



TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE PESTICIDE STEERING NETWORK

September 2024

OBJECTIVES

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, as well as the exchange of expertise and best practices.

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 implementing Regulations). In addition, it 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 maximum residue levels (MRLs) (in line with Regulation (EC) No 396/2005). Furthermore, it works in cooperation with the Panel on Plant Protection Products and their Residues (PPR) and it is providing scientific advice on pesticide risk assessment on ad-hoc requests 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 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 (PSN) was proposed in June 2014.

Additional discussions regarding the involvement of the network in the development of 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 were amended to clarify the commitment of the network members to liaise at national level with other relevant organizations and to include additional role of the network in the development and updating of risk assessment guidance documents.

In March 2021, it was agreed that the existing Terms of Reference (ToR) were still appropriate. However, following the entry into force of the new regulation on the transparency and



sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain¹, EFSA has new requirements for capturing, managing, handling and distributing data related to active substance dossiers and 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. A dedicated Pesticides Steering Network IUCLID sub-group was created, with its own ToR, to ensure the cooperation and governance for IUCLID for pesticides.

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.

The main objectives of the PSN are:

- to plan, monitor, develop and improve the risk assessment and peer review process;
- to integrate the risk assessment of active substances used in plant protection products and MRL setting processes in order to coordinate and achieve efficiency in the implementation of the provisions of both regulatory frameworks;
- to coordinate with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA);
- to give advice on prioritisation and risk assessors needs in the development and the updating of risk assessment guidance documents²;
- to ensure the cooperation and governance for IUCLID for pesticides;
- to exchange and share information on differences relating to the post-approval assessment of data on active substances;
- to exchange and share feedback and signals of interest on the adverse effects of plant protection products, identified from post-marketing vigilance and / or surveillance activities.

MEMBERS

According to article 6.1 of the **Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission**³: "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 a specific network".

¹ Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 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. OJ L 231, 6.9.2019, p. 1–28.

² The PAI (Post Annex I Group) is responsible for procedural guidance related to the authorisation and renewal of authorisations.

³ [Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission](#)



In response to a request by the Pesticide Peer Review Unit, the Advisory Forum member may formally designate the member organisation(s) of the PSN for the country with expertise in the fields covered by the network.

In principle, but not necessarily only, the member organisations should encompass the competent authorities designated in accordance with Article 75 of Regulation (EC) 1107/2009 or Article 38 of Regulation (EC) No 396/2005.

For each Member State, the Advisory Forum member, in cooperation with the PSN member organisation(s) formally designated in accordance with the previous paragraphs, shall identify the name of a network participant and an alternate participant for the PSN from the designated member organisation(s).

Their profile should encompass the following areas:

- management of the overall planning of the pesticide risk assessment process including considerations further streamline this process;
- participation in the planning and the management of the active substance risk assessment process in their country;
- responsibility for coordination at national level, liaising with relevant parties to ensure seamless sharing of information before and after each Network meeting.

ACCESS TO MEETINGS

Representatives of the European Commission may participate in the work of the network. Representatives of other EU agencies may participate in the work of the network as appropriate.

Other organisations may be invited by EFSA to meetings, including from outside the EU, if they bring specific expertise, where deemed appropriate or necessary. These organisations may be invited either to participate in full or as observers only.

WORKING METHODS

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

In addition, the network will use other means of collaboration including:

- EFSA's Document Management System (DMS) for the registration of records and e-mails for specific questions or issues.
- Dedicated Microsoft Teams channels and space on SharePoint as web-based electronic interfaces for sharing information and data.
- Email communication to inform on the main events (dates of the annual meetings and ad-hoc meetings, official invitation, finalised agenda, minutes for final endorsement).

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



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

DELIVERABLES AND OUTCOMES

The proceedings of PSN Network meetings shall be recorded in meeting minutes. Meeting agenda, minutes and presentations are published on the EFSA website⁴ The activities of the PSN Network, shall be recorded in annual reports of activities of EFSA Networks issued by EFSA. These reports will be published on the EFSA website and presented to the EFSA Advisory Forum.

TIMELINE

The terms of reference for the network will be renewed after 3 years in 2027.

⁴ https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/advanced-search?f%5B1%5D=event_participant%3A127&sort=computed_sort_date&order=desc