FoodSafety4EU, a new international project for the food safety, begins in January 2021. It is coordinated by the Institute of Food Production Sciences of the National Research Council (Cnr - Ispa) and funded by European Commission in the framework of the Horizon 2020 program.

The project, answering to the call "Supporting the agri-food security system of the future" will support the European Commission and EFSA, the European Food Safety Authority (and other Commission agencies) in preparing the next EU strategy for research and innovation in the field of food safety.

The project addresses four main challenges in order to improve the EU Member States coordination and the food safety system actors, enhance the involvement of the food system operators and increase the consumers trust. These challenges are:

- define the scenario and the framework that can guide future European food safety policies through the alignment of national and global guidelines;

- define guidelines for the harmonization of research support programs in the Member States;

- prepare and propose the next Strategic Agenda for Research and Innovation in Europe;

- prepare and propose new models for public communication to strengthen the authority of European institutions and agencies, thus stimulating new forms of relationship and consumers trust.

The project, the only one in this field to be selected and financed in the EU, will apply an innovative approach based on the progressive activation of four levels of connection between the operators of the European food safety system, starting from the bottom up to the top institutional level.

The plan includes:

1) the activation of four territorial hubs in defined European areas, aimed at creating specific networks including research bodies, universities, food safety authorities, business and consumer associations, public communication experts;

2) the creation of four structured thematic discussion laboratories (living labs) in which selected experts will participate, deploying co-designed documents to be presented to the Commission for the adoption of research policies and programs, and pilot actions outside the EU (Albania and Tunisia) for communication models;

3) the development and use of advanced digital solutions (digital platform), which will favor the exchange of information, facilitate interaction in the food safety community, also by providing knowledge, big data, methods and tools;

4) the generation of the FoodSafety4EU platform, shaped as an organization / entity, approved by the Commission, which will be able to act as a service center for European food safety actors and stakeholders, connecting institutions, authorities, European agencies, bodies, suppliers, producers, large retailers, consumers, citizens;

5) the creation of the European food safety forum: an international event that will formalize and officially promote the platform as a selected and appointed player to interact with the European Commission and EFSA.

Here are some numbers of the project:

• 3 million euros funding under the Horizon 2020 program

* 3 years duration

• 23 partners: research institutions and universities (7), Food Safety Authority (5), experts in communication, training and international food networking (4), digital services (1), social innovation and participatory processes (1), organizations business and consumer representatives (4);

• 12 countries involved: Italy, Belgium, Holland, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic, Romania, Albania, Tunisia, Portugal;

• 80 external experts and 6 independent advisors with international experience from DG Sante of the European Commission, Efsa, Jrc, media and stakeholders from the food sector;

• 44 support partners with the task of animating and strengthening the networks in the four territorial hubs, divided into 12 food safety authorities, 22 scientific subjects and producer associations operating at national level and 10 of the most important European organizations / federations representing food businesses and consumers.