

53rd FP Meeting

Location: European Food Safety Authority, online

Attendees: Chair Victoria Villamar and co-chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia

Countries	Attendance	
Austria (AT)	Johann Steinwider	
Belgium (BE)	Tom Storms	
Bulgaria (BG)	Lilyana Polihronova	Ekaterina Koeva
Croatia (HR)	Vlatka Buzjak Služek	Jasenska Petrič
Cyprus (CY)	Aspasia Sarandi	Georgios Stavroulakis
Czech Republic (CZ)	Petr Beneš	
Denmark (DK)	Vibe Beltoft	
Estonia (EE)	Piret Priisalu	Allan Alekasin
Finland (FI)	Kirsi-Maarit Siekkinen	
France (FR)	Coralie Bultel	Celine Bahuon
France (FR)	Samuel Contreras	Julia Raeke
Germany (DE)	Marina Lechleider	Sophia Bergelt
Germany (DE)	Phoebe Young	
Greece (EL)	Foteini Tzoumanika	Danai Papanastasiou
Hungary (HU)	Renáta Prisztóka	Tamara Tamas
Iceland (IS)	Grímur Ólafsson	
Ireland (IE)	Gráinne Redmond	
Italy (IT)	Cinzia La Rocca	Luca Busani
Latvia (LV)	Inese Sikсна	
Lithuania (LT)	Giedre Ciuberkyte	Rima Živatkauskaitė
Luxembourg (LU)	Miriam Fougeras	
Malta (MT)	Giannella Pisani	
Netherlands (NL)	Timme Van der Lugt	
Norway (NO)	Danika Grahek-Ogden	
Poland (PL)	Monika Kolodziejczyk	
Portugal (PT)	Filipa Melo De Vasconcelos	Carmen Sarogini Monteiro
Romania (RO)	Simona Radulescu	Gina Popovici
Slovak Republic (SK)	Gabriela Dringušová	



Slovenia (SE)	Blaža Nahtigal	
Spain (ES)	Beatriz Martinez Llarena	Laura Cebadera
Sweden (SE)	Åsa Svanström	
Observers and others	Attendance	
Albania (AL)	Valbona Paluka	
Bosnia & Herzegovina (BA)	Dalibor Vidacak	
Kosovo*¹	Sara Preniqi	
Montenegro (ME)	Mirjana Lekic	
Republic of North Macedonia (MK)	Jasmin Hadji Vasilev	
Netherlands (NVWA)	Antoon Opperhuizen	
Serbia (RS)	Nadezda Dukic	
Türkiye	Fatih Serdaroğlu	
EFSA Representatives		
Federica Amiconi (FP Team)	Cristina Alonso Andicoberry (ENREL)	Lisa Brovall (FIN)
Elina Ciekure (FP Team)	Gorgias Garofalakis (KNOW)	Sanja Ilieva (IPA Coordinator)
Martina Kurišova (KNOW)	Martina Mannis (FP Team)	Andrea Nironi (COM)
Maria Chiara Petrolini (CORSER)	Sérgio Potier-Rodeia (Chair)	Victoria Villamar (Chair)

53 participants attended the meeting representing both FP Network Members and Alternates, and observers.

Apologies: Barbara Engeli, FP observer from Switzerland

There are no new nominations since the last 52nd FP Meeting held back on 27-28 September 2023.

¹ Kosovo (*) - This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



Day 1 : 15 November 2023, 9:30-12:30

I. Action points from the 52nd FP meeting

The **Chair Victoria Villamar** opened the 53rd FP Meeting by noting great attendance rate and wishing a good meeting ahead. The floor was given to **Elina Ciekure** to present a short recap on the six action points (AP) stemming from 52nd FP meeting in 27-28 September 2023. Reported ongoing AP for FPs included the accuracy check of the World Food Safety Almanac MS profiles and the promotion of the Food Risk Assessment Europe (FRAE). Ongoing AP also included conclusion of FPA amendments' signature process, EFSA to provide to FPs supporting information on activities reporting and organization of info session on IPA countries' possibilities to support TM activities. AP regarding planning exercise for principal activities and TM activities was reported as concluded.

II. Focal Point Operational Framework 2023-2027: Milestones on current activities

2.1 Principal activities' implementation – MS experience

Opportunities of cooperation with EFSA - RO FP event organised under FPA

The **Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia** gave floor to **Simona Radulescu** to share the best practices from Romania with regards to the implementation of principal activities (PA) corresponding to FP acting as the facilitator of national organizations' involvement in EFSA risk assessment (RA) activities and supporter of partnerships' establishment. This example highlighted the link between PA and tailor-made activities (TM) as the initiation for the event's organization came from the training on G&P run as part of TM activity. The event's agenda included points on EFSA's G&P scheme, management of the Competent organization List, the role of the FP and EU-RAA and MS RA databases, TM activities – new opportunities for cooperation. The AP stemming from the event was the possibility to arrange future events, under the FPA, for the newest Art.36 organisations.

Principal activities' implementation – MS experience (Spain)

Beatriz Martinez Llarena shared the best practices of the implementation of PA under area of Engagement, Collaboration and Partnerships by sharing FP experience in organization of two national events held face-to-face: the 8th Conference on scientific cooperation of Spanish Organizations with EFSA and the 10th Meeting of the National Network on Nanotechnology. Events brought together representatives from Art.36 organisations and relevant national experts working on the specific area.

Conference "Safety on my plate"

Miriam Fougères presented the highlights stemming from the organization of a national conference in Luxembourg – "Safety on my plate". The conference, focusing on official controls of the food chain, was organised in June 2023 as part of implementation of PAs under area of Engagement, Collaboration and Partnerships. The interactive event focused on various risk management topics including food labelling, geographical indications and food contact materials. Based on the survey that the FP circulated among the participants, additional areas of interest were identified, e.g., allergies, more animal related topics, climate change and food, antibiotic



resistance and food, synthetic meat and novel drinks. The FP of Luxembourg expressed availability to share among the FP the feedback survey addressed to participants, after its translation.

2.2 Draft Guidance: Joint working between Focal Point and CEN Members

The **Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia** invited **Vlatka Buzjak Služek** to debrief on the current status of the "Draft Guidance: Joint working between Focal Point and CEN Members". The document is the deliverable of FP TM activity under area of Risk Communication implemented by: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Slovenia, and Sweden.

The document aims to support the delivery of the EU coordinated communication framework expecting to contribute to the creation of a community of professionals capable of coordinating with national institutional partners, to communicate with consumers in Europe about food risks, as stated in the 2019 Transparency Regulation. A common and harmonized understanding of the role and responsibilities of FP and CEN as regarding to Risk Communication activities is important to avoid duplication of work and to communicate with specific auditory in correct manner.

Vlatka Buzkak Služek informed that recently the commenting process on the draft by the FP, CEN and EFSA, was completed and finalization of the document is expected in the end of 2023/beginning 2024.

2.3 Short feedback from the One Health conference

The **Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia** gave the floor to **Danai Papanastasiou** who informed about the outcomes from the conference "Food Safety: a key pillar of One Health approach" held back in Athens, Greece, on 7-8 November 2023. The event focused on topics varying from the European Policy on One Health, food and human health, animal and plant health, agricultural policies and to the role of the industry and the consumers in achieving the objectives of One Health. The event, organized under the TM activity under area of Engagement, Collaboration and Partnerships, provided a ground for engagement and collaboration among all disciplines and all sectors in the food chain by providing better coordination of official controls to protect public health.

Interactive feedback on pilot year:

Short, interactive pulse check exercise was done to assess FP impressions on the pilot year experience. The results were included and discussed under the item 3.1 A Focal Point pilot year – getting ready for 2024.

Action point 1: FP to present the finale version of the guidance: Joint working between Focal Point and CEN Members.

Action point 2: FP to share examples of best practice materials prepared by FP and used during various events, both within the network and with EFSA, along with materials utilized in surveys and summaries of survey results among FP and EFSA.

III. Focal Point Operational Framework: Operational aspects

3.1 A Focal Point pilot year – getting ready for 2024

Chair Victoria Villamar gave the floor to **Sérgio Potier Rodeia** to highlight the main achievements from the pilot year experience and to recap the main elements of the FP framework given the different improvements developed during the year. The strategic orientation of the FP framework was underlined together with the main differences between principal and tailor-made activities as well as the main requirements for submission of new proposals and their assessment



process. The main achievements remarked consisted in the overall number of 29 FPA signed, and the subsequent 44 specific agreements signed for a 6.2 M total investment for the 2023. A total of 24 countries received grants for implementing one or more tailor-made activity, 13 countries proposed new tailor-made proposals and 27 countries were beneficiaries (i.e., with no grant) of tailor-made activities thanks to their attendance to trainings, workshops or conferences organised by FP as part of tailor-made activities implementation. The presentation concluded with a comparative perspective of the FPs' impressions on their first months in the new framework as resulted by a survey run through the 51st FP meeting in May 2023 and their impressions after one year in the new framework, as resulted by a survey run during the same day.

Sérgio Potier Rodeia highlighted that despite the challenges and the complexities of the first implementation year, a lot of opportunities and improvements are possible given the flexibility of the model.

3.2 Key indications from the activities' planning, EoI and proposals submission for 2024

The **Chair Victoria Villamar** gave the floor to **Elina Ciekure** who debriefed on several operation aspects of the FP framework. **Elina Ciekure** started with an overview on the planning of PA for 2024, including statistics on the most selected activities per areas of work, statistics on budget consumption and main factors impacting planning choices. Based on the planning exercise 24 out of 29 FPs have applied for max grant amount.

The presentation included short overview on the submitted TM activities proposals. As the assessment process is ongoing, first feedback is expected to come at the AF meeting on 30 November - 1 December 2023 (Madrid, Spain).

Finally, the highlights from the expression of interest (EoI) for TM activities under the area of Engagement, collaboration and partnership and area of Risk Communication were presented. For both areas activities' uptake was good. It was noted that EoIs were supported by dedicated meetings and individual consultations. **Elina Ciekure** informed that the planning exercise will be kicked off after the conclusion of the assessment process.

Action point 3: FP to complete the national signature process of the SA on PA the by the 1st of December 2023.

Action point 4: EFSA following the agreed process to kick-off the planning exercise for certain TM activities as soon as the assessment process of TM activities proposals is concluded.

IV. Progress on the DiCo2 project – platform for RAA/EU RA plans

The **Chair Victoria Villamar** gave the floor to **Cristina Alonso Andicoberry, Andrea Nironi and Gorgias Garofalakis** to debrief on the on the work undertaken until now in the conceptualisation of a new database to collect MS RA ideas and plans under the EFSA DiCo2 project. The presentation covered general information on the project and the activities performed, including internal consultations and gathering of MS's feedback via the external consultations with selected MS, as well as interaction with FP implementing TM activities under area of Engagement, Collaboration and Partnerships. It was highlighted that while the business analysis is expected by the end of 2023, in Q1 2024, EFSA will expectedly be able to share with FPs some prototypes for testing.

The floor was open for discussion to gather the views of the Plenary on those attention points and requirements already raised during the consultations with MS. FPs were given the possibility to



raise additional points and reflect on possible additional audiences that should have direct access to the databases, e.g., potential opening of the database to Art36 organisations.

The **Chair Victoria Villamar** thanked the FPs and AF members who participated in the individual interviews on the functionalities of the database and welcomed the work undertaken so far and closed the 1st day of the 53rd FP Meeting.

Action point 5: EFSA to evaluate need and possibility to organize a session on DICO2 including all FPs.

Closing of the 1st day

Day 2: 16 November 2023, 9:30-12:30

V. Thematic discussion

5.1 Competent organisations in Member States

The **Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia** opened the 2nd day of the meeting by giving the floor to **Martina Kurišova**, who recapped of the role of FP in management and maintenance of the List of Competent organisations designated by Member States (Art.36 organisations list) and the operational side of the process. She summarised on the requirements for organisations to be included in the list. **Martina Kurišova** provided a high-level overview on statistics on the ongoing Art.36 list update (new organisations, updates and withdrawals), the current state-of-play of number of organisations per country and reminded FP their crucial role of networking (i.e., having overview and contact details in their countries and Europe wide).

Discussion points referred to identification of the expertise missing and how to fill these expertise gaps in some areas within EFSA's remit, and on how to maintain and increase activity of the organisations (e.g., application to EFSA grants proposal, consortia creation and providing expertise to EFSA when needed).

5.2 Feedback from FP's survey among Art.36 Organisations

Spain

The **Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia** gave the floor to **Beatriz Martinez Llarena**, to report back on the results from the survey that aimed at investigating competent organizations' experience in applying to EFSA grants, identifying bottlenecks and success factors in the G&P application process. The identified challenges included misalignment of the calls theme and the respondent's organization's area of work, depending on a call the complexity of the application process and assumption that application period is too short. On the other hand, the identified strengths were – the transparency of the application process; the variety of the calls; a clear explanation of terminology (e.g., grants vs procurement); the support in the formation of consortia and electronical submission of documentation.

Italy

The **Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia** gave the floor to **Luca Busani**, to present Italian FP experience running the survey among Art.36 organisations on application to EFSA G&P calls. The questions focused on administrative and non-administrative difficulties encountered by organisation during the preparation of the applications; the number of applications submitted by organisations and success rate; identification of difficulties encountered during the phase of implementation.



The questionnaire referred to 3 types of EFSA calls: grants (excepts EU-FORA), EU-FORA Grants and Procurement.

Bottlenecks identified included: lack of clarity of the difference between grant and procurement calls and their scope from organisations' side, limits in addressing the topic covered due to lack of identified additional partner(-s), too specific and strict bureaucratic and administrative requirements and procedures, also the limited budget amount.

Action Point 6: EFSA to analyze the information submitted by FP on bottlenecks and success factors in application for G&P calls and bring discussion on what can be done in EFSA and also with support of FP to address the bottlenecks preventing Art.36 organisation to fully engage in G&P calls.

VI. EFSA's IPA III Action 2023-2026: opportunities for cooperation

6.1 Country visit to Kosovo*

Chair **Victoria Villamar** gave the floor to **Sara Preniqi** to present their national effort and experience in working on area of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and to raise awareness on possible engagement among MS and IPA countries in this area.

Sara Preniqi informed about the country visit implemented within the framework of the joint project of European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (SANTE), The Finnish Food Authority and IQLS - Integrated quality laboratory services. The scope of the visit was to obtain first-hand information and see the actual situation in the country related to AMR, taking into account the public health, animal health and food safety.

The presentation explained objectives of the visit and highlighted recommendations for improvement (e.g., improvement of collaboration at national level, enhancing infection prevention and control measures, establishing monitoring of AMR, generating and integrating data into daily decision-making processes) and lessons learned stemming from the visit. The country visit brought valuable information to develop country road map on the response against AMR.

Kosovo (*) - This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

6.2 Cooperation in IPA countries

The Chair **Victoria Villamar** gave the floor to **Mirjana Lekic** to provide overview on the Montenegrin ongoing cooperation with EFSA and possible future cooperation opportunities – involvement in EFSA Scientific Networks, activities regarding data reporting and activities to align, mirror and harmonize the EU MS FP work at their national level. The objective of the presentation was to present the national risk assessment set up, the benefits and the progress in the cooperation and involvement of Montenegrin professionals in the work of EFSA, how it reflects on national level in reaching capacities, capabilities and expertise needed to achieve the necessary alignment with the EU food safety system.

The presentation also provided an overview of the implementation and outreach of the EFSA campaigns in Montenegro: #STOP ASF, PlantHealth4Life, Hazard vs Risk.

The expected outcome of the discussion was to support networking and cooperation initiatives with other pre-accession countries and with MS especially in the domain of tailor-made activities.

6.3 Short debrief from Osijek Autumn School



The **Chair Victoria Villamar** gave the floor to **Sanja Ilieva** to debrief on the IPA Autumn school 2023 that took place on 7-9 November 2023 in Osijek, Croatia. It is long-standing EFSA supported capacity-building initiative, targeted to early and mid-career risk assessors and risk communicators from IPA beneficiaries. The 2023 edition focused on raising visibility of EFSA work and One Health, covering the principles of RA in areas identified as important for the IPA beneficiaries to further strengthen capacity and stimulate involvement in RA with focus on human health, animal health, plant health, and the protection of the environment. The training also included sessions dedicated to risk communication aiming to improve the knowledge and skills of risk communicators by providing first-hand experience on setting-up communication programmes and methodologies and stimulating them to coordinate tasks and activities towards gaining consumers' trust.

VII. Opportunities for FP support and collaboration with EFSA:

7.1 EFSA calls in 2024/25 and strengthening of partnerships

The **Chair Victoria Villamar** gave the floor to **Gorgias Garofalakis** to provide high level overview on the partnership-relevant calls that EFSA is planning to launch in 2024/25.

The objectives of the presentation were to inform the FPs on the areas on which partnership opportunities that are already available (open calls) or will be launched in the coming months, to highlight that there are cooperation routes beyond the G&P calls, which the FPs can support, and finally to strengthen the message that engagement effort needs to be continuous so as to support partnership, when the need or opportunity arises.

In his presentation, he indicated opportunities that can help partnership creation, including the TM activities under Area 2 "Engagement, Cooperation and Partnership".

Gorgias Garofalakis took opportunity to invite the FPs to promote at national level, and attend, the online info-session for the presentation of the G&P 2024 workplan, on 4 December 2023, highlighting that, while it is primarily indented for MS Competent Organisations, it would also be of interest for organisations likely to be included, in the future, in the Art.36 list. **Gorgias Garofalakis** also reminded the audience where they could find call-related information on EFSA's website.

The **Chair Victoria Villamar**, by closing the discussion item, noted that the FP network is an important and long-standing mechanism for supporting cooperation with MS. In particular, the FP tailor-made activities provide a lot of flexibility to create initiatives that will empower the FPs to reach new actors and identify new areas for cooperation.

7.2 The application process for procurement & grants and EU Funding & Tenders Portal

The **Chair Victoria Villamar** gave the floor to **Lisa Brovall** to provide an overview on EFSA's application process for procurements and grants, including by explaining the difference between the two types of calls and actors who can apply to both. The presentation aimed to further support the clarification of G&P mechanisms within EFSA towards FPs, especially in the light of their role as connecting hubs and their support to Art.36 organisations in application to EFSA G&P calls. The presentation highlighted the use of the EU funding and tender portal, that EFSA has started to use in addition to the EFSA's dedicate page. The importance for EFSA to align with Commission's practice of e-submission and call publication on the EU Funding & Tenders portal (particularly on grants) was important feedback from the Art.36 survey a few years ago.



Action Point 7: FP to raise awareness among relevant parties including Art.36 organisations - and other potentially interested parties - on EFSA Webinar on funding opportunities in the EFSA 2024 workplan on 4 December.

Action point 8: FP to continue to support creation of new partnerships by raising visibility of EFSA G&P calls among relevant national organizations and experts and by supporting them before and during application process.

VIII. Risk Communication Summer School

The **Chair Victoria Villamar** gave the floor to **Antoon Opperhuizen**, to present the results of the FP TM activity on Risk Communication Summer School and pilot strategy of RC implemented by Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA).

The objective of the summer school was developed to support the implementation of the General Food Law and the Transparency Regulation with the co-creation of risk communication strategies across Europe, by strengthening the dialogue and promoting cooperation between risk assessors, risk managers and risk communicators. The main learning objectives were: insight in value conflicts between stakeholders, learning on how to communicate RA in a honest and trustworthy way, how to deal with risk management decisions, how to build, feed and shape trust and confidence, the role of media and societal expectations.

2023 was the pilot year for the Risk communication summer school. It was held in September 2023 in Utrecht with 2 representatives per MS, the following countries participated Estonia, Latvia, Norway, Ireland, Germany, Portugal, Croatia. The activity also included NL country visits to listen and understand MS needs.

Participants' feedback was very good with 95% of participants rating the event between 8 and 10 highlighting the strong synergies and the inspiring exchanges.

Finally, **Antoon Opperhuizen** provided preliminary information on the new TM activity proposal to continue the activity. It is envisaged to have two summer schools during 2024, following similar approach as before with full face-to-face participation for 2 participants per MS and a maximum of 7 MS per edition. In addition, having MS visits to tailor the summer school according to national needs.

Action point 9: FP to support raise visibility of the Risk Communication Summer School and to provide information to the Dutch FP on the identified interest to participate in it.

IX. AOB

9.1 Upcoming meetings

The **Chair Victoria Villamar** gave the floor to **Elina Ciekure** who provided information on the dates of the FP plenary meetings in 2024 and highlighted that communication received from MS's side on the benefits of having 2 face-to-face meetings was taken into consideration. Therefore, spring and early autumn meetings will be organized as hybrid events, the first in Parma and the second in an IPA country.

Closing of the 2nd day



Summary of Action Points

<u>Action 1</u>	<u>FP</u>	to present the finale version of the guidance: Joint working between Focal Point and CEN Members,
<u>Action 2</u>	<u>FP</u>	to share examples of best practice materials prepared by FP and used during various events, both within the network and with EFSA, along with materials utilized in surveys and summaries of survey results among FP and EFSA.
<u>Action 3</u>	<u>FP</u>	to complete the national signature process of the SA on PA the by the 1 st of December 2023.
<u>Action 4</u>	<u>EFSA</u>	to follow the agreed process and to kick-off the planning exercise for certain TM activities as soon as the assessment process of TM activities proposals is concluded.
<u>Action 5</u>	<u>EFSA</u>	to evaluate need and possibility to organize a session on DICO2 including all FPs.
<u>Action 6</u>	<u>EFSA</u>	to analyze the information submitted by FP on bottlenecks and success factors in application for G&P calls and bring discussion on what can be done in EFSA and also with support of FP to adress the bottlenecks preventing Art. 36 organisations to fully engage in G&P calls.
<u>Action 7</u>	<u>FP</u>	to raise awareness among relevant parties including Art.36 organisations - and other potentially interested parties - on EFSA Webinar on funding opportunities in the EFSA 2024 workplan on 4 December.
<u>Action 8</u>	<u>FP</u>	to continue to support creation of new partnerships by raising visibility of EFSA G&P calls among relevant national organizations and experts and by supporting them before and during application process.
<u>Action 9</u>	<u>FP</u>	to support raise visibility of the Risk Communication Summer School and to provide information to the Dutch FP on the identified interest to participate in it.

