

# Framework for interaction between the European Food Safety Authority and the Stakeholder Discussion Group on Emerging Risks (StaDG-ER)

(Amended on the 30 March 2021)

The scope of this document is to provide a framework for interaction between EFSA and the Stakeholder Discussion Group on Emerging Risks as one of targeted platforms established under the new Stakeholder Engagement Approach (SEA)<sup>1</sup> through which EFSA engages with stakeholders on technical issues. The relations and the work carried out through all interactions within this engagement mechanism will be guided by EFSA's core values of transparency and independence.

## 1. Background

The EFSA's Management Board adopted, on 9 October 2018 the Decision on the criteria for establishing a list of registered stakeholders and the establishment of the Stakeholder Forum and Stakeholder Bureau<sup>2</sup>, setting the frame for the new way EFSA engages with its stakeholders. Once registered, stakeholders are able to take part the Stakeholder Forum and Stakeholder Bureau, the two permanent mechanisms for engagement. Registered stakeholders are also invited to interact with EFSA through targeted engagement platforms, based on their interest and technical expertise (e.g. Roundtable meetings, Question Framing Working Groups, Discussion groups, Communicators Lab, etc.).

Networking with stakeholders, MSs, EU and international agencies is seen as a key step in developing the effectiveness of the emerging risks identification process<sup>3</sup>. The Stakeholder Discussion Group on Emerging Risks (StaDG-ER) is a targeted platform that has allowed EFSA to capitalise on stakeholders' specialist knowledge in the identification of new or emerging issues since 2010. The group was created to improve the exchange of information about emerging risks identification and to enhance communication and dialogue on issues pertaining to emerging risks with stakeholders.

The current StaDG-ER is composed of EU-wide stakeholder organisations working in the food chain and organisations representing consumers, food and feed operators, food industry, food trade and NGOs, providing a balanced representation of the interests of the stakeholders that interact with EFSA.

The present Framework for interaction between the European Food Safety Authority and the Stakeholder Discussion Group on Emerging Risks substitutes the previous StaDG-

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<sup>1</sup>Stakeholder Engagement Approach

[http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EFSA%20Stakeholder%20engagement%20approach\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EFSA%20Stakeholder%20engagement%20approach_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Decision of the Management Board of the European Food Safety Authority on the criteria for establishing a list of stakeholders and the establishment of the Stakeholder Forum and Stakeholder Bureau

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Document18992.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Piloting a process for emerging risks identification: lessons learnt and next steps;

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/310e.htm>

ER's Terms of Reference<sup>4</sup> in accordance with the new EFSA Stakeholder Engagement Approach (SEA) and introduces an updated overview on the way the group performs.

## **2. Scope of interaction**

The StaDG-ER will enable the members of the group to provide strategic input to EFSA's work on emerging risk identification. The themes and topics of each meeting will be determined by demands from its registered stakeholders and by the priority areas identified by EFSA. The group will provide with inputs and available data to support EFSA emerging risk identification system.

## **3. General objectives**

StaDG-ER members shall:

- present to the group information, data and knowledge concerning identified emerging risks and/or issues as well as the methods used to identify them;
- provide access to data related to the reported emerging risks/issues;
- provide additional information on on-going issues discussed at the previous StaDG-ER meetings.

Emerging issues are identified at the beginning of the Emerging Risk Identification process as issues that may merit further investigation and additional data collection. Emerging issues can include specific issues (e.g. specific chemical substance or a pathogen), as well as general issues such as drivers of change (e.g. climate change). Risk management issues resulting from a lack of compliance with existing regulations should be excluded.

In order to strengthen the overall emerging risks identification process at EFSA and to ensure coordination and efficient collaboration at different levels, the activities of StaDG-ER will be regularly presented to the EFSA's Emerging Risk Engaging Network (EREN) and vice versa.

## **4. Working methodology**

### **4.1. Composition and selection of members**

To ensure balance and to be aligned with the new EFSA Stakeholder Engagement Approach (SEA), the composition of the current StaDG-ER established in 2010 shall be regularly revised and renewed. The latest renewal of the discussion group, covering 2018-2020, aimed to ensure a balanced representation of different views and alignment with the principles of the EFSA Stakeholder Engagement Approach. Considering the ongoing evolution of the EFSA Stakeholder Engagement Approach and its possible impact on stakeholder groups' composition, the mandate of the current StaDG-ER has been extended until the end of 2022.

The StaDG-ER shall be composed of at least one representative from a registered stakeholder in each of the following categories: consumers; environmental/health NGOs and/or advocacy groups; farmers and primary producers; business and food industry; distributors and HORECA (food service industry preparing and serving food and beverages), associations of practitioners working in fields relevant to EFSA's food safety and public health remit and academia.

Following the launching of an official call to stakeholder organisations for nominating experts to the EFSA Discussion Group on Emerging Risks, registered

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<sup>4</sup> Terms of reference of the Stakeholder Group on Emerging Risks (2014-2015)  
<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/assets/emrisknetworksscq.pdf>

organisations may submit nominations for up to three experts. EFSA will select one member and one alternate member per registered organisation. The experts shall be selected on the basis of their technical expertise.

As emerging risks may concern all areas of the food and feed chain and animal-plant health, a group of approximately 15 to 20 experts with a wide range of expertise shall be selected from the candidates proposed by the organisations on the list of registered EFSA stakeholders<sup>5</sup> to participate in the StaDG-ER. Other organisations interested in nominating a member for this Discussion Group should send first a request to become registered as an EFSA stakeholder; information for submitting a request is available at and this [web link](#).

As stipulated in Article 3 of the Decision on the criteria for establishing a list of registered stakeholders and the establishment of the Stakeholder Forum and Stakeholder Bureau<sup>6</sup>, non-registered stakeholder may be invited to the meetings of StaDG-ER based on the need for specific expertise or technical knowledge. Any involvement of non-registered Stakeholders will be communicated in transparent and timely manner. The usefulness of this activity will be reviewed after the third year of its operation.

#### **4.2. Roles and responsibilities**

The StaDG-ER will be coordinated by EFSA that will also provide the chair, rapporteur and secretariat and be responsible for drafting the minutes of the meetings, reporting as part of EFSA's annual report on activities on emerging risks as well as ensuring efficient collaboration at different levels and the activities of StaDG-ER to be regularly presented to the EFSA's Emerging Risk Exchange Network (EREN) and vice versa.

#### **4.3. Frequency of meetings**

The StaDG-ER shall meet at least twice a year.

#### **4.4. Scope in EFSA's work**

The work of StaDG-ER is integrated into EFSA's emerging risks identification process. The StaDG-ER activities are presented in the the EFSA's Emerging Risk Exchange Network (EREN), Advisory Forum and Scientific Committee of EFSA on a regular basis.

Potential emerging issues are discussed at the group to add further information and data. Issues can be further elaborated in a form of a Briefing Note.

With an aim at enhancing possible ways of collaboration and exchange of information, EFSA will regularly provide to the group information related to the issues identified through the EFSA's emerging risks identification process, to the on-going EFSA activities related to the development of methodologies on emerging risks identification, as well as informing the group on the outcome and needs for data of EFSA's groups (e.g. Working groups) actively working on the identified issues.

#### **4.5. Expected deliverables**

- Meeting minutes summarizing the issues discussed and the agreed actions.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/stakeholders-registered-list.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Decision of the Management Board of the European Food Safety Authority on the criteria for establishing a list stakeholders and the establishment of the Stakeholder Forum and Stakeholder Bureau  
<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Document18992.pdf>

- Report on issues identified by the StaDG-ER including the data exchanged related to on-going issues as well as information on the latest developments in the area of emerging risks identification i.e. methods, data sources and drivers of emerging risks not described in previous EFSA's annual report on activities on emerging risks.

## **5. Transparency requirement**

Openness and transparency are fundamental aspects of EFSA and are enshrined as concepts in EFSA's regulatory framework (art. 38 of EFSA's Founding Regulation (EC) No 178/2002) and in the Decision of the Management Board establishing the Forum.

The transparency of the work of the Stakeholder Discussion Group on Emerging Risks will be made available through the timely announcement of EFSA's upcoming activities on Emerging Risks identification as well as through the publication of agendas, participant' lists and the outcome of each of the meetings of this group on the EFSA website.

## **6. Monitoring and review**

A review of the effectiveness of EFSA's stakeholder engagement, including activities related with the Stakeholder Discussion Group on Emerging Risks, shall be carried out every three years, as of the entry into force of the Decision of the Management Board of the European Food Safety Authority on the criteria for establishing a list stakeholders and the establishment of the Stakeholder Forum and Stakeholder Bureau and, at any time, upon request of the Management Board, Article 9.

#### Document history

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