



Frequently asked questions on the “Expert Database”

1. Why does EFSA need an expert database?

EFSA aims to deliver timely scientific advice of the highest standards to support the policies and decisions of Europe’s risk managers (European Commission, European Parliament and EU Member States). This can only be achieved through effective pooling of scientific excellence across Europe. To this end, EFSA, in cooperation with Members States, has decided to set up a database of external scientific experts in order to develop a more effective and flexible response to its growing workload. In addition, one of the main objectives of setting up this database is to enhance the transparency of the process through which experts are selected and invited to participate in EFSA’s scientific activities.

2. Will I be able to become a member of EFSA’s Scientific Committee or Panels if included on the expert database?

No. The selection of EFSA’s Scientific Committee and Panel members is carried out every 3 years and is subject to a different selection procedure. Detailed internal rules on the procedure to select members for the Scientific Committee and Panels are established in a Decision of EFSA’s Executive Director and are available on EFSA’s internet. The future Scientific Committee and Panel members will be recruited following a call to be published in Autumn 2008. However, it will be likely that you may be invited to provide support to the Scientific Committee and Panels members, once included in the expert database.

3. How do I apply?

Interested experts from EU Member States and Third Countries will fill out an individual on-line application form available on EFSA’s website

<http://edb.efsa.europa.eu/EfsaDBExpertWeb/jsp/Login.jsp>

4. Will my application be accepted?

The process for inclusion of experts in EFSA’s expert database is based on the submission and validation of a set of mandatory data, consisting of personal and institutional information, and data describing the expertise of applicants. During the validation step, EFSA verifies if applicant experts satisfy the eligibility criteria needed for inclusion in the database: (1) a university degree, or equivalent, in one or more areas of expertise within the remit of EFSA; (2) relevant professional experience *i.e.* in risk assessment, data collection on

biological or chemical hazards, as appropriate; (3) scientific articles published in peer reviewed journals, technical reports and/or other publications relevant to the expertise declared; (4) ability to communicate and work in at least one Community language; and (5) a completed Annual Declaration of Interests (http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/AboutEfsa/WhoWeAre/efsa_locale-1178620753812_DeclarationsInterest.htm).

All applicant experts will be informed of the outcome of the validation and eligibility steps.

5. How will experts be selected by EFSA?

Each time EFSA needs the support of an external expert for a specific scientific task, a list of potential experts is drawn up from the expert database. The potential candidates who closely match the sought profile are then contacted concerning their availability and interest in participating in the identified task. Those that express their availability are then asked to update their Annual Declaration of Interest (ADoI), unless a current one, completed less than one year ago, is already available. This ADoI is reviewed by EFSA staff and only candidates without a conflict of interest are retained for further evaluation. Additional evaluation and final selection criteria are finally assessed by EFSA, leading to the identification of the most suitable candidate(s).

6. What is the nature of the work involved?

Experts included in the database may be invited for one of two types of assignments: (1) EFSA assignments, where the nature of the tasks may be the provision of scientific advice to EFSA's Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels, EFSA's networks (Advisory Forum, Focal Points, Zoonoses Task Force, amongst others) and related working groups; and (2) assignments on Member States' own scientific projects (when experts give their consent for their profile information to be shared with Member State National Food Safety Agencies).

7. Will I be compensated for my work?

In accordance with existing EFSA rules, those experts selected from the database will be invited for a certain scientific activity. When participating in the work, they will receive travel and subsistence expenses and an indemnity for their contribution to EFSA's work.

8. How much time will I need to dedicate to these activities?

External scientific experts with the required expertise could be invited (a) on an ad-hoc basis, to attend a single meeting or for the duration of the work on a specific mandate or project; or (b) on a longer term, when the required expertise is needed for more than one mandate or project.

9. Who will use the database and will my data be protected?

The main end-users of EFSA's database are the Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels, EFSA's networks, their respective working groups and EFSA scientific staff. The expert database will also be used by Member States (via Members of the Advisory Forum). This will allow Member States to approach selected experts for their own scientific projects. However, experts included in the database have the possibility to choose whether or not to

share their individual profiles with Member States. Those experts who do not wish to share their data with Member States will be able to opt to restrict access to their data to EFSA only.

All personal information on applicant experts and experts included into the database will be processed by EFSA pursuant to Regulation (EC) N° 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000, on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.