

# Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) for dietary assessment in epidemiological studies

Engeset D<sup>1</sup> and Boeing H<sup>2</sup> on behalf of the IDAMES project

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Community Medicine, University of Tromsø, Norway, <sup>2</sup>Department of Epidemiology, German Institute of Human Nutrition Potsdam-Rehbrücke, Germany

## Introduction

Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) are used to apply methods and procedures in a standardized way. They help researchers with less experience to conduct proper methods and procedures and serve also as reminders for the more experienced groups.

The uses of Standard Operational Procedures are widespread within clinical studies and laboratories. However, the use of SOPs is not yet common in large epidemiological studies. With the increasing number of multi-centre and multi-country studies, the development and use of SOPs for agreed dietary assessment procedures would be an advantage to ensure comparability of study data.

## Methods

Two preliminary SOPs were developed and tested in the IDAMES pilot study, one for each method that was used: a Food Propensity Questionnaire (FPQ) and three repeated telephone administered 24-hour dietary recalls (24-HDR). The SOP developed for the FPQ describes how to deal with the information material related to the study, and how to handle the preference for either web based or paper based questionnaire. The SOP for the 24-HDR gives guidelines regarding common procedures on how to contact the participants for an interview, and how to perform the interviews. The SOPs were tested in five different countries in the IDAMES pilot study: Spain, Italy, Estonia, Germany and Norway (figure 1).

### Acknowledgements

The study is supported by the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers, EU. WP6 partners: University of Tromsø, Norway (Lead partner); German Institute of Human Nutrition, Germany; Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale, France; Universitair Medisch Centrum Utrecht, The Netherlands; University of Cambridge, UK; Estonian Genome Project Foundation, Estonia; Istituto per lo studio e la Prevenzione Oncologica, Florence, Italy; National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, The Netherlands; Hellenic Health Foundation, Athens, Greece; Aalborg Hospital, Denmark; Karolinska Institutet, Sweden; Fundacion Vasca de Innovacion e Investigacion Sanitarias, San Sebastian, Spain)

## Objective

One of the objectives in the EU funded project IDAMES (Innovative Dietary Assessment Methods in Epidemiologic and Public Health Studies) was to generate SOPs for a dietary assessment methodology that allows quantitative and detailed characterisation of individuals regarding their dietary intake. The SOPs will be made available in a manner that allows other groups to use them in epidemiological and public health studies.

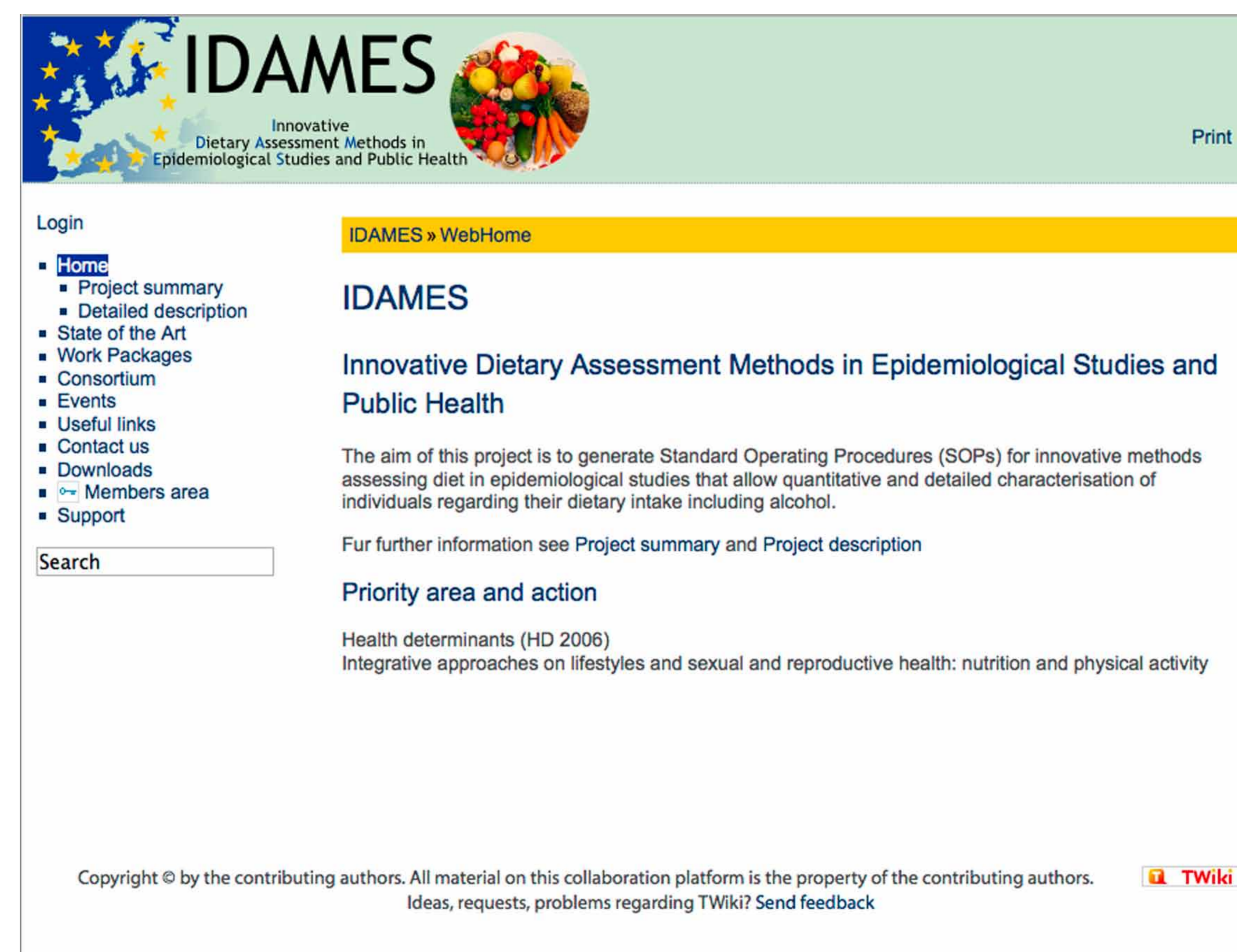


Figure 2: The IDAMES web site.

## Results

The preliminary SOPs were evaluated. No major problems occurred during the pilot study and there were no major deviation from the SOPs in any countries. Only minor revision was needed for the final SOPs. The IDAMES partners agreed upon the formulation of the final SOPs.

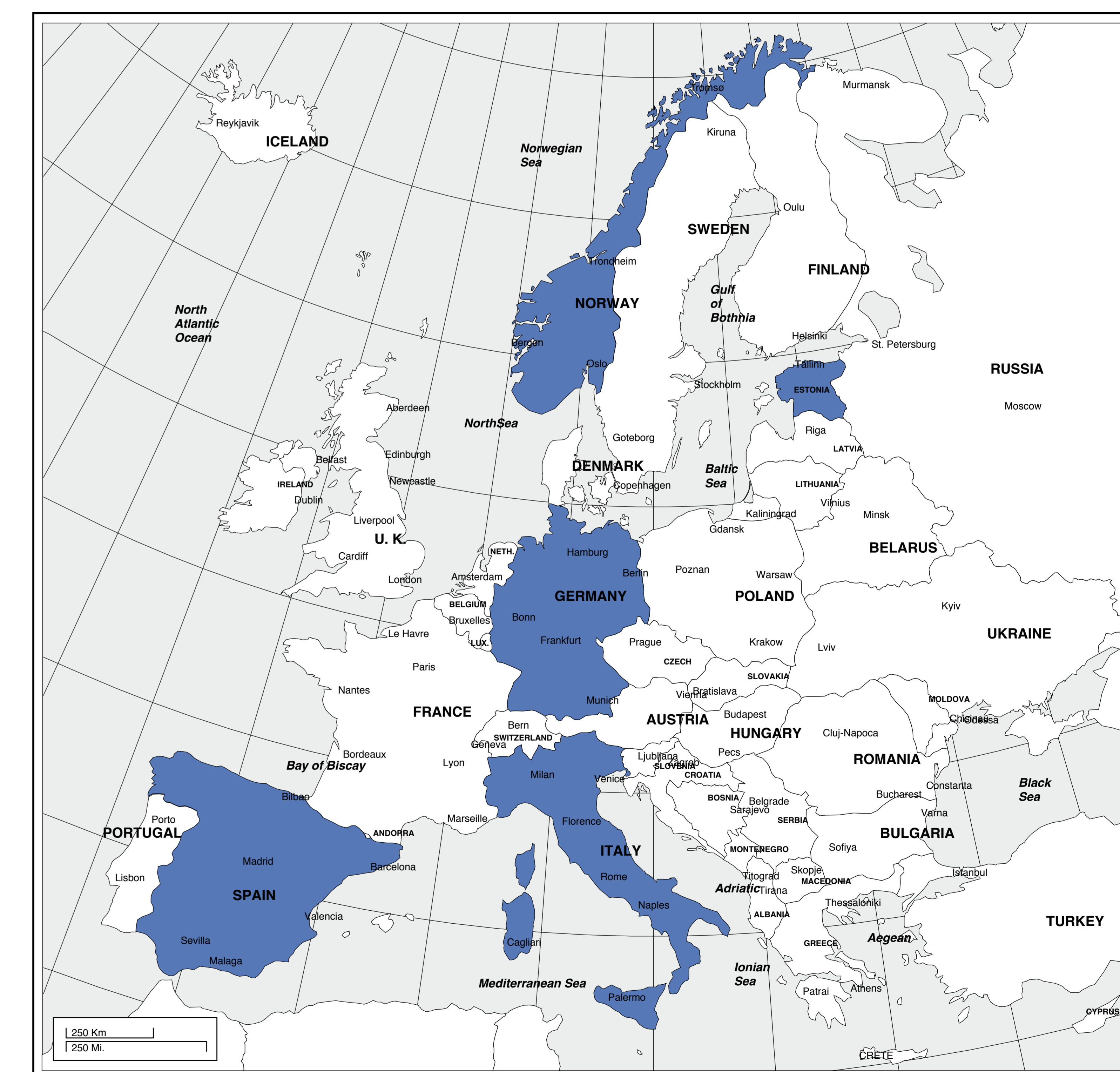


Figure 1: Map showing the countries that performed the pilot test of the SOPs

The final SOPs will be available at the IDAMES web site: <http://www.idames.eu/> (figure2).