EFSA Strategy 2020
Trusted science for safe food

Protecting consumers' health with independent scientific advice on the food chain

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efsa
European Food Safety Authority

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Foreword

EFSA's mission is clear. We contribute to the safety of the EU food chain by providing scientific advice to risk managers, by communicating on risks to the public, and by cooperating with Member States and other parties to deliver a coherent, trusted food safety system in the EU. This mission has been a constant since EFSA was born in 2002. But the environment within which we operate is changing rapidly and, in some respects, dramatically. This presents new challenges for EFSA in terms of the risks that we need to address and how we operate.

We must continue to carry out our core tasks, which are essential to protecting the public from health risks in the food chain. But we must also challenge ourselves and the way we work, to ensure that we remain a forward-looking organisation that possesses the tools and the culture to address new and complex risks and ensure that there is confidence in the quality and relevance of our work.

That is why we decided to take stock and chart our course for the next few years with a formal strategic review. The conclusions of that review are contained in this document, which has been developed in close consultation with our partners and stakeholders.

We have identified a number of drivers that we expect to influence significantly the direction EFSA takes between now and 2020, as well as the related challenges and opportunities that the agency will encounter over that period. These range from high-level issues such as public expectations of greater transparency and engagement and the impact of globalisation, to closer-to-home concerns such as how we can further improve efficiency at EFSA and continue to attract scientific expertise at a time when time and resources are increasingly precious. Closer cooperation with stakeholders, Member States and international partners will be crucial, but at the same time we must robustly guard our independence.

Our response to these challenges will be framed by five overarching strategic objectives. Over the next five years EFSA will:

- Prioritise public and stakeholder engagement in the process of scientific assessment.
- Widen its evidence base and optimise access to its data.
- Build the EU's scientific assessment capacity and knowledge community.
- Prepare for future risk assessment challenges.
- Create an environment and culture that reflects EFSA's values.

This document sets out how we intend to deliver on these objectives and ensure they give us the direction we need to steer EFSA successfully into the next decade.

We hope you are as excited about our plans as we are.

Sue Davies
Chair of the EFSA Management Board

Bernhard Url
Executive Director, EFSA

Introduction

The EFSA Strategy 2020 has been drawn up by EFSA staff in close consultation with the Management Board, taking particular account of the obligations outlined in EFSA's Founding Regulation, the overarching priorities of the European Commission, and the main external drivers that are expected to influence the direction EFSA takes between now and 2020. Feedback received from EFSA's partners and stakeholders during the public consultation was carefully considered in the shaping of the final document.

The document lays out the context for EFSA's Strategy 2020 – the environment in which EFSA operates, the main drivers that are expected to influence the direction the Authority takes between now and 2020, and the challenges and opportunities that EFSA will encounter during that period – and then describes five strategic objectives and expected outcomes that will guide EFSA through the next five years. The document also presents the key values that will be enablers for the realisation of these strategic goals.

The EFSA Strategy 2020 document will not stand in isolation. Indeed, it already makes extensive use of existing planning and programming documents. Detailed planning of the work to be undertaken in the next years as well as indicators to monitor and report progress will be included in EFSA's programming documents and activity reports, as part of its performance management cycle.

Regular evaluation of progress made and of EFSA's external and internal environment will ensure that EFSA's strategy stays relevant. It will be revised according to the strategic review cycle.

I. EFSA and its environment

EFSA is an integral part of the EU's food safety system. As outlined in its Founding Regulation, the Authority's mission is to contribute to the safety of the EU food and feed chain and to a high level of protection of human life and health, mainly by:

- providing EU risk managers with independent, up-to-date and fit-for-purpose scientific advice on questions related to food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, plant health, nutrition, and environmental issues specific to the above;
- communicating to the public on its outputs and the information on which they are based;
- cooperating with Member States, institutional partners and other interested parties/stakeholders[1] in the EU to promote coherent advice and increase trust in the EU food safety system;
- developing uniform methodologies and collecting and analysing data to allow the identification, characterisation and monitoring of emerging risks that have a direct or indirect impact on food and feed safety.

EFSA's core responsibilities are the delivery and communication of advice on general scientific assessment priorities, and the evaluation of food and feed products that require a safety assessment before they can be used on the EU market.

Over time there will be fluctuations and evolutions in the nature and the volume of these two core areas – for example, as a result of new risk management priorities, new legislation or outbreaks of food-borne diseases – but they will continue to be the central activities of the agency, and their detailed planning and prioritisation will be addressed in EFSA's work plans.

As an essential component of the EU food safety system, and through the above described activities, EFSA contributes to the overarching objectives[2] of the European Commission, particulary to achieving "a high level of public health while enhancing the competitiveness of the Union food and feed industry and favouring the creation of jobs"; it does so both directly, e.g. by safeguarding public health, and indirectly, e.g. by strengthening consumer confidence in the food safety system.

EFSA operates in a world of rapid change, and needs to ensure that it can continue to deliver on its tasks and obligations. In close consultation with our stakeholders we have identified the following main drivers that are expected to influence the direction EFSA takes between now and 2020, and the challenges and opportunities that the agency will encounter during that period.

WHO WE ARE

EFSA is a decentralised agency of the European Union, funded by the EU and issuing scientific advice independently of any external influence. It was set up in 2002 as an impartial source of scientific advice and communication on risks associated with the food chain.

The advice that EFSA provides to risk managers underpins the laws and regulations of the EU, as well as evolving policy priorities and needs, to protect European consumers from food-related risks – from field and factory to fork.

The term "food safety" is used throughout the document as shorthand for "food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, plant health, nutrition, and environmental issues specific to the above".

1 As defined in EFSA's Founding Regulation, Article 3 (13).
2 http://ec.europa.eu/food/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/index_en.htm

HOW WE WORK

EFSA is governed by a Management Board whose members are appointed to act in the public interest. The 15-member Board, which includes a representative of the European Commission, sets EFSA's budget and approves the annual work programme. EFSA's Executive Director is responsible for operational and staffing matters, and drawing up the annual work programme in consultation with the European Commission, the European Parliament and EU Member States. EFSA's scientific work is led by its Scientific Committee and its 10 Scientific Panels, which are composed of leading scientists in their fields. Additional external experts participate in working groups when more specialised knowledge is required. The panels and working groups are supported by EFSA staff.

WHO WE WORK WITH

EFSA collaborates with partners throughout Europe. These include institutions with whom the Authority is tasked to work under EU law, specifically policy makers/risk managers in the European Commission, the European Parliament and Member States.

EFSA also works with national food safety authorities and other scientific organisations responsible for aspects of risk assessment through its Advisory Forum, Focal Points, Scientific Networks and organisations identified through Article 36 of EFSA's Founding Regulation. In addition, EFSA seeks to foster partnerships with other EU agencies, such as EMA, EEA, ECHA and ECDC.

Table 1: Who we work with

Who	Role	What
Consumers, environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups, practitioner associations	Representative associations interested in or affected by food and feed safety regulations and therefore EFSA's work	Generate mutual trust and support through dialogue/interaction, transparency and engagement
Farmers and primary producers, business and food industry, distributors and Horeca	Representative associations holding an economic interest in food and feed safety regulations and therefore EFSA's work	Generate mutual trust and support through dialogue/interaction, transparency and engagement
Applicants for regulated products	Companies submitting applications for regulated products according to established food and feed safety regulations	Transparent interaction to ensure clarity and simplification of procedures and guidance, and the predictability of the risk assessment process and timelines
European Commission, European Parliament, European Council (Member States)	Policy and budget masters, legislators, risk managers	Dialogue/interaction at strategic and operational levels, main requestors of work, develop workplans jointly
Member States – risk assessors	Partner risk assessors and source/users of data, expertise, methods	Dialogue/interaction at strategic and operational levels, seek synergies/avoid duplications, build and share capacity/capabilities, develop workplans jointly
EU agencies, JRC	Scientific bodies, risk assessors in closely related fields and source/users of data, expertise, methods	Dialogue/interaction at strategic and operational levels, seek synergies/avoid duplications, build and share capacity/capabilities, develop workplans jointly
International organisations and third countries	Scientific bodies, risk assessors and source/users of data, expertise, methods in areas within the remit of EFSA	Dialogue/interaction at strategic and operational levels, seek synergies/avoid duplications
Academia (broader scientific community)	Source/users of data, expertise, methods	Foster scientific excellence through outreach, transparency, engagement and cooperation

Public expectations and benefits/opportunities of greater transparency and engagement

Transparency and engagement – which together are the two components of openness – are fundamental aspects of EFSA's work and are enshrined in the Authority's Founding Regulation. Expectations of more openness have been increasing and are expected to increase further, largely as a product of today's better informed, faster connected society.

There are expectations related to transparency, as shown, for example, by the number of requests for access to documents, for access to underlying methodologies and data, as well as for wider engagement in the process of EFSA's scientific assessment.

EFSA has always striven to be as transparent as possible in all its activities and procedures. It is important to continue building on the procedures in place, while ensuring an appropriate balance with challenges faced, e.g. in terms of extra demands on resources and safeguarding the intellectual property rights of data owners. Greater openness also brings important possibilities. Broader engagement with risk managers and other stakeholders provides opportunities for developing efficient data collection systems to support risk assessment and for monitoring the safety of food on the European market, as well as for strengthening communication and the dissemination of information from and to a wide range of stakeholders with multi-faceted needs.

Such engagement will also make it possible to harvest early in the risk assessment process scientific knowledge, experience and tools developed by stakeholders, and to tap into the unexplored expertise of the wider scientific community – in other words, to look beyond EFSA's panels and working groups.

Addressing these expectations proactively will be essential to EFSA's ability to maintain and strengthen the trust of its stakeholders.

Emergence of new risks and hazards leading to complex food safety questions

As highlighted in the study commissioned by the European Commission on future scenarios for food safety and nutrition[3], new risks in food production will continue to emerge, thereby increasing the need for data, methodologies, expertise and scientific advice on new and complex food safety questions.

Demographic changes – ageing populations, increasing migration flows – and changes in consumer attitudes and behaviour towards nutrition and food production and consumption (driven by, for example, principles of sustainability such as urban farming or a circular economy) may lead to a further diversification of diets in Europe. Population growth, climate change and food waste all pose challenges to global food security and food safety. Emerging technologies or new applications of existing technologies, such as in the wider area of biotechnology, synthetic biology, or nanotechnology will continue to add to the complexity of the food chain and the task of risk assessment.

EFSA and its partners, at EU and international level, will have to address these new developments within the context of societal expectations of broader, sustainable levels of protection of human, animal, plant and environmental health, in an integrated "one health" approach.

Evolving scientific knowledge, creating a need for innovative and collaborative approaches

Scientific knowledge continues to evolve rapidly, with methodologies, information and data becoming available on an increasingly global scale.

This collaborative approach is not confined to Europe; EFSA works increasingly with global risk assessment bodies as well as institutions in non-European countries, particularly to take stock of scientific developments and to develop or revise harmonised assessment guidance.

As part of its interaction with a broad range of stakeholders (see **Table 1:** Who we work with) the Authority proactively engages with various groups, such as consumers, non-governmental and advocacy organisations, industry associations and applicants for regulated products as well as the wider scientific community. This broad spectrum of dialogue ranges from face-to-face meetings with stakeholder groups and public consultations, to calls for data and surveys on the views of our partners.

3 Delivering on EU food safety and nutrition in 2050: scenarios of future change and policy responses

Emerging research areas and scientific developments are constantly bringing new insights to EFSA's work. For example, new findings in biomedical research such as in neurotoxicity, reproductive toxicity, the role of gut microbiota and epigenetics or advances in molecular biology and gene interaction, analytical techniques, –omics, and metabolic biomarkers for disease and health, or new knowledge on the cumulative effects of compounds and antimicrobial resistance, will directly affect the nature of EFSA's scientific assessments.

EFSA collects and analyses existing evidence and data but does not generate primary evidence to carry out its scientific assessments. It will be increasingly important for EFSA, in collaboration with the wider EU and international risk assessment community, to partner with research bodies and project consortia, risk managers and funding bodies to identify and prioritise research funding for the generation of data for its on-going work.

EFSA and its partners will have to monitor and take stock of scientific developments, thus ensuring that its work, and particularly its risk assessment methodologies and evidence, continues to reflect the latest scientific thinking.

The impact of globalisation

Further integration of regional and national economies, societies and cultures is expected as a growing number of countries sign up to free-trade agreements and emerging economies' share of global trade increases. This will lead not only to an increasingly globalised trade in food and feed products, and the associated "trade" of hazards and risks, but also to a more complex food supply chain, which poses challenges for EFSA, such as for the tracing of food-borne outbreaks.

The future of EU food safety and nutrition will increasingly be affected by the actions of global players – for example, trade blocs and multinational companies – and the extent to which global cooperation can be achieved on the setting and enforcement of standards throughout the food chain. In this process, the EU will need to ensure that existing high standards on food safety are adopted universally or, where possible, improved.

A global approach on food safety is crucial to addressing these major challenges, and EFSA will have to play an increasingly active role in the development of an international risk assessment community. Increasing cooperation with organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), Codex Alimentarius and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and third countries, will promote high standards in risk assessment in a harmonised approach and will harness the best expertise available to provide global solutions to global challenges.

Efficient operation of the agency's activities

In the coming years EFSA will continue to execute its core and supporting activities in line with EU legislation. This will be challenging as the agency's resources are becoming scarcer, as is the case with other public organisations – staffing is foreseen to be reduced by 10% between 2013-2018 and then remain stable until 2020. At the same time there is an increasing demand for additional services, such as support through greater clarity of procedures to applicants for regulatory products (although the gains from such activities could in the medium to long term partially balance out the costs) as well as for more self-tasking on general scientific assessment priorities.

Increasing efficiency will therefore be key to the successful execution of core and supporting activities, and to this end enhanced cooperation with Member State and international scientific assessment bodies presents a particular opportunity for improving efficiency. Emerging technologies may also further standardise and automate routine tasks of the agency, while the development of collaborative digital platforms will help to optimise the involvement of stakeholders and other potential collaborators.

EFSA will need to explore all possible solutions to achieve the needed efficiency gains, from closer collaboration with its partners to innovative working methods, and to define a prioritisation scheme to address any potential resource bottlenecks, in close cooperation with risk managers and risk assessment partners.

Availability of expertise for EFSA's multidisciplinary needs

EFSA staff currently provides support to the members of the Scientific Committee, 10 Scientific Panels and their working groups. A priority in this area is to maintain EFSA's attractiveness and access to diverse, competent and independent scientific experts. This will be challenging for a number of reasons: organisations making experts available to EFSA face similar resource constraints; the population of potential experts is limited by requirements related to independence and the need to be well-versed in scientific assessment approaches; and experts face other demands on their time.

EFSA will have to carefully and comprehensively assess these underlying factors – as well as the sustainability of, and possible improvements to, the current model for EFSA as a whole and for the different panel areas – and address them in cooperation with EU and international partners.

II. Strategic objectives

EFSA fulfils its mission while aiming to increase satisfaction and trust in its performance. This means that:

- EU risk managers are provided with independent, up-to-date, fit-for-purpose scientific advice on questions linked to the food chain with regards to general risk assessment priorities and regulated products.
- The public and interested parties receive rapid, objective and comprehensible information on EFSA's outputs and the information on which they are based and EFSA is widely seen as a key and active guardian of EU food safety.
- EFSA cooperates proactively with institutional partners, EU Member States and, where possible, international reference bodies, to ensure that the public receives coherent food safety advice.
- EFSA develops uniform methodologies and collects and analyses data to ensure the timely identification, characterisation and monitoring of emerging risks. EFSA thereby contributes to a high level of protection of human life and health.

EFSA has formulated five strategic objectives that will enable us to progress our main areas of work while addressing the challenges and opportunities described in the previous section.

- Prioritise public and stakeholder engagement in the process of scientific assessment.
- Widen EFSA's evidence base and optimise access to its data.
- Build the EU's scientific assessment capacity and knowledge community.
- Prepare for future risk assessment challenges.
- Create an environment and culture that reflects EFSA's values.

The strategic objectives are presented below. For each objective, operational objectives have been identified. Proposals on how the operational objectives will be implemented can be found in the annex to this document.

OUR VALUES

As part of its strategy review, EFSA has revisited and refined the core values that will drive its development between now and 2020. These are:

Scientific excellence: EFSA aims to provide high-quality scientific advice based on the expertise of its network of scientists and staff and the quality of its science-based information and methodologies, which are grounded in internationally recognised standards.

Independence: EFSA is committed to safeguarding the independence of its experts, methods and data from any undue external influence and to ensuring that it has the necessary mechanisms in place to achieve this.

Openness: Communicating openly and promptly on its scientific work helps foster trust in EFSA. As well as being transparent, we aim to engage civil society in our risk assessment work and connect with untapped scientific potential.

...

Prioritise public and stakeholder engagement in the process of scientific assessment

EFSA aims to enable society to contribute more widely to its risk assessment work and thereby to increase trust.

EFSA will introduce more interaction into its risk assessment and risk communication processes and will increase transparency on assumptions and data used and uncertainties in outputs. Furthermore, it will promote dialogue with the scientific community and society. It will use as a driver its key values while ensuring alignment with legal obligations, such as safeguarding data confidentiality.

Operational objectives

1. Promote enhanced dialogue with stakeholders on mandates in collaboration with risk managers

EFSA will promote dialogue with stakeholders on its self-tasking and guidance development initiatives; EFSA will strengthen dialogue with risk managers on the mandates they issue to maximise decision support and explore the potential for involving stakeholders in their framing; the effectiveness of communication and consultation with applicants for regulated products and other stakeholders before the submission phase is to be strengthened, maximising the administrative predictability of the risk assessment process.

2. Make documentation on information gathering and the evaluation process available

All documentation and information relevant to the production of EFSA scientific outputs, as well as on their selection and use, to be accessible to the public and linked to the outputs, allowing their re-use and dissemination; to this end, confidentiality of documents and data to be defined, agreed with relevant parties, and respected. The submission and management of application dossiers and the information contained in them to be automated, streamlining the workflow, improving communication among stakeholders and the publication of non-confidential information.

3. Foster engagement throughout the development of scientific assessments

Stakeholders and public to participate regularly, with the opportunity to provide input at defined interaction points throughout the development of scientific outputs, including for regulated products. To this end, dedicated engagement and collaboration tools, such as EFSA's website, will be optimised.

4. Ensure clarity and accessibility/usability in the communication of findings

The visibility and use of EFSA communications is to be increased. Messages to be better tailored/contextualised for risk managers and for the general audience. Risk assessment outputs to be further improved in terms of clear expression of uncertainty and explicit disclosure of hypotheses used.

...

Innovation: Being pro-active and forward-looking enables EFSA to anticipate new challenges. We believe that regulatory science must keep pace with changes in the natural sciences, industry and society. We are constantly developing and adapting our data and working methods to ensure that the EU food safety system is at the forefront of scientific as well as administrative thinking and practice.

Cooperation: Working together and exchanging knowledge between food safety experts in the EU and globally ensures excellence and efficiency and maximises the available risk assessment capacity and potential. We believe that the totality of food safety expertise in Europe and internationally is greater than the sum of its individual parts.

Widen EFSA's evidence base and optimise access to its data

EFSA aims to enhance the quality of its outputs by giving direct access to data and promoting the development of collaborative platforms in Europe and internationally, as well as fostering data re-use and innovation.

EFSA will be an advocate for openness by working with data providers and organisations funding research to adopt open data concepts and standards; gaining better access to, and making better use of, data from a wider evidence base that, where possible, follow international quality standards, as well as via the use of innovative sources of information, such as social media. EFSA recognises that its efforts to make data more accessible will have to take account of data ownership, confidentiality and security issues.

Operational objectives

1. **Adopt an Open Data approach**
EFSA scientific data (structured and unstructured) to be made accessible to the outside world by developing and contributing to Open Data portals. New scientific knowledge to be generated by external parties re-using EFSA data.

2. **Improve data interoperability to facilitate data exchange**
A wider coverage of data to be ensured through data sharing/exchange mechanisms and partnerships with data owners in the Member States and internationally, through the use of common standards with other scientific and regulatory bodies, and though innovative approaches to exploit all available sources of information, such as via social media.

3. **Migrate towards structured scientific data**
Efficiency, innovation and new methods in risk assessment to be fostered through the structuring of data from monitoring schemes, regulated product applications and EFSA outputs, in agreed formats and based, where possible, on existing international standards, enabling their re-use.

Build the EU's scientific assessment capacity and knowledge community

EFSA aims to set up cooperation initiatives that make the best use of expertise for scientific assessment through a partnership between EFSA staff, scientific experts and Member State and international organisations. EFSA will invest in competence development and capability transfer, common programming and work-sharing, to grow EU and international expertise, thus increasing the EU's scientific assessment capacity and efficiency.

Operational objectives

1. Strengthen capacity building and capacity sharing with Member States, in collaboration with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation and its Joint Research Centre, EU agencies, international organisations
An EU common risk assessment agenda, a common research agenda and a multi-annual work-sharing plan to be developed and to be implemented via strengthened cooperation forums, innovative partnership schemes and close collaboration with Member States and EU institutional partners. International cooperation with key international actors and on prioritised areas to be further developed, to harness the best available expertise and to promote harmonised approaches and a coherent voice.

2. Foster the growth of the EU risk assessment community in collaboration with international organisations
EFSA, Member States and international partners to cooperate closely to build a wider risk assessment community: the necessary competences will be identified and regularly reviewed; joint initiatives to foster the development of expertise and capabilities will be implemented, e.g. training, mobility and exchange schemes; and a plan to attract and retain EU risk assessment experts will be set in action.

3. Review and further develop EFSA's scientific assessment model
EFSA to take stock of best practices internally and elsewhere (other EU agencies and international bodies), and optimise its workforce model (tasks, roles and working methods), making best possible use of available capacities and getting timely access to the necessary expertise. EFSA to strengthen multi-and inter-disciplinary working, and harmonisation and exchanges across different areas/panels. EFSA to explore innovative ways of increasing risk assessment capacity, such as via crowdsourcing and cognitive computing.

Prepare for future risk assessment challenges

Anticipating risk assessment priorities and related methodology and evidence needs will ensure EFSA is prepared for present and future challenges in a dynamic food safety system. Furthering harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies will help to improve food safety across Europe and promote trust.

EFSA will ensure that its scientific assessments remain relevant by: innovating, providing stimulus to the EU research programme on safety in the food chain; working with its European and international partners to promote consensus on identifying risk assessment priorities and on how evidence-based risk assessment should be performed; and making risk assessment more accessible by providing online access to methods and tools. This will result in fewer and earlier identified divergences of opinion and increased transparency.

Operational objectives

1. Strengthen EFSA's resilience and ability to anticipate and respond effectively to food safety risks in cooperation with EU and international partners

Priority areas and actions for preparedness will be proactively identified and addressed, in collaboration with EU and international partners and stakeholders. The emerging risks identification and crisis preparedness processes and tools will be strengthened in general and in prioritised areas. EFSA will be at the forefront of addressing new scientific issues, being proactive rather than reactive.

2. Develop and implement harmonised methodologies and guidance documents for risk assessment across the EU and internationally

EFSA scientific assessment methodologies and guidance documents to be fully mapped with respect to the risk assessment workflow, gaps identified and actions for addressing these gaps prioritised. A long-term plan for methodological and guidance development and review to be implemented in collaboration with EU and international partners and in consultation with stakeholders, taking into account international developments. All EFSA guidance documents to be fully implemented in a harmonised manner across EFSA panels. EFSA guidance documents to be increasingly adopted as EU and international standards.

3. Become a hub in methodologies, tools and guidance documents for risk assessment

All tools, methods and guidance documents used for EFSA scientific assessments, built where possible on existing international standards but also exploring innovative tools, to be made available through an open access and easy to use platform. Other commonly used as well as new scientific assessment tools to be linked through EFSA resources, and a hub created in collaboration with Member States and international partners.

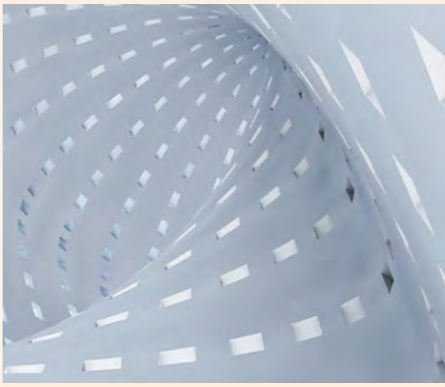
Create an environment and culture that reflect EFSA's values

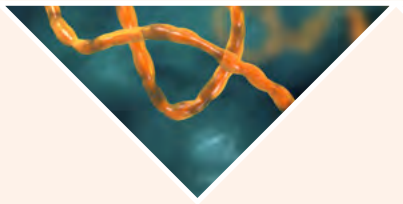
EFSA will foster a culture of openness, innovation, cooperation, independence and scientific excellence among its experts, partners and staff. EFSA will launch initiatives and create an efficient, transparent and responsive environment, i.e. organisation, processes and tools, that allow it to put into practice its values, thus sustaining organisational performance improvements and delivering its strategic objectives. EFSA will optimise human, technical and financial resources ensuring its efficiency and overall accountability.

Operational objectives

1. People: build a culture that puts EFSA's values into practice
EFSA staff, experts and partners to demonstrate a shared understanding of EFSA's mission as well as adherence, ownership and accountability to EFSA's values in daily activities/regular practices.

2. Organisation and processes: develop an environment focused on improving organisational performance and capabilities
EFSA to establish a management system and an operational framework to put into practice its values and ensure delivery of its strategic objectives, ensuring sound operational performance by optimising all available resources.





Annex - Implementation plan

This section presents the key initiatives through which EFSA will implement its five strategic objectives over the coming years. Detailed planning of the work to be undertaken in the next years as well as indicators to monitor and report progress will be included in EFSA's programming and activity reports, as part of its performance management cycle. Regular evaluation of progress made and of EFSA's external and internal environment will ensure that the strategy stays relevant. It will be revised according to the strategic review cycle.

Prioritise public engagement in the process of scientific assessment

Work area: *Provision and communication of scientific advice for general risk assessment priorities and regulated products.*

Expected outcome: *EFSA provides fit-for-purpose and timely advice to risk managers while enabling the public and stakeholders to contribute more widely and promoting communication, dialogue and transparency with the scientific community, applicants and society as a whole; this increases trust, the effectiveness of EFSA's scientific advice and the predictability of the risk assessment process.*

Key activities

- Selection and implementation of a set of transparency and engagement measures throughout the risk assessment workflow: measures not requiring impact assessment will be implemented by end 2017 and measures requiring an impact assessment, to be finalised in 2016, will be progresively implemented from 2016 to 2020. Pilot and, if successful, set up a framework for the use of social science research in guiding the implementation of engagement measures in EFSA's mandates/outputs.
- Establishment and implementation via regular review of a multiannual plan of support activities (catalogue of support initiatives to applicants).
- Development of an e-submission workflow on application dossiers for regulated products which will be gradually implemented from 2018; a collaboration tool for the preparation of regulated product opinions will be developed by 2020.
- A more inclusive and targeted approach for stakeholder engagement to be launched in 2016. A pilot for the Brussels liaison office will be evaluated with a view to making it permanent. EFSA will continue to monitor external perceptions, e.g. via media monitoring and a reputation barometer, to inform further improvements in the way we interact with stakeholders, institutions, media and the public.
- Strengthened EFSA Journal: new editorial workflow and migration of EFSA outputs to a new platform, to be included in Medline/Pubmed by the end of 2017. Feasibility analysis and a pilot towards a strengthened peer review system carried out, possibly to be implemented from 2018. In parallel, EFSA foresees an adaptation of the EFSA Journal Platform in line with the needs of strengthened transparency and engagement measures, such as the linking of EFSA outputs to the underlying data and methodologies.
- Target audience research to improve clarity in the communication of findings through the development of better tailored and contextualised communication for risk managers and the general audience.

Widen EFSA's evidence base and optimise access to its data

Work area: *Data collection and evidence management.*

Expected outcome: *The quality of the EFSA evidence base has been improved via the provision of:*

i) direct access in open data formats;
ii) wider evidence base;
iii) data amenable to re-use, enabling transparency and engagement, fostering innovation and efficiency in the data collection and management process.

Key activities

- Further development of the Data Warehouse as a repository and portal of EFSA structured data and information. By the end of 2016, EFSA will have populated the Data Warehouse with data from all its collections; data from application dossiers to be included from end-2018, in line with the development of the e-submission workflow and agreed data structures for all regulated product areas. From 2019, risk assessment end-points will be transferred to the Data Warehouse and a data mining tool developed. From 2017, identification, piloting and implementation of i) structuring of new data types arising from research projects and new methodologies, and provision of support for the (re)use of validated scientific data, for instance in silico, bio-informatics and simulation methods; and ii) harmonisation of selected structured scientific data with international standards.
- Development and implementation of a system to enable Open Data, namely i) assignment of Digital Object Identifiers that allow referencing and tracking of data use; and ii) publication of meta-data from EFSA data collections in the EU Open Data Portal, starting in 2016 with the pilot publication of metadata from the Chemical Hazards Database.
- Development of a repository and portal of EFSA non-structured data and information (Open Scaie) to be populated from 2017 with peer reviewed and grey literature.
- Development of data sharing and exchange capacity. Set up and implement a comprehensive and integrated information architecture framework for centralised information access management, enabling data interoperability. Set up data exchange/openness networking groups and establish interoperability with main data providers, based on a multiannual plan to increase EFSA's evidence base in line with internationally accepted quality standards (such as with EUROSTAT, the JRC and EPPO, Member States). Set up innovative approaches to exploit all available sources of information, such as via social media.

Build the EU's scientific assessment capacity and knowledge community

Work area: *Cooperation and expertise management.*

Expected outcome: *EFSA, Member States and international partners are cooperating closely to strengthen capacity building and sharing, foster the EU and international risk assessment community, and optimise EFSA's workforce model. This will increase efficiency and effectiveness and reduce divergences in EU and global risk assessment, thereby increasing trust in the EU food safety system.*

Key activities

- Set-up, pilot and implementation of the EU risk assessment agenda, i.e. risk assessment priorities to be identified and addressed with Member States and international partners, from 2016. Set-up of cooperation clusters with EU agencies, reference laboratories and Member States, in close collaboration with the European Commission (Directorate General for Research and Innovation and its Joint Research Centre), to identify common research priorities so as to implement, from 2018, a common research agenda.
- Development from 2016, with Member States, of a strategic approach to EFSA's cooperation schemes – grants and procurement – towards the establishment of partnership schemes to enable capacity building and sharing, including a multi-annual work-sharing plan. In 2017-2018, initiatives will be carried out to strengthen coordination across the Member State cooperation forums (e.g. Advisory Forum, Focal Points, Scientific Networks) to optimise their effectiveness and efficiency; the role of the Article 36 network will be reviewed and strengthened to implement common risk assessment priorities.
- Development in 2016 of a strategic approach to international cooperation and implementation of selected initiatives, including the identification of key international partners and set-up of multilateral forums; the creation of a new liaison group of regulatory agencies to work on the international harmonisation and acceptance of risk assessment methods for chemical and biological hazards; the creation of a global platform for regulatory agencies on risk communication; the set-up of joint projects with EU and international partners on implementation of new prioritised methods in regulatory risk assessment; the set-up of continent coordinators and the development of scientific advice capacity in other regions of Europe, together with the European Commission, EU Member States and international organisations.

- Fostering, in cooperation with Member States and other stakeholders, a risk assessment talent pool and community of knowledge, via: an assessment of attraction drivers and definition of an action plan to recruit and retain scientific assessment experts; the implementation of new measures to enhance EFSA's visibility in the job market and invest in expert preparedness; the development of a framework for risk assessment competency management (i.e. needed competences), and a targeted coordinated framework for learning and development, offering comprehensive training (on and off line), mobility and exchange programmes (SNEs, visiting experts, PhDs), and a fellowship programme. These are planned to be piloted from 2016-2017 and implemented in 2018-2020.
- Further development of EFSA's risk assessment modus operandi and workforce model, based on a review of current practices across all panel areas, benchmarking with other EU and international bodies, and the identification of target operating (work-force) model(s) to be implemented across all areas from 2017. In 2018-2020, focus on the identification and exploration of medium and long term opportunities for a more effective and efficient model.
- Carrying out feasibility studies in 2016-2017, and possible long-term implementation, on new ways of increasing risk assessment capacity, via crowdsourcing and cognitive computing. These will be implemented in selected areas of EFSA's work and in line with strengthened engagement measures.

Prepare for future risk assessment challenges

Work area: *Preparedness and methodological development.*

Expected outcome: *Risk assessment priorities and related methodologies and evidence needs are anticipated ensuring EFSA is prepared for present and new challenges in a dynamic food safety system; through innovation EFSA's scientific assessments remain relevant, whilst driving harmonisation of methodologies to improve food safety across Europe and internationally, promote trust and reduce divergences.*

Key activities

- Set-up in 2016 and implementation from 2017 onwards of a process to plan, prioritise and implement preparedness actions for the development of key capabilities and for addressing the need to re-open previous opinions in a coordinated fashion across external mandates and self-initiatives. A first set of areas has been identified (list to be regularly reviewed).
- Processes and a toolbox for emerging risks identification and crisis preparedness will be further developed, with particular emphasis in the areas of plant health and vector-borne (wild) animal diseases, and trace-back, trace-forward methodologies and tools.
- Set-up in 2016 and implementation from 2017 of a coordinated plan on combatting anti-microbial resistance (AMR) with the European Commission, sister agencies and Member States.
- Development and gradual integration in EFSA guidance of new approaches in prioritised chemical and biological risk assessment areas to strengthen EFSA's capability to deal with the absence of data, address complex questions and reduce uncertainty. These areas include:
  - Chemical risk assessment: endocrine disruptors; epigenetics; chemical mixtures; nanotechnology; read-across; human variability; human biomonitoring; developmental neurotoxicity testing strategy.
  - Biological risk assessment (across food safety, animal health and welfare and plant health): food-borne viruses, *Campylobacter* from farm to fork, predictive modelling for biological risks, microorganisms as plant protection products, microbiological criteria, whole genome sequencing, animal-based indicators for animal welfare risk assessment.

- Development of a holistic and integrated, pan-EU approach in environmental risk assessment with a focus on:
  - Bee health.
  - A coordinated landscape-based framework across all relevant areas of EFSA's remit (pesticides, feed additives, GMOs, plant health, animal health).
  - Spatially explicit ecotoxicology and environmental fate and behaviour for pesticides.
- Set-up in 2016 of a cooperation plan with DG Health and Food Safety to develop capabilities supporting risk-based food inspections, such as on the risk ranking of biological and chemical (contaminants) hazards and the development of appropriate surveys and surveillance schemes.
- Set-up by end 2016 of an integrated framework containing EFSA's methodologies and guidances for evidence-based risk assessment, covering existing horizontal and sectorial methodologies and guidances; implementation from 2017 of a process for the continuous maintenance and updating of prioritised methodologies and guidances in cooperation with EU and international bodies (e.g. through the review of existing and/or development of new methodologies). Continuous coordination of methodological and guidance development needs with the prioritised development of new capabilities and learning and development schemes that foster the EU risk assessment community (e.g. the on-boarding programme and training schemes for experts and staff).
- Development of a web-based platform hosting methodologies and tools used in EFSA's risk assessments from 2017 onwards. Piloting and, if possible, implementing the use of the platform to link to others' methods and tools in cooperation with Member States and international partners from 2018.

Create an environment and culture that reflects EFSA's values

Work area: *Governance, management, support services and coordination.*

Expected outcome: *EFSA has established an efficient, transparent and responsive environment and culture that ensures effectiveness and coherence in the execution of EFSA's strategic plan. The new environment complies with the highest standards of performance and integrity and enables collaboration and innovation; EFSA has optimised human, technical and financial resources ensuring its efficiency, compliance and overall accountability.*

Key activities

- Development and integration of managerial and leadership standards reflecting EFSA's values in management policies, processes and tools, with the aim to have set up a managerial community pipeline from 2018. Incorporation of reputation management into the objectives, roles and responsibilities of the managerial community from 2017, and development of processes and tools supporting reputation management activities. An organisational learning strategy supporting the achievement of EFSA's strategic objectives will be elaborated in 2016, and a Learning Management System will be developed from 2017.
- Streamlining of recruitment, on-boarding and mentoring/coaching practices, implementation of employer branding measures and introduction of innovative approaches to retention activities for EFSA staff.
- Development and implementation of a governance and accountability framework to be periodically reviewed, including the development of streamlined management of competing interests, and a revised Independence policy.
- Strengthening of performance and quality orientation via the full establishment of a corporate business control function and the streamlining of EFSA's controlling initiatives (including risk management, internal control, quality management) supporting continuous improvement. By the end of 2016 EFSA is expected to be ready to obtain ISO 9001 Quality certification, while it is exploring opportunities for preparing and obtaining eco-management and auditing (EMAS) and occupational health and safety certifications (OSHAS). Selected transactional processes, such as correspondence management, meeting organisation, staff missions and catering services, will be optimised, while a business continuity plan will be tested and made fully operational.

- Piloting, development and implementation of innovative collaboration and engagement mechanisms and a process for harvesting innovative ideas from stakeholders and the public.
- Further development of a world-class technological environment (system/tools) to enable the achievement of EFSA's strategic capabilities.

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