

# Terms of Reference

## Purpose

To advise the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland on any matters relating to novel foods, traditional novel foods, genetically modified foods and feed and novel food processes including food irradiation, having regard where appropriate to the views of relevant expert bodies.

To advise the Food Standards Agency on selected matters where the expert advice of the Committee is requested.

The primary role of the Advisory Committee Novel Food & Processes (ACNFP) is the safety assessment of applications for novel and traditional foods under [UK legislation](#) (EU retained law) and the safety assessment of Genetically Modified Food & Feed under [UK legislation](#) (EU retained law).

Under UK legislation a novel food is defined as a food that does not have a significant history of consumption within the UK before 15 May 1997. This definition includes traditional foods from third countries. Such foods are subject to a pre-market safety assessment before a decision is made on UK wide authorisations.

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are plants and animals with a genetic make-up that has been modified using techniques of biotechnology. Before a GMO food or feed product can be placed on the market in Great Britain (GB) it must be authorised under the retained EU Regulation 1829/2003 on Genetically Modified Food and Feed.

Therefore, a company planning to market a traditional or novel food or process or genetically modified food or feed in the UK must submit an application to the [Regulated Product Application Service](#).

## Role and Responsibility

It is the role of the ACNFP to review the safety assessment of traditional and novel food notifications and safety assessments of genetically modified food & feed applications. Concerns are usually raised if there is a lack of information or there is a clear safety concern. The information from the applicant and the advice of the Committee will provide the basis for risk management decisions made by the Governments in Great Britain.

The Committee meets approximately six times a year for formal meetings and workshops, where they review dossiers and briefing papers on the submitted notifications.

The ACNFP is supported in its work by a Secretariat provided by the Food Standards Agency. The Secretariat has scientific expertise that enables them to provide Members with comprehensive background information and briefing papers on the regulated product notification that inform the processes and advice given by the Committee.

## **Membership**

The Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Process (ACNFP) comprises of one Chair and nineteen members.

Members are recruited by open competition. The Committee is made up of a range of experts, covering a range of scientific disciplines, as well as consumer representation who provide insight, advice and the technical knowledge needed to evaluate the safety of regulated product applications.

The normal duration of appointment for an ACNFP member is three years and for the Chair five years. Members and Chairs will normally not serve for longer than 10 years continuously.

The ACNFP is also able to identify and to draw in wider expertise and inputs across relevant disciplines and perspectives to address the issues at hand.

## **Independence and transparency**

The ACNFP is an independent SAC which operates to the highest standards of openness and transparency. It will work in accordance with guidelines by the FSA and relevant guidance and rules established across Government for the operation of Scientific Advisory Committees. These include:

The cross-Government [Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees](#) (CoPSAC), which includes the [Principles of Scientific Advice to Government](#)

The FSA's [Good Practice Guidelines for Scientific Advisory Committees](#) (SACs)

**Key elements of practice which underpin and assure this include:**

ACNFP meeting agendas, papers, minutes and reports are published.

The ACNFP publishes an annual report and the ACNFP Chair will report to the FSA Board annually at an open Board meeting.

The ACNFP Chair has the right of direct access to the FSA's CSA and Chief Executive (CE), and to FSA Board members (via the Agency Chair), at all times. Members also have the right of access to the CSA, the CE and Board on any matter which they believe raises important issues relating to their duties as a member.

In addition to regular contact between meetings, the ACNFP Chair and FSA CSA will meet for a feedback discussion each year to review the work of the Committee against its remit, and the relationship with and support from the FSA.

The ACNFP Chair will meet the FSA Chair annually to discuss the work of the ACNFP.

The ACNFP is supported by a [Secretariat](#) provided by the FSA.

## **Resources and Budget**

The ACNFP is supported by a Secretariat provided by the Food Standards Agency.

The Secretariat is led by a Secretary who is responsible for the work of the Secretariat and a lead Secretariat who manages overall workflow.

The Committee has no independent budget or expenditure. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) covers the costs for the operation of the Committee (including secretariat support, member's fees and expenses, and administrative costs for meetings and events). These are recorded formally in the accounts of the FSA.

The budget for the Food Standards Agency is agreed every year by the FSA Business Committee.