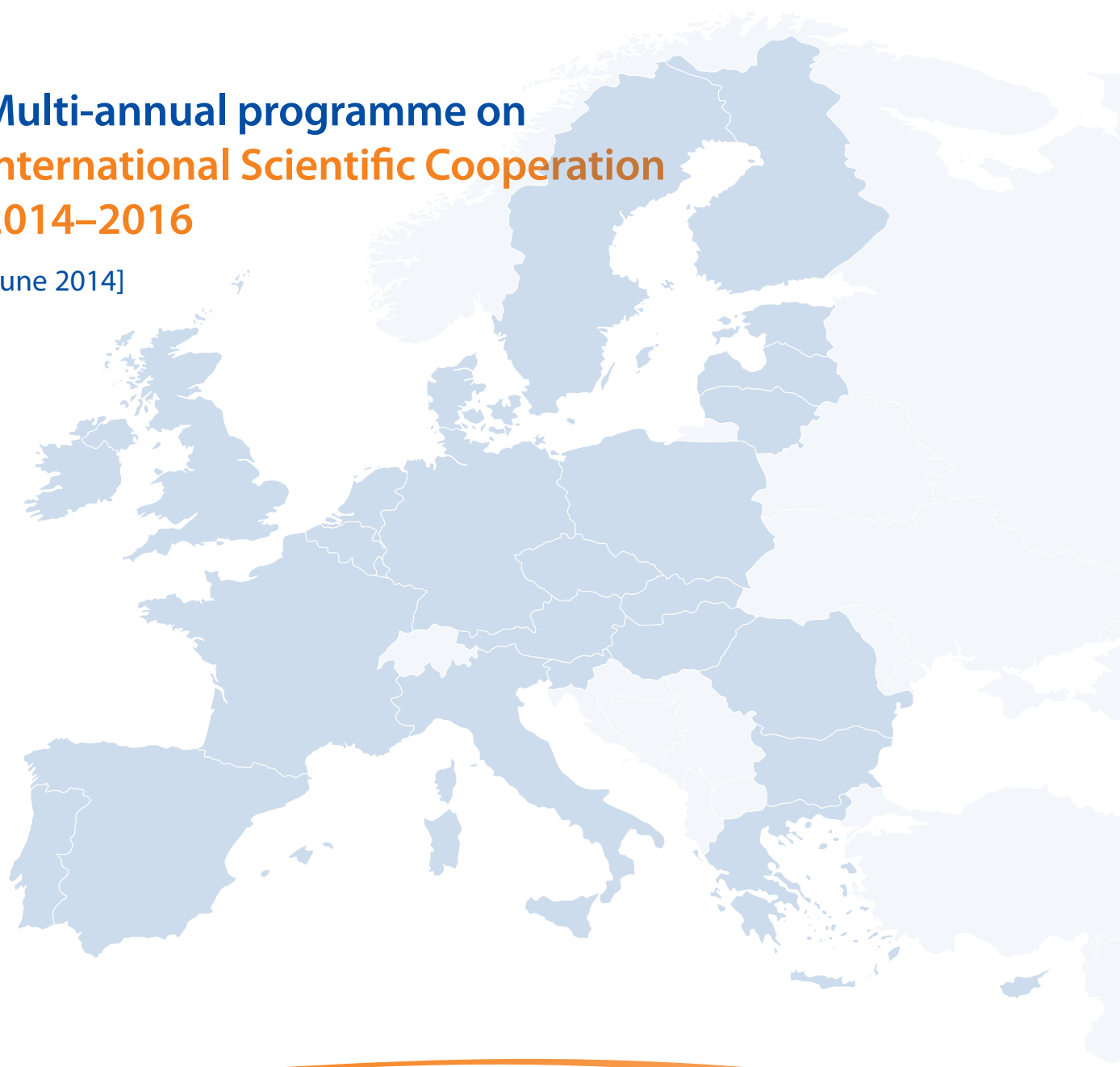


International Scientific Cooperation

European Food Safety Authority

Multi-annual programme on International Scientific Cooperation 2014–2016

[June 2014]



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Multi-annual programme on International Scientific Cooperation 2014–2016

EFSA Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation Unit^{1, 2}

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ABSTRACT

In EFSA's international scientific cooperation multi-annual programme 2014–2016, priority is given to support to the EU in its international commitments; support to the strategic objectives of EFSA's Science Strategy 2012–16; the promotion of coherence in risk communication at international level; and the building of awareness on EFSA's activities and EU food safety achievements internationally. On multilateral relations, EFSA will continue to support the EC in its Codex-related activities; improve collaboration with the Secretariat of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committees; strengthen cooperation with EU agencies and institutions in areas of international relevance and challenge; and continue the ongoing collaboration activities with other international organisations and liaison groups. On bilateral relations with other countries, EFSA will continue its existing cooperation with risk assessment bodies in Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the USA. In the longer term, EFSA will give priority to engagements in multilateral liaison groups to discuss issues on the risk assessment agenda and to coalitions with experienced regulatory agencies at international level. The establishment of bilateral relations with third countries will continue on a case by case basis, in consultation with the EC. Priority will mainly be given to risk assessment bodies in third countries which have concluded agreements with the EU. Additional tools and mechanisms for knowledge transfer are also proposed, such as international conferences and seminars on thematic areas, and exchange of staff. Building further on the existing communication activities, a key initiative will be to establish an international platform for the development and implementation of harmonised risk communication practices. In the Scientific Cooperation Roadmap, EFSA will outline which other initiatives will be taken in cooperation with EU Member States, EU agencies and institutions, international organisations and third country risk assessment bodies.

KEY WORDS

international scientific cooperation, multilateral relation, bilateral relation, liaison groups, risk communication, Scientific Cooperation Roadmap

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SUMMARY

This multi-annual programme on ‘EFSA’s international scientific cooperation 2014–2016’ builds on EFSA’s ‘Strategic approach to international activities 2009–2012’ and is guided by the recommendations of EFSA’s Management Board in connection with the 2nd External Evaluation and the Science Strategy 2012–2016. It has been developed through a process of extensive consultations with EFSA’s Scientific Committee, Advisory Forum, Stakeholder Consultative Platform and staff.

The programme takes stock of the achievements and experience gained from EFSA’s international activities. It also takes into account the common global challenges that risk assessment bodies with a similar remit to EFSA need to address, such as limited risk assessment capacity and experience, budget constraints, scientific competence and independence issues.

The programme provides an overview of the activities, mechanisms and tools already in place in EFSA to support international scientific cooperation. EFSA supports the European Union (EU) in its international commitments by providing scientific and technical advice to Codex Alimentarius-related activities, collaborating with Joint Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/World Health Organization (WHO) Expert Committees and establishing bilateral collaboration with third countries at the request of the European Commission (EC). EFSA liaises with the EC to optimise its activities, and works with EU agencies on scientific subjects with an international dimension. EFSA is further cooperating with international organisations with responsibility for providing scientific advice or setting international standards. This includes collaboration with organisations such as WHO, FAO, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). Last but not least, EFSA cooperates with third country risk assessment organisations. In some cases this cooperation is formalised through agreements with experienced regulatory agencies with a risk assessment mandate, such as in Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the USA. In the case of several other countries, cooperation is formalised through ad-hoc meetings with exchange of experience, work programmes and views in food safety risk assessment.

The programme identifies as key challenges for EFSA’s international scientific cooperation the development and implementation of harmonised risk assessment methodologies, the development of internationally harmonised frameworks for collection and appraisal of scientific evidence and the coherence with EU and international partners in risk communication. Moreover, it stresses that EFSA’s international activities should continue the support provided to the EU in its international commitments; enhance EU visibility globally by disseminating what has been built in the EU thus far (e.g. principles 178/2002, scientific cooperation within EU); and boost EFSA’s recognition and reputation globally as the EU reference point for risk assessment in food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, nutrition, plant protection and plant health.

To meet these challenges and opportunities, the programme identifies the following objectives for EFSA’s international scientific cooperation 2014–16:

- i. Support the EU in its international commitments.
- ii. Support EFSA’s Science Strategy 2012–16 strategic objectives: optimise the use of risk assessment capacity in the EU and internationally; develop and harmonise the methodologies and approaches to assess risks associated with the food chain; and strengthen the scientific evidence for risk assessment and risk monitoring.
- iii. Promote coherence in risk communication and build awareness of EFSA’s activities at international level.

To support the implementation of these objectives in practice, the following key initiatives are proposed for the short term (2014–2016):

- On multilateral relations, EFSA will continue to support the EC in its Codex-related activities; improve collaboration with the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committees; and strengthen cooperation with EU agencies and institutions (e.g. the Joint Research Centre (JRC)) in areas of international relevance (e.g. developing harmonised risk assessment guidance across sectors, use of whole-genome sequence data, implementing alternative methods in risk assessment). EFSA's ongoing collaboration activities with other international organisations and liaison groups will continue. These include joint activities with IPPC/EPPO in the area of plant protection, with OECD on the development of international test guidelines and with OIE in the area of animal health and welfare and of zoonotic diseases; and regular information exchange with the multilateral liaison groups in the area of food chemical safety and microbiological food safety.
- In the area of bilateral relations with third countries, EFSA will continue its existing cooperation with risk assessment bodies in Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the USA. The establishment of bilateral relations with third countries that have launched risk assessment initiatives more recently (e.g. countries in Asia, South America, Africa) will continue on a case by case basis, in consultation with the EC. Priority shall mainly be given to risk assessment bodies in third countries which have concluded agreements with the EU. Additional tools and mechanisms for knowledge transfer are also proposed, such as international conferences and seminars on thematic areas, and exchange of staff.
- Building further on the existing communication activities, a key initiative will be to establish an international platform for the development and implementation of harmonised risk communication practices.

In the longer term, EFSA will give priority to engagements in multilateral liaison groups to discuss issues on the risk assessment agenda and to coalitions with experienced regulatory agencies at international level aimed at translating innovative science into regulatory risk assessment practice (e.g. the Global Coalition for Regulatory Science Research (GCRSR) initiative of the US Food and Drug Administration (US FDA)). In the Scientific Cooperation Roadmap, EFSA will outline which other initiatives will be taken in cooperation with EU Member States, EU agencies and institutions, international organisations and third country risk assessment bodies.

Baseline initiatives proposed in this multi-annual programme can be conducted using available resources for the coordination of the international activities, in close cooperation with the various experts and staff contributing to EFSA's scientific work. More resources would be needed if higher priority were to be given to raising EFSA's visibility and using its competence to support the European and international risk analysis community to address emerging issues of international interest.

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1. Introduction

EFSA's mission is to provide independent scientific advice and clear communication on existing and emerging risks in the area of food and feed safety, animal health and welfare as well as plant health.

EFSA's scientific opinions and advice are produced to provide a sound foundation for European policies and legislation and to support the EC, European Parliament and EU Member States in taking effective and timely risk management decisions. EFSA's scientific opinions are used as reference documents by policy makers at national and international level.

EFSA's most critical commitment is therefore to ground its science-based advice and communications in the most up-to-date scientific information and knowledge. Thus, scientific cooperation is crucial for EFSA's core business. This scientific cooperation goes beyond the borders of the EU to ensure that it can meet the expectations of risk managers, stakeholders and the public at large.

On the other hand, globally risk assessment bodies with similar remit with EFSA address common challenges, such as limited risk assessment capacity, budget constraints, scientific competence and independence issues. In addition, more risk assessment bodies are currently being established in Asia, South America and Africa. Therefore, risk assessment harmonisation and proper implementation is a key challenge. Working together is of mutual benefit to risk assessment bodies, so what has been built in the EU thus far (e.g. principles 178/2002, scientific cooperation within EU) should be made visible and shared with our key international partners and risk assessment bodies. In this document, a multi-annual programme on 'EFSA's international scientific cooperation' for the period 2014–2016 is presented. The programme builds on EFSA's international strategy, as set up in the document 'Strategic approach to EFSA's international activities 2009–12'.³ It takes stock of the achievements and experience gained from EFSA's international activities. Last but not least, EFSA's international scientific approach 2014–2016 takes into consideration the recommendations⁴ of EFSA's Management Board, following the findings of EFSA's external evaluation (EFSA, 2012b),⁵ and also EFSA's Science Strategy 2012–2016 (EFSA, 2012a),⁶ adopted in 2012. The main aim of this document is to identify the key objectives, priorities and tools for the international activities to be conducted in the period 2014–2016.

The multi-annual programme on 'EFSA's international scientific cooperation' will be integrated into the Scientific Cooperation Roadmap which is intended to be finalised by mid-2014.

2. Background of EFSA's strategic approach on international activities

EFSA has built a dialogue and bilateral cooperation with food risk assessment agencies in different parts of the world and multilateral cooperation with international organisations.

EFSA supports the EU delegation in Codex Alimentarius-related activities, by providing technical and scientific support to the EC to meet the EU international commitments. In order to ensure a consistent risk assessment approach at EU level and to contribute to international harmonisation, EFSA also works with EU institutions (including EC Scientific Committees and the JRC) and bodies with a risk assessment mandate (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), European Medicines Agency (EMA)) in areas and subjects with an international outreach.

EFSA has signed a cooperation agreement with WHO and collaborates with other international organisations, such as the FAO, the OIE, the OECD, the IPPC and EPPO.

³ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/corporate/doc/intstrategicen.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/mbrecommendations2012.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/mb121213/docs/mb121213-ax4.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/sciencestrategy.pdf>

EFSA has strengthened its cooperation with experienced regulatory agencies with a risk assessment mandate, in particular in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, and has developed relations with risk assessment bodies in other countries worldwide.

Delegations from Brazil, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Taiwan have visited EFSA and shown an interest in EFSA's experiences and expertise in risk assessment and risk communication. In addition, various risk assessment bodies have requested that their experts be seconded to EFSA for a short or longer period of time to obtain a better understanding of risk assessment practices in specific domains of EFSA's work. Likewise, EFSA experts have been invited to visit various third countries to share experience gained at EU level and to help these countries strengthen their national food safety initiatives.

EFSA's Management Board considers international scientific cooperation a key area and in 2009 adopted the first strategic approach to EFSA's international activities.

These activities were categorised in the priority areas of:

- supporting the EC in its international commitments;
- ensuring access to international data and information;
- participating in risk assessment internationally;
- promoting coherence of risk communication and building awareness of EFSA's activities at the international level;
- cooperating with third countries' risk assessment bodies and international organisations; and
- enhancing the visibility of EFSA's activities through the organisation of and/or participation in international scientific events.

EFSA's external evaluation, conducted in 2012, concluded that EFSA **plays a role in the international scientific community** to promote risk assessment through the development and provision of scientific outputs for the scientific community; it was highlighted that EFSA's scientific opinions are used as reference documents by policy makers of international bodies (Codex Alimentarius, FAO, WHO, OIE) and national agencies. The evaluation acknowledged that the strategic approach to international activities set up in 2009 has improved and has contributed to EFSA being recognised outside the EU. However, it was noted that there is still a lot of work to be done. It was therefore recommended that EFSA should take advantage of its strong EU positioning to further develop data exchange with international organisations and promote the convergence of international risk assessment standards with the EU approach.

Following these outcomes, EFSA's Management Board, in 2012, adopted the following recommendation regarding international activities:

“The international role and reputation of EFSA as the reference point for risk assessment related to food safety in Europe should be further enhanced for the benefit of the EU food safety system, in concert with EFSA's partner organisations within the Member States, European institutions and other European Agencies, relevant agencies in third countries and international organisations. Frameworks for cooperation should be developed with key international partners such as WHO, OIE, Codex Alimentarius, JECFA etc.” (EFSA, 2012b)

Looking at the future, it is inevitable that EFSA's international scientific cooperation activities should be in line with the key strategic objectives of its Science Strategy 2012–2016, which are the following:

- i. further develop the excellence of EFSA's scientific advice;
- ii. optimise the use of risk assessment capacity in the EU;
- iii. develop and harmonise methodologies and approaches to assess risks associated with the food chain;
- iv. strengthen the scientific basis for risk assessment and risk monitoring.

3. State of play and key partners in EFSA's international cooperation

This section reflects the state of play of EFSA's international activities in relation to the relevant agencies in third countries and international organisations. It is presented based on the three main domains of EFSA's international scientific cooperation activities:

- support for the EU in its international commitments;
- scientific cooperation with international organisations with responsibility for providing scientific advice or setting international standards, in the area of food and feed safety, animal health and welfare as well as plant health; and
- bilateral scientific cooperation with third country risk assessment organisations.

An overview of this cooperation is shown in Table 1 and presented in the following sub-sections.

3.1. Support the EU in its international commitments

EFSA provides support to the EC in order to meet EU international commitments and enhance EU influence worldwide. In particular, EFSA:

- provides scientific and technical support to the EC in its international commitments;
- develops bilateral collaboration with third countries at the EC's request;
- builds EU risk assessment capacity with the EC, EU agencies and networks in areas and subjects with an international outreach.

A summary of activities in the above-mentioned areas is presented below.

3.1.1. Providing scientific and technical support to the European Commission in its international commitments

EFSA provides support to the EU delegation in Codex Alimentarius-related activities which are coordinated by the Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) by means of an annual request. This support can take the form of a technical briefing on substances of concern or a comprehensive report on health-based guidance values and Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) proposed for multiple substances by the relevant Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee. In particular cases, EFSA takes part in the EU delegation at Codex Committee meetings. Recently, EFSA received a clear mandate from the EC to enhance its involvement in Codex Alimentarius work and activities. EFSA also contributes to calls for data from the Codex risk assessment bodies. Following the European Council conclusions,⁷ DG SANCO asked EFSA to explore ways of improving collaboration between EFSA and the FAO/WHO risk assessment bodies (Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on

⁷ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/agricult/133115.pdf

Food Additives (JECFA), Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) and Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA)).⁸

3.1.2. Developing bilateral collaboration with third countries at the EC's request

EFSA's bilateral scientific cooperation with third countries includes:

- Requests from the DG for Trade (DG TRADE) and DG SANCO to receive delegations from various countries with a general interest in EFSA's role in the EU food safety system, or with a more specific interest in a particular domain of EFSA's activities (e.g. health claims, food additive risk assessment, pesticide peer review). Examples of these activities are the exchange of information and expertise in risk assessment methodology applied to animal welfare organised in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the EC and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply (MAPA) of Brazil or in the framework of the EU–Chile Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement.
- Developing and maintaining working relations and scientific cooperation with EU Enlargement Countries,⁹ on behalf of DG Enlargement (ELARG), and with Europe's southern and eastern neighbours in the framework of the EU's Neighbourhood Programme (ENP),¹⁰ on behalf of DG EuropeAid Development and Cooperation (DEVCO).
- Risk assessment training in the framework of the Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) initiative of DG SANCO¹¹ is provided beyond the EU borders, to the Candidate and Associated Countries, to African countries, etc.
- EFSA is working together with the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU (FRONTEX), the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in the area of emerging risks and crisis preparedness.

3.1.3. Collaboration with the EC, EU agencies and networks in areas of international relevance

Although outside the scope of this document, it needs to be emphasised that EFSA also works with EU institutions (including EC Scientific Committees, JRC) and bodies with a risk assessment mandate (ECDC, ECHA, EMA) in areas and subjects with an international outreach (e.g. antimicrobial resistance, whole-genome sequencing, data collection on zoonoses, use of *in vitro* and *in silico* techniques as well as 'omics' for chemical risk assessment, identification of emerging risks, developing chemical databases, evaluation of packaging materials, food/feed additives, pesticides and veterinary drugs).

This collaboration takes the form of joint meetings, regular audio- and video-conferences, exchange of experts and joint projects. MoUs with the EU agencies and institutions provide a framework for the scientific cooperation between EFSA and the other EU risk assessment bodies. In addition, EFSA produces joint contributions with other EU agencies/institutions in international platforms, for instance at the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committees with EMA, in the OECD and WHO's Chemical Risk Assessment Network with ECHA and JRC, and at the Global Coalition on Regulatory Science Research with EMA. These joint contributions clearly illustrate the importance of cooperation between EU agencies at the international level.

⁸ Letter from Mrs P. Testori to Ms Catherine Geslain-Laneelle, SANCO G6/BM/ise D(2013) 1105273, 23/5/2013.

⁹ For further information, see <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/networks/euenlargement.htm>

¹⁰ For further information, see http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/index_en.htm

¹¹ See http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/

The collaboration between EFSA and EU institutions and bodies with a risk assessment mandate is considered crucial not only for building EU risk assessment capacity but also for the application of harmonised risk assessment approaches across the EU and internationally. It further strengthens the EU influence on international forums, it avoids duplication of effort and it establishes procedures for sharing scientific information and data on subjects of common concern. The cooperation strengthens EU's visibility and role in risk assessment at international level.

3.2. Cooperation with international organisations

EFSA has built cooperation with international organisations with a responsibility for providing scientific advice or setting international standards in the area of food and feed safety, animal health and welfare as well as plant health. EFSA's collaborations with the key international organisations are described below.

3.2.1. Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

EFSA's involvement with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) was referred to in section 3.1 and includes the provision of scientific and technical support to the preparation of EU positions in the framework of Codex-related activities by means of an annual request from DG SANCO or on an ad-hoc basis.

Moreover, EFSA signed a cooperation agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters (EoL) with the FAO and WHO Secretariats to the Joint Expert Committees in 2009. The current cooperation consists in exchanging data and other relevant scientific information on substances to be evaluated by the Joint Expert Committees and EFSA as well as on emerging risks, and joint activities aimed at international harmonisation of methodologies and approaches for chemical risk assessment.

As already mentioned above, in May 2013, DG SANCO requested EFSA to take further steps to improve cooperation with the WHO and FAO Secretariats of the Joint Expert Committees (JECFA, JMPR and JEMRA). The aim is to develop a multi-annual cooperation plan on general risk assessment issues and specific substances of priority for both EU and Codex, e.g. through international workshops and preparatory work in support of future evaluations by the Joint Expert Committees.

This cooperation avoids duplication of work and facilitates data sharing on substances of common concern.

3.2.2. World Health Organization (WHO)

The collaboration with WHO is mainly with its Department on Food Safety and Zoonoses in Geneva (WHO/FOS). This WHO Department provides the Secretariats of JECFA, JMPR and JEMRA. WHO also coordinates international programmes such as the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS), the Global Environment Monitoring System on Food Contamination (GEMS/FOOD) and the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN). As described in section 3.1.1, the European Council of Ministers and DG SANCO have expressed a strong desire to explore ways of improving collaboration between EFSA and the FAO/WHO risk assessment bodies.

It is therefore planned to improve coordination of work programmes and to provide better support through preparatory work in the form of technical reports, such as in the area of data collection and analysis for exposure assessment, or in the form of a review of hazard characterisation data for the derivation of health-based guidance values. Furthermore, short-term secondments of scientific staff can be considered for dedicated activities in the area of harmonisation of methodologies or preparatory work on priority subjects of mutual concern.

At a bilateral meeting in Geneva in September 2013, EFSA and WHO/FOS took the first steps towards developing a programme of more concrete proposals for collaboration in the future. It was agreed that further collaboration between EFSA and WHO is mutually beneficial, and should

preferably be ratified by an EoL, and possibly a two- to three-year collaboration plan, building on the fruitful interactions and collaborations already in place.

3.2.3. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

There have been several scientific collaborations between EFSA and FAO on specific subjects in the area of climate change, emergency prevention systems, emerging risks, animal health and welfare, microbiological risk assessments, antimicrobial resistance, nanotechnology, biotechnology, guidance for risk communication and the development of an EFSA thesaurus. This collaboration is mainly conducted with FAO's Food Safety and Quality, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department and includes FAO Secretariat to Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committees and the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Secretariat.

A joint meeting planned for 2014 will allow the organisations to exchange work programmes with the aim of specifying the themes and topics where cooperation could be further enhanced. This would also include a discussion about a possible collaboration in building capacity in risk assessment.

3.2.4. Other key international organizations

The European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) is an intergovernmental organisation responsible for European cooperation in plant protection in the European and Mediterranean region. EFSA's PLH Unit and EPPO are collaborating in exchanging experience and information in the field of plant health risk assessment. EPPO participates as observer in meetings of the PLH Panel and PLH network. In addition, the IPPC Secretariat participates in the colloquia and workshops organised by EFSA PLH.

It is envisaged that collaboration with EPPO in the field of data collection and harmonisation and in the development of risk assessment methodologies will increase in the coming years. For instance, in 2014, EFSA and EPPO organised a joint workshop on collecting and sharing data on plant health.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) plays an important role in the provision of international test guidelines. EFSA contributes to some of these activities at the request of the EC, e.g. in the area of non-animal (*in vitro*) assays and computational tools for screening of endocrine active substances, and in the development of harmonised templates for chemical databases.

In the coming years, these dedicated collaborations will continue and annual meetings will be arranged so that the needs for collaboration can be updated on a regular basis. From time to time, EFSA receives mandates from DG SANCO in relation to subjects which also fall within the competence of the OECD (e.g. nanotechnology, endocrine active substances). In these cases, EFSA involvement may take the form of reviewing a final draft of an OECD scientific output and/or it may participate as observer in an OECD working group.

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE¹²) is the intergovernmental organisation responsible for improving animal health worldwide. It is recognised as a reference organisation by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and in 2013 had a total of 178 Member Countries. EFSA's collaboration with OIE mainly takes the form of exchange of information on risk assessments performed in the field of animal health and welfare and by collaborations in the area of data collection on zoonotic diseases.

Cooperation with these international organisations mostly consists in participation in workshops and meetings aimed at exchange of data and information on risk assessments performed in areas of mutual interest.

¹² Office International des Epizooties (OIE).

3.3. Cooperation with third country risk assessment organisations

3.3.1. Bilateral cooperation with other countries through agreements

To date, EFSA has signed Memorandums of Cooperation (MoC) with the US FDA and the Food Safety Commission of Japan (FCSJ). In addition, EFSA has exchanged letters (i.e. established an EoL) with food safety risk assessment organisations in Australia (Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)), Canada (Health Canada), New Zealand (Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)) and the USA (United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)). MoC and EoL agreements identify the areas of collaboration and establish procedures for exchange of information, data and views in areas of common interest including risk communication and the handling of confidential information.

The ongoing cooperation activities take the form of regular updates on work programmes and exchange of data and information in support of specific evaluations. These scientific exchanges are mostly done through electronic submissions and audio (or video) conferences. Only a limited number of physical meetings have taken place. The number of bilateral conference calls is on average less than one per year.

More intensive working relations have been built with US agencies through the creation of cluster meetings¹³ with one or more US agencies in six dedicated areas: food additives, feed additives, microbiological risks, pesticides, pollinators and animal health. As there is quite some overlap between the areas of work of the different food safety risk assessment bodies, in part also due to their contributions to Codex, there is a need to organise multilateral conference calls on a regular basis (three or four times per year).

As a result, two international liaison groups have been created which allow agencies in Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, the USA, the EC and some European countries to exchange information and discuss emerging issues in the areas of food chemical risk assessment and microbial food safety risk assessment. These are networks such as the International Food Chemical Safety Liaison Group (IFCSLG) and the International Microbiological Food Safety Liaison Group (IMFSLG).

Regular information exchange is maintained through the IFCSLG, formed in 2006. The group provides a platform for national food regulators/risk assessment bodies to exchange information on chemical risk analysis, emerging issues and food surveillance. Some of the food chemical safety issues covered in 2013 included acrylamide, bisphenol A, food contaminants, food colours, safety assessment of radionuclides, nutritional assessment of irradiated foods, food contact materials, natural toxins and trans-fatty acids. The IFCSLG organises physical meetings every 18 months,¹⁴ if possible back to back with another international event (e.g. a Codex Committee or JECFA meeting). Whilst not necessary to have such a meeting every year, multilateral meetings allow deeper discussions than feasible during a conference call.

Regular information exchange is maintained through the IMFSLG. The group provides a platform for national food regulators/risk assessment bodies to exchange information on microbiological risk analysis, emerging issues and food surveillance. Some of the microbiological safety issues covered in 2013 included *Campylobacter* strategy and risk management, setting *Salmonella* targets in certain poultry populations and setting performance targets. The IMFSLG only organises yearly conference calls.

¹³ The aim of these cluster meetings is to exchange information on risk assessments (previous, ongoing, planned), guidance documents, databases and ongoing research, and they take the form of conference calls between staff of the agencies at a frequency of up to three or four times per year.

¹⁴ EFSA hosted a meeting of the International Food Chemical Safety Liaison Group with representatives from agencies in Australia, Canada, the EU (SANCO and EFSA), France, Japan, the UK and the USA in November 2009.

In 2013, both EFSA and EMA received an invitation from the US FDA to participate in the Global Coalition for Regulatory Science Research (GCRSR), which was created at the initiative of the US FDA. The proposed aims of the GCRSR are to host an annual Global Summit on Regulatory Science (GSRS), to facilitate education and scientific training, to support the research needed to support regulatory decision making, establish best practices to understand and interpret data from innovative technology and to facilitate the translation of basic science innovation into regulatory applications; and to consider global research collaborations. The GCRSR is represented by an Executive Committee composed of representatives from various regulatory agencies in the medical and food safety areas that provide programme input and oversight.

3.3.2. Other bilateral cooperation with countries

The number of countries considering developing their own national risk assessment agency continues to grow. Since some time, EFSA receives regularly requests for developing scientific cooperation from third countries that launched initiatives for the creation of a risk assessment body in order to learn from EFSA's experiences and best practices in food safety risk assessment acquired since its inception in 2002.. These countries wish to learn from EFSA's experiences and best practices in food safety risk assessment, acquired since the Agency's inception in 2002. For instance, such requests come from countries in Asia (e.g. China, South-East Asia) or Africa (e.g. in November 2013 EFSA was also involved in a workshop to discuss a proposal for the creation of an African Union Food Safety Authority). EFSA mostly responds to these requests by holding a meeting with a delegation from the country, at which it explains how the EU food safety system works and presents its role, responsibilities and the way it organises and conducts its risk assessments.

EFSA has been visited by delegations from Brazil, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. In some cases, EFSA staff participate in seminars and workshops organised by the national authorities of the countries, to reach a wider audience. Most requests to organise a meeting with a delegation of a third country come from the EC (DGs SANCO and TRADE), but, since it became clear that the number of visits was increasing, DG SANCO offered to help in the coordination of the planning of these third country visits. It is also envisaged that a more thematic approach could be of interest and would lead to the organisation of workshops/seminars on specific areas of risk assessments with a group of interested third countries.

These contacts could lead to new sustainable relations that will play an important role in strengthening EFSA's scientific basis for risk assessment and risk monitoring, one of the key objectives in EFSA's Science Strategy (EFSA, 2012a). Some follow-up activities have been planned with a number of these organisations.

In the multi-annual programme it is anticipated that EFSA may be approached to support initiatives taken in Africa, the ASEAN countries,¹⁵ Russia and South and Latin America. DG SANCO offered its support to clarify how EFSA could set priorities taking into account Codex developments as a basis for a scientific collaboration with new third countries.

4. Key objectives of EFSA's programme 2014–16 on international scientific cooperation

In line with EFSA's Multiannual Management plan 2014–16, the main goal of EFSA's future international scientific cooperation is to enhance EFSA's role, reputation and recognition globally as the European reference body for risk assessment on food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, nutrition, plant protection and plant health. To meet this vision, EFSA's international strategic approach 2014–2016 will be a continuation of EFSA's International Activities (EFSA, 2009a)¹⁶ and a further support to EFSA's Science Strategy 2012–2016 (EFSA, 2012a).¹⁷

¹⁵ ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see <http://www.aseansec.org/asean-anthem/>).

¹⁶ Available at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/corporate/pub/intstrategic.htm>

¹⁷ Available at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/corporate/pub/sciencestrategy12.htm>

In other words, the following three key areas of action have been identified for EFSA's international scientific cooperation multi-annual programme 2014–16:

- i. support the EU in its international commitments;
- ii. support the strategic objectives of EFSA's Science Strategy 2012–16 by:
 - a) optimising the use of risk assessment capacity in the EU and internationally;
 - b) developing and harmonising methodologies and approaches to assess risks associated with the food chain;
 - c) strengthening the scientific evidence for risk assessment and risk monitoring;
- iii. promotion of coherence in risk communication and building awareness of EFSA's activities at international level.

4.1. Support of the EU in its international commitments

EFSA's support to the EC for its international commitments was described in section 3.1 and it is anticipated that it will continue and become even stronger in some cases.

In terms of multilateral scientific cooperation, special focus will be given to:

- participating in the activities of international organisations (e.g. Codex Alimentarius, OIE, OECD, WHO, FAO, IPPC/EPPO);
- enhancing EFSA's involvement in the work and activities of Codex Alimentarius;
- improving scientific cooperation with the Secretariats of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committees (JEFCA, JMPR, JEMRA); and
- collaborating with EU agencies on specific topics of international dimension, which is crucial for EU support to multilateral relations.

In the case of bilateral scientific cooperation with specific countries, the focus will be on activities which support the sharing of scientific data, information and risk assessment methodologies. In this framework, DG SANCO will provide support to set priorities taking into account Codex developments and in creating a basis for a scientific collaboration with other third countries.

In terms of bilateral scientific cooperation, EFSA will continue its collaborations with third country organisations with a collaboration agreement and/or ongoing scientific cooperation activities (e.g. regular meetings/teleconferences, joint activities, (pre)notifications). This will include organisations such as US FDA, USDA, FSANZ, FSCJ, Health Canada and New Zealand MPI. With the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) a new cooperation agreement will be established. In some cases it will be necessary to evaluate existing collaborations and possibly update the collaboration agreements prepared a few years ago based on current needs identified during a high-level meeting between EFSA and the relevant agencies.

4.2. Support EFSA's Science Strategy 2012–16

4.2.1. Optimisation of the use of risk assessment capacity internationally

In particular, in the current period of limited resources, it is essential that duplication of work or inconsistencies be avoided. Continually improving coordination with European and international agencies, stakeholders in the food chain and key third countries will make the best use of available

capacity and resources throughout Europe and internationally and enhance EU influence at international level.

Various tools of collaboration could be used, such as sharing of work programmes, launching joint risk assessment initiatives, exchange of experts and collaborative efforts to train experts in risk assessment. Using these tools allows the organisations to consider working together on subjects of mutual interest and to avoid duplication of effort. It will also provide an opportunity to identify knowledge or data gaps that could result in (joint) follow-up actions. This could include, for instance, enhanced collaborations in the following areas:

- the introduction of new tools and approaches in chemical hazard assessment (e.g. JRC Institute for Health and Consumer Protection (IHCP), ECHA;
- EMA, EC Scientific Committees,¹⁸ US FDA, WHO;
- trends in (bio-)analytical techniques, with particular emphasis on current methods of multi-residue analysis, for screening of bio-active compounds, for genetic analysis, and their performance characteristics in terms of specificity, sensitivity and applicability for exposure, hazard and risk characterisation (e.g. JRC Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements (IRMM), European Reference Laboratories (EURLs));
- methodologies for environmental risk assessment (EC Scientific Committees, European Environmental Agency (EEA));
- data sources, methodologies and approaches for identification of emerging risks (e.g. ECHA, ECDC, FAO, WHO, FRONTEX, FVO, OLAF).

4.2.2. Development and harmonisation of methodologies and approaches to assess risks associated with the food chain

Under the coordination of OECD and WHO, major progress has been made in the development of internationally validated testing methods and harmonised risk assessment approaches. However, there will always be a need for further harmonisation between various domains within EFSA, between EFSA and the EU Member States, with other EU agencies and at the international level. EFSA will therefore continue to work with key partners on initiatives for the harmonisation of existing and the development of new methodologies (EFSA, 2012b).

The focus will be on:

- *cross-cutting guidance* such as risk assessment terminology, uncertainties in risk assessment, weight of evidence, interpretation of epidemiological studies and biological relevance;
- *more specific cross-cutting guidance in the area of chemical or microbiological risk assessment*, such as for (combined) exposure to multiple hazards and for the risk assessment of endocrine disruptors;
- guidance for the *assessment of regulated products*, which may differ between various countries and regions not only from a scientific point of view, but also from a legislative/regulatory point of view; and

¹⁸ Scientific Committee for Consumer Safety (SCCS), Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER), Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR).

- guidance on *new risk assessment methodologies*, such as for risk–risk and risk–benefit comparisons, environmental risk assessment, tiered/pragmatic risk assessment approaches and risk assessment of new (including ‘omics’-based) technologies.

It is worth noting that EFSA’s Scientific Committee considered it very important to encourage wider collaboration and engagement with other international activities to develop and harmonise risk assessment approaches across the food, feed and environmental sectors within EFSA’s remit; and recommended enhancing EFSA’s collaboration with other EU/non-EU/international agencies and other risk assessment organisations. The Scientific Committee opinion, adopted in July 2013, identified priority topics for risk assessment guidance development for the coming years¹⁹:

- development of new guidance on the following topics: interpretation of epidemiological studies; the use of a weight of evidence approach in risk assessment; the identification of biological relevance in toxicology; import risk assessment;
- updating existing guidance or developing follow-up guidance on harmonisation of the assessment of human exposure and terminology in risk assessment;
- continuing the ongoing work on the development of guidance documents on environmental risk assessment and uncertainty in risk assessment;
- reviewing scientific issues (e.g. omics, synthetic biology).

This Opinion on Priorities for Guidance development could be used with EFSA’s partners in international scientific cooperation as a basis for examining if there is a shared interest and an opportunity to launch a joint harmonisation activity with other risk assessment bodies.

Promoting the implementation of best practices and harmonised methodologies around the globe could be a key area for EFSA’s multilateral relations through frameworks with international organisations such as FAO, WHO, OIE and IPPC/EPPO.

Launching projects for 2014–2016 dedicated to international risk assessment harmonisation in cooperation with third country and international RA organisations is also an option.

4.2.3. Strengthening the scientific evidence for risk assessment and risk monitoring

EFSA’s Strategic Plan 2009–2013 (EFSA, 2009b)²⁰ identified the long-term need for EFSA to have access to high-quality scientific data to ensure that it is able to deliver scientifically robust assessments of risk and to identify emerging issues.

EFSA has already signed collaboration agreements (e.g. MoU, EoL) with some EU agencies and third country organisations with longstanding experience in risk assessment.²¹ The common element in these agreements is the exchange of information, data and methodologies in the area of risk assessment, and a commitment to inform each other about emerging issues of relevance for the collaborating agency.

There remains, however, the need to strengthen relations with existing partners and to increase the number of organisations with which EFSA collaborates in order to meet EFSA’s need for access to the data, information and methodologies in possession of or generated by other risk assessment bodies.

Possible directions in the area of data sharing could involve:

¹⁹ Available at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3345.htm>

²⁰ Available at <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/corporate/pub/strategicplan.htm>

²¹ For more details see <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/networks/international.htm>

- strengthening data sharing and data access agreements with EU agencies (EEA, EMA, ECHA, ECDC) and international organisations (e.g. FAO, WHO, OECD, OIE, IPPC/EPPO);
- contributing to the further expansion and development of shared data collections in cooperation with EU agencies, international organisations (e.g. WHO, OECD, EPPO and OIE) and third country organisations (e.g. US EPA) using harmonised protocols for data generation, collection and collation; priority will be given to data collections in the area of:
 - microbiological and chemical occurrence data, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and foodborne outbreaks data (in food of animal and plant origin as well as feed)
 - post-marketing monitoring data for regulated substances such as plant protection products and food additives
 - food composition data (for general population as well as for vulnerable groups within the population)
 - food consumption data
 - exposure assessment data
 - biomonitoring data
 - toxic, addictive, psychotropic or other substances of concern in botanicals
 - chemical hazards (including toxicokinetic, toxicodynamic and toxicological properties and pivotal data used to derive health based guidance values).

Ensuring efficient access to and processing of information from scientific literature, unpublished studies and risk assessments is crucial. Tools facilitating this access could be:

- joint projects aimed at sharing and pooling of grey literature and systematic reviews (part of the Virtual Library project);
- cooperation activities to establish a system to regularly identify and take stock of new information and new data which could require re-consideration of existing opinions;
- joint projects with other organisations carrying out work in EFSA's remit to ensure access to studies and the risk assessment work of these organisations;
- expanding EFSA's Information Exchange Platform (IEP) and cooperation networks permitting information sourcing and sharing to international organisations, e.g. WHO.

Last but not least is the planning of research with relevance for EFSA's work. Possible mechanisms for this could be:

- detailed forward planning with EU agencies/institutions (particularly DG Research and Innovation, DG Agriculture and the JRC) and international organisations related to research needed on assessment methodologies to keep up with technological developments, and for mapping of ongoing and planned research with relevance for EFSA's work;
- sharing of research priorities with international agencies and partners in third countries for the identification of joint research needs.

4.3. Promotion of coherence in risk communication and building awareness of EFSA's activities at the international level

Promotion of coherence in communications with EU and international partners has been a key strategic priority for EFSA as outlined in its International Strategy (EFSA, 2009b) and the 2010–2013 Communications Strategy.²² Moving forward, it is likely that this important element of the Authority's work will continue to be underlined in its proposed 2014–2018 Communications Strategy, currently in development. EFSA's communications work beyond EU includes pre-notification of key outputs when appropriate, pre-accession and neighbourhood training programmes, delegation visits to EFSA, ad hoc outreach by EFSA and third parties (Risk Communications Guidelines are available in Mandarin) and participation in FAO's risk communications guidelines.

Establishing an international platform would be a step forward to ensure coherence in risk communication by:

- exchanging information and experiences;
- developing common practices and guidelines;
- building on existing practice including pre-notification on specific (emerging) issues and early warning on key public announcements;
- building on existing communication activities linked to risk assessment, e.g. by establishing dedicated networks of communicators.

5. Criteria for prioritisation

In the preceding section, we tried to capture proposals for scientific activities that could be launched or enhanced by EFSA in collaboration with EC services, agencies and institutions in the EU and risk assessment bodies in third countries and at international level. Launching all proposed initiatives at once is unrealistic, and it can be anticipated that the number of third countries seeking cooperation with EFSA will grow. It is clear that choices need to be made and that a planning and prioritisation framework should be implemented.

In order to prioritise cooperation activities with risk assessment bodies in third countries and international organisations in a transparent way, activities should be ranked according to the following criteria:

1. They support EFSA's core business of providing transparent and independent scientific advice and effective and timely communication to the risk managers in the EU and MSs.
2. They support the EU in its international commitments.
3. They contribute to the safety of foods consumed in the EU.
4. They consume relatively few resources.
5. There are similarities between the core values of the partner organisation and of EFSA (independence, scientific excellence, responsiveness, openness and transparency).
6. Failure to implement the proposed collaboration would result in a risk to EFSA.

²² <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/commstrategyperspective2013.pdf>

To this end, priority could be given to activities that provide added value to the EU and the global community and would use the core competence of EFSA. Possible strategic choices for EFSA could include, for instance:

- scientific cooperation with international organisations (WHO, FAO) on specific activities (e.g. Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TTC), risk communication guidance, risk assessment guidelines);
- scientific cooperation with third countries which have concluded agreements with the EU;
- scientific cooperation activities with a focus on *the collection and analysis of* data for the risk assessments to be conducted;
- scientific cooperation activities focused on the development and implementation of internationally harmonised methodologies for risk assessment; use of best practices and harmonised methodologies and approaches for risk assessment across the globe;
- scientific cooperation to optimise the use of risk assessment capacity in the EU/internationally.

6. Possible directions to take in the multi-annual programme on International Scientific Cooperation

What do we want to achieve in the near future and which directions do we want to take?

EFSA will frame its international programme in such a way that the following short- to medium-term targets can be reached:

For the medium to long term (2016 and beyond):

- awareness, understanding and recognition globally of EFSA as a reference point for risk assessment in food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, nutrition, plant protection and plant health;
- access to an internationally harmonised set of good risk assessment practices;
- internationally harmonised frameworks for collection and appraisal of scientific evidence in support of risk assessment and risk monitoring purposes;
- coherence with EU and international partners in risk communication.

For the short to medium term (2014–2016):

- roadmap on international scientific cooperation with a clarification of EFSA's contributions to international risk assessment and the visibility of EU risk assessment;
- develop best practice in risk communications: (i) lexicon, (ii) risk communications guidelines, and (iii) crisis communications guidelines;
- strengthen coordination of EU risk communications.

The following activities and actions are proposed in the framework of EFSA's multi-annual programme:

- to continue its scientific and technical contributions to the EU in Codex-related activities, at the request of the EC;
- to develop a more extensive work programme with WHO and FAO focused on harmonisation of risk assessment and risk communication guidelines, on preparatory work for the evaluation of specific substances of priority, and on the identification of emerging risks;
- to continue its activities with international organisations in the area of plant protection (IPPC/EPPO), development of international test guidelines (OECD), and risk assessments in the area of animal health and welfare and data collection in the area of zoonotic diseases (OIE);
- to continue the existing cooperation arrangements with risk assessment bodies in Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the USA;
- to continue the multilateral liaison group activities in the area of food chemical safety and microbial food safety, possibly with a wider risk assessment community;
- to develop a multi-annual plan for meetings with delegations from risk assessment bodies in third countries in consultation with DG SANCO;
- to consider joint projects with other risk assessment bodies;
- to raise EU visibility by:
 - organising, twice a year, an international workshop for (new) third country risk assessment bodies on dedicated areas of risk assessment (e.g. food additives, food contact materials, etc.);
 - organising an international conference on trends and developments in risk assessment, similar to EFSA's scientific conference in 2012 in conjunction with EXPO 2015;
 - presenting EFSA's work at international meetings and organising international meetings/conferences.
- to improve risk communication at international level through:
 - the creation of an international platform to discuss and exchange experiences ("lessons learnt") in risk communication;
 - the organisation of an international seminar on best practices in risk communication in 2016.
- to promote the knowledge transfer through:
 - visits from third country delegations;
 - scientists visiting EFSA;
 - EFSA's experts/staff assigned for short- to medium-term tasks, e.g. scientific support to EU delegation at Codex, participating in JECFA/JMPR meetings.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AMR	antimicrobial resistance
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AVA	Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore
BTSF	Better Training for Safer Food
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CFSA	China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment
DG	Directorate General
DG AGRI	DG Agriculture
DG DEVCO	DG EuropeAid Development and Cooperation
DG ELARG	DG Enlargement
DG RTD	DG Research & Innovation
DG SANCO	DG of Health and Consumers
DG TRADE	DG for Trade
EC	European Commission
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
ECHA	European Chemicals Agency
EEA	European Environment Agency
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EMA	European Medicines Agency
ENP	European Neighbourhood Programme
EoL	Exchange of Letters
EPPO	European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization
EU	European Union
EURL	European Reference Laboratory
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FRONTEX	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU

FSANZ	Food Standards Australia New Zealand
FSCJ	Food Safety Commission of Japan
FVO	DG SANCO Food and Veterinary Office
GEMS	Global Environment Monitoring System
GCRSR	Global Coalition for Regulatory Science Research
GSRS	Global Summit on Regulatory Science
Hong Kong—CFS	Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Brand Hong Kong
IFCSLG	International Food Chemical Safety Liaison Group
IMFSLG	International Microbial Food Safety Liaison Group
INFOSAN	International Food Safety Authorities Network
IPCS	International Programme on Chemical Safety
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
JECFA	Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives
JEMRA	Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment
JMPR	Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues
JRC	Joint Research Centre
JRC-IHCP	Institute for Health and Consumer Protection (Ispra)
JRC-IRMM	Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements (Geel)
KFDA	Korea Food & Drug Administration (currently Ministry of Food and Drug Safety—MFDS)
MAPA	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply (Brazil)
MoC	Memorandum of Cooperation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries (New Zealand)
MRL	Maximum Residue Limit
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office

PLH	Plant Health Panel
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
SAG	Agricultural and Livestock Service of Chile
SCCS	Scientific Committee for Consumer Safety
SCHER	Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks
SCENIHR	Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
Taiwan-FDA	Taiwan Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health
TTC	Threshold of Toxicological Concern
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
USDA/APHIS	USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
USDA/APHIS/CEAH	USDA APHIS Centers for Epidemiology
USDA/ARS	USDA Agricultural Research Service
USDA/FSIS	USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service
USEPA	US Environmental Protection Agency
USFDA	US Food and Drug Administration
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO/FOS	WHO Department of Food Safety and Zoonoses
WTO	World Trade Organization

Table 1: Multi-annual programme on International Scientific Cooperation in 2014–2016: mapping of ongoing (✓) and planned scientific cooperation activities in 2014–2016 (O) on behalf of the European Commission, with international organisations, as well as with third countries and third country organisations

Area of scientific cooperation →	MoU or EoL	Joint scientific reports re. EU legislative tasks	Joint activity, on request of EC	Identifying emerging risks	Harmon. crisis preparedness procedures	Training in RA	Joint projects on scient. topics of common interest	Regular (cluster) meetings, WGs, exchanges on specific topics	Ad-hoc discussions on specific topics	Visits and events of general nature	Audio- and videoconferences of general nature	Examples (non-exhaustive listing)
<i>EU key partners in international activities</i>												
DG AGRI								✓	✓	✓		Research priorities, Horizon 2020
DG RTD								✓	✓	✓		Research priorities, Horizon 2020
DG SANCO			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	BTSF, Codex, Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committees, emerging risks
DG TRADE			✓						✓	✓	✓	EFSA's role in EU food safety
EC Scientific Committees			✓	O		O		O	✓			EAS, default values, TTC, nanotechnology, mixtures, genotoxicity
FRONTEX				O	O	O	O	O	✓			Emerging risks, import risk assessment, animal/plant health
FVO			O	O					✓			Emerging risks
OLAF				O			O	O	✓			Emerging risks
RASFF				O	O	O	O	O	✓			Emerging risks, crisis preparedness procedures

Area of scientific cooperation →	MoU or EoL	Joint scientific reports re. EU legislative tasks	Joint activ. on request of EC	Identifying emerging risks	Harmon. crisis preparedness procedures	Training in RA	Joint projects on scient. topics of common interest	Regular (cluster) meetings, WGs, exchanges on specific topics	Ad-hoc discussions on specific topics	Visits and events of general nature	Audio- and videoconferences of general nature	Examples (non-exhaustive listing)
<i>International organisations</i>												
Codex Alimentarius Commission and Committees		✓							✓✓			Food and feed additives, veterinary drug residues, pesticides
FAO		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	AMR, nanotechnology, genetically modified organisms (GMO), emerging risks, animal welfare, risk communication Plant health data collection, data sharing and analysis
IPPC and EPPO		O		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		Testing guidelines, good laboratory practice (GLP), eChem Portal, EAS, pollinators, QSAR toolbox
OECD		✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	OIE standards, animal health and welfare
OIE		O		O						✓	✓	Threshold of Toxicological Concern, Bisphenol A, arsenic, polychlorinated biphenyls, total diet study, mode of action, chemical mixtures, uncertainties in risk assessment
WHO/FOS	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Third countries/third country organisations</i>												
Australia—FSANZ	✓		✓	✓				O	✓	✓	✓	Pyrrolizidine alkaloids, 3-MCPD, claims, intolerance, food contact materials
Canada—Health Canada	✓		✓	✓				O	✓	✓	✓	BPA, lead, melamine, food allergy, energy drinks, emerging risks
FSC Japan	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	Ethoxyquin, food additives, food enzymes, pesticides
New Zealand MPI	✓		O	✓				O	✓	✓	✓	Tutin, emerging risks, claims, animal health, zoonoses

Area of scientific cooperation →	MoU or EoL	Joint scientific reports re. EU legislative tasks	Joint activ. on request of EC	Identifying emerging risks	Harmon. crisis preparedness procedures	Training in RA	Joint projects on scient. topics of common interest	Regular (cluster) meetings, WGs, exchanges on specific topics	Ad-hoc discussions on specific topics	Visits and events of general nature	Audio- and videoconferences of general nature	Examples (non-exhaustive listing)
USDA/APHIS/CEAH	✓		O	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	Animal and plant health
USDA/ARS	✓		O	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	Animal health, plant health, pollinators
USDA/FSIS	✓		O	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	Chemical and microbiological risk assessment, monitoring and surveillance, risk-ranking prioritisation, emerging risks
US EPA	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	Pesticides, pollinators, alternative testing, TOX21, mixtures
US FDA	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	Food and feed additives, BPA, perchlorate, cadmium, TOX21
Africa			O	O		✓			O	✓	O	Possible support to the development of an African risk assessment agency
ASEAN ^(a)			O	O					O	O	O	EFSA's role in EU food safety
Brazil—MAPA			✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	Animal welfare, food safety risk assessment
Canada—Food Inspection			O	✓				O	✓	✓	✓	Feed additives, emerging risks
Chile—SAG			O	✓					✓	✓	✓	Animal health and welfare
China—CFSA			✓	✓					✓	✓	O	EFSA's role in EU food safety, food additives, food contact materials, novel food
EU Enlargement ^(b)			✓			✓		✓		✓		Data exchange, risk assessment methods, risk communication support
EU Neighbourhood ^(c)			✓			✓		✓		✓		Data exchange, risk assessment methods, risk communication support

Area of scientific cooperation →	MoU or EoL	Joint scientific reports re. EU legislative tasks	Joint activ. on request of EC	Identifying emerging risks	Harmon. crisis preparedness procedures	Training in RA	Joint projects on scient. topics of common interest	Regular (cluster) meetings, WGs, exchanges on specific topics	Ad-hoc discussions on specific topics	Visits and events of general nature	Audio- and videoconferences of general nature	Examples (non-exhaustive listing)
Hong Kong—CFS		✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	EFSA's role in EU food safety, health claims
Korean FDA		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	O	EFSA's role in EU food safety, zoonoses, risk communications
Malaysia—Ministry of Health		✓	✓	✓					O	✓	O	EFSA's role in EU food safety
Russia		O	O	O					✓	O	O	Pesticide risk assessment/MRLs, animal health
Singapore—AVA		✓	✓	✓					O	✓	O	EFSA's role in EU food safety
Taiwan—FDA		O	O	O					O	O	✓	EFSA's role in EU food safety, transparency
Thailand—Thai Embassy		✓	✓	✓					O	✓	O	EFSA's role in EU food safety, food and feed additives risk assessment

(a): ASEAN: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam (situation October 2013).

(b): EU Enlargement: includes the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Turkey and Serbia as countries with Candidate status and the countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo with Potential Candidate status (situation October 2013).

(c): EU Neighbourhood: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine (situation October 2013).

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