

Potential future discussion items - horizon scanning - proposed format of summary table

This is a paper for discussion. This does not represent the views of the Committee and should not be cited.

Introduction and Background

1. During the horizon scanning discussion at the February COT meeting, it was agreed that the COT should trial having horizon scanning as a standing agenda item, as was already the approach taken by the Committee on the Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC).

2. Attached at Annex A to this paper is a summary table based on the format used by COC. Members are asked to make any comments on the draft format. It is envisaged that this would be a standing item, largely for information or a brief discussion, but with a more detailed annual discussion taking place at the February meeting.

Questions for the Committee

3. Members are asked for:

- a) Any comments on the proposed format.
- b) If they have any more general comments on horizon scanning.

Secretariat March 2026

Annex A to TOX/2026/07

COT horizon scanning topics- March 2026

Topics for progression

Meeting raised	Topic	Status
February 2026 Horizon scanning	Microplastics and nanoplastics	February 2026. Scoping paper to be prepared to provide overview of current external activity e.g. EFSA and allow relevant data gaps to be identified.
February 2026 Horizon scanning	Hazard and risk-based risk assessment approaches – joint with Science Council?	February 2026. To be discussed with Science Council Secretariat.
February 2026 Horizon scanning	Comparison of HBGVs for arsenic	Paper to be prepared following the publication of the JECFA monograph.
February 2026 Horizon scanning	Dioxins	Review of final EFSA opinion when published, plus associated work tbc.
2021	Biologically based food contact materials	Assessments of chitosan and bamboo have been completed. Rest tbc.

Topics kept under a watching brief or not yet prioritised

Meeting raised	Topic	Status
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February 2026 Horizon scanning	Alternative proteins and their associated allergenic risks.	February 2026. To be discussed with ACNFP Secretariat.
February 2026 Horizon scanning	Acrylamide	An FSA call for data on acrylamide levels in foods has recently been completed. The Committee may be asked to consider the implications of UK exposures.
February 2026 Horizon scanning	Climate-driven contaminants such as aflatoxins and algal toxins.	February 2026. Possible workshop.
February 2026 Horizon scanning	PFAS and its substitutes	TBC.
February 2026 Horizon scanning	UPFs - potential interactions between UPFs, food packaging materials, and chemical mixtures.	Comment- cross government issue.
February 2026 Horizon scanning	Complex organic mixtures (e.g. botanicals, smoke flavourings).	Comments- there are some differences in the risk assessment approaches between the UK/EU for these complex mixtures. For the guidance WG to pick up in due course.

February 2026 Horizon scanning	Guidance on how to build a weight of evidence from NAMs	Comments- As EU legislation moves to a gradual animal test free assessments, COT may consider how to develop guidance on how to build a weight of evidence from NAMs, and how to 'weigh' data within the hierarchical ranking of the lines of evidence (e.g. from testing NAMs such as in vitro/ex vivo tests, and non-testing methods such as in silico models and read-across), and to keep track of developments in the area of New Generation Risk Assessment (NGRA).For the guidance WG.
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Topics not considered a priority or outside COT's remit

Meeting raised	Topic	Status
February 2026 Horizon scanning	New hazard classes under CLP: The exclusion of CMR substances from food and other consumer products is already well embedded in the EU legislation - except exemption in some use categories after stringent risk assessment. Now other specific toxicological endpoints are proposed under the EU Chemical Strategy for Sustainability (CSS) framework to expand the scope of CLP hazard classes - with the notion that chemicals falling in these categories be considered for a similar ban in food/consumer products unless substantiated to be "essential for use". These include endocrine disruptors (EDs); Specific Target Organ Toxicants (STOTs), respiratory toxicants, neurotoxicants, immunotoxicants. The COT should keep track of developments in this area to align with, or be prepared for, if and when these come to implementation at the EU level.	February 2026. For COT information only.

February 2026
Horizon scanning

EU developments in regard to One- Substance-One- Assessment (1S1A), if assessment is done by one authority/body (e.g. EChA, EMA, EFSA) then others will have to adopt at least the hazard assessment for the same chemical (risk assessment may vary under different regulatory frameworks). COT may consider the impact of such developments on future risk assessments – e.g. a chemical may be assessed safe for use in consumer products but may still be banned in the EU due to negative environmental impacts.

TBC.