



DRAFT Report and Recommendations from EFSA's Stakeholder Event

**2nd Stakeholder colloque – outcome of the discussions and
proposals for follow up actions**

Introduction

1. In the context of EFSA's policy on transparency and openness, EFSA held its 2nd Stakeholder colloque on 9 & 10 November in Berlin. The 1st colloque took place in October 2003 in Ostende and led to follow up actions which were agreed by the Management Board at the April 2004 meeting. The purpose of this second colloque was to continue the developing dialogue with stakeholders in light of the more tangible relationships that have developed now that EFSA has been in operation for a longer period.

2. The Colloque was therefore focussed on having an open and in-depth discussions with participants as regards further development of EFSA's policy towards stakeholders. On the basis of these discussions, a number of recommendations for further engagement of stakeholders in the work of EFSA are proposed in this document.

Format of the meeting & criteria

3. In order to facilitate discussions with stakeholders, it was agreed that the most appropriate format is a meeting only with stakeholder organisations with a legitimate interest in the work of EFSA. This allowed all participants to embark on an open and frank dialogue. Not only traditional "farm to fork" stakeholder organisations were invited, but also representatives of animal welfare and environmental non-governmental organisations with an interest in the work done by EFSA. The audience of about 80 people was composed of academics, representatives from industry, retailers, distributors, farmers, consumer groups, animal welfare and environmental NGOs,. In addition the meeting was attended by members of EFSA's Management Board and EFSA's Advisory Forum, chairs of EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels and staff from EFSA secretariat.

4. The decision on which stakeholder organisations to invite was not arbitrary and responded to the certain specific criteria:

- organisations with a legitimate interest in the areas of work of EFSA
- organisations with whom EFSA does not have a legal obligation (i.e. not EU institutions)
- permanently established organisations and well-known at the EU level for their activities in the area of food safety

5. In view of the vast range of organisations involved in the field of food safety (national/European, general interests/sectorial interests), EFSA tried to ensure the best possible balance between the different parties invited.

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Structure of the colloque

6. The Stakeholder colloque was divided into 3 sessions which dealt with food safety and public perception (session I), the role of stakeholders in the risk analysis process and in particular the risk assessment process (session 2) and the way forward for EFSA (session 3). The latter was an interactive session with stakeholders using "Metaplan techniques".

7. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, Vice-Chair of EFSA's Management Board, opened the 2nd colloque outlining the importance the Board placed on the development of successful relationships between EFSA and its stakeholders. She emphasised the importance the Board had placed right from its first meetings on prominent place that openness should have in EFSA's thinking and working methods.

8. The programme of the colloque is attached to this note. All presentations made by speakers at session 1 and session 2 are now available at EFSA's website. A full report of the colloque will be posted on EFSA's website shortly.

9. In outline the presentations from Lynn Frewer and Paddy Coulter dealt with two aspects of risk assessment: public perception of risks and the interface between science and the media.

10. The session on the role of stakeholders in the risk assessment process had contributions from the European, international and national point of views with stakeholder organisations representing the whole food chain. During their presentations, stakeholder organisations explained how they see the role of EFSA in the food safety area, what they expect from EFSA and what EFSA could expect from them. All these issues were tackled again during the "Metaplan session" (session 3).

Metaplan session

11. A brief presentation of the survey on the image and performance of EFSA done for EFSA and discussed at the Management Board meeting in June 2004 (Paep's report), set the scene for in-depth discussions among stakeholders. Three major topics were chosen and discussed in the working groups set up for that purpose. Those issues were: 1) How to consult stakeholders on EFSA's scientific work, 2) How to achieve a proper balance in EFSA's priorities, 3) How to intensify the relationship between EFSA and its stakeholders. Discussions within the working groups are reproduced in the photo-minutes attached to this note.

12. In general terms, the great majority of stakeholders were satisfied with EFSA and how EFSA performs. They had also recognized the efforts EFSA had already made to implement the actions agreed at Ostende last year and that significant progress had been already achieved. As an indicative example, the following actions have already being implemented:

- the meetings on the Management Board are public and webstreaming
- the documents for the MB meetings are available on the website ahead of the meeting
- the agendas and meetings of the Scientific Committee and Panel are published on the website
- an e-mail notification system is in place to alert subscribers on what's new at EFSA's website and an EFSA newsletter is now regularly published

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- the register of questions has been made more transparent and allows for the tracking of the state of play of questions addressed to EFSA
- scientific consultation have been held, notably in the area of GMOs and feed additives
- scientific colloquia have and continue to be organized

However, EFSA had not yet formed a “stakeholder forum”.

13. It was also stressed by participants that stakeholders could provide data and expertise to EFSA in the context of the risk analysis process. Furthermore, stakeholder organisation may be able to contribute their expertise in risk communication activities particularly in relation to helping craft a message.

14. Stakeholders also expressed the wish to be more involved on looking at EFSA's overall priorities and that opportunities for stakeholder input should be identified. On the subject of consultation on scientific matters, stakeholders underlined the need for transparency in this and agreed that it would be useful in this respect for EFSA to have established criteria or guidelines to follow so that these were chosen in a logical manner.

It was strongly highlighted by participants, that EFSA's role on nutrition and related issues should be considered in the light of EFSA's review next year.

Overall the activities of EFSA in relation to self tasking activities were strongly supported by participants, who also indicated that long-terms health issues should be high on EFSA's agenda and thought that these would be ideal matters for EFSA's self-tasking activities.

15. While there was a general agreement on the points above, different opinions emerged in areas such as the participation of stakeholder in Panel meetings, the possibility of consultation on draft scientific opinions, the release of minority opinions.

16. The following ideas emerged concerning the **Stakeholder Forum**:

- There was very strong support for setting up a consultative forum (“stakeholder forum”) as had already been agreed by the EFSA Management Board.
- There was general agreement that the Stakeholder forum should meet a few times per year and discuss general issues, such as how to give input into EFSA's work programme, on priorities, on topics for consultation or self-tasking activities.
- It was underlined that the stakeholder forum should not be too big and should not overlap with any of the existing consultative committees in the area of food safety.
- It was acknowledge from participants that the membership of the stakeholder forum as well as the way of operating should be clearly defined but there should be flexibility for the participation of other stakeholders with a legitimate interest in a matter to be discussed by it. Ad hoc meetings would also be useful whenever these might prove necessary.
- It was suggested that an independent chairman should be appointed.
- It was underlined that criteria for membership and rules of procedure should be developed.
- In terms of practical operation of the stakeholder forum, participants indicated that information should be public and all documents for the meetings as well as minutes of the meetings should be published.

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Proposals & recommendations

17. On the basis of these discussions, the Executive Director invites the Management Board to consider the following:

- EFSA will set up a “Stakeholder Forum”– which should be consulted on general issues which affect the work of EFSA including how to give input into EFSA's work priorities and on topics for consultation or self-tasking activities.
- The Stakeholder Forum will have an advisory role and shall operate in the following manner:
 - The Forum shall meet three times per year.
 - The Forum shall have a membership of 20-30 drawn from EFSA's main stakeholder organisations who have EU wide representation and a legitimate and generic interest in EFSA's activities, i.e. from consumer, industry, producer and trade and workers organisations and other NGOs and academics.
 - The membership shall be composed so as to provide a balance of representation and views of issues within the remit and mission of the Authority.
 - EFSA will participate at the meetings of the Forum but shall not be a member.
 - The Forum shall be chaired by an independent chair who shall be chosen by the members and from among the members at the second meeting.
 - The first meeting shall be chaired by the EFSA's Executive Director. This should enable members who may have an interest in becoming the Chair to come forward.
 - The Stakeholder Forum shall meet in Parma and expenses will be covered for those participants who otherwise would not be able to be present.
 - EFSA will provide the secretariat who will be responsible for the drafting of agendas, minutes and other relevant documents. These will be published on the Authority's website in the Authority's working languages.
 - The minutes and agendas will be circulated to members of the Board.
 - The meetings will be held in public.

The Board may also wish to consider the following associated matters.

- The Management Board may wish to indicate whether it wishes to approve the list of members once this has been drafted.
 - The Management Board may wish to indicate if it would like to approve the rules of procedure for the Stakeholder Forum.
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- EFSA will continue bilateral contacts with stakeholders within its mission and in particular in the area of food safety.
 - EFSA will continue with its practice of public consultation on specific scientific matters and with scientific colloquia. EFSA will develop and publish the principles for the choice of consultations it holds so that these are transparent.
 - In the context of EFSA's review for 2005 (Article 61 of the Founding Regulation) stakeholders will be part of the process as the independent external evaluation that EFSA will commission and will take into account the views of stakeholders.