



TERMS OF REFERENCE
OF THE EFSA SCIENTIFIC NETWORK FOR RISK ASSESSMENT IN PLANT
HEALTH
SEPTEMBER 2021

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



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considering a greater involvement of Member State expertise in support of EFSA's mission.

The overall aim of the EFSA Scientific Network for Risk Assessment on Plant Health is to install and enhance cooperation between Member States (MS) and EFSA, to build a mutual understanding of RA principles in plant health in a transparent way. It is expected to promote the harmonisation of risk assessment practices and methodologies, including harmonisation of the data collection, and reduce the duplication of activities by identifying and sharing current priorities. This applies within the framework of the new EU plant health rules, adopted in October 2016 by the European Parliament and the Council ([Regulation \(EU\) 2016/2031](#) on protective measures against plant pests ("Plant Health Law")).

The scientific network for risk assessment in plant health aims to contribute to strengthening of scientific cooperation on plant health issues in the European Union. The network will be a privileged environment in which to share data and methodologies. It will also allow anticipating emerging risks in the EU and enhance the understanding of the current plant health risk assessment priorities that may need to be addressed through EFSA. This platform for cooperation in the field of plant health will be based on a dynamic exchange of information among all participants

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 specific objectives of the scientific network for risk assessment in plant health are:

1. To facilitate harmonisation of risk assessment practices and methodologies in plant health by:
 - Sharing best practices between EFSA and the EU Member States.
 - Discussing ongoing issues of plant health risk assessment such as new guidances developed or new opinions adopted.
 - Discussing new scientific developments in plant health risk assessment and their implications on risk assessment practice.



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- Focusing attention on and streamlining common research needs that support progress in plant health risk assessment.
 - Analysing risk assessment needs and planning ahead to support the new EU Plant health law
2. To enhance exchange of information and data between EFSA and MS by:
- Discussing issues of availability and quality of data required for plant health risk assessment purposes.
 - Enhancing cooperation in data collection and sharing for plant health risk assessment.
 - Identifying and mapping expertise in specific areas and on specific issues.
3. To achieve synergies in plant health risk assessment activities by:
- Identifying common themes and areas for mutual collaboration.
 - Sharing and discussing on-going plant health risk assessment activities.
 - Sharing and discussing priorities for plant health risk assessment at national and EU level.
 - Identifying new and emerging risks for EU plant health.

EFSA may entrust to the network certain tasks, in particular preparatory work for scientific opinions, scientific and technical assistance, and collection of data.

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 PLH NETWORK.

The Advisory Forum, in cooperation with the member organisations formally designated in accordance with the previous paragraph, establishes the names of network



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participants and alternate participants for the PLH NETWORK within the designated member organisation(s). The network shall be composed of experts with the following profile:

- Experience in plant health risk assessment and data collection, and knowledge of the national plant health status and of the European and/or international context of plant health risk assessment.

Access to meetings

Representatives of the European Commission are invited to attend meetings and participate in the work of the networks. Representatives of other EU agencies may participate in the work of the networks as appropriate. EFSA may invite representatives of other agencies, bodies or institutions of the European Union, third countries or international plant health organisations (such as IPPC and EPPO) to attend meetings of the Network. Other organisations may be invited, including those from outside the EU, with specific expertise 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 per year. The working language for the Network Activities will be English.

In addition, it will use other means of collaboration:

- EFSA digital collaboration platforms
- Web- conferences/webinars
- Emails for specific questions or issues.

Member States' representatives in this network shall commit to liaise as appropriate at national level before and after each network meeting in order to make sure all the necessary information is shared, without prejudice to Article 10 of the Decision of the Management Board concerning the establishment and operation of European Networks of scientific organisations operating in the field within the Authority's mission.

Deliverables and Outcomes:



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Minutes of the Network meetings

Annual report on activities of the PLH Network, as well as the examination of the criticalities found.

Timeline:

The terms of reference will be renewed after 3 years.