

Appointment of Members to *safefood* Advisory Committee 2015 – Guidance Information

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safefood is committed to the principles of appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. We are also committed to equality of opportunity and welcome applications from suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, race, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, members of the travelling community, gender reassignment or with and without dependants. All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of applicants with a disability.

1. Background and Functions of the Committee

Since its establishment in 1999 under the International Agreement between the British and Irish Governments as a North/South Implementation Body, the Food Safety Promotion Board (**safefood**) has promoted food safety and healthy eating on the island of Ireland in accordance with its legislative remit.

safefood's remit is to promote awareness and knowledge of food safety and healthy eating on an all-island basis and, in particular, to bring about a general acceptance that responsibility for the provision of safe food is shared among producers, processors and distributors at all levels, including caterers, as well as the general public.

safefood fulfils its mandate by communicating pertinent and targeted health messages, commissioning and funding relevant research, coordinating scientific cooperation including identifying and establishing laboratory linkages, undertaking education and awareness campaigns, communicating of nutritional advice and publishing independent reports of interest to consumers and other key stakeholders.

To assist us in this work, and in keeping with our legislative remit, **safefood** has established an Advisory Committee of experts and representatives with a broad range of professional expertise, experience and backgrounds. Membership of the Committee is voluntary and the overarching role of the members is the provision of technical advice and guidance to assist **safefood** in setting strategy and successfully delivering on the elements of its three-year Corporate and Annual Business Plans. This committee is one of two advisory structures within **safefood**. It complements our Advisory Board and both structures are appointed by the North South Ministerial Council.

A number of vacancies will arise on the Advisory Committee as of 21st November 2015 and we are now seeking expressions of interest for membership.

2. Role Profile

The main duties of a Committee member are to:

- Advise **safefood** on food safety and healthy eating related issues within their categories of professional expertise.
- Advise **safefood** on strategic and cost-effective communications mechanisms for fostering positive food safety and healthy eating behaviours across the food chain.
- Participate fully in the work programme of the Advisory Committee and its sub-committees.

Further details of the rules of procedure of the Advisory Committee are at Appendix One.

3. Time Commitment and Remuneration

The period of membership will be decided by the North South Ministerial Council and is normally for three years. There will be up to three meetings per year with the possibility of smaller sub-groups, formed as required to focus on specific topics, meeting on a more frequent basis (each half-day meetings). Membership does not attract a fee: however travel and subsistence expenses will be reimbursed.

4. Conduct and Conflicts of Interest

Appointees must disclose any information or personal connections which, if they were appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest or be perceived as such. For further information on this subject, please refer to the Code of Conduct for Committee Members.

5. Required Professional Expertise, Skills and Competencies

safefood wishes to attract candidates from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and invites applications from suitably qualified individuals. Candidates would be expected to have substantial experience in at least one of the following categories of professional expertise:

Category	Eligible Professional Expertise
Food Science	Representation from microbiology, chemistry, food science, epidemiology, veterinary, surveillance
Diet and Health	Representation from nutrition, public health, health promotion, medicine
Food Industry	Representation from processing, catering, retail, primary producers, trade promotion, food industry support
Communications	Representation from behavioural and social sciences, marketing, PR/media, consumer associations, community and voluntary bodies
State and Regulatory	Representation from environmental health, regulatory, primary/secondary education

Qualifying Criteria

Candidates must demonstrate at least three of the following skill sets and competencies:

1. At least five years' experience in one or more of the aforementioned categories of professional expertise.
2. Experience in knowledge generation, information dissemination, policy formulation and implementation, the communication of scientific information or innovation.
3. Leadership positions in professional associations or experience on other advisory committees.
4. Relevant professional experience and education.
5. Good judgement with a high level of integrity and responsibility.
6. The capacity to think and act both strategically and analytically.
7. A demonstrated ability for collaborative problem solving.
8. A demonstrated commitment to fully participate in membership roles.

6. Selection Process

Applicants will first be assigned to one of the five categories of professional expertise. A weighting of 10 will be given for qualifying criteria 2-8 with a weighting of 30 to be allocated to the first criteria.

The Assessment Panel will reach a decision on whether the above qualifying criteria are met on the basis of the evidence provided and eligibility established. It is not sufficient to simply list duties and responsibilities. The Panel will not make assumptions from the title of the post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.

safefood is committed to the principles of appointments based on merit with an open and transparent assessment process. Each panel member will separately carry out an assessment of the Expressions of Interest received before meeting to discuss and decide on:

- an agreed pass mark and
- an agreed panel score for each applicant.

Candidates who meet the qualifying criteria will then be ranked according to the following selection criteria:

1. The range of professional expertise demonstrated in the Expression of Interest
2. Vacancies within each category of professional expertise
3. Complementarity with the skills set of **safefood** staff
4. Geographical balance vis-à-vis Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

A weighting of 25 will be given for each of these selection criteria.

Following the selection process, **safefood** will furnish a list of recommended appointees to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland and the Department of Health in the Republic of Ireland. The Departments will then submit a final list of appointees to the North South Ministerial Council for final approval.

safefood reserves the right to create a reserve list to cover future vacancies that may arise in 2016. Candidates will be advised if they are on a reserve list and will be asked if they wish to be contacted should such a vacancy occur.

7. How to Apply and Contact Details

Prospective candidates must submit an expression of interest which shall consist of:

- A cover letter outlining how they meet the qualifying criteria for membership listed above, and
- A *Curriculum Vitae*.

All applications must be made electronically to sac@safefood.eu marked for the attention of Dr James McIntosh. If you wish your application to be facilitated in a different format, or have any queries, please contact Colette O'Shea on +353 (0)21 2304135.

The receipt of each Expression of Interest will be acknowledged within three working days.

The candidates should take care when submitting their Expression of Interest. As the Assessment Panel will make its recommendation(s) based on consideration of the documentation submitted, it is most important that the Cover letter and supporting *Curriculum Vitae* clearly demonstrate how their particular background and experience meets the qualifying criteria. This information will help ensure that the Assessment Panel is as informed as possible as to the basis for the candidature and why the person believes they are suitable candidates for Committee Membership.

8. Time Frame for Process

Applications must be received by 4 pm on Friday 25th September 2015. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for their application to arrive with **safefood** on or before the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

It is planned that shortlisting be carried out in the week beginning Monday 28th September 2015. It is hoped that appointments will be confirmed following ratification of the recommended appointments by the North South Ministerial Council at their meeting in November 2015.



Successful candidates will have their appointment confirmed in writing by **safefood** and they will be required to confirm, in writing, their acceptance.

All other candidates will be advised in writing of the outcome of the selection process once the appointments have been made.

9. Feedback

Unsuccessful candidates may request feedback if they so wish and this will be facilitated upon receiving a written request. If, at any stage of the process, an applicant feels they wish to make a complaint, they may do so in writing. In both instances, the complaint should be addressed to:

Patricia McCarthy
HR and Administrative Executive
safefood
7 Eastgate Avenue
Little Island
Cork T45 RX01

10. Equal Opportunities

safefood is keen to encourage applicants from all sections of societies. As part of its commitment to equality, **safefood** considered its need to promote equality of opportunity between the different and relevant equality groups on the island of Ireland. Three mediums of advertising were chosen (newspapers, social media and website) to ensure that the widest possible coverage to equality groups is achieved.

APPENDIX ONE: Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Committee

Designation of the Advisory Committee Members

1. At the end of the three year term of the Advisory Committee, **safefood** will review the list of competencies among Committee members and identify priority areas to be included in the subsequent Committee.
2. The Advisory Committee members are identified through an open selection process.
3. The members of the Advisory Committee are appointed by the North South Ministerial Council on the basis of the recommendation from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland and the Department of Health in the Republic of Ireland, following the selection process.
4. They shall be appointed on a personal basis. The members shall undertake to act independently in the work of the Advisory Committee. For this purpose, members will be obliged to make a declaration of interests at the outset.
5. Members are appointed in the first instance for a period of 3 years. Current members may apply for reselection but no Committee member may serve more than two consecutive terms.
6. The number of members in the Advisory Committee shall not exceed 15. The Committee members shall collectively cover the appointed categories of professional expertise.
7. If an Advisory Committee member does not attend two consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation, the Chairperson is entitled to advise the Chief Executive to propose to the North South Ministerial Council to withdraw this member's appointment.
8. The appointment of, and retention of, membership is conditional to the declaration of interest.

Appointment of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

1. The North South Ministerial Council will appoint a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from the members for a term of three years.
2. The Vice-Chairperson will carry out the duties of Chairperson in case of absence of the Chairperson.
3. If the Chairperson resigns, a new Chairperson will be appointed to complete the remainder of that term.

Meetings

1. The Advisory Committee shall meet at least twice per year and shall be convened by **safefood**. Meeting dates will be decided at the start of each year and the members informed.
2. Smaller subgroups of the Committee may be formed from time to time to address specific issues. In these cases it may be necessary to meet more frequently.
3. For each meeting, **safefood** shall notify each member of the time and venue not less than two weeks beforehand. A draft agenda will be sent simultaneously comprising the items to be examined and any preparatory documents.
4. Members of **safefood**'s Executive Board will be invited to attend the meetings.

The Secretariat

1. A member of **safefood**'s staff, appointed by the Chief Executive, shall prepare and organise the work of the Advisory Committee and shall provide the secretariat for meetings under the direction of the Chairperson.
2. Correspondence intended for the Advisory Committee shall be addressed to the secretariat.
3. The secretariat is responsible for archiving all Advisory Committee papers.

Agenda and proceedings at the meetings

1. At the beginning of a meeting, the Advisory Committee shall adopt the agenda, comprising the items included in the draft and any other item proposed by the Chairperson or by any of the members.
2. Any request by a member of the Advisory Committee for the inclusion, deletion or substitution of an agenda item shall state the reasons for doing so, in writing, to the secretariat at least one week before the date of the meeting. The Chairperson shall immediately bring any such request to the notice of the other members.
3. During a meeting, any member may propose the inclusion of an item on the agenda for the subsequent meeting.
4. The presence of at least half of the Advisory Committee members shall constitute a *quorum*. In the absence of a *quorum*, it is at the Chairperson's discretion as to whether the meeting should proceed or not.
5. The Chairperson shall direct the proceedings, giving precedence to those who wish to raise a point of order or a matter arising.

6. The Chairperson on behalf of the Advisory Committee may propose, on an *ad hoc* basis, to invite guests or other **safefood** staff to attend meetings of the Committee, including guest presenters, when it is considered appropriate for the work of the Committee.

Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings

1. Minutes will be taken at each meeting and will include:
 - A list of participants;
 - A list of apologies;
 - A record of proceedings;
 - A list of documentation circulated;
 - Any conflict(s) of interest declared by the members regarding the items on the agenda.
2. The draft minutes shall be submitted for adoption.
3. The minutes of the Advisory Committee shall be made accessible to the public via the **safefood** website.