EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE

Note to the Management Board

Abstract of the survey

EFSA Panel members are not EFSA staff and are often full-time employees of public organisations, particularly national risk assessment bodies, universities and other organisations conducting research. Regular surveys have been conducted to gain feedback from these experts to improve the support provided to them. Until now the view of the employers' organisations had not been sought. The purpose of this survey was to better understand the conditions that impact on the continued support of the organisations in ensuring expert availability to EFSA as established in the Founding Regulation.

A range of the relevant organisations from across Europe were invited to take part in the survey. At over 70%, the response rate was considered to be very high. The findings show that a significant amount of expert's time on Panel work is spent during working hours. Benefits identified by the employers of their scientific staff doing this work include networking among scientists, building risk assessment expertise with knowledge transfer to the institute and recognition of the expert and the institute at EU level. The overriding concern noted was the time and effort required to be an EFSA Panel member impacting on achieving the other tasks that need to be accomplished in the institute. Regarding financial support, the findings show there is a significant gap between the indemnity paid to experts and the cost of Panel work done during office hours.

The survey provides insight into improvements to optimise conditions for experts contributing to EFSA's work and forms a basis for future consultation. While a main suggestion to improve the expert system involves increased financial resources to the institutes, other suggestions such as reducing reliance on physical meetings, involving young experts in working groups, simplifying administrative processes and improving recognition of the expert's work for EFSA by the employing institute were also proposed.