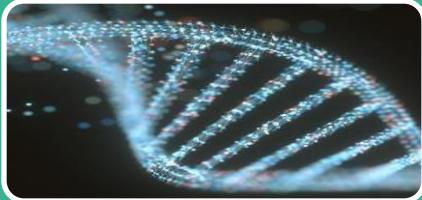


59TH FOCAL POINT PLENARY  
MEETING  
25 SEPTEMBER 2025

# EFSA INDEPENDENCE FRAMEWORK

Luisa Venier  
Legal Affairs Services

# EFSA 2017 INDEPENDENCE POLICY EX POST EVALUATION



Adopted by EFSA Management Board in 2017



Article 6: Policy shall be subject to external evaluation within five years from its entry into force



2023: EFSA outsourced the external evaluation.  
Final Report released in October 2023

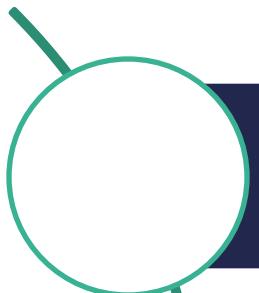
# EVALUATION SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY



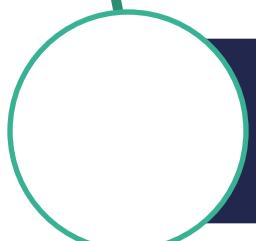
- **Purpose of the evaluation:** ex-post evaluation of EFSA's Independence Policy
- **Evaluation dimensions**
  - ✓ Retrospective: the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the Policy and its coherence with the pertinent legal and strategic framework
  - ✓ Forward looking: whether the Policy remains relevant and fit for purpose in the light of evolving legal framework and challenges
- **Methodology**
  - ✓ Stakeholder consultation, interviews and survey
  - ✓ Desk research
  - ✓ Benchmarking



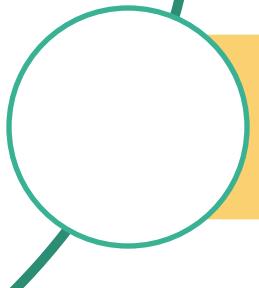
# CONCLUSIONS OF THE POLICY EVALUATION



EFSA has a robust system in place that ensures a **satisfactory level of independence and prevention of undue conflicts of interest** (...). The Policy is **coherent** with objectives and values in EFSA's corporate strategy and requirements laid down in the legal framework.



There is widespread recognition of EFSA recent **improvements** in relation to independence(...). Evidence of **positive reputational impact** can be found in EU supervisory bodies' reports, as well as in feedback from scientific community and stakeholders.



(...) future **sustainability could be challenged** by the expected increase in EFSA activities, especially through outsourcing of scientific work. (...). Other minor issues mainly regarding the **clarity and the consistency** of specific provisions or implementation measures (...) **not represent substantial and/or urgent threats** to the functioning and achievement of the Policy's objective

# REPORT PUBLISHED

Report on the ex post evaluation of the Policy on Independence of the European Food Safety Authority adopted by EFSA Management Board on 21/06/2017 published on [EFSA's website](#)



# MEMBERS OF THE MB SUB-GROUP



**Pamela Byrne (Chair)**  
Ireland: Food Safety Authority



**Marie-Luise Trebes**  
Germany: Federal Ministry of Food  
and Agriculture



**Floriana Cimmarusti**  
Consumer Org.: Safe Food  
Advocacy Europe



**Ana Viloria**  
Netherlands: Ministry of Public  
Health, Welfare and Sport



**Astrid Thors**  
European Parliament



**Hrönn Jörundsdóttir**  
Iceland: Food and Veterinary  
Authority



**Claire Bury**  
Commission: DG Health and  
Safety



# MB DECISION ON UPDATING THE INDEPENDENCE POLICY

*At the December MB meeting, the Chair of the sub-group presented the work carried out by the sub-group in reviewing the report on the ex-post evaluation of EFSA's Independence Policy.*

*Based on the outcome of the ex-post external evaluation report and the advice of its sub-group on independence, the Management Board decided by consensus to open EFSA's Independence Policy for targeted revisions*



# OVERVIEW OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS



Clarity & effectiveness



Communication on independence



Sustainability



Coherence & cooperation



# UPDATED POLICY

Recommendations were analysed by MB sub-group on independence

In June 2024 EFSA Management Board adopted an updated independence Policy.

The updated Policy further detailed in the implementing rules, adopted by EFSA ED in March 2025

## EFSA's Independence Policy

FACTSHEET

### Index

- 1 Background
- 2 What is meant by a conflict of interest
- 3 Basic principles of EFSA's approach to independence
- 4 Main features of EFSA's Independence Policy

### 1 Background

In June 2024, EFSA's Management Board approved a new Independence Policy, further strengthening the way in which the Authority manages the interests of its scientific experts and all professionals with whom it works.

The new Policy builds on EFSA's experience of managing interests over the last 20 years and is designed to strike the appropriate balance between attracting the best experts to work with EFSA while protecting it against undue influence.

### 2 What is meant by a conflict of interest

*"Any situation where a person has an interest that may compromise, or be reasonably perceived as compromising, his or her capacity to act independently and in the public interest in relation to the subject of the work performed at EFSA"*

### 3 Basic principles of EFSA's approach to independence

- Prior to working with EFSA, all experts must submit Declarations of Interest (Dols) that cover the previous five years.
- Experts must update their Dols at least once a year and every time a new interest emerges or a declared interest changes.
- EFSA screens Dols to identify potential conflicts of interest related to an expert's professional activities and financial interests.
- EFSA carries out annual compliance and veracity checks on a sample of experts' Dols.
- All Dols are published on EFSA's website.
- External evaluations or audits are carried out by the European Court of Auditors and the Internal Audit Service of the European Commission.

# UPDATE OF THE IMPLEMENTING RULES ON INDEPENDENCE FOR EXPERTS



# REFLECTING THE UPDATED POLICY → RECOMMENDATIONS

Updated Decision on competing interest management reflects the updated Policy and Recommendations of ex-post evaluation

E.g. → EFSA ex-post checks of Dols of Advisory Forum & Networks members;  
E.g. → Outsourcing mechanisms e.g. same independence and transparency rules of WG experts when Art. 36 experts carry out equivalent activities



# ADDITIONAL ENHANCEMENTS

## Legislative updates

- Transparency Regulation; EU GDPR; EU Financial Regulation

## Enhanced clarity & strengthening transparency

- Improved and new definitions; New transparency requirements in case of outsourcing



# FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES



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