

EUROFIR

European Food Information Resource Network



Comprising 200 researchers and 50 postgraduate students from 27 European countries, EuroFIR is a Network of Excellence (NoE) on information about the composition of food. This NoE forms a world-leading collaboration on the development and application of a unified, reliable and accessible European Food Information Resource, uniting many national food database compiler organisations with both analytical laboratories that generate the data, and end-users of the data from universities and research institutes specialising in nutrition from all over Europe in a major five-year project (including Israel and Turkey). They are joined by seven SMEs with expertise in IT databases and software development, and disseminating and communicating the results and findings across Europe.

It will be primarily useful to help scientists collaborate in validating the relationships between dietary habits and chronic disease, and to exploit the findings to reduce the medical and social costs of ill health. It will also help the wider community to gain access to nutritional research results and understand their implications for public health nutrition.

Background

The growing recognition of the significance of diet in maintaining human health has generated considerable amounts of research throughout Europe. Food components have been shown to help prevent a range of diseases and to prolong active life, and the search continues to unravel the various effects of different nutrients. Much of the information uncovered by this work was hard to access, although the European Commission has actively encouraged collaboration in several programmes. The establishment of EuroFIR (the European Food Information Resource Network) has helped to create a comprehensive and authoritative European source of food information on nutrients, components and newly emerging bioactive compounds with putative health benefits.

Objectives

- Strengthen scientific and technological excellence in food composition databank systems by integrating at the European level the critical mass of resources and expertise needed to provide European leadership
- Identify and provide new information for missing data for nutrients and biologically active compounds with putative health effects, and covering all food groups
- Spread excellence and enhance the impact of the network in food composition databanks and public health nutrition beyond the boundaries of the partnership through training, and sharing of methods and facilities
- Communicate with, and enter into dialogue with all user and stakeholder groups, in order to establish and deliver user and stakeholder requirements for sustainable and durable food databank systems
- Disseminate and exploit new scientific and technological knowledge in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the European food industry, including SMEs, aiming to help the European food and nutrition industry to grow into knowledge-based industry, targeted at evidence based healthier food production



Results

- Food Composition Databases including:-
 - 51000 foods described
 - 33000 generic products
 - 14000 recipes
 - 4000 branded products
- Standardised vocabulary
- XML format data exchange
- Quality management system
- Database for composition and biological activity of plant bioactive compounds

Impacts

- Distributed network of 26 authoritative EU food composition databases
- Draft EU standard food data CEN/ TC387
- Harmonised global vocabulary, data management, food description
- Training at all levels of expertise, food compilers and students
- Sustainable legal entity EuroFIR AISBL

For more information, please visit the website: www.eurofir.org

Or contact the project coordinator:

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EC contribution: 12 million €

Duration: 66 months

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Partners:

Institute of Food Research (UK), Graz University of Technology (Austria), Ghent University (Belgium), Nutrienten België (Belgium), Institute of Reference Materials and Measurements (Belgium), National Center of Public Health Protection (Bulgaria), National Food Institute, Technical University of Denmark (Denmark), National Institute for Health and Welfare (Finland), University of Helsinki (Finland), Agence Française de Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments (France), Matis Food Research Innovation and Safety (Iceland), Max Rubner Institut (Germany), International Life Sciences Institute, European Branch (Belgium), Verein zur Förderung Technologietransfers an der Hochschule Bremerhaven e.V (Germany), National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece), Agricultural University of Athens (Greece), Wageningen University (The Netherlands), University of Oslo (Norway), National Food and Nutrition Institute (Poland), National Institute of Health (Portugal), University of Vienna (Austria), Centre for Superior Studies on Nutrition and Dietetics (Spain), Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology, University of Granada (Spain), Food Research Institute (Slovenia), Swedish National Food Administration (Sweden), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sweden), Tübitak Marmara Research Centre (Turkey), British Nutrition Foundation (UK), European Molecular Biology Laboratory European Bioinformatics Institute (UK), The Food and Environment Research Agency (UK), University of Leeds (UK), University of Surrey (UK), University College Cork (Ireland), Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (Israel), National Institute for Food and Nutrition Research (Italy), Istituto per lo Studio e la Prevenzione Oncologia (Italy), Baigent (UK), RIKILT - Institute of Food Safety (The Netherlands), Polytec (Denmark), Food Information Consultancy (UK), State Environmental Health Centre (Lithuania), ETH Zurich (Switzerland), Institute for Medical Research, University of Belgrade (Serbia), Food Centre of Food and Veterinary Service (Latvia), Danish Food Information (Denmark), Foodcon (Belgium), Institute of Public Health and the Environment (The Netherlands), EuroFIR AISBL (Belgium).