

88TH ADVISORY FORUM  
STOCKHOLM, 27-28 JUNE



# **SPEED OF RISK ASSESSMENT**

EFSA Scientific Committee workshop  
19 April 2023

# ONCE UPON A TIME

## *Ex cathedra* risk assessment



Wide and open search

→ Not reproducible, risk of missing important studies

Experts identify “pivotal” studies without any a priori decision

Only “Pivotal” studies described and used in the opinion

→ Subjective without any a priori decision

→ Not transparent if non-pivotal studies not described

Conservative screening tools used, e.g. for the assessment of exposure

→ Overestimation of the risk

Uncertainties not considered

→ Not transparent



# EFSA TODAY (NOT ALWAYS)

## Search strings

- + Reproducible, limited risk of missing important studies
- Often very wide, high number of studies to be screened

## Non “pivotal” studies described in Annexes

- + Transparent
- Sometimes in long annexes with information in free text  
→ difficult to handle and analyse

## Dietary exposure estimated with real food consumption and occurrence data

- + More precise
- Time & resources needed to clean data, fill gaps, develop models



# CONTINUOUS EVOLUTION

~~Ex cathedra~~  
risk assessment



*EFSA in transition*

→ slowing down risk assessment process

**New approach** to be developed to **speed up** EFSA's work while keeping its assessments **evidence based** and **transparent**.



# FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SPEED OF RISK ASSESSMENT

## Scope of evaluations and data requirements

- Literature data
- Low quality of the data submitted for hazard identification
- Low quality or incomplete data for exposure assessment

## Engagement processes

- Guidance to be applied
- Cross cutting issues
- Public or targeted consultation

## Methodology

- Protocol
- Uncertainty assessment
- Expert Knowledge Elicitation (EKE)



# THEMATIC WORKSHOP

## THEMATIC WORKSHOP ON THE SPEED OF RISK ASSESSMENT

### **Objective:**

Gather feedback & ideas from the SC members on how to increase the speed of EFSA's risk assessments by ensuring actionable and fit for purpose advices

### **Break-out group 1** *Optimisation*

Can you suggest procedures and standard practices that EFSA panels could adopt to optimize the existing risk assessment framework?

### **Break-out group 2** *Innovation*

Can you suggest innovation initiatives (tools, databases, projects, ...) that EFSA could carry out to reduce the time needed to deliver opinions?





# MAIN SUGGESTIONS

Enforce a **dialogue** with the mandate requestor to better frame the questions (currently too broad).

It might be facilitated by:

- Upfront **scoping review, problem formulation & protocol**
- **Criteria** to decide upfront, e.g., which sort of literature search is needed
- **Templates** and **tools**, as the Web-based tool/repository for protocol development

Carefully consider CC **guidance documents development** (e.g. general vs specific)

**Expand CC WGs** support to guidance implementation

Chair of WG/Panel to be trained to steer discussion and ensure effective meetings

A declaration of interest **“pass”** to work across panels

Further invest in **machine learning** tools for systematic review of the literature and in standard critical appraisal tools

Collect **information** on the time spent in the different phases of the risk assessment, not all steps should be done for all opinions

Develop **repositories** to capitalize the information generated for each opinion was also recommended together with the definition of **standard structures** for data extraction

