

57th Focal Point Meeting

Location: online

Chair: Sérgio Potier-Rodeia

Attendees:

Last name	First name	Member state
Kopacka	Ian	Austria
Meusburger	Lukas	Austria
Storms	Tom	Belgium
Koeva	Ekaterina	Bulgaria
Polihronova	Lilyana	Bulgaria
Lendić	Barbara	Croatia
Papachrysostomou	Christoforos	Cyprus
Sarandi	Aspasia	Cyprus
Stavroulakis	Georgios	Cyprus
Brychta	Vladimir	Czech Republic
Beltoft	Vibe	Denmark
Priisalu	Piret	Estonia
Allan	Aleksasin	Estonia
Siekkinen	Kirsi-Maarit	Finland
Bahuon	Celine	France
Bultel	Coralie	France
Contreras	Samuel	France
Raeke	Julia	France
Schoene	Julia	Germany
Wlucka	Katrin	Germany
Friese	Sharleen	Germany
Nadolny	Iris	Germany
Papanastasiou	Danai	Greece
Tzoumanika	Foteini	Greece
Prisztóka	Renáta	Hungary
Tamas	Tamara	Hungary
Olafsson	Grimur	Iceland
Redmond	Gráinne	Ireland
Perrella	Alessandra	Italy
Siksna	Inese	Latvia
Vilkoicaitė	Agnė	Lithuania
Fougeras	Miriam	Luxembourg
Pisani	Giannella	Malta
van der Ploeg	Merel	Netherlands
Solstad	Gisle	Norway
Baraniak	Justyna	Poland



Jurczynska	Liliana	Poland
Melo de Vasconcelos	Filipa	Portugal
Monteiro	Sarogini	Portugal
Popovici	Georgeta	Romania
Rădulescu	Simona	Romania
Dringušová	Gabriela	Slovakia
Prošek	Sara	Slovenia
Llarena Martinez	Beatriz	Spain
Nyberg	Karin	Sweden
Patterson	Emma	Sweden
Widenfalk	Anneli	Sweden

Last name	First name	Observer country
Paluka	Valbona	Albania
Vidacak	Dalibor	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Dibrani	Yllka	Kosovo ¹
Joheski	Martin	North Macedonia
Lekic	Mirjana	Montenegro
Dukic	Nadezda	Serbia
Engeli	Barbara	Switzerland
Hanci	Serap	Turkiye

EFSA Representatives		
Potier-Rodeia Sergio (Chair)	Ciekure Elina (FP team, speaker)	Finger Julia Miriam (FP Team, speaker)
Elena Testa (speaker)	Gloria López Gálvez (speaker)	Laura Sanmartin (speaker)
Monica Ingeaua (speaker)	Raquel Garcia Matas (speaker)	Marella Tassini (speaker)
Chloé Russo (FP team, speaker)	Oscar Gonzalez (speaker)	Gabriele Zancanaro (speaker)
Filippo Positano (speaker)		

55 participants attended the meeting online, representing Focal Point (FP) network members and alternates from MS, Iceland and Norway as well as observers from Switzerland and IPA countries.

¹ Kosovo - This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



I. Opening of the Meeting

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia welcomed the Focal Points to the 57th FP meeting, the first **plenary meeting of 2025** held in the two mornings of 12th and 13th February 2025, online. He welcomed the new Assistant Coordinator from North Macedonia, **Mr. Martin Joheski** and the new alternate Assistant Coordinator of North Macedonia: **Ms. Slada Drndar Pepikj**, as well as the alternate FP **Vicente Calderón Pascual** from Spain. He expressed enthusiasm for the two mornings, introduced and adopted the agenda and invited FP to raise items to be discussed under AOB, no additional items were raised.

- Action Points from the 56th Focal Points meeting

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave a short recap on the **APs stemming** from the 56th FP meeting in September. There are **7 APs** stemming from the last meeting, all AP were for FP, 1 is completed and 6 are ongoing.

II. Focal Point support to Advisory Forum

2.1 SNEs scheme – follow up from AF meeting in December

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Elena Testa (EFSA)**.

This presentation served as a follow-up from the 94th Advisory Forum meeting (4-5 December 2024), on the item "EFSA External Mobility", where it was agreed that FP could support the proposal for enhancing the Seconded National Expert (SNE) approach in EFSA.

The presentation started with an overview of the SNE Scheme and highlighting benefits for the host organization, home institution, and individuals (win-win-win model). The results from the survey previously discussed during the 94th Advisory Forum meeting were also presented, highlighting challenges (e.g., financial constraints, bureaucracy) and benefits (e.g., skill development, knowledge sharing). Elena Testa then presented statistics on the nationality distribution of SNEs and applicants.

She then went on to introduce the new EFSA approach to the SNE scheme, emphasizing shorter secondments, clearer and shared objectives, and better promotion, and the specific dissemination activities for targeted profiles. Lastly, the FP were invited to promote the January 2025 call for SNEs and to support EFSA in raising visibility and applications for SNE positions.

Some FP expressed their concern over the potential brain-drain and lack of human resources in their departments. To answer this concern, it was highlighted that the knowledge acquired by the national expert during their stay at EFSA will return to their organization, enriched, afterwards.

Another concern that was expressed was that SNEs might not go back to their organization and stay in EFSA. EFSA informed the FP that even though there are cases in which this happens, in general the rate of SNEs staying in EFSA through other positions is low.



The possibility to work as an SNE part-time was dismissed as it will prevent issues regarding the nature of the work, the salary and potential conflicts of interest.

2.1.1 Member State experience: Cyprus

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Georgios Stavroulakis (Cyprus)**.

Georgios Stavroulakis shared experience from his one-year secondment in the EFSA's Risk Assessment Logistics Unit (RAL). The presentation focused on the nature of his tasks, on training activities and on the benefits from the secondment in EFSA.

The positives aspects mentioned were – the satisfaction to work for the European citizens, multicultural and inclusive environment, the networking opportunities, the trainings and development plans and the flexible working hours.

During the discussion, it was proposed for EFSA to consider creating an SNE alumni network, where SNE could share their experience, including information on topics they were working on. The FP could use this information to raise awareness on the SNE schema.

2.2 Updates on Advisory Group on Data

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Akos Jozwiak (Hungary)**.

This presentation gave an overview on the latest updates on work of the Advisory Group on Data (AGoD). The presentation underlined the main tasks of AGoD, e.g., to act as a governance body providing recommendations on data related matters and ideas, including acting as a consulting body on FP tailor-made activities proposals in area of data. Akos Jozwiak provided a detailed overview of the subgroups created under the AGoD as well as the meeting plan for 2025. He also highlighted the importance of working together with FP on TMA, on nomination of national experts, on support to national experts involved in AGoD work and on raising awareness of AGoD work.

The questions raised by the FP focused on the challenges in coding national terms into FoodEx2 codes. Akos Jozwiak replied that this item is of interest for the AGoD as well and noted the ongoing efforts including under the TMA to create the tools to support this process.

2.3 FP support in creation of EU Library of Food Safety Guidance Documents

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Gloria López-Gálvez (EFSA)** and **Laura Sanmartín (EFSA)**.

The presentation was a follow-up of the items presented and discussed during the 91st Advisory Forum meeting (6-7 March 2024) and the 94th Advisory Forum meeting (4-5 December 2024).

The presentation gave an overview of the exercise run by EFSA on the creation of an EU library containing guidance documents developed at national level supporting risk assessment



areas under EFSA's remit. This library would be part of a wider activity on the EFSA's initiative on Guidance Architecture.

Gloria López-Gálvez provided a summary of the first inputs received from the Advisory Forum on guidance documents and invited Focal Points to validate and complement the information submitted. In addition, the countries who did not provide an input during the first exercise were invited to share the available information. Data would be collected from 1st March to 30th April 2025. The importance to work together with Article 36 organizations was also highlighted.

Laura Sanmartín presented the tool where to insert the requested information, the MS Lists. Before launching the official exercise, foreseen by 1st March, a test should be made with some voluntary countries.

Following FP's questions, it was clarified that the form can be filled with guidance documents both in English and in the MS's national languages. In a first step, the only parts that would be translated would be the title, keywords and abstract/summary. In case that, upon a second step, the full guidance is translated by EFSA, it should be made clear that countries will not be liable for such translation.

III. EFSA Trainings Roadmap

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Monica Ingeaua (EFSA)** and **Raquel Garcia Matas (EFSA)**.

The presentation introduced EFSA's scientific training program set-up (from 2026 onwards) – its key objectives, responsible units, steps, timing and its progress focusing on the further support needed from MS and FP. The available courses on the 2025 Scientific training program were also presented. FP were encouraged to share this information to their scientific network participants and relevant experts.

The new training set-up process involves several key actions. Firstly, dedicated survey to FP to assess the alignment between the courses offered by EFSA and the participants' expectations. FP were invited to fill it in by the end of February. Secondly, an expert survey targeting experts in MS with dual expertise: on their area of knowledge and on designing, developing and/or delivering training courses. FP were invited to support dissemination of the survey and to aim it to the relevant MS experts. Finally, focus group meetings for shaping future training approaches in food and feed safety assessment. FP were invited to nominate experts for participation in the focus groups and were also invited to register to participate in the dedicated FP focus group session/s.

Monica Ingeaua also assured that the knowledge gathered through the principal activity of identifying training needs is used as one of the information sources for training set-up and explained the time gap between receiving the information from the MS and its reflection in potential training programs.

As the next steps, EFSA would share the dedicated surveys to the target audiences.



IV. Focal Point activities

4.1 Focal Point Health Check

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Julia Finger (EFSA)**.

4.1.1 Status Update

This presentation gave an overview on the current Health Check work, its objectives and how Member States can be involved, as well as the next steps to be taken, highlighting the importance of sustainability, impact and of the role of the network. The quick fixes for 2025 were presented, as well as considerations for the next FP framework.

4.1.2 Interactive session on benefits and added value stemming from the current framework

The session started with a SLIDO questionnaire of 6 questions to FPs on TMA deliverables. The answers are supposed to help measuring the outreach and feedback on TMA deliverables, get an idea on how broadly the community exchanges on these deliverables and what could be hindering factors to these exchanges. The questions and the replies gathered during the meeting are in Annex II.

The questionnaire has been followed by a plenary discussion on FPs view on TMA deliverables. The questions had been sent ahead of the meeting via mail and Teams and FPs were invited to discuss at national level and to provide feedback in the plenary.

Question for the plenary discussion: Based on Focal Points current experiences, do you think that TMA deliverables:

- *provide benefit/support to the EU food safety system?*
- *contribute to future Risk Assessment work?*
- *can be used by most of the countries (have an inclusive approach)?*
- *have enough visibility? What would you do to raise it?*

Finally, FPs have been asked their views and ideas on how to best promote TMA deliverables.

The visibility of deliverables was deemed as a complex issue, in particular regarding confidentiality issues and the balance between confidentiality and inclusivity

The publication of deliverables on the internet was mentioned but deemed difficult to organize, it was suggested that the visibility should be improved for the relevant organizations and networks rather than the general public.

The question of the ease of access to deliverables was also discussed, as the current labeling can sometimes appear unclear. To solve this issue, efforts should be made to improve labelling. It was proposed to discuss visibility and other issues in thematic sessions.



4.2 Follow-up from the Community Management training

Chair **Sérgio Potier Rodeia** gave the floor to **Marella Tassini (EFSA)**, to give a follow-up on the Community Management training for FP that took place on 19 December 2024.

The training, which included a practice exercise, provided an overview on community management principles and best practices. It illustrated how community management can support FP in their challenges and presented their role as both community members and community managers.

The main takeaways from the event include a high interest of FP on the topic and a request for additional trainings on Community Management focusing on how to shape the community. Marella Tassini assured that EFSA has looked in the FP request and will plan together with FP follow-up training. FP noted that similar training is given also to other MS Communication Coordinators and that some of FP have overlapping roles and they would have access to the training twice. EFSA noted that trainings are voluntary, and FP can choose to attend or not.

4.3 Principal activities' implementation

Chair **Sérgio Potier Rodeia** gave the floor to **Elina Ciekure, Chloé Russo, Oscar Gonzalez, Gabriele Zancanaro (all EFSA)**.

Chloé Russo started with the summary of the 2024 reporting, giving information about the most and least selected activities, budget uptake and feedback received from FP on activities implementation.

Elina Ciekure presented the leaning of the process of handling the invitation to the national events coming from FP as the response to growing number of the requests received and support the relevant presence of EFSA in the events. Invitations should be channeled through the one entry point either Scientific Cooperation mailbox or in some cases the AF secretariat mailbox. One of the key elements noted was timely communication, also definition of the aim of the event and added value brought by EFSA presence. Other discussed practicalities included the language of the event, a type of EFSA participation and importance of interactions with participants during an event.

Oscar Gonzalez gave a presentation on the already well-established activity between EFSA and FP on EFSA's support to applicants. FP were invited to support in identifying conferences, forums and events where EFSA could be invited to present EFSA's services for applicants, in particular to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). He also presented the call for MS delegates to apply to EFSA's community on applications for food and feed products, which will be launched in March 2025.

Gabriele Zancanaro updated FP on the actions ongoing in EFSA (with MS support) related to the data flow mapping (ex-SIGMA project). He assured that the information received through FP as the result of the implementation on their principal activity is still valid, valuable and used by EFSA. There is currently a shift between platforms and some updates are not visible



to MS but until the end of the year, the new version of country cards with data flow visualisations should be available for everyone.

4.4 Preparation for the new FP tailor-made cycle

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Elina Ciekure**, who provided an overview on the latest updates in the TMA proposals' submission template (shared with FP in February). The next submission window will run from March 1st to April 15th. The main changes included more detailed examples and tips on budget estimations, a new section on the sustainability assessment of the proposal to provide insights on possible actions after the EFSA grant ends, and an annex with information from the finance unit on the types of activities that can be granted by EFSA to MS competent organizations, to clarify and support a common understanding of the activities that can be proposed under TMA. FP were invited to share the new version of template to their national counterparts.

4.5 Status update from tailor-made and principal activities' implementation

4.5.1 Feedback from the Norway FP meeting with national stakeholders

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Gisle Solstad (Norway)**. The presentation provided a summary on the event organized by the Norway FP with national EFSA stakeholders, e.g., risk communication experts and scientific network participants, held on 10 January 2025. Among participants there were also participants from Sweden and Denmark. EFSA officers were invited as speakers and observers and their participation was well received by the event participants. The event consisted of joints session and three parallel sessions: on the Transparency Regulation and partnerships; on EFSA Scientific Networks; and on Risk Communication. The post event survey showed a high level of satisfaction with the event organised. The positive aspects mentioned were the diversity and high number of participants and the possibilities for follow-up created by the event. The lessons learned included some technical aspects of the meeting and the observation that there were too many items included in the agenda, resulting in insufficient time for Q&As.

4.5.2 Luxembourg takeaway messages from the event organized under Safe2Eat campaign

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Miriam Fougères (Luxembourg)** to give feedback on the Luxembourg's first year experience in the Safe2Eat campaign and on the conference organised under implementation of FP activities. The conference "The safety on



my plate”, targeted to the general public, raised awareness about EFSA’s work and covered topics such as Salmonella, antimicrobial resistance, food supplements, and plant pests.

The Luxembourg colleagues working on the Safe to Eat campaign gained first time experience in working with a communication agency, an influencer, and food magazines. The campaign allowed them to gain new experiences, broaden collaborations, increase press contacts, and gain visibility. Measuring the impact the campaign had on awareness is challenging, and comparisons with previous years are not possible, but will be in the future. They received valuable feedback on future improvements, and they aim to explore further projects with their successful partners.

4.5.3 Status update on the TMA Inspections and Samples: risk based versus random – phase 2

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Ian Kopacka (Austria)**, to give an update on the ongoing TMA on Inspections and Samples: risk based versus random – phase 2, which is entering its finalization phase. It is implemented by the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, Portugal and Albania.

The TMA focuses on the communication of the methods identified and created during the previous phase of the TMA to other MS via dedicated webinar and symposium; as well as on the application of methods to practical use cases and on the continuous development of the methods. The presentation indicated the challenges faced, the goals and the next steps to be taken, including the continuation of the work on the topic and seeking for alternative funding sources. The good engagement between countries and EFSA colleagues during the activity’s implementation have been highlighted.

Efisio Solazzo (EFSA) expressed his congratulations for the project and praised the project’s capacity building and case studies.

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia also invited the team to consider the re-submission of the TMA proposal.

4.5.4 EFSA national awareness event in the Republic of Serbia

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Nadezda Dukic (Serbia)**, to share an experience on the EFSA national awareness event in the Republic of Serbia, which took place on 8 November 2024, in Belgrade, Serbia. Participants and presenters included EFSA, the EU delegation, WHO, observers from the Republic of Serbia in EFSA Scientific Networks. Topics covered included the organization of the food safety system in Serbia and operational activities within the EFSA IPA program. The event received very positive feedback, with participants suggesting a similar event be held next year.



5. AOB

5.1 Update on EFSA's Social media presence

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia highlighted EFSA's commitment to trust and transparency, and the fact that EFSA regularly review its online presence to ensure it aligns with the agency's values and gave floor to **Filippo Positano (EFSA)**.

Filippo Positano shared the latest updates on EFSA's social media presence. He expressed that the decision was made to suspend the organization's presence on X and transition to Blue Sky, an open-source platform with better algorithm transparency and community engagement. Additionally, a new communication channel was established on WhatsApp to further diversify outreach efforts.

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia encouraged FP to reassess their digital presence in light of ongoing shifts in the digital media landscape and to explore the opportunity to join EFSA on Bluesky.

Annex I. Summary of the Action Points

Action reference	Who	Action
<u>Action 1</u>	FP	to support and amplify visibility of new EFSA Seconded National Experts call.
<u>Action 2</u>	EFSA	to provide supporting communication materials on Seconded National Expert (SNE) schema and detailed information on available positions in EFSA, and to consider creation of SNE alumni group.
<u>Action 3</u>	FP	with support of national organisations to compile, complement and validate the data on national food safety guidance to support creation of EU library of food safety guidance documents.
<u>Action 4</u>	FP	to fill in a survey focusing on expert training in food and feed safety risk assessment.
<u>Action 5</u>	FP	to disseminate the EFSA survey targeted to trainers and training developers in food and feed safety risk assessment to all potentially relevant and interested parties.
<u>Action 6</u>	FP	to apply for and to support identification of subject matter experts that have a good insight in the needs and developments for topics in food and feed safety risk assessment to take part in focus groups aimed to produce input to the shaping future training approaches.
<u>Action 7</u>	EFSA	to lean the process of the activities' deliverables' visibility with support of FP.
<u>Action 8</u>	FP	to fill in the survey to identify events where EFSA would present their Support to applicant services (in particular to SMEs).
<u>Action 9</u>	FP	to disseminate and to support the call on the setting up a stakeholder community on applications for food and feed products.
<u>Action 10</u>	FP	to support raising visibility of new EFSA social media accounts.



Annex II. Summary of the replies received during item 4.1

1. Did you ever look up or share TMA deliverables? 40 votes

1. I looked up one or more TMA deliverables: 22 votes (55%)
2. I have shared one of more TMA deliverables: 12 votes (30%)
3. Where do I find TMA deliverables?: 14 votes (35%)

2. I have not looked up or shared deliverables because 22 votes

1. I have no time to do so: 2 votes (9%)
2. I do not understand them: 1 vote (5%)
3. I do not find them: 16 votes (73%)
4. I do not see any added value in doing so 0 vote
5. Other... 5 votes (23%)

3. I have looked up and/or shared deliverables 28 votes

1. my organisation was involved in: 19 votes (68%)
2. an organisation of my country was involved in: 5 votes (18%)
3. with no direct involvement, but interest: 14 votes (50%)

4. I have shared deliverables with 20 votes

1. colleagues in my organisation: 18 votes (90%)
2. individual experts not in my organisation (targeted, in and beyond Art.36): 11 votes (55%)
3. Art.36 organisation(s)' contact point in my country: 4 votes (20%)
4. organisations not on the Art.36 list: 3 votes (15%)

5. I have shared deliverables with any of the abovementioned 16 votes

1. for their information: 14 votes (88%)
2. for dissemination: 3 votes (19%)
3. for follow-up or to address their needs: 7 votes (44%)

6. Feedback I have received on sharing deliverables was 18 participants

1. positive / raised interest: 11 votes (61%)
 2. negative / raised criticism: 1 vote (6%)
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3. no feedback / no interest: 10 votes (56%)