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INFOSAN Members' Guide

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Safety Authorities
Network

INFOSAN members' guide

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Web Annex

Template for INFOSAN/IHR Communication: national protocol for information sharing with national and international partners during food safety events and outbreaks of foodborne illness
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/337469/9789240012288-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

Acronyms

CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Control
ECP	INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FP	INFOSAN Focal Point
GOARN	Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network
ICW	INFOSAN Community Website
IHR (2005)	International Health Regulations (2005)
IHR NFP	National International Health Regulations (2005) Focal Point
INFOSAN	the International Food Safety Authorities Network
JEE	Joint External Evaluation Tool
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
RASFF	European Commission's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
WGS	Whole Genome Sequencing
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to serve as a functional reference guide for members of the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN). The guide is split into two parts covering both organizational and practical information about INFOSAN and member participation.

Part A of the guide provides a general overview of the INFOSAN structure, including the functions of INFOSAN, and it details the network organisation, including the roles and responsibilities of the members, the Secretariat and the Advisory Group. This part of the guide also provides details on the INFOSAN Community Website (ICW) and instructions pertaining to the designation and registration of new members.

Part B of the guide describes operational aspects around the communication of international food safety incidents (the main function of INFOSAN). Sources of information are described along with guidance on the process for reporting food safety incidents to the INFOSAN Secretariat.

INFOSAN members should note that this document has been drafted by the INFOSAN Secretariat with input from the INFOSAN Advisory Group following a consultative process whereby all INFOSAN members were invited to provide comments on an earlier draft. This guide complements other documentation that has been published with the support of the broader INFOSAN membership. Following the presentation and discussion of the Members' Guide at the Global Meeting of INFOSAN in December 2019, the INFOSAN Secretariat will develop and publish additional guidance to supplement the information in this guide which may also be included in future revisions. The table below outlines the purpose, authors and primary users of the different reference documents:

Documents	Purpose	Authors	Primary users
INFOSAN Secretariat Strategic Plan	To guide overall management of INFOSAN by the Secretariat	INFOSAN Secretariat together with the INFOSAN Advisory Group	FAO/WHO INFOSAN Secretariat
Regional strategies to strengthen INFOSAN	To outline regional-specific actions for members to strengthen INFOSAN	INFOSAN Secretariat, together with Regional Food Safety Officers/Advisers and regional INFOSAN Members	INFOSAN Members in respective regions
INFOSAN Members' Guide	To ensure all INFOSAN members understand their roles and responsibilities	INFOSAN Secretariat together with the INFOSAN Advisory Group and all INFOSAN members	All INFOSAN Members

If you have questions about anything in this guide or about INFOSAN in general, please contact the INFOSAN Secretariat at infosan@who.int.

Background

The rapid globalization of food production and trade has increased the potential for international incidents involving unsafe food. As a result, food safety issues occurring in one country are often of concern to other countries.

While implementing effective prevention strategies throughout the entire food chain is the most effective way to produce safe food, it is impossible to eliminate all food safety hazards. Addressing incidents that result from contamination of food by foodborne hazards requires rapid access to, and exchange of, food safety information at the national, regional, and international levels.

Key Point



INFOSAN was launched in 2004 and operates as a joint FAO/WHO programme

Clear, reliable, and authoritative information is essential to allow food safety authorities to implement effective prevention, response and risk management measures, and for the maintenance of international food trade and consumer confidence in the food supply.

To address these challenges, WHO developed and launched INFOSAN in 2004, in cooperation with FAO. Today, INFOSAN is jointly managed by WHO and FAO with most operational functions led by a Secretariat located at WHO HQ.

Further information about the history and development of INFOSAN is available in another publication, titled: [The FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network in Review, 2004–2018: Learning from the Past and Looking to the Future](#)¹

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