

# Scientific Cooperation Roadmap 2014 - 2016

*Working together to ensure food safety*





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# Summary

EFSA was established to assess and communicate on risks associated with the food chain, thereby contributing to ensure food safety for Europe's 500 million consumers. Cooperation with partners in Member States and internationally has been important since EFSA's inception, and EFSA's Management Board identified as one of EFSA's priority areas, to further enhance the EU risk assessment capacity. This 'Roadmap' is developed to indicate ways and specific actions to address the recommendations of the Management Board and EFSA's strategic objectives, with the vision to move beyond the operation of specific cooperation tools towards building a common risk assessment agenda, where priorities are defined on which Member States and EFSA can partner.

Outsourcing will be a key feature and additional financial instruments are identified, such as framework partnership agreements and thematic grants. Cooperation and mentoring directly among MS organisations could be supported by EFSA through twinning projects to exchange knowledge and expertise and strengthen Europe's capacity in food safety risk assessment. The main aim of proposed new grants is to increase the opportunity to work together among Member States, and between EFSA and MS in the form of 'Joint Projects', as mentioned in Article 36 of EFSA's Founding Regulation.

The awareness and sharing of work programmes may help to avoid duplication of work, create opportunities for scientific cooperation and help to avoid diverging opinions. It is recognised that not all MS have established work plans or programmes specifically for food safety risk assessment, hence additional avenues are needed. In relation to diverging scientific opinions, it is proposed that EFSA will extend public consultations to 8 weeks whenever possible, and recommend that MS should also organise public consultations.

Also the roles of the Advisory Forum and the Focal Points are explored. The Advisory Forum offers a means of ensuring close cooperation between EFSA and the competent bodies of the Member States. The different needs and expectations among MS is acknowledged and will be assessed to determine if 'clusters' for scientific cooperation is possible, making use of different cooperation tools to meet different needs. It is proposed to expand the role of the Focal Points, while strengthening of the formal and financial framework for the Focal Points.

In addition to current training activities, additional activities such as summer courses, mentoring and regional training opportunities and development of basic risk assessment training opportunities / material targeted to non-scientists and relevant stakeholders will be explored. Another novel means to stimulate new opportunities for building and sharing expertise would be the exchange of PhD students.

The resource allocation is provided in detail between 2014 and 2016, with a steady FTE allocation of 35.5 and a budget of €10 506 000 in 2014 to €11 150 000 in 2016. The main changes over that time being the shift of resources between specific grants & procurement to framework partnership agreements, thematic grants and twinning projects.

One of the key action areas detailed in "EFSA's Multiannual Work Programme for 2014-2016" is to develop a EU risk assessment agenda to address common long term needs and actions. The Roadmap details how the agenda will be developed together with MS and institutional partners, taking into account the international dimension, to identify specific activities and joint projects to be prioritised, programmed and resourced in the coming years.

EFSA has developed a multi-annual international programme "EFSA's international scientific cooperation 2014-2016". The activities and actions of this multi-annual programme are summarised with specific actions and timelines detailed. In order to ensure a consistent risk assessment approach at EU level and to contribute to international harmonisation, EFSA works also together with EU institutions and bodies with a risk assessment mandate (ECDC, ECHA, EEA, EMA) in areas and subjects with an international outreach. The Roadmap details how in the coming years EFSA will work together with these agencies on various subjects.





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# 1. Introduction

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was established as an independent source of scientific advice and to communicate on risks associated with the food chain, thereby contributing to ensuring a high level of consumer protection and maintaining confidence in the EU food supply. To achieve such a demanding task EFSA cannot, and does not, work in isolation. Cooperation with partners in Member States and internationally has been important since EFSA's inception, and related strategic objectives have been integral to the 'Strategy for Cooperation and Networking'<sup>1</sup>. Over the years several tools, activities, and networks have been established to structure networking and cooperation.

In 2012, the international auditors Ernst & Young issued the independent report<sup>2</sup> on EFSA's external evaluation. In drawing upon the conclusions and recommendations of the external evaluation report and taking into account the results of the consultation with EFSA's staff, Advisory Forum, Scientific Committee and Stakeholders, the Management Board identified a number of priority areas, including further enhancement of EU risk assessment capacity<sup>3</sup>.

EFSA described the practical implementation of the recommendations of the Management Board in its Programming Document and identified as one of its three key priorities for the period 2014 – 2016, to build the EU risk assessment community and optimise the use of its resources<sup>4</sup>. The first sectoral objective listed in the Programming Document is to define a multiannual risk assessment agenda with institutional partners, in particular with Member States. The Management Board highlighted the strategic relevance in promoting the efficient use of the European scientific resources and pointed out the need to:

- promote scientific cooperation initiatives aimed at using the scientific capabilities of Member States in the most efficient manner;
- build on the scientific expertise of the Member States, and ensure that the scientific work carried out at national level is not duplicated at EU level;
- elaborate actions to stimulate the Member States to contribute to the consolidation of the EU risk assessment community.

This 'Scientific Cooperation Roadmap' is developed to indicate ways and specific actions on how to address the recommendations of the Management Board and EFSA's strategic objectives.

<sup>1</sup> Strategy for cooperation and networking between the EU Member States and EFSA. Available: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/networks.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Evaluation of EFSA – Final Report, Ernst & Young. Available at: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/efsafinalreport.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> EFSA's external evaluation and recommendations from the Management Board. Available at: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/mbrecommendations2012.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Programming Document of the European Food Safety Authority 2014-2016 incorporating the Annual Management Plan 2014 and the Multiannual Plan 2014-2016. Available at: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/corporate/doc/amp1416.pdf>



## 2. Background

In 2013, the **Advisory Forum Discussion Group on Scientific Cooperation** worked to provide EFSA with suggestions on strengthening scientific cooperation, in line with recommendations from the Management Board. The discussion group reviewed the various scientific cooperation activities and provided suggestions on how EFSA and Member States can work together to strengthen cooperation. Eleven recommendations<sup>5</sup> were agreed by the Advisory Forum (AF) and are worked out in this roadmap.

After five years of operation, the work of the **Focal Point network** was reviewed in 2013. Following input from Focal Points on perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the network, and an analysis of relevant strategic and operational documents, this review was summarised in a SWOT matrix<sup>6</sup>. The review concluded that the Focal Point network is a strong and operational network, meeting the overall objective to strengthen cooperation and networking, suggesting that additional tasks could be entrusted to the Focal Point network.

Also in 2013, EFSA commissioned an **external review<sup>7</sup> to determine the impact of science grant and procurement projects** on delivery of EFSA's tasks. The external review shows that EFSA science projects conducted during 2009-2012 were frequently and widely used in EFSA scientific outputs. EFSA grant and procurement schemes are also intended to achieve a number of secondary objectives. The study findings demonstrate that the grant and procurement projects made a positive contribution to scientific risk assessment practices in EFSA during the study period and to EFSA's own capacity to respond to the mandates it was given. There was a strong, positive networking and cooperation benefit from science projects for beneficiaries/contractors and the projects also facilitated cooperation and networking between organisations in EU Member States. Grant projects have a greater potential to contribute to EFSA's objectives of supporting capacity building, cooperation and networking, and to the development of scientific knowledge that is of more general application in EFSA's work. The review suggests greater use of longer term, larger, and strategic research (grant-funded) projects.

In developing a **programme for international scientific cooperation**, a stock-taking activity was conducted in 2013, to map achievements and experience gained from EFSA's activities in cooperation with EU agencies, as well as with risk assessment organisations in third countries and international organisations<sup>8</sup>. Based on this stock taking exercise and taking into consideration global challenges that risk assessment bodies need to address, such as limited risk assessment capacity and experience, budget constraints, scientific competence and independence issues, this roadmap identifies targets and actions for the coming years.

The outcomes and recommendations of these reviews have been taken up in this roadmap and led to the proposed actions in the following chapters to work together to ensuring food safety.

5 Technical Report 'Enhancing Scientific Cooperation between EFSA and Member States' by the Advisory Forum Discussion Group on Scientific Cooperation. Available at: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/567e.htm>.

6 Technical Report 'Focal Points activities 2013', including Annex 1: SWOT Analysis on the 5 Year Review of the Focal Point Network. Available at: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/580e.htm>.

7 External review of the impact of scientific grant and procurement projects on delivering EFSA's tasks. Review Report, in progress.

8 Multi-annual programme on International Scientific Cooperation 2014 – 2016. <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/corporate/pub/iscmap1416.htm>

## 3. Vision

### Working together to ensure food safety

Scientific cooperation is about enabling Member States and EFSA to work together to ensure that Europe's food is safe, while strengthening consumer confidence. Having joint responsibility and sharing the same goal, it will be most efficient for Member States and EFSA to agree and cooperate on food safety priorities. Therefore the vision is to move beyond the operation of specific cooperation tools towards building a common risk assessment agenda, where priorities are defined on which Member States and EFSA can partner, so to make best use of resources. Food safety is increasingly a global matter, hence Member States and EFSA shall take up their international role in food safety risk assessment together with partner organisations in pre-accession and neighbouring countries, European institutions and EU agencies, as well as relevant agencies in third countries and international organisations.

## 4. Objectives

In working together on food safety, the following objectives are shared:

SCIENTIFIC CAPACITY BUILDING AND INTELLIGENT USE OF RESOURCES	COHERENT INTERNATIONAL VOICE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Building risk assessment community</li><li>■ Data collection and data sharing</li><li>■ Strengthen (inter) national networking</li><li>■ Share workload among partners</li><li>■ Efficient use of scientific expertise in MS</li><li>■ Avoid duplication of work and divergent views</li><li>■ Establish EU risk assessment agenda on shared priorities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Joint work programmes with international partners</li><li>■ Support EU in international commitments</li><li>■ Harmonise risk assessment approaches</li><li>■ Coherence in risk communication</li></ul>

This roadmap provides an overview of actions and tools to achieve above objectives. Background details are provided in full in the documents listed at the end of the roadmap.

The objective of data collection and data sharing, while being an integral part of scientific cooperation, is addressed in a separate roadmap and outside the scope of this document.

## 5. Added value

Working together on these objectives shall bring mutual benefit by efficiency gains and shared responsibility, bringing a return of investment in scientific cooperation, both from the side of EFSA and the Member States. For EFSA this networking is a basic principle and allows for information and knowledge to be shared and common tasks to be identified to make optimum use of expertise and resources, as detailed in Commission Regulation (EC) No 2230/2004. For Member State organisations benefits include the networking with other centres of expertise, dissemination of best practices, sharing and obtaining data of common interest, wider exposure of research findings and the possibility to obtain financial support for their research activities.

The external evaluation conducted by the auditors in 2012, assessed the added value of EFSA for national food agencies and indicated that: *expenditures related to finding best methodologies, communication support or trainings have been reduced in national food agencies. However, the benefits vary from one MS to another.* The auditors further reported that for MS with limited own internal risk assessment capacities, EFSA provides an activity that they would not provide by themselves, whereas for MS with strong internal risk assessment capacities the involvement of national staff in EFSA's activities is perceived as an additional cost.

Member States are also very different in terms of population, geographical size, history, eating habits and organisation of food and feed safety. It is therefore logical that there are different levels of capacity in food safety risk assessment and expectations from scientific cooperation, and one size will not fit all. Optimum benefit may be obtained if MS somehow cluster together, making use of cooperation tools that suit best.

It is further acknowledged that national risk assessment bodies have their own needs and accountability that go beyond the cooperation discussed in this roadmap. In different parts of the EU some Member States have traditionally worked together closely on food safety related issues. Hence, Member States will engage in the activities detailed in this Roadmap in different ways according to their own needs and capabilities.

## 6. Underlying values

Creating partnerships to enable scientific cooperation is part of a larger project: Europe. Therefore, the motto of the European Union '*United in diversity*' applies also here. The following values underlie scientific cooperation, which are interlinked:

- **Trust:** results in solutions leading to increased efficiency and reduced costs;
- **Partnership:** there is so much to do that we do rely on one another to get the work done;
- **Openness:** working together requires letting others know what is being done and how;
- **Commitment:** achieving results may need time, flexibility and will to overcome obstacles, and sometimes a re-start.

## 7. Scientific capacity building and intelligent use of resources

It is important to ensure that risk assessment approaches do not conflict with one another and to ensure that risk assessment capacity, across Europe, can develop. In times of scarcity, it is essential to make efficient use of resources, avoiding duplication of work, and to share workload among partners. To consolidate the risk assessment community, this roadmap suggests to optimise outsourcing and training opportunities, and to strengthen national networking and the role of the FPs.

### *Optimising outsourcing opportunities*

Involvement of Member State organisations in EFSA's projects can be better promoted by planning further ahead and increasing efforts to establish and share multi-annual plans. EFSA can foster higher interest in projects and more continuous collaboration with organisations through developing longer-term projects and improve the cost-benefit ratio for organisations. To help achieving this, an increasing proportion of outsourcing shall be done in the form of grants, such as framework partnership agreements, thematic grants and a call for proposals to support twinning projects.

**Framework partnership agreement:** an 'umbrella agreement' (normally 4 year duration) that sets out the terms under which specific grants are awarded.

**Thematic grants:** call for proposals on broad themes, launched by EFSA, open for a number of months, so that eligible applicants can form consortia and submit innovative project proposals for large networking projects of long duration.

**Twinning projects:** call for proposal to stimulate projects among Member States to exchange of knowledge and expertise, to ensure optimal utilisation of the existing risk assessment capacity in the Member States, in order to strengthen Europe's capacity in food safety risk assessment.

### *Joint projects*

The main aim of proposed new grants is to increase the opportunity to work together among Member States, and between EFSA and Member States. This can take the shape of 'Joint Projects' as mentioned in Article 36 of EFSA's Founding Regulation: *'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 in the fields within the Authority's mission'*. Pilot projects may kick-off in 2014 and through the development of the EU risk assessment agenda other suitable joint projects can be identified.

Cooperation and mentoring directly among Member State organisations could possibly be supported by EFSA through Twinning projects, to exchange knowledge and expertise and strengthen Europe's capacity in food safety risk assessment.

TARGET	ACTIONS	ACTORS	TIMELINE
Joint projects	■ Launch thematic grants.	EFSA	2015
	■ Broaden means of outsourcing scientific work, including use of framework partnership agreements where relevant.	EFSA, MS	2015
	■ Launch a call for proposals to support Twinning Projects among Member States.	EFSA, MS	2016

## Sharing work programmes

Awareness of each others work programmes may help to avoid unnecessary duplication of work and create opportunities for scientific cooperation. Where such work plans exist, they are shared through an Information Exchange Platform (IEP). However, it is recognised that not all Member States have established work plans or programmes specifically for food safety risk assessment, hence additional avenues for sharing information are needed. Sharing of work planning can also help to identify contentious scientific issues and allow the opportunity to exchange views to prevent diverging scientific opinions.

To help identify duplication of work and potential divergence, establishing liaison officers in each MS or organisation conducting risk assessment can be explored, whose role would be to identify potential overlapping areas at national level and in circumstances where diverging opinions are likely, to act as contacts for the exchange of information. Another powerful tool to prevent divergences is public consultation. EFSA will extend public consultations to 8 weeks, whenever possible, and also MS should organise public consultations, ideally in English.

In case of new scientific evidence and/or innovative techniques becoming available there may be a need to re-address scientific opinions and/or guidance documents. Close cooperation will be important when considering updating opinions/guidance.

TARGET	ACTIONS	ACTORS	TIMELINE
Sharing work programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available work plans continue to be shared and additional Excel table developed.</li> <li>Standing agenda item on AF and FP meetings for update on unplanned risk assessment activities.</li> <li>Synchronise FP with AF meetings, organising 4 meetings per year.</li> <li>Involve Article 36 network in sharing work plans.</li> <li>Pre-notify and consult AF earlier about sensitive scientific opinions.</li> <li>Extend public consultation to 8 weeks, whenever possible.</li> <li>Forum to adopt a guideline on managing diverging scientific opinions.</li> </ul>	AF, FP, EFSA	On-going
Life-cycle of opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structured dialogue when considering updating guidance and/or scientific opinions.</li> </ul>	EFSA, AF	2015 - 2016

## Operation of Advisory Forum

The role of the AF in the oversight and nomination of representatives to the Scientific Networks has recently been reinforced. Regular review of the Terms of Reference of the networks has been implemented and efforts are being made to ensure proper and timely information flow among the different actors.

Regular and structured dialogue with the Advisory Forum, supported by Focal Points, on forthcoming risk assessments shall be strengthened. Discussion with the Advisory Forum on its role in ensuring close cooperation with EFSA and the competent bodies of the Member States is necessary. The different needs and expectations among (groups) of Member States will be assessed to determine if 'clusters' for scientific cooperation, making use of different cooperation tools is possible.

TARGET	ACTIONS	ACTORS	TIMELINE
Harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early consultation through AF in case new guidance is developed.</li> <li>Workshops / training on new guidance delivered.</li> <li>Review mandate Scientific Network on the harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies.</li> </ul>	AF, EFSA	2014
Operation of the AF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dialogue on the AF role to coordinate networking with competent bodies in the MS.</li> <li>Assess specific needs and expectations of MS</li> <li>Dialogue on needs and possible cluster approaches using different cooperation tools.</li> </ul>	AF	2014 - 2015

## Strengthen national networking and role of Focal Points

Member States are organised quite differently to each other as regards to food and feed safety. A good overview of all country arrangements is provided in the 'EU Food Safety Almanac' developed and maintained by the BfR (<http://www.bfr.bund.de/en>). Since EFSA's mission is broad, this means there is interaction with many different organisations at national level. Strengthening of national networking can be fostered by a stronger coordination of Scientific Networks and Article 36 organisations. It is the task of the FPs to help coordinate this interaction and to support scientific cooperation as specified in Article 36. Therefore multi-annual grant agreements will be implemented with the Focal Points to support the dissemination of best practices and other tasks indicated under Article 36. In discussions following the review of the FP network new tasks were identified:

- Coordinating role of Article 36 organisations;
- National coordination of EFSA's Scientific Networks;
- Support training opportunities at national level;
- Cooperation on international activities;
- Sharing of work plans.

TARGET	ACTIONS	ACTORS	TIMELINE
Better national networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ EFSA's scientific networks to clearly set out their work activities.</li><li>■ Coordinate information flow to / from networks on work planning, new research, exchange of models and literature searches.</li></ul>	Networks, FPs, AF, EFSA	2015
Expand role Focal Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Strengthen formal and financial framework FPs.</li><li>■ Agree on new tasks for FPs.</li><li>■ Revise FP Grant Agreements, including new tasks.</li></ul>	AF, EFSA	2015

## Sharing expertise

About half of the experts engaged in EFSA's Panels and working groups are employed by national government authorities in their home country, while the other half are employed in universities and public research institutions. Also at organisational level EFSA works in close cooperation with bodies in Member States on tasks in EFSA's remit. Both EFSA and Member States share the common need to uphold and strengthen scientific expertise in the Member States, as EFSA is reliant on external experts. So far, the Expert database has been a tool that could be used both by Member States and EFSA to identify and select scientific experts. The recently concluded 5 year review of the Expert Database concluded that the tool was not used by MS and that for the database to remain fit for purpose, new avenues will be considered in the context of EFSA's Talent Management Project<sup>9</sup>.

Another novel means to stimulate new opportunities for building and sharing expertise would be the exchange of PhD students between national institutions/universities and EFSA. This would allow exchange of staff and knowledge and could be achieved through the framework of grant/procurement projects or be supported by external funding opportunities (e.g. Marie-Curie fellowships).

TARGET	ACTIONS	ACTORS	TIMELINE
Sharing expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Develop the Expert Database repository into a tool to support a talent management approach.</li><li>■ Stimulate exchange of staff / host PhD students.</li></ul>	EFSA, AF, Article 36 organisations	2015 - 2016

<sup>9</sup> European Food Safety Authority, 2014; Expert Database 5-year Review. EFSA supporting publication 2014:EN-613. 19 pp. <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/613e.htm>

## Training opportunities

A successful set of five risk assessment courses (microbiological, chemical, pest risk assessment, nutrition, GMO and other biotechnologies) has been delivered through the Commissions' Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) programme. Over 2015 – 2018, these five courses will be continued and completed by three other courses (animal health, animal welfare, and environmental risk assessment). Experience has shown that it is possible to adapt the BTSF syllabus and training material to national and regional training opportunities, such as is done in pre-accession regional trainings. Further training opportunities that should be explored are listed below.

TARGET	ACTIONS	ACTORS	TIMELINE
Training opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand the guest scientist and staff exchange programme to EU agencies and third countries.</li> <li>Open advanced risk assessment courses developed by and for EFSA Panel members/staff to participants from Member States.</li> <li>Stimulate exchange on post-graduate training opportunities and stimulate graduate study programmes to address risk assessment in curricula.</li> <li>Stimulate and share opportunities for participation in risk assessment courses, for example summer courses.</li> <li>Stimulate mentoring and regional training opportunities whereby an expert or organisation could provide guidance on certain aspects related to risk assessment, for example through twinning projects.</li> <li>Develop basic risk assessment training opportunities / material targeted to non-scientists and relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>	FPs, AF, EFSA	2015 - 2016

## 8. Resource allocation to various cooperation tools

Given that EFSA's budget will remain stable over the coming years, by consequence the budget that is dedicated to cooperation tools can not grow significantly. To find the needed resources to support above-mentioned activities, the current level of expenditure on the specific grants and procurements will be reduced as shown in the table below that provides estimates of the budget to be allocated to the different activities in the coming years:

	2014 BUDGET (K EURO)	2014 FTE	2015 BUDGET (K EURO)	2016 BUDGET (K EURO)
FP agreements	785	1	1,020	1,020
FP meetings	56	1.5	75	75
AF meetings	165	2.5	165	165
EFSA Scientific Networks	500	3	500	500
Training experts (opening advanced risk assessment courses to MS participants)	0	0	40	40
Guest scientists and staff exchange	50	0.5	50	100
Specific Grants & Procurement budget	8,700	20	6,000	5,000
Framework partnership agreements	0	0	1,000	1,000
Thematic grants	0	0	1,000	2,000
Grants supporting Twinning Projects	0	0	0	1,000
Interagency cooperation	50	2	50	50
International cooperation	200	5	200	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,506</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>10,100</b>	<b>11,150</b>



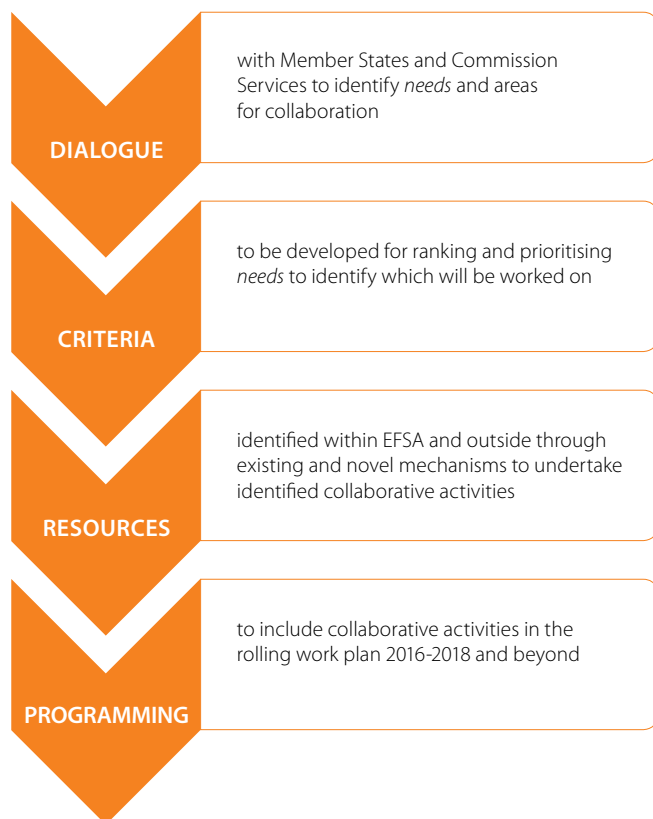
# 9. EU Risk Assessment Agenda

In December 2013, the Management Board adopted “EFSA’s Multiannual Work Programme for 2014-2016” setting out how the Authority plans to deliver its strategic objectives. One of the key action areas is to develop a EU risk assessment agenda to address common long term needs and actions. The agenda will be developed together with MS and institutional partners, taking into account the international dimension. It is necessary to identify specific activities and joint projects to be prioritised, programmed and resourced in the coming years. Establishing a common EU risk assessment agenda will help to:

- define common priorities;
- clarify who is involved in what activities;
- avoid duplication of efforts;
- provide justification to obtain needed funds and resources.

Partner organisations and agencies working in fields related to EFSA’s remit are often referred to as the *EU risk assessment community*. Organisations have their own work plans and priorities. The aim of the EU risk assessment agenda is to agree an additional programme of prioritised risk assessment support activities to be carried out jointly with other members of the EU risk assessment community. In short, this will be a planning instrument to agree on common priorities in food safety, to identify resources needed, and to agree who does what.

Discussions have started with Advisory Forum members on defining common priorities, and certain activity areas and key topics, where Member States and EFSA could work together more closely, are being identified. Consultation with EFSA units and Panels is necessary, delivery mechanisms for the key areas need to be identified, and a prioritisation exercise to help decide which activities to take forward first must be completed. The process to develop a common agenda will follow steps as visualised and described below:



The **dialogue** will include discussions with Advisory Forum members, helped by a discussion group, and with the different departments within EFSA. The criteria for prioritisation will be developed in parallel. At this stage it is important to ensure a close link to EFSA’s Scientific Committee for an overview of scientific needs in the different areas of risk assessment.

Following the establishment of prioritisation **criteria**, it will be possible to prioritise the needs and to draft a list of activities which can be worked on collaboratively, identifying who will be involved in which activities.

The next step will be to identify the proper means and **resources** as a way of actually implementing and undertaking the activities identified. In this phase it will be important to explore opportunities for obtaining resources from different sources and to continue dialogue with other partners, such as the Commission Services, including DG SANCO, DG RTD, DG AGRI, DG DEVCO and DG Connect, the JRC, and with the agencies EMA, ECDC, ECHA and EEA.

A first common **programming** for the EU risk assessment agenda should be agreed by end 2015, so that the first round of activities can be included in EFSA’s workplans as from 2016. Having a common risk assessment agenda, where priorities on which to work together are defined, shall help Member States and EFSA to engage in long-term partnerships and enjoy an intelligent use of resources.

# 10. International Scientific Cooperation

EFSA developed a multi-annual international programme “EFSA’s international scientific cooperation 2014-2016” which is building on EFSA’s “Strategic approach to international activities 2009-2012” and is guided by the recommendations of EFSA’s Management Board in connection to the 2<sup>nd</sup> external evaluation and “EFSA’s Science Strategy 2012-2016”. The activities and actions of this multi-annual programme on international scientific cooperation are summarised in the following table:

TARGET	ACTIONS	ACTORS	TIMELINE
Support EU in its international commitments	Provision of scientific and technical contributions to the EU in Codex related activities, on request of the Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Preparation of supporting documents for EU delegations</li> <li>■ Responding to calls for data from JECFA/JMPR/JEMRA</li> </ul>	EFSA	Following annual and <i>ad-hoc</i> requests from DG SANCO
	Develop joint work programme with WHO and FAO focused on harmonisation of risk assessment and risk communication guidelines, on preparatory work for evaluation of priority substances, and identification of emerging risks	EFSA	2014
	Develop joint work programme with international organisations in the area of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ plant protection (IPPC/EPPO)</li> <li>■ international test guidelines (OECD)</li> <li>■ risk assessments in the area of biological hazards, animal health and welfare and data collection in the area of zoonotic diseases (OIE)</li> </ul>	EFSA	2015
	Meetings with delegations from risk assessment bodies in third countries in consultation with the European Commission	EFSA	On-going
a) optimising use of risk assessment capacity	Cooperation with risk assessment bodies in Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and United States: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bilateral meetings</li> <li>■ Multilateral liaison groups</li> </ul>	EFSA	Regular audio/video conferences & at least once a year a physical meeting.
b) development and harmonisation of risk assessment methodologies and approaches	International conference on trends and developments in risk assessment in conjunction with EXPO 2015	EFSA	2015
c) strengthening the scientific evidence base	International workshops for (new) third country risk assessment bodies on dedicated areas of risk assessment (e.g. food additives, food contact materials, etc.)	EFSA	Twice a year
Coherence with EU and international partners in risk communication	Development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lexicon</li> <li>■ Risk communications guidelines</li> <li>■ Crisis communications guidelines</li> </ul>	EFSA with international partners (e.g. FAO, WHO)	2016
	Creation of an international platform to discuss and exchange experiences (“lessons learnt”) in risk communication	EFSA	2016
	International seminar on best practices in risk communication	EFSA, AF	2016

# 11. Interagency Cooperation

In order to ensure a consistent risk assessment approach at EU level and to contribute to international harmonisation, EFSA works together with EU institutions (e.g. EC Scientific Committees, JRC) and bodies with a risk assessment mandate (ECDC, ECHA, EEA, EMA) in areas and subjects with an international outreach. In coming years, EFSA will work together with these agencies on various subjects including antimicrobial resistance, molecular typing, data collection on zoonoses, use of in vitro, in silico and '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 videoconferences, exchange of experts and joint projects.

TARGET	ACTIONS	ACTORS	TIMELINE
ECDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular collaboration with ECDC in the area of e.g. EU Summary Reports, foodborne outbreaks, emerging hazards, molecular typing, crisis preparedness</li> <li>Development of a common platform to address emerging issues at the animal human interface (spec. non food-borne zoonoses including vector-borne diseases)</li> <li>Cooperation at WG level in reply to DG SANCO mandates in providing human data for Microbial Risk Assessment on food borne zoonoses, meat inspection and AMR</li> <li>Joint EFSA-ECDC framework contract for a database on vectors and vector born diseases</li> </ul>	EFSA, ECDC	On-going
ECHA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint projects on collection of chemical hazard data: physical meetings/video-/teleconferences to discuss e.g. chemical hazard database, harmonised templates (OECD, IUCLID, eChem), ontology, OECD QSAR toolbox, read-across, risk ranking/prioritisation of chemicals</li> <li>Harmonisation of RA guidance: videoconferences on subjects of mutual e.g. EDs, chemical mixtures, environmental risk assessment, use of default values and assessment factors</li> <li>Assessment of Regulated Substances (e.g. identifying substances of very high concern; confidentiality issues; alignment of RA procedures)</li> <li>Other topics: alternative testing, nanotechnologies</li> </ul>	EFSA, ECHA	On-going
EEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High-level meeting to identify areas of cooperation</li> <li>Exchange of views on Environmental Protection Goals</li> </ul>	EFSA, EEA	2014
EMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of Regulated Substances and new technologies with food, feed and medical applications</li> <li>General Risk Assessment approaches (e.g. efficacy assessments, use of default values and assessment factors, planned activities aimed at developing RA guidance);</li> <li>International harmonisation of RA approaches.</li> <li>Collaboration in opinions between CVMP and BIOHAZ at request of DG SANCO (e.g. on AMR)</li> </ul>	EFSA, EMA	On-going
EC Scientific Committees (SCCS, SCHER, SCENIHR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exchange of work programmes with the Secretariat of the EC Scientific Committees</li> <li>Assessment of Regulated Substances with food and non-food applications</li> <li>General Risk Assessment approaches (e.g. environmental RA, use of default values and assessment factors, planned activities aimed at developing RA guidance);</li> <li>Identification of emerging Risks (methodology, communication, interaction with EFSA's activity)</li> <li>Specific topics: alternative testing, nanotechnologies; chemical mixtures, risk ranking</li> </ul>	EFSA, SCCS, SCHER, SCENIHR	On-going
EU Agencies Network on Scientific Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness with regard to the provision of scientific advice</li> <li>To coordinate towards a more structured dialogue with EU regulators, risk managers and decision makers/takers</li> <li>To act as a high-level forum for the provision of scientific advice</li> </ul>	EFSA, EU Agencies	On-going
EU Agencies Network on Pre-Accession and ENP Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness with regards to agencies cooperation with the Pre-Accession and ENP countries</li> <li>To coordinate towards a more structured dialogue with the Commission services on current and future programmes</li> <li>To cooperate and support each other on practical solution for the execution of the projects and the cooperation with the Commission services</li> </ul>	EFSA, EU Agencies, Commission	On-going
JRC	<p>Cooperation in the area of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hazard identification and characterisation of chemicals (e.g. integrated testing strategies, toxicity studies to fill data gaps for RA)</li> <li>Exposure assessment of chemicals, including development and validation of analytical methods and collection of occurrence data in food</li> <li>Environmental health, including animal, plant and environmental data collection and assessment</li> <li>Other emerging topics: Integrating human health with environmental and ecological risk assessments, risk ranking, risk benefit, effectiveness of RM measures</li> </ul>	EFSA, JRC, ECHA	2014, joint activities for chemical RA in cooperation with JRC and ECHA

## Abbreviations

AF	Advisory Forum, EFSA
AFSCO	Advisory Forum and Scientific Cooperation Unit, EFSA
Art. 36	Article 36 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council (i.e. EFSA's Founding Regulation)
BfR	Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Germany
BIOHAZ	Biological Hazards Panel, EFSA
BTSF	Better Training for Safer Food programme, EC
Codex	<i>Codex Alimentarius</i>
CVMP	Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use, EMA
DG AGRI	EC Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development
DG CONNECT	EC Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology
DG DEVCO	EC Directorate General for Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid
DG RTD	EC Directorate General for Research and Innovation
DG SANCO	EC Directorate General for Health and Consumers
EC	European Commission
ECHA	European Chemical Agency
eChem	eChemPortal, OECD
EEA	European Environment Agency
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EMA	European Medicines Agency
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FP, FPs	Focal Point(s), EFSA
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
G&P projects	scientific grant and procurement projects
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
IEP	Information Exchange Platform, EFSA
IPPC/EPO	International Plant Protection Convention / Regional Plant Protection Organization for Europe
IUCLID	International Uniform Chemical Information Database
JECFA/JMPR	Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) / Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues
JRC	Joint Research Centre
MAP	Multi Annual Plan
MS	Member States, EU
OIE	Office International des Epizooties, World Organisation for Animal Health
QSAR	Quantitative Structure–Activity Relationship
RA	Risk Assessment
RM	Risk Management
SCCS	Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety
SCENHIR	Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks
SCHER	Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis
WHO	World Health Organization





