

Keeping Food Safety Research on the Agenda

Coordinator

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Expected budget: €200,000 per year

COST contribution: €130,000 per year

Duration: 48 months

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Objectives

The SafeFoodFocus Action aims to establish a European network to keep food safety research on the agenda for all relevant stakeholders, including in Europe's largest food trading partners: USA, Brazil, China, Argentina and Switzerland. The Action will disseminate coordinated food safety research results, research gaps and appropriate responses via a supra-national, multi-sectorial and interdisciplinary network of high quality scientists and stakeholders to identify and plan for relevant food safety risks.



Background

Food safety is an imperative for health, social and economic reasons. Safer foods contribute to healthier and longer lives, less costly health care, and a more resilient food industry, thus improved livelihood and increased productivity. Policies and interventions to improve nutrition and food security should systematically include food safety (World Health Organization. Advancing food safety initiatives. Strategic plan for food safety including foodborne zoonoses 2013-2022).

Food safety has been a priority in Europe for several decades, reflected in its emphasis in the European Framework Programmes. This is less clear in Horizon 2020, where food safety is embedded into the areas of health and well-being and food security. Yet in 2013, there were over 5.000 reported food-borne outbreaks in Europe resulting in over 43.000 humans falling ill, almost 6.000 hospitalisations and 11 deaths (Scientific Report of EFSA and EDCE. EFSA Journal 2015;13(1):3991). Food safety is more than outbreaks, as chronic exposures to e.g., chemical residues and food integrity e.g., horse meat labelled as beef, are also food safety issues.

Overview of Activities

A network of institutes with well-established food safety research and development programmes will organise workshops and seminars on the most relevant food safety topics. Position papers for regulators and policy makers, one pagers for industry and consumers, and assorted social media will keep food safety on the agenda for all involved stakeholders. Marie Curie ITN proposals, R&D proposals and Training Schools will ensure that food safety stays on the agenda into the future.

The network will be organised into five scientific Working Groups:

- .. **WG1: Safe, innovative and alternative manufacturing processes**
- .. **WG2: Safely reducing waste to mitigate resource depletion**
- .. **WG3: Safely valorising bio-based industrial by-products**
- .. **WG4: Emerging chemical and biological risks**
- .. **WG5: Global cooperation for traceable, safe and authentic products**

What is new about this approach?

There is a need for a clear food safety strategy in Europe. In this Action, food safety priorities will be established by a global group of researchers with input from all relevant stakeholders including policy makers, regulators, consumers, industry and retailers.

Why now?

Food safety requires constant attention and with the European focus on a bio-based economy, new and emerging challenges are on the horizon. New microorganisms appear and old ones reappear; new chemicals are used in foods and to enhance food production, new technologies introduce new food contact materials and new production practices may mean new and unexpected interactions. Food safety must stay relevant.

Main Results of the Action

This Action will identify the latest food safety priorities in Europe and globally and influence long-term technological development and research advances for safe food production.

The Network

28 Partners and still growing in Europe and its international supplier countries, Associated Countries, Near Neighbor Countries, Inclusiveness Target Countries : Matis, SAFE consortium, Nofima, NVI, IAR & FR-Polish Academy of Sciences, CNR-DAA, UPO-DFB Center, SP Sweden, AZTI-Tecnalia, IBA, Catholic U Portugal, Istanbul Aydin U, U Food Tech, Food Transfer Centre, National Tech U Athens, U Ljubljana, BfR, Traza, Corvinus U, Zhejiang U, China Agricultural U, Suez Canal U, Institute of Life Technologies U of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland, Harper Adams, Frigorifico la Florida, Coop, Barilla. Each research partner has a dedicated food safety programme and a history of participation in EU projects. The European Association for Food Safety, SAFE consortium is an international non-profit organization. Members have worked together for as long as 14 years.

Objectives

Highlight food safety
Be a platform for cooperation and development
Create mutual understanding of challenges
Identify novel solutions



Effect

Improved food safety
Reduction in foodborne disease
Fewer recalls
Reduced costs for society
Production costs are not increased
Consumer trust



Drug & Food Biotechnology Center



Veterinærinstituttet
Norwegian Veterinary Institute



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Univerza
v Ljubljani
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Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung



Nofima



Hes·SO

Haute Ecole Spécialisée
de Suisse occidentale
Fachhochschule Westschweiz
University of Applied Sciences and Arts
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