



European Food Safety Authority

NOTE TO THE MANAGEMENT BOARD ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND PANELS

1. At its meeting in June 2005 the Management Board requested the development of a document addressing issues related to the functioning of EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels, including the handling of work flow, outsourcing of work and possible overlaps of the Panels' respective mandates.

2. The Management Board has had an initial discussion of EFSA document MB 27.10.2005-3 regarding issues related to the functioning of the Scientific Committee and Scientific Panels, at its meeting on 27 October 2005. A draft of this document had been shared with the Scientific Committee at its 14th plenary meeting in September and the final document was discussed at the 16th plenary meeting of the Scientific Committee in December. In addition, the document was also shared with the Advisory Forum at its meeting on the 25th of November.

3. In order to facilitate the discussions at the December plenary of the Scientific Committee, the Secretariat prepared a note with questions to collect views from the members of the Scientific Committee on the mandates of the Panels, the size of the Panels, the handling of overlapping work mandates, the organisation and possible outsourcing of the work. The Members of the Scientific Committee made various valuable suggestions that could lead to improvements of the work flow, to a more even distribution of the work across the Panels and to a better coverage of the disciplines needed for the work to be conducted. Among others, the following suggestions were made for further consideration:

- To monitor the overload in some of the Panels and, where necessary, to consider the creation of an additional Panel (the creation of three new Panels for the areas currently covered by the AFC and CONTAM panel was suggested).
- To allow differences in the size of the Panels to better deal with the variable amount and nature of the workload of the respective Panels.
- To increase the size of the BIOHAZ Panel to cover better the broad spectrum of disciplines, and of the Scientific Committee, allowing to better undertake the many tasks related to the development of new methodologies for risk assessment and multidisciplinary issues.
- To improve and make more transparent EFSA's procedures for handling of requests for opinions and to describe the process in an EFSA document.

4. In addition, the Committee considered areas of work that could be outsourced to external working groups, or handled by ad-hoc expert groups or EFSA staff with consent of the Chairs of the Scientific Panels or Committee.

MB 24.01.2006 – 8 Functioning of Scientific Committee and Panels

5. A written note describing the position of the Scientific Committee based on the discussions at its 16th plenary meeting is currently in preparation by the Chair of the Scientific Committee. The Scientific Committee will finalise its recommendations to EFSA during its 17th plenary meeting in January. Subsequently, EFSA will develop a proposal for improvements of its various scientific functions including those of the Scientific Committee and Panels for consideration and possible endorsement by the Management Board. This proposal will also address the possible resource implications of the suggested changes of procedure. It is intended to have a more extensive discussion of this document at the Management Board meeting of 28/29 March 2006. The Management Board may wish to consider in its discussions in March also the outcome of the EFSA Evaluation Report and the public comments received on that report.