

# EFSA rolls out re-organisation programme to meet demands, optimise resources

News Story  
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The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has begun rolling out its re-organisation programme, making best use of resources to reflect an ever increasing workload, strengthen efficiency and provide a higher quality service to its clients. The re-structuring will take place gradually throughout 2011 and will be completed by early 2012.

The re-organisation aims to address the growing demands on the Authority, particularly with regards to applications for the assessment of regulated substances and products, such as health claims, enzymes, feed additives and pesticides. Resources will also be focused on risk assessments on general health and safety priorities in areas such as chemical and biological contaminants, animal health and welfare and plant health. Five directorates now make up EFSA: three scientific directorates, which support the work of the Scientific Committee and EFSA's 10 scientific Panels; a reshaped Communications Directorate and the Resources and Support Directorate.

"The re-organisation is all about making EFSA more flexible and more able to respond to the increasing number of demands for its scientific advice. In this way, we can maintain the support we give to help Europe's policy makers protect the health of European consumers," EFSA's Executive Director Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle said.

"It is important that our scientific staff are able to focus more on scientific work, and so we are centralising many more administrative tasks under the Resources and Support Directorate on which the rest of EFSA depends to successfully carry out its mission."

The Risk Assessment and Scientific Assistance Directorate includes risk assessment of animal health and welfare, contaminants and plant health as well as monitoring of diets and chemical or biological hazards and scientific assessment support.

The Scientific Evaluation of Regulated Products Directorate supports EFSA's work related to the risk assessment of substances products and processes intended to be used in the food chain and to the substantiation of claims made on foods in order to help protect public, plant and animal health as well as the environment. Its units focus on feed, food additives and nutrient sources, food contact materials, enzymes and flavourings, GMOs, nutrition, and pesticides.

EFSA is setting up an Applications Desk, to act as a first contact point for companies submitting applications for the evaluation of regulated substances, products and claims and to raise the level of service to other clients and partners such as Member States and stakeholders. The extra spotlight on applications also means EFSA will be prepared should EU institutions decide in the future to introduce a fee-based system.

The Science Strategy and Coordination Directorate will coordinate the implementation of EFSA's science strategy and reinforce engagement and cooperation with stakeholders and international partners, in particular on broader horizontal scientific issues, for example, on risk assessment methodologies. The Directorate will also provide support to the Scientific Committee and Advisory Forum and focus on specific areas such as emerging risks in the food and feed chain.

The Resources and Support Directorate will bring together a number of functions previously spread across the Authority, such as meeting organisational support, procurement and financial management. A new Human Capital and Knowledge Management unit will develop strategies to encourage knowledge-sharing, training and best use of talents among staff and more than 1,500 external experts to help EFSA achieve its mission.

Guided by EFSA's 2010-2013 Communications Strategy, the Communications Directorate is developing a more thematic approach to EFSA's communications to illustrate the impact of EFSA's work and

demonstrate how the Authority contributes to improving food safety across Europe and to building public confidence in the way risk is assessed.

“EFSA has grown rapidly since it was set up in 2002. It is right that we review the way we are structured to make sure we keep pace with the demands made of us, make optimal use of our resources and become even more effective in what we do,” Geslain-Lanéelle said.

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