RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EFSA’S MANAGEMENT BOARD

Preamble

The Management Board of EFSA finds the External Evaluation Report comprehensive and useful. It acknowledges that the report has found that EFSA is fulfilling its mandate and is operating in an independent, open and transparent manner, providing high quality scientific advice to underpin and add value to the European system of food and feed law.

In making its conclusions and recommendations, the Management Board emphasises the importance of ensuring that EFSA continues to provide risk managers at the European and national level as well as stakeholders with independent, high quality, timely, fit-for-purpose and clear scientific advice following open and transparent processes while communicating clearly to all interested parties on its findings.

The Management Board notes the changing and evolving role of EFSA since the previous evaluation in 2005. EFSA has matured as an organisation and the requests for its advice have become more complex, often requiring multi-disciplinary work across several scientific areas. There is an even greater need for close cooperation with the Member States and other partners to fully harness the risk assessment capacity across Europe. Bearing this in mind and the fact that EFSA is operating in a context of tight resources and increasing complexity, EFSA will need to place greater emphasis on efficiency, prioritisation and forward planning with its partners. Better systems for collecting and disseminating data will also be important to underpin the risk assessment process.

In drawing on the conclusions and recommendations of the External Evaluation Report and taking into account the results of the consultation process, the Management Board identifies four key areas which it wishes to be further acted upon as a matter of priority during the period 2013-2017.

The Management Board acknowledges that EFSA cannot address some of the recommendations on its own and will need to work with the European Commission, EU Institutions, including EU Agencies, Member States and other key stakeholders.

Recommendations

1. Ensure long-term sustainability of EFSA’s operations

Recommendations to EFSA

1.1 The long-term sustainability of EFSA’s operations should be ensured by, among others, optimising the respective roles of experts, staff and other partners/organisations within the risk assessment process. While the fundamental role of the panel system in generating EFSA’s scientific advice panels should be guaranteed, the nature of the work allocated to them should be adapted to the evolving needs in terms of increasing workload, complexity and multidisciplinarity across several scientific areas. EFSA needs to anticipate and plan its future requirements for expertise and ensure that experts are effectively supported.

1.2 EFSA should continue to enhance its efficiency and its ability to set priorities and maintain its focus on general health issues and emerging risks, in a context where the workload and the complexity of the assessment of regulated products are continuously increasing. EFSA needs to proactively identify
scientific fields where there is a need for self-tasking and communicate clearly on this aspect of its work to all stakeholders.

1.3 EFSA should develop and monitor initiatives to maintain its attractiveness as a place to work and invest further on professional development and training for both experts and staff.

**Recommendations to EFSA, EU Institutions and Member States**

1.4 The enhancement of interaction and dialogue with risk managers and other stakeholders will have to remain an important priority for EFSA if it is to continue to provide fit-for-purpose scientific advice, address the specific needs of stakeholders, understand and consider the overall context, and anticipate how its work in the various areas will evolve, with particular attention to emerging risks.

1.5 EFSA should work closely with the EU Institutions to ensure that risk assessment needs are addressed in an adequate and timely manner via the definition of a dedicated research programme, particularly in the context of “Horizon 2020”.

**Recommendations to EU institutions**

1.6 EFSA must have adequate resources to deliver its mission in the context of an increasing workload in specific areas. In a context of tight resources, EFSA shall pay particular attention to the need for efficiency. If new tasks are assigned that cannot be performed with the existing budget, additional funds must be allocated in line with the financial rules.

1.7 Regulatory workflows that are applicable to EFSA’s work should be streamlined, with the objective of reducing unnecessary administrative burden.

1.8 EFSA should be more involved at an early stage in the consultative steps during the EU legislative process to enable it to provide an EU risk assessment perspective and ensure that adequate resources are made available for any new tasks. This should enable EFSA to anticipate its future expertise requirements and enable it to plan its work programmes effectively; it will also support a more science-based regulatory system.

2. **Increase trust by continuing to ensure independence and enhancing transparency and openness**

**Recommendation to EFSA**

2.1 EFSA should continue to improve the transparency and openness of its scientific work, both in relation to the processes (prioritisation, Panel meetings, risk assessment process, public consultations and engagement with stakeholders), scientific approaches and the opinions themselves (ensuring that the language is clear and that the basis for the opinions are fully explained, including data sources and data considered, assumptions, uncertainties and any diverging views). In addition, EFSA should enhance the transparency of and access to the data it uses in its risk assessments and continue to enforce and review its independence policy and procedures in light of the experience gained in their practical implementation.

**Recommendation to EU institutions**

2.2 The European Commission should consider greater involvement of other EU institutions and stakeholders in the framing and formulation of requests for scientific advice from EFSA. Greater engagement of all interested parties in questions addressed to EFSA will help foster the acceptability and value of EFSA’s scientific advice and mitigate against the advice being perceived as providing only partial answers to broader societal concerns.

3. **Further enhance EU risk assessment capacity**

**Recommendation to EFSA, EU Institutions and Member States**

3.1 EFSA should cooperate further with Member States, the European Commission and other EU Agencies in relation to planning EU work in the areas within its remit, to enable better priority setting and more efficient and effective use of resources. In particular EFSA should enhance the coordination of work...
programmes with the national authorities, including through the Advisory Forum, to enable better sharing of data and scientific studies and better planning of joint projects. Member State authorities and the other EU Institutions should contribute to defining a common EU risk assessment agenda, reinforce cooperation and networking on a multiannual perspective, and be willing to share data and methodologies with EFSA in order to build long-term partnerships. EFSA should improve its IT systems to enhance data sharing with Member States and provide training on data collection where needed.

3.2 The international role and reputation of EFSA as the reference point for risk assessment related to food safety in Europe should be further enhanced for the benefit of the EU food safety system, in concert with EFSA’s partner organisations within the Member States, European institutions and other European Agencies, relevant agencies in third countries and international organisations. Frameworks for cooperation should be developed with key international partners such as WHO, OIE, FAO, Codex Alimentarius, etc.

Recommendation to EFSA, EU Institutions and Member States and other key stakeholders

3.3 EFSA should improve the quality and availability of data and other information it collects and further enhance the coordination of data collection activities with Member States and other EU and international bodies. EFSA should contribute to further develop harmonised data collection systems and implement processes to ensure data quality and facilitate accessibility. Member States, EU and international institutions as well as stakeholders should cooperate with EFSA to enhance the availability and quality of data in the areas within EFSA’s remit.

4. Strengthen clarity and accessibility of EFSA Communication

Recommendation to EFSA

4.1 EFSA should strengthen the clarity of its communication, improve the accessibility and usability of the information in its portfolio of communication tools focusing particularly on its website and other online communication tools and increase efforts to understand and meet target audience needs and expectations.

4.2 EFSA should seek to better understand public perception regarding the independence of its scientific advice and strengthen its dialogue with interested parties on the measures undertaken to ensure the independence of its scientific work. EFSA should also ensure effective communication to stakeholders and the public at large in this regard.

4.3 EFSA should ensure that its role as EU risk assessor supporting the decision making process is clearly communicated and understood

Recommendation to EU Institutions, Member States and other key stakeholders

4.4 EU institutions, Member States and other key stakeholders should support EFSA in communicating clearly its role in the European food safety system.

EFSA will describe the practical implementation of the recommendations of the Management Board in its Multiannual Plan 2014-2016. The Management Board will monitor the progress on the implementation of these recommendations in particular in the context of the annual and multiannual management plan life cycles.

Adopted in Parma on 13 December 2012

For EFSA’s Management Board

SIGNED

Sue Davies
Chair of the Management Board