

First Stakeholder Meeting of the European Technology Platform for Global Animal Health

Thursday 24 February 2005
DG Research, Brussels

Executive summary

1. The participants at the meeting supported the concept of the technology platform and the launch of the European Technology Platform for Global Animal Health. Those present at the meeting represented a wide range of key stakeholders including academia, research, industry, public authorities, international organisations, consumers, developing countries and the European Union Commission services.

2. The interim vision document, launched on 16 December 2004 had stimulated a number of written comments. These along with the comments made during the meeting would be incorporated into a revised vision document. This would be circulated to all stakeholders for their agreement and endorsement. It was agreed that:

- Comments from stakeholders should be submitted within one week if possible;
- A revised vision document would be circulated to all stakeholders and also placed on the web site;
- Heads of the organisations involved would be asked to provide a signature to demonstrate that the vision document was endorsed at the highest level.

3. The involvement of all stakeholders was essential for the success of the platform. It would not be possible to invite all stakeholders to the stakeholder forum due to financial constraints. It was agreed that;

- There would be approximately 75 key stakeholder members representing the major organisations with an interest in the platform;
- All the participants at the 1st meeting would be invited to future meetings of the stakeholder forum;
- Individual experts would be invited as appropriate;
- A list of all potential stakeholders should be established and would include representatives from NGOs;
- The wider stakeholder base would be involved via email and the website;
- All documents should be available on the website for information and comment.

4. The governance arrangements for the platform would be critical for success. Following discussion it was agreed that:

- The name of the 'Advisory Council' should be changed to 'Steering Council';
- There should be around 25 members, with a quorum of two thirds;
- Membership of the Steering Council should include the key stakeholder organisations at a European level;
- Developing countries would be represented on the Steering Council by FAO and OIE;
- There will be an interim executive board of 7 members drawn from the Steering Council. This would include 1 member each from industry, users (vets and farmers), academia, research institutes, regulatory authorities and international organisations;

- The interim executive board will be chaired by IFAH-Europe. The first meeting will be held in early May pending the results of the application for specific support action funding.

5. The initial discussions on the Specific Research Agenda (SRA) identified three main themes: Research, Technology Transfer, Horizontal issues. Cross cutting issues, which would need to build into a matrix with the three themes included, sustainability, competitiveness, security from bio terrorism, public health and food security.

6. It was agreed that three working groups would be established to develop the research agenda for the three themes. Terms of Reference, mandates, membership and identification of the chair will be developed. Working groups will consist of about 25 people and would meet twice during the development of the SRA. Nominations to Working Groups to be done by each organisation before end of March.

Session 1 - Introduction

7. Dr Zänker, (IFAH-Europe), as Chairperson welcomed the participants and explained the objectives of the first stakeholder meeting. These were to finalise the vision paper of the technology platform for Global Animal Health and to begin the work of developing the Strategic Research Agenda.

8. Dr Patermann, Director DG Research, gave the Commission's viewpoint, emphasising that this was an important technology platform. He made a number of important points. The work on the Strategic Research Agenda will have a direct impact on the priorities and programmes of the 7th Framework Programme (FP7). Close contact should be developed with the other technology platforms especially where there were common interests e.g. innovative medicines. It was also important to work with all the stakeholders and to remember that the European Parliament was an important group where there was interest in the technology platform. Care should be taken in developing the governance arrangements for the platform to ensure openness and transparency reaching decisions by consensus

The Concept of Technology Platforms (Sean O'Reagain, DG Research)

9. The presentation outlined the Commissions approach and provided an introduction to the context, rationale and state of play for the technology platforms. The importance of the wide stakeholder base and the need for openness and transparency of the platforms was emphasised. The platforms should be all inclusive although to achieve this would require funding. The links between the platforms and the forthcoming Framework 7 were also discussed.

10. Issues raised during the discussions included:
- Role of the European Investment Bank and structural funding?
 - Life span of a TP?
 - EC evaluation of TPs?
 - Involvement of research institutes and their financial implications?
 - Involvement of international stakeholders outside Europe?

Session 2 - A European Technology Platform for Global Animal Health

11. Professor Scudamore, TP Secretariat, described the current position in the development of the European Technology Platform for Global Animal

Health (ETPGAH). The Interim Vision Paper for the platform was described and the comments received since the launch in December 2004 were catalogued. The proposed criteria for the inclusion of stakeholders and suggestions for the organisational and governance structure for the platform were presented. A series of questions on each of the issues had been circulated and formed the basis for the discussions.

Interim Vision

12. The content of the draft Vision document was discussed. Suggestions were made that the scope should include minor species, fish and companion animals. In addition other pharmaceuticals and medicines should be included as well as vaccines. There was the view that other controls and different solutions to disease problems should be highlighted, as the focus was too concentrated on vaccines and diagnostics. There was concern at the way in which international partnerships could be developed. How to define objectives and set milestones was another important issue with concern that the adoption of a broad set of objectives would lose focus and ultimately result in little being delivered by the platform.

13. A number of action points were identified:
- Klaus Osinga, Copa-Cogeca, will send comments on food security, environment and food safety;
 - Anne Gautrais, DG Enterprise, will provide further comment on the regulatory framework for vaccines;
 - John McDermott, ILRI, will provide text on partnerships and innovations between Europe and international organisations;
 - Keith Sumption, FAO will check for ongoing research work co-ordinated by OIE, FAO and SANCO on e.g. FMD;
 - Remaining comments should be sent by 4th March 2005 if possible.

Stakeholders

14. The size and membership of the stakeholder forum was discussed as well as criteria for membership. Based on the average cost of meetings and the availability of finance a total forum membership of around 75 was feasible. However to meet the need for openness and transparency it would be important to have a clear communication strategy to ensure no-one was excluded from the platform or the discussions. Stakeholders currently excluded and who should be considered include non-terrestrial species (fish) organisations, funders, welfare organisations and NGOs. There was agreement that OIE and FAO have a critical involvement and provide the global perspective. Finding ways to include Member-States, and funders were highlighted for further discussion.

15. The following actions were agreed:
- Dil Peeling to provide a list of suggested NGOs by 4th March;
 - Dominique Martinez, CIRAD, to provide a list of institutions coordinating networks of excellence as possible representatives of research on the forum and the Steering Council;
 - Further suggestions must be submitted by 4th March if possible.

Governance

16. There was a comprehensive debate on the proposals for governance of the platform. Based on the suggested role and responsibility of the Advisory Council it

was strongly recommended by the stakeholders that the Council would be more of a controlling and directing group rather than advisory. As a result it was suggested the title "Steering Council" would better reflect the role of the council. It was agreed that the membership should be around 25 and represent European Organisations where possible. The main problem lay with research and academia where there were no specific European representative bodies. The proposed membership of the Steering Council was accepted but will be subject to further consideration by the interim Executive board.

17. The initial proposal for an Executive Board was discussed and accepted but with a number of modifications. The meeting felt that with the development of the Steering Council it would be more appropriate to have an interim Executive Board to take forward the proposals in the short term. When the Steering Council was fully established the membership and role of the Executive Board could be finalised.

18. Initially it was proposed that the Executive Board consist of 5 members including the chair from the industry. It was accepted that the OIE should be a member of the Board to ensure the international and global aspects of the platform were taken into account. It was also agreed that it would be appropriate to have 1 member from academia and 1 from the research institutes rather than only 1 representative of academia and research.

19. The meeting agreed that invitations for membership of the interim Executive Board would be extended to: Dr Zänker (chair), IFAH-Europe, Dr Vaarten, FVE, Dr Feller, COPA-COGECA, Prof J.M. Sanchez-Vizcaino, Universidad de Madrid and Professor Pastoret. In addition Dr Schudel would be invited to represent the OIE on behalf of the Dr Vallat the Director General. A representative of the Heads of the Medicines Agencies for the EU would also be invited.

20. Note: The first meeting for the interim executive board was proposed for March but since the meeting it has been necessary to delay the meeting until mid May in order to:

- Await outcome of the application to the Commission for financial funds (SSA);
- Allow each stakeholder group to organise themselves;
- Provide time to prepare papers and documents of the meeting.

Session 3 - The Strategic Research Agenda

21. Dr Simon Barber representing the **European Technology Platform for Plant Genomics and Biotechnology** gave a presentation on their experiences of launching a TP and setting a Strategic Research Agenda. He stressed the amount of work ahead, the importance of coordinating work, the commitment needed from all stakeholders and the Code of Conduct. Dr Barber agreed to send a draft copy of their Code of Conduct document to the Secretariat which would be circulated to participants. (*done*)

22. Prof Jose Sanchez-Vizcaino presented the academic perspective, highlighting the need for risk analysis to identify which problems are of highest importance, where the threats are and the tools currently available and those, which were needed. He compared the impact of regulatory systems in Europe and the US on competitiveness and concluded that scientific evidence was required to assess whether the regulations in Europe were proportionate. During the discussion it was emphasised that the ETPGAH is focused on research and is not a lobby group.

23. Dr Schüller for IFAH-Europe, (Intervet), presented the industry perspective. The regulatory system was cited as the main constraint to development and some improvements were suggested such as waiving the efficacy demonstration for specific cases, harmonising interpretation and reducing the need for animal tests. Comments: Vaccines could be tested in developing countries where there is the capacity and the disease. Need for research on comparison between the situation in US and Europe in terms of differences. The stakeholders can decide what they want to research. It should be considered what the animal health world would look like in 2025.

Strategic Research Agenda

24. The presentations provided a good basis for the discussions. This was the first meeting to begin the work of developing the SRA for the platform and it was important to identify the main themes and the working practices which were to be adopted. A consensus was established on the five main challenges which were identified as: competitiveness, sustainability, security, public health and food security, and international cooperation. The three main themes for the work groups were agreed as: Research, Technology Transfer and Horizontal Issues.

25. The main action points for the discussion were:
- Those who wish to be involved in a working group should contact the Secretariat (Isabel or Suzanne) in the next few weeks;
 - Prof Paul-Pierre Pastoret, Dr Martinez, Professor Mettenleiter and Professor Moennig volunteered to be in the Research working group;
 - Ideas for ToRs and mandates for each working group would gratefully be received.

Conclusions

26. Dr Zänker thanked everyone for their constructive participation and the Commission for its support.