

NOTE TO THE MANAGEMENT BOARD

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Global cooperation in action: methodological development and EU enlargement

Background

The presentation provides an overview of EFSA's approach for global cooperation, beginning with a comprehensive outline of its objectives, scope, tools, and stakeholders. It highlights two representative case studies that exemplify EFSA's collaborative approach with global partners and third countries in methodological development and EU enlargement policies.

Objectives of EFSA's global cooperation approach

Aligned with the [EFSA Strategy 2027](#), EFSA's global cooperation approach aims to:

- provide scientific and technical support to the European Commission;
- expand and harmonise scientific methods and approaches;
- strengthen international capacity for scientific assessments;
- contribute to worldwide initiatives focused on developing, validating, implementing, and harmonising methodologies and tools; and
- boost EFSA's visibility and reputation as an innovative and capable regulatory risk assessment agency operating globally.

Alignment with the European Commission

Central to EFSA's global cooperation approach is alignment with European Commission priorities. EFSA and DG SANTE typically hold three meetings annually, plus occasional exchanges as needed.

EFSA's global partners

EFSA's main global partners include:

- at bilateral level: U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Food Safety Commission of Japan (FSCJ);
- at multilateral level: OECD, WHO, FAO, WOA, and CODEX Alimentarius.

Cooperation mechanisms

EFSA cooperates with global partners through the following mechanisms:

- Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and Memoranda of Cooperation (MoC)
- Exchanges of Letters (EoL)
- Contribution agreements for EU enlargement (e.g., IPA programme)

These mechanisms are complemented by ad-hoc technical exchanges and meetings.

Examples of global cooperation activities

Methodologies

EFSA collaborates on methodological development mainly with EU partners (Member States and EU Agencies). Knowledge sharing and alignment with non-EU risk assessors and international organisations is mainly achieved through:

- Ad-hoc bilateral exchanges (e.g., with US FDA in the context of biomarkers of effect);
- EFSA's participation in international liaison groups and working parties, such as:
 - OECD - EFSA maintains close and continuous interactions with the OECD's Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) Programme. Through participation in its expert groups, EFSA contributes regulatory expertise and follows the development of OECD Test Guidelines, Guidance Documents, Harmonised Templates (OHT), and tools supporting new approach methodologies (NAMs).
 - The International Liaison Group on Methods for Risk Assessment of Chemicals in Food (ILMERAC) is a network of more than 25 governmental and intergovernmental organisations, which are active in the field of food and feed safety at the global level. It offers opportunities to discuss scientific and regulatory developments and challenges.

EU enlargement

EFSA supports pre-accession countries through the IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) programme. The current cycle, running from August 2023 to July 2026 with a budget of 1.15M€ provided by DG ENEST, is targeted to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Türkiye, focusing on food and feed safety authorities and the scientific community. The initiative aims to strengthen collaboration and align food safety systems with EU standards, helping participants contribute to EFSA's work before and after accession.

In the 2023-2026 cycle, the IPA programme achieved the following results:

- Expanded participation of IPA experts in EFSA Networks.
- Enhanced capacity in risk assessment, risk communication and crisis preparedness.
- Increased IPA engagement in National Awareness Events and EFSA coordinated communication campaigns.
- Increased engagement in EFSA publications with contributions from IPA beneficiaries.

The upcoming Action is set to begin on 1 August 2026, and will run for three years, concluding on 31 July 2029. This initiative expands upon previous IPA cycles to improve beneficiaries' capacity in risk assessment, communication, data collection, and networking.

Alongside the seven existing pre-accession beneficiaries, the Action 2026-2029 will also include Moldova and Ukraine. The overall budget for the upcoming Action is 2.2M€, derived from two policy instruments, namely:

- IPA (1.4M€, with an increase of 250K€ compared to the Action 2023-2026), focusing on Western Balkans and Türkiye.
- NDICI (Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument) (800K€), focusing on Ukraine and Moldova.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence