

# Draft Terms of Reference of the Editorial Advisory Board and Operational Details

## Part A: Terms of reference

### 1. Introduction

Since 2003, the European Food Safety Authority has published its scientific advice in an online, open access Journal, the EFSA Journal. The Journal is dedicated to disseminating the scientific assessments of EFSA among a broad user community, including *inter alia* risk managers at national and EU level, stakeholders, policy makers and other interested parties. The Journal has a broad international readership. The Journal operates on the principles of accurate information, timely publication, an open access license that enables users to reuse the content, dissemination of open data according to the FAIR<sup>1</sup> principles, and clear and transparent editorial policies and practices. Since 2016, the Journal has been published on EFSA's behalf by the publishers Wiley along with its sister publication, EFSA Supporting Publications which provides ancillary information to the scientific opinions that EFSA provides for EU risk managers. A third channel is under preparation for the scientific assessments of EU Member States (Food Risk Assess Europe, FRAE), also included as part of a hub on the Wiley Online Library. The EFSA Journal is indexed in the key bibliographic databases in the field of public health and food safety and has been assigned an impact factor (currently 3.480) since 2020.

### 2. Editorial Advisory Board: Role and Functions

#### 2.1 Role

The Editorial Advisory Board provides oversight and guidance of EFSA's scientific publishing operations ensuring they meet internal and external user expectations.

#### 2.2 Functions

- Provide strategic advice on EFSA's scientific publishing activities that enables the organisation to achieve its mission

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

- Provide expertise on the publication and communication of scientific assessments; propose policies or amendments to existing policies related to publishing
- Monitor the performance and impact of EFSA's scientific publishing programme and propose mitigations and improvements when necessary
- Establish and review quality criteria for inclusion of Member State Publications in the FRAE and monitor its development; provide advice to EFSA's Advisory Forum on the development of the FRAE
- Provide a platform for discussion of scientific publishing issues relevant to EFSA and increase EFSA's awareness of relevant issues at MS and central EU levels
- Promote use of the Journal and encourage MSs to publish via the FRAE and resolves any disputes on inclusion of articles or authorship.

### 3. Composition

The Editorial Advisory Board will comprise 12 members who will be appointed for a three-year term, renewable twice. They will represent the following functions and areas of expertise:

- Chair of EFSA Scientific Committee (1)
- Member of EFSA Scientific Committee not affiliated to a Scientific Panel (1)
- Representatives of four national food safety agencies of EU Member States (4)
- Representative of EU food safety risk management (1)
- Representative of an EU ANSA agency with similar scientific publishing mandate to EFSA (1)
- Representative of EU Publications function (1)
- Appointee of EFSA Assess and Enable Departments (2)
- Appointee of EFSA CSO Office (1)

The composition of the Board reflects EFSA's commitment to foster inclusive engagement in its activities that reflect the human and geographic diversity of the European Union.

*Editor in Chief:* The Chair of the EFSA Scientific Committee assumes the role of Editor in Chief. She/He chairs the Board meetings and takes final responsibility for the decisions of the Board.

*Editorial Office:* The EFSA Journal Editorial Office is responsible for the operational aspects of publishing EFSA's scientific advice, providing performance data and secretarial support for Board meetings.

In the execution of these tasks, the members of the Board will work closely with the EFSA Journal Editorial Office to ensure that the Journal meets its organizational targets and responsibilities.

#### 4. *Statutory position*

The Board is not a statutory EFSA body: it acts in an advisory capacity. Members are not reimbursed for their participation in Board meetings and are not subject to EFSA's independence policies specifically for their roles as Board members.

#### 5. *Meeting logistics*

The Board meets 4 times per annum at regular intervals. Meetings are held virtually and are of 1.0-1.5 hours duration. Ad hoc meetings may be called at any time to address urgent issues and a physical meeting may be organised if the Board deems necessary. Decisions are taken by consensus.

#### 6. *Agenda*

Agendas will include a number of standing and development/strategic items. Standing items will include *inter alia* the number of MS articles published, timeliness of publication of EFSA's scientific outputs, impact metrics etc.

#### 7. *Minutes*

The minutes will be distributed no later than two weeks after the meeting and will record the following:

- Date of meeting
- Attendees and absentees
- Agenda items discussed
- Action points (including responsibility and deadlines)
- Decisions taken (including the rationale for the decisions).

The minutes of the preceding meeting are confirmed at the subsequent meeting and will include a review of the action points.

Once approved, the Minutes of the meeting will be made available to all Board members.

### Part B: Operating details

#### 8. Governance of Food Risk Assess Europe

FRAE will publish the scientific outputs of national food safety agencies of EU Member States that will support the effectiveness of the overall European risk assessment community. Surveys completed by the EFSA Journal Editorial Office in 2021 have indicated that the national agencies are a rich source of risk assessments and various other types of literature – including grey literature – access to which would benefit the community, increase awareness of food safety

issues at the national level and leverage available knowledge within the community. The Board is asked to establish a governance model and establish criteria for the selection of literature for the FRAE.

(a) Scope: the scope of the FRAE corresponds with that of EFSA covering the following broad scientific disciplines:

- Animal health & welfare
- Biological hazards
- Contaminants in the food chain
- Food additives & flavourings
- Food contact materials, enzymes & processing aids
- Feed additives
- GMOs
- Nutrition
- Plant health
- Plant protection products

In addition, articles produced by the national agencies that fall into other areas related to food safety will be included:

- Data management
- Methodologies and protocols
- Toxicology
- Generic and cross-cutting food safety issues

(b) Quality: articles accepted into the FRAE must maintain the high scientific quality of the other EFSA channels - EFSA Journal and Supporting Publications.

As well as demonstrating relevance to the FRAE community, the following criteria should be applied

- eligible articles must be official publications of the national agencies
- a **documented quality management system** is in place i.e. a process of peer review or similar quality assurance is required
- articles should **not represent the views of a single individual**

Three levels of quality management are permissible:

1. articles are **peer reviewed by external scientists** i.e. scientists not employed by the agency
2. articles are **reviewed internally by colleagues** not directly involved in the drafting

3. articles are subject to the agency's **quality management system and are authorised** by the appropriate responsible individual within the agency
  - must meet a high standard of communication in terms of structure, formatting and availability of suitable metadata. (These can be assessed by the EFSA Journal Editorial Office and Wiley.)

(c) Miscellaneous issues

Copyright: National agencies will retain copyright for their articles which will be published with an open access [CC-BY ND](#) license. They will also retain legal responsibility for their articles and data.

Venue of first publication: articles may first be published on the website of the national agency before publication on FRAE. Publication of an article on FRAE should take 4 working days for articles not requiring translation.

Translation: EFSA will provide a translation of titles, abstracts/summaries and keywords as requested from the national agency. On average, translation should be completed in 1 working week.

Data availability: EFSA will publish relevant datasets in its Knowledge Junction and link to articles in FRAE as requested. Those agencies that use existing data repositories, e.g. national data repositories, can continue to use them.

Authorship: EFSA will provide access to its guidance on authorship. Agencies must resolve any disputes internally before dispatching to EFSA.

Ethics: Articles must comply with internationally recognised ethical standards in relation to *inter alia* vulnerable populations, conduct of research using animals, research using human subjects, and management of confidential data.

Plagiarism: EFSA will perform similarity checks on articles submitted to FRAE as requested.

File types: Articles can be submitted in Word or PDF. Image files should be broadly aligned with good publication practice particularly in relation to resolution. Wiley has extensive guidance on artwork.

Digital object identifiers: Wiley will assign and register DOIs if not already provided at submission.

Competing interests: national agencies should ensure that any interests are declared prior to submission.

Operational contacts: EFSA has established a network of contacts within the national agencies to support the operational aspects of publishing the national articles.

Indexing: EFSA will instruct Wiley to apply for indexing of FRAE in the key databases at an appropriate juncture in its development.

Metrics: The EFSA Journal Editorial Office will provide regular (annual) metrics including timeliness, usage and impact.

Performance: The Board will assess the performance data provided by the EFSA Journal Editorial Office and advise accordingly.

Republications: The Editorial Office should be informed as soon as an error is noticed in an article. EFSA will make its standard procedures on republication of scientific outputs and error classification available to the national agencies.

END

#### Document history

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