



DECISION

<p>EFSA – European Food Safety Authority</p>	<p>Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority’s mission</p>	<p>Decision No.: mb210624-a4</p>
	<p>Effective Date: 25 June 2021</p>	<p>Supersedes: Decision of the Management Board of EFSA of 7 April 2010 concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority’s mission</p>

Approvals	Signature	Name
Originator		Bernhard Url
Management Board	See Decision	Jaana Husu-Kallio (Chair of the Management Board)

Introduction	EFSA harnesses networks of organisations with particular technical proficiencies in the fields within the Authority’s mission.
Description	The present Decision will produce the efficiency gains envisioned following an internal review of EFSA scientific networks.
References	Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725
Abbreviations	EFSA: European Food Safety Authority EU: European Union GFL: General Food Law



Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission

Having regard to Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority (hereinafter referred to as 'EFSA' or 'the Authority') and laying down procedures in relation to food safety, and in particular to Chapter III thereof (hereinafter referred to as 'the GFL Regulation')¹, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and the Council on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain (hereinafter referred to as 'the Transparency Regulation')²,

Whereas:

1. In order to achieve the objectives laid down in the GFL Regulation, EFSA needs to create and manage several networks of organisations with specific expertise in a particular field relevant to the Authority.
2. In accordance with Article 22(7) and Article 23(g) of the GFL Regulation, EFSA shall promote the networking of scientific organisations of EU Member States operating in the fields within the Authority's mission.
3. The present Decision is without prejudice to consultations of National Competent Authorities that are foreseen as mandatory by the relevant sectoral legislation.
4. The Declaration of Intent of the EFSA Advisory Forum³ plays a key role in safeguarding the high standards of independence and impartiality of the Authority.

The Management Board of the Authority has adopted the following Decision:

Article 1: Purpose

The purpose of this Decision is to optimise the operational procedures of EFSA scientific networks in accordance with the remit and strategic objectives of the Authority, specifically considering a greater involvement of Member State expertise in support of EFSA's mission.

¹ Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety, OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1–24.

² Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain and amending Regulations (EC) No 178/2002, (EC) No 1829/2003, (EC) No 1831/2003, (EC) No 2065/2003, (EC) No 1935/2004, (EC) No 1331/2008, (EC) No 1107/2009, (EU) 2015/2283 and Directive 2001/18/EC, OJ L 231, 6.9.2019, p. 1–28.

³ Available at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/190703_independence_AF_decl_of_inten_t.pdf



Article 2: Definition and role of networks

The aim of the networks is to support EFSA and the Member States in carrying out the Authority's mission in accordance with the established standards of scientific excellence, transparency and responsiveness foreseen in the GFL Regulation. These include, *inter alia*, facilitating the development of a scientific cooperation framework by 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 mission.

Article 3: Creation of networks

1. Networks are created by EFSA in consultation with the Advisory Forum to work on specific areas within EFSA's remit. New networks shall be adopted by the Management Board.
2. Each network shall be set up on the basis of a specific remit and shall be dissolved as soon as the remit has been completed.
3. Each network shall benefit from its own Terms of Reference clearly describing the parameters of the scientific expertise which it is designed to offer and the projected deliverables and outcomes which it shall endeavour to achieve.

Article 4: Continuous review of networks

1. Each network shall enhance the work of EFSA by ensuring that it satisfies the overarching objectives relevant to all networks outlined in Article 2 and also meets its individual targets laid down in its Terms of Reference.
2. In order to ensure that all networks remain suitably tailored to the Authority's needs, the specific activities carried out by each network in the context of the implementation of Paragraph 1 of this Article shall be reported to the Executive Director of EFSA.
3. EFSA shall inform the Management Board and the Advisory Forum of the activities of each network through regular reports.
4. EFSA shall evaluate the work of each network at least every three years beginning in 2021 on the basis of the criteria outlined in Paragraph 1 of this Article. EFSA shall report the outcome of such evaluations of networks to the Management Board and the Advisory Forum. Based on the evaluation reports for each network, the Advisory Forum shall recommend non-binding either the continuation or discontinuation of each network and the Management Board shall decide whether a particular network should be continued or discontinued.



Article 5: Composition of networks

1. Each network shall be composed of organisations in EU Member States with expertise in the fields covered by the relevant network as identified by the Advisory Forum in application of Paragraph 1 of Article 6.
2. EFSA may invite organisations, including from outside the EU, with specific expertise to participate in a network, where appropriate or necessary. These organisations may be invited either to participate in full or as observers only.
3. Representatives of the European Commission may participate in the work of the networks. Representatives of other EU agencies may participate in the work of the networks as appropriate.

Article 6: Appointment and replacement of members of networks

1. Following the receipt of all necessary information from EFSA, the Advisory Forum shall identify organisations in EU Member States which are capable of contributing to the tasks of a specific network.
2. In response to a request by EFSA, the Advisory Forum may formally designate the member organisation(s) of a specific network.
3. The Advisory Forum, in cooperation with the member organisations formally designated in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article, shall establish the names of the network participants and alternate participants per Member State for each network. All network participants and alternate participants shall be affiliated to a member organisation. The Advisory Forum Secretariat shall inform the EFSA Unit responsible for the management of a network of the identity of the appointed network participants and alternate participants of that network. Upon completion of the appointment procedure, the EFSA Unit concerned shall liaise directly with the appointed network participants and alternate participants. In situations whereby more than one member organisation has been designated per Member State for a specific network, taking into consideration the specific needs of such network, additional network participants and alternate participants may be appointed for those additional organisations.
4. The replacement of network participants and alternate participants may be arranged by the relevant member organisations formally designated in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article to which each participant is affiliated in cooperation with the EFSA unit responsible for the management of the relevant network and the relevant Focal Point.

Article 7: Responsibilities of network participants

1. Network participants and where appropriate alternate participants are required to ensure timely feedback on any discussions and outcomes of any meetings of the network and/or online collaborative working, as well as the identification of possible future discussion topics.



2. Each network participant is required to inform the Advisory Forum and their national Focal Point of their participation or non-participation in any network meetings organised.
3. In light of the fundamental importance of the Focal Points in enhancing scientific cooperation and networking activities between and among Member States and EFSA, all appointed network participants and alternate participants taking part in network meetings and/or providing any other contributions to the work of a network shall collaborate with their national Focal Points.
4. If a network participant cannot take part in a network meeting, they shall contact their alternate participant and their national Focal Point in order to ensure operational continuity.

Article 8: Network meetings

1. Meetings of EFSA scientific networks, including virtual meetings, shall be held on a regular basis.
2. Ad hoc meetings may be called at short notice according to the urgency of the corresponding discussion topic.
3. A draft agenda for each meeting shall be circulated to the appropriate network participants and, where necessary, the appropriate alternate participants of the relevant network. The agenda shall be adopted at the beginning of each meeting.
4. The pertinent EFSA Secretariat shall prepare the draft minutes of the meetings of each network, which shall be circulated for comments and agreed upon either at the next meeting or via written procedure. The minutes shall be made publicly available on EFSA's website after adoption.

Article 9: Documentation of the outcome of discussions

1. Networks shall endorse their contributions at their meetings or by the procedure set out in Paragraph 2 of this Article.
2. In the event that the nature, urgency or circumstances do not require or allow discussion at a meeting, a consultation may take place by written procedure.

Article 10: Technical hearings

The pertinent EFSA Secretariat may organise technical hearings with individuals and stakeholder representatives.



Article 11: Mission expenses of network participants or of their alternate participants

Unless already covered by reimbursements from the relevant organisations, travel and subsistence expenses incurred by network participants or their alternate participants in connection with meetings relating to networks shall be reimbursed by EFSA in accordance with the Authority's expert compensation guide.

Article 12: Confidentiality

1. Network participants, their alternate participants and observers shall:
 - not divulge to third parties information identified by the Authority as "restricted" or "confidential".
 - sign a written declaration that they will comply with the rules of confidentiality set out in this Article.
 - be required, even after their duties have ceased, not to disclose information of the kind covered by the obligation of professional secrecy.
2. Individual views, whether expressed orally or in writing by network participants or alternate participants during meetings, shall be confidential.

Article 13: Competing interest management

In line with the Declaration of Intent undersigned by members of the Authority's Advisory Forum, network participants and their alternate participants shall comply with the requirements set out in the Authority's Decision on Competing Interest Management.

Article 14: Processing of personal data

The establishment and operation of EFSA scientific networks shall be compliant with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies⁴. In accordance with Article 14 and 15 of that Regulation, the network participants and alternate participants for each network established

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC, OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39.



are entitled to receive concise, transparent and intelligible information from EFSA regarding the following:

- The identity and contact details of the EFSA Unit responsible as controller for the management of the relevant network and of the EFSA data protection officer;
- To whom information on their involvement in a particular EFSA network will be disclosed, including the online publication of any information or documents emanating from their participation in the relevant EFSA network;
- The time period for which their personal data in relation to their network participation will be stored by EFSA or the criteria applied to determine the data retention period;
- Information on the systems and tools applied by EFSA in support of the network operations including the processing of their personal data and the measures taken to ensure regulatory compliance of these systems and tools and adherence to information security standards;
- The way network participants and alternate participants can exercise their rights as a data subject, including their right of access to and rectification or erasure of their personal data and the right to lodge a complaint concerning the processing of their personal data with the European Data Protection Supervisor.

Article 15: Application measures

1. The Decision of the Management Board of EFSA of 7 April 2010 concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission is repealed.
2. The present Decision shall enter into force on the day following its adoption.

Adopted at the Management Board meeting held in virtual modality on 24 June 2021

For the EFSA Management Board

[SIGNED]

Raymond O'Rourke

Chair of the Management Board