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# TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ADVISORY FORUM ADVISORY GROUP ON DATA

*April 2024*

## MANDATE

The Group emerged from a recommendation of the Advisory Forum Task Force on Data Collection and Data Modelling<sup>1</sup>, which had been working for two years under the chairmanship of Hungary between 2018-2020. In its final report the Task Force presented a novel vision for a future food safety data ecosystem. In particular, this data ecosystem would leverage emerging technologies and analytical capabilities to advance the efficiency and effectiveness of European collaboration thus ensuring the safety and sustainability of the food chain through transparency and interoperability. The mandate of the Group is to act in an advisory capacity providing input on and oversight of projects and activities launched by EFSA and Member States to promote a data driven approach to risk assessment.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Act as a governance body providing recommendations to inform decisions regarding strategic prioritization and funding of data-related projects connected to the Task Force recommendations.
- Act as a Think Tank providing input on project idea generation and as a channel for elaboration of ideas linked to Advisory Forum Task Force recommendations, emerging technology, and AI readiness.
- Act as a program steering committee for data related projects connected to Advisory Forum Task Force recommendations ensuring coherence among different actions and added value to multiple Member States.
- Act as a consulting body on Focal Point tailor-made activities proposals in area of data and during activities' implementation, and to support provision of MS advice on Focal Point tailor-made activities proposals in the field of data, ensuring coherence among different actions and added value to multiple Member States
- Act as a hub providing access to knowledge, expertise, competencies and staff in Member States helping to shape and expand a digital ecosystem on food safety data.
- Provide strategic input on and oversight of alignment of EFSA's data and AI roadmap (under the remit of EFSA Strategy 2027) with recommendations of the Advisory Forum Task Force.
- Create thematic subgroups as needed and act as coordinator of those subgroups' activities.
- Seek opportunities to collaborate with DG SANTE and other European ENVI Agencies under the One Health paradigm.

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<sup>1</sup> [Report of the Advisory Forum Task Force on Data Collection and Data Modelling | EFSA \(europa.eu\)](https://eufsa.europa.eu/en/efsa-2023-report-on-data-collection-and-data-modelling)



- Create awareness, clarity, visibility of the work of the group through enhanced communication and engagement.

## MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

The Group is composed of:

- Advisory Forum representatives
- EFSA representatives
- DG Sante representatives
- governmental experts<sup>2</sup> nominated by Advisory Forum members,

Each Member State can nominate one representative.

Technical experts invited by AGoD can contribute as hearing experts.

The Group shall be chaired by one Member State nominated by the Advisory Forum.

## WORKING LANGUAGE

The working language shall be English.

## WORKING METHODS

The Group shall meet virtually using Microsoft Teams. Physical meetings, as needed, will take place back-to-back with Advisory Forum meetings. A dedicated Teams group will serve as the primary means of interaction within the Group. EFSA is responsible for providing administrative support.

## TIMELINE

The Group's second mandate will be set until the end of 2027. The Advisory Forum can extend the timeline of the Group for a longer period. The Terms of Reference may be updated as the ecosystem evolves.

## EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- Progress updates at Advisory Forum meetings.
- Multi-country projects agreed, launched and implemented.
- Input to EFSA on strategic prioritization processes on data initiatives e.g. Focal Point tailored made activities on data or EFSA Programmes' activities.
- AGoD multi annual roadmap

## SUBGROUPS

The Group can create or dismiss thematic subgroups, as deemed necessary, during its Terms of Reference duration with the objective to focus on specific aspects of data and to develop project ideas and recommendations.

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<sup>2</sup> As defined by the [Experts Compensation Guide of EFSA](#)



The list of subgroups is provided in the annex and will be updated based on AGoDs decisions.

## SUBGROUP MEMBERS

The Subgroups are composed of:

- Advisory Group on Data representatives
- EFSA representatives
- DG SANTE representatives
- Governmental experts<sup>3</sup> nominated by Advisory Forum members (\*)

Technical experts invited by members of subgroups can contribute as hearing experts.

The Group shall be chaired by a Member of the Advisory Group on Data

(\*) Governmental expert can be proposed by Focal Points or EFSA's Networks.

## SUBGROUP WORKING LANGUAGE

The working language shall be English.

## SUBGROUPS WORKING METHODS

The Groups shall meet virtually using Microsoft Teams.

Dedicated Teams groups will serve as the primary means of interaction within the subgroups. EFSA is responsible for providing administrative support.

## SUBGROUPS TIMELINE

The Advisory Group decides on the duration of the Subgroups mandate. The Terms of Reference – including specific objectives of the Subgroups – may be updated as the ecosystem evolves.

## SUBGROUPS EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- Progress updates at Advisory Group on Data meetings.
- Projects ideas to be reported to Advisory Group on Data.
- Best practices or solutions to specific challenges reported to Advisory Group on Data
- Contribution to the continuous evaluation of the Task Force recommendations on data, and if needed, if needed, formulation of new recommendations.
- Input to EFSA on strategic prioritisation processes concerning data in the field of the Subgroup.
- Contribution to annual reports on the activities of the Advisory Group on Data and its Subgroups.

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<sup>3</sup> As defined by the [Experts Compensation Guide of EFSA](#)



## ANNEX – Subgroups' specific objectives

### DEVELOPING AND SHARING TOOLS AND TECH

The activities of this sub-WG will focus on more detailed and operational questions related to data collection and connection, data architecture, and process automation. The objective of the group is to discuss these questions, synthesise available knowledge and formulate recommendations in the following topics:

- Mechanisms for data accessibility and data connection
- 'Code-to-data' solutions
- Common data capture methods
- Data process automation and sharing
- Collaborative projects on data architecture
- Building services not websites

### DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND ECOSYSTEMS

The activities of this sub-WG will focus on communication, collaboration, sharing and – in a broader sense – knowledge management questions. The group will serve as a think tank for data related knowledge management questions and enhancing platform- and ecosystem thinking throughout the wider food safety data community. The objective of the group is to discuss these questions, synthesise available knowledge and formulate recommendations in the following topics:

- Knowledge Platform for Food Safety
- EU ecosystem of data management
- Contribution and discovery of knowledge in a digital ecosystem
- Data discoverability, (re-)usability by applying open data, metadata standards, and ecosystem of APIs
- Use of Terminologies and ontologies to amplify digital ecosystem interactions
- Quality Assurance and Independence in a digital ecosystem
- Use of open food safety data
- Communication and collaboration possibilities in food safety data domain (including communication and knowledge management solutions for AGoD)

### INNOVATIVE DATA ANALYTICS & NEW DATA STREAMS

The activities of this sub-WG will focus on novel data analytic approaches (including AI) and new data streams (including existing data streams outside the current food safety domain). Besides the technical solutions and application fields, the group will also discuss the broader context (ethical, legal, etc.) of new data analytical approaches and new data streams. The objective of the group is to discuss these questions, synthesise available knowledge and formulate recommendations in the following topics:

- Enhance services using new data streams, big data and computational analysis
- Develop and/or implement new algorithms (prevalently based on AI methods)
- Use AI-based solutions in risk analysis framework
- Trust, legal, ethical and transparency questions of AI-based and other advanced computational solutions
- Explore the use of traceability data and other new data streams (structured and unstructured)
- New approaches in food consumption and composition data collection



## DATA LITERACY AND DATA CAPACITY

The activities of this subgroup shall focus on data literacy and capacity building for enabling a transition towards becoming data driven organization. The objective of the group is to discuss these questions, synthesise available knowledge, share practices and formulate recommendations in the following topics:

- Actions towards achieving critical mass of data literacy by supporting and encouraging data-related education activities, including EU-FORA, capacity-building initiatives, EU datathons, and other regular and ad hoc training opportunities.
- Discussions towards encouraging future recruitment efforts in food safety institutions to focus on increasing data analytical capacities.
- Supporting datathons and crowdsourcing activities to encourage use of food safety data and virtuous spiral feedback.
- Organising an annual food safety data science conference.
- Sharing good practices on techniques and coding languages, upskilling and training efforts.

## DATA QUALITY

The activities of this sub-group shall look on data quality issues on both sides: data collection (harmonisation of standards, evaluation of quality criteria, proposal of KPI dashboards etc) and the usage of any data, possibly not perfect data.

- Enhance Data Capital Governance and Data Management Processes
- Data Quality planning and monitoring
- Automate methods for data quality assurance processes
- For data usage of not perfect (not own or by own quality criteria collected) data develop guidelines and checks lists for data usage

## DATA MODELLING AND TERMINOLOGY

The activities of this subgroup shall look on data modelling and terminology issues, including discussions on ontologies, data models, data catalogues and interoperability questions. The objective of the group is to discuss these questions, synthesise available knowledge, share practices and formulate recommendations in the following topics:

- Development, promotion and evolution of ontologies supporting a food safety data analysis framework.
- Foster collaboration on data models and reporting requirements during legislation development.
- Encourage the use of standardised European data catalogues for Member State-to-EU reporting and data exchange systems.
- Initiating discussions on the usefulness, feasibility and consequences of drafting a common single 'European food safety data model' along the food chain. Include consideration of international participants in food chain safety, from farm to fork, from production to food services and consumption, e.g. WHO/FAO, OIE and non-EU national regulatory authorities.
- Enhancing the use of existing terms and controlled terminology catalogues to enable interoperability with the new systems and datasets where relevant (e.g. IMSOC for RASFF, AAC-FF, AAC, TRACES, EUROPHYT, ADIS)