

GUIDELINES FOR NETWORK PARTICIPANTS

Engagement and External Relations (ENREL) & Risk Assessment Logistics Units (RAL)

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ESTABLISHMENT OF EFSA'S EUROPEAN NETWORKS OF SCIENTIFIC ORGANISATIONS

[Regulation \(EC\) No. 178/2002](#) ('EFSA's Founding Regulation), as recently amended by [Regulation EU 2019/1381](#) on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain, provides the Authority with the competence of developing scientific cooperation through the coordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects and the exchange of expertise and best practices in the fields within the Authority's remit , in particular in Article 22(7) and Article 23(g) of EFSA's Founding Regulation. In order to achieve these scientific cooperation objectives stemming from EFSA's Founding Regulation, the [Management Board Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission](#) ('Networks Decision') sets out the basis for creating and managing European Networks of scientific organisations¹ that support EFSA and the Member States in carrying out their missions.

THE ROLE OF NETWORK PARTICIPANTS²

European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission are chaired by EFSA and supported by relevant EFSA Units. Their aim is to facilitate scientific cooperation in the fields of EFSA's mission by:

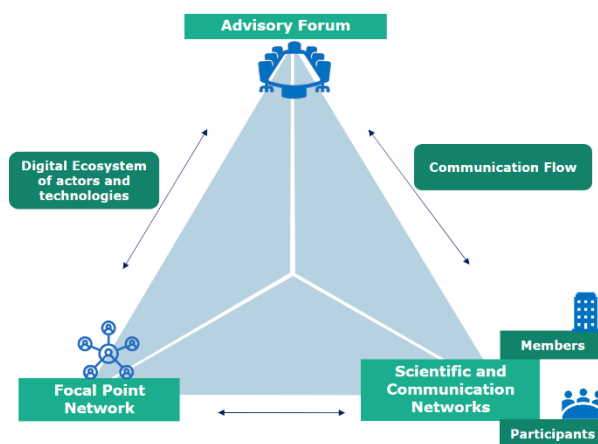
- Coordinating activities
- Exchanging information
- Developing and implementing joint projects
- Exchanging expertise and best practices

Member Organisations of the Networks are organisations in EU Member States with expertise in the fields covered by each of the EFSA Networks. They are designated by the Advisory Forum (AF) and play an important role in the provision of input and in the collection of feedback within the remit of each Network.

The Network Participants, appointed by the AF and affiliated to a Member Organisation, have the responsibility to present input while also keeping AF Members informed about the activities of their Networks, such as feedback on any meeting discussion and outcomes at European level. The information flow among the Network Participants and the AF is facilitated by the national Focal Points (FP) and thus Network Participants need to cooperate closely with the FP on Network related activities in order to enhance scientific cooperation between and among Member States and EFSA. The responsibilities of Network Participants are outlined in Article 7 of the [Networks Decision](#). More on the information flow can be found in the picture 1.

¹ Further in the text this will be referred as "Networks"

²Where reference is made to "Network Participants", this applies equally to Alternate Participants.



Picture 1- Actors involved in the information flow

According to Article 7(3) of the [Networks Decision](#) all appointed Network Participants taking part in network meetings and/or providing any other contributions to the work of a network collaborate with the FP. Each Network Participant is required to inform the AF and the FP of their participation or non-participation in any network meetings organised according to Article 7(2) and to collaborate with them to ensure timely feedback on the discussions and outcomes of the meeting, as well as the identification of possible discussion topics for future consideration within the Network. Cooperation and engagement at national level, involving the AF and the FP, is essential.

Best practices for the maintenance of an efficient communication flow among the involved actors should allow for any key items on the draft agendas of network meetings to reach the AF and the FP in a timely manner. Sufficient alignment on actions such as topic proposals, follow up of meeting minutes, workplan definition, should be ensured through the role of liaison of the Focal Point Network.

The type of information to be exchanged (information shared by EFSA, by Network Participants or by FP and AF) as well as the tools for the information exchange have to be agreed among the involved parties as per collaborative workspaces in use and in line with EFSA's digital strategy.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

As outlined in Article 3(3) of the [Management Board Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission](#) ('Networks Decision'), each Network operates according to their Terms of Reference, which describes the Network's purpose, general and specific objectives, members, working methods, etc. The Terms of Reference can be found on the [EFSA's external experts webpage](#), which contains further information by area of expertise.

In general, the outputs of the Networks are made publicly available. The webpage of each Network contains links to the agendas and summary of outputs of previous meetings.

COMPETING INTEREST MANAGEMENT

In accordance with Article 13 of the [Management Board Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission](#) ('Networks Decision'), Network Participants shall comply with the Decision

of the Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority on Competing Interest Management by submitting to the Authority an Annual Declaration of Interest (AdoI) in order to allow the identification of any interest that might be considered prejudicial to their independence.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Network Participants and Observers shall respect the confidentiality of information identified as restricted or confidential by EFSA and exchanged throughout the Networks even after completion of their assignment. In order to safeguard data (including personal data) in Office 365 (e.g. Teams, SharePoint and OneDrive) against security threats, EFSA will ask Network Participants, Alternate Participants and Observers to comply with confidentiality requirements.

The confidentiality status of the information handled by Network Participants is not meant to affect their communication and cooperation with their AF and FP.

PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

The establishment and operation of EFSA Networks shall be compliant with [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1725](#) on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies. Network Participants are entitled to receive from EFSA the information referred to in Article 14 of the [Management Board Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission](#).

APPOINTMENT OF NETWORK PARTICIPANTS

The Advisory Forum is the competent body to identify and designate Member organisations of a Network.

The AF, in cooperation with the Member Organisations formally designated and with the support of the FP, establish the names of the Network Participants and Alternate Participants per Member State for each network. The appointment procedure is done via a dedicated nomination form available in the AF and FP collaborative workspaces.

The Advisory Forum Secretariat is the primary contact point for informing RAL and EFSA Unit responsible for the management of a network of the identity of the appointed Network Participants.

Upon completion of the appointment procedure, the EFSA Unit concerned liaises directly with the appointed Network Participants.

If a Network Participant cannot take part in a network meeting, they inform their Alternate Participant and their national Focal Point in order to ensure operational continuity, as stipulated in Article 7(4) of Networks Decision.

The replacement of Network Participants can be arranged by the Member Organisations to which each Participant is affiliated in cooperation with the FP and the EFSA unit responsible for the management of the relevant network. The communication of the replacement must be communicated to the AF Secretariat through the relevant tool in place in the collaborative workspace.

The final list of all appointed Networks Participants/Alternate Participants/Observers may be consulted by the AF and FP from the FP Network SharePoint.

In exceptional cases, in order to ensure operational continuity, a one-time substitute Participant for a particular Network meeting, when both the Network Participant and the Alternate

Participant are unavailable, can be accepted without confirmation of the AF, if coming from the same Member organisation of the Network Participant. The communication have to be transmitted to AF Secretariat through a written procedure (e.g. letter, email). In case when the one-time substitute Participant does not come from the same organization of the Network official Participant, the FP informs the AF Secretariat, copying the Subject Matter Units (SMUs) Network Coordinator and RAL. The official Network Participant should be informed as he/she remains responsible to ensure the information flow.

BASIC LOGISTICS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Information on how to register to the meeting and on travel arrangements for physical and hybrid meetings

Meetings attendees can find all the useful information on administrative and logistic procedure at [EFSA's Experts Corner](#). Invitations to Network meetings are sent to the Network Participants by RAL@efsa.europa.eu. In order to be able to attend a meeting, the Network Participants needs to register through a dedicated registration tool provided by RAL and contact the specific mailbox indicated in the invitation e-mail, providing details for the booking of prepaid flight tickets. Network Participants are entitled to reimbursement of expenses and allowances according to the [expert compensation guide](#).

For meetings in Parma, shuttles are organized from/to the airports of Milan Malpensa and Linate, Bergamo, Bologna, Verona or Parma. Time for departure from EFSA to the airport is fixed by the shuttle company according to the departure time and the distance to the airport. For more information, please refer to [Coming and staying in Parma](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Upon their nomination, Network Participants receive details on:

- their user account to access the relevant EFSA collaborative space on Teams/SharePoint and any eventual tool in use
- the link to the EFSA DOI System
- a copy of the Guidelines for Network Participants

Guidelines on the digital collaboration with external experts are available on this dedicated microsite [External Peers collaborating with EFSA](#) and [EFSA's corner expert](#) accessible upon login with EFSA credentials. RAL will provide assistance in case of access problems.

General support on the use of EFSA's IT infrastructure can be obtained through the EFSA Service Desk (servicedesk@efsa.europa.eu, +39-0521 036 123).

USEFUL LINKS

EFSA Website:

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/>

EFSA collaboration with Member States and observers: the Advisory Forum and Focal Point Network

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/partnersnetworks/eumembers>

EFSA cooperation with partners and networks:

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/about/partnersnetworks>

EFSA webpage dedicated to Networks:

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/wgs-and-networks>

EFSA microsite for scientific experts' help and support:

<https://efsa815.sharepoint.com/sites/help-and-support/ScientificExpert>

EFSA Organisational Chart:

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/assets/orgchart.pdf>

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