



Note to the Management Board: revising EFSA's Stakeholder Engagement Approach (SEA)

1. Introduction

In 2016, EFSA's Management Board endorsed a framework (the [EFSA Stakeholder Engagement Approach, or SEA](#)) to strengthen dialogue and engagement with food chain stakeholders. The SEA classifies EFSA's stakeholders into [seven categories](#). The SEA also foresees dedicated engagement [platforms](#) that are only accessible by organisations who completed the [registration process](#) to become accredited EFSA stakeholders and are featured in the [EU Transparency Register](#). Two of these platforms – the Stakeholder Bureau and the Stakeholder Forum – are standing bodies [established by the MB](#).

In 2019, EFSA initiated a review of the SEA to take stock of the [improvement requests](#) from the registered stakeholders, which were followed by some [MB recommendations](#). Based on those, EFSA developed a plan for advancing the SEA considering the entry into force of the Transparency Regulation and in view of the Strategy 2027. The plan was [presented](#) to the registered stakeholders in October 2020 and was followed by three co-design workshops¹ where stakeholders contributed to the formulation of proposals to achieve a more flexible, targeted, topic-based and purpose-driven engagement, and for a clearer communication on how stakeholder input is considered by EFSA in its risk assessments.

2. Recommendations to advance the SEA – for endorsement

The blueprint for advancing stakeholder engagement follow a 360-degrees revision of the SEA to:

- ensure alignment with EFSA's new regulatory framework (the [Transparency Regulation](#)),
- effectively support the implementation of the [EFSA Strategy 2027](#)²,
- foster a closer relationship with the SHs and promote a better understanding of engagement opportunities by its beneficiaries,
- evolve EFSA's engagement methodologies and participatory processes in line with the latest trends and the lessons learnt from the COVID pandemic.

To achieve these goals, the following recommendations are made:

Recommendation	Description
Recommendation #1: Revised scope	<p>Organise stakeholder engagement around three domains (each of them underpinned by fit-for-purpose engagement models):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foresight and preparedness: engaging stakeholders in horizon scanning and foresight so that EFSA can stay relevant for policymakers and society, and be prepared for the challenges ahead. ▪ Risk assessment process: topic-based engagement on EFSA's mandates and applications to improve the quality and transparency of EFSA's scientific risk assessment. ▪ Dialogue with stakeholders: the open dialogue between EFSA and stakeholders to build mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities and ensure relevance.

¹ [Getting prepared for the future challenges in risk assessment and innovation](#) (Jan 2021), [Building a digital community platform for registered stakeholders](#) (Apr 2021), and [Engaging throughout the risk assessment process](#) (Jun 2021).

² Both Objective #1 'Deliver trustworthy scientific advice and communication of risks from farm to fork' and Objective #2 'Ensure preparedness for future risk analysis needs' require effective engagement of third parties to be fulfilled.

Recommendation	Description
Recommendation #2: Revised principles, registration process and engagement platforms	Refocus the principles of stakeholder engagement on Trustworthy , Traceable and Targeted (the ' three T's '). These new principles shall replace the current ones (Authentic, Inclusive, Targeted).
	Prioritise topic-based engagement and rescope or deprioritise the SEA platforms that focus primarily on affiliation categories.
	Revise and expand ³ the catalogue of EFSA's engagement mechanisms with new methods inspired by EFSA's Engagement Toolkit⁴ , applying a topic-based and 'hybrid by design' approach to combine the benefits of physical and digital engagement models.
	Launch a digital community platform for regular dialogue and topic-based exchanges with the registered stakeholders.
	Extend the use of the customer relationship management tool adopted by EFSA for the Transparency Regulation to the registration process to become an accredited stakeholder to improve the user experience and ensure a seamless integration with other tools (e.g., Connect.EFSA). This will enable stakeholders to set preferences and receive tailored information in line with their interests and expertise.
Recommendation #3: Revised external communication on stakeholder engagement	Enhance the external communication on the SEA to promote the understanding of the engagement opportunities for both registered and non-registered stakeholders in each of the above-mentioned domains (see Recommendation #1).
	Better promote the benefits of becoming an EFSA registered stakeholder to encourage new registrations.

3. Expected benefits for stakeholders

From a stakeholder perspective, advancing the SEA as recommended will:

- ensure a greater focus through topic-based engagement where stakeholders can better contribute to the discussion based on their interest and expertise,
- allow to better trace the impact of stakeholders' contributions to EFSA's work,
- offer more time-efficient engagement opportunities.

4. Next steps

EFSA will present the new blueprint at the Stakeholder Forum of mid-November to close the feedback loop initiated in 2019 with the SEA review. Its measures will be progressively rolled out as from January 2022, in conjunction with the entry into application of the EFSA Strategy 2027 and of EFSA's new operational model (ODP). External communication (e.g., the revision of stakeholder-related webpages of the EFSA website) will accompany the rollout of the endorsed measures.

We recommend running the next review of the SEA within 3 years from 2022 to assess the impact of the abovementioned changes allowing for some time to implement and consolidate the revised approach.

³ Updating the SEA as described will result in a revision of the terms of reference of two permanent platforms (the Stakeholder Bureau and the Stakeholder Forum) and, subsequently, of [MB decision #18992](#).

⁴ The Engagement Toolkit was developed by EFSA in response to a mandate by the European Commission to support the implementation of a 'General Plan for Risk Communication' (i.e., an integrated framework for EU food safety risk assessors and risk managers at Union and national level, as required by the Transparency Regulation).