SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND EMERGING RISKS UNIT

Scientific Committee

Minutes of the 97th Plenary meeting

Held on 18 -19-20 February 2020

EFSA, Parma (Italy)

(Agreed on 17 March 2020)

Participants

- **Scientific Committee Members:**

  Simon More (chair), Diane Benford (vice chair)[1], Vasileios Bampidis, Claude Bragard, Thorhallur Halldorsson, Antonio Hernandez-Jerez, Kostas Koutsoumanis, Kyriaki Machera, Hanspeter Naegeli[2], Søren Saxmose Nielsen, Josef Schlatter, Vittorio Silano, Dominique Turck, Maged Younes, Heather Wallace.

- **European Commission:**

  Marina Marini (DG SANTE DDG.2.D1)

- **EFSA:**

  - **Executive Directorate:** Marta Hugas.
  - **Risk Assessment and Scientific Assistance Department (RASA):** Juliane Kleiner.
  - **Communication Engagement and cooperation Department (COMCO)**: Barbara Gallani (only for agenda item 6.3)
  - **Scientific Committee and Emerging Risks Unit (SCER):** Tobin Robinson, Daniela Maurici, Djien Liem, Bernard Bottex, Jean-Lou Dorne, Andrea Gervelmeyer, Caroline Merten[1], Agnes Rortais, Reinhilde Schoonjans[2], Jose Tarazona, Ana Afonso.
  - **Assessment and Methodology Support Unit (AMU):** Laura Martino, Elisa Aiassa, Didier Verloo (only for agenda item 4.4).
  - **Genetically Modified Organisms Unit (GMO)** Elisabeth Waigmann, Yann Devos (only for agenda item 6.3 and 4.2).
  - **Pesticides Peer Review Unit (PREV):** Maria Arena (only for agenda item 6.4)

[1] Via webconference
[2] Only on 19th February

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- Others:

  Hearing experts: Pier Sandro Cocconcelli (chair WG synthetic biology and member of the CEP Panel), (only for agenda item 4.2); Christophe Topping (member WG on MUST-B and Vice-Chair of the PPR Panel) (only for agenda item 6.4); Diana Di Gioia, Carmen Pelaez (member of the NDA Panel), Yolanda Sanz (member of the FEEDAP panel) for the agenda item 6.3.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. Apologies were received from Susanne Hougaard Bennekou (vice chair of the Scientific Committee), Dieter Schrenk, chair of the Panel on contaminants (CONTAM), replaced by the vice chair Heather Wallace.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Declarations of Interest of Scientific Committee/Scientific Panel Members

In accordance with EFSA's Policy on Independence[3] and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management[4], EFSA screened the Annual Declarations of Interest filled out by the members invited to the present meeting. No Conflicts of Interest related to the issues discussed in this meeting have been identified during the screening process, and no interests were declared orally by the members at the beginning of this meeting.

4. Scientific topic(s) for discussion

4.1. Draft technical report on "Review of current EFSA approaches for the Derivation of Health Based Guidance Values (HBGV) for food additives, other regulated products and nutrients" (EFSA-Q-2019-00505)[5]

Some nutrients are also used in products subject to regulatory assessment, e.g. phosphates or chlorates as additives, copper in pesticides. The report is providing a state of the art of the current approaches used by the EFSA relevant Panels for setting health-based guidance values.

The Scientific Committee went through the document, making a number of suggestions to improve its content. The document will be updated accordingly.

A draft statement discussing the recommendations on how EFSA Panels should derive health-based guidance values in a harmonised/consistent manner for food additives and other regulated products that are also nutrients will be presented for first discussion at the next Plenary meeting. The

[3] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf
[4] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/competing_interest_management_17.pdf
[5] http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00505

Scientific Committee recommended annexing the technical report to the Statement in order to produce one single document before it goes for public consultation.

4.2. Draft opinion "Evaluation of existing guidelines for their adequacy to the molecular characterisation and environmental risk assessment of genetically modified microorganisms obtained through synthetic biology. (EFSA-Q-2018-00921)[6]

Pier Sandro Cocconcelli presented the draft opinion that was updated taking into account the comments made by the Scientific Committee during its previous Plenary meeting. The Scientific Committee went through the various sections making additional suggestions for improvement. The Scientific Committee endorsed the document for public consultation, once the suggestions for improvement have been implemented. The public consultation will be launched probably in the end of March.

4.3. Draft guidance on aneugenicity assessment (EFSA-Q-2019-00262)[7]

Diane Benford presented the draft guidance intended to complement the current SC guidance on genotoxicity testing. The guidance is discussing what is the most appropriate *in vivo* follow up for substances that are found to be aneugenic *in vitro*, and how to assess risk to human health for a substance exhibiting aneugenicity.

The Scientific Committee reviewed the document section by section, making suggestions for improvement. The document was endorsed for public consultation that will be launched by mid March.

4.4. Draft framework for protocol development for EFSA's non-application scientific assessments (EFSA-Q-2019-00256)[8]

Laura Martino presented the draft framework that was updated to take account of the comments made by the Scientific Committee during its last Plenary meeting. The Scientific Committee went section by section before endorsing the document. The document will be published in the EFSA's website and in the Knowledge Junction https://zenodo.org/communities/efsa-kj/?page=1&size=20) repository presumably in March. A pilot (implementation) phase will start in May 2020, allowing the various Panels to test the framework and report back on the experience for possible further improvement of the document.

5. Feedback from the Scientific Committee/Scientific Panels, EFSA, The European Commission

[6] http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2018-00921
[7] http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00262
[8] http://registerofquestions.efsa.europa.eu/roqFrontend/questionLoader?question=EFSA-Q-2019-00256

5.1 Feedback from Panels

The various Panel chairs provided feedback on the 3 following horizontal topics: (1) Challenges in the implementation of SC cross cutting guidance; (2) Methodologies development; (3) Risk assessment with cross cutting issues.

Food Contact Materials, Enzymes and Processing Aids (CEP) Panel

The Chair of the Panel reported on the adoption of several opinions on enzymes and recycling of food packaging materials during the last Plenary meeting that took place earlier this month.

Nutrition, Novel Foods and Food Allergens (NDA) Panel

The Chair of the Panel provided the Scientific Committee with an overview of the NDA Panel remit and activities. The Chair highlighted the mandate on dietary reference values (DRVs) for sodium that was used to test some of the horizontal methodological guidance documents (protocol development, expert knowledge elicitation, characterisation of uncertainty in risk assessment). The opinion on sodium's DRV is the last one of 34 nutrients and 10 years work by the Panel.

The Chair also presented the opinion on the appropriate age for the introduction of complementary foods. The Panel assessed the evidence for the benefits or adverse effects related to the introduction of complementary foods before 6 months of age. In this case again, various horizontal methodological guidance documents were used such as the one on systematic review and extensive search of the literature, on protocol development, and on data integration / weight of evidence.

In 2020, the Panel will work on tolerable upper levels for sugars; a systematic review of the literature on the effects of added sugars was performed, and food composition and food consumption databases for total, added and free sugars were developed. The draft opinion will go for public consultation end of 2020 / beginning of 2021, and the opinion is due for adoption in March 2021, after a technical meeting will be held with stakeholders.

The NDA Panel is also requested to provide an advice on the uncertainty factor to be used for Copper (two different uncertainty factors were used in previous assessments). The draft opinion will go for public consultation in March-April 2020, with the adoption due in May 2020.

Protein hydrolysate-based infant formula will be authorised in Europe only if the composition corresponds to the requirements listed in the Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/127. The NDA Panel will be asked to assess the applications and is currently preparing explanatory notes to complement the guidance published three years ago.

Regarding food allergy, the Panel is currently reviewing a notification for a permanent labelling exemption of barley starch as allergen.

The workload for health claims is reducing but the complexity of the dossiers received is increasing. Since the beginning, a total of 515 applications have been received: 292 have been assessed, 202 withdrawn, 4 are under validation and 1 is under ongoing assessment. Several botanical-related health claims are on hold.

Following the coming into force of the new Novel Food Regulation, the risk assessment is entirely done by EFSA (no pre-assessment by the Member States anymore). New food categories have been introduced, e.g. insect, traditional foods. The NUTRI Unit modified its way of working to cope with the workload. About 100 dossiers are expected for 2020, with the objective to finalise 40 opinions this year.

Finally, the Chair underlined some of the challenges for the Panel: high workload and "new" novel foods, highly complex and sensitive mandates (e.g. sugars), very low quality of infant studies for the mandate on hydrolysate protein-based formula, and preparedness and adaptation in relation to the implementation of the new transparency regulation. The Panel is exploring new ways of working: the further use of outsourcing, peer-review process by selected Panel members before adoption, increased use of web-plenary meetings.

Food Additives and Flavourings (FAF) Panel

The Chair of the Panel informed the participants that the new mandate for the assessment of titanium dioxide will require to use the Scientific Committee guidance on risk assessment of nanomaterials (link here). The information provided on possible genotoxicity may also require the involvement of the EFSA cross-cutting WG on genotoxicity in the assessment.

The Panel is currently updating its guidance for the assessment of smoke flavourings. The new guidance document will contain a specific section on uncertainty characterisation, adapting therefore the SC guidance on uncertainty characterisation to the specific assessment needs for these substances. The finalisation of the smoke flavouring guidance is expected by March 2021.

Plant Health (PLH) Panel

The Chair of the Panel informed the SC about the international year of Plant Health and the communication activities in which the Panel and Unit have been involved. The SC guidance on uncertainty characterisation was presented during the last Plenary meeting of the Panel, discussing its implementation for the full pest risk assessments; a specific training will be organised next to the November 2020 Plenary meeting for the Panel members.

Additives and Products or Substances used in Animal Feed (FEEDAP) Panel

The Chair of the Panel provided the Scientific Committee with an overview of the FEEDAP remit and activities. The Panel is requested to assess the safety and efficacy of additives (e.g. technological, sensory, nutritional, coccidiostats) and products (e.g. feed materials) used in animal feed. The assessment should consider the target animals, the user/worker, the environment and the consumer.

Significant work was done these last years for updating existing guidance documents with the objectives to reduce their number, clarify better the requirements for the assessment, reduce animal testing and harmonise the approaches as much as possible.

Around 1000 opinions were delivered during the period 2003-2020. The Panel completed the re-evaluation for most categories of additives and developed/updated 30 guidance documents. Some of the work has been done in cooperation with other Panels (e.g. BIOHAZ, CONTAM, AHAW) and/or interacting with stakeholders (info sessions, ad-hoc meetings with the industry, webinars and discussion groups), Member States competent Authorities and sister agencies (e.g. EMA).

In 2020, the Panel aims at finalising the re-evaluation of the approximately 60 additives pending, adopt a pragmatic approach for guidance renewal and work on developing a pragmatic approach to the assessment of user safety. The FEED Unit, in close collaboration with the Panel adopted new ways of working which explain in part the increased efficiency.

Finally, the Chair informed the participants about an info session on feed additives held in November 2019 for applicants (link here); more than 120 stakeholders participated.

Plant Protection Products and their Residues (PPR) Panel

The Chair of the Panel informed the Scientific Committee about the adoption of the opinion on the genotoxic potential of triazine amine. The SC cross-cutting WG genotoxicity was consulted to provide clarification to some points and the advice has been considered by the panel before adoption of the opinion.

The Panel received a new mandate for the assessment of a *Pseudomonas chlororaphis* strain used as a potent biocontrol agent against seed-borne diseases of cereal crops. The organism is producing a genotoxic metabolite, which may require the involvement of the SC cross-cutting WG on genotoxicity for the assessment. Also the Panel will advise on the potential translocation of the microorganism and metabolite to edible parts of the plants.

The Panel has started working on the development of adverse outcome pathways (AOP) for pesticides active substances with endocrine disruptor properties. Four AOP are foreseen to be developed. A procurement will be launched to review the literature available.

Finally, the Chair informed the participants that he will update the Scientific Committee on the development of integrated approaches to testing and assessment (IATA) case studies on developmental neurotoxicity risk assessment at the next Plenary meeting in April.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) Panel

No report back in the absence of Panel Representatives.

Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) Panel

The Panel has started working on the update of its guidance on good practice in conducting scientific assessments in animal health using modelling, and its guidance on risk assessment for animal welfare.

AHAW will collaborate with the BIOHAZ Panel for a scientific opinion for the listing and categorisation of transmissible animal diseases caused by bacteria resistant to antimicrobials, in the framework of the Animal Health Law.

Panel on Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ)

The Chair informed the Scientific Committee that the Panel has started implementing the guidance documents on uncertainty characterisation and expert knowledge elicitations for its assessments. Feedback will be provided to the Scientific Committee after the various working groups have reported back on their experience.

Panel on contaminants (CONTAM)

The vice-chair of the Panel reported back on the training on uncertainty characterisation provided to the Panel. The Panel is preparing a checklist of issues to consider when characterising uncertainties in the assessment of a contaminant.

The Scientific Committee was informed about the imminent publication for public consultation of the opinion on the risk for human health related to the presence of perfluoroalkyl substances in food.

5.2 Update on WGs activities

- **Cross-cutting WG Nanotechnologies**

Agenda point not addressed due to lack of time

- **Cross cutting WG Benchmark Dose**

Agenda point not addressed due to lack of time

- **Cross-cutting WG Mixtox 2**

Agenda point not addressed due to lack of time

- **Cross-cutting WG Genotoxicity (M-2019-0091)**

Agenda point not addressed due to lack of time

- **Cross-cutting WG Uncertainty**

Agenda point not addressed due to lack of time

- **WG Non Monotonic Dose Response (NMDR) (M-2019-0166)**

Agenda point not addressed due to lack of time

- **Beeswax WG (M-2019-0061)**

Agenda point not addressed due to lack of time

- **WG MUST-B and EU Bee Partnership (M-2018-0155)**

Agenda point not addressed due to lack of time

- **WG Compendium of Botanicals (M-2012-0145)**

Agenda point not addressed due to lack of time

- **WG on Epidemiological Studies (M-2019-0073)**

The Scientific Committee was provided with an update on the draft guidance on appraisal, integration and use of epidemiological studies in risk assessment. Due to reprioritisation of tasks, the deadlines related to the guidance development had to be adjusted. The objective is now to have the public consultation of the draft guidance in May-June 2021, with the adoption due in September 2021.

The Scientific Committee was informed that the section on modelling of epidemiological data will be co-drafted with the EFSA cross-cutting working group on benchmark dose during the second half of the year. The proposed outline and structure of section 4.4 on the use of epidemiological evidence for specific scientific assessment questions will be presented at the June 2020 Plenary meeting. Members of the Scientific Committee were invited to provide further details on their needs/difficulties regarding use of epidemiological evidence in their risk assessments before the next plenary meeting. The Scientific Committee was informed that additional explanations related to the Bradford Hill viewpoints on causality have been drafted by the WG. Participants were invited to review this section prior to the next plenary meeting and provide suggestions for improvement via email.

6. Other topics for information and discussion

6.1. Extension of current Panel mandate, mutual assessment of EFSA staff and experts and expert compensation scheme

The Head of the RASA department informed the participants about the changes introduced by the new Transparency Regulation (link here) and the implications for the Scientific Committee and the Panels. The mandate of the Panels and Scientific Committee will be extended until June 2024 to allow for the appointment of the new Management Board. Members of the Scientific Committee were invited to confirm their agreement with the extension of their mandate by end of this month. In addition, the members were also informed about the increase in expert indemnities and the expert mutual assessment and timelines.

6.2 Update on the EFSA strategy 2021-2027

Ana Afonso presented an update on the EFSA Strategy 2021-2027 definition process. The outcome of the discussion with the Management Board on the strategic foundation of EFSA (vision, mission, values, who we are, who we work with, how we work) and its strategic directions were presented, as well as the results of the strategic directions survey filled-in by EFSA Scientific Committee Experts. Following up on these, strategic objectives will be translated into operational objectives with expected outcomes and key activities.

Three strategic objectives were identified:

- Ensure fit for purpose scientific advice through open dialogue
- Develop knowledge capacity for regulatory science
- Ensure efficient governance and services.

A revised content of the strategic foundation based on the various feedback received will be presented to the Management Board on 18 March 2020 as well as the strategic objectives, its expected impact and operational objectives with expected outcome. The EFSA Strategy 2027 will then be subject to a public consultation during the month of April 2020, with the aim to get the Strategy endorsed by the Management Board in June 2020. A strategy detailed implementation and monitoring plan will be prepared for endorsement by the Management board in December 2020.

Suggestion was made to detail further the meaning for EFSA of some of the concepts presented in the Strategy, e.g. accountability, sustainability.

Update on the future of risk assessment (RA) in EFSA

Tobin Robinson reported back on an EFSA internal Task Force aiming at contributing to the development of the EFSA Strategy 2021-2027. Three reflection papers were prepared in the areas of chemical, environmental and biological risk assessment, focussing on scientific considerations: What are the existing challenges, what risk assessment capabilities are we missing and what will be needed in the future? A provisional list of themes was presented. The Scientific Committee will be consulted on these three documents in March, with a discussion planned at the April Plenary meeting. The content of these documents will then be integrated in the EFSA Strategy, and used more specifically for the implementation and monitoring plan of the Strategy.

6.2. Thematic discussion on microbiome

This half-day workshop was organised to provide the participants with an overview of the role of the microbiome in the gut and in the soil. The contribution of the microbiome in nutrition and health is subject of ongoing research and is one of the topics considered for the EFSA Science strategy.

Yolanda Sanz introduced how the gut microbiome establishes a mutualistic relationship with its host. The breakdown of this mutualistic symbiosis leads to a number of adverse effects and diseases. For example: the gut microbiome has been shown to be associated with a healthy growth while its alteration leads to malnutrition. The microbiome also strongly interacts with the environment, increasing for example the resilience of the host to diseases, or increasing the flexibility of the host to changing environments. The microbiome not only interacts with foods but also with xenobiotics, leading to health/toxic effects of foods and chemicals; it also contributes to inter-individual variability and should therefore be considered in risk assessment.

A number of research activities are currently looking at the use of microbiomes to increase the sustainability, productivity and safety of food production. Possible implications for risk assessment could be the establishment of a microbiological acceptable daily intake, which implies the definition of a healthy microbiome, and the definition of reference strains representative of the human or animal microbiota. The possible integration of microbiome data in toxicokinetics and predictive risk models should then be explored.

Carmen Pelaez presented possible gut microbiome models to be used for risk (benefit) assessment. Four core areas are considered: toxicokinetics, microbial structure, microbial function and microbial-host interaction. Several *in vitro* models have been developed to assess microbial structure and function but they still need extensive validation; they also need to be associated with other *in vitro or in vivo* models to assess the microbial-host interaction. The cross-talk between the gut microbiome and its host is very host-specific, which limits the possibility of extrapolating the results to other hosts. A tiered approach using first *in vitro* models and if needed go to risk assessment with laboratory animals is proposed. The recommendation for the future is to validate further the current in vitro models, and to consider the extensive use of combined multi-omics techniques to address the complexity of the gut microbial community structure and function. Additional work is also needed to go from simple associations to final causality to use these models for risk assessment.

Diana di Gioia presented the soil microbiome composition, function and interaction with plants, and how anthropogenic factors can affect the soil microbiome composition.

There are similarities between the gut and soil microbiomes: nutrient uptake, prevention of colonisation by pathogens, modulation of host immunity, distinguish friends from foes. Soil-borne pathogens need to grow saprophytically in the rhizosphere to achieve a sufficient number to be able to infect the plant; the success of a pathogen is therefore influenced by the microbial community in the soil. Although specific functions can be attributed to specific microorganisms, it is the total microbiome and its interaction with the rhizome that affects plant health. The plant is able to select the microbiota in the rhizosphere by means of root exudates. Other factors affecting the composition of the soil microbiome are for example the soil pH, the presence of organic carbon (quality and quantity), the oxygen amount, moisture, nitrogen and phosphorous availability, temperature. The soil fertility and functionality are closely related to the soil microbiome; anthropogenic factors (use of antibiotics, heavy metals, plant protection products, GM organisms) can affect the soil microbiome. The following topics for future research were identified: improved culturing strategies for bacteria, viruses and the role in the soil microbiome, importance of horizontal gene transfer, response of microorganisms to climate change.

The Scientific Committee noted the significant differences in gut metabolic functions between test animals and humans and their implication for risk assessments: adverse effects seen in animals may not be relevant for humans, but also the other way around. The lack of information on animal / human microbiomes variations was also underlined, making it difficult to determine when such a variation becomes adverse. Moreover, most of the models presented by the second speaker are still in development/validation phase and not conventional for regulatory risk assessment; their insertion in testing strategies and their international recognition will therefore take some time. Research needs can however be identified to prepare the integration of microbiome considerations in risk/benefit assessments. The following issues/areas were identified:

- Develop case studies with selected xenobiotics
- Generate more information on the association between certain functions or interactions (e.g. metabolism, regulation of host gene expression) and certain microbiome profiles. The whole microbiome and not only the bacteria should be considered. Suggestion was made to start with the ruminants microbiomes that have been extensively studied.
- Possibility to define normal/abnormal metabolic profiles and "good/bad" microbiota
- Develop computational models for predicting toxicity from the plethora of microbiome-related data. The need for training EFSA Experts and Staff on multivariate statistics was identified.
- Develop mechanistic risk assessment, i.e. identify key events responsible for adverse outcomes. A mapping of what is happening in test species vs. humans vs. farmed animals (metabolism, gene activation, omics changes) will be needed.
- Consider the adequacy of the safety factors used traditionally when integrating the microbiome in risk assessment.

Summarising the discussion of this half-day workshop, Tobin Robinson confirmed the relevance of this topic to all EFSA Panels and the need to continue the discussion after further information/data have been generated.

Participants were informed that EFSA will launch end of February two thematic grants to gather information on the state of the art regarding gut/soil microbiomes and risk assessment, and build EFSA capacity in this area, in cooperation with the European Member States competent Authorities.

6.3. Thematic discussion on the future of environmental risk assessment: experience from the MUST B WG and proposal for a way forward

Being Chair of the MUST B Working Group and in the absence of the vice-chairs in the meeting room, Simon More transferred the chairmanship of the meeting to Tobin Robinson for this agenda point.

The purpose of this agenda point was to present the work done under the MUST B project (Multiple stressors in Bees), in particular the challenges identified due to the complexity of the system that is not specific to the honey bees but to the environmental risk assessment (ERA), as highlighted further in the presentation by Chris Topping. This discussion is also intended to feed to the EFSA Scientific Strategy, and make sure that EFSA remains up to date to provide the best possible assessments to the risk managers and address environmental concerns expressed by the public and the European Parliament.

Agnes Rortais presented the challenges made when building the holistic approach used in MUST B for environmental risk assessment, taking into account the multiple stressors in managed honey bees. The challenges are linked to the complexity of honeybee colonies (colony as superorganism vs.

individual bees), of the environment (variability of landscapes, exposure to multiple plant protection products and stressors), the genetic diversity of honey bees in the EU, and due to gaps of knowledge / lack of data on foraging, bee nutrition and toxicological data.

Chris Topping presented an alternative approach that could be considered for environmental risk assessment: considering mixture toxicity over longer time periods, use more realistic approaches to recovery, consider ecological interactions and context dependency.

A system approach including the full spectrum of stressors in time and space, and considering population resilience was applied for a holistic risk assessment in honeybees. A group of well-tested models was developed to combine multiple stressors, local context and mitigation measures. The system approach also allows for the inclusion of socio-economic perspectives in the assessment, as well as the involvement of stakeholders.

The Scientific Committee acknowledged that the system approach presented is the way forward from a methodological point of view for environmental risk assessment but underlined also the need for close interactions with the risk managers to ensure the compatibility of the proposed approach with the legislation in place and the resources available.

7. Any Other Business

7.1. Science Studies and Project Identification Office (SPIDO): a new function in EFSA

Marta Hugas introduced a new function in EFSA coming from the implementation of the new Transparency Regulation (EU) 2019/1381: EFSA will be able to commission studies with the objective of verifying evidence used in its risk assessment process; an annual budget is foreseen for grant and procurement (verifying studies) activities. On the short term, some of that money will be invested in forward thinking scientific studies and projects to integrate the latest scientific developments in regulatory science.

The Science Studies and Project Identification and Development Office (SPIDO) was created to coordinate the identification of selected scientific themes, identify where collaboration on scientific studies and projects is possible and which partenrs could contribute, capture stakeholders views on selected thematic themes, scientific studies and projects, oversee and coordinate the outsourcing of multiannual, multipartner and high value grants and procurements, and measure the transfer of scientific studies and project results into risk assessment activities.

The following future of science themes were identified: artificial intelligence in risk assessment, environmental risk assessment, mutliple chemicals risk assessment, and methodologies for non-animal testing. A consultation will be launched on these four themes, with further discussion with the Scientific Committee in April. The Scientific Committee expressed its appreciation about this initiative.

7.2. General matters arising

The Scientific Committee was provided with a document summarising relevant activities that had taken place since the last plenary meeting with focus on the activities of the EFSA Management Board, Advisory Forum (AF), Interagency and International Scientific cooperation and EFSA Stakeholders Meetings.

7.3. List of published opinions

The Scientific Committee was provided with a document containing the list of published opinions from 03 November 2019 to 30 January 2020, produced by the different panels and units, including those on applications for food contact materials, enzymes, flavourings, GMOs, health claims, novel foods and food additives. The list also includes published conclusions on the peer review of pesticides and ongoing public consultations.

7.4. Draft agenda next SC plenary

The SC was presented with an overview of the topics that will be on the agenda of the April meeting. The meeting is scheduled for the 22 April– 23 April.

98th SC Plenary: 22 April (full day) – 23 April (9.00-13.00)
99th SC Plenary: 23 June (full day) – 24 June (9.00-16.30) OPEN to observers
100th SC Plenary: 16 Sep (full day) – 17 Sep (9.00-13.00)
101st SC Plenary: 11 Nov (full day) – 12 Nov (9.00-13.00)

END OF THE MEETING