

# Call for expressions of interest in joining EFSA's new stakeholder community on applications for food and feed products



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## 1 About the call

In line with EFSA's commitment on transparency and engagement with its stakeholders, EFSA is launching a call for expressions of interest to shape a community of stakeholders with expertise and a professional interest in topics related to the applications for food and feed products which require authorisation prior to entering the EU market, also referred to as 'regulated products'.

Over the past three years, while supporting food business operators in navigating the changes introduced by the Transparency Regulation, EFSA has recognised the need to establish the **EFSA's stakeholder community on applications for food and feed products**. The aim of this community is to facilitate discussions on application-related matters, with strong emphasis on the active role of its members in proposing topics for discussion, as well as in sharing proposals and possible initiatives to support applicants at the various stages of the application lifecycle.

This forum is distinct from other ongoing stakeholder initiatives, which are not suited to discuss practical and procedural aspects of the application process. The community will be open to all stakeholders involved in or interested in various application-related topics, including not only business operators and consultants but also representatives from other organisations such as NGOs, universities, research centres, and laboratories/contract research organisations. It will also be open to delegates from the European Commission and from Member State competent authorities.

Whilst members from the European Commission and from Member State Competent Authorities will be identified via nominations requested from their respective institutions, EFSA is launching a call for stakeholders to express their interest in joining this new community. The present call is therefore reserved exclusively for stakeholders as defined in Section 3 below.

## 2 Objectives and functioning of the community

The community nature of this new forum aims to emphasise the active role of its members in proposing topics to be addressed and related modalities, as well as in suggesting possible proposals for initiatives to support applicants at the various stages of the application lifecycle. The new community will also incorporate relevant insights and experience shared by stakeholders through other technical discussion groups and engagement fora (e.g., the EFSA Technical Group on the Tools related to the application of the Transparency Regulation).

Community members will have the opportunity to share their views, experiences, and suggestions with EFSA and their peers, working together towards the common goal of streamlining the process and improving application quality, thereby facilitating the delivery of fit-for-purpose and timely risk assessments. The discussions within the community will focus on topics related to applications and their processes, structured in four main areas that are transversal to all food and feed domains:

1. **Procedural aspects:** Discussions will focus on the practical aspects of the application procedures.
2. **Digital tools:** This area will cover feedback and suggestions for improving the IT tools used in the application process (e.g., EFSA's portals and assessment calculation tools) and related user guides.



3. **Support initiatives for applicants:** Discussions will focus on gathering input from users on the effectiveness of EFSA's support initiatives during the application lifecycle and of initiatives targeting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with the aim of also exploring potential new initiatives.
4. **General aspects related to guidance documents:** This area will cover general discussions on the creation, updates and accessibility of guidance documents used in the application process and on standard data formats.

The community will operate through topic-based discussions involving subgroups of members interested in the specific topics. EFSA will propose topics for discussion when a need to engage with stakeholders on applications is identified, and members are also encouraged to actively suggest topics. To this end, a call for topics will be launched twice per year. EFSA will assign identified topics to either cross-cutting discussions that span multiple subjects or to discussions focused on specific topics.

Through this topic-based engagement mechanism, EFSA aims to ensure that discussions on any given matter include only those members with a specific interest and expertise to actively contribute. Depending on the topic to be discussed, EFSA will design the format for discussion and exchange, consulting with members as necessary. While meetings will be a key tool, other formats, such as written exchanges and surveys, will also be considered to address the points raised.

### 3 Who we are looking for

The call is open to all categories of stakeholders who have an interest in regulated product application topics (e.g., business operators, consultants, NGOs, laboratories/contract research organisations, etc.). The call will be reopened periodically to allow new members to join and contribute to the community.

Active members of the community are expected to contribute to both the definition of the topics under discussion and participate actively in discussions based on their interests and experience, such as leading agenda items, providing practical insights on available support initiatives, and offering input for further improvement of the application process. Examples of activities include:

- attending meetings relevant to their topics of interest (e.g., to discuss experienced issues and collectively consider possible solutions);
- actively participating in calls for topics to be discussed;
- contributing to written exchanges and surveys (e.g., to provide feedback or views on IT tools, procedural aspects, applicant support initiatives, etc.).

## 4 Selection of members and prioritisation criteria

### 4.1 Prioritisation of received expressions of interest

To ensure efficient exchange dynamics within the community, EFSA may need to limit the number of accepted members, prioritising those who demonstrate strong expertise and interest in relevant topics, as indicated in the submission form. Additionally, EFSA will determine the final composition of the community to ensure fair representation across food industry sectors and organisations' sizes.



## 4.2 Eligibility requirements

For an expression of interest to be considered, the applying member must meet the following requirements:

1. Be involved in, or have a professional interest in, at least one of the areas for the applications for regulated products, defined as: Animal welfare; Biological hazards; Feed additives; Food contact materials; Food improvement agents; GMOs; Novel foods and traditional foods; Nutrition; and Pesticides<sup>1</sup>.

and

2. Belong to one of the stakeholder categories identified by EFSA: Business and food industry; Consumer organisations; NGOs and advocacy groups; Distributors and HORECA; Practitioners; Academia; and Farmers and primary producers<sup>2</sup>.

Note: Being part of the EFSA Registered Stakeholders scheme is not a prerequisite for joining the community.

## 4.3 Multiple members from the same organisation

The submission of interest to join the community is on an individual basis and not at the organisational level. EFSA acknowledged that some organisations may prefer to have multiple members from the same entity participate in the community, as they may have interests in different topics or areas of work. In principle, the participation of multiple members from the same organisation is allowed.

However, should it become necessary to ensure efficient exchange dynamics, EFSA reserves the right to limit participation from multiple members from a same organisation, particularly when they cover overlapping areas of work or interest.

Nevertheless, since the activities of the community will be structured around initiatives focused on themes that may involve subgroups, it will still be possible, where relevant, for a community member to nominate alternates – who are not part of the community on a standing basis – to participate in specific initiatives.

## 5 How you can apply

Stakeholders interested in joining the EFSA's new stakeholder community on applications for food and feed products are invited to submit their interest via the

**[DEDICATED FORM](#)**

**Deadline: 10 January 2025 23:59 CET.**

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the [dedicated page on EFSA's website](#) for more details on each application area.

<sup>2</sup> Laboratories and contract research organisations are invited to select the stakeholder category that best reflects their legal status.



## 6 Notification of the outcome

The composition of the community is expected to be finalised **by the end of February 2025**.

Applying members will be notified of the outcome of their request to join the community via e-mail, sent to the address they provided in their expression of interest form.

## 7 Publication of community-related documents

To ensure transparency in the management of the community, documents related to its establishment and operations – such as meeting minutes and presentations – will be published on EFSA's website. These documents may include references to the companies or organisations that community members represent, but, unless specific consent is requested and provided by the members, they will not feature any personal data, such as individual names, surnames, or email addresses.

## 8 Timeline

Opening of the call	26 November 2024
Deadline to submit interest via the dedicated form	10 January 2025
Notification of the outcome of the request	By end of February 2025
Kick-off of the community	By end of March 2025

## 9 Inquiries

Any questions or requests for assistance regarding this call should be sent via the [Ask a Question service](#) indicating in the subject "New stakeholder community on applications for food and feed products – call for expressions of interest".