

**Call:** HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01**Topic:** HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01-12**Type of action:** HORIZON Coordination and Support Actions

Deliverable Name: Model of Chapter on Dairy & Artisanal Traditional Cheese

Lead beneficiary: Agroscope

Type: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype

Deliverable Related number: D4.1

Deliverable number: D8

Level of dissemination of the deliverable: Public

WP	4
Authors (partner)	Agroscope & UCP
Version	1.0
Due date	31.05.2025
Delivery date	20.05.2025
Revised by	UCP, UCSC

Abstract	2
Introduction	3
1. Collect: Gathering Knowledge from tradition for the future.....	3
2. Translate: Bridging Science and Practical Application	4
4. Educate: Building Capacity and Ensuring Sustainability.....	5
5. From National Excellence to European Engagement.....	6
5.1 Sharing Practical Resources.....	6
5.2 Listening to Stakeholders and engaging their idea for CoP.....	7
5.3 The CoP Platform: A Shared Space for Continuous Interaction	10
5.4 Major Events Supporting CoP Visibility and Expansion.....	10
Conclusion	12

Abstract

This document explores Agroscope’s integrated model for advancing food safety, highlighting its alignment with the European Catalyse project. As a Swiss center of excellence in agricultural research, Agroscope offers a well-established framework that closely mirrors the core structure of the Catalyse model, which is built around four main pillars: Collect, Translate, Facilitate, and Educate. Through systematic knowledge gathering, including its unique collection of microbial strains and data from artisanal cheese production, Agroscope supports food safety, innovation and sustainability in the dairy sector. Its collaborative approach bridges scientific research and real-world application, ensuring that innovations are both scientifically robust and practically relevant. Agroscope’s role as a facilitator promotes strong stakeholder networks and co-creation, while its emphasis on education builds long-term capacity across the food system.

Although implemented locally in Switzerland for many years, Agroscope’s model shares key features with the Catalyse framework. For this reason, it was selected as a pilot example within the project. Catalyse builds upon and expands this approach, creating a broader and more agile model that applies across the EU. It demonstrates and scales the structure—now extended to all areas of food safety, and innovation—aiming to improve food systems by connecting research with SME and industry needs and fostering sustainable, stakeholder-driven solutions.

Introduction

The CATALYSE project is a European initiative involving 17 partners from various regions in Europe, all of whom represent different sectors within the food sector. Together, we are establishing a network of food safety stakeholders aimed at promoting the adoption of knowledge and innovative solutions from farm to fork. This dynamic network will act as a hub for collaboration and knowledge sharing, bridging the gaps among various actors in the food sector. By fostering open communication among these groups, the project matches real-world challenges with cutting-edge solutions tailored to practical needs. CATALYSE will develop an active community of practice, connecting stakeholders across the entire food value chain.

Agroscope, as a center of excellency for agricultural research in Switzerland, provides a proven model that aligns seamlessly with the objectives of the European Catalyse project. The dissemination model, driven by Agroscope's emphasis on scientific research, community-building, education, and collaborative innovation, perfectly aligns with the Catalyse project's aim, offering valuable insights and practical approaches in advancing food safety across Europe.

1. Collect: Gathering Knowledge from tradition for the future

Agroscope's extensive research on Swiss cheese production, food safety, and agricultural innovation plays a key role in gathering data for Swiss cheesemakers and promoting artisanal production. The organization's broad knowledge base, developed over decades through partnerships, research programs, and its integral role in the Swiss dairy industry, provides a strong pilot foundation for the Catalyse model.

Agroscope's collection is not limited to knowledge; through consultancy and training programs, the organization identifies artisanal and industry challenges and monitors sector needs, demonstrating the importance of co-creation for practical innovation. This ongoing process helps track and address challenges across the Swiss dairy sector.

By systematically compiling both historical and current data, Agroscope exemplifies how the dissemination of knowledge can continuously improve food safety across Switzerland. Agroscope's close collaboration with farmers, artisanal cheesemakers, industry partners, cheesemaking associations and researchers ensures that the collected data is relevant, practical, and impactful, providing valuable insights for the industry.

The Catalyse project follows a comprehensive approach as well as the model used by Agroscope, focusing on bridging the gap between scientific research and real-world applications. By identifying current food safety challenges, Catalyse aims to connect and disseminate innovative solutions that can be implemented across the EU. Its model emphasizes co-creation, involving scientists, artisanal and industry partners, authorities, and end-users in the development and testing of solutions. This collaborative framework ensures that the project's innovations are not only scientifically based but also practically relevant. Through its partnerships and systematic data collection, Catalyse will play a key role in connecting food safety innovations, contributing to broader European and global advancements in food safety while fostering sustainable, industry-wide improvements.

2. Translate: Bridging Science and Practical Application

Translating scientific research into practical solutions is a key mission of Agroscope and a central focus of the Catalyse model. Agroscope plays a vital role in transforming scientific discoveries into real-world improvements in food safety and artisanal cheese production. The work of developing targeted microbial cultures and optimizing dairy production processes demonstrates how research can directly support industry needs.

A strong network of experts, farmers, producers, and partners enables Agroscope to effectively transfer knowledge into practice. Each year, Agroscope offers consultations and training sessions to share the latest scientific findings and methods with cheesemakers. Four specialized scientific collaborators support regional advisors and quality managers within cheese associations, ensuring consistent technical support (Figure 1). This ongoing exchange helps producers integrate scientific advancements into their daily routines.

Agroscope also facilitates direct communication between researchers and end-users. Approximately 75% of Swiss cheese dairies use Agroscope’s microbial cultures, reflecting how scientific expertise is widely applied throughout the dairy sector.

Agroscope and cheesemakers work together to develop simple but effective innovations that improve cheese quality and support sustainability. In the same way, the Catalyse project aims to bridge the gap between scientists and end-users, making sure that new food safety solutions are practical, relevant, and used in real production environments across Europe.

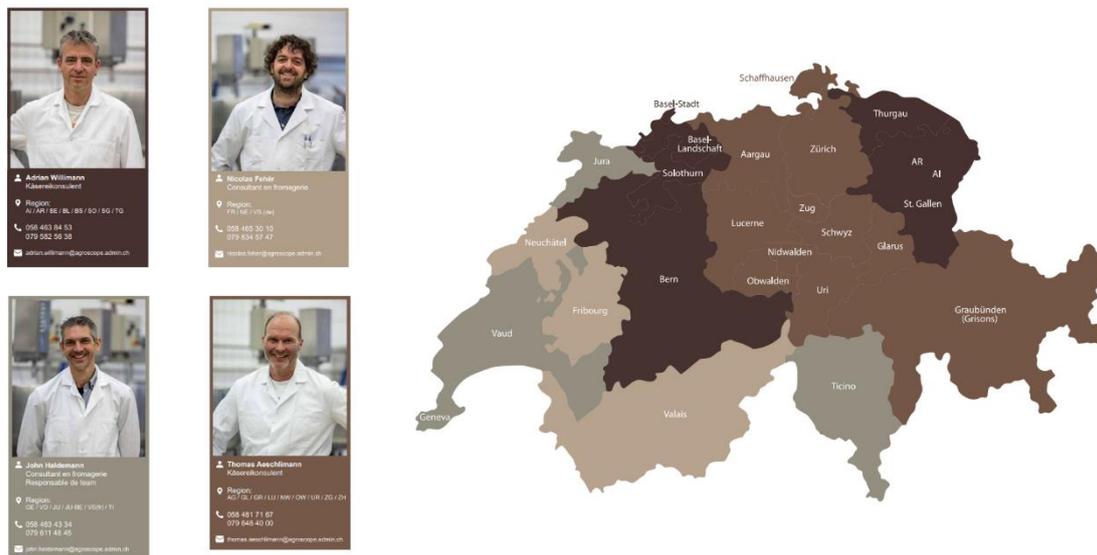


Figure 1: the Agroscope consultant team operating across various regions of Switzerland.

3. Facilitate: Connecting Stakeholders and Enabling Innovation

Agroscope plays a key role as a facilitator, showing how collaboration drives food safety innovation. Its approach relies on a strong network between researchers, farmers, producers, advisors, policymakers, and food safety authorities. This network supports the

exchange of knowledge, aligns practices with regulations, and ensures that scientific results are applied in real-world production settings.

A central part of this collaboration is Agroscope’s Community of Practice (CoP) (Figure 2), a platform for stakeholders to share ideas and develop joint solutions. Each year, Agroscope connects food sector specialists through presentations, workshops, and courses on topics like dairy science, cheese production, and food safety.

Agroscope also contributes to food safety as a National Reference Laboratory (NRL), organizing regular exchange meetings with advisory groups and national artisanal cheese associations. The Catalyse project can build on this model by establishing CoP networks across Europe. By connecting stakeholders, promoting knowledge exchange, and encouraging co-creation, Catalyse can ensure that food safety innovations are widely shared and adopted.



Figure 2: Agroscope stakeholder map for the Community of Practice, highlighting connections between researchers, artisanal cheesemakers, industry partners, and food safety authorities.

4. Educate: Building Capacity and Ensuring Sustainability

Agroscope emphasizes education through consultations, training sessions, and academic collaborations. Every year, it delivers over 600 consultations and around 50 training courses. These activities ensure that industry professionals stay updated with the latest scientific knowledge and practical solutions. This is closely aligned with the Catalyse model, which recognizes education and training as essential pillars for driving change across the food system. Agroscope’s educational work is part of a broader Swiss system that connects education, research, industry, and public authorities. A strong example of this is Switzerland’s vocational education and training (VET) system, where about two-thirds of students at the age of 16 choose a vocational path. Students split their time between hands-on work in agricultural settings and theoretical training, ensuring they

develop both practical skills and scientific understanding. Catalyse could acquire this educational model to foster food safety culture also with the young public engaging them towards a specialization in the food sector and in correct food safety practices.

Through its "Educate" pillar, Catalyse will create training programs, develop educational materials based on real industry needs, and ensure that all actors—from farm to fork—have access to the latest scientific knowledge and tools. The goal is not only to raise awareness but to build capacity, so that innovations in food safety can be understood, adopted, and sustained across the entire food chain. Education supports sustainable innovation by building trust and competence among all stakeholders. Catalyse incorporates similar educational goals, ensuring that food safety knowledge is accessible and applicable throughout the food chain.

5. From National Excellence to European Engagement

Since January 2024, Agroscope has been working as part of the Catalyse project to connect its Swiss experience in food safety with a broader European network. What was started as a national effort focused on the dairy sector is now part of a larger goal: to bring useful knowledge and tools into the Catalyse CoP. This deliverable explains how Agroscope is collaborating by sharing local know-how, engaging stakeholders, and helping to shape a Europe-wide learning platform.

5.1 Sharing Practical Resources

The Catalyse CoP gives Agroscope the chance for sharing food safety knowledge in the dairy sector with a European audience. Over the past year, Agroscope has started linking its national work to the CoP, contributing to a common network for food safety and innovation. To support the CoP, Agroscope selected and adapted 70 practical documents. These include:

- Agroscope Transfer – applied briefs for practitioners on best practices and food safety issues;
- Agroscope Magazine – thematic issues translating current research into practical decision-making tools;
- Agroscope Science – peer-reviewed technical syntheses.

These documents were simplified, tagged, and prepared for a wider use in the Catalyse platform, making Swiss knowledge available to the whole CoP.

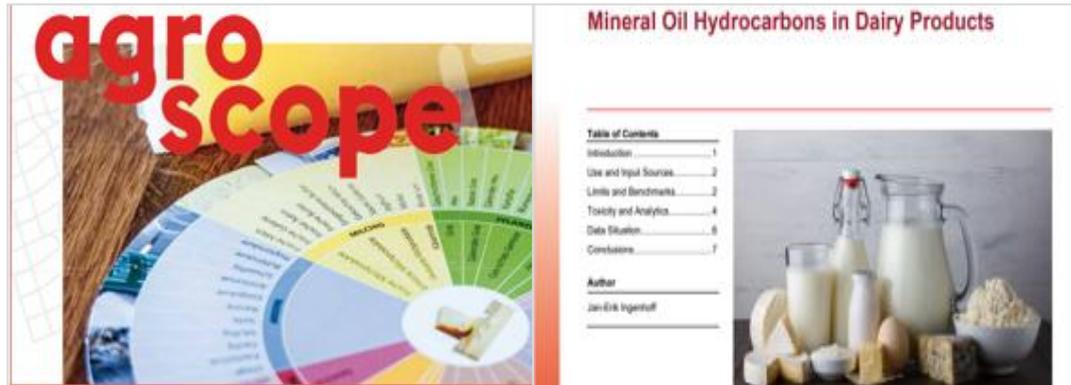


Figure 3: Agroscope document and data will be presented in chapter of Cheese, Dairy and alternatives.

5.2 Listening to Stakeholders and engaging their idea for CoP

In 2024, Agroscope organized a series of strategic dissemination events to both raise awareness of the Catalyse project and identify stakeholder needs as part as WP2 goals and for future CoP development. These events served a dual purpose: they supported national knowledge exchange and acted as activation points for integrating Agroscope's stakeholders into the Catalyse platform.

Three major stakeholder meetings were held:

- The Annual Exchange with Cheese Associations (Appenzeller and Tilsiter regions);
- The Agroscope Industry Engagement Day.
- The Consultant & Association Annual Symposium.



Figure 4: Engaging Industry Partners in the Catalyse Project and CoP Platform.

Each event included a dedicated session on “The Catalyse Project: Community of Practice and Methodology,” where participants were introduced to the CoP concept, shown how to engage with it, and invited to become early members. In addition, we collected feedback on:

- What innovations would they like to see in the food safety domain;
- What services do they expect when participating in a CoP-like experience exchange;
- What thematic areas do they consider most relevant for shared learning.

The resulting feedback (Figure 4) identified the following key priorities:

- High interest in on-site detection methods, rapid testing, and AI-supported solutions.
- Clear demand for practical outputs such as risk assessment information, and standardization tools.
- Specific needs for exchange on raw milk cheese safety, *Listeria* control, PFAS contaminants, and regulatory interpretation.

Welche Innovationen (z.B. Methoden, Verfahren, Materialien, Technologien etc.) wünschen Sie sich im Bereich Lebensmittelsicherheit?

14 responses



Figure 5: stakeholder Input on Expectations and Priorities for the Community of Practice (CoP).

This input is being used to:

- Inform the selection of documents and tools Agroscope contributes to the CoP;
- Guide the design of upcoming webinars and CoP content formats;
- Support UCP and the WP4 team in building user-centered CoP features aligned with real needs.

Through this participatory process, Agroscope ensures the use of practice-based needs of advisors, producers, SMEs, and national authorities. It transforms stakeholder voices into actionable focus areas for both Swiss and European collaboration within Catalyse.

5.3 The CoP Platform: A Shared Space for Continuous Interaction

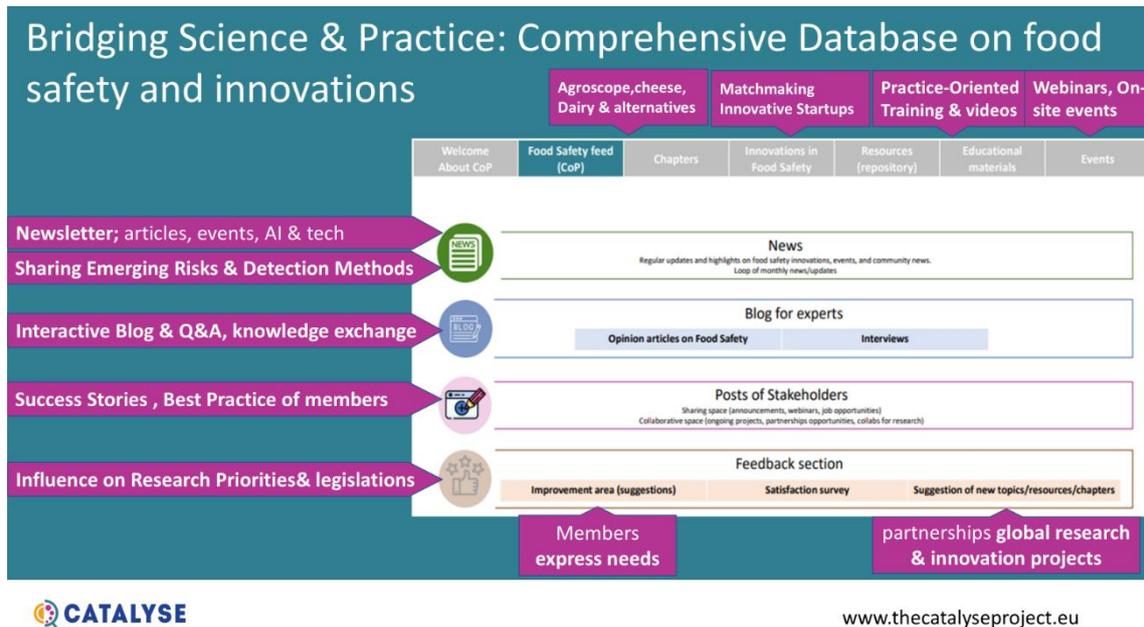


Figure 6: The CoP online platform will offer access to diverse information and enable mutual interaction among stakeholders.

To make this knowledge exchange sustainable and accessible, all interactions and resources are now channeled through the online Community of Practice (CoP) platform, developed in WP4. While Agroscope’s Swiss model was originally grounded in face-to-face interaction, it now serves as a living inspiration for this virtual platform—demonstrating how trusted, practice-based exchange can be scaled across Europe.

Building on the core values of participation, co-creation, and practical relevance, Catalyse is shaping a digital space where experts, advisors, SMEs, and food safety authorities can continuously exchange ideas, express needs, and develop solutions together.

The platform acts as a living repository, hosting curated resources, enabling matchmaking between stakeholders and innovators, and offering access to training materials, success stories, and real-time dialogue. It ensures that inputs from events, consultations, and working documents are not siloed but integrated into a dynamic, user-driven system.

In this way, the CoP becomes more than a project deliverable. It represents a growing, European-wide infrastructure for collaboration, designed to respond to the diverse and evolving challenges across the entire food system—not just in dairy, but in all areas of food, including food safety innovation.

5.4 Major Events Supporting CoP Visibility and Expansion

To further strengthen its contribution to the Catalyse CoP, Agroscope has strategically aligned its upcoming dissemination efforts with three major international and national events taking place between late 2025 and 2026. These initiatives not only amplify the

project's visibility but also support the CoP's expansion into new audiences, sectors, and thematic areas.

1. World Cheese Awards (Bern, 13–15 November 2025)
Agroscope will participate in the first-ever Swiss edition of the World Cheese Awards, will support Switzerland Cheese Marketing team. This event hosts over 5,000 cheeses from 50+ countries; the event will serve as a global platform for engaging cheese producers and experts.

- The Catalyse CoP will be part of the official program, in the event's main sensory hall.
- Part of the on-site program will be hosted at Agroscope, introducing cheese experts to the Catalyse CoP, showcasing our labs, microbial research, and food safety protocols.

2. Event on Alternative Proteins with Swiss Food Research (Zurich, November 2025)
Agroscope will co-organize a session on "Food Safety & Proteins4Future" with Swiss Food Research, focusing on SMEs, start-ups, and innovation stakeholders.

- The event will introduce Catalyse and the CoP as a tool for cross-sector collaboration, especially around food safety innovative solutions.
- It will also help connect food-tech innovators with existing safety networks, contributing new actors to the Catalyse CoP.

3. Inauguration of the BSL3 Pilot Plant (October 2026) (Figure 7)
To close its three-year Catalyse contribution, Agroscope will host a scientific biosafety event linked to the launch of its new BSL3 pilot infrastructure.

- Visitors will explore Agroscope's BSL3 laboratory and pilot plant for high-risk microbial research;
- A scientific symposium on biosafety and microbial containment is planned in collaboration with the Swiss Biosafety Network (SBNET);
- The event will illustrate infrastructure readiness for future food safety challenges and applied biosafety training.

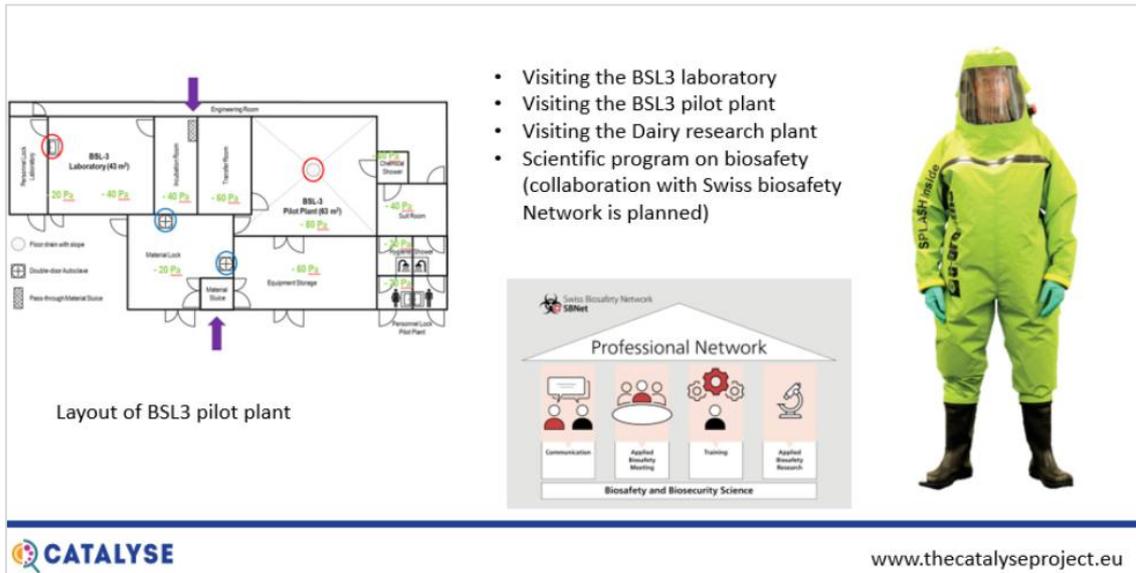


Figure 7. Model of the BSL3 Pilot Plant which will be inaugurate in October 2026.

Together, these events form a coherent strategy to:

- Broaden stakeholder engagement from traditional dairy to alternative proteins, start-ups, and biosafety experts;
- Embed the Catalyse CoP into key knowledge ecosystems in Switzerland and across Europe.

Additionally, to build strong connections among Europe’s diverse food safety infrastructures, Agroscope in collaboration with other partners of the project (Nofima) will focus especially on biosafety pilot plants (WP8 – Task 8.4). Together, and during the project, we are mapping the available European infrastructures and creating a list that identifies facilities for validating processes, developing new products, tracing contamination sources, etc. This list will be comprehensive and accessible through the Catalyse CoP, making it accessible for researchers and practitioners to find and use the right infrastructure.

Conclusion

Finally, considering that Catalyse project pretends to create a network of food safety actors with the aim to facilitate the adoption of knowledge and innovative solutions along the food chain and bridge the gap between end users, innovators, practitioners, trainers, and regulators by facilitating communication among them, while matching practical needs with innovative solutions. Agroscope supports the project through its Cheese model focused on the Swiss cheese sector. By combining research, resources (educational materials and scientific publications), and participation in events, Agroscope is collaborating with one of the main goals of Catalyse: expanding food safety innovations across Europe and linking research with practical, collaborative solutions.