Management Board
25 June 2026

FOOD ADDITIVES AND FLAVOURINGS PANEL STATE OF PLAY

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EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

OUTLINE

- What are food additives and flavourings?
- Key considerations for their safety assessment
- The Panel on Food Additives and Flavourings
- Workplan and challenges in 2026-2027
- Monitoring of food additives and flavourings

Food additives

Substances added **intentionally** to food for a technological purpose at any stage in the manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packaging, transport or storage of such food

Functional classes: colours, sweeteners, others (e.g. preservatives, emulsifiers, thickeners, etc.)

Many food additives are naturally present in the human body and or in the diet (e.g. citric acid).

Food flavourings & smoke flavourings

Substances added to improve or modify smell and taste.

Main categories: chemically defined substances, natural flavouring substances, flavouring preparations, thermal process flavourings, flavouring precursors

Smoke flavourings, derived from controlled smoke condensation. All eight renewal opinions in 2023 concluded with negative outcome.

EU framework

Common Authorisation Procedure

- Applicable to food additives and flavourings before they are placed on the market

Re-evaluation of food additives

- Applicable to food additives already permitted in the EU before January 2009

Food flavourings evaluations

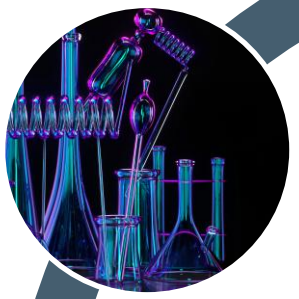
- Ad hoc evaluation for substances already in the Union List

Smoke flavourings

- None in the EU List after renewal procedures

HOW FOOD ADDITIVES AND FLAVOURINGS ARE ASSESSED IN THE EU

Technical part



Dietary exposure

Biological and toxicological data

Risk assessment

Estimated dietary exposure to the food additive/flavouring is compared with a health-based guidance value (e.g. ADI)

In the absence of an ADI, the margin of exposure is calculated to support the safety assessment

KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF NEW FOOD ADDITIVES

Food additives highly diverse and complex to assess, ranging from single chemical substances to complex mixtures

- Updated guidance in 2026 to improve quality of dossiers for new FA applications submitted

Shift towards food additives extracted from natural sources

- Often cross-cutting with Novel Foods

Fermentation/enzymatic steps often used to enrich for selected components

- Cross-cutting with ENZ and/or GMO Panel opinions

Characterisation of the food additive is the starting point for risk assessment

- Identification and quantification of possible components of toxicological concern
- Potential exposure to small particles, applicability of conventional RA


Glycolipids from Dacryopinax spathularia


Blue Galdieria extract


Pectin rich extract from Coffea arabica


Monk fruit extract


Rice hulls

KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN RE-EVALUATION OF NEW FOOD ADDITIVES

Regulation (EU) No 257/2010 set up re-evaluation programme for all food additives that were already permitted for use in food as of 20 January 2009

- EFSA opinions must be based on data collected through calls for data + previous evaluations + all new relevant data from published literature
- No structured dossiers, need to request additional data during risk assessment
- The programme set up priorities for completion, currently 66% fully re-evaluated

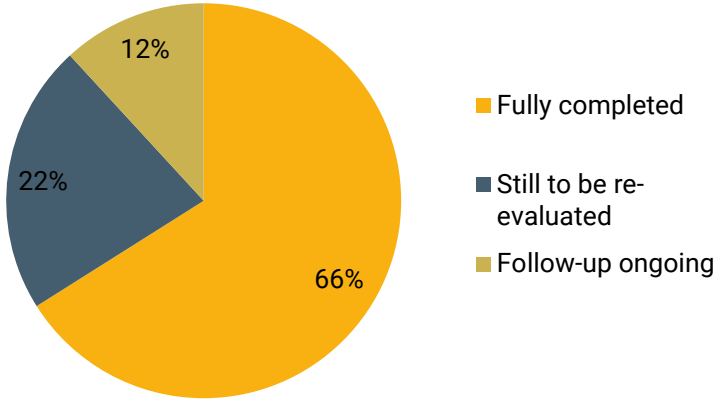
Re-evaluation programme has generated mandates for follow-up data gaps or uncertainties identified

- 9 follow-up mandates for 19 opinions on re-evaluation published in the last 5 years

Re-evaluation is not a renewal procedure

- No legal provisions for renewal of authorisations

Status as of 31.05.2025



Fully completed	212
Follow-up ongoing	38
To be re-evaluated	71
Total E numbers	317

KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF FOOD FLAVOURINGS

Flavouring substances grouped together, data on candidate substances

- Assessment follows ‘JECFA Procedure’

New food flavourings, smoke flavourings:

- Data requirements now aligned to food additives

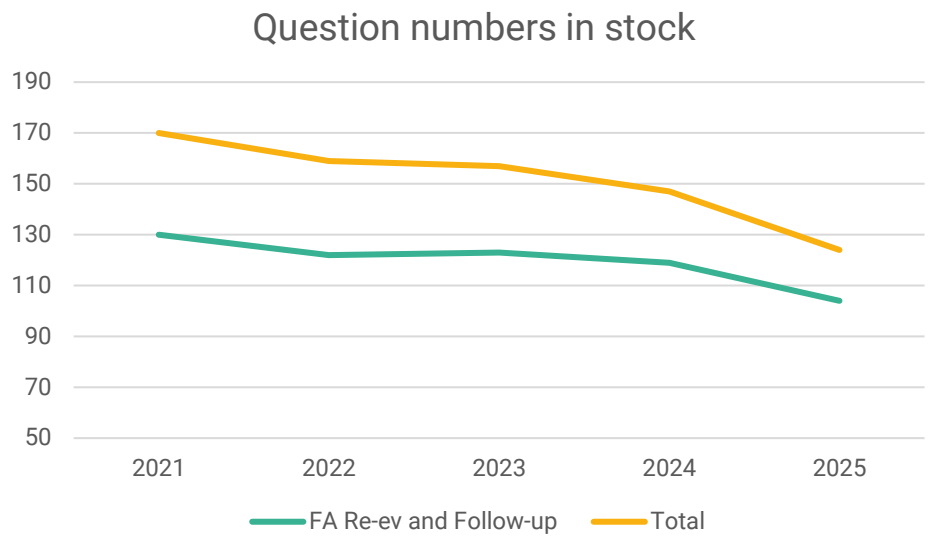
No legal provisions for authorisation renewal

MULTIDISCIPLINARITY

Analytical Chemistry	Food technology	Food Microbiology	Genotoxicity
Toxicokinetics	Developmental/ reproductive toxicity	Carcinogenicity	Regulatory toxicology
Food composition	Dietary exposure	Epidemiology	Risk assessment

CHALLENGES CONTINUE IN 2026

- Overall stock of questions for food additives re-evaluation and follow-up is decreasing over the years
  - Slow reduction, owing to lack of dossiers, extensive data collection before the start of risk assessment, additional requests for data during risk assessment
- One single opinion may be very complex and long still corresponding to one EFSA-Q-number while other opinions in the backlog may cover groups of substances (multiple EFSA-Q-numbers).
- Competing priorities for the Panel, e.g. legal deadline for new applications versus re-evaluations



PRIORITIES FOR 2026

New applications

- 14 opinions Q3 2026-Q1 2027
- Speed of RA initiatives

Aspartame/acesulfame K (E 962)

- Planned for adoption Open Plenary meeting Jun-Jul 2026

1S1A

- Talc (E 553b)
- Nitrous oxide (E 942)
- Acetaldehyde FL-No 05.001

Food additives and flavourings monitoring

Member States shall establish systems to monitor the consumption and use of food additives and flavourings … on a risk-based approach, and shall report their findings with appropriate frequency to the Commission and to the Authority.

First pilot exercise completed in 2026, second data collection on selected food additives and flavourings ongoing.

Selection of substances to be monitored done by EC and Member States on the basis of the EFSA opinions.

Activity led by iDATA Unit with support from MESE and FIP

Article 27 of Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 &
Article 20 of Regulation (EC) No 1334/2008

TO CONCLUDE

NEW APPLICATIONS: ON TIME ADOPTION AND REDUCTION OF THROUGHPUT TIME

STOCK REDUCTION

STAKEHOLDERS FOCUS