



Better Training for Safer Food Annual Report 2010



**RESPONDING TO
CHALLENGES**



The Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) in close cooperation with the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers of the European Commission (DG SANCO) manage the Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) initiative. This report describes the activity of BTSF in 2010. This report was prepared by EAHC with the contribution of unit G4 from DG SANCO. The support from colleagues in DG SANCO is gratefully acknowledged.

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http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm

and information on the Better Training for Safer Food initiative at:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/index_en.htm

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Better Training for Safer Food
Annual Report **2010**

Explanation of acronyms that appear in this document	
BIP	Border inspection post
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
BTSF	Better Training for Safer Food
DG SANCO	Directorate-General for Health and Consumers
EAHC	Executive Agency for Health and Consumers
EU-RL	European Union Reference Laboratory
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCM	Food contact materials
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
FNAO	Feed and food of non-animal origin
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
HPLC	High Pressure Liquid Chromatography
LBM	Live Bivalve Molluscs – for the purpose of this AR
MLs	Maximum Levels – for the purpose of this AR
MRL	Maximum residue levels
MS	Member States (of the European Union)
NCP	National contact points
NRL	National Reference Laboratory
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PPP	Plant protection products
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
TRACES	Trade Control and Expert System
TSE	Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies
WHO	World Health Organization
TC	Third countries

Contents

Foreword by Paola Testori Coggi, Director-General for Health and Consumers	4
Introduction	5
Chapter 1 BTSF – what it is and what it does	6
What is BTSF?	7
How BTSF has developed	8
Legal base and operating context	10
Training and related activities in 2010	11
In the EU	11
Beyond the EU	27
Participation in BTSF training activities held in 2010 and hosting countries	35
The Africa programme	38
High-level Conference	42
A look ahead to 2011–2012	43
Chapter 2 Five years of experience – looking backwards to plan for the future	46
Preparing for change	47
The Staff Working Document	48
Chapter 3 BTSF – a social network	54
National contact points	54
Contractors	61
Practical information	63
How participants should apply	63
How contractors should apply	63

Foreword



The European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers' Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) programme has now completed its fifth year of activity. It trains official control staff of EU Member States and third countries involved in food, veterinary and plant health issues.

The expansion of the programme has continued during 2010 in terms of participants, with almost 6,000 people directly involved in training and programmes with the launch of new subjects such as the health of bees, zoo animals and aquaculture animals.

Aside from these encouraging signs, a key factor of BTSF's activity during the past year has been the adoption by the Commission of the Staff Working Document on challenges and strategies for BTSF. This outlines the challenges facing the programme and sets out actions to overcome them both in the short-medium and long term.

Another important issue during the year has been the successful conclusion of most activities within the BTSF Africa programme, which aimed at developing capacity in Africa on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues. This should contribute to regional integration across the African continent and bring African agro-food production further into line with international standards.

Future SPS training for Africa and the strategies described in the Staff Working Document were the main points of discussion during the high-level conference on BTSF, which took place in November. This emphasised the benefits of BTSF activities and highlighted effective dissemination as vital to continued success.

Indeed, wider dissemination of the expertise provided by BTSF is essential to ensure that the EU food safety model reinforces its position as a global point of reference. Achieving this goal will facilitate increased trade in safe food worldwide and contribute to economic development. Increased safety standards in the rest of the world, and particularly in developing countries, will bring additional benefits for the EU by reducing the need for extensive import checks at the Union's borders and giving EU consumers access to a more diverse range of safe food products.

At the same time, crises in the food supply chain bring about considerable economic costs for Europe. By continuing to drive up the standards of official controls in the EU and elsewhere, BTSF is helping to minimise the risks of such crises emerging.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in BTSF for their contribution to its success over the last year and I sincerely hope that the programme continues to flourish in the years to come.

Paola Testori Coggi

Director-General for Health and Consumers

Introduction

BTSF exists to help solve a problem basic to society – safe food – through training that assures food safety. In a large single market and in a globalised world with major import and export trade in food and its components, this is a constant challenge. There are rules about food safety, and they are being constantly updated. But rules aren't enough. They have to be applied properly – and that needs training. Training that is constantly adapted to the evolving demands of EU legislation, training that can ensure that food is safe whenever or wherever it is bought. In other words, better training for safer food. BTSF responds to these everyday challenges.

Through high-quality courses and contacts and through promoting cooperation and collaboration, BTSF helps ensure standards are met. Other positive effects include harmonisation, which offers food businesses greater certainty of equal treatment wherever their goods are placed on the market. BTSF helps the EU achieve its aim in food production – safety for consumers and free trade. Its activity extends even beyond the EU, with courses in other countries: in EFTA, or countries covered by the Neighbourhood Policy, the enlargement policy, and others with trade links with the EU. The training promotes European standards and the EU's legislative model at global level. It also gives businesses and consumers in the Union easier access to safe products from all over the world. At the same time, if third-country products fully comply with EU standards, this reduces the burden of extensive import checks at the Union's borders. Part of BTSF's work is in Africa, and its engagement there not only contributes to food safety but also helps to spur trade and improve development prospects, promoting EU standards at regional level. As an integral part of the EU's Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC), BTSF contributes to the broad thinking on food safety and how best to assure it. This report looks back across the first five years of operation of BTSF, and draws some conclusions about how it has met the challenges.

Reflection on the past points to the future – so the annual report also includes elements from the Commission's staff working document published in 2010. This document examined the challenges BTSF faces in the coming years, and suggested some ways to best meet them.

This annual report is not just a report but serves as a tool – for contact and cooperation among the many stakeholders in this field. To be fully successful, BTSF needs to operate as a sort of social network among everyone involved in food chain control. This has been the core of its work throughout its existence. This report contains details of vital contact points, information about the sort of courses BTSF runs and how to apply for them, as well as links to relevant websites and key facts and figures about BTSF. We hope you will find it of interest, and of continuing usefulness as a contact book.

Salvatore Magazzu

Head of the Consumers and Food Safety Unit



BTSF – what it is and what it does



What is BTSF?

Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) provides high-quality training for officials involved in verifying compliance with EU food and feed law, animal health and welfare rules and plant health rules. Participants come from Member States and sometimes also from other countries, particularly candidate countries, EFTA, the Neighbourhood Policy Countries and developing countries. Training programmes take place in Europe and beyond. The aim is to make controls more efficient and harmonised and to ensure that the food industry respects EU regulations safeguarding public, animal and plant health.

This means safe food and feed and high levels of protection for consumers and animals.

"It is my firm belief that Better Training for Safer Food goes to the very heart of the stated mission of the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers, that of making Europe's citizens safer, healthier and more confident."

John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, High-Level Conference on Better Training for Safer Food, 18 November 2010, Brussels

BTSF training is provided by contractors, selected through a public procurement process that involves intensive liaison with the National Contact Points (NCPs) in Member States and other relevant countries, covering also the selection of participants, coordination tasks and promotion.

All tutors for these training courses are chosen for their experience and expertise in their field. Currently most workshops are from three to five days.

A Member State expert group and an Inter service Steering Group, both managed by DG SANCO, meet regularly to coordinate activities, and to define policy orientation and training needs.

In June 2007, a cost-benefit analysis was launched to assess the benefits of extending the mandate of the Public Health Executive Agency (PHEA) to include food safety training measures and the consumer policy programme. The analysis supported outsourcing tasks that could be managed more efficiently by the Agency without undermining the Commission's policy role. Following Commission Decision 2008/544/EC, PHEA became the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC).

EAHC has a mandate to translate into everyday practice the Commission's policies and programmes in a cost effective manner. The Agency works in close cooperation with DG SANCO and NCPs on one side and with contractors on the other, to ensure smooth operation and cooperation in implementing BTSF.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

EAHC

The Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (formerly the Public Health Executive Agency) was created by the European Commission on 1 January 2005. In 2008, its mandate was expanded to include actions in consumer and food safety areas. EAHC implements the EU Health and Consumer Programmes and the Better Training for Safer Food initiative. Based in Luxembourg, it manages relationships between some 3,000 beneficiaries involved in hundreds of projects with a total EU contribution of more than €200 million. The Agency has about 50 staff members, and an annual administrative budget of €4.5 million, and provides a professional service in performing the activities entrusted to it, working closely with the Commission's Health and Consumers Directorate General (DG SANCO), its parent DG.

The value of BTSF is inestimable. It increases compliance with food safety rules inside the EU, and helps ensure that imports are of adequate safety and quality.

The European Union is the world's largest food importer, with €57.1 billion worth of imports in 2008, up by 8.4% from the previous year.

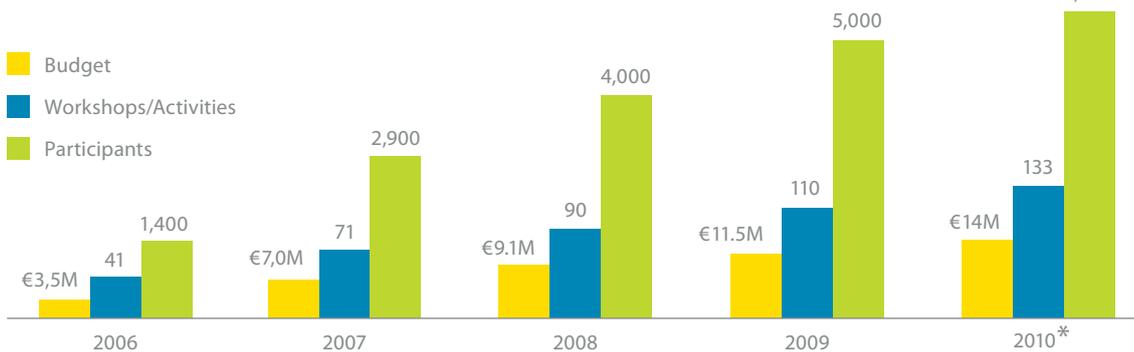
How BTSF has developed

"In 2006 the offer comprised seven programs and trained just under 1,500 people. From these relatively modest beginnings the initiative has become a real success story over the last few years."
Paola Testori Coggi, Director General For Health And Consumers, European Commission, High-Level Conference on The Better Training for Safer Food Programme, 18 November 2010, Brussels

BTSF has been providing training on food and feed law, animal health and welfare rules and plant health rules for national-level control staff both from the EU and worldwide since 2006. It was launched under the auspices of the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers, with considerable backing from the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development and other Commission services. Communication COM (2006) 519 of September 2006 identified a medium-long term steady state of 6,000 participants and a budget of €15 million annually, to be reached around 2011–2012. Since 2006, around 180 countries have been involved in the training programme, with upwards of 23,000 people, both in the European Union and worldwide, and with training on some 25 different subjects.

In designing new strategies and programmes, full account is taken of evaluations and feedback from participants, impact studies, collection and analysis of data and information obtained from a range of stakeholders.

BTSF evolution 2006–2010



*Excluding the activities in BTSF Africa that are detailed elsewhere.

The graphical data show a continuous increase of people trained, demonstrating that the money invested in BTSF is spent efficiently and in line with the principle of value for money.

Better Training for Safer Food is intended to complement the training provided by the EU Member States in food control, in particular in those areas where a Community value is evident.

The scope of BTSF is very broad, covering food safety checks at border inspection posts, animal health and animal welfare issues, food contact materials and plant protection products, EU food standards, highly pathogenic avian influenza control, TSE and GMOs, etc.

In 2008, an intermediate assessment of the impact of BTSF provided encouraging feedback, with high ratings in terms of content, delivery, format, tutor performance, implementation and organisation. Feedback also showed the continued high demand for EU-level training in the areas covered by BTSF.

“The increasing demand for training under Better Training for Safer Food is truly a testament to its success.”
 John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, High-Level Conference on Better Training for Safer Food, 18 November 2010, Brussels

Since 2009, execution of the BTSF programme has been gradually entrusted to EAHC. The Commission retained its guidance role in terms of policy. The transfer marked the end of the pilot phase of BTSF and represented the first element in the construction of an organisational structure capable of responding to high levels of demand and providing high-quality training in the medium-long term.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

Legal base and operating context

The roots of BTSF go back to Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 (OJ L 165, 30.4.2004 corrected by L 191, 28.5.2004) on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law and animal health and welfare rules, which was adopted in April 2004 and came into force in January 2006. Article 51 empowers the Commission to organise training for Member State staff verifying compliance with food and feed law, animal health, welfare and plant health rules and third country, particularly developing country, participants. Article 66 (1) (b) of that same regulation provides that the appropriations required for the training of control staff shall be authorised each year in the framework of the budgetary procedure. The legal basis for training on plant health rules is Article 2(1) (i) of Council Directive 2000/29/EC on protective measures against the introduction into the EU of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the EU (OJ L 169, 10.7.2000, p.1). This empowers the Commission to draw up EU programmes for further training of officials in an effort to increase the knowledge and experience they have acquired in the national context to a level necessary for the proper application of the Directive. The Commission is also empowered to contribute to the financing of such training from the EU budget. Article 15(2)(b)(i) of Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation provides for a thematic programme on food security (OJ L378, 27.12.2006, p. 41), which has been the basis for financing the “BTSF Africa” programme.

“Better enforcement of existing legislation is essential, as underlined in the recent Monti report on the Single Market, if the EU’s internal market is to function as it should.”
John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, High-Level Conference on Better Training for Safer Food, 18 November 2010, Brussels

DG SANCO’s role in the BTSF project cycle is that it develops BTSF policy, and sets the strategy and programmes.

EAHC’s task includes management of the whole project cycle, publishing calls for tender, conducting the evaluations, awards and contracting, monitoring the implementation of contracts, approving reports, collecting and analysing data and preparing reports for policy debate.

The BTSF legal base as set out above is complemented by two strategic documents, the September 2006 Communication and the Staff Working Document 2010.

Training and related activities in 2010

In the EU

As shown below, training courses organised in the EU for Member State officials have covered a wide range of subjects.

HACCP – BIPs Seaport/roads/rail – Food hygiene and controls – Microbiological criteria and zoonoses control – TSE - Animal welfare – Feed law – Official controls of feed and food of non-animal origin – Food contact materials – Animal by-products – Animal health prevention and control (Aquaculture) – Animal health of bees and exotic zoo animals – Plant health controls – Plant protection products

Member States 2010 programme overview

Name of the programme	Number of training courses	Number of participants	Geographical coverage
Food contact materials	6	215	EE/PT/SI
Controls of FNAO	3	145	IT
TSE	4	133	DE
BIPs	4	145	PL/UK
Microbiological criteria and control of zoonoses	6	224	DE/FR
Animal welfare	4	228	IT/SE/TR
PPP	3	113	LT
Feed law	5	151	BE/ES/PL
Food hygiene and controls	14	298	BE/ES/HU/IE/IT/UK
Plant health controls	8	221	ES/IE/IT/PL/PT
Animal by-products	4	251	BE/LT/PT
Animal health: aquaculture	3	111	UK/ES
Animal health: bees and exotic zoo animals	2	79	CZ
HACCP	23	436	FR/DE/HU/PT/SE/UK
Total	89	2750	16 countries

BTSF – what it is and what it does



HACCP

The HACCP system is internationally recognised as the most effective instrument to help food business operators reach a higher standard of food safety. The HACCP system focuses on identifying and preventing hazards from contaminating feed and food. It is based on hazard analysis and enables more efficient and effective control of product processes in order to verify how well a food or feed business is complying with relevant food safety requirements. This system places responsibility for ensuring food and feed safety on business operators, helping them to compete more effectively in the world market and reducing barriers to international trade. The HACCP system should take account of the principles contained in the Codex Alimentarius.

Food and feed business operators are required to implement and maintain permanent procedures based upon the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. Control techniques, such as auditing and evaluation of HACCP procedures by food business operators and their assessment, are included in Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 among the relevant subject areas for the training of staff performing official controls.

HACCP course Type 1 covered the development, implementation and maintenance of control procedures based upon the seven principles of HACCP. Course Type 2 was designed to develop the ability to conduct detailed audits of food and feed businesses to verify implementation of HACCP systems and their compliance with food and feed hygiene requirements.

Activities – 23 events in total	23 workshops (5 days duration) were run: 5 as Course Type 1 18 as Course Type 2
Tutors	24 tutors from 6 EU Member States (France, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom)
Total number of participants	436 participants from 26 Member States, candidate and third countries

Total number of attendees		
	Course Type 1	Course Type 2
Member States	90	272
Candidate countries	7	40
EFTA	1	4
Third countries	5	17
Total	103	333

Border inspection posts (BIPs)

Border controls are fundamental to the animal and public health security of the Community single market. With the enlargement of the European Union to 27 Member States, it is necessary to ensure that all official staff engaged in border controls (including candidate countries and EFTA countries) have adequate training so that they can implement effective and harmonised control checks.

Detailed EU legislation in these fields lays down the conditions that Member States must apply to the imports of live animals and food products from third countries. This legislation imposes a series of health and supervisory requirements, designed to ensure that imported products meet standards at least equivalent to those required for production in, and trade between, Member States.

The objective of the training course is to disseminate best practices for control procedures, improving knowledge of this complex area of work and ensuring consistent and high implementation standards across the Community. Training activity is mainly addressed to Member State staff operating or involved in BIPS (seaport and road/rail) control systems.

Activities – 4 events in total	4 workshops held in Poland and United Kingdom as: three 4-day training sessions one 5-day training session
Tutors	14 tutors
Total number of participants Member states 132 Third countries 13	145 participants from 26 EU Member States, 3 potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia), 4 ENP countries (Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Ukraine) and 1 third country (Brazil)

BTSF – what it is and what it does

Food hygiene and controls of fishery, meat and dairy products

The European Union has developed a wide range of measures aimed at ensuring a high standard of hygiene during food production and proper control of foodstuffs. These rules apply to all food business operators, cover the entire food chain and deal with all types of food.

General hygiene requirements apply to all stages of production, processing and distribution of food. These rules also require the implementation of internal permanent food hygiene control procedures based on HACCP principles (see above). Hygiene and control rules for food of animal origin introduce new concepts, especially in meat production and inspection, such as the requirements that animals be clean when brought to slaughter. They also cover provision of food chain information, risk based meat inspection, simplified requirements for slaughter and de-boning establishments, and new rules concerning game meat. The methods of detection of marine biotoxins in shellfish, the microbiological criteria for certain types of food, and some requirements for raw milk production were also revised recently.

The training activity aims at spreading knowledge and Community best practices in order to increase the level of expertise with regard to food hygiene and control issues concerning all stages of production, processing and distribution of meat, milk and fishery products.

Three different types of courses were organised, covering EU legislation, official controls, organisation of control services, implementation of Good Hygienic Practices and HACCP, as well as issues and selected topics on meat, milk and fishery products.

Activities – 4 events in total	14 training sessions (5 days duration) held in Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom
Tutors	36 tutors representing 11 nationalities
Total number of participants EU 269 EFTA 7 TC 22	298 participants from the 27 EU Member States, the 3 candidate countries, 2 out of 3 invited EFTA countries (Norway and Switzerland), invited ENP, Mediterranean basin and other third countries (Algeria, Armenia, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Ukraine, Russia and Albania, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Microbiological criteria and control of zoonoses

The training activities cover the organisation and implementation of training courses for staff of the competent authorities of Member States involved in official controls and possible participants from third countries, with the aim of developing best practices on the implementation of microbiological criteria and investigation of foodborne outbreaks and monitoring and control of zoonoses and zoonotic agents.

The training aims at increasing the efficacy of staff involved in the implementation of and reporting on the control of zoonoses and zoonotic agents, in particular *salmonella*, and of those zoonoses and zoonotic agents which are monitored and controlled in primary production in the framework of control and eradication programmes executed in relevant animal populations, in order to reach the requested targets for reduction, as well as epidemiological indicators set in the Member States.

The increased efficacy will facilitate intra-community trade of live animals, hatching eggs and products relevant for the control of *salmonella* (eggs, egg products, poultry meat) subject to testing for zoonotic agents. It should also help third countries to import live animals, hatching eggs and relevant foodstuffs by guiding them to implement a control programme or to provide equivalent guarantees.

Six training workshops were held in the field of microbiological criteria and control of zoonoses, with one specifically focused on microbiological criteria and investigation of foodborne outbreaks. This workshop included an exploration of tools for investigations and quantitative assessment of the risk derived from different foodstuffs. The training sessions also looked at classification of outbreaks according to the epidemiological and sample evidence, place of exposure, contributing factors, and outbreak reporting and communication at the national and EU level.

Workshops on development of best practices for monitoring and control of zoonoses and zoonotic agents focused on the eradication of *salmonella* in poultry and pigs. They explored the risk factors for *salmonella* in these species, assessment of the public health impact, and risk management options, including guides for good hygiene practice.



BTSF – what it is and what it does

Activities – 6 events in total	6 workshops (5 days duration) held in France and Germany
Tutors	9 tutors, 8 associated with competent authorities of Member States and 1 tutor working for a food business operator
Total number of participants MS 173 CC 28 EFTA 6 TC 17	224 participants from the EU Member States, candidate, EFTA and third countries

Prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE)

The TSE regulation provides measures targeting all animal species and public health risks resulting from all animal TSEs, and governing the entire chain of production and the placing on the market of live animals and products of animal origin. The regulation consolidates rules for the monitoring of TSE in bovine, ovine and caprine animals, removal of specified risk material and prohibitions concerning animal feeding.

It also lays down rules regarding eradication of TSEs as well as trade rules covering the domestic market, intra-EU trade, import and export, and the procedure, criteria and categories for the classification of countries according to BSE status in line with the international standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

This training acquaints participants with the single, regularly reviewed framework for existing TSE measures that target animal and public health risks and govern the entire production chain of live animals and products of animal origin. This should help harmonise Member State approaches and increase authorities' ability to verify compliance with requirements. It should also help in comparisons of the situations across Member States.

The workshops examined general considerations on the concept of food safety in the EU and rules for the prevention, control and eradication of TSE. Presentations covered preventive measures for TSE in cattle and small ruminants. These included the TSE road map and feed ban, as well as the role of feed in spreading TSE. They also considered animal by-product provisions, epidemiology, geographic risk of TSE, diagnostic methods, cross contamination, fish meal for young ruminants and removal of specified risk material.

Special attention was given to TSE in cattle and monitoring and eradication measures, looking also at classification of countries according to TSE status and trade issues. The workshops examined TSE in small ruminants. The focus was on

breeding programmes in sheep, the impact of scrapie on trade, and the slaughter process for ovines. Practical sessions included sampling and laboratory diagnosis of TSE, and the slaughter process (with removal, sampling and disposal of specified risk material). Other practical work looked at feed inspection and surveillance procedures, and official procedures for supervision, monitoring and control of TSE, such as registration of bovines and sheep in databases.

Activities – 4 events in total	4 workshops held in Germany (Oldenburg), as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three 3-day training sessions • one 1-day training session
Tutors	5 tutors from 4 EU Member States
Total number of participants	133 participants from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all EU Member States/candidate countries except Luxembourg, Finland, Sweden • EFTA countries: Iceland, Norway • ENP countries: Ukraine • potential candidate countries: Albania, Serbia • third countries: Argentina, Chile

Animal welfare concerning the stunning and killing of animals at slaughterhouses and in disease control situations and on animal welfare during transport

Animal welfare legislation has been developed by the Commission for over 30 years. The first Community legislation on farm animal welfare concerned the stunning of animals before slaughter. Community legislation aims to minimise the pain and suffering of animals through the use of proper approved methods to stun and kill animals, based on scientific knowledge and practical experience.

The rules for protection of animals during transport were recently revised and extended to the operations related to transport, such as the handling of animals at interim transfer points on the way to the point of destination, such as slaughterhouses.

Reports from the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) highlighted deficiencies concerning the application of stunning and killing methods in slaughterhouses in both EU and third countries as well as concerning the enforcement of the transport legislation. Recent animal disease outbreaks (foot and mouth disease – FMD, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza – HPAI) have also highlighted the limitations of certain techniques used in the context of killing animals for disease control purposes.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

At international level, the OIE has adopted standards on animal welfare focusing on the slaughter of animals for human consumption, land and sea transport of animals, and the human killing of animals for disease control purposes.

Training in the areas of animal welfare is considered as an important tool in view of developing best practices and compliance with EU and international standards.

The courses included a focus on animal welfare during stunning and killing at slaughterhouses, in disease control situations, and during religious slaughter practices. Key training phases were sessions dedicated to in-field simulation exercises. These included an inspection on animal welfare issues during the unloading operations of pigs at an official control post, assessment of the status during stunning and killing operations of poultry, sheep, cattle, and pigs, and Halal slaughter practices for ovine and bovine animals, including buffaloes.

Activities – 4 events in total	4 workshops (4 days duration) held in Italy, Sweden and Turkey
Tutors	45 tutors
Total number of participants MS 165 CC 25 EFTA 10 TC 28	228 participants from the 27 EU Member States, candidate, EFTA and third countries (Albania, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, Eritrea, Israel, Kenya, Korea, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Serbia, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine and Zimbabwe)

Feed law

The production of animal feed is one of the most important sectors of activity in agriculture. Approximately 230 million tonnes of feeding stuffs (excluding roughage) are fed to farmed animals in the EU annually.

Initially the rules on animal feed put the emphasis on productivity of livestock farming. Since then the European Union has developed a wide range of measures aimed at ensuring feed safety at all stages that may have an impact on feed and food safety, including primary production.

New rules include feed hygiene or marketing and labelling criteria for feed materials, covering issues such as undesirable substances, additives, genetically modified feed, medicated feed, animal by-products or chemical and microbiological contaminants.

The new requirements for feed hygiene have introduced certain elements which play a key role in ensuring feed safety along the food chain, e.g. the compulsory registration of all feed business operators, the approval of feed business establishments, the application of good hygienic practice and HACCP principles.

The aim of the training was to spread knowledge and best practice in order to increase the level of expertise of the participants with regard to feed safety issues concerning all stages of production, processing and distribution of feeding stuffs, including on-site inspections of establishments involved in the production of these products.

Activities – 5 events in total	5 workshops (5 days duration) held in Belgium, Poland and Spain
Tutors	27 tutors
Total number of participants MS 117 EFTA 4 CC 16 TC 14	151 participants from 26 Member States, the 3 candidate countries as well as from EFTA (Norway and Switzerland), ENP (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine) and third countries (Brazil, Chile, China, India and South Africa)

Best practices on increased level of official controls on certain feed and food of non-animal origin

Animals, products of animal and plant origin and all food and feed imported into the EU must comply with the Union's requirements or equivalents thereof. Member State control staff checking compliance should be suitably qualified, so training on import of products of non-animal origin was launched as a new subject within BTSF for 2010.

The training was aimed at providing national officials responsible for implementing EU rules in these fields with solid knowledge of the requirements. This should improve implementation of EU legislation and contribute to developing best practices for controls on certain feed and food of non-animal origin.

The workshops took place in an appropriate inspection facility (an EU Designated Point of Entry) and included extensive practical exercises, as well as case studies. Participants were able to share opinions and approaches, compare actions and behaviour, and arrive at consensus-based solutions, with discussion in small working groups. Initial presentations covered the general framework and implementing rules of EU legislation on import control of food and feed products of non-animal origin, equivalent provisions and perspectives, and critical issues related to the implementation of EU norms in the field. Best practices for and different approaches to official controls were also discussed in terms of practical application of documentary, identity and physical checks.

Information-sharing systems were demonstrated and the importance of enhanced cooperation with customs services was underlined. Further presentations looked at national experiences with official controls of feed imports, standard operating procedures for controls, and the need for further harmonisation.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

Best practices for laboratory testing were also covered, particularly as regards sampling. Participants spent a full day of each workshop visiting the Designated Point of Entry, where they performed practical exercises related to the case studies, and viewed the practical application of official sampling procedures.

Activities – 3 events in total	3 workshops (4 days duration) held in Genoa, Pisa and Rome (Italy)
Tutors	26 Tutors from 4 EU Member States
Total number of participants	145 participants from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all EU Member States/candidate countries• EFTA countries: Iceland, Norway, Switzerland• potential candidate countries: Serbia• third countries: Iran

Food contact materials

Food contact materials (FCM) are materials and articles intended to come into contact with food, including packaging, cutlery, dishes, processing machines and containers. Such materials should not transfer their components into foodstuffs in unacceptable quantities.

To avoid contamination of food, migration limits have been established for plasticisers. However, Food and Veterinary Office reports have shown that these limits are often exceeded. It is thus necessary to improve official controls of food contact materials through training in this area for inspectors and national authority staff responsible for setting up control plans.

EU legislation on food contact materials also requires manufacturers to issue declarations of compliance and provide supporting documentation. Inspectors therefore also require training on checking the declarations of compliance and supporting documentation required from manufacturers under EU legislation.

Work on legislation focused on traceability, documentation of compliance and good manufacturing practice. The most important FCM were examined in terms of including the synthesis and structure of their organic macromolecules, their physical properties and commercial uses. Aspects relevant to the industrial sectors producing these materials were also considered, with work on practical registration and control of FCM manufacturers and importers underlining the need for detailed and precise documentation.

The roles of EU bodies and instruments were explained, such as that of EFSA and RASFF, along with Member State viewpoints on the development of national control plans, and guidelines to promote compliance with EU good management practice regulations.

The challenges of importing FCM were spelled out, with an emphasis on compliance with national legislation in different countries. Attention was also given to the lack of testing methods for some materials, and the need for collaboration between producers, importers and retailers of packaging and competent authorities.

Activities – 6 events in total	<p>2 workshops (3 days duration) for competent authority staff responsible for setting up control plans held in Ljubljana and in Tallinn</p> <p>4 workshops (3 days duration) for inspectors of food and FCM production premises held in Ljubljana, in Lisbon and in Tallinn</p>
Tutors	17 tutors from 7 EU Member States and 1 third country
Total number of participants	<p>215 participants from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all EU Member States/candidate countries except Belgium • EFTA countries: Iceland, Norway, Switzerland • ENP countries: Georgia and Tunisia • potential candidate countries: Albania • third countries: Chile, China, Indonesia, Lebanon and Vietnam

Animal by-products (ABP)

Several circumstances have led to include training sessions on animal by-products within the training activities of the BTSF initiative. Every year more than 16 million tonnes of materials of animal origin not intended for human consumption are generated within the EU, the bulk of which are derived from healthy animals. Some of these materials are transformed into a variety of products used in animal feed, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and laboratory reagents and other technical products (fertilisers, soil improver, oleo-chemical products, etc.).

Depending on the risk those ABP pose, they are either used for those purposes or disposed of as waste by incineration, or co-incineration following pre-treatment. In addition, an increasing amount of materials of animal origin not intended for human consumption are being imported from or exported to third countries for similar purposes.

Recent evidence has shown that the use of certain ABPs in animal feed can spread diseases or chemical contaminants. ABPs can also pose a threat to animal and human health via the environment, if not properly disposed of. In this field, the Commission has adopted a series of measures in order, in particular, to protect the safety of the food and feed chain.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

New rules will apply as from 2010, and it is therefore important to disseminate knowledge about the main changes to the rules and to provide a forum for exchanges between practitioners on available techniques for the handling of ABPs.

Training sessions covered:

- an overview of the changes introduced by the revised regulation on ABPs
- a detailed overview and explanation of EU standards on ABP, in particular on identification and traceability, and imports and exports
- the identification and description of EU good practices for ABP in feed
- an exchange of views between practitioners from the public & private sectors

Activities – 4 events in total	4 training sessions (3 days duration) held in Belgium, Portugal and Lithuania (2)
Tutors	8 tutors, 7 associated with competent authorities from EU Member States (France, Belgium, Romania, Italy, United Kingdom and The Netherlands) and 1 working for an animal by-products business operator
Total number of participants MS 204 CC 20 TC 27	251 participants from EU Member States, candidate and third countries

Animal health: prevention, and controls of aquaculture animals

Feedback from Member States and stakeholders shows that there is a need for training in the EU concerning emerging diseases affecting animal health of fish, molluscs and crustacean in aquaculture. In particular, the involvement of Member State control staff with adequate professional experience, who are familiar with the relevant EU legislation and in a position to train others, has been identified as a target group for the training.

The specific objectives of the training sessions are to increase expertise on aquaculture fish-health issues, and aquaculture molluscs- and crustaceans-health issues at all stages of farming and placing on the market. In particular, the following subjects were presented:

- the EU legislation relevant to aquaculture animals, in particular the rules of placing on the market and import
- pathogen and disease description
- surveillance
- inspection and sampling procedure
- measures to be taken in case of outbreaks (scenarios, study cases), notifications at internal and EU level

Activities – 3 events in total	3 training sessions (3 days duration) organised in the United Kingdom and in Spain as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 trainings on fish health • 1 training on molluscs and crustaceans
Tutors	11 tutors from 5 EU Member States (Finland, France, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom)
Total number of participants EU 101 CC 6 EFTA AND EEA 4	111 participants from 26 Member States, 2 candidate and 2 EFTA/EEA countries

Animal health: prevention, control of bees and exotic zoo animals

Feedback from Member States and stakeholders shows that there is a need for training in the EU concerning diseases affecting bees and exotic zoo animals. In particular, Member State control staff with adequate professional experience, and who are familiar with the relevant EU legislation and in a position to train others, have been identified as a target group for the training.

The specific objectives of the training courses are to cover the veterinary controls to be carried out on honey bees and bumble bees, and the early detection of bee pests. They also cover best veterinary practices on exotic animals destined for EU zoos, and approval of zoos under EU requirements. In particular, the following subjects were presented:

- the EU legislation relevant to both honey bees and bumble bees
- pathogen and disease description
- monitoring, planning and assurance of appropriate resources
- rules of inspection and sampling of various hives
- measures to be taken in case of outbreaks (scenarios, study cases)
- traceability and follow-up checks
- notifications at internal and EU level, information and experience exchange
- planning and conducting of bee import controls

The focus was on: a) training for animal health control staff on bee diseases (four three-day sessions); b) training for animal health control staff on diseases affecting exotic animals destined for EU zoos, and approval procedures (two three-day sessions).

At a field visit to the Bee Dol Research Institute, handling posts/workshops covered: 1) Organisation of bee yard, colony inspection and feeding bees, 2) Honey harvesting and wax melting, 3) Queen rearing and artificial insemination and 4) Varroa control methods (fumigation, aerosol, evaporation, contact strips).

BTSF – what it is and what it does

Activities – 2 events in total	2 training sessions in Prague (4 days duration)
Tutors	10
Total number of participants EU 72 CC 7	79 participants from EU Member States and candidate countries

Plant health controls

Several circumstances have led to the inclusion of training sessions on plant health controls within the training activities of the BTSF initiative:

- lack of knowledge of the practical implementation of the potato control directive in a number of Member States, in particular since a new revised control directive was adopted
- differences observed between Member States in the approach, knowledge and ability of the inspectors with regard to the internal controls required under the passport regime
- differences observed between Member States in the approach, knowledge and ability of the inspectors with regard to the internal controls required for imports of various plants and plant products
- differences observed among the Member States in their approach to the official surveys in order to assess whether their territories are free of the relevant harmful organisms
- differences observed between Member States in the approach, knowledge and ability of the inspectors with regard to wood packaging material
- need to have a harmonised and uniform approach in the authorisation of facilities to treat wood packaging material

The provision of training in these areas, in particular for senior Member State control staff, was aimed at providing for a common and unambiguous understanding of the EU legislation and its proper and harmonised implementation across the EU.

Training courses covered plant health controls on wood packaging material, emergency decisions for forestry pests and non-forestry pests, internal controls, import controls and potato quarantine controls. The workshops allowed participants to:

- get up-to-date with current Community rules and regulations, have a common and unambiguous understanding of their requirements, and acquire the ability to ensure their correct and harmonised implementation across the EU,

- gather specific practical expertise in areas related to organising a national system of inspections and to control wood packaging material used in international trade,
- increase efficacy in planning and policy-making and in practical execution of the legislation.

Activities – 8 events in total	8 training sessions held in Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain held as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 five-day workshops, • 2 four-day workshops
Tutors	25 tutors
Total number of participants MS 188 EFTA 5 CC 28	221 participants from Member States, candidate and EFTA countries

Plant protection products

The European legislation establishes that Member States must ensure official checks on use and marketing of plant protection products to verify if they comply with the requirements of the legislation and in particular with the conditions of authorisation and information appearing on the label. A proper control in this area would grant protection to workers, consumers and the environment.

Cases of illegal trade and use of un-authorised pesticides occurred in the last years in the Member States.

Training courses were divided into two topics: evaluation and registration of plant protection products and control of use and marketing of plant protection products. Three workshops were held in 2010. All the workshops were held in Vilnius. The key experts for each workshop came from the Chemicals Regulation Directorate of the Health and Safety Executive in the United Kingdom.

The purpose of the workshops on controls on use and marketing of plant protection products is to generally increase the skill base in the Member States, candidate and European Neighbouring Policy countries and to improve their capacity to:

- provide a system for control to ensure proper use and marketing of plant protection products
- avoid illegal trade
- prevent the illegal use of plant protection products

BTSF – what it is and what it does



The workshops on evaluation and registration of plant protection products covered two areas. First they looked at the phases defined as step 1 and step 2 of the re-registration process (with an examination of experiences to date and the necessary refinements). Secondly they considered the new regulation (with emphasis on new provisions which will have to be implemented at Member State level, such as zonal authorisations, mutual recognition and renewal and amendment of authorisations).

The workshops allowed participants to:

- consider their current progress in meeting the legislative requirements in relation to re-registration
- share their individual experiences in implementing improvements to the processes at a national level and discuss the challenges that remain
- be updated on the new format for application submission (the draft registration report), work-sharing developments and use of the risk envelope and the zonal GAP
- identify best practice currently operating in Member States and consider mechanisms for more fully sharing this
- be updated on the latest developments on confirmatory data, green route inclusions, voluntary withdrawals and the AIR projects
- consider current processes in relation to meeting the legislative requirements of the new regulation with particular attention to zonal authorisations, mutual recognition and renewal, withdrawal and amendment of authorisations

It has to be noted that Commission guidance documents were used as the basis for discussions on re-registration and post inclusion issues, and the latest draft versions of the Commission guidance documents on zonal evaluation and mutual recognition and renewal, withdrawal and amendment of authorisations were used as the basis for the discussions on authorisations in the new regulation.

Activities – 3 events in total	3 workshops held in Lithuania as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one 5-day training session • one 4-day duration training session • one 3-day training session
Tutors	15 tutors representing the Commission, national authorities, including national control laboratories, the EU-RL and NRLs, industry and the trade
Total number of participants MS 91 CC 13 TC and EFTA 9	113 participants from the EU Member States, candidate, EFTA and third countries

Beyond the EU

BTSF has organised a wide range of programmes in third countries. In 2010 these included training on avian influenza, EU food import standards, food testing and SPS issues, GMO analysis and RASFF/TRACES. The courses were held in Asia, Africa and in North and South America, as well as within the EU and in neighbouring countries. Participants came from around the globe. Other BTSF activities were organised in Africa under a specific programme dedicated to this part of the world, they are described in a separate section (see page 35).

TC-based programmes organised in 2010

- Avian Influenza
- EU Food standards
- Food testing and sanitary and phytosanitary issues
- GMO analysis
- RASFF/TRACES

Third country 2010 programme overview

Name of the programme	Number of training courses (workshops and sustained training missions) (days)	Number of participants	Geographical coverage
Avian influenza	5 (39 days)	211	Belarus, Denmark, Moldova, Philippines, Russia
EU food standards	14 (140 days)	972	Brazil, Canada, China, Cyprus, Indonesia, Malaysia, Peru, Philippines, Thailand, Ukraine, Uruguay
Food testing and SPS issues	3 (36 days)	57	Denmark, United Kingdom
GMO analysis	3 (9 days)	74	Singapore, South Africa, Turkey
RASFF/TRACES	14 (67 days)	516	Europe (Italy), Africa, Asia, Central America, Oceania
Total	44 (291 days in total)	1830	All continents

BTSF – what it is and what it does

Control of highly pathogenic avian influenza and other animal diseases

An assessment of the current highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) situation took place under BTSF in 2008. The outcomes of this assessment have contributed to the development of subsequent HPAI training within the initiative taken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), with input from EU experts.

Training during 2010 consisted of a laboratory workshop and sustained training missions, with content developed with national authorities in the beneficiary countries on the basis of needs assessment and input from international organisations. The laboratory workshop, held in Copenhagen for participants from Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, focused on practical laboratory exercises. Sustained training consisted of five-day workshops in Belarus and Moldova for regional- and national-level veterinary health officials, and two similar workshops in Russia. Discussion in these sessions covered issues, options, and challenges in controlling HPAI in poultry, including the use of bio-security, surveillance, decontamination, movement control, and risk analysis. The mission to the Philippines comprised a laboratory training session and two two-day workshops. These were designed to strengthen the capacity of animal health workers in outbreak investigation, surveillance, emergency preparedness and response. Steps within the outbreak investigation process were covered and the main methods for culling of infected animals and regulations for disposal of their carcasses were outlined.

Activities – 5 events in total	1 workshop in Copenhagen 4 sustained training missions in Belarus, Moldova, Philippines and Russia
Tutors	14 tutors from 3 EU Member States and 1 third country
Total number of participants	211 participants from Belarus, Moldova, the Philippines, Russia and Ukraine 741 users of the HPAI e-learning portal

EU food standards

A series of workshops on EU standards was aimed at helping improve verification of compliance in developing countries where surveillance structures and the ability to provide safety guarantees are lacking. This facilitates trade, reduces the risk of importing foodborne diseases, and eases the burden of controls at EU borders. The workshops were often combined with site visits and the participation of private sector representatives.

A workshop on fishery and aquaculture products in Peru clarified the framework and operational criteria for FVO missions, and focused on regulations affecting primary production, from fishing, factory and freezer vessels to landing sites, auction halls and transport. Legislative requirements for processing establishments (including facilities, design and HACCP implementation) and control practices for processed products (including EU border controls and health certificates) were covered, backed up by site visits. Fish pathology, veterinary drug residues, LBM diseases affecting human health, border controls and rapid alert systems were also examined.

A workshop in Ukraine on the epidemiological situation of and control strategies for rabies examined prevention and eradication measures and dissemination of EU legislation on movements of pets into the EU, targeting veterinary authorities of countries bordering on or close to the EU. Presentations on EU and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) requirements for management of sylvatic rabies focused on national surveillance plans. Vaccination programmes were discussed in terms of design, implementation, monitoring and required resources. The workshop included a visit to a stray-dog facility.

Training in Brazil on poultry meat and eggs examined the application of risk analysis principles and implementation of risk-based control systems, health and welfare controls on primary production and transport of poultry, and rules and requirements for slaughterhouses. Conditions for poultry imports to the EU, border controls and EU controls on zoonoses linked to poultry products were examined, and site visits took place to a slaughterhouse and a meat processing establishment.

A food labelling and novel food workshop in Uruguay covered labelling requirements, specific labelling schemes and claims, and nutritional labelling. Attention was given to differences between MERCOSUR and EU legislation, to EU developments in organic farming legislation, GMO labelling and nutritional and health claims.

In Canada, a workshop on animal welfare looked at OIE initiatives in the Americas, new players and development in animal welfare at global level, and the integration of animal welfare into EU food safety legislation. Current understanding of behaviour and handling methods for cattle, pigs and poultry was covered, and main stunning techniques were described, along with the outcomes of dialogue on religious slaughter. Site visits to slaughterhouses took place.

The workshop on laboratory controls on pesticides, contaminants and veterinary drug residues, held in Cyprus, looked at the role of EFSA in food safety and risk analysis and EU risk-management controls legislation. Case studies

BTSF – what it is and what it does



on management of rapid alerts were performed to emphasise the role of the RASFF. The EU legal framework for marketing of plant protection products and sustainable pesticide use was examined, along with the structure and content of EU requirements for veterinary drug residues, contaminants, and MRLs for active substances. Participants visited an EU Designated Point of Entry, a warehouse and a border inspection post, as well as a feed mill and farm to observe preventative controls focused on mycotoxins.



Sustained training missions dealt with fishery and aquaculture products, hygiene requirements and animal welfare. The fishery and aquaculture mission entailed sending two experts to the Philippines for five days each. One verified implementation of EU regulations on residue control in aquaculture and control of safety of fishery products. The other evaluated the fishery control system from catcher vessels through to export, the effectiveness of inspection and quality assurance service, and compliance with EU food safety requirements. Three missions took place to Indonesia to improve official controls on primary production. These covered needs analysis, tailored training materials, and a workshop that looked at the principles of adult education, skills and knowledge related to personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitation, fish spoilage and handling of seafood products. Two missions to Thailand focused on animal welfare (with visits to poultry farms and slaughterhouses) and on avian influenza (focused on compartmentalisation).



Bi-lateral cooperation fora, an important part of the EU food standards programme, were initiated with the Sino-European Food Safety Cooperation Forum in Shanghai, which presented the principles behind the EU's food safety approach, the EU implementation of the WTO agreement on SPS measures, and the roles of the FVO and EFSA. An overview of food safety controls in China was also presented, including import and export controls, monitoring of risks and national standards. Parallel sessions looked at animal welfare, pesticides, veterinary drug residues, food hygiene, plant health legislation, food and feed additives, and risk assessment.

The EU-ASEAN cooperation forum on risk assessment, a follow-up to the February 2009 EU-ASEAN cooperation forum on Codex Matters and Risk Assessment, examined the application of risk analysis in the EU and the ASEAN region, and focused on pesticide residues and MRLs. Issues covered included crop and chemical data gaps, and the capacity for food safety risk assessment in ASEAN countries. Cooperation strategies were proposed for food contact materials, microbiological risk reduction strategies and import tolerances. Training priorities identified included strengthening laboratory capacity, crisis management and risk communication.

Activities – 14 events in total	8 workshops in Brazil, Canada, China, Cyprus, Malaysia, Peru, Ukraine and Uruguay 6 sustained training missions in India, Indonesia, Peru, Philippines and Thailand
Tutors	48 tutors from 15 EU Member States, 1 candidate and 1 ENP country and 5 third countries and 36 forum speakers from 8 EU Member States and 1 third country
Total number of participants	972 participants from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all EU Member States and candidate countries • potential candidate, ENP, and other European countries (Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Palestinian Authority, Russia, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine) • the Americas (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay) • Asia (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam)

Food testing and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues

Several circumstances have led to the inclusion of SPS issues within the training activities of the BTSF initiative:

- the lack of or deficiencies in aflatoxins controls within the exporting developing countries and increased occurrence of aflatoxins in food samples during inspection in the EU
- the lack of or deficiencies in microbiological controls in foodstuffs within the exporting developing countries and constantly occurring positive cases in samples during inspection in the EU
- the lack of or deficiencies in residue controls within the exporting developing countries and continuous positive cases in samples during inspection in the EU

Therefore, the provision of technical assistance in these areas, in particular hands-on training on technical procedures at EU accredited laboratories, would help reduce the difficulties being experienced by developing countries in these fields.

The main objective of the training is to improve compliance with EU legislative requirements. Training is given on analytical techniques at EU accredited laboratories, covering detection of mycotoxins (particularly aflatoxins and ochratoxin A), residue analysis (particularly veterinary drugs) and the full range of currently employed microbiology techniques.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

During Course 1 on mycotoxins, particular attention was given to aflatoxins. Course 3 on residues mainly focused on residues of veterinary drugs. The workshops allowed participants to:

- train on analytical techniques at EU accredited laboratories covering the detection of mycotoxins (particularly aflatoxins and ochratoxin A), residue analysis (particularly veterinary drugs) and the full range of currently employed microbiology techniques,
- update their knowledge on the relevant EU legislation, risk assessment and regulatory limits (MLs) establishment and official bodies for microbiological and laboratory networks,
- become familiar with sampling, including storage, transport and traceability of samples, screening (ELISA) and confirmatory (HPLC and MS) methods and automation techniques,
- improve their knowledge on quality in analytical laboratories, such as accreditation (ISO standards), performance criteria, validation of analytical methods and quality management.

Activities – 3 events in total	Copenhagen, York
Tutors	23 tutors
Total number of participants Central and South America 11 ENP Countries 12 Africa 15 Asia 19	57 participants from ENP countries, Africa, Asia and Central and South America

Analysis of genetically modified organisms

GMOs are cultivated and commercialised in parts of the world. Approximately 134 million hectares were planted with GM crops in 2009; almost half of the global hectareage was planted by developing countries. 144 GM events, representing 24 crops, have so far received worldwide regulatory approval and this number is still likely to rise. Out of these 144 GM events, only about 20 are authorised for food and/or feed use in Europe. A specific event may be authorised in an exporting country but not in an importing country.

A more uniform approach to GMO analysis will help international trade. Capacity building through training should increase expertise among non-EU operators, helping them to adapt procedures for checking compliance with EU requirements.

Training was provided for non-EU operators in GMO analysis, including in grasp of EU control and safety requirements. A training workshop was held in Istanbul for participants from candidate, potential candidate and European Neighbourhood Policy countries and Russia. This provided scientific and technical information on sampling and analytical approaches for GMO analysis as well as hands-on experience in use of methods in the laboratory. It also provided information on theoretical and technical requirements for laboratory testing in accordance with EU legislative requirements. A regional meeting for Asia, in Singapore, was a follow-up to the 2009 EU-Asia regional network meeting on GMO analysis. It promoted experience exchange on GMO analysis from different countries, and a detailed presentation of GMO analysis topics, which was discussed with a view to preparing an EU-Asia action list. An African regional meeting in Cape Town covered the role of the Joint Research Centre in GMO analysis, the European Network of GMO Laboratories and the approach of the African Union to bio-safety. It also promoted open exchange of experience, particularly on needs and challenges facing African laboratories engaged in GMO detection and the implementation status of GMO legislation in participants' respective countries.

Activities – 3 events in total	3 workshops in Singapore, South-Africa and Turkey
Tutors	8 tutors (3 of them from DG Joint Research Centre in ISPRA, Italy)
Total number of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU, ENP, candidate and potential candidate countries (Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Kosovo, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine) • Africa (Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe) • Asia (China, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam)

RASFF and TRACES

The BTSF training programme organised under this contract was the continuation of activities started in 2007. The approach to the training workshops on RASFF and to the training courses on TRACES was not significantly modified. Innovation within the programme took the form of organising sustained training missions on RASFF.

Europe is the place where RASFF evolved. The concept has been developed in the EU across 30 years. Training programmes and monitoring plans are oriented according to the trends observed through the RASFF. During 2009–2010, the EU RASFF updated its IT tools and aimed at developing an “interactive RASFF” platform (iRASFF) within the project. The pilot project was tested by several pilot NCPs, with the objective of being operative by the end of 2010 or the

BTSF – what it is and what it does

beginning of 2011. A training workshop organised in Europe was held in Rome with the objective to demonstrate iRASFF to all the NCPs, to train them on the new features and concept it provides, to train them on the creation of alerts and follow-up with iRASFF and to clarify their doubts and questions regarding the application of iRASFF.

Asia, South East Asia, in particular, has become an important area for the development of RASFF. Trade between Asian countries has increased, new strategies have emerged, and new trade agreements have come into force. The development of the ASEAN RASFF has been actively supported by DG SANCO and BTSF since 2007. The main challenge for the training courses organised in 2009–2010 was to ensure the sustainability of the RASFF ASEAN pilot project. This objective was addressed through two types of activities:

- the provision of technical assistance to ASEAN countries to develop their capacity to create notifications into ASEAN RASFF
- assistance to the ASEAN NCPs in getting ASEAN RASFF endorsed by ASEAN

For sustained training missions in Indonesia, a first mission was carried out in 2009, preparing the logistical framework for the development of Rapid Food Alert Management, on the basis of interviews and observations made in different locations in Indonesia with all the competent authorities involved in the Food Safety Control System of Indonesia. The conclusions of the missions were endorsed by the Indonesian competent authorities, which created a working group on RASFF. 8 months later, a second sustained training mission took place to reinforce communication and management capacities, to organise the operation of the Indonesian RASFF, and to keep track of the alerts and follow-up provided.

In Africa, food safety long remained an issue of lower importance than food security in development policies. In 2009, BTSF launched a specific initiative for African countries, in collaboration with the African Union, in order to promote harmonisation regarding food safety approaches at the level of RECs and to support the extension of Food Safety in the local food chains, in particular for processed products. In the framework of the workshops held in this project, the governments and the African Union expressed their interest in developing RASFF and the use of TRACES.

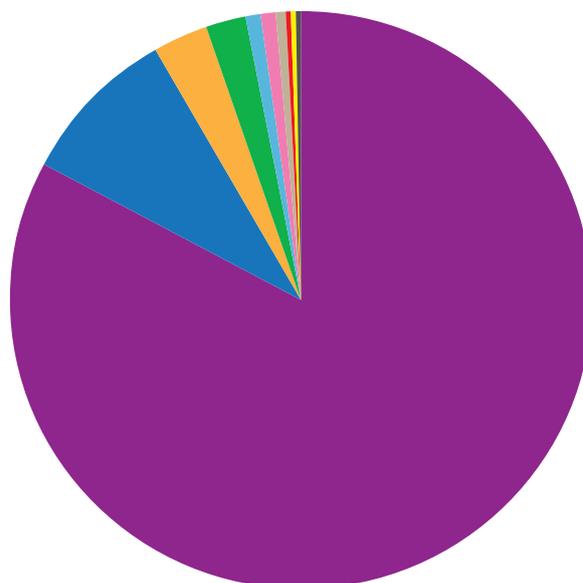
A BTSF training course addressed Latin American countries in 2007. Since then, several countries in Latin America have started developing network for information and alert management. TRACES trainings were organised in Guatemala and sustainable training missions on RASFF have been organised in Argentina and Chile. A second mission was foreseen in Argentina but was not implemented due to the lack of follow-up given on the expert's recommendations by the beneficiary parties.

Activities – 14 events in total	3 workshops on RASFF (one held with iRASFF) 5 training sessions on TRACES 6 sustained training missions on RASFF and TRACES
Tutors	17 tutors
Total number of participants	516 participants from all continents

“We can all be justifiably proud of the achievements of the Better Training for Safer Food programme in Africa as underlined by the positive findings of the mid-term review of the programme. Each of you assembled here today have contributed, either directly or indirectly, to the success of the Better Training for Safer Food programme in Africa. For your energy and for your personal commitment, I would like to sincerely thank you.”
John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, High-Level Conference on Better Training for Safer Food, 18 November 2010, Brussels

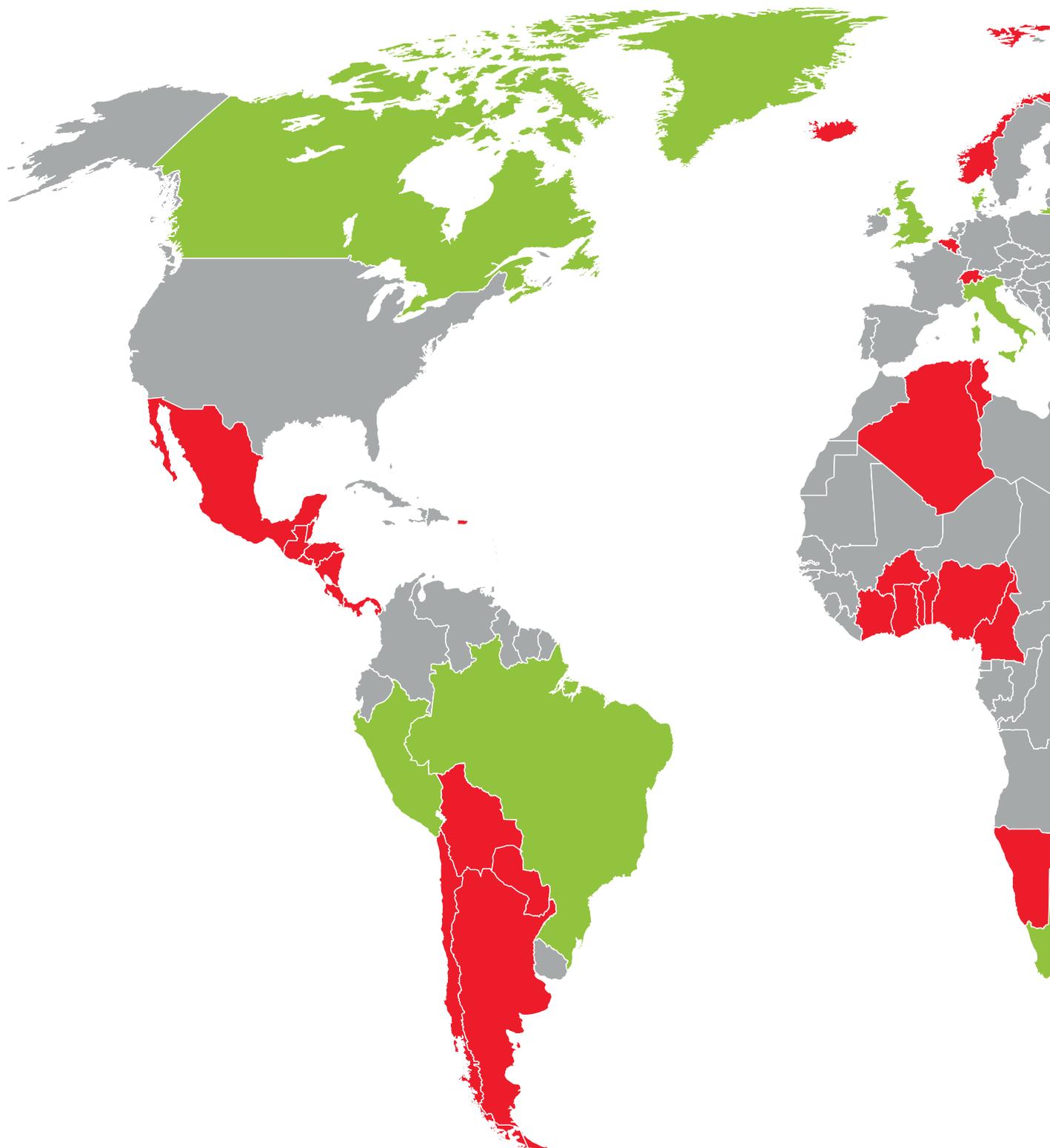
Participation in BTSF training activities held in 2010 and hosting countries

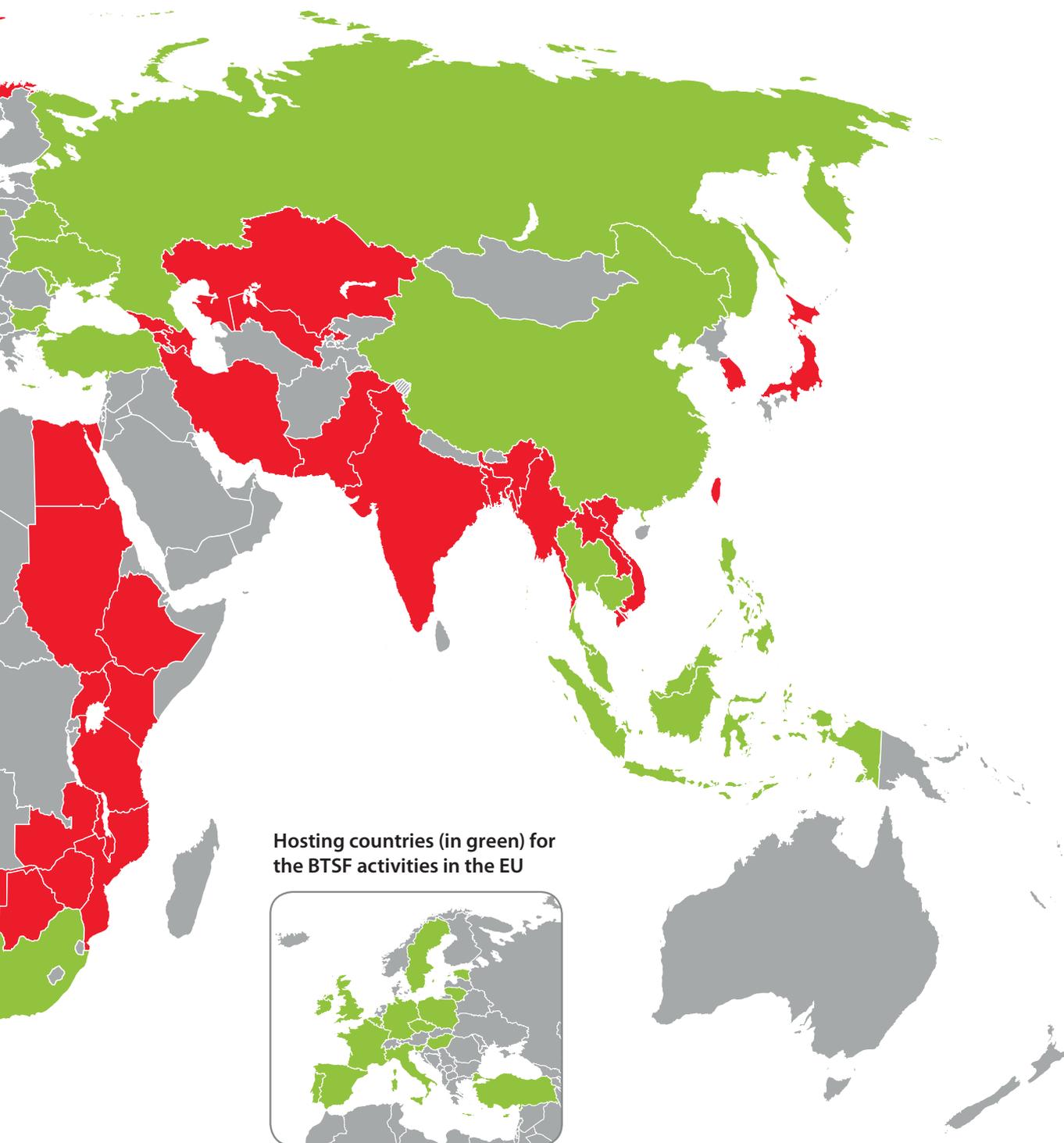
Distribution of participants for the BTSF activities in the EU



BTSF – what it is and what it does

Hosting (in green) and participating (in red) countries
for the BTSF activities beyond the EU





BTSF – what it is and what it does

The Africa programme

The 2009–10 BTSF Africa activities are deliverables of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy agreed by EU and African heads of state and government at their Lisbon Summit in December 2007. The Strategy's first Action Plan for 2008–2010 includes a component aimed at strengthening sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) capacities in Africa and comprises five deliverables, of which BTSF Africa is one.

Since the launch of concrete activities in 2009, BTSF Africa has created opportunities for networking and exchange of best practices, and close to 500 inspectors have been trained. It has contributed to harmonisation of food hygiene inspections, improving food hygiene practice in SMEs and strengthening national veterinary services. This should have knock-on effects in terms of public-private partnerships, trade opportunities, market access and job creation at national, regional and pan-African levels.

“Let me... thank you for the joint progress made in strengthening the overall SPS frameworks across Africa through the Better Training for Safer Foods Programme for the past two years.”
Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, Commissioner, Department for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission, High-Level Conference on Better Training For Safer Food, 18 November 2010, Brussels

The seven BTSF Africa activities are funded under the Food Security Thematic Programme of the EU's Development Cooperation Instrument, with a budget of €10 million for three years. Activities began with a high-level Africa-EU conference in April 2009 in Addis Ababa. The conference aimed at promoting regional integration on rules, standards, controls and procedures. It included an explanation of the programme and was aimed at generating political momentum and collecting views on the way forward.

In 2009, 38 events were organised for more than 1,100 participants and a budget of €3.5 million. During 2010, around 60 events were organised, with some 3,000 participants for a budget of €6.5 million.

The activities have targeted the public and private sectors across Africa. This has involved transfer of expertise that should better enable African countries to produce agricultural products and foodstuffs that comply with international SPS standards. This helps to guarantee a safer and more secure food supply for African consumers and ensures integration of the African agro-food sector into the global market. This could benefit a vast number of people in terms of rural development, economic growth and employment. A safer food supply should also cut the likelihood of outbreaks of foodborne disease and resulting health and socio-economic costs.

Four activities were implemented by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). One evaluated the performance of veterinary services (PVS) and analysed needs and follow-up. PVS helps to bring veterinary services in line with international standards, and can also strengthen public-private partnerships in prevention and control of animal diseases. Each evaluation mission lasts up to 15 days, and a peer-reviewed comprehensive report is presented to the national authorities, which serves as a basis for a national action plan. As of 1 December 2010, eight evaluations had been completed (Botswana, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gambia, Libya, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe) and three were ongoing (Ethiopia, Liberia and Somalia). The number of country requests for PVS Gap Analysis missions stood at 29, of which 17 have been completed (Benin, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia) and 12 have yet to be completed (Cameron, Congo RDC, Eritrea, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Niger, Sudan and Uganda).

Another activity managed by OIE involved improving national and regional animal health and food safety legal frameworks. Experts were seconded to review veterinary legislation, identify gaps and propose ways of consolidating the legal framework. On the basis of PVS outcomes, some countries have requested the OIE to assist them in revising their national animal health legislation to improve its compliance with international standards. OIE experts are currently working on guidelines and generic guidance texts that could be used to facilitate these requests. As of the end of 2010, legislation missions in Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Gabon, Togo and Uganda had been completed. Legislation missions to countries including Congo RDC, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sudan and Zambia are scheduled for 2011.

Strengthening laboratory technicians' capacity through twinning was the subject of the third OIE-run activity on creating partnerships between laboratories in Africa and OIE Reference Laboratories, to improve African laboratory technicians' expertise in specific areas. To date there are six OIE certified Laboratory Twinning Projects financed under the BTSF programme. The Veterinary Laboratories Agency in the UK is twinned with the National Veterinary Laboratory of Botswana in Avian Influenza and Newcastle disease, with Sudan on Brucellosis, and with Uganda on improving diagnostic capacity. The laboratory at Fougères in France is twinned with Senegal on veterinary medicinal products, the laboratory in South Africa with Nigeria, NVRI on rabies, and Italy's laboratory with Botswana on contagious bovine pleuropneumonia.

OIE also provided training for Chief Veterinary Officers and OIE National Focal Points on prevention and control of zoonoses. Regular training and continuous education of National Delegates to the OIE and of National OIE focal



BTSF – what it is and what it does

points is carried out under the BTSF contract. In 2010 eight regional workshops were carried out in:

- Botswana (newly appointed OIE delegates)
- Tanzania (focal points for wildlife diseases)
- Namibia (focal points for aquatic animal diseases)
- Mali (focal points for wildlife diseases)
- Botswana (focal points for animal disease notification to OIE)
- Morocco (national OIE delegates on communication)
- Ethiopia (focal points for animal welfare)
- South Africa (focal points for veterinary products)

Regional workshops are scheduled for 2011 in Mali, Tunisia, Kenya, Swaziland, South Africa, Botswana, Senegal, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana and Egypt.

A fifth activity programme designed for training trainers was conducted during regional workshops. Eight of these covered the five Economic Partnership Agreement regions (Western Africa, Central Africa, East-Southern Africa, Southern including South Africa and East Africa) and two covered North Africa. Specific guidelines were developed and used to “train the trainers” on the application of the Reference Framework developed in 2010 on the harmonisation of food hygiene management – inspections and authorisation of food establishments.

Regional Workshops held in 2010		
Month	Venues	Participants
February	Douala, Cameroon	28 supported participants from 6 countries of the Central African region. AUC, UNIDO and host country (vice Prime Minister) attended
March	Casablanca, Morocco	24 supported participants from 5 countries of the Northern Africa region. AUC, UMA, UNIDO and host country (Services Director) attended
April	Kampala, Uganda	26 supported participants from 8 countries of East Africa + Southern Africa regions. AUC, EAC, WHO, ARSO and host country (Minister's office) attended
May	Bamako, Mali	55 supported participants from 15 countries of the West African region. ECOWAS, UEMOA, AUC, WHO, UNIDO and host country (Services Director) attended
June	Lilongwe, Malawi	39 supported participants from 12 countries of the Eastern and Southern African region. AUC, COMESA, SADC, WHO, UNIDO, ARSO and host country (1 Minister & 1 Deputy Minister) attended
November	Brussels, Belgium	149 (of which 61 supported) participants from across Africa, AUC, ARSO, COMESA, EAC, UEMOA, UMA, farmers & food associations. Standards setting bodies (OIE, Codex) & International organisations (UNIDO, FAO) also attended

A sixth activity was aimed at strengthening the capacity of SMEs via deployment of experts to work with beneficiaries to address SPS deficiencies identified by FVO or other credible reports. In 2009, missions took place to 15 (out of 26) countries. These missions, and new ones completed in 2010, helped to improve hygiene practices and workers' skills, with knock-on effects on improvement of business potential, competitiveness and access to domestic and international markets, thereby contributing to overall economic growth and food security. In total, 219 SMEs have been assisted, with more than 1,200 staff trained by 17 EU experts and 56 African experts who have spent 1,560 working days in Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Sao Tome y Principe, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia.

A stock-taking workshop was held in Malawi in October 2010, bringing together 19 national contact points from countries in which training took place and generated recommendations for future missions.

The seventh activity trained officials of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African Union Commission and specialist bodies on international policy, standards and norms, with a special focus on harmonising SPS frameworks in Africa. Two sessions were held in 2010 in Dakar and Cape Town. Each training session welcomed over 30 participants, with input from the African Union Commission, RECs and international organisations. This provided an update on international policy, standards and norms, with a focus on the Reference Framework for harmonising food hygiene management/inspections in Africa.

A key element within the 2010 activities was the high-level conference on Better Training for Safer Food in Brussels in November. More information on the conference can be found in the section of this report dedicated to the event.

BTSF – what it is and what it does

High-level Conference

The high-level conference on the BTSF programme on 18–19 November gave the 149 delegates from the EU and beyond an opportunity to assess the core BTSF activities (as well as the outcomes of the BTSF programme in Africa).

“The main purpose of this conference... is to examine our achievements to date with a view to ensuring that our work will move from strength to strength in the future. The idea is to generate momentum on commonly agreed actions, to strengthen our mutual capacities through dialogue and cooperation and to facilitate an exchange of expertise between our two continents.”

John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, High-Level Conference on Better Training for Safer Food, 18 November 2010, Brussels

The conference was addressed by EU Commissioner for Health and Consumers, John Dalli, and AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, as well as by Sabine Laruelle, Belgian Minister for SMEs, the Self-Employed, Agriculture and Scientific Policy, and Professor Peter Nelson Mwanza, Malawian Minister of Agriculture. Other key guests included the Gabonese Agriculture Minister Mr Ndong Sima as well as African Ambassadors to Brussels, representatives of Regional Economic Communities (COMESA, EAC, UEMOA, UMA), standards setting bodies (OIE, CODEX) and international organisations (UNIDO, STDF, FAO, ARSO) and regional farmers and food associations, etc.

The conference took place against the background of the publication of the Commission Staff Working Document on Better Training for Safer Food and provided the first forum to discuss its ideas and analyse its proposals. The second day of the conference had a technical focus, and Commission DGs and services presented their view of BTSF. An assessment was provided of the training so far and an outline given of possible strategies for future activities in both the EU and third countries.

Delegates were in agreement that the standard BTSF activity should continue, because of the benefits that it brings to increasing consumer protection and fostering trade, through the knowledge and expertise it provides. They also recognised the pertinence of the strategies in the staff working document and concluded that they need successful implementation.

Continuation of the collaboration fostered by BTSF was pinpointed as desirable, and stronger links were urged with national authorities of EU Member States and third countries to identify needs, ensure training quality, and enhance dissemination, so that the training has the intended impact. Continued coordination with international organisations and other stakeholders was also

seen as vital, with support for seeking synergies with similar training efforts by other organisations to prevent duplication of efforts.

The importance of dissemination as key to the success of the entire programme was confirmed. Effective targeting of the training was seen as vital in terms of needs and audience, with proper needs analysis and identification of appropriate participants to ensure a homogeneous participant selection for each training event.

“Better Training for Safer Food now finds itself at a crossroads. Its pilot phase has effectively come to an end and it is time to ensure that the right structures are firmly in place so as to enable it to flourish in the long term.”

John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, High-Level Conference on Better Training For Safer Food, 18 November 2010, Brussels

The overall aim is to add value, increase the size, quality, impact and productivity of BTSF while maximising scarce resources.

This aim must be achieved without compromising the flexibility that has been a hallmark of BTSF and enables it to respond quickly to specific and urgent training needs in EU SPS, especially through “ad-hoc” training missions. The current management structure allows the setting up of training at short notice. BTSF has the potential to substantially contribute to raising Commission’s profile within the multilateral/international framework related to SPS issues.

But tackling the new challenges may require a rethink of the current operating model. For instance, specific training in African countries, and more generally in third countries, requires a development-gear approach, with balanced emphasis on inducing trade within countries of the region as well as export beyond.

A look ahead to 2011–2012

BTSF is continuing to expand its range of training over the coming months. Calls for tender published in 2010 are leading to the development of new courses covering some new areas in 2011 and 2012.

The sessions on quality schemes are a new departure for BTSF, as they cover quality rather than safety. Another novelty is that they are closely linked to the European Commission’s Agriculture Directorate General, in a new form of co-operation among Commission departments. The courses cover organic farming and geographical indications, and are mainly addressed to Member State staff in charge of controls of the schemes for organic and protected designations

BTSF – what it is and what it does

and to the staff of private control bodies to which this task has been delegated. The objective is to disseminate best practices for control procedures, improving knowledge and ensuring consistent and rigorous implementation of rules across the Union. There will be nine three-day training sessions on organic farming and nine three-day training sessions for protected designation schemes.

Another new programme focuses on supporting EU controls in Member States and third countries. This too has a novel dimension in that it aims at close cooperation between the Food and Veterinary Office, the Commission and Member States. Its objectives are to increase awareness of FVO working methods and standards, to allow national officials with experience in national audits and control functions, to bring their knowledge to the FVO's work, and to boost confidence in the results of audits and controls carried out in other Member States and in third countries. The training is aimed exclusively at Member State staff conducting official controls into compliance with EU feed and food law, animal health and welfare and plant health legislation. There will be 24 three-day training sessions at the FVO premises in Ireland, each covering FVO methods and standards on ethics and reporting systems, background on missions (objectives, legislation involved, history of previous missions, expectations, etc.), and one specific area of expertise, ranging from red meat and milk to residue controls, and from food of non-animal origin to genetically modified organisms.

For internal auditing, the rationale is that training at the early stage of setting these processes will assist in developing a consistent approach across the Member States and in providing assurances that the audit findings in different reports are of comparable value. The objective is to disseminate best practices for auditing procedures, improving knowledge of this complex area of work and ensuring consistent and high implementation standards across the Union. Again, the training is mainly addressed to Member State staff operating or involved in national audit systems; officials are often familiar with auditing and inspecting food establishments and operators and their control systems as part of national controls, but are not so familiar with the auditing of competent authorities' performance of their controls. There will be six four-day training sessions on setting up and implementing an audit system, either internal or external, in line with Community legislation and taking account of relevant international standards; and six four-day training sessions on developing the ability to conduct a detailed audit to verify the effective and suitable implementation of official controls by the relevant control authorities.

The third novelty will be TRACES for Member States. TRACES is a veterinary and sanitary network that controls movement, import and export of live animals and animal products in Europe. TRACES, by using internet, is based on a network of veterinary authorities of Member States and participating third countries. Central and local authorities, border inspection posts and economics operators are linked via TRACES. It uses all EU languages plus others, including Norwegian, Russian, Turkish, Croatian and Serbian. In particular, this new network provides an internet-based architecture between Member States' veterinary structures (especially border inspection posts), Members States' central veterinary authorities, the European Commission and third countries' central authorities and local inspection posts. It provides access to EU legislation, including electronic sanitary certificates mandatory for tracking goods and live animals, and a common veterinary entry document, as well as a tracking system for foods of animal origin or live animals. TRACES provides notifications by sending an electronic message from the departure point to the transfer point and the arrival point, informing other parties to the system that a consignment is arriving. Similarly, every concerned point sends a message to other points, and this makes possible a developed follow-up of the consignment of goods or animals. This is also a management tool for third countries' lists of approved establishments to import into the EU and a registration system for all rejected consignments, including the reasons for rejection.

Overall in 2011 we will have available:

- Organisation of technical training sessions on food and feed control procedures based on HACCP principles and audit techniques to verify implementation of HACCP systems
- Organisation of technical training sessions on food hygiene and control of fishery, meat and dairy products
- Organisation of technical training sessions on animal by-products
- Organisation of technical training sessions on animal health prevention and control of aquaculture animals
- Organisation of technical training sessions on animal health prevention and control of bees & exotic zoo animals
- Organisation of technical training sessions on plant health controls
- Organisation and implementation of training activities concerning food testing and sanitary and phytosanitary issues for third countries
- Veterinary and food safety control checks at border inspection posts
- Prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies
- Quality schemes (organic farming and geographical indications)
- Best practices on increased level of official controls on certain feed and food of non-animal origin
- Audit systems & internal auditing
- Support to Union controls in Member States & third countries
- EU food rules and food import requirements
- Diagnosis and control of highly pathogenic avian influenza and other animal diseases
- Modules for e-learning training courses
- Feed law
- Animal welfare
- Evaluation and registration of plant protection products and control of their proper use and marketing
- Microbiological criteria and control of zoonoses
- Trade control and Expert System (TRACES) in Member States
- RASFF and TRACES in third countries

Five years of experience – looking backwards to plan for the future



Preparing for change

While BTSF is widely appreciated, the Commission believes the time has come to think about how to better develop its potential in order to deal with some of the growing challenges – notably increasing demand for high quality training, a demand-driven approach, clearer identification of priorities and target audience and improved dissemination and evaluation, as was pointed out in the conclusions of the High Level Conference in Brussels in November 2010.

BTSF is proud of what it has done in the five years of its existence. It has won praise for its contributions to food safety, and has expanded its activities to cover an ever wider range of topics – most recently advancing from safety considerations to look also at quality – and to develop new synergies, as it is now doing with the FVO and DG AGRI.

BTSF's activities have grown, in line with the growing needs – whether from new legislation, new challenges to safety, or the emergence of new techniques. Based on its experience, its contacts, its accumulated expertise, BTSF is well-placed to meet these needs, and to remain as valuable in the future as it has been for the last five years.

But to meet these growing needs, BTSF cannot rely on simply continuing to expand the same activities with ever-larger budgets. The budget levels of around €50 million for the last five years are not likely to increase for the future, particularly in these times of budgetary austerity. So if BTSF is to do more, it must do it with the same resources – and that means developing new and more efficient ways of deploying those resources.

It is not just a question of making savings. It is more through a process of re-examining and rethinking some of our working methods that the solution is going to be found. Notably, instead of simply reproducing our seminars, we are exploring different forms of delivering. One of the most promising areas is the use of e-training/e-learning, which can provide training of wide audiences at low cost, particularly for basic training, allowing seminars and workshops to focus on advanced training also necessary for experts and specialists.

For more than a year now, BTSF has been preparing itself for a modified approach to the future on the basis of in-depth evaluations of its experience to date. This has included a range of impact studies, consultations and feedback from stakeholders, and studies and suggestions of best practice in training methodologies. These reflections, within BTSF and more broadly within the Commission and among BTSF stakeholders, were brought together and condensed into a Commission staff working document in 2010.

Five years of experience – looking backwards to plan for the future

The Staff Working Document

Staff Working Document on Challenges and Strategies for Better Training for Safer Food

The European Commission took the decision to transform the strategy paper on Better Training for Safer Food that had been drafted in 2009 into a Staff Working Document. The Document was subsequently adopted by the Commission during 2010 and presented at the High Level Conference in Brussels, November 18–19, 2010.

The SWD is a Commission response to the challenges identified by the intermediate assessment of the first two years of BTSF carried out in 2008. SWD responded to these findings by proposing actions to enable BTSF to successfully overcome these challenges. Some of these actions can be implemented in the short-medium term (i.e. by the end of 2013) and include:

- a study to accurately estimate the demand for BTSF training
- a pilot project aimed at setting up an e-learning tool for basic-level training
- increasing training output through closer cooperation of EC services with Member State and third country authorities, international organisations and the private sector
- better identifying training priorities and target audiences through preparing a standard questionnaire to ascertain training needs, and deepening cooperation with national authorities and stakeholders
- increasing participant homogeneity through:
 - more accurate definition of training goals and target audiences
 - development of basic- and advanced-level courses for all subjects in the long term
 - more interpretation
 - maintaining regional-level training, particularly in third countries
- reinforcing the train the trainer approach in the selection process
- a study on best practice in training for in-depth investigation of ways to improve training quality
- improving dissemination through providing clear learning tools and documentation, verifying possibilities offered by e-learning and setting up dissemination plans through coordination with stakeholders
- general assessments of BTSF every two years

chapter 2

Actions planned for launch in the short-medium term but which cannot be completed within that time frame should be concluded in the long-term (i.e. 2014 onwards). Certain other actions can only be implemented in the long-term and these include:

- implementation of e-learning for basic-level training
- introduction of basic and advanced-level courses for all subjects
- organisation of international expert meetings to reflect on prioritisation of needs
- establishment of a summer school to increase availability of highly-qualified tutors
- verification of the possibility of creating a post-graduate training centre for previous participants
- organisation of exchange programmes of officials/trainers between national competent authorities
- setting up an alumni network to increase knowledge sharing
- creation of a network and database of tutors who could carry out training
- obtaining a formal commitment from Member States to disseminate as well as to develop dissemination plans by all stakeholders
- verification of instruments and sources facilitating quantification of the impact of training

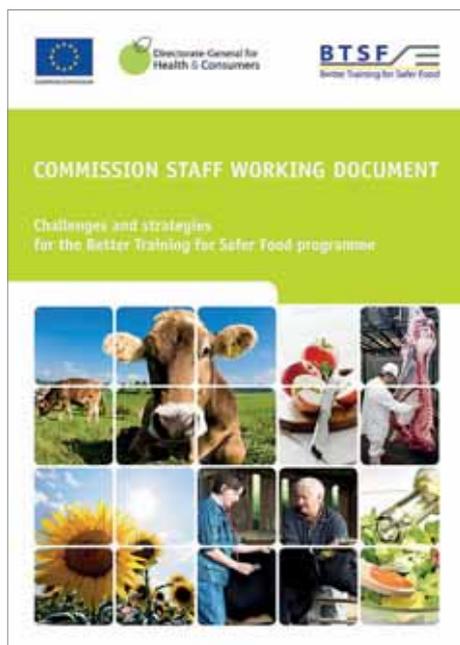
An action plan setting out actions to be put into practice by end-2013 has been drawn up. This also identifies opportunities for reflection on longer-term strategies.

A key element in the actions set out in the document is their ability to respond to a high-level of demand. The ad-hoc nature of BTSF has been sufficient for participation levels in the pilot phase but it is now necessary to move towards more concrete structures of governance. The challenge here is to achieve a more structured set-up without compromising the flexibility that has served BTSF so well thus far. All procedural steps should be reviewed bi-annually in order to strike the requisite balance between structure and flexibility.

The governance of BTSF should be defined taking account of:

- the role of the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers' role in managing BTSF
- development of standard operating procedures to better define priorities, including a performancebased review process
- development of a structured approach to coordination with stakeholders

Five years of experience – looking backwards to plan for the future



The Staff Working Document looks at options that are not directly linked to a budget increase. Other options could imply an increase in budget above the €15 million estimated in Communication COM (2006) 519 after 2013. Any eventual increase relates to the longer term and will be subject to a prior cost-benefit analysis.

An ex-post evaluation covering the entire period of the programme will be carried out in 2011. It will form the basis of any future decision on the development of BTSF.

Study on best practices for training on sanitary and phytosanitary issues

One of the actions highlighted in the Staff Working Document was the identification and definition of best training practices in the fields covered by BTSF. To this end, a study was completed during 2010 that proposes practices which could be implemented within the framework of the initiative and examines how different practices perform in relation to aspects that are relevant to BTSF. This work was mainly carried out through questionnaires and case study analysis of organisations providing SPS-related or similar training and interviews with experts in training and in SPS training.

The analysis revealed a wide diversity of training practices regarding objectives, size, audience, methods, etc. Such diversity had several implications. In particular, it was not easy to draw simple clear-cut lessons from the review of practices. Moreover, it appears more appropriate to speak about good practices rather than best practices, as no practice could indeed be considered overall good in all aspects and for all kinds of SPS training.

The recommendations only focus on areas that could be beneficial to BTSF. There are indeed areas for which BTSF is considered to perform sufficiently well in comparison with the observed practices and/or for which no particular good/best practices were identified (needs assessment and prioritisation, logistical and organisational arrangements).

The recommendations concern the preparation of participants (preparatory work or prior basic e-learning courses), the content of training (to favour basic and advanced training and to use more practice-oriented methods), the development of new training models (to promote blended learning combining e-learning and traditional class-room learning) and more cost-effective training (to focus on the training of trainers approach with particular attention devoted to pedagogical techniques and reusability of materials). In addition, the report indicates that more attention should be paid to building a BTSF knowledge database in order to consolidate the existing BTSF corpus of knowledge, which seems so far insufficiently exploited. This knowledge database could include:

presentations of tutors, related publications, web links, legislative references, practical cases, guidance tools, etc.

Application of acquired knowledge and impact on trainees' organisations are considered the most important elements to monitor but also the most difficult and resource-consuming. Upgrading evaluation approaches could provide more objective assessment of training impact by measuring knowledge acquisition, focusing on behaviour changes, and assessing performance of trainees' organisations or applying indicators independent of trainees' perceptions.

Many surveyed respondents expressed interest in setting up a network of SPS training organisers, provided that any such network is practice-oriented and delivers concrete output.

Development of an e-learning platform for Better Training for Safer Food

As highlighted in the Staff Working Document, provision of basic training through e-learning, with workshops and sustained missions used for advanced training, is one option that could be considered in order to meet the increasing demand for training.

A pilot project was thus launched in order to identify suitable e-learning tools and provide concrete examples of a functional e-learning system. As part of this project, a feasibility study was completed in 2010 to examine possibilities for use of e-learning within BTSF.

The specific objectives were to identify the most appropriate e-learning system for providing basic training in all BTSF subjects and increasing dissemination; to define the most appropriate options for implementation of such a system; and to highlight the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

The study considered examples of private and public bodies that have implemented e-learning. Interviews were also undertaken on the subject with European Commission staff. Finally, the study took into account the experience gained from the development of three pilot e-learning modules within the same project.

The study identified several ways in which e-learning could benefit BTSF. It could lower training costs and eliminate geographical barriers as all participants will be integrated into the same system wherever they are based.

Five years of experience – looking backwards to plan for the future



E-learning will cut the need for travel, accommodation, rental of facilities and materials, thereby making additional savings. Some travel may still be necessary, especially within a blended training approach, but it would be less frequent and for shorter durations.

Increased access to training is another potential result. In most organisations staff can only attend a limited number of classroom training sessions due to cost whereas many organisations provide staff with unlimited access to e-learning as no incremental costs result.

Greater participant homogeneity could be achieved by using basic-level e-learning as a starting point for advanced practical training targeted at people with appropriate qualifications and experience. Combining these aspects could also offer an effective way of running training while increasing outreach and participant numbers.



More focus on advanced practical training during workshops might reduce the need for longer workshops that the intermediate assessment on BTSF identified as necessary to cover the full range of subjects for any given programme. Applying e-learning to basic-level courses for all programmes could clarify technical focus, facilitate identification of participants, allow clearer indications to be given of required knowledge levels and help to better define contents, agenda and selection procedures.

An additional issue currently affecting target audience definition is language. Translation of e-learning courses into all official EU languages as well as languages of candidate and selected third countries could solve this problem.

The study identified potential constraints to the establishment of an e-learning platform, including:

- Lack of knowledge of potential uses and benefits of e-learning
- Lack of availability of technical experts
- Lack of requisite IT skills
- Possible reluctance of learners to engage with new technologies
- Upheaval caused by changes to training management processes
- Insufficient support for and engagement with learners
- Lack of access to high-speed internet in some countries

E-learning prototypes were developed for animal welfare, TSE and food contact materials. This demonstrated the potentially high impact on staff workload of e-learning implementation, particularly for creation, management and review of content.

chapter 2

The study recommended full subcontracting, initially for five modules. It was concluded that maintaining state-of-the-art e-learning capacity in-house over a long period could prove costly owing to rapid technological development. Outsourcing avoids risks associated with technological evolution, as external providers will be aware of recent developments and have the expertise to create programmes quickly and to tight deadlines, thus ensuring rapid deployment when necessary. Full outsourcing allows increased or reduced training provision in accordance with demand levels and will guarantee the necessary resources. In addition, the contractors will have full responsibility for the entire development phase, thus cutting out extra workload within the Commission. Work to be carried out in-house would mainly be related to quality control, monitoring and validation. Such an approach would allow the Commission to gain further experience of e-learning and its benefits and risks while providing an opportunity for practical testing of the first courses developed. Additionally, it would not require development of a specific BTSF e-learning platform; instead, a suitable system provided by the contractor would be used.

Subsequently, a call for proposals was issued in 2011 to commence work on pilots. See box.

EAHC-BTSF launched a call for tender late in 2010 for the development of five e-learning training modules. The aim is to increase outreach with basic-level training through e-learning, reaching a larger audience at lower cost. It will also make courses more flexible, easing time management for officials making use of these courses, and will also help in selecting participants for the more advanced types of BTSF workshops and courses involving participation on the spot. (EAHC/2010/BTSF/04: Modules for e-learning training courses under the programme "Better Training for Safer Food").

Possible formats to be used for the delivery of e-learning were examined and the e-learning pilot project launched should to help identify the most suitable model for the needs of BTSF. The initial idea is to create an e-learning tool for more basic-level training and which could serve as a starting point for practical training. Firstly, offering basic level training through e-learning would increase outreach and the number of participants (as compared with current levels) both on basic-level courses and globally. Secondly, by using e-learning it would be possible to focus more during workshops on advanced practical training (as has been repeatedly requested). This might reduce the need to increase the duration of workshops, and could also contribute to saving resources. Thirdly, applying e-learning to basic level courses for all training programmes could improve quality by clarifying the technical focus, facilitating identification of participants (for example, clearer indications could be given regarding the level of knowledge required to participate) and related selection procedures. Finally, applying e-learning to basic as opposed to advanced course level will simplify the task of creating such a tool.

BTSF – a social network

“Better Training for Safer Food represents a considerable success story for the European Commission. However, this success is not solely down to the Commission, as the management of Better Training for Safer Food requires constructive engagement from European Union Member State and third country authorities and a wide array of stakeholders (...). The work of these experts has been fundamental to the smooth functioning of Better Training for Safer Food thus far and in order to successfully implement the actions laid down in the Working Document, their role and commitment will need to increase further still.”
Paola Testori Coggi, Director General For Health And Consumers, European Commission, High-Level Conference on The Better Training for Safer Food Programme, 18 November 2010, Brussels

The expert group of national contact points (NCPs) in the Member States, candidate and European Free Trade Association countries channel information related to Better Training for Safer Food between the Commission, the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers and the external contractors responsible for the running of training activities on the one hand, and the national authorities on the other. Regular meetings of this group with the Commission help to define training needs, coordinate activities and flag up any problems that may have been encountered during the activities.

National contact points

National contact points in the Member states, candidate countries and other third countries for the “Better Training for Safer Food” initiative			
Member States countries			
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	<i>Deputy:</i> Mr. Roland Vecernik same contact details	roland.vecernik@bmg.gv.at	Tel: +43(0)1 70007 33484 Fax: +43(0)1 7007 33409
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chapter 3

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chapter 3

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chapter 3

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chapter 3

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Contractors

Bodies that have been awarded contracts for the organisation of the training activities to take place within the framework of the Better Training for Safer Food initiative

Body:	Training course on:	Contact Person:
* Agriconsulting – AGRICONSULTING EUROPE SA (AES) Avenue de Tervuren, 36 1040 Brussels	Feed and food of non animal origin, TRACES for Member States	Gianluca Vedova Managing Director G.Vedova@aesagroup.eu Tel: +32 2 7362277
* AETS (Application européenne de Technologies et de Services), 17 Avenue André Marie Ampère, BP201, Induspal Lons, Billère F-64142, France	Health of aquaculture animals; Food Hygiene and Controls; EU Food Standards; EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed and the possible introduction of a similar system in other regions of the world; Regional food hygiene workshops within Better Training for Safer Food in Africa	Franck Boccas franck.boccas@aets-europe.fr Tel: +33 5 59 72 43 23 www.aets-europe.fr
* Campden Technology Limited, Station Road, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, GL53 6LD, United Kingdom	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)	Robert Gaze r.gaze@campden.co.uk Tel: +44 (0) 1 386 842000 www.campden.co.uk

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<p>* DEVELOPMENT Solutions Europe Ltd 6 Cherry Close, Emmer Green Reading RG4 8UP United Kingdom</p>	<p>Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza disease control (HPAI)</p>	<p>Philip Bartley philip@development-solutions.eu Tel: +86 (010) 8527 5705/06 www.development-solutions.eu</p>
<p>* EuroConsultants, Avenue Pasteur 21, 1300 Wavre – Belgium</p>	<p>Feed law</p>	<p>Emilie Loward e.loward@euroconsultants.be Tel: +32 (0) 10 84 84 21 www.euroconsultants.be</p>
<p>* European Training Platform for Safer Food (TrainSaferFood) – GIZ GmbH (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1–5, 65760 Eschborn, Germany</p>	<p>Animal by-products; Prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies; Monitoring and controls of zoonoses and applying microbiological criteria in foodstuffs; Food contact materials; Plant Health Controls; Evaluation and registration and control of use and marketing of plant protection products; Food testing and phytosanitary issues</p>	<p>Victoria Diekkamp Victoria.Diekkamp@giz.de Tel: +32 2 229 27 68 www.giz.de</p>
<p>* Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale (IZS) TERAMO Consortium, Training Unit for SANCO OIE CC for veterinary training, epidemiology, food safety and animal welfare, Istituto “G.Caporale” – Teramo, Italy</p>	<p>Animal welfare standards during transport and at slaughter and killing for disease control purposes; Controls on food and feed of non-animal origin</p>	<p>Silvia d’Albenzio sancotraining@izs.it Tel: +39 0861 332670</p>
<p>* EC Joint Research Centre Ispra Via Enrico Fermi, 2749 21027 Ispra (Varese), Italy</p>	<p>Analysis of genetically modified organisms</p>	<p>Maddalena Querci maddalena.querci@jrc.ec.europa.eu Tel: +39 0332 783538 www.jrc.ec.europa.eu</p>
<p>* JVL Consulting, Rue J. Matagne, 15, 5020 Vedrin, Belgium</p>	<p>Best practices for veterinary checks in seaport, road and rail border inspection posts; Health of bees and exotic zoo animals</p>	<p>Fabiana Quadu quadu@jvl-c.com Tel: +32 (0) 81 327 996 www.jvl-c.com</p>

** This is a list of the bodies that currently have direct contract with the EAHC. However, the number of the institutions and bodies providing or supporting the actual training is much higher. The companies listed here represent the consortiums or platforms where different national bodies and administrations or other private companies are present and are carrying out training of officials.*

Practical information

Practical information for possible participants

How to apply to take part in a course:

Staff of national competent authorities of EU Member States, candidate and associated countries interested in finding out more about participating in Better Training for Safer Food activities are invited to refer to their appropriate NCP. It is possible to apply only in this way.

Interested parties from third countries where there is no NCP should refer directly to the appropriate contractor for the activity in which they wish to take part. Information about specific training courses, how they are organised and the subjects that are taught can be seen in the latest videos on BTSF training courses on the BTSF website (www.each.eu).

Practical information for potential contractors

How to apply to run a course:

The development of the training activities is mainly based on the launch of calls for tender and calls for expression of interest. All parties interested in submitting proposals to the Commission in the context of invitations to tender for the award of contracts in connection with the activities are invited to consult the relevant pages on our website for guidance – a new BTSF guideline for tenderers and an updated BTSF guideline for operators are now available online. (<http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/guidelines.html>). Published calls appear on <http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/tenders.html>. Calls are published throughout the year with the core in the first half of the year.

“Your presence here today assures me of your commitment. It also compels me to re-iterate our own commitment to the future success of the programme. Indeed, I am ready, together with my services, to do what is necessary to ensure that the Better Training for Safer Food programme continues to achieve our overarching aim of safer food for all.”

John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, High-Level Conference on Better Training for Safer Food, 18 November 2010, Brussels

European Commission

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