

Third meeting of
EFSA's Stakeholder Forum
17-18 October 2019

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Introduction

Following the principles established under the framework of EFSA's [Stakeholder Engagement Approach \(SEA\)](#), the Forum provides a strategic input on specific aspects of EFSA's work plans and future priorities. This year's annual meeting of the [Stakeholder Forum](#) brought together representatives of the registered stakeholder organisations and members of the Stakeholder Bureau, EFSA's Management Board, EFSA's senior management, scientific and communication officers, and observers from the European Commission.

Further to the review of its Founding Regulation, EFSA has been allocated new tasks and responsibilities, calling for more transparency and engagement to build trust in the scientific risk assessment process that underpins policy-making on food. EFSA's current Strategy 2020 will soon expire. EFSA has taken stock of developments and trends in its environment and focused on the external challenges and opportunities that will inform its Strategy 2027. In parallel, EFSA is carrying out a review of its Stakeholder Engagement Approach, a mandatory three-year assessment of the efficiency of the current engagement mechanisms. With this in mind, the focus of this year's Forum was to review and co-design with stakeholders future engagement mechanisms and to gather stakeholder input to inform the Strategy 2027.

More specifically, the objectives of this year's Forum were to:

- increase awareness of the SEA's *raison d'être* and implementing mechanisms, especially from the newly registered stakeholders (as requested by participants to the 2018 Forum);
- ensure an adequate and balanced involvement of stakeholders in the discussion;
- identify and manage diverging expectations within the stakeholder community; and
- collect concrete proposals to (re)shape EFSA's stakeholder engagement mechanisms.

The format was structured around four activities: an onboarding session where newly registered stakeholders had opportunity to learn about the main elements of the SEA; a plenary session to set the scene and prepare for the workshop; a "world café" workshop to co-design EFSA's future engagement mechanisms; and a closing panel discussion to take stock of the outcomes of the world café workshop and agree how best to integrate them in future stakeholder engagement initiatives.

Members of the Stakeholder Bureau chaired workshops on topics of the world café sessions such as framing of questions, digital solutions for engagement, risk communication, crowdsourcing, and how to ensure follow-up and feedback on input provided by stakeholders.

The input provided by the Forum will support the development of the EFSA Strategy 2027 and the forthcoming review of the SEA after its first three-year cycle.

The Stakeholder Forum is a permanent platform for stakeholder engagement established under the SEA, which was endorsed by the EFSA Management Board in 2016. Alongside the annual Forum meeting and the Stakeholder Bureau, stakeholders have the opportunity to engage with EFSA through a number of targeted activities throughout the year, organised according to their area of interest and expertise. These include discussion groups on particular topics, scientific colloquia, communicators lab, roundtables, info sessions and technical meetings¹.

¹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/engage/stakeholders>

Onboarding session

The purpose of the onboarding session was to present the SEA to new stakeholders interactively, highlighting the main achievements of the first three years of implementation. SEA milestones were presented through storytelling and stakeholder testimonials instead of a top-down presenting style. The expected results of the onboarding session were to:

- provide an overview of EFSA's remit and values (through initial mapping of stakeholders' and EFSA's different areas of work);
- raise awareness of what the SEA is about (presented through lived-experience stories), how it works in practice and the value it can bring to EFSA and stakeholders;
- establish a positive, participatory and constructive atmosphere;
- provide networking opportunities (among stakeholders and between stakeholders and EFSA).

Several EFSA staff and members of different stakeholder categories were selected to act as "stakeholder buddies" and presented topics related to EFSA's stakeholder engagement activities such as the permanent and targeted engagement mechanisms, roundtables with NGOs and industry representatives, Bee Partnership Discussion Group, workshop with academia stakeholders and the Communicators lab, a tool that gathers stakeholder input on new communication products at EFSA.

Plenary session

The Executive Director of EFSA, Bernhard Url, welcomed Forum members and gave an outline of the Forum and its expected results. He presented the ongoing work to implement the provisions of the new Transparency Regulation, stressing the pivotal role of transparency and engagement in building public trust in the risk assessment process.

Jaana Husu-Kallio, Chair of the Management Board, assessed the implementation of the SEA so far, reaffirmed the support of the Management Board and shared views on how to improve the SEA processes, further to the approval of the new Transparency Regulation and in the context of the EFSA Strategy 2027. Ms Husu-Kallio emphasised that the Management Board pays close attention to this part of EFSA's work and invited stakeholders to use the Forum to contribute to continuous improvement of this two-way process, for mutual benefit.

Annette Klinkert, Director of the European Science Engagement Association, set the scene by tackling stakeholder engagement in science from a broader perspective. "Excellence is about more than ground-breaking discoveries – it includes openness, transparency and the co-production of knowledge," she said, before inviting the audience to reflect upon the role of research and innovation in the 21st century. Ms Klinkert reflected on different formats of public engagement, and how these can be applied by scientists and stakeholders to build relationships, create trust and conduct research.

The programme continued with an audience-led debate that included members of EFSA's senior management.

Didier Verloo, the Head of EFSA's Assessment and Methodological Support Unit, gave a presentation entitled "Windows for stakeholder engagement along EFSA's risk assessment process" that placed stakeholder and public engagement in the specific context of EFSA's work.

After the plenary session, participants formed break-out groups that focused on different aspects of stakeholder engagement in the risk assessment process.

World Café Conversation Tables

This session comprised seven rounds of group conversations on different dimensions of stakeholder engagement in the risk assessment process. Each discussion was facilitated by a stakeholder representative acting as table host and supported by a co-host from EFSA acting as rapporteur. Each round of discussion started with a deliberately bold statement to trigger reactions (conveyed by participants through reaction cards) and stimulate conversation. The trigger statement was progressively re-elaborated during the conversation rounds until the end of the session. The final statement was used to inform the final panel discussion.

Workshop 1: *Whom should EFSA engage with?*

The discussion focused on identifying which stakeholders EFSA should engage with, depending on the specific needs of the risk assessment process. Criteria and issues to be considered when identifying the appropriate stakeholders were discussed, e.g. with regards to stakeholder-mediated vs. direct engagement model. This workshop was hosted by Maud Perrudin– from the Association of the European Self-Medication Industry, and supported by Matthew Ramon, a team leader in the External Engagement, Engagement and Cooperation Unit at EFSA.

Insights from the Workshop

- Pursue more topic-based engagement with associations; focus on scientific topics, methodology development and processes, as well as data collection and processing;
- EFSA shall assist associations in improving their input (data collection, methodology, scientific topic) that will answer EFSA's needs for its Risk Assessment;
- Anticipate the impact of real-world evidence in the future of stakeholder engagement (EFSA trusted systems).
- Ensure clarity on the engagement mechanisms throughout the Risk Assessment processes (and possibly training) in both directions;
- Set up a catalogue of engagement opportunities.

Workshop 2: *Early involvement of stakeholders in horizon scanning activities*

This table focused on how stakeholder engagement can support the identification of priority issues for EFSA to ensure that key issues of concern to the wider public are being addressed. It also tackled future emerging food- and food systems-related risk assessment questions (i.e. horizon scanning), providing input on future trends of food production, processing and consumption. Finally, the discussion addressed new concerns, including issues that go beyond food system safety. The workshop was hosted by Sean O'Laoide, from the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, and supported by Tobin Robinson, Head of EFSA's Scientific Committee and Emerging Risk Unit.

Insights from the Workshop

- Stakeholders have limited resources to contribute, so focus and prioritisation are important;
- Consult with stakeholders on priority issues of societal concern;
- Consult with stakeholders on framing of questions for EFSA “self-task” mandates;
- Ensure an effective public communication;
- Ensure that bias or specific agendas do not have undue influence;
- Ensure that science remains at the core of the decision-making process.

Workshop 3: *Next steps for public engagement through crowdsourcing*

This workshop enabled participants to exchange views on the feasibility of crowdsourcing as a public engagement method in the risk assessment process and on factors to be considered when designing it, e.g. target audiences and weighting of crowdsourcing-generated materials. The workshop was hosted by Riccardo Siligato, EU Agri-cooperatives/EU Farmers, COPA COGECA, and supported by Federica Barrucci from EFSA’s Assessment and Methodological Support Unit.

Insights from the Workshop

- Balancing risk/benefit is context specific, e.g. for monitoring and post market monitoring the crowdsourcing results in higher benefit and lower risk. In the case of experimental data, a lower benefit and higher risk is perceived.
- Appropriate methodology is needed to get high-quality unbiased data.

Workshop 4: Unpacking the "science box". A space for scientific discussion

Engagement in the risk assessment process is key to ensuring scientific value is delivered, but is it appropriate at all stages of the process? Is there a need for a closed science box – a point where scientists discuss scientific issues without any stakeholder or public scrutiny – somewhere between the arrival of the mandate and the adoption of the opinion? Where should this be? The host of this workshop was Jose Julio Ortega, from the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry Europe, supported by Didier Verloo, the Head of EFSA's Assessment and Methodological Support Unit.

Insights from the Workshop

- Explore where in the risk assessment process (plan-do-check-adopt) EFSA could consider adding new engagement models to ensure appropriate level of transparency, scrutiny, or opportunity for co-creation with stakeholders.
- Ensure the transparency along the risk assessment process as a key for trustworthiness;
- Ensure presence of observers along the whole risk assessment process;

Workshop 5: Collecting stakeholder input beyond risk assessment

This conversation table was an opportunity to reflect on EFSA's mechanisms for eliciting stakeholder feedback, focusing on format, use and dissemination of communication products as well as understanding stakeholders' views and perceptions of EFSA in general. The aim was to provide ideas on how to strengthen the methods in place and identify innovative new ones that would minimise respondent fatigue while maximising the usefulness of input received. The host of this workshop was Floriana Cimmarusti, from Safe Food Advocacy Europe – SAFE, and supported by Domagoj Vrbos, a social scientist in EFSA's Communication Unit.

Insights from the Workshop

- To make the most of stakeholder feedback, EFSA shall present clear objectives, demonstrating how the feedback is used and that there is a balanced and credible representation of views;
- Consult stakeholders on topics for Communicators Lab and promote participation;
- Minimize complex language and ensure a precise and concise communication;
- Create discussion groups on new topics (e.g. implementation of the Transparency Regulation, food contact materials).
- The new format of the Forum appreciated by the stakeholders; in the future, ensure a balance of networking opportunities and topic-specific sessions.

Workshop 6: *Digital solutions to ease stakeholder engagement*

This table looked into how digital technology may support and rationalise stakeholder engagement by, for example, ensuring real-time access to relevant and bespoke information based on user profiles and preferences. Participants examined the existing tools (e.g. website) to find opportunities for an easier and timely access to relevant information by stakeholders. This workshop was hosted by Elinor McCartney, Association of Veterinary Consultants and supported by Cinzia Percivaldi, team leader from Events Services at EFSA.

Insights from the Workshop

- EFSA's website is useful and has tools that work well (e.g. videos and infographics);
- Website can still be improved in the way information is structured and made accessible to both professional and non-professional users;
- More frequent updates in the Register of Questions are needed to track progress of an opinion/dossier;
- Differentiated "paths" for professional and non-professional users to facilitate access to relevant information/tools;
- Provide more info on the progress (e.g. intermediate steps) of the risk assessment leading to a scientific output.
- Ensure searchability of scientific data (e.g ECHA model).

Workshop 7: *Follow-up mechanisms to report on the use of stakeholders' contributions*

The aim of this discussion was to gather proposals on how to strengthen transparency in the way stakeholders' views and input are considered and contribute to EFSA's processes. The workshop was hosted by Giulia Tarsitano, European Community of Consumer Cooperatives - Euro Coop, and supported by Lucia Parrino, a strategic consultant at EFSA.

Insights from the Workshop

- EFSA feedback on input received should provide a science-based justification;
- Follow-up mechanisms should be improved and better systematised according to pre-set criteria;
- A two-steps process has been suggested but organisations with limited resources may not be able to follow-up (that may lead to an unbalanced participation);
- When a second stage for additional input is provided it should allow a dialogue with a live feedback (one-to-one interviews);
- It is crucial to improve the quality of the feedback, especially when it comes to meetings where oral input is provided.

Sharing insights from world café conversations

This session enabled hosts of the conversation tables to report back and explain how the trigger statement evolved during the conversations. Diverging opinions or elements on which agreement was reached were highlighted and used to feed the final panel discussion.

Interactive panel discussion on world café outcomes

The objective of this session was to take stock of the outcomes of the world café conversations, acknowledge divergencies, discuss and prioritise next steps and agree how to move forward with the input gathered from the workshop. As with the debate during the opening plenary session, this discussion included contributions from the audience. Live polls and other engagement tools (e.g. Mentimeter) were used to make the discussion more interactive.

Conclusions and closing remarks

The Stakeholder Forum 2019 provided a platform for networking and building relations between EFSA and the registered stakeholders. Stakeholders appreciated the set-up of this year's Forum, with its onboarding session, plenary sessions, as well as the world café conversations, which fostered a collaborative dialogue. All the participants had the opportunity to contribute. The input collected reflects the variety of stakeholder views.

In his closing remarks Dr Uri recalled that engagement should be a balanced, topic-based, and two-way process. He confirmed EFSA's commitment to further fine-tune the engagement approach and to provide regular feedback with a science-based justification for all its actions.

Finally, he said that EFSA should communicate clearly and concisely to enable easier tracking of its scientific outputs. EFSA should invest more in the digitisation of its meetings and events to save stakeholders' time and ease their interaction with the risk assessment process.

The outcome of the Forum discussions provided rich food for thought on how to proceed with stakeholder engagement and will feed into the review of EFSA's engagement mechanisms (SEA) and the development of Strategy 2027.

Appendix A

Results of the Stakeholder Survey

The participants were asked to fill in a satisfaction survey to provide inputs and ideas on how to improve the future stakeholder engagement events. In total, 30 replies have been received out of 53 participants attending. 96 % of participants considered the overall event experience as excellent or good. 93 % of the respondents found the overall programme of the event as excellent or very good. As the main motivation to attend the Forum participants listed the opportunity to strengthen interaction with EFSA, and to network with other EFSA's registered stakeholders.

The participants particularly appreciated the balance between presentations and the opportunity to intervene and contribute to the discussions. The World Café format was highly appreciated, but some participants considered that rounds and topics were too many.

Participants considered that the onboarding session met their expectations in 93% of responses. They particularly appreciated the presentation with storytelling and testimonials as very engaging approach. Overall impression is that everyone had the chance to contribute to the points raised and the onboarding session presented a good overview to prepare participants for the Forum.

Some respondents consider that holding the Stakeholder Forum meeting in Parma instead of Brussels adds a lot more value to the event.

A strong majority of respondents feel the contribution they provided during the Forum will inform EFSA's future directions on stakeholder engagement and they expect to be keep informed on the progress made with their input!

Appendix B

Agenda

Meeting date:	17-18 October 2019
Meeting time:	11:30-18:15 09:00-13:00
Meeting venue:	Parma, EFSA premises

DAY 1

From 11:00	Registration of participants <i>Upon presentation of a valid identity document</i>	
11:30- 12:45	Onboarding session (optional participation)	
12:45- 14:00	Welcome/networking lunch <i>Registration desk open for registration</i>	
14:00- 14:10 (10')	Welcome and opening of the 2019 Forum	Bernhard Url Executive Director, EFSA
14:10 14:20 (10')	EFSA's stakeholder engagement: views and recommendations from EFSA's Management Board	Jaana Husu-Kallio Chair of EFSA's Management Board <i>Via teleconference</i>
14:20- 14:50 (30')	Trusting Science in an Age of Distrust – Why Engagement Matters	Annette Klinkert Director of the European Science Engagement Association (EUSEA)
14:50- 15:30 (40')	Audience-led discussion with feedback from EFSA	Moderator: Annette Klinkert Director of the European Science Engagement Association (EUSEA)
15:30- 15:50 (20')	Windows for stakeholder engagement along EFSA's risk assessment process	Didier Verloo Head of Assessment and Methodological Support Unit, EFSA
15:50- 16:00 (10')	Introduction to the World Café conversations	Anthony Smith Team Leader Content and Social Science, EFSA
16:00- 16:15	Grab a coffee and pick a table	
16:15- 18:15 (120')	World Café conversations (Part I)	
	Whom should EFSA engage with?	Host: Maud Perrudin , AESGP - Association of the European Self-Medication Industry Co-host (EFSA): Matthew Ramon , Team Leader External Engagement, Engagement and Cooperation Unit

Early involvement of stakeholders in horizon scanning activities	<p>Host: Sean O'Laoide, Federation of Veterinarians of Europe</p> <p>Co-host (EFSA): Tobin Robinson, Head of Scientific Committee and Emerging Risk Unit</p>
Next steps for public engagement through crowdsourcing	<p>Host: Riccardo Siligato, EU Agri-cooperatives/EU Farmers-COPA COGECA,</p> <p>Co-host (EFSA): Federica Barrucci, Scientific Officer, Assessment and Methodological Support Unit</p>
Unpacking the "science box". A space for scientific discussion	<p>Host: Jose Julio Ortega, Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry Europe - SETAC</p> <p>Co-host (EFSA): Didier Verloo, Head of Assessment and Methodological Support Unit</p>
Collecting stakeholder input beyond just risk assessment	<p>Host: Floriana Cimmarusti, Safe Food Advocacy Europe - SAFE</p> <p>Co-host (EFSA): Domagoj Vrbos, Social Scientist, Communication Unit</p>
Digital solutions to ease stakeholder engagement	<p>Host: Elinor McCartney, Federation of Veterinary Consultants</p> <p>Co-host (EFSA): Cinzia Percivaldi, Team Leader Events Services, Corporate Services Unit</p>
Follow-up mechanisms to report on the use of stakeholders' contributions	<p>Host: Giulia Tarsitano, European Community of Consumer Cooperatives - Euro Coop</p> <p>Co-host (EFSA): Lucia Parrino, Strategic Consultant, Corporate Services Unit</p>
18:15-19:30	Networking cocktail (EFSA premises)

DAY 2

09:00-10:45 (95')	Continuation of World Café conversations (Part II)	
10:45-11:15	Coffee break	
11:15-12:00 (45')	Sharing insights from World Café conversations	<p>Moderators: Barbara Gallani, Head of Communication, Engagement and Cooperation Department, EFSA</p> <p>Victoria Villamar, Head of Engagement and Cooperation Unit, EFSA</p> <p>Presenters: World Café hosts</p>
12:00-12:45 (45')	Interactive panel discussion on World Café outcomes	<p>Moderators: Barbara Gallani, Head of Communication, Engagement and Cooperation Department, EFSA</p> <p>Victoria Villamar, Head of Engagement and Cooperation Unit, EFSA</p> <p>Panellists: Bernhard Url, Executive Director, EFSA</p> <p>Selomey Yamadjako, Head of Business Services Department, EFSA</p> <p>Guilhem De Seze, Head of Scientific Evaluation of Regulated Products Department, EFSA</p>
12:45-13:00 (15')	Take home messages and close of meeting	Bernhard Url Executive Director, EFSA
13:00-14:00	Lunch	

Appendix C

List of Stakeholder Organisations Attending

Name of Organisation	Stakeholder Category
Animal Health Europe	Business and food industry
Association of the European Self-Medication Industry	Business and food industry
Association of Veterinary Consultants	Associations of practitioners
Bee Life European Beekeeping Coordination	Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups
Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust	Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups
Chem Trust	Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups
Clean Smoke Coalition	Business and food industry
Confederation of European Paper Industries	Business and food industry
Energy Drinks Europe	Business and food industry
EU Agri-cooperatives - COGECA	Farmers and primary producers
EU Farmers - COPA	Farmers and primary producers
Euro Science	Academia
Eurogroup for Animals	Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups
EuropaBio	Business and food industry
European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences	Academia
European Association of Chemical Distributors	Business and food industry
European Association of Craft, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises	Business and food industry – Apology
European Association of Poison Centres and Clinical Toxicologists	Associations of practitioners
European Association of Sugar Producers	Business and food industry
European Chemical Industry Council	Business and food industry
European Community of Consumer Co-operatives	Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups
European Consensus-Platform on Alternatives	Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups
European Consumer Organisation	Consumers
European Crop Care Association	Business and food industry
European Crop Protection Association	Business and food industry – Apology
European Dairy Association	Business and food industry – Apology
European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations	Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups
European Federation of Associations of Health Product Manufacturers	Business and food industry
European Flavour Association	Business and food industry
European Food Information Council	Associations of practitioners
European Manufacturers of Expanded Polystyrene	Business and food industry
European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility	Academia
European Professional Beekeepers Association	Farmers and primary producers
European Specialist Sports Nutrition Alliance	Business and food industry
Federation of European Specialty Food Ingredients Industries	Business and food industry
Federation of the European Cutlery, Flatware, Holloware and Cookware Industries	Business and food industry
Federation of Veterinarians of Europe	Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy

Food Lawyers' Network worldwide	groups
Food Supplements Europe	Associations of practitioners
FoodDrinkEurope	Business and food industry
FoodServiceEurope	Business and food industry
Global Harmonization Initiative	Distributors and HORECA – Apology
Humane Society International	Academia
International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association	Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups
International Platform of Insects for Food & Feed	Business and food industry
International Sweeteners Association	Business and food industry
Pesticide Action Network Europe	Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups
PETA International Science Consortium	Environmental/health NGOs and advocacy groups
Plastics Europe	Business and food industry
Safe food advocacy Europe - SAFE	Consumers
Serving Europe - Branded Food and Beverage Service Chains Association	Distributors and HORECA
Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry Europe	Academia
Specialised Nutrition Europe	Business and food industry
Spirits EUROPE	Business and food industry
The EU Vegetable Oil and Protein Meal Industry	Business and food industry
Total Diet and Meal Replacements Europe	Business and food industry
Union of European Beverages Associations	Business and food industry – Apology
Veterinary Public Health Association	Business and food industry

EFSA Participants

Surname	Name	Unit/Department
Barrucci	Federica	Assessment and Methodological Support
de Seze	Guilhem	Scientific Evaluation of Regulated Products Department
Gallani	Barbara	Communications, Engagement and Cooperation Department
Hugas	Marta	Chief Scientist
Husu-Kallio	Jaana	Chair of the Management Board
Kleiner	Juliane	Risk Assessment and Scientific Assistance Department
Kumric	Goran	Engagement and Cooperation
Parrino	Lucia	Corporate Services
Percivaldi	Cinzia	Corporate Services
Ramon	Matthew	Engagement and Cooperation
Ramsay	James	Communications
Robinson	Tobin	Scientific Committee and Emerging Risks
Rortais	Agnes	Scientific Committee and Emerging Risks
Schoonjans	Reinhilde	Scientific Committee and Emerging Risks
Smith	Anthony	Communications
Url	Bernhard	Executive Director
Verloo	Didier	Assessment and Methodological Support
Villamar	Victoria	Engagement and Cooperation
Vrbos	Domagoj	Communications, Social Science
Yamadjako	Selomey	Business Services Department

Observers – European Commission, DG SANTE

Surname	Name	Unit
Darago	Fatima	Food chain science and stakeholder relations

Appendix D

List of presentations

Plenary

Trusting Science in an Age of Distrust – Why Engagement Matters

Annette Klinkert, Director of the European Science Engagement Association (EUSEA)

Windows for Stakeholder Engagement Along EFSA's Risk Assessment Process

Didier Verloo, Head of Assessment and Methodological Support Unit, EFSA