

79th Advisory Forum meeting
Virtual meeting, 03-04 March 2021

Update on SPIDO **(Science Studies and** **Project Identification &** **Development Office**

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Trusted science for safe food

Recap

Science Studies and Project Identification & Development Office (SPIDO)

1st Q 2020



PERA

- Building a European Partnership for next generation, systems-based Environmental Risk Assessment

NAMs

- New Approach Methodologies in risk assessment

RACEMiC

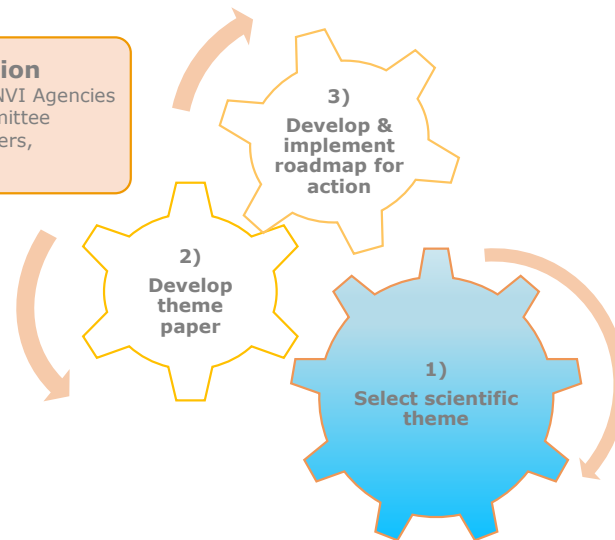
- Risk Assessment of Combined Exposure to Multiple Chemicals

AI

- Artificial Intelligence for evidence management in risk assessment

Consultation

1. DG SANTE, JRC, ENVI Agencies
2. AF, Scientific Committee
3. International partners, stakeholders



Consultation

1. DG SANTE
2. Advisory forum
3. EU Agencies



Process

Scientific theme selection



Aim to develop 2-3 theme papers each year



Consult with EC (DG SANTE) & partners (EU Agencies, Member States through AF) to **identify candidate themes** foreseen



Ensure **complementarity** with **DG Research activities**, particularly EU Partnerships



Ensure **alignment** with **EFSA's 2027 Strategy**

Selection criteria with associated weighting factors (details see notes)



Reduces risk of divergencies (VS)



Requires involvement of partners (EU agencies, MS, international)



Addresses a critical gap, complementary to research projects & facilitates preparedness



Promotes innovative technology in regulatory science, **reduces uncertainties & supports RM**



Explores opportunities on potential controversies which may arise through **implementation of strategies**



Allows for multi-annual & high-value grants & procurements

2021 candidate themes: *Proposal under consultation*



**Theme 1:
OMICS**



**Application of
OMICS &
bioinformatic
approaches: next
generation risk
assessment**

Ranking (FWD) **12** out of 14
Maturity **2.3** out 3

**Theme 2:
INSECT
POLLINATORS**



**Advancing the
environmental risk
assessment of
chemicals for
insect pollinators**

Ranking (FWD) **11** out of 14
Maturity **2.3** out 3

**Theme 3:
COMMUNICATION**



**Evidence-based
communication in
the EU food safety
system**

Ranking (FWD) **9.6** out of 14
Maturity **2** out 3

OMICS & Bioinformatics Approaches: Next Generation Risk Assessment

Why

Science

- Opportunities to produce new evidence for next generation risk assessments

Farm to Fork Strategy

- Utilising innovative technologies is critical to transition to sustainable food systems

Draft EFSA strategy 2021-2027

- Consolidate new methods and make use of big data to deliver fit for purpose and faster scientific advice

Challenges

- Need to shift away from **traditional observational tests to understand mechanisms** of adverse effects
- **Data interpretation** for regulatory confidence
- Address insufficient **harmonisation**
- Establish **consistent framework** for OMICS data collection, processing storage & curation
- Implement appropriate **bioinformatic tools.**

Areas of work

- **Build** the needed confidence for wide implementation
- **Harmonise** risk assessment tools & methodologies
- Use **publicly available omics datasets** to fill existing data gaps in food safety RA
- **Advance to next generation RA** in several work areas areas, e.g.:
 - Animal/plant health
 - Biotechnology products
 - Antimicrobial resistance
 - Microbiome

Drivers of change

Science

- Unprecedented insect pollinator **declines** (→ biodiversity loss & impaired pollination service delivery)
- Scientific **developments & progress**

Farm to Fork Strategy

- Reduce **pesticide** risk/use
- Promote safer **alternatives** (to combat pests & diseases)

Biodiversity Strategy & EU Pollinators Initiative

- **Halt** insect pollinator declines
- Bring back some arable land under **high-diversity landscape features**

Goals

Risk assessment methodologies & tools

- Consolidate, **update & harmonise**
- Be more **context** dependent
- Consider more **realistic** (real world) conditions (e.g. exposure to multiple chemicals & other environmental stressors)
- Promote integrated **systems-based** approach
- Promote uptake in **regulatory** context
- Ensure **preparedness** (for future challenges)

Risk assessment process

- Be more **collaborative**
- Promote data/expertise **sharing**

Areas of work

Proposals

- Support definition of specific **protection goals**
- Integrate knowledge on **insect pollinator health**
- Characterise **routes/levels of exposure** to chemicals
- Integrate methodologies & tools to: (1) assess **sublethal/chronic/indirect effects**; (2) **extrapolate** adverse effects across species, different levels of biological organisation & relevant spatio-temporal scales; (3) consider **cumulative effects**
- Establish & complement relevant **partnerships**

Communication science: Evidence-based risk communication in the EU food safety system

Why

- **Transparent, continuous and inclusive risk communication** throughout the risk analysis process **is needed to strengthen citizen trust in the EU food safety system**
- Need for **General Plan for Risk Communication** (GPRC)

(as evidenced in the Transparency Regulation)

Challenges

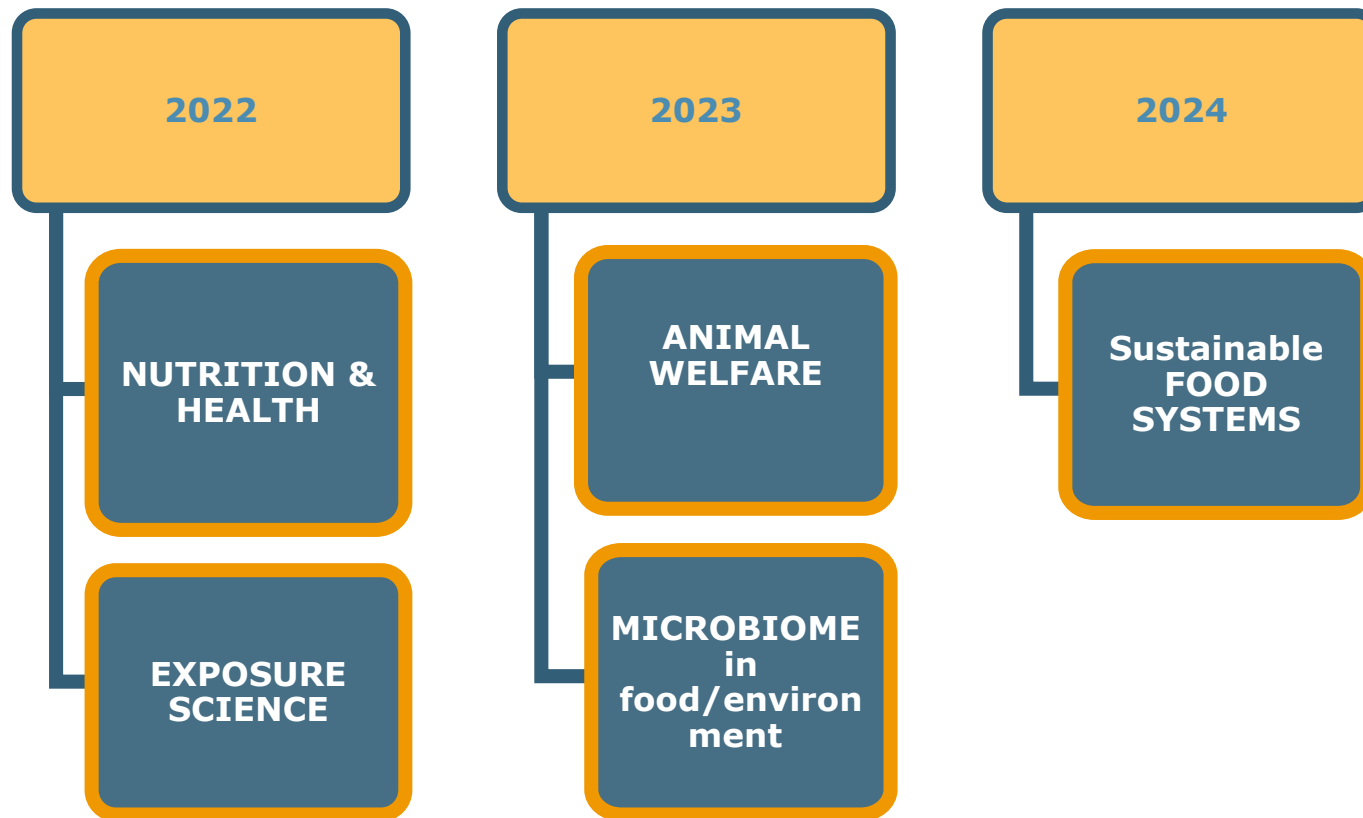
- **Use of evidence from social sciences** to meet TR provisions is needed and critical
- **Roles of actors in risk analysis roles and key concepts** to be clarified to the public (increase awareness and understanding)
- Risk communication models to achieve **coherent communication**, at EU and MS level

(Questions addressed in ongoing EFSA technical assistance work)

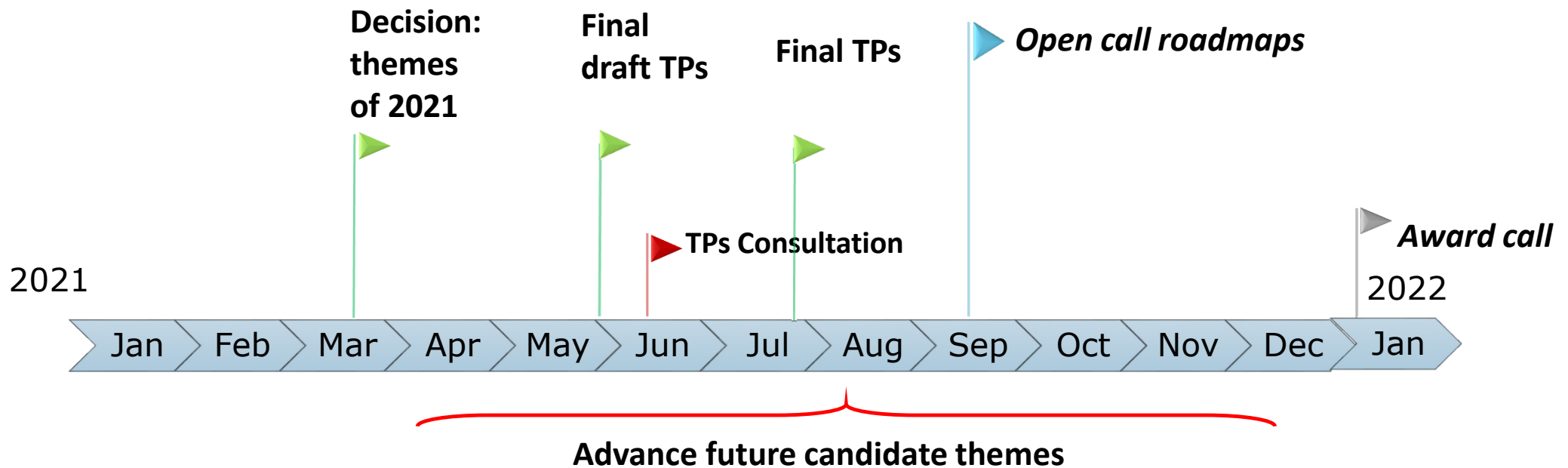
Areas of work

- Explore setting a **joint coordinated platform** managed by risk managers, risk assessors and stakeholders.
- Foster further **investigation on disinformation** in the area of food safety
- Research on **effectiveness of different transparency initiatives** in the EU
- Integrate **psychological and socio-cultural factors with behavioural models**, in risk communication
- **Strengthen cooperation**/dialogue with EC, MS and stakeholders

Multi-annual theme development plan: *Proposal under consultation*



Retro-planner themes of 2021



- Identify 2021 candidate themes and consult with partners (DG SANTE, AF, EU Agencies) (Jan-Mar)
- Drafting of theme papers (TPs) of 2021 (Mar-May)
- External consultation of TPs (June)
- Launch open call for roadmap generation (Sep)

1. What is your view on candidate themes of 2021 proceeding to themes?
2. What is your view on the multi-annual plan?
3. How would you like to be involved in advancing candidate themes beyond 2021?



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Annex

Retro planner themes of 2020

OPEN CALL

3 Lots

- Environmental RA
- Multiple chemical RA
- New approach methodologies in RA

FRAMEWORK CONTRACT

CT/EFSA/FIN/2019/01)

Artificial intelligence in RA

