1. Mandate and tasks

1.1. The Stakeholder Consultative Platform (hereinafter referred to as the Platform) is composed of EU-wide stakeholder organisations operating in the food chain and active within the mandate of EFSA covering in particular food and feed safety, nutrition, animal health and welfare, plant health. The Platform will assist EFSA with the development of its overall relations and policy with regard to stakeholder involvement with tasks and mission by providing a forum for regular dialogue and exchanges.

1.2. The Platform will offer advice to the EFSA’s Executive Director with regard to general issues regarding the work of EFSA and, in particular, the impact of its work on stakeholders. Operating in relation to the competences of EFSA, the Platform will:
   a) Comment on EFSA’s work program and annual management plan;
   b) Comment on the EFSA’s stakeholders annual work plan;
   c) Provide EFSA with feedback on the effectiveness of its policies in responding to stakeholders’ concerns;
   d) Alert EFSA to key issues of current or emerging stakeholders’ concern, as well as concerns on possible emerging and existing risks;
   e) Advise on risk assessment methodologies, including the topics for consultation and the best way to organize such consultations;
   f) Provide information and cooperation at the technical level;
   g) Set up objectives to be achieved by the Platform during its mandate;
   h) Advise on communication to different target groups.

2. Composition of the Platform

2.1. The members of the Platform shall be organizations being significantly represented at European level, fulfilling the following criteria:

   a) Representing stakeholders’ interests in the following categories:
      i. Consumer associations and NGOs representing consumer interests;
      ii. Farmers and primary processors including feed processors;
      iii. Food industry including raw material processors;
      iv. Trade and Catering (wholesale, retail, hotel, restaurants, etc);
      v. NGOs involved in health protection, animal welfare, environment.

   b) To be an EU wide organization with members distributed in the majority of the EU Member States; representing at least 60 % of the EU population;

   c) To be an organization that has been established since at least 5 years;
d) To be an organization having legitimate and general interests covered and represented by the EFSA’s remit;
e) To be a major organization in its field of competence, representing relevant areas within EFSA’s remit; playing a crucial role for the area represented, and securing significant expertise in the fields covered by the EFSA’s remit.

2.2. The Platform shall be composed of a balanced representation of the categories above, avoiding participation of organizations covering the same areas or overlapping areas.

2.3. In order to facilitate active participation and effective discussions, the total number of organizations should be no more than 24.

2.4. Representatives of members’ organizations attending the Platform meetings represent their organizations and are not attending the Platform in their individual capacity. Should some categories foreseen in the criterion 2.1, be under represented in the Platform, EFSA may grant to the organization/s belonging to that category to be represented by more than one delegate. Members of EFSA’s Management Board, Advisory Forum, Scientific Committee and Panels as well as staff cannot be appointed as members of the Platform. EFSA’s staff will participate in meetings of the Platform as necessary to ensure a proper exchange of information and dialogue, as well giving support to the Platform by providing the Secretariat.

2.5. The Terms of reference and membership of the Platform will be reviewed on a regular basis by EFSA’s Management Board according to the principles of transparency, openness and equal treatment. In order to guarantee a maximum level of transparency, the renewal of the Platform membership will be organized through a public call for interests.

3. Chairperson

3.1. The Chair will be designated by the members of the Platform from among its members. The Chair will be elected by a vote by simple majority of members and appointed for a period of 3 years. The Chair can be re-elected following the same procedure. Two Vice-chairs will be appointed following the same procedure and for the same period of time with also the possibility to be re-elected following the same procedure. The holding of the office of Vice-chair does not preclude member organizations from subsequently holding the office of Chair. In performing their duties, the Chair and Vice-chairs should ensure integrity, impartiality and independence of any interest.

3.2. The functions of Chair and vice-Chairs are held by the elected delegates in their personal capacity. If an elected delegate holding such function is substituted by his/her organization, then the procedure for the election of Chair/vice Chair should be repeated.

4. Meetings

4.1. The Platform will meet on average three times per year. Additional meetings might be organized if required. The meetings will be normally held in Parma.

4.2. The outcome of the meetings will be made publicly available and reported to the Board.

4.3. Members of the Platform shall attend the Platform meetings with assiduity. In case of non compliance with the duty of the assiduous participation, the members of the Platform concerned may be dismissed by the EFSA Management Board.

4.4. Other organizations or individuals (including representatives of organizations of non-EU Member States) can attend the meeting upon registration on the EFSA website as observers. Observers that register to attend the meeting can be invited to participate to the discussion. The invitation of
the observers to participate to the discussion will be issued by the EFSA following consultation with the Chair in advance of the meeting.

4.5. Meetings of the Platform do not preclude other exercises with the Platform and/or with other stakeholder organizations, public consultations, technical meetings, scientific colloquia, ad hoc meetings on specific subjects and/or any other bilateral meetings. Members of the Platform should be invited to participate in such events.

4.6. EFSA may set up Platform working groups with Platform members on its own initiative or in response to a proposal of the members. The working groups will be set up on the basis of a specific remit of horizontal nature and will provide preparatory work to be reported back to the Platform.

5. Working methods

5.1. The Platform is an advisory group and its recommendations are not binding on EFSA or its Executive Director. The Platform will not take decisions on behalf of EFSA nor speak on behalf of EFSA or take views that could be construed or perceived as a reflection of the official position of the Authority.

5.2. The EFSA Secretariat of the Platform will draft agendas and the minutes in collaboration with the Chair and Vice Chairs. It will also distribute documents and liaise with the participants with regards to practical arrangements for the effective operation of the Platform.

5.3. Any papers tabled in the Platform, as well as the minutes of the meetings, will be circulated to members of EFSA’s Management Board for their information.

5.4. Agendas, documents, minutes and any other relevant information about the Platform will be placed on EFSA’s website. EFSA will be responsible for updating its website regularly.

6. Funding

6.1. The costs of participation in the meetings of the Platform will be borne by each individual organization.

6.2. Exceptionally, EFSA may contribute to financing the costs of those organizations that could not otherwise afford to participate in meetings of the Platform. Financial contributions may only be awarded to European organizations which are non-governmental, non-profit making, independent of industry, commercial and business. and have as their primary objectives and activities the promotion and protection of the health and safety of consumers.

6.3. Requests for financial support will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will need to be properly documented by the requesting organization.