

Note on the establishment of an EFSA Standing Working Group on Traditional Foods

The Nutrition Unit is requested to manage the administrative and scientific activities of the Standing Working Group on Traditional Foods. The Nutrition Unit is also requested to organise the meetings of the Standing Working Group and assist in the preparation of the relevant EFSA scientific outputs in line with the tasks delegated to the Standing Working Group.

Background:

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is the keystone of European Union risk assessment regarding food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, nutrition, plant protection and plant health. In close collaboration with national authorities and in open consultation with its stakeholders, EFSA provides independent and transparent scientific advice and clear communication on existing and emerging risks associated with the food chain. On request from the European Commission, European Parliament and Member States or on its own initiative¹, EFSA provides scientific opinions on issues falling under its remit.

As of 1 January 2018, Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 introduces a special procedure for the safety assessment of traditional foods from third countries (TF), based on a history of safe food use. In this case, a notification for the placing on the market of a traditional food from a third country (pursuant to Article 14) is sent to the European Commission (EC) who forwards it to all the Member States (MSs) and EFSA. Within four months from receipt of a valid notification, a MS or EFSA may submit duly reasoned safety objections on the placing on the market of the notified TF.

In order to fulfil within the legal timeframe the above-mentioned mandates on notifications, EFSA has deemed it necessary to establish a Standing EFSA Working Group on Traditional Foods (WG TF).

¹ Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety (OJ, L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1-24).

Terms of reference:

The objective of the WG on TF is to support EFSA in performing the preparatory work in order to deliver efficiently and in a timely fashion the requested scientific outputs in relation to notifications for the placing on the market of a traditional food from a third country (TF), submitted pursuant to Article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2015/2283, i.e.

- (i) elaboration of outputs (Technical reports) on the assessment of TF notifications for consideration by EFSA (which do not require adoption by the NDA Panel);
- (ii) provision of assistance/input on updating existing guidance and/or developing new guidance related to TF.

In order to fulfil its objective, the WG TF shall consist of members with experience in the safety assessment of foods/ingredients (particularly novel food/food derived from i.e. microorganisms/fungi/algae, plants, animals/insects) and/or with expertise in one or more of the following scientific areas: food chemistry/biochemistry, food technology/processing/composition, exposure assessment, toxicology, human nutrition, epidemiology, allergenicity/immunotoxicology, (food) microbiology, clinical pharmacology, pharmacognosy.

Members:

The Chair of WG TF is appointed by the respective EFSA Head of Unit in consultation with its Head of Department. The decision on the composition of the Working Group was made by the EFSA Head of Unit.

The composition of the Standing Working Group is available on the EFSA website².

Scope of EFSA's work and outsourcing programme:

The Standing Working Group will assess the available and relevant scientific information and data submitted through the applicants' dossiers (notifications), those provided to EFSA by Members States and stakeholders, as well as those collected by EFSA itself (as applicable). As appropriate, EFSA may outsource the collection, collation or analysis of scientific information, through its grant and procurement schemes, in order to support the scientific assessment of the Standing Working Group.

Timelines:

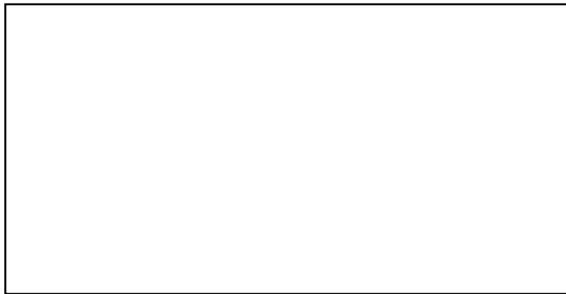
The WG on TF may be closed as a result of a period of inactivity.

² <https://ess.efsa.europa.eu/doi/doiweb/doisearch>

Expected deliverables:

Draft EFSA scientific outputs, which will be submitted for consideration and possible approval by EFSA:

- (i) EFSA Technical Reports on notifications for traditional foods from third countries (which do not require adoption by NDA Panel)
- (ii) EFSA Technical guidance.



Guilhem de Seze
Head of the Scientific Evaluation of Regulated Products Department