

Concept paper on the Advisory Body on Interest Management

I. Background

1. In line with the rules implementing EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes regarding Declarations of Interests (DoI), the **Committee on Conflicts of Interests (CCI)** was established by the Executive Director (ED) in February 2012. The CCI is an internal committee in charge of providing comprehensive advice to the ED on independence related issues. CCI is composed of the EFSA's Heads of Departments Science and the Head of the Legal and Regulatory Affairs Unit.

2. According to Article 24 of the revised rules implementing EFSA's Policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes regarding Declarations of Interests (DoI) of July 2014, the CCI should only execute the above mentioned function until the Management Board (MB) adopts a decision on the composition and terms of reference of a specialist committee with the competence to review and advise on independence related matters.

3. This concept paper proposes for consideration of the MB certain key features of such specialist committee (working title **Advisory Body on Interest Management – "AIM"**). The overall objective being that AIM would deal with independence matters of general importance or concern. In this respect, the creation of AIM represents a further refinement of EFSA's independence system since it addresses the deficiencies of a purely internal advisory body such as the CCI.

II. Proposed mandate and composition of AIM

Upon initiative of the MB or by his own initiative, the ED may seek the advice of the **Advisory Body on Interest Management (AIM)**. AIM should provide advice on overarching aspects and approaches aimed at fostering the implementation of EFSA's independence policy. Additionally, AIM should be in charge of the regular review of systemic aspects of the interest management governance of EFSA and of processing regular compliance and veracity checks of DoI screenings performed by EFSA staff. AIM should issue opinions, without prejudice to the decision-making power of the ED. AIM should be established by the MB and consist of MB and EFSA staff members as well as external academics (e.g. social scientists, lawyers, psychologists). In addition, Member State or Union agencies' representatives could be considered as well. The AIM members should be appointed by the MB, based on a reasoned proposal by the ED. AIM shall meet, by default, at least once a year, and more often if appropriate. To ensure transparency, AIM shall prepare an annual report to the MB and to the ED on its activities. The report and AIM's advice shall be published on EFSA's website.

III. Next steps

The MB is asked to consider the concept of such Advisory Body as described above together with the time line of its implementation.

Dec. 2015: Discussion of the AIM concept by the Management Board

Feb. 2016: Stakeholders consultation

- Mar. 2016: Proposal to the Management Board to adopt the AIM's Terms of Reference
- Jun. 2016: Appointment of AIM's members by the Management Board based on a reasoned proposal of the ED
- 2nd half 2016: AIM's first meeting