

REQUEST FOR TENDERS

For the delivery of Food Safety Training Workshops to Small Food Businesses and the Community & Voluntary sector on the Island of Ireland

Safefood

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Eastgate,
Little Island,
Co. Cork,
T45 RX01

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. Safefood's functions are carried out by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) under the policy direction of the North-South Ministerial Council. An Advisory Board with members drawn from both jurisdictions, and an Advisory Committee, assist and advise the CEO in the discharge of these functions. One of these functions is the promotion of good food safety practices and awareness across the entire food chain from producers and processors to retailers and the final consumer. Achieving and maintaining the highest food safety standards is essential for ensuring consumer confidence in the food supply chain and protecting public health. This also augments the resilience of the agri-food industry on the island of Ireland.

Safefood headquarters are located at 7 Eastgate Avenue, Eastgate, Little Island, Co. Cork, with an additional in the Irish Life Centre, Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin.

2. Background

The [Knowledge Network](#) programme was developed by Safefood to support those working in food safety across the island of Ireland with a particular focus on small food businesses. These businesses often do not have the skills and expertise to adapt and implement their legal food safety obligations and may find accessing appropriate expertise difficult in this regard. Many food business owners and managers are limited in terms of time and resources.

The Community & Voluntary sector on the island of Ireland is large and diverse and encompasses everything from sports clubs to church halls. Those working in the sector, either in a paid or volunteer capacity, are now highly likely to be providing food to the public or members in some form. They may be either complete unaware of their food safety obligations in this regard or not have the skills and knowledge to know what to do.

Safefood continues to engage with small food businesses and the Community & Voluntary sector. To date, the services we offer under the auspices of the Knowledge Network include workshops, webinars, training courses, and online and printed resources. A key element of this work has been training workshops in basic food safety that have been held across the island of Ireland in recent years. These workshops have covered topics such as food microbiology, food allergens, cleaning and sanitisation, food labelling, and HACCP.

As part of its 2026 Business Plan, Safefood will deliver a series of in-person (not online) workshops. The audience for these workshops will be small food businesses and people working in the Community & Voluntary sector. Safefood is seeking tender submissions from food safety trainers to provide this service. Based on previous experience, it is envisaged that the audience for these workshops will be diverse, with delegates from catering/food service, food production/processing and other structures for selling/providing food.

3. Requirements

3.1 Number of workshops

Safefood is seeking tender submissions from experienced food safety trainers to deliver food safety workshops to small food businesses. An abridged content will be used at workshops aimed at Community & Voluntary personnel. One successful tender applicant will be appointed to deliver the workshops for the calendar year 2026. Following a successful evaluation of the 2026 workshop programme, Safefood may exercise the option to extend the contract to deliver a similar programme of workshops in 2027 and maybe again in 2028.

During 2026, at least twelve food safety workshops will be delivered to small food businesses throughout the island of Ireland (Table 1). Eight of these will be held in Ireland and will be organised and delivered in association with National Environmental Health Service of the Health Services Executive. Two workshops for small food businesses will be delivered in Northern Ireland in association with the District and Borough Councils. In addition, two food safety workshops will be delivered to the Community & Voluntary sector in Northern Ireland, also in association with the District and Borough Councils.

Table 1: 2026 food safety workshop programme

Jurisdiction	Audience	Location	Date & venue
Ireland	Small Food Businesses	Dublin	TBC
Ireland	Small Food Businesses	Dublin	TBC
Ireland	Small Food Businesses	Cork	TBC
Ireland	Small Food Businesses	Cork	TBC
Ireland	Small Food Businesses	Limerick	TBC
Ireland	Small Food Businesses	Waterford	TBC
Ireland	Small Food Businesses	Galway	TBC
Ireland	Small Food Businesses	Sligo	TBC
Northern Ireland	Small Food Businesses	Derry	TBC
Northern Ireland	Small Food Businesses	Belfast	TBC
Northern Ireland	Community & Voluntary	Omagh	TBC
Northern Ireland	Community & Voluntary	Derry	TBC

NOTE: If the opportunity to provide further workshops for Small Food Businesses or Community & Voluntary personnel arises in either Northern Ireland or Ireland during the 2026 workshop programme, and once the final cost for the extra workshops does not exceed 50% of the total value of the contract for 2026, the successful tender applicant will deliver these within the calendar year 2026 and in the specified format. The dates for the workshops listed in Table 1, and any extra workshops, will be agreed with Safefood.

3.2 Workshop content and format

- A. Each small food business workshop will cover the following topics:
 - 1. Managing and labelling food allergens
 - 2. Cleaning and sanitation
 - 3. Controlling food poisoning bacteria
 - 4. Pest control
 - 5. HACCP
- B. Each topic will be allocated 40-45 minutes (inclusive of Q&A). (The Community & Voluntary workshops will include topics 1 to 4).
- C. The tone, energy and pitch must be appropriate for a non-technical audience.
- D. For the small food business workshops, it is envisaged that there will be three topics delivered before lunch and the remaining two topics immediately after lunch. The exact timings will be agreed with the successful tender applicant and any third-party stakeholders assisting in the organisation of the workshops. The Community & Voluntary workshops will be held in the evening, with the exact timings to be agreed with the successful tender applicant and third-party stakeholders.
- E. Training sessions must be engaging and designed for those working with food who a) do not have a background in food safety, b) may be completely unaware of the food safety obligations for their particular working or volunteering circumstances, and c) have little technical knowledge.
- F. It is essential that interactive elements are factored into each topic delivery to prevent delegate fatigue.
- G. The use of case studies and real-life scenarios is highly desirable.
- H. Trainers will encourage questions and comments from the delegates who will be given the opportunity to share their experiences so as to facilitate peer-to-peer learning.
- I. It is essential that the workshops take into account local variations in food safety legislation and are tailored for the delegates from the jurisdiction where they are being delivered, for example practical advice on pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS) foods is important and relevant only in Northern Ireland.

Note: Safefood will be responsible for organising the venues and the promotion and marketing of the workshops, as well as securing partnerships to maximise participation in the workshops. Safefood will be anxious to group the timings of the workshops together, inasmuch as this will be possible, to avoid excess travel costs.

3.3 Trainer requirements

- A. Prospective trainers must have at least 10 years' experience in providing food safety training and auditing services (including HACCP and record keeping) to small food businesses in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Trainers must also have previous experience of delivering food safety training to the Community & Voluntary sector personnel.
- B. Prospective trainers must have an excellent understanding of small food businesses, their food safety training needs and the specific challenges they face, especially those in smaller business (<10 employees). Trainers should also have an understanding of the food safety training needs of personnel in the Community & Voluntary sector.
- C. The tone, energy and pitch of all presentations must be appropriate for a non-technical audience (course contents will be discussed and agreed with Safefood in advance of the workshop programme).
- D. Prospective trainers must be familiar with food business infrastructure and trade conditions.
- E. Prospective trainers must have excellent communication and presentation skills.
- F. Prospective trainers will provide testimonials or references from at least two small food businesses where they have provided food safety training.

Note: Safefood will be responsible for all aspects of arranging venues, catering, delegate registration and communication.

4. Information required

All tender applications 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) A proposal for the workshop content and format outlined in section 3.2
- c) The prospective trainer's suitability as outlined in section 3.3
- d) References or testimonials from at least two small food businesses where training services have been provided.
- e) The full cost of the proposal including appropriate cost breakdown. Costs should indicate rates per day, including and excluding VAT, and should be submitted in Euro only. Costs must include:
 - i. The cost to deliver a single workshop (including any associated VAT).
 - ii. The cost to prepare any workshop content and/or materials.
 - iii. Other expenses associated with the delivery of the workshops.
- f) Environmental and social considerations: Safefood encourages tenderers to outline any practical and proportionate environmental or social measures that support the delivery of in-person food safety workshops. Examples may include:

- i. Organisational practices that seek to limit environmental impact, such as thoughtful travel planning or efficient scheduling of work.
- ii. Use of digital-first resources and communications, with printed materials used where appropriate.
- iii. Awareness of waste reduction and recycling in day-to-day operations and when working in external venues.
- iv. Training approaches that reflect the practical realities of small food businesses or Community & Voluntary personnel, including limited time, staffing and resources.

These examples are illustrative only. Tenderers must comply with relevant environmental, employment and equality legislation applicable in Ireland and/or Northern Ireland.

Note: Safefood will pay subsistence and appropriate mileage costs at no more than the prevailing civil service rates (to be agreed in advance of the contract). Safefood will reimburse the trainer for other expenses associated with travel to and from the training venue including car parking, tolls, etc. Safefood will arrange and pay for overnight accommodation for the trainer when necessary.

5. Evaluation of tenders

Safefood will ensure a confidential, fair, and equitable evaluation of tender applications.

5.1 Qualification Criteria

Tender applications will initially be evaluated with reference to the information required (Section 4). Only applications that address all of the elements in Section 4 will be considered for further evaluation.

5.2 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)	A comprehensive understanding of the workshops content and format requirements as outlined in Section 3.2 of this document.	40%
b)	The prospective trainer's suitability as outlined in Section 3.3 of this document.	25%
c)	References or testimonials from at least two small food businesses where training services have been provided.	5%
d)	The overall cost of the proposal as outlined in Section 4 of this document.	25%
e)	Proposals on the incorporation of environmentally sustainable and/or social considerations into the delivery of the service.	5%

Award of contract may be subject to a clarification meeting.

6. Conditions of tender

- a) Safefood requires that all information provided pursuant to this invitation to tender be treated in strict confidence by tender applicants.
- b) Information supplied by tender applicants 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 tender applicant 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 tender applicants in the preparation of proposals or any associated work effort.
- e) Any conflict or potential conflict of interest must be fully disclosed when submitting the tender application.
- f) Tender applications should be emailed to jmcintosh@safefood.net on or before 17.00 on Monday, 2nd of March 2026. No postal tender applications will be accepted.
- g) Any queries on this tender should be emailed to Dr James McIntosh at jmcintosh@safefood.net.
- h) Tender applicants may be required to attend a presentation / clarification meeting at our Cork office.
- i) Tender applications delivered late will not be considered. Incomplete applications will be rejected.

Safefood is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion throughout its work. Safefood is required to comply with Equality and Human Rights legislation in both Ireland and Northern Ireland with equality objectives and commitments mainstreamed into its main strategic and operational business plans. It is fully committed to fulfilling these obligations through a proactive approach to equality and human rights issues in all aspects of its work and by providing a working environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment.

Safefood is committed to meeting our environmental and sustainability obligations to combat climate change by driving down our energy and carbon impacts. We have implemented several initiatives across our offices as part of our Climate Action Plan to recycle, reduce waste, and minimise paper usage. Additionally, by embracing hybrid working arrangements and technology, we have reduced the environmental footprint of our office spaces and lessened the need for many of our employees to commute and travel.