

European Scientific Advice Mechanism
Scientific advice on the topic:
Towards an EU Sustainable Food System

Call for Nominations

The European Scientific Advice Mechanism ([SAM](#)) provides independent and transparent scientific advice to the European Commission, working with a European Commission Group of Chief Scientific Advisors ([GCSA](#)) and the European Academies ([SAPEA](#)).

SAPEA (Science Advice for Policy by European Academies) comprises the five European Academy Networks: [Academia Europaea](#), [ALLEA](#), [EASAC](#), [Euro-CASE](#) and [FEAM](#) – representing over 100 Academies in over 40 European countries, and spanning the disciplines of engineering, humanities, science and social sciences. The SAPEA project runs over four years and is funded through a grant from the EU's Horizon 2020 programme (see Annex 1).

SAPEA offers the opportunity to raise the profile of your Academy's work and expertise on a European level, and we ask as a first step for the contribution and support of your Academy by:

- **Nominating Academy Fellows or external experts for a Working Group**, in accordance with the expertise indicated below;
- **Nominating Academy Fellows or external experts for the peer-review process;**
- **Suggesting a Science Writer** able to assist in conveying the complex scientific evidence in an accessible way (s/he will be remunerated);
- **Submitting Academy reports** or other published material that is relevant to the topic and could be used as evidence.

The GCSA have identified the development of 'An EU sustainable food system' as a high priority topic and intend to produce a Scientific Opinion on the topic by March 2020. They believe that a new and holistic systems approach to food is essential for the future well-being of people, the environment and the future security of food supply in a changing world.

They note that there is already an established, large body of high-quality scientific reports and evidence-based policy relevant recommendations on this topic, ranging from local community schemes to global initiatives. However, there seems to be a 'social sciences deficit' in these reports, with gaps remaining in scientific advice on 'how' best to ensure the transformation to a sustainable food system can occur in a 'just' (fair) manner and at the pace that is required.

Consequently, the main question to be answered by the Scientific Advice Mechanism is:

From a scientific point-of-view, what are workable paths to deliver an inclusive, 'just' and timely transition to an EU sustainable food system, where possible delivering 'co-benefits' for health, the environment, and socio-economic aspects?

The GCSA note that the social sciences' perspectives are critically underrepresented in the general debate on sustainable food systems. To address this gap, evidence should predominantly come from the **social sciences**, including political sciences. The analysis should consider three different levels:

- i. EU and Global (intended to be treated mainly through a major literature study of established literature)
- ii. Member state level, and
- iii. Communities/Businesses/Regions/Cities and Rural Areas (the latter two might benefit in particular from analysis of factors for success derived from case studies of existing successful schemes).

Given the request that **evidence should predominantly come from the social sciences**, with a particular focus on strategies and capabilities of organisations ranging from EU policies to social enterprises, the following areas of expertise on the topic of sustainable food systems are sought (not exhaustive):

- Public policy
- Political and policy sciences and political economy
- History
- Behavioural science and behavioural economy
- Sustainable transition studies
- Socio-economics
- Consumer sciences
- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Anthropology
- Geography
- Sociology
- Expertise in food systems

Please note that some experts from the **natural sciences** with broad and overlapping expertise in this area are also sought, to ensure a constructive and inclusive interdisciplinary dialogue.

For more detailed information, please refer to the attached draft Specification of Work. The draft Scoping Paper with the request to the GCSA, primarily aimed at policy-makers, is also attached for background information. Kindly note that the College of Commissioners have not yet formally approved the Scoping Paper, so please treat it confidentially and do not circulate it in public domain.

SAPEA will produce the Evidence Review Report (ERR) that informs the Scientific Opinion. For more detailed information, please refer to the attached draft Project Plan.

To address the topic, SAPEA will set up an international and interdisciplinary working group. The experts will provide their input via physical and virtual meetings and are requested to produce a **first draft of an ERR by the end of August 2019 and the final draft by January 2020**. For more details about expected tasks and responsibilities, please refer to Annex 2.

The organisational lead network for the topic is ALLEA (the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities), with Academia Europaea acting as collaborating network and also working closely with EASAC, Euro-CASE and FEAM, the other European Academy Networks in SAPEA.

Please address your response to Céline Tschirhart (celine.tschirhart@sapea.info) by the deadline of **Wednesday 03 April 2019**.

Nominations of experts should be accompanied by a short curriculum vitae (please not more than 2 pages), together with a short explanation on how the nominee's experience meets the areas of expertise needed. We would be very grateful if you could inform us whether you have checked your experts' availability before nominating them.

Reasonable travel costs will be reimbursed by SAPEA for attendance at physical working group meetings.

Further details are provided in the annexes to this letter, including terms and conditions on the selection of candidates. A SAPEA Selection Committee will be responsible for the composition of the Working Group (criteria detailed in Annex 3). Links to other useful documents are provided in Annex 4.

Please contact Céline Tschirhart (celine.tschirhart@sapea.info) if you have questions or would like further information.

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



Professor Sierd Cloetingh
Chair of the SAPEA Board
President of Academia Europaea



Professor Antonio Loprieno
President of ALLEA

Annex 1

SAPEA: Science Advice for Policy by European Academies

- Spanning the disciplines of engineering, humanities, medicine, science and social sciences, SAPEA brings together the outstanding knowledge and expertise of Fellows from over 100 Academies, Young Academies and Learned Societies in more than 40 countries across Europe.
- SAPEA is part of the [European Scientific Advice Mechanism](#) (SAM) which provides independent, interdisciplinary and evidence-based scientific advice on policy issues to the European Commission, working closely with the [European Commission Group of Chief Scientific Advisors](#).
- The project is funded through a grant from the EU's Horizon 2020 programme
- Academies' independence, academic expertise and convening power make them a critical source of evidence for policymakers and the wider public, providing an unbiased, balanced and transparent perspective. Academies within SAPEA are members of one or more of the European Academy Networks: [Academia Europaea](#), [ALLEA](#), [EASAC](#), [Euro-CASE](#) and [FEAM](#).
- SAPEA provides a means for closer collaboration between Academies, combining Fellows' expertise in engineering, human, medical, natural, social and technical sciences in a unique way.

All Member Academies across Europe are part of SAPEA and are encouraged to participate actively. Opportunities for involvement include nominating Fellows to SAPEA working groups, hosting working group meetings, hosting outreach events and helping SAPEA to communicate the achievements of the project.

The SAPEA Evidence Review Reports inform the Scientific Opinions produced by the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. The Scientific Opinions contain concrete policy recommendations and address primarily policymakers, who make use of scientific advice across the European Commission, but both documents will also be relevant for other stakeholders and interested public.

Annex 2

Expected workload, support and timeline

Members of the Working Group are expected to:

- Meet around three times between May and September 2019;
- Consider the results of a structured literature review with analysis and synthesis, as well as additional structured searches of the published literature on the topic;
- Draft the Evidence Review Report and review/advise on the editorial work undertaken by SAPEA staff, with the first draft of the Evidence Review Report delivered by end-August 2019;
- Write up evidence-based conclusions, presented in a balanced and non-biased way, as well as evidence-based options for policy;
- Respond to the comments of the Evidence Review Report made by external experts at an expert workshop;
- Respond to the comments made by the peer reviewers of the Evidence Review Report;
- Be involved in stakeholder and public engagement work (such as meetings, conferences, events), as appropriate and upon request, following delivery of the report.

In support, **SAPEA staff will:**

- Administratively manage the project, establish the working group and organise the physical meetings and telephone conferences;
- Administratively coordinate the structured literature review that will be undertaken for level i, its synthesis, analysis and summary for the WG;
- Administratively coordinate the structured literature search that will inform the WG's work on level ii and iii;
- Undertake editorial work on drafts of the Evidence Review Report, in liaison with the Chairs, working group and steering group;
- 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 March 2020;

An indicative timeline is as follows:

2019	Task
<i>April</i>	Final formation of WG and first WG preparatory telco
<i>May</i>	First WG meeting
<i>June</i>	<i>Drafting phase</i>
<i>July</i>	WG meeting 2
<i>August</i>	<i>Drafting phase – Production of first draft report</i>
<i>September</i>	WG meeting 3
<i>October</i>	<i>Drafting phase – Production of second draft report</i>
<i>November</i>	Expert workshop
<i>December</i>	<i>Production of final draft report</i> ERR sent to peer-review
2020	
<i>January</i>	Peer-review comments addressed by WG Compilation of final ERR
<i>February</i>	ERR endorsement by SAPEA Board
<i>March</i>	Final designed ERR handed over to EC GCSA Scientific Opinion and SAPEA Evidence Review Report published

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
- Broad geographical coverage of Europe
- Inclusion of experts from non-European countries, as appropriate
- 50% female members, with a 20% minimum for either gender
- 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.

SAPEA Working Group members will need to fill in a Declaration of Interests form. Further information about SAPEA Quality Assurance Procedures can be found here: <https://www.sapea.info/wp-content/uploads/SAPEA-guidelines-update-sep-2018.pdf>.

Annex 4

Useful background documents

As an example of the transition that may be sought, please refer to:

- the attached content-final draft: „*A scoping review of major works relevant to scientific advice towards an EU sustainable food system*”, produced by the SAM Unit,
- the FOOD2030 report, which approaches the topic more from a policy angle: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d0c725de-6f7c-11e8-9483-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>,
- the Reflection Paper on sustainable Europe, which clarifies the political ambition: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-701_en.htm), and
- The Opinion by the European Economic and Social Committee, which emphasizes that the “policy challenge is how to engender the necessary change” to a sustainable food system (<https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/civil-societys-contribution-development-comprehensive-food-policy-eu>)