

# Minutes of the Scientific Network on Chemical Occurrence Data: 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Circle of Trust pilot study

**Held on 11/11/2015, Parma**  
**Meeting room: M08-09**  
**Time: 14:00-18:00**  
**(Agreed on dd Month yyyy)**

## Participants

### ■ Network Representatives of Member States (including EFTA Countries):

| Country     | Name   |
|-------------|--|
| Austria     | Josef WOLF   |
| Bulgaria    | Emil SIMEONOV  |
| Cyprus      | Eleni IOANNOU KAKOURI<br>Eftychia CHRISTOU                 |
| Croatia     | Sandra BASIC   |
| Denmark     | Jens Hinge ANDERSEN<br>Louise JENSEN                       |
| Estonia     | Kadi PADUR   |
| Finland     | Niina PAJALIN-MYLLYNEN<br>Johanna SUOMI by tele-conference |
| France      | Jean-Cédric RENINGER<br>Marion BORDIER                     |
| Greece      | Leonidas PALILIS   |
| Hungary     | Krisztian VARGA  |
| Ireland     | Eileen O'DEA   |
| Italy       | Michele DE MARTINO   |
| Luxembourg  | Elisa BARILOZZI  |
| Netherlands | Rob THEELEN  |
| Norway      | Inger HALLE SKAGEN   |
| Sweden      | Petra FOHGELBERG<br>David FOSTER                           |

### ■ EFSA

Evidence Management (DATA) Unit: Francesco VERNAZZA (Chair), Mary GILSENAN (HoU)\*, Stefano CAPPE\*, Isabelle LLOYD\*, Simona FUSAR POLI, Enikő VARGA

(\* attended part of the meeting)

## 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

No apologies were received.

## 2. Adoption of agenda

The objective of this specific meeting was to summarise the experience gathered so far by the participants to the Circle of Trust (CoT). The CoT is a pilot 'user community', within the framework of the Data warehouse (DWH), whereby a limited number of Member States (MS) (so far 15 MSs) could have access to each other's raw chemical contaminants data under defined conditions<sup>1</sup>. In the 'Circle of Trust' access is significantly extended with respect to the default proposed access rules of the DWH<sup>2</sup>.

The agenda was adopted without changes.

The administrative aspects of the meeting were presented and discussed by Simona Fusar Poli.

## 3. Topics for discussion

In the context of the pilot, the members were granted access to the DWH as an interface to the data (on February 2015) and received specific training (8 different sessions between February and June 2015). The participants were asked to test the functionality of the DWH and provide feedback.

### 3.1. Feedback on the Scientific Data Warehouse (DWH) and the 'data sharing experience'

Almost half of the participants of the Circle of Trust pilot study accessed the DWH; feedback on its usability was generally positive. The following bullets summarise the major feedback provided by the meeting participants in a 'tour de table':

- A more user-friendly interface to browse the system might improve the accessibility to the system;
- The time for running a query was in many cases too long; therefore, the tester couldn't understand whether the software was working or not. It was suggested to implement in the application a tool showing the progress of a particular query;
- The need for more and more complex pre-defined queries was identified by the tester. Stefano Cappé reassured the participants that existing queries may be improved and new queries may be created by EFSA on request;
- Additional training on the DWH was requested.

### 3.2. Discussion summarising advantages, issues and suggestions

A general discussion followed the 'tour de table', where advantages and issues found during the pilot and suggestions for improvement were further expanded and debated. The plenary session summarised the main points of the discussion under three chapters: advantages experienced in the pilot, issues to be addressed and suggestions for further improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Circle of trust' pilot initiative for chemical occurrence data sharing - proposed rules for the pilot-accessible at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/assets/CircleOfTrust.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> European Food Safety Authority, 2015. The EFSA Data Warehouse access rules. EFSA supporting publication 2015:EN-768. 18 pp. - accessible at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/it/supporting/pub/768e>

### 3.2.1. **Advantages experienced by the participants to the pilot**

- The CoT pilot study allows access to many data and the possibility of comparison with other countries on levels and trends was considered very useful; a dialogue between countries on these subjects might further improve the understanding of the observed levels thus driving a better management of the risk;
- Laboratories can gather information on limit of quantification (LOQ) and limit of detection (LOD), and analytical methods used in other Member State laboratories to improve their current practice;
- Through the CoT the members may access data on concentration data for chemical contaminants for areas (e.g. food groups, analytes) not included in their national datasets. These data can “fill” the gaps in missing data needed to be used for example in modelling exposure and risk assessment; With the DWH tools it is possible to easily obtain statistics on own data;
- For defining the national monitoring plan, it is possible to get useful insights from monitoring programmes in other countries; for example, substances with high occurrence levels in some countries may be considered in the monitoring plans of other Member States;
- In general, as highlighted in the previous bullets, the CoT may promote better co-operation between countries both in risk management and laboratory practices by promoting direct dialogue.

### 3.2.2. **Issues:**

- Slow reaction of DWH was observed: in particular, waiting time after launching queries may be too long;
- Staff not directly trained by EFSA may encounter difficulties while trying to navigate the DWH.
- The DWH doesn't show clearly the progress of the report creation activity.
- The tool needs to be used also under urgent circumstances (like incident management); in this case improved ease of use and speed of reaction are of utmost importance.

### 3.2.3. **Suggestions for improvement:**

- A pre-recorded tutorial for untrained users should be prepared as for end users not receiving interactive training by EFSA;
- A FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document on the use of the DWH should be prepared. Development of the FAQ in collaboration with the users would improve its usefulness;
- Enhanced two-way communication between EFSA and the members of the CoT in identifying the type of additional queries needed was proposed. As a first step, an active involvement of the CoT participants in the improvement process was envisaged.

Three members of the CoT offered to act as contact points for collection of suggestions on improvements of the CoT and more generally of the DWH each taking care of one among three groups of stakeholders: analytical laboratories, exposure assessors and risk managers.

1. **Analytical laboratories:** Eileen O'Dea (Ireland) will be the contact for collecting suggestions on better use of the DWH and data sharing for the advantage of analytical activity. A first suggestion was already made at the meeting: to make available a report on analytical sensitivity by matrix (food group) and by analytical method;
2. **Dietary exposure assessors:** Eleni Kakouri (Cyprus) will be the contact for collecting suggestions on better use of the DWH and data sharing for the advantage of exposure assessment;
3. **Risk managers:** Marion Bordier (France) will be the contact for collecting suggestions on better use of the DWH and data sharing for the advantage of risk management.

It was agreed that the suggestions for additional queries will be collected by the contact points and feedback will be provided to EFSA by the end of January 2016.

### 3.3. Discussion about the extension of the CoT pilot project

The possibility of extending the timeframe of the CoT was discussed.

According to Austria the pilot project was successful and the DWH is very useful for the CoT participants and extension to all MSs would be useful. Austria also highlighted that the group of queries and level of access of the CoT has to be regarded as an expert system for data sharing between MSs, but should not be made available for the public accessing the DWH.

Mary Gilson clarified that there are two projects: the CoT pilot project and the DWH project which are running parallel. In the DWH the data will be available at aggregated level to external stakeholders. Country-specific individual data (raw data) will be accessible for data owners and providers. In the frame of the CoT pilot project the participants of the CoT have access to each other's data at individual level according to the rules agreed at the first CoT pilot study<sup>34</sup>.

The Netherlands suggested reviewing the criteria for restriction of the shared information and exclude some more fields.

Ireland explained that since due to some technical issues the functionalities of the DWH could not be tested thoroughly prior to the meeting, it is early to draw conclusions on the CoT, therefore the exercise should be extended. Eileen O'Dea also suggested implementing a logging system, to keep track of the use of the DWH.

According to France, the CoT pilot project allowed members to validate rules for data sharing and to understand better the functionality of the DWH, therefore the feedback is so far positive.

As a general comment, the DWH should be more stable and user-friendly in order to use it more extensively.

France asked whether it would be possible to distinguish the different data provider laboratories/organisations inside a country, if the data were transmitted at country level by one centralised data provider. Enikő Varga suggested reporting the name of the original data provider in the field of "Local organisation (O.1.)" or alternatively in "Laboratory (L.1.)". This field can then be easily used as a filter in the DWH.

<sup>3</sup> 'Circle of trust' pilot initiative for chemical occurrence data sharing - proposed rules for the pilot-accessible at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/assets/CircleOfTrust.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Update on the Circle of Trust available in the minutes of the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Scientific Network on Chemical Occurrence data, accessible at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/event/150310-m.pdf>

Mary Gilsean proposed to establish a case study or project with members of the CoT whereby a PhD student in a Member State – e.g. from or linked with a national competent authority – , could analyse cross country data for specific contaminants within the CoT and write up a scientific paper. Members were asked to come up with ideas for a possible research project/(s).

### 3.4. Conclusions and proposals for next meetings

The final outcome of the round table discussion about the extension of the CoT pilot project was:

- There was an agreement between Members to propose extension for the CoT pilot study by end of 2017 in order to investigate better the opportunities and advantages given by the DWH;
- There is a need to reach a more 'mature' tool before extending the initiative beyond the current membership of the CoT.
- A revision and eventual fine-tuning of the conditions for data sharing was envisaged and it was agreed that additional comments on specific points to revise should be sent to EFSA by end of February 2016.

### Date for next meeting

The Chair proposed to have the next meeting of the CoT project during the week of the Network in autumn 2016 (week of the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016). The exact date will be communicated soon.

## 4. Closure of the meeting

The meeting was closed at about 18:00, as foreseen in the agenda.

## 5. Table with actions

| WHO                                   | WHAT  | BY                   |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| All / Contact points defined in 3.2.3 | To collect suggestions for additional queries and provide feedback to EFSA.   | end of January 2016  |
| All participants                      | To come up with ideas for a possible research project/(s) to establish a case study or project with members of the CoT whereby a PhD student in a Member State – e.g. from or linked with a national competent authority – , could analyse cross country data for specific contaminants within the CoT and write up a scientific paper. | next CoT meeting     |
| All participants                      | To send to EFSA comments on specific points for fine-tuning of the conditions for data sharing.   | end of February 2016 |

### Document history

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|--|------------------|
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