

TERMS OF REFERENCE

OF THE FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS (FCM) NETWORK

Introduction and purpose for establishing:

Establishing a system of Networks of organisations operating in the fields within EFSA's mission is among the tasks of EFSA, according to its Founding Regulation (Article 22(7) and Article 23(g) of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002), in order to facilitate a scientific cooperation framework by the coordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects, the exchange of expertise and best practices. In accordance with Article 22(7) and Article 23(g) of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, EFSA shall promote the networking of scientific organisations of EU Member States operating in the fields within the Authority's mission.

A new regulation on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain (EU Regulation 1381/2019 on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain and amending Regulations (EC) No 178/2002, (EC) No 1829/2003, (EC) No 1831/2003, (EC) No 2065/2003, (EC) No 1935/2004, (EC) No 1331/2008, (EC) No 1107/2009, (EU) 2015/2283 and Directive 2001/18/EC), which has been in application since 27 March 2021, strengthens the Authority's ability to carry out its risk assessment functions in accordance with the highest transparency standards. On 24 June 2021 the Management Board of the Authority has adopted the Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission which purpose is to optimise the operational procedures of EFSA scientific networks in accordance with the remit and strategic objectives of the Authority, specifically considering a greater involvement of Member State expertise in support of EFSA's mission.

The Food Ingredients and Packaging (FIP) Unit provides scientific and administrative assistance to both the Food Contact Materials, Enzymes and Processing Aids (CEP) and Food Additives and Flavourings (FAF) Panels and their respective working groups.



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The networking on FCM was initiated in October 2013 within the FIP Unit Network for a period of three years. To continue this cooperation, the Network was renewed in December 2016 for a period of three years. The FCM Network was intended to be renewed early 2020, but this was postponed due to other priorities and Covid situation.

During those 6 years, the FCM Network enhanced cooperation between risk assessors and supported harmonisation of risk assessment practices in the area of food contact materials (FCM). The Network met in average three times per mandate and involved representatives of up to 29 risk assessment bodies from Member States, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and the EU candidate countries, plus ECHA, EC DG SANTE, EC DG Joint Research Centre and the Council of Europe. It was the only platform gathering all key players where to share and discuss activities on safety assessment, challenges and projects in the FCM area. This enabled identifying topics of common interest (coatings, paper and board, printing inks, non-intentionally added substances (NIAS)) and expertise of Member States (MS) in these areas. The MS representatives identified the need for harmonization of the safety assessments for non-EU harmonised FCMs. As a result, sharing and discussing guidance documents, migration testing and other challenges for the safety assessment became a major topic to support harmonisation and mutual recognition.

In order to pursue this initiated cooperation, to further enhance the collaboration with and between Member States, Norway and Iceland, Switzerland and EFSA, to facilitate the harmonisation of principles underlying the safety assessment of substances used to manufacture food contact materials, it is proposed to continue the Network on Food Contact Materials for a new period of three years.

Objectives:

Taking into account art. 7.3 of the above mentioned Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission, the main objective of the Network on "Food Contact Materials" is to facilitate scientific cooperation on the **risk assessment activities and approaches** of mutual interest to the EU Member States, Norway and Iceland, Switzerland and EFSA.



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Specifically, the Network on Food Contact Materials aims to:

- provide a platform for discussion, consultation and collaboration
- enhance cooperation between scientists involved in risk assessment
- promote exchange of information on activities and risk assessments
- support and harmonise risk assessment
- avoid duplication of work and possibly anticipate and prevent divergences

Areas for cooperation are focussed on:

- sharing and discussing on activities and projects related to the safety assessment of FCM;
- exchanging on challenges and experience in the assessment such as on non-intentionally added substances (NIAS);
- promote the exchange of information through a database/table on past, current and future projects related to safety assessment of (substances used to manufacture) FCMs;
- initiate, as far as needed, the setting of small group(s) of MSs with interest in a FCM type (e.g. coatings, paper and boards) to share expertise, build common projects, contribute to and harmonise safety assessment in a FCM type or of substances of interest;
- involve MSs in the preparation of the new EFSA Guidance to take on board their expertise;
- provide training on EFSA's approaches e.g. advanced risk assessment.

Members

According to art. 6.1 of the Decision concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission, following the receipt of all necessary information from EFSA, the Advisory Forum shall identify organisations in EU Member States which are capable of contributing to the tasks of the FCM Network. In response to a request by the EFSA FIP UNIT, the Advisory Forum may formally designate the member organisation(s) for each country.



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The Advisory Forum, in cooperation with the member organisations formally designated in accordance with the previous paragraph, shall establish the names of network participants and alternate participants for the FCM Network within the designated member organisation(s). The network shall be composed of experts with the following profile:

- significant expertise in risk assessment of food contact materials, including knowledge of the national status and of the European and/or international context. They should also be key players in risk assessment at national level.
- scientific background and experience in chemistry, analytical chemistry, migration or toxicology. They should have experience also in non-plastic FCMs as listed in annex I of the Regulation (EU) 1935/2004 (e.g. inks, coatings, papers and boards).

Access to meetings

Representatives of the European Commission such as SANTE and JRC, and other EU agencies such as ECHA, may participate in the work of the networks as observers.

Other organisations, including those from outside the EU such as the Council of Europe, may be invited to participate in a network meeting, where deemed appropriate or necessary. These organisations may be invited either to participate in full or as observers only.

Working methods

The network shall meet physically or virtually at least once a year. There should be flexibility to accommodate ad hoc meetings and discussions on urgent issues outside the scheduled yearly meeting(s). The working language for the Network Activities will be English. The Scientific Network shall be chaired by EFSA. EFSA will also provide the Secretariat of the Scientific Network.

In addition, other means of collaboration will be used:

- Web-based electronic interfaces for sharing information and data, such as the EFSA's Data Management System (DMS) and/or Teams channel.



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- Emails for specific questions or issues.

During the meeting, the Members will have the opportunity to present the on-going activities at MS level, as well as MS approaches for risk assessment, in perspective of future actions to be taken in this area. They are expected to actively contribute to the conclusions of the meetings.

Member States representatives shall commit to liaise as appropriate at national level before and after each network meeting to make sure that all the necessary information is disseminated and shared between national organisations and EFSA FIP unit.

Deliverables and Outcomes:

- Agenda and Minutes of the meetings.
- Where deemed appropriate or necessary, speech/presentation by EFSA at Conference(s), with the aim to inform stakeholders on activities and outcome of the Network, and to promote awareness and harmonisation.
- Training on EFSA's approaches e.g. advanced risk assessment.

Timeline:

The terms of reference for the Food Contact Materials network can be updated whenever deemed necessary and are valid until a decision of discontinuing the network is taken.

Last updated: April 2025