

SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION UNIT

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Report
Focal Point Activities
2008

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1 Executive Summary

With the signature of the Declaration of Intent¹ by the Advisory Forum and the adoption of the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking² by the EFSA Management Board, the foundation was laid for the establishment of Focal Points in all 27 Member States. The role of Focal Points is to support their Advisory Forum Members in the practical implementation of activities related to networking and scientific cooperation.

As setting up networks at national level was considered crucial, this objective was given priority during the first year. The newly established networks in the Member States actively supported the Focal Points in collecting and sharing data on topics of common or specific interest, which supported the work of EFSA's Panels and Units as well as scientific committees in Member States.

Furthermore, Focal Points have played a pivotal role in helping EFSA to update the Article 36 List and maintain it functional. By testing and populating EFSA's Expert Database, Focal Points also contributed to the successful launch of the database in spring 2008 as well as to its further development. In the future, both EFSA and Member States will benefit from this growing pool of highly qualified and specialised experts.

Various additional initiatives of Focal Points also helped broadening EFSA's scientific outreach in Europe. Particularly EFSA's key role regarding food safety in Europe was made more visible and transparent at national level.

Through all of these activities and efforts, the Focal Points have contributed substantially to improve scientific cooperation and networking between and among Member States and EFSA. In the questionnaire on the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking, Advisory Forum Members consider Focal Points an asset and have expressed that, in their views, Focal Point activities should continue and that their function should be strengthened.

2 Background

Cooperation and networking between EFSA and EU Member States is a key priority: by working together it can be ensured that Europe's food is safe. Hence, Advisory Forum Members and EFSA committed themselves to, on the one hand strengthen scientific cooperation and on the other facilitate the information exchange on risk assessment as well as risk communication in the European Union, by signing the Declaration of Intent¹. This initiative was followed by the adoption of the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking² by EFSA's Management Board. Apart from emphasising the need to exchange and collect scientific data and information, share risk assessment practices, contribute to the harmonisation of methodologies for risk assessment, and promote coherence in risk communication, the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking also calls for the establishment of Focal Points.

Over the past year, Focal Points have been officially nominated by all Member States and Norway. An Agreement between Norway and EFSA could not be signed because the Decision to incorporate Food Law into the EEA Agreement is pending the consent of the national parliaments. Consequently, Norway also did not receive any financial support from EFSA. Switzerland joined as an observer. The role of Focal Points is to support the Advisory Forum Members on all practical aspects related to networking and cooperation, such as collecting and disseminating relevant information. All strategic issues and decision-making remain the responsibility of the Advisory Forum.

EFSA provides financial support to Focal Points, as specified in the Focal Point Agreements, which have been signed between EFSA and the designated authorities of all 27 Member States. In accordance with the Agreements, Focal Points have provided EFSA with detailed reports of their key activities performed under the Agreements, and the human and financial resources used in their implementation.

During the first year of establishment, Focal Points have gathered much experience with carrying out their tasks. The present Report on Focal Point Activities 2008 is based on the reports submitted by each Focal Point (summarised in Appendix 1) and gives an overview of their activities, as well as the resulting outputs and achievements in the Focal Points' first year.

¹ Declaration of Intent, AF 29.09.2006 – 6a,
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/PartnersNetworks/AdvisoryForum/efsa_locale-1178620753812_Declarationofintent.htm

² Strategy for Cooperation and Networking, December 2006,
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/DocumentSet/mb_strategy_28thmee_en_6a.1.pdf

3 Setting up Focal Points

All 27 EU Member States have signed Focal Point Agreements with EFSA within the first year of being set up and becoming operational: 18 Agreements were signed by the end of 2007 and the remaining ones in 2008. In addition, Norway has officially nominated its Focal Point (without signing an Agreement with EFSA, due to legal reasons) and Switzerland is participating as an observer. Where and how Focal Points were created varied among Member States: in 23 Member States, the Focal Points were established in the same institution as the one where the Advisory Forum Member comes from; in 15 cases the Focal Point contact person is the same person as the Advisory Forum Member or the Alternate.

To support the Advisory Forum Members with practical aspects of cooperation and networking, Focal Points have set up networks, for example with competent authorities/institutions, (potential) Article 36 organisations, research organisations, universities, risk managers, risk assessors, and stakeholders in their countries. On EFSA's side, Focal Points mainly interact with the Scientific Cooperation Unit, which has the mandate to foster cooperation and communication on scientific issues between EFSA and Member States. Thus, Focal Points form a link between EFSA and relevant national institutions and experts.

Focal Points were successfully established in all 27 Member States and Norway. Switzerland joined as an observer. From the beginning, Focal Points acted in both directions: within Europe, they enhanced the relationship between EFSA and national authorities; within their countries, they established nation-wide networks.

4 Focal Point activities

The Focal Points were established to support their Advisory Forum Members, particularly with the following tasks:

1. facilitate the exchange of scientific information;
2. support activities under Article 36;
3. support activities to populate EFSA's Expert Database; and
4. raise the visibility of EFSA's scientific work, at national level.

Close collaboration between Focal Points and their Advisory Forum Members is therefore important where Focal Points and Advisory Forum Members or Alternates are not the same persons. The method of liaison and the focus of work undertaken by Focal Points vary from one country to another according to their individual situations and priorities.

To increase the effectiveness of Focal Point work, it is essential to coordinate Focal Point activities and to exchange views and experiences on the implementation of their tasks. Thus, three Focal Point meetings were held in 2008. The importance of the meetings is reflected in the large, and increasing, number of countries that participated: while 26 countries were present at the 1st meeting, all 27 Member States, Norway and Switzerland were represented at the 3rd meeting. Participants also benefited from these meetings as they provide a platform for cooperation and networking between and among Member States and EFSA.

4.1 Exchange of scientific information

Being pivotal to effective scientific cooperation between Member States and EFSA, the active exchange of scientific information at EU level was defined as a priority area in the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking; and consequently became a major task of the Focal Points.

4.1.1 Requests for sharing information and data

To mutually benefit from data, knowledge and experience available in Member States, EFSA and Member States have requested assistance and input on specific issues. In this two-way process, Focal Points have: forwarded and disseminated specific information to their national networks; and collected requested data and information, which they shared with EFSA and other Member States.

Six questionnaires were sent to Focal Points, requesting their assistance in collecting answers to the specific questions, five of which have already been returned to EFSA (see Table 1). The Focal Points have contributed to this activity by replying directly or forwarding the questionnaire to the relevant experts or institutions in their country.

Table 1: Questionnaires sent to Focal Points

Number	Item	Replies ^{a)}
1	Questionnaire on surveillance data on bee colony mortality	24
2	Questionnaire on Classical Swine Fever (CSF) vaccines	14
3 4	2 Questionnaires on hunting practices and CSF vaccination of wild boar (one on live vaccines and other on inactivated vaccines)	21
5a 5b	Questionnaire on process-related aspects of Risk Assessment Part 1 Part 2	29 72 ^{b)}
6	Questionnaire on the scope and protection goals for aquatic and terrestrial ecotoxicological effect assessments	^{c)}

^{a)} Replies of Member States, Norway and Switzerland

^{b)} Replies from national competent organisations of Member States, Norway and Switzerland

^{c)} Replies requested by December 2008

To give an example, the bees questionnaire was developed by EFSA, following a request from a Member State for information on surveillance data on colony mortality in bees. The replies received by the Focal Points were then collated by EFSA, and a report was published on EFSA's website. It was concluded that additional scientific studies were needed. Consequently, EFSA sent out an Article 36 call. Thus, Focal Points have not only contributed considerably to the exchange of scientific information between Member States and EFSA, but their efforts have also helped identify the need for an EU-wide review to facilitate an objective assessment of the problem.

In addition to the six questionnaires, 75 requests for assistance and input were made by EFSA and Focal Points between January and October 2008. Of these 75 requests, 70 had been forwarded by the Scientific Cooperation Unit to Focal Points. The EFSA requests included:

- requests to disseminate information on conferences, EFSA public consultations and calls for data, tenders, contributions to workshops, expressions of interest, etc;
- requests to test EFSA's Expert Database search tool on the Extranet and to promote the Expert Database after its launch;
- request to support the updating of the Article 36 List;
- requests to identify experts to attend EFSA seminars to foster the application of experts from new Member States as part of the EFSA Panel renewal exercise in 2009;
- requests to distribute EFSA newsletters; and
- request to disseminate information on EFSA's call for Scientific Committee and Panel members.

The remaining five requests were sent by Focal Points and focussed on the following:

- information about conferences in their countries;
- request for information on reasons for taste disturbances several days after eating of Chinese pine nuts; and
- request to determine the interest of national institutions to collaborate and answer to an EFSA Article 36 call.

The immediate response of Focal Points, for example to the pine nuts request, demonstrates two aspects: i) the importance of sharing information; and ii) the preparedness of Member States to immediately support each other in urgent cases.

The total number of requests sent to Focal Points per month is depicted in Figure 1. An overview of all requests and information messages forwarded by the Scientific Cooperation Unit to Focal Points is given in Appendix 2.

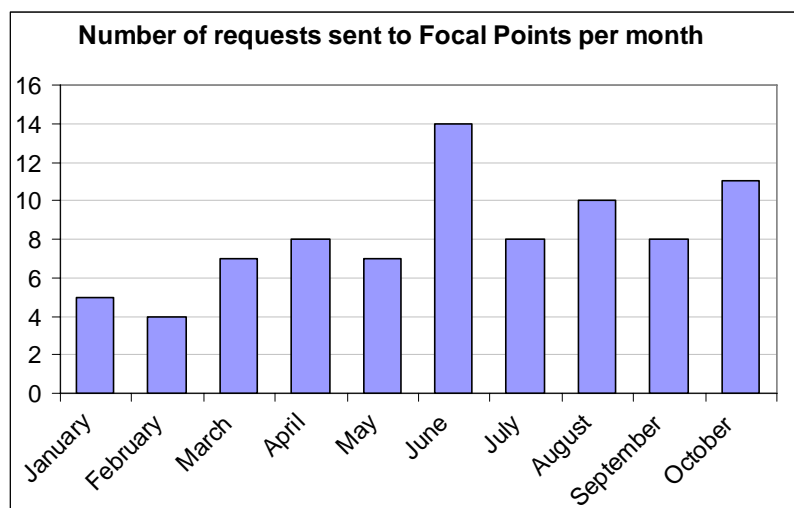


Figure 1: Number of requests forwarded to Focal Points, by month

By dealing with the above described requests, Focal Points have considerably supported their national networks as well as EFSA's Scientific Panels and Units. On the one hand, Focal Points have collected and forwarded requested data and information to EFSA. On the other hand, they have disseminated information to their national networks. For instance, the Scientific Cooperation Unit asked Focal Points to disseminate calls for data and contributions on e.g., nanotechnology and *Salmonella*; information on public consultations such as antimicrobial resistance or genetically modified plants; and calls for expression of interest in membership of EFSA Panels.

By actively collecting and sharing data and information, Focal Points have facilitated information flow at national and EU-level, supported the scientific work of EFSA's Panels and Units, and contributed to the harmonisation of procedural aspects of risk assessment in the EU.

4.1.2 Information Exchange Platform

An Information Exchange Platform was considered the best tool to easily share scientific information on topics of high interest to Member States and EFSA. It provides an adequate and timely two-way exchange of relevant scientific information, including documents which are otherwise not easily accessible.

To develop the Information Exchange Platform, Focal Points have set up a working group in May 2008. The Focal Point Working Group on the Information Exchange Platform agreed on its Terms of Reference, discussed the types of documents to be

uploaded, the structure of the platform, and document management and access issues. All Focal Points were kept informed and agreed with the Working Group's proposals.

During the summer months, EFSA developed the Information Exchange Platform on EFSA's Extranet. The platform was launched on 8 September 2008.

The Focal Points, Advisory Forum Members and EFSA staff collected information and uploaded documents or links onto the platform. In the first month, a total of 70 documents were uploaded onto the platform and 558 hits (the number of users who have accessed the platform) were registered. The platform allows Member States to react instantly to upcoming urgent issues and has already proved valuable: when melamine became a world-wide case, relevant scientific articles were uploaded immediately.

Moreover, through the Information Exchange Platform, Member States and EFSA can inform each other about national and international scientific conferences, meetings and seminars in the EU and beyond. When appropriate, Focal Points can inform their networks about upcoming events.

To gain experience in administering, managing and using the platform, a six month pilot phase was introduced. Users are welcome to send comments and suggestions for further development of the Information Exchange Platform, which will be discussed at the next Focal Point Working Group meeting at the beginning of 2009. The discussion will also include possible reporting formats for circulation to Member States and EFSA.

Both, Member States and EFSA, benefit from sharing relevant information on scientific topics and events in a timely manner. The Information Exchange Platform was launched, as a six-month pilot, in September 2008, only four months after the start of the project.

4.1.3 Work programmes and strategic work plans

In the sense of best practices, the Advisory Forum agreed to share their national work plans, amongst themselves and EFSA, when signing the Declaration of Intent. Sharing such information can be particularly helpful for planning medium- and long-term activities, avoiding duplication of work and allocating limited resources according to priorities. This initiative was also highlighted in the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking.

Focal Points helped their Advisory Forum Members in collecting the work programmes and strategic work plans of relevant national authorities for 2008-2013. The Advisory Forum Members made the work programmes/plans available to Member States and EFSA on the Extranet.

By assisting their Advisory Forum Members with sharing national work programmes and strategic work plans, Focal Points help them avoid duplication of work and allocate limited resources according to priorities.

4.1.4 Identification of potential divergences

Experience shows that scientific advice can vary occasionally. In order to address divergences, actions need to be taken at an early stage. To support the efforts made by the Advisory Forum in the past, the identification of divergences were included in the Focal Point Agreements. Nineteen Focal Points screened information, such as genetically modified organisms, aspartame, uranium and isoflavones.

Being vigilant is a precondition for identifying diverging views between and among Member States and EFSA. Parties involved will discuss any divergences, looking for a possible solution in good time.

Focal Points have helped the Advisory Forum Members screen information to identify potential divergences and find a solution at an early stage.

4.2 Article 36

Article 36 of EFSA's Founding Regulation states that EFSA "shall promote the European networking of organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission"³. Focal Points play an important role in supporting these activities.

Twenty six Focal Points reported to have contacted and held meetings with (potential) Article 36 organisations. Further, 24 Focal Points established or strengthened networks with Article 36 organisations and disseminated information on Article 36 activities to these national networks. Between January and November 2008, EFSA launched 18 calls for proposals. Where appropriate, Focal Points stimulated the Article 36 organisations to apply to these calls. Following these Focal Point initiatives, 26 organisations participated in the awarded grants.

At their 2nd meeting, Focal Points brainstormed on scientific subjects within EFSA's remit. The result of this brainstorming was used to prepare the ground for discussion, at the 27th Advisory Forum Meeting, of the draft Article 36 Work Programme for 2009 (as well as topics for future scientific colloquia organised by EFSA).

Focal Points have also helped EFSA in ensuring that the Article 36 List is up-to-date and functional. They have reviewed the List, which currently includes 243 organisations, and notified EFSA of almost 50 changes in the status⁴ or contact details of the Article 36 organisations. In addition, Focal Points facilitated the process of updating the Article 36 List, which was launched by EFSA on 1 July 2008. Focal Points supported this fundamental exercise by identifying appropriate organisations in their countries. More than 400 organisations were contacted and over 182 organisations were stimulated to apply. The Member States' Permanent Representations in Brussels then officially nominated approximately 130 potential Article 36 organisations. Figure 2 shows the number of existing and newly designated organisations of each Member State, demonstrating a potential 52% increase in the total number of organisations on the List, subject to approval by EFSA's Management Board.

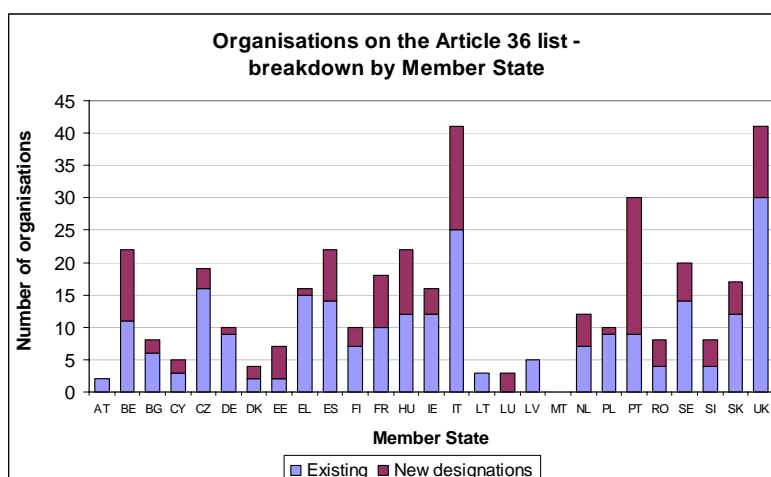


Figure 2: Number of existing and newly designated competent organisations on the Article 36 List per Member State

³ Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 28 January 2002.

⁴ Relevant changes in status would be anything that changes the information given in the questionnaire, such as funding sources, public/private status, mergers, changes in research structure.

Through disseminating information on Article 36 activities and stimulating Article 36 organisations to apply to calls, Focal Points have substantially supported EFSA's scientific work. In addition, Focal Points have played a pivotal role in helping EFSA to ensure that the Article 36 List is up-to-date and functional. Through their active support, the number of organisations on the List was increased and the areas of expertise covered by the organisations were broadened.

4.3 EFSA's Expert Database

The development of EFSA's Expert Database was strongly supported by Member States and EFSA. The need for such a database is also stressed in the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking. The aim is:

- i) to pool information on external scientific experts capable of assisting Member States and EFSA in tasks within EFSA's remit; and
- ii) to enhance the transparency of the invitation process by which experts participate in EFSA's scientific activities.

During the pilot phase of the Expert Database, 24 Focal Points tested the application form and/or the search environment and 15 provided feedback for its further improvement. The Expert Database was launched on 5 June 2008.

In addition, all Focal Points promoted the Expert Database aiming to populate it:

- All Focal Points disseminated information on the Expert Database to their national networks of over 140 institutions and 6,400 experts;
- Twenty four advertised it on websites; nine published articles in newsletters, journals and newspapers; and two developed and distributed brochures;
- Nineteen Focal Points presented the Expert Database, mostly using the standard PowerPoint slides provided by EFSA, at more than 63 national and international events; and
- Thirteen Focal Points assisted some 62 experts in filling in application forms (ten Focal Points reported that they had not been asked for support by applicants).

As a result of the promotion activities carried out by Focal Points, amongst others, 532⁵ experts have submitted application forms to join the Expert Database. Figure 3 depicts the number of application forms received over time and Figure 4 shows the number of experts, per country, who submitted application forms.

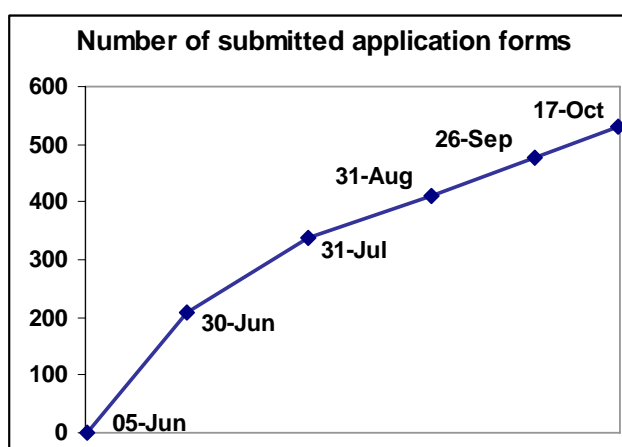


Figure 3: Number of submitted application forms on EFSA's Expert Database

⁵ Status: 17/10/2008

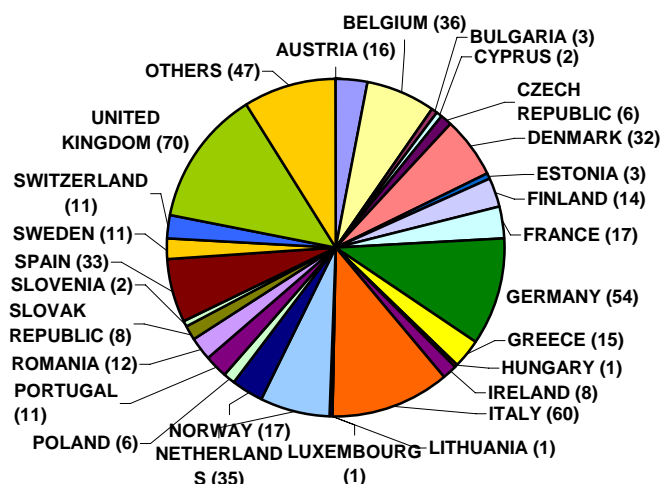


Figure 4: Number of experts, per country, who submitted application forms (status 17 October 2008)

In addition to the 532 application forms submitted by experts on their own initiative, EFSA pre-filled a total of 1,358 application forms on behalf of experts who have cooperated or are currently cooperating with EFSA. These experts have been invited by e-mail to join the Expert Database by completing and submitting their application forms.

In future, EFSA and Member States should aim at integrating national expert databases with EFSA’s Expert Database, in order to avoid duplication of work on the collection of expert information.

Focal Points played a key role in testing and populating the Expert Database. With their help, Member States and EFSA have received a continuously growing pool of information on external scientific experts, who are ready to assist them in scientific *ad-hoc* activities. Consequently, Member States and EFSA can respond more effectively and flexibly to upcoming issues as well as crises situations when specialised, unexpected and urgent work is required.

4.4 Raising visibility of EFSA’s scientific work

Member States and EFSA produce high quality scientific output, which needs to be made visible for appropriate acknowledgement by a range of audiences; from risk managers, to scientists, to stakeholders. This need to build awareness and recognition of EFSA’s and Member States’ scientific work is addressed in the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking. Accordingly, Focal Points have raised the visibility of their own and EFSA’s scientific work, at national level, through a range of activities.

4.4.1 Communications materials

To build awareness, recognition and trust in the value of risk assessment in Europe, it is essential that EU and national efforts to ensure food safety are communicated widely. Accordingly, all Focal Points have disseminated EFSA communications materials within their country. For example, they displayed the EFSA Annual Report at national events; placed EFSA press-releases on their institutions’ websites; and forwarded “Moving

together”, EFSA’s newsletter dedicated to Member State work, and targeted newsletters on Food, Animal and Plant Safety to their national networks.

In addition, Focal Points have developed various outreach materials, in close collaboration with their Advisory Forum Communications Working Group Member, to increase the visibility of EFSA’s and the Focal Points’ work:

- Twelve Focal Points have produced or are producing brochures and/or leaflets on the role of Focal Points, their activities and their cooperation with EFSA. A total of more than 14,800 copies were printed.
- Six Focal Points have produced national newsletters and/or special issues or supplements of existing newsletters.
- Twenty six Focal Points are creating or have established Focal Point sections on their institutions’ websites.
- Twenty one Member States are producing or have published over 66 press-releases or newspaper articles related to Focal Point activities.
- Twenty one Focal Points have given presentations or presented posters about EFSA or the work of Focal Points. Over 75 presentations or posters were prepared.

Focal Points raised their own and EFSA’s profiles at national level by disseminating EFSA communication materials and developing outreach materials. The latter include web pages, brochures, leaflets, press-releases, newspaper articles, presentations and posters. These efforts supported the objective of increasing the visibility of EFSA and Member States’ scientific work throughout Europe.

4.4.2 Scientific / kick-off meetings

A well-functioning network between Member States and EFSA will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of risk assessment in the EU, as stressed in the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking. Focal Points are, therefore, actively supporting their Advisory Forum Members to establish and maintain national networks.

To inform partners of their networks about the role of Focal Points and their collaboration with EFSA, 24 Focal Points have organised more than 40 Focal Point kick-off meetings and other national events. EFSA staff joined ten of these meetings and presented EFSA’s working procedures and cooperation projects. The events gave participants an opportunity to meet in person and have a two-way exchange of views and experiences. The target audiences varied according to the individual focus of the events and the situation in the country. They included concerned risk assessment institutes and organisations, ministries, universities, experts and stakeholders.

In addition, 20 Focal Points facilitated the contribution of EFSA staff to more than 50 (inter)national events (e.g. conferences, seminars, training events, national stakeholder conferences). It gave EFSA an additional opportunity to present its role, work, and cooperation with Member States.

Focal Points have organised over 40 kick-off meetings and other scientific events were to present their tasks and activities of their national networks. Further, Focal Points gave

EFSA staff the opportunity to contribute to more than 50 (inter)national conferences and meetings. While all of these events strongly contributed to the establishment and strengthening of networking activities at national level, they also increased awareness of the fundamental work carried out by Focal Points and EFSA.

4.4.3 Seminars in Member States

EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panel Members will be renewed in summer 2009, and experts in all fields of EFSA's remit have been invited to apply. EFSA's Management Board recommended activities be initiated by EFSA to help balance the number of applications from old and new Member States. Subsequently, the Scientific Cooperation Unit, in collaboration with the host Member State, is currently organising seminars to raise EFSA's profile in the New Member States and to explain EFSA's work and procedures to the scientific community.

To increase the efficiency of these seminars, Focal Points discussed how the events could best be organised to foster the application of experts from the New Member States. Results of this discussion provided a valuable background for organising the events and optimise benefits to the target audience.

Two seminars were scheduled in 2008; one in October in Budapest, Hungary, and the other one in November in Warsaw, Poland. The Focal Points of the New Member States joining these seminars played a key role in identifying around 120 reputable experts and submitting their contact details to EFSA. Thus, the Focal Points' efforts were essential for the successful organisation and an effective outcome of the seminars.

Focal Points helped raise EFSA's visibility and encouraged experts to apply to EFSA's call on the renewal of EFSA's Scientific Panels, by supporting the organisation of two seminars. Focal Points of the New Member States identified around 120 reputable experts. The seminars aim at increasing the number of applications from experts of the New Member States.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

During the first year of existence, Focal Points put substantial efforts into setting up national networks. These provided an essential basis for other activities, such as collecting and disseminating scientific information, and raising the profile of Focal Points and EFSA at national level. Moreover, Focal Points gained valuable experience in working together at European level. In particular, they strengthened the scientific cooperation between and among Member States and EFSA.

In the context of reviewing the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking, a questionnaire was sent to Advisory Forum Members. According to their feedback, 16 out of 18 Advisory Forum Members stated that the activities of the Focal Points were “well done” (see Figure 5). Further, eight Advisory Forum Members felt that the work of the Focal Points should be increased as compared to the first year, while nine indicated the activities should remain the same as before. In their comments, Advisory Forum Members emphasize that the Focal Points are an important initiative and that their function should be strengthened. The relationship among Focal Points, Advisory Forum Members and EFSA provides a sound basis for further enhanced cooperation, from which all parties can benefit. As expressed in the questionnaire, Advisory Forum Members consider the continuation of the Focal Points very important and expressed the need for a long-term implementation of Focal Points, which EFSA and Member States should provide for. The very successful starting phase of Focal Point work has therefore made a difference to improve cooperation and networking between and among Member States and EFSA.

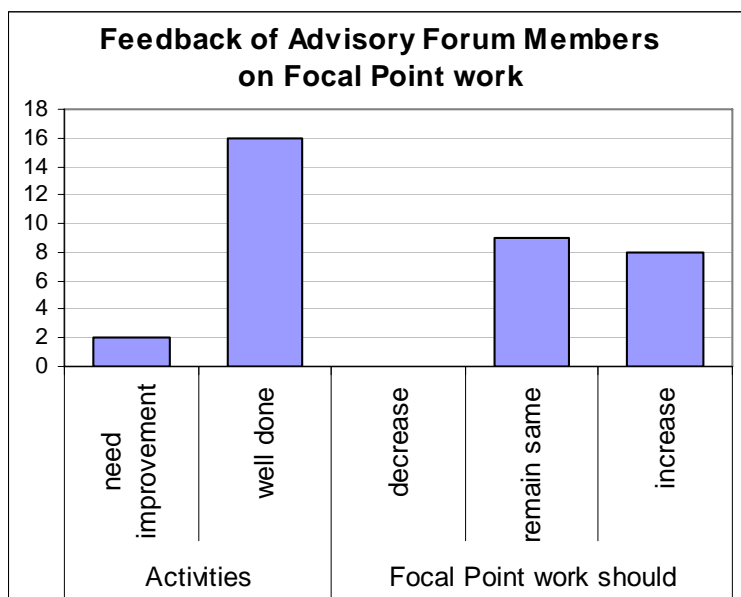


Figure 5: Feedback from Advisory Forum Members on Focal Point work, as indicated in the questionnaires on the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking

The following future activities, which will heavily depend on the established networks, include:

- maintaining the Article 36 List of Competent Organisations up-to-date, thereby ensuring its functionality;
- pooling scientific expertise in Europe by helping integrate national expert databases into EFSA's Expert Database, increasing the efficiency of searching for specific expertise;
- developing the Information Exchange Platform further to enhance user-friendliness, document management and system administration, supporting the sharing of scientific information between and among Member States and EFSA; and
- assisting the Advisory Forum Members in sharing national work programmes and strategic work plans, e.g. via the Information Exchange Platform.

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1

Summary of Focal Point Reports 2008

1. Description of Tasks

a. Exchange of scientific information

Tasks listed in FP Agreement: ensure the exchange of information on the development of important risk assessment initiatives in the MS and in EFSA; ongoing risk assessments and opinions under preparation; results of relevant scientific research projects.	
Activities	Feedback
FP collected information on risk assessment initiatives.	25 FPs collected information. Examples of information collected: RA of aluminium residues in soya beans; alkaloids in poppy seeds; cadmium in foodstuffs; Classic Swine Fever; 3-MCPD esters; melamine; GMOs; folic acid; acrylamide; Noni juice and hepatotoxicity.
FP liaised with AF Member on selecting relevant information to be shared with EFSA and MS.	Where applicable, all FPs liaised with their AF Member. The methods of liaison differed widely between countries, e.g. weekly meetings, regular briefings before and after FP and AF meetings, and creation of a Working Group to coordinate the work of AF and FP.
FP provided input to EFSA on relevant national food safety risk assessment activities of interest in their MS.	20 FPs provided input to EFSA. 3 FPs reported not having had activities at all or of interest to EFSA. Remaining 5: either not done or done by other entity, e.g. AF. Examples of input provided: information on acrylamide; pesticide residues; <i>Salmonella</i> in poultry; nanotechnology; new human data for assessment of energy drinks.
FP uploaded relevant information onto the Information Exchange Platform (IEP), including summaries of research project results (e.g. from national university).	The time between the launch of the IEP and the writing of the reports was too short for FPs to add their activities.

Task listed in FP Agreement: ensure the exchange of information on issues that may give rise to potential divergences of opinions between the MS and EFSA.	
Activities	Feedback
FP screened information to identify potential controversial issues.	19 FPs screened information.
FP coordinated with the AF Member to identify potentially controversial issues.	Where applicable, all FPs liaised with their AF Member. Examples of identified issues: GMOs; animal cloning; folic acid; aspartame; uranium; isoflavones; cetylpyridinium chloride
Task listed in FP Agreement: ensure close cooperation as far as appropriate on the preparation of EFSA's and the MS's competent authorities' Work Programmes.	
Activities	Feedback
FP collected and made available the Work Programmes and strategic Work Plans ⁶ (time frame: 2008-13) of competent authorities on Extranet or IEP.	18 FPs have made or will make available Work Plans, some via the AF Member.
Task listed in FP Agreement: ensure the exchange of information on requests for specific information.	
Activities	Feedback
FP disseminated requests received from EFSA or other FPs for specific information at national level.	All FPs disseminated requests.
FP collected and sent requested information to EFSA or other FP (e.g. questionnaires).	Only 1 FP did not send requested information to EFSA because they did not receive the information.

⁶ Exchange of working Programmes will be carried out in the AF Forum; FPs to assist AF members by collecting them and making them available.

b. Cooperation through Article 36 and Experts Database

Tasks listed in FP Agreement: provide advice on scientific actions of common interest that could be undertaken within the network, particularly in framework of Article 36; assignment of tasks to Competent Organisations on the List.	
Activities	Feedback
FP provided input to the preparation of the Article 36 annual work programme.	All FPs provided input by brainstorming on scientific subjects of interest to MS at the 2nd FP Meeting. The resulting list set a basis for AF Members and EFSA to identify areas of potential common interests design the draft Article 36 Work Programme.
FP established a network with the Article 36 organisations.	25 FPs have or are establishing a network with Article 36 organisations (not applicable for NO).
FP held meetings/had contact with (potential) Article 36 organisations.	26 FPs held meetings or had contact with (potential) Article 36 organisations.
FP stimulated Article 36 organisations to apply for <u>calls</u> once issued.	All FPs stimulated organisations, e.g. by disseminating calls (except for NO, where not applicable).
Task listed in FP Agreement: provide advice on review or proposals for new designations for updates of the list of competent organisations in the MS (Article 36 List).	
Activities	Feedback
FP ensured that any changes in the status ⁷ Article 36 organisations were notified to EFSA (SCO).	15 FPs notified EFSA of changes; 9 FPs had no changes to notify; 3 FPs did not specify (not applicable for NO).
FP established contacts with relevant research organisations in their country to identify appropriate organisations that were not yet included in the <u>Article 36 List</u> .	25 FPs established contacts (except for NO, where not applicable) with more than 400 institutions.
FP stimulated appropriate organisations to apply once the official procedure to amend the <u>Article 36 List</u> was launched by EFSA.	26 FPs stimulated more than 182 organisations to apply.
Once the procedure was launched, FP ensured the facilitation of this process ⁸ .	25 FPs facilitated the process (except for NO, where not applicable).
FPs identified potential Article 36 institutions.	

⁷ relevant change in status would be e.g. anything that changes the information as given in the questionnaire, such as on funding sources, public/private status, mergers, changes in research structure

⁸ organisation – FP – Perm. Rep. – EFSA

Task listed in FP Agreement: provide advice on the development and maintenance of databases of scientific experts and research organisations in the Member States.	
Activities	Feedback
FP tested the expert database (EDB) during the pilot phase.	24 FPs tested the EDB.
FP provided feedback to EFSA on possible improvements of the EDB application form and/or search environment after the launch of the EDB.	16 FPs sent feedback; 8 FPs stated that no improvement had been required from their point of view; 4 FPs did not send feedback, some as they had been part of the EDB WG.
Task listed in FP Agreement: provide advice on roster of national experts.	
Activities	Feedback
FP disseminated information on the EDB to their national networks, e.g. via e-mail.	All FPs disseminated the information to over 140 institutions and 6400 experts.
FP promoted the EDB in newsletters, websites, etc using the web story, FAQs, and the web banner.	All FPs promoted the EDB: 24 FPs advertised it on their websites, 9 FPs published articles in newsletters, journals and newspapers, and 2 FPs distributed brochures.
FP presented the EDB using the standard PowerPoint slides provided by EFSA at national events, e.g. conferences (this includes translated presentations).	19 FPs presented the EDB at more than 63 national and international events.
FP assisted experts in filling in the EDB if they had questions.	13 FPs assisted at least 62 experts to fill in the EDB. Of the remaining FPs, 10 indicated they had not been asked for help by experts.
Task listed in FP Agreement: provide advice on requests to national experts.	
Activities	Feedback
FP ensured widest possible spreading of requests received from EFSA or other MS for specific expertise.	26 FPs indicated they ensured widest spreading of request.

c. Networking and raising visibility of EFSA and its role in the EU food safety system

Task listed in FP Agreement: provide support on disseminating materials concerning EFSA within the MS.	
Activities	Feedback
FP disseminated EFSA information/communications materials within country.	All FPs disseminated materials.
FP liaised with the Advisory Forum Communications Working Group member.	25 FPs indicated they liaise closely with the AFCWG Member or are the same person.
FP produced a brochure(s)/leaflet(s) on the role Focal Points, activities and co-operation with EFSA.	12 FPs will or have produced one or more brochures or leaflets with a total of more than 14 800 copies printed.
FP produced a (digital) national newsletter, supplements and/or special issues.	6 FPs will or have produced a (digital) newsletter or special issue.
FP established / maintained a Focal Point section on the website.	26 FPs are or have established a FP section on their website.
FP published press-releases, newspaper articles, etc on cooperation between FP and EFSA.	21 FPs will or have published over 66 press-releases, newspaper articles, etc.
FP gave a presentation or presented a poster on EFSA and FP activities at conferences, etc.	21 FPs will or have given/presented over 75 presentations or posters.
FP facilitated EFSA's contribution to national events (e.g. conferences, seminars, training events, national stakeholder conferences) to present the role of EFSA, its work, etc.	20 FPs facilitated EFSA's contribution to more than 50 (inter)national events.
FP participated in the Working Group (WG) on the IEP.	11 FPs participated at the FP WG on the IEP.
FP sent comments on the documents of the IEP WG.	6 further FPs sent comments on the IEP.
1 FP produced a banner and 1 FP produced a video film about EFSA's role in food safety and consumer protection	
4 FPs reported they liaised with other FPs on own activities	

Task listed in FP Agreement: provide support on organising and co-ordinating in the MS the exchange of information and documentation concerning scientific activities of relevance to EFSA.	
Activities	Feedback
FP organised national conferences / workshops (e.g. kick-off meetings)	24 FPs organised more than 40 national conferences / workshops, including kick-off meetings.
FP drew attention of experts, institutions, national parties (incl. stakeholders), etc to EFSA expressions of interest, applications, public consultations, etc.	27 FPs disseminated information.
FP uploaded information of national events (e.g. conferences, workshops) onto the IEP.	The time between the launch of the IEP and the writing of the reports was too short for FPs to add their activities.
Task listed in FP Agreement: provide support on providing an interface between EFSA and national level stakeholders.	
Activities	Feedback
FP established an on-going two-way communication with national stakeholders.	21 FPs have already established an on-going two-way communication with national stakeholders.
Task listed in FP Agreement: provide support on raising EFSA's visibility in the MS	
Raising EFSA's visibility in the MS is reached through the different actions listed above and in an integrated way between FPs, AF members, etc.	

6.2 Appendix 2

Messages sent to Focal Points⁹

Item	Date sent	Deadline for FPs
Calls for data and contributions		
Call for Scientific Data on Applications of Nanotechnology and Nanomaterials used in Food and Feed	24 January 2008	-
Information on call for contributions to EFSA Workshops on Salmonella in Pigs	19 February 2008	-
Call for data on "Quantitative Microbiological Risk Assessment on Salmonella in slaughter and breeder pigs " & questionnaire	25 March 2008	-
Information on the open call for data on Salmonella in poultry chain	4 August 2008	-
Information on extension of deadline for the open call for data on Salmonella in poultry chain	28 August 2008	-
Calls for expressions of interest		
Call for expression of membership of the two new Panels in EFSA	16 January 2008	-
Call for expressions of interest for Temporary Agent positions	28 January 2008	-
Information on postponement of the deadline for the submission of the interest in membership of the two new Panels in EFSA	18 February 2008	-
Call for expressions of interest for Temporary Agent positions	6 March 2008	-
Information on call for External Experts of the EFSA Scientific Committee	18 March 2008	-

⁹ Not included in this list: messages and feedback regarding agendas, minutes, working documents, Declarations of Interest etc.

Item	Date sent	Deadline for FPs
Call for expressions of interest for Temporary Agent positions	26 March 2008	-
Information on positions as seconded national experts in EFSA	8 April 2008	-
Call for applications for an in-service training period at EFSA	17 June 2008	-
Information on inauguration of the two newly created scientific Panels (ANS and CEF)	11 July 2008	-
Call for expressions of interest for Temporary and Contract Agent positions	18 August 2008	-
Call for expressions of interest for Temporary Agent positions	18 August 2008	-
Call for expressions of interest for Temporary and Contract Agent positions	3 October 2008	-
Call for expressions of interest for Temporary Agent position	15 October 2008	-
Calls for tender		
Call for tender - "analyses of data on antimicrobial resistance in certain zoonotic agents and indicator organisms (lot 1) as well as data on <i>Salmonella</i> serovars and phage types (lot 2) derived from animals and food in the European Union"	25 March 2008	-
Information on the EFSA call for tender: analyses of data on antimicrobial resistance and <i>Salmonella</i> serovars	25 June 2008	-
Information on public consultations		
Information on public consultation on the Project Plan for the revision of the Guidance Document on Persistence in Soil in the area of Environmental Fate and Behaviour of Pesticides; FPs to distribute cover letter to stakeholders	29 January 2008	-
Information on public consultation on draft opinion on " Foodborne antimicrobial resistance as a biological hazard "	23 April 2008	-
Information on public consultation on GM plants	17 June 2008	-

Item	Date sent	Deadline for FPs
Information on 2 PPR public consultations and request to distribute the information	20 October 2008	-
Questionnaires		
Preliminary note on request for surveillance data on mortality in bees - questionnaire	4 April 2008	-
Request for surveillance data on mortality in bees - questionnaire	14 April 2008	2 May 2008
Reminder: Information request for surveillance data on mortality in bees	24 April 2008	2 May 2008
Request to forward and/or fill in Classic Swine Fever (CSF) questionnaire	6 May 2008	30 May 2008
Extension of deadline to fill in CSF questionnaire	27 May 2008	4 June 2008
Information request for surveillance data on mortality in bees questionnaire – possibility to still send questionnaires for inclusion in EFSA’s report	6 June 2008	end June
Information on extension of deadline - Classic Swine Fever (CSF) questionnaires	11 June 2008	13 June 2008
Request to submit process-related aspects of Risk Assessment questionnaire	12 June 2008	20 June 2008
Information on deadline extension - questionnaire on process-related aspects of Risk Assessment	23 June 2008	24 June 2008
Information on deadline extension - questionnaire on process-related aspects of Risk Assessment	1 August 2008	part 1: ASAP part2: 15 August ‘08
Request to send questionnaire regarding the revision of Ecotox Guidance Documents to Risk Managers	29 October 2008	15 December 2008
Article 36 and other scientific cooperation projects		
Information that four Calls For Proposals have been launched and have been publishes on the EFSA website - Framework Art.36	10 April 2008	-
Information that two Calls For Proposals have been launched and have been publishes on the EFSA website - Framework Art.36	30 April 2008	-

Item	Date sent	Deadline for FPs
Information that two Calls for Proposals have been launched and published on the EFSA website - Framework Art.36	29 May 2008	-
Information that a Call for Proposals have been launched and published on the EFSA website - Framework Art.36	6 June 2008	-
Information on updating the Article 36 list with new competent organisations	17 June 2008	-
List of scientific subjects of interest to MS - preparation of EFSA's 2009 Work-Programme for Article 36 grants	30 June 2008	11 July 2008
Information on call for proposals - Framework Art.36 of Reg. (EC) 178/2002	3 July 2008	-
Information on the procedure and request for support on updating the Article 36 list	8 July 2008	30 September 2008
Information on letter sent to Perm Rep on nominating organisations to provide data for the Comprehensive European Food Consumption database	22 July 2008	-
Information and Annex to letter on Comprehensive European Food Consumption database	25 July 2008	-
Information on call for proposals - Framework Art.36 of Reg. (EC) 178/2002	12 August 2008	-
Information on bees report and call for proposals - Framework Art.36 of Reg. (EC) 178/2002	12 August 2008	-
Information on call for proposals - Framework Art.36 of Reg. (EC) 178/2002	14 August 2008	-
Information on call for proposals - Framework Art.36 of Reg. (EC) 178/2002	9 September 2008	-
Information on call for proposals - Framework Art.36 of Reg. (EC) 178/2002	12 September 2008	-
Information on message sent to representatives on Animal Health and Welfare and Plant Health on the update of the list of institutions capable of assisting EFSA in its tasks - Art. 36 of EFSA's Founding Regulation	12 September 2008	-
Corrigendum of call for proposal - Framework Art.36 of Reg. (EC) 178/2002	1 October 2008	-
Information on call for proposals - Framework Art.36 of Reg. (EC) 178/2002	1 October 2008	-

Item	Date sent	Deadline for FPs
Expert Database		
Invitation to participate in the testing of EFSA's database of scientific experts (EDB)	7 May 2008	30 May 2008
Testing of EDB search tool on Extranet – information of integration of the expert database search tool on Extranet	22 May 2008	30 May 2008
Official launching of EFSA's Expert Database: pre-warning on the request for support on communication activities	27 May 2008	-
Official launch of EFSA's Expert Database: request for support on promotion communication activities	30 May 2008	-
Requests from FPs		
Message from the Latvian Focal Point – info request on Chinese pine nuts	10 June 2008	-
Request from Belgium to sound the interest of national institutions about possible collaboration for call CFP/EFSA/ZOONOSES/2008/02 "Development of harmonised survey methods for food-borne pathogens in foodstuffs in the EU"	16 June 2008	-
Message from the Latvian Focal Point – thank you for pine nuts replies	17 June 2008	-
Information on organisation of conference “III Encounter in Food Safety and Nutrition: Current Approaches”, Spain	7 July 2008	-
Invitation to International Conference in Romania	1 October 2008	-
Requests from EFSA’s Communications Department		
Message from the EFSA’s Communication Directorate asking Focal Points for Communications contacts	25 March 2008	-
Information on and link to the 2nd edition of the " Moving together " Newsletter published on EFSA’s website	25 July 2008	-
Request to distribute EFSA targeted newsletters (Food/Animal/Plant)	4 September 2008	-

Item	Date sent	Deadline for FPs
Request to disseminate information about the World Food Day - WHO-EFSA-FAO joint event	2 October 2008	-
Information on request to disseminate EFSA targeted newsletters (Food/Animal/Plant) and thumbnail image for the national institution websites	20 October 2008	-
Information on launch of call for renewal of EFSA scientific panels and request for assistance in disseminating information on this call.	23 October 2008	-
Requests from SCO		
Information on Cooperation between Focal Points and EFSA – introduction of SCO as counterpart in EFSA	15 January 2008	-
Request for information on budget and staff of EU National Food Safety Agencies	5 February 2008	-
Request for information on budget and staff of EU National Food Safety Agencies	25 February 2008	ASAP
Request to send comments to the IEP documents	12 June 2008	20 June 2008
Information on the organisation of Workshops in Member States – identify experts to attend the WSs (estimate of how many experts you believe we should invite from your country)	1 July 2008	8 August 2008
Reminder to identify experts to attend the Workshops in Member States (estimate of how many experts you believe we should invite from your country)	5 August 2008	8 August 2008
Request for feedback on success and difficulties encountered during/with FP work	5 August 2008	25 August 2008
Focal Point report template	2 September 2008	-
Request for feedback on success and difficulties encountered during/with FP work, esp. for those who had not previously sent feedback	25 September 2008	10 October 2008
Information on availability of Melamine and Bisphenol A documents on the IEP and invitation to FP to upload documents as well	26 September 2008	-
Information on invitation of pre-filled experts to join EFSA's Expert Database	31 October 2008	

Item	Date sent	Deadline for FPs
Others		
Request for advice on names of expert assessors in their countries related to the scientific substantiation of health claims	4 March 2008	-
Information on EFSA's preparation of scientific advice on the risks for human health related to melamine in milk products from China	23 September 2008	-