



TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC NETWORK ON NOVEL FOODS

Background

Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 of the European Parliament and of the Council on novel foods, repealing Regulation (EC) No 258/97, introduces a centralised assessment and authorisation procedure, as of January 2018. It requires that all applications for the authorisation of novel foods shall be submitted to the Commission who may then request a safety assessment from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The Regulation also introduces a special procedure for the safety assessment of traditional foods from third countries, based on a history of safe food use. In this case, a notification for the placing on the market of a traditional food from a third country is sent to the Commission who forwards it to all Member States and to EFSA. Member States and EFSA may submit duly reasoned safety objections regarding the placing on the market of the notified food.

The Nutrition Unit provides scientific and administrative assistance to the Scientific Panel on Nutrition, Novel Foods and Food Allergens (NDA) and its related working group, which will be mandated with the safety assessment of novel foods.

EFSA's Advisory Forum agreed at its 63rd meeting held on 7-8 March 2017 to the creation of a Scientific Network in the area of Novel Foods ("NF Network") to deal with the new Regulatory requirements for a 3 year-period in accordance with EFSA's strategy for cooperation and networking across Europe.

On 27-28 November 2019 EFSA's Advisory Forum endorsed the renewal for an additional 3 year-period of the Terms of Reference of the Scientific Network on NF.

Objectives

The role of the NF Network is to provide a platform for the scientific cooperation between risk assessors of the EU Member States and EFSA in collaboration with the European Commission (EC), and to enhance risk assessment practices in the areas of novel foods including traditional foods from third countries in the framework of Regulation (EU) 2015/2283.

Specifically, the NF Network aims to:

- facilitate the exchange of information, the discussion and the consultation, and to enhance collaboration in the area of novel foods;
- harmonise the methodology for searching for information and commenting on notifications for traditional foods from third countries, and to harmonise the approach to streamline the submission of duly reasoned safety objections for notifications of traditional foods from third countries;
- avoid duplication of work.

The NF Network will involve Member State representatives with experience in dealing with the safety assessment of novel foods, as well as representatives of the EC DG SANTE.

Members of the scientific network

The Network will be composed of national representatives – i.e. experts with experience in the safety assessment of novel foods. The members of the Network are also required to act as a communication point for relevant organisations and stakeholders within their Member State, ensuring the timely exchange of scientific information between these national organisations and EFSA.

Members of the Network will be appointed in accordance with Articles 2 and 3 of the [Decision of the Management Board of EFSA on the establishment and operation of networks](#)¹.

The Network shall be chaired by EFSA.

Working language

English will be the working language of the Network.

Working methods

Meetings of the Scientific Network on NF are convened when necessary. The use of web-conference meetings will be encouraged.

In addition, the Network will use other means of collaboration such as web-based electronic interfaces for sharing information and data, such as EFSA's Document Management System (DMS) and e-mails for specific questions or issues.

Member State representatives in this Network will commit to timely liaison as appropriate at national level before and after each Network meeting in order to make sure that all the necessary information is shared without prejudice to Article 10 of the Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission.

Timeline

The terms of reference will be renewed after 3 years, in 2022.

Expected deliverables

Minutes of the meeting(s).

Publication plan

Publication of the meeting minutes on EFSA's website.

E-signature

[E-signed on 09 December 2019]

Guilhem de Seze
Head of REPRO Department

¹ Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission, EFSA 2010.