

59th Focal Point Meeting

Location: online

Chair: Victoria Villamar / Sérgio Potier-Rodeia

Attendees:

Last name	First name	Member state
Mika	Sonja	Austria
Meusburger	Lukas	Austria
Boyen	Jens	Belgium
Baugnies	Camille	Belgium
Polihronova	Lilyana	Bulgaria
Buzjak Služek	Vlatka	Croatia
Stavroulakis	Georgios	Cyprus
Beneš	Petr	Czech Republic
Beltoft	Vibe	Denmark
Priisalu	Piret	Estonia
Aleksasin	Allan	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
Papanastasiou	Danai	Greece
Tzoumanika	Foteini	Greece
Prisztóka	Renáta	Hungary
Tamás	Tamara	Hungary
Olafsson	Grimur	Iceland
Redmond	Gráinne	Ireland
Perrella	Alessandra	Italy
Giacomini	Denise	Italy
La Rocca	Cinzia	Italy
Ciekure	Elina	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
Popovici	Georgeta	Romania
Rădulescu	Simona	Romania
Dringušová	Gabriela	Slovakia
Lépesová	Kristina	Slovakia
Janzekovic	Matej	Slovenia
Calderon	Vicente	Spain
Nyberg	Karin	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
Hanci	Serap	Türkiye

EFSA Representatives	
Victoria Villamar (Chair)	Potier-Rodeia Sergio (Chair)
Cristina Alonso Andicoberry (FP Team, speaker)	Andrea Laroni, (FP team, speaker)
Finger Julia Miriam (FP Team, speaker)	Chloé Russo (FP team, speaker)
Zoi Mousia (speaker)	Aikaterini Vlachou (speaker)
Gorgias Garofalakis (speaker)	Luisa Venier (speaker)
Kostas Paraskevopoulos (speaker)	

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



1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

Chair Victoria Villamar informed the FP Network about the entering into office of EFSA's new Executive Director.

She welcomed the Focal Points to the 59th FP meeting, the last plenary meeting of 2025, held in the mornings of 24th and 25th September 2025, online, with special stress on the new alternates from Latvia, Elina Ciekure; from Italy, Denise Giacomini; and from Belgium, Camille Baugnies.

The **Chair** expressed enthusiasm for the two mornings ahead and wished a successful two-day event full of interactive and fruitful discussions then introduced and adopted the agenda.

The FP were invited to raise any new item to be discussed under AOB, no items were raised.

The Chair gave the floor to **Cristina Alonso Andicoberry (EFSA)** for a short recap on the action points stemming from the 58th FP meeting in September. There were 7 APs stemming from the last meeting, 1 was completed and 6 were ongoing, several of them related to the newly introduced Risk Assessment Initiatives Hub.

2. FOCAL POINT ACTIVITIES

2.1 FOCAL POINT HEALTH CHECK

The Chair gave the floor to **Julia Finger (EFSA)** and **Chloé Russo (EFSA)**.

This session aimed to start the preparation on MS level for the workshop on the Focal Point framework that will take place on 4 and 5 November and will include both FP and AF representatives.

The presentation was structured around 3 main functions of the Focal Points: their support function, their connection function and their incubator function. While the latter focused on the Tailor-made part of the agreements, the support and connection functions related to the "classical" FP role and tasks and were of particular focus in this session.

FP were asked questions on how they saw their future role in support to both EFSA and the Advisory Forum and how they planned to improve and/or intensify their connecting role within the MS and even across MS.

Based on discussions that took place, Focal Points were asked to prepare on national level together with their Advisory Forum member for the workshop.

The **Chair** invited the Focal Points to prepare their Advisory Forum representatives for the workshop based on the discussions that took place and to share their best practices and ideas regarding their support function and connection function within the Network and with EFSA.

2.2 TAILOR-MADE ACTIVITIES PRIORITISATION 2025

Chair Victoria Villamar gave the floor to **Andrea Laroni (EFSA)**.

This presentation communicated that the assessment and prioritisation process for TMA activities proposals received in 2025 was completed.



EFSA received 16 TMA proposals for a total budget demand of over €7 million (including MSCC), against a budget availability of €4 million. Submitted proposals involved a total of 30 countries (EU and non-EU).

All proposals were assessed by relevant EFSA SMUs and the MS advice was expressed via consultations with AGoD and the AF Trio (HU, PL, DK). The EFSA managerial decision on the list of TMA proposals to fund as of 2026 was taken on 18 September.

The next steps announced include:

- a. Communication of the prioritisation results via email to AF and FP representative.
- b. Presentation of the prioritisation results at the 97th AF meeting (8 & 9 October, online)

The Chair thanked the MS for the submission of the proposals and their interest to work together and stressed the importance of these joint projects in the collaboration among MS, and between MS and EFSA.

2.3 UPDATES ON THE CHANGE PROJECT

Chair Victoria Villamar gave the floor to **Gisle Solstad (Norway)**.

This presentation provided an update on the CHANGE project, related to the TMA "Building confidence and advancing integration of NAM Data in risk assessment and risk management decision-making – A platform for dialogue and consensus".

The key outcomes and reflections from Workshop 2 (June 2025) were shared as well with the FP. The presentation also focused on sharing information on the engagement and contribution of Art. 36 organisations and resulting scientific publications.

The Chair acknowledged the added value of the TMA in general, and the CHANGE project in particular, in the generation of new knowledge and bringing MS together.

2.4 FOLLOW UP OF JOINING FORCES ON ENGAGEMENT

Chair Victoria Villamar gave the floor to **Zoi Mousia (EFSA)**.

This presentation offered high-level information from the Strategic Engagement Island at the 58th Focal Point Plenary Meeting and respective follow-up. It aimed to update the FP about the "Joining Forces on MSs engagement" initiative, where EFSA stood regarding the priorities mapping exercise, and what followed next. More detailed information, on one of the identified priority topics with a proposed strategy for moving forward on areas of common interest, will be presented at the AF meeting in December.

2.5 PARTNERSHIPS

2.5.1 FOLLOW UP OF THE 58TH FOCAL POINT MEETING NETWORKING EVENT – SUPPORT OF FPS TO EFSA'S G&P - MAKING THE MOST OF EFSA'S PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Gorgias Garofalakis (EFSA)** and **Aikaterini Vlachou (EFSA)**.



This presentation was a follow-up from the Partnerships Island of the 58th Focal Point Plenary Meeting. It presented the outcome of the discussions at the Island, including the “survey” across the FPs on the various partnership-support activities and the level of difficulty each presented. The message was to encourage the Focal Points to work together, exchanging best practices, to improve partnership support.

The presentation further focused on how Focal Points could help national organisations benefit the most from EFSA's Partnership opportunities. Key characteristics of an “ideal partnership enabler” were listed, also reminding FPs of tools and resources available to support this work. The presentation was supported by cases studies brought forward by the Greek and Finish FPs. Finally, the presentation referred to the preparation and launch of the recent EFSA animal welfare call, listing the various stages in which the FPs had the margin to contribute (e.g., by identifying relevant actors, promoting the calls, etc.).

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia acknowledged that different Focal Points had different priorities and capacities. However, he stated that there were always opportunities to improve. EFSA – and colleagues from the Network – are keen on supporting such change.

The **Chair** noted that any specific activities or tasks that might be needed by the Focal Points to better support cooperation with EFSA – but also cooperation among MS – could be considered in the new FP Framework.

2.5.2 UPDATE ON PARTNER ANALYSIS EXERCISES (PLH AND AW)

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Aikaterini Vlachou (EFSA)**.

This update informed the Focal Points about the impact of the recent exercise in the area of Plant Health, presenting the results in numbers. It also served as a reminder of the ongoing exercise in the area of Animal Health and Welfare, with the aim of encouraging all Focal Points to review the results of the analysis, engage where relevant, and complete the survey. By doing so, EFSA will be able to gather valuable feedback on this exercise.

The Chair highlighted to Focal Points that these exercises were to support their work and efforts rather than impose any mandatory actions. Although it was highly recommended to review the identified organisations and submit the survey, general and specific analysis of questions was included.

3. EFSA INDEPENDENCE POLICY

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Luisa Venier (EFSA)**.

This presentation introduced EFSA's independence policy and its implementing rules (ED Decision on competing interest management). It also provided an overview of the work carried out vis-à-vis the revision of EFSA's Independence Policy and implementing rules. The presentation also focused on informing the Focal Points on the main changes introduced by the revised Independence Policy.



4. AOB

4.1 ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF MICROBIOME

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Kostas Paraskevopoulos (EFSA)**.

This intervention aimed to inform the Focal Points on the planned Advisory Forum discussion on the topic of microbiomes (to be discussed during the December meeting). The Focal Points were asked to explore which national organisations/institutions have regulatory science-related activities in microbiome. This information will then feed and support discussions at the AF meeting in December.

4.2 REPORT ON TRAINING ON PREDICTIVE MICROBIOLOGY TOOLS

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Foteini Tzoumanika** and **Danai Papanastasiou (Greece)**. This intervention aimed to present the training on predictive microbiology tools, a Greek initiative launched under the principal activity 3.3.

4.3 WORLD FOOD SAFETY ALMANACH: UPDATE ON THE EDITOR TRAININGS

Chair Sérgio Potier Rodeia gave the floor to **Sharleen Friese (Germany)**.

This intervention focused on sharing information on the available materials for editors of the World Food Safety Almanach.



ANNEX I. SUMMARY OF THE ACTION POINTS

Action reference	Who	Action
<u>Action 1</u>	FP	To prepare their AF representatives for the Health Check workshop (4-5 Nov.).
<u>Action 2</u>	EFSA	To inform the FPs on recent Animal Welfare partnership initiatives (which can help the FPs to better promote the current call)
<u>Action 3</u>	FP	FPs to review the results of EFSA's partner analysis for AHAW and respond to the survey circulated
<u>Action 4</u>	FP	French FP to share with EFSA and Focal Points national presentation on arguments supporting the inclusion of potential candidates in the Art. 36 list of competent organisations.
<u>Action 5</u>	FP	FPs to explore which national organisations/institutions have regulatory science-related activities in microbiome

N.B.1. Action point 1 is shared in these minutes as Annex 2.

N.B.2. At the moment of drafting these minutes, Action Point 2 has already been carried out.

N.B.3. At the moment of drafting these minutes, Action Point 5 is ongoing with a deadline on 17 October.