Report

IPA training on pesticides and veterinary medicinal products residues data collection and reporting to EFSA

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

EFSA's cooperation with EU enlargement (IPA) countries, based on the EU's enlargement policy and the EC Multi-country Action entitled "Preparatory measures for the participation of IPA beneficiaries in EU agencies", dates back from 2005.

The Action if funded from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) by the European Commission, through grant projects. The current grant is run from 1 October 2015 until 30 November 2017.

EFSA's cooperation with IPA countries has a long term perspective, as EC grants programing for the Agencies are done two years cycles that enables continuity and long term planning. The next IPA II project 2017-2019 will start immediately after finishing the current one (starting due date 1 December 2017).

The objective of the project is to progressively increase involvement of the IPA countries in EFSA's scientific cooperation and networks and build capacity and expertise able to contribute to EFSA's work before and after the accession, in particular in the area of harmonisation of data collection methodologies and reporting to EFSA. Collection of accurate and reliable data is a prerequisite for informed risk assessment and risk management, especially during the food safety crises and emerging risks.

The results of the recent EFSA's online survey with 93 representatives from IPA partner institutions confirmed that one of the two most important areas for future cooperation is the harmonisation of data collection methodologies and reporting to EFSA.

STATE OF PLAY – DATA COLLECTION

EFSA and IPA countries invested considerable resources and efforts in 2016/2017 to increase capacity in the area of data harmonisation and reporting to EFSA, including arrangement of IPA dedicated workshops and training sessions and IPA participation in EFSA's scientific networks and project for data harmonisation. The outcomes are the following:

- Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia submitted national reports on zoonoses, AMR and FBOs to EFSA's DWH for the first time in 2017.
- National food authorities and organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia participate in the EU menu project that supports countries to conduct surveys on national food consumption.
- The last report on data collection on LSD where EFSA was working closely together with both MS and IPA countries to produce the report.

AIM OF THE TRAINING

The aim of this training was to provide theoretical knowledge and hands on training to IPA experts on the methods and tools for pesticides and veterinary medicinal product residues (VMPR) data collection and reporting to EFSA.

Specific topics covered with the training were:

- Outcome of two questionnaires on pesticides and VMPR, previously sent to IPA countries and future EFSA activities with IPA in the area of data collection;
- Open discussion on the control activities and the intended reporting to EFSA starting from 2018: testing and deadlines;
- Introduction to the SSD data model (SSD1 or SSD2) including structure, variables and catalogues;
- Hands on training on pesticides and VMPR data coding reporting using basic tools and platforms developed by EFSA, including DCF, how to upload and understanding data validation errors;
- Final round table discussion on reporting timelines and capacity building needs.

Please see annex A for detailed agenda.

AUDIENCE AND STRUCTURE OF THE TRAINING

The training was arranged back to back with the meetings of the two EFSA Scientific networks on Pesticides and VMPR. The audience consisted of national representatives to these networks from five IPA countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia), that confirmed interest to report these data, through the EFSA questionnaires submitted previously to national contacts and scientific networks representatives.

Please see annex B for details on participants.

During the introduction EFSA explained and emphasised the training objectives and the aim to involve IPA countries in the EU wide data collection and reporting of pesticides and VMPR in the following period. Information on the new IPA grant and planed cooperation and data exchange in various data collection domains were presented.

A round table introduction with the experts was followed by a brief summary of the results of the IPA questionnaires' on pesticides and VMPR. Feedback was received from six countries (out of seven invited).

The outcome is:

- All IPA countries have national monitoring for pesticides and VMPR residues in place;
- Monitoring is fully or partially harmonised with the EU legislation and requirements, e.g. pesticide residue legal limits (MRL) compliance check;
- While all countries have the obligation to submit plan and outcome from VMPR monitoring to the European Commission, none of the countries has is obliged to submit outcome from pesticides residues monitoring to the EC;
- All countries confirmed awareness of EFSA's systems for data collection;
- Five countries confirmed interest to start to report data on pesticides and VMPR to EFSA.

For VMPR data reporting participants were provided with support materials, while for the pesticides residue area, PESTICIDES Unit provided direct training on the use of tools such as for example the XML tool creator for the data compilation and the SSD catalogue for the data coding. The participants were also introduced on the data transmission on the EFSA DCF system.

Input from participants was requested on their readiness to submit data in SSD (Standard Sample Description) format. Based on the feedback and comments received from the IPA countries, who indicated a preference to be further acquainted with the SSD data model, EFSA agreed with the IPA countries to modify the agenda to address this need.

In particular, EFSA presented an overview of the SSD explaining the history behind the implementation of a standard and the advantages of a harmonised and flexible data collection model to meet the needs of data analysis.

The structure of the data model was described including how data variables are reported as either numerical or text values and participants were also provided with the lists (catalogues) of the defined data elements that can be reported as well as with an explanation concerning mandatory and non-mandatory data elements (supported by a list of mandatory, recommended and optional fields).

The excel version of SSD was also presented, to illustrate the data element names and codes and the links to the controlled terminologies (catalogues).

The second part of the meeting was devoted to hands-on training on reporting pesticides data.

The final round table included discussion about possible timelines for IPA countries to report data on pesticides and VMPR to EFSA, major gaps and obstacles and specific capacity building needs. The outcome is summarised below:

Reporting of pesticide residues:

Country	Timelines	Gaps/Obstacles	Further support needed	Notes
Albania	Albania has developed pesticide residue monitoring programme in place; however, at the moment, there is no a concrete plan to send the monitoring results to EFSA as – in the pesticide residue area – first need to set-up a data collection system at national level.	No SSD coding system in place yet at national level. But data are coded (also) in English.	Yes, possible hands-on training in Albania would be appreciated. At the moment, no SSD/SSD2 is used at country level.	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina already has a good pesticide residue monitoring programme in place. Bosnia and Herzegovina is likely to be one of the first IPA countries ready to send EFSA the pesticide residue monitoring data, already in 2018 (2017 monitoring results). However, this information has to be checked and confirmed after the meeting in Parma.	No SSD coding system in place yet at national level. But data are coded (also) in English.	Yes, possible hands-on training in Bosnia and Herzegovina would be appreciated. It is worth noting that Bosnia and Herzegovina has already started a fruitful collaboration with Croatia, which is country that is used to in dealing with SSD data coding and transmission to EFSA.	The data collected at national level are handled in Excel files, which will make easier for the XML data file creation.
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has already good monitoring programmes in place in different food areas, e.g. pesticide residues, mycotoxins, microbiological criteria of certain categories of food products, determination of the presence of heavy metals and nitrates in certain types of food, materials and products that come in contact with food, organic production and GMO. At the moment, FYR of Macedonia only reports the monitoring results to the national authorities. No indication is available when data could be reported to COM and/or EFSA. It is noted that Macedonia collect data only from accredited laboratories.	No SSD coding system in place yet at national level. But data are coded (also) in English.	Yes, possible hands-on training in Macedonia would be appreciated. At the moment, no SSD/SSD2 is used at country level.	The data collected at national level are handled in Excel files, which will make easier for the XML data file creation. LIMS systems are available in the national laboratories.
Montenegro	Montenegro has already good monitoring programmes in place in	No SSD coding system in place	Yes, possible hands-on training in	The data collected at

Country	Timelines	Gaps/Obstacles	Further support needed	Notes
	different food areas, e.g. pesticide residues. Montenegro already reports the monitoring results to the national authorities and COM. Montenegro is likely to be one of the first IPA countries ready to send EFSA the pesticide residue monitoring data, already in 2018 (2017 monitoring results).	yet at national level. But data are coded (also) in English.	Montenegro would be highly appreciated. At the moment, no SSD/SSD2 is implemented at country level. Montenegro is very motivated for collaborating as soon as possible with EFSA in order to learn the SSD data coding for a near future data transmission to EFSA. Montenegro committed to send its pesticide monitoring data to EFSA already in 2018.	national level are handled in Excel files. LIMS systems are available in the national laboratories.
Serbia	Serbia has already good monitoring programmes in place but does not reports the monitoring results to the EC COM yet. The monitoring results are sent by the five laboratories involved to the competent Ministry. At the moment, Serbia is not yet ready for its data transmission to EFSA, for sure will not be able to transmit the 2017 monitoring results in 2018.	No SSD coding system in place yet at national level. But data are coded (also) in English.	Yes, possible hands-on training in Serbia would be highly appreciated. At the moment, no SSD/SSD2 is used at country level.	The data collected at national level are handled in Excel files. LIMS systems are available in the national laboratories. EU MRL are already used for checking pesticide residue levels in food controlled.

Reporting of VMPR:

Country	Timelines	Gaps/Obstacles	Further support needed
Albania	Currently, VMPR data is sent by the ministry to the EC. We have an official control plan in place since 2005 in Excel format in English. Not able to send data to EFSA yet.	To send data to EFSA in SSD2 format would need to configure to export the data from the LIMS as SSD2 (export excel files from LIMS at present) and to address the issue of reporting ccAlpha and ccBeta	Dedicated training on reporting VMPR data at country level
Bosnia and Herzegovina	At present, VMPR reports are sent by the residues laboratory to the veterinary office in excel format. No LIMS. Not possible to say when they would be able to send the data to EFSA	Working towards the establishment of a LIMS system and with a colleague in Croatia to assist in the facilitation of a data export	Dedicated training on reporting VMPR data at country level

Country	Timelines	Gaps/Obstacles	Further support needed
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	National monitoring plan in place for residues. Have a manual system in place for data extraction. Would need to check with decision makers on possible timelines	Have a centralised LIMS system but not connected with all laboratories, Need to address reporting of ccAlpha and ccBeta. No SSD coding system in place yet at national level.	Dedicated training on reporting VMPR data at country level (including FoodEx2 training)
Montenegro	Send VMPR data to EC in excel format. Would like to attempt a test VMPR data submission to EFSA	Challenge of reporting ccAlpha and ccBeta	Dedicated training and support from EFSA for a test submission
Serbia	National monitoring plan in place, submit reports to the EC in excel format. Have a LIMS system in place	Main challenge in reporting data in SSD2 format but technically possible to report the data	Dedicated training and support from EFSA

KEY MESSAGES FROM THE TRAINING

- EFSA sees the benefits for and is committed to work with the IPA countries in harmonisation and streamlining reporting processes in order to ensure that the data collected in IPA countries are relevant and easy to analyse at the EU level.
- IPA countries are invited to report the data on pesticides and take part in EU wide collection from 2018. For reporting VMPR data, the general consensus is for further support and training for the IPA countries; thus the EU wide reporting of veterinary residues commencing in January 2018 represents a considerable challenge. However EFSA can offer on request assistance and guidance to any of the IPA counties who may be in a position to submit some of their 2017 VMPR data in SSD2 format before the VMPR data collection is closed on 30 June 2018.
- Pesticide residues resulting from the use of plant protection products on crops or food products that are used for food or feed production may pose a risk factor for public health. For this reason, a comprehensive legislative framework has been established in the European Union (EU), which defines rules for the approval of active substances used in plant protection products, the use of plant protection products and for pesticide residues in food. In the pesticide residue area, EFSA has the legal obligation to collect on annual basis results of the official controls and other relevant information. Based on the results provided by the reporting countries, detailed analysis are performed every year regarding pesticide occurrence on the most important food products consumed and the dietary risk related to the exposure of European consumers to pesticide residues. This report provides a detailed insight in the official control activities performed by EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. EFSA informed the training participants that the legal deadline for the reporting countries to send to EFSA the pesticide monitoring results is set to the last day of August every year, i.e. the deadline for the reporting of the 2017 monitoring results to EFSA is set to 31st of August 2018. The current data model for coding the pesticide residue results is the SSD (version 1); however, in a few years all the EU countries will have fully implemented the SSD2 version of the EFSA data model. During the training the IPA countries shown to have a good understanding of the EU legislation with regard the pesticide residue legal limits (MRL) and other pieces of EU legislation related to pesticide residue in food. Thus, potential future training should focus mainly on technical aspects, in particular about data coding and management according to the models and procedures already agreed and applied by all EU Member States.
- From 2018 EFSA will produce the annual report on veterinary medicinal residues using sample-based data submitted by Member States. Reporting countries will also be able to produce their national reports on veterinary residues.
- Participation in the EFSA's Scientific network meetings on pesticides monitoring and scientific network meetings on Veterinary Medicinal Products Residues is important in order to ensure the exchange of information between EFSA and each reporting country.

- To support data collection and reporting of pesticides and VMPR, EFSA provides dedicated technical reporting manuals, specific guidelines for each data collection food domain and several tools to facilitate the national coding of the monitoring results

NEXT STEPS

- By the end of the year, EFSA will approach IPA national contact points and appointed observers to the EFSA's Scientific network on pesticides monitoring and Scientific network on Veterinary Medicinal Products Residues, to confirm countries' interest (including reporting timelines) for reporting the data on pesticides and VMPR in 2018 to EFSA.
- Reporting countries will be asked to provide information on the appointed reporting officer and data providers in order to allow the creation of user profiles.
- In accordance with IPA reporting timelines, specific capacity building needs and availability of EFSA's experts and resources, EFSA will design proposal for IPA capacity building assistance, either through arrangement of national/regional events outside EFSA premises and/or webinars, organisation of a pilot, and/or through arrangement of the training back to back with respective network meetings, whilst help-desk support will be provided through the whole reporting period.
- Alternatively, capacity building events could be also arranged through TAIEX technical assistance. EFSA will support the countries in applying for the TAIEX assistance to organise expert missions/workshops at national/regional level on the subject.
- Through the IPA project, EFSA will fund participation of IPA representatives to the EFSA's scientific network meeting on pesticides monitoring and scientific network meeting on Veterinary Medicinal Products Residues. Reporting countries will be asked to revisit the list of nominated representatives, if needed, in accordance with the information provided on the reporting officer and data providers.

Annex A – Agenda

IPA dedicated training on data collection (pesticides and VMDR)

Meeting date:	**Friday 13 October 2017**
Meeting venue:	**MTG SEAT 00/M08-09 - EFSA, Parma, Italy**
Meeting hours:	**10:00 – 17.00**
Chair:	**Daniela Brocca, Scientific Officer, PESTICIDES Unit, EFSA**

Draft Agenda

Time	*No.*	*Items*	*Presenters*
10.00	1	Introduction and outcome of pre-accession countries survey	Jelena VRACAR FILIPOVIC, Liaison officer, AFSCO Unit, EFSA
10.30	2	Open discussion of the control activities and the intended reporting to EFSA starting from 2018: testing and deadlines	Daniela Brocca, Scientific Officer, PESTICIDES Unit, EFSA + input from all
11:00		**COFFEE BREAK**	
11.15	3	Introduction to the SSD data model (SSD1 or SSD2?) including structure, variables and catalogues – DATA	DATA Unit
11:45	4	How to report pesticides data - demo plus hands on – Part I	Daniela Brocca, Scientific Officer, PESTICIDES Unit, EFSA
12.30		**LUNCH**	
13.30	5	How to report pesticides data - demo plus hands on – Part II	Daniela Brocca, Scientific Officer, PESTICIDES Unit, EFSA
14.15	6	How to report VMPR data – demo plus hands on	Doreen Dolores RUSSELL, Scientific Officer and Anca STOICESCU, Scientific Officer, DATA Unit, EFSA
15:45		**COFFEE BREAK**	
16.00	7	DCF, how to upload and understanding errors	DATA Unit
16.30	8	Round table – questions, support needs, next steps	All
17.00		End of training	

Annex B – list of participants

Country	Representative to SC network on pesticides	Representative to SC network on
Albania	VLADI Vjollca, Food Safety and Veterinary Institute	MEHMETI Elmira Food Safety and Veterinary Institute
Bosnia and Herzegovina	ZOVKO Ivana Food Safety Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina	TAHIROVIC Dinaida Veterinary Faculty University of Sarajevo
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	DRNDAR PEPIKJ Slada Food and Veterinary Agency	RISTOSKA Daniela Food and Veterinary Agency
Montenegro	SUKOVIC Danijela Center for ecotoxicological research	ZIVKOVIC Vladimir Center for Ecotoxicological Research
Serbia	RISTIC MATIJEVIC Lidija Plant Protection Directorate	STEFANOVIC Srdjan Institute for Meat hygiene and Technology