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Update from the Management Board sub-group on independence



REVIEW OF THE EFSA INDEPENDENCE POLICY

UPDATE FROM THE MANAGEMENT BOARD SUB-GROUP ON INDEPENDENCE

Background

Article 6 of EFSA's Independence Policy foresees that the Policy is subject to an ex-post evaluation not later than five years after its entry into force. Following a procurement procedure, EFSA commissioned an ex-post evaluation in spring 2023 and the final report was delivered in October 2023. The report included a list of 21 recommendations suggesting the revision of the EFSA independence regulatory framework.

The sub-group on independence, established by the Management Board on 21 June 2023, has the task of providing the Board with advice / support to steer the review of EFSA's independence regulatory framework based on the evaluation report and its recommendations, which were presented to the Management Board in December 2023 for its consideration.

The sub-group clustered the 21 recommendations in the evaluation report into three groups:

- (i) Recommendations that would improve EFSA's Independence framework and were therefore suggested to be part of a revision of the Independence Policy;
- (ii) Recommendations, notably R#6 and 20, that could be part of the Independence Policy review but should be subject to additional analysis before their possible implementation; and
- (iii) Recommendations, notably R# 4, 5, 7, 9 and 12, that the sub-group suggested not to pursue further since their benefit and positive impact is unclear and in the view of the sub-group are unlikely to deliver greater independence or strengthen the Independence regulatory framework.

On 14 December 2023, endorsing the advice of its sub-group on independence, the Management Board decided to open EFSA's Independence Policy for targeted revisions.

Meeting of the sub-group on independence held on 23 February 2024

The sub-group discussed:

- the actions envisaged by EFSA to implement the first three recommendations relating to the enhancement of EFSA communications activities on independence matters.
- a preliminary draft of the revised Independence Policy addressing the recommendations grouped in the above-mentioned cluster (i), notably R# 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 21.
- Recommendations 6 & 20 requiring further analysis.

Next steps

The sub-group on independence has planned additional meetings on 11 April and 30 May 2024.

The Management Board will be invited to review and possibly adopt the revised Independence Policy of EFSA during its meeting scheduled on 20 June 2024.