



# REQUEST FOR TENDERS

**For the provision of a database of  
food testing laboratory services  
currently available on the island of  
Ireland**

**safefood**  
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## **Contents**

1. Introduction	3
2. Background	4
3. Details of requirements	6
4. Evaluation of Tenders	7
4.1 Qualification Criteria	7
4.2 Award Criteria	7
5. Information Required	8
6. Conditions of Tender	9

## **1. Introduction**

**safefood** was established in 1999 under the British-Irish Agreement Act (1999) and is one of the six North-South Implementation Bodies jointly managed by the British and Irish Governments.

The remit of **safefood** is to promote awareness of food safety and healthy eating issues on an all-island basis, which includes the commissioning and funding of relevant research, the development of monitoring and surveillance procedures, the coordination of scientific cooperation including identifying and establishing laboratory linkages, public education and awareness campaigns, and the publication of independent reports of interest to consumers and other key stakeholders.

An Advisory Board and an Advisory Committee with prominent members drawn from both Northern Ireland and Ireland supports the Chief Executive Officer. The Headquarters are located at 7 Eastgate Avenue, Eastgate, Little Island, Co. Cork, with an additional office in the Irish Life Centre, Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin. For more information on **safefood**, please see our web site at [www.safefood.net](http://www.safefood.net).

## **2. Background**

On the island of Ireland there are many laboratories involved in food testing including, monitoring, surveillance, analysis and research. Some operate directly or are under the aegis of government departments, others are managed by local authorities, some by health boards, others are privately owned or within institutes of higher education, and other laboratory establishments are funded or run by various national agencies.

Scientific partnerships and collaborations between **safefood**, laboratories and other agencies provide the links and networks that are necessary to build a co-ordinated and cohesive framework for enhanced food safety actions.

**safefood** aims to increase co-ordination and interaction between food testing laboratories on the island by:

- Developing a strategy for co-operation and linkages between laboratories
- Developing a reporting system for rapid access to laboratory results
- Sharing knowledge and experience on methodologies of testing and surveillance
- Setting priorities for laboratory network development
- Advising on developing linkages and on the means to be employed
- Establishing and promoting appropriate information technology solutions
- Monitoring effectiveness of the linked laboratories system, including advising on its continuing development.

**safefood** has set up a number of support programmes that encourage and initiate inter-laboratory co-operation. In particular such partnerships encourage information and technology transfer. Some of the initiatives launched include:

- Supporting accreditation through events such as workshops designed specifically for laboratory staff who wish to understand present and future requirements of accreditation
- Establish co-operative programmes and initiatives such as the Food Safety Skills Fund which allows laboratory personnel to participate in exchange visits

or training at other food safety laboratories, research establishments and centres of excellence

- Providing training to support previous **safefood**–funded Laboratory Information Management System infrastructures in both Northern Ireland and Ireland to facilitate rapid electronic reporting of food testing results and contribute to a speed response to food outbreak management
- Incorporate laboratory activities within **safefood**'s food safety publications.

The database giving a detailed account of food testing laboratory services available on the island of Ireland will be useful to either those who already use some of these services (e.g., food businesses), to individual laboratories who may wish to avail of the specialised analyses provided by other laboratories, and to organisations or individuals who may have need of some of the analyses offered.

The database will be available in the laboratory section of the **safefood** website [www.safefood.net](http://www.safefood.net) accompanied by a search facility.

### **3. Details of requirements**

- a) The tenderer must provide details of their knowledge of the food testing laboratory services on the island of Ireland.
- b) The tenderer must produce a detailed plan (including timelines) of how they will provide the following service: A database of all food testing laboratory services currently available on the island of Ireland. This will include the following definitive tasks:
  1. Collating a list of all food testing laboratories on the island of Ireland (including Official & Official Agency Laboratories including Public Health Laboratories, Public Analyst's Laboratories, Agriculture Laboratories, Local Authority Laboratories, Marine laboratories, Non-Departmental Public Body/State Agency Laboratories, Government Authorised/ Approved Private Laboratories).
  2. Preparing a comprehensive laboratory questionnaire to gain an overview of each laboratory's food testing activities with an emphasis on the type and extent of the routine and specialised food testing carried out including chemical, microbiological and molecular analysis.

This questionnaire must include essential information, examples of which are listed in Annex 1. However, tenderers should also include additional data/information they deem to be relevant.

3. Circulating the questionnaire to the collated list of food testing laboratories on the island of Ireland on behalf of **safefood** using appropriate online survey software. To ensure a 100% response rate, the successful tenderer will need to engage with each laboratory in advance of disseminating the questionnaire.
4. The survey data must be quality controlled and compiled in the specific Microsoft Excel format provided by **safefood** for this purpose.

5. Present the survey outputs and the completed Microsoft Excel database to **safefood**.

## **4. Evaluation of Tenders**

### **4.1 Qualification Criteria**

Tenderers will be initially evaluated by reference to the following qualification criteria:

- a) Addressing in full the Requirements set out in this document with an outline of the proposed approach/methodology.
- b) A statement of the tenderer's previous experience in data gathering and collation, the use of online survey software for data gathering, and data preparation.
- c) Inclusion of all information required.

Only those proposals, which satisfy the qualifying criteria will be eligible for further evaluation.

### **4.2 Award Criteria**

The contract will be awarded from the qualifying tenders on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender by applying the following award criteria:

- a) Comprehensive understanding of **safefood**'s requirements in relation to the provision of Requirements. (20%)
- b) Proposed approach / methodology. (30%)
- c) Skills, expertise and experience of key assigned personnel in providing the type of service required in this tender. (20%)
- d) Overall cost of the proposal on offer. (30%)

Award of contract may be subject to a successful presentation and clarification meeting. It is essential that the key personnel assigned to this contract should be available and present at this meeting and it is anticipated that this meeting will be held during the week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

## **5. Information Required**

All tenders must include the following:

- a) Full name of business/institution and contact details including business name and telephone number, full address, telephone number, web site address (where available) and contact person dealing with this request (including contact details);
- b) Full details of staffing levels (full-time and/or part-time) proposed to deliver the tender requirements;
- c) Name and details of relevant prior experience of the designated individual with overall responsibility for delivery of the tender requirements;
- d) The name and contacts details (including contact names) of two previous clients for whom similar work has been carried out;
- e) A full cost breakdown of the different elements of the proposal. Costs may be submitted in Euro or Sterling, and any VAT applicable should be separately stated. The daily rate and the number of indicative days required to carry out this work must also be stated.



## **6. Conditions of Tender**

- a) **safefood** requires that all information provided pursuant to this invitation to tender be treated in strict confidence by tenderers;
- b) Information supplied by tenderers will be treated as contractually binding. However, **safefood** reserves the right to seek clarification or verification of any such information;
- c) Before any tender is awarded, the successful tenderer will be required to provide a valid Tax Clearance Certificate from the Revenue Commissioners;
- d) **safefood** will not be liable in respect of any costs incurred by tenderers in the preparation of proposals or any associated work effort;
- e) Any conflict or potential conflict of interest must be fully disclosed;
- f) Applicants may be required to attend a presentation / clarification meeting and this is provisionally scheduled to be held during the week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022.
- g) Tenders delivered late will not be considered. In addition, incomplete tenders may be rejected;
- h) Tenderers are advised that any responses supplied in respect of further information requested will be distributed to all other parties who have participated in this Request for Tender;
- i) The decision of **safefood** will be final;
- j) The tender should be emailed to [mmccann@safefood.net](mailto:mmccann@safefood.net) on or before 4pm on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.
- k) Any queries should only be emailed to [mmccann@safefood.net](mailto:mmccann@safefood.net), The etenders message box will not be monitored.

## Annex 1

### Examples of the essential information required from the survey of food testing laboratories on the island of Ireland.

- Name of Laboratory
- Address of Laboratory
- Contact Person Title
- Contact Person First Name
- Contact Person Surname
- Contact Person Position
- Laboratory Telephone Number
- Contact Person Email
- Website
- Number of Staff
- Geographical Area Serviced
- Primary Function
- Food Safety Work Carried Out
- ISO17025 Accredited
- Accredited by
- Instrumentation Specialisation Details
- Parameter Specialisation Details

Tests carried out for the sample types below:-

1. Dairy products, including cheese, cream liqueur, powdered dairy products
2. Egg & egg products, including egg mayonnaise, prepared egg dishes
3. Meat & meat products, including game, offal, white & black puddings
4. Fish, shellfish, and molluscs
5. Fats & oils, including lard, olive oil, non-dairy spread
6. Soups, broths & sauces, including mayonnaise, apple sauce, salad cream
7. Cereal & bakery products, including pasta, rice, cornflakes
8. Fruit and vegetables
9. Herbs & spices
10. Non-alcoholic beverages, including bottled water, soya milk-based drinks
11. Wine, including fortified, non-fortified
12. Alcoholic beverages (other than wine)
13. Ices & desserts, including sorbets, shop bought dessert mixes
14. Cocoa & cocoa preparations, coffee & tea, including herbal fruit teas
15. Confectionary, including chocolate
16. Nuts & nut products, snacks, including peanut butter, crisps
17. Prepared dishes, including baby food, all vegetable & cereal based dishes
18. Special nutritional uses, including diabetic foodstuffs, gluten free products, infant formulas
19. Additives including antioxidants, emulsifiers, stabilisers, thickeners
20. Foodstuff Contact Materials, including aluminium foil, cling film, cardboard, paper, plastics, etc
21. Others, including water used as an ingredient
22. Water, including treated, untreated, rainwater, saltwater
23. Environmental, including factory hygiene, hygiene swabs, contact plates, effluent, air
24. All food stuffs, other
25. Biological/clinical (blood, serum, others)
26. Blood, serum and milk