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EFSA Strategy 2027

Science
Safe food
Sustainability

UPDATED EDITION

Adopted at the Management Board meeting
held in virtual modality on 24 June 2021

For EFSA's Management Board
[SIGNED]
Raymond O'Rourke
Chair of the Management Board

efsa
European Food Safety Authority

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CONTENTS

Foreword 4

Introduction 6

Strategic Foundation 7

- Mission 7
- Vision 7
- Values 7
  - Excellence 7
  - Independence 7
  - Openness 8
  - Accountability 8
  - Cooperation 8
- Who we are 8
- Who we work with 8
- How we work 8

EFSA's Environment 9

EFSA's 2027 Strategic Objectives 12

Strategic Objective 1 | Deliver trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork 13

- Expected Outcome 1.1 13
  - Expected Operational Results 13
- Expected Outcome 1.2 14
  - Expected Operational Results 14

Strategic Objective 2 | Ensure preparedness for future risk analysis needs 15

- Expected Outcome 2.1 15
  - Expected Operational Results 15

Strategic Objective 3 | Empower people and ensure organisational agility 16

- Expected Outcome 3.1 16
  - Expected Operational Results 16

Annex I: High-level Implementation Plan 17

Annex II: Terminology & Hierarchy 21

FOREWORD

Raymond O'Rourke,
Chair of the EFSA
Management Board

Bernhard Url,
EFSA's Executive Director

The starting point for EFSA's last strategy document, published in 2016, was that "the environment within which we operate is changing rapidly and, in some respects, dramatically". The document was an acknowledgement that the speed of change around us, and the growing turbulence of the times in which we were operating, warranted a considered, overarching framework for our work.

In many ways the challenges we identified five years ago remain the same – from big issues such as addressing public expectations of greater transparency and engagement and the impact of globalisation, to in-house concerns such as how we can further improve efficiency at EFSA and continue to attract the scientific expertise we need to do our job effectively.

But the pace of social, political and technological development has, if anything, accelerated further since 2016. Who foresaw the departure of the UK from the European Union? Or the rise in populism across the globe that has undermined so many of the things we previously took for granted – such as trust in science and scientists. We now live in the age of "alternative truths" and "fake news". And, of course, the SARS-CoV-2 global pandemic will change the way we live and work for years to come.

Closer to home, our 2027 strategy document, while picking up the themes and issues of the 2020 Strategy, comes at a historical moment for EFSA and for all those involved in food safety, security and sustainability.

The implementation of the EU's Farm to Fork strategy, part of the Green Deal, will clearly shape our activities for the foreseeable future. It is an ambitious, potentially transformative project. Then there is the amendment to the General Food Law, the so-called Transparency Regulation, which came into effect in 2021, bringing new obligations for EFSA but also new opportunities and more resources – human and financial. In addition, EFSA's important risk communication role has been further deepened which will entail further adaptations to the way EFSA communicates risk in the coming years.

It is against this backdrop that we have prepared EFSA's Strategy 2027. It sets out how we intend to respond to this changing environment, particularly the newly amended General Food Law and to prepare for the challenges ahead, such as digitalisation, capacity to meet emerging needs, and coordinated support to the EC sustainability agenda.

The reforms required to bring the regulation into effect will require commitment and co-operation from all involved in the food safety system in the EU. This of course includes EFSA and extends to organisations in the public and private sector at a national and European level. It is only by working together and by pooling resources and assets – knowledge, expertise and data – that the EU will continue to deliver the high standards of food safety for which it is renowned.

Cooperation has been deep-rooted into EFSA's operating mode since day one. Now, in the face of unprecedented challenges for safe, healthy and sustainable food we want to take it to a new level: creating value through partnerships within an EU food safety ecosystem.

This ethos of collaboration – and EFSA's more focused role as an enabler of collective action – is at the heart of our Strategy 2027.

This document is based on a thorough scan and analysis of the internal and external environment in which EFSA operates, carried out in 2019 and 2020. The 2027 Strategy Document as now published was drawn up in close consultation with the Management Board as well as our partners and stakeholders. We believe it sets out an exciting course for EFSA over the next half a decade, based on a clear vision and purpose.

Amid all this talk of change, one thing remains unamended. EFSA contributes to the safety of the EU food chain by providing scientific advice to risk managers, by communicating on risks to the public, and by cooperating with Member States and other parties to uphold a coherent, trusted food safety system in the EU. This mission has been a constant since EFSA was born in 2002 and will remain so.

INTRODUCTION

This document comes at a historical point in time for EFSA: an amendment to the General Food Law came into effect in 2021 that increased its responsibilities towards EU citizens; EU-wide policy developments, such as the Green Deal actions and in particular the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and the Biodiversity Strategy, have been announced and will shape the focus of its activities in the years ahead; and the SARS-CoV-2 global pandemic has, and will, require it to adapt to new ways of working. It is against this backdrop that EFSA has prepared its Strategy 2027. It sets out how EFSA intends to respond to this changing environment, describing the added value it proposes to its customers, partners, stakeholders, and the public at large.

EFSA's Strategy 2027 is structured in three main parts. The first part describes EFSA's strategic foundation – the elements that give purpose and meaning to its day-to-day activities, including its key values. These represent and reflect the role the organisation will have in the years to come.

The second part details the outcome of an analysis that EFSA carried out of its internal and external environment. The aim of the analysis was to identify the critical challenges and opportunities that it will face in the future and to explore their relevance to the organisation in the medium and long term.

The third part of the document sets out the strategic objectives, expected outcomes and results that will guide EFSA through the next six years. This is accompanied by a high-level implementation plan, detailing what activities EFSA will carry out to achieve the objectives.

The Strategy has been drawn up in close consultation with EFSA's Management Board and, in the shaping of the final document, EFSA has considered feedback from a public consultation. A mid-term review of the Strategy will be carried out at the end of 2024 to assess progress and make necessary adjustments as a result of any changes that occur in the meantime to EFSA's operating environment.

STRATEGIC FOUNDATION

EFSA's Strategic Foundations are the elements that give purpose and meaning to its day-to-day activities.

The elements that form EFSA's Strategic Foundations are the following:

- ▲ Mission
- ▲ Vision
- ▲ Values
- ▲ Who we are
- ▲ Who we work with
- ▲ How we work

MISSION

Safety in the food chain from farm to fork is at EFSA's core. We contribute to protecting human life and health, taking account of animal health and welfare, plant health and the environment.

We deliver independent and transparent scientific advice to policy makers, through cooperation with our partners, and in an open dialogue with society.

VISION

Safe food and sustainable food systems through transparent, independent and trustworthy scientific advice.

VALUES

A set of key values guides all of EFSA's activities. We are committed to upholding them in all areas of our work.

Excellence

Organisational Description	Staff Description
We deliver rigorous and reliable risk assessments, building on the latest scientific advancements. We communicate to meet the needs of our different audiences.	I work to the highest possible standards to support EFSA in achieving its mission. I am efficient, agile and innovative in my work.

Independence

Organisational Description	Staff Description
We ensure impartiality of our scientific outputs. Staff and experts, free of conflicts of interests, analyse data and apply methods objectively. Group decision-making allows for diversity and review among peers.	I carry out my work impartially, in accordance with EFSA's policy on independence. I strive to ensure that the data, methods and experts I work with are free of bias to the greatest extent possible. [1]

[1] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/policy_independence.pdf

Openness

Organisational Description	Staff Description
Our risk assessments and communications are accessible and understandable. They are produced via transparent processes, enhanced by an open dialogue with all interested parties.	I ensure my work is accessible and understandable, underpinned by the principle of transparency. I engage openly with parties interested in my work.

Accountability

Organisational Description	Staff Description
We serve the public interest, working to deliver improvements in food safety from farm to fork. We use resources effectively, responsibly and sustainably.	I serve the public interest, providing value to society while ensuring that expected results are achieved and resources used effectively, responsibly and sustainably.

Cooperation

Organisational Description	Staff Description
We see collaboration as the only way to master the complexities of the future. We invest in building long-term partnerships for mutual benefit.	I value collaboration highly, with colleagues and beyond EFSA, sharing knowledge and identifying opportunities for working together in areas of mutual interest.

WHO WE ARE

We are an agency of the European Union set up in 2002 to serve as an impartial source of scientific advice to risk managers and to communicate on risks associated with the food chain. We cooperate with interested parties to promote the coherence of EU scientific advice. We provide the scientific basis for laws and regulations to protect European consumers from food-related risks – from farm to fork.

WHO WE WORK WITH

Individual experts and competent organisations are our main knowledge partners. To nurture these relations, we cooperate intensively with Member States risk assessment organisations via the Advisory Forum, the National Focal Points and our Scientific Networks. Likewise, we work with other EU agencies, international organisations and risk assessors in third countries to increase outreach and joint food safety impact. EU citizens are the ultimate beneficiaries of our work: we engage with them and our stakeholders ([2]) through a multitude of platforms and fora.

HOW WE WORK

The core of our activities is to collect, appraise and integrate scientific evidence to answer questions about risks. The outcome of our work is scientific advice to risk managers, jointly produced by independent experts and EFSA staff. Everything we do is guided by our values of Excellence, Independence, Openness, Accountability and Cooperation. The transparency of our processes, together with our engagement activities, allows for interested parties to scrutinise our work and interact with us in an open dialogue on equal terms. We communicate about risks in the food chain independently and in a way that meets the needs of our audiences. Together with our Member States partners, we build the European food safety knowledge ecosystem, ensuring safe food as the basis for healthy diets and sustainable food systems.

([2]) EFSA's stakeholders are representative organisations that have an interest in the Authority's work or in the wider food and feed sector. As per current Stakeholder Engagement Approach (SEA), EFSA divides stakeholders into seven major groups (details here)

EFSA'S ENVIRONMENT

The starting point for EFSA's 2027 Strategy was a forward-looking scan and analysis of the internal and external environment in which the Authority finds itself. Carried out in 2019 and 2020, the purpose of this exercise was to identify emerging scientific, societal, political, and technological issues and trends that may have an impact on EFSA's operations in the years ahead. What follows is a summary of the main findings of this environmental scan. Further details and sources ([3]) can be found in the full reports of the Environmental Scans performed, which will be published alongside the 2027 Strategy on EFSA's website.

THE BIG PICTURE

The European food safety regulatory framework provides EU consumers with one of the safest food systems in the world. However, demographic changes, malnutrition and the rise of non-communicable diseases, climate change and the depletion of natural resources (including biodiversity) will require new approaches to food safety in the future.

The ongoing SARS-COV2 pandemic, which has placed significant pressure on health systems across the EU, brings the role of science to the centre of the public debate on effective risk analysis.

At a global level, the United Nations has adopted a transformative agenda for 2030 based on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are designed to stimulate action in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet. At an EU level, the European Commission has put forward its Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system. This is one of the key components of the European Green Deal, alongside the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability. The main aim of F2F is to enhance the sustainability of the European food system, ensuring the protection of the health of humans, animals, plants and the environment.

In 2021 - nineteen years since its establishment as a key actor in the European food safety regulatory framework - EFSA is charged with implementing the Transparency Regulation[4]. Brought about as a result of the changing expectations of the civil society and the public at large, the Transparency Regulation ultimately strengthens EFSA's role and places it on a more sustainable footing for the years to come.

The reforms required to bring the Transparency Regulation into effect will require commitment and co-operation from all involved in the food safety system in the EU. This of course includes EFSA and extends to organisations in the public and private sector at a national and European level. It is only by working together and by pooling resources and assets (knowledge, expertise, data, and methods) that the EU will continue to deliver the high standards of food safety for which it is renowned.

EVOLVING DIALOGUE WITH SOCIETY

Trends such as the rise of populism and national sentiment in the EU, coupled with the democratisation of information in a highly interconnected, global environment, are combining to affect the trust of citizens in institutions and the expectations that society places on regulatory science ([5]). Within the EU, food safety information needs vary significantly depending on socio-economic factors and geography. And food safety is just one piece of the puzzle: it influences consumer choices together with food quality, origin, taste, nutrient content, environmental impact, and price. As the Transparency Regulation indicates, more attention should be given to provide coherent,

([3]) Sources included the JRC report "Delivering on EU Food Safety and Nutrition in 2050 - Future challenges and policy preparedness", the EU Farm to Fork Strategy, the Third independent External evaluation of EFSA and others (see EFSA Strategic Environmental Scan report)

([4]) Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain

([5]) Transdisciplinary scientific information, including risk/safety assessments, methods, tools, models and scientific advice, to support sound and transparent science-based policies

consistent and clear messages about food-related risks. This reinforces risk communication as a core part of the risk analysis paradigm with its relevance arguably set to increase within today's information ecosystem. With technology steadily influencing and challenging risk communication, the way messages are created, shared and amplified is evolving, and EFSA will need to keep pace with these rapid advances. Building and maintaining networks of food safety communications professionals across the EU will be key to harnessing the opportunities that these new advances offer.

At the same time, the call for transparency emphasises the need for increased open dialogue with society. Appropriate engagement strategies in risk assessment and communication must take into consideration the positions of different stakeholders and ensure a balanced representation of all interested parties. There must be transparent, widely available information that helps understand EFSA's processes, while preserving its confidentiality where appropriate. This should be complemented by mechanisms that allow for interested parties and the wider public to contribute to EFSA's work easily and in a balanced manner.

FOOD SAFETY – INTEGRAL TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

As the global population grows from 7 billion in 2010 to a projected 9.8 billion by 2050, overall food demand is on course to increase by more than 50% and demand for animal-based foods by nearly 70%. Yet even today, hundreds of millions of people remain hungry and agriculture already uses almost half of the world's arable land. Furthermore, agriculture and related land-use change generate 25% of annual greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve the SDG targets, it is necessary to significantly transform our production and consumption patterns, producing more with less and reducing food loss and waste.

This transformation will likely require the development of alternative food and feed sources (e.g. insects and synthetic meat) and new production technologies (e.g. precision farming) that must be assessed for any risks they pose to humans, animals, and the environment. Same applies to the assessment of risks linked to the introduction of circular economy principles along the food supply chain, which could play a role in the transition to a more sustainable food system. To achieve sustainable consumption and reduce malnutrition, changes in dietary patterns will also be needed.

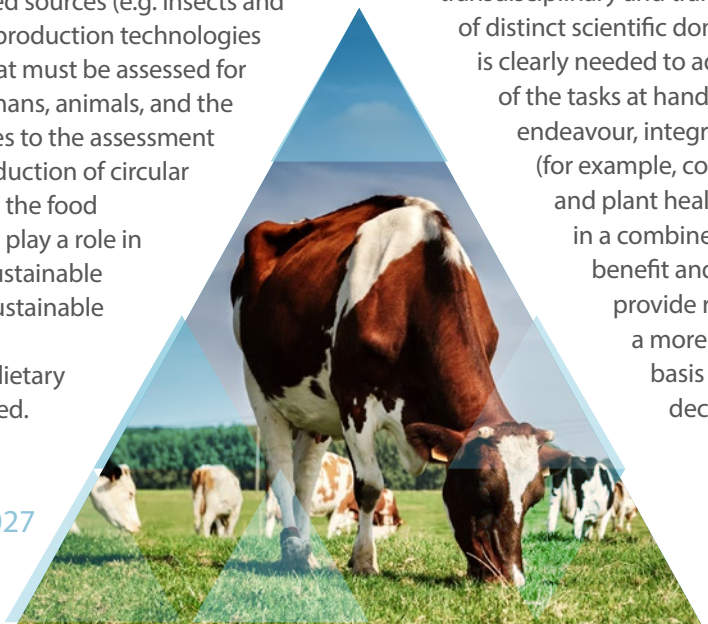
This is reiterated in the EU Farm to Fork Strategy, which seeks opportunities to facilitate the shift to healthier diets and stimulate product reformulation.

Sustainable production of safe food begins on farms. Therefore, plant health, an important part of EFSA's mandate, is a cornerstone of food security and sustainable food systems. The International Year of Plant Health in 2020 raised awareness of how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment, boost economic development, and contribute to achieving the Sustainability Development Goals.

Likewise, animal health and welfare are fundamental components of food safety. Safeguarding the health of animals reduces the incidence of zoonoses, supports the competitiveness of animal food production and contributes to the sustainability of rural communities. Specific attention will have to be paid to the fight against antimicrobial resistance, as this constitutes a major global public health threat. Joint efforts of all actors in livestock production will be needed to significantly reduce the use of antimicrobial substances. Achieving more sustainable aquaculture as well as seeking solutions for restoring soil health will need to complement these efforts.

Another important aspect of animal health is the role of animals as intermediate hosts: The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has demonstrated again the need for assessing and managing risks at the interfaces between wildlife habitats, domestic animals, and the human ecosphere with a systemic perspective. Future evaluations will also need to consider the impact of international trade, human movements, and climate change on the microbiological risks leading to the globalisation of food-borne diseases.

In many ways, the arguments mentioned above demonstrate the necessity of applying a "one health – one environment" approach for safeguarding public health, animal health, plant health and the environment: transdisciplinary and transboundary cooperation of distinct scientific domains and organisations is clearly needed to address the complexity of the tasks at hand. As one result of this endeavour, integrated risk assessments (for example, considering human, animal and plant health or the environment in a combined way), as well as risk benefit and risk – risk assessment, will provide risk managers with a more comprehensive evidence basis for public health policy decisions.



MAKING THE MOST OF THE FOOD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE ECOSYSTEM

The EU's Horizon Europe research agenda is a promising tool to address some of the issues that exist as a result of the lack of harmonisation in food safety standards at global level. It will also help to drive research forward for the diverse areas of EFSA's remit where the cost of generating new scientific knowledge can be very high. Funding programmes at Member State level will also contribute to the strengthening of the scientific evidence for risk assessment and risk monitoring.

Investments made in partnerships and cooperation with EFSA's sister EU agencies and food safety bodies in Member States, as well as with international organisations, will result in further economies of scale and more capacity to deliver on even the most complex regulatory science. Similarly, evolving towards joint systems, processes and tools with EU agencies and Member States, such as in the "One substance One assessment" initiative under the EU Chemicals strategy, is expected to yield important efficiencies. Policy developments are taking place even faster through changes linked to new technologies, scientific knowledge, expertise and the exponential growth in the availability of data and information.

EFSA relies on a large pool of scientific expertise to produce its risk assessments, provided by both its network of EU experts and its staff. While attracting the required expertise to EFSA from within the EU is a continuous challenge, the rich and diverse EU academic environment, coupled with the opportunities offered by Horizon Europe and Member State research programmes, should foster the sustainability of the expertise needed for EFSA's scientific work. In addition, the ever-increasing mobility of people and knowledge, facilitated by the widespread use of digital technologies such as those that emerged during the Coronavirus pandemic, also presents unique opportunities to be explored further.

HARNESSING NEW TRENDS IN DATA, TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE

The volume of data produced in the world is growing rapidly, from 33 zettabytes in 2018 to an expected 175 zettabytes in 2025. Furthermore, the way in which data is stored and processed will change dramatically over the coming 5 years. Today 80% of the processing and analysis of data takes place in data centres and centralised computing facilities, and 20% in smart connected objects. By 2025 these proportions are likely to be inverted. At the same time, there is an increasing amount of data from different sources (surveillance and controls, and biomonitoring) that remain under-exploited due to a lack of connectivity. While EFSA is already exploring approaches to manage and exploit big data sets, such as in whole genome sequencing, the sheer speed and complexity with which data relevant to its risk assessments is growing means that new tools and approaches are urgently needed to take advantage of them. Access to real-time data from monitoring systems in the food chain would increase EFSA's capacity to define scenarios, refine risk assessments or measure the impact of emerging risks or new control methods.

Cognitive analytics such as machine learning and natural language processing can discover patterns and relationships in information from millions of texts, books, online articles and other sources (e.g. social media) - information that could take human researchers decades to discover, retrieve and digest. Artificial intelligence offers great opportunities for risk assessment but also challenges of an ethical and technological nature, recognizing the continued need for human expertise to assist the use of technology. Harnessing collaboration tools to enable co-creation of models and algorithms will position EFSA to take advantage of the power of these capabilities. EFSA will have to navigate how to manage its enhanced responsibilities towards transparency in the face of data ownership concerns from Member States and confidentiality claims from applicants, among other considerations.

Finally, the development of scientific methodologies and tools, and the opportunity to refine existing ones, will offer new approaches for risk assessment in line with the 3Rs principle (Replacement, Refinement, and Reduction) to animal testing. EFSA must continue to invest in harvesting data and information to stay abreast of evolving scientific methodologies and research and develop adequate methodologies to assess new sources of potential food/feed risks such as new production technologies.

Investing in future preparedness by further developing methodologies to identify emerging risks at global level, and proposing prevention strategies that ensure the safety and sustainability of food systems is important; but also in conjunction, developing new and agile processes for rapid assessments is needed to support policy action when incidents occur. These scientific and technological developments must ultimately contribute to the evolution of regulatory risk assessment in the EU.

EFSA'S 2027 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

EFSA's Strategy 2027 coincides with the entry into force of the new Transparency Regulation. This Regulation aims to build stakeholders' and citizens' trust in EFSA through increased transparency and improved communication, while making its risk assessments more reliable and its operational model more sustainable. The various requirements placed on EFSA by the Transparency Regulation have been captured in this Strategy as implementation actions. In many respects, they follow on naturally from the objectives and measures that were included in EFSA's Strategy 2020. In addition, the Strategy 2027 outlines new measures that stem from recently announced, long-term EU policy developments (e.g. F2F strategy).

The Strategy centres around **three Strategic Objectives**. These are further expanded into Expected Outcomes, Expected Operational Results, and key actions as detailed in the high-level Implementation Plan ([6]):

- **Strategic Objective 1** I Deliver trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork.
- **Strategic Objective 2** I Ensure preparedness for future risk analysis needs
- **Strategic Objective 3** I Empower people and ensure organisational agility

Should EFSA successfully achieve these Strategic Objectives, one would expect to see the following impacts, through policies and risk management decisions supported by EFSA's work: i) public health ensured, that takes account of the environment, animal health and welfare, and plant health ii) trust sustained in a food safety system that ensures a high level of protection for human health and consumers' interests.

([6]) For a more in-depth overview of the 2027 Strategy hierarchy and definitions, please refer to Annex II

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE **1**

Deliver trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork

Strategic Objective 1 is about EFSA's core business – risk assessment and communication of risks related to human health, animal health and welfare, plant health and the environment. EFSA will strive to deliver high-quality scientific advice to risk managers in partnership with Member States and ENVI agencies ([7]), using the most relevant and internationally harmonised risk assessment approaches. It will do this while listening to and engaging with stakeholders and the public, providing clear and accessible communication.

The expected outcomes under **Strategic Objective 1** include:

- Increased relevance and improved reputation of EFSA's scientific advice
- Increased relevance and improved reputation of EFSA's risk communication

EXPECTED OUTCOME 1.1

Increased relevance and improved reputation of EFSA's scientific advice

EFSA, via transparent, actionable and trustworthy scientific advice , will support the decisions of risk managers at European and Member State level.

This will be done in *partnership* with Member States organisations and other EU agencies; through *open dialogue* with consumers, food and feed businesses, the academic community and all other interested parties (both public and private), and in *cooperation* with international bodies and Third Country Risk Assessors.

The quality, coherence and comprehensiveness of EFSA's scientific advice will increase its relevance. Delivered in an independent and transparent way, it will benefit partners and stakeholders and improve the organisation's reputation.

Expected Operational Results

1.1.1. Assessments for regulated products are delivered with quality and efficiency. In accordance with the principles of independence and transparency, this will be achieved via the application of the new Transparency Regulation measures such as notification of studies and pre-submission advice, confidentiality assessment and data disclosures, as well as the broader participation of Member State competent organisations in EFSA risk assessments. EFSA will also work towards ensuring the quality and predictability of the content and processing of regulated product dossiers.

1.1.2. Generic scientific advice is delivered with quality and efficiency. In accordance with the principles of independence and transparency, this will be achieved via the application of the Transparency Regulation measures such as the implementation of new sourcing/partnership schemes and broadened engagement. Further efforts will include strengthened mandate preparation with EFSA's customers and the implementation of relevant cross cutting guidance, newly developed methodologies and improved data streams.

Quality at EFSA implies that questions received form risk managers are answered on time, comprehensively, with clarity and with the agreed scientific value: impartiality, transparency, engagement and methodological rigour.

([7]) Agencies that support the work of the European Parliament Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), European Environmental Agency (EEA), European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and European Medicines Agency (EMA).

EXPECTED OUTCOME 1.2

Increased relevance and improved reputation of EFSA's risk communication

EFSA will ensure that risk assessment advice is useful and understandable, through transparent, coherent, actionable and trustworthy risk communication.

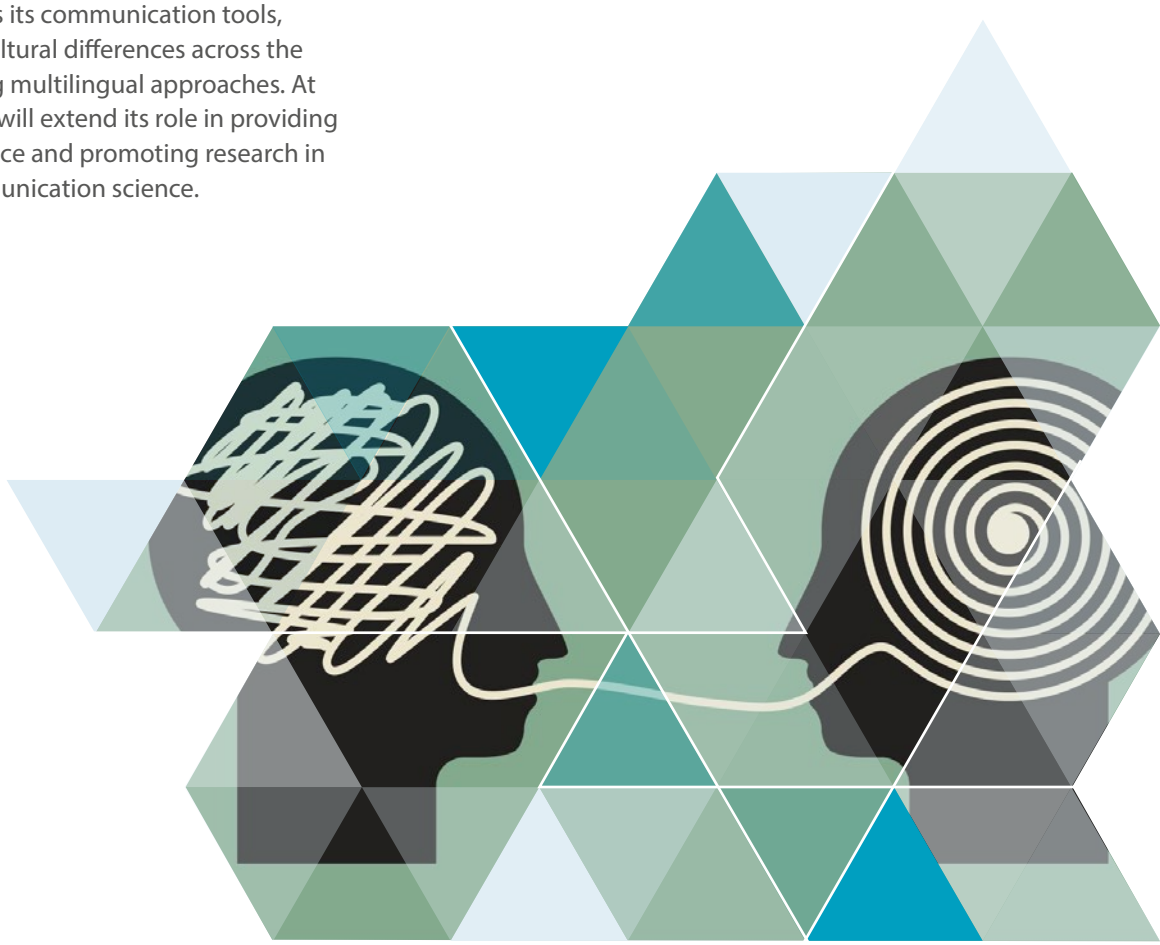
This will be done in *partnership* with EU risk managers, Member States risk assessors and managers and other EU agencies, through *open dialogue* with consumers, food and feed businesses, the academic community and other interested parties and in *cooperation* with international bodies and Third Country risk assessors as a secondary audience.

The quality, clarity, coherence and timeliness of EFSA's risk communication products will benefit partners and stakeholders, as well as the public at large, improving the organisation's reputation.

Expected Operational Results

1.2.1. **An audience-first approach ensures quality throughout risk communication.** EFSA will generate and use insights from social research, analyse the impact of its communication activities and focus on personalising user experience across its communication tools, accounting for cultural differences across the EU and extending multilingual approaches. At the same time, it will extend its role in providing technical assistance and promoting research in the area of communication science.

1.2.2. **Coordinated risk communication is delivered with the European Commission, Member States and ENVI agencies.** EFSA will support the EC in development of the future General Plan for Risk Communication, and invest accordingly in its communication channels and digital platforms, ranging from the evolution of the EFSA Journal to campaigns delivered to EU citizens, through strengthened EU coordination. Joint crisis communication for food safety at the EU level will be enhanced.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE **2**

Ensure preparedness for future risk analysis needs

Strategic Objective 2 is about sustaining and developing EFSA's core capabilities to ensure its long-term relevance and reputation. Strengthened partnerships within the food safety knowledge ecosystem are crucial, and will result in the identification of priority areas for knowledge sharing, knowledge development and capacity building. This, in turn, will allow EFSA to be prepared with the methodologies, data and expertise needed for its future risk assessment and communication activities.

The expected outcome under **Strategic Objective 2** is:

- Increased risk analysis capabilities (knowledge, expertise, methodologies and data) to maintain relevance for the future

EXPECTED OUTCOME 2.1

Increased risk analysis capabilities (knowledge, expertise, methodologies and data) to maintain relevance for the future

EFSA will ensure preparedness for future risk analysis needs by co-producing and making available knowledge, expertise, methodologies and data, and by contributing to the Horizon Europe programme cycle.

This will be done in *partnership* with Member States and other EU agencies, in *cooperation* with international and Third Country risk assessment bodies, and through *open dialogue* with risk managers, the wider scientific community/academia, and stakeholders, both public and private.

The quality, comprehensiveness, and coherence of the four risk analysis capabilities and the efficiency with which knowledge is generated at EU level will benefit partners and stakeholders. This way, EFSA and its partners will be able to address food safety challenges of the future.

We see **partnerships**, based on trust and shared values, as the most promising leverage to co-create the EU food safety knowledge ecosystem for delivering relevant scientific advice in the future.

Expected Operational Results

2.1.1 **Harmonised risk assessment culture, with the necessary knowledge and expertise, is ensured at EU level.** This is achieved via the further development of EU and international cooperation fora and channels, shared platforms and infrastructures, capacity building initiatives, long-term partnerships, flexible and innovative workforce planning and sourcing; as well as strengthened approaches, leveraged by social science, for engaging with all actors who can provide input into EFSA's activities.

2.1.2 **The quality and scale of crisis preparedness and the identification of emerging risks is improved.** Strengthened foresight and horizon scanning will lead to this result, and so will the linking of early warning systems and data systems across the EU bodies, EU Agencies with different remits, Member States and international organisations such as WHO, FAO and OIE. This can be achieved by further evolving the existing networks on emerging risks. Better coordination in media and social media monitoring and early warning communications will support these efforts.

2.1.3 **The quality of scientific guidance and methodologies,** with the necessary risk assessment capabilities **is improved to address future challenges.** Within its risk assessment approaches, EFSA will develop and integrate new scientific developments focusing on NAM-based methods and the minimisation of animal testing, innovations in food systems, data, and technology, and strive to meet One health policy needs.

2.1.4 **Preparedness for future regulatory and policy needs addressing the EU Farm to Fork, Biodiversity and Chemical strategies is ensured,** with a view of contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Exploratory studies and projects to implement new legislation will be undertaken; EFSA will advocate for relevant topics to be included as priorities for EU co-funded research programmes particularly the EU research and innovation framework programme Horizon Europe. Jointly with ENVI agencies, EFSA will propose solutions that support simplification, cost savings and improved regulatory predictability, such as for example the "One substance-one assessment" approach.

2.1.5 **Wider access to and broader exploitation of data and analytics is achieved.** EFSA will strengthen a collaborative data governance together with Member States and other Agencies, improve data quality and interoperability in line with the One Health approach, and draw on Artificial Intelligence-enabled analytics and technologies. Activities will be supported by novel data services and data products developed, using collaborative digital platforms delivered in a One Health EU ecosystem.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE **3**

Empower people and ensure organisational agility

Strategic Objective 3 is about managing and enabling EFSA's operations. EFSA will focus on attracting talents and developing people, organisation, culture, services and tools to increase staff efficiency of its operations. Strengthened institutional partnerships will ensure alignment with higher-level strategies and goals, and increase effectiveness.

The expected outcome under **Strategic Objective 3** is:

- Improved reputation of EFSA as an accountable institution and an attractive employer

EXPECTED OUTCOME 3.1

Improved reputation of EFSA as an accountable institution and an attractive employer

Accountability is at the foundation of EFSA's culture and means that each individual staff member is willing to accept responsibility for their actions: serving the public interest with integrity and striving to increase the value we deliver to the society.

EFSA and its staff will guarantee the efficient implementation of its strategy and entrusted resources, through effective governance, management, and enabling services, inspired by its five core values. This will be done in close *partnership* with EU Institutions.

Demonstrating accountability and efficiency to the EU Parliament, Council and the European Commission will improve the organisational reputation. EFSA will empower its staff and invest in talent management, attracting expertise to support the implementation of its Strategy.

Expected Operational Results

3.1.1 **Staff engagement is inspired by EFSA's value system.** Efforts focussing on competency management and talent development, promoting a culture of agility, accountability, trust, and care are expected to inspire employee engagement and, more broadly, improve the attractiveness of EFSA as an employer.

3.1.2 **User satisfaction and efficiency of enabling services is enhanced.** This is achieved by investing in technological infrastructure, methods for digital collaboration, and initiatives to make processes more efficient and services more user-friendly.

3.1.3 **Operational performance is ensured** by an integrated and lean system for management and governance, adequate internal control and assurance, an embedded results-based approach, and quality management powered by continuous improvement.

3.1.4 **Alignment with EU strategies and policies is ensured** through strengthened institutional partnerships for shared resources, capabilities and services, joint Governance mechanisms with EU partners and agile, ecosystem-conscious strategic planning. Partnership schemes with national scientific organisations to be delivered in alignment to the overall strategy.

ANNEX I
HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Annex I was reviewed in 2024 as part of the Mid-term review of the 2027 Strategy.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE **1**

Deliver trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork

EXPECTED OUTCOME 1.1

Increased relevance and improved reputation of EFSA's scientific advice

Expected Operational Result 1.1.1

Assessments for regulated products are delivered with quality and efficiency

Expected Operational Result 1.1.2

Generic scientific advice is delivered with quality and efficiency

EXPECTED OUTCOME 1.2

Increased relevance and improved reputation of EFSA's risk communication

Expected Operational Result 1.2.1

An audience-first approach ensures quality throughout risk communication

Expected Operational Result 1.2.2

Coordinated risk communication is delivered with the European Commission, Member States and ENVI agencies

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE **2**

Ensure preparedness for future risk analysis needs

EXPECTED OUTCOME 2.1

Increased risk analysis capabilities (knowledge, expertise, methodologies and data) to maintain relevance for the future

Expected Operational Result 2.1.1

Harmonised risk assessment culture, with the necessary knowledge and expertise, is ensured at EU level

KEY ACTIONS

- Streamline the end-to-end risk assessment process by reducing non-value-added activities, from pre-submission to publication
- Expand the use of sourcing tools and partnership schemes to enhance the risk assessment capacity
- Develop user-centric, interoperable digital platforms and networks that support risk assessment, coordinated communication, emerging risk detection, crisis preparedness, capacity building, and innovation
- Establish a working environment that fosters accountability, agility, partnering, innovation, and digital dexterity
- Evolve EFSA into a learning organization by focusing on skills and behaviors, knowledge sharing, collaboration, and organizational capability improvement
- Implement coordinated communication (in line with the European Commission-led general plan for risk communication once adopted)

Expected Operational Result 2.1.2

The quality and scale of crisis preparedness and the identification of emerging risks is improved

KEY ACTIONS

- Enhance crisis preparedness and communication governance and capacity
- Advance the development of foresight, integrated early warning systems, and surveillance methods for emerging risks with partners and stakeholders

Expected Operational Result 2.1.3

The quality of scientific guidance and methodologies, with the necessary risk assessment capabilities, is improved to address future challenges

KEY ACTIONS

- Enhance proactive engagement and align guidance documents, methods, models, tools, and data with other EU and international entities
- Prepare to address risk assessment challenges associated with food and feed systems innovation ([8])
- Develop and implement systems-based approaches for regulatory environmental risk assessment ([8])
- Develop and integrate new approach methodologies (NAMs), including omics and in silico (bio- and chemo-informatics) tools to advance regulatory risk assessments ([8])
- Advance methods to assess human and animal exposure to chemicals across regulatory domains, with particular attention to cumulative and aggregated exposure ([8])
- Consider how microbiomes (human, animal, environment) could be included in the risk assessment ([8])

Expected Operational Result 2.1.4

Preparedness for future regulatory and policy needs addressing the EU Farm to Fork, Biodiversity and Chemical strategies is ensured

KEY ACTIONS

- Contribute to the implementation of the chemicals strategy for sustainability and the EU common data platform on chemicals through EFSA's open data approach and according to findability, accessibility, interoperability and reusability (FAIR) principles
- Engage with the EU 'One Health' risk assessment and communication research agenda, from identifying priorities to developing new capabilities
- Contribute to the development of risk assessment approaches to address sustainable food systems
- Explore, in close collaboration with Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, the structural implications on EFSA's operations from the evolving needs

Expected Operational Result 2.1.5

Wider access to and broader exploitation of data and analytics is achieved

KEY ACTIONS

- Improve and integrate workflows and tools for seamless collaboration on regulatory dossier handling, hazard and exposure assessments, and scientific opinion preparation
- Investigate the use of AI and related technologies for risk assessment and for all EFSA operations, in collaboration with EU institutions
- Strengthen information security to keep pace with technology advancements and comply with regulatory standards
- Create unified systems to standardize and simplify transactional, administrative, scientific support, and management services

([8]) Develop new risk assessment capabilities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE **3**

Empower people and ensure organisational agility

EXPECTED OUTCOME 3.1

Improved reputation of EFSA as an accountable institution and an attractive employer

Expected Operational Result 3.1.1

Staff engagement is inspired by EFSA's value system

Expected Operational Result 3.1.2

User satisfaction and efficiency of enabling services is enhanced

Expected Operational Result 3.1.3

Operational performance is ensured

Expected Operational Result 3.1.4

Alignment with EU strategies and policies is ensured

ANNEX II
TERMINOLOGY & HIERARCHY

REGULATORY SCIENCE

Transdisciplinary scientific information, including risk/safety assessments, methods, tools, models and scientific advice, to support sound and transparent science-based policies.

EXPECTED IMPACTS
(to the Society)

The Expected Impacts are the downstream value we aim at providing to the broader society. They are the overarching objectives of the EU Food Law and other legislation and policies to which we directly contribute on request of the policy makers. Although in this document we do not specify nor measures these Impacts, we stand ready to work with policy makers to define them (for example on health and potentially sustainability) and their monitoring framework, including specific targets for EFSA's contribution.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

EFSA's 2027 Strategy foresee the achievement of three different Strategic Objectives that together shape the overarching goal of the agency. These Strategic Objectives will guide EFSA in fulfilling its mission in light of the challenges and opportunities described above, while aiming to increase customer satisfaction and the trust of stakeholders in its scientific advice and, at the same time, without compromising its core values or the quality of its work.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES
(for EFSA's Target Audiences)

The Expected Outcomes are the value we aim at providing to our target audiences, i.e. customers, stakeholders, citizens (as applicable). This value includes the needs we address and the problems we solve. The contribution of EFSA's activities on the Outcomes can be assessed via subjective feedback and in some cases via objective measurements. Consultation with the target audiences will improve the accuracy and relevance of the Expected Outcomes.

The Outcome description is a statement that summarises the value produced for the target audiences via our products/services

EXPECTED OPERATIONAL RESULTS
(from EFSA's Products and Services)

The Expected Operational Results (EORs) are the value of our services and products for the target audiences (external but also internal) that use them. The direct contribution of EFSA's activities on the Expected Operational Results can be measured objectively or via (subjective) feedback.

The Expected Operational Results description is a statement summarising the EFSA activities that generate the value proposed.

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