



# Governance, Openness and Transparency

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# Introduction

The EFSA founding Regulation EC 178/2002 states that EFSA must: ***“[...] provide the Community institutions and the Member States with the best possible scientific opinions in all cases provided for by Community legislation and on any question within its mission”.***

- There is **no legal obligation** for EFSA to provide scientific advice and guidance directly to industry.

# EFSA's Core Values

- This principle of independence implies independence from any external economic or political interests, but also from bias related to political, economic, social, philosophical, ethical, or any other non-scientific considerations.
- Nonetheless, there is agreement that EFSA needs to have access to top quality science. Top class scientists should not be automatically excluded from working with EFSA solely on the basis that they may have contacts with top scientific leaders in industry.

# Organisational Governance (I)

- To enhance the quality of a scientific opinion, EFSA may require additional information from individuals, petitioners or other stakeholders for the completion of a scientific opinion.
  - In such cases in particular, invited face-to-face meetings, consultations or hearings might be necessary (for example) and should apply in compliance with the fundamental requirements of ensuring full independence and autonomy of EFSA's panels.
  - It should not be assumed that the independence of EFSA would be compromised by such bilateral meetings.
  - Guidelines should be drawn up by EFSA so as to allow such engagement with stakeholders, including industry, to take place at the stakeholder's request.

# Organisational Governance (II)

- Where an opinion is prepared in light of information submitted by a stakeholder in response to specific regulatory requirements, EFSA should seek comments from the applicant on a draft of the opinion, and submit those comments to the Panel before the opinion is adopted.

# Development of Methodologies

- The application of high standards of scientific processes and standards is necessary for EFSA to develop good risk assessment practices and methodologies:
  - EFSA's policy should include provisions to ensure that such risk assessment practices and methodologies are executed in a harmonised and consistent way.

# EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels

- What are the general rules established for the decision-making process to adopt an output of the Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and Working Groups?
  - How is a consensus reached?
  - Is there a quorum?
  - When is a majority decision taken?



# Organisational structure

- There is an urgent need for clarity and transparency as to what is in the „implementing document’
  - Precision is needed as to whether non-profit science organisations would be considered a conflict of interest for scientists working in EFSA panels.

# Conclusions

Clear, science-based opinions by EFSA of the highest level must lead to:

- Scientific certainty for both industry and consumers to ensure:
  - Peace of mind for consumers; and
  - A transparent and level-playing operating field for industry.
- Access to the scientific expertise of EFSA to guide innovation and provide consumers with safe products offering benefits to health.