



European Food Safety Authority

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Scientific Committee and Panel – encouraging candidature from all Member States

The Management Board of the Authority discussed at its meeting on the 18 January the subject of the selection of candidates to its Scientific Committee and Panels. The Board is responsible for the appointment of the Committee and Panels on the basis of a proposal from the Executive Director. The matter was raised in relation to the procedures that have been in place since the initial call in 2003 to re-populate the Scientific Committee and Panels where there have been resignations or where it has been felt that additional expertise may be needed. This prompted a broader discussion on the selection of scientists for the Scientific Committee and Panels in general, the membership of which is due to be renewed in 2006.

The original call for expression of interest in membership of the Scientific Committee or a Scientific Panel was undertaken in January 2003. The call covered the joint needs of all 8 Scientific Expert Panels and the Scientific Committee. It was published in the Official Journal of the European Communities, on the Authority's website and in various European scientific journals and magazines and was also transmitted to members of the Advisory Forum.

Following an in-depth selection procedure and the input of the Advisory Forum the Board appointed the members of the Committee and Panels in line with the procedure established in the Founding Regulation 178/2002.

Members will also be aware that not all Panels were filled up to the maximum of 21 members at that time since for 5 Panels it was not clear what kind of additional expertise might be required. In January 2004 when this was clearer, a second call was launched, this time with specific requirements for candidates applying for a position on the respective 5 Panels. A call was also launched in December 2004 in order to fill a position made vacant on the CONTAM Panel.

EFSA's experience has been that the scientists applying through these calls are of a high calibre and meet the EFSA objective of having the best available scientists on its Scientific Panels and Committee. Although EFSA selects scientists on the basis of their expertise and experience it is also acutely aware of the need to maintain as broad a geographic representation as possible. It is also true to say that so far the applications from some Member States have been relatively limited and this is especially the case with the new Member States.

The tenure of the Scientific Committee and Panels is three years and therefore in 2006 EFSA will re-launch a selection process to re-populate these. Bearing this and the points above in mind the Board would like to have a discussion on this matter in June 2005.

In order to provide a broad view of this matter the Board was particularly interested in seeking the views of the Advisory Forum on the following two matters:

- i) the processes that EFSA may wish to consider to ensure that the news concerning the call for the 2006 selection procedure be transmitted as broadly as possible throughout the scientific communities of all Member States
- ii) to assess how scientists in the new Member States in particular could be encouraged to put forward their candidature.