



TERMS OF REFERENCE
OF THE PESTICIDE STEERING NETWORK
JULY 2021

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



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considering a greater involvement of Member State expertise in support of EFSA's mission.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is the keystone of European Union (EU) risk assessment regarding food and feed safety. In close collaboration with national authorities and in open consultation with its stakeholders, EFSA provides independent scientific advice and clear communication on existing and emerging risks associated with the food chain. On request from the European Commission, European Parliament or Member States or on its own initiative EFSA provides scientific opinions on issues falling under its remit.

The Pesticide Peer Review Unit is responsible for the EU peer review of risk assessments of active substances used in plant protection products, in close cooperation with EU Member States (complying with Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 and relevant Regulations).

The Pesticide Residues Unit provides scientific advice to the European Commission on possible risks related to the presence of pesticide residues in food treated with plant protection products and makes proposals regarding the setting and reviewing of MRLs (complying with Regulation (EC) No 396/2005).

Furthermore, both units work in cooperation with the Panel on Pesticide Products and their Residues and are providing scientific advice on pesticide risk assessment on ad-hoc cases or by self-tasking.

The Pesticide Steering Committee (PSC) was established in 2008. The mandate as an EFSA network was adopted by the EFSA Executive Director in May 2011. The PSC has highly contributed to the coordination of the activities of EFSA and the Member States regarding the risk assessment of pesticides. Following the discussion at the EFSA Joint Science Meetings, a renaming of the PSC network to Pesticide Steering Network was proposed in June 2014.

Additional discussions regarding the involvement of the network in the development of the guidance documents were held and in June 2014 it was concluded that the network plays a key role regarding the coordination between EFSA and the Member States (MS) institutions conducting the assessment, and the terms of reference included minor



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changes for clarifying the commitment of the network members to liaise at the national level with other relevant organizations and to include additional role of the network in the development of the guidance documents.

In March 2021, it was agreed that the existing ToR were still appropriate and covering the tasks and responsibilities of the Network, however, following the entry into force of the Transparency Regulation, EFSA has new requirements for capturing, managing, handling and distributing Plant Protection Products (PPP) data and the IUCLID tool is used for data preparation, electronic submission and management of active substance and MRL dossiers. Therefore, a new task related to the governance of IUCLID was added to the ToR.

Objectives:

The main goals of the PSN are:

- to improve dialogue among participants;
- to build mutual understanding of risk assessment principles;
- to enhance knowledge on and confidence in the scientific assessments carried out in the EU;
- to provide increased transparency in the current process among Member States and EFSA;
- to raise the harmonisation level of the risk assessments developed in the EU.

Taking into account art. 7.3 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 main objectives of the PSN are:

- plan, monitor, develop and improve the risk assessment and peer review process;



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- integrate the risk assessment and MRL setting processes for coordinating and achieving efficiency in the implementation of the provisions of both regulatory frameworks;
- coordinate with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA);
- give advice on prioritisation and risk assessors needs in the development and the updating of risk assessment guidance documents¹;
- ensure the cooperation and governance for IUCLID for pesticides.

Members

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, the Advisory Forum shall identify organisations in EU Member States which are capable of contributing to the tasks of the PSN.

In response to a request by the Pesticide Peer Review and Residues Units the Advisory Forum may formally designate the member organisation(s) of PSN for each country.

The Advisory Forum, in cooperation with the member organisations formally designated in accordance with the previous paragraph, shall establish the name of a network participant and an alternate participant per Member State for PSN within the designated member organisation(s).

The network shall be composed of experts whose profile shall include:

- management of the overall planning of the pesticide risk assessment process and to consider ways to further streamline this process,
- involvement in the planning and the management of the active substance risk assessment process in their country

¹ The PAI (Post Annex I Group) is responsible for procedural guidance related to the authorisation and renewal of authorisations.



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- commitment to liaise as appropriate at national level before and after each Network meeting

Access to meetings

Other organisations may be invited, including from outside the EU, with specific expertise to participate in a network, where appropriate or necessary. These organisations may be invited either to participate in full or as observers only.

In addition representatives of the European Commission may participate in the work of the networks. Representatives of other EU agencies may participate in the work of the networks as appropriate

Working methods

The network shall meet physical or virtual at least one time per year. The working language for the Network activities will be English.

In addition, it will use other means of collaboration:

- web-based electronic interfaces for sharing information and data and EFSA's Document Management System (DMS) for the registration of records and e-mails for specific questions or issues.

The chair of the network shall be a member of EFSA staff designated by EFSA.

Deliverables and Outcomes:

- Meeting minutes published on the EFSA website
- Annual Report of the meetings and resulting activities of the PSN, as well as the examination of the criticalities found



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Timeline:

The terms of reference will be renewed after 3 years in 2024.