



TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EFSA NETWORK ON PLANT PEST SURVEILLANCE

Introduction and purpose for establishing:

Establishing a system of Networks of organisations operating in the fields within EFSA's mission is among the tasks of EFSA, according to its Founding Regulation (Article 22(7) and Article 23(g) of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002), in order to facilitate a scientific cooperation framework by the coordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects, the exchange of expertise and best practices.

In accordance with Article 22(7) and Article 23(g) of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, EFSA shall promote the networking of scientific organisations of EU Member States operating in the fields within the Authority's mission.

A new regulation on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain (EU Regulation 1381/2019 on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain and amending Regulations (EC) No 178/2002, (EC) No 1829/2003, (EC) No 1831/2003, (EC) No 2065/2003, (EC) No 1935/2004, (EC) No 1331/2008, (EC) No 1107/2009, (EU) 2015/2283 and Directive 2001/18/EC), which has been in application since 27 March 2021, strengthens the Authority's ability to carry out its risk assessment functions in accordance with the highest transparency standards.

On 24 June 2021 the Management Board of the Authority has adopted the Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission which purpose is to optimise the operational procedures of EFSA scientific networks in accordance with the remit and strategic objectives of the Authority, specifically considering a greater involvement of Member State expertise in support of EFSA's mission.

The overall aim of the EFSA Scientific Network on plant pest surveillance is to establish and enhance cooperation between Member States (MS) and EFSA, to build a community of knowledge and expertise for preparing and designing statistically sound and risk-based surveys for quarantine pests in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. The members of the Network will become the EFSA contact points and trainers in plant health surveys following the EFSA methodological framework in their respective MS. Establishing and supporting of the network was requested by the European Commission in mandate M-2022-00069: for providing scientific and technical assistance to the Member States and training activities on survey guidelines relevant for plant health for the EU territory, Iceland and Norway.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the EFSA Scientific Network on plant pest surveillance are:

Taking into account art. 2 of the above-mentioned Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's

mission the role of the networks is to support EFSA and the Member States in carrying out the Authority's mission in accordance with the established standards of scientific excellence, transparency and responsiveness foreseen in the GFL Regulation. These include, *inter alia*, facilitating the development of a scientific cooperation framework by the coordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects and the exchange of expertise and best practices in the fields within the Authority's mission.

Specifically, the Network aims to:

- Ensure the mutual understanding of statistically sound and risk-based surveys in plant health, sharing the developments of survey methodologies, keeping the participants abreast of the most recent and relevant progress in the field of pest monitoring and surveillance,
- Build capacity on pest surveillance in the MSs by disseminating the knowledge, expertise and best practice of using the EFSA pest survey toolkit. In particular by training the key players in the MSs, that within the MS institutions are in charge of planning and executing surveys of quarantine pests, for initiating, preparing, designing, implementing and reporting of surveys of EU quarantine pests
- Act as a contact point between EFSA and the Member State authorities that are competent in the field of planning and execution of specific surveys for EU quarantine pests
- Share the MS experience in the implementation of pest surveys for improving the current practices
- Harmonise the Plant Health surveys performed across the MSs allowing for comparison of pest surveys in time and space

Members of the Scientific Network

According to art. 6.1 of the Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission, following the receipt of all necessary information from EFSA Plant Health and Pesticides Residues Unit, the Advisory Forum shall identify member organisations which can contribute to the tasks of Pest Survey Network in Plant Health for each country.

The Member State representative at the Advisory Forum, in cooperation with the member organisations formally designated in accordance with the previous paragraph, shall establish the names of maximum two network participants and two alternate participants. The network shall be composed of experts with the following profile:

- national experts in Plant Health with direct responsibilities:
 - in the planning and execution of surveys of EU quarantine pests;
 - in the analyses and reporting of the results of the conducted pest surveys;
- national experts in Plant Health with direct responsibilities in the training of surveillance related topics (e.g. trainings for inspectors, staff involved in the preparation of pest survey instructions, in sampling activities)

The members of the network are required to also act as a communication point for relevant organisations (including national risk managers) and stakeholders within the Member State, ensuring the timely exchange of scientific information and follow ups between these national organisations and EFSA.

Working methods

The network shall be coordinated by the EFSA Plant Health Monitoring Team of the Plant Health and Pesticide Residues Unit (PLANTS Unit).

The network shall meet at least once per year, usually twice preferably through physical and possibly through virtual or hybrid meetings. The duration of each meeting will depend on its programme but will be at least 1 ½ days. The working language for the Network will be English.

In addition, it will use other means of collaboration:

- EFSA digital collaboration platforms
- Web- conferences/webinars
- Emails for specific questions or issues.

Member States' representatives in this network shall commit to liaise as appropriate at national level before and after each network meeting to make sure all the necessary information is shared, without prejudice to Article 12 of the Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the field within the Authority's mission.

Access to meetings

Representatives of the European Commission are invited to attend meetings and participate in the work of the networks. Representatives of other EU agencies may participate in the work of the networks as appropriate. EFSA may invite representatives of other agencies, bodies or institutions of the European Union, EFTA¹, third countries or international plant health organisations (such as IPPC ²and EPPO³) to attend meetings of the Network. Other organisations may be invited, including those from outside the EU, with specific expertise to participate in a network meeting, where deemed appropriate or necessary. These organisations may be invited either to participate in full or as observers only.

Timeline

The terms of reference will be renewed after 3 years in 2025.

Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the network activities are:

- improved preparedness of the Members States to detect pest outbreaks at early stages of invasion in their territory;
- a more targeted and effective support from EFSA to the Member States in the field of surveillance of quarantine pests;
- more harmonised pest surveillance across the MSs allowing comparison of surveys implemented in different locations and in different years.

Expected deliverables

¹ EFTA – The European Free Trade Association, intergovernmental organization of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland

² IPPC – International Plant Protection Convention

³ EPPO – European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization

Minutes will be provided for each meeting and shared with the participants. As well the presentations and working materials will be shared with the participants in a dedicated platform.

For sharing the developments of pest survey methodologies and for keeping the participants abreast of the most recent and relevant progress in the field, an annual technical report will be prepared by EFSA. This document will provide detailed account of (i) the updates of the EFSA pest survey toolkit and of its implementation by the Member States as discussed during the network meetings; (ii) the data exchanged and on the latest national and EFSA developments in the area of surveillance and research on methodology development; (iii) the discussions and proposals by the participants for improvements of the EFSA pest survey toolkit and the best practices for ensuring it is fit for the purpose, with the aim of harmonising the Plant Health surveys performed within and across the MSs.

For building capacity on pest surveillance in the EU MSs by disseminating the knowledge, expertise and best practice of using the EFSA pest survey toolkit, on the one hand by proposing an annual training program including the ones to be implemented during the Network meetings. On the other hand, the Member State representatives in the Network will share their training plan for their Member State. The didactical materials will be shared on a dedicated digital platform.

Publication plan

Publication of the deliverables on EFSA's website:

Minutes of the meeting(s), technical reports of the Network, presentations and didactical materials on pest surveys.