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**IT working group - terms of reference**



**European Food Safety Authority**

**EFSA ADVISORY FORUM**

**Terms of Reference - Working Group on the Practical aspects of building IT links  
between EFSA and Member States national agencies**

The Advisory Forum hereby establishes a working group to consider the practical aspects of building IT links between EFSA and Member States national agencies.

1. To discuss the feasibility of common projects and taking into consideration the requirements and technical limitations of common project. EFSA will lead the search for funding for such projects. Including projects :

To assess the practical implications of building IT tools to enable members to collaborate actively, share information, cross-reference scientific advice or any other type of documents,

To assess what means and tools will be needed and to develop technical specifications for the commissioning of studies to find appropriate solutions which can then be designed and implemented

To consider the project descriptions which may attract IDA<sup>1</sup> funding and to submit these for consideration by the IDA committee.

2. To assess the development of links between websites of the member organisations of the Forum including developing an agreed short text describing the MS entity which will be linked to the EFSA website. To agree a standard template for the data needed for this exercise.

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<sup>1</sup> Interchange of Data between Administrations (IDA) is a European Commission driven strategic initiative using advances in information and communications technology to support rapid electronic exchange of information between Member State administrations. The objective is to improve Community decision-making, facilitate operation of the internal market and accelerate policy implementation.

Its mission is to co-ordinate the establishment of trans-European telematic networks by:

Promoting implementation of sectoral networks in priority areas  
Developing network interoperability measures  
Extending network benefits to EU industry and citizens  
Co-operating with Member States authorities and Community services  
Promoting convergence towards a common telematic interface.

Initially, IDA helped set up infrastructure, establish common formats and integrate new ICT based business processes. It is now improving network services, tools, security and interoperability, opening IDA to more sectoral areas, and very soon, the EEA and EU applicant countries.

3. To develop a collaborative tool for Advisory Forum document sharing: (In order to support the Advisory Forum actions, EFSA proposes to develop and use a collaborative tool to share and elaborate documents between the Advisory Forum meetings. Depending on the degree of confidentiality of the documents shared, this tool could be deployed using Internet technology or through European-wide administrative networks (e.g. TESTA-II)).

4. To start to construct the technical collaboration between the various technical layers of the Advisory Forum organizations and EFSA. This will help to define and prepare the projects for future structured data

To consider a project which on implementation will allow the members to build a common repository in which scientific and technical information is organised, potentially in a multilingual way, and accessible to each Forum member and EFSA. To achieve these goals, it is necessary to perform a study to agree on a common classification method and language, then build the repository, identify appropriate tools to input into the system and tools to retrieve the information in a subject oriented way.

The IT working group will define in precise terms the project in two phases:

- (1) Basic Common metadata for web content: This structure will cover how to define the future repository items and identify the various parameters supporting the content of the documents.
- (2) Web services for content exchange: This collection of tools will allow the participant to upload and/or request content by using the format defined in the 'Basic Common metadata' project.

### **Timeframe and Working methods**

5. The working group will meet for the first time during 2003 and can be expected to follow up with another 4 to 5 meetings during 2004. The group will produce as part of its on going work programme, a report by the end of 2004. The working group will report back regularly to the Advisory Forum on progress. The group shall be chaired by the EFSA Director of IT.

The Terms of reference are to be open to review by the Advisory Forum after one year.