



Reputation barometer

Reference: RC/EFSA/COMMS/2016/02

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Submitted to:

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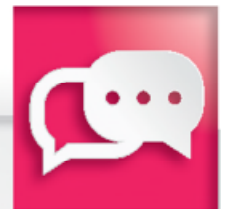
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Reputation barometer

Reference: RC/EFSA/COMMS/2016/02

A report submitted by [ICF Consulting Limited](#)

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Document Control

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Executive summary

This study was commissioned from ICF¹ by EFSA “to measure the reputation of EFSA amongst its stakeholders across the European Union. Through understanding its reputation with different stakeholders, this study will enable EFSA to identify opportunities to manage and improve its reputation.” The measurement tool developed in this assignment is presented as a ‘Reputation Barometer’ that can be used periodically by EFSA to measure its reputation. The study piloted the Barometer; results of the pilot and recommendations for its further development are provided.

ES1 Conceptual framework

The study has adopted its main concept of agency reputation from the academic literature, this concept being: “a set of symbolic beliefs about the unique or separable capacities, roles, and obligations of an organization, where these beliefs are embedded in audience networks” (Carpenter 2010a: 45). This definition has been combined with insights from the literature on corporate reputation, particularly the work of Dowling and Gardberg (2012). The framework has been structured around three elements:

- Attributes – EFSA’s reputation is composed of views on “unique or separable capacities, roles, and obligations” of EFSA. The research has identified a set of distinct attributes (capacities, roles and obligations) of EFSA and defined ways to gather views on each of them.
- Audiences – EFSA’s reputation is made of beliefs “embedded in audience networks”. The research has involved identifying and understanding better EFSA’s audiences.
- Temporality – EFSA’s reputation can be understood at different points in time: as a contemporary construct (what is EFSA’s reputation now?), as a historical construct (what reputation has EFSA gained over the years?), or as a forward looking one (what can be expected of EFSA? Can it be trusted?)

ES1.1 Attributes

The following twelve attributes were identified :

- EFSA’s approach to providing scientific advice
- The quality of EFSA’s risk assessment opinions
- The efficiency of EFSA in producing risk assessments
- The identification and characterization of emerging risks by EFSA
- EFSA’s work to harmonize risk assessment methods
- EFSA’s independence and objectivity
- The level of transparency at EFSA
- How EFSA communicate risks
- Engagement by EFSA with external partners
- EFSA’s provision of scientific and technical assistance to Member States for crisis management
- The quality of EFSA’s governance
- EFSA’s innovativeness

¹ www.icf.com

ES1.2 Audiences

The audiences of EFSA have been identified and characterised on the basis of their relationship with EFSA. A limited set of audiences has been selected for the test of the Reputation barometer. This list comprised: Member State authorities, the European Commission, the European Parliament, representative organisations from the food industry (businesses, farmers and primary producers), consumer and environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and members of the scientific community involved in regulatory risk assessments for the food chain. These audiences have been characterised in more detail in terms of their relative homogeneity and relationship towards EFSA.

ES1.3 Temporality

The concept of EFSA's reputation has been defined as anchored in the present. The Barometer has been designed to focus on EFSA's distinctive capacities, roles and obligations at the moment of the survey. The Reputation Barometer has, however, been developed to enable comparison of EFSA's reputation over time, from one year to the next. In that respect, the conceptual framework includes some consideration of how the Barometer design might need to be adjusted over time to accommodate changes in EFSA's practices and the context of its work, and how changes might affect interpretation of the data collected with this tool.

ES2 Method

The methodology for the study had four main stages.

First, the team carried out preliminary data collection, including a literature review and a media analysis (both traditional and social media channels). The literature review was instrumental in the development of the conceptual bases for the barometer. The media analysis provided initial information with which to identify the dimensions of EFSA's reputation – these could be inferred from the manner in which EFSA was discussed in traditional and social media. Ten exploratory interviews were then conducted to explore further the dimensions that mattered to stakeholders of EFSA.

Second, a survey tool was developed. This involved finalizing the list of attributes and definition of indicators for measurement of each one. The survey tool also included questions that would enable respondents to indicate the importance they granted to certain attributes relative to others, to indicate how they considered EFSA's performance to have changed in the past previous months, and to compare EFSA to its peers in the Member States and at the global level.

Third, the survey was deployed via an online platform. An appropriate approach to sampling was developed for each audience. Participants were recruited by email and with EFSA's assistance. Those respondents who agreed to be contacted after completing the survey questionnaire were invited to a short follow up interview to explore the rationale for their responses.

In the fourth stage the data were analysed. The first step was an assessment of the tool's appropriateness, based principally on the number of "don't know" answers and the response rate achieved for each of the audience groups. The analysis then involved calculation of the reputation score. This was developed from the weighted average of performance scores across all attributes, per individual and then per group. The reputation scores for each group were then interpreted jointly with the qualitative information collected through the interviews. A reputation score was not generated across all groups given the differences between these groups' relationship with EFSA, their size, the samples drawn for the study and response rates achieved.

ES3 Findings

The pilot study has generated an EFSA reputation score for each of the stakeholder groups selected. The score has been calculated on a scale from -100 (very low reputation) to 100 (very high reputation). The different groups have scored EFSA's reputation as follows:

Member authorities	State	European Commission	Businesses, farmers and primary producers	Consumers and thematic NGOs	Scientific Community
46		33	20	3	42

EFSA's reputation with **MS authorities** is high across all attributes. Members from this audience praised EFSA for its engagement with Member States and its risk communication. Areas identified for improvement are:

- Efficiency in risk assessments
- Assistance to Member States for crisis management
- Conflict of interest policy
- Risk communication

EFSA's reputation with **the European Commission** is also high across all attributes. Members of the Commission praised multiple aspects of EFSA's performance: transparency, independence, communication. Areas for improvement are:

- Efficiency in risk assessments, particularly with regard to the burden that EFSA's requirements may impose on industry (SMEs).
- Risk communication

The distribution of scores obtained from respondents at DG SANTE indicates that it is a heterogeneous audience, with a variety of views on EFSA that may reflect the different themes on which DG SANTE and EFSA work together.

EFSA's reputation with **the food industry** is relatively good across most attributes, but is neutral to low in two areas:

- Efficiency in risk assessments
- Harmonization of risk assessment methods

The concerns expressed by this audience mostly relate to the process used to assess authorisation dossiers. A number of members from this group indicated in their responses comments that they did not see EFSA as an organisation that "works in the interests of the EU economy". Nonetheless they indicated that they trust EFSA and think it provides high quality Opinions.

The group that gave EFSA the lowest reputation rating was the **consumer and environmental NGOs**. This result is, however, based on a small number of responses, and as such is a weaker result than those obtained for each of the other groups. Members of this audience gave positive scores to EFSA's efforts to harmonize risk assessment methods, and the quality of EFSA's opinions.

Four attributes received negative scores:

- Efficiency in risks assessments
- Independence and objectivity
- Innovativeness

- Transparency

These findings echo the criticism of EFSA that these groups have voiced in the media.

EFSA's reputation with **the scientific community** is high, EFSA is praised for its performance across all attributes. Areas for improvement are:

- Efficiency in risks assessment
- Conflict of interest policy
- Engagement with peers on the global stage

The response rates varied across the stakeholder groups. The number of responses obtained for the European Parliament (three) was too small to enable any firm conclusions to be drawn. The response rates obtained provided insights on the replicability of the Reputation Barometer methodology for the different audience groups and has led ICF to propose a number of recommendations, as listed below.

The count of “don't know” responses demonstrated that the sections of the pilot survey tool that were dedicated to assessing the evolution of EFSA's performance over the past 12 months and to comparison of EFSA's performance with that of its peers did not perform well enough to be useful. The responses obtained to these questions have not been included in the analysis. ICF has drafted recommendations to address these difficulties in future iterations of the Barometer.

ES4 Limitations

The method that was piloted had a number of limitations, described below:

- The design of the Reputation Barometer was based on a number of untested assumptions, notably on the level of homogeneity of different audience groups, and the (absence of) causal relationships between different attributes of EFSA's reputation. The audiences of EFSA had not been mapped beforehand.
- The sampling strategy differed across audiences. There were good reasons for these differences but they prevented comparisons of responses being made across all groups. That is because the responses could not be assumed to be equally representative from one group to the next.
- The small number of respondents to the survey obtained from some groups imposed limitations on what could be said about the representativeness of the results from those audiences.
- Important forums in which EFSA's reputation is made and discussed were not included in this study: the European Parliament could not be surveyed; and media coverage was reviewed through a limited sample of articles and tweets.

ES5 Recommendations

ES5.1 Areas for improvement

The study has identified areas in which, from a stakeholder perspective, EFSA can improve its performance. Appropriate changes in those areas could improve EFSA's reputation with those audiences. Areas that were consistently highlighted were:

- **Efficiency in risk assessments** – This attribute of EFSA was the one that consistently received lower scores across all audiences. Success in addressing the issues behind the ratings would be expected to improve its reputation with all audiences, and therefore emerge from this pilot as a priority area for action.

- **Conflicts of interests / independence and objectivity** – The issue of how EFSA manages conflicts of interest was mentioned by interviewees from all groups as an area where further progress is needed. However, the problem definition varied: each audience had its own set of expectations on this matter and these were not consistent with the views of other groups.

The groups giving EFSA's the lowest reputational score were businesses in the food chain (food business operators, farmers and primary producers) and consumer and environmental NGOs. Focusing on the matters of concern to these groups would, on the methodology used, improve EFSA overall reputation..

ES5.2 EFSA's Barometer 2.0

The Barometer has been proven to be a useful tool for assessing performance across the range of EFSA's activities. This was a pilot exercise intended to provide points of learning as well as data and, as such, a number of areas in which the design could be improved have been identified. Some require work before the approach is deployed again, others would be integrated into the Barometer methodology:

- **Improve understanding of EFSA's audiences** – Some of the key assumptions that underpin the methodology, particularly regarding the homogeneity of the audiences, are challenged by the results. These assumptions could be tested and refined through a more in-depth investigation. EFSA should carry out a stakeholder mapping study to generate empirical evidence on its audiences before another Reputation Barometer survey is commissioned. Such effort would generate a fuller picture of the groups having a stake in EFSA's actions, beyond EU-level organisations. It would also improve EFSA's understanding of differences of interests and opinion within these groups. EFSA should also invest in the construction of a more comprehensive stakeholder contact database that supports segmentation of contacts by audience type. This will improve its capacity for sampling in future barometer studies and surveys, and for deploying targeted communication strategies.
- **Improve the sampling strategy** – The sampling strategy could be improved for at least some of the audiences. In particular:
 - The relevant scientific community audience population could be identified in a more rigorous manner by pooling together the list of all scientists that sit on relevant scientific panels or committees. A sample of consultees could then be drawn randomly.
 - EFSA might consider surveying not only consumer organisations at EU level, but also consumer organisations in all Member States.
- **Improve the questionnaire** – A number of questions used in this questionnaire failed to gather sufficient responses and it is recommended that alternative approaches are used in future studies. Alternative approaches are needed to gather feedback on how EFSA's performance:
 - Has evolved over the past 12 months
 - Is perceived to compare with that of its peers – These approaches will need to accommodate constraints such as whether respondents with an interest in food risk will have had any exposure to organisations active in other areas of risk management.
 - May be influenced by contextual events – A question should be added that identifies one or more relevant events that occurred in the months before the Barometer survey

and asks the respondent to comment on how EFSA should have responded to them. Their answers to this question would help in interpretation of the Barometer scores.

- **Apply cognitive testing** – If the questionnaire is revised it should be **cognitively tested** before deployment. Cognitive testing means to explore the manner respondents understand and think when answering questions from a survey. It helps ascertain that a questionnaire is designed in such a way that it can achieve its intended objectives.
- **Apply statistical tests to the indicators** – The Reputation Barometer should include indicators that are not causally related to one another. In a follow up study statistical testing could be used to check for causal links.
- **Refine weighting** – In future iterations of the Barometer a more robust weighting of indicators within attributes could be developed and tested. This would refine the overall assessment by ensuring that the importance given to an indicator relative to another is as intended by the respondent.

ES5.3 A broader strategy for assessing EFSA's reputation

As this study has demonstrated, all audiences cannot be surveyed with the same tool. Besides, other audiences of EFSA have not been surveyed in this study. Furthermore, some of the manifestations of EFSA's reputation – its presence and the manner it is spoken of in the media – were not reviewed in depth.

An online survey tool completed by a number of interviews (**Reputation Barometer**), as was done for this study, is suitable to assess EFSA's reputation in the following audiences:

- European Commission
- Member State competent authorities
- Industry
- Consumers and thematic NGOs
- The scientific community involved in food risk assessments

The **European Parliament** requires a different approach. This report recommends that EFSA considers two alternative options. Option 1 is **an insiders' survey**: EFSA's reputation would be measured through targeted interviews with a network of individuals with good, up to date knowledge of the European Parliament's debates and views on food policy issues, including EFSA. This network would likely consist of a carefully selected list of individuals from a range of horizons, some of them deeply embedded in European institutions and others having a more distant, observer's role. Option 2 is a **discourse analysis of relevant European Parliament debates**. Discourse analysis is a structured approach to reviewing text, which identifies themes, processes of argumentation, and how they evolve with time, context, and interactions between different speakers. It could be implemented to characterize EFSA's reputation among Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).

Other policy makers at EU level (the European Council) and the MS (ministers) are also an important audience for EFSA. EFSA's reputation among this group could also be assessed through an insiders' survey, with the assistance of a public relations company.

Finally, the manner in which EFSA and its activities are discussed in traditional and social **media** reflects (as well as shapes) its reputation. There are tools available that facilitate a highly rigorous assessment of the manner in which an organisation and its peers are talked about in the media. That includes software tracking and assessing all mentions of an organization's name online. There is merit in integrating these tools into a comprehensive approach to monitoring EFSA's reputation.

1 Introduction

This study was commissioned from ICF² by EFSA (contract number RC/EFSA/COMMS/2016/02) under the Framework Contract No OC/EFSA/COMM/2014/01-CT01. Its purpose was, *“to measure the reputation of EFSA amongst its stakeholders across the European Union. Through understanding its reputation with different stakeholders, this study will enable EFSA to identify opportunities to manage and improve its reputation.”*

EFSA has been developing various initiatives to improve its practices and interactions with stakeholders. This project contributes to this “open approach” of engagement with stakeholders by providing the means to measure how effective those initiatives may be. It is also part of EFSA’s efforts to foster a culture in which reputation is an important factor in all decisions by EFSA staff and experts.

The specific objectives of this study were to:

- Provide **insights** that EFSA may use to positively influence its reputation;
- Identify the **key drivers** of EFSA’s reputation and the **level of trust** that stakeholders have in EFSA;
- Help EFSA **understand** its stakeholders, what matters to them and their concerns;
- Document the **views** of stakeholders and explain why they hold those views;
- Measure the **reputation** of EFSA;
- Provide a **benchmark** to measure the effectiveness of how EFSA manages its reputation

The research was to provide a **quantitative and qualitative framework** which provides both data and actionable insights. The elaboration of this “Reputation Barometer” has involved media analysis, desktop research and a consultation (online survey and a selected number of interviews) with the European Commission, the European Parliament, risk assessment authorities in Member States, members of the scientific community, and representative organisations from among EFSA’s registered stakeholders.

The research has assessed the scope to transpose tools used in the field of corporate reputation measurement to a regulatory and scientific agency such as EFSA. A review of the academic literature on agency reputation helped to build the conceptual foundations for the work. The project also involved a **pilot study** to develop and test for the first time a reputation measurement tool designed specifically for EFSA.

² www.icf.com

2 Conceptual framework

This section introduces the conceptual underpinnings of this study. It presents a brief outline of the state of the art in reputation measurement, and then considers key elements of EFSA's reputation. Finally, it defines design principles for a tool to measure EFSA's reputation.

2.1 State of the art

To date, tools to measure reputation have been developed principally for corporate organisations (Dowling and Gardberg 2012). Single or composite measures have been used, relying on diverse data collection methods (media analysis, interviews, surveys). Some of these tools have been developed for academic research. However, corporate reputation tools have also been used extensively in commercial settings. As such, most of the dimensions they measure are not relevant for public sector bodies. The state of the art on corporate reputation has conceptualised reputation as a set of attributes. It provides a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of alternative measurement tools can meet the needs of commercial organisations.

By comparison, the literature on (public) agency reputation, which has recently grown significantly, is exclusively academic. It has explored extensively the concept of agency reputation. It has also theorised the causal processes to which reputation contributes (for example, agency growth and termination), as well as the causal processes that have a causal impact on reputation (crises, organization identity, performance, communication, transparency). In other words, the literature on agency reputation has come to a good understanding of “how regulation regulates regulators” (Gilad and Yogev 2012).³ The agency reputation literature offers comparatively few insights on how to systematically measure the reputation of agencies, or to track the manner in which it changes over time. A contributory factor is that in the agency reputation literature reputational dimensions are identified in a general, unspecified manner. As such, they are not amenable to measurement.

The study has taken relevant insights and approaches from both bodies of literature. From the corporate reputation literature, it has taken tools needed to elaborate an approach for measuring EFSA's reputation in a rigorous and replicable manner. The study has adopted its main concept of agency reputation from the academic literature on agency reputation, this concept being: “a set of symbolic beliefs about the unique or separable capacities, roles, and obligations of an organization, where these beliefs are embedded in audience networks” (Carpenter 2010a: 45). This definition is the dominant contemporary formulation of agency reputation among public administration scholars.

³ A more detailed review of the literature on agency reputation is presented in **Error! Reference source not found.**

2.2 The concept of EFSA's reputation

A concept of EFSA's reputation, with three basic elements, has been constructed from Carpenter's definition of agency reputation (Carpenter 2010a) and the work of Dowling and Gardberg (2012):

- **Attributes** – EFSA's reputation is made of views on “unique or separable capacities, roles, and obligations” of EFSA. The research has identified a set of distinct attributes (capacities, roles and obligations) of EFSA and defined ways to gather views on each of them.
- **Audiences** – EFSA's reputation is made of beliefs “embedded in audience networks”. The research has involved identifying and understanding better EFSA's audiences.
- **Temporality** – EFSA's reputation can be understood at different points in time: as a contemporary construct (what is EFSA's reputation now?), as a historical construct (what reputation has EFSA gained over the years?), or as a forward looking one (what can be expected of EFSA? Can it be trusted?)

The following sub-sections provide more detailed information on attributes, audiences and temporality as they have been defined in the study.

2.2.1 Attributes

To identify EFSA's attributes, its capacities, roles and obligations have been reviewed. Information has been taken from the underlying legislation (chiefly Regulation 178/2002), and completed by preliminary research (literature review, media analysis) and exploratory interviews (as discussed in section 3.1) as well as existing corporate reputation measurement tools.

Twelve attributes have been identified:

- **EFSA's approach to providing scientific advice** – This attribute refers to the *process* through which EFSA generates scientific opinions.
- **The quality of EFSA's risk assessment opinions** – This attribute refers to the *outcomes* of EFSA's risk assessment activities.
- **The efficiency of EFSA in producing risk assessments** – This attribute refers to the *timeliness* of EFSA's risk assessments and to its use of *resources* to carry out risk assessments.
- **The identification and characterization of emerging risks by EFSA** – This attribute refers to EFSA's role to identify and assess emerging risks.
- **EFSA's work to harmonize risk assessment methods** – This attribute refers to EFSA's role to contribute to the harmonization of methods of risk assessment at the EU and global level.
- **EFSA's independence and objectivity** – This attribute refers to EFSA's obligation to act in an independent and objective manner, including through its policy to address and prevent conflicts of interest.
- **The level of transparency at EFSA** – This attribute refers to EFSA's obligation and commitment to be transparent about its processes, practices, and findings.

- **How EFSA communicate risks** – This attribute refers to one of EFSA’s main roles: to be the risk communicator on food safety issues at the EU level.
- **Engagement by EFSA with external partners** – This attribute refers to EFSA’s interactions with stakeholders including and beyond its institutional stakeholders.
- **EFSA’s provision of scientific and technical assistance to Member States for crisis management** – This attribute refers to EFSA’s role to provide assistance to Member States in times of crisis.
- **The quality of EFSA’s governance** – This attribute refers to the governance procedures and practices at EFSA.
- **EFSA’s innovativeness** – This attribute refers to how innovative EFSA is in its risk communication, data collection, data analysis, and risk assessment methodologies.

The two last attributes – governance and innovativeness – are core elements of organisational reputation as understood both in corporate reputation tools and in the literature on agency reputation.

Most attributes have been further disaggregated into components (as detailed in Table A5.1, in Annex 5). These were then included in the questionnaire used to collect stakeholder views (See Annex 4). Consultees may not necessarily fully understand or know much about each of these attributes but that does not prevent them from having an opinion. It is their opinion that matters to the Barometer, rather than the extent of their understanding.

2.2.2 Audiences

EFSA’s reputation is embedded in audience networks. As Carpenter writes, to understand how agency reputation is formed and sustained, “look at the audience, and look at the threats” (Carpenter 2010b: 832). EFSA has multiple potential audiences, which result from several of EFSA’s features:

- It is a European Agency – Institutions of the European Union, and chiefly the European Commission and the European Parliament, belong to its audiences. Other audiences are competent authorities of the European Member States, and by extension the governments they depend on.
- It is involved in scientific work – as such multiple organisations involved in scientific work (including scientific media) belong to its audiences, both in the EU and globally.
- It is a risk communicator – its intended audiences are risk managers and the population at large across the EU.
- It assesses risks related to the food chain in multiple domains and sectors – all the actors of the food supply chain are affected by its work one way or another.

EFSA’s audiences are many and varied. In the absence of a detailed map of EFSA’s stakeholders, which was not required as part of this project, the research distinguished between audiences by reference to the nature of their relationship with EFSA. Table 2.1 lists EFSA’s audiences and outlines the main features of their relationship towards EFSA.

Table 2.1 EFSA's audiences and their relationship towards EFSA

Audience	Relationship towards EFSA
European Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Principal / agenda setter / customer ■ User of risk assessments ■ Account holder
European Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Principal / agenda setter / customer ■ User of risk assessments ■ Account holder
Member States authorities – risk managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Principal / agenda setter / customer ■ User of risk assessments ■ Various forms of cooperation
Members State authorities – risk assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contributor to risk assessments (as source of data, methods, or assessor) ■ User of risk assessments ■ Peer risk assessor ■ Various forms of cooperation
Other EU organisations (e.g. ECDC, EMA, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partners on cross-cutting themes (e.g. AMR)
Food risk assessors outside the EU (WHO, IARC, FDA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Peer risk assessors
Scientific community in the EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contributor to risk assessments (as source of expertise, data, methods)) ■ Influencer
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ User of risk assessments ■ Applicant to assessments of products or claims ■ Contributor to risk assessments (as source of data, methods) ■ Influencer
Consumer and thematic organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ User of risk assessments ■ Influencer
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Disseminator of risk assessment information ■ Influencer
General public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ultimate beneficiary of risk assessments

EFSA's reputation has been assessed from the perspective of the following EFSA audiences:

- The European Commission;
- The European Parliament;
- National Competent Authorities in Member States;
- EU level organisations of the food industry, farmers and primary producers
- EU level organisations defending consumers and specific themes (environment, animal welfare, etc.); and
- The scientific community involved in risk assessments.

The various relationships that these groups have with EFSA may translate into different expectations of EFSA and different views on EFSA's performance. It may well be that some stakeholders will consider the same feature of EFSA's work – for example, its policy to prevent conflicts of interest – insufficient while others will find it excessively burdensome. Both may give it the same rating on a performance scale (e.g. "Poor") yet their justifications for this rating would be opposed. Therefore, not only would different groups assess the same practices differently, their assessments may be **incommensurable** because they would be based on different and irreconcilable sets of expectations.

These differences were reflected in the Reputation Barometer through:

- The introduction of questions tailored for specific groups to ensure that they might comment specifically on matters that concerned them most;
- A programme of follow-up interviews with a sample of the respondents; and
- A reporting strategy that maintains distinctions between the different audiences surveyed.

This approach relies also on the assumption that each audience is relatively homogeneous. There was only limited evidence to inform this assumption. At the same time, one can expect that there will be differences in resources, interests, and ideas between the members of each group. Table 2.2 summarizes key assumptions on the internal composition of these groups.

Table 2.2 Assumptions on the homogeneity of EFSA's audiences

Audience	Assumptions
European Commission (DG SANTE)	Perceptions of EFSA at DG SANTE may vary between its units, as a function of the themes that they are working on and EFSA's work on those themes. However, the institutional rules structuring the relationship between EFSA and the European Commission impose a relatively homogeneous set of expectations across all units..
European Parliament	The European Parliament can be considered a very heterogeneous audience. The ENVI Committee, which considers food safety issues, has 69 members from different political groups. One may expect that the variety of views expressed <i>across</i> all of EFSA's other audiences will also be represented at the Parliament.
Member State authorities	The MS authorities can be separated into two relatively homogeneous groups : large countries and small ones. Small countries have a different set of expectations and views of EFSA than large countries, which reflects their varying capacities to undertake risk assessment work, and their level of dependence towards EFSA for risk assessment opinions. ⁴ However, differences between Member States may also emerge as a function of political views or concerns on certain topics, irrespective of Member State size. Such concerns may lead a Member State to diverge from others (big and small) on an issue examined by EFSA (for instance, glyphosate).

⁴ As mentioned by three interviewees.

EU level organisations – industry	It is assumed that EU level organisations representing industry constitute a homogeneous audience in spite of their different activities; their interests in relation to EFSA are assumed to be relatively consistent across the group.
EU level organisations – thematic & consumers	EU level organisations representing consumers or focused around specific themes (GMOs, pesticides, animal welfare, nutrition, etc.) may differ as a function of their agenda, which may then colour their beliefs on EFSA's capacities, roles and obligations. The set-up of the study did not allow for an in-depth exploration of these differences. For the purpose of the study they have been assumed to be a relatively homogeneous group.
Scientific community	The scientific community involved in risk assessments is assumed to be homogeneous with a shared set of values related to scientific work that shapes their expectations towards EFSA. This is notwithstanding the variety of disciplines, specialization, and political views of scientists involved in "regulatory science."

Such assumptions are based on the information available to the research team at the time of the study. While future surveys of these groups may be relied on to further test these assumptions, the necessary understanding of the characteristics and homogeneity of each audience could be provided by devoting resources to the mapping of EFSA's stakeholders (see also Recommendations section in section 6.1.3).

2.2.3 Temporality

The concept of EFSA's reputation developed for the study is contemporary, as opposed to a backward looking or a forward looking, construct: EFSA's reputation is understood as being anchored in the present. The Barometer has been designed to focus on EFSA's distinctive capacities, roles and obligations at the moment of the survey. It does not aim to record years of perceptions: the purpose of the Barometer is not to measure how "respected" or "admired" EFSA is. It also does not aim to assess audiences' perception of EFSA's future, or to measure how trustworthy audiences consider EFSA to be, even if the measurement of EFSA's reputation can be associated to a trust indicator.

The Reputation Barometer has, however, been developed to enable comparison of EFSA's reputation over time, from one year to the next. EFSA's reputation may be compared across time only inasmuch as the attributes of EFSA's reputation remain stable. Should changes to EFSA's mandate or significant changes to its activities occur, then it may become impossible to compare the reputation measured after those changes have taken place with that measured before. In particular, the validity of the Reputation Barometer may be weakened as a result of:

- Initiatives that alter the manner in which the respondent assesses otherwise stable attributes (e.g. branding).
- Initiatives adding a new attribute to the organisation.

EFSA's reputation, as measured by the Barometer, can be expected to vary not only as a function of EFSA's practices and the manner in which they are perceived by its audiences but also to be influenced by **context**: events or actions that happen in the environment around EFSA. An understanding of the context in which the measurement is done is therefore imperative. Table 2.3 provides an initial map of

presumptive issues or topics and how they may affect (positively or negatively) the measurement of EFSA's reputation through ratings given by representatives of audience groups.

Table 2.3 Assumptions on context influence onto EFSA's reputation

Issues / topics	Audience(s) whose perception is likely to be affected	Direction of effect
A national or international peer organisation contradicts EFSA	All	Likely negative (EFSA's authoritativeness challenged), however the magnitude of impact would depend on the reputation of the challenger and whether audiences factor in political or other elements that underlie the peer organisation's position
EFSA's Opinion not being followed by its intended users	All	Negative (EFSA's authoritativeness challenged)
EFSA's Opinion at odds with national/EU level political priorities	Member State authorities, European Commission, European Parliament	Negative (unless there is a great divergence of priorities within key audiences)
Highly politicised / controversial topic at national level / among consumers	Member State authorities, NGOs	Depends on whether the direction of EFSA's Opinion/Assessment agrees with the political views of the audience
High scientific uncertainty / contradictory evidence	All	Depends on whether the direction of EFSA's Opinion/Assessment agrees with the political views of the audience
Any significant incident that could be construed as a challenge to a decision/opinion EFSA made	All	May be mitigated by the quality of the response EFSA may have given to the incident

3 Method

This section outlines the methodology followed to:

- Develop the analytical framework underpinning the Reputation Barometer
- Develop survey tools
- Collect data (questionnaire survey and interviews)
- Analyse data

3.1 Preliminary data collection

The primary data collection task gathered information to inform the conceptual basis of the Reputation Barometer. The aim of this first task was also to identify the key elements that would need to be included in the Reputation Barometer, in terms of the dimensions of EFSA's reputation, and the audiences that may be consulted to assess that reputation. It consisted of:

- A rapid review of the scholarly literature on reputation;
- A media analysis, consisting of:
 - A review of press articles mentioning EFSA; and
 - A Twitter analysis of tweets mentioning EFSA.

This preliminary data collection was completed by several consultations (phone calls and email exchanges) with external corporate reputation and agency reputation experts, as well as with members of EFSA's staff.

3.1.1 Review of the literature on EFSA's reputation

The literature review involved a rapid assessment of the key concepts and learning points from the literature on agency reputation which is located in the discipline of political science. The rapid review also identified relevant findings for EU agencies / EFSA, and ascertained the limitations of the literature. Key lessons from the literature on corporate reputation, specifically on the issue of what to measure and how to measure it, have been also reviewed. A synthesis of the literature review is provided in Annex 1.

3.1.2 Analysis of traditional media channels – news articles

The traditional media review was limited to:

- Articles from national newspapers in five EU countries: Germany, France, Ireland, Spain and Sweden. These were selected in agreement with EFSA, based on the extent of media coverage mentioning EFSA in those countries.
- Articles from the two main national daily newspapers⁵ by circulation in each of the five selected Member States. This approach was adopted to avoid the presence of duplicates and to facilitate comparability of results across countries.

⁵ Excluding sport news, tabloids, freesheets and business news.

- Articles published over the two years before this project, to provide a baseline for EFSA's annual assessment of its reputation.

All articles from the selected countries and sources were retrieved through Google News' search tool, by filtering news items including the keywords "EFSA" and/or "European Food Safety Authority" (or the translation of those terms in the countries' official language). Non-relevant articles and duplicates were removed from the search. This resulted in 200 articles.

The resources and timeline for this study allowed for a review of a sample of 10 articles per country (i.e., 50 articles in total). Articles were randomly selected among those mentioning EFSA.

Sampled articles were read in full to:

- **Extract basic information on the article:** date of publication, country, newspaper, title, author and web-link.
- **Assess the tone of the article (sentiment)** as either positive (use of positive adjectives to qualify EFSA or EFSA's work, use of statements communicating positively connoted attributes of EFSA), negative (use of negative adjectives to qualify EFSA or EFSA's work; use of statements communicating negatively connoted attributes of EFSA) or neutral (either absence of positive or negative elements, or balance between positive and negative messages). The sentiment analysis also identified the stakeholders who expressed the positive, neutral or negative judgements.
- **Identify the main stakeholders** mentioned or quoted by media sources (such as national competent authorities, research communities, industry and NGO representatives).
- **Summarise the main messages** associated with aspects of EFSA's reputation, such as scientific excellence, transparency, independence and communications.

3.1.3 Social media channels – Twitter analysis

The social media analysis focussed on Twitter, as it is the main social media tool used by EFSA. ICF produced a list of tweets on EFSA by using Twitter's advanced search tool. The list was created by identifying all posts that mentioned EFSA. The search was done in English and was limited to an agreed timeframe (the two years before this project). This yielded 21,376 results.

The timeline and resources for this study allowed for a rapid scan of a sample of 300 tweets, selected **at random** from the initial list. The sample was reviewed to remove duplicates and non-relevant posts. Posts by EFSA's Twitter accounts were also excluded from the analysis⁶.

ICF researchers then reviewed the sampled posts to identify:

- **The main themes discussed** (e.g., GMOs, pesticides, drug residues in food)
- **Sentiment** associated with each theme (positive, negative or neutral).

⁶ @EFSA_EU, @EFSA_live, @Plants_EFSA, @Methods_EFSA, and @EFSAJournal.

- **Top communicators** (the individuals or organisations that published the most posts during the selected timeframe).

A detailed outline of the method and findings for the traditional and social media analysis is provided in Annex 2.

3.1.4 Exploratory interviews

The literature review and the media analysis provided a first outline of the key dimensions that appeared to inform or colour judgments on EFSA. ICF then conducted 10 exploratory interviews. These interviews:

- explored whether there were other dimensions or themes that mattered and yet had not been identified at that stage in the study;
- “unpacked” dimensions of EFSA’s activities to clearly understand what aspect of an activity drew praise or criticism from stakeholders.

The purpose of that task was not to paint a representative picture of the views held by members of different stakeholder groups (which would require a more ambitious interview programme) but rather to increase the range of themes that could or should be included in the Reputation Barometer. For that purpose, the exploratory interviews were conducted with members from each of the stakeholder groups the Reputation Barometer has been designed for:

- European Commission (1 interview)
- European Parliament (1 interview – with an assistant)
- Advisory Forum (3 interviews, from one large and two small MS, one in Western Europe, one in Eastern Europe, and one in Northern Europe)
- EU level organisations (3 interviews: one environmental NGO, one industry association, and one primary producers association)
- Scientific community (2 interviews)

The interviews were semi-structured. They were recorded and transcribed. Their content was reviewed to identify key themes interviewees raised in relation to EFSA’s performance, and their sentiment towards EFSA.

3.2 Development of the survey tool

The information collected in the preliminary data collection phase has informed the development of the main survey tool.

3.2.1 Attributes

The questionnaire was developed around the list of EFSA’s attributes. When applicable, attributes were detailed further into a list of more specific components. For instance, the efficiency of EFSA’s risk assessment activities was detailed further to include indicators referring to the timeliness of EFSA’s responses to requests for opinions and to its use of resources. A total of 42 indicators were elaborated. The design of the questionnaire involved numerous checks for consistency and overlaps: one indicator should apply to one attribute only. Particular care was also taken to avoid indicators that would be causally related to one another. In other words, one indicator should not be the *cause* or the *effect* of another indicator. Otherwise it

would not be possible to aggregate respondents' ratings for these indicators. The research team did not have empirical evidence on the causal relationships between these indicators, therefore it relied instead on inferences and logic, building on the team's understanding of EFSA's activities.

3.2.2 Importance of each attribute - weighting

The survey tool included one question that assessed the importance respondents gave to each attribute. Responses were then coded to obtain a weighing factor for each attribute.

Different options were considered for the purpose of achieving weighted scores. One, involving use of the MaxDiff method, was disregarded because the sample size for the survey was too small to apply this method. Another involved a question that would force respondents to rank the 12 attributes on a scale from 1 to 12. This was rejected out of concern that it would impose a static scale on respondents. Respondents could be expected to give similar importance to a number of EFSA's attributes. That would be particularly the case within audiences that rely on the full range of EFSA's activities.

A third option was chosen: respondents were invited to indicate what importance each attribute had to themselves, on a 6-point scale (from "Not important" to "Extremely important"). These absolute weighting scores were recalculated in order to obtain relative weighting scores (as discussed in section 3.4.3).

3.2.3 EFSA's performance for each attribute

In the main part of the survey, respondents were asked to rate the performance of EFSA on each of the 42 indicators. These indicators map to the 12 attributes of EFSA. Respondents had the option to score the performance of EFSA on a 7-point scale (from "Extremely poor" to "Extremely good").

3.2.4 Evolution over the past 12 months

The survey included also a question on how EFSA's performance had evolved over the past 12 months. This question was introduced in order to provide some indication of where EFSA may have made progress or its performance deteriorated in the past year.

3.2.5 Sentiment

A number of questions were added at the end of the questionnaire to gather information on respondents' overall sentiment towards EFSA. They included reference to the respondent's "trust", "respect", or "admiration" towards EFSA. These questions provide a control for the overall reputation score. They also provide an additional layer of information to qualify people's views of EFSA.

3.2.6 Benchmarking question

A final question asked respondents to compare EFSA to its peers on the 12 attributes. Corporate reputation barometers often include a benchmarking question of this sort. Based on EFSA's input, a list of "peer organisations" was drawn. The question then requested respondents to indicate which of the peer organisations performed the best on each of the 12 attributes.

3.2.7 Testing

The survey tool was tested with a handful of staff members from the Food Standards Agency (UK) before it was rolled out. The test was deemed positive, and the fieldwork followed immediately afterwards.

3.3 Main fieldwork

3.3.1 Sample selection

The method used to select a sample varied by audience.

The **Member States authorities** were approached through their representatives at the Advisory Forum.⁷ The Advisory Forum includes representatives of all EU Member States (MS) as well as Iceland and Norway. All the representatives were contacted and invited to participate in the survey, using contact details provided by EFSA. More than one individual may represent a MS at the Advisory Forum. When there was more than one respondent per country, an average was calculated for each question based on the respondents received by all representatives from that country.

The **European Commission** was approached through its staff at the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE). One third of the sample was drawn from horizontal unit D1 “Science, stakeholders, enforcement”, and two thirds from the vertical units E1, E2, E3, E4 and E5, which all fall under “Food and feed safety, innovation”. This sampling strategy was meant to capture both cross-cutting perspectives and the perspective of specialised technical units. The sample focused on all staff in middle-to-senior positions in these units. EFSA provided the contact details and introduced the survey directly to the DG before ICF contacted individual officials.

The strategy for sampling respondents at the **European Parliament** relied on two main considerations:

- The well-known difficulty of achieving good response rates with MEPs;
- The high degree of polarisation of debates related to EFSA at the Parliament; and
- The wide diversity of opinions and backgrounds at the Parliament.

Given the significant challenges involved in achieving a representative sample of MEPs, a purposive sampling approach of MEPs was implemented, whereby contactees were selected on the basis of their contributions to debates involving EFSA. Two sources were used to build the sample. Firstly, the EP’s website was consulted to collect and review all the questions asked in the previous 12 months that related to EFSA. These questions were assessed for their tone (positive, neutral, negative) and their authors listed. Secondly, an EFSA staff member familiar with the relations with the European Parliament reviewed and edited the list. This led to a sample of 18 MEPs. All contact details were retrieved from the Parliament’s website.

⁷ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/partnersnetworks/eumembers>

EU level organisations were selected based on EFSA's list of registered stakeholders, which is publically available on its website. EFSA provided contact details for all organisations, which were then invited to take part in the research.

The approach to selecting a sample of consultees from the **scientific community** was to constitute a convenient sample of scientists involved in regulatory science. The strategy was to identify scientists who would be involved in risk assessments on issues that fall within the remit of EFSA. Scientists already participating in such activities at EFSA were excluded. The focus was on individuals with this profile who were involved in risk assessments in peer organisations within the EU and worldwide. Project resources were not sufficient to quantify that population and to draw a random sample from it so the research team used a convenient sampling approach. In agreement with EFSA, senior individuals in peer organisations (in the European Union these were the people sitting in the Advisory Forum) were asked to forward the survey to 4 to 6 scientists who had been working on risk assessments on behalf of or at the organisation, in areas within EFSA's remit.

The final list of contacts was edited to exclude representatives from industry and environmental NGOs who had opted out of being surveyed.

3.3.2 Recruitment of participants and reminders

Participants were recruited by email. Each was provided with a personalised link to the survey, except for members of the scientific community. The latter received a general link that was forwarded to them through peer organisations contacted by ICF. Each email was accompanied by a letter of representation from EFSA.

EFSA provided support by giving advance notice of the survey to all of the audiences.

ICF sent two email reminders, and followed up with telephone reminders when necessary (e.g. for the European Parliament).

3.3.3 Follow-up interviews

A total of 17 follow-up interviews were completed with representatives of all stakeholder groups (with the exception of the European Parliament). Interviewees were selected as follows:

- The online survey asked respondents to indicate their availability for a follow-up call to discuss and clarify some of their responses. Of the 111 respondents, 26 indicated availability.
- All those who indicated availability were contacted for a follow-up; 17 were able to participate in the interview during the study timeframe.

Interviews were conducted by phone and lasted approximately 15 minutes. The aims of interviews were to:

- Clarify any points emerging from survey responses, and notably seek more information on which elements might enhance EFSA's reputation or undermine it;
- Discuss additional themes, such as how specific areas of EFSA's work or initiatives have impacted its reputation; and

- Clarify any issues discussed by respondents in their open responses.

3.4 Analysis

3.4.1 General principles

Following recommendations drawn from corporate reputation studies (Dowling and Gardberg 2012), the analysis should assess:

- Whether EFSA's attributes are causally related to one another – attributes that are causally related could not be aggregated in the same manner as attributes that are not so related⁸;
- How important these attributes are for EFSA's audiences – attributes should be weighted differently;
- Which specific audiences emphasise specific attributes;
- Whether these attributes are negative or positive – the aggregation of attributes should reflect whether they are negatively or positively 'rated' by respondents;
- Whether some attributes enhance reputation and others undermine it – "If the attributes (dimensions) that create a good reputation are different from those that destroy such reputations, averaging across these compromises the measure's efficacy" (Dowling and Gardberg 2012:37).

3.4.2 Assessment of the tool's effectiveness

This study has piloted a Reputation Barometer for EFSA. Within the resources and timescale set for the study, a single fieldwork effort has aimed to deliver both a test of the tool, and a measure of EFSA's reputation.

To assess whether the tool is effective and fit for purpose, the proportion of non-responses to individual questions and indicators has been reviewed. This has been with a view to identifying whether certain questions or indicators would be too difficult to answer for a large proportion of consultees. On that basis, the research team has considered whether these questions or indicators should be removed from the tool (for future measures), and whether the responses collected should be excluded from this report.

3.4.3 Calculation of the reputation score

The overall reputation score has been defined as the sum of the weighted scores given to each attribute of EFSA's reputation. This can be expressed as follows:

$$z = \sum_{i=1}^n r w_i x_i$$

In this equation:

- "z" is the overall reputation score;
- "i" is an attribute of EFSA's reputation;

⁸ As noted earlier (see section 3.2.1) this was not tested quantitatively in the pilot study.

- “rw” is the relative weighting given to each attribute; and
- “x” is the performance score given by the respondent for that particular attribute.

The relative weighting given to each component is calculated from a set of importance scores, w_i , where each score represents an answer to the question “How important is [attribute] to you?” For example, a respondent may consider independence and objectivity at EFSA to be of average importance ($w=3$ on a scale from 1 to 6).

In order to assess the relative weight that an attribute should have in the overall reputation score, the weighting score, w , is turned into a relative weighting score, rw , as represented by this equation:

$$rw_i = \frac{w_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i}$$

For example, if a respondent has given a weight of 5 to attribute 1 ($w_1 = 5$) and respectively weights of 3 and 2 to attributes 2 and 3 ($w_2 = 3$, $w_3 = 2$), then the relative weight of attribute 1 is calculated as:

$$rw_1 = \frac{5}{5 + 3 + 2} = 0.5 \text{ (50\%)}$$

Each attribute may itself be a composite measure. For example, “EFSA’s approach to providing scientific advice” as an attribute of EFSA’s reputation is made of various components, covering methodology, data, and interpretation. The barometer requires a performance score for each component. However, to limit the barometer’s complexity, those components are assumed to carry the same weight for respondents. Therefore, the overall performance score for the attribute is calculated as the straight average of the components’ performance scores.

Performance scores sit on a scale from -100 (extremely poor) to +100 (extremely good). For example, if the attribute “risk assessment” has three components – methodology, data, and interpretation – and the performance scores for these three are, respectively, 100, -100, and 66, then the overall performance score for the attribute “risk assessment” is:

$$x = \frac{100 - 100 + 66}{3} = 22$$

4 Descriptive results

This section presents descriptive results of the Reputation Barometer survey.

4.1 Response rate

The overall response rate of the survey was 30%. This figure hides wide variations between the different audiences: from a high of 42% at the Advisory Forum to a low of 17% at the European Parliament (see Table 4.1).

No response rate can be provided for the scientific community given that the full number of scientists that have been contacted by peer organisations as per ICF's request is not known.

Table 4.1 Response rates per audience

Audience	Sample	Responses	Rate
Member State authorities (Advisory Forum)	62	26	42%
European Commission	38	12	32%
Business and food industry, farmers and primary producers	61	12 ⁹	19%
Consumers and thematic Organisations	14	5	35%
Scientific community	N/A	51	N/A
European Parliament	18	3	17%
Total	193	109	30%

- The **European Commission (DG SANTE)** is a clearly delimited and accessible audience, with the critical mass to provide a good number of responses to the questionnaire survey. Out of 38 persons contacted, 12 responded (a response rate of 32%). This audience is likely to show equally good participation rates to future surveys of the same kind, given its proximity to EFSA, and the relevance and importance of EFSA's activities for DG SANTE.
- Representatives of **Member State authorities** constitute a clearly delimited and accessible audience. Although it is a small population in absolute numbers, a large proportion of that population responded to the questionnaire survey. Out of 62 persons contacted, 26 responded (a response rate of 42%). This audience is likely to show equally good participation rates to future surveys of the same kind.
- The **scientific community** is an accessible and very large audience. It is also a global audience scattered in multiple organisations (academic, governmental, commercial, or hybrids). Therefore, the limits and size of this population are difficult to ascertain. While a relatively large number of scientists (51) responded to the survey, they were all drawn from a convenient sample. Therefore, it is not

⁹ One of the 12 completed questionnaires was disregarded because it was scored in the exact same way by the respondent across all 12 attributes and 42 performance indicators. Therefore the results presented in section 5 for the European Commission are based on 11 questionnaires.

possible to ascertain how representative they are of the overall scientific community that EFSA considers as its audience.

- **EU-level organisations** were approached using EFSA's list of registered stakeholders. This included both organisations representing the industry (businesses, traders, farmers and primary producers) and civil society organisations (consumers, environmental NGOs). For some categories, very few organisations exist at EU level and are listed on EFSA's register of stakeholders. As a consequence, very few responses could be collected even if all responded. That is notably the case for consumer organisations, of which there are only two. The possibility to draw general inferences from such small numbers of consultees depends on whether these organisations can be assumed to communicate their members' views on EFSA in a fully representative manner. In the absence of any evidence, it is impossible to validate this assumption. Instead, it would be reasonable to expect that views would differ from one theme (e.g. bee protection) to the next (e.g. animal welfare), and from one country to the next (as is the case for Competent Authorities represented in EFSA's Advisory Forum). On that basis, the representativeness of the information collected for EU-level organisations can be questioned, especially for consumer organisations and, to a lesser extent, environmental organisations.
- The **European Parliament** constitutes a clearly delimited population but one that has been extremely difficult to survey. The nature of MEPs' duties and their busy agenda makes them difficult to access and it is hard to secure their availability to participate in a study of this nature. Very few MEPs (just 3) responded to the survey. This level of response is too low for any firm conclusions to be drawn on EFSA's reputation among MEPs.

4.2 Count of “don’t know” responses

The implementation of the survey tool provided information about the ability of respondents to formulate a response to a large set of questions. The data collected indicate that certain questions received high to very high proportions of “don’t know” answers. Table 5.1 lists the questions for which more than 15% of the respondents responded “don’t know” to the question.

Table 4.2 Questions with more than 15% of “don’t know” replies (>25% highlighted)

Question	Number of don't knows	Proportion of don't knows
The quality of the guidance EFSA produces for applicants	31	29%
The criteria EFSA uses for selecting (and rejecting) data for risk assessments	23	21%
The extent to which EFSA's risk assessments meet the requestor's needs	19	18%
The time it takes EFSA to process dossiers from applicants	43	40%
The time it takes EFSA to respond to requesting authorities (European Commission, European Parliament, Member States)	40	37%
The level of resources EFSA allocates to risk assessments	34	31%

EFSA's independence from civil society groups	22	20%
The balance EFSA strikes between guarding against conflicts of interest and attracting relevant expertise	20	19%
The handling of private data and confidentiality issues by EFSA	31	29%
The handling of public access to document requests	31	29%
EFSA's publication of standards and expectations for dossiers	19	18%
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with the European Commission	31	29%
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with peer organisations outside of the EU	37	34%
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with the European Parliament	50	46%
EFSA's engagement with farmers and primary producers	61	56%
EFSA's engagement with environmental/health NGOs and consumer groups	50	46%
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with risk assessors in Member States	24	22%
EFSA's engagement with business and food industry stakeholders	35	32%
EFSA's provision of scientific and technical assistance to Member States for crisis management	40	37%
EFSA's adherence to due process for making decisions	26	24%
EFSA's capacity (resources, personnel, capital) to deliver its mandate	20	19%
EFSA's innovativeness in data collection and data analysis	20	19%
EFSA's innovativeness in risk communication	18	17%

A large proportion of these questions relate to EFSA activities that are likely to affect only certain audiences, such as questions on the processing of dossiers, the timeliness of responding to requests, or the quality of cooperation and coordination with certain categories of stakeholders. For example, a greater proportion of respondents from the scientific community have been unable to answer questions on engagement, cooperation and coordination with stakeholders than respondents from other groups. By contrast, a smaller proportion of the same group have failed to answer questions on methodology, science, and data.

It was expected that a number of respondents would not be able to express views on these aspects. Since “don’t know” answers have not been counted in the reputation scores, this does not affect the reliability of the tool.

By contrast, questions relative to the manner in which EFSA’s performance might have evolved in the past 12 months received very large numbers of “don’t know” answers. Only 7 questions out of 42 received less than 25% “don’t know” answers, and 18 less than 40% of “don’t know” answers. This level of non-response does not

allow any robust conclusions to be made. Accordingly, the responses to those questions have not been included in this report.

Similarly, a very significant proportion of respondents were unable to respond to the benchmarking question. For all questions, the percentage of non-responses ranged between 47% and 69%. While such a benchmarking question is a mainstay of corporate reputation tools – one way or another, corporate reputation measures aim to assess the reputation of an organization against that of its peers –, it did not perform well in this case. On the one hand, only very few consultees would have the knowledge and international perspective that would enable them to assess how EFSA compares to its peer organisations on a global level. On the other hand, respondents may find it difficult to compare between organisations they perceive as not comparable. Accordingly, the results from this question have been excluded from the report.

4.3 Geographical spread

The distribution of responses in geographical terms is of interest for two audiences: the Member State authorities and the scientific community. As for the MS, 26 responses were collected from 18 countries, with a balance of 4 large MS (3 from Western and 1 from Southern Europe), and 14 medium to small MS (7 from Eastern Europe, 4 from Northern Europe, 1 from Western Europe and 2 from Southern Europe). Members from the scientific community could potentially come from multiple locations. The majority of the respondents came from the European Union (38 out of 51).

Table 4.3 Origin of the respondents from the Scientific Community audience

Country	Responses	Country	Responses
Canada	7	Slovakia	2
United Kingdom	5	Slovenia	2
Bulgaria	4	United States	2
Lithuania	4	Australia	1
Spain	3	Belgium	1
Cyprus	2	Brunei Darussalam	1
Czech Republic	2	Chile	1
Denmark	2	Finland	1
Estonia	2	France	1
Ireland	2	Germany	1
Italy	2	Switzerland	1
Netherlands	2		

5 Results – EFSA’s reputation in 2017

This section presents the results of the Reputation Barometer for the following audiences:

- Member State authorities
- The European Commission
- Businesses, farmers and primary producers
- Consumers and thematic (environment, etc.) organisations
- The scientific community

5.1 The context: EFSA in 2017

The measurement of EFSA's reputation was carried out in the spring of 2017. During the months that preceded the study, a number of events and processes took place which may have contributed to different audiences' assessment of EFSA's performance during the study.

Among the most salient issues which EFSA worked on in that period are glyphosate, neonicotinoids, antimicrobial resistance, and endocrine disruptors. The first of those issues has been controversial. EFSA's Opinion on the carcinogenicity of **glyphosate** was divergent from that of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and, one Member State risk assessor. . The manner in which EFSA has responded to this controversy has been commented on by contributors to the study.

Neonicotinoids, a type of **pesticides**, have been the object of intense scientific and political debate at EU and Member State level. The work of EFSA in this area has also been referenced by some of the respondents.

Antimicrobial resistance has become a major theme of work for several EU institutions and agencies. EFSA has worked collaboratively with the European Centre for Disease prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) on this matter for some time and contributed actively to the debates on this issue through studies, reports, workshops and communication activities.

Endocrine disruptors have been an important topic in the months leading to the study. EFSA's 2015 Opinion on **Bisphenol A** has been abundantly discussed and sometimes criticised. EFSA has also begun work to coordinate its approach to endocrine disruptors with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA).

EFSA has also conducted various initiatives to improve its modes of working and to facilitate interactions with key stakeholders. These include the simplification of guidance to applicants for **health claims**, published in early 2017, an area where there is a history of industry grievances towards EFSA.

Another significant change has been the review of EFSA's approach to stakeholder engagement, with the creation of two permanent stakeholder platforms: the EFSA **Stakeholder Forum** and the **Stakeholder Bureau**. With these platforms, EFSA means to engage more regularly and more intensively with the full range of its stakeholders, through both permanent and targeted activities.

Finally, EFSA has modernised its approach to engaging with Member State authorities, through its **Advisory Forum**, the aim being to give Member States a greater steering role in the activities of the Agency.

5.2 Cross-cutting observations

5.2.1 Reputation scores

The reputation scores were calculated for each audience separately. These scores indicate that EFSA has a good reputation with Member State authorities (participants to EFSA's Advisory Forum), members of the scientific community and the European Commission. The perception of the business community, farmers and primary producers is less positive and vies towards a more neutral view, while that of consumers and thematic NGOs is neutral.

Table 5.1 Reputation scores for each audience (on a scale of -100 to +100).

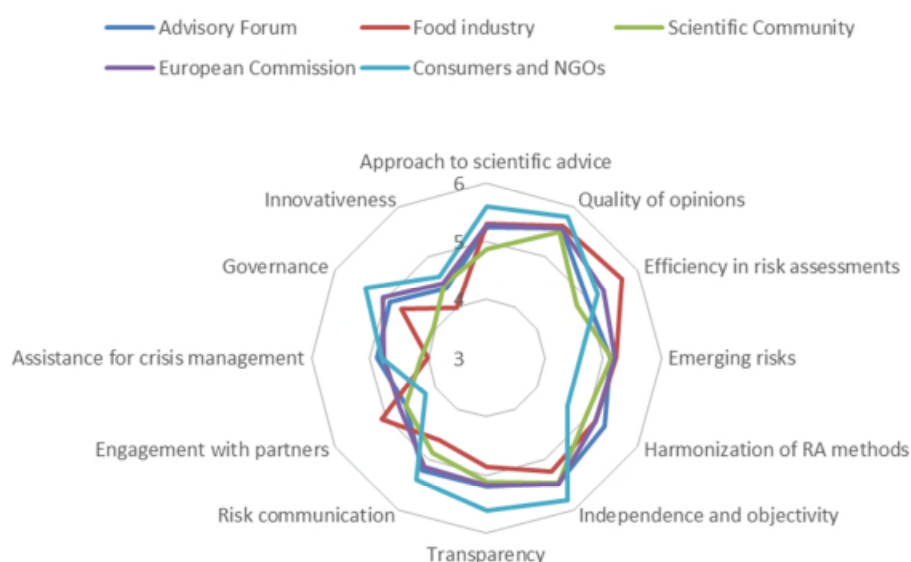
Member State authorities	European Commission	Businesses, farmers and primary producers	Consumers and thematic NGOs	Scientific Community
46	33	20	3	42

The results for each group are discussed in greater detail the following sections

5.2.2 Importance scores

The comparison between the different audiences surveyed provides evidence of some differences in terms of the relative importance they give to different aspects of EFSA's activities. These differences are made visible in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Importance scores per attribute and per audience



Most respondents of all audiences tended to give high importance scores to all attributes. Differences were marginal. However, it is notable that the scientific community and the industry differed from other groups consulted in attaching less importance to innovativeness, assistance for crisis management, and governance.

The lack of weight that members of the scientific community gave to innovativeness (relative to other attributes of EFSA, and relative to the importance granted to innovativeness by other stakeholder groups) is unexpected given the inherent value that scientists would normally give to the refinement of scientific methods and the generation of new knowledge. Interview material suggests that it may be linked to the perception expressed by some members of the scientific community, according to which EFSA does not conduct scientific work per se but rather relies on the work done by other scientists that are not part of EFSA. As such, what may matter more to members of the scientific community is the quality of the science that EFSA relies on, as opposed to the quality of EFSA's "own science". The information gathered through this study does not provide firm evidence on this aspect, and further investigation would be needed for this result to be properly understood. From the industry's perspective, EFSA's innovativeness may be less important than for other groups because the business community may favour a stable regulatory environment more than one changing as a result of innovation. This is based on information provided by one interview, itself echoing concerns voiced elsewhere by industry, e.g. on EFSA's requirements for applicants' dossiers.

The relatively low importance granted to assistance for crisis management by both scientists and members of the industry may result from the perception that this role of EFSA is essentially for the benefit of Member State authorities, and therefore it is not likely to impact these other stakeholder groups, either positively or negatively.

EFSA's governance appeared to matter least to the scientific community. Scientists who were consulted were unlikely to have contributed to EFSA's panels or committees, and as such they would have relatively little stake or interest in this dimension of EFSA's performance.

5.3 Member State authorities (Advisory Forum)

5.3.1 Overview of this audience

Member State authorities are an important audience for EFSA. They are the main users of EFSA's outputs alongside the European Commission and the European Parliament. However some of them fulfil also a key support function to EFSA because they might have capacity that EFSA does not have. Member States are also affected by EFSA's work in their role as first level assessors of applicants' dossiers for certain substances (e.g. pesticides).

5.3.2 Performance and reputation scores

Performance scores for EFSA were consistently good across all attributes (between 31 and 53). This demonstrates that EFSA has been seen positively by members of the Advisory Forum. This was confirmed by a few interviews, in which participants highlighted the quality of EFSA's work on many levels. The overall reputation score was good, at 46.

Table 5.2 MS authorities scores

Attributes	Performance (on a -100 to +100 scale)	Weighting (on a 1-6 scale)	Reputation score (on a -100 to +100 scale)
Approach to scientific advice	53	5.25	46
Quality of opinions	53	5.6	
Efficiency in risk assessments	31	5	
Emerging risks	45	5.1	
Harmonization of RA methods	52	5.3	
Independence and objectivity	43	5.5	
Transparency	48	5.2	
Risk communication	52	5.2	
Engagement with partners	40	4.6	
Assistance for crisis management	42	4.9	
Governance	37	4.9	
Innovativeness	50	4.4	

There was praise for many aspects of EFSA's work, from engagement...

"The agencies responsible for Food Safety in the Member States are a key stakeholder to be engaged, and EFSA is doing a pretty good job in engaging them. Naturally, it could be developed further, but it is not miles away from where it should be."

... to risk communication...

"EFSA's risk communication is quite good compared to the ECDC or the EC. It is one of the best."

... and the credibility of EFSA as a provider of scientific opinions:

"I trust EFSA's scientific opinion more than any other. If I can't find something from EFSA's opinions, then I look at other organisations, but my first choice is EFSA."

The research team explored in more detail the areas where EFSA could further improve its standing in the eyes of the Advisory Forum. For that purpose it has relied on a few interviews with participants to the study.

Although scores were good overall, EFSA's **efficiency in risk assessments received the lowest score**. Follow-up interviews highlighted how several MS representatives saw the risk assessment function as under-resourced and too slow, in particular when compared to the way it was delivered by some Member State authorities.

"EFSA does not have sufficient resources: for example, it still has 1,500 pending evaluations for botanicals. It does not have sufficient resources to complete all opinions within the adequate time. I understand that the process to prepare a scientific opinion is complex, but sometimes these processes of public consultation and revision take too long."

“When EFSA is asked to give an opinion, some MS are also asked to give advice. Sometimes our institution has to reply within a week or a month. Sometimes it’s quite important and urgent and it’s a matter of days. If you compare with timeframes given by the European Commission – e.g. we had a timeline of up to March 2019 – you see that there’s a huge difference. Of course, when we reply within days it’s not a complete RA, but there could be an easier assessment procedures done by EFSA, with a shorter timeline.”

There was concern that the issue of resources may worsen over time, affecting further EFSA’s capacity to deliver risk assessments in a timely manner. This threat to EFSA’s reputation might justify a more strategic approach to the manner EFSA prioritises its activities.

“If I understand correctly, within the EC they have a requirement to cut 2% of personnel every year. In 10 years this means that 10% is cut. It’s not too much. (...) But this means you have less resources. The other side of the coin is the increased tasks for EFSA – there are more and more requirements for EFSA to provide opinions on regulatory work, this work has increased in past years. This means that other parts of EFSA’s work, the “real” risk assessment, is going to have less resources. Self-tasking and horizontal risk assessment is lacking. We should allocate risk to holistic approaches – see the role of risks and weighting throughout the food chain. EFSA started to do it but there’s minimal resources for that.”

Concerns about EFSA’s lack of efficiency in risk assessments echoed those that one MS representative expressed in relation to **assistance to MS for crisis management**. There too, a lack of rapid response by EFSA was emphasised.

“We have not been supported at all by the Authority. I think that things are improving now, however: there are rapid risk assessment processes. (...) in these situations [of crisis] (...) you need good information within a short amount of time. Given its role as EU authority, EFSA usually takes its time to deliver opinions. But it is not possible to do so in crisis situations: you need to provide something, despite information may not be sufficient. You need to take the risk.

This is an underlying theme that has also been observed for other audiences, as discussed in the following sections.

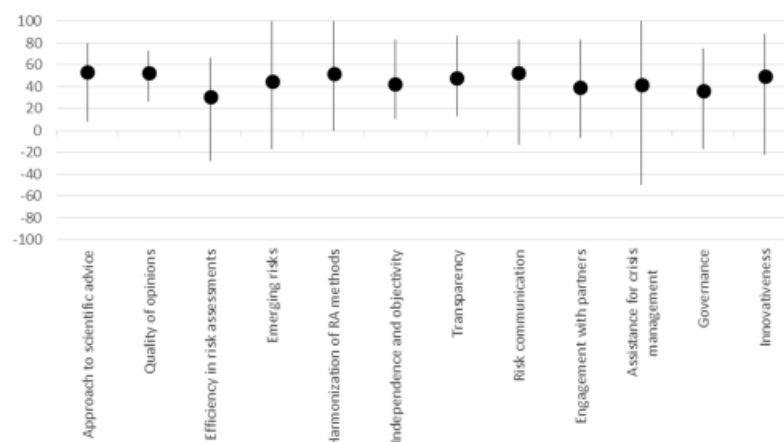
The topic of **Conflict of Interest** (CoI) is an object of some criticism within that group. Several interviewees contended that EFSA’s CoI policy is excessive in the limitations it imposes onto scientists. One respondent added that it imposed excessive restrictions on members of MS risk assessment authorities as well. While some respondents appeared to blame EFSA for this, at least one respondent clearly blamed others in EFSA’s environment for pressing it to implement such a policy. There is a commonality of views on that point between some members of the Advisory Forum and some members of the Scientific Community.

EFSA’s risk communication activities have been scored well and were praised by interviewees. However, at least two interviewees noted also the necessity to adapt EFSA’s messages to its audiences, and to further improve how it communicates on complex issues.

Finally, in terms of engagement with stakeholders, one interviewee from this group noted how EFSA was failing, alongside other international agencies, to coordinate

and communicate with its global peers on topics of global impact, before publishing opinions. This lack of communication was seen as confusing consumers.

Figure 5.2 Distribution of performance scores (minimum, maximum, and average) - Advisory forum

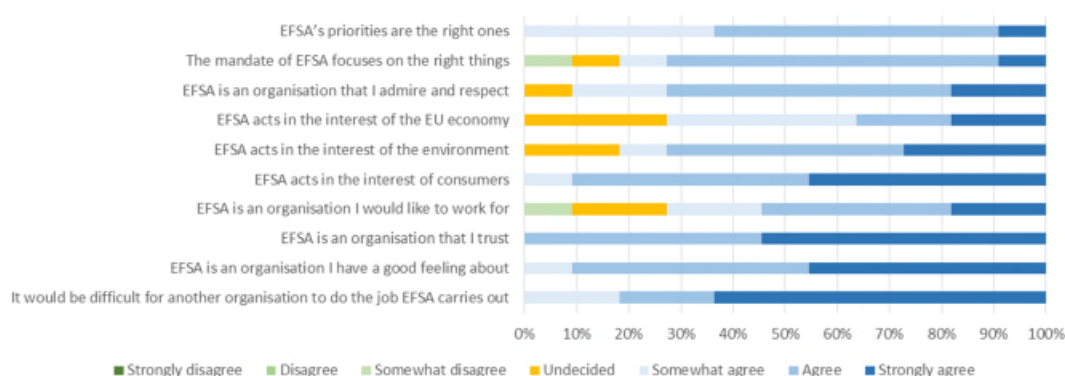


The distribution of scores overall across participants from this group shows a relatively wide range of performance assessments (see Figure 5.2), which reflects differences in interests and political views between Member States of the European Union (including also Norway and Iceland), and the variety of their experience interacting with EFSA. This does not apply to the quality of Opinions, for which the range of assessments across respondents is small, indicating a consistent judgment across the group of respondents on this attribute.

5.3.3 Sentiment towards EFSA

The good reputation score of EFSA given by the Advisory Forum is consistent with the positive picture that emerged from responses to questions on sentiment towards EFSA (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 Sentiment towards EFSA (Advisory Forum)



All respondents agreed that EFSA was trustworthy, had the right priorities, and acted in the interest of the consumers. All agreed that they had a positive feeling about EFSA and that it would be difficult for another organisation to do EFSA's job. There was only very limited disagreement from this group on the focus of EFSA's

mandate and on EFSA's attractiveness as a place of work for the respondent. More notable is the undecided stance of a number of respondents on whether EFSA's actions were in the interest of the environment or the EU economy, when all agreed that it acted in the interests of consumers. Interviews provided indicative evidence that national political debates on certain topics, such as GMOs or pesticides, could influence the way national MS authorities perceived EFSA. A more detailed investigation would be necessary in order to ascertain what underpins these responses.

5.4 European Commission

5.4.1 Overview of this audience

The European Commission – DG SANTE – is a strategically important audience for EFSA. The Commission sets EFSA's budget and the terms of EFSA's mandate for all risk assessment requests addressed to the Commission. It is a primary user of EFSA's opinions, which inform its decisions not only on new topics but also for matters such as GMOs or pesticides, where the Commission plays the role of approver to the industry.

5.4.2 Performance and reputation scores

Performance scores for EFSA were consistently good across all attributes (between 21 and 52). This demonstrates that EFSA has been seen positively by members of the European Commission. This was confirmed by interviews, in which participants highlighted the quality of EFSA's work on many levels. The reputation score for the whole group was 33.

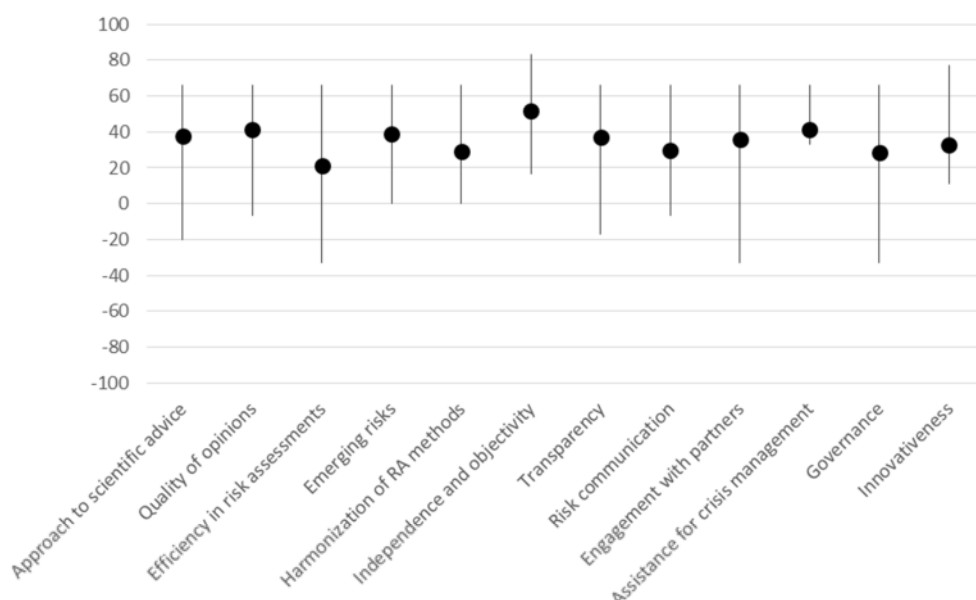
Table 5.3 Average scores for all the attributes

Attributes	Performance (on a -100 to +100 scale)	Weighting (on a 1-6 scale)	Reputation score (on a -100 to 100 scale)
Approach to scientific advice	38	5.3	33
Quality of opinions	41	5.6	
Efficiency in risk assessments	21	5.3	
Emerging risks	39	5.2	
Harmonization of RA methods	29	5.2	
Independence and objectivity	52	5.5	
Transparency	37	5.2	
Risk communication	30	5.1	
Engagement with partners	36	4.7	
Assistance for crisis management	41	4.8	
Governance	29	5	
Innovativeness	33	4.5	

While the performance of EFSA was generally noted positively, the efficiency of EFSA in producing risk assessments received the lowest score, which is consistent with responses from Member State representatives.

The range of performance assessments was wide across all attributes. This was notably the case for the efficiency of EFSA in producing assessments, EFSA's engagement with partners, and EFSA's governance.

Figure 5.4 Distribution of performance scores (minimum, maximum, and average) – European Commission



This suggests that DG SANTE is indeed a heterogeneous stakeholder with divergent opinions among its staff regarding EFSA's work, possibly reflecting some inconsistencies in EFSA's performance across different themes. Further investigation may be useful to understand more in depth how EFSA's reputation varies *within* DG SANTE, from one Unit to another.

The following comments suggest that the views of respondents may have been shaped by their understanding of specific areas of EFSA's work, as opposed to a cross-cutting view:

"At EFSA, data collection in the animal sector is innovative and is developing. In the EU, there is a need for epidemiological data. Member states do not have such data. EFSA's role goes beyond expressing only opinions."

The progress EFSA has made in various areas, including conflicts of interest, and communicating and making its information visible, has been praised.

"EFSA gets good visibility, and in some areas it is even more known than the Commission itself because it has a more understandable institutional value of the EC. Communicating with the public is important. E.g. Website has improved a lot."

This implies also engaging with Member States, for which EFSA's efforts are noted:

“We need all MS to help on risk communication. One nice thing EFSA is doing is cooperation with MSs on communications. If you want to convince consumers in each MS, you need the MSs to do part of the communication on your behalf. Otherwise it does not work.”

Further progress on risk communication may be achieved, however:

“The situation is complex: there is no educational support for the data user. Sometimes risk manager find it difficult to use or interpret these data. ... It would be useful to have a structured approach to the interpretation of data to avoid imbalances due to data being badly interpreted. It is a matter of benchmarking: the data is provided without giving a reference to the more general problem.”

Another area for progress that Commission officials identified was the management of disagreements with peer organisations:

“For instance there was an issue with IARC – EFSA asked IARC for a meeting to discuss why they achieved different conclusions. IARC took offence from something that was put on EFSA’s website. You need to avoid these things.”

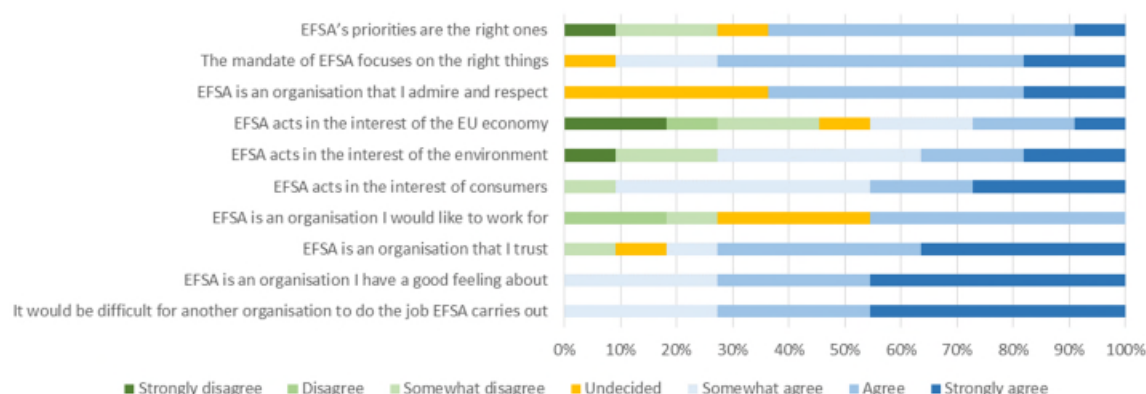
Likewise, there has been concern that EFSA’s demands of the industry may not always be proportionate.

“When you ask very sophisticated data from industry, you are creating problems for SMEs, so you get criticism from the Commission that sometimes EFSA should have its feet on the ground, and ask for less sophisticated data. So we have dialogue with EFSA and check with them whether it is always necessary to make data collection so complicated. It’s very difficult for EFSA to address this problem, because they were created to ensure food safety – not to protect the industry. This depends on the areas – there are some where there are more SMEs. There are no SMEs for the GMO area, for example. (...) Sometimes it’s good to ask: do we absolutely need this for the safety assessment? Is this something that is nice to know, but not necessarily useful for the safety assessment? It’s good to have a dialogue on this issue.”

5.4.3 Sentiment towards EFSA

This group’s sentiment towards EFSA was generally positive, in line with the Reputation measure. However, the group of respondents was not consistently in agreement with some of the statements. In particular, the group of respondents was split in two halves on the statement “EFSA acts in the interest of the EU economy.” This echoes the concerns of some members of the Commission regarding the impact of EFSA’s requirements on EU businesses, particularly SMEs. There was some disagreement – including strong disagreement – with the statement that “EFSA acts in the interest of the environment”, indicating concerns with the substance of some of EFSA’s Opinions.

Figure 5.5 Sentiment towards EFSA (European Commission)



While EFSA's raison d'être and uniqueness was acknowledged by all respondents (100% agreed that "It would be difficult for another organisation to do the job EFSA carries out"), a minority of them did not agree that its priorities were the right ones, or that it was an organisation they would like to work for.

5.5 Businesses, farmers and primary producers

5.5.1 Overview of this audience

This is a mixed audience, which includes actors intervening at multiple points in the food chain. Some members of this "commercially oriented" audience are also applicants for authorisation of GMOs, pesticides, or health claims. As such their views on EFSA are likely to be framed by their experience of the procedures EFSA has defined for these applications, and of the process through which EFSA has been reviewing them.

5.5.2 Performance and reputation scores

EFSA's performance scores were good overall, with an overall reputation score of 20. However, there are areas where EFSA's performance scores with that group were low, and sometimes negative. That was particularly the case for efficiency in risk assessments (the lowest score at -4) and harmonization of risk assessment methods (7). These two attributes of EFSA are notable in that they directly relate to the experience of applicants.

Table 5.4 Average scores for all the attributes

Attributes	Performance (on a -100 to +100 scale)	Weighting (on a 1-6 scale)	Reputation score (on a -100 to 100 scale)
Approach to scientific advice	27	5.3	20
Quality of opinions	36	5.6	
Efficiency in risk assessments	-4	5.7	
Emerging risks	36	5.2	

Harmonization of RA methods	7	5.2
Independence and objectivity	33	5.2
Transparency	29	4.8
Risk communication	26	4.6
Engagement with partners	14	5.1
Assistance for crisis management	20	4
Governance	12	4
Innovativeness	19	4.4

Interviews with members of that group have provided additional evidence that the process for applications has been perceived as too complex, and too lengthy. For instance:

“When it comes to GMOs, the time it takes for EFSA to deliver its opinion is significantly long and not in line with the practices from other countries. This can cause different problems e.g. with imports (asynchronous authorisation of GMOs). This is also due to the decision making process, but the delay starts already with EFSA. There may be differences with other regulated products.”

Some of the criticism is aimed at EFSA’s guidance for applicants. Two interviewees perceived these guidance documents as overly complex. One interviewee highlighted how EFSA’s requirements to applicants have tended to grow over time, at the expense of stability and clarity.

While some consultees saw “an attitude of excessive ostracism towards the industry” at EFSA, others noted progress in the manner in which EFSA has engaged with stakeholders.

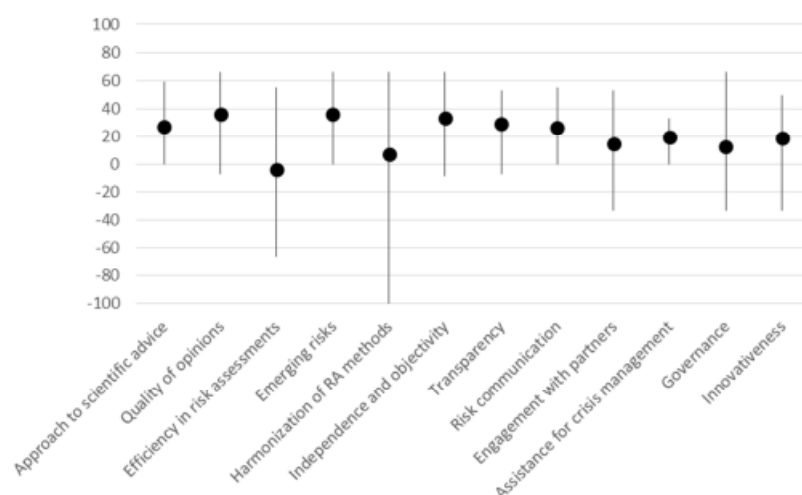
“We saw that EFSA made a lot of efforts to engage with stakeholders – they also organise a roundtable for industry associations. This is a good step as there are very limited options for us to talk to EFSA. The new forum is a good opportunity, in the previous forum not all associations were represented. (...) Face to face exercises are also very good. Public consultations are excellent but also cost resources and time. Direct interaction is better because APDESK is helpful on admin issues, but not on scientific issues content-wise. It’s better to have a meeting with the person in charge to solve issues. They also have open plenary meetings now – you can attend as observer, and there is an option of web streaming – this is excellent as travelling to Parma is not so easy. This effort needs to be recognised.”

Finally, members of this group considered the Col policy to be effective, but also too restrictive in that it did not take into account all kinds of Col.

“EFSA’s Col management exclude experts who have had business relationships, while other Col are not recognised, such as interests of those who have worked for the government (who have an unbalanced interpretation) and those who work for NGOs (who have specific interests).”

The distribution of performance scores within the group shows wide discrepancies when it comes to the most criticized areas. This suggests that the perception of EFSA (and the experience of interacting with EFSA that has informed such perception) varies widely within the group of respondents. Further investigations would be needed to determine whether this would justify making a distinction between different sub-groups within this audience, or whether it reveals inconsistencies in the manner EFSA has interacted with members of the food industry.

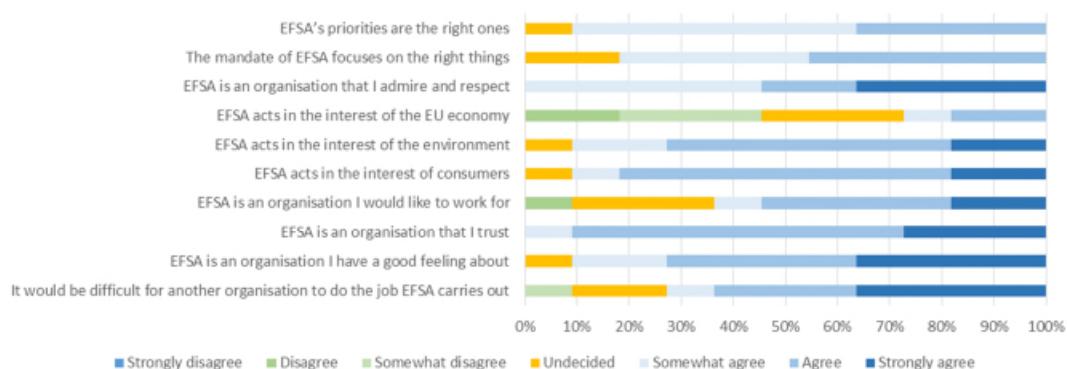
Figure 5.6 Distribution of performance scores (minimum, maximum, and average) – Businesses, farmers and primary producers



5.5.3 Sentiment towards EFSA

The measure of overall sentiment towards EFSA was generally good, with the notable exception of responses to the statement: “EFSA acts in the interest of the EU economy”, with which a minority of respondents agreed. This is a response from a business audience whose primary interests are economic. While the group has generally expressed positive views on EFSA’s approach and outputs (the quality of the Opinions), this negative note appears consistent with the poor scores given to EFSA’s efficiency in risk assessments. A central concern for this group is the process of conducting risk assessments, which a number of respondents identified as being too burdensome and complex. It is not EFSA as an organisation, or the substance of its decisions. This is confirmed by the fact that 100% of respondents from this group indicated they trusted EFSA and 90% indicated they “have a good feeling about” EFSA.

Figure 5.7 Sentiment towards EFSA (Businesses, farmers and primary producers)



5.6 Consumer and thematic organisations

5.6.1 Overview of this audience

The audience of consumer and thematic organisations is mixed in that it includes both generalist organisations with a wide range of interests and causes, but also very specialised organisations focused on one theme, such as bees or animal welfare. Contrary to the industry, the European Commission or Member States, this audience does not participate at or directly benefit from any of the central missions of EFSA (e.g. providing advice or support, assessing applications). Yet it is a key audience of EFSA because EFSA's advice has an influence on policy in the areas these organisations are also active in.

5.6.2 Performance and reputation scores

The reputation score for the consumer and thematic organisations is neutral. The performance scores are quite diverse, ranging from a low of -14 to a maximum of 33. As it is the case for other groups, the attribute "Efficiency in risk assessments" has received the lowest score (-14).

Table 5.5 Average scores for all the attributes

Attributes	Performance (on a -100 to +100 scale)	Weighting (on a 1-6 scale)	Reputation score (on a -100 to 100 scale)
Approach to scientific advice	13	5.6	3
Quality of opinions	11	5.8	
Efficiency in risk assessments	-14	5.2	
Emerging risks	17	4.6	
Harmonization of RA methods	33	4.6	
Independence and objectivity	-4	5.8	
Transparency	-11	5.6	
Risk communication	3	5.4	
Engagement with partners	7	4.2	
Assistance for crisis management	0	4.8	
Governance	0	5.4	
Innovativeness	-8	4.6	

The other areas where the lowest scores were recorded were those that have been repeatedly voiced in public criticism of EFSA: independence and objectivity, transparency, and to a lesser extent innovativeness in the tools used for conducting risks assessments. In that respect, the findings from the survey are consistent with the discourse from consumer and thematic organisations that has been reported in media reports.

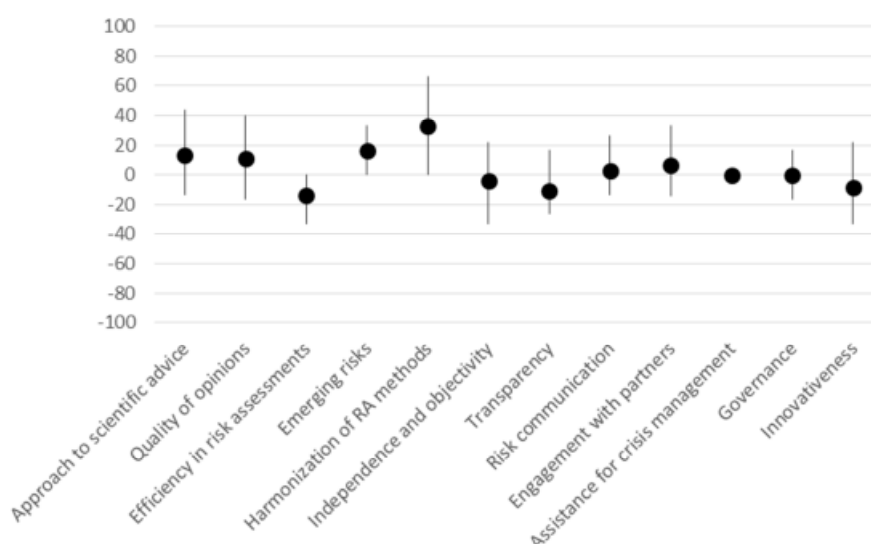
By contrast, the performance of EFSA in terms of harmonization of risk assessment methods across the EU was assessed positively on average. There was a relatively wide range of opinions on that attribute, as represented in Figure 5.8. The

information collected in exploratory and follow-up interviews with representatives of this audience indicates that views on the methods EFSA has used varied depending on which area of EFSA's work was considered. For instance, while EFSA's work on neonicotinoids has been praised (with the respondent mentioning the methodology used to conduct risk assessments in this area), EFSA's work in GMOs has been criticized for failing to take into account updates in the methodologies used in the wider scientific community to assess the risks of GMOs.

The debate surrounding glyphosate was also mentioned by respondents in follow-up interviews. EFSA's handling of divergent scientific opinions was noted as an aspect on which it had performed less well in recent months.

"On the Glyphosate Opinion – there was an interesting debate (...) and there were divergent opinions. [EFSA's Director] Mr. Url's response was not clear - the press generally tends to distort the information, but if you communicate that the assessment criteria [between IARC And EFSA] are different, you are giving a disconcerting message. The public already has low trust in science. There is no convergence and this deforms public opinion. So the public has deformed views on antibiotics, GMOs and so on. EU institutions and other agencies must create a convergent ground. Otherwise, politicians will use divergences in their favour."

Figure 5.8 Distribution of performance scores (minimum, maximum, and average) – Consumers and thematic NGOs



Members from that audience also criticised the manner in which EFSA communicated with others, especially in face-to-face communications, as well as the manner in which EFSA organised itself to interact with stakeholders on specific issues.

"Face-to-face communications are sometimes an issue - it depends on which EFSA officers is providing the explanation. EFSA has to understand its target audiences: whether the audience has scientific knowledge or not. (...) Some EFSA representatives have not been careful enough with the messages given."

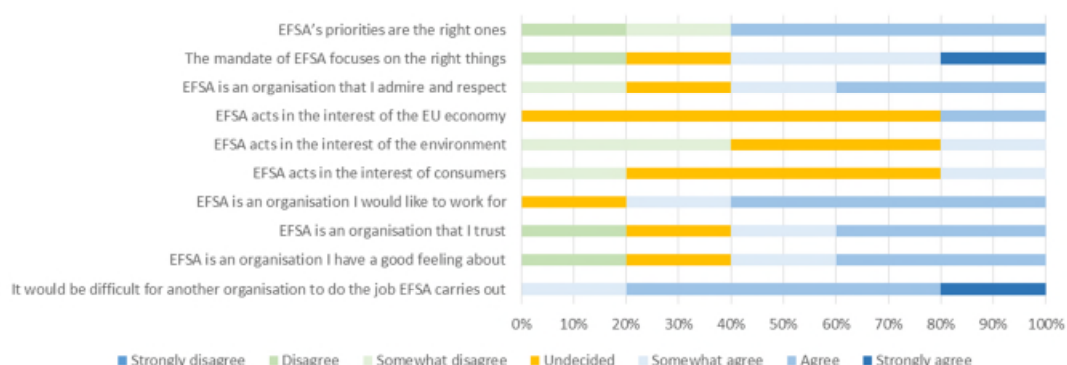
"When you engage with EFSA, it's difficult to track the person who was originally involved in the issue - this lengthens the time needed for EFSA to deliver its work. For example, in 2012 we worked on meat inspection. It was difficult to talk to EFSA – response time was very long and they created a webpage that disappeared and then reappeared."

There was only a small range of performance scores for each attribute within that group. However, the sample was small, which suggests that the range could have been wider had other organisations participated in the study.

5.6.3 Sentiment towards EFSA

The measure of sentiment towards EFSA showed a mixed picture, with relatively positive views on EFSA as an organisation, but a large majority of undecided and negative views on the question of whether EFSA acts in the interest of the economy (80% undecided), the environment (40% disagree, 40% undecided), or consumers (20% disagree, 60% undecided). The unique role of EFSA is not questioned by any respondent.

Figure 5.9 Sentiment towards EFSA (Consumers and thematic NGOs)



5.7 Scientific community

5.7.1 Overview of this audience

The scientific community, understood as the scientists involved in food risk assessments, is a global audience that reaches well beyond the European Union's borders. It has been contributing to risk assessments through panels or committees, or as permanent staff, in national and international organisations. The nature of scientific work implies that this audience is both defined by a shared set of values and tools that are core to science, and yet divided into multiple groups defined by discipline, specialisation, and positions in scientific debates. Some member of this community are also involved in policy debates, and may make public statements about key issues, sometimes to support and sometimes to contradict risk assessment agencies like EFSA.

5.7.2 Performance and reputation scores

The performance scores for EFSA within this group were consistently high across all attributes. The overall reputation score was high as well, at 42. As for other groups, the attribute "efficiency in risk assessments" received the lowest score at 37.

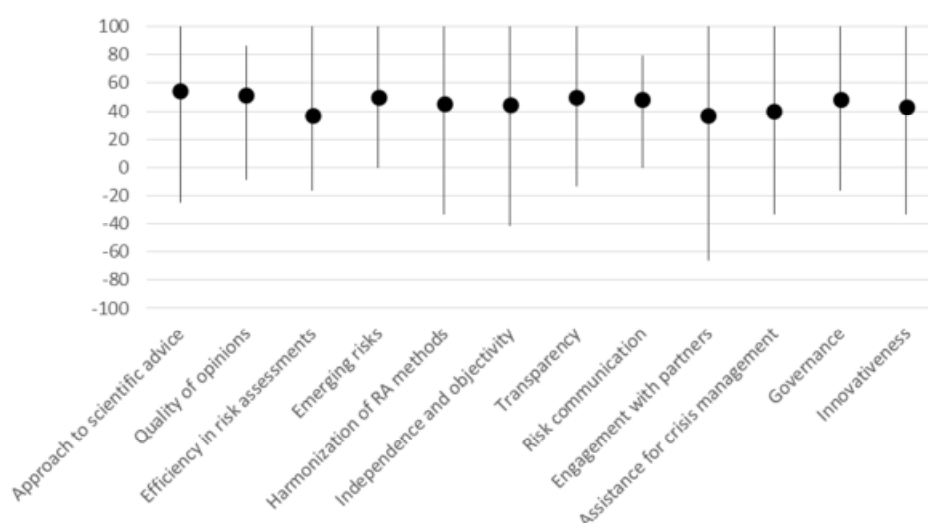
Table 5.6 Average scores for all the attributes

Attributes	Performance (on a -100 to +100 scale)	Weighting (on a 1-6 scale)	Reputation score (on a -100 to 100 scale)
Approach to scientific advice	54	4.9	42
Quality of opinions	52	5.5	
Efficiency in risk assessments	37	4.8	
Emerging risks	50	5.2	
Harmonization of RA methods	45	5	
Independence and objectivity	44	5.5	
Transparency	50	5.1	
Risk communication	48	4.9	
Engagement with partners	37	4.6	
Assistance for crisis management	40	4.1	
Governance	48	4	
Innovativeness	43	4.4	

There was a very wide range of scores given for each attribute (See Figure 5.10), which makes it difficult to provide firm conclusions on this group. This provides an indication on the heterogeneity of this audience. Yet, overall the assessment of EFSA's performance was positive. For example, even when scientists disagreed with EFSA's opinions, they praised the quality of EFSA's work and its transparency.

"In general, I look at EFSA as a reliable authority and they make good scientific judgement calls. In some cases I would have made other judgement calls and I cannot understand their reasoning. But in recent years, in EFSA and other organisations the RA processes have become more transparent and easy to follow. This is something EFSA is good at. You can see who has worked on opinions, it's clear what data they have used. So, even if I don't agree, I can see why they reached a specific conclusion and I can make my case on why I would make another conclusion."

Figure 5.10 Distribution of performance scores (minimum, maximum, and average) – Scientific Community



The interviews provided some indications of how and where EFSA could improve its reputation as seen from that audience's perspective.

EFSA's policy on **conflict of interest** (Col) was one of the issues that drew comments. On the one hand, some scientists highlighted that EFSA's Col policy was imposing unnecessary constraints on EFSA and preventing it from drawing in the most competent people. As a result, EFSA was sometimes "behind", for example in the area of food allergens.

"it's almost impossible for a scientist who has some contacts with the industry to be member of a working group or a Panel. But in fact these people are very knowledgeable. For me there's a difference between people who have a big chunk of their research paid by the industry – they should be out [of EFSA's panels...] – and people who, from time to time, are consulted by the industry: that should be more allowed. (...) These kind of things really hamper EFSA's work."

"The food industry has been very active to generate knowledge [on food allergies], and EFSA is not really part of that work. So EFSA is behind. This is because EFSA cannot cooperate with the industry."

Other scientists also criticized the narrow focus of EFSA's Col on economic interests. One scientist highlighted that scientists usually had an opinion, which coloured their scientific advice. EFSA was perceived as ignorant of these differences and therefore ill-equipped to provide opinions that were not only scientifically sound, but also balanced.

The group's views on EFSA's **independence and objectivity** were positive overall (average performance score of 44). However, there was some criticism of what was seen as overly close relationship between EFSA and the European Commission:

"Recently, (...) you get the impression that the work is not so independent from the EU Commission. Sometimes, on a case by case basis, there is the impression that the Commission tries to get the assessment to go in a certain direction."

"One thing that really hampers EFSA is that they have formal ways of dealing with EU requests. If you want to be a science-based organisation, then you must be willing from time to time to 'contradict' the boss. That's part of scientific independence: sometime you have to

bring a bad message. I've noted that there's reluctance for EFSA to speak up when they should."

Interviewees also mentioned what they saw as a lack of **international engagement** with third country organisations such as the United States Food and Drugs Administration (US FDA).

"I never hear anything for instance about EFSA cooperating with the FDA – they are doing an excellent job in many respects, and there should be a regular exchange between EFSA and FDA. That's bad, simply. Food business' trade is not limited to the EU, but EFSA's work is focussing on the EU and forgets that much of our food comes from outside the EU. E.g. lot of chicken from Thailand, meat from Argentina... Those are countries you should really reach out to and exchange knowledge about methodologies etc."

Although EFSA was deemed innovative by most respondents, it was also criticised for being too conservative in terms of the methodologies it used in risk assessments.

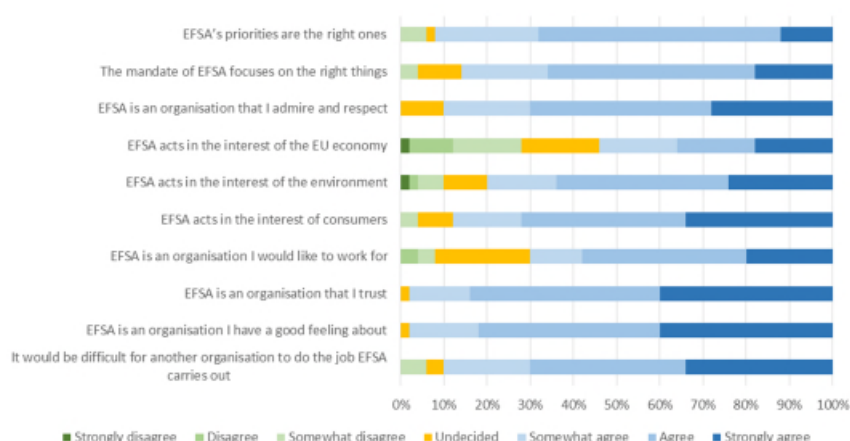
"EFSA is very conservative. It really looks at old methodologies – not even the well-established ones. Sometimes they look at the 'old-fashioned' ones! You come up with something new, with some new principles, for instance: risk migration (you take care of one problem, and because of that problem another issue comes up) - this is simply not in their system of thinking."

Finally, some scientists indicated that EFSA could improve its opinions and the manner in which it communicated them, by making them shorter and more adapted to their audiences.

5.7.3 Sentiment towards EFSA

This group's sentiment towards EFSA was generally very positive and in that respect consistent with the positive assessment of the agency's performance across many attributes. Almost all respondents indicated that they trusted EFSA and had a good feeling about it. They also acknowledged the unique role of EFSA, although this audience also included peer organisations that may perceive themselves as equally capable of delivering scientific opinions on issues falling within the remit of EFSA. Like other groups, a number of respondents from the scientific community indicated they did not agree with the statement that "EFSA acts in the interest of the EU economy" (about 30%) or "EFSA acts in the interest of the environment" (about 10%).

Figure 5.11 Sentiment towards EFSA (Scientific community)



6 Conclusions

This section presents the main findings of the study, discusses its limitations, and provides a set of recommendations.

6.1.1 Findings

The Reputation Barometer study has developed a tool inspired by corporate reputation barometers, in order to measure the reputation of EFSA amongst a selection of its principal stakeholders. This is the first time that such a tool has been developed for a regulatory organisation. As such the study has broken new ground by articulating together the insights from corporate reputation tools and the academic literature on agency reputation.

In this study, the concept of a Reputation Barometer for EFSA has been tested. Through this test, the study has identified which elements – assumptions, indicators, and data collection tools – may be used in future surveys to measure how EFSA's Reputation amongst those groups.

The study has also provided a qualitative and quantitative measure of EFSA's reputation among some of its most important audiences. As such the study provides a benchmark against which EFSA's reputation may be assessed in future iterations of the Barometer.

6.1.2 Limitations

The study was subject to a number of limitations:

- The design of the Reputation Barometer relies on some assumptions that are currently untested, regarding for example the level of homogeneity of different audience groups, and the (absence of) causal relationships between different attributes of EFSA's reputation. The audiences of EFSA had not been mapped beforehand.
- For practical reasons, the sampling strategies that were adopted varied across the different target audiences. This prevented the analysis from drawing comparisons across all groups and their responses.
- There was a low level of participation from certain groups targeted by the survey. The small sample size means that the results obtained from these groups cannot be regarded as representative.
- Some of the important forums in which EFSA's reputation is made and discussed were not included in this study. The European Parliament could not be surveyed. Media coverage of EFSA and its work was reviewed through a limited sample of articles and tweets.

6.1.3 Recommendations

This section presents recommendations both on EFSA's practices and how they may affect positively its reputation, and on the strategy and the tools for assessing EFSA's reputation.

6.1.3.1 Areas for improvement

The study has identified areas in which, from a stakeholder perspective, EFSA can improve its performance. Appropriate changes in those areas could improve

EFSA's reputation with those audiences. Areas that were consistently highlighted were:

- **Efficiency in risk assessments** – This attribute of EFSA was the one that consistently received lower scores across all audiences. The concerns differed in substance from one audience to the next, according to how they use or depend on EFSA's risk assessments. However, there is a common thread of dissatisfaction with the timeliness of EFSA's work. This appears to be linked to resource constraints at EFSA, but also matters of organisation and the approach that EFSA has taken to delivery of this task. The results suggest that improvements in this area would have a positive impact on reputation. It is clearly important, however, that efficiency improvements do not compromise the quality of the results.
- **Conflicts of interests / independence and objectivity** – While EFSA's scores on the matter of how it addresses conflicts of interests and secures expertise were not poor overall, the issue of conflicts of interest was mentioned across all groups by interviewees as an area where further progress is needed. The views differ from one group to the next: each audience appeared to hold its own set of expectations on this matter, which were not consistent with those held by other groups.

Contradictions between the expectations that different audiences hold towards EFSA indicate the need to tailor communication on contested issues to specific groups, to dispel or address specific concerns. This leads to a more fundamental observation that should inform the manner in which EFSA will use the information presented in this report. It is hard and sometimes impossible for an agency to improve its reputation among all of its audiences. As highlighted by scholars who have worked on this issue (e.g. Carpenter and Krause 2012, Huber 2007), the challenge that an agency faces with regard to its reputation is to improve its reputation with some audiences *at the expense of* other audiences. For instance, in a study of the uses of scientific expertise in the EU, Rimkute (2015) has highlighted the different ways reputation may influence the production and use of scientific expertise in the EU, which may please sometimes some audiences and be viewed negatively by others. Members of the scientific community may criticize EFSA for paying too much attention to the political preferences of the Commission, or to the criticism from NGOs. At the same time, NGOs may criticize it for not paying enough attention to their concerns. Another alternative is for an agency to *project neutrality* towards its different audiences, in those areas where it cannot improve its reputation with all of them.

The study has found that the food industry (businesses, farmers and primary producers) on the one hand, and consumer and environmental / thematic NGOs on the other hand, were the audiences for which EFSA's reputation was the lowest. These findings should be strengthened by additional information (considering in particular the small number of respondents from the latter audience). Focusing on the matters of concern to these groups would, on the methodology used, improve EFSA overall reputation.

6.1.3.2 EFSA's Barometer 2.0

The Barometer has been proven to be a useful tool for assessing performance across the range of EFSA's activities. This was a pilot exercise intended to provide

points of learning as well as data and, as such, a number of areas in which the design could be improved have been identified. Some require work before the approach is deployed again, others would be integrated into the Barometer methodology:

- **Improve understanding of EFSA's audiences** – This study has built on partial evidence gathered through desk research and interviews, as well as ICF's previous research for EFSA, to inform key assumptions about EFSA's audiences. While insightful, the amount of information collected this way has been limited. Some of the key assumptions from the study, particularly regarding the homogeneity of the audiences, have been challenged in the study: there is evidence that views on EFSA vary significantly within audiences, for example within the European Commission's DG SANTE. These assumptions could be tested and refined through a more in-depth investigation. This is why ICF recommends that EFSA commissions a stakeholder mapping study that will provide more empirical evidence on its audiences, before another Reputation Barometer survey is commissioned. ICF also recommends that EFSA invests in the construction of a more comprehensive stakeholder contact database that supports segmentation of contacts by audience type. This would be useful not only to improve sampling for future barometers and surveys, but also for targeted communication strategies.
- **Improve the sampling strategy** – Adequate sampling has implications both for adequately mapping stakeholder expectations (being able to robustly measure the relevance and weight assigned to an attribute by particular respondent groups) as well as for the accuracy of the actual scores. The sampling strategy could be improved for at least some of the audiences. In particular:
 - The population from the **scientific community** audience could be identified in a more rigorous manner by pooling together the list of all scientists that sit on relevant scientific panels or committees, within the EU as well as in peer third country and international organisations. A sample of consultees could then be drawn randomly from that population. This approach would provide a rigorous, yet more onerous, alternative to the convenient sampling strategy that was followed in the study.
 - EFSA might consider surveying jointly **consumer organisations** at EU level and the main consumer organisations in all Member States. An extended list of **environmental / thematic NGOs** may also be surveyed to expand on the relatively small list of stakeholders listed under EFSA's register of stakeholders. Such an extended consultation strategy could be developed based on an effort to map relevant stakeholder organisations across the European Union's Member States.
- **Improve the questionnaire** – A number of questions used in this questionnaire failed to gather sufficient responses and it is recommended that alternative approaches are used in future studies. Alternative approaches are needed to gather feedback on how EFSA's performance:
 - Gathering feedback on how EFSA's performance has evolved over the past 12 months: an alternative option for gathering information on the manner in which EFSA's performance may have evolved over time could use the following questioning format:

- In the past 12 months, what has contributed to improving your opinion about EFSA?
- In the past 12 months, what has contributed to worsening your opinion about EFSA?
- Gathering feedback on how EFSA compares with its peers: a benchmarking question may be improved on the basis of a preliminary study of EFSA's peer group, focusing in particular on:
 - The attributes on which they could be reasonably compared (e.g. EFSA could be compared to the OECD in terms of method harmonization, but not on the issue of risk communication); and
 - The degree to which they are known to EFSA's audiences
 - These approaches will need to accommodate constraints such as whether respondents with an interest in food risk will have had any exposure to organisations active in other areas of risk management.
- Understanding the context in which the measurement is done: while this was not applied in the pilot study, a question should be added that identifies one or more relevant events that occurred in the months before the Barometer survey and asks the respondent to comment on how EFSA should have responded to them. Their answers to this question would help in interpretation of the Barometer scores.
- **Apply cognitive testing** – If the questionnaire is revised it should be **cognitively tested** before deployment. Cognitive testing means to explore the manner respondents understand and think when answering questions from a survey. It helps ascertain that a questionnaire is designed in such a way that it can achieve its intended objectives.
- **Apply statistical tests to the indicators** – The Reputation Barometer should include indicators that are not causally related to one another. In the pilot study the team relied on inferences and logic to define indicators that would not be causally related. However, in a follow up study this could be made more robust through statistical testing, to ensure that indicators (and attributes) are not causally related, that they actually contribute to the measured outcome, and that they are not redundant. Such an effort should be factored in the resourcing and sampling specifications for the study.
- **Refine weighting** – For the purpose of simplifying the survey tool, it was assumed that all indicators for a given attribute had similar importance for the respondents. In future iterations of the Barometer a more robust weighting of indicators within attributes could be developed and tested. This would refine the overall assessment by ensuring that the importance given to an indicator relative to another is as intended by the respondent. This may not make the survey tool too complex or lengthy if other elements from the initial tool – questions on evolution during the past 12 months and benchmarking question – were revised as recommended earlier.

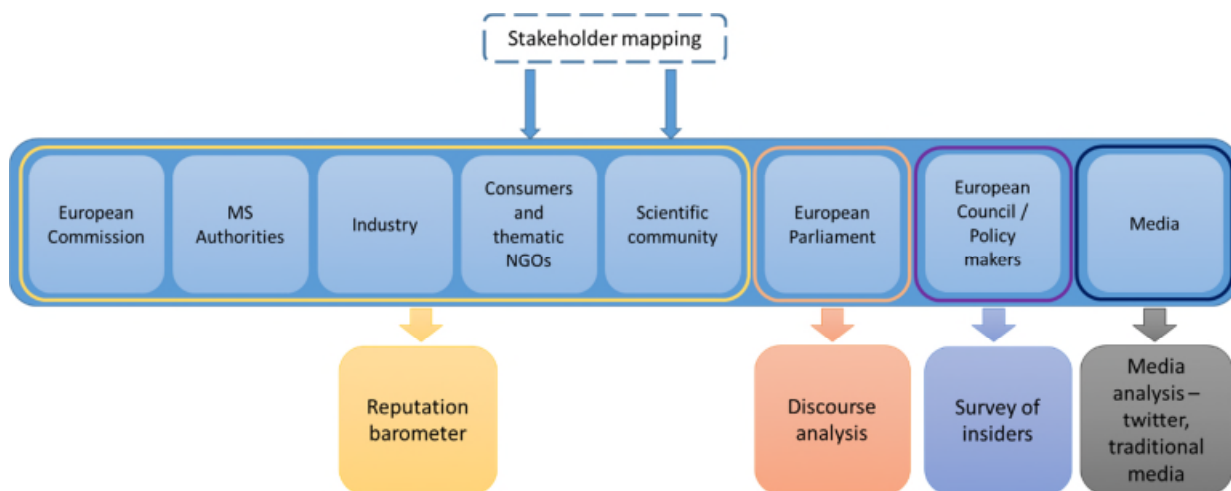
6.1.3.3 A broader strategy for assessing EFSA's reputation

As this study has demonstrated, all audiences cannot be surveyed with the same tool. Besides, other audiences of EFSA have not been surveyed in this study.

Furthermore, some of the manifestations of EFSA's reputation – its presence and the manner it is spoken of in the media – were not reviewed in depth.

The different audiences of EFSA and the different manifestations of its reputation call for the use of a portfolio of tools (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 Proposal for a portfolio of reputation measurement tools for EFSA



An online survey tool completed by a number of interviews (**Reputation Barometer**), as was done for this study, is suitable to assess EFSA's reputation in the following audiences:

- European Commission
- Member State competent authorities
- Industry
- Consumers and thematic NGOs
- **The scientific community** involved in food risk assessments

The **European Parliament** requires a different approach. The MEPs are not a population that can be surveyed through interviews or an online survey. The response rates that such methods yield are just too low to enable any meaningful analysis. This report recommends that EFSA considers two alternative options. Option 1 consists in **an insiders' survey**: EFSA's reputation would be measured through targeted interviews with a network of individuals with good, up to date knowledge of the European Parliament's debates and views on food policy issues, including EFSA. This network would likely consist of a carefully selected list of individuals from a range of horizons, some of them deeply embedded in European institutions and others having a more distant, observer's role. This approach requires a preliminary investment in the development of such a network. Public relations firms may provide this service, which is onerous. Option 2 consists in **discourse analysis of relevant European Parliament debates**. The debates of the European Parliament may be studied for tone and substance. Tools for automated and semi-automated analysis of text can be relied on to mine extensively this information. The analysis can also be anchored in a robust theoretical and methodological literature (drawn from political science studies of parliamentary debates and discourse analysis more broadly). Such an approach may be used also

to track how discourses evolve over time, through a sequence of discussions (questions raised by MEPs, debates in plenary sessions, debates in commission). A qualitative research firm may provide this service, which would be less onerous than the previous option.

Other policy makers at EU level (the European Council) and the MS (ministers) are an important audience for EFSA. EFSA's reputation within this group could also be assessed through an insiders' survey.

Finally, while the status of the **media** as an audience may be discussed, the manner in which EFSA and its activities are discussed in traditional, online and social media certainly constitutes a core manifestation of its reputation. EFSA is already monitoring media to collect information on EFSA's reputation. There are multiple tools and strategies available to measure reputation by mining and tracking the media, some of which have been developed by Olson, a subsidiary of ICF. That includes software tracking and assessing all mentions of an organization's name online. Some of these tools allow for a highly rigorous assessment of the manner in which an organisation and its peers are talked about in the media. There is merit in integrating these tools into a comprehensive approach to monitoring EFSA's reputation.

Part A: ANNEXES

Annex 1 Literature review

The literature review has explored three main elements from the literature: (i) the concept of agency reputation, (ii) key findings from the literature on agency reputation, and (iii) relevant findings from the literature discussing EFSA and other European agencies. This section includes also a short discussion of the limitations of the literature.

A1.1 The concept of agency reputation

The most relevant literature for this assignment is to be found in the field of public administration, which belongs to the broader discipline of political science. Public administration scholars have included consideration for agency reputation in their studies of “bureaucratic” behaviour since the 1980s (Hawkins 1984; Wilson 1991), although reputation was a relatively marginal element in the analytical frameworks used at that time. Carpenter has introduced a more refined “reputational approach” to agency behaviour, built on extensive studies of public administration bodies in the United States. His study of the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) in its role of gatekeeper to the market for pharmaceuticals (Carpenter 2010a) has become the core reference for a growing body of studies, all of which have adopted a “reputation based approach”.

Carpenter defines reputation as “a set of symbolic beliefs about the unique or separable capacities, roles, and obligations of an organization, where these beliefs are embedded in audience networks” (Carpenter 2010a: 45). An organization’s reputation is therefore fundamentally enshrined in its audiences, which may include not only the organization’s principals and account holders (e.g. elected officials), but also other stakeholders in the public, private, and voluntary sectors. It is also a set of beliefs and expectations, which may or may not be aligned with the reality of what the said organization is mandated to do, or is capable of doing. The organization’s reputation is also a matter of distinctiveness: the organization may stand out if its audiences believe it is providing something that other organizations in the same environment do not or cannot provide. Hence, as Maor puts it, “bureaucratic reputation relies on the external audiences’ perceptions of the quality of agency outcomes that these audiences really care about, and the effectiveness of its actions, which distinguish the agency from others in the polity” (Maor 2016: 82). Reputation management is therefore a matter of cultivating favourable beliefs, and that involves communication as well as delivering outcomes that the organization’s audiences value (e.g. enforcing law, assessing risks, etc.)

A1.2 Key findings from existing studies on agency reputation

As far as “reputation regulates regulators” (Gilad and Yogev 2012), agency behaviour can be explained by the necessity to build their reputation to establish themselves in their environment, (Carpenter 2001), and then the need to sustain and defend their reputation against challenges. In other words, to make sense of agency behaviour: *look at the audience, and look at the threats*” (Carpenter 2010b: 832). Accordingly, numerous studies have since Carpenter demonstrated the role of reputation in shaping multiple dimensions of agency practice, including information gathering, enforcement, communication, and allocation of resources between tasks. The underlying claim of the literature is that reputation can shape everything that regulators / agencies do.

However, the literature has often assumed too much of regulators / agencies, implying that agencies are generally acutely aware of their reputation, their audiences, and the threats

they are facing. For example, Maor interprets agency responses to threats (in the form of adverse events taking place in the remit of the regulator / agency) as directly linked to these agencies' core reputation (Maor 2010). However, it is fair to say that regulatory agencies do not have all such a clear understanding of their audiences, and of the threats posed to their reputation by their environment. The works of Gilad (2015) or Busuioc (2016) provide examples of agencies failing to uphold their reputations and failing to address failures, criticisms and pressures, sometimes leading to their termination. The literature provides indications of what such inability to uphold their reputation may result from:

- Insufficient attention to what shapes the reputation of the agency and of other agencies in the agency's environment (e.g. national authorities for a European agency; Busuioc 2016);
- Excessive reliance on institutional responses to (potential / actual) criticism, at the expense of engagement and political acumen (Groenleer 2009; Busuioc and Etienne 2016);
- Inadequate communication in response to criticism (respond when silence would have been best, or the contrary; Gilad 2015; Gilad et al 2015; Maor 2010).
- Lack of a tailored approach to the different expectations of different audiences, or failure to project neutrality towards audiences (Huber 2007).
- Agency identity as a filter for external demands from audiences, which may act as a safeguard against agency drift away from its core mission and reputation, or on the contrary contribute to shifting attention away from the agency's mandate (Gilad 2015).

A1.3 Relevant findings from the literature discussing EFSA and other European agencies

European agencies face a particular set of challenges. Their existence in parallel to national agencies with which they share core objectives puts them in the challenging position of needing to assert their specificity / differentiate themselves from national bodies that are mandated to deliver very similar outcomes. They are also in a position of dependence towards these same national bodies, from whom they need information, resources sometimes, and more generally support so as to be recognized as authoritative or credible in their field at the EU level. Like other European agencies (Europol, CPVO...) EFSA depends structurally on the contribution of national bodies, particularly for the provision of specialised services that are core to the achievement of its mission. Busuioc (2016) shows how, through the examples of Frontex and Europol, cooperation with national authorities is very much a function of reputation, and reputation influences cooperation in return. Thus, when national agencies see cooperation with a European agency as something that may enhance their reputation, then they are likely to cooperate (Frontex's example). Instead, when they see cooperation as reputation depleting, they then are likely to forgo cooperation (Europol's example). Busuioc goes on to argue that both European agencies have not been thinking about reputation when devising ways to entice cooperation from key stakeholders, and as a result they have failed or had limited success in achieving cooperation, and other benefits (authoritativeness, credibility, legitimacy).

A key point made by the literature on EFSA's reputation is the limited benefits in terms of reputation that key institutional features of EFSA (its independence, its conflict of interest policy, etc.) have provided. Thus Groenleer (2009) has argued that, in spite of institutional guarantees of authoritativeness, EFSA has struggled in its early years to be acknowledged

by its key stakeholders as an “authority” on food safety matters in Europe. Groenleer argues that EFSA’s difficulties, revealed in EFSA’s work becoming entangled in political controversy (on GMOs or aspartame), resulted from the agency “isolating itself from its institutional environment rather than generating acceptance as a player in its own right” (p. 177). The work of Busuioc further indicates that inadequate understanding of what determines and contributes to an agency’s reputation is responsible for EFSA’s and other agencies’ challenges.

A1.4 Limitations

The literature on agency reputation has notable limitations. It is still a young literature. Albeit growing fast, it still rests on a limited number of cases studied. That limited coverage is compensated somehow by the high quality of certain studies, in particular Carpenter’s. As mentioned earlier, the literature tends to explain agency behaviour with a framework assuming all agencies are acutely aware of their audiences, how they are perceived, and what threats they are exposed to, and act accordingly. There are to this day very few studies that compare the ways different agencies address similar reputational challenges, some of them successfully and others not so successfully (Gilad 2015 and Busuioc 2016 are among the very few such studies that have been published). As a result the literature has limited practical recommendations to offer to agencies on what they may do or not do given the circumstances in which they find themselves. Instead, it offers numerous case studies of the manner in which a number of successful agencies have built their reputation over time and responded to challenges (arguably, the best studied example remains the US FDA’s). The transferability of any lessons one can draw from these case studies is a challenge: every agency has its peculiarities, its history, its mandate, its identity, its resources, and its stakeholders.

Annex 2 Media analysis

A2.1 Approach

This task consisted in a media analysis, consisting of:

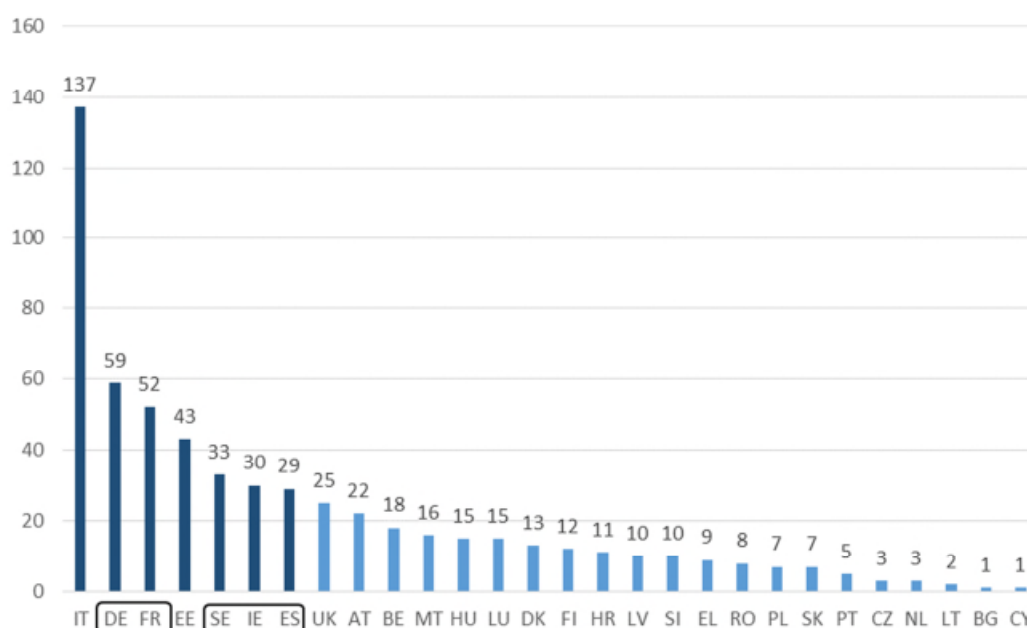
- A review of press articles mentioning EFSA; and
- A Twitter analysis of tweets mentioning EFSA.

A2.1.1 Analysis of traditional media channels – news articles

The traditional media review was limited to:

- Articles from national newspapers in five EU countries: Germany, France, Ireland, Spain and Sweden. These were selected in agreement with EFSA, based on the extent of media coverage mentioning EFSA in those countries (see Figure A2.1)¹⁰.
- Articles from the two main national daily newspapers¹¹ by circulation in each of the five Member States chosen. This approach was adopted to avoid the presence of duplicates and to facilitate comparability of results across countries.
- Articles published over the two years before this project, to provide a baseline for EFSA's annual assessment of its reputation.

Figure A2.1 EFSA in the news – total number of articles on EFSA in the two main daily newspapers for each Member State (time range: articles published between 11/08/2014 and 11/08/2016)



¹⁰ Figure A2.1 is based on a time range of two years before the submission of ICF's technical offer for this project, while the articles analyses in this report refer to the two years prior to the start of the project.

¹¹ Excluding sport news, tabloids, freesheets and business news.

Source: ICF analysis, based on Google News data

All articles from the selected countries and sources were retrieved through Google News' search tool, by filtering news items including the keywords "EFSA" and/or "European Food Safety Authority" (or the translation of those terms in the countries' official language). Non-relevant articles and duplicates were removed from the search. This resulted in 200 articles.

The resources and timeline for this study allowed for a review of a sample of 10 articles per country (i.e., 50 articles in total). Articles were randomly selected among those mentioning EFSA.

Sampled articles were read in full to:

- **Extract basic information on the article:** date of publication, country, newspaper, title, author and weblink.
- **Assess the tone of the article (sentiment)** as either positive (use of positive adjectives to qualify EFSA or EFSA's work, use of statements communicating positively connoted attributes of EFSA), negative (use of negative adjectives to qualify EFSA or EFSA's work; use of statements communicating negatively connoted attributes of EFSA) or neutral (either absence of positive or negative elements, or balance between positive and negative messages). The sentiment analysis also identified the stakeholders who expressed the positive, neutral or negative judgements.
- **Identify the main stakeholders** mentioned or quoted by media sources (such as national competent authorities, research communities, industry and NGO representatives).
- **Summarise the main messages** associated with aspects of EFSA's reputation, such as scientific excellence, transparency, independence and communications.

A2.1.2 Social media channels – Twitter analysis

The social media analysis focussed on Twitter, as it is the main social media tool used by EFSA.

ICF produced a list of tweets on EFSA by using Twitter's advanced search tool. The list was created by identifying all posts that mentioned EFSA.

The search was done in English and was limited to an agreed timeframe (the two years before this project). This yielded 21,376 results.

The timeline and resources for this study allowed for a rapid scan of a sample of 300 tweets, which were selected **at random** from the initial list. The sample was reviewed to remove duplicates and non-relevant posts. Posts by EFSA's Twitter accounts were also excluded from the analysis¹².

ICF researchers then reviewed the sampled posts to identify:

- **The main themes discussed** (e.g., GMOs, pesticides, drug residues in food)
- **Sentiment** associated with each theme (positive, negative or neutral).
- **Top communicators** (the individuals or organisations that published the most posts during the selected timeframe).

¹² @EFSA_EU, @EFSA_live, @Plants_EFSA, @Methods_EFSA, and @EFSAJournal.

A2.2 Findings

A2.2.1 Traditional media channels – news articles

The sample of articles discussed a variety of subject areas and topics, as shown in Table A2.2. Pesticides, nutrition, food ingredients and packaging were the most common subject areas¹³. Glyphosate was the most common topic, followed by genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and bisphenol A (BPA).

Articles covered views of all the stakeholder groups within the scope of this study (EU institutions, national food safety authorities, EU NGOs and civil society groups, EU associations of farmers and primary producers, EU food industry associations, scientific and research community), with the exception of EU consumer organisations.

Articles also discussed views of other stakeholder groups, such as consumers, international organisations (for example, the World Health Organisation), third country authorities, national political parties, national food businesses, and national NGOs.

A large majority of articles (40 out of 50) used a **neutral tone**, and reported on EFSA's activities (such as scientific opinions' findings) without any positive or negative elements. All Swedish articles were neutral, while views in other countries were more mixed (see Table A2.1). Neutral articles presented views from a variety of stakeholders and covering a mix of themes (see Table A2.2).

Five articles had a **negative tone**. The subject areas and topics associated with negative sentiment were pesticides (more specifically, glyphosate), food ingredients and packaging (BPA) and GMOs (see Table A2.2). These articles reported criticism from different stakeholders, representing the European Parliament, national competent authorities, EU and national NGOs, and the scientific community.

Different aspects of EFSA's reputation were criticised:

- **Interpretation (objectivity):** articles reported stakeholder questions on EFSA's autonomy from external pressures (such as pressures from industry actors) and bias in risk assessments. For example, an article on glyphosate reported the European Parliament call for an independent review of EFSA's risk assessment conclusions (Planelles, 2016). Another article reported the views of a group of NGOs on EFSA's assessment of glyphosate: NGOs submitted a complaint against EFSA, stating that it had distorted the scientific analyses in order to prove the safety of glyphosate. NGOs believed that EU authorities and the industry had acted this way to avoid restrictions on the use of these pesticides (Le Parisien / Aujourd'hui en France, 2016).
- **Accountability:** an article reported the views of a national Green Party spokesperson, who believed that there is too much "secretism" and lack of transparency regarding sources of evidence used by EFSA for its risk assessment of glyphosate. The article also mentioned the content of a European Parliament's resolution on glyphosate, which required more transparency on EFSA's assessment. The article does not specify the rationale behind these views on EFSA, although it mentions that NGO and national

¹³ The subject area classification applied here is the same used by EFSA on its website. These areas are: animal feed, animal health and welfare, biological hazards, chemical contaminants, cross-cutting science (i.e., covering two or more areas of EFSA's work; cross-cutting subjects include, for example, nanotechnology and antimicrobial resistance), data, food ingredients and packaging, GMOs, methodology, nutrition, pesticides, and plant health.

Green Parties had, more broadly, influenced the European Parliament's position on glyphosate (Planelles, 2016).

- **Comprehensiveness of the scientific process:** one news item included a statement from a representative of a national environmental NGO, who regarded differences between EFSA's and WHO's risk assessments of glyphosates as "*evidence of the ignorance of the authority concerning the health risks of the substance*" (Liebrich and Rummel, 2015).
- **Risk assessment / management principles:** an article reports comments from the Swedish Ministry of Environment, who believes EFSA should apply a more precautionary approach to GMOs' risk assessment. As reported by the article, the Ministry has called for a stricter approach towards GMOs, including a ban on genetic engineering in Germany (Bauchmüller, 2015).
- **Priorities:** an article reports comments from the Swedish Ministry of Environment, who believes EFSA should give more importance to research on GMOs (Bauchmüller, 2015).

Five articles had a **positive tone**, and discussed subjects related to nutrition (more specifically, health claims), pesticides (glyphosate), food ingredients and packaging (BPA and food colours) and chemical contaminants (in general, without focussing on one contaminant).

Positive views were expressed by representatives of NCAs, journalists and the scientific community. Messages mainly related to:

- **Interpretation (objectivity):** EFSA was referred to as a reliable source of scientific evidence, as opposed to interest groups such as NGOs or actors in charge of product marketing (King, 2014; Huss, 2015). For example, an article reported how "dubious claims" on the benefits of various food products could be found in British and Irish newspapers and on websites. However, the article emphasized how these claims introduced by "marketing people" were in fact without scientific basis, referencing EFSA's role in Europe to assess health claims and to reject them when they lacked scientific evidence (King, 2014).
- **Rigour (methodology) applied to the risk assessment process:** stakeholders praised EFSA's "rigorous" risk assessment process to test food additives and produce peer reviews (Park, 2014).
- **Comprehensiveness of the risk assessment process:** an NCA judged EFSA's peer review process regarding glyphosate as "comprehensive" and allowing for "detailed consideration" of evidence produced by the WHO. The NCA rather criticised EU Member States, which failed to reach an agreement on glyphosates (Flaherty, 2016).
- **Clarity of findings/message:** an NCA referred to EFSA's re-evaluation of BPA and welcomed its findings as they provide "scientific clarity" that BPA does not pose risks (Healy, 2015b).

None of the articles combined both positive and negative messages.

Table A2.1 Overview of news articles' sentiment – by country

Member State	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
France	2	8	0	10

Germany	2	7	1	10
Ireland	0	6	4	10
Spain	1	9	0	10
Sweden	0	10	0	10
Total	5	40	5	50

Source: ICF traditional media analysis

Table A2.2 Overview of news articles' sentiment – by subject area

Subject area	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Nutrition	0	12	1	13
Pesticides	3	9	1	13
Food ingredients and packaging	1	6	3	10
GMOs	1	5	0	6
Chemical contaminants	0	4	1	5
Cross-cutting science	0	3	0	3
Animal health and welfare	0	2	0	2
Food safety (general)	0	2	0	2
Total	5	43	6	54

Source: ICF traditional media analysis

Note: some articles covered more than one subject area

Given the small sample size and the limited number of countries covered, results from the media analysis cannot be considered as representative of stakeholders' views on EFSA. However, the analysis provide initial findings to inform the following stages of this project:

- EFSA tended to be portrayed neutrally within the articles analysed, although some articles had a positive or negative sentiment. Positive or negative statements did not relate to a specific area of EFSA's remit, and they did not address EFSA's existence or its mandate. Instead they were linked to specific topics and specific aspects of EFSA's activities in relation to those topics.
- EFSA's risk assessment work received praise and critiques on multiple levels, which provides indications on audience expectations towards EFSA:
 - **accountability** (transparency)
 - **method** (rigour, comprehensiveness);
 - **interpretation** (objectivity, bias)
 - **risk management / assessment principles** (precautionary principle)
 - **communication** (clarity of the findings and the message)
 - **priorities** (allocation of resources / focus on given topics as opposed to others)

- Some aspects of EFSA's reputation (such as method) were associated with positive sentiment in some articles, and negative sentiment in others, which may indicate either fundamental disagreements on how EFSA should and does perform on those levels. Alternatively, this may indicate polarized views on given topics (e.g. pesticides) that are rooted in considerations (e.g. ethics) external to EFSA's mission or EFSA's practices, but are communicated in the context of reporting on EFSA's outcomes.
- The analysis suggests that there are diverse views and expectations across different stakeholders, same stakeholders across different countries, and across themes.

A2.2.2 Social media channels – Twitter analysis

The most common subject areas in the sample of 300 tweets were pesticides, nutrition, and food ingredients and packaging (see Table A2.4). Tweets were distributed across 261 different accounts; the account with the most tweets was @NoGMOsVerified¹⁴, with eight tweets.

A large majority of tweets (248 of 300, or 83 percent of the total) had a **neutral** tone. A small minority of tweets had either a negative (42 tweets, or 14 percent of the total) or positive tone (10 tweets, 3 percent) (see Table A2.3).

Articles with a **negative** tone mostly referred to pesticides, and in particular to glyphosate. Negative criticism referred to different reputation issues:

- **Accountability:** as in the news article analysis, tweets called for EFSA to be more transparent regarding the sources used for its risk assessments (for example, by publishing the studies on glyphosate it reviewed).
- **Method (rigour):** one tweet criticised that EFSA “rejected” a health claim due to “semantics” issues related to the distinction between exercising physical “capacity” and “performance”.
- **Interpretation (objectivity):** one tweet stated that EFSA had “intentionally ignored” certain sources of evidence; tweets stated that EFSA's decisions were influenced by industry or NGO representatives
- **Priorities:** tweets implied that EFSA's activities should not focus on food safety issues that were perceived by the author of the tweet as low priorities (such as the risk assessment of insects as food).
- **Interpretation (uncertainty):** one tweet questioned EFSA's assessment of BPA's safety based on the “considerable uncertainties” over exposure.

Tweets with a **positive** tone focussed on the following messages:

- **Method (comprehensiveness):** one tweet stated that EFSA's assessment of risks from neonicotinoids addressed the limitations of other assessments, by considering risks for bumblebees (rather than only focussing on honeybees).
- **Method (data):** one tweet welcomed EFSA's efforts to modernise its data collection process and use “new forms of data”.

¹⁴ The account focusses on providing information to consumers regarding food containing GMOs.

- **Accountability:** one tweet included a general statement that EFSA is “embracing transparency”;
- **Stakeholder engagement:** one tweet emphasised that EFSA’s work on GMOs “benefitted from early stakeholder input”.

Table A2.3 Overview of tweets’ sentiment

Sentiment	Number of tweets (% of the total)
Negative	42 (14%)
Neutral	248 (83%)
Positive	10 (3%)
Total	300

Source: ICF Twitter analysis

Table A2.4 Overview of tweets’ sentiment – by subject area

Subject area	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Pesticides	22	37	2	61
Nutrition	5	54	1	60
Food ingredients and packaging	6	35	3	44
EFSA's policies and role	4	22	2	28
Chemical contaminants	0	25	0	25
Biological hazards	0	19	1	20
GMOs	5	8	2	15
Cross-cutting science	0	14	0	14
Animal health and welfare	0	9	0	9
Plant health	0	8	0	8
Other - events	0	8	0	8
Feed	1	5	0	6
Data	0	4	0	4
Events	0	1	0	1
Methodology	0	1	0	1
Total	44	249	11	304

Source: ICF Twitter analysis

Note: some articles covered more than one subject area

Findings from the Twitter analysis partly mirror those from the news articles' review:

- The analysis did not identify any dominant communicators: tweets were distributed across a large number of different accounts.
- The subject areas most commonly covered by tweets were similar to those covered by news articles (pesticides, nutrition, food ingredients and packaging).
- In most cases, tweets presented neutral views on EFSA and reported its activities without indications of praise or criticism. A limited number of tweets included judgements of EFSA's activities and covered a mix of specific topics (such as neonicotinoids) or, more generally, EFSA's policies and risk assessment methods. The main aspects that received positive or negative criticism were:
 - **accountability** (transparency);
 - **method** (comprehensiveness and approaches to data collection);
 - **interpretation** (objectivity and uncertainty);
 - **priorities** (allocation of resources / focus on given topics as opposed to others); and
 - **stakeholder engagement**.
- As in the media analysis, there are some indications of disagreement regarding the evaluation of some aspects of EFSA's reputation.

A2.3 Conclusions

The scale of the media analysis could not generate an exhaustive or even a representative picture of the themes and considerations of commentators in the traditional or social media. It has provided, however, a number of elements to open up the universe of potential dimensions the barometer may consider.

The dimensions identified in this task are:

- **accountability** (transparency);
- **method** (rigour, comprehensiveness, approach to data collection);
- **interpretation** (objectivity, bias, uncertainty);
- **risk management / assessment principles** (precautionary principle);
- **communication** (clarity of the findings and the message);
- **priorities** (allocation of resources / focus on given topics as opposed to others), and
- **stakeholder engagement**.

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Annex 4 Survey tool

Introduction

Objectives of the survey

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) launched its 2020 Strategy in 2016, an important part of which focuses on enhancing public and stakeholder engagement. This survey aims to contribute to this objective, providing EFSA with a better understanding of its various stakeholders. You will be asked about your expectations towards EFSA and your views on EFSA's work. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey.

The results will be used by ICF to produce a report for EFSA on how stakeholders perceive its work. The report will inform the way EFSA interacts with its stakeholders with a view to ensuring that it continues to meet their expectations in the future.

The survey has been distributed to representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament, risk assessment authorities in Member States and third countries, members of the scientific community contributing to food risk assessments, and representative organisations of consumers, the food industry, farmers, primary producers, and environmental NGOs at the EU level.

Data confidentiality

- **Participation in this survey is voluntary**
- Your personal information will not be shared with anyone outside the research team. It will be collected by EFSA's appointed research contractor, ICF.
- This survey is anonymous. No individual or organisation name or contact details will be identified in ICF's report nor will any information by which a respondent may be identifiable.
- The information will be stored on secure servers and protected against unauthorised access or unlawful processing. It will be kept for a maximum of three months after the final report is delivered to EFSA. All data will be permanently deleted from the ICF system after the end of the retention period.
- The processing of personal data for this study is compliant with Regulation 45/2001, applicable to EFSA as controller; and the UK branch of ICF as the contracted processor in the sense of Article 23 of the Regulation.

Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the study team (+44 (0) 2030 964 850, olivia.braiterman@icf.com).

We appreciate your contribution to our study and thank you for your time.

1) Please rate the following aspects of EFSA's work in terms of how important they are to you. We are interested in your personal views.

This question is required.

	Not important	Low importance	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important	Don't know
EFSA's approach to providing scientific advice	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The quality of EFSA's risk assessment opinions	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The efficiency of EFSA in producing risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The identification and characterization of emerging risks by EFSA	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's work to harmonize risk assessment methods	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's independence and objectivity	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The level of transparency at EFSA	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
How EFSA communicate risks	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Engagement by EFSA with external partners	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Not important	Low importance	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important	Don't know
EFSA's provision of scientific and technical assistance to Member States for crisis management	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The quality of EFSA's governance	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's innovativeness	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

2) Please rate EFSA's work on each of the following aspects:*

Please think about your overall impression about EFSA's work. This question is required.

	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very good	Extremely good	Don't know
The contribution of EFSA's advice to the wider scientific knowledge base	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's publication of information on the experts involved in risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's tailoring	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very good	Extremely good	Don't know
of risk communication content to respond to audience needs								
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with the European Parliament	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The quality of the guidance EFSA produces for applicants	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The interpretation of data used in risk assessments, including gaps and uncertainties	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's independence from civil society groups	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's independence from risk managers and policy makers	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The handling of public access to document requests	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The balance EFSA strikes	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very good	Extremely good	Don't know
between guarding against conflicts of interest and attracting relevant expertise								
The handling of private data and confidentiality issues by EFSA	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The extent to which EFSA's risk assessments meet the requestor's needs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The quality of the methodology used in EFSA's risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The identification and characterization of emerging risks by EFSA	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

3) Please rate EFSA's work on each of the following aspects:*

Please think about your overall impression about EFSA's work. This question is required.

	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very good	Extremely good	Don't know
EFSA's work to harmonize risk assessment methods	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The quality of EFSA's science	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The criteria EFSA uses for selecting (and rejecting) data for risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's publication of standards and expectations for dossiers	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with the European Commission	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's handling of divergent scientific opinions	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The clarity of EFSA's risk communications	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The time it takes EFSA to process dossiers from applicants	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The clarity of EFSA's opinions	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's innovativeness in risk assessment methodologies	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very good	Extremely good	Don't know
EFSA's capacity (resources, personnel, capital) to deliver its mandate	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with peer organisations outside of the EU	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's innovativeness in risk communication	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The accessibility on EFSA's website of material used by EFSA to communicate risks	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

4) Please rate EFSA's work on each of the following aspects:*

Please think about your overall impression about EFSA's work. This question is required.

	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very good	Extremely good	Don't know
EFSA's engagement with farmers and primary producers	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The level of	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very good	Extremely good	Don't know
resources EFSA allocates to risk assessments								
EFSA's independence from commercial interests	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's engagement with business and food industry stakeholders	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The impact of EFSA's advice for policy makers and risk managers	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The tools EFSA uses to communicate risk (e.g. newsletters, media alerts, social media, multimedia products)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's adherence to due process for making decisions	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's publication of the data it has used in risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very good	Extremely good	Don't know
EFSA's innovativeness in data collection and data analysis	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's engagement with environmental/health NGOs and consumer groups	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The time it takes EFSA to respond to requesting authorities (European Commission, European Parliament, Member States)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's publication of gaps and uncertainties in risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with risk assessors in Member States	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's provision of scientific and technical assistance to Member States	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very good	Extremely good	Don't know
for crisis management								

5) In the past 12 months, has EFSA done better or worse on the following aspects:*

This question is required.

	Extremely worse	Much worse	Worse	No change	Better	Much better	Extremely better	Don't know
The contribution of EFSA's advice to the wider scientific knowledge base	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's publication of information on the experts involved in risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's tailoring of risk communication content to respond to audience needs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with the European Parliament	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely worse	Much worse	Worse	No change	Better	Much better	Extremely better	Don't know
The quality of the guidance EFSA produces for applicants	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The interpretation of data used in risk assessments, including gaps and uncertainties	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's independence from civil society groups	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's independence from risk managers and policy makers	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The handling of public access to document requests	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The balance EFSA strikes between guarding against conflicts of interest and attracting relevant expertise	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The handling of private data and confidentiality issues by EFSA	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely worse	Much worse	Worse	No change	Better	Much better	Extremely better	Don't know
The extent to which EFSA's risk assessments meet the requestor's needs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The quality of the methodology used in EFSA's risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The identification and characterization of emerging risks by EFSA	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

6) In the past 12 months, has EFSA done better or worse on the following aspects:

This question is required.

	Extremely worse	Much worse	Worse	No change	Better	Much better	Extremely better	Don't know
EFSA's work to harmonize risk assessment methods	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The quality of EFSA's science	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The criteria EFSA uses for selecting (and	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely worse	Much worse	Worse	No change	Better	Much better	Extremely better	Don't know
rejecting) data for risk assessments								
EFSA's publication of standards and expectations for dossiers	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with the European Commission	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's handling of divergent scientific opinions	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The clarity of EFSA's risk communications	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The time it takes EFSA to process dossiers from applicants	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The clarity of EFSA's opinions	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's innovativeness in risk assessment methodologies	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's capacity (resources, personnel, capital) to deliver its mandate	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely worse	Much worse	Worse	No change	Better	Much better	Extremely better	Don't know
peer organisations outside of the EU								
EFSA's innovativeness in risk communication	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The accessibility on EFSA's website of material used by EFSA to communicate risks	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

7) In the past 12 months, has EFSA done better or worse on the following aspects:

This question is required.

	Extremely worse	Much worse	Worse	No change	Better	Much better	Extremely better	Don't know
EFSA's engagement with farmers and primary producers	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The level of resources EFSA allocates to risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely worse	Much worse	Worse	No change	Better	Much better	Extremely better	Don't know
EFSA's independence from commercial interests	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's engagement with business and food industry stakeholders	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The impact of EFSA's advice for policy makers and risk managers	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The tools EFSA uses to communicate risk (e.g. newsletters, media alerts, social media, multimedia products)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's adherence to due process for making decisions	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's publication of the data it has used in risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's innovativeness in data collection and data analysis	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Extremely worse	Much worse	Worse	No change	Better	Much better	Extremely better	Don't know
EFSA's engagement with environmental/health NGOs and consumer groups	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The time it takes EFSA to respond to requesting authorities (European Commission, European Parliament, Member States)	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's publication of gaps and uncertainties in risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with risk assessors in Member States	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's provision of scientific and technical assistance to Member States for crisis management	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

8) Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements:

This question is required.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Undecided	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
It would be difficult for another organisation to do the job EFSA carries out.	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA is an organisation I have a good feeling about	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA is an organisation that I trust	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA is an organisation I would like to work for	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA acts in the interest of consumers	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA acts in the interest of the environment	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA acts in the interest of the EU economy	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA is an organisation that I admire and respect	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The mandate of EFSA focuses on the right things	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
EFSA's priorities are the right ones	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

9) Please indicate which organisation does best under each of the aspects below.

This question is required.

	Your national food safety agency	EFSA [The European Food Safety Authority]	Food Safety Commission of Japan	WHO [The World Health Organization]	ECHA [The European Chemicals Agency]	FSANZ [The Food Standards Australia New Zealand]	US FDA [The US Food and Drug Administration]	EMA [The European Medicines Agency]	Don't know
Approach to providing scientific advice	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Quality of risk assessment opinions	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Efficiency in producing risk assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Risk communication	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Harmonization of risk assessment methods	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Level of transparency	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Level of innovativeness	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Level of stakeholder engagement	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

	Your national food safety agency	EFSA [The European Food Safety Authority]	Food Safety Commission of Japan	WHO [World Health Organization]	ECHA [The European Chemicals Agency]	FSANZ [Food Standards Australia New Zealand]	US FDA [US Food and Drug Administration]	EMA [The European Medicines Agency]	Don't know
Identification and characterization of emerging risks	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Level of independence and objectivity	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Scientific and technical assistance for crisis management	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Quality of governance	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

6.1.3.4 12) Which areas of EFSA's work are you familiar with?*

This question is required.

- ☐ Animal feed
- ☐ Animal health and welfare
- ☐ Biological hazards
- ☐ Chemical contaminants
- ☐ Food ingredients and packaging
- ☐ GMO
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ Pesticides
- ☐ Plant health

13) Do you have any other comments on the topics covered by this survey?

14) After completing this survey, would you be available for a brief follow-up phone call? The purpose of this call is for a member of the ICF study team to discuss further and to clarify your responses. These calls will be conducted by ICF. Your responses will be fully anonymized.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Logic: Hidden unless: Question "After completing this survey, would you be available for a brief follow-up phone call? The purpose of this call is for a member of the ICF study team to discuss further and to clarify your responses. These calls will be conducted by ICF. Your responses will be fully anonymized." #14 is one of the following answers ("Yes")

15) Thank you for agreeing with a follow-up call. Please provide the information below so the ICF team may contact you.

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Thank You!



We thank you for completing this survey and very much appreciate your time.
In case you have any questions about this study please contact us at
olivia.brajterman@icf.com.

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Annex 5 Indicators for all attributes

Table A5.1 Attributes of EFSA's reputation (and components of those attributes)

EFSA's approach to providing scientific advice
The quality of the methodology used in EFSA's risk assessments
The quality of EFSA's science
The criteria EFSA uses for selecting (and rejecting) data for risk assessments
The interpretation of data used in risk assessments, including gaps and uncertainties
The quality of the guidance EFSA produces for applicants
The quality of EFSA's risk assessment opinions
The clarity of EFSA's opinions
The extent to which EFSA's risk assessments meet the requestor's needs
The impact of EFSA's advice for policy makers and risk managers
The contribution of EFSA's advice to the wider scientific knowledge base
EFSA's handling of divergent scientific opinions
The efficiency of EFSA in producing risk assessments
The time it takes EFSA to respond to requesting authorities (European Commission, European Parliament, Member States)
The time it takes EFSA to process dossiers from applicants
The level of resources EFSA allocates to risk assessments
The identification and characterization of emerging risks by EFSA
EFSA's work to harmonize risk assessment methods
EFSA's independence and objectivity
EFSA's independence from commercial interests
EFSA's independence from civil society groups
EFSA's independence from risk managers and policy makers
The balance EFSA strikes between guarding against conflicts of interest and attracting relevant expertise
The level of transparency at EFSA
EFSA's publication of the data it has used in risk assessments
EFSA's publication of information on the experts involved in risk assessments
The handling of public access to document requests
The handling of private data and confidentiality issues by EFSA
EFSA's publication of standards and expectations for dossiers
How EFSA communicate risks
The accessibility on EFSA's website of material used by EFSA to communicate risks
EFSA's tailoring of risk communication content to respond to audience needs
The clarity of EFSA's risk communications
The tools EFSA uses to communicate risk (e.g. newsletters, media alerts, social media, multimedia products)
EFSA's publication of gaps and uncertainties in risk assessments
Engagement by EFSA with external partners

EFSA's cooperation and coordination with risk assessors in Member States
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with the European Commission
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with the European Parliament
EFSA's cooperation and coordination with peer organisations outside of the EU
EFSA's engagement with environmental/health NGOs and consumer groups
EFSA's engagement with business and food industry stakeholders
EFSA's engagement with farmers and primary producers
EFSA's provision of scientific and technical assistance to Member States for crisis management
The quality of EFSA's governance
EFSA's capacity (resources, personnel, capital) to deliver its mandate
EFSA's adherence to due process for making decisions
EFSA's innovativeness
EFSA's innovativeness in risk communication
EFSA's innovativeness in data collection and data analysis
EFSA's innovativeness in risk assessment methodologies

Legend: **light blue** = attribute of EFSA's reputation; White = components of each attribute.