

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIVE PLATFORM: TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Mandate and tasks

1.1 EFSA proposes to renew¹ the Stakeholder Consultative Platform (hereinafter referred to as the Platform) composed of EU-wide stakeholder organizations related with EFSA's remit, including organizations operating in the food chain and working on food and feed safety, nutrition, animal health and welfare, plant protection and plant health.

This platform will assist EFSA with the development of its overall relations and policy with regard to stakeholder involvement with tasks and mission by providing a forum for regular dialogue and exchanges.

1.2 The Platform will advise EFSA's Executive Director with regard to general issues regarding the work of EFSA and, in particular, the impact of its work on stakeholders. Operating in relation to the competences of EFSA, the Platform will (1) comment on EFSA's work programme and annual management plan (2) provide EFSA with feedback on the effectiveness of its policies in responding to stakeholders' concerns (3) alert EFSA to key issues of current or emerging stakeholders' concern, as well on emerging and existing risks (4) advise on methodologies, including the topics for consultation and the best way to organize such consultations (5) provide information and cooperation at the technical level (6) set up objectives to be achieved by the Platform during its mandate.

2. Composition of the Platform

2.1 The members of the Platform shall be organizations representing: consumers, the food and feed business operators, the food industry, the food trade and NGOs active within the mandate of EFSA.

2.2 The participating organizations will be selected following a wide examination of Stakeholder organizations operating at the European level covering matters within the remit of EFSA. Organizations invited to participate in the Platform shall meet the following criteria:

- organizations permanently established and well known at the EU level;
- organizations with a legitimate interest in the areas of EFSA;

¹ "The Terms of reference and the list of the existing members of the Platform were agreed in the Management Board meeting in June 2005, and amended in the Management Board meeting in September 2006. Chapter II, paragraph 9 of the terms of reference as amended in 2006 foresees that both *"the terms of reference and the membership of the Platform will be reviewed by EFSA's Management board after three years"*.

- organisations which are representative in the field of their competence and involved in the area within the remit of EFSA;
- organisations with which the Authority does not have a legal obligation.

2.3 In order to facilitate active participation and effective discussions, the total number of organizations should be no more than 35 and the membership of the Platform should be balanced to encourage a wide range of views. Considerations to be taken into account include:

- members represent organizations and are not members of the Platform in their individual capacity;
- the outcome of the meetings will be made publicly available and reported to the Board;
- efforts will be made to avoid participation of organizations covering the same areas or overlapping areas.

2.4 The membership of the Platform will be fixed. However other stakeholder organizations than those permanently sitting on the Platform (associated members) could be invited on a case-by-case and topic-related basis to attend a particular point of the agenda or whole meeting.

2.5 Members of EFSA's Management Board, Advisory Forum, Scientific Committee and Panels as well as staff cannot be members of the Platform. EFSA's staff will participate in meetings of the Platform as necessary to ensure a proper exchange of information and dialogue.

2.6 The Terms of reference and membership of the Platform will be reviewed by EFSA's Management Board every 3 years according to the principles of transparency, openness and equal treatment. In order to guarantee a maximum level of transparency, the renewal of the Platform membership will be organized through a public call for interests.

3. Chairperson

3.1 The Chair will be designated by the members of the Platform from among its members. The Chair will be elected by a vote by simple majority of members and appointed for a period of 3 years. The Chair can be re-elected following the same procedure. Two Vice-chairs will be appointed following the same procedure and for the same period of time with also the possibility to be re-elected following the same procedure. The holding of the office of Vice-chair does not preclude member organizations from subsequently holding the office of Chair. In performing their duties, the Chair and Vice-chairs should ensure integrity, impartiality and independence of any interest.

4. Meetings

4.1 The Platform will meet on average three times per year. Additional meetings might be organized if required. The meetings will normally be held in Parma, Italy with one meeting held in Brussels, Belgium.

4.2 The meetings will be open to the public and interested parties will be able to attend the meetings as observers.

4.3 Meetings of the Platform do not preclude other exercises with other stakeholder organizations, public consultations, technical hearings, scientific colloquia, ad hoc meetings on specific subjects and/or any other bilateral meetings.

5. Working methods

5.1 The Platform is an advisory group and its recommendations are not binding on EFSA or its Executive Director. The Platform will not take decisions on behalf of EFSA nor speak on behalf of EFSA or take views that could be construed or perceived as a reflection of the official position of the Authority.

5.2 The EFSA secretariat of the Platform will draft agendas and the minutes in collaboration with the Chair. It will also distribute documents and liaise with the participants with regards to practical arrangements for the effective operation of the Platform.

5.3 Agendas, documents, minutes and any other relevant information about the Platform will be placed on EFSA's website who will be responsible for updating it regularly.

5.4. The Platform should aim at reaching consensus in the advice it produces. On a case by case basis, the Platform may use the majority vote principle if the member organizations decide to do so at unanimously. Whenever the Platform goes for the majority vote principle, dissenting votes or divergent views will be recorded.

6. Funding

6.1 The costs of participation in the meetings of the Platform will be borne by each individual organization.

6.2 Exceptionally, EFSA may contribute to financing the costs of those organizations that could not otherwise afford to participate in meetings of the Platform. Financial contributions may only be awarded to European organizations which are non-governmental, non-profit making, independent of industry, commercial and business or other conflicting interests, and have as their primary objectives and activities the promotion and protection of the health and safety of consumers.

6.3 Requests for financial support will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will need to be properly documented by the requesting organization.