



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

**For Professional Services to the
Safefood Knowledge Network Programme**

Safefood
7 Eastgate Avenue
Eastgate
Little Island
Co. Cork
T45 RX01

October 2025

Request for Expressions of Interest

1. Introduction

Safefood invites expressions of interest from food chain experts to provide professional services to the Safefood Knowledge Network Programme 2025-2028, in accordance with the requirements specified in Section 5. Successful applicants will form an Expert Working Group who will, together with the Safefood Food Safety Directorate, further develop the Safefood Knowledge Network of food safety professionals across the island of Ireland. Prospective applicants must complete the application requirements which must be received by Safefood by 4pm on Thursday 27th November 2025.

Safefood was established in 1999 under the British-Irish Agreement Act and is one of the six North-South Implementation Bodies jointly governed by the British and Irish Governments. The remit of Safefood is to promote awareness of food safety and healthy eating issues throughout the food chain on the island of

Island, which includes the commissioning and funding of relevant research, 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. Safefood 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.

2. The Knowledge Network Programme

Safefood is responsible for promoting food safety across the entire supply chain—from producers and processors to retailers and consumers. Maintaining high food safety standards is critical to protecting public health, sustaining confidence in the supply chain, and supporting the agri-food sector. To help achieve this, the Knowledge Network supports professionals working in food safety across the island of Ireland. It offers services for those in food production, processing, retail, and catering, as well as for regulators and those advancing food safety through research and education.

The Knowledge Network fosters collaboration and knowledge-sharing through events, briefings, workshops, newsletters, and digital resources including the Safefood website, videos, podcasts, and webinars. The current programme runs from June 2025 to June 2028 and is supported by an Expert Working Group on Food SMEs and Microbiology. This group will meet two to three times per year to set priorities and shape the programme of activities, with flexibility to respond quickly to emerging food safety issues.

All our activities will be organised in terms of the following audience priority:

- Food SMEs
- Lab Links Programme (food safety laboratories)
- Science Events in Partnership with other organisations

- EHOs
- Community groups

For more information on the Safefood Knowledge Network please visit safefood.net/knowledge-network

3. Objectives of the Knowledge Network Programme 2025 - 2028

The objectives for the Knowledge Network for the next three years are:

- To promote food safety by raising awareness and providing opportunities for learning and sharing best practice food safety knowledge amongst food chain actors across the IOI
- To monitor and utilise the KN programme as an accessible source of expertise for Safefood to explore existing concerns, monitor developments in food safety on the IOI and internationally, and to enhance our in-house evidence base
- To monitor and utilise the KN programme as a vehicle to raise awareness of Safefood activities and enhance its profile in the overall public health promotion field
- To further develop multi-disciplinary and cross-jurisdictional cooperation and working relationships between food safety professionals operating in food safety laboratories and across food production, regulation, academia and other public bodies-based sectors
- To explore further partnerships for delivering food safety information at community level especially in Northern Ireland and cross border. This will include an exploration of the 2025 Community Food Initiative (CFI) programme

4. Details of Requirements

The Expert Working Group will be led by a designated member of the Safefood Food Safety Directorate and will be supported by a Network Administrator. The Network Administrator will be responsible for Network event management & logistics, Network promotion, food safety information uploads onto the Safefood website, contributions to KN newsletters and also acting as secretariat to the Group.

A programme of activities based on priority food safety issues will be identified by the Expert Group, with the flexibility to address other food safety issues that may arise in the interim.

Safefood is seeking expressions of interest for professional services for up to six positions on the Expert Group.

4.1 Role specification for the Expert Groups

The professional services required of each Expert Group member will be:

1. To provide high level strategic and technical food safety advice and direction for the Knowledge Network. Members will be expected to be fully up to date the food safety

vulnerabilities and challenges relevant to their specific expertise.

2. To advise on new resources or services that the Network should include in its programme of activities.
3. To advise on appropriate research which Safefood should commission to address food safety issues.
4. To advise on the most appropriate target audiences, based on food safety need.
5. To actively participate in the development and promotion of the Knowledge Network and its associated activities.
6. To contribute to the output of the Knowledge Network, e.g. events, information papers, etc., over the lifetime of the Expert Group (administrative support will be provided by Safefood.)
7. To assist Safefood in increasing the multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral membership of the Knowledge Network on an all-island basis.
8. To participate fully in the work programme of the Expert Group as appropriate.
9. To assist in the publication of eNewsletters by advising on topics for inclusion and subjects for interviews.
10. To use their own professional networks (including international networks and collaborations, if relevant) to access expertise in specific areas identified by the Expert Group and Safefood for the benefit of the Knowledge Network programme of activities.
11. Prepare/develop/enhance Knowledge Network conferences and events. Specific inputs required include;
 - a. key guidance in regard to the types of conferences, events and training of most benefit in enhancing food safety behaviours;
 - b. direct involvement in developing event programmes and speaker selection;
 - c. chairing, presenting at, or attending various Knowledge Network events and/or training throughout the year, as appropriate.

12. Sustainability and Green Criteria:

To protect the environment and meet legal requirements, it is important that our services follow green criteria. Irish and EU laws, such as the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act and public sector procurement rules, require organisations to reduce carbon emissions, use resources wisely, and make sustainable choices.

By including these criteria, we help ensure our activities are environmentally responsible, comply with government policy, and set a positive example for others. For these reasons, we have set out clear sustainability requirements for all services and activities under this programme and the following criteria must be followed to ensure our work is environmentally responsible:

4.2 Expertise specification for Expert Group members

Safefood wishes to invite expressions of interest from both Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the provision of the professional services detailed in section 4.1 above from suitably qualified individuals with the required professional expertise, experience and competencies.

Applicants are expected to have substantial experience in one of the categories outlined below:

Category number	Category Name	Eligible professional expertise areas
1	Microbiological food safety	Extensive experience of guidance and advice on microbiological pathogens (including viruses) and food hygiene
2	Food SMEs (catering/ food service, food manufacturing)	Extensive experience of working in/ with small food business, consumer and food safety standards, hygiene & food safety needs

5. Time commitment, remuneration and duration

The service requirement for members of the Expert Group will be for a period of 36 months. There will be two half-day in-person meetings per year. Outside of these meetings, ad hoc bilateral meetings between individual Group members and Safefood personnel may be held online or by telephone.

The service fee payable to Expert Group members will be €1,500 per annum net of VAT in addition to vouched travel and subsistence expenses (these will not exceed civil service allowances). Please note that funding for successful Expert Group members will be provided through their employment authority for the provision of a professional service. It is not a contract of employment.

6. Evaluation of applications for professional services

Safefood will ensure a confidential, fair and equitable evaluation of all eligible applications. These will be evaluated externally, and the outcomes of the evaluation will be communicated to the applicants.

Please note that where competencies and experience are deemed equal, gender balance as well as North-South representation are factors that will be taken into account when selecting members of the Expert Groups.

6.1 Qualifying criteria

Your application must meet both of the following to be considered:

- Respond fully to the requirements set out in Section 4 and clearly confirm you can meet all requirements.
- Provide every item of information requested in this document.

Only applications that satisfy both criteria will proceed to evaluation.

6.2 Award criteria

Contracts for professional services will be awarded to the highest-scoring qualifying applications. Scores will be based on your response to the Request for Expressions of Interest, your relevant experience, and your competencies, using the criteria below.

Criterion 1: Meeting the Knowledge Network objectives

1. Show a strong understanding of the food safety landscape and infrastructure relevant to the role (see Section 4.1) and how your expertise supports the aims of the Knowledge Network (see Section 2).
2. Provide evidence of experience in one or more categories of professional expertise (see Section 4.2).
3. Demonstrate strategic and lateral thinking to advance awareness of food safety across the island of Ireland's food supply chain.
4. Show how you can foster cooperation and collaboration among key professionals and organisations in food safety on the island of Ireland and beyond.

Criterion 2: Organisational and networking experience

- 1 Experience of participation in, and coordination of, multi-disciplinary groups of professionals and/or networks;
- 2 Experience serving on and leading relevant committees and working groups.
- 3 Experience working across jurisdictions.

Criterion 3: Technical expertise and experience in food safety subject area (service deliverables)

1. Experience providing and implementing technical, innovative, and operational advice on current and emerging food safety issues—including identifying research opportunities—within at least one category in Section 4.2
2. Experience developing scientific/technical newsletters, conferences, and events
3. Experience generating food safety knowledge, disseminating information, informing policy, and communicating scientific information or innovation

Criterion 4: Professional competencies and qualities

1. The capacity to think and act both strategically and analytically
2. Proven collaborative problem-solving skills and a commitment to fully engage in the membership role
3. Sound judgement, integrity, and a high sense of responsibility

Criterion 5: Incorporation of sustainability considerations:

1. Prioritisation of virtual/hybrid delivery and responsible travel (public transport, low-emission options, minimal flights).
2. Sustainable event practices, including accessible venues, waste segregation, single-use plastic elimination, and plant-based/local catering.
3. Preference for digital communications; printed materials must use recycled/Ecolabel paper and eco-friendly inks.
4. Low-energy digital content.
5. Assurance that sustainability measures do not compromise accessibility.

7. Information Required

All applications must include the following:

- A Curriculum Vitae;
- A cover letter outlining how they meet the qualifying criteria for provision of the professional services listed above, and specifying the category of expertise (section 4.2)
- Completion of the 'Key Requirements Form' (Appendix 1)

All applications must be made electronically to: Linda Gordon, lgordon@safefood.net

Any queries should be submitted to Linda Gordon, lgordon@safefood.net

The receipt of each application will be acknowledged electronically within three working days.

The Assessment Panel will make its recommendation(s) based on consideration of the documentation submitted. The *Cover Letter*, *Curriculum Vitae* and *Key Requirements Form* must clearly demonstrate how a particular set of skills, expertise and experience meet the Qualifying and Award Criteria.

Applications must be received by 4pm on Thursday 27th November 2025. Late submissions will not be accepted.

8 Conditions of the Request for Expressions of Interest

- a) Safefood requires that all information provided pursuant to this Request for Expressions of Interest be treated in strict confidence by applicants;
- b) Information supplied by applicants will, following a successful evaluation outcome, be treated as contractually binding. However, Safefood reserves the right to seek clarification or verification of any such information;
- c) Before any contract is awarded, the successful applicant will be required to provide a valid Tax Clearance Certificate from the Revenue Commissioners or HM Revenue & Customs;
- d) Safefood will not be liable in respect of any costs incurred by applicants in the preparation of
 - a. proposals or any associated work effort;
- e) Any conflict or potential conflict of interest must be fully disclosed;
- f) Applications delivered late will not be considered. Incomplete applications may be rejected;
- g) Applicants are advised that any responses supplied in respect of further information requested will be distributed to all other applicants who have participated in this Request for Expressions of Interest;
- h) Funding for the successful applicants will be provided through their employment authority for the provision of a professional service. It is not a contract of employment;
- i) Safefood Knowledge Network contracts (including all payments) shall be issued and arranged only
 - a. with the employment authority of the successful applicant, as specified in their Curriculum Vitae;
- j) The decision of Safefood will be final. Safefood may decide, following evaluation, not to proceed with the award of contract and no liability shall fall on Safefood arising from costs incurred by you in relation to any application.
- k) Award of contract may be subject to a successful clarification meeting with the applicant. There will be no contractual relationship between the parties except pursuant to a duly-signed contract.
- l) The application should be emailed to on or before 4pm on Thursday 27th November 2025.
- m) No publicity regarding this) document or any contract with Safefood is permitted unless and until Safefood has given its prior written consent to the relevant communication.

- n) Safefood will be a Data Controller (where Data Controller has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) in respect of any Personal Data (where Personal Data has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) required to be provided by the applicant in response to this document. The applicant confirms they have a legal basis to share third-party personal information with Safefood for the purposes of this application. “Data Protection Laws” means all applicable national and EU data protection laws, regulations and guidelines including but not limited to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (the “General Data Protection Regulation”), the Data Protection Act 2018, and any guidelines and codes of practice issued by the Office of the Data Protection Commission or other supervisory authority for data protection in Ireland from time to time.

9 Conduct and Conflicts of Interest

In regard to the professional services provided by the Expert Group, members must fully disclose any conflicts or potential conflicts or any information or personal connections which, if their application was successful, could lead, or be perceived to lead, to a conflict of interest.

Appendix 1: Key Requirements Form

Name:

Service Category (Ref: Section 4.2):

Having read the [Qualifying](#) and [Award](#) criteria and having considered the logistics of the professional services required, for each of the areas below, please briefly (max 250 words for each) highlight specific achievements, contributions or expertise you have developed and consider relevant which clearly demonstrate suitability to meet the challenges of the requisite professional services.

Criterion 1: Meeting the Knowledge Network objectives

Criterion 2: Organisational and networking experience

Criterion 3: Technical expertise and experience in food safety subject area [Service Deliverables]

Criterion 4: Professional competencies and qualities

Criterion 5: Incorporation of sustainability considerations