Introduction and purpose for establishing:

Establishing a system of Networks of organisations operating in the fields within EFSA’s mission is among the tasks of EFSA, according to its Founding Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 178/2002), in order to facilitate a scientific cooperation framework by the coordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects, the exchange of expertise and best practices.

The Scientific Network on bovine spongiform encephalopathies and other transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (BSE-TSE) strengthens the scientific cooperation in the remit of risk assessment of BSE-TSE. It aims at anticipating and reducing the duplication of activities and hence avoiding divergence of opinions. The Network is a privileged environment to share data and methodologies facilitating harmonisation of assessment practices and to assist in anticipating emerging risks in the EU.

Objectives:

The main overall goals of the BSE-TSE SCIENTIFIC NETWORK are:

- to improve dialogue and exchange of information among participants;
- to build mutual understanding of risk assessment principles;
- to enhance knowledge on and confidence in the scientific assessments carried out in the EU;
- to provide increased transparency in the current process among Member States and EFSA;
- to raise the harmonisation level of the risk assessments developed in the EU.

The specific objectives of the BSE-TSE SCIENTIFIC NETWORK are:

- identifying common themes and areas for mutual collaboration;
- identifying and avoiding duplication of efforts;
- identification of experts in specific areas and on special issues;
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- sharing of data availability and quality;
- strengthening cooperation amongst risk assessors and risk managers;
- exchanging information between EFSA, Member States and other stakeholders;
- strengthening communication and collaboration between EFSA and the EU Member States and among risk assessors; risk managers and stakeholders; including national AF and FP members.
- focusing attention on and streamlining of common research needs;
- identifying potential emerging risks when addressing current issues.

Members

In response to a request by the BIOCONTAM UNIT, the Advisory Forum may formally designate the member organisation(s) of the BSE-TSE SCIENTIFIC NETWORK for each country.

The Advisory Forum, in cooperation with the member organisations formally designated in accordance with the previous paragraph, shall establish the names of network participants and alternate participants for the BSE-TSE SCIENTIFIC NETWORK. The network shall be composed of experts with the following profile:

- members of national food safety authorities or risk assessment bodies responsible for the area of TSE’
- researchers providing advice to competent authorities in the area of TSE.

Access to meetings

Other organisations may be invited, including from outside the EU, with specific expertise to participate in a network, where appropriate or necessary. These organisations may be invited either to participate in full or as observers only.

In addition, representatives of the European Commission may participate in the work of the networks. Representatives of other EU agencies may participate in the work of the networks as appropriate.

Working methods
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The network shall meet physical or virtual once per year. The working language for the Network Activities will be English.

In addition, it will use other means of collaboration:

- exchanges of MS risk assessments and other information via the Member States Risk Assessment Database,
- Online Forum for exchange of information, data and news.

**Deliverables and Outcomes:**

- Minutes of the annual meeting(s) of the BSE-TSE Scientific Network
- Annual Report of the meeting(s) of the BSE-TSE Scientific Network

**Timeline:**

The terms of reference will be renewed after three years, i.e. in 2024.