

ILMERAC

International Liaison Group on
Methods for Risk Assessment
of Chemicals in Food and Feed

INTERNATIONAL FOOD RISK ASSESSMENT NETWORKS SERVING AFRICA'S CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT: THE ILMERAC EXAMPLE

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in Food and Feed (ILMERAC)

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Why international networks matter for Africa's risk assessment capacity?
- Africa's risk assessment landscape: from training to capacity
- Connecting African expertise to global risk-assessment communities
- International Liaison Group on Methods for Risk Assessment of Chemicals in Food and Feed (ILMERAC)
- A Network-of-Networks approach for Africa
- From knowledge exchange to joint scientific work
- A possible ILMERAC-Africa cooperation pathway

WHY INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS MATTER FOR AFRICA'S RISK ASSESSMENT CAPACITY?

Connecting African regulatory priorities with global scientific expertise

1. Expertise already exists, but is dispersed
2. Risk assessment is becoming increasingly specialised
3. Scientific methods evolve rapidly
4. Data and evidence need collaboration
5. Capacity is built through doing, not only training
6. Africa should be a contributor, not only a recipient

AFRICA'S RISK ASSESSMENT LANDSCAPE

Capacity exists, but connectivity is the biggest challenge

1. The real issue is the 'fragmentation'
 - Expertise is distributed at very different levels
 - Data and scientific capacity are uneven
 - Cooperation mechanisms already exist, but are not yet fully connected
2. Africa does not start from zero. The opportunity exists to
 - connect existing expertise, data and institutions, and
 - mobilise for shared risk-assessment priorities.

Move from a distributed, diverse and unevenly connected landscape to a connected risk-assessment ecosystem

FROM TRAINING TO CAPACITY AND CAPABILITIES: WHAT MAKES NETWORKS EFFECTIVE?

1. Training ≠ Capacity ≠ Capability

- Training: *Can the individual understand/apply the knowledge?*
- Capacity: *Does the organisation have the people, processes, resources and networks to perform the function?*
- Capability: *Can the system independently perform, adapt, improve and sustain the function over time?*

2. **Ultimate objective:** Build African institutions that participate as equal partners in the global scientific community of risk assessment

CONNECTING AFRICAN REGULATORY PRIORITIES WITH GLOBAL SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE

1. The objective is to connect African scientific and regulatory needs with the global risk-assessment community.

- Who identifies the need?
- Who provides/holds the expertise?
- How does the connection create lasting capacity?

2. Move from capacity transfer to capacity connection and joint work

JOINT SCIENTIFIC WORK

THE TRANSITION FROM A VISION INTO A REALITY

Capacity is strongest when African and international experts will work together on real scientific questions

CONNECT

Bring African experts into existing scientific networks

LEARN TOGETHER

Build capability around emerging methods

CO-DEVELOP

Move from training to a shared scientific product

MULTIPLY

Turn individual participation into institutional capacity

***Lasting capacity:** people, knowledge, tools, networks, multipliers, participation and sustained engagement in global scientific communities*

A NETWORK-OF-NETWORKS APPROACH FOR AFRICA

Africa → Global community

- African regulatory priorities
- African data
- African expertise
- African scientific questions
- African experience



Global community → Africa

- methodologies
- expertise
- scientific networks
- experience
- emerging approaches

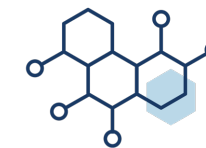
ILMERAC – A CONCRETE EXAMPLE



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TIMELINE OF EVENTS



ILMERAC
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2018

ILMERAC was founded
under auspices of EFSA.

2021

1st ILMERAC Working
Group established:
WG NAMs

2024

BfR took over ILMERAC
Chairmanship & seat of
Scientific Secretariat.

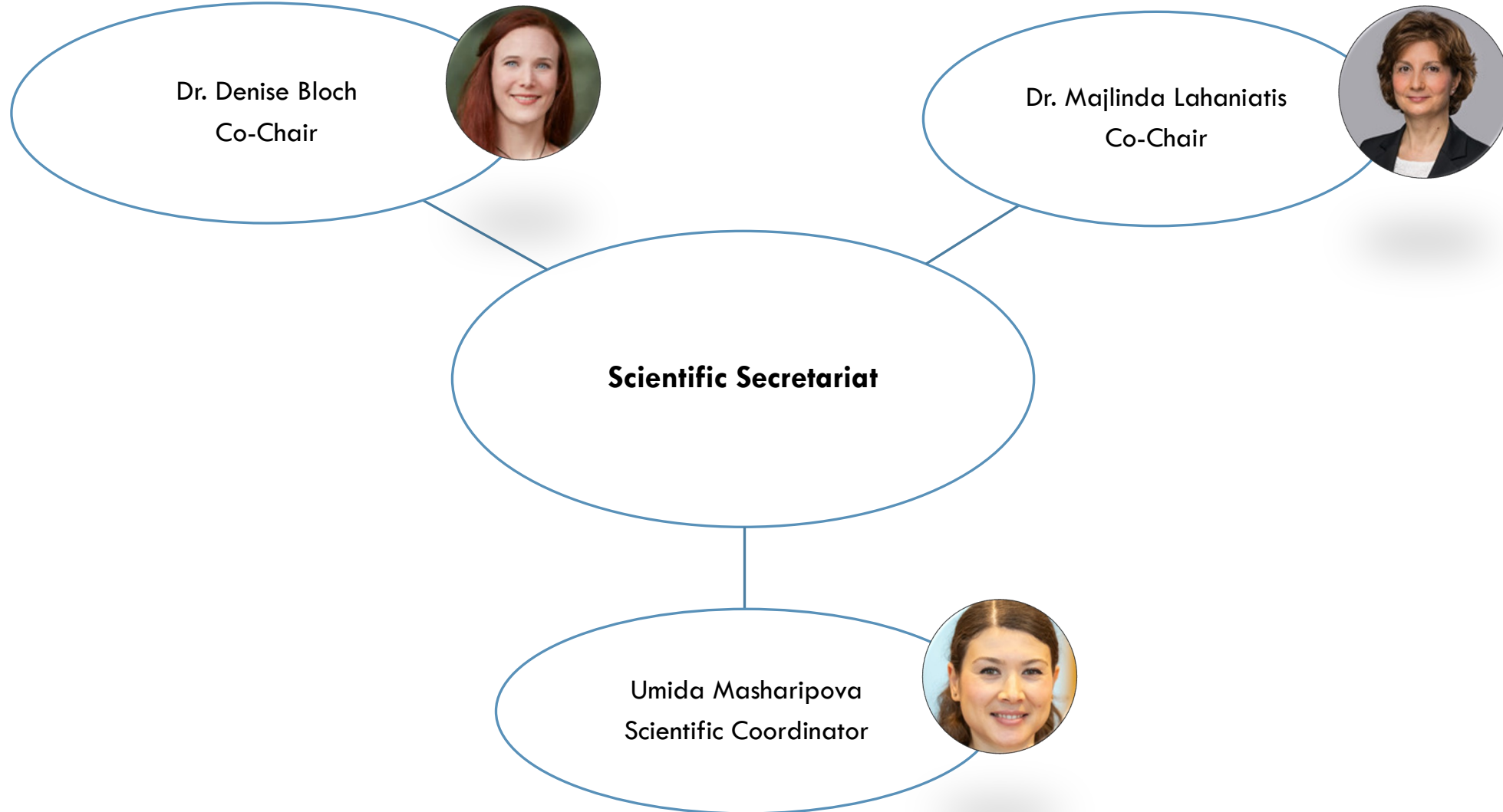
2025

WG Evidence
Integration & WG
Mixtures added to
scientific portfolio.

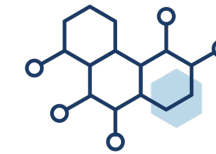
ILMERAC TEAM AT BFR



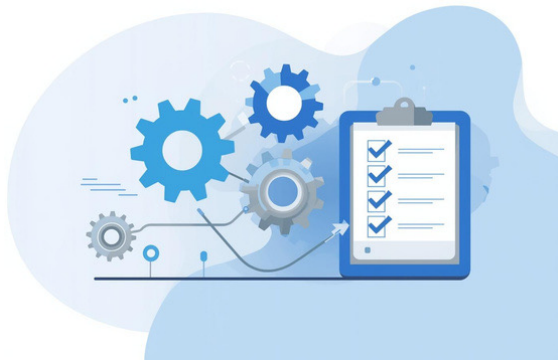
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OUR MISSION AND VALUES



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Harmonisation

Support of harmonisation of risk assessment methods to ensure **global consistency**.



Global Collaboration

Fostering **partnerships** to strengthen chemical safety in food and feed.



Trusted environment

Commitment to **open and constructive exchange** beyond political restrictions.



Innovation

Promotion of application of **new science** in risk assessment practice.



Community Engagement

Creation of **synergies** between participating institutions and scientists.



Knowledge Hub

Exchange of **best practices** and new developments in chemical risk assessment.



Terms of Reference

Framework

ToR outlines overall framework, modus operandi, mission and objectives, strategic foresight, among others.

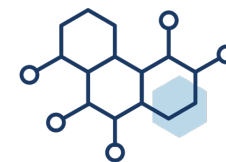
Term

Each term is accompanied by a newly adopted ToR.

Current period

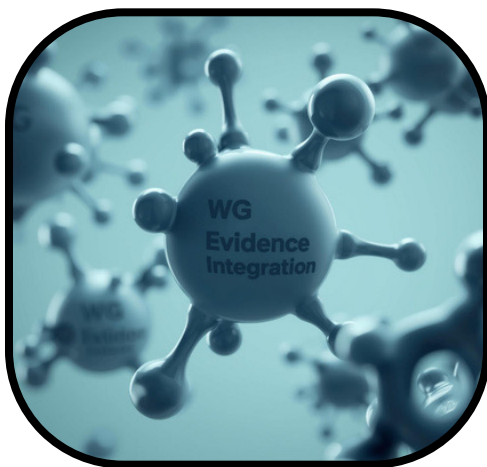
Currently acting on ToR 2024-2026.

ILMERAC WORKING GROUPS



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Following a bottom-up horizon-scanning process & subsequent voting procedure by member organisations.



WG Evidence Integration

Co-chaired by RIVM and
BfR



WG NAMs

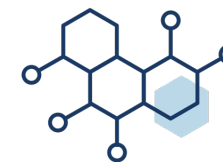
Co-chaired by US FDA
and CNSA



WG Mixtures

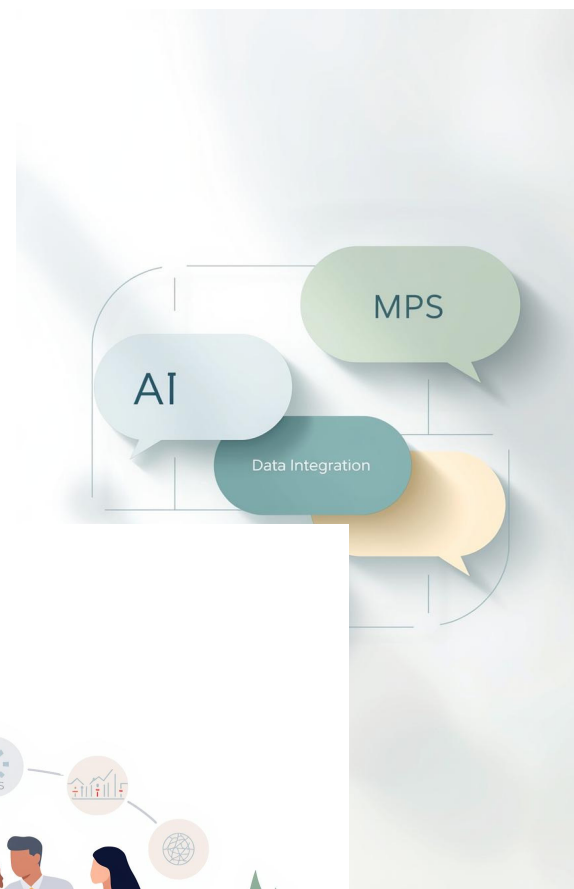
Co-chaired by BfR and
CFSA

Expert Dialogues Event Series

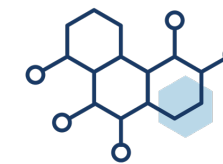


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- ✓ Launched early 2025
- ✓ 6 Expert Dialogues took place to date, e.g. *AI*, *Microphysiological Systems*, *Data Integration*, *Computational Toxicology*, *EC Roadmap towards phasing out animal testing*, *Genotoxicity*. More coming soon
- ✓ **Events open to expert public beyond ILMERAC community**



COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT



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WELCOME TO ILMERAC EXPERT DIALOGUE: USE OF AI IN RISK ASSESSMENT



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Thomas Hartung,
John Hopkins University



Didier Verloo,
European Food Safety Authority

25 February 2025, 12 – 2 pm CET



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ILMERAC Expert Dialogue on Computational Toxicology

Online



23 February 2026



11-13 CET



Anastasia Weyrich
BASF



Jinhee Choi
University of Seoul

Sign up via ILMERAC@bfr.bund.de until 19 February!



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USE OF MPS IN CHEMICAL RISK ASSESSMENT

ILMERAC EXPERT DIALOGUE

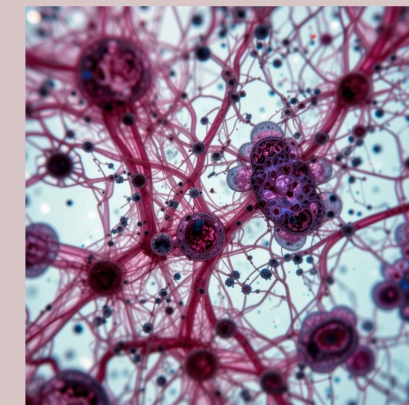
WITH EXPERT INSIGHTS FROM

STEPHEN FERGUSON, US NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES

IVAN RUSYN, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

19 MAY 2025, 11-13 CEST
ONLINE VIA ZOOM

SIGN UP WITH ILMERAC@BFR.BUND.DE



ILMERAC Expert Dialogue on Genotoxicity

Online



22 Sept 2026



13-15 CEST



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Tewes Tralau
German Federal Institute for
Risk Assessment



Aswin Mangerich
University of Potsdam



Sign up via ILMERAC@bfr.bund.de until 11 Sept!

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International Liaison Group on Methods for Risk Assessment of Chemicals in Food (ILMERAC)

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Concept Note: ILMERAC Communication and Engagement Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Since the handover of the Scientific Secretariat from EFSA to BfR in December 2023, resources and efforts have largely been focused around seeking consensus with respect to governance aspects as well as developing a scientific agenda of ILMERAC. To this end, member and observer organisations¹ have been consulted to propose topics they deem of strategic and regulatory relevance to be potentially taken up within dedicated working groups (WGs). This bottom-up horizon-scanning process has yielded the installment of 3 new WGs² (WG Evidence Integration, WG Mixtures, WG PFAS), in addition to the already existing WG NAMs.

In the upcoming months, the WGs will have concurred on their priorities as well as modus operandi. Another factor that should receive attention will be the outputs and how the WGs plan to engage in the global dialogue in the thematic areas they cover.

Given this backdrop, ILMERAC should now gain the momentum and start addressing its communication and engagement strategy. As more meetings and events are being envisaged in the upcoming period, such as WG meetings and ILMERAC Expert Dialogues³, there will be ample opportunities to report about and thereby promote ILMERAC.

About us

The International Liaison Group on Methods for Risk Assessment of Chemicals in Food (ILMERAC) is a network of more than 25 governmental and intergovernmental organisations, which are active in the field of food and feed safety at the global level. ILMERAC was founded in 2018 under the auspices of the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA). EFSA hosted the Scientific Secretariat of ILMERAC for two consecutive terms, from 2018 through 2023.



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ILMERAC

Connecting global expertise
to safeguard human health

More than 25 governmental and
intergovernmental organisations **pioneering
innovation in food and feed safety.**

We **support the development** of new risk
assessment methodologies and **advocate
for a harmonised approach** in chemical
risk assessment around the world.

COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

ILMERAC is **invited to contribute** at international meetings and conferences

- ✓ 3d AFRAF Meeting, Spetember 2026
- ✓ 62nd EFSA Focal Point Meeting, September 2026
- ✓ UNIDO National Food Safety Governance Workshop Syria, July 2026
- ✓ 3rd Latin American Risk Assessment Symposium, June-July 2026
- ✓ Vietnam Food Safety Risk Assessment Conference, December 2025
- ✓ 98th EFSA Advisory Forum Meeting, December 2025
- ✓ 19th Dubai International Food Safety Conference, November 2025
- ✓ China International Food Safety & Quality Conference, November 2025
- ✓ German Interagency Working Group Advanced Materials, September 2025
- ✓ US FDA Workshop on NAMs, July 2025



FIRST CAPACITY-BUILDING TRAINING



ILMERAC

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New topic-driven endeavor under the current ToR. Objective: sharing novel science with Global South by allowing them to witness discussions within ILMERAC.

Held in **November 2025**, at the fringes of 19th Dubai International Food Safety Conference.

Focused on **Probabilistic Risk Assessment**, including high-level presentations and practical application.

Over **50 risk assessors and risk managers** participated from the MENA region.

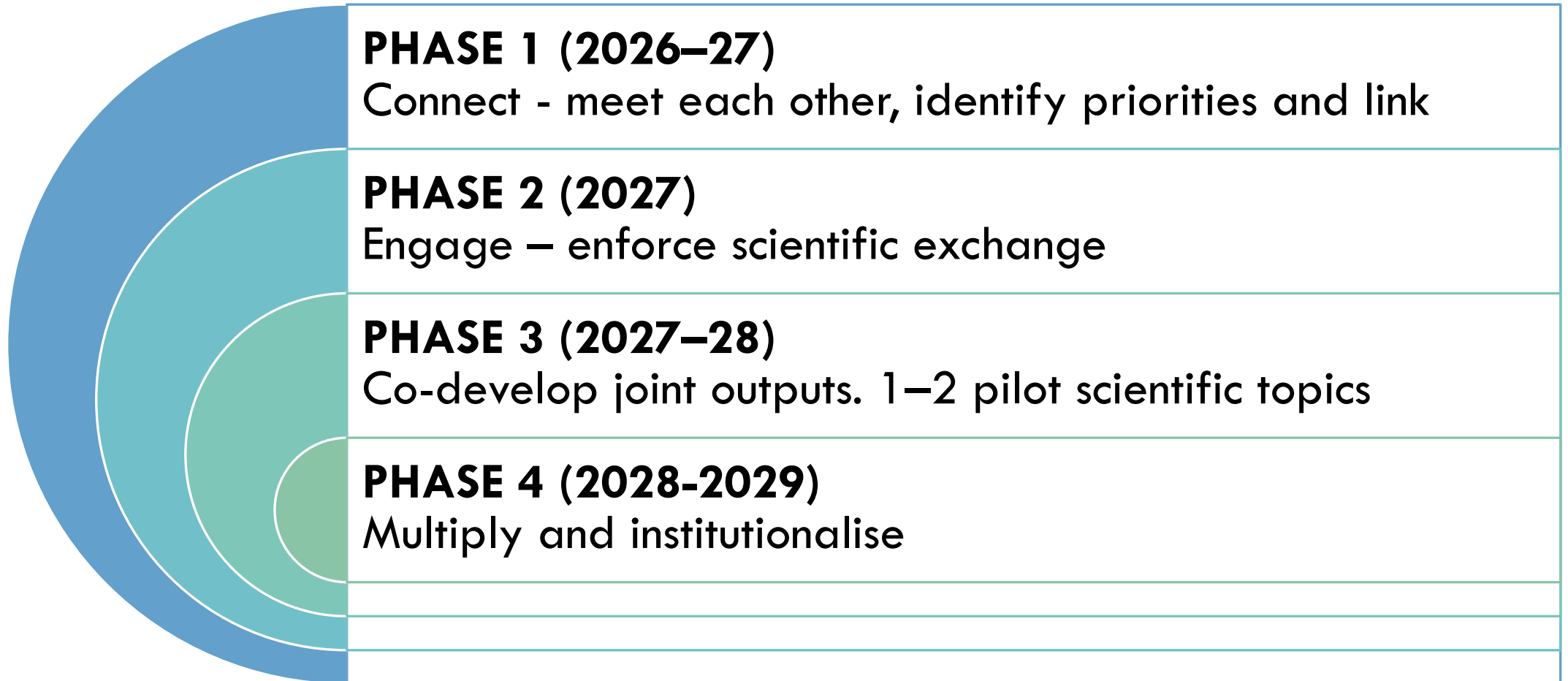
Partnered successfully with **Global Food Regulatory Science Society**.

ILMERAC AS A GLOBAL SCIENTIFIC NETWORK: WHAT CAN IT OFFER AFRICA?

- Access to global scientific expertise that may not be available within one institution or country
- Access to methodologies, exchange of methods and experience
- Exposure to emerging science
- Participation in international scientific working groups
- Peer learning and mentoring
- Joint scientific work
- A channel into the wider international ecosystem

Connect, enable and co-develop

ILMERAC - AFRICA COOPERATION PATHWAY



UPCOMING MEETINGS



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- Feb 2026: Expert Dialogue Computational Toxicology, online
- May 2026: Expert Dialogue EC Roadmap towards phasing out animal testing, online
- June 2026: Internal plenary meeting, online
- 22 Sept 2026: Expert Dialogue on Genotoxicity, online
- 28 Oct 2026: Annual Meeting on Rethinking risk assessment: NGRA as a global initiative to drive animal-free approaches in chemical safety assessment, Paris/online
- Q1 /2027: Expert Dialogue (topic tba), online

FACES BEHIND ILMERAC



Annual Meeting, 2 December 2024, Berlin



Annual Meeting, 1-2 October 2025, Geneva

At kind invitation of WHO
INTERNATIONAL FOOD RISK ASSESSMENT NETWORKS SERVING AFRICA'S CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT: THE ILMERAC EXAMPLE |

Any Questions? Let's connect!



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