	Standard Operating Procedure Social Research and Advice
Public	

Scope	Includes: Description of processes and steps followed by EFSA when undertaking social research and providing social science advice as part of the social science function established in COMCO, in line with the Social Science Roadmap and the EPA charter E09.04 - Social research and advice. Excludes: Detailed process followed for “Feedback collection mechanism” described as part of C04.02 Quality management
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Special Requirements	This procedure is a controlled document maintained by Quality Management. It may not be deleted without comparable controls.
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Responsibilities	Social Scientist, COM unit, COMCO HoD
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Abbreviations and definitions


CEN	Communication Experts Network
COM	Communication Unit
COMCO	Communication, Engagement and Cooperation Department
HoD	Head of Department
HoU	Head of Unit
MT	Management Team
WIN	Work Instruction Note
WG	Working Group (composition defined in E09.04)

Procedure


Step 1	1 Identifying a social research question
Social scientists, COM HoU	1.1 The objectives of EFSA’s work in terms of social research are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To account for societal factors and monitor risk perceptions in the area of food safety; • To understand views of institutional partners and stakeholders regarding EFSA’s work.

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	<p>The social research questions that are set to meet the above objectives are identified: i) directly by the Content and Social Science Team in case of research on a topic of strategic relevance to EFSA; ii) at request of a Scientific Unit if research is to complement the existing work on a scientific output; iii) in consultation with institutional partners (e.g. Member States, EU institutions/agencies) in case of research that informs risk communication efforts at EU and national level.</p> <p>1.2 COM HoU approves the social research question based on information provided by the social scientist regarding the relevance and alignment of the proposal to the Social Science Roadmap.</p> <p>1.3 Upon research question approval, the social scientist(s):</p> <p>1.3.1 Propose research execution method choosing between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Direct implementation (research is undertaken directly by EFSA); or ii) Procurement (e.g. research is undertaken by an external contractor); <p>1.3.2 Discuss the research question and the method through the “feedback collection mechanism” (C04.02_Quality management).</p>
Step 2	2 Social research design and execution
Social Scientists, WG Social Research Methods and Advice	<p>2.1 Once social research question has been approved by the COM HoU and discussed through the “feedback collection mechanism” process, the social scientist(s):</p> <p>2.1.1 Presents the research question to the EFSA “WG on Social Research Methods and Advice” at the first available meeting following COM HoU approval;</p>

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	<p>and</p> <p>2.1.2 Collates WG input into research design, for example drafting of survey questions or preparation of interview guide for qualitative research.</p> <p>2.1.3 WG input into research design is supplemented by a review performed by EFSA colleagues in case of research in response to Scientific Unit request or by established EFSA networks (e.g. Communication Experts Network) in case of social research set to inform risk communication.</p> <p>2.2 Once comments received by the reviewers have been collated, the final research design is presented for endorsement by the WG.</p> <p>2.3 Upon WG endorsement, the social scientist(s) proceeds with the following research execution methods:</p> <p>2.3.1 Makes arrangements for using a qualitative or quantitative research method (survey, focus group, literature review, discourse analysis or any other applicable method) in case of direct implementation;</p> <p>or</p> <p>2.3.2 Proceeds to procurement through an external contractor.</p>
Step 3	3 Social science advice
Social scientists, COM HoU, COMCO HoD	<p>3.1 The social scientist(s) manage the research to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant parties (e.g. EFSA Communication Officers, Scientific units, Communication Experts Network or other institutional partners) are consulted and review the research progress and findings at intervals during the process; • Research is finalised within timelines agreed with COM HoU in case of direct implementation; • All deliverables are on time as per the contract signed with the external contractor in case of procurement.

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	<p>3.2 In case of procurement, all deliverables are cleared by COM HoU, or if not within the HoU Delegation of Authority, COMCO HoD. (See SOP_009_S_Approving Supporting Publications)</p> <p>3.3 As findings of the research become available, the social scientist(s) will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret the research findings and share a summary of the findings with COM officers responsible for development of related communication outputs (see WIN SOP 031C_02 Identification and Development of Communications Content); • Inform the Engagement and Cooperation Unit of the research findings, focusing on insights that can inform existing and future engagement activities; • Share the findings with the relevant Scientific Unit and/or its Working Groups, where research is linked to a specific scientific output and requested by the Unit/WG; • Discuss the research findings and implications for EFSA with the EFSA “WG on Social Research Methods and Advice” and seek endorsement of the final research report. <p>3.4 The social scientist(s) may also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the development infographics to be shared within the networks of institutional partners, upon request from EFSA Communication Officers; • Organise an info session for all EFSA staff to present the research findings in case of research on a topic of strategic relevance to EFSA. <p>3.5 In addition to points under 3.3 and 3.4., COMCO HoD will approve publication of research undertaken through procurement process on EFSA website or in the EFSA Journal.</p>
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