

## National Networking

### Issues identified & possible solutions proposed

- 1. ISSUE:** lack of institutional support for implementing Focal Point activities, including excessive bureaucracy, resource limitations and difficulty in ensuring sustainability of planned activities due to higher priorities.

**SOLUTIONS:** obtain buy-in and additional support from higher management for the implementation of Focal Point activities and institutional interactions.
- 2. ISSUE:** “Competition” between networking organisations (namely between organisations with partially overlapping remits); big-sized networking partners look often into their own benefits (too much emphasis on “what’s in it for me”).

**SOLUTIONS:** provide an “umbrella” for activities to be carried out (beyond the communication of information), where contacts/organisations can be better engaged (e.g. having a national RA Agenda, involving relevant stakeholders in different activities/studies, using national Committees/WGs to implement activities relevant for EFSA and/or the FP network).
- 3. ISSUE:** limitations on the Focal Point knowledge/clarity of relevant national stakeholders.

**SOLUTIONS:** carry out a stakeholder mapping at national level (other than existing ones, like Article 36, Scientific Networks, etc.) and use results to increase outreach; include, on the distribution lists used, contacts of associations or professional bodies and use them as multipliers.
- 4. ISSUE:** high turnover of the stakeholder contacts details.

**SOLUTIONS:** compile, review and/or update distribution lists, organising them in meaningful ways (e.g. thematically; by area of expertise of stakeholders; by type of stakeholder group).
- 5. ISSUE:** limited available information (to Focal Points) regarding the different entities that interact with the EFSA, leading to incomplete/inadequate networking.

**SOLUTIONS:** understand and identify better the national and EU stakeholders in order to understand if at national level there is a good “linkage” and “fitness” with the EU counterparts.
- 6. ISSUE:** lack of proper targeting of information cascaded down to national networks.

**SOLUTIONS:** carry out a stakeholder mapping at national level (other than existing ones, like Article 36, Scientific Networks, etc.) and use results to better target outreach; prioritise relevant stakeholders & organisations, as well as information to be disseminated within the network (i.e. which information should be sent out to whom and in which way).
- 7. ISSUE:** overload of communications made by email.

**SOLUTIONS:** use newsletters instead of (or in addition to) distribution lists (e.g. with support of Communications Departments); consider setting up an on-line platform for national networking and information exchange; prioritise relevant stakeholders & organisations, as well as information to be disseminated within the network (i.e. which information should be sent out to whom and in which way).

- 8. ISSUE:** lack of feedback from stakeholders on communications made via email.  
**SOLUTIONS:** ensure clear feedback from stakeholders on their actions and outreach.
- 9. ISSUE:** lack of use of proper communication modes/tools.  
**SOLUTIONS:** formulate adequately and communicate messages with relevance to intended target audiences (e.g. summaries in national language, short snippets of information, and leaflets with utility bills); use existing & new social media channels by the Focal Point organisation (and by other national institutions) for information dissemination.
- 10. ISSUE:** language barriers (being country specific or too technical for certain target audiences).  
**SOLUTIONS:** formulate adequately and communicate messages with relevance to intended target audiences (e.g. summaries in national language, short snippets of information, and leaflets with utility bills).
- 11. ISSUE:** limited visibility of EFSA and/or of the FP at the national level.  
**SOLUTIONS:** further promote the concept of the EFSA Focal Points and their role at national level (e.g. in conferences, on websites, etc.) enhancing engagement and better follow of information dissemination at national level; organise meetings involving relevant stakeholders, including universities: smaller meetings may allow for better engagement but larger events (such as conferences) are better for promoting messages to a larger audience.
- 12. ISSUE:** difficulty in obtaining engagement of (some) stakeholders on the information/activities cascaded downwards due to organisational size/motivation ("what's in for them", "we're too small") and/or due to lack of resources at their end.  
**SOLUTIONS:** provide an "umbrella" for activities to be carried out (beyond the communication of information), where contacts/organisations can be further engaged (e.g. having a national RA Agenda, involving relevant stakeholders in different activities/studies, using national Committees/WGs to implement activities relevant for EFSA and/or the FP network); define strategies to be "attractive" for institutions & networks (including those not yet involved), promoting their engagement.
- 13. ISSUE:** lack of best practices regarding interaction with stakeholders.  
**SOLUTIONS:** provide an "umbrella" for activities to be carried out (beyond the communication of information), where contacts/organisations can be further engaged (e.g. having a national RA Agenda, involving relevant stakeholders in different activities/studies, using national Committees/WGs to implement activities relevant for EFSA and/or the FP network).