

EFSA Annual Strategy Survey 2024

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Note: This document, once submitted by IPSOS, was reviewed and edited by EFSA prior to publication.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EFSA is committed to measuring perceptions of its work across a range of areas set out in its Strategy 2027, particularly its progress towards its strategic objectives. To this end, 2022 saw the organisation pilot its first Annual Strategy Survey among Customers, Stakeholder and Partners, as well as members of the EFSA Management Board. The survey was repeated in 2023.

This report summarises the findings of the third (2024) iteration of the Annual Strategy Survey. The survey sought to understand how the aforementioned groups perceived EFSA's activities – particularly in relation to its Strategic Objective 1, the delivery of trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork – and how perceptions have evolved since the previous survey. The 2024 survey also included a new question to assess respondents' awareness of EFSA's updated independence policy.

A total of 1,376 contacts took part in the survey, giving an overall response rate of 17% (compared to 18% in 2023 and 17% in 2022).

Summary of findings at the overall level (Customers, Stakeholders and Partners combined)

EFSA's performance on Strategic Objective 1 (SO1) and its constituent Attributes continues to be viewed mainly positively. **The % favourable satisfaction score for SO1 is 68%, while the equivalent scores for the Risk Assessment and Risk Communication Attributes of SO1 stand at 65% and 71%, respectively.** All of these scores are in line with the comparable figures for 2023.

In terms of the results for the individual components of the two SO1 Attributes, and beginning with the Risk Assessment Attribute, the overall % favourable satisfaction scores range between 80% and 49%. The highest scores are found for the impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice (80%), the rigour of the methods it employs in its scientific advice (75%), and the ability of the advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor, adhering to the terms of reference (72%). The lowest scores are found for EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the risk assessment process (53%) and the ability of its scientific advice to be timely (49%). There are no statistically significant differences between the 2024 and 2023 % favourable satisfaction scores for the individual components of the Risk Assessment Attribute. However, for several of the components, the 2024 scores are lower than the average of the scores recorded over the last three surveys.

As regards the scores for the Risk Communication components, these range from 78% to 64%. The highest scores emerge for the range of tools EFSA uses to communicate risks (78%), EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety (75%), and the context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks (75%). Comparatively lower scores emerge for the ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences (64%) and its ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner (66%). All of the Risk Communication scores align very closely with those for 2023.

Summary of findings for Customers

Just over eight in ten Customers (82%) rated EFSA's work as 'extremely good', 'very good', or 'fairly good', which is in line with the rating for 2023. About nine in ten (89%) Customers continue to say they trust EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork, with just 2% expressing any level of distrust.

For Strategic Objective 1, the % favourable satisfaction score among Customers stands at 65%. For the two constituent Attributes of SO1 (Risk Assessment and Risk Communication), the % favourable satisfaction scores stand at 62% and 68%, respectively. All of these scores are in line with the 2023 results.

Looking at the ratings Customers give for the individual components of the two Attributes, significant variation is apparent:

- **For the Risk Assessment components**, the % favourable satisfaction scores range from 80%-41%. As in 2023, the highest scores are found for the *impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice* (80%), the *rigour of the methods it employs* (79%), and the *transparency of the risk assessment process* (72%) – the latter being equally ranked to the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor* (72%). The lowest scores are again found for the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely* (41%) and its *effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the risk assessment process* (47%).
- While none of the Risk Assessment scores are significantly different to those for 2023, there are significant decreases in positivity for two of the SO1 Risk Assessment components if we look simply at the *total proportion of Customers rating these as "extremely good", "very good" or "fairly good"*. The two components are: the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible* (55% vs. 72% in 2023); and the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action* (52% vs. 68% in 2023).
- **For the Risk Communication components of SO1**, the degree of variation in the 2024 scores among Customers is narrower (77% to 58%). The highest scores emerge for *EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way that faithfully reflects the scientific output* (77%), *the range of tools used by EFSA to communicate risks* (74%), and its *ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions* (71%). Comparatively lower scores emerge for *EFSA's ability to reach relevant target audiences* (58%) and its *ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, comprehensible and meaningful* (66%). While the ranking of the different components is somewhat different from that observed in 2023, none of the differences between the scores for the two years are statistically significant.

Summary of findings for Stakeholders

As in 2023, about two-thirds (68%) of Stakeholders rated EFSA's work as 'extremely good', 'very good', or 'fairly good', and three-quarters (75%) said they trusted EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork.

The Strategic Objective 1 % favourable satisfaction score among Stakeholders stands at 51%. For the two constituent Attributes of SO1 (Risk Assessment and Risk Communication), the % favourable satisfaction scores stand at 47% and 55%, respectively. All of these scores are in line with the 2023 results.

In terms of the ratings Stakeholders gave for the individual components of the two Attributes:

- **For the Risk Assessment components**, the % favourable satisfaction scores range from 66%-32%. The highest scores are found for the *impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice* (66%), the *ability of its scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment* (55%) and the *rigour of the methods it employs in its scientific advice* (55%). For most of the other components, the scores fall below the 50% mark, with the lowest scores found for *EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its Stakeholders during the risk assessment process* (32%) and the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely* (34%). There are no statistically significant differences between the 2024 and 2023 scores for the Risk Assessment components.
- **For the Risk Communication components**, the % favourable satisfaction scores range from 70%-41%. The highest scores emerge for *the range of tools used by EFSA to communicate risks* (70%), *EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food*

safety (67%) and the context provided by EFSA about its scientific outputs when communicating risks (63%). The lowest scores emerge for its ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions (41%) and its ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner (49%). Again, none of the scores are significantly different to those for 2023.

Summary of findings for Partners

In line with 2023 results, approaching nine in ten (89%) Partners rated EFSA's work as 'extremely good', 'very good', or 'fairly good', and almost all (96%) said they trusted EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork.

For Strategic Objective 1, the % favourable satisfaction score among Partners stands at 88%, which is consistent with the 2023 score (86%). For the two constituent Attributes of SO1 (Risk Assessment and Risk Communication), the % favourable satisfaction scores stand at 87% and 89%, respectively. The latter figure represents a slight improvement on the comparable result for 2023 (84%).

The ratings Partners give for the individual components of the two SO1 Attributes are also consistently very positive, with the % favourable satisfaction score rarely falling below the 80% mark:

- **For the Risk Assessment components,** the highest scores are found for the *impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice (92%), the criteria EFSA uses for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments (91%), the ability of its scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor (90%), and the transparency of the risk assessment process (90%).* Comparatively 'lower' scores are found for *the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely (75%), the ability of the advice to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties, assumptions and weight of evidence (82%), and EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the risk assessment process (83%).* The scores for the *ability of EFSA's advice to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties, assumptions and weight of evidence (82%), and for the ability of the advice to be timely (75%)* are lower than the comparable scores obtained in 2023 (92% and 85% respectively).
- **For the Risk Communication components,** the highest scores emerge for EFSA's *alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities (95%), the context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks (94%), and its ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output (92%).* The 'lowest' scores emerge for *the ability of EFSA's risk communications to reach relevant target audiences (81%) and EFSA's ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner (83%).* All of these results align with those for 2023.

1 INTRODUCTION

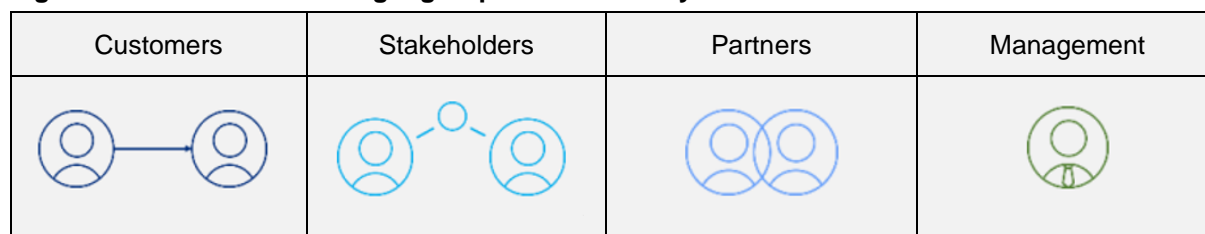
EFSA's Strategy 2027¹ was published at a pivotal point in time for the organisation. The SARS-CoV-2 global pandemic, which reached its peak the previous year, saw the organisation having to adapt to new ways of working. In 2021, an amendment to the General Food Law (the Transparency Regulation) came into effect, increasing EFSA's responsibilities towards EU citizens. Parallel EU-wide policy developments, such as the Green Deal actions and, in particular, the Farm to Fork Strategy, will shape the focus of EFSA's activities in the years ahead. The Strategy 2027 sets out how EFSA intends to respond to this changing environment, describing the added value the organisation aims to deliver to its Customers, Partners, Stakeholders and the public at large.

EFSA is committed to measuring perceptions of its work across a range of areas set out in the Strategy 2027, particularly its progress towards its strategic objectives. To this end, 2022 saw the organisation pilot a new annual survey tool (the '2022 Annual Strategy Survey') among Customers, Stakeholder and Partners, as well as members of the EFSA Management Board. The survey combined two previously existing reputation monitoring surveys (The Customer/Stakeholder Feedback Survey, and the Reputation Barometer). The Annual Strategy Survey was repeated in 2023.

The 2024 Annual Strategy Survey was commissioned to update the findings from the previous two waves, with a particular focus on assessing perceptions of EFSA's activities in relation to its Strategic Objective 1 – the delivery of trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork – and how these perceptions have evolved. The 2024 survey also included a new question to assess respondents' awareness of EFSA's updated Independence Policy².

As in previous years, the 2024 survey was targeted at four groups: **Customers, Stakeholders, Partners and members of the EFSA Management Board**. The constitution of these groups is described further in the next chapter.

Figure 1.1 Four main target groups for the survey



1.1 Structure of the report

The next chapter of this report sets out the methodology used for the 2024 survey. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the survey results for the three main target audiences combined (Customers, Stakeholders and Partners), while Chapters 4 to 6 present the results for each group separately. Chapter 7 sets out the findings of a Key Drivers Analysis, conducted to identify factors that have the greatest impact on overall evaluations of EFSA among the three main target groups. The survey results for the EFSA Management Board are reported in Appendix A.

¹ [EFSA Strategy 2027 \(europea.eu\)](https://europea.eu)

² [EFSA Independence Policy](#)


2 METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodological approach for the Annual Strategy Survey 2024, providing details on the target groups, sample selection, the questionnaire, fieldwork, response rates and weighting. It also details how composite indicators presented in the report were calculated.

2.1 Target Groups

The survey was conducted among four target groups, who form part of EFSA's knowledge ecosystem and are familiar, to varying extent, with the work and activities of the Authority: i) Customers; ii) Stakeholders; iii) Partners and iv) EFSA's Management Board. Figure 2.1. shows the composition of the four groups.

Figure 2.1 Composition of the four target groups for the survey

Customers	Stakeholders	Partners	Management
			
Applicants DG SANTE	Academia and practitioner organisations Business & Farmers (includes the business and food industry, farmers and primary producers, distributors and HORECA) NGOs, advocacy groups and consumer organisations	Art. 36 organisations Communications Expert Network EU ENVI Agencies International organisations and third countries Member States authorities (AF and FP) Member States authorities (IPA countries) Scientific experts	EFSA Management Board members

2.2 Sample Selection

The survey was conducted online, with a total of 8,055 EFSA contacts invited to participate. Each contact was sent an email invitation that provided information on the purpose of the study and a unique link to the online questionnaire. Each participant could complete the survey only once.

2.3 Questionnaire





The 2024 survey was designed to measure the target groups' perceptions of EFSA's work across areas that showed lower satisfaction in 2023. In practice this meant that the survey focused mainly on EFSA's performance in relation to its Strategic Objective 1, the delivery of trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork. Questions that featured in the 2023 and/or the 2022 survey relating to Strategic Objectives 2 and 3 were deleted for 2024, as KPI targets for these areas were met in the earlier surveys.

Alongside the aforementioned deletions, a new set of questions on familiarity with EFSA's Independence Policy was added to the survey for 2024.

2.4 Fieldwork

The survey fieldwork was conducted between 19 August and 27 September 2024. Reminder invitations were sent at regular intervals during this period to contacts who had not yet participated. A total of 1,376 contacts took part in the survey, giving an overall response rate of 17%, which is in line with the rate for both of the previous surveys (18% in 2023 and 17% in 2022).

Figure 2.2 Response rates by target group

Customers	Stakeholders	Partners	Management
			
Individual response rate: 12%	Individual response rate: 20%	Individual response rate: 20%	Individual response rate: 38%

2.5 Calculation of composite indicators, including the satisfaction score index

As noted above, the core of the 2024 survey comprised a set of questions designed to assess perceptions of EFSA's work relating to its Strategic Objective 1 (SO1), the delivery of trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork. These questions asked respondents to rate specific components of this work, using a scale ranging from 'extremely good' to 'extremely poor'. For presentational purposes, a '**% favourable satisfaction score**' was calculated for each component, comprising the total proportion of 'extremely good', 'very good' and 'good' answers over the total valid answers (excluding 'not applicable' and 'I don't know' (NA/DK) replies, which are presented separately).

As shown in Table 2.1, the components group into two broader **Attributes** – Risk Assessment and Risk Communication. A **% favourable satisfaction score** has been calculated for each Attribute and also for SO1 as whole, with the Attribute scores representing the simple average of the scores of the constituent components, and the SO1 score representing the simple average of the scores of the constituent Attributes.

For SO1 and its two Attributes, an '**overall satisfaction indicator**' was also calculated. This is a weighted score that reflects the relative degree of positive and negative responses to each of the constituent components. In the report, the overall satisfaction indicator is represented via a colour spectrum, where green signifies a positive score, yellow signifies a neutral score and red signifies a negative score:



Table 2.1 SO1 and its underlying Attributes and Components

Objective	Attributes	Components
Strategic Objective 1	Risk Assessment	The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor, adhering to the terms of reference
		The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties, assumptions and weight of evidence
		The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action
		The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely
		The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible
		The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment
		The impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice
		The rigour of the methods that EFSA employs in its scientific advice
		The transparency of EFSA's risk assessment process
		The criteria EFSA uses for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments
		EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the process of risk assessment
	Risk Communication	EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully (in an accurate manner) reflects the scientific output
		EFSA's ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s)
		EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, comprehensible, and meaningful
		The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely
		EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety
		The ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences
		EFSA's ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions, e.g. planning, monitoring, social research and evaluation
		The range of tools EFSA uses to communicate risks (e.g. news stories, multimedia products, social media activities)
		The context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks (i.e. who requested the work, why, what happens next)

2.6 Weighting of the data

The data was weighted according to a methodology provided by EFSA, within each of the three main target groups. At the aggregate level, the overall satisfaction score was calculated in a balanced way – 33.3% based on the perception of the Customers, 33.3% based on the perception of the Stakeholders and 33.3% based on the perception of the Partners. The perceptions of EFSA's Management Board (reported in Appendix A), did not count towards the overall perception score. More information about the weighting can be found in Appendix D – Technical report.

2.7 Interpreting the data

Throughout this report, the 2024 results are compared with those from 2023. It should be noted that survey results are subject to sampling tolerances meaning that not all apparent differences between survey waves may be statistically significant. Only differences that are statistically significant (at the 5% level) – i.e. where we can be reasonably certain that they are unlikely to have occurred by chance – are highlighted in the text of the findings chapters.

The percentages in this report are given without a decimal and due to rounding percentages may not add up to 100% exactly. The bars in charts take into account decimals, explaining small differences in the length of bars showing the same percentages. Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding or multiple answers. An asterisk (*) denotes any value of less than half one per cent but more than zero, while a dash (-) denotes zero.

3 OVERALL PERCEPTION OF EFSA'S WORK

This chapter summarises perceptions of EFSA's work in relation to its Strategic Objective 1 among Customers, Partners and Stakeholders combined.

3.1 Strategic Objective 1 and its Attributes

EFSA's performance on SO1 and its constituent Attributes continues to be viewed mainly positively. **The % favourable satisfaction score for SO1 is 68%, while the equivalent scores for the Risk Assessment and Risk Communication Attributes stand at 65% and 71%, respectively.** All of these scores are in line with the comparable figures for 2023 (Table 3.1).

Accordingly, the **satisfaction indicator for SO1 and its two Attributes remains** in the yellow part of the spectrum, signifying **mainly neutral perceptions** overall.

Table 3.1 % favourable satisfaction scores and indicators for SO1 and its Attributes

	% Favourable satisfaction score and indicator		
	2024	2023	
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1	68	69 	
Risk Assessment	65	68 	
Risk Communication	71	69 	

■ 2024 ■ 2023

Base: All Customers, Stakeholders and Partners interviewed (n=1352)

The % favourable satisfaction score for SO1 as a whole holds at a majority level among each of the three respondent subgroups. It remains **highest among Partners (88%) followed by Customers (65%) and Stakeholders (51%) respectively.**

Reflecting this, **the satisfaction indicator among Partners** is generally in the **light green (positive)** part of the spectrum. Among **Customers and Stakeholders**, the indicator for the most part sits more towards the **yellow (neutral) part of the spectrum**. All of these results are in line with those for 2023 (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 % favourable satisfaction scores and indicators for SO1 and its Attributes by audience



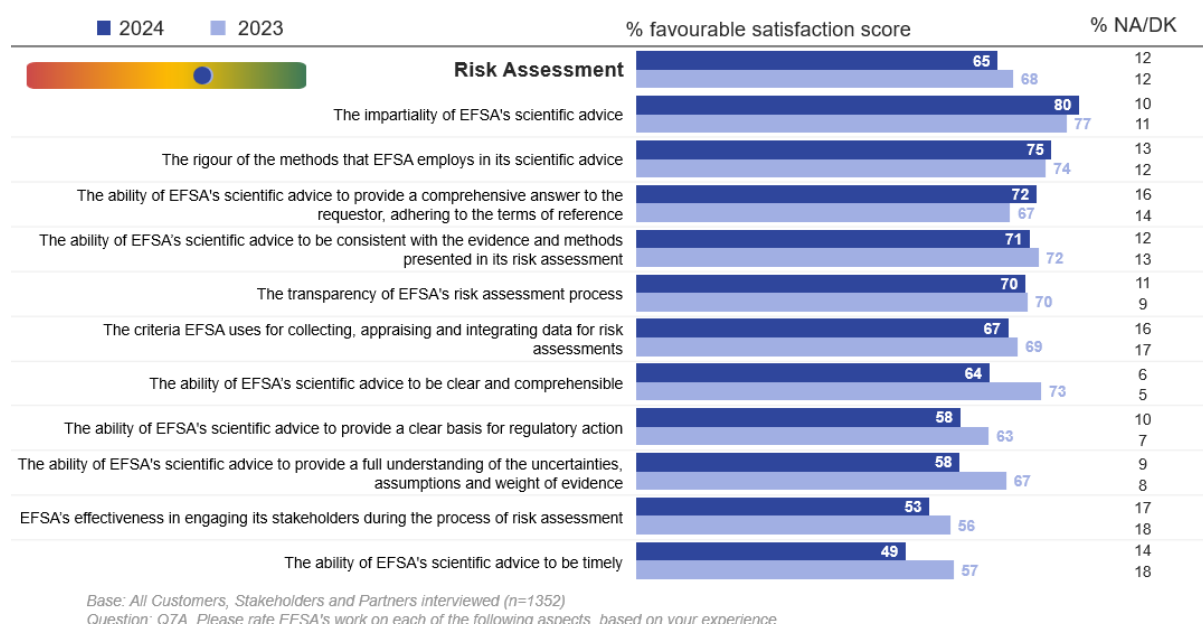
Base: All Customers, Stakeholders and Partners interviewed (n=1352)

In terms of the results for the individual components of the two SO1 Attributes, and beginning with the Risk Assessment Attribute, the overall % favourable satisfaction scores range between 80% and 49% (Figure 3.3). The highest scores are found for the impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice (80%), the rigour of the methods it employs in its scientific advice (75%) and the ability of the advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor, adhering to the terms of reference (72%). The lowest scores are found for EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the risk assessment process (53%) and the ability of its scientific advice to be timely (49%).

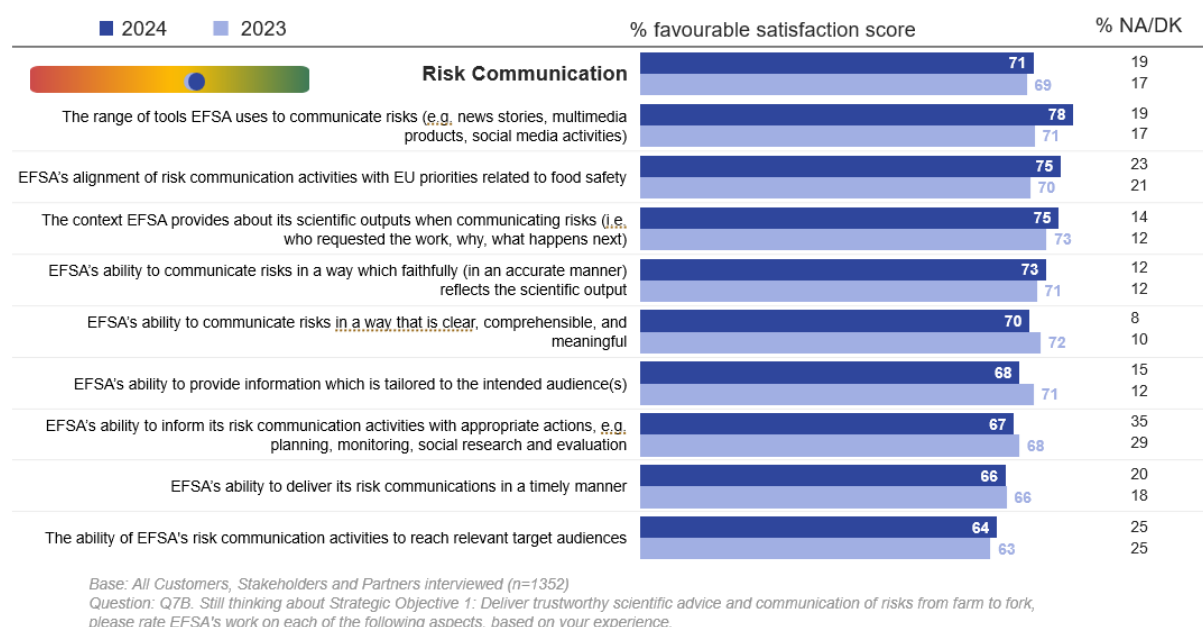
There are no statistically significant differences between the 2023 and 2024 % favourable satisfaction scores for the individual components of the Risk Assessment Attribute. However, for a few of these components, the 2024 scores are lower than the average of the scores recorded over the last three surveys. The components concerned include:

- The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties, assumptions and weight of evidence (58% vs. the average of 66% over the last three surveys)
- The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely (49% vs. 55%)
- EFSA's effectiveness in engaging stakeholders during the risk assessment process (53% vs. 59%)
- The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible (64% vs. 70%).
- The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action (58% vs. 62%)

These results may be an early indication of a downward trend in the scores and, as such, should be carefully monitored in future waves of the survey.

Figure 3.2 Satisfaction scores and indicator on SO1 Risk Assessment components


As regards the scores for the Risk Communication components, these range from 78%-64% (Figure 3.4). The highest scores emerge for the range of tools EFSA uses to communicate risks (78%), EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety (75%) and the context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks (75%). Comparatively lower scores emerge for the ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences (64%) and its ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner (66%). All of the Risk Communication scores align very closely with those for 2023.

Figure 3.3 Satisfaction scores and indicator on SO1 Risk Communication components


For EFSA's annual reporting purposes, results from the 2022 and 2023 Annual Strategy Surveys will be used for areas of performance that were not assessed in the 2024 survey because KPI targets for these areas were met in the earlier surveys. The full survey is planned to be repeated at the end of the EFSA Strategy 2027 and surveys conducted in the interim are intended to inform any mid-point review. The following values are therefore reported for EFSA's annual performance in 2024:

Strategic Objective 1

- Risk Assessment: 65% (2024 value)
- Risk Communication: 71% (2024 value)

Strategic Objective 2

- Preparedness: 74% (2022 value – baseline above corporate target)
- Harmonisation: 77% (2022 value – baseline above corporate target)
- Data access and exploitation: 73% (2022 value – baseline above corporate target)
- Capacity Strengthening: 74%: (average of one attribute tested in 2022 and other re-tested in 2023)
- Ecosystem efficiency: 73% (2022 value – baseline above corporate target)
- Coherence: 82% (2022 value – baseline above corporate target)

Strategic Objective 3

- Governance: 80% (2022 value – baseline above corporate target)
- Organisational efficiency: 90% (2023 value)

Overall EFSA Performance: 76% (average of values reported above)

The 2024 Overall Performance score is the same as that recorded for 2023.

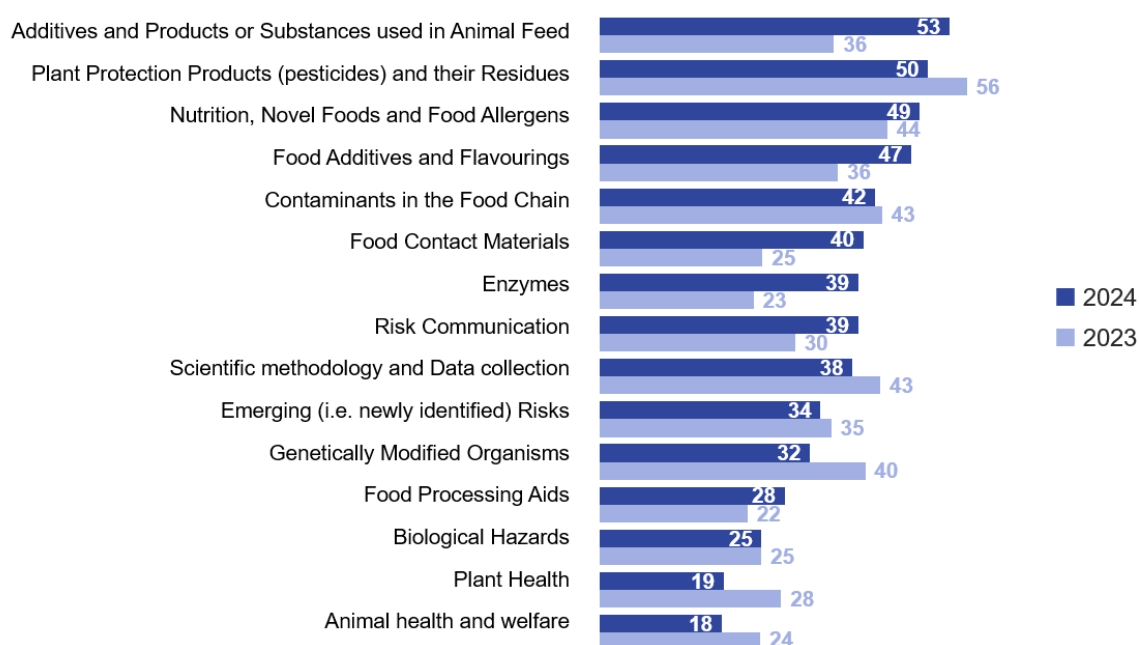
4 CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF EFSA'S WORK

The results for the Customer group are composed of responses from Applicants (n=420; weight applied 67%) and DG Sante (n=4; weight applied 33%).

4.1 Customers' main areas of interest and EFSA's perceived performance on these

Asked which areas of EFSA's work they were most interested in, Customers most commonly mentioned its work on additives and products or substances used in animal feed (53%), plant protection products and their residues (50%), nutrition, novel foods and food allergens (49%), food additives and flavourings (47%), and contaminants in the food chain (42%) (Figure 4.1). The 2024 results show no statistically significant differences on those for 2023, though it is worth noting that the proportion of customers mentioning additives and products or substances used in animal feed has increased by 17 percentage points since 2023 (from 36% to 53%).

Figure 4.1 Customers' main areas of interest



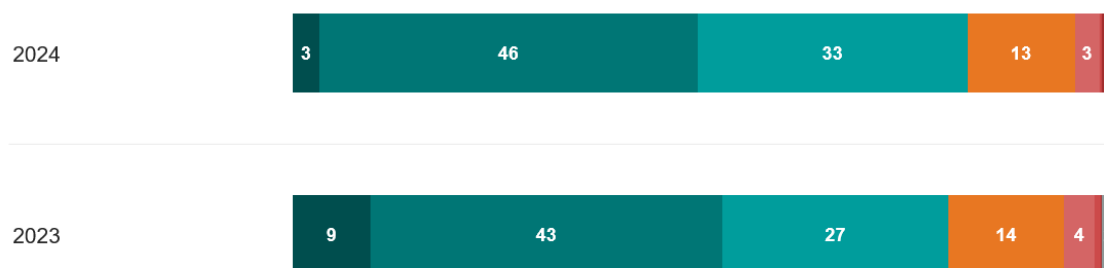
Base: All customers surveyed (n=424)

Question: Q3. Which areas of EFSA's work are you most interested in?

Just over eight in ten Customers (82%) rated EFSA's work positively, including 49% who rated it as *extremely* or *very good*. Just 4% in total rated the organisation's work negatively (Figure 4.2). These ratings are in line with those for 2023.

Figure 4.2 Customers' overall assessment of EFSA's work

Extremely good Very good Good Acceptable Poor Very poor Extremely poor Not applicable/Don't know



Base: All customers surveyed (n=424)

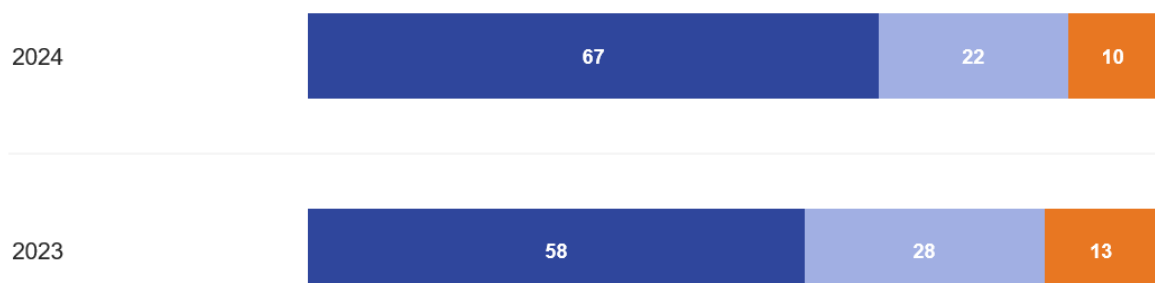
Question: Q4. In general, how would you rate EFSA's work in the areas you are interested in?

4.2 Customers' engagement and familiarity with EFSA's activities

Around two thirds (67%) of Customers said they engaged with EFSA or its activities on a regular basis, while 22% said they did so on an occasional basis (Figure 4.3). Eleven percent in total said they rarely or never engaged with EFSA or its activities. These results are not significantly different from those for 2023.

Figure 4.3 Customers' frequency of engagement with EFSA and its activities

On a regular basis On occasional basis Rarely Never

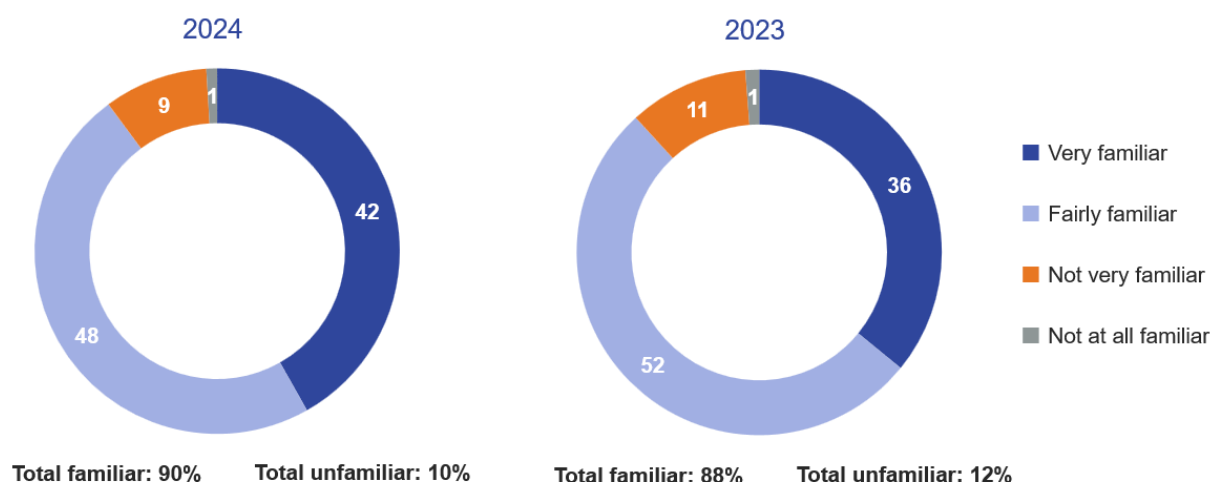


Base: All customers surveyed (n=424)

Question: Q1. In general, would you say that you engage with EFSA or follow its activities:

Nine in ten (90%) Customers said they were very or fairly familiar with EFSA's work and activities, while 10% said they were not very or not at all familiar with it (Figure 4.4). Again, these results show no significant change on last year.

Figure 4.4 Customers' familiarity with EFSA's work and activities



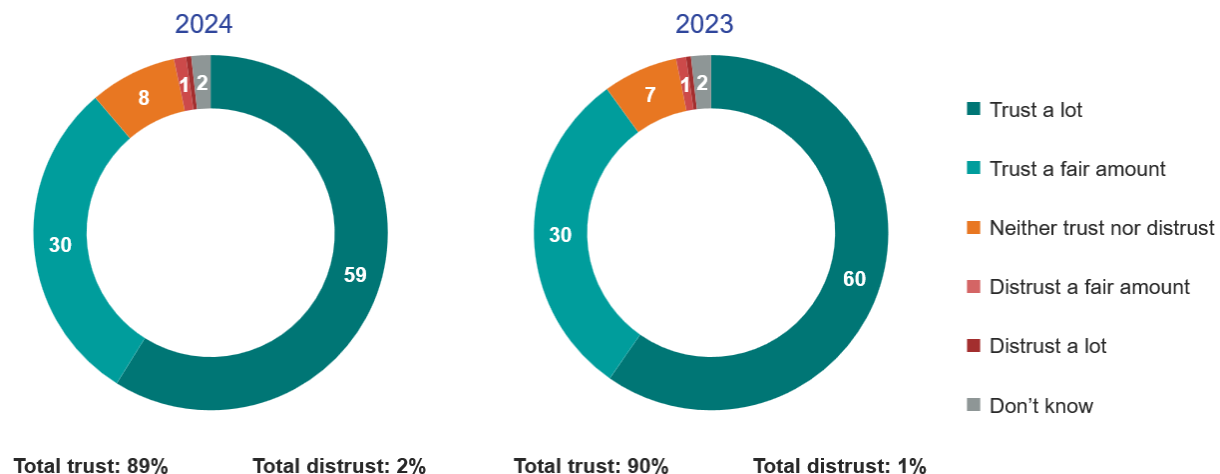
Base: All customers surveyed (n=424)

Question: Q2. How familiar would you say you are with EFSA's work and activities?

4.3 Trust in, and advocacy of, EFSA

Reflecting the results reported above, about nine in ten (89%) Customers continue to say they trust EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork, with just 2% expressing any level of distrust. (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5 Customers' trust in EFSA to promote safety in the food chain

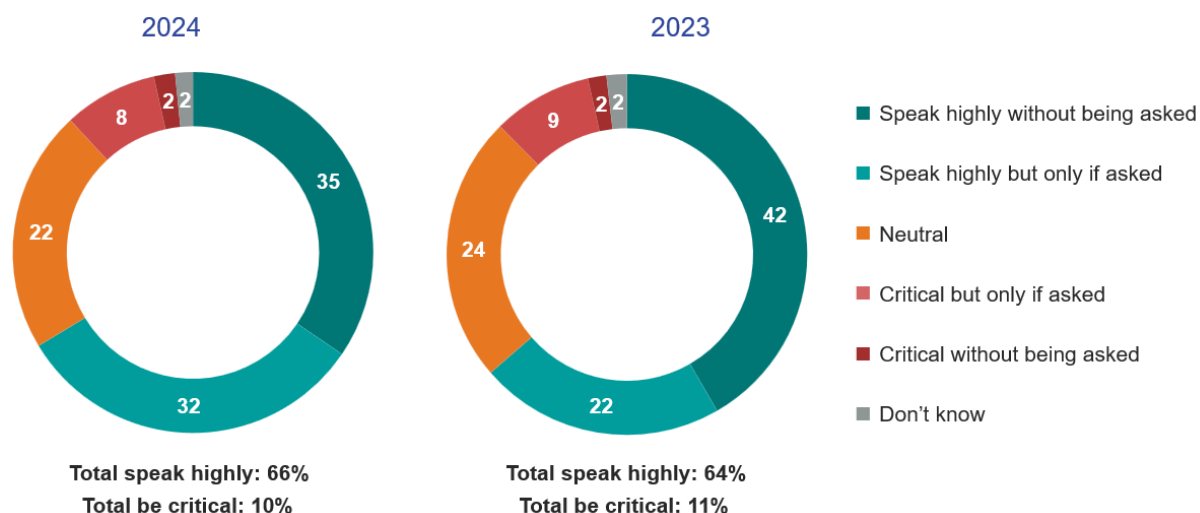


Base: All customers surveyed (n=424)

Question: Q5. Overall, how much do you trust or distrust EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork?

About two thirds (66%) of Customers indicated that they would speak highly of EFSA, with 35% saying they would do so even without being asked their opinion. Meanwhile, 22% said they would be neutral about the organisation and 10% said they would be critical of it. These figures too are in line with those for 2023 (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6 How customers would speak about EFSA (Advocacy)



Base: All customers surveyed (n=424)

Question: Q6. Which of these phrases best describes the way that you personally would speak about EFSA to others?

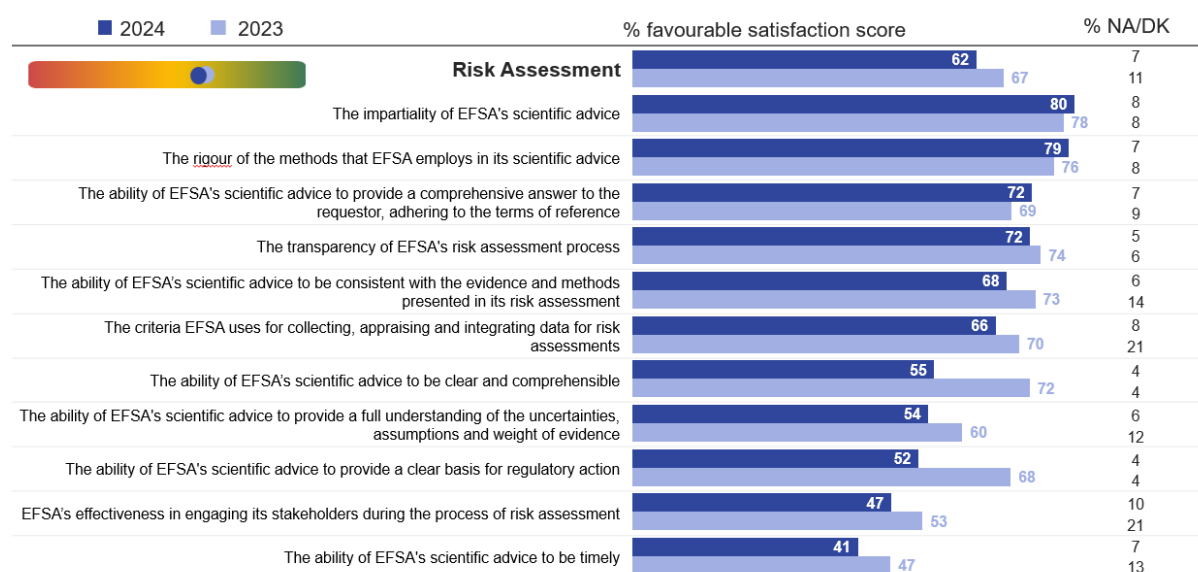
4.4 Strategic Objective 1 and its Attributes

EFSA's overall performance on SO1 among Customers is at 65%. In terms of EFSA's performance on the Risk Assessment Attribute of SO1, 62% of Customers rated this positively (Figure 4.7), while 68% give positive ratings for its performance on the Risk Communication Attribute (Figure 4.8). The satisfaction indicators for SO1 and its Attributes are all situated in the yellow (neutral) part of the colour spectrum. All of the aforementioned results are in line with those for 2023.

Looking at the ratings Customers give for the individual components of the two Attributes, significant variation is apparent. For the Risk Assessment components, the % favourable satisfaction scores range from 80%-41%. As in 2023, the highest scores are found for the *impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice* (80%), the *rigour of the methods it employs* (79%), and the *transparency of the risk assessment process* (72%) – the latter being equally ranked to the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor* (72%). The lowest scores are again found for the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely* (41%) and its *effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the risk assessment process* (47%).

While none of these scores are significantly different to those for 2023, there are significant decreases in positivity for two of the SO1 Risk Assessment components if we look simply at the *total proportion of Customers rating these as "extremely good", "very good" or "fairly good"*. The two components are: the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible* (55% vs. 72% in 2023); and the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action* (52% vs. 68% in 2023).

Figure 4.7 Customers' satisfaction scores and indicators on SO1 Risk Assessment components

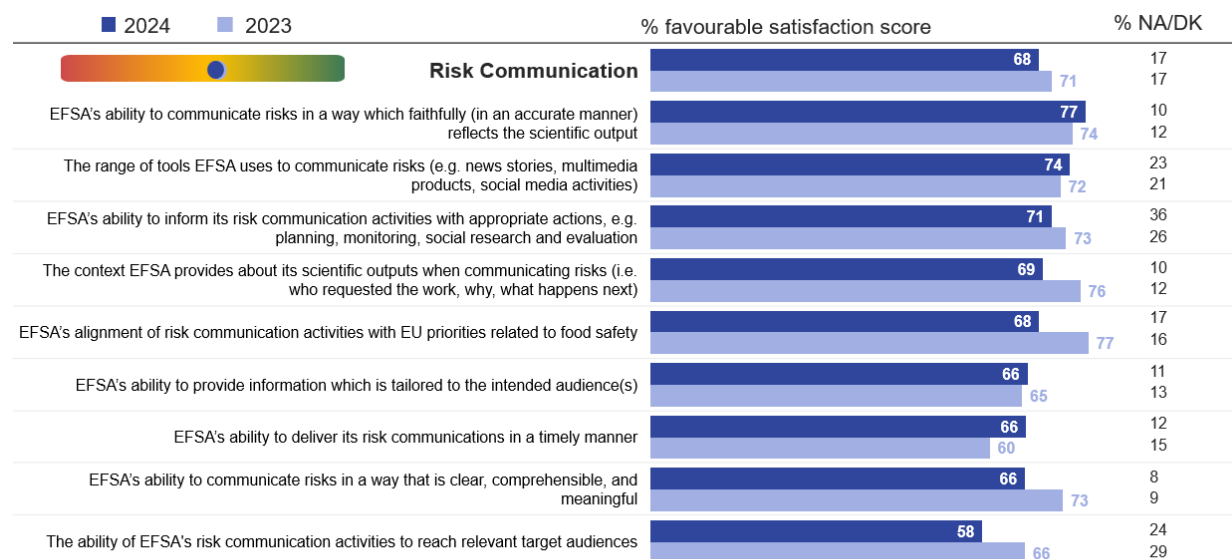


Base: All customers surveyed (n=424)

Question: Q7A. Please rate EFSA's work on each of the following aspects, based on your experience.

For the Risk Communication components, the degree of variation in the 2024 scores is narrower (77% to 58%). The highest scores emerge for *EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way that faithfully reflects the scientific output* (77%), *the range of tools used by EFSA to communicate risks* (74%), and its *ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions* (71%). Comparatively lower scores emerge for *EFSA's ability to reach relevant target audiences* (58%) and its *ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, comprehensible and meaningful* (66%). While the ranking of the different components is somewhat different from 2023, none of the differences between the scores for the two years are statistically significant.

Figure 4.8 Customers' satisfaction scores and indicators on SO1 Risk Communication components



Base: All customers surveyed (n=424)

Question: Q7B. Still thinking about Strategic Objective 1: Deliver trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork, please rate EFSA's work on each of the following aspects, based on your experience.

4.5 Customers' subgroup satisfaction scores

On a subgroup level, ratings of EFSA's work are mostly higher among Customers from DG Sante than among Applicants (Table 4.1). This is especially noticeable in relation to the components that assess *EFSA's ability to deliver its risk communication in a timely manner* (45% vs. 100%), the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor, adhering to the terms of reference* (57% vs. 100%), and the *transparency of EFSA's risk assessment process* (57% vs. 100%). These differences should be treated with caution however given the very small sample size for DG Sante.

Table 4.1 Customers' satisfaction score on all components by various customer subgroups

	Customers	Applicants	DG Sante
Risk Assessment Attribute Satisfaction Score	62%	56%	73%
The impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice	80%	69%	100%
The rigour of the methods that EFSA employs in its scientific advice	79%	67%	100%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor, adhering to the terms of reference	72%	57%	100%
The transparency of EFSA's risk assessment process	72%	57%	100%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment	68%	64%	75%
The criteria EFSA uses for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments	66%	60%	75%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible	55%	57%	50%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties, assumptions and weight of evidence	54%	55%	50%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action	52%	53%	50%
EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the process of risk assessment	47%	45%	50%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely	41%	36%	50%
Risk Communication Attribute Satisfaction Score	68%	60%	85%
EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully (in an accurate manner) reflects the scientific output	77%	63%	100%
The range of tools EFSA uses to communicate risks (e.g. news stories, multimedia products, social media activities)	74%	61%	100%
EFSA's ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions, e.g. planning, monitoring, social research & evaluation	71%	60%	100%
The context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks (i.e. who requested the work, why, what happens next)	69%	66%	75%
EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety	68%	64%	75%
EFSA's ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s)	66%	61%	75%
EFSA's ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner	66%	45%	100%
EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, comprehensible, and meaningful	66%	61%	75%
The ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences	58%	54%	67%

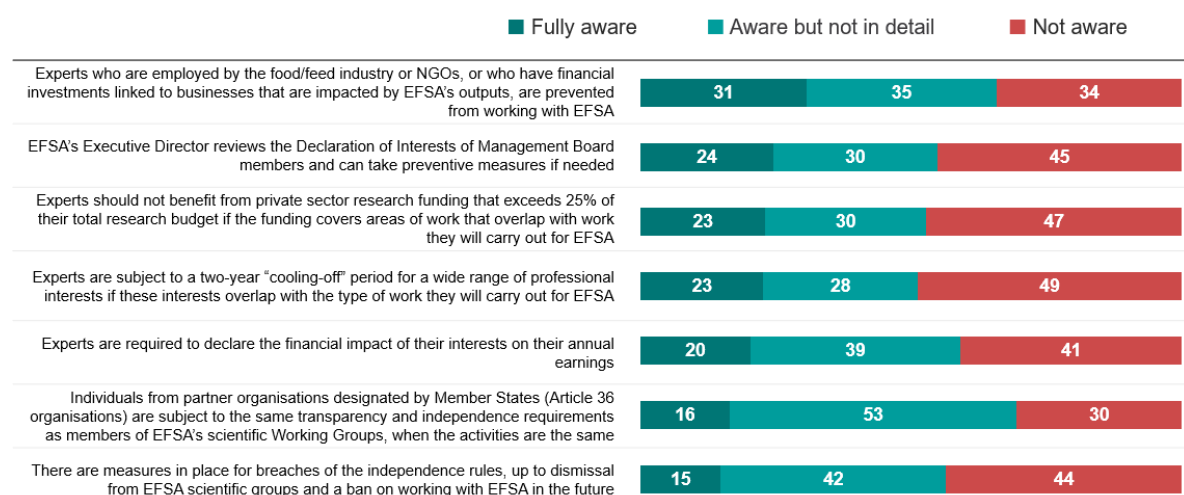
Question: Q7 (n=424)

Notes: Customer score represents a weighted average of various subgroups as per methodology provided by EFSA.

4.6 Customers' awareness of EFSA's updated independence policy

In a new question added to the survey for 2024, Customers were asked about their awareness of different aspects of EFSA's updated independence policy. The results provide a mixed picture, with some aspects of the policy appearing to be more well-known than others. The highest awareness levels were found for the fact that Article 36 organisations are subject to the same transparency and independence requirements as EFSA Working Group members (70%), and for the restrictions on industry/NGOs experts (66%). Awareness was lowest for the "cooling-off" period requirement (51%) and the 25% limit on private sector research funding (53%).

Figure 4.9 Customers' awareness of EFSA's updated independence policy



Base: All customers surveyed (n=424)

Question: Q17. Below are some key elements of EFSA's updated Independence Policy. Please indicate to what extent you were aware of each.

4.7 Other comments shared on EFSA's Strategic Objectives by Customers

Customers shared a number of additional comments on Strategic Objective 1, most of which reflected the feedback provided in 2023. In particular, they called for:

- Enhanced information accessibility and user-friendly digital submission portals:** Customers expressed a strong desire for a centralised and more intuitive portal that consolidates all EFSA resources, ensuring that guidance, documents, and manuals are easy to locate and not scattered across multiple platforms. Customers also called for adaptable and user-friendly digital tools to facilitate easier application processes and document uploads.
- The adoption of more up-to-date, contemporary scientific standards and methodologies:** Customers urged EFSA to implement up-to-date scientific standards that align with international best practices, ensuring that risk assessments are rigorous, timely, and conclusive. They advocated for a balanced approach that supports innovation while maintaining high safety standards, moving away from an overly conservative stance. By adopting modern methodologies, Customers felt that EFSA could better support the development of new technologies and provide scientific advice that reflects the latest advancements in the field, ultimately benefiting both industry and consumers.
- Greater regulatory/assessment efficiency and process improvement:** Customers commonly felt the need to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and delays in the application process to streamline procedures and support timely decision-making, for more flexible regulatory approaches that adapt to the realities of the industry. By minimising the administrative burden on applicants while maintaining robust evaluations, Customers felt that EFSA could facilitate innovation in the food industry and ensure that regulatory processes are efficient and effective. Additionally, there was a strong emphasis on the need for more timely and conclusive risk

assessments to enhance decision-making and risk management, ensuring that interested parties receive clear and actionable outcomes from EFSA's evaluations.

- **Increased transparency and impartiality:** Customers called for greater transparency in EFSA's processes and decisions, with clearer communication of the rationale behind risk assessments. They often emphasised the importance of including diverse expert opinions to enhance the objectivity of assessments, ensuring that decisions are impartial and reflect a wide range of perspectives.
- **Enhanced public engagement and awareness:** Customers commonly emphasised the need to improve public engagement strategies to make EFSA's activities more visible and understandable to the general population. There was a specific perceived need to simplify scientific communication to ensure that the public can easily grasp the implications of EFSA's work, which in turn may foster trust in, and support for, its initiatives.
- **A balanced approach to industry impact and competitiveness:** Customers advocated for the reduction of procedural burdens that hinder innovation, supporting the competitiveness of the EU food industry by ensuring that regulatory requirements do not stifle technological advancement. They called for consideration of the economic realities faced by businesses, particularly smaller companies, within the regulatory framework.
- **Proactive risk management and innovation support:** Customers commonly perceived a need for proactive identification and management of emerging risks, to ensure EFSA is prepared for future challenges and can provide timely guidance and support. They also emphasised the importance of encouraging innovative solutions and technologies, focusing on facilitating advancements that enhance food safety and sustainability. Customers felt that by supporting innovation, EFSA can contribute to a more resilient and forward-thinking food industry.

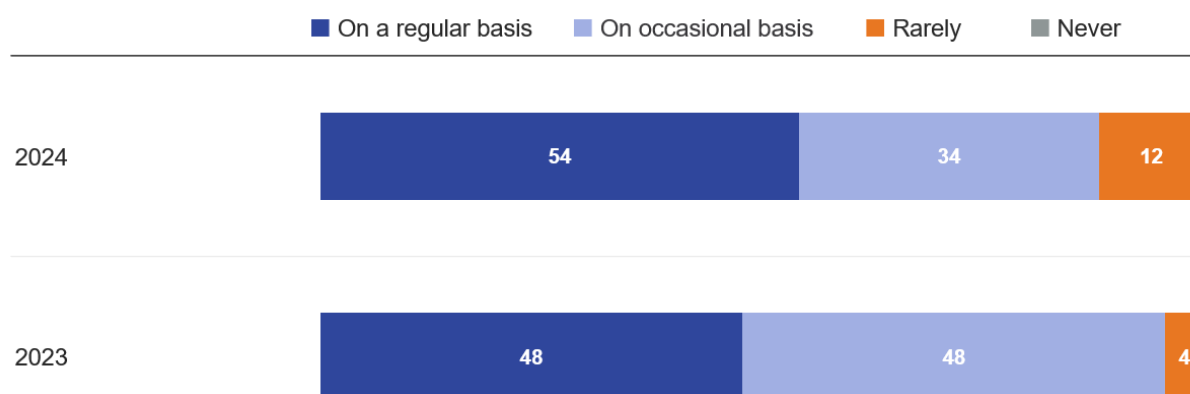
5 STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTION OF EFSA'S WORK

The scores for the Stakeholder group are composed of responses from academia and practitioners (n=9), business and farmers (n=35), and NGO and consumer organisations (n=15)³. Respondents in all of the three subgroups were given an equal weight in the results.

5.1 Stakeholders' engagement and familiarity with EFSA's activities

Over half (54%) of Stakeholders said they engaged with EFSA or its activities on a regular basis, while about a third (34%) said they did so on an occasional basis. A total of 12% of respondents said they rarely engaged with EFSA or its activities. The 2024 results show no statistically significant differences on those for 2023 (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Stakeholders' frequency of engagement with EFSA and its activities

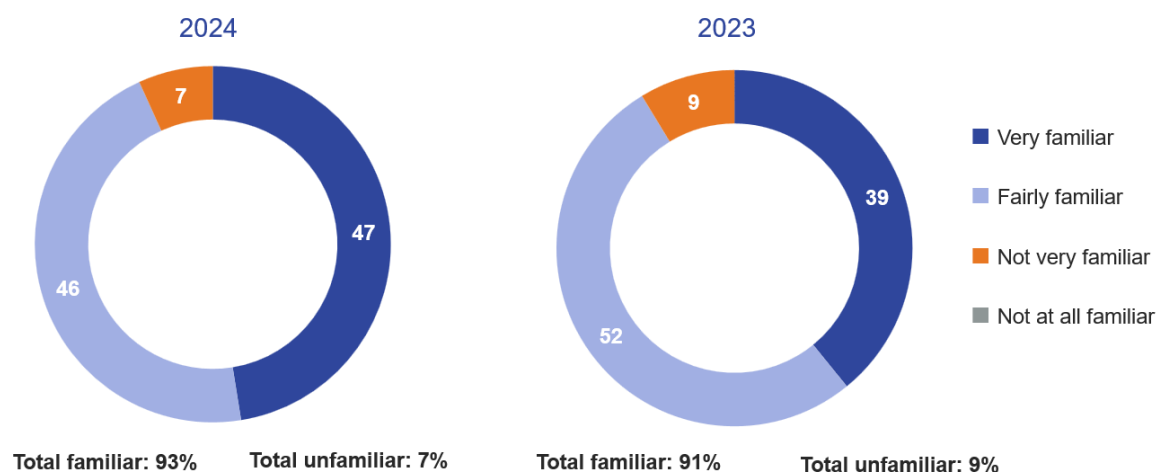


Base: All stakeholders surveyed (n=59)

Question: Q1. In general, would you say that you engage with EFSA or follow its activities:

More than nine in ten (93%) Stakeholders said they were very or fairly familiar with EFSA's work and activities, while 7% said they were not very or not at all familiar with it. Again, there are no statistically significant differences between the 2024 and 2023 results (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2 Stakeholders' familiarity with EFSA's work and activities



Base: All stakeholders surveyed (n=59)

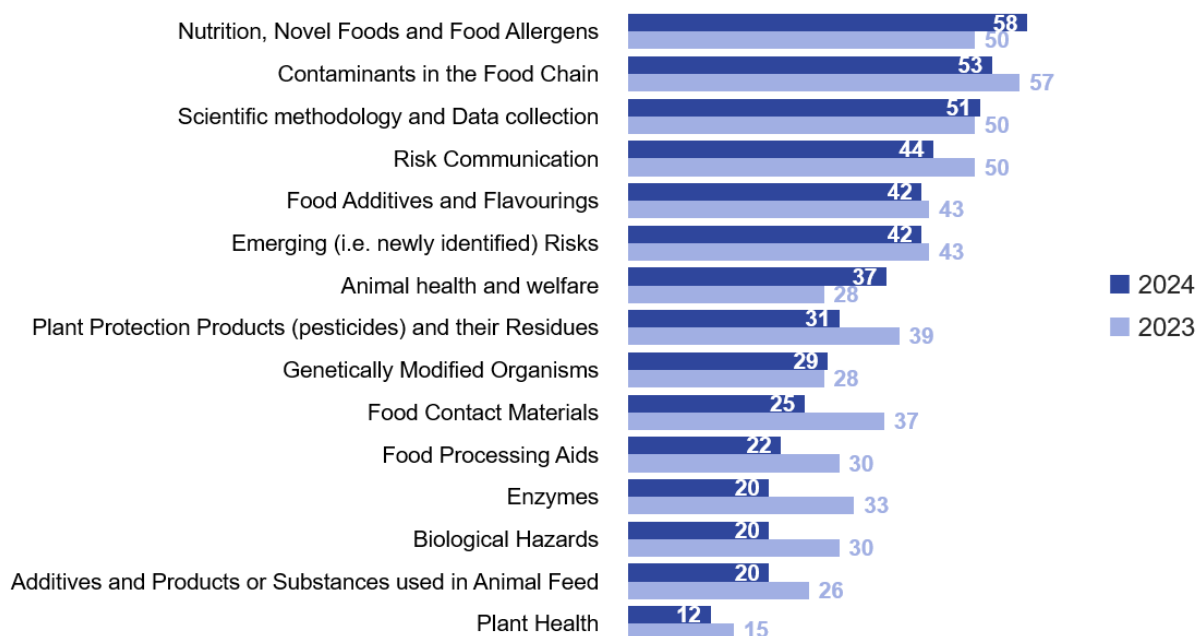
Question: Q2. How familiar would you say you are with EFSA's work and activities?

³ The Business & Farmers subgroup includes business and the food industry, farmers and primary producers, distributors and HORECA. The NGOs and consumer organisations subgroup includes NGOs, advocacy groups and consumer organisations.

5.2 Stakeholders' areas of interest and perceptions of EFSA's performance on these

Asked which areas of EFSA's work they were most interested in (Figure 5.3), Stakeholders most commonly mentioned its work on nutrition, novel foods and food allergens (58%), contaminants in the food chain (53%), scientific methodology (51%) and risk communication (44%). Here too all of the figures are in line with those for 2023.

Figure 5.3 Stakeholders' main areas of interest

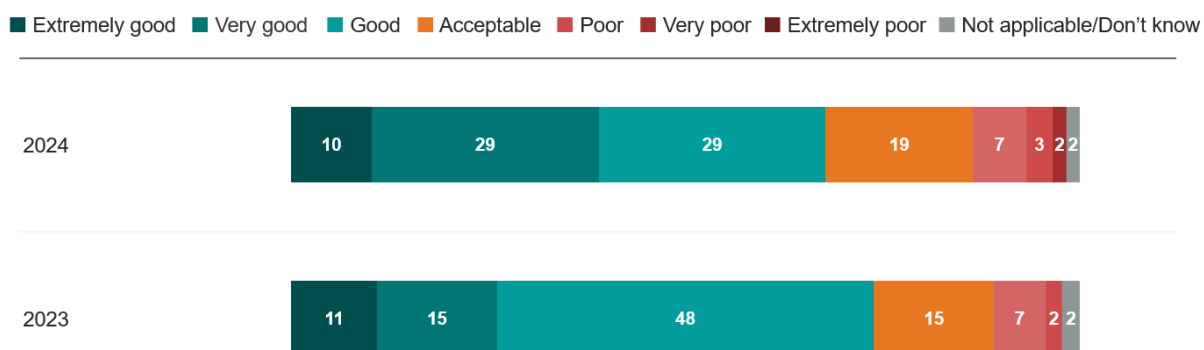


Base: All stakeholders surveyed (n=59)

Question: Q3. Which areas of EFSA's work are you most interested in?

As in 2023, about two thirds (68%) of Stakeholders rated EFSA's work positively, including 39% who rated it as *extremely* or *very good*. Twelve percent in total rated the organisation's work negatively. (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4 Stakeholders' overall assessment of EFSA's work



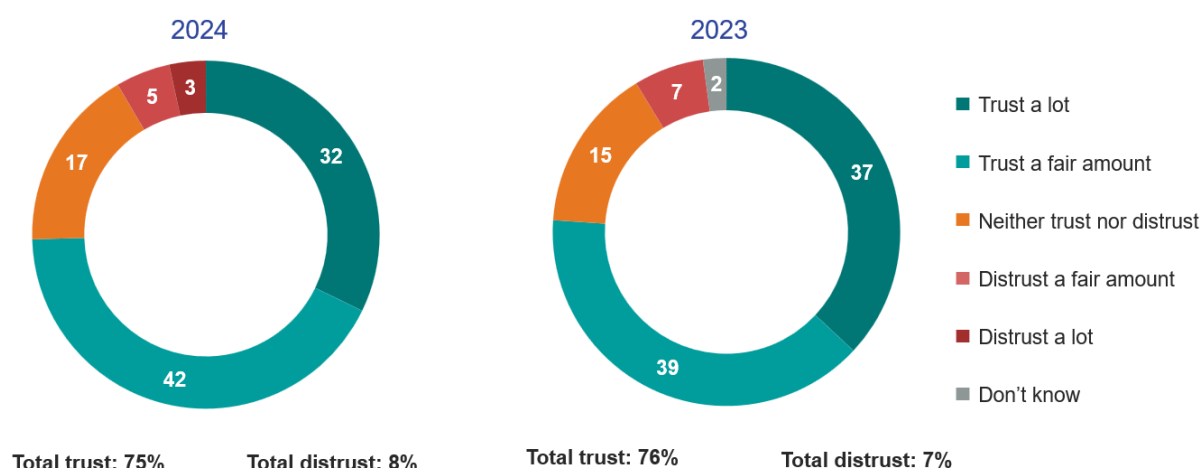
Base: All stakeholders surveyed (n=59)

Question: Q4. In general, how would you rate EFSA's work in the areas you are interested in?

5.3 Trust in, and advocacy of, EFSA

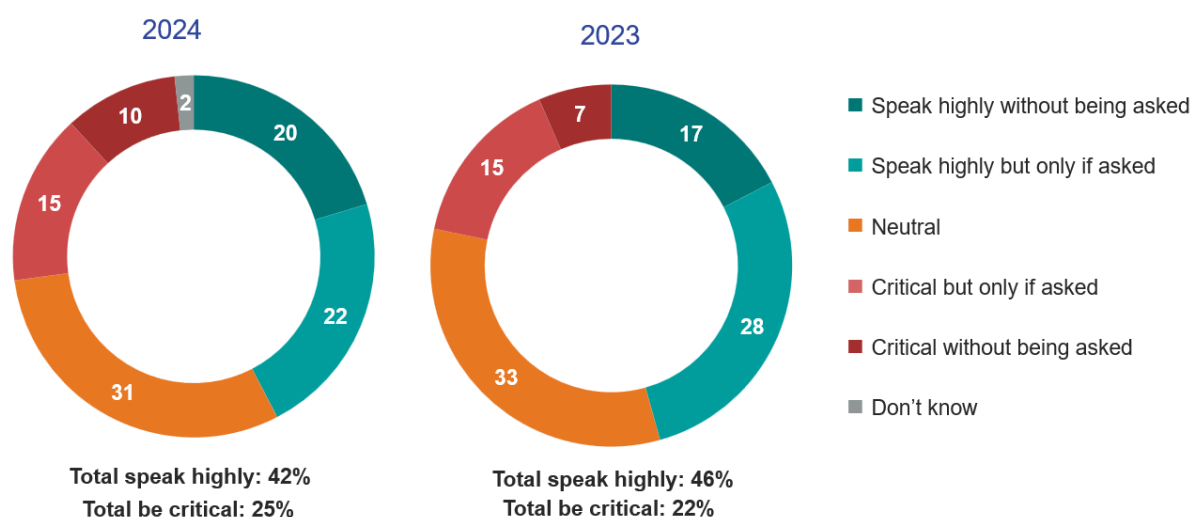
In line with the 2023 results, three-quarters (75%) of Stakeholders said they trusted EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork. Seventeen percent said they neither trusted nor distrusted the organisation, while just 8% expressed any level of distrust (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 Stakeholders' trust in EFSA to promote safety in the food chain



Just over four in ten (42%) Stakeholders indicated that they would speak highly of EFSA, with 20% saying they would do so even without being asked their opinion. Meanwhile, about three in ten (31%) said they would be neutral about the organisation and 25% said they would be critical of it (Figure 5.6). These figures too are in line with those for 2023.

Figure 5.6 How stakeholders would speak about EFSA (Advocacy)



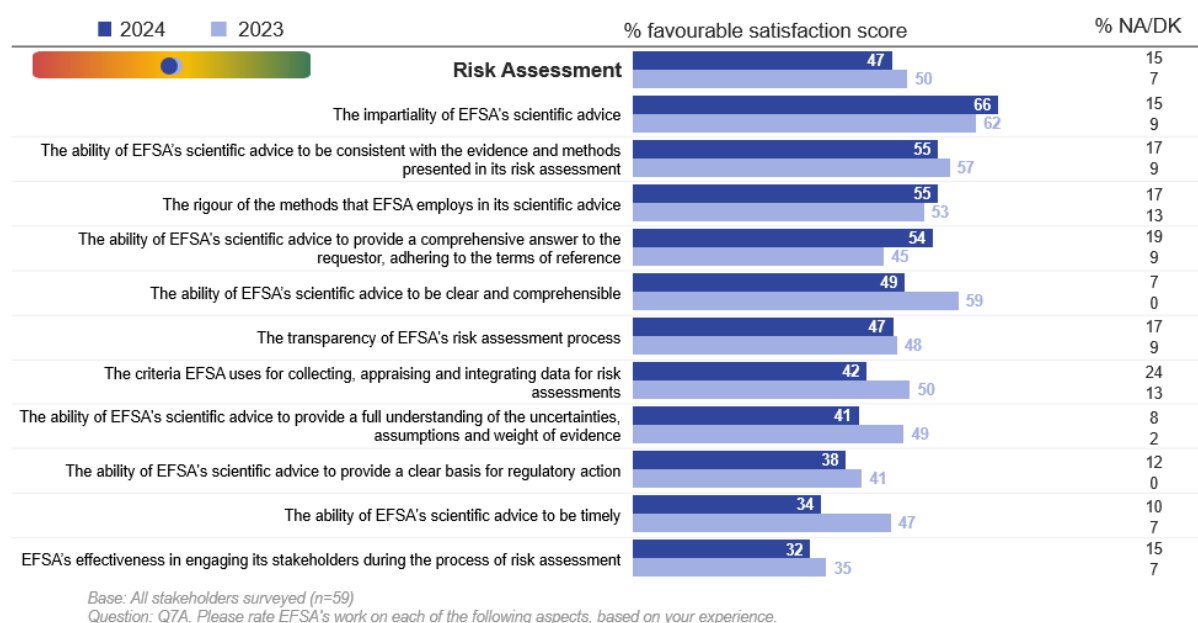
5.4 Strategic Objective 1 and its Attributes

EFSA's overall performance on SO1 (% favourable satisfaction score) among Stakeholders is at 51%, which is consistent with the 2023 score (53%).

EFSA's overall performance on the Risk Assessment Attribute of SO1 was rated positively by 47% of Stakeholders, while its performance on the Risk Communication Attribute was rated positively by 55%. The satisfaction indicators for the two SO1 Attributes remains in the yellow (neutral) part of the colour spectrum.

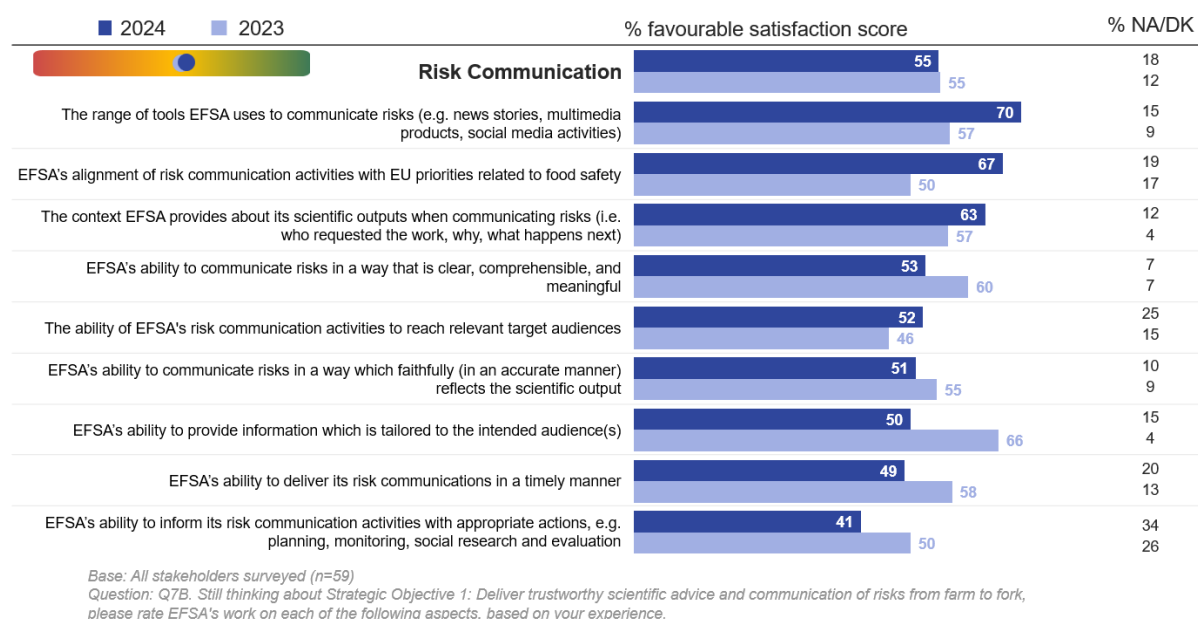
In terms of the ratings Stakeholders gave for the individual components of the two Attributes, these vary considerably (Figure 5.7). For the Risk Assessment components, the % favourable satisfaction scores range from 66%-32%. The highest scores are found for the *impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice* (66%), the *ability of its scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment* (55%) and the *rigour of the methods it employs in its scientific advice* (55%). For most of the other components, the scores fall below the 50% mark, with the lowest scores found for *EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its Stakeholders during the risk assessment process* (32%) and the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely* (34%). There are no statistically significant differences between the 2024 and 2023 scores for the Risk Assessment components.

Figure 5.7 Stakeholders' satisfaction scores and indicators on SO1 Risk Assessment components



For the Risk Communication components, the % favourable satisfaction scores range from 70%-41% (Figure 5.8). The highest scores emerge for *the range of tools used by EFSA to communicate risks* (70%) and *EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety* (67%) and the *context provided by EFSA about its scientific outputs when communicating risks* (63%). The lowest scores emerge for its *ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions* (41%) and *its ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner* (49%). Again, none of the scores are significantly different to those for 2023.

Figure 5.8 Stakeholders' satisfaction scores and indicators on SO1 Risk Communication components



5.5 Stakeholders' subgroup satisfaction scores

There are no statistically significant differences in ratings of EFSA's work among the different stakeholder subgroups. At the same time, the small samples sizes for the subgroups are very small, so the results should be interpreted with caution (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Stakeholders' satisfaction score on SO2 capacity strengthening components

	Stakeholders	Academia & Practitioners	Business & Farmers	NGO & Consumer
Risk Assessment Attribute Satisfaction Score	47%	29%	47%	55%
The impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice	66%	33%	74%	62%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment	55%	33%	55%	67%
The rigour of the methods that EFSA employs in its scientific advice	55%	43%	55%	64%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor, adhering to the terms of reference	54%	14%	57%	69%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible	49%	29%	53%	50%
The transparency of EFSA's risk assessment process	47%	17%	52%	50%
The criteria EFSA uses for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments	42%	33%	38%	60%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties, assumptions and weight of evidence	41%	29%	38%	54%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action	38%	33%	34%	50%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely	34%	25%	36%	33%
EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the process of risk assessment	32%	33%	25%	50%
Risk Communication Attribute Satisfaction Score	55%	37%	58%	57%
The range of tools EFSA uses to communicate risks (e.g. news stories, multimedia products, social media activities)	70%	57%	74%	67%
EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety	67%	57%	77%	45%
The context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks (i.e. who requested the work, why, what happens next)	63%	43%	68%	64%
EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, comprehensible, and meaningful	53%	29%	50%	71%
The ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences	52%	29%	62%	45%
EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully (in an accurate manner) reflects the scientific output	51%	29%	50%	67%
EFSA's ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s)	50%	43%	52%	50%
EFSA's ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner	49%	17%	52%	58%
EFSA's ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions, e.g. planning, monitoring, social research & evaluation	41%	33%	42%	44%

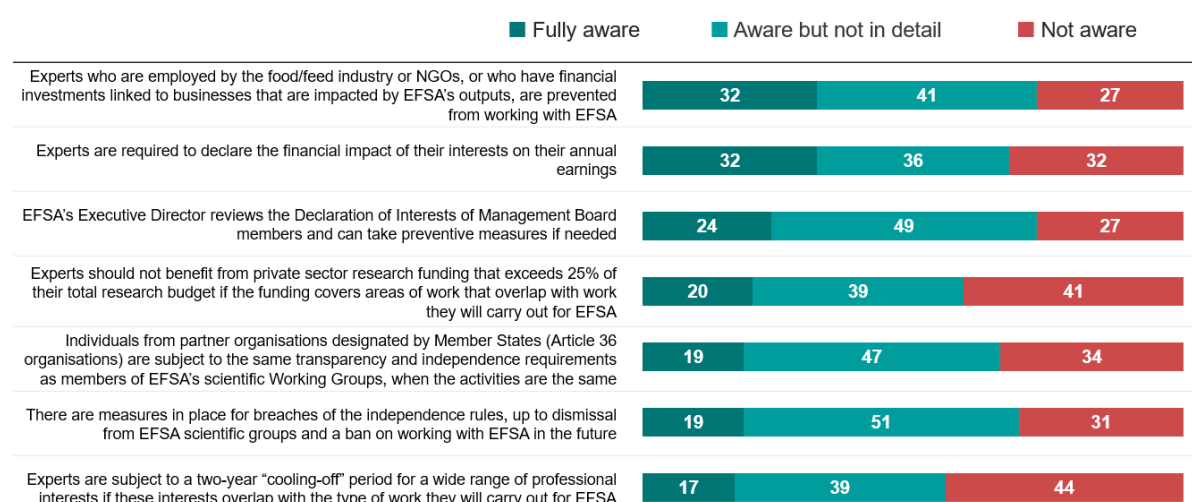
Question: Q7 (n=46)

Notes: All respondents in the stakeholder category are given an equal weight, irrespective of their subgroup affiliation.

5.6 Stakeholders' awareness of EFSA's updated independence policy

As was the case among Customers, Stakeholders' awareness of the different elements of EFSA's updated independence policy varied depending on the element. The highest awareness level was found for the restrictions in place on industry/NGOs experts (73%) and for the Executive Director's review of Management Board Declarations of Interests and subsequent preventive measures (73%), while notably lower levels of awareness were found for the "cooling-off" period requirement (56%) and the 25% limit on private sector research funding (59%) (Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9 Stakeholders' awareness of EFSA's updated independence policy



Base: All stakeholders surveyed (n=59)

Question: Q17. Below are some key elements of EFSA's updated Independence Policy. Please indicate to what extent you were aware of each.

5.7 Other comments shared on EFSA's Strategic Objectives by Stakeholders

Stakeholders made a few additional comments about EFSA's performance in relation to Strategic Objective 1. Specifically, they praised:

- **positive developments in the use of new digital communication tools**, including podcasts and videos, which enhance the engagement and accessibility of EFSA's materials;
- **EFSA's scientific rigour and expertise**, which was generally acknowledged by Stakeholders in relation to risk assessment decisions.

Alongside these strengths, the Stakeholders suggested several improvements to the way EFSA works, including:

- **clearer communication and stakeholder engagement** – Stakeholders noted that EFSA's communication often lacks clarity, and there are limited opportunities for meaningful interaction and feedback.
- **more consistency, reliability and trustworthiness of EFSA's outputs** – Stakeholders commonly expressed concerns about the variability in the quality of risk assessments and the need for more consistent and dependable scientific opinions.
- **greater transparency in decision-making** – including clearer insights into internal procedures and risk assessment stages to build trust and understanding among Stakeholders.
- **enhancement of expertise and methodological approaches** – Stakeholders commonly suggested that EFSA could benefit from bolstering its expertise in specific areas and refining its assessment methodologies, particularly concerning biocontrol and botanicals. It was felt that addressing these challenges could help mitigate uncertainties and reduce delays in evaluations.

- **greater impartiality and expert diversity** – Some Stakeholders felt that EFSA needed to take account of more diverse and independent voices (e.g. those of NGOs) in order to prevent bias and ensure balanced evaluations in risk assessments.

6 PARTNERS' PERCEPTION OF EFSA'S WORK

The scores for the Partners group are composed of responses from:

- Art. 36 organisations (n=436, weight applied 20%)
- EU Environmental Agencies and the JRC (n=12 and n=1 respectively, weight applied 20%)
- International partners (n=11, weight applied 20%)
- Scientific experts (n=332, weight applied 20%)
- The Communications Expert Network and Member States Authorities (AF and FP, incl. IPA) (n=27, n=16, and n=34 respectively, weight applied 20%)

6.1 Partners' engagement and familiarity with EFSA's activities

Just over half of Partners (57%) said they engaged with EFSA or its activities on a regular basis, while just over a third (34%) said they did so on an occasional basis and 10% said they rarely or never did (Figure 6.1). These results are in line with those for 2023.

Figure 6.1 Partners' frequency of engagement with EFSA and its activities

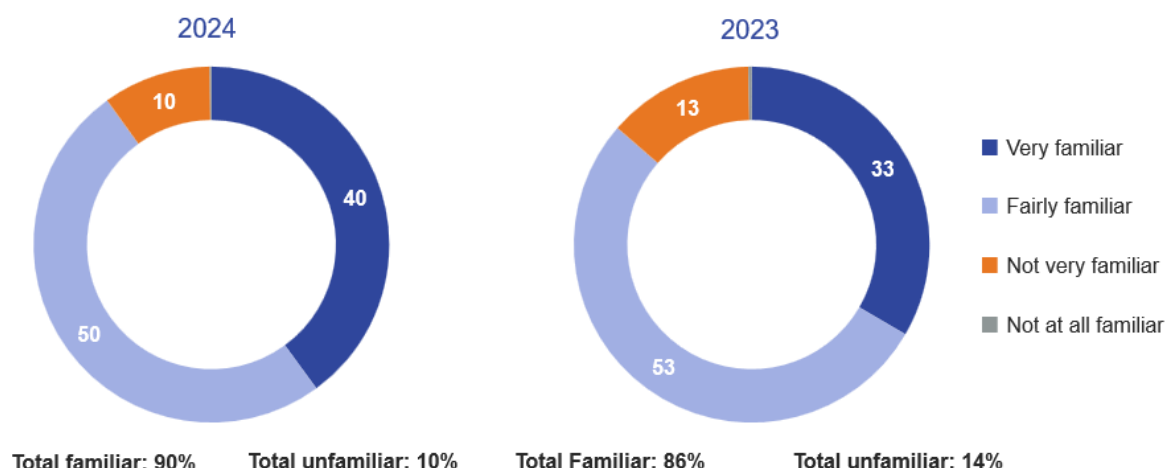


Base: All partners surveyed (n=869)

Question: Q1. In general, would you say that you engage with EFSA or follow its activities:

Nine in ten (90%) Partners said they were very or fairly familiar with EFSA's work, while 10% said they were not very or not at all familiar with it (Figure 6.2). These figures too are in line with those for 2023.

Figure 6.2 Partners' familiarity with EFSA's work and activities



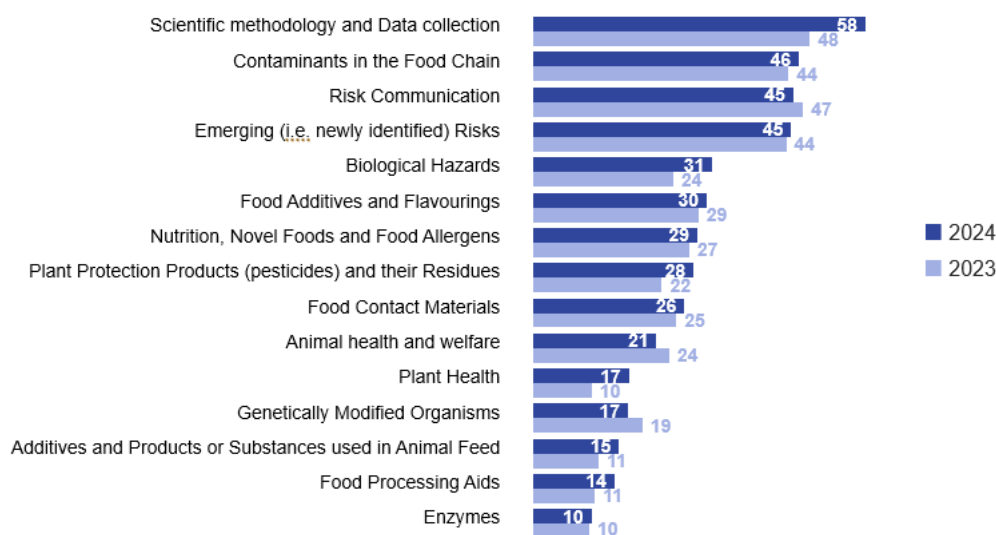
Base: All partners surveyed (n=869)

Question: Q2. How familiar would you say you are with EFSA's work and activities?

6.2 Partners' areas of interest and perceptions of EFSA's performance on these

Asked which areas of EFSA's work they were most interested in, Partners most commonly mentioned its work on scientific methodology (58%), contaminants in the food chain (46%), risk communication (45%) and emerging risks (45%) (Figure 6.3). The 2024 results on partners' areas of interest show no statistically significant differences on those for 2023.

Figure 6.3 Partners' main areas of interest



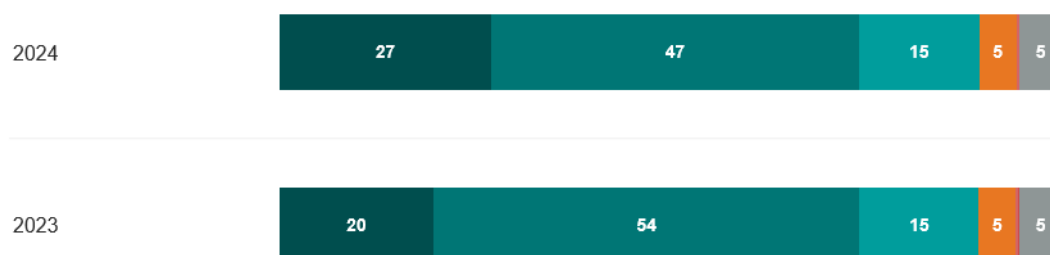
Base: All partners surveyed (n=869)

Question: Q3. Which areas of EFSA's work are you most interested in?

As in 2023, approaching nine in ten (89%) Partners rated EFSA's work positively, including 74% who rated it as *extremely* or *very* good. Only fewer than 1% rated the organisation's work negatively (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4 Partners' overall assessment of EFSA's work

Extremely good Very good Good Acceptable Poor Very poor Extremely poor Not applicable/Don't know



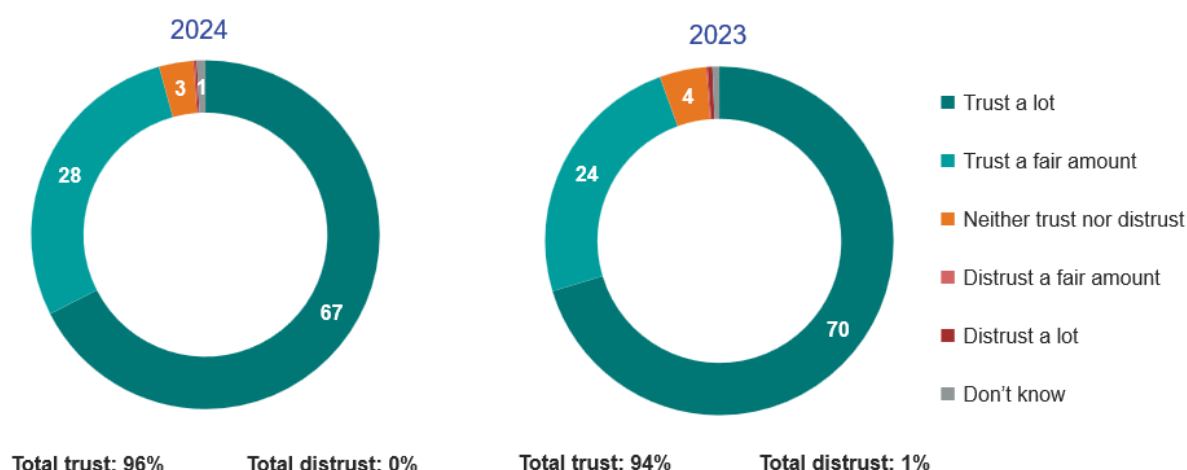
Base: All partners surveyed (n=869)

Question: Q4. In general, how would you rate EFSA's work in the areas you are interested in?

6.3 Trust in, and advocacy of, EFSA

Also in line with the 2023 results, almost all Partners (96%) said they trusted EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork. Just three percent said they neither trusted nor distrusted the organisation, while fewer than 1% expressed any level of distrust (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5 Partners' trust in EFSA to promote safety in the food chain

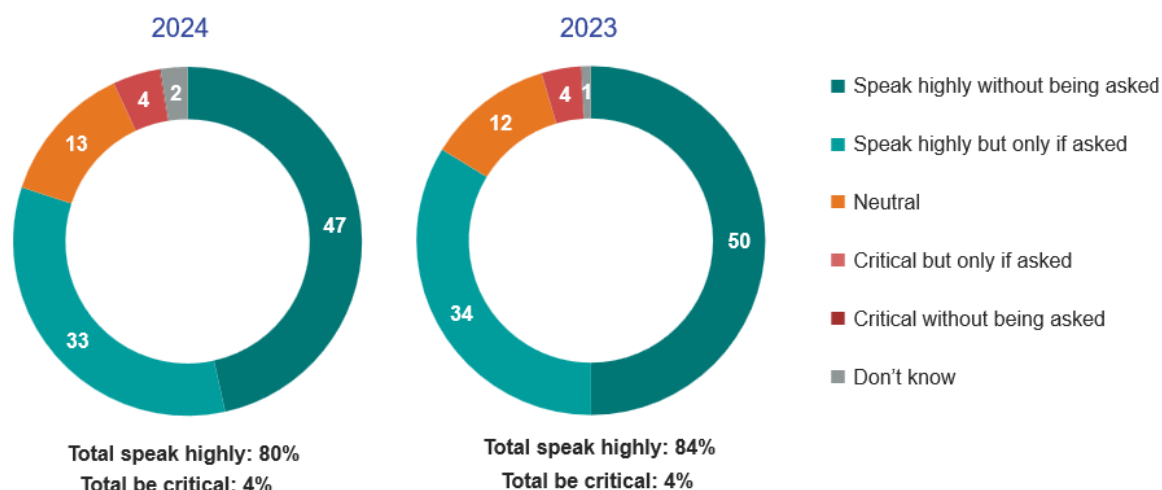


Base: All partners surveyed (n=869)

Question: Q5. Overall, how much do you trust or distrust EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork?

A total of 80% of Partners indicated that they would speak highly of EFSA, with almost half (47%) saying they would do so even without being asked their opinion. Meanwhile, a total of 13% said they would be neutral about the organisation and just 4% said they would be critical of it. These figures too are in line with those for 2023 (Figure 6.6).

Figure 6.6 How partners would speak about EFSA (Advocacy)



Base: All partners surveyed (n=869)

Question: Q6. Which of these phrases best describes the way that you personally would speak about EFSA to others?

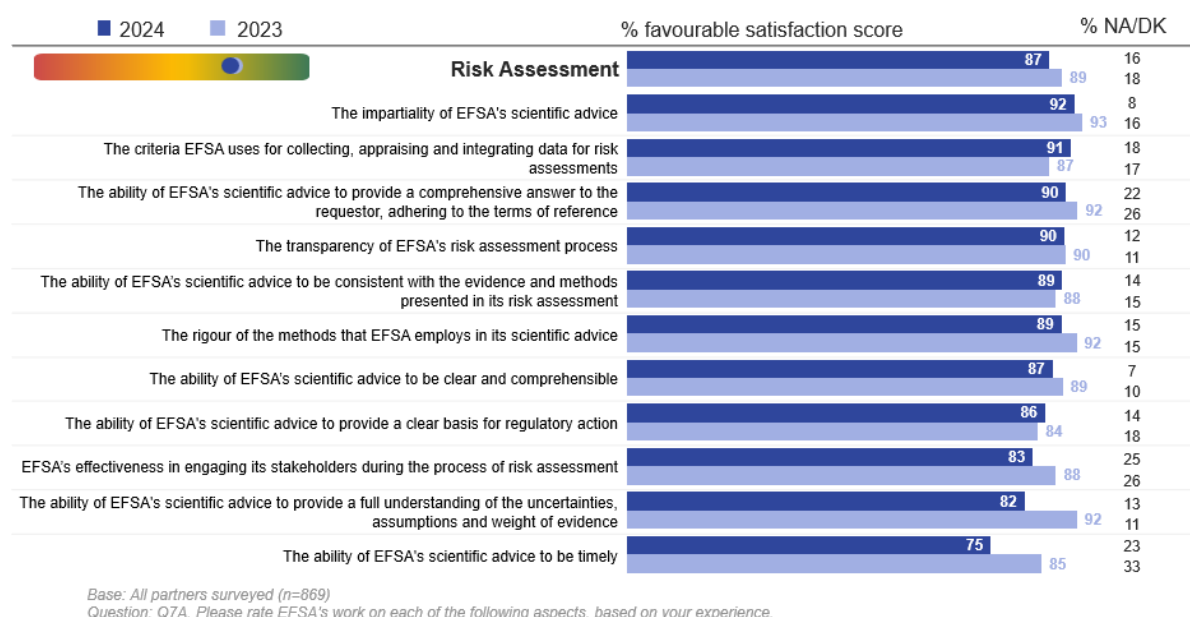
6.4 Strategic Objective 1 and its Attributes

EFSA's overall performance on SO1 (% favourable satisfaction score) among Partners is at 88%, which is consistent with the 2023 score (86%).

EFSA's overall performance on the Risk Assessment Attribute of SO1 was rated positively by 87% of Partners, while its performance on the Risk Communication Attribute was rated positively by 89%. The latter figure represents a slight improvement on the comparable result for 2023 (84%). The 2024 satisfaction indicator for the two SO1 Attributes sit squarely in the green (positive) part of the colour spectrum, which was also the case in 2023.

In terms of the ratings Partners give for the individual components of the two Attributes, these too are consistently very positive, with the % favourable satisfaction score rarely falling below the 80% mark. For the Risk Assessment components, the highest scores are found for the *impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice* (92%), *the criteria EFSA uses for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments* (91%), *the ability of its scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor* (90%), and the *transparency of the risk assessment process* (90%). Comparatively 'lower' scores are found for *the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely* (75%), *the ability of the advice to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties, assumptions and weight of evidence* (82%), and *EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the risk assessment process* (83%) (Figure 6.7).

The scores for the *ability of EFSA's advice to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties, assumptions and weight of evidence* (82%), and for the *ability of the advice to be timely* (75%) are lower than the comparable scores obtained in 2023 (92% and 85% respectively).

Figure 6.7 Partners' satisfaction scores and indicators on SO1 Risk Assessment components

For the Risk Communication components, the highest scores emerge for EFSA's *alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities* (95%), *the context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks* (94%), and *its ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output* (92%). The 'lowest' scores emerge for *the ability of EFSA's risk communications to reach relevant target audiences* (81%) and *EFSA's ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner* (83%) (Figure 6.8). All of these results align with those for 2023.

Figure 6.8 Partners' satisfaction scores and indicators on SO1 Risk Communication components

6.5 Partners' subgroup satisfaction scores

On a subgroup level, ratings of EFSA's work are generally highest among international partners and Member States Authorities (including IPA countries) (Table 6.1). The international partners subgroup stands out from other Partners in its positive assessments of: *the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely* (25 percentage points above the Partners' group average), *EFSA's effectiveness in engaging*

its stakeholders during the process of risk assessment (17 percentage points above the Partners' group average) and *EFSA's ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s)* (12 percentage points above the Partners' group average). FP Member State authorities are notable for their positive assessment of *EFSA's ability to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties* (11 percentage points above the Partners' group average), while AF and FP Member State authorities are notable for their positive assessment of the *ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action* (respectively 14 and 8 percentage points above the Partners' group average).

Again, however, all of these subgroup differences should be treated with caution given the very small sample sizes involved.

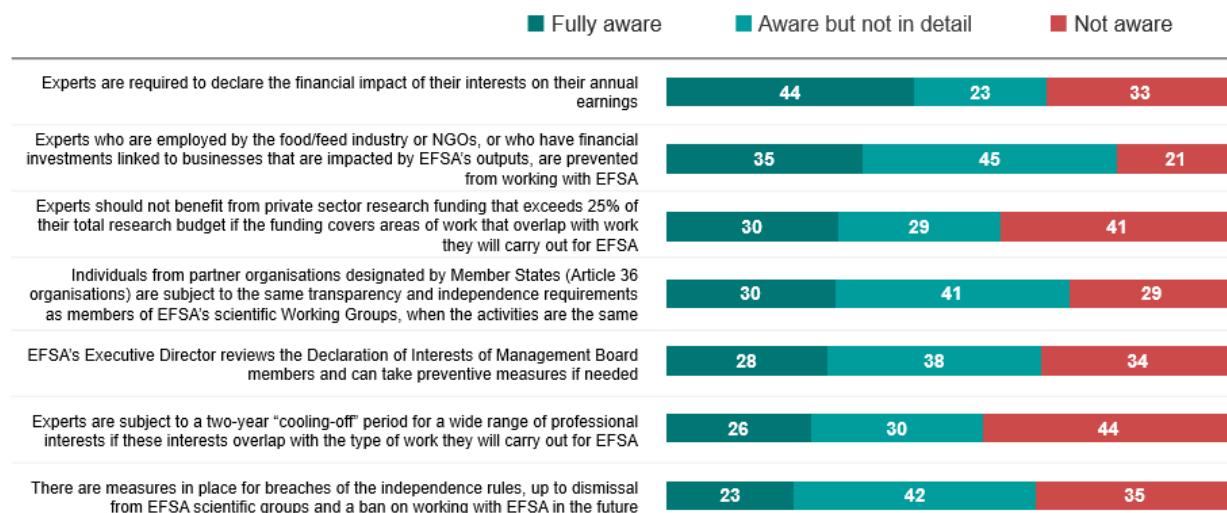
Table 6.1 Partners' satisfaction score on SO2 capacity strengthening components

	Partners	AF (incl. IPA)	FP (incl. IPA)	Comms. Expert Network	ENVI Agencies	JRC	International partners	Scientific experts	Art. 36
Risk Assessment Attribute Satisfaction Score	87%	92%	91%	81%	64%	82%	99%	87%	88%
The impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice	92%	100%	94%	88%	82%	100%	100%	89%	93%
The criteria EFSA uses for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments	91%	92%	96%	85%	75%	100%	100%	91%	91%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor, adhering to the terms of reference	90%	93%	93%	88%	75%	100%	100%	90%	90%
The transparency of EFSA's risk assessment process	90%	93%	97%	95%	78%	100%	90%	90%	92%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment	89%	100%	96%	89%	67%	100%	100%	90%	90%
The rigour of the methods that EFSA employs in its scientific advice	89%	100%	88%	83%	67%	100%	100%	91%	90%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible	87%	88%	90%	85%	70%	100%	100%	87%	88%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action	86%	100%	94%	81%	56%	100%	100%	87%	88%
EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the process of risk assessment	83%	87%	90%	76%	75%	0%	100%	84%	81%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties, assumptions and weight of evidence	82%	81%	93%	68%	43%	0%	100%	86%	86%
The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely	75%	81%	71%	55%	20%	100%	100%	75%	78%
Risk Communication Attribute Satisfaction Score	89%	83%	92%	81%	97%	44%	99%	87%	84%
EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety	95%	93%	100%	89%	100%	0%	100%	93%	90%
The context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks (i.e. who requested the work, why, what happens next)	94%	100%	100%	91%	100%	100%	100%	88%	85%
EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully (in an accurate manner) reflects the scientific output	92%	86%	93%	89%	100%	100%	100%	87%	85%
EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, comprehensible, and meaningful	91%	81%	94%	81%	100%	100%	100%	86%	86%
EFSA's ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions, e.g. planning, monitoring, social research & evaluation	90%	86%	88%	84%	100%	0%	100%	88%	83%
The range of tools EFSA uses to communicate risks (e.g. news stories, multimedia products, social media activities)	89%	80%	91%	81%	100%	0%	100%	88%	82%
EFSA's ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s)	88%	77%	94%	78%	100%	0%	100%	87%	81%
EFSA's ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner	83%	80%	86%	68%	71%	100%	100%	80%	81%
The ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences	81%	64%	81%	70%	100%	0%	89%	83%	78%

6.6 Partners' awareness of EFSA's updated independence policy

As was the case among Customers and Stakeholders, a majority of Partners said they were aware of the various elements of EFSA's new independence policy, though the size of the majority varied depending on the element. It was highest for the restrictions in place on industry/NGOs experts (79%) and the rules for Partners (71%), and lowest for the "cooling-off" period requirement (56%) and the 25% limit on private sector research funding (59%) (Figure 6.9).

Figure 6.9 Partners' awareness of EFSA's updated independence policy



Base: All partners surveyed (n=869)

Question: Q17. Below are some key elements of EFSA's updated Independence Policy. Please indicate to what extent you were aware of each.

6.7 Other comments shared on EFSA's Strategic Objectives by Partners

In the open-text box of the survey, Partners took the chance to praise EFSA, citing its trustworthiness, reliability, and ultimate positive impact on food safety. They noted the Agency's comprehensive approach to evaluating risks "from farm to fork", which they felt had significantly contributed to public health protection across Europe. The Agency's ability to deliver scientific opinions that are both authoritative and informative was frequently highlighted, with many Partners noting that EFSA's work serves as a global benchmark for food safety standards.

Other more specific aspects of EFSA's work that were singled out for praise were:

- **EFSA's scientific rigour and methodological improvements** – Partners appreciated EFSA's commitment to maintaining high scientific standards and its efforts to integrate emerging concepts like the 'One Health' approach into its assessments, as well as the Agency's rigorous methodological approach to risk assessments.
- **EFSA's digital tools** – Some Partners described finding these useful (e.g. OpenFoodTox), and appreciated the availability of training opportunities and detailed resources for users, as these empowered stakeholders to utilise the tools effectively.

At the same time, Partners called for:

- **enhanced public communication and engagement strategies** – This includes ensuring that messaging is clear, relatable, and widely disseminated to the general public and non-professionals, and making effective use of social media and other outreach channels.
- **simpler risk communication and clearer distinctions between hazards and risks** – Partners commonly felt that some scientific opinions (e.g. Bisphenol A Assessments and the newer benchmark dose modelling documents) were difficult to understand due to the technical

language used. They called for simplified communication that clearly distinguished between potential hazards and actual risks.

- **improvements in the timeliness and efficiency of EFSA's processes** – To enhance operational effectiveness, Partners emphasised the need to address delays and procedural inefficiencies, particularly in the provision of guidance documents and the finalisation of risk assessments. Some Partners suggested that streamlining these processes could significantly boost EFSA's responsiveness and impact.
- **procedural simplification and more clarity on conflicts of interest** – Some Partners mentioned that EFSA's policies on conflicts of interest were overly stringent, potentially excluding experts with valuable insights due to diverse funding sources. Additionally, complexity and bureaucracy within EFSA's decision-making processes were seen as deterrents to stakeholder involvement. Simplifying these procedures and ensuring clear, transparent guidelines were suggested as ways to encourage broader participation and input from knowledgeable stakeholders.

7 KEY DRIVER ANALYSIS

A Key Driver Analysis (KDA), sometimes known as an Importance-Performance analysis, is a multivariate statistical technique that looks simultaneously at various attributes measured in an organisational survey ('independent variables') in order to identify which of these attributes have the greatest impact on a particular desired outcome measured (the 'dependent variable'). The analysis then maps how the organisation is seen to be performing on those attributes. The attributes are classified into four main groupings accordingly:

- Not an important driver but highly rated in performance terms (Opportunities)
- Not an important driver and poorly rated in performance terms (Threats)
- An important driver and highly rated in performance terms (Strengths)
- An important driver and poorly rated in performance terms (Weaknesses)

These categories are helpful for identifying which attributes the organisation should focus on to bring about the greatest improvement in the desired outcome.

For the 2024 Annual Strategy Survey, a KDA analysis was conducted to identify which of the SO1 components were most important in driving two important outcomes for EFSA:

- **respondents ratings of its work** in their main areas of interest; and
- **their trust in the organisation** to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork.

The KDA was conducted at the overall level (i.e. for Customers, Stakeholders and Partners combined), and for Customers and Partners separately (The sample size for Stakeholders was insufficient for a KDA among this group).

7.1 KDA at the overall level (Customers, Stakeholders and Partners combined)

7.1.1 Key drivers of positive ratings of EFSA's work at the overall level

The KDA revealed that the components of SO1 that were most important in driving ratings of EFSA's work among Customers, Stakeholders and Partners (combined) were:

- EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output
- the criteria used by EFSA for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments
- The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its assessment

The components that were found to be least important in driving ratings were:

- the ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences
- EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety
- EFSA's ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner (equally ranked with the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely)

Figure 7.1. maps these findings against EFSA's perceived performance on the components. It shows that areas of strength for the organisation – that is, areas that are important drivers of ratings and on which it is seen to be performing well – are:

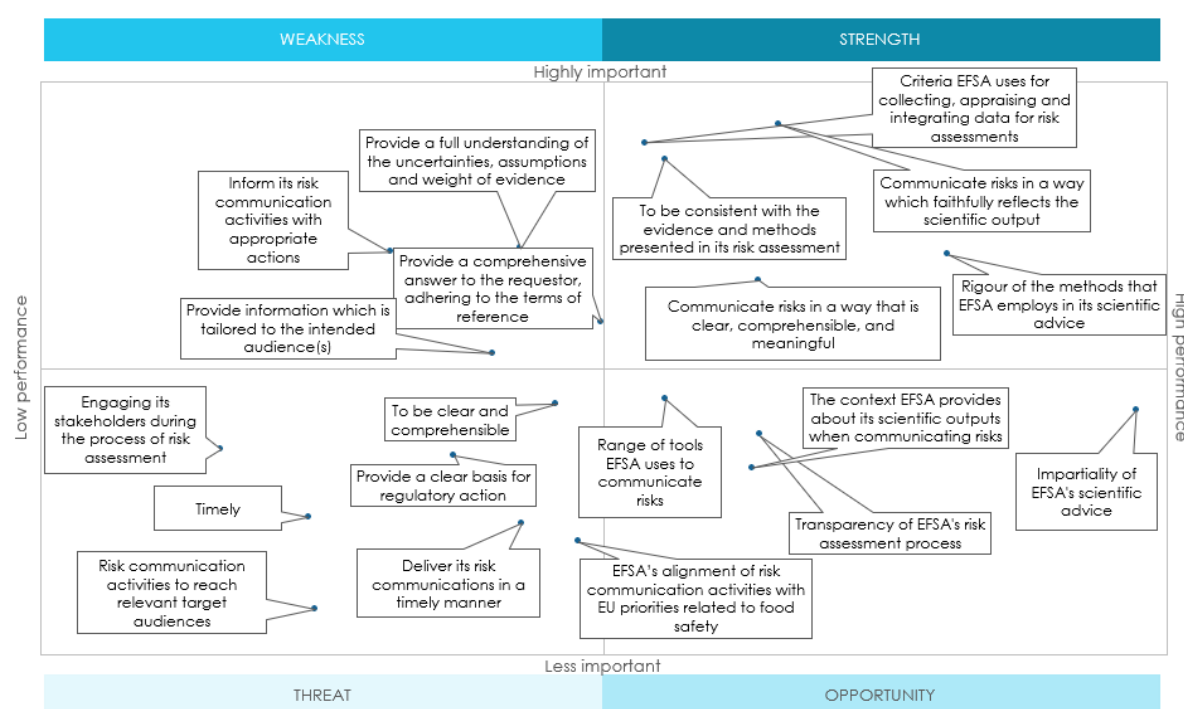
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment
- the rigour of the methods that EFSA employs in its scientific advice

- the criteria used by EFSA for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments
- EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output
- EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, comprehensible and meaningful

Areas of comparative weakness for the organisation – that is, areas that are important drivers of ratings but on which it is seen to be performing relatively less well are:

- EFSA's ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions
- EFSA's ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s)
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties, assumptions, and weight of evidence
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor, adhering to the terms of reference

Figure 7.1: KDA of ratings of EFSA's work at the overall level



The areas of strength and weakness for 2024 align only partially with those uncovered by the KDA conducted in 2023. Notable areas of divergence between the two analyses are found in relation to:

- EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output – which was an 'opportunity' in 2023 and is now a 'strength'
- the transparency of the risk assessment process – which was a 'strength' in 2023 and is now an 'opportunity'
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor – which has moved from being a 'strength' in 2023 to a 'weakness' now
- EFSA's ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s), and its ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions – both of which were 'threats' in 2023 and have now moved to becoming 'weaknesses'.

7.1.2 Key drivers of Trust at the overall level

Among Customers, Stakeholders and Partners combined, the most important drivers of trust in EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork were:

- the impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice

- the rigour of the methods it employs in its scientific advice
- its ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output
- its ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions

In comparison, the least important drivers were:

- the ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely
- the range of tools EFSA uses to communicate risks
- EFSA's ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s)

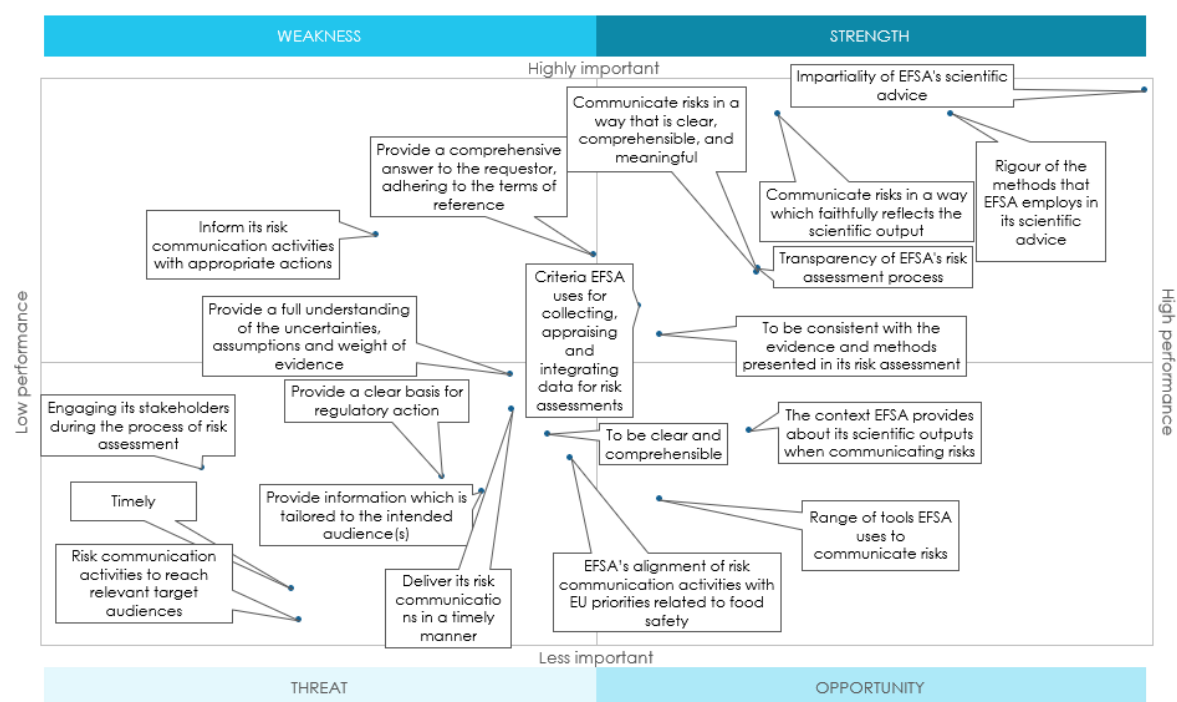
Figure 7.2 maps these findings against EFSA's perceived performance on the components. It reveals that areas of strength for EFSA when it comes to fostering trust are:

- the impartiality of its scientific advice
- the rigour of the methods it employs in its scientific advice
- the transparency of the risk assessment process
- the criteria used by EFSA for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with evidence and methods presented in the risk assessments
- its ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output
- and its ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, comprehensible and meaningful

Areas of comparative weakness for EFSA when it comes to fostering trust include:

- EFSA's ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor, adhering to the terms of reference

Figure 7.2: KDA of trust in EFSA to promote safety in the food system at the overall level



Overall, there is a high level of consistency in the strengths and weaknesses identified in the 2024 and 2023 trust KDAs. That said, it is notable that the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor has moved from being a 'strength' in 2023 to a 'weakness' now.

7.2 KDA for Customers

7.2.1 Key drivers of positive ratings of EFSA's work among Customers

Among Customers, the KDA revealed that the components of SO1 that were most important in driving ratings of EFSA's work were:

- EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output
- its ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions
- the impartiality of its scientific advice

The components that were found to be least important in driving ratings were:

- EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action
- the context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks

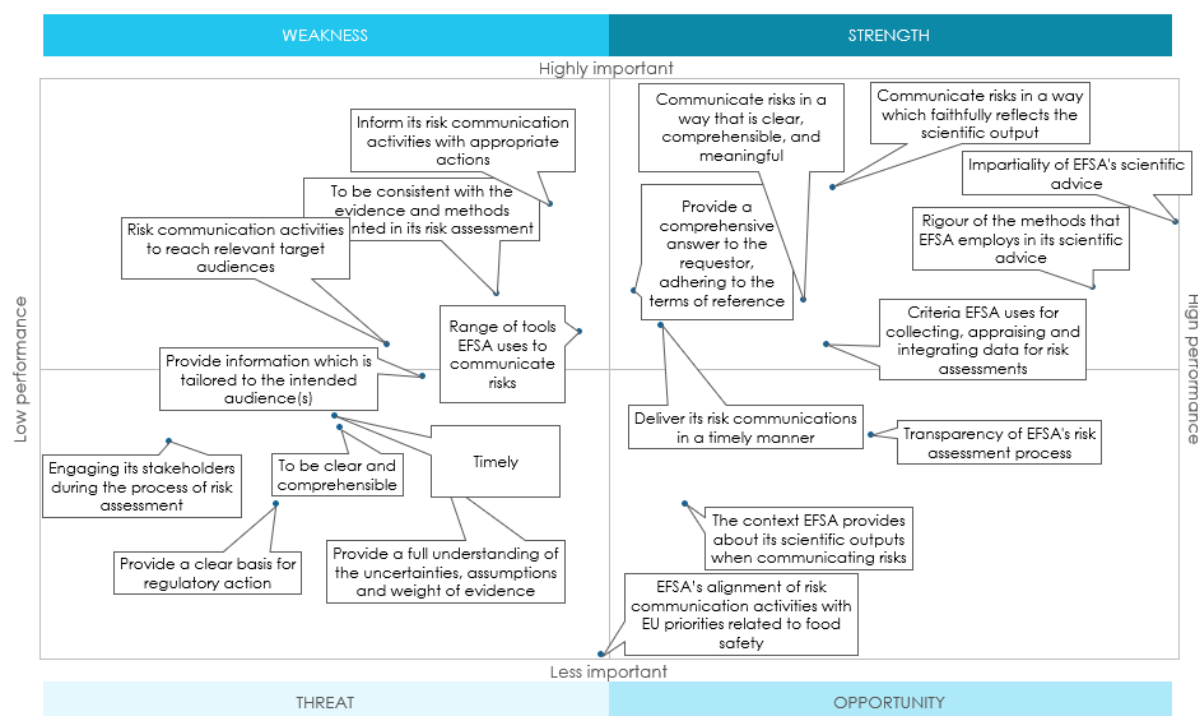
Figure 7.3. maps these findings against EFSA's perceived performance on the components. It shows that areas of strength for the organisation – that is, areas that are important drivers of ratings and on which it is seen to be performing well by Customers – are:

- the impartiality of its scientific advice
- the rigour of the methods it employs in its scientific advice
- its ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output
- the criteria used by EFSA for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments
- its ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, meaningful and comprehensible
- its ability to deliver risk communications in a timely manner
- and the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor adhering to the terms of reference

Areas of comparative weakness for the organisation among Customers – that is, areas that are important drivers of ratings but on which it is seen to be performing relatively less well are:

- its ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions
- the range of tools it uses to communicate risks
- the ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment

Figure 7.3: KDA of ratings of EFSA's work among Customers



There is a significant level of consistency in the strengths and weaknesses identified in the 2024 and 2023 ratings KDAs. That said, some notable areas of divergence between the two analyses include:

- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment – which was a 'strength' in 2023 and is now a 'weakness'
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible – which was a 'weakness' in 2023 and is now a 'strength'
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action – which has moved on from being a 'weakness' in 2023 to a 'threat' now

7.2.2 Key drivers of Trust in EFSA among Customers

Among Customers the most important drivers of trust in EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork were:

- the impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice
- the rigour of the methods that EFSA employs in its scientific advice
- its ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions
- its ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output

In comparison, the least important drivers were:

- EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the process of risk assessment
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible

Figure 7.4 maps these findings against EFSA's perceived performance on the components. It reveals that areas of strength for EFSA when it comes to fostering trust among Customers are:

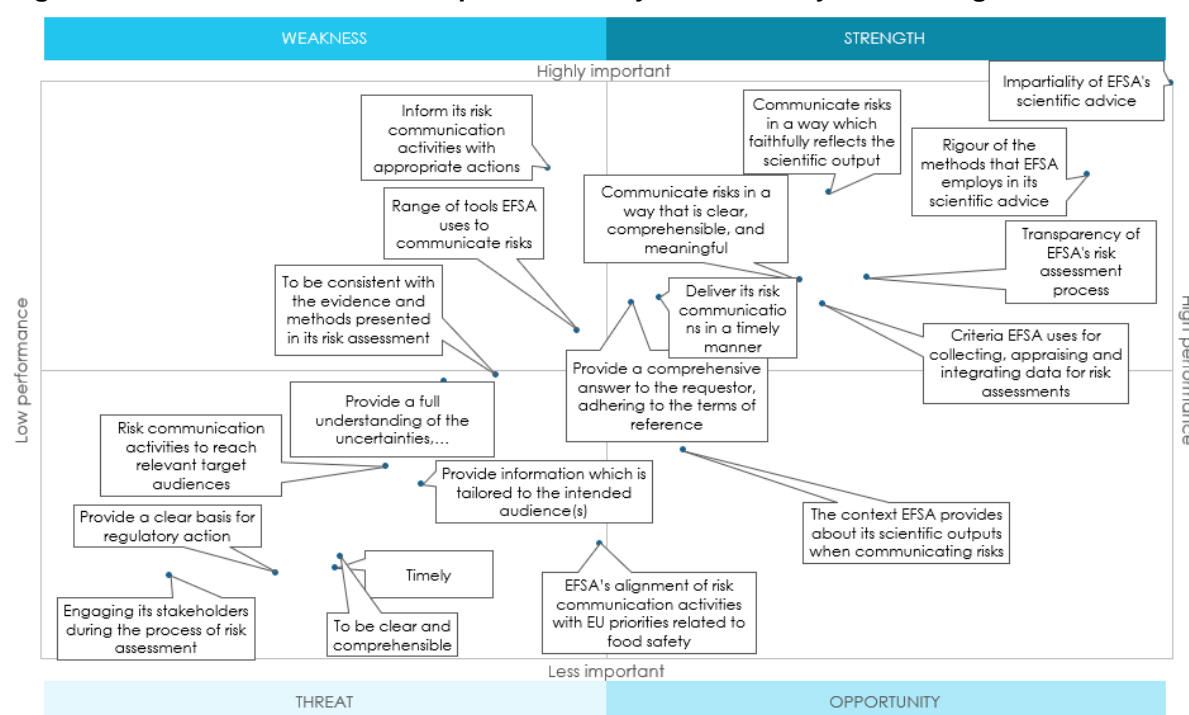
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor adhering to the terms of reference

- the impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice
- the rigour of the methods it employs in its scientific advice
- the transparency of its risk assessment process
- the criteria it uses for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments
- EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output
- its ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, meaningful and comprehensible
- its ability to deliver risk communications in a timely manner

Areas of comparative weakness for EFSA when it comes to fostering trust include:

- EFSA's ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions
- the range of tools it uses to communicate risks

Figure 7.4: KDA of trust in EFSA to promote safety in the food system among Customers



The areas of strength and weakness for 2024 align only partially with those uncovered by the trust KDA conducted in 2023. Notable areas of divergence between the two analyses are in relation to:

- EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, meaningful and comprehensible – which has moved from being a 'weakness' in 2023 to being a 'strength' now
- the range of tools EFSA uses to communicate risks – which was an 'opportunity' in 2023 and is now a 'weakness'
- EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety – which was a 'strength' in 2023 and is now a 'threat'

7.3 KDA for Partners

7.3.1 Key drivers of positive ratings of EFSA's work among Partners

Among Partners, the KDA revealed that the components of SO1 that were most important in driving ratings of EFSA's work were:

- the rigour of the methods employed by EFSA in its scientific advice
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor, adhering to the terms of reference

The components that were found to be least important in driving ratings were:

- the context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks
- EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety
- the ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences

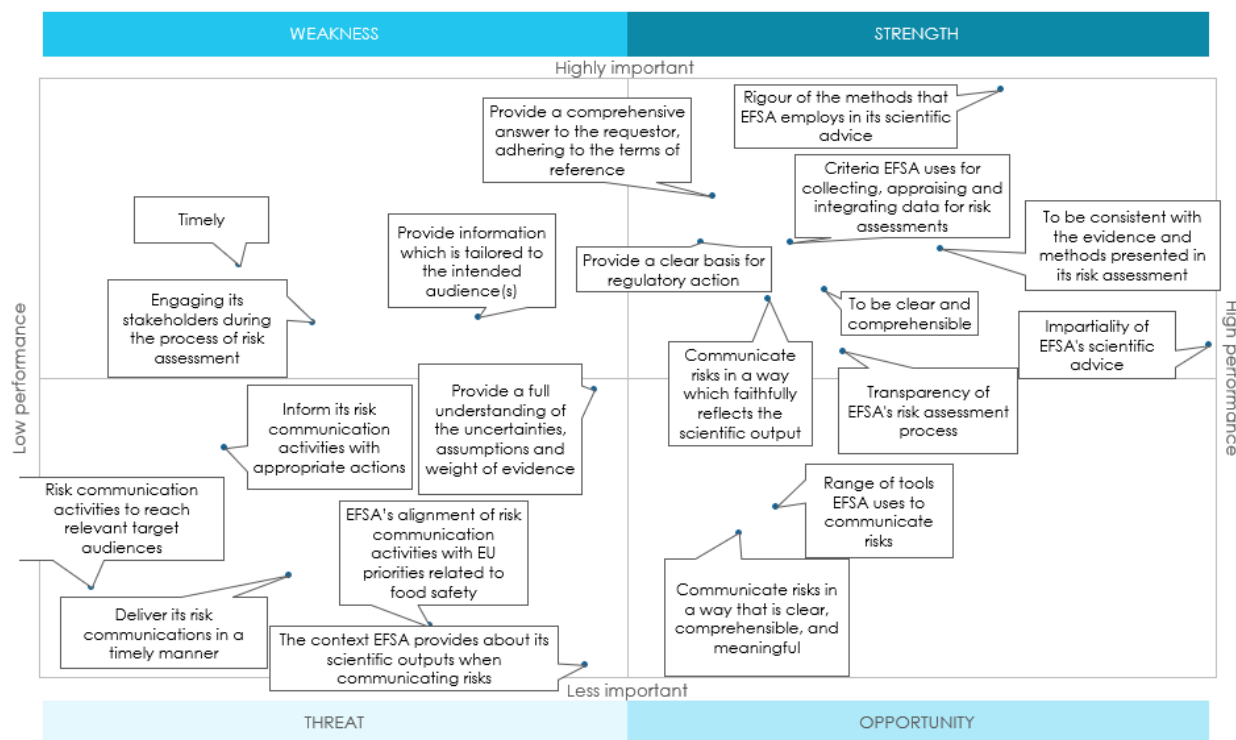
The mapping of these findings against EFSA's perceived performance on the components (Figure 7.5) shows that areas of strength for the organisation – that is, areas that are important drivers of ratings and on which it is seen to be performing well among Partners – are:

- the impartiality of its scientific advice
- the rigour of the methods it employs in its scientific advice
- the criteria it uses for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments
- its ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor adhering to the terms of reference
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible
- the transparency of EFSA's risk assessment process
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment

Areas of comparative weakness for the organisation – that is, areas that are important drivers of ratings but on which it is seen to be performing relatively less well by Partners are:

- EFSA's ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner
- EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the process of risk assessment
- EFSA's ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s)

Figure 7.5 KDA of ratings of EFSA's work among Partners



Overall, there is a high level of consistency in the strengths and weaknesses identified in the 2024 and 2023 trust KDAs. That said, it is notable that the ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences has moved from being a 'weakness' in 2023 to being a 'threat' now.

7.3.2 Key drivers of Trust in EFSA among Partners

Among Partners the most important drivers of trust in EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork were:

- the impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor adhering to the terms of reference

In comparison, the least important drivers were:

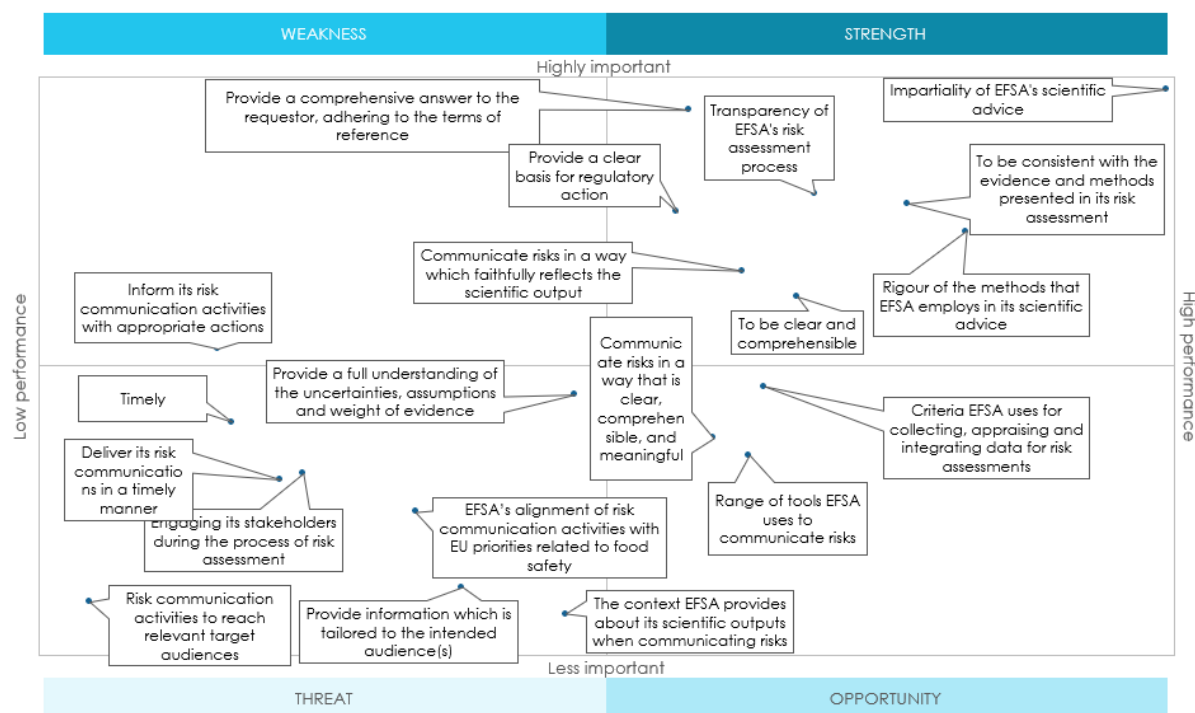
- the context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks
- its ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s)
- the ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences

The mapping of these findings against EFSA's perceived performance on the components, reveals that areas of strength for EFSA when it comes to fostering trust among Partners are:

- the impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice
- the transparency of its risk assessment process
- the rigour of the methods it employs in its scientific advice
- its ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor adhering to the terms of reference
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment

An area of comparative weakness for EFSA when it comes to fostering trust among Partners is EFSA's ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions.

Figure 7.6: KDA of trust in EFSA to promote safety in the food system among Partners



In terms of how these results compare with those for 2023, divergence is observed in relation to:

- EFSA's ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions – which has moved from being a 'threat' in 2023 to being a 'weakness' now
- EFSA's ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s) which was a 'weakness' in 2023 and is now a 'threat'
- the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment – which moved from being an 'opportunity' in 2023 to a 'strength' now

APPENDIX A: MANAGEMENT BOARD MEMBERS' PERCEPTION OF EFSA'S WORK

The scores for the Management Board group are based on 24 respondents. All respondents in the management group were given an equal weighting in the results. While year-on-year comparisons are provided throughout this section, where available, these should be interpreted with caution given the small sample size (in both years).

A.1 Management Board Members' engagement and familiarity with EFSA's activities

Just over two-thirds (67%) of Management Board Members said they engaged with EFSA or its activities on a regular basis, while a third (33%) said they did so on an occasional basis (Figure A.1). These results are statistically in line with those for 2023.

Figure A.1 Management Board Members' frequency of engagement with EFSA and its activities

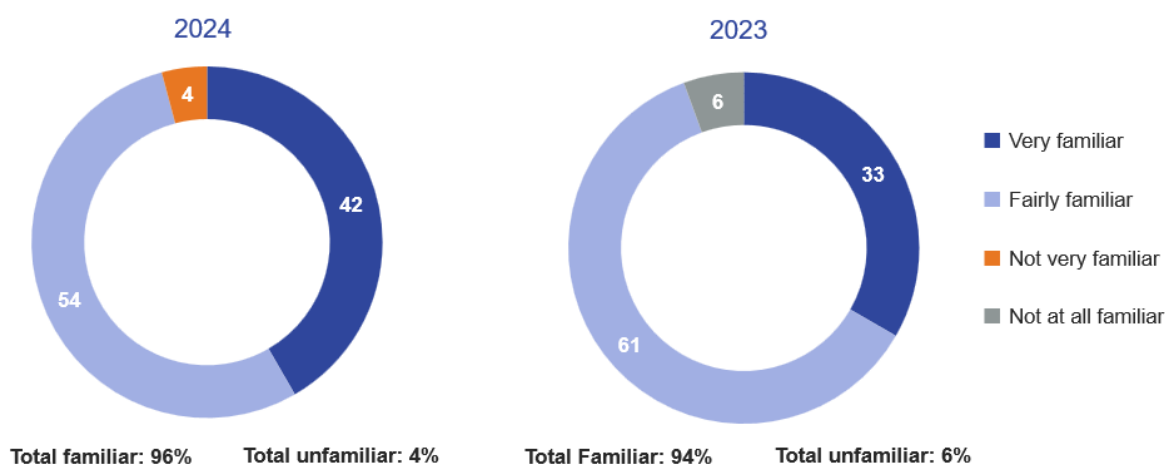


Base: All Management Board members surveyed (n=24)

Question: Q1. In general, would you say that you engage with EFSA or follow its activities:

Almost all (96%) Management Board Members said they were very or fairly familiar with EFSA's work and activities, while 4% said they were not very familiar with it (Figure A.2). These figures too are in line with those for 2023.

Figure A.2 Management Board Members' familiarity with EFSA's work and activities



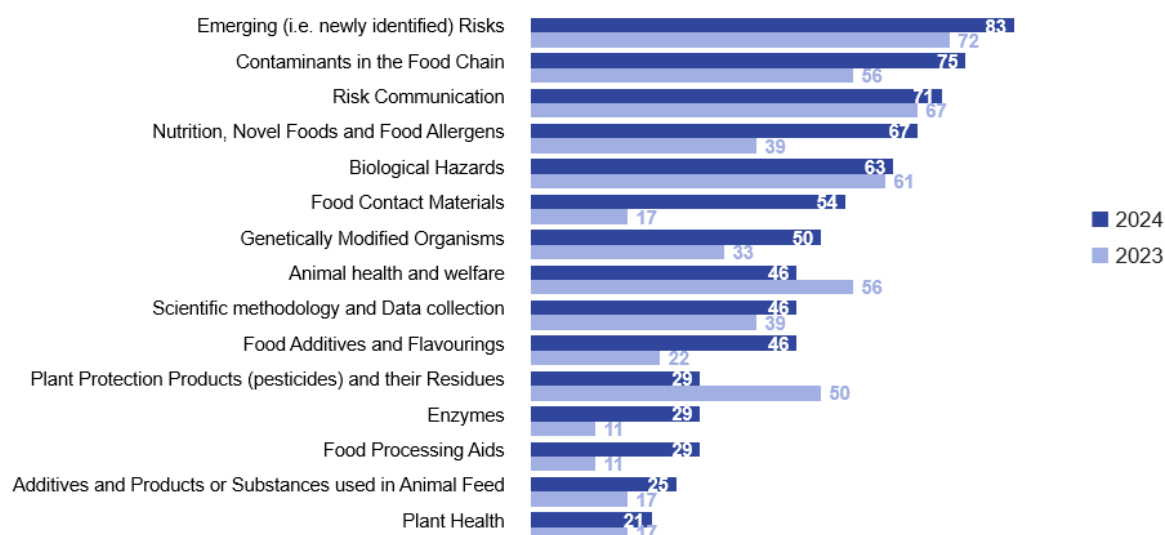
Base: All Management Board members surveyed (n=24)

Question: Q2. How familiar would you say you are with EFSA's work and activities?

A.2 Management Board Members' areas of interest and perceptions of EFSA's performance on these

Asked which areas of EFSA's work they were most interested in, Management Board Members most commonly mentioned its work on emerging risks (83%), contaminants in the food chain (75%), risk communication (71%), nutrition, novel foods and food allergens (67%), and biological hazards (63%) (Figure A.3). Just over half of the Management Board (54%) also mentioned having an interest in Food Contact Materials; a more than three-fold increase on 2023, when the figure stood at 17%.

Figure A.3 Management Board Members' main areas of interest



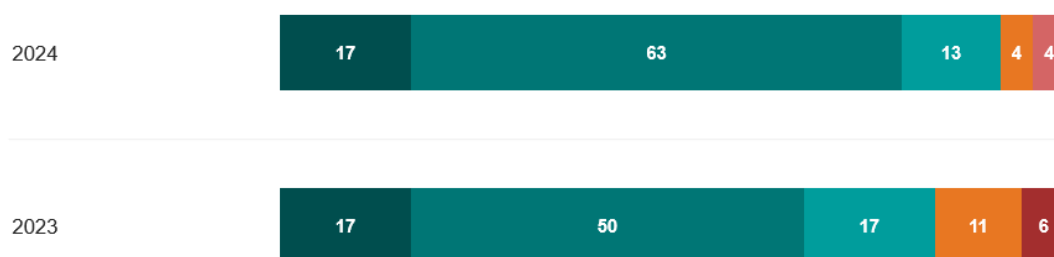
Base: All Management Board members surveyed (n=24)

Question: Q3. Which areas of EFSA's work are you most interested in?

Just over nine in ten Management Board Members (92%) rated EFSA's work positively, including 79% who rated it as *extremely* or *very good*. About 4% in total rated the organisation's work negatively. These ratings are in line with the 2023 results (Figure A.4).

Figure A.4 Management Board Members' overall assessment of EFSA's work

Extremely good Very good Good Acceptable Poor Very poor Extremely poor Not applicable/Don't know



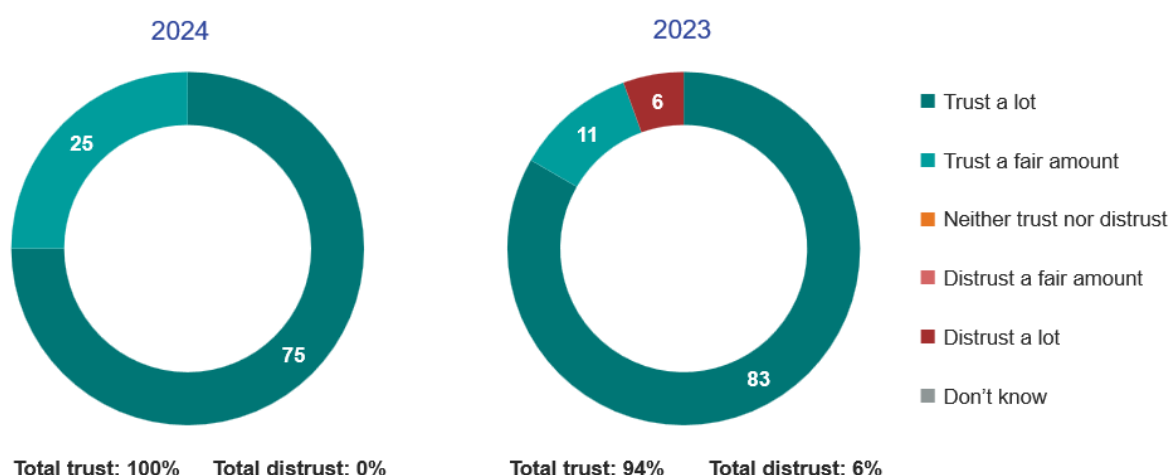
Base: All Management Board members surveyed (n=24)

Question: Q4. In general, how would you rate EFSA's work in the areas you are interested in?

A.3 Trust in, and advocacy of, EFSA

All Management Board Members said they trusted EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork. (Figure A.5). In 2023, a small minority (6%) expressed *distrust* in the organisation.

Figure A.5 Management Board Members' trust in EFSA to promote safety in the food chain

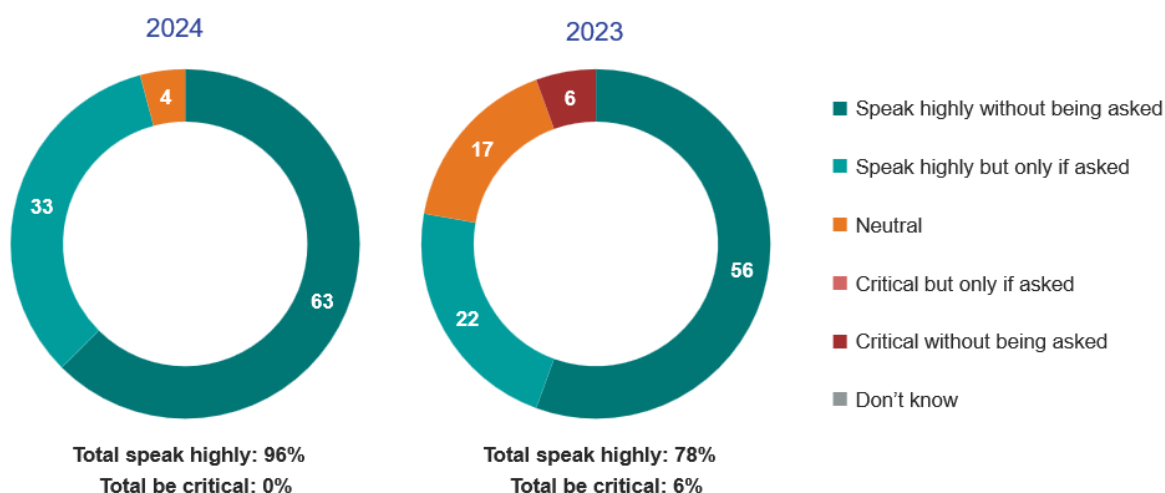


Base: All Management Board members surveyed (n=24)

Question: Q5. Overall, how much do you trust or distrust EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork?

Almost all (96%) Management Board Members also indicated that they would speak highly of EFSA, with 63% saying they would do so even without being asked their opinion. Meanwhile, 4% said they would be neutral about the organisation and no Member said they would be critical of it (Figure A.6). These figures are statistically in line with those for 2023.

Figure A.6 How Management Board Members would speak about EFSA (Advocacy)



Base: All Management Board members surveyed (n=24)

Question: Q6. Which of these phrases best describes the way that you personally would speak about EFSA to others?

A.4 Strategic Objective 1 and its Attributes

For Strategic Objective 1, the % favourable satisfaction score for Management Board Members stands at 83%, which is statistically in line with the comparable figure for 2023 (74%). For the two constituent Attributes of SO1 (Risk Assessment and Risk Communication), the % favourable satisfaction scores stand at 82% and 83% respectively. These scores too are consistent with the comparable figures for 2023.

The satisfaction indicators for SO1, as well as for the Risk Assessment and Risk Communication Attributes remain in the green part of the spectrum, signifying positive perceptions overall.

Table A.7 % favourable satisfaction scores and indicators for SO1 and its Attributes

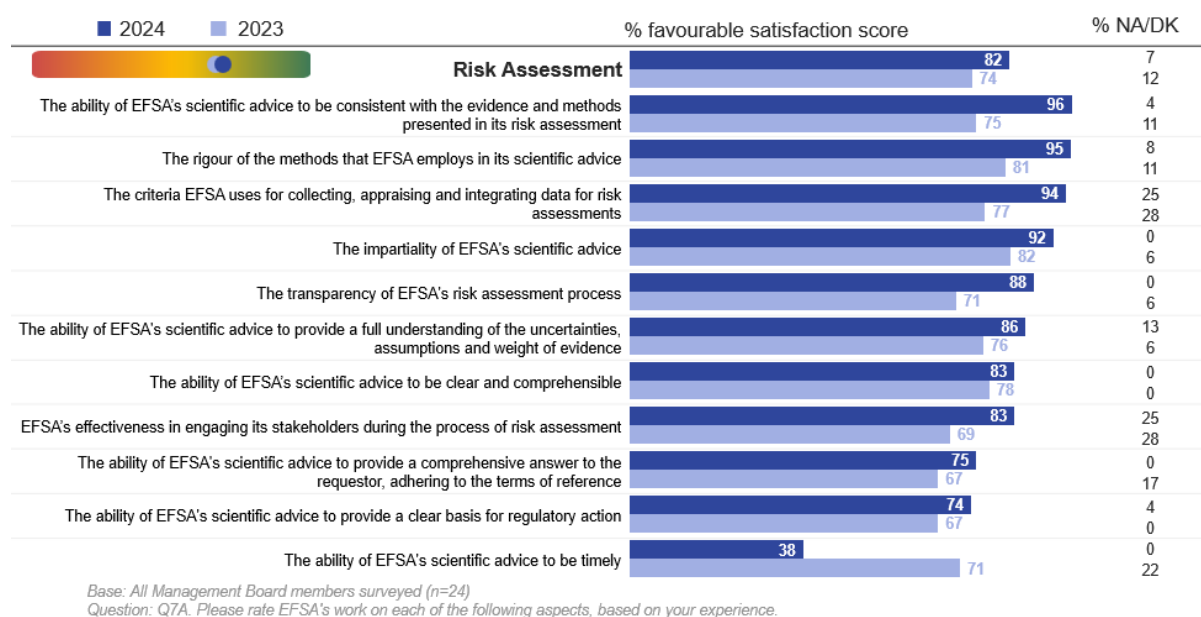
	2024	2023	
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1	83	74	
Risk Assessment	82	74	
Risk Communication	83	73	

Base: All Management Board members (n=24)

■ 2024 ■ 2023

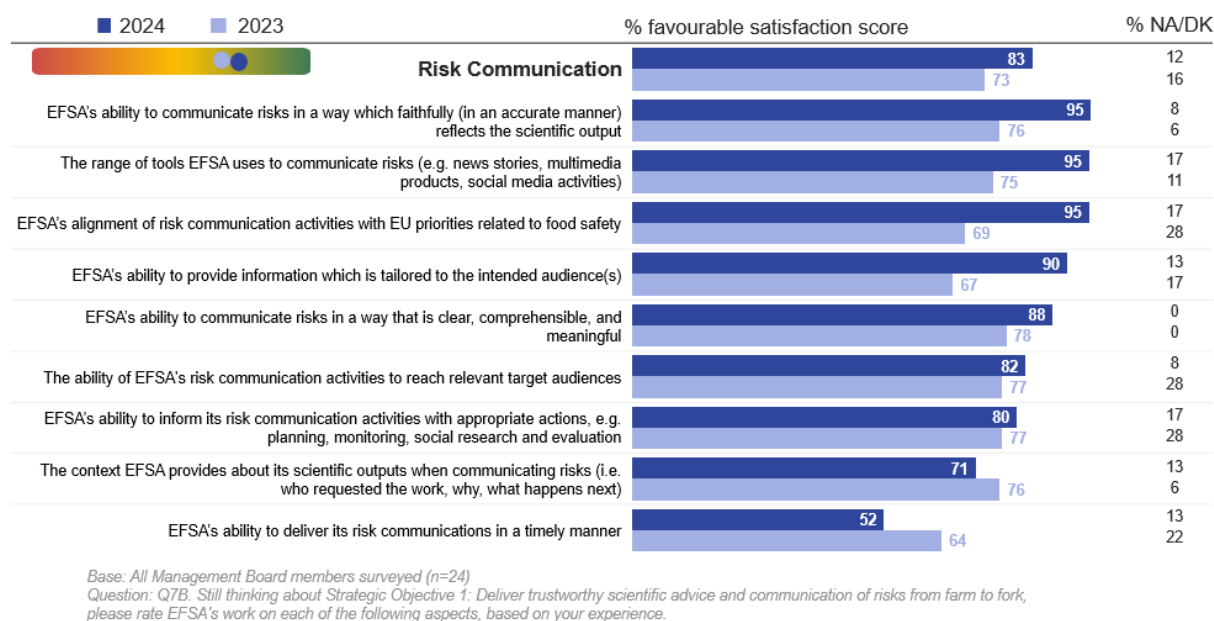
Looking beneath these results at the ratings that Management Board members give for the individual components of the two SO1 Attributes, significant variation is apparent. For the Risk Assessment components, the % favourable satisfaction scores range from 96%-38%. The highest scores are found for the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessments (96%), the rigour of the methods that EFSA employs in its scientific advice (95%), and the criteria used by EFSA for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments (94%). A considerably lower score – just 38% – is found for the ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely. There are no statistically significant differences between the 2024 and 2023, scores. That said, the score for the timeliness of scientific advice is significantly lower than the average score obtained for this component across the three waves of the survey conducted to date (52%).

Figure A.8 Management Board Members' satisfaction scores and indicators on SO1 Risk Assessment components



For the Risk Communication components, the degree of variation in the score is slightly less pronounced compared to that for the Risk Assessment components, ranging from 95% to 52% (Figure A.9). The highest scores emerge for EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully reflects the scientific output (95%), the range of tools used by EFSA to communicate risks (95%) and EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety (95%). The lowest scores emerge for EFSA's ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner (52%) and the context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks (71%). Again, all of the scores are in line with those from 2023.

Figure A.9 Management Board Members' satisfaction scores and indicators on SO1 Risk Communication components

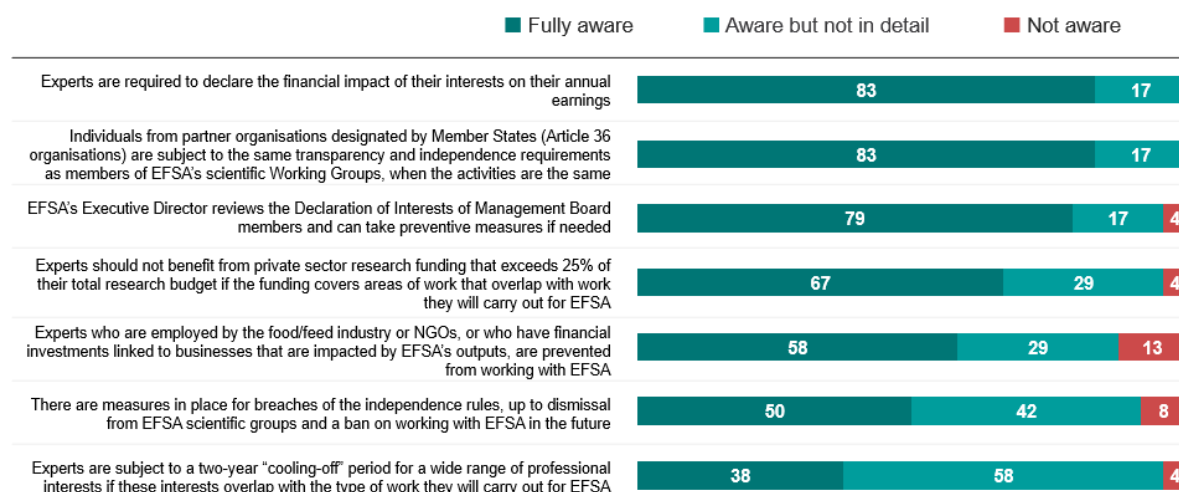


A.6 Management Board Member's awareness of EFSA's updated independence policy

A consistently high proportion of Management Board Members said they were aware of the various elements of EFSA's new independence policy. Indeed, all of the group said they were aware of the requirement to declare any financial impact of the Member's interests on their annual earnings (100%)

and the fact that Article 36 organisations are subject to the same transparency and independence requirements as EFSA Working Group members (100%). Similarly, most were aware of the Executive Director's review of Management Board Declarations of Interests and subsequent preventive measures (96%) and the 25% limit on private sector research funding (96%). Awareness was only marginally lower for the restrictions in place on industry/NGOs experts (88%) and for the measures in place for breaches of the independence rules (92%).

Figure A.10 Management Board Members' awareness of EFSA's updated independence policy



Base: All Management Board members surveyed (n=24)

Question: Q17. Below are some key elements of EFSA's updated Independence Policy. Please indicate to what extent you were aware of each.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITH NGOS AND CONSUMER ORGANISATIONS

B.1 Background and methodology

To gain a deeper understanding of how EFSA could improve its risk assessment and risk communication, qualitative research was conducted among NGOs and consumer organisations, as this target group reported the lowest satisfaction scores in 2023. The research consisted of eight in-depth interviews, which took place online between 13 September and 22 October 2024. The interviews were structured around a discussion guide designed by EFSA in collaboration with Ipsos, and the key question areas were shared with the participants in advance of the interviews, so that they could collect relevant feedback from their members.

Qualitative research aims to identify and explore issues, perspectives and experiences relating to the subject of study. The assumption is that the issues, perspectives and experiences raised by the participants will be reflective of those likely to be found among the wider population(s) concerned. The precise extent to which they apply to that wider population(s), or specific sub-groups within it, cannot be quantified (as is possible with representative survey research). Rather, the value of qualitative research lies in identifying the nature of issues, perspectives and experiences that exist, and their potential impact or implications.

B.2 Perception of EFSA risk assessment

Comprehensiveness of risk assessments

- **Participants contended that EFSA's risk assessments were too narrow in scope.** They made two main points in this regard:
 - That the assessments were mostly guided by economic considerations, which came at the expense of taking into account risks for humans, animals and the environment. Participants felt that EFSA's emphasis on economic interests may stem from a fear of backlash from the business community, a view that was reinforced by participants' observation that some of EFSA's expert panels were composed entirely of industry-affiliated experts.
 - That inadequate consideration was given to risks for specific consumer groups. In particular, two participants raised concerns about the handling of allergenicity in novel foods, pointing to specific cases where they believed potential allergen risks had not been thoroughly evaluated. These cases related to allergen risks associated with food products containing insects, such as larva or crickets.
- **To ensure EFSA's risk assessments were as comprehensive as possible, participants called for a more balanced approach that considered the perspective of various stakeholder groups,** including animal welfare and veterinary organisations, as well as consumer organisations working on food allergies. They also expressed a preference for more flexible feedback channels, commenting that current channels, such as the stakeholder discussion group on emerging risks, were too formal and bureaucratic.
- **At the same time, one participant was keen to stress that collaboration with stakeholders must be timely.** They noted that while EFSA did occasionally solicit reports from NGOs, these requests often come at short notice. To optimise collaboration, the participant suggested that EFSA should not only issue requests for information well in advance, but also share overall study plans more proactively, so that NGOs had a clearer understanding of potential contribution opportunities and sufficient time to prepare and deliver high-quality input.

- **On the question of EFSA's capacity to provide scientific advice that offered a clear basis for regulatory action, only one participant offered input.** This participant observed that the results of EFSA's risk assessments were not always taken into account by regulatory bodies, leading to inconsistencies between EFSA's scientific advice and the guidelines foreseen by regulations. The participant suggested that EFSA should address this issue by integrating a stronger feedback loop between itself and regulatory bodies.

Rigour of methods and data used in risk assessments

- **Participants noted and expressed significant concern that risk assessments were primarily grounded in data provided by applicants themselves.** They felt this data was inevitably limited or inherently biased, which, in turn, undermined the quality and credibility of assessments. A perceived corollary of EFSA's reliance on industry data was a tendency for the organisation to exclude academic or independent studies from their risk assessments.
- **Another area of concern was EFSA's way of dealing with topics for which scientific knowledge, or other types of studies, were lacking.** One participant felt that a lack of existing data should not serve as an excuse for inaction and that, in such instances, EFSA should explore ways to conduct its own research and should have a budget allocated for field studies.
- **Whilst perceived bias and/or conservatism in EFSA's use of data for its risk assessments was generally considered a significant issue, some participants did note improvements in this area over recent years.** One participant cited the example of an assessment of bisphenol A (BPA).

B.3 Perception of EFSA risk communication

Alignment of risk communication with EU priorities relating to food safety

- **On the whole, participants offered little comment on this matter,** with most simply acknowledging that an alignment did exist between EFSA's risk communication and EU priorities.
- **However, one participant expressed some concerns about potential unintended consequences of this alignment.** The participant felt it might be overly rigid or narrow, potentially constraining EFSA's ability to address issues that, whilst falling outside official EU priorities, remained crucial for food safety and public health.

Engagement of stakeholders in development of risk communications

- **Participants had different views on the extent to which organisations like theirs were involved in the development of risk communications.** Some noted a positive trend in this regard over recent years, while others identified significant room for improvement and called for greater engagement.
- **Generally, participants expressed considerable willingness to provide input about their topics of expertise** to help inform risk communication messages. They felt that such engagement would ensure that all relevant parties were onboard with what was communicated by EFSA, whilst also helping to improve the ultimate effectiveness of the communications.
- **There was a specific view that involving stakeholders more would help to ensure communication was consumer-friendly.** In discussing this point one participant noted that EFSA's risk communication was sometimes overly alarmist, focusing too much on possible dangers at the expense of other important considerations, like mitigating measures.

Alignment of risk communication with scientific output

- **On the one hand, participants appreciated EFSA's efforts to avoid the oversimplification or "black and white" communication of scientific findings**, and believed that the Agency was generally doing a good job of conveying the inherent uncertainties in scientific research.
- **On the other hand, some participants expressed concern about an ongoing use of technical jargon by the Agency**, noting that this could make its risk communications difficult for a general audience to fully understand.
- **To help facilitate understanding, participants suggested risk communication could be supplemented with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**, or could incorporate more visual elements.
- **Other participants felt EFSA's risk communication had more fundamental weaknesses that needed to be addressed to ensure alignment with the scientific evidence** – and to avoid possibly misleading the target audiences. Specifically, one participant expressed a view that EFSA sometimes tended to downplay the information that was found in the scientific assessment, while two others reiterated that EFSA's risk communications were inherently unscientific because they did not fully incorporate all relevant scientific results and studies.

Communication tools and reaching target audiences effectively

- **There was general acknowledgement that EFSA employed a wide range of channels to communicate risks**, ranging from traditional media, to digital platforms and in-person events. Overall, these communications were seen as adequate and fit for purpose.
- **Still, some differences of opinions did emerge regarding EFSA's social media presence.** On the one hand, several participants spoke positively about interactions they had with EFSA on social media platforms. On the other hand, there was suggestion that EFSA's could benefit from a more proactive approach to social media communication, not least as a way of reaching younger target audiences.
- **Participants tended to characterise EFSA's communication messages as being too broad.** They pointed out that when communications are insufficiently targeted, recipients may struggle to find the information they need amidst a sea of less relevant content.
- **A few participants also believed that EFSA's risk communication seemed to be mostly geared towards demonstrating its competence in risk assessment to industry**, rather than providing substantive information about food safety issues to other relevant audiences. In discussing this, they identified three stakeholder groups whose perspectives and needs they felt EFSA should take greater account of in developing risk communications:
 - **The general public.** Participants noted that there was often a lack of awareness about EFSA's role and purpose among this group and that, to address this, EFSA should focus not only on risk communication but also incorporate public relations strategies to promote the Agency and its activities. They also stressed that the tone of communication is crucial and should not be patronising or condescending.
 - **NGOs.** Participants reiterated their view that EFSA should more proactively engage with their respective organisations when developing communications to ensure the information was conveyed in a way that was not only accurate but also easy to understand.

- ***The scientific community.*** Participants observed that scientists were eager to provide input into risk communications, as well as into more general regulatory science discussions that were taking place, but lacked clear information about how they could collaborate with EFSA in these ways. To address this, the participants felt that EFSA could more actively promote scientific discussions, consultations, and other initiatives that encouraged contributions from scientists.

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

EFSA Annual Strategy Survey July 2024

Dear participant,

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published its [Strategy 2027](#) which intends to respond to the current changing environment (the Transparency Regulation and the Farm to Fork strategy, among others) and describes the added value EFSA proposes to its customers, partners, stakeholders, and the public at large.

EFSA aims to measure how its partners and stakeholders regard its activities across a range of areas, including those related to its strategic objectives and its strategic foundation set out in the 2027 Strategy. We would therefore be grateful if you could dedicate 15 minutes of your time to answer to some questions regarding your experiences and expectations of EFSA's work. EFSA will use your input to identify ways of improving and strengthening its work.

All of the information you provide in the survey will be treated in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only. It will not be possible to identify any particular individuals or organisations in the results.

The survey will run until 27 September 2024. If you would like to know more about the legal basis for the survey, how the data will be processed, how Ipsos will ensure the confidentiality of your responses or your rights under data protection regulations, you can view the project Privacy Notice [here](https://survey.ipsos.be/privacynotice_EFSA_2024.pdf) (scripter: add link to https://survey.ipsos.be/privacynotice_EFSA_2024.pdf).

Thank you in advance for your participation.

1. I agree to take part and I have read the Privacy Notice
2. I do not agree to take part

[TERMINATE FOR RESPONDENTS WHO DO NOT AGREE TO TAKE PART]

FOR Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7A, Q7B, Q17: Half of the respondents should see the answer options in the order provided in this document. The other half of respondents should see consistently inverted answer options that keep the progressive logic. DK/NA answer options, if available, should be always anchored at the bottom of the list.

Introductory questions

[ALL RESPONDENTS, SINGLE RESPONSE], [S]

To start with, a few questions about the nature of your engagement with EFSA

Q1: In general, would you say that you engage with EFSA or follow its activities:

1. On a regular basis (e.g., at least once a month)
2. On an occasional basis (e.g., about once every quarter to once every six months)
3. Rarely (e.g., about once a year or less often)
4. Never

[ALL RESPONDENTS, SINGLE RESPONSE], [S]

Q2: How familiar would you say you are with EFSA's work and activities?

1. Very familiar
2. Fairly familiar
3. Not very familiar
4. Not at all familiar

**[ALL RESPONDENTS, MULTIPLE RESPONSE OPTIONS ALLOWED], [M]
[KEEP THE LIST IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER]**

Q3: Which areas of EFSA's work are you most interested in? (Multiple Choice)

1. Additives and Products or Substances used in Animal Feed
2. Animal health and welfare
3. Biological Hazards
4. Contaminants in the Food Chain
5. Emerging (i.e. newly identified) Risks
6. Food Additives and Flavourings
7. Food Contact Materials
8. Enzymes
9. Food Processing Aids
10. Genetically Modified Organisms
11. Nutrition, Novel Foods and Food Allergens
12. Plant Health
13. Plant Protection Products (pesticides) and their Residues
14. Risk Communication
15. Scientific methodology and Data collection

[ALL RESPONDENTS, SINGLE RESPONSE], [SGRID]

Q4: In general, how would you rate EFSA's work in the areas you are interested in? [S]

1. Extremely good
2. Very good
3. Good
4. Acceptable
5. Poor
6. Very poor
7. Extremely poor
8. Not applicable/Don't know

[ALL RESPONDENTS, SINGLE RESPONSE], [S]

Q5: Overall, how much do you trust or distrust EFSA to promote safety in the food chain from farm to fork?

1. Trust a lot
2. Trust a fair amount
3. Neither trust nor distrust
4. Distrust a fair amount
5. Distrust a lot
6. Don't know

[ALL RESPONDENTS, SINGLE RESPONSE], [S]

Q6: Which of these phrases best describes the way that you personally would speak about EFSA to others?

1. I would speak highly of the organisation without being asked
2. I would speak highly of the organisation but only if someone asked me
3. I would be neutral
4. I would be critical of the organisation but only if someone asked me
5. I would be critical of the organisation without being asked
6. Don't know

Core questions

EFSA's 2027 Strategy Document sets out three Strategic Objectives for the organisation. You will now read an extract from the document outlining **Strategic Objective 1: Deliver trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork**. After reading the text, you will be asked to rate EFSA's work on these aspects.

*Most of EFSA's work is undertaken in **response to requests for scientific advice** from the European Commission, the European Parliament and EU Member States.*

*EFSA is committed to delivering **actionable and trustworthy scientific advice** carried out **in accordance with the new Transparency Regulations measures**, as well as ensuring the **broader participation of stakeholders** in EFSA risk assessments.*

*EFSA is committed to continue ensuring **transparent, coherent, actionable and trustworthy risk communication** on its scientific advice.*

***This is done adopting an audience-first approach**, using insights coming from **social research** to offer a **personalised user experience** across its communication tools.*

*Furthermore, EFSA is delivering **coordinated risk communication** with the European Commission, Member States, and ENVI agencies, supporting the development of the future General Plan for Risk Communication, and **investing accordingly in its communication channels and digital platforms**.*

[ALL RESPONDENTS, SINGLE RESPONSE], [SGRID]

[RANDOMISE THE ORDER OF STATEMENTS 1-11]

Q7A. Please rate EFSA's work on each of the following aspects, based on your experience. Where you are not familiar with EFSA's work and feel you cannot provide an assessment, please select "Not applicable".

Columns:

1. Extremely good
2. Very good
3. Good
4. Acceptable
5. Poor
6. Very poor
7. Extremely poor
8. Not applicable/Don't know

Rows (randomize):

- 1 The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a comprehensive answer to the requestor, adhering to the terms of reference
- 2 The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a full understanding of the uncertainties, assumptions and weight of evidence
- 3 The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to provide a clear basis for regulatory action
- 4 The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be timely

- 5 The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be clear and comprehensible
- 6 The ability of EFSA's scientific advice to be consistent with the evidence and methods presented in its risk assessment
- 7 The impartiality of EFSA's scientific advice
- 8 The rigour of the methods that EFSA employs in its scientific advice
- 9 The transparency of EFSA's risk assessment process
- 10 The criteria EFSA uses for collecting, appraising and integrating data for risk assessments
- 11 EFSA's effectiveness in engaging its stakeholders during the process of risk assessment

[ALL RESPONDENTS, SINGLE RESPONSE], [SGRID]

[RANDOMISE THE ORDER OF STATEMENTS 1-9]

Q7b. Thank you for your responses so far. Still thinking about Strategic Objective 1: Deliver trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork, please rate EFSA's work on each of the following aspects, based on your experience. Where you are not familiar with EFSA's work and feel you cannot provide an assessment, please select "Not applicable".

Columns:

1. Extremely good
2. Very good
3. Good
4. Acceptable
5. Poor
6. Very poor
7. Extremely poor
8. Not applicable/Don't know

Rows (randomize):

- 1 EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way which faithfully (in an accurate manner) reflects the scientific output
- 2 EFSA's ability to provide information which is tailored to the intended audience(s)
- 3 EFSA's ability to communicate risks in a way that is clear, comprehensible, and meaningful
- 4 EFSA's ability to deliver its risk communications in a timely manner
- 5 EFSA's alignment of risk communication activities with EU priorities related to food safety
- 6 The ability of EFSA's risk communication activities to reach relevant target audiences

- 7 EFSA's ability to inform its risk communication activities with appropriate actions, e.g. planning, monitoring, social research and evaluation
- 8 The range of tools EFSA uses to communicate risks (e.g. news stories, multimedia products, social media activities)
- 9 The context EFSA provides about its scientific outputs when communicating risks (i.e. who requested the work, why, what happens next)

[ALL RESPONDENTS, OPEN ENDED QUESTION]

Q8. Would you like to share any additional comments on EFSA's performance or role in relation to Strategic Objective 1: Deliver trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork? Please consider all aspects of EFSA's work in this area, including procedural aspects and supporting digital tools.

Independence policy

In June 2024, EFSA updated its Independence Policy, further strengthening the measures it has in place to manage the interests of the scientific experts and professionals with whom it works and to guard against undue influence. The new policy includes targeted revisions based on a thorough review of the 2017 policy.

**[ALL RESPONDENTS, SINGLE RESPONSE], [SGRID]
 [RANDOMISE THE ORDER OF STATEMENTS 1-7]**

Q17: Below are some key elements of EFSA's updated Independence Policy. Please indicate to what extent you were aware of each.

- 1 Experts who are employed by the food/feed industry or NGOs, or who have financial investments linked to businesses that are impacted by EFSA's outputs, are prevented from working with EFSA
- 2 Experts are subject to a two-year "cooling-off" period for a wide range of professional interests if these interests overlap with the type of work they will carry out for EFSA
- 3 Experts are required to declare the financial impact of their interests on their annual earnings
- 4 Experts should not benefit from private sector research funding that exceeds 25% of their total research budget if the funding covers areas of work that overlap with work they will carry out for EFSA
- 5 Individuals from partner organisations designated by Member States (Article 36 organisations) are subject to the same transparency and independence requirements as members of EFSA's scientific Working Groups, when the activities are the same
- 6 EFSA's Executive Director reviews the Declaration of Interests of Management Board members and can take preventive measures if needed

- 7 There are measures in place for breaches of the independence rules, up to dismissal from EFSA scientific groups and a ban on working with EFSA in the future

1. Fully aware
2. Aware but not in detail
3. Not aware

[ALL RESPONDENTS, OPEN ENDED QUESTION]

Q11. Would you like to share any additional comment on EFSA's work and activities?

[ALL RESPONDENTS, SURVEY END MESSAGE]

Thank you

This brings us to the end of the survey.

Should further questions have come up in the course of the questionnaire, please feel free to direct them by email to giorgia.zamariola@efsa.europa.eu

Thank you very much for your participation!

APPENDIX D: TECHNICAL REPORT

This appendix provides further detail on the response rates (Table D.1) and weighting used for this study (Table D.2).

Table D.1 Response rates

	Invites on a personal level (gross sample)	Completes on respondent level (net sample)	Response rate on respondent level
Total	8055	1376	17,1%
Customers	3412	424	12,4%
DG Sante	33	4	12,1%
Applicants	3379	420	12,4%
Partners	4280	869	20,3%
Art 36 organisations	2848	436	15,3%
Communications Expert Network	74	27	36,5%
EU ENVI Agencies	71	12	16,9%
International partners	196	11	5,6%
Member States authorities (AF and FP, incl. IPA)	154	50	32,5%
JRC	19	1	5,3%
Scientific experts	918	332	36,2%
Stakeholders	299	59	19,7%
Academia & Practitioners	39	9	23,1%
Business & Farmers	186	35	18,8%
NGO & Consumer	73	15	20,5%
EFSA's Management Board	64	24	37,5%

Table D.2 Weighting

	Ideal weighting numbers	% before weighting	% after weighting
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Customers	33.3%	36.6%	33.3%
DG Sante	11.1%	0.5%	11.1%
Applicant	22.2%	36.1%	22.2%
Partners	33.3%	59.6%	33.4%
Art 36 organisations	6.7%	37.6%	6.7%
EU ENVI Agencies	6.7%	1.1%	6.7%
International organisations and third countries	6.7%	1.2%	6.7%
Scientific experts	6.7%	15.2%	6.7%
Communications Expert Network			
Member States authorities (AF and FP)	6.7%	4.6%	6.7%
Member States authorities (IPA countries)			
Stakeholders	33.3%	3.8%	33.3%
Academia & Practitioners			
Business & Farmers	33.3%	3.8%	33.3%
NGO & Consumer			

EFSA's Management Board is not part of the overall results and therefore not included in the weighting. The findings for EFSA's Management Board are based on unweighted data.