



EXECUTIVE OFFICE

**Management Board
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COVER PAGE

The final report of the external evaluation – commissioned by EFSA in line with Article 61 of its Founding Regulation – prepared by the international consultants Ernst & Young was published in September 2012¹.

According to Ernst & Young's analysis, EFSA has overall accomplished its mission. However, the report lays down a series of recommendations (37) which have been grouped into eight thematic areas: provision of scientific outputs and technical support; data collection; risk communication; cooperation and networking; international role and recognition; organisational structure, operational efficiency and adaptability to change; independence; and openness and transparency. A number of transversal recommendations have also been identified.

The Board examined Ernst & Young's report and on 12 December 2012 it identified four priority areas on which EFSA should focus its attention in the years to come: 1. Ensure long term-sustainability; 2. Increase trust by continuously enhancing transparency and openness; 3. Further enhance EU risk assessment capacity; and 4. Strengthen the clarity and accessibility of EFSA communications. The Board eventually adopted a series of more strategic recommendations² in these four areas with a view to improving the way EFSA fulfil its mission of providing independent, high quality scientific advice to policymakers across the European Union.

EFSA intends to implement the Board's recommendations through its Multi-Annual Plans and its Annual Management Plans for the years to come.

The Board indicated the need to ensure that all 37 recommendations included in the external evaluation report are properly followed up and individually assess on their level of priority. Hence, the table below provides an overview of the 37 recommendations including a ranking according to the priority level (H = High, M = Medium, L = Low) and also how they link to the Board's recommendations and to EFSA's Multi Annual Plan 2014-2016.

The Management Board is kindly requested to consider this proposal and comment as appropriate.

¹ Available at: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/efsafinalreport.pdf>

² Available at: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/keydocs/docs/mbrecommendations2012.pdf>

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Nr.	ERNST AND YOUNG'S RECOMMENDATIONS: PROVISION OF SCIENTIFIC OUTPUTS AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT	ADDRESSED TO	Priority index	Related MB recommendations	Covered by MAP	Comments
1	Address the concern of timeliness <i>i)</i> (as relates Openness and Transparency) improving the user friendliness of EFSA Register of Questions (RoQ) in order to allow requestors and other interested stakeholders to follow the process and <i>ii)</i> improving the dialogue with partners to limit bottlenecks.	EFSA, EC, NRM, NRA	M	MB recommendation 2 (2.1)	Yes	APDESK activities.
2	Improve the usability of guidance documents, enriching them with practical examples of implementation and identify specific point of contact.	EFSA	H	MB recommendation 2 (2.1)	Yes	Ongoing (Science strategy)
3	Promote the harmonization of outputs, <i>i)</i> controlling the compliance of Panels and Committee to the guidance documents detailing scientific and procedural aspects of the risk assessment workflow and <i>ii)</i> simplifying SOPs related to the scientific decision-making process and encourage their use.	EFSA	H	n.a.	Yes	Ongoing (quality management)
4	Increase the external awareness of internal mandates and self-tasking activities on emerging issues, better communicating outputs and activities.	EFSA	H	MB recommendations 1(1.2), 4(4. 1)	Yes	New Transparency initiative
	ERNST AND YOUNG'S RECOMMENDATIONS: DATA COLLECTION	ADDRESSED TO	Priority index	Related MB recommendations	Covered by MAP	Comments
5	Improve the compatibility of the Data Collection Framework with national IT systems for data collection, revising the Data Collection Framework in order to make the formats for data submission more flexible and usable for all MS.	EFSA	M	MB recommendation 3(3.1)	Yes	Ongoing (Science strategy)
6	Improve the accessibility to data and information <i>i)</i> making the databases more user-friendly and intelligible and improving the query function; <i>ii)</i> identifying strategies to harmonize EFSA's data collection requirements with non European ones.	EFSA	M	MB recommendation 3(3.1)	Yes	Ongoing (Science strategy)
7	Strengthen the role given to EFSA in assisting risk managers on continuous proactive risk monitoring in areas not specifically identified by the Founding Regulation (e.g., GMOs).	EP, Council, EC	M	MB recommendations 1(1.2)	Yes	Requires new budgetary resources

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	ERNST AND YOUNG'S RECOMMENDATIONS: RISK COMMUNICATION	ADDRESSED TO	Priority index	Related MB recommendations	Covered by MAP	Comments
8	Bring more clarity in EFSA's communication, <i>i)</i> adapting the communication language taking into account the targets and <i>ii)</i> further increasing the use of other languages (other than English) for publications and communication on the website.	EFSA	i): M ii): L	MB recommendation 4(4.1)	i): Yes ii) : No	Review of Communication strategy
9	Make the website more effective, reducing the complexity of the navigation on the website and strengthening the search engine.	EFSA	M	MB recommendation 4(4.1)	Yes	Ongoing
10	Strengthen the role given to EFSA in supporting the EC and risk managers in MS in ensuring coordinated and coherent communications when urgent scientific advice is required to address risks associated with the food chain <i>i)</i> defining clear responsibilities in risk communication as soon as a crisis arises and <i>ii)</i> making more effective the support of the Advisory Forum Working Group on Communications (AFWGC) in crisis situations.	EFSA, EC, NRM	M	MB recommendation 4(4.1)	Yes	Review of Communication strategy.
	ERNST AND YOUNG'S RECOMMENDATIONS: COOPERATION AND NETWORKING	ADDRESSED TO	Priority index	Related MB recommendations	Covered by MAP	Comments
11	Further strengthen the cooperation with Member States: <i>i)</i> improving the integrated system of exchange of information (IEP) giving the opportunity to signal to EFSA new risk assessments, divergent opinions, etc.; <i>ii)</i> increasing the diffusion and communication of EFSA's risk assessment in MS; <i>iii)</i> sharing agenda and work plans (including priorities) to make the most of existing and on-going works and develop joint activities; <i>iv)</i> stimulating exchanges and the participation of each MS at AF meetings and a better matching between meetings' agenda items and participants.	EFSA, NRM, NA	H	MB recommendation 3(3.1)	Yes	Ongoing (Science strategy)
12	Promote a higher quality of data evaluating to allocate funds to the implementation of a project aimed at establishing/improving data quality provision by MS and promoting assurance systems according to a harmonized approach for data collection. Difficulties faced by MS in providing data (both in terms of available resources and IT interface) should be taken into account.	EFSA, NRM, NA	M	MB recommendation 3(3.3)	Yes	Ongoing (Science strategy)

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	ERNST AND YOUNG'S RECOMMENDATIONS: INTERNATIONAL ROLE AND RECOGNITION	ADDRESSED TO	Priority index	Related MB recommendations	Covered by MAP	Comments
13	Strengthen agreements/scientific partnerships with other agencies and international organisations for the exchange of information and the use of data fostering the convergence of international risk assessment standards with EU approach in a globalizing economy.	EFSA, Council	H	MB recommendation 3(3.1 and 3.2)	Yes	International relation function recently enhanced
14	More actively participate in international discussions on risk assessment methodologies.	EFSA				
15	Monitor the professional attractiveness of EFSA for external experts to maintain a high quality of scientific outputs, limiting the travelling time for experts by promoting the use of IT tools (interactive video-conference, webinars, etc.).	EFSA	M	MB recommendation 1(1.3)(1.1)	Yes	Ongoing
	ERNST AND YOUNG'S RECOMMENDATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND ADAPTABILITY TO CHANGE	ADDRESSED TO	Priority index	Related MB recommendations	Covered by MAP	Comments
16	Improve the monitoring system, <i>i)</i> improving the readability of reporting documents by using a uniform nomenclature; <i>ii)</i> using the same indicators in strategic and reporting documents over the years; <i>iii)</i> inserting a column in the budget reconciling budget lines with activities; <i>iv)</i> limiting changes in budget, reporting documents, indicators, activity repartition and explain them whenever they occur, enabling comparison across years; <i>v)</i> establishing a system to reconcile mandates received, questions produced and the outputs provided. <i>vi)</i> increase the level of reliability and integrity of data used.	EFSA	L	n.a.	Yes	Largely implemented
	ERNST AND YOUNG'S RECOMMENDATIONS: INDEPENDENCE	ADDRESSED TO	Priority index	Related MB recommendations	Covered by MAP	Comments
17	Focus the communication on independence, specific aspects of implemented rules, procedures and results that address still existing criticisms. Analyse criticisms, keeping track of "scientific" and "political" ones and defining strategies to deal with both.	EFSA	H	MB recommendations 4(4.2) and 2(2.2)	Yes	New initiative launched.
18	Conduct a survey focused on NGOs to better understand the obstacles to a fruitful cooperation, identifying expectations and areas of potential cooperation.	EFSA	H	MB recommendation 2(2.1)	Yes	Part of broader stakeholder approach.

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	ERNST AND YOUNG'S RECOMMENDATIONS: OPENESS AND TRANSPARENCY	ADDRESSED TO	Priority index	Related MB recommendations	Covered by MAP	Comments
19	Increase the level of transparency on how external scientific studies, as well as suggestions and comments coming from stakeholders are taken into account (especially the diverging ones).	EFSA				
20	Enforce IT platforms/points of contacts to exchange information and updates in meetings on how comments/studies have been taken into account can help for specific scientific decision-making processes.	EFSA	H	MB recommendation 2(2.1)	Yes	New Transparency Initiative.
21	Evaluate the impact on the external perception of transparency of the Pilot Project to open up Panels to external observers.	EFSA				
22	Assess the cost-benefit of the tools of involvement of stakeholders, in order to prioritize them and focus efforts on the most efficient and effective tools.	EFSA				
23	Provide feedbacks to data providers on the quality, quantity, relevance and use of collected data.	EFSA	L	n.a.	No	
24	Address the issues of the ownership and of the final level of accessibility of data.	EFSA	H	n.a.	Yes	New Transparency Initiative.
25	Improve the procedure to update opinions once new evidence is available in terms of timeliness.	EFSA	L	n.a.	Yes	Ongoing
26	Make clearer reference in the scientific outputs to the sources of data, conflicting data, assumptions and uncertainties.	EFSA	H	MB recommendation 2(2.1)	Yes	New Transparency Initiative.
27	Evaluate the opportunity to give stakeholders the possibility to get access to documents related to the screening procedures and decisions on conflict of interests.	EFSA	L	n.a.	No	High workload and data protection issues
	ERNST AND YOUNG'S TRANSVERSAL RECOMMENDATIONS	ADDRESSED TO	Priority index	Related MB recommendations	Covered by MAP	Comments
28	Organize bilateral meetings and evaluate the opportunity to insert specific national context details when dealing with opinions, and to provide an additional service consultancy for NRM to interpret/adapt the opinion to a specific national context.	EFSA, NRM, NRA	L	n.a.	No	Value added/opportunity of action are questionable.
29	Evaluate the opportunity to integrate meetings with complementary projects developed in cooperation with specific MS in order to take benefit of MS expertise and increase the value of their contribution.	EFSA	L	MB recommendation 3(3.1)	Yes	Ongoing within cooperation activities
30	The application desk should work as a platform for discussion between EFSA and applicants, and EFSA should evaluate the cost opportunity of introducing hearings and pre-submission meetings (even with fees), to	EFSA	H	MB recommendation 1(1.4)	Yes	Requires new budgetary resources.

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	streamline the application process and allow EFSA and firms to gain efficiency.					
31	Evaluate whether the general public represents a priority target for communication and thus, in case, design adequate tools of information.	EFSA	L	n.a.	Yes	Ongoing review of the Communication strategy
32	Improve the effectiveness of the consultation of EFSA during the EU legislative process, to anticipate impacts of new legislations on EFSA's work and allow EFSA to organize at best.	EFSA, EP, EC, Council	M	MB recommendation 1 (1.8)	No	EFSA will take a proactive role, but this will require joint efforts with the EU institutions.
33	Establish regular meetings to report on progress in the work plan implementation and review the work plan, in case of new regulations or emerging issues.	EFSA, EC, Council	M	Management Board recommendation 1(1.4)	No	EFSA will take a proactive role, but this will require joint efforts with the EU institutions.
34	Increase the number of EC's feedbacks on the usefulness of the outputs, to allow EFSA to identify priority work areas and focus available resources (including an efficient use of outsourcing).	EC	H	Management Board recommendations 1(1.4) and 2(2.1)	Yes	New transparency initiatives
35	Continue strengthening its "Intelligence capacity" to study the global context, be aware of the international trends and regularly monitor evolutions and changes.	EFSA	M	MB recommendations 1(1.2)	Yes	Ongoing
36	Increase of exchanges/partnerships with public research institutions and MS to have inputs in terms of knowledge and innovation is recommended, as well as a better use of stakeholders meetings to identify emerging issues and future work areas.	EFSA	H	Management Board recommendation 1(1.4)	Yes	Ongoing (Science strategy)
37	Formally recognize that EFSA's mandate has been <i>de facto</i> extended over the years in order to address the changing needs and expectations of risk managers (i.e., environmental risk assessment).	EP, Council, EC	H	Management Board recommendation 1(1.6)	Yes	Not addressed to EFSA. EFSA will take a proactive role, but this will require joint efforts with the EU institutions.

Abbreviations

NGOs Non Governmental Organisations (other than consumer organisations)

NRA National Risk Assessors

NRM National Risk Managers

EP European Parliament

EC European Commission