National Reference Laboratory for GMOs in Food and Feed
Annual workplan 2021 - 2022

The tasks and objectives for the National Reference Laboratory (NRL) for GMOs in Food and Feed are as follows:

NRL Core function

Objective 1. Secretariat services

(a) Disseminating relevant information/advice to the CA, when required, OLs and other relevant laboratories in a timely and effective manner;

(b) Co-ordinating the activities of OLs and other relevant laboratories in food and feed below;

(c) Creating and maintaining an efficient two-way channel of communication with OLs and relevant laboratories and international organisations, including information on analytical methods and relevant legislation;

(d) Providing regular updates to the CA on NRL activities, and up-to-date information on UK OLs and other relevant laboratories to the CA as requested;

(e) Creation and maintenance of a dedicated website for communication of the work of the NRL including provision of advice and support to OLs, information on methods of analyses, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), latest developments and other background information.

Objective 2. Advice and representation within the UK and internationally

(a) Provide details of analytical methods including reference methods to OLs and co-ordinate application of these methods through proficiency testing (see Objective 4.c);

(b) Provide impartial expert advice as requested to the CA, OLs and other relevant laboratories on analytical methodology in the context of official controls and risk assessment;

(c) Represent the UK at relevant international meetings, networks and working groups, consulting the CA on objectives and requirements before each meeting and providing the CA with an internal report of the meeting within 10 working days of each meeting;

(d) Participate in activities organised by international organisations and contributing to the scientific input at international meetings and in manner which supports UK policy based on best available scientific knowledge;

(e) Provide advice to the CA, OLs and other relevant laboratories on best scientific practice in testing for official controls and undertaking activities in consultation with the CA that facilitate and promote their application in the UK within the policy aims of the CA;

(f) Keep abreast of and advise the CA, OLs and other relevant laboratories of research and development for the sampling, testing and detection of GMOs;

(g) Identify and inform the CA, OLs and other relevant laboratories of emerging analytical issues or developments at a national or international level and recommending action to address them;

(h) Provide technical assistance to the CA in cases of contested results of analyses

(i) Where appropriate, partake and/or keep abreast of standardisation activities (e.g. CEN, ISO, etc.) relevant to the work area.

Objective 3. Production of standard operating procedures, codes of practice, guidance documents and databases

(a) Contribute to the development of standardised operating procedures, relevant codes of practice and guidance documents for use by OLs and other relevant laboratories, as requested by the CA.

(b) Where required, develop a database to store relevant information in relation to GMO official control testing, e.g. GMO methods, SOPs, codes and guidance

Objective 4. Compliance assessment via audits, ring trials and provision of reference materials

(a) Ensure consistency and quality of testing approaches applied by UK OLs and other relevant laboratories, including advising on corrective action following adverse reports on OLs from UKAS;

(b) Source and provide suitable reference materials and testing kits to OLs;

(c) Plan and coordinate proficiency tests for UK OLs and other relevant laboratories as appropriate (taking into account the number of relevant laboratories), analysing and evaluating the outcome, informing the CA and OLs of the results and advising on further action;

(d) Co-ordinate the participation of UK OLs and other relevant laboratories in international method validation studies and other initiatives, informing the CA and OLs of the results and advising on further action;

(e) Where relevant, participate in proficiency tests and method validation studies organised by international organisations, informing the CA of the results and implementing any corrective measures required;

(f) Co-ordinate training exercises for OLs and other relevant laboratories to promote best laboratory practice in respect of GMO analysis.

(g) Provide OLs with advanced notification of proficiency testing rounds to enable OLs to implement such activities in a timely manner

Objective 5. Co-ordination within the UK of international initiatives

(a) Where appropriate, co-ordinate the recommendations of international organisations related to the standardisation of testing methods.

Objective 6. Liaison and support work on GMO food/feed authorisation

(a) Liaise with the FSA appointed laboratory on GMO food/feed authorisation process and applications

(b) Where necessary, provide support/advice to the FSA appointed laboratory for GMO authorisation on the validation of methods of analyses, reference materials

Objective 7. Communication of results and data use

(a) The Contractor shall ensure that the CA receives regular updates of any developments related to the core functions of the NRL;

(b) The Contractor shall notify the CA immediately by email of any deviations or significant unexpected situations which may affect the cost, specifications and timing of the annual work programme;

(c) The Contractor shall notify the CA immediately by email of any unusual occurrences resulting from any of the core functions of the NRL;

(d) The Contractor shall provide annual reports of work summarising all activities completed as part of their annual work programme, to the CA by 31st March each year. Annual reports will be approved by the CA prior to publication by NRLs on NRL dedicated websites. If requested by the CA, the Contractor may also need to provide interim reports during the annual work programme;

(e) Any results or reports arising from the work of the NRL will not be communicated to any external parties without the written permission of the CA;

(f) The use of the data for presentations and/or papers will not be permitted unless written permission has been sought and given by the CA;

(g) the Contractor will maintain records. Retention periods will be agreed and defined in the contract and if necessary the contractor will assist with transfer of archived reference material;

(h) In other work related to the core functions of the NRL, the specified deadlines agreed between the CA and the Contractor should be met;

(i) If necessary, at the end of the Contract all information and data gained from, and required for, NRL function over the course of the Contract will be handed over to the CA. This will include assisting with transfer of archived reference materials;

(j) Provide an internal report of meetings with other organisations within 10 working days of the meeting.

(k) The Contractor will engage in quarterly dialogues with the CA to review contract management requirements and update on progress against work

programme. Informal monthly check-ins with the CA may also be organised to ensure any potential or evolving issues are flagged and work is kept on track;

(l) The Contractor will organise regular network meetings, as appropriate and on at least an annual basis to update their official controls networks and CA on method updates, enforcement, training and other relevant information issues and to discuss PT programmes and results;

(m) The Contractor will review NRL finances regularly and communicate spending, including a break-down of costs, with the CA on a monthly basis.

Proposed Workplan for 2021 – 2022 for the NRL for GMOs in food and feed

NRL Core function

- Communicate with Official Laboratories (OLs) including informing them of LGC's new contract for the GMO NRL role and the associated tasks and objectives.

- Regular updates (monthly activity logs and quarterly updates) to the Competent Authority (CA).

- As required, respond to any requests for advice, guidance, assistance with specific methods of analysis and emerging issues, from the CA and OLs.

- Participate in relevant meeting and working groups (for example European/International working groups on DNA extraction, DNA sequencing, GMM and method performance requirements), including contribution to the development of standardised methods where relevant.

- Carry out horizon scanning activities with regards to emerging issues relating to GMOs. Dissemination of findings at the quarterly updates, via e-mail, direct communication with the OLs or the NRL webpages as appropriate.

- Participate in relevant proficiency tests (for example FAPAS/GeMMA round U97), informing OLs of any relevant national and international PTs and validation studies the NRL becomes aware of.

- Development and improvement of the NRL webpage on LGC's website.

- In conjunction with the NRL for Feed Additives, hold a virtual meeting with OLs to disseminate relevant information, assess training needs and discuss issues.

- Preparation and publication of an annual report summarising the activities carried out throughput the year.

- Review of the format of all reports, etc. to ensure they meet accessibility requirements.

The following table gives indicative dates for specific tasks.

Core function	Objective	Brief Description	Month 1 Aug	2 Sep	3 Oct	4 Nov	5 Dec	6 Jan	7 Feb	8 Mar
1		**Secretariat services**								
	1a	Dissemination								
	1.b	Co-ordination activities								
	1.c	OL communication								
	1.d	Information updates								
	1.e	Update GMO NRL Webpages								
2		**Advice and Representation**								
	2.a	Reference methods								
	2.b	Provision of advice								
	2.c	International meetings								
	2.d	International activities								
	2.e	Covered by Core function 1								
	2.f	Covered by Objective 1.d								
	2.g	Covered by Objective 1.d								
	2.h	Technical assistance								
	2.i	Standardisation activities								
3		**Provision of guidance**								
	3.a	Guidance/SOPs								
	3.b	Database								
4		**Compliance assessment**								
	4.a	Monitor quality								
	4.b	Reference material advice								
	4.c	Coordinate PT inclusion								
	4.d	Coordinate method validation participation								
	4.e	PT participation								
	4.f	Training exercises								
	4.g	PT horizon scanning								
5		**International initiatives**								
	5.a	International guidance								
6		**GMO authorisation support**								
	6.a	Liaise with GMO authorisation lab								
	6.b	Advice and support to GMO authorisation lab								
7		**Communication of results**								

	7.a	Regular updates								
	7.b-7.c	Function updates								
	7.d	Annual report								
	7.e-7.j	Function updates								
	7.k	Quarterly meetings								
	7.l	OL Network meetings								
	7.m	Financial updates								