



TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC NETWORK ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

EFSA Question Number: EFSA-Q-2017-00591

Objectives

The overall objectives of the EFSA Scientific Network for Risk Assessment (RA) in Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) is to install and enhance cooperation between Member States (MS) and EFSA, to build a mutual understanding of RA principles of animal health and welfare in a transparent way. It is expected to promote the harmonisation of risk assessment practices and methodologies, including harmonisation of the data collection, and reduce the duplication of activities by identifying and sharing current priorities.

The specific objectives of the network are:

- **To facilitate harmonisation of AHAW assessment practices and methodologies by:**
 - Sharing the best practices for animal health and welfare assessment between EFSA and MS;
 - Discussing new scientific developments for animal health and welfare RA and their implications of RA practices;
 - Discussing ongoing issues of animal health and welfare assessment such as new guidance documents developed or new opinions adopted;
 - Focusing attention on, and the streamlining of common research and data needs that support progress in AHAW RA.
- **To enhance the exchange of information and data on AHAW areas between EFSA and MS by:**
 - Discussing issues on quality of data required for AHAW RA purposes (standards for biological agents data collection);
 - Promoting harmonised data submission to EFSA by discussing issues related to the availability of the data;
 - Sharing information, data and experience in data collection and surveillance;
 - Identifying and mapping expertise in specific areas and issues.
- **To achieve synergies in AHAW RA activities by:**
 - Identifying common themes and areas for mutual collaboration between EFSA and MS, between MS, and between AHAW at national and EU level;
 - Sharing and discussing on-going animal health and animal welfare risk assessment activities to avoid duplication;
 - Sharing and discussing priorities for AHAW RA at national and EU level;
 - Sharing of information related to AHAW RA at national and EU level and AHAW Network through a common digital exchange platform (e.g. Teams and/or SharePoint);
 - Identifying emerging risks when addressing current issues in animal health.

- **To improve the collaboration between animal health and public health on non-foodborne zoonotic potential zoonotic issues by:**

- Identifying common themes and areas for mutual collaboration on non-foodborne zoonotic and potential zoonotic issues between animal and public health
- Sharing and discussing on-going non-foodborne zoonotic and potential zoonotic issues between animal and public health networks of EFSA and ECDC
- Sharing and discussing priorities for joint risk assessments of non-foodborne zoonotic and potential zoonotic issues at national and EU level
- Sharing of information and data on non-foodborne zoonotic and potential zoonotic issues between animal and public health through a common digital exchange platform (SharePoint); EFSA may entrust to the network certain tasks, in particular preparatory work for scientific opinions, scientific and technical assistance, and the collection of data.

Members of the scientific network

The Members of the AHAW Network are organisations appointed for three-year terms through the EFSA Advisory Forum Members, in accordance with Articles 2 and 3 of the Decision of the Management Board of EFSA on the establishment and operations of networks¹.

These organisations preferentially cover two areas of competence:

- Experience in animal health risk assessment, animal health data collection and knowledge of the national animal health status and of the European and/or international context of animal health risk assessment (AH).
- Experience in animal welfare risk assessment and knowledge of the national animal welfare status and of the European and/or international context of animal welfare risk assessment (AW).

The appointment (or confirmation) is done by the national Advisory Forum member through notification to the ENCO (Engagement and Cooperation Unit).

Working language

English will be the working language of the network.

Working methods

The network shall meet twice a year (one meeting related to AH and one related to AW). The meeting shall be recorded and the records published on the EFSA website.

In addition, the network will use other means of collaboration:

- Exchanges of MS RA activities and other relevant information via the digital exchange platform (Teams / SharePoint);
- Conversations on the digital exchange platform (SharePoint) on specific questions or issues

MS' representatives in the network shall commit to liaise as appropriate at national level before and after each network meeting in order to make sure 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 organization operating in the fields within the Authority's mission.

¹MB 18 03 10 – items 7 doc 6 Management Board Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organizations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission, EFSA 2010

Access to meetings

Experts from AHAW Network Member organisations shall be invited to the AHAW Network meetings: per country and per meeting, one expert should represent the Animal Health Member organisation and one expert should represent the Animal Welfare Member organisation. Representatives of the European Commission are entitled to attend meetings of the AHAW Network as observers. EFSA may invite representatives of other agencies, bodies or institutions of the European Union, third countries or international organisations to attend meetings of the AHAW Network as observers. EFSA may invite scientific experts from regulatory or academic bodies of the European Union or third countries, or from international organisations, as speakers, to update the AHAW Network on developments in the field of AHAW risk assessment.

Timeline

The terms of reference for the network will be due for revision in 2022

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Document history	
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