European Commission’s Scientific Advice Mechanism
Scientific advice on the topic:
Towards sustainable food consumption

Call for Nominations for a SAPEA Working Group

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Background

The European Commission’s Scientific Advice Mechanism provides independent and transparent scientific advice to the European Commission, working with the independent Group of Chief Scientific Advisors (GCSA) to the European Commission and the SAPEA consortium.

SAPEA (Science Advice for Policy by European Academies) comprises five European Academy Networks: AE, ALLEA, Euro-CASE, FEAM and YASAS— and brings together outstanding expertise in natural sciences, engineering and technology, medical, health, agricultural and social sciences, and the humanities from over 100 academies, young academies and learned societies in more than 40 countries across Europe (see Annex 1).

The Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth and the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety have asked the GCSA to deliver advice on the topic of Sustainable Food Consumption by the second quarter of 2023, as it will feed into the revision of the Farm to Fork strategy from the middle of 2023 onwards. The main question to be answered by the GCSA is:

What tools could be used at EU level, in addition to those mentioned in the 2020 Farm to Fork Strategy, to overcome the barriers preventing consumers to adopt sustainable and healthy diets, fostering the necessary change towards sustainability in the food environment? The Group’s advice should be based on an analysis that identifies the elements refraining consumers from making healthy and sustainable choices.

The Scoping Paper for this request can be found here:
This request builds on previous advice delivered by the Scientific Advice Mechanism on a Sustainable Food System for the EU.

To answer the scoping question, the GCSA will draft a Scientific Opinion containing policy recommendations to the College of Commissioners. In order to inform this Opinion, SAPEA is requested to set up a Working Group to gather scientific evidence relevant to the topic and to synthesise it in an Evidence Review Report containing options for EU policy.

The Evidence Review Report will present evidence on the range of determinants that prevent consumers from making healthier and more sustainable food choices; will assess how EU policies and legislation address these barriers to healthier and more sustainable consumer choices; and formulate conclusions and evidence-based policy options on how to move towards healthier and more sustainable food consumption in the EU. The work can also present successful and emerging approaches on actions carried out at Member State level and Communities/Regions/Cities level that may be scaled up to EU level.

SAPEA call for nominations

SAPEA will set up an international and interdisciplinary Working Group of experts, covering the necessary fields, from the social sciences/humanities and also relevant natural sciences/technical fields. The Working Group will be chaired by Professor Erik Mathijs, Full Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics at KU Leuven (Belgium) and Director of the SFERE (Sustainable Food Economies Research Group).

We very much welcome, and rely on, your contribution and support through:

(1) the nomination of experts for the Working Group,
(2) the nomination of experts for an expert workshop or the peer review process,
(3) the submission of reports or other published material that is relevant to the topic and could be used as evidence.

You can nominate experts who may or may not be Members of Academia Europaea (MAE).

The request for advice focuses on consumer-behavioural aspects. However, due to the complex architecture of the food environment, a systemic, multi-level approach will also be required, with a consideration of interrelated economic, social, environmental and cultural factors.

Non-exclusive examples of areas of expertise that may be of relevance are provided below. The composition of the Working Group for the evidence review should represent the interdisciplinary expertise required:

- Consumer psychology, consumer decision-making, consumer behaviour;
- Agro-food marketing and retail management, including distribution channels, new product development and pricing policies with regard to food (or fast-moving consumer goods);
- Digital marketing;
- Socio-cultural retail studies;
- Food industry structure;
- Food supply chain;
- Agricultural economics, including impact of prices and taxes on consumer demand;
• Behavioural economics, including nudging and type-1 decision-making;
• Hospitality management;
• (EU) Food policy and legislation;
• Anthropology, sociology, history, geography with a food and nutrition focus;
• Cultural studies of food consumption;
• Public health, behavioural nutrition, behavioural epidemiology;
• Global food market and food consumption;
• Consumer Food Science and Technology.

The experts will provide their input via physical and/or virtual meetings and are requested to produce a first draft of an Evidence Review Report by December/January 2022 and the final report by April 2023. For more details about expected tasks and responsibilities, please refer to the expected workload, support and timeline in Annex 2.

Please address your response to Hub Manager, Louise Edwards (EdwardsL31@cardiff.ac.uk) by the deadline of 2 September 2022. Nominations of experts should please be accompanied by a detailed Curriculum Vitae, together with a short explanation on how the nominee’s experience meets the areas of expertise needed. We would be grateful if you could inform us whether you have checked your experts’ availability before nominating them.

A SAPEA Selection Committee will be responsible for the composition of the Working Group. Criteria for selection of members to the Working Group are detailed in Annex 3.

Experts selected for the Working Group will not receive any fee. Reasonable travel costs will be reimbursed by SAPEA for attendance at physical working group meetings. All selected experts will be required to complete a Declaration of Interests form that will be assessed by SAPEA before contributing to the scientific report.

If you have questions or would like further information, please email Louise Edwards (EdwardsL31@cardiff.ac.uk).

Thank you very much in advance and we look forward to hearing from you,

Professor Antonio Loprieno
Chair of the SAPEA Board, President of ALLEA
Annex 1. SAPEA: Science Advice for Policy by European Academies

SAPEA (Science Advice for Policy by European Academies) comprises the five European Academy Networks: AE, ALLEA, Euro-CASE, FEAM and YASAS and brings together outstanding expertise from natural sciences, engineering and technology, medical, health, agricultural and social sciences, and the humanities. We draw on over a hundred academies, young academies and learned societies in more than 40 countries across Europe. SAPEA is part of the European Commission’s Scientific Advice Mechanism. Together with the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, we provide independent scientific advice to European Commissioners to support their decision-making. We also work to raise awareness of scientific advice and evidence in policymaking, and to stimulate debate in Europe about these issues.

SAPEA is funded by the European Union.

Annex 2. Expected workload, support and timeline

Members of the Working Group (WG) are expected to:

- Meet approximately once a month, or as appropriate between September/October 2022 and April 2023;
- Draft the Evidence Review Report by writing relevant sections/chapters of the report, based on published evidence; the first draft of the Evidence Review Report is expected by January 2023;
- Comment and review the whole report as a group at meetings and between meetings;
- Consider the results of structured literature and policy landscape reviews on the topic, carried out in coordination with the WG, to inform their writing;
- Write up evidence-based conclusions and suggest policy options, presented in a balanced and non-biased way;
- Respond to the comments on the draft Evidence Review Report made by external experts at an expert workshop in February 2023- attendance of some members of the working group will be required;
- Respond to the comments made by the peer reviewers of the Evidence Review Report in March/April 2023;
- Be involved in stakeholder and public engagement work (such as meetings, conferences, events), as appropriate and upon request, following delivery of the report.

Invited experts may need to be able to reserve the equivalent of approximately half a day per week for this work, although this can vary between members depending on the size of the contribution and other factors.

In support, SAPEA staff will:

- Administratively manage the project, organise the meetings, draft the meeting minutes and follow up with agreed actions;
- Administratively coordinate the literature reviews that will be undertaken for the WG;
- Undertake editorial work on drafts of the Evidence Review Report, in liaison with the Chair(s) and working group members;
- Organise a workshop comprised of a wider group of experts, to consider the draft Evidence Review Report;
• Coordinate a formal peer review of the final draft of the Evidence Review Report;
• Coordinate appropriate stakeholder and public engagement work associated with the topic;
• Prepare and publish the final Evidence Review Report, by May 2023.

An indicative timeline is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2022</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Final formation of Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Working Group meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Working Group meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Working Group meeting</td>
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<td>2023</td>
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<td>January</td>
<td>Production of first solid draft</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>SAPEA Expert Workshop (a review by the wider expert community)</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>Report sent to peer review</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Working Group addresses peer reviewers’ comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Report endorsement by SAPEA Board</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Advisor’s Scientific Opinion and SAPEA Evidence Review Report published</td>
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Annex 3. Criteria for selection of members to the international Working Group

A SAPEA-appointed Selection Committee will select the experts according to demonstrated excellence in one or more of the fields listed in the Call, and other criteria such as:

• Interdisciplinarity, all relevant disciplines should be included;
• Wide geographical coverage of Europe;
• Participation of underrepresented gender in SAPEA Working Groups of at least 40%;
• Inclusion of early career scientists;
• Commitment and time-availability.

There should be a good diversity of technical, professional, and scientific experts, ranging from highly focused specialists to generalists, from well-established to early-career career stage, and as socially, culturally and gender balanced as possible.

Please note that nomination does not guarantee selection to the Working Group. The average success rate is around 20%.