



Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC)

Charter June 2016

Introduction

The Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC) was established in 2011 and represents a substantial effort to improve coordination of federal food safety responsibilities of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). IFSAC was created, in part, in response to the key findings of the President's Food Safety Working Group (see: http://www.foodsafetyworkinggroup.gov/FSWG_Key_Findings.pdf).

Purpose

The original Charter, signed in 2011, established IFSAC, described its mission and scope, nature of the work, and roles and responsibilities of its senior members. This revised Charter adds information about the roles and responsibilities of the Technical Workgroup and Communications Workgroup, as well as other process updates.

Scope/Mission

The goal of IFSAC is to strengthen federal collaboration by addressing cross-cutting priorities for food safety data collection, analysis, and use. In support of this goal, IFSAC:

- Works collectively to identify, plan, conduct, and monitor selected food safety and foodborne illness analytical projects that are recognized as high priority by CDC, FSIS, and FDA;
- Develops and shares analytical methods, common terminology, and standards of practice;
- Identifies and links existing datasets and personnel expertise to conduct analyses on priority topics; and
- Estimates the incidence of foodborne illness and contamination of food products, and attributes illnesses caused by specific pathogens to specific food categories.

In addition to work related to understanding the incidence and attribution of foodborne illness, additional areas of collaboration may include analyzing the locations of, contributing factors to, and environmental antecedents for, foodborne illness outbreaks; determining trends or assessing major changes in the incidence of illness and of food contamination; examining major food sources of illness by food category; developing novel analytical methods; and conducting economic analyses. IFSAC's work, however, does not include acute outbreak investigation or response activities.

Additionally, IFSAC has and will continue to use data from surveillance of human illness, regulatory testing of food commodities, epidemiologic studies, and other sources of data to inform analyses. The Agencies have and will continue to work together to design and implement approaches to data collection and analysis that are concordant and share a common terminology so that relevant information from one Agency can be combined with information from another. IFSAC's work should not constrain innovation or scientific work at each Agency, including the collection and analysis of data, and it is recognized that much work in this arena continues to lie outside this collaboration.

Finally, IFSAC will continue to communicate and interact with other governmental and non-governmental organizations to better achieve IFSAC's strategic and analytical goals.

Organizational Structure

IFSAC has an established organizational structure that consists of a Steering Committee (SC) to guide decision-making, a Technical Workgroup (TWG) to conduct analyses, and a Communications Workgroup (CWG) to develop plans for publicly sharing results. The roles, responsibilities, and organizational structures of these are described below, along with the formal process by which IFSAC members develop, review, and approve projects.

Steering Committee

Overall Function

IFSAC is guided by a Steering Committee (SC) composed of two senior leaders from each participating Agency. The SC will:

- Identify, prioritize, and coordinate cross-cutting analytical needs related to food safety and foodborne illness and solicit project proposals to provide pertinent information to help prioritize public health interventions and to inform food safety strategies.
- Review solicited and unsolicited written proposals for collaborative projects submitted by the IFSAC TWG and provide suggestions for modifications.
- Provide oversight of analytical projects conducted within this framework to define the scope and outcomes of analytical efforts, and ensure that projects are coordinated and managed effectively and are completed in a timely manner.
- Review interim reports to ensure that timelines are met and satisfactory outcomes for deliverables are likely to be achieved.
- Monitor projects for deficiencies and seeks solutions to enable achievement of deliverables.
- Monitor related research activities of the identified collaborative projects, and identify opportunities to coordinate food safety and foodborne illness surveillance activities.
- Assess opportunities and make recommendations for Agencies based on findings from collaborative projects.
- Review (and revise, as necessary) the Charter annually by October 1.
- Review, update, and finalize the Strategic Plan at least every five years.
- Review (and revise, as necessary) other IFSAC documents as needed.

Membership

- **Members:** The IFSAC SC shall include two members from each of the participating Agencies. The respective Agency leadership will select the SC representatives.
- **Chair:** A Chair will be elected from the SC membership by the members, and the chair position will rotate annually among the participating Agencies on October 1. In each given year, the Agency of the SC Chair is referred to as the “Chairing Agency.”
- **Terms:** The term of each SC member will be at the discretion of the Agency to which that member belongs.

Operations

- **Meeting Schedule:** The SC shall hold regular meetings at least twice a year. The SC Chair will set and revise, as needed, the frequency of regular meetings. Additional meetings may be scheduled on an as-needed (ad-hoc) basis.
- **Communications:** The SC Chair (or designee) shall be responsible for soliciting input from members about meeting schedules and other logistical information, and working with a dedicated IFSAC TWG member (from the respective Agency) to ensure meeting logistics are properly managed. CWG members serve as the conduit to established Agency communication organizational structures.
- **Quorum:** A quorum, defined as at least one SC member from each Agency, will be required for all meetings of the SC. One exception may be allowed occasionally; if neither SC member is available, they may designate a representative from their Agency, preferably a TWG member, to serve as their proxy for that meeting (“SC proxy”).

- **Decision-Making:** Decision-making is only permitted when a quorum, as defined above, exists at a meeting. When decisions are required, they will be made by consensus. In the occasional instance that both SC members from an Agency are absent, the SC proxy may vote on the SC member's behalf. Electronic voting may be used when other means of decision-making are not available or decisions are required of the SC outside of a regularly scheduled meeting.
 - Decisions involving the use or interpretation of data held by a particular Agency or within the clear scope of that Agency's mission, and decisions involving the commitment of resources of a particular Agency, cannot be made without the consent of both SC members from that Agency.
- **Administrative Support and Record Keeping:** The Chairing Agency will provide administrative support and record keeping.

Responsibilities

- **Chair:** The SC Chair shall set meeting agendas and preside over meetings. The Chair will designate a person or persons to arrange meetings, distribute (via e-mail and posted on the shared working environment (e.g., Microsoft SharePoint)) meeting agendas, materials, and information before scheduled SC meetings, take minutes at each SC meeting, and post finalized minutes on the shared working environment. The Chair will assure that minutes are reviewed and voted on for acceptance by the membership.
- **Members:** The SC members will represent their respective Agencies and inform their leadership of products and outcomes, as needed. The members are expected to participate in scheduled meetings and teleconferences. When new projects are to be conducted, the members should determine the resources to be committed by their respective Agencies.

Technical Workgroup

Overall Function

The IFSAC Technical Workgroup (TWG) provides the analytical expertise to develop and execute IFSAC projects. The TWG will:

- Develop project proposals and plans, conduct analyses, develop written materials (e.g., reports, memos, manuscripts, conference materials) to share the findings of the work, and meet project deliverables.
- Identify external expertise (experts outside of IFSAC, but within CDC, FSIS, or FDA or experts outside of the Agencies) to contribute to projects, as needed.
- Establish and maintain an electronic, collaborative, shared working environment for project file work, distribution, and storage.

Membership

- **Members:** The TWG shall include at least two members from each of the participating Agencies. At least one TWG member from each Agency will also be on the CWG to ensure timely communication between the TWG and CWG. The TWG members should have expertise in epidemiology, statistics, public health, microbiology, or other relevant disciplines.
- **TWG Lead and TWG Points of Contact (POC):** The Chairing Agency will designate a TWG Lead; the non-chairing Agencies will designate one or more TWG POCs who will act as liaison(s) between the non-chairing SC members and the TWG. The TWG Lead will rotate annually with

the rotation of the SC Chair on October 1.

- **Terms:** The term of each TWG member will be at the discretion of the Agency to which that member belongs.

Operations

- **Meeting Schedule:** The TWG shall hold regular meetings, scheduled for at least every other month. The TWG Lead will set and revise, as needed, the frequency of regular meetings. Additional meetings may be scheduled on an as-needed (ad-hoc) basis.
- **Communications and Record Keeping:** The TWG Lead, with assistance as-needed from a project manager (if available) from the Charing Agency will arrange meetings, develop and distribute meeting agendas, along with materials and information, to TWG members at least two business days in advance of scheduled meetings (via e-mail and posted on the shared working environment). The TWG Lead or a designee (e.g., the project manager or other TWG member) will take minutes at each meeting; assure that minutes are accepted; and post finalized minutes on the shared working environment.
- **Quorum and Decision-Making:** A quorum, defined as at least one representative from each Agency, will be required for meetings of the TWG. When decisions are required, they will be made by consensus.

Communications Workgroup

Overall Function

The IFSAC Communications Workgroup (CWG) provides the communication expertise to develop and share results from IFSAC projects. The CWG will:

- Advise the IFSAC SC and TWG on the development and implementation of communication materials related to projects (e.g., written documents, webinars, public meetings).
- Coordinate with Agency Communications Specialists to ensure harmonization of communication materials and messaging.
- Coordinate with IFSAC project teams to develop communication materials for external audiences, including conference materials, manuscripts, webinars, and press releases, among other materials.
- Coordinate and respond to media or other external inquires (e.g., Government Accountability Office (GAO)).
- Coordinate updates of the IFSAC Strategic Plan and Charter.
- Update the IFSAC public webpages as necessary.
- Monitor IFSAC e-mail inbox and coordinate responses to non-media inquiries.

Membership

- **Members:** The CWG shall include at least one member from each of the participating Agencies. At least one CWG person from each Agency will also be on the TWG to ensure timely communication between the TWG and CWG. Individual Agency Communication Specialists will be invited to and can attend all CWG meetings on either a regular (if possible) or targeted basis.
- **CWG Lead and CWG Points of Contact (POC):** The Charing Agency will designate a CWG Lead; the non-charing Agencies will designate one or more CWG POCs who will act as liaison(s) between the non-charing SC members and the CWG. The CWG Lead will rotate annually with the rotation of the SC Chair on October 1.

- **Terms:** The term of each CWG member will be at the discretion of the Agency to which that member belongs.

Operations

- **Meeting Schedule:** The CWG shall hold regular meetings, scheduled for at least every other month to discuss communication-related needs and activities. The CWG Lead will set and revise, as needed, the frequency of regular meetings. Additional meetings may be scheduled on an as-needed (ad-hoc) basis.
- **Communications and Record Keeping:** The CWG Lead, with assistance as-needed from a project manager (if available) from the Chairing Agency, will arrange meetings, develop and distribute meeting agendas, along with materials and information, to CWG members in advance of scheduled meetings (via e-mail and posted on the shared working environment). The CWG Lead or a designee (e.g., the project manager or other CWG member) will take notes at each meeting.
- **Quorum and Decision Making:** A quorum, defined as at least one representative from each Agency, will be required for meetings of the CWG. When decisions are required, they will be made by consensus.

IFSAC Project Development Structure

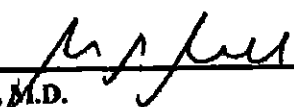
- IFSAC has developed a formal project development structure to ensure that projects are well conceived, executable, and appropriate; this information, with operational details, is included in internal IFSAC documents.

Agency Roles and Document Clearance


- **Agency Roles:** Individual Agencies will support their respective SC member's time, travel, and incidental expenses to actively participate in SC meetings. The Agencies will support their respective project participants' reasonable time, travel, and incidental expenses (e.g., software, hardware) to participate in approved projects.
- **Document Clearance, Publication and Authorship Credits:** Each Agency participating in a collaborative project will be responsible for the clearance and approval of documents (e.g., reports, presentations, or manuscripts for publication) produced as a result of the project. Data and analyses that are within the mission of one Agency shall not be presented or published without the appropriate permissions or formal clearance from that Agency, as determined by the SC representatives from that Agency. Unresolved issues should be brought to the SC.

All policies established by IFSAC will remain within the scope of this Charter.

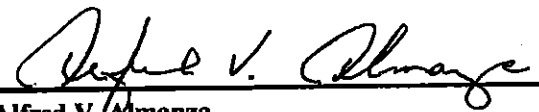
Signatures



Beth P. Bell, M.D. 6/17/16
Director, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Date



Stephen Ostroff, M.D. JULY 12, 2016
Deputy Commissioner for Foods and Veterinary Medicine
U.S. Food and Drug Administration Date



Alfred V. Almanza 7/22/16
Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety
Food Safety and Inspection Service Date