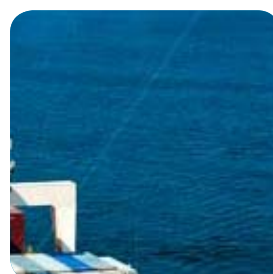




Better Training for Safer Food

Annual Report 2010



RESPONDING TO
CHALLENGES

The Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) in close cooperation with the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers of the European Commission (DG SANCO) manage the Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) initiative. This report describes the activity of BTSF in 2010. This report was prepared by EAHC with the contribution of unit G4 from DG SANCO. The support from colleagues in DG SANCO is gratefully acknowledged.

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and information on the Better Training for Safer Food initiative at:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/index_en.htm

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Explanation of acronyms that appear in this document	
BIP	Border inspection post
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
BTSF	Better Training for Safer Food
DG SANCO	Directorate-General for Health and Consumers
EAHC	Executive Agency for Health and Consumers
EU-RL	European Union Reference Laboratory
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCM	Food contact materials
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
FNAO	Feed and food of non-animal origin
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
HPLC	High Pressure Liquid Chromatography
LBM	Live Bivalve Molluscs – for the purpose of this AR
MLs	Maximum Levels – for the purpose of this AR
MRL	Maximum residue levels
MS	Member States (of the European Union)
NCP	National contact points
NRL	National Reference Laboratory
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PPP	Plant protection products
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
TRACES	Trade Control and Expert System
TSE	Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies
WHO	World Health Organization
TC	Third countries

Foreword



The European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers' Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) programme has now completed its fifth year of activity. It trains official control staff of EU Member States and third countries involved in food, veterinary and plant health issues.

The expansion of the programme has continued during 2010 in terms of participants, with almost 6,000 people directly involved in training and programmes with the launch of new subjects such as the health of bees, zoo animals and aquaculture animals.

Aside from these encouraging signs, a key factor of BTSF's activity during the past year has been the adoption by the Commission of the Staff Working Document on challenges and strategies for BTSF. This outlines the challenges facing the programme and sets out actions to overcome them both in the short-medium and long term.

Another important issue during the year has been the successful conclusion of most activities within the BTSF Africa programme, which aimed at developing capacity in Africa on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues. This should contribute to regional integration across the African continent and bring African agro-food production further into line with international standards.

Future SPS training for Africa and the strategies described in the Staff Working Document were the main points of discussion during the high-level conference on BTSF, which took place in November. This emphasised the benefits of BTSF activities and highlighted effective dissemination as vital to continued success.

Indeed, wider dissemination of the expertise provided by BTSF is essential to ensure that the EU food safety model reinforces its position as a global point of reference. Achieving this goal will facilitate increased trade in safe food worldwide and contribute to economic development. Increased safety standards in the rest of the world, and particularly in developing countries, will bring additional benefits for the EU by reducing the need for extensive import checks at the Union's borders and giving EU consumers access to a more diverse range of safe food products.

At the same time, crises in the food supply chain bring about considerable economic costs for Europe. By continuing to drive up the standards of official controls in the EU and elsewhere, BTSF is helping to minimise the risks of such crises emerging.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in BTSF for their contribution to its success over the last year and I sincerely hope that the programme continues to flourish in the years to come.

Paola Testori Coggi

Director-General for Health and Consumers

BTSF – what it is and what it does



BTSF – what it is and what it does

EAHC

The Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (formerly the Public Health Executive Agency) was created by the European Commission on 1 January 2005. In 2008, its mandate was expanded to include actions in consumer and food safety areas. EAHC implements the EU Health and Consumer Programmes and the Better Training for Safer Food initiative. Based in Luxembourg, it manages relationships between some 3,000 beneficiaries involved in hundreds of projects with a total EU contribution of more than 200 million €. The Agency has about 50 staff members, and an annual administrative budget of 4.5 million €, and provides a professional service in performing the activities entrusted to it, working closely with the Commission's Health and Consumers Directorate General (DG SANCO), its parent DG.

The value of BTSF is inestimable. It increases compliance with food safety rules inside the EU, and helps ensure that imports are of adequate safety and quality.

The European Union is the world's largest food importer, with € 57.1 billion worth of imports in 2008, up by 8.4% from the previous year.

How BTSF has developed

„In 2006 the offer comprised seven programs and trained just under 1,500 people. From these relatively modest beginnings the initiative has become a real success story over the last few years.“

Paola Testori Coggi, Director General For Health And Consumers, European Commission, High-Level Conference on The Better Training for Safer Food Programme, 18 November 2010, Brussels

BTSF has been providing training on food and feed law, animal health and welfare rules and plant health rules for national-level control staff both from the EU and worldwide since 2006. It was launched under the auspices of the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers, with considerable backing from the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development and other Commission services. Communication COM (2006) 519 of September 2006 identified a medium-long term steady state of 6,000 participants and a budget of €15 million annually, to be reached around 2011-2012. Since 2006, around 180 countries have been involved in the training programme, with upwards of 23,000 people, both in the European Union and worldwide, and with training on some 25 different subjects.

In designing new strategies and programmes, full account is taken of evaluations and feedback from participants, impact studies, collection and analysis of data and information obtained from a range of stakeholders.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

Legal Base and operating context

The roots of BTSF go back to Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 (OJ L 165, 30.4.2004 corrected by L 191, 28.5.2004) on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law and animal health and welfare rules, which was adopted in April 2004 and came into force in January 2006. Article 51 empowers the Commission to organise training for Member State staff verifying compliance with food and feed law, animal health, welfare and plant health rules and third country, particularly developing country, participants. Article 66 (1) (b) of that same regulation provides that the appropriations required for the training of control staff shall be authorised each year in the framework of the budgetary procedure. The legal basis for training on plant health rules is Article 2(1) (i) of Council Directive 2000/29/EC on protective measures against the introduction into the EU of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the EU (OJ L 169, 10.7.2000, p.1). This empowers the Commission to draw up EU programmes for further training of officials in an effort to increase the knowledge and experience they have acquired in the national context to a level necessary for the proper application of the Directive. The Commission is also empowered to contribute to the financing of such training from the EU budget. Article 15(2)(b)(i) of Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation provides for a thematic programme on food security (OJ L378, 27.12.2006, p. 41), which has been the basis for financing the “BTSF Africa” programme.

„Better enforcement of existing legislation is essential, as underlined in the recent Monti report on the Single Market, if the EU’s internal market is to function as it should.“

John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, High-Level Conference on Better Training for Safer Food, 18 November 2010, Brussels

DG SANCO’s role in the BTSF project cycle is that it develops BTSF policy, and sets the strategy and programmes.

EAHC’s task includes management of the whole project cycle, publishing calls for tender, conducting the evaluations, awards and contracting, monitoring the implementation of contracts, approving reports, collecting and analysing data and preparing reports for policy debate.

The BTSF legal base as set out above is complemented by two strategic documents, the September 2006 Communication and the Staff Working Document 2010.

BTSF – what it is and what it does



HACCP

The HACCP system is internationally recognised as the most effective instrument to help food business operators reach a higher standard of food safety. The HACCP system focuses on identifying and preventing hazards from contaminating feed and food. It is based on hazard analysis and enables more efficient and effective control of product processes in order to verify how well a food or feed business is complying with relevant food safety requirements. This system places responsibility for ensuring food and feed safety on business operators, helping them to compete more effectively in the world market and reducing barriers to international trade. The HACCP system should take account of the principles contained in the Codex Alimentarius.

Food and feed business operators are required to implement and maintain permanent procedures based upon the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. Control techniques, such as auditing and evaluation of HACCP procedures by food business operators and their assessment, are included in Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 among the relevant subject areas for the training of staff performing official controls.

HACCP course Type 1 covered the development, implementation and maintenance of control procedures based upon the seven principles of HACCP. Course Type 2 was designed to develop the ability to conduct detailed audits of food and feed businesses to verify implementation of HACCP systems and their compliance with food and feed hygiene requirements.

Activities - 23 events in total	23 workshops (5 days duration) were run: 5 as Course Type 1 18 as Course Type 2
Tutors	24 tutors from 6 EU Member States (France, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom)
Total number of participants	436 participants from 26 Member States, candidate and third countries

BTSF – what it is and what it does

Food hygiene and controls of fishery, meat and dairy products

The European Union has developed a wide range of measures aimed at ensuring a high standard of hygiene during food production and proper control of food-stuffs. These rules apply to all food business operators, cover the entire food chain and deal with all types of food.

General hygiene requirements apply to all stages of production, processing and distribution of food. These rules also require the implementation of internal permanent food hygiene control procedures based on HACCP principles (see above). Hygiene and control rules for food of animal origin introduce new concepts, especially in meat production and inspection, such as the requirements that animals be clean when brought to slaughter. They also cover provision of food chain information, risk based meat inspection, simplified requirements for slaughter and de-boning establishments, and new rules concerning game meat. The methods of detection of marine biotoxins in shellfish, the microbiological criteria for certain types of food, and some requirements for raw milk production were also revised recently.

The training activity aims at spreading knowledge and Community best practices in order to increase the level of expertise with regard to food hygiene and control issues concerning all stages of production, processing and distribution of meat, milk and fishery products.

Three different types of courses were organised, covering EU legislation, official controls, organisation of control services, implementation of Good Hygienic Practices and HACCP, as well as issues and selected topics on meat, milk and fishery products.

Activities - 4 events in total	14 training sessions (5 days duration) held in Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom
Tutors	36 tutors representing 11 nationalities
Total number of participants EU 269 EFTA 7 TC 22	298 participants from the 27 EU Member States, the 3 candidate countries, 2 out of 3 invited EFTA countries (Norway and Switzerland), invited ENP, Mediterranean basin and other third countries (Algeria, Armenia, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Ukraine, Russia and Albania, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina)

BTSF – what it is and what it does

Activities - 6 events in total	6 workshops (5 days duration) held in France and Germany
Tutors	9 tutors, 8 associated with competent authorities of Member States and 1 tutor working for a food business operator
Total number of participants MS 173 CC 28 EFTA 6 TC 17	224 participants from the EU Member States, candidate, EFTA and third countries

Prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE)

The TSE regulation provides measures targeting all animal species and public health risks resulting from all animal TSEs, and governing the entire chain of production and the placing on the market of live animals and products of animal origin. The regulation consolidates rules for the monitoring of TSE in bovine, ovine and caprine animals, removal of specified risk material and prohibitions concerning animal feeding.

It also lays down rules regarding eradication of TSEs as well as trade rules covering the domestic market, intra-EU trade, import and export, and the procedure, criteria and categories for the classification of countries according to BSE status in line with the international standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

This training acquaints participants with the single, regularly reviewed framework for existing TSE measures that target animal and public health risks and govern the entire production chain of live animals and products of animal origin. This should help harmonise Member State approaches and increase authorities' ability to verify compliance with requirements. It should also help in comparisons of the situations across Member States.

The workshops examined general considerations on the concept of food safety in the EU and rules for the prevention, control and eradication of TSE. Presentations covered preventive measures for TSE in cattle and small ruminants. These included the TSE road map and feed ban, as well as the role of feed in spreading TSE. They also considered animal by-product provisions, epidemiology, geographic risk of TSE, diagnostic methods, cross contamination, fish meal for young ruminants and removal of specified risk material.

Special attention was given to TSE in cattle and monitoring and eradication measures, looking also at classification of countries according to TSE status and

BTSF – what it is and what it does

At international level, the OIE has adopted standards on animal welfare focusing on the slaughter of animals for human consumption, land and sea transport of animals, and the human killing of animals for disease control purposes.

Training in the areas of animal welfare is considered as an important tool in view of developing best practices and compliance with the EU and international standards.

The courses included a focus on animal welfare during stunning and killing at slaughterhouses, in disease control situations, and during religious slaughter practices. Key training phases were sessions dedicated to in-field simulation exercises. These included an inspection on animal welfare issues during the unloading operations of pigs at an official control post, assessment of the status during stunning and killing operations of poultry, sheep, cattle, and pigs, and Halal slaughter practices for ovine and bovine animals, including buffaloes.

Activities - 4 events in total	4 workshops (4 days duration) held in Italy, Sweden and Turkey
Tutors	45 tutors
Total number of participants MS 165 CC 25 EFTA 10 TC 28	228 participants from the 27 EU Member States, candidate, EFTA and third countries (Albania, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, Eritrea, Israel, Kenya, Korea, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Serbia, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine and Zimbabwe)

Feed law

The production of animal feed is one of the most important sectors of activity in agriculture. Approximately 230 million tonnes of feeding stuffs (excluding roughage) are fed to farmed animals in the EU annually.

Initially the rules on animal feed put the emphasis on productivity of livestock farming. Since then the European Union has developed a wide range of measures aimed at ensuring feed safety at all stages that may have an impact on feed and food safety, including primary production.

New rules include feed hygiene or marketing and labelling criteria for feed materials, covering issues such as undesirable substances, additives, genetically modified feed, medicated feed, animal by-products or chemical and microbiological contaminants.

The new requirements for feed hygiene have introduced certain elements which play a key role in ensuring feed safety along the food chain, e.g. the compulsory registration of all feed business operators, the approval of feed business establishments, the application of good hygienic practice and HACCP principles.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

Best practices for laboratory testing were also covered, particularly as regards sampling. Participants spent a full day of each workshop visiting the Designated Point of Entry, where they performed practical exercises related to the case studies, and viewed the practical application of official sampling procedures.

Activities - 3 events in total	3 workshops (4 days duration) held in Genoa, Pisa and Rome (Italy)
Tutors	26 Tutors from 4 EU Member States
Total number of participants	145 participants from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all EU Member States/candidate countries• EFTA countries: Iceland, Norway, Switzerland• potential candidate countries: Serbia• third countries: Iran

Food contact materials

Food contact materials (FCM) are materials and articles intended to come into contact with food, including packaging, cutlery, dishes, processing machines and containers. Such materials should not transfer their components into foodstuffs in unacceptable quantities.

To avoid contamination of food, migration limits have been established for plasticisers. However, Food and Veterinary Office reports have shown that these limits are often exceeded. It is thus necessary to improve official controls of food contact materials through training in this area for inspectors and national authority staff responsible for setting up control plans.

EU legislation on food contact materials also requires manufacturers to issue declarations of compliance and provide supporting documentation. Inspectors therefore also require training on checking the declarations of compliance and supporting documentation required from manufacturers under EU legislation.

Work on legislation focused on traceability, documentation of compliance and good manufacturing practice. The most important FCM were examined in terms of including the synthesis and structure of their organic macromolecules, their physical properties and commercial uses. Aspects relevant to the industrial sectors producing these materials were also considered, with work on practical registration and control of FCM manufacturers and importers underlining the need for detailed and precise documentation.

The roles of EU bodies and instruments were explained, such as that of EFSA and RASFF, along with Member State viewpoints on the development of national control plans, and guidelines to promote compliance with EU good management practice regulations.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

New rules will apply as from 2010, and it is therefore important to disseminate knowledge about the main changes to the rules and to provide a forum for exchanges between practitioners on available techniques for the handling of ABPs.

Training sessions covered:

- an overview of the changes introduced by the revised regulation on ABPs,
- a detailed overview and explanation of EU standards on ABP, in particular on identification and traceability, and imports and exports,
- the identification and description of EU good practices for ABP in feed,
- an exchange of views between practitioners from the public & private sectors.

Activities – 4 events in total	4 training sessions (3 days duration) held in Belgium, Portugal and Lithuania (2)
Tutors	8 tutors, 7 associated with competent authorities from EU Member States (France, Belgium, Romania, Italy, United Kingdom and The Netherlands) and 1 working for an animal by-products business operator
Total number of participants MS 204 CC 20 TC 27	251 participants from EU Member States, candidate and third countries

Animal health: prevention, and controls of aquaculture animals

Feedback from Member States and stakeholders shows that there is a need for training in the EU concerning emerging diseases affecting animal health of fish, molluscs and crustacean in aquaculture. In particular, the involvement of Member State control staff with adequate professional experience, who are familiar with the relevant EU legislation and in a position to train others, has been identified as a target group for the training.

The specific objectives of the training sessions are to increase expertise on aquaculture fish-health issues, and aquaculture molluscs- and crustaceans-health issues at all stages of farming and placing on the market. In particular, the following subjects were presented:

- the EU legislation relevant to aquaculture animals, in particular the rules of placing on the market and import
- pathogen and disease description
- surveillance,
- inspection and sampling procedure,
- measures to be taken in case of outbreaks (scenarios, study cases), notifications at internal and EU level

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Activities – 2 events in total	2 training sessions in Prague (4 days duration)
Tutors	10
Total number of participants EU 72 CC 7	79 participants from EU Member States and candidate countries

Plant health controls

Several circumstances have led to the inclusion of training sessions on plant health controls within the training activities of the BTSF initiative:

- lack of knowledge of the practical implementation of the potato control directive in a number of Member States, in particular since a new revised control directive was adopted
- differences observed between Member States in the approach, knowledge and ability of the inspectors with regard to the internal controls required under the passport regime
- differences observed between Member States in the approach, knowledge and ability of the inspectors with regard to the internal controls required for imports of various plants and plant products
- differences observed among the Member States in their approach to the official surveys in order to assess whether their territories are free of the relevant harmful organisms
- differences observed between Member States in the approach, knowledge and ability of the inspectors with regard to wood packaging material
- need to have a harmonised and uniform approach in the authorisation of facilities to treat wood packaging material

The provision of training in these areas, in particular for senior Member State control staff, was aimed at providing for a common and unambiguous understanding of the EU legislation and its proper and harmonised implementation across the EU.

Training courses covered plant health controls on wood packaging material, emergency decisions for forestry pests and non-forestry pests, internal controls, import controls and potato quarantine controls. The workshops allowed participants to:

- get up-to-date with current Community rules and regulations, have a common and unambiguous understanding of their requirements, and acquire the ability to ensure their correct and harmonised implementation across the EU,

BTSF – what it is and what it does



The workshops on evaluation and registration of plant protection products covered two areas. First they looked at the phases defined as step 1 and step 2 of the re-registration process (with an examination of experiences to date and the necessary refinements). Secondly they considered the new regulation (with emphasis on new provisions which will have to be implemented at Member State level, such as zonal authorisations, mutual recognition and renewal and amendment of authorisations).

The workshops allowed participants to:

- consider their current progress in meeting the legislative requirements in relation to re-registration
- share their individual experiences in implementing improvements to the processes at a national level and discuss the challenges that remain
- be updated on the new format for application submission (the draft registration report), work-sharing developments and use of the risk envelope and the zonal GAP
- identify best practice currently operating in Member States and consider mechanisms for more fully sharing this
- be updated on the latest developments on confirmatory data, green route inclusions, voluntary withdrawals and the AIR projects
- consider current processes in relation to meeting the legislative requirements of the new regulation with particular attention to zonal authorisations, mutual recognition and renewal, withdrawal and amendment of authorisations

It has to be noted that Commission guidance documents were used as the basis for discussions on re-registration and post inclusion issues, and the latest draft versions of the Commission guidance documents on zonal evaluation and mutual recognition and renewal, withdrawal and amendment of authorisations were used as the basis for the discussions on authorisations in the new regulation.

Activities – 3 events in total	3 workshops held in Lithuania as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one 5-day training session, • one 4-day duration training session, • one 3-day training session
Tutors	15 tutors representing the Commission, national authorities, including national control laboratories, the EU-RL and NRLs, industry and the trade
Total number of participants MS 91 CC 13 TC and EFTA 9	113 participants from the EU Member States, candidate, EFTA and third countries

BTSF – what it is and what it does

Control of highly pathogenic avian influenza and other animal diseases

An assessment of the current highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) situation took place under BTSF in 2008. The outcomes of this assessment have contributed to the development of subsequent HPAI training within the initiative taken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), with input from EU experts.

Training during 2010 consisted of a laboratory workshop and sustained training missions, with content developed with national authorities in the beneficiary countries on the basis of needs assessment and input from international organisations. The laboratory workshop, held in Copenhagen for participants from Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, focused on practical laboratory exercises. Sustained training consisted of five-day workshops in Belarus and Moldova for regional- and national-level veterinary health officials, and two similar workshops in Russia. Discussion in these sessions covered issues, options, and challenges in controlling HPAI in poultry, including the use of bio-security, surveillance, decontamination, movement control, and risk analysis. The mission to the Philippines comprised a laboratory training session and two two-day workshops. These were designed to strengthen the capacity of animal health workers in outbreak investigation, surveillance, emergency preparedness and response. Steps within the outbreak investigation process were covered and the main methods for culling of infected animals and regulations for disposal of their carcasses were outlined.

Activities – 5 events in total	1 workshop in Copenhagen 4 sustained training missions in Belarus, Moldova, Philippines and Russia
Tutors	14 tutors from 3 EU Member States and 1 third country
Total number of participants	211 participants from Belarus, Moldova, the Philippines, Russia and Ukraine 741 users of the HPAI e-learning portal

EU food standards

A series of workshops on EU standards was aimed at helping improve verification of compliance in developing countries where surveillance structures and the ability to provide safety guarantees are lacking. This facilitates trade, reduces the risk of importing food-borne diseases, and eases the burden of controls at EU borders. The workshops were often combined with site visits and the participation of private sector representatives.

BTSF – what it is and what it does



sustainable pesticide use was examined, along with the structure and content of EU requirements for veterinary drug residues, contaminants, and MRLs for active substances. Participants visited an EU Designated Point of Entry, a warehouse and a border inspection post, as well as a feed mill and farm to observe preventative controls focused on mycotoxins.



Sustained training missions dealt with fishery and aquaculture products, hygiene requirements and animal welfare. The fishery and aquaculture mission entailed sending two experts to the Philippines for five days each. One verified implementation of EU regulations on residue control in aquaculture and control of safety of fishery products. The other evaluated the fishery control system from catcher vessels through to export, the effectiveness of inspection and quality assurance service, and compliance with EU food safety requirements. Three missions took place to Indonesia to improve official controls on primary production. These covered needs analysis, tailored training materials, and a workshop that looked at the principles of adult education, skills and knowledge related to personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitation, fish spoilage and handling of seafood products. Two missions to Thailand focused on animal welfare (with visits to poultry farms and slaughterhouses) and on avian influenza (focused on compartmentalisation).



Bi-lateral cooperation fora, an important part of the EU food standards programme, were initiated with the Sino-European Food Safety Cooperation Forum in Shanghai, which presented the principles behind the EU's food safety approach, the EU implementation of the WTO agreement on SPS measures, and the roles of the FVO and EFSA. An overview of food safety controls in China was also presented, including import and export controls, monitoring of risks and national standards. Parallel sessions looked at animal welfare, pesticides, veterinary drug residues, food hygiene, plant health legislation, food and feed additives, and risk assessment.

The EU-ASEAN cooperation forum on risk assessment, a follow-up to the February 2009 EU-ASEAN cooperation forum on Codex Matters and Risk Assessment, examined the application of risk analysis in the EU and the ASEAN region, and focused on pesticide residues and MRLs. Issues covered included crop and chemical data gaps, and the capacity for food safety risk assessment in ASEAN countries. Cooperation strategies were proposed for food contact materials, microbiological risk reduction strategies and import tolerances. Training priorities identified included strengthening laboratory capacity, crisis management and risk communication.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

During Course 1 on mycotoxins, particular attention was given to aflatoxins. Course 3 on residues mainly focused on residues of veterinary drugs. The workshops allowed participants to:

- train on analytical techniques at EU accredited laboratories covering the detection of mycotoxins (particularly aflatoxins and ochratoxin A), residue analysis (particularly veterinary drugs) and the full range of currently employed microbiology techniques,
- update their knowledge on the relevant EU legislation, risk assessment and regulatory limits (MLs) establishment and official bodies for microbiological and laboratory networks,
- become familiar with sampling, including storage, transport and traceability of samples, screening (ELISA) and confirmatory (HPLC and MS) methods and automation techniques,
- improve their knowledge on quality in analytical laboratories, such as accreditation (ISO standards), performance criteria, validation of analytical methods and quality management.

Activities – 3 events in total	Copenhagen, York
Tutors	23 tutors
Total number of participants Central and South America 11 ENP Countries 12 Africa 15 Asia 19	57 participants from ENP countries, Africa, Asia and Central and South America

Analysis of genetically modified organisms

GMOs are cultivated and commercialised in parts of the world. Approximately 134 million hectares were planted with GM crops in 2009; almost half of the global hectareage was planted by developing countries. 144 GM events, representing 24 crops, have so far received worldwide regulatory approval and this number is still likely to rise. Out of these 144 GM events, only about 20 are authorised for food and/or feed use in Europe. A specific event may be authorised in an exporting country but not in an importing country.

A more uniform approach to GMO analysis will help international trade. Capacity building through training should increase expertise among non-EU operators, helping them to adapt procedures for checking compliance with EU requirements.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

pilot NCPs, with the objective of being operative by the end of 2010 or the beginning of 2011. A training workshop organised in Europe was held in Rome with the objective to demonstrate iRASFF to all the NCPs, to train them on the new features and concept it provides, to train them on the creation of alerts and follow-up with iRASFF and to clarify their doubts and questions regarding the application of iRASFF.

Asia, South East Asia, in particular, has become an important area for the development of RASFF. Trade between Asian countries has increased, new strategies have emerged, and new trade agreements have come into force. The development of the ASEAN RASFF has been actively supported by DG SANCO and BTSF since 2007. The main challenge for the training courses organised in 2009-2010 was to ensure the sustainability of the RASFF ASEAN pilot project. This objective was addressed through two types of activities:

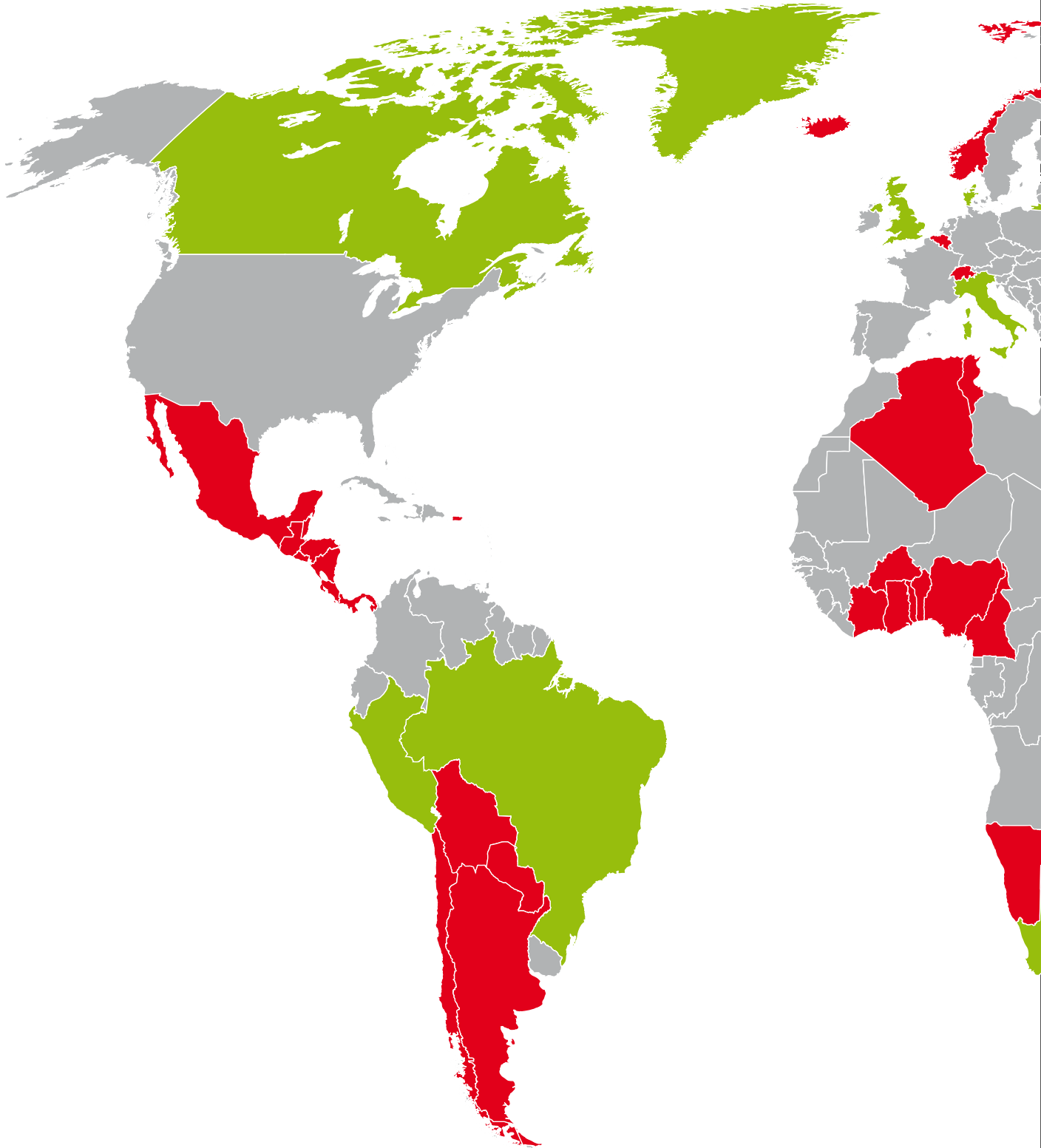
- the provision of technical assistance to ASEAN countries to develop their capacity to create notifications into ASEAN RASFF,
- assistance to the ASEAN NCPs in getting ASEAN RASFF endorsed by ASEAN.

For sustained training missions in Indonesia, a first mission was carried out in 2009, preparing the logistical framework for the development of Rapid Food Alert Management, on the basis of interviews and observations made in different locations in Indonesia with all the competent authorities involved in the Food Safety Control System of Indonesia. The conclusions of the missions were endorsed by the Indonesian competent authorities, which created a working group on RASFF. 8 months later, a second sustained training mission took place to reinforce communication and management capacities, to organise the operation of the Indonesian RASFF, and to keep track of the alerts and follow-up provided.

In Africa, food safety long remained an issue of lower importance than food security in development policies. In 2009, BTSF launched a specific initiative for African countries, in collaboration with the African Union, in order to promote harmonisation regarding food safety approaches at the level of RECs and to support the extension of Food Safety in the local food chains, in particular for processed products. In the framework of the workshops held in this project, the governments and the African Union expressed their interest in developing RASFF and the use of TRACES.

A BTSF training course addressed Latin American countries in 2007. Since then, several countries in Latin America have started developing network for information and alert management. TRACES trainings were organised in Guatemala and sustainable training missions on RASFF have been organised in Argentina and Chile. A second mission was foreseen in Argentina but was not implemented due to the lack of follow-up given on the expert's recommendations by the beneficiary parties.

BTSF – what it is and what it does



BTSF – what it is and what it does

The Africa programme

The 2009-10 BTSF Africa activities are deliverables of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy agreed by EU and African heads of state and government at their Lisbon Summit in December 2007. The Strategy's first Action Plan for 2008-2010 includes a component aimed at strengthening sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) capacities in Africa and comprises five deliverables, of which BTSF Africa is one.

Since the launch of concrete activities in 2009, BTSF Africa has created opportunities for networking and exchange of best practices, and close to 500 inspectors have been trained. It has contributed to harmonisation of food hygiene inspections, improving food hygiene practice in SMEs and strengthening national veterinary services. This should have knock-on effects in terms of public-private partnerships, trade opportunities, market access and job creation at national, regional and pan-African levels.

"Let me... thank you for the joint progress made in strengthening the overall SPS frameworks across Africa through the Better Training for Safer Foods Programme for the past two years."
Tumusiime Rhoda Peace , Commissioner, Department for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission, High-Level Conference on Better Training For Safer Food, 18 November 2010, Brussels

The seven BTSF Africa activities are funded under the Food Security Thematic Programme of the EU's Development Cooperation Instrument, with a budget of €10 million for three years. Activities began with a high-level Africa-EU conference in April 2009 in Addis Ababa. The conference aimed at promoting regional integration on rules, standards, controls and procedures. It included an explanation of the programme and was aimed at generating political momentum and collecting views on the way forward.

In 2009, 38 events were organised for more than 1,100 participants and a budget of € 3.5 million. During 2010, around 60 events were organised, with some 3,000 participants for a budget of € 6.5 million.

The activities have targeted the public and private sectors across Africa. This has involved transfer of expertise that should better enable African countries to produce agricultural products and foodstuffs that comply with international SPS standards. This helps to guarantee a safer and more secure food supply for African consumers and ensures integration of the African agro-food sector into the global market. This could benefit a vast number of people in terms of rural development, economic growth and employment. A safer food supply should also cut the likelihood of outbreaks of food-borne disease and resulting health and socio-economic costs.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

- Botswana (newly appointed OIE delegates)
- Tanzania (focal points for wildlife diseases)
- Namibia (focal points for aquatic animal diseases)
- Mali (focal points for wildlife diseases)
- Botswana (focal points for animal disease notification to OIE)
- Morocco (national OIE delegates on communication)
- Ethiopia (focal points for animal welfare)
- South Africa (focal points for veterinary products)

Regional workshops are scheduled for 2011 in Mali, Tunisia, Kenya, Swaziland, South Africa, Botswana, Senegal, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana and Egypt.

A fifth activity programme designed for training trainers was conducted during regional workshops. Eight of these covered the five Economic Partnership Agreement regions (Western Africa, Central Africa, East-Southern Africa, Southern including South Africa and East Africa) and two covered North Africa. Specific guidelines were developed and used to „train the trainers“ on the application of the Reference Framework developed in 2010 on the harmonisation of food hygiene management – inspections and authorisation of food establishments.

Regional Workshops held in 2010		
Month	Venues	Participants
February	Douala, Cameroon	28 supported participants from 6 countries of the Central Africa region. AUC, UNIDO and host country (vice Prime Minister) attended
March	Casablanca, Morocco	24 supported participants from 5 countries of the Northern Africa region. AUC, UMA, UNIDO and host country (Services Director) attended
April	Kampala, Uganda	26 supported participants from 8 countries of East Africa + Southern Africa regions. AUC, EAC, WHO, ARSO and host country (Minister's office) attended
May	Bamako, Mali	55 supported participants from 15 countries of the West Africa region. ECOWAS, UEMOA, AUC, WHO, UNIDO and host country (Services Director) attended
June	Lilongwe, Malawi	39 supported participants from 12 countries of the Eastern and Southern Africa region. AUC, COMESA, SADC, WHO, UNIDO, ARSO and host country (1 Minister & 1 Deputy Minister) attended
November	Brussels, Belgium	149 (of which 61 supported) participants from across Africa, AUC, ARSO, COMESA, EAC, UEMOA, UMA, farmers & food associations. Standards setting bodies (OIE, Codex) & International organisations (UNIDO, FAO) also attended

BTSF – what it is and what it does

High-level Conference

The high-level conference on the BTSF programme on 18-19 November gave the 149 delegates from the EU and beyond an opportunity to assess the core BTSF activities (as well as the outcomes of the BTSF programme in [Africa](#)).

„The main purpose of this conference...is to examine our achievements to date with a view to ensuring that our work will move from strength to strength in the future. The idea is to generate momentum on commonly agreed actions, to strengthen our mutual capacities through dialogue and cooperation and to facilitate an exchange of expertise between our two continents.“

John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, High-Level Conference on Better Training For Safer Food, 18 November 2010, Brussels

The conference was addressed by EU Commissioner for Health and Consumers, John Dalli, and AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, as well as by Sabine Laruelle, Belgian Minister for SMEs, the Self-Employed, Agriculture and Scientific Policy, and Professor Peter Nelson Mwanza, Malawian Minister of Agriculture. Other key guests included the Gabonese Agriculture Minister Mr Ndong Sima as well as African Ambassadors to Brussels, representatives of Regional Economic Communities (COMESA, EAC, UEMOA, UMA), standards setting bodies (OIE, CODEX) and international organisations (UNIDO, STDF, FAO, ARSO) and regional farmers and food associations, etc.

The conference took place against the background of the publication of the Commission Staff Working Document on Better Training for Safer Food and provided the first forum to discuss its ideas and analyse its proposals. The second day of the conference had a technical focus, and Commission DGs and services presented their view of BTSF. An assessment was provided of the training so far and an outline given of possible strategies for future activities in both the EU and third countries.

Delegates were in agreement that the standard BTSF activity should continue, because of the benefits that it brings to increasing consumer protection and fostering trade, through the knowledge and expertise it provides. They also recognised the pertinence of the strategies in the staff working document and concluded that they need successful implementation.

Continuation of the collaboration fostered by BTSF was pinpointed as desirable, and stronger links were urged with national authorities of EU Member States and third countries to identify needs, ensure training quality, and enhance dissemination, so that the training has the intended impact. Continued coordination with international organisations and other stakeholders was also

BTSF – what it is and what it does

cooperation among Commission departments. The courses cover organic farming and geographical indications, and are mainly addressed to Member State staff in charge of controls of the schemes for organic and protected designations and to the staff of private control bodies to which this task has been delegated. The objective is to disseminate best practices for control procedures, improving knowledge and ensuring consistent and rigorous implementation of rules across the Union. There will be nine three-day training sessions on organic farming and nine three-day training sessions for protected designation schemes.

Another new programme focuses on supporting EU controls in Member States and third countries. This too has a novel dimension in that it aims at close cooperation between the Food and Veterinary Office, the Commission and Member States. Its objectives are to increase awareness of FVO working methods and standards, to allow national officials with experience in national audits and control functions, to bring their knowledge to the FVO's work, and to boost confidence in the results of audits and controls carried out in other Member States and in third countries. The training is aimed exclusively at Member State staff conducting official controls into compliance with EU feed and food law, animal health and welfare and plant health legislation. There will be 24 three-day training sessions at the FVO premises in Ireland, each covering FVO methods and standards on ethics and reporting systems, background on missions (objectives, legislation involved, history of previous missions, expectations, etc.), and one specific area of expertise, ranging from red meat and milk to residue controls, and from food of non-animal origin to genetically modified organisms.

For internal auditing, the rationale is that training at the early stage of setting these processes will assist in developing a consistent approach across the Member States and in providing assurances that the audit findings in different reports are of comparable value. The objective is to disseminate best practices for auditing procedures, improving knowledge of this complex area of work and ensuring consistent and high implementation standards across the Union. Again, the training is mainly addressed to Member State staff operating or involved in national audit systems; officials are often familiar with auditing and inspecting food establishments and operators and their control systems as part of national controls, but are not so familiar with the auditing of competent authorities' performance of their controls. There will be six four-day training sessions on setting up and implementing an audit system, either internal or external, in line with Community legislation and taking account of relevant international standards; and six four-day training sessions on developing the ability to conduct a detailed audit to verify the effective and suitable implementation of official controls by the relevant control authorities.

**Five years of experience –
looking backwards,
to plan for the future**



Five years of experience – looking backwards, to plan for the future

The Staff Working Document

Staff Working Document on Challenges and Strategies for Better Training for Safer Food

The European Commission took the decision to transform the strategy paper on Better Training for Safer Food that had been drafted in 2009 into a Staff Working Document. The Document was subsequently adopted by the Commission during 2010 and presented at the High Level Conference in Brussels, November 18-19, 2010.

The SWD is a Commission response to the challenges identified by the intermediate assessment of the first two years of BTSF carried out in 2008. SWD responded to these findings by proposing actions to enable BTSF to successfully overcome these challenges. Some of these actions can be implemented in the short-medium term (i.e. by the end of 2013) and include:

- a study to accurately estimate the demand for BTSF training
- a pilot project aimed at setting up an e-learning tool for basic-level training
- increasing training output through closer cooperation of EC services with Member State and third country authorities, international organisations and the private sector
- better identifying training priorities and target audiences through preparing a standard questionnaire to ascertain training needs, and deepening cooperation with national authorities and stakeholders
- increasing participant homogeneity through:
 - more accurate definition of training goals and target audiences
 - development of basic- and advanced-level courses for all subjects in the long term
 - more interpretation
 - maintaining regional-level training, particularly in third countries
- reinforcing the train the trainer approach in the selection process;
- a study on best practice in training for in-depth investigation of ways to improve training quality
- improving dissemination through providing clear learning tools and documentation, verifying possibilities offered by e-learning and setting up dissemination plans through coordination with stakeholders
- general assessments of BTSF every two years

Five years of experience – looking backwards, to plan for the future



The Staff Working Document looks at options that are not directly linked to a budget increase. Other options could imply an increase in budget above the €15 million estimated in Communication COM (2006) 519 after 2013. Any eventual increase relates to the longer term and will be subject to a prior cost-benefit analysis.

An ex-post evaluation covering the entire period of the programme will be carried out in 2011. It will form the basis of any future decision on the development of BTSF.

Study on best practices for training on sanitary and phytosanitary issues

One of the actions highlighted in the Staff Working Document was the identification and definition of best training practices in the fields covered by BTSF. To this end, a study was completed during 2010 that proposes practices which could be implemented within the framework of the initiative and examines how different practices perform in relation to aspects that are relevant to BTSF. This work was mainly carried out through questionnaires and case study analysis of organisations providing SPS-related or similar training and interviews with experts in training and in SPS training.

The analysis revealed a wide diversity of training practices regarding objectives, size, audience, methods, etc. Such diversity had several implications. In particular, it was not easy to draw simple clear-cut lessons from the review of practices. Moreover, it appears more appropriate to speak about good practices rather than best practices, as no practice could indeed be considered overall good in all aspects and for all kinds of SPS training.

The recommendations only focus on areas that could be beneficial to BTSF. There are indeed areas for which BTSF is considered to perform sufficiently well in comparison with the observed practices and/or for which no particular good/best practices were identified (needs assessment and prioritisation, logistical and organisational arrangements).

The recommendations concern the preparation of participants (preparatory work or prior basic e-learning courses), the content of training (to favour basic and advanced training and to use more practice-oriented methods), the development of new training models (to promote blended learning combining e-learning and traditional class-room learning) and more cost-effective training (to focus on the training of trainers approach with particular attention devoted to pedagogical techniques and reusability of materials). In addition, the report indicates that more attention should be paid to building a BTSF knowledge database in order to consolidate the existing BTSF corpus of knowledge, which seems so far insufficiently exploited. This knowledge database could include:

Five years of experience – looking backwards, to plan for the future



sary, especially within a blended training approach, but it would be less frequent and for shorter durations.

Increased access to training is another potential result. In most organisations staff can only attend a limited number of classroom training sessions due to cost whereas many organisations provide staff with unlimited access to e-learning as no incremental costs result.

Greater participant homogeneity could be achieved by using basic-level e-learning as a starting point for advanced practical training targeted at people with appropriate qualifications and experience. Combining these aspects could also offer an effective way of running training while increasing outreach and participant numbers.

More focus on advanced practical training during workshops might reduce the need for longer workshops that the intermediate assessment on BTSF identified as necessary to cover the full range of subjects for any given programme. Applying e-learning to basic-level courses for all programmes could clarify technical focus, facilitate identification of participants, allow clearer indications to be given of required knowledge levels and help to better define contents, agenda and selection procedures.

An additional issue currently affecting target audience definition is language. Translation of e-learning courses into all official EU languages as well as languages of candidate and selected third countries could solve this problem.

The study identified potential constraints to the establishment of an e-learning platform, including:

- Lack of knowledge of potential uses and benefits of e-learning
- Lack of availability of technical experts
- Lack of requisite IT skills
- Possible reluctance of learners to engage with new technologies
- Upheaval caused by changes to training management processes
- Insufficient support for and engagement with learners
- Lack of access to high-speed internet in some countries

E-learning prototypes were developed for animal welfare, TSE and food contact materials. This demonstrated the potentially high impact on staff workload of e-learning implementation, particularly for creation, management and review of content.

The study recommended full subcontracting, initially for five modules. It was concluded that maintaining state-of-the-art e-learning capacity in-house over a long period could prove costly owing to rapid technological development.

BTSF – a social network

“Better Training for Safer Food represents a considerable success story for the European Commission. However, this success is not solely down to the Commission, as the management of Better Training for Safer Food requires constructive engagement from European Union Member State and third country authorities and a wide array of stakeholders (...). The work of these experts has been fundamental to the smooth functioning of Better Training for Safer Food thus far and in order to successfully implement the actions laid down in the Working Document, their role and commitment will need to increase further still.”

Paola Testori Coggi, Director General For Health And Consumers, European Commission, High-Level Conference on The Better Training for Safer Food Programme, 18 November 2010, Brussels

The expert group of national contact points (NCPs) in the Member States, candidate and European Free Trade Association countries channel information related to Better Training for Safer Food between the Commission, the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers and the external contractors responsible for the running of training activities on the one hand, and the national authorities on the other. Regular meetings of this group with the Commission help to define training needs, coordinate activities and flag up any problems that may have been encountered during the activities.

National contact points in the Member states, candidate countries and other third countries for the “Better Training For Safer Food” initiative

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* European Training Platform for Safer Food (TrainSaferFood) – GIZ GmbH (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5, 65760 Eschborn, Germany	Animal by-products; Prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies; Monitoring and controls of zoonoses and applying microbiological criteria in foodstuffs; Food contact materials; Plant Health Controls; Evaluation and registration and control of use and marketing of plant protection products; Food testing and phytosanitary issues	Victoria Diekkamp Victoria.Diekkamp@giz.de Tel: +32 2 229 27 68 www.giz.de
* Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale (IZS) TERAMO Consortium, Training Unit for SANCO OIE CC for veterinary training, epidemiology, food safety and animal welfare, Istituto "G.Caporale" – Teramo, Italy	Animal welfare standards during transport and at slaughter and killing for disease control purposes; Controls on food and feed of non-animal origin	Silvia d'Albenzio sancotraining@izs.it Tel: +39.0861.332670
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* This is a list of the bodies that currently have direct contract with the EAHC. However, the number of the institutions and bodies providing or supporting the actual training is much higher. The companies listed here represent the consortiums or platforms where different national bodies and administrations or other private companies are present and are carrying out training of officials.

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