



## ***BTSF – RISK ASSESSMENT IN THE FOOD CHAIN***

### ***Course 2 - Microbiological risk assessment***

#### **Notification to NCPs**

Organisation and implementation of training activities on principles and methods of risk assessment in the food chain under the "Better Training for Safer Food" initiative

#### **Objectives of the proposed training and goals to be reached**

The EFSA Advisory Forum has on several occasions expressed a need to develop a long-term training programme on risk assessment for experts working in different fields of the food chain, wishing also more recently to extend these training programmes to additional areas of risk assessment.”.

The harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies has been identified as a priority area of the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking between the EU Member States and EFSA, since harmonisation would help in the development of high quality scientific opinions that are recognised as truly authoritative. This harmonisation does not aim at standardising risk assessment methodology, but merely at identifying possible discrepancies between the approaches used by different Member States in order to increase transparency and trust amongst Member States’ authorities in each other’s risk assessments.

2008 EFSA Working Group Report on “Fostering harmonised risk assessment approaches in Member States” pointed out how countries organised risk assessment differently at the time. Many of the procedures in the countries appeared to be in line, or at least not in conflict, with procedural aspects within EFSA, however highlighting discrepancies in procedural aspects of risk assessment, mostly regarding declarations of interest, public register of risk assessment requests, procedures concerning the selection of experts, the interaction with stakeholders and between risk assessors and risk managers during the risk assessment process. Harmonisation of risk assessments is thus considered fundamental to avoid divergences by different national agencies and strengthen collaboration within Europe and beyond.

The present training proposal will address issues listed above through the adoption of a practical approach, aimed to increase knowledge of Competent Authorities and scientists from public institutions and national authorities involved in food chain risk assessment in order to increase the level of expertise and harmonisation. **To facilitate this, invited countries will be requested to select on the specific training sessions officials coming from the risk assessment field.**

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### **General training objective**

The main goal of the training programme is to disseminate best practices for the implementation of principles and methods of food chain risk assessment, improving knowledge of this complex area of work and ensuring consistent and high implementation standards across the European Union.

### **Specific objectives:**

- Promoting reduction of discrepancies in procedural aspects of risk assessment
- Contribute to the harmonisation of risk assessment approaches
- Contribute to increasing transparency and building trust amongst Member States' authorities in each other's risk assessments.
- Disseminate best practices for risk management and communication
- Promote exchange of experience in order to increase the level of expertise and harmonisation of approaches.

The training will be addressed to officials from the Member States, EEA/EFTA countries and EU candidate countries involved in the risk assessment field

### **Main topics that will be addressed:**

- Introduction to microbiological risk assessment (EU and international regulatory framework, basic steps in microbiological risk assessment);
- Introduction to microbiological risk assessment (different steps, microbiological risk assessment at national and at international level, approaches in different areas of food and feed safety, problem formulation, routes of exposure) and its legal framework;
- Hazard Identification
  - Statement of problem and scope of risk assessment;
  - What makes microbiological risk assessment different (i.e. differences with other risk assessments);
  - Food intoxication versus food infection;
  - Pathogen-product pathway;
  - Data and information on microbial agent, food and process, consumer practice;
  - Concept of Qualified Presumption of Safety (QPS);
  - Bacteria, molds, algae, mycotoxins.
- Hazard Characterization
  - The disease triangle (pathogen virulence-host susceptibility-food matrix);
  - Sources of dose-response data (human volunteer feeding studies, epidemiological data, animal studies, in vitro studies);
  - Modelling dose-response relationship (types of models, selection of dose-response model);



- Statistical inference in dose-response modelling and applicability of results to new (even unknown) conditions, different from the reference data set.
- Exposure Assessment
  - Describing and modelling the production-to-consumption chain;
  - Describe the basic processes, such as microbial processes (such as growth and inactivation of microorganisms) and food handling processes (such as cross-contamination), statistical inference and applicability of results to new (even unknown) conditions, different from the reference data set;
  - Qualitative and qualitative (deterministic vs. stochastic) models, simple vs. structured models, limitations due to data;
  - Uncertainty and variability in exposure assessment;
  - Sources of data and models, their generality vs. context dependency.
- Risk Characterization
  - Qualitative, semi-quantitative, quantitative outputs;
  - Distinguishing variability and uncertainty;
  - Sensitivity analysis and “what if” scenarios;
  - Model criticism: model fit, model comparison and model assumptions;
  - Applicability and generality of results, limitations.
- Risk management aspects specifically related to microbiological risk assessment and other related issues (e.g. antimicrobial resistance, BSE and other TSE prions);
- Short introduction to Risk Communication.

#### Training agenda

The training will be organised over 5 days and it will be designed in the following way: opening introductory session in the afternoon on the day of arrival, three full day sessions and a session in the morning on the final day.

### **Courses, locations and allocations of seats**

Two four-day training courses will be delivered in February 2020 and November 2020.

The dates and locations of the training sessions are the following:

#### Training sessions: dates and locations

Year	Training session	Tentative dates	City
2020	1	27 - 31 January 2020	Bologna (Italy)
	2	26 - 30 October 2020	Voorschoten (Netherlands)

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The attendance will be approximately 20 people for each session. As specified, the courses will be offered to officials of the Member States, EEA/EFTA countries and EU candidate countries. **It's again highlighted that each invited country on the different training sessions will be requested to select trainees coming from the risk assessment field**

Quotas of allocated seats for the first training session is provided as per below table. Quotas of allocated seats for the second training session will be provided in due time.

		Course 2 - Microbiological risk assessment
country group	Country	TS 1 27-31/01/2020 Bologna
Member States	Austria	1
	Belgium	0
	Bulgaria	1
	Croatia	1
	Cyprus	0
	Czech Republic	1
	Denmark	1
	Estonia	0
	Finland	0
	France	1
	Germany	1
	Greece	1
	Hungary	1
	Ireland	0
	Italy	1
	Latvia	0
	Lithuania	0
	Luxembourg	0
	Malta	1
	Netherlands	1
	Poland	0
	Portugal	0
	Romania	1
	Slovakia	1
	Slovenia	0
	Spain	1
	Sweden	1

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	United Kingdom	0
Candidate countries	Albania	1
	North Macedonia	1
	Montenegro	1
	Serbia	1
	Turkey	0
EFTA/EEA Countries	Iceland	0
	Norway	0
	Switzerland	0
		<b>20</b>

In addition to the numbers indicated above, each country will be requested to indicate additional participants for a reserve list to be used should one or more countries not meet the proposed quota.

For logistic organisational reasons, it is kindly requested that names of participants shall be communicated at the latest within 30 days from each workshop. A reminder will be sent to NCPs before each event.

Participants will arrive at the training venues on Monday morning and training will commence on Monday afternoon (depending on travel connections, participants may be requested to arrive at the training venues on Sunday evening). Return travel will be on Friday afternoon or Saturday morning according to flight connections.

## Participants' profile

The proposal of OPERA will aim at disseminating best practices for the implementation of principles and methods of food chain risk assessment, improving knowledge of this complex area of work and ensuring consistent and high implementation standards across the European Union. To ensure a properly targeted selection of participants in the field of risk assessment, relevant selection criteria are enclosed here below.

### Selection criteria for regular participants

<b>Minimum requirements</b> (participants who do not meet the minimum requirements should not be proposed for the training and should not be evaluated according to the selection criteria listed below)		
Minimum 3 years of professional experience in the food chain risk assessment		Yes/No
Competent national authority responsible for the food chain risk assessment		Yes/No
<b>Evaluation criteria</b>		<b>Max. score</b>
1)	Professional experience in public institutions and national authorities involved in food chain risk assessment  <i>Scoring</i> less than 3 years = 1 point; 3-5 years = 5 points; 5-10 years = 7 points; > 10 years = points	10

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2)	Experience in microbiological risk assessment <i>Scoring</i> <i>less than 3 years = 1 point; 3-5 years = 5 points; 5-10 years = 7 points; &gt; 10 years = points</i>	10
3)	Experience in crisis investigation and management <i>Scoring</i> <i>no experience = 0 points; less than 3 years = 1 point; 3-5 years = 5 points; 5-10 years = 7 points; &gt; 10 years = points</i>	10
<b>Maximum total score</b>		<b>30</b>

As concerns the Evaluation Criteria, these should be used as a tool to rank participants according to priority (where higher scoring indicates higher priority) but there is no expected minimum scoring to be met with.

**Participants will be requested to commit themselves to disseminate the knowledge received via different dissemination methods**, i.e. informing colleagues about the information received at the training, distributing (photocopying or sending via electronic way) the training materials among their colleagues, preparing informative articles in the professional national journals or preparing presentations based on the training materials for the staff of national Competent Authorities or other disseminating methods which could be appropriate to share the information received via the BTSF training. During the course participants will be provided with a training package to be used as supporting dissemination material.

#### Dissemination questionnaire

Between two to three months after the respective training session, participants will receive a standard questionnaire requesting information of dissemination activities performed by the participant after the workshop and details on differences in the approach adopted in day-to-day work after having undergone the training.

#### Initial and final tests of knowledge

Furthermore, selected participants should be informed that the program will include an anonymous knowledge test to be carried out at the beginning and at the end of each training session in order to measure the impact of the training on the understanding of the taught subjects by participants.

Participants are expected to agree to carry out the above tests and to reply to the questionnaire.

#### Data protection

For the the purpose of selection, enrolment and participation in the training activities under the BTSF, as well as for statistical purposes, personal data of participants will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data. As the organisation of BTSF training courses implies the collection of individuals' personal data, its processing falls within the provisions of the above mentioned Regulation. Further details can be found at the following link: <https://btsfacademy.eu/training/mod/page/view.php?id=417>



## **Project Management**

The project is managed by OPERA Srl, in consortium with NSF Euroconsultants.

Project Manager is Claudio BOMPARD.

Training Coordinator is Jørgen SCHLUNDT.

Separate notifications will be sent to NCPs for each course and will contain the names and contact details of the Event Manager and Assistant Event Manager as also logistical details on the event.

All official communication between NCPs and the project will be maintained through the functional e-mail [20189605riskassessment@btsftraining.com](mailto:20189605riskassessment@btsftraining.com) or phone to + 39 06 96042652.

Booking of flights and other logistical arrangements will be handled by OPERA and NSF Euroconsultants staff. Contacts of relevant staff members involved will be supplied to the participants.

The project website is [www.btsftraining.com/btsf-risk-management](http://www.btsftraining.com/btsf-risk-management) and will be regularly updated with details of forthcoming courses.