

Parma, 28/11/2013

EFSA Stakeholder Consultative Group on Emerging Risks

Background

Networking with stakeholders, MSs, EU and international agencies is seen as a key step in developing the effectiveness of the emerging risks identification process¹.

The EFSA's Management Board formed a Stakeholder Consultative Platform (SCP) in 2005 and renewed its Terms of Reference in 2010². The current platform is composed of EU-wide stakeholder organizations working in the food chain and organizations representing consumers, food and feed operators, food industry, food trade and NGOs.

A Stakeholder Consultative Group on Emerging Risks (StaCG-ER) was established in 2010, which worked with EFSA on emerging risks. The mandate of this Group expired in May 2011 and its report on Stakeholders' activities in the area of emerging risks was published in June 2011³. The report confirms that the identification of emerging risks is an essential part of the daily activities in food and feed sector organisations and is undertaken through regular monitoring of various data sources combined with information received through organisations' networks. A common approach among stakeholders is the use of multidisciplinary expert groups to discuss the relevance and importance of signals of potential emerging risks.

In the same report, it is also suggested that in order to strengthen the capability to identify emerging risks of public health importance, a multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach is essential for both vision and interpretation, as is a means for sharing information and accumulated knowledge. Therefore, the development of a common language with shared definitions, terminology, and methodology is necessary.

A second "StaCG-ER" was established in 2012 and its mandate will expire at the end of 2013. Recognising the activities of the second StaCG-ER as productive, the Stakeholder Consultative Platform recommended EFSA to renew the mandate of the StaCG-ER.

From experience gained trialling EFSA's process for identifying emerging risks⁵, it is clear that an important data source are stakeholders. The group has provided useful information for issues raised by the Advisory Forum and by the Member States Network on Emerging Risks (EREN) as well as raising issues that EREN has found important to follow up on.

In order to continue to exchange in a constructive way with stakeholders on both signals of potential emerging risks and also on data concerning potential identified

¹ Piloting a process for emerging risks identification: lessons learnt and next steps;
<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/310e.htm>

² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/consultativeplatform/docs/ctor.pdf>

³ Outcome of the stakeholders' consultative group on emerging risks.
<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/fr/supporting/doc/170e.pdf>

risks, it is proposed that the Scientific Committee and Emerging Risks Unit (SCER) should renew the mandate of the StaCG-ER.

Terms of reference

The StaCG-ER will be coordinated by SCER that will also provide the chair, rapporteur and secretariat and be responsible for drafting the minutes of the meetings, the report of the StaCG-ER, and reporting back to the SCP. The StaCG-ER shall meet two times in one year period.

StaCG-ER members shall:

- present to the group information and data concerning identified emerging risks and/or signals, the methods used to detect them and for the analysis of the collected data;
- give access to these data and justify the reported emerging risks/signals based on scientific evidence. The data shall be presented and assessed using a standard briefing note template developed by EFSA;
- share potential signals in every meeting as a way to identify issues for which briefing notes can be developed;
- share with the group issues identified through their own scanning systems;
- provide additional information on on-going issues discussed by the previous StaCG-ER.

In addition, the group could focus on specific areas, such as emerging food production technologies.

In order to strengthen the overall emerging risks identification process at EFSA, presentations of the activities of StaCG-ER could be made to EFSA's Network on emerging risks (EREN) and to the Scientific Committee's Standing Working Group on emerging risks and vice versa.

As emerging risks may concern all areas of the food and feed chain, a group of approximately 15 to 20 experts with a wide range of expertise shall be selected from nominations made by the EFSA SCP to participate in the StaCG-ER.

The experts shall be selected on the basis of their expertise and their strong motivation.

The StaCG-ER shall be composed of a group representing, as far as possible, the whole food chain, from primary production to retail. In particular, experts shall be selected according to the following:

- Expertise in current and novel industrial and agricultural practices, in food and feed technology, primary production, food and feed import, novel foods, food and feed additives, food supplements, food contact materials;
- Expertise and participation in ongoing activities in the area of emerging risks identification.

The selection will also ensure a balanced representation of both industry and consumer concerns. Members of the first and/or second StaCG-ER are welcome to participate in the group to be established.

Scope in EFSA's work and outsourcing programme

SCER will present StaCG-ER activities in the SCP, Advisory Forum and Scientific Committee of EFSA on a regular basis.

The work of StaCG-ER is integrated into EFSA's emerging risks identification process. The group is consulted to add information and further elaborate the briefing

notes that describe potential emerging issues, as well as raising new emerging issues that are then entered into the emerging risks identification process.

IT impact

No IT impact is foreseen.

Timeline

- i) February 2014: composition of the StaCG-ER to be finalised.
- ii) March-May 2014: first meeting of the StaCG-ER to discuss about the EFSA, SCER activities on emerging risks and adopt the work plan for 2014-2015. Presentation of emerging signals/issues identified by the members of the StaCG-ER through their own networks or organisation they represent and by EFSA.
- iii) September-November 2014: second meeting of the StaCG-ER to discuss emerging risks/signals and review the report of the StaCG-ER. The report should be finalised by February 2015.

A third meeting could be hold, if the group sees the necessity, in order to address the number of issues presented.

The points ii and iii to be repeated in 2015.

After the second year of operation, the usefulness of this activity will be reviewed.

Expected deliverables (e.g. scientific output, scientific article)

- Feedback of members on issues presented by EFSA and by StaCG-ER.
- Report on signals reported by the StaCG-ER, the data exchanged latest developments in the area of emerging risks i.e. methods, data sources and drivers of emerging risks not described in the report of the first StaCG-ER.

Publication plan:

It is proposed to publish the StaCG-ER reports of 2014 and 2015 as soon as they are finalised and approved.