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TOX/2020/47

## **Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT)**

### **Second draft revision to the COT Terms of Reference and Code of Practice.**

#### **Introduction and Background.**

1. The Chair of the FSA Board is trying to encourage greater consistency between the Terms of Reference (ToR) and Codes of Practice (CoP) of the different FSA Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs). A template has been developed by the Science Council and the current COT ToR and CoP have been revised to follow the common format. In general, this has involved including the same information but revising the order that it has been presented in. The ToR and CoP as annexed to this paper is based on the one that is Annexed to the COT/C/M Annual Report. Some of the information is also included on the COT website, sometimes in a more detailed form. Not all the information in this document is covered on the COC and COM websites.

2. However, the COT is different to the other FSA SACs in that it is one of three sister Committees along with COC and COM which are jointly sponsored by the FSA and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and therefore any changes will also need to be acceptable to these committees. The Secretariat has contacted policy officials at DHSC, but no detailed comments were received by the suggested deadline.

3. The COC and COM will be considering this topic at their Autumn meetings and further changes may be needed following their discussions along with any changes arising from the restructuring of Public Health England (PHE).

4. A revised version of the ToR and CoP was discussed at the May COT meeting. A number of suggestions were made by Members and these have been reflected in the revised text attached at Annex A.

#### **Summary of changes made**

5. The changes made have been summarised below:

*P3*

It has been proposed that the COT come up with a single simple sentence explaining the purpose of the Committee to summarise their role and introduce their ToR. The

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order of the ToR has also been swapped. Are Members content with this change – or would they prefer to retain the current version.

The role of the COT is to assess and advise on the toxic risk to humans of substances which people may be exposed to in their everyday life.

The list of Government Departments has been shortened.

An explanation of consumer products has been provided. Are Members content with this?

An additional ToR has been included to cover the JEG and COT relationship. Are Members content with this?

*P4*

A paragraph on COT, COC and COM and FSA/DHSC co-sponsorship included. Are Members content with this?

*P5*

A section on the role of the Secretariat has been added. Is this in the right place? Is anything else needed on the Secretariat's role in drawing up the COT agenda?

*P6*

Does the bullet below need to be modified to ensure that the Committee's independence is clear?

- engage fully in collective consideration of the issues, taking account of the full range of relevant factors, including any guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency, DHSC, PHE or Health Ministers;

*P7*

A section has been added on the role of the lay Members. Does anything more specific need to be included?

A line has been added re Members' concerns if the Committee is not rigorous or thorough enough. Are Members content with this?

*P8*

Is the section on role of contractors enough?

The section on the role of Observers could be reduced to a short paragraph and the detail go on the website. Do Members have any views on this?

*P9*

The section on interactions with the media has been revised as requested. Do Members have any additional comments?

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*P10*

Additional information on declaring 5 years interests has been included.

Does the information on interests need to be annexed or would Members prefer it to remain in the main text?

*P13*

Withdrawal from meetings- is this still needed?

*P14*

The previous COT CoP did not have a section on meetings. This has been taken from the Science Council model CoP- are Members content to include it, if so, does it need adapting?

*P15*

The Committee has not previously specified a quorum – is it needed, and, if so, are Members content with this proposal?

*P16*

Do Members want to declare the amount of the fees here - or leave on the FSA SAC website where a lot of overarching information is being placed?

*P19 and 20*

Annex 1 Seven Principles of public life and Annex 2 – Detailed guidance on interests.

The information in both Annexes will be available on the FSA website. Do these still need to be included? Members want to keep or discard as on website

### **Questions for the Committee:**

Are Members content with the changes made?

Subject to any comments received from DHSC, can this be cleared by Chairs action?

Secretariat

August 2020