

SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Supporting the cooperation and coordination of research activities carried out at national or regional level (ERA-NET Scheme)



COORDINATION ACTION

The Nordic model

The 36 month Periodic activity report

Deliverables: D9

Report prepared by

Oddur Már Gunnarsson, Ola Eide & Mads Peter Schreiber, P.J.M. Noteborn, Marchel Mengelers, Alisdair Wotherspoon, Philippe Verger, Hartmut Waldner & Sabine Bonneck,

Contributors :

Arne Buchert, Tibbe Breimer, Jos Cornelese, Ferdinando Chiodo, Hans Gudmundsson, Harmen Hofstra, Johs Kjosbakken, Maria Landgren, Agustino Marci, Guner Ozay, Raimo Pakkanen, Mónica de Prado Paniagua, Catarina Resende, Marta Sabec, Helena Silva, Leda Skoufari, Lucjan Szponar, Bente Stærk, Xavier Vanhuffel, Karen Vereecken, Hartmut Waldner, Artur Wieland & Cristel Zimmerman.

Project acronym: SAFEFOODERA

Project full title: Food Safety - Forming a European platform for protecting consumers against health risks

Contract no.: 515726

Date of preparation of the report: 2007-08-15

Start date of contract: 2004-08-01





Table of Content:

0.	Executive summary	3.
1.	Management Framework (WP 1)	11.
2.	Information exchange (WP 2)	13.
3.	Strategic activities (WP 3)	14.
	a. Progress report - Topic: Emerging risks	18.
4.	Joint activities (WP 4)	22.
5.	Transnational activities (WP 5)	25.
6.	External communication (WP 6)	27.
	b. Progress report - Topic: Network Expansion	30.

Appendix 1	Project Management Group (PMG) meetings
Appendix 2	3 rd ESC meeting LIMASSOL, Cyprus 8-10 February 2006
Appendix 3	4 th ESC meeting Scheveningen, Holland 28-29 September 2006
Appendix 4	FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A FOOD SAFETY RESEARCH IDEAS FORUM REPORT OF A WORKSHOP HELD ON 30 – 31 OCTOBER
Appendix 5	Draft joint action plan WP4
Appendix 6	Establishment of strategic priorities for 2008 SAFOODERA transnational call
Appendix 7	Results of the selection process of topic priorities for 2008
Appendix 8	Analysis of questionnaires on the procedure used for the SAFEFOODERA pilot call
Appendix 9	Draft report from the stakeholder meetings
Appendix 10	Plan for dissemination
Deliverable 17	Report on harmonised evaluation procedures for food safety projects
Deliverable 19	Final report on information exchange



SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Supporting the cooperation and coordination of research activities carried out at national
or regional level (ERA-NET Scheme)



COORDINATION ACTION

The Nordic model
The 36 month Periodic activity report
**Executive summary including a balanced scorecard for
milestones and deliverables**

Report prepared by

Oddur Már Gunnarsson, Ola Eide & Mads Peter Schreiber, P.J.M. Noteborn, Marchel Mengelers, Alisdair Wotherspoon, Philippe Verger, Hartmut Waldner & Sabine Bonneck,

Contributors :

Arne Buchert, Tibbe Breimer, Jos Cornelese, Ferdinando Chiodo, Hans Gudmundsson, Harmen Hofstra, Johs Kjosbakken, Maria Landgren, Agustino Marci, Guner Ozay, Raimo Pakkanen, Mónica de Prado Paniagua, Catarina Resende, Marta Sabec, Helena Silva, Leda Skoufari, Lucjan Szponar, Bente Stærk, Xavier Vanhuffel, Karen Vereecken, Hartmut Waldner, Artur Wieland & Cristel Zimmerman, Gun Wirtanen.

Project acronym: SAFEFOODERA

Project full title: Food Safety - Forming a European platform for protecting consumers against health risks

Contract no.: 515726

Date of preparation of the report: 2006-02-28

Start date of contract: 2004-08-01





The primary objective of SAFEFOODERA is to establish a European platform for protecting consumers against health risks from the consumption of food through a co-ordination action ERA-NET

From each country, one representative from a public body responsible for financing or managing research activities on food safety issues carried out at national or regional level are appointed to the European Steering Committee (ESC), which will have overall responsibility for directing and managing the work. The original plan was that one representative with high standards of scientific excellence was to be appointed to the European Expert Advisory Group (EEAG), providing scientific and technical support when requested by the ESC.

The SAFEFOODERA project is a merger of two SSA's the PROFORSAFE and the PERIAPT.

SAFEFOODERA meets the objective of integrating and strengthening the European Research Area (ERA) by networking of national and regional research programmes on food safety. Especially, SAFEFOODERA aims to establish a sustainable platform between the national and regional research programming and funding bodies and for dissemination and exchange of information with associated members, regulators, key stakeholders including industry, consumers and scientists and organisations involved in the identification, mitigation and management of risks in the food and feed chain. With regards to the objective of integrating and strengthening European safety research it is of utmost importance to ensure that SAFEFOODERA's managerial outputs are widely disseminated in order to reach the end users: European scientists as suppliers of knowledge and expertise. A major innovation will therefore be to bring researchers and programming / funding bodies together in order to harmonise the activities in the area of food safety.

Management Framework (WP)

The project is in all main aspects proceeding according to plan. In the reporting period the European Steering Committee (ESC) has had two meetings the 3rd Main Focus was on preparations of a pilot cal. and 4th ESC meeting, since the EEAG group is no longer planet as a standing group but more on an ad hoc basis Milestone 16 (Joint ESC and EEAG meeting), was transferred into an extraordinary ESC meeting the 4th focusing on planes on expansion of the network and to finalise the planning of the pilot call. All milestones have been reached apart from 3 ie: M12, M20, M24. Work is in progress on all 3. Deliverables D8, D11 and D18 have been rescheduled. Deliverables D 10 and D20 have been initiated and are ongoing. Other deliverables are on schedule. The 5th ESC Meeting is scheduled to 27. - 29. September 07. The Project Management Group (PMG) has had eighth meetings in the reporting period.

Information exchange (WP 2)

Has finished under the reporting periode.

Strategic activities (WP 3)

Emerging Risks as stipulated in the workplan as annexed to the contract. Here it comprises a number of tasks in respect to Workpackage 2 and 3, which deal with the topic of emerging risks.





At the 4th ESC meeting in September 2006 a pilot call on the assessment of information for the identification of emerging risks was successfully launched. In 2007 the proposals were evaluated and a joint research project on emerging mycotoxins has started in May 2007.

At the 5th ESC meeting in June 2007 a new topic working group has been installed to explore the possibility of launching a second transnational research call on emerging risks.

In December 2006 a working group was installed to prepare a blue print for a sustainable platform for coordinating transnational research on emerging feed and food safety risks.

Joint activities (WP 4)

A workshop was held in the Gustav Stresemann Institute in Bonn on 30 and 31 October 2006. Taking forward ideas which emerged from earlier work (see M20 below), the aim of the workshop was to investigate the feasibility of establishing a food safety research ideas forum for public funders to facilitate opportunities for joint activities. As well as involving the partners within the ERA NET, there were also representatives from outside the ERA NET partners, including international organisations such as FAO/WHO, other national/regional food safety authorities, and the Commission.

Work commenced at the ESC meeting in Limassol in February 2006 following which a report was prepared based on inputs from the ERA NET partners. The report summarised a large number of ideas, brigaded under 7 headings, where network members considered there was scope for joint activities which would assist them in future closer working. This report is being used to inform future ideas for joint activities, from which the workshop under M14 was a key development. Subsequently, the report was augmented by input from new members of the network at a WP4 workshop within an event in Zagreb as part of the network expansion activities under WP6.

Networks have already been established in relation to strategic topics identified as part of the pilot call. In particular, a major network on foodborne zoonoses has been established relating to work on *Campylobacter* and *E coli* (CampEcNet) – the aim of this network is to aid integration of veterinary, food and medical laboratory based surveillance. It involves 24 institutions from 10 countries/regions. Three further, smaller, networks have been established on two areas of pathogen free production and emerging risks. Together, all of these networks have resulted from the coordinated funding action of 12 of the partners within Safefoodera with an initial total call budget of approximately €2.3m. All of these networks will be evaluated in the context of the management of the pilot call. The first part of this evaluation will take place at the mid term presentations by each project at the ESC meeting in Bilbao in month 37.

Transnational activities (WP 5)

Work Package 5 was initiated in month 24. A working group within the ESC was constituted during the ESC meeting in September 2006 and started to analysis the procedures used in the pilot call. The working group will propose the frame of the next call to be adopted by the ESC in September 2007, for launch in 2008. The overall goal of the WP5 appears more ambitious than initially planned, because in addition to the pilot call already successfully launched, we will proceed to the preparation of a 2008's call for transnational research activities on food safety. The funded projects will therefore run for several years after the end of SAFEFOODERA project. Compared with other running ERA-Net, the strength of





SAFEFOODERA will be to have the opportunity to consider all the lessons learnt from the pilot before integrating them in a “real size” research call.

The main task of the WP 5, in close collaboration with WP4 (Join activities) was to prepare the procedure of selection for 2008’s topic priorities. At first a questionnaire was sent to the SAFEFOODERA partners and analysed by the working group on transnational activities (Appendix 7) and secondly a forum for selection of common priorities was organised in Paris and resulted in a list of topics (Appendix 7) proposed for further elaboration of scientific questions and selection of appropriate financial models.

External communication (WP 6)

The present channel used External communication is the SAFEFOODERA web site, which is divided into an open part (FRONTPAGE) and an internal part (EXTRANET). A series of 5 stakeholder meetings have been completed with scientists, industry, food service sector, consumers and a final meeting with representatives from all stakeholder groups, including EFSA and the Commission. The evolution of the relationship with EFSA has been extremely interesting and positive. Joint meetings have been held in Kransjka Gora, Istanbul, Parma and Bergen. SAFEFOODERA will continue to update and cooperate with EFSA in the future development of SAFEFOODERA.

From January 2006 until today several countries were contacted to join SAFEFOODERA. The ESC decided during the meeting in The Hague in September 2006 to invite five countries: Brazil, Croatia, Czech Republic, Ireland, Latvia and Lithuania. These countries fulfilled all formal requests; An amendment to the Contract with the Commission’s is still outstanding.

Also the second phase of network expansion was characterised by a multitude of efforts to contact new members for the SAFEFOODERA network. But we could identify only a few countries who were interested in cooperation. Finally it was decided not to invite any new countries to the ESC meeting in Bilbao in September 2007, in particular due to two reasons: SAFEFOODERA will end regularly in August 2008. But its future has to be clarified for being able to “offer” benefits and perspectives to new members. Beside this the procedure of launching the second call has already started. This topic will be discussed in Bilbao and should not be complicated by including new countries.



Balanced scorecard milestones and deliverables

Completed

Overdue

Not initiated

M1 - 1st ESC meeting, month 1

Completed

M2 - Comparison of national/regional food safety research, month 9

Completed.

M3 - Identification of best practice in programming concepts on research on emerging risks, month 12

Completed.

M4 - Comparison of evaluation criteria for project funding, month 12

Completed.

M5 - 2nd ESC meeting, month 12

Completed

M6 - Identification of best practice in project evaluation and management, month 15

Completed

M7 - Selection of joint strategic research topics on guidance of new possibilities and gaps, month 18

Completed

M8 - Identification of barriers hindering co-operation, month 18

Completed,

M9 - 1st Joint ESC and EEAG meeting, month 18

Completed, Since the ESC group is no longer planet as a standing group but more on an ad hoc basis the milestone was postponed until spring 2006 and then held as a funder group meeting in relation of planning the first Pilot call.

M10 - Comparison of practices in programme management, month 18

Completed

M11 - A *posteriori* clustering of research projects, month 18

Completed.

M12 - Selection of system structure for institutional linking to enable and facilitate data exchanges on emerging risks, month 18

Partly completed with finalisation at month 36.

M13 - 3rd ESC meeting, month 18

Completed

M14 - Workshop on joint training activities in food safety, month 20

Completed. Report From information exchange through a *posteriori* clustering to the selection of strategic research topics

M15- Selection of joint strategic research topics, month 24

Completed

M16 - 2nd Joint ESC and EEAG meeting, month 24

Completed since the ESC group is no longer planet as a standing group but more on an ad hoc basis this milestone was transferred into an extraordinary ESC meeting to discuss plans on expansion of the network and to finalise the planning of the pilot call



- M17 - 1st Seminar with authorities, month 24 –**
Completed
- M18 - 1st Seminar with non-participating member States, month 24**
Completed
- M19 - 1st Seminar with consumer groups and industry, month 24**
Completed
- M20 - Elaboration of the joint action plan in food safety, month 24**
Ongoing,
- M21 - Common call for proposals in joint strategic topics, month 26**
Completed: Call for proposals were received, selection is in its final phase.
Agreements should be signed in Month 31 (February 2007).
A pilot call was launch in 2006 and another call will be launch in 2008 based on the lessons learnt in the pilot. The activity is therefore more important than what was planned even if new milestones were not added.
- M22 - 1st Seminar with the scientific community, month 28**
Completed
- M23- Identification of new possibilities and gaps in trans-national research, month 30**
Completed
- M24 - Harmonised evaluation procedures for food safety projects, month 30**
In progress
- M25 - Elaboration of joint networks of excellence in food safety, month 36**
In progress: The working group finalised the analysis of the questionnaires sent to ESC Members regarding the steps 1 to 9 of the procedure. The analysis of steps 10 of the procedure will be analysed by the working group during the next 6 month. In parallel, questionnaires were sent to the applicants in the pilot call – successful or not) and will be analysed during a working group meeting in the next ESC (Bilbao, September 2007).
- M26 - 4th ESC meeting, month 36**
Initiated Bilbao, September 2007
- M27 - Joint research programmes in food safety, month 42**
Not initiated
- M28 - Common plan for dissemination of the scientific results, month 42**
Not initiated
- M29 - 2nd Seminar with authorities, month 42**
Not initiated
- M30 - 2nd Seminar with non-participating member States, month 42**
Not initiated
- M31 - 2nd Seminar with consumer groups and industry, month 42**
Not initiated
- M32 - 2nd Seminar with the scientific community, month 46**
Not initiated
- M33 - 5th ESC meeting and the final project meeting, month 48**
Not initiated





M_{new} - Establishment of a working group to organise a PERIAPT 2 event taking forward the priority for platform building and joint activities identified in the field of emerging risks, month 40

Deliverables

- D1- First action plan describing the road to reach the trans-national strategic activities, month 12**
Completed.
- D2- First plan for joint strategic activities, month 15**
Completed
- D3 - Report on the a *posteriori* clustering of research projects, month 18**
Completed. Report From information exchange through a *posteriori* clustering to the selection of strategic research topics
- D4- Report on selected strategic research topics and key resources, including the removal of barriers, month 18**
Completed
- D5 - Flyers on joint training activity events in food safety, month 18**
Completed
- D6 - 1st annual report to the Commission, month 18**
Completed
- D7 - Flyers about the 1st Seminar with 1) consumer groups and industry, 2) authorities & 3) representatives from non-participating member States & 1st project newsletter, Month 22 –**
Completed
- D8- Delivery of platform for interoperable data exchange on signals/research related to emerging risks, month 22**
Partly completed with finalisation at month 48
- D9 - 2nd annual report to the Commission, month 36**
Not initiated
- D10 - Report on the joint action plan in food safety, month 24**
Initiated and ongoing
- D11- Report on selected strategic research topics, including the removal of barriers, month 24**
To be launched in month 40
- D12 - Final report - Emerging risks, month 24**
Completion anticipated at month 48 (see mandate WG)
- D13 - Proceedings for the 1st Seminar with consumer groups and industry, authorities & representatives from non-participating member States & 2nd project newsletter, month 25 -**
Completed
- D14 -Flyers about the 1st Seminar with the scientific community & 3rd project newsletter, month 26 –**
Completed
- D15 - Report on common call for proposals in joint strategic topics, month 26**
Completed



- D16 - Proceedings for 1st Seminar with the scientific community, month 29**
Completed
- D17 - Report on harmonised evaluation procedures for food safety projects, month 30**
Not initiated
- D18 - Final report on Strategic activities, month 30**
In progress will be finished in month 48
- D19 - Final report on Information exchange, month 36**
Completed
- D20 - Report on joint networks of excellence in food safety, month 36**
Initiated and ongoing
- D21 - 3rd annual report to the Commission, month 48**
Not initiated
- D22 - Flyers about the 2nd Seminar with 1) consumer groups and industry, 2) authorities & 3) representatives from non-participating member States & 4th project newsletter, Month 40**
Not initiated
- D23 - Report on joint research programmes in food safety, month 42**
Not initiated
- D24 - Final report - Joint activities, month 42**
Not initiated
- D25 - Proceedings for the 2nd Seminar with consumer groups and industry, authorities & representatives from non-participating member States, month 43**
Not initiated
- D26 - Flyers about the 2nd Seminar with the scientific community & 5th project newsletter, Month 44**
Not initiated
- D27 - Final report - Transnational activities, month 46**
Not initiated
- D28 - Proceedings for 2nd Seminar with the scientific community, month 47 –**
Not initiated
- D29 - 6th project newsletter & Final report of SAFEFOODERA, month 48**
Not initiated
- D_{new} - Output report from a PERIAPT-2 event relating to the priority for platform building and joint activities related to the identification of emerging risks, month 46**
Not initiated



1. Management Framework (WP 1)

Workpackage task facilitator Oddur Már Gunnarsson, NICE

Objectives

The objective of the workpackage “Management Framework” is the overall follow up on co-ordination and management, including the organisational and financial responsibility for the implementation of the ERA-NET.

Description of work

This WP includes the set up and maintenance of the management framework responsible for the overall management of the activities, the organisation of the meetings of ESC and EEAG and also the communication with the Commission and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). An important task of this WP is to establish tight and interactive links between the ministries/ authorities involved, and a transparent support from the European Expert Advisory Group (EEAG).

Key responsibilities include:

- develop and obtain agreement on terms of reference and operational procedures for the ESC
 - **CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT 17.08.04**
 - **Terms of Reference and Protocols for European Expert Advisory Group (EEAG) January 2005**
 - **Mandates for the different working groups**
 - **Amendments to the Contract with the Commission**
- provide a compatible work plan for the WPs, which will be for decision by the ESC
- ensure and monitor progress and quality of work within the WPs
- reporting of results and monitoring of milestones and deliverables
- interacting with the WPTFs to provide transfer of knowledge
 - **PMG meeting every 3 months. with participation of all WPTFs Appendix 1**
 - **1 PMG meeting Reykjavik, Iceland, 4 – 5 September 2004**
 - **2 PMG meeting Helsinki, Finland, 9 - 10 December 2004**
 - **3 PMG meeting Bonn, Germany, 14 - 15 March 2005**
 - **4 PMG meeting Istanbul, Turkey 17 - 18 June 2005**
 - **5 PMG meeting Bergen, Norway 31 August 2005**
 - **6 PMG meeting Copenhagen 14 October 2005**
 - **7 PMG meeting London 11 – 12 January 2006**
 - **8 PMG meeting Limassol 8 February 2006**
 - **9 PMG meeting Lisbon 4 – 5 April 2006**
 - **10 PMG meeting London 23 August 2006**
 - **11 PMG meeting The Hague (Scheveningen) 26 September 2006**
 - **12 PMG meeting Copenhagen 12 January 2007**
 - **13 PMG meeting Reykjavík 19 April 2007**
 - **14 PMG meeting London 14-15 May 2007**
 - **15 PMG meeting Paris 16 July 2007**





- deal with all payments related to the project
 - **Distribution of prepayment from Commission**
- ensure that the ESC meets regularly to discuss the progress and subsequent work in meetings hosted by various partners
 - **ESC meetings Appendix 2**
 - 1. ESC meeting Kranskja Gora, Slovenia on 23-24 September 2004
 - 2. ESC meeting Bergen Norway 1-2 September 2005
 - 3. ESC meeting Cyprus 9-10 February 2006
 - 4. ESC (Extraordinary) meeting The Hague (Scheveningen) 28-29 September 2006
- Ensure that short technical and financial progress reports are obtained before the ESC meetings; supply in cooperation with the WPTFs the Annual Technical Reports including details on the progress in the foregoing year and plans for the subsequent periods. These reports will be presented to the Commission.
- Disseminate all communications received from the Commission to all partners
- Compile together with the WPTFs all reports defined in the timetable and a Final Report with information on the milestones and deliverables within 3 months after expiration of the workpackage or the project
- The Final Report should contain a critical evaluation of the results obtained with regard to the deliverables set, and it will be approved by the ESC before distribution

Milestones

- M1 - 1st ESC meeting, month 1**
Completed
- M5 - 2nd ESC meeting, month 12**
Completed
- M13 - 3rd ESC meeting, month 18**
Completed
- M26 - 4th ESC meeting, month 36**
Initiated Planet in Bilbao 27-29 September 2007
- M33 - 5th ESC meeting and the final project meeting, month 48**
Not initiated

Deliverables

- D6 - 1st annual report to the Commission, month 18**
Completed
- D9 - 2nd annual report to the Commission, month 36**
Completed
- D21 - 3rd annual report to the Commission, month 48**
Not initiated
- D29 - 6th project newsletter & Final report of SAFEFOODERA, month 48**
Not initiated





2. Information exchange (WP 2)

Workpackage task facilitator: Ola Eide, NICE

Objectives

The objective of the workpackage “Information exchange” is to identify complementarities between topics in ongoing national or regional programmes, exchange of information on the management of programmes and evaluation practices, and to create trust and mutual understanding in the consortium.

Description of work

The workpackage includes the following four tasks:

- 1) Workshop to initiate ESC and EEAG to create trust and mutual understanding, including defined guidelines for the continuous interaction between ESC and EEAG throughout the project period.
- 2) Basic exchange of information and comparison of governmental funded national, regional and international food safety research programmes and projects in the participating countries, including national areas of excellence. Comparing programme output, including publications, technical reports, social impact, and services to production/distribution. The research programmes/projects will be clustered to create a framework for durable integration with regard to the planning and conduct of food safety research in the participating countries. Good or best practice will be defined, and a set of criteria to be decided by ESC for working towards establishing best practice will be developed.
- 3) Comparison of evaluation criteria for choosing programmes and projects to be financed in the participating countries and comparing funding bodies objectives.
- 4) Personal contacts and workshops with programme managers to exchange information on best practice in programme and project management and the exchange of new ideas on food safety research programming and dissemination practices.

The ESC will if needed organise joint workshops with EEAG to review the results before deciding on how to use the results in the next stage. The final report from this workpackage will contain a *posteriori* clustering of research projects, good or best practise on programme/project evaluation and programme/project management. All relevant information will be presented on the project website.

Milestones

M2 - Comparison of national/regional food safety research, month 9





Completed. Report From information exchange through a *posteriori* clustering to the selection of strategic research topics

M4 - Comparison of evaluation criteria for project funding, month 12

Completed. Report From information exchange through a *posteriori* clustering to the selection of strategic research topics

M9 - 1st Joint ESC and EEAG meeting, month 18

Since the ESC group is no longer present as a standing group but more on an ad hoc basis the milestone is postponed until spring 2006 and is to be in relation of planning the first Pilot call.

M10 - Comparison of practices in programme management, month 18

Completed

M11 - A *posteriori* clustering of research projects, month 18

Completed. Report From information exchange through a *posteriori* clustering to the selection of strategic research topics

M16 - 2nd Joint ESC and EEAG meeting, month 24

Completed since the ESC group is no longer present as a standing group but more on an ad hoc basis this milestone was transferred into an extraordinary ESC meeting to discuss plans on expansion of the network and to finalise the planning of the pilot call

Deliverables

D3 - Report on the a *posteriori* clustering of research projects, month 18

Completed. Report From information exchange through a *posteriori* clustering to the selection of strategic research topics

D19 - Final report on Information exchange, month 36

Completed

3. Strategic Activities (WP3)

Workpackage task facilitators: Mads Peter Schreiber

The emerging risk activities are reported in the last part of this report as a specific part.

Objectives

The first objective of the workpackage “Strategic activities” is to identify the most important complementarities between ongoing national or regional programmes, regarding their organisation and financing structure as well as the most important research topics. The second objective is to identify the organisational barriers hindering transnational research co-operation, including the financing, monitoring and auditing of research activities. We will then be able to define additional joint strategic activities aimed at dealing with or removing the barriers that impair the transnational research co-operation and at defining the policy, scientific and industrial challenges within these selected strategic activities. We will identify topics, define new opportunities and gaps in the existing programmes.





In the selected topic “Emerging risks” the aim will be to identify and create a network of key sources, resources and instruments to support the ERA-NET in the effective identification of new- or re-emerging food-and feed related risks.

Description of work

Targeted workshops will be organised to obtain an analysis of the national/regional research infrastructure, with the emphasis on food safety. The national representatives in the ESC will present to the group the ongoing national programmes and the important organisational aspects. Organisational complementarities between Food research programmes will be identified. All publicly funded programmes (or projects in countries without programmes) ongoing or ended in the year 2004 will be reviewed for that purpose. They will be described briefly with respect to topic, goal, organisation, funding, activity period and the research institutions involved. The evaluation criteria for project funding will be compared, as will the practices in programme management.

Barriers hindering co-operation will be identified through information exchange. Strategic activities will be developed to improve the possibilities for transnational co-operation. This will be done by removing the barriers impairing this co-operation wherever possible.

The representatives in the ESC will present to the group their national programmes including the major research topics and the institutes and researchers involved. They will also identify new possibilities in transnational research and closing gaps wherever possible. Joint strategic topics and the relevant expertise will be identified and selected from the ongoing national/regional research programmes based on transnational relevance and scientific excellence. The European Expert Advisory Group (EEAG) will if needed assist the consortium in the analysis of the research programmes. The ESC and the EEAG will coordinate their information through expert workshops and/or seminars. The expert group will present to the ESC the scientific and industrial challenges for each of the topics selected by ESC.

Up-to-date specific information about agriculture and the environment is available today. For example, the coordination of information sources on these topics in a centralised clearing facility on the transnational European level is a new approach, as well as the use of web-based information sources as a broad risk management system in the fields of agriculture, environment, and food production and consumer protection. Until today, existing early warning systems in agriculture usually have a highly specialised content. A targeted questionnaire will be organised to ensure a systematic structure to the discussions and that targeted areas will be covered to the same depth of analysis of the national, regional and global infrastructure emphasising emerging risks. All publicly funded programmes ongoing or ended in 2004, as well as the web-based Prognosis Systems and Databases, will be reviewed by a comparison exercise. They will be analysed with respect to key performance indicators (KPIs) as developed by PERIAPT. Differences and barriers hindering co-ordination and co-operation will be identified. If needed the European Expert Advisory Group (EEAG) will assist WP3 in the studies foreseen to analyse the required indicators for identifying emerging food- and feed-related risks. The ESC will coordinate their information through fact-finding expert workshops and/or seminars. These studies will



enable further improvement regarding research management and control mechanisms for the identification of emerging risks and quality by learning from the best practices and processes by which they can be achieved.

The work in this WP includes the following tasks;

- 1 Description of the complementarities between the food safety research programmes of the ERA-NET partners. This includes organisational, financial and personnel aspects. It also includes the identification of complementary research activities carried out in different programmes with similar goals. This could lead to future transnational research schemes.

Report From information exchange through a *posteriori* clustering to the selection of strategic research topics Appendix 1 in the 18 month report.

2. Identification of barriers hindering transnational co-operation, including the financing of transnational research, but also including the monitoring and auditing procedures for both national and transnational research programmes.

Report First action plan describing the road to reach the transnational strategic activities.

3. Dealing with barriers hindering cooperation (e.g. strategic topic Emerging Risks)

Progress report from topic working group of emerging risk .

4. Selection of joint research topics by identification of research activities carried out in different programmes with similar goals which could lead to future transnational research schemes.

In wp 2 a questionnaire about the ongoing research strategies in the member states has been carried out. The outcome from here was the base for the pilot call launched in 2006 and also for the starting the discussion for the 2nd call to be launched in 2008.

5. Identification of gaps and new opportunities, taking advantage of synergy in expertise or infrastructure. The WP will result in suggestion for future developments in strategic research in food safety.

Report From information exchange through a *posteriori* clustering to the selection of strategic research topics has been delivered. An open space seminar has been performed for all member experts. A large number of common topics have been shown as possible cooperation keys and an ongoing forum discussion shows a converging form for discussion.

Milestones



- M3 - Identification of best practice (scientific criteria) in programming concepts on research on emerging risks, month 12**
Completed
- M6 - Identification of best practice in project evaluation and management, month 15**
Completed
- M7 - Selection of joint strategic research topics (indicators on identifying emerging risks; instruments) on guidance of new possibilities and gaps, month 18**
Completed
- M8 - Identification of barriers hindering co-operation, month 18**
Completed,
- M12- Selection of system structure for institutional linking to enable and facilitate data exchanges (Clearing Facility) on emerging risks, month 18**
See emerging risk - Partly completed with anticipated finalisation at month 48.
- M15- Selection of joint strategic research topics, month 24**
Completed
- M23- Identification of new possibilities and gaps in transnational research, month 30**
The pilot call was launched in 2006 and all projects had kick off in month 32

Deliverables

- D1 - First action plan describing the road to reach the transnational strategic activities, month 12**
Completed. The three step action plan (1. Pilot call, 2. ERA-NET+ and 3. Article 169) was discussed at the ESC meeting in Bergen (2005) at the Workshop "Future platform for cooperation". Report: First action plan describing the road to reach the trans national strategic activities.
- D2 - First plan for joint strategic activities, month 15**
Completed
- D4 - Report on selected strategic research topics and key resources, including the removal of barriers, month 18**
Completed



D8 - Delivery of platform for interoperable data exchange on signals/research related to emerging risks, month 22

See emerging risk report - Partly completed with anticipated finalisation at month 48.

D11- Report on selected strategic research topics, including the removal of barriers, month 24

To be launch in month 40

D12 - Final report - Emerging risks, month 24

See emerging risk report

D18 - Final report on Strategic activities, month 30

In progress and will be finished month 48

a. Progress report - Topic: Emerging risks

Group leader: Marcel Mengelers

A periodic activity report is to be submitted for the 36 months reporting period as defined by Article 6 of the SAFEFOODERA contract. It should also include relevant information of the progress made in the field of the topic Emerging Risks as stipulated in the workplan as annexed to the contract. Here it comprises a number of tasks in respect to Workpackage 2 and 3, which deal with the topic of emerging risks.

At the 4th ESC meeting in September 2006 a pilot call on the assessment of information for the identification of emerging risks was successfully launched. In 2007 the proposals were evaluated and a joint research project on emerging mycotoxins has started in May 2007.

At the 5th ESC meeting in June 2007 a new topic working group has been installed to explore the possibility of launching a second transnational research call on emerging risks. In December 2006 a working group was installed to prepare a blue print for a sustainable platform for coordinating transnational research on emerging feed and food safety risks.

WP2 progress of the 36 months reporting period – part Emerging Risks

Referring to the information exchange activities of WP2 it can be concluded that a *a posteriori* clustering of research projects in the field of emerging risks has been completed.

With regards to the lists of milestones, including due date and actual/foreseen achievement date the consortium is obliged to report on the state-of-the-art of M2, M11 and D3 (see workplan).

M2 - Comparison of national/regional food safety research, month 9

Completed.

M11 - A *a posteriori* clustering of research projects, month 18

Completed.



D3 - Report on the a *posteriori* clustering of research projects, month 18
Completed.

WP3 progress of the 36 months reporting period – part Emerging Risks

Referring to the part of emerging risks the general objective is to identify a network of resources and instruments to support the ERA-NET in the effective identification of (re)emerging risks and prediction of new risk. With respect to WP3 we aim to develop a strategic cooperation between the national research programming bodies dealing with (re)emerging and new risks.

The output of the targeted questionnaire, organised as part of WP2, has ensured a systematic structure to perform a comparative in-depth analysis of the national, regional and global infrastructure related to identifying emerging risks.

In line with workpackage 4 and 5 (i.e. joint and trans-national activities) and task 4 within workpackage 3 additional work was carried out in setting up a common pot call for a joint research project on emerging risks. Within the 30 months period the pilot call on the assessment of information for the identification of emerging risks was successfully launched and a proposal received. Within the 36 months period the proposal was evaluated and a joint project on emerging mycotoxins (called MYCONET) has started in May 2007.

With respect to the last deliverable (D8) within this workpackage a new working group has been established in December 2006 to provide the ESC members in the next ESC meeting in September 2007 with a blue print on a sustainable platform for coordinating transnational research on emerging feed and food safety risks. During a workshop in June 2007 the basic elements of this blue print were discussed with the ESC members.

The ESC will continue to coordinate their information through the use of specific working groups and fact-finding expert workshops and/or seminars. These studies will enable further improvement regarding research management and control mechanisms for the identification of emerging risks and quality by learning from the best practices and processes by which they can be achieved.

Task 3.1: Comparison of ongoing programmes and systems on dimensions of performance, which aims to represent a programming body's or the ERA-NET's capabilities to meet the demands of proactive and timely identification of emerging risks.

Thereto all publicly funded programmes ongoing or ended in 2004, as well as existing national and/or regional (web-based) systems and databases that are currently used for prognosis and trend analysis, have been reviewed. They have been analysed with respect to the usefulness to identify emerging risks (their nature of information) as developed by the





SSA ERA-NET PERIAPT. Differences and barriers hindering co-ordination and co-operation have been identified.

Task 3.2: Definition of the nature of the required information on new or re-emerging food- and feed-related risks, existing early warning systems on the internet and ongoing developments in EU's framework programme for RTD. Also the definition of the profile of key sources to be approached by the ERA-NET SAFEFOODERA in order to provide the required information and strategic activities will be worked out in the context of WP4.

The route from (core) indicators to (key) information sources has been discussed during the workshop at the 3rd and the 4th ESC meeting. Major steps were made by describing the barriers in obtaining all relevant indicators and the procedure for selecting core indicators because a relevant set of core indicators is essential to obtain the required information on new or re-emerging food and feed related risks. This approach has been clearly described in the first research call for emerging risks (see task 3.4).

Task 3.3: Identification of key information sources with the purpose to create the ERA-NET that will provide the specified information to allow the identification of emerging risks and to define procedures for transmission of information on a transnational level. This includes the development and set-up of relevant databases, and interpretative expert network on the key indicators identified during the course of task 3.2.

The procedure for collecting the required information on a transnational level through relevant databases and expert networks has been discussed in the ESC meeting in Paris in June 2007. Subsequently, a topic working group has been installed that will aim at launching a new transnational research call on the feasibility of combining global changes, relevant for emerging feed and food related risks, with already existing databases and expert networks related to these global changes. See also task 3.4.

Task 3.4: Development of criteria for the evaluation of information (e.g. survey data) on emerging risks, and to report research that should be undertaken to demonstrate the level of performance to the satisfaction of the WP4 and WP5.

Within the 30 months period the pilot call on the assessment of information for the identification of emerging risks was successfully launched and a proposal received. Within the 36 months period the proposal was evaluated and a project on emerging mycotoxins (called MYCONET) has started in May 2007.

At the ESC meeting in Paris in June 2007 a new topic working group has been installed that will produce a progress report on the feasibility of launching a second transnational research call on emerging risks.

Task 3.5: Identification of options for the establishment and maintenance of transnational programming and monitoring procedures to collect and collate the



information to identify emerging risks. This includes the transfer of information on a pan-European level (input WP5).

Within the 30 and 36 months period it has become clear that there is sufficient interest from various research programming bodies within the ESC to coordinate new transnational research related to emerging risks. In May 2007 the first research project has started (see task 3.4) and during the 5th ESC meeting in June 2007 several research programming bodies have declared an interest of launching a second transnational call on merging risks (see task 3.3).

At the 4th ESC meeting, it was decided to install a new ESC working group (WGER) that would elaborate on a blue print of a sustainable platform for coordinating transnational research on emerging feed and food safety risks (see task 3.7).

Task 3.6: Co-ordinated development and institutional linking for the centralised collection, examination, analysis and scientific evaluation of information for emerging risk prognosis. This includes exploration of the opportunities as identified in Task 3.5 by cost-effective analysis and input to WP5.

Due to the intercalation of the pilot call on emerging risks this task was postponed and initiated immediately after the 4th ESC meeting (September 2006).

At the 5th ESC meeting in June 2007 a new topic working group has been installed that will produce a progress report on the feasibility of combining research on global changes, relevant for emerging feed and food related risks, with already existing databases and expert networks related to these global changes. This progress report of this topic working group will be discussed at the 6th ESC meeting in September 2007.

Task 3.7: Selection of joint strategic activities aimed at improving the opportunities for future transnational research co-operation. This includes activities to remove the barriers identified in task 3.

After the 4th ESC meeting at Scheveningen in September 2006, the 12th PMG agreed to establish a working group to explore the possibility of establishing a sustainable platform for the exchange of information on emerging risks. During a workshop in June 2007 the basic elements of this blue print were discussed with the ESC members. Besides national research programming bodies also other stakeholders (industry, retail, consumer organisations, expert networks) will take part in this platform. The feasibility of the platform will be discussed at the 6th ESC meeting in Bilbao, September 2007. The sustainability of the platform is an important aspect because it is intended that the platform will continue after the SAFEFOODERA project has ended. Thereto, the 6th ESC meeting of September 2007 will have to decide whether a new working group can prepare the launch of the proposed platform in 2008.

Milestones and deliverables to be achieved



With regards to the lists of milestones, including due date and actual/foreseen achievement date the consortium is obliged to report on the state-of-the-art of the milestones M3, M7 and M12 and the deliverables D8 and D12 (see workplan).

M3 - Identification of best practice in programming concepts on research on emerging risks, month 12

Completed.

M7 - Selection of joint strategic research topics on guidance of new possibilities and gaps, month 18

Completed.

M12 - Selection of system structure for institutional linking to enable and facilitate data exchanges on emerging risks, month 18

Partly completed with anticipated finalisation at month 48.

D8 - Delivery of platform for interoperable data exchange on signals/research related to emerging risks, month 22

Partly completed with anticipated finalisation at month 48.

D12 - Final report on emerging risks, month 24

Not yet initiated. Completion anticipated at month 48.

4. Joint activities (WP 4)

Workpackage task facilitator: Alisdair Wotherspoon, FSA

Objectives

The objective of the workpackage “Joint activities” is to develop a joint action plan dealing with the new opportunities and gaps e.g. training activities and joint networks of excellence within the identified selected joint strategic topics.

Description of work

A joint action plan to take forward action on identified gaps and new opportunities will be developed, including, where appropriate, training activities for both programme managers and scientific personnel. These activities will most probably form the bridge of the scientific programmes announced within WP5 into joint networks of excellence. The following tasks will be dealt with:

- 1) An evaluation of the needs to address any shortfalls in expertise/capability and agreement on how to take forward work on new opportunities/gaps, such as deciding priorities and agreeing procedures. A roadmap for action will be developed





- 2) Training of programme managers within the selected strategic topics is important. Courses, workshops and seminars will be included in the training activity as a part of the action plan.
- 3) The project will not fund, but propose training events of researchers within the selected strategic topics to bridge national research programmes into international co-operation. We will propose various instruments, including a European Food Research network of graduate programme initiatives and short-term postgraduate courses and training leading to professional diplomas.

Virtual networks of excellence may be used in building up the selected strategic topics. Other new, applicable models will be discussed to achieve the coordination needed. Established centres of excellence, e.g. the reference laboratories within EU, will be identified and evaluated

Milestones

M14 - Workshop on joint training activities in food safety, month 20

Completed – workshop was held in the Gustav Stresemann Institute in Bonn on 30 and 31 October 2006. Taking forward ideas which emerged from earlier work (see M20 below), the aim of the workshop was to investigate the feasibility of establishing a food safety research ideas forum for public funders to facilitate opportunities for joint activities. As well as involving the partners within the ERA NET, there were also representatives from outside the ERA NET partners, including international organisations such as FAO/WHO, other national/regional food safety authorities, and the Commission.

There was a great deal of enthusiasm amongst the workshop participants to explore this idea and to try to define a workable forum. A range of views emerged during the event as to what such a forum could achieve and how it might operate, which led to uncertainty on a clear way forward. Nevertheless, there remained a strong desire to build on the work done and to explore the issue further, with some ideas emerging as to how this might be progressed. The report on the workshop has been finalised and published on the SAFEFOODERA website. A copy is attached at Appendix 4.

M20 - Elaboration of the joint action plan in food safety, month 24

Ongoing, in the light of developments in the ERA NET network - a draft plan based on work undertaken so far is attached at Appendix 5.

Work commenced at the ESC meeting in Limassol in February 2006 following which a report was prepared based on inputs from the ERA NET partners. The report summarised a large number of ideas, brigaded under 7 headings, where network members considered there was scope for joint activities which would assist them in future closer working. This report is being used to inform future ideas for joint activities, from which the workshop under M14 was a key development. Subsequently, the report was augmented by





input from new members of the network at a WP4 workshop within an event in Zagreb as part of the network expansion activities under WP6.

Since the original work at the Limassol ESC, there have been a number of developments within the ERA NET, including expansion of the network, the issuing of a pilot joint call for research and proposals for a platform on emerging risks. Plans are also in train to develop and issue a new and larger transnational call. In general, this is an important outcome from the joint activities which have already taken place within the functioning of the ERA NET itself, such as meetings and working groups. This reflects the very positive developing relationships within the ERA NET network and a closer integration of the developing workstreams within the work packages, consistent with a desire to coordinate the partners' activities where appropriate.

Within all of these, opportunities to take forward further work on joint activities have been identified which will better serve the needs of the partners in the ERA NET and the project's wider aspirations. Activities include:

Working with WP5 –

- Activities supporting the development and issue of the pilot joint call – a series of working groups was set up to develop procedures and processes to be used for the procurement and management of projects within the call. These provided a valuable training opportunity for different funders to learn from each other about barriers to working together and identifying pragmatic solutions.
- Follow up to the Bonn workshop, linking in with developing ideas for strategic topics which will form the basis of the proposed transnational call. A mechanism which could act as a forum for exchange of ideas has been identified and tested – the Open Space methodology (see Appendix C). A major meeting of the Safefoodera partners took place in Paris in June which identified 26 topics of interest for a future transnational call. Based on expressions of interest from the network partners, 23 of these are currently under discussion. A report of the outputs of the Paris meeting is available on the Safefoodera website;
- Arising from this, and from evaluation of the current pilot joint call, is likely to be a need to undertake joint activities to further develop research call procurement and management procedures;

Working with WP3 –

- Joint activities in support of the work on the proposed emerging risks platform;

M25 - Elaboration of joint networks of excellence in food safety, month 36

Initiated and ongoing – networks have already been established in relation to strategic topics identified as part of the pilot call. In particular, a major network on foodborne zoonoses has been established relating to work on Campylobacter and E coli (CampEcNet) – the aim of this network is to aid integration of veterinary, food and medical laboratory based surveillance. It involves 24 institutions from 10 countries/regions. Three further, smaller, networks have been established on two areas of pathogen free production and emerging risks. Together, all of these networks have resulted from the coordinated funding action of 12 of the partners within Safefoodera with an initial total call budget of approximately €2.3m. All of these networks will be evaluated in the context of the



management of the pilot call. The first part of this evaluation will take place at the mid term presentations by each project at the ESC meeting in Bilbao in month 37.

The development of a platform on research related to emerging risks under WP3 will be another important network of excellence in its own right, facilitating flows of information amongst public and private bodies and developing priorities for future research. One of the aims will be to issue calls for research which in turn will promote the development of key networks of researchers and their interaction with policy and funding bodies on food safety.

Deliverables

D5 - Flyers on joint training activity events in food safety, month 18

Completed.

D10 - Report on the joint action plan in food safety, month 24

Initiated and ongoing – see commentary above.

D20 - Report on joint networks of excellence in food safety, month 36

Initiated and ongoing – see commentary above.

D24 - Final report - Joint activities, month 42

Not initiated

5. Transnational activities (WP 5)

Workpackage task facilitator: Philippe Verger, INRA

Objectives

The objective of the workpackage “Transnational activities” is to launch common calls for proposals within the strategic topics to establish transnational research programmes.

Description of work

Work Package 5 was initiated in month 24. A working group within the ESC was constituted during the ESC meeting in September 2006 and started to analysis the procedures used in the pilot call. The working group will propose the frame of the next call to be adopted by the ESC in September 2007, for launch in 2008. The overall goal of the WP5 appears more ambitious than initially planned, because in addition to the pilot call already successfully launched, we will proceed to the preparation of a 2008's call for transnational research activities on food safety. The funded projects will therefore run for several years after the end of SAFEFOODERA project. Compared with other running ERA-Net, the strength of SAFEFOODERA will be to have the opportunity to consider all the lessons learnt from the pilot before integrating them in a “real size” research call.

a. Analysis of the pilot call

Since September 2006 the working group on transnational activities met 3 times in Paris (1-2 March, 9-10 May; 17 July). During these meetings the working group analysed the inputs



from partners regarding the procedure for launching transnational calls. At date steps 1 to 9 were analysed by partners and the results are summarised in annex 3. The last step (Step 10 – management of the call) will be analysed during the next 6 month. The improvements of the procedure proposed by the working group on transnational activities will be presented for discussion and adoption in the 2007s' ESC meeting (Bilbao).

In parallel, the opinion of applicants in the pilot call - successful or not – will be analysed by the way of a questionnaire sent in July 2007 and a meeting with coordinators of successful applications in September 2007.

b. Preparation of the call 2008

The main task of the WP 5, in close collaboration with WP4 (Join activities) was to prepare the procedure of selection for 2008's topic priorities. At first a questionnaire was sent to the SAFEFOODERA partners and analysed by the working group on transnational activities (Appendix 7) and secondly a forum for selection of common priorities was organised in Paris and resulted in a list of topics (Appendix 7) proposed for further elaboration of scientific questions and selection of appropriate financial models.

Milestones

M21 - Common call for proposals in joint strategic topics, month 26

Completed: Call for proposals were received, selection is in its final phase. Agreements should be signed in Month 31 (February 2007).

A pilot call was launch in 2006 and another call will be launch in 2008 based on the lessons learnt in the pilot. The activity is therefore more important than what was planned even if new milestones were not added.

M24 - Harmonised evaluation procedures for food safety projects, month 30

In progress: The working group finalised the analysis of the questionnaires sent to ESC Members regarding the steps 1 to 9 of the procedure. The analysis of steps 10 of the procedure will be analysed by the working group during the next 6 month. In parallel, questionnaires were sent to the applicants in the pilot call – successful or not) and will be analysed during a working group meeting in the next ESC (Bilbao, September 2007).

M27 - Joint research programmes in food safety, month 42

Not initiated

M28 - Common plan for dissemination of the scientific results, month 42

Not initiated

Working with WP4 –

- A mechanism which could act as a forum for exchange of ideas has been identified and tested – the Open Space methodology (see WP4, Appendix 5). A major meeting





of the Safefoodera partners took place in Paris in June which identified 26 topics of interest for a future transnational call (See annex 2). Based on expressions of interest from the network partners, 23 of these are currently under discussion. A report of the outputs of the Paris meeting is available on the Safefoodera website;

Deliverables

D15 -Report on common call for proposals in joint strategic topics, month 26

Completed

D17 - Report on harmonised evaluation procedures for food safety projects, month 30

Completed

D23 - Report on joint research programmes in food safety, month 42

Not initiated

D27 - Final report - Transnational activities, month 46

Not initiated

6. External communication (WP 6)

Workpackage task facilitator: Ola Eide, NICE

Objectives

The objective of the workpackage “External communication” is to establish links with stakeholders to facilitate pan-European dissemination and exploitation of project results, including the execution of common plans for dissemination. It will also ensure early engagement with other eligible funding bodies in Europe to maximise the potential for a wider network.

Description of work

- 1) External communication will be on the agenda on the ESC meetings, and ESC will decide on outgoing information and the channels to be used, including media, web portal, leaflets, fliers, newsletter, etc. Procedures and decisions will be communicated in a transparent way to all parties.

The present channel used is the SAFEFOODERA web site, which is divided into an open part (FRONTPAGE) and an internal part (EXTRANET).

- 2) A dialogue or a workshop with stakeholders will be initiated at the end of each workpackages.
The stakeholders are mainly the Commission and the authorities in the participating countries, but also scientists, industry, consumer groups and non-participating member states will be invited. Such countries that are willing to coordinate the food safety





aspects of their ongoing national/regional programmes with the ongoing ERA-NET will be invited as early as possible to prepare for future expansion of the network.

Both the Commission and EFSA have participated in the ESC meetings in Kranskja Gora, Slovenia (2004) and Bergen, Norway (2005). At the Bergen meeting (2005) a representative from the Austrian authority participated. Representatives from the authorities in Spain, Ireland and Greece were also invited. In the Bergen meeting scientist from Germany, Sweden and Norway were invited to present case studies, and to participate in the discussions.

A series of 5 stakeholder meetings have been completed with scientists, industry, food service sector, consumers and a final meeting with representatives from all stakeholder groups, including EFSA and the Commission.

- 3) This WP includes the set up and maintenance of the project's web site that is to be used for most of the communication and for the exchange and dissemination of information among partners throughout the project period. All the final reports will be made publicly available through the web site. The web site will be an interactive discussion forum to networking with stakeholders, including the scientific community.

The web site www.safefoodera.net has been up and running from November 2004. Through the web site participants may upload and download information to make it available for other members of the consortium and the project management.

- 4) Special seminars or conferences will be organized twice during the lifespan of the project to inform and discuss with the stakeholders and interested parties about the project, facilitating pan-European dissemination and exploitation of research results. Special attention will be paid to non-participating European countries to promote their involvement in the growing community. All new Member States will be contacted and invited to join the SAFEFOODERA seminars to create an active list of countries that are willing to start integrating the new European network in research strategy in food safety. Seminars will be timed to allow for input on proposed courses of action, eg on joint strategic topics, gaps/opportunities to be tackled.

The authorities of Austria, Greece, Ireland and Spain have been invited to participate in SAFEFOODERA through face-to-face meetings. An application for extra money for expansion was sent to the Commission, however this application was rejected.

The five countries Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, The Czech Republic and Slovak Republic have been consulted regarding their possible entry into the SAFEFOODERA. A strategy for their involvement is at present being discussed.

I the last period we have initiated national contact meeting as a tool to update national participants and to discuss their role in the future of SAFEFOODERA.





The first national contact meeting was held in Warsaw on December 6th 2007. It was followed by a similar meeting in Rome in February 2007.

- 5) High-level meetings with EFSA will be an integrated part of our communication strategy. A key policy priority for the Commission is assuring that the EU has the highest standards of food safety. Since 1997, the Commission has implemented an approach to ensure transparency by making available to the public all information on scientific advice and on inspections and controls.

The evolution of the relationship with EFSA has been extremely interesting and positive. Joint meetings have been held in Kranjska Gora, Istanbul, Parma and Bergen. We will continue to update and cooperate with EFSA in the future development of SAFEFOODERA.

Milestones

- M17 - 1st Seminar with authorities, month 24 - Completed**
- M18 - 1st Seminar with non-participating member States, month 24 - Completed**
- M19 - 1st Seminar with consumer groups and industry, month 24 – Completed**
- M22 - 1st Seminar with the scientific community, month 28 – Completed**
- M29 - 2nd Seminar with authorities, month 42 - Not initiated**
- M30 - 2nd Seminar with non-participating member States, month 42 - Not initiated**
- M31 - 2nd Seminar with consumer groups and industry, month 42 - Not initiated**
- M32 - 2nd Seminar with the scientific community, month 46 - Not initiated**

Deliverables

- D7 - Flyers about the 1st Seminar with 1) consumer groups and industry, 2) authorities & 3) representatives from non-participating member States & 1st project newsletter, month 22 – Completed**
- D13 - Proceedings for the 1st Seminar with consumer groups and industry, authorities & representatives from non-participating member States & 2nd project newsletter, month 25 - Completed**
- D14 - Flyers about the 1st Seminar with the scientific community & 3rd project newsletter, month 26 - Completed**
- D16 - Proceedings for 1st Seminar with the scientific community, month 29 - Completed**
- D22 - Flyers about the 2nd Seminar with 1) consumer groups and industry, 2) authorities & 3) representatives from non-participating member States & 4th project newsletter, month 40 - Not initiated**
- D25 - Proceedings for the 2nd Seminar with consumer groups and industry, authorities**



- & representatives from non-participating member States, month 43 - Not initiated
- D26 - Flyers about the 2nd Seminar with the scientific community & 5th project newsletter, month 44 - Not initiated**
- D28 - Proceedings for 2nd Seminar with the scientific community, month 47 - Not initiated**

b. Progress report - Topic: Network Expansion

Group leader: Hartmut Waldner

Report prepared by Hartmut Waldner & Sabine Boneck

Contents

I. Summary.....	30
II. Background.....	30
III. Proceeding with invited countries.....	32
IV. New members' Meeting	34
V. Selection of countries to be contacted and current activity status.....	34
VI. Conclusion	36

Summary

From January 2006 until today several countries were contacted to join SAFEFOODERA. The ESC decided during the meeting in The Hague in September 2006 to invite five countries: Brazil, Croatia, Czech Republic, Ireland, Latvia and Lithuania. These countries fulfilled all formal requests; An amendment to the Contract with the Commission's is still outstanding.

Also the second phase of network expansion was characterised by a multitude of efforts to contact new members for the SAFEFOODERA network. But we could identify only a few countries who were interested in cooperation. Finally it was decided not to invite any new countries to the ESC meeting in Bilbao in September 2007, in particular due to two reasons: SAFEFOODERA will end regularly in August 2008. But its future has to be clarified for being able to "offer" benefits and perspectives to new members. Beside this the procedure of launching the second call has already started. This topic will be discussed in Bilbao and should not be complicated by including new countries.

Background

SAFEFOODERA's Aim: Building a European platform for protecting consumers against health risks from the consumption of food. Part of Work Package 6 is the network expansion with the aim to create a great network. The following steps have been undertaken to reach this aim so far:



The 1st International SAFEFOODERA meeting on network expansion was held on 10 January 2006 in Vilnius, Lithuania. Main subject was the discussion about "Preferred models for cooperation".

During the PMG meeting in Lisbon (4 – 5 April 2006) it was decided that a working group for network expansion should be established. The first meeting of the new working group took place in Budapest (13 June 2006) where an *observer status* for new participants was defined. This means that new partners can act as ESC members but they will have no voting rights and their travel costs cannot be reimbursed by the project. A list of 16 countries was created which should have been invited to the following ESC meeting in The Hague in September.

The main result of the efforts between June and September was that representatives from Brazil, Croatia, Latvia and Lithuania attended the The Hague meeting. Since the Irish representative sent an excuse for not being able to participate it could be decided on the 4th ESC meeting in The Hague to invite five countries to join the SAFEFOODERA network:

This status means that

- travel expenses can be reimbursed by the project
- an information package has to be sent to the new countries which enables them to fulfil the requests to become an accepted member (c.f. chapter III).

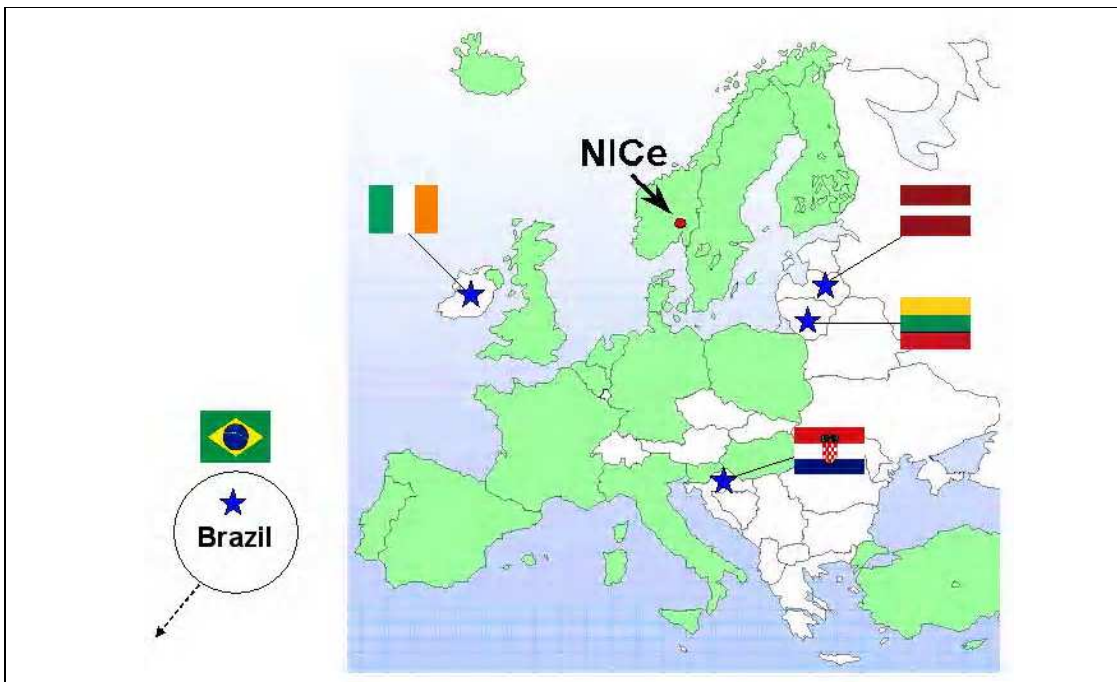


Figure 1: Invited countries to the SAFEFOODERA network as at September 2006

Proceeding with invited countries

The further proceeding with the invited countries was discussed by the ESC in The Hague. Before they can become accepted members of SAFEFOODERA they have to fulfil the following formal requests:

(1) Declaration of two person's names as contact persons

Name and CV of both persons have to be delivered according to a specified form. One person is the main contact person. The second contact person doesn't necessarily need to be from an eligible organisation.

(2) Brief description of the involved institutions

The description serves as a basis to judge the institution's eligibility. Due to the ERA-NET rules the institutions have to be:

- public bodies responsible for financing or managing research activities carried out at national or regional level e.g. ministries, food safety authorities (even if they are not classical founders), state committees for research, academies, agencies, funding agencies or national research organisations;
- other national or regional bodies that finance or manage such research activities such as agencies established by governments under private law with a public service mission;
- bodies operating at European level that include the pan-European co-ordination of nationally-funded research activities as part of their mission.

Individual researchers and research institutes are not eligible.¹

(3) Overview about national research activities in the field of food safety

(4) Reasons for joining the SAFEFOODERA Network

(5) Decision about the financial model

Choice between additional cost (restricted money, has to be spent for clearly defined purposes) and full cost (money will be incorporated in a general budget)

(6) Application for a budget to cover travel expenses

While these six issues have to be fulfilled by all means the Network invites its new members to present

(7) New ideas for joint activities

¹ The only exception would be when a research institute has been entrusted by a public body with the task of managing a public research programme on its behalf i.e. this entity has taken over the whole management of the programme from the calls of proposals to the monitoring of selected projects - or at least a substantial part of this process. Such bodies would then become eligible for ERA-NETs related to this particular programme, but not for their other activities.



After having delivered all necessary kind of information, papers and decisions is has to be checked definitely whether the institution is eligible. If this is the case the ESC will finalise the membership of the invited countries (by e-mail). This step includes the accession to the project's contracts without any additional negotiations with the European Commission.

The proceeding is outlined in Figure 2:

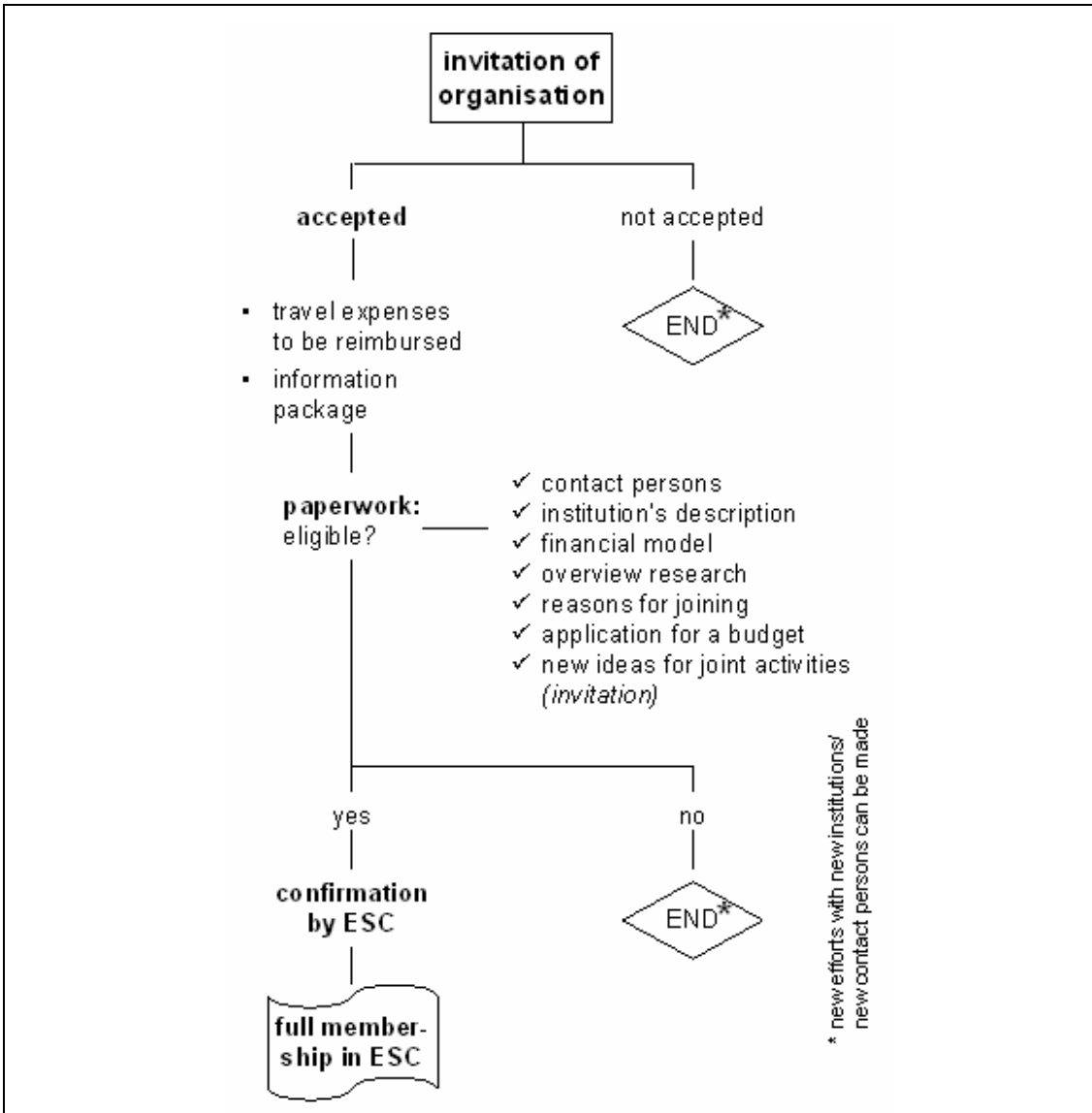


Figure 2: Network Expansion Proceeding

Regarding the invited countries the next step will be to provide them with all necessary information and forms and support them to fulfil the requests.



New members' Meeting

We realised that the new members wanted to get more information about SAFEFOODERA. An early update was considered as very important for a successful participation. Therefore a meeting for the five new countries was held in Zagreb on 22nd to 23rd March 2007. Beside the five invited countries also representatives from Slovak Republic joined the meeting (c.f. Minutes).

Selection of countries to be contacted and current activity status

The ESC expressed the wish to include new countries only bit by bit. A central issue discussed in The Hague was the question where and when to stop the expansion. According to the discussion the main criteria for the choice of countries to invite are:

- EU member states
- other important import countries outside the EU
- reasons of scientific and geographical significance

As a result of this discussion it was proposed to invite the following countries to join the SAFEFOODERA Network:

(1) EU member states and future member states activity status

Austria	Invitation to The Hague and Bonn ² ; some attempts were made by mail and telephone to three contact persons → no results
Bulgaria	Invitation to The Hague by mail, additional attempts via e-mail in 2007 → no results
Estonia	Invitation to The Hague by mail and telephone; appropriate contact person seems to be identified, additional attempts in 2007 → no results
Greece	Invitation to The Hague by mail, additional attempts via e-mail in 2007 → no results
Luxemburg	no effort made
Malta	no national budget for research on food safety
Romania	Invitation to The Hague by mail; a contact person seemed to be identified but did not reply to e-mails → no results

² While the meeting in The Hague was explicitly dedicated to the question of network expansion the interested countries were also invited to the Bonn meeting on 30/31 October 2006 which was organised in the context of working package 4 – Joint Activities.



Slovak Republic

The Food Research Institute (FRI) was visited by Sabine Bonneck on 5th March 2007. Representatives from Slovak Republic participated in the New Members' Meeting in Zagreb.
→ contact should be intensified

We considered the members of Group 1 as the most important countries to join Safefoodera. We decided to focus our activities on trying to contact them in the first instance even if we were aware of the fact that nearly all of them were already contacted before summer 2006 and either they didn't reply at all or they didn't express any interest. Also after having made additional efforts in 2007 the situation didn't improve: Only Slovak Republic accepted the invitation to learn more about SAFEFOODERA.

(2) "hub" strategy

It seemed reasonable to limit SAFEFOODERA's engagement beyond the European borders. Therefore it was planned to install "hubs". We were looking for partners in each continent who should participate in SAFEFOODERA but should also bring in their knowledge and experiences from their regional networks. The future SAFEFOODERA world-map should ideally look like the following:



Figure 3: Future Ideal SAFEFOODERA World-Map

Australia	no effort made
Brazil	already invited
South Africa	Several attempts to identify an appropriate contact person → no results
Thailand	The National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards was visited by Oddur Gunnarsson and Sabine Bonneck in May 2007 → contact should be intensified
United Arab Emirates	Due to a contact in this region The Food Control Division in Abu Dhabi was visited by Oddur Gunnarsson and Sabine Bonneck in May 2007 → no expression of strong interest



USA The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the US Agricultural Research Service (US-ARS) were visited by Sabine Bonneck in December 200; appropriate contact person is identified
 → contact should be intensified

(3) Other European third countries

Albania	no effort made
Belarus	no effort made
Bosnia-Herzegovina	no effort made
Macedonia	Invitation to The Hague and Bonn by e-mail
Moldova	no effort made
Montenegro	no effort made
Serbia	Invitation to The Hague by e-mail
Switzerland	no effort made, but one contact person identified
Ukraine	no effort made

The countries listed as Group 3 didn't have an equal priority since they are no European member states and also no important players on the international food markets.

Conclusion

The network expansion group tried to contact as much countries as possible. We could win five new members and created a solid basis for further approaches to renew contacts to Slovak Republic, USA, UAE, Thailand and Switzerland in the future. After having written this report the network expansion group will be disbanded.

Hartmut Waldner
 Coordinator Network Expansion
hartmut.waldner@bvl.bund.de

Sabine Bonneck
 Assistant Network Expansion
sabine.bonneck@bvl.bund.de