

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC NETWORK ON FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

EFSA question number: EFSA-Q-2017-0088

Background:

The Food Ingredients and Packaging (FIP) Unit provides scientific and administrative assistance to both the Food Contact Materials, Enzymes, Flavourings and Processing Aids (CEF) and Food Additives and Nutrient Sources Added to Food (ANS) Panels and their respective working groups.

The EFSA's Advisory Forum agreed at its 49th meeting in September 2013 to the creation of a "FIP Network" for a 3 year-period in accordance with the EFSA's strategy for cooperation and networking across Europe. As a follow-up, on 18 October 2013 EFSA sent a mandate to the FIP Unit for the establishment and operation of a Scientific Network for risk assessment of regulated food ingredients and food packaging. Such network was tasked to enhance cooperation between risk assessors and support harmonisation of risk assessment practices in the areas of food additives, food enzymes and food contact materials (FCM). The FIP Unit decided to focus specifically on food contact materials, where cooperation and harmonisation of risk assessment practices are considered to be particularly needed (i.e. non EU harmonised FCMs). A FIP Network on Food Contact Materials was thus created.

The FCM Network has involved representatives of 29 risk assessment bodies from Member States, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and the EU candidate countries¹, as well as EC DG SANTE, EC DG Joint Research Centre and the Council of Europe. The network has met three times during this mandate. The first achievement has been to gather together the mentioned representatives and observers to share and discuss activities on safety assessment, challenges and projects. This enabled identifying topics of common interest (coatings, paper and board, printing inks, non-intentionally added substances (NIAS)) and expertise of Member States (MS) in these areas. The MS representatives identified the need for harmonization of the safety assessments for non-EU harmonised FCMs. As a result, sharing and discussing guidance, migration testing and other challenges for the safety assessment has become a major topic to support harmonisation and mutual recognition. This included the EFSA scientific opinion on the safety assessment of substances used in EU harmonised food contact materials (plastics) that was presented prior to public consultation to ensure better understanding and elicit feedback from MS.

In order to pursue this initiated cooperation, to further enhance the collaboration with and between Member States, Norway and Iceland, Switzerland and the EU candidate countries, to facilitate the **harmonisation of principles underlying the safety**

¹ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/food-ingredients-and-packaging/networks>

assessment of substances used to manufacture food contact materials, it is proposed to continue the FIP Network on Food Contact Materials for a new period of three years.

Objectives:

The role of the Network on Food Contact Materials is to facilitate **scientific cooperation on the risk assessment activities and approaches** of mutual interest to the EU Member States, Norway and Iceland, Switzerland and the EU candidate countries and EFSA.

Specifically, the Network on Food Contact Materials aims to:

- provide a platform for discussion, consultation and collaboration
- enhance cooperation between scientists involved in risk assessment
- promote exchange of information on activities and risk assessments
- support and harmonise risk assessment
- avoid duplication of work

Areas for cooperation are in particular to:

- continue sharing and discussing on activities and projects related to safety assessment;
- continue exchanging on challenges and experience in the assessment of non-intentionally added substances (NIAS);
- promote the exchange of information through a database/table on past, current and future projects related to safety assessment of (substances used to manufacture) FCMs;
- initiate the setting of small group(s) of MSs (led by a MS) with interest in a FCM type (e.g. coatings, paper and boards) to share expertise, build common projects, contribute to and harmonise safety assessment in a FCM type;
- involve MSs, at early stage, in the preparation of the new EFSA Guidance to take on board their expertise;
- provide training on EFSA's approaches e.g. advanced risk assessment.

Access to meetings:

EU Member States representatives, Norway and Iceland representatives and observers from Switzerland and the EU Candidate Countries may participate in the Scientific Network. Furthermore, EFSA may invite representatives from other agencies, bodies or Institutions of the EU, third countries or international organisations with specific expertise to attend meetings of the Scientific Network as observers. In particular, representatives of the European Chemical Agency (ECHA), the European Commission and the Council of Europe may participate to meetings of the FIP Scientific Network as observers.

Members of the Scientific Network:

The Scientific Network shall be composed of representatives with expertise in risk assessment of food contact materials, including knowledge of the national status and of the European and/or international context.

Representatives are proposed by the relevant organisations identified by the EU Member States².

The Scientific Network shall be chaired by EFSA. EFSA will also provide the Secretariat of the Scientific Network.

The members are expected to also act as a contact point for relevant organisations and stakeholders within their Member States, ensuring the exchange of scientific/technical information between national organisations and the EFSA FIP unit.

Working language:

English will be the working language of the network.

Working methods:

The Scientific Network shall meet at least once a year and shall allow flexibility for Member States in participating to the meeting. The scientific topics to be taken up by the FIP Scientific Network each year will come from Member States representatives and EFSA. There should be flexibility to accommodate *ad hoc* meetings and discussions on urgent issues outside the scheduled yearly meetings.

In addition, the Network will use other means of collaboration such as web-based electronic interfaces for sharing information and data, such as the EFSA's Data Management System (DMS) and e-mails for specific questions or issues.

Member States representatives in this network shall commit to liaise as appropriate at national level before and after each network meeting in order to make sure that 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 organisations operating in the field within the Authority's mission.

Timeline:

3 years

Expected deliverables:

Agenda and Minutes of the meetings.

Report(s) on activities of the Network.

If possible, speech/presentation by EFSA at Conference(s), with the aim to inform stakeholders on activities and outcome of the Network, and to promote awareness and harmonisation.

Training on EFSA's approaches e.g. advanced risk assessment.

Publication plan:

On the EFSA's website, publication of the meetings' agenda and minutes, possibly presentations given at meetings and report(s) on activities.

² Including the non-EU countries to which Annex II, Chapter XII of the Agreement on the European Economic Area applies.