

Background to the project

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Consumers and civil society are increasingly concerned about a range of factors beyond safety when making food choices. The Food Standards Act (1999) makes provision for the Food Standards Agency (FSA), in exercising its powers, to take into consideration several factors not directly related to food safety. Such considerations, when applicable, are secondary to the goal that “people can trust that the food they buy and eat is safe and what it says it is”.

The scope of this project encompassed broader risks and benefits as well as the term **“other legitimate factors”** used in international trade and regulatory language (for background reading, see Annex 1). It included consideration of broad consequences, positive and negative, intentional and unintentional, associated with regulated and unregulated food products. The Working Group was asked to examine the evidence base for these wider impact considerations and to recommend principles for application in risk management and policymaking. Advice on the selection of specific risk management or policy options is not included. The special case of wider impacts in the context of food crisis management was not discussed. The terms of reference of the project specifically excluded discussion of the regulatory framework for food safety evaluation and risk assessment. Such considerations are currently evaluated by FSA and are not considered to be **“wider impacts”**. There may be safety and risk considerations in a broader context, however (e.g., diet and/or environment). The scope of the project also excluded the risk assessment process and

methodology, policy, and food law.