Collaboration – the agony and the ecstasy

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- 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.

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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;

**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?

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

**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**.