

Management Board
21 March 2024



EFSA INDEPENDENCE POLICY: UPDATE FROM THE MANAGEMENT BOARD SUB-GROUP ON INDEPENDENCE

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MB DECISION ON UPDATING THE INDEPENDENCE POLICY

At the December MB meeting, the Chair of the sub-group presented the work carried out by the sub-group in reviewing the [report on the ex-post evaluation of EFSA's Independence Policy](#).

Based on the outcome of the ex-post external evaluation report and the advice of its sub-group on independence, the Management Board decided by consensus to open EFSA's Independence Policy for targeted revisions



MEETING OF THE SUB-GROUP ON 23 FEBRUARY 2024

R# 1, 2 & 3 relating to communication activities.



Overview on actions proposed

R# 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19 & 21 to be implemented in the Independence Policy review by means of targeted updates.



*The sub-group discussed a **preliminary draft** incorporating the 'green recommendations' for initial discussion*

R# 6 and 20 subject to additional analysis before their possible implementation.



The sub-group discussed the additional analysis carried out at EFSA's level, relating to those two Recommendations



THE COMMUNICATIONS' RECOMMENDATIONS: ACTIONS

R#1 Proactive engagement with EU Institutions, sister agencies, MS and stakeholders on independence-related matters

Actions proposed to reach targeted stakeholders

R#2 Strengthening awareness and investigating familiarity with specific target audiences

Actions proposed for enhancing awareness included in communication calendar as well as on familiarity with the Policy

R#3 Research on knowledge and appreciation of the policy among the general public

Actions proposed envisage monitoring EU barometer on food safety and report on measuring institutional trust in food systems in May 2024



PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF THE REVISED POLICY ON INDEPENDENCE

The revised Policy was shared and presented to the sub-group for comments

Draft incorporates in track changes the 10 'green' R#, notably:

- R# 8
- R#10
- R#11
- R#13 & 14
- R# 16, 17, & 18
- R# 19
- R#21

Fit for purpose

- The sub-group commented the revised text vis-à-vis most of the 'green' R#
- Further refinements are expected for the second draft, in particular in relation to outsourcing of non-critical tasks.



CONCLUSIONS ON R#6 (POLITICAL PRESSURE)



Separation between risk management and risk assessment preserved and implemented in EFSA's rules



TR and EFSA rules : Member States shall refrain from giving to experts of SC/SP and WGs any instruction which is incompatible with independence.



The definition of political pressure not harmonised or consolidated in EU legal framework nor case-law.



Evaluation report: "objective screening criteria...poorly applicable"
ENVI study: EFSA Col definition is "broad enough to include within its scope ... interests deriving from other public duties/roles of the concerned individual."



CONSIDERATIONS AROUND R#20 (CO-FUNDING)

R#20: *“EFSA should clarify and remove inconsistencies regarding the application of the 25% threshold to the relevant private funding that experts can benefit from.”*

EFSA benchmarked with ENVI agencies

Consensus on the importance of research activities, also emphasised by the Transparency Regulation

Further reflections in the next meeting in April



TIMELINE AND STEPS: MB SUB-GROUP INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLICY REVIEW

