

CHARTER OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE OF EFSA

The Charter establishes the role, the composition and organisation, responsibilities and reporting arrangements of the Audit Committee.

1- ROLE

The Audit Committee assists the Management Board by ensuring that the work of EFSA Internal Auditor, Internal Audit Service (IAS) and of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) is properly conducted and taken into account by the Management Board and the Executive Director and receives appropriate follow-up. It also guarantees the independence and objectivity of the Internal Auditor.

2- COMPOSITION

- The Audit Committee comprises at least five members, of whom a majority should be external to EFSA including at least three members of EFSA Management Board, a (nominatively appointed) member of IAS (Internal Audit Service of the EC Commission) and members of EFSA staff to be nominated by the Executive Director who will make sure their nomination does not generate any conflict of interest.
- The Committee shall be composed of members with professional experience covering a variety of appropriate backgrounds (such as auditing, governance, EFSA's operational areas and/or IT).
- The Management Board appoints the Chairperson and approves the other members of the Committee by written decision.

3- ORGANISATION AND MEETINGS ATTENDANCE

- Starting as of January 2006, the Audit Committee Members' mandate will have a term of two years. Membership may be renewed once.
- Meetings shall be held at least three times yearly or more frequently as circumstances require. Participation may not be delegated.

The quorum to hold a meeting shall be the simple majority of members.

- The Committee works on a basis of consensus. Recommendations may be taken by written procedure.
- The Executive Director will normally attend meetings of the Committee.
- Secretariat to the Committee shall be provided by the Internal Auditor

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- The Committee may invite members of EFSA (management team or other staff) or external experts to attend meetings where it considers this is necessary. (If any cost is incurred it shall be borne by EFSA).

4- RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

The responsibilities and tasks of the Committee shall be to:

- provide the best advice to EFSA Executive Director and Management Board.
- examine the Audit Programmes prepared by the Internal Auditor and make proposals to carry out audits where a particular need is perceived.
- follow-up implementation of audits and assess internal audit quality and control systems of the Authority by keeping under review the scope, results and effectiveness of the internal audit programme.
- monitor action taken by EFSA in response to analyses, assessments and recommendations of internal and external auditors
- consider and review with the Executive Director and management significant findings and opportunities for improvement and their responses thereto, in the form of adopted actions plans.
- advise the Executive Director and management about significant risks or exposures and evaluate the steps taken to minimise such risks to the Authority.
- keep the Management Board informed of reports resulting from audits (Internal Auditor, IAS, ECA and other external party audits) and the Authority's response thereto.
- monitor the quality of internal audit work at EFSA and ensure the independence and objectivity of the Internal Auditor.

The Audit Committee is not responsible for the implementation of audit recommendations which rests fully under the ultimate responsibility of the Executive Director.

5- REPORTING

The Audit Committee shall bring to EFSA Management Board and Executive Director's attention any issues arising out of the Committee's work and will report regularly to the Management Board on:

- the follow-up given by EFSA to major audit recommendations,
- the quality of internal audit work
- its own activity.

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The outputs of the Audit Committee will be, as appropriate, reported by the Chairman to the Public sessions of the Management Board.

The secretariat shall distribute copies of the minutes of Audit Committee meetings to EFSA Management Board, Executive Director and Management Team.

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