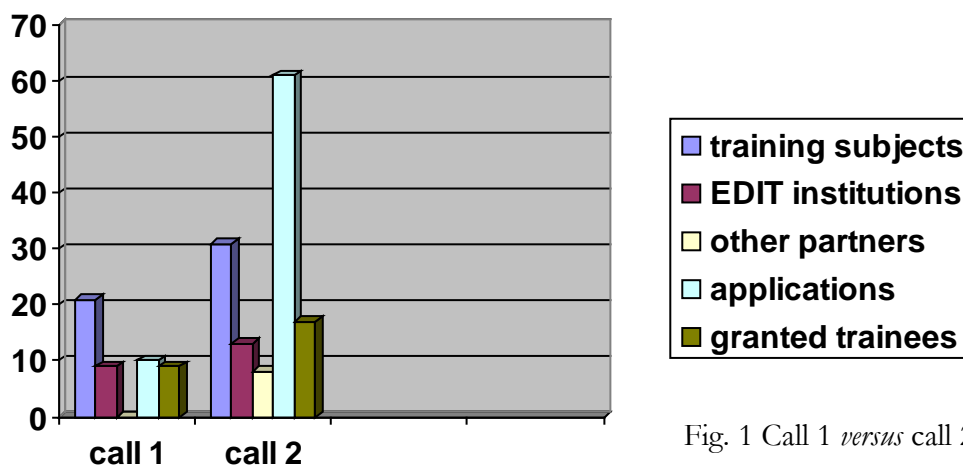


Fig. 1 Call 1 *versus* call 2

The complete list of traineeships offered during the call 1 & call 2 and a detailed description of the training are available at: <http://www.taxonomytraining.eu>

The names of successful applicants are posted on the website: <http://e-taxonomy.eu/node/415> (call 1), <http://www.e-taxonomy.eu/node/653> (call 2). Details on the applicants' institution country and nationality are illustrated in Fig. 4-7.

To help us to define and to evaluate training needs in taxonomy, applicants have the possibility on the website to express their needs for specific trainings that are not yet offered by EDIT. As a consequence a specific training on Botanical Nomenclature was established and included in the call 2 training offer.

Future perspectives: sustain the expert-in-training programme beyond EDIT

In addition to the large number of applications received in call 2, the evaluation feedback of the trainees shows that there is an overwhelming interest in these intensive trainings. A selection of trainees' comments is provided on p.7 of this report. Another positive outcome is that, to our knowledge, at least 2 trainees obtained a job thanks to the completion of an EDIT expert-in-training! Furthermore, the programme generates future research cooperation.

Hence, it is the intention to continue these specific trainings beyond EDIT and even to extend the program by involving overseas partners (*cfr* AtC with ABRS (Australian Biological Resources Study) and SANBI (South African National Biodiversity Institute).

Participation conditions will be different beyond EDIT. A subscription fee will be asked, but funding sources will be searched to award grants.

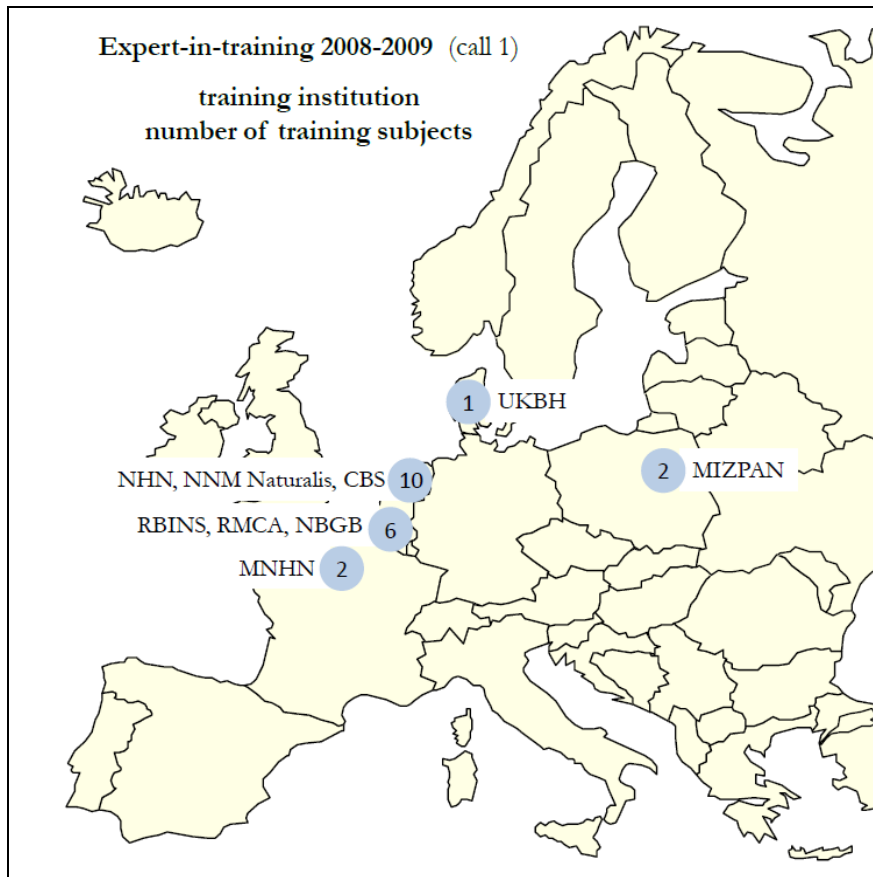


Fig. 2

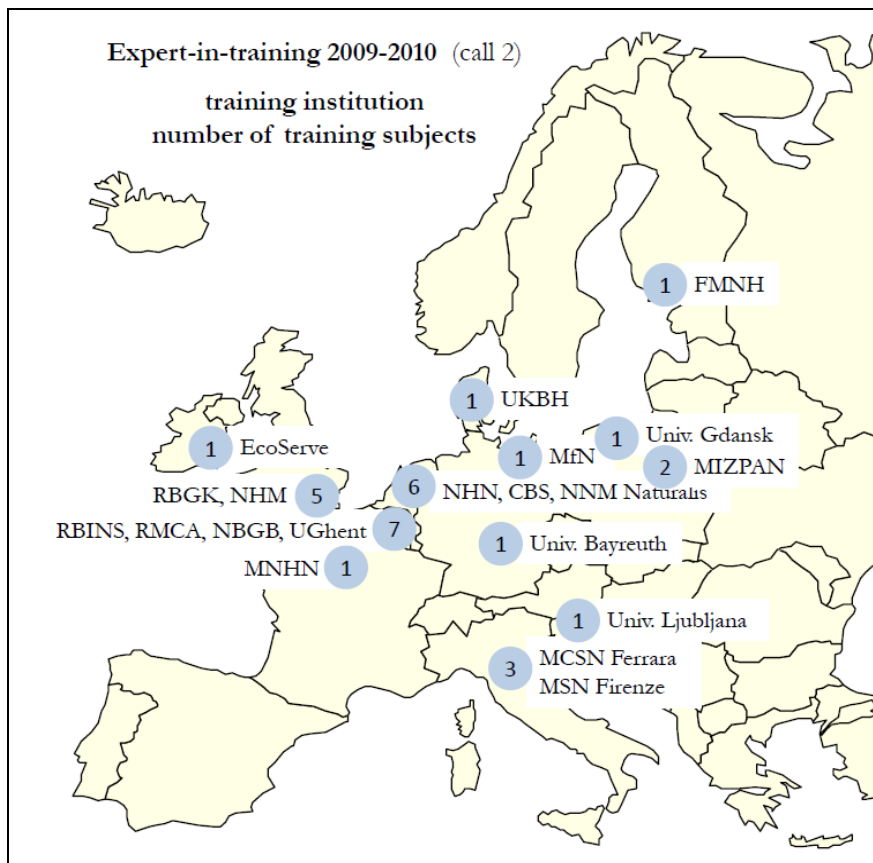


Fig. 3

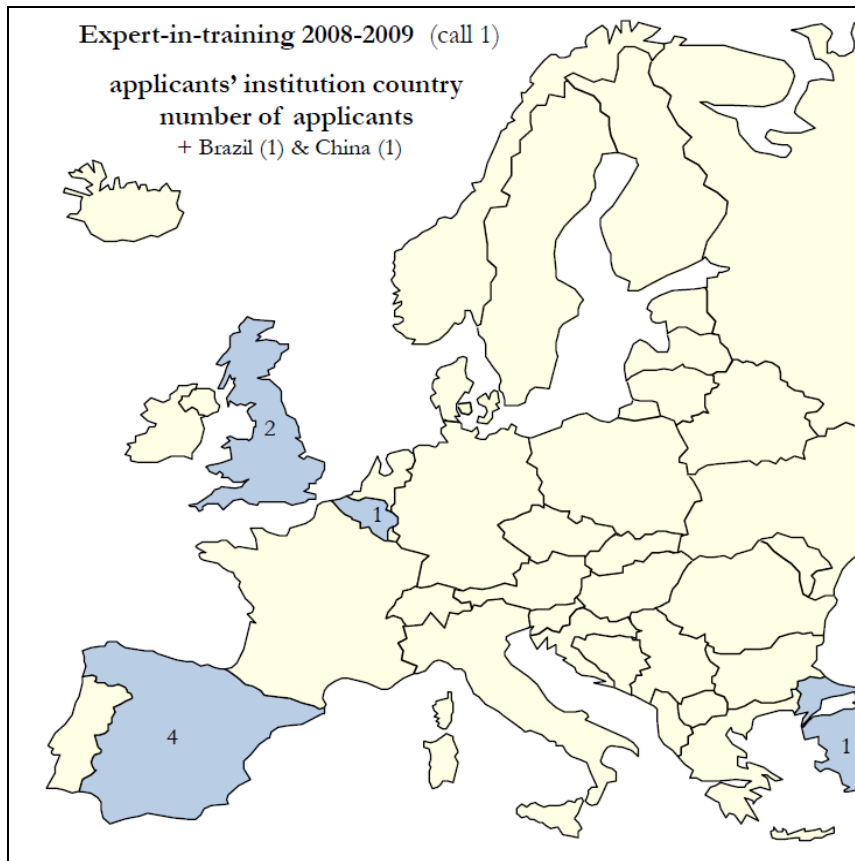


Fig. 4

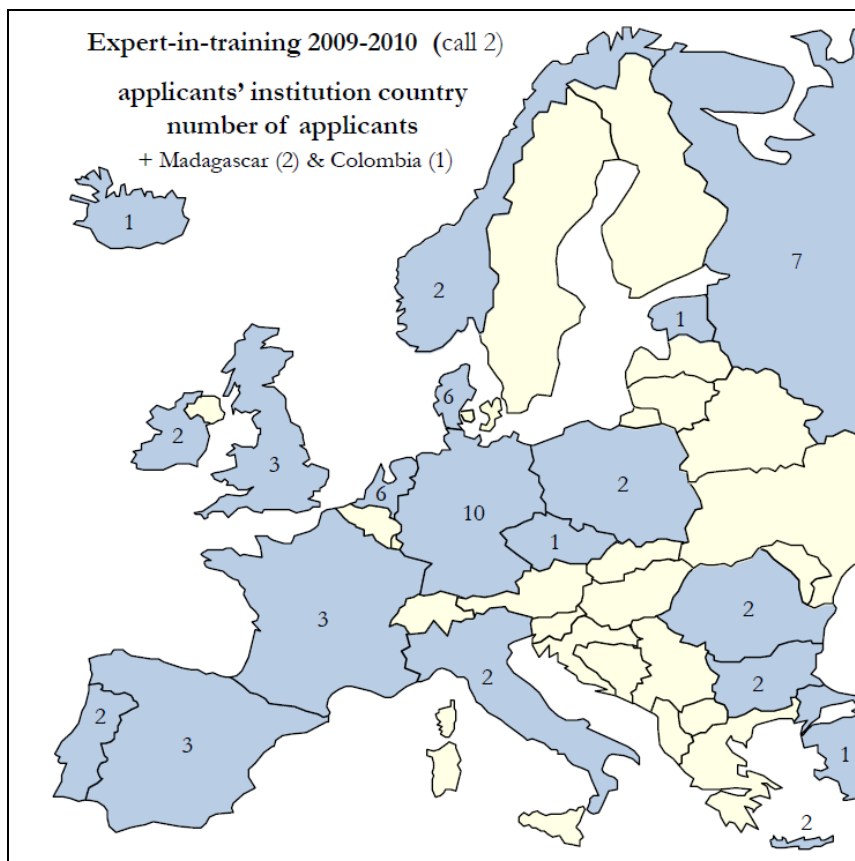


Fig. 5

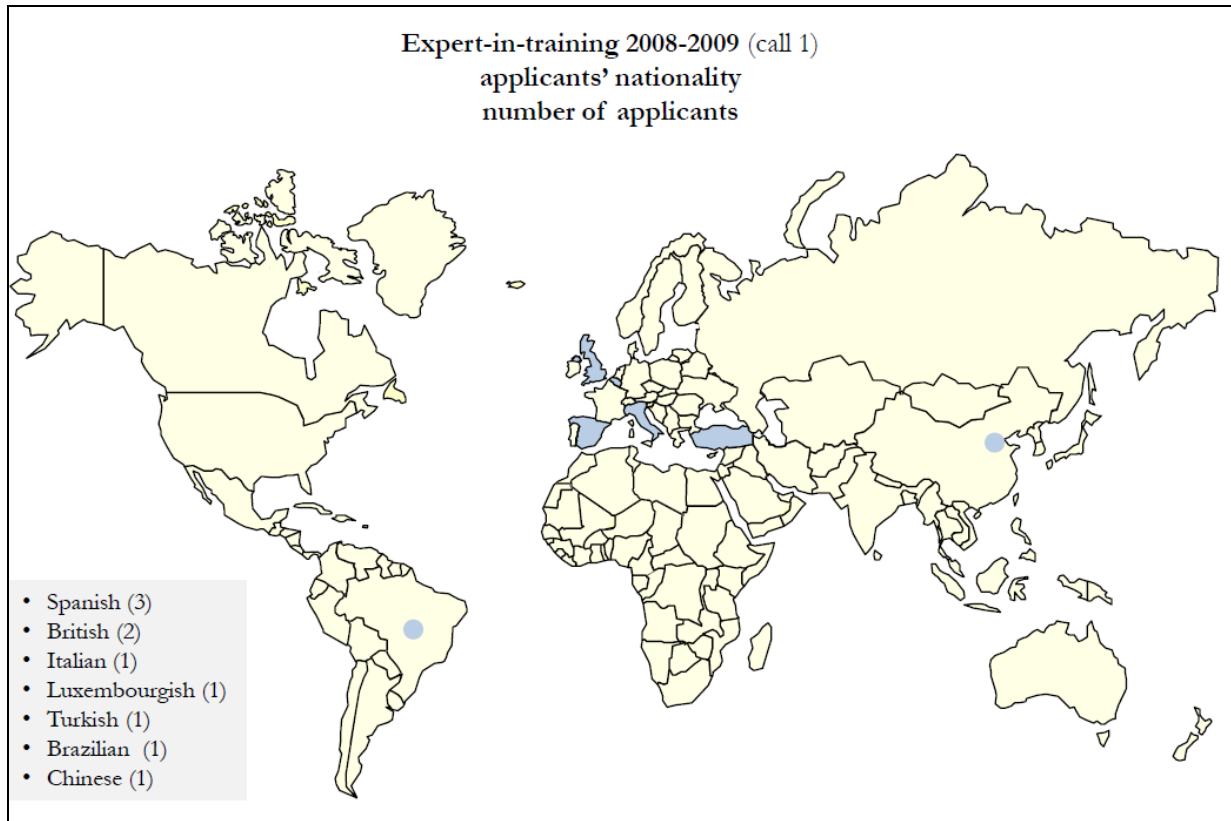


Fig. 6

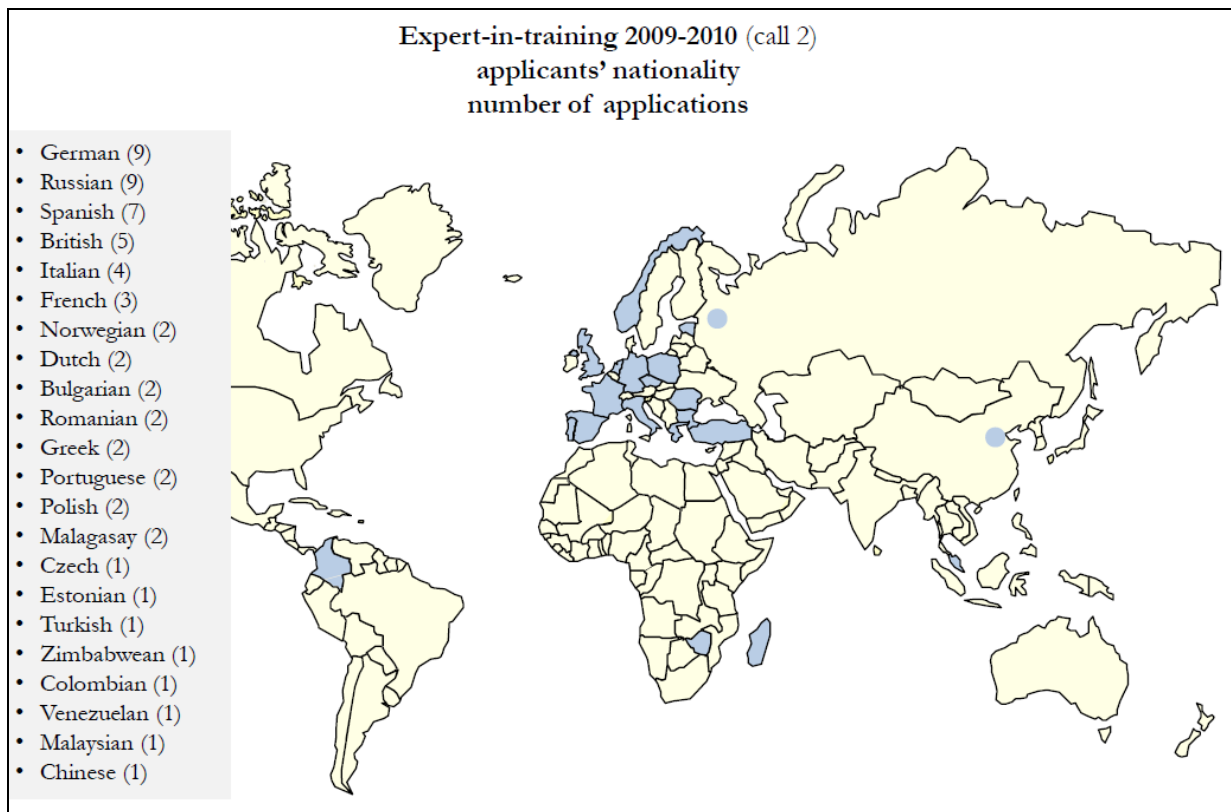


Fig. 7

A selection out of the evaluation feedback of the trainees

‘This kind of training is what young scientists would need in order to improve their skills, to enrich their networks and progress in their studies. It is a good idea to encourage them with grants because for 2 weeks they will be away from their projects, and not always they realize that they will go back there with an enriched knowledge... My overall impression about the EDIT is definitely positive. The only remark that I have is that it was a little short, I would have exploited much more for one more week.’

‘If every trainee receives the same treatment as I had during my traineeship, everything would be just perfect.’

‘Actually I applied for a job immediately after the training and the knowledge acquired was crucial during my interviews and I got the job!! Now I have a tenure-track position in cryptogamic botany at University of Brasilia, Brazil.’

‘For my career in general I have complemented my taxonomic and systematic expertise with know-how in IT. Only recently I was successful with my application for a position in a EU-project in the field of biodiversity informatics. My knowledge acquired during the EDIT-training will definitely help me to work successfully in this project.’

‘My research project will benefit because I now have the knowledge and some practice to conduct especially those analyses needed for that project, while my career will be forwarded by the training through the acquirement of that knowledge/these abilities and because of the very positive effect the training will have on my project.’

‘The mentor was a very interesting and skilled person, and the structures were good, we had both field and herbarium work. The second week was particularly fruitful.’

‘The extensive content included in the two weeks training was well presented and included a wide range of topics from collections management to georeferencing, databasing and the publication of biodiversity data on online portals. The training providers were very knowledgeable; my questions were readily and always well answered. The atmosphere during the training was very pleasant and I enjoyed the presentations and exercises very much. Furthermore, my special interests were incorporated in the agenda and extra sessions prepared.’

‘The main benefit of this training for me is that the knowledge received allows me to involve molecular as well as morphological data to my taxonomical research. Before the training I had a little experience of analysing of molecular data.’

‘The training content met the course description very well and covered many of the topics and practical techniques that I was hoping to gain understanding and/or experience of. In particular I was pleased that so much of the course was practical and lab based rather than theoretical.’

‘I was a member of a small class (six other students) and there were three experienced taxonomists available to answer questions or assist with the work. I found this very helpful and enjoyed being able to ask questions in this environment and make the most of this kind of ‘mentoring’ which, to me, seems so essential for a thorough understanding of taxonomic work.’

‘I am more interested to pursue a career in Taxonomy, since then I have more ideas on how to implement my research ideas, with in depth understanding of the topics and after acquiring skills on using the analytical tools.’