

TERMS OF REFERENCE

OF THE EFSA COMMUNICATIONS EXPERTS NETWORK (CEN)

October 2016

Risk communications¹ is identified as one of the mandates in EFSA's founding regulations and includes acting in close collaboration with the Member States to promote coherence in the risk communication process as well as ensuring appropriate cooperation with regard to public information campaigns². Co-operation in risk communications between EFSA and the Member States is the main focus for the Communications Expert Network (CEN), which is closely aligned with the Advisory Forum (AF) to support its strategic priorities.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the CEN are:

- To establish mechanisms (e.g. sharing calendars, teleconferences) that improve coordination, preparedness and consistency in communications on all areas within EFSA's remit, in particular in case of diverging views, food outbreaks, and emerging risks;
- To work in close alignment to support the identified priorities of the AF, including the EU Risk Assessment agenda and regularly update the AF regarding issues, joint activities and identified areas for development in risk communications;
- To explore opportunities to implement joint communications activities with a focus on those issues having the greatest public health impact and of priority to EFSA and the MS;
- To support the development of best practices and guidelines in communications;
- To facilitate acquisition of knowledge and share experiences in

¹ As defined in Regulation EC No 178/2002, point 13: "risk communication" means the interactive exchange of information and opinions throughout the risk analysis process as regards hazards and risks, risk-related factors and risk perceptions, among risk assessors, risk managers, consumers, feed and food businesses, the academic community and other interested parties, including the explanation of risk assessment findings and the basis of risk management decisions;

² Regulation EC No 178/2002: Article 40, points 3 and 4.

communications and risk communications, including strengthening expertise in how social science can support risk communications, innovative communications channels (e.g. social media) and communicating on emerging risks;

- To share information and knowledge on public perception on food and feed safety, especially regarding controversial or sensitive topics (e.g. GMO, BPA, Pesticides) or areas of priority for the EU (e.g. AMR)

Members

CEN Members and Alternates shall be nominated by the relevant Member State AF member in accordance with Article 3 of the Decision of the Management Board of EFSA on the establishment and operations of networks³. The network shall be composed of communications experts with the following profile:

- Experience in risk communications in the area of food and feed safety, in line with EFSA's mandate;
- Ability to play an active role in the Communications Unit of a competent authority in a Member State;
- Be in the position to act as a communication point for relevant organisations and stakeholders within the MS, ensuring the exchange of information between these national organisations.

Access to meetings

Representatives of the European Commission will be invited to attend meetings of Networks as observers. The Chair may invite representatives of other agencies, bodies or Institutions of the European Union, third countries or international organisations to attend meetings of Networks as observers.

Working methods

The network shall meet three times a year.

In addition it will use other means of collaboration:

- Email exchanges for information about meetings, campaigns, activities and deliverables and sharing documents (eg. Minutes, Terms of Reference, Flash Reports, Agendas, etc)

³ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/paneloperation.pdf

- Online exchanges (eg. Yammer) to share ideas, references, organisational updates and promotions
- Teleconferences – either bilateral or multilateral for ad hoc exchanges and sharing of information regarding issues and ‘hot topics’
- Meetings – either bilateral or multilateral, to share experiences and expertise on areas of competence (eg. social sciences, stakeholder engagement, organisational issues, etc)

Deliverables:

- The activities of the network defined in an Annual Workplan. Discussions and decisions should be recorded in meeting minutes, shared with the members for feedback and published on the EFSA website.
- Risk Communications Guidelines - update edition and add relevant content, when determined as needed by the Network , of *When Food is Cooking Up a Storm* Crisis Communications Best Practice Recommendations – update version as relevant and determined by the Network
- Risk Perception Surveys and other social science related activities– when appropriate and identified by the Network
- Joint Communications Plans and Campaigns - when appropriate and identified by the Network

Timeline:

The terms of reference will be renewed after 3 years in 2020.