

## Note to the Management Board

### Update on Competent Organisations (Article 36) project

#### Summary

The Management Board is informed of the status of a project to strengthen European networking with and amongst competent organisations, through:

- Establishing, as the base for networking and collaboration, a more agile up-to-date List; and
- Enhancing engagement of Member States and organisations in networking.

The project was presented to the Management Board in December 2016 and meets Strategic Objective 3 of EFSA's Strategy 2020<sup>1</sup>. A more efficient procedure, supported by a new tool, was developed in close collaboration with Member States. The List of Competent Organisations will be newly drawn-up in October 2019.

#### Background

Generating a List, which provides names of organisations with a shown minimum standard of quality and expertise, independence and integrity, and acting in the interest of the public, can reduce organisations' risks in networking. The List can be used by EFSA and competent authorities to entrust tasks to the organisations, individually or in consortia. The Advisory Forum and Focal Points support such networking, providing national organisations with the opportunity to collaborate: e.g. to get access to information, data, expertise & financial support.

#### Status of the project

The main aim of reviewing the procedures to manage the List of Competent Organisations is to increase efficiency and remove barriers to cooperation. Being bound to the regulation leaves little margin of manoeuvre for changes, i.e. the overall process for the indicated actors and the criteria for the organisations remain the same. However, in close collaboration with Member States and in contact with the European Commission, we have managed to streamline the process, using a new tool.

The new tool forms part of EFSA's digital landscape of the future, outlined in the Technology Roadmap, and serves as a pilot to EFSA's Customer Relationship Management tool and concept.

The changes designed into the new process will:

- Increase efficiency by avoiding duplication of work between Member States and EFSA, and reducing administrative burden;
- Support a more structured assessment (criteria compliance check) & designation at Member State level, further aligning them between Member States;
- Strengthen the role and recognition of EFSA national Focal Points in Member States (reflected in Focal Point agreements) in managing their list updates;
- Link Focal Points and organisations more closely at national level, which:
  - strengthens the centralised awareness of organisations' competences and activities in Member States;

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<sup>1</sup> "Build the EU's scientific assessment capacity and knowledge community"

- supports Advisory Forum input to EFSA, e.g. on work plans, priorities; and
- supports organisations in finding partners and making them aware of information, funding and training opportunities.

## Member State involvement

To ensure take-up and understanding of the new solution, Member States were involved at an early stage:

- A **Focal Point Task Force** was set up, with members of the Task Force having been elected by the Focal Points to represent the entire group; The Task Force has actively engaged in shaping the way forward;
- Regular information has been provided to all **Focal Points** and their feedback taken into consideration;
- The **Advisory Forum** has been regularly informed on progress.

**Training workshops** will take place at the end of 2018, to train all Focal Points. They will be hosted by the Task Force members, demonstrating their commitment and ownership.

The strengthened **role** of Member States, facilitated by Focal Points, is to:

- Collect information and check whether the organisations comply with the criteria in view of national law, and
- Decide which organisations to designate as competent organisations for the list.

The Focal Points will provide a summary of the compliance check, which will allow EFSA to ensure that the organisations meet the criteria.

## Timeline

The continuous existence of the List of Competent Organisations will be ensured by replacing the existing List in October 2019 with the newly drawn-up List of Competent Organisations. To ensure that its functionality and standard are upheld, Member States will be asked to fully (re)assess their organisations and formally designate or withdraw them.

The Management Board's role will remain the same in future, as indicated in regulation: To update the List regularly, on the basis of proposals from the Authority's Executive Director, taking account of reviews or new designation proposals from the Member States.

