Food Authenticity Funders Network and Joint Strategic Research Agenda

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Food Authenticity Funders Network

- Authent-net project aims to establish sustainable co-operation between funding bodies on food authenticity
- Group of around 14 funders have met 4 times to discuss authent-net project outputs, funding priorities and future collaboration options
- General consensus has been that we would like to collaborate on research funding/anti-fraud activities in the future and want to explore options on best way to do this
- Proposal is to establish a **Food Authenticity Funders Network** to continue after authent-net project finishes (in March 2018)

Food Authenticity Funders Network

- To facilitate future collaboration of the network we have developed Terms of Reference for the network:
  - ➢ To outline the networks aims and objectives
  - ➢ To agree on how we should continue the networking activities after authent-net ends
  - ➢ To outline expected input, planned activities and network outputs
- And we are starting to develop a Strategic Research Agenda for the network:
  - ➢ To set out ways we can collaborate on future activities
  - ➢ To highlight areas where we would like to work together

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Rationale for a funders network

➢ The research funding bodies involved are keen to continue to maintain and grow the network themselves, to better co-ordinate and align knowledge exchange and research activities across countries in the longer–term.

➢ This will enable more cost-effective, targeted funding of research, sharing of information and expertise, avoiding duplication of effort by building a critical mass of research and addressing common and trans-boundary issues with other countries.

➢ Continued co-operation between countries will ensure capacity for food fraud detection and prevention across the EU is better joined up to support a secure, safe, resilient and competitive food supply chain, trusted by consumers.

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Food Authenticity Funders Network Aims and Objectives

The network aims to:

- **create a forum** which brings together research funders to build collaboration, share information about food authenticity issues and work together on common research goals to ensure the integrity, resilience and competitiveness of the food chain EU wide, protecting consumers' health and interests in relation to food.
- **build knowledge and good practice** through knowledge transfer/exchange
- **bridge gaps in research** by enabling co-funding and partnerships to create synergies between and help align research priorities and support standardisation of methods/research practices.

The network objectives are to:

- **establish a clearly mapped network of funders, creating opportunities for collaboration** to share knowledge, expertise, reduce duplication and maximise impact
- actively promote and **continue to grow the network** with new funders, **raising awareness** of research, validated methods, and approaches to detect food fraud
- build on the outputs of Authent-net **to align research and knowledge exchange** priorities

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Funders Network Planned activities and outputs

➢ One of the first activities for the funders network is to develop an agreed Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) which builds on Authent-net outputs

➢ A first draft SRA has been developed based on the funders discussions, sharing of priorities and the authent-net gap analysis

➢ The SRA will be further developed following stakeholder and funder feedback and finalisation of the gap analysis

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Draft Strategic Research Agenda on Food Authenticity and Food Fraud

➢ The draft SRA sets out the main high-level areas of common interest in food authenticity research and anti-food fraud related activities identified by the Funders Network.

➢ By identifying shared priorities the intention is to facilitate funders in working together, through research co-funding, collaboration and knowledge exchange.

➢ Priorities identified in the SRA aim to address some of the challenges and barriers to predicting and detecting food fraud to support a secure, safe, resilient and competitive food supply chain, trusted by consumers.

➢ The intention is for the funders to annually review and update the SRA to take account of emerging issues and changing priorities.

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Draft Strategic Research Agenda on Food Authenticity and Food Fraud

Challenges in the prediction, prevention & detection of Food Fraud

Food fraud is a constantly changing dynamic with a range of influencing drivers and factors such as:

- volatility in food prices,

- the availability of raw materials and ingredients,

- the economic climate,

- regulatory developments,

- changing consumer preferences and habits

We need to stay ahead of the curve to be able to predict, prevent and have the tools available to detect new and emerging food fraud incidents.

Complex, global, and rapidly changing food supply chains make this challenging but working together to pool resources and share expertise and intelligence is vital.

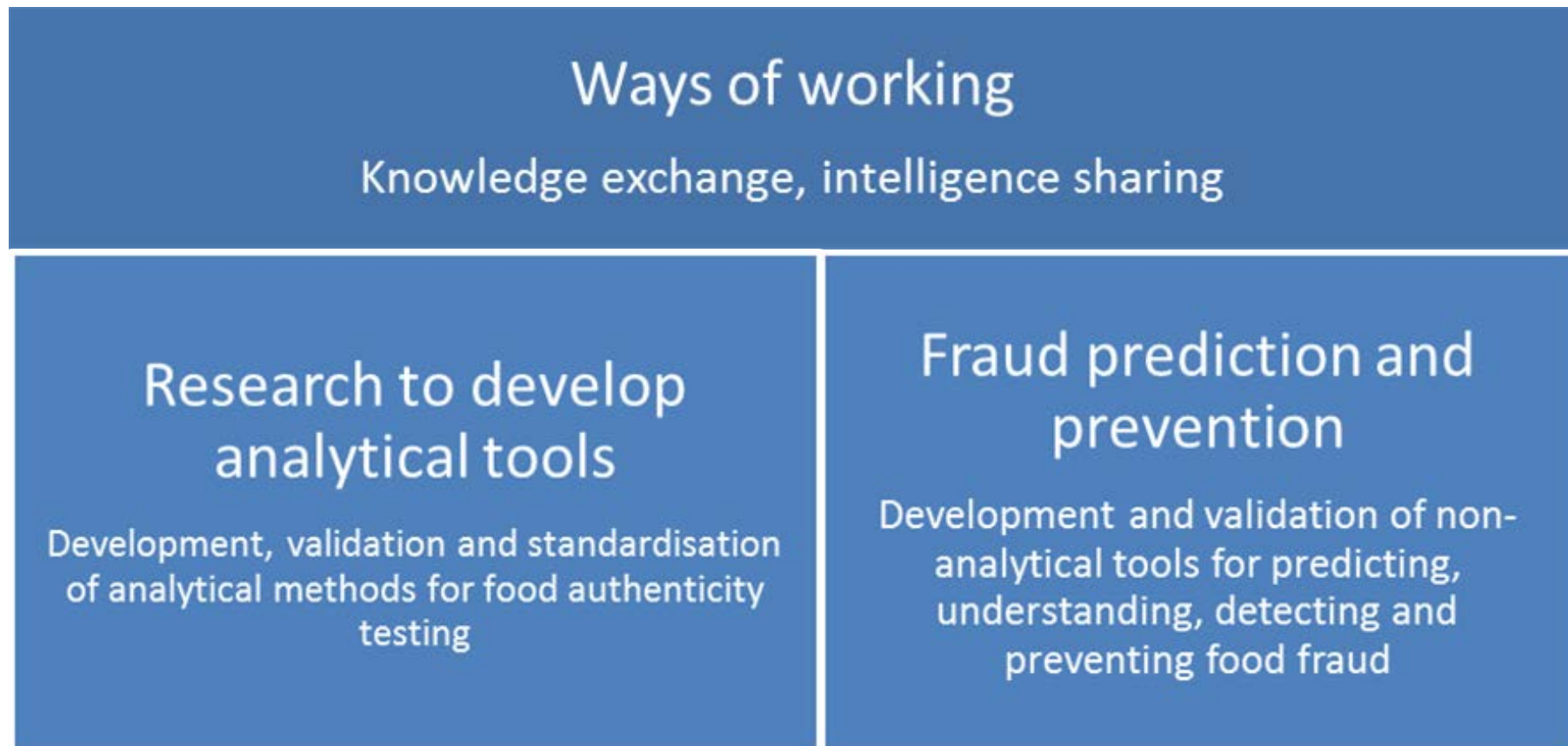# Draft Strategic Research Agenda on Food Authenticity and Food Fraud

Analytical challenges

In addition to challenges in predicting food fraud there are a number of analytical challenges associated with detecting existing fraudulent and mislabelling practices:

- Availability of authentic reference materials for method development, accreditation, and proficiency testing.
- Methods need to be practical, transferable and fit for purpose for use in court cases.
- Fit for purpose methods need to be well validated and given the global nature of supply chains method standardisation and harmonisation across countries is also important.
- Development and application of portable, rapid point of use tools and non-targeted multi-analyte methods
- Harnessing emerging technologies and novel methods for food authenticity analysis to stay ahead of fraudsters and improve on currently available approaches.

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Draft Strategic Research Agenda on Food Authenticity and Food Fraud

Funders have identified three key areas where they would benefit from collaboration

Ways of working
Knowledge exchange, intelligence sharing

Research to develop analytical tools
Development, validation and standardisation of analytical methods for food authenticity testing

Fraud prediction and prevention
Development and validation of non-analytical tools for predicting, understanding, detecting and preventing food fraud

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Research to develop analytical tools

Areas for collaboration:

- Development of improved methods to detect food mislabelling issues with a particular focus on origin (geographic and production origin, including verification of PDO and PGI products)

- Trans-national validation of existing and new methods to detect food mislabelling;

- Harmonisation/standardisation of methods employed by different countries;

- Simplification of existing methods to allow for accessible, transferable, rapid, point of use, low cost screening tools;

- Application of innovative, cutting edge methods and emerging technologies to detect food fraud issues;

- Better use of existing methods and resource such as reference materials and databases;

- The main commodities of interest varies with different countries but meat, fish/seafood, honey, dairy, wine, cereals, vegetables and fats and oils are of interest to a significant number of the funders.

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Fraud Prediction and Prevention

Areas for collaboration:

- Development of non-analytical tools such as mass balance and paper-based checks to detect food fraud and harmonised guidance on their use;
- Improved food chain vulnerability assessments with identification and harmonisation of tools to identify Critical Control Points (CCPs);
- Development and dissemination of information/guides & food fraud prevention tools for industry;
- Surveillance/pilot studies to scope out scale of fraud issues;
- Horizon scanning and emerging risk surveillance;
- Feasibility studies on network analysis/social media analysis to identify fraudulent activity;
- Understanding causes of fraud - trends and drivers e.g. raw material availability, trade, crop failures, political trends etc.
- Social science research to understand consumer consumption trends e.g for organic, free range etc
- Big data analysis

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Ways of working

Areas for collaboration:

- Information sharing on current research areas, outputs, foresight activities, research priorities, and best practice to align activities and enhance dissemination;
- Intelligence sharing to support food fraud detection and food law enforcement.

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- Any questions?
- Your comments and input on the high-level areas identified for collaboration would be valuable

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