

GUIDELINES FOR EFSA NETWORKS' PARTICIPANTS AND ALTERNATE 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:

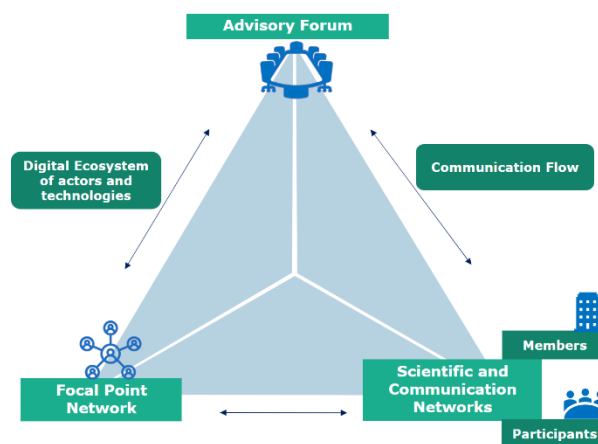
- Coordinating activities
- Exchanging information
- Developing and implementing joint projects
- Exchanging expertise and best practices

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

The Network Participants are appointed by the AF and are affiliated to a Member Organisation. They have the responsibility to provide inputs while keeping their national AF Member informed about the activities of the Networks they belong to, such as feedback from any meeting's discussion and outcomes relevant at European level. The information flow among the Network Participants and the AF is facilitated by the national Focal Point (FP). The responsibilities of the 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](#), the designated Networks' Participants taking part in the meetings and/or providing any contributions to the work of a the Network are required to inform the national AF and FP of their participation or non-participation in any Network's meetings organised according to Article 7(2) and to collaborate with them to ensure timely feedback sharing.

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 FP.

The type of information to be exchanged (e.g., information shared by EFSA, the Network's Participants or by the FP/AF) as well as the tools for the information exchange have to be agreed upon among the involved parties 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 its own Terms of Reference (ToR) which describes the Network's purpose, the general and specific objectives, its members, working methods, etc. The Terms of Reference are available on the [EFSA's external experts webpage](#), which contains further information by the area of expertise. In general, the outputs of the Networks are made publicly available. The webpage of each Network contains the links to the agendas and the summary of the 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'), Networks' 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 the 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 the Network's Participants, Alternate Participants and Observers to comply with confidentiality requirements. The confidentiality status of the information handled by the Network Participants is not meant to affect their communication and cooperation with their national 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 regards 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 THE NETWORK PARTICIPANTS

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

The AF, in cooperation with the Member Organisations formally designated and with the support of the FP, establishes 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 Subject Matter Unit (SMU) of the identity of the appointed Network Participants.

Upon completion of the designation procedure, the concerned SMU liaises directly with the appointed Network Participants.

If a Network Participant cannot take part in a Network meeting, he/she shall inform the Alternate Participant and the national FP in order to ensure operational continuity, as stipulated in Article 7(4) of Networks Decision.

The replacement of the Network Participants can be arranged by the Member Organisations to which each Participant is affiliated in cooperation with the national AF/FP and the SMU responsible for the management of the Network. The AF Secretariat shall be timely informed about the replacement through the relevant nomination tool in place in the AF/FP collaborative workspaces.

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

In exceptional cases, in order to ensure operational continuity (e.g., when the Participant and/or Alternate Participant is unavailable, etc.), a *one-time Participant* for a Network's meeting can be accepted without the confirmation of the AF, if he/she belongs to the same Member Organisation of the standing Network Participant. In this case it is sufficient to receive the confirmation from the officially nominated participant. In case when the *one-time Participant* does not come from the same Member Organisation of the standing Network Participant, he/she should seek a prior approval from the national AF. The AF Secretariat must be notified, including

the standing Network Participant as he/she remains responsible for ensuring the information flow within the Network.

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](#). The invitations to the Networks' meetings are sent to the Network Participants by RAL@efsa.europa.eu. In order to be able to attend the meeting, the Network Participants/Alternate Participants are requested to register via a dedicated registration tool provided by RAL. In addition, they shall contact the specific mailbox indicated in the invitation e-mail, by providing the details for the booking of prepaid flight tickets. All Network Participants are entitled to receive a reimbursement of the expenses and allowances according to the [Experts' Compensation Guide](#).

For meetings taking place in Parma, shuttles are organized from/to the airports of Milan Malpensa and Linate, Bergamo, Bologna, Verona or Parma. The time of 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 the 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 at 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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