TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MICROBIOLOGICAL RISK ASSESSMENT (MRA) NETWORK

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the Microbiological Risk Assessment (MRA) 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 MRA Network are:

- Identifying common themes and areas for mutual collaboration;
- Identifying and avoiding duplication of efforts and hence divergence of opinions;
- Identification of experts in specific areas and on special issues;
- Sharing of data availability and quality;
- Strengthening cooperation amongst risk assessors and managers;
- Exchanging information between EFSA, the EU 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

The Members of the MRA Network are organisations appointed for three-year terms through the EFSA Advisory Forum Members, in accordance with Articles 2 and 3 of the Decision of the Management Board of EFSA[1] on the establishment and operations of networks. 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 microbiological risk assessment;
- researchers providing advice to competent authorities in the area of microbiological risk assessment.

ACCESS TO MEETINGS

Other organisations may be invited, including those from outside the EU, with specific expertise to participate in a network meeting, where deemed 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

The network shall meet physically or virtually at least once per year. The working language for the Network Activities will be English.

In addition, the network 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.

MS' representatives in the network shall commit to liaise as appropriate at national level before and after each network meeting in order to make sure all the necessary information is shared without prejudice to Article 10 of the Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organization operating in the fields within the Authority's mission.

DELIVERABLES AND OUTCOMES

- Minutes of the annual meeting(s) of the MRA Network

[1] Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission

TIMELINE

The terms of reference for the Microbiological Risk Assessment network can be updated whenever deemed necessary and are valid until a decision of discontinuing the network is taken.

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