

efsa

European Food Safety Authority



Review System to Assess the Quality of EFSA's Scientific Work

Juliane Kleiner
Team Leader Scientific Committee
Scientific Committee & Advisory Forum Unit

Background

- SC was asked by EFSA to develop a proposal for a review system to evaluate the quality, objectivity and utility of scientific information provided by EFSA
- Review system to be understood as an evaluation of the conformity of EFSA's scientific work with best RA practices and should not result in a new evaluation of the data

Components of Review System

Self-review:	Best scientific practice check
Internal review:	Number of EFSA opinion to be checked by senior EFSA staff before adoption
External review:	Number of EFSA opinion to be reviewed by independent outside experts

Appreciation of EFSA's scientific work by intended user

Self-Review

- SC/P to check proper compliance with best risk assessment practices during the course of the development of an opinion
- Self-review template was developed to conduct this check and to identify any significant issue
- SC/P to keep an internal record of completed self-reviews

Self-Review

- Preparatory steps (e.g. clarity of ToR?, are appropriate experts involved?, DoI obtained and evaluated?, are data complete/all relevant scientific data available?)
- Description of data (e.g. have data quality been considered?, are data/sources of information properly described/referenced?)

Self-Review

- Quality of discussion (e.g. are key studies properly identified/are criteria for selection of key studies given?, have implications of potentially contradictory/conflicting data been discussed?, have assumption/limitation/uncertainties been described/discussed?)
- Quality of conclusion (e.g. does assessment address ToR?, are conclusion coherent with main text?, are minority opinions expressed?, are boundaries between RA and RM respected?)

Self-Review

- Quality of summary (e.g. is summary adequately informative and clear for target audience?)
- Delivery and follow-up (e.g. has the opinion been delivered on time)

Internal Scientific Review

- Internal Review Group (IRG) to be established to evaluate the conformity of EFSA's scientific work with best risk assessment practices
- IRG: Senior scientific staff and/or SC/P members, not involved in the respective opinion
- Balanced set of draft opinions (at least 10% of opinions produced annually) to be reviewed prior adoption
- Written IRG reports to be made available to relevant SC/P for their consideration

External Scientific Review

- Independent highly-reputed scientists to review a balanced set of EFSA's opinion after adoption and publication
- External review group to focus on criteria like
  - quality of scientific evidence description
  - treatment of uncertainties
  - completeness of data gathering
  - appropriateness of underlying assumptions
  - whether conclusions are supported by data

External Scientific Review

- Establishment of external review group (ERG) for each SC/P
- Experts to be selected/appointed by EFSA in consultation with national/European/International scientific bodies (small number of experts per ERG)
- Each ERG to select opinions to be examined from EFSA's entire portfolio
- Outcome of ERG to be reported to Executive Director

Appreciation by intended user

- Independent external evaluation of EFSA's achievement already in place (Art. 61)
- In addition additional ways to be considered for structured consultation of both institutional and non-institutional stakeholders to assess appreciations of EFSA's scientific work
- More general consultation with non-institutional stakeholders could be conducted via EFSA Stakeholder consultative platform

Implementation plans

- Self-review starts October 2007
- Implementation plan of other review components currently being developed. Anticipated start: early 2008

All proposed approaches to be tested during the remainder of the current 3-year cycle of SC/P (2006-2009) and strategy to be updated according to experience gained

Website

- Scientific advice by Scientific Committee for a proposal for a review system for EFSA's scientific activities can be found at:

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1178628825410.htm

Thank you!


EUROPEAN | FOOD | SAFETY | AUTHORITY
Celebrating five years since the founding of EFSA
EFSA was set up by European authorities as part of a commitment to ensuring a high level of food and feed safety and consumer protection. EFSA is the keystone of the EU system of risk assessment for food and feed safety, and our scientific advice underpins the decisions of policy-makers and risk managers in the European institutions and Europe's Member States.
efsa
European Food Safety Authority
Food is essential to life. We are committed to ensuring that Europe's food is safe.
EFSA ANNIVERSARY 5th