

Collaboration – the agony and the ecstasy

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FOOD SAFETY RESEARCH

- Issues – complex – both in nature and in terms of the system within which they exist. Do not observe geographical boundaries
- Approaches – multi- and inter-disciplinary – and if they are to lead to implementable solutions, not just the biological and physical sciences
- *Resources – increasingly stretched – both in funding and expertise – priorities? Making your voice heard in others' research planning.*
- *Funding landscape – fragmented, complex, opaque, rules driven, conservative (my way or no way) - the Agony!!*

SOME BENEFITS OF STRUCTURED INTERACTION?

- Better use of available expertise pool and funding resources
 - *likely that there is lots of duplication/overlap at the moment; need to ask the right questions, drawing on multidisciplinary approaches*
- Less fragmentation of approaches – more “impactful” calls?
 - *better to have fewer larger pieces of a jigsaw rather than lots of smaller ones (which may not join up anyway)*
- Alignment of research activities giving clearer pathways (and funding streams) to impact? – *joining up does not always mean combining at the outset – agreeing a distribution of activities planned to come together (joint programmes)*
- Building capacity and capability in a more structured way, expansion of networks including into geographical areas with less research activity – *investing for the future*



to **start** to think about the key issues and how they might be addressed. with the following broad objectives:

- build and support the case for future public funding of research in food safety; coordinate research agenda setting to ensure impact of food safety research; and provide a platform for networking, facilitating new partnerships.

Utrecht – 7 February 2018

Full report at:

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/en-1408>

SOME KEY POINTS FROM RARA SESSIONS & POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

Cooperation needed at all levels – regional, national, international – *regular exchange of information on PLANNED activities to identify early enough areas for joint working;*

collaboration – *partnerships, not just between funders but between funders and researchers, co-design, co-delivery, minimise duplication, spot opportunities more easily*

coordination - *either to set up joint activities from the outset or to align activities so they (hopefully) mesh on completion (enhance impact), invest in strong coordinator role in organisations – with freedom (and support) to innovate. New shared commissioning procedures, common pots?*

communication - *and trust – underpins all the above*

Plus: *the need for more opportunities like RARA to facilitate networking and building collaborations – role for EFSA and its partners - **convening**.*