



REQUEST FOR TENDERS

For

Management Services for the *safe food* Knowledge Networks

Safe food
7 Eastgate Avenue
Eastgate
Little Island
Cork.

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Request for Tender

1. Introduction

safefood invites tenders from external organisations (either public or private sector) to provide management services for our Knowledge Networks, in accordance with the requirements specified in Section three.

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 and on an island of Ireland (IoI) 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.

The Chief Executive Officer is supported by an Advisory Board that provides strategic advice, and an Advisory Committee that provides scientific and technical guidance on matters of food safety and healthy eating. The membership of both structures comprises a broad range of expertise and backgrounds from the Public, Private and Voluntary sectors across the IoI.

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, and a sub-office at The Gasworks, 5 Cromac Avenue, Belfast BT7 2JA.

The Request for Tender relates to the provision of services in the Cork Headquarters. However, it is noted, that as an independent function, the service provider will need to attend events and visit stakeholders across the IoI, as well as attending meetings in **safefood**'s Cork, Dublin and Belfast offices.

For more information on **safefood**, please see our web site at www.safefood.eu.

2. Overview of the **safefood** Knowledge Networks

As part of its legislative remit, **safefood** has an obligation to promote awareness of food safety issues amongst professionals with an interest in, or responsibility for, food safety, including the food industry. Food safety is critical at all stages of the food chain – on the farm, during processing, storage and distribution, at retail and catering levels, and in the hands of the consumer. Food safety is the central pillar on which the reputation and sustainability of the agri-food sector are built. It is the key element that underpins food production ensuring that consumer expectations are met and that the highest levels of public health continue to be assured.

In 2011, **safefood** established a programme of collaborative arrangements called 'Knowledge Networks' (KNs) that link food safety professionals across the IoI and throughout the whole food chain including food producers and processors, as well as those working in the wider public sector, research and academia. The networks help facilitate greater knowledge sharing by those involved in all parts of the food chain to support and enhance food safety.

Seven **safefood** KNs were established covering specific food safety topics. Four cover microbiological parameters - Verocytotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (VTEC), *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *Listeria*. There are two networks dealing with chemical safety - Chemical Residues and Biotoxins, and there is also a network focused on Food Allergy and Food Intolerance. Each KN has been externally facilitated by an expert in each specific topical area.

The **safefood** KNs explore current food safety issues, identify new risks and emerging challenges and facilitate more rapid dissemination of information and ideas. They facilitate early access to on-going and completed research acting as a catalyst for industry-focused food safety research and innovation. The overarching goal of the KNs is to ensure that consumers can continue to have confidence in the food they eat.

The KN membership includes food safety professionals from across the health, food industry, academia, government and agriculture arenas on the IoI. To date, the KNs have attracted more than 2,700 members who are benefiting from the various services provided including (a) a dedicated online platform that facilitates dissemination of up-to-

date food safety information and online discussion, (b) attendance at conferences and workshops covering a wide variety of food safety themes, (c) a tri-weekly eNewsletter with updates on KN activities and a quarterly published KN magazine called 'The Food Chain'. KN members are also eligible to apply for bursaries from the **safefood** KN Training and Mobility Programme to enable members to develop broader experience through visits to centres of excellence and conferences under the different KN topics.

During the period 2011-2015 (end Sep 2015), over 41 different events were held with 2,597 attendees who listened to 278 presentations including 78 international speakers. A total of 56 Newsletters/eNewsletters were distributed to ca. 55,000 recipients. To date there have been approximately 2,500 uploads onto the KN website including news, events, discussions and forum postings as well over 300,000 page views. In addition 97 videos have been produced by **safefood** covering a broad range of food safety topics and conference reviews. **safefood** has also enabled 52 KN members from across the IoI to develop broader experience through visits to centres of excellence and conferences through the KN Training and Mobility programme.

There has been a clear recognition that the KN programme has facilitated a wide range of different food safety professionals forming multidisciplinary linkages in the food safety arena, gaining access to scientific information and shared knowledge, and especially developing synergies both within the KN framework and externally. The KNs have also helped food businesses and producers keep abreast of potential and emerging food safety and authenticity risks in relation to their supply chains.

3. New 2016-18 Knowledge Network Configuration

From 2016 onwards, **safefood** intends to build on the strengths and successes of the 2011-2015 KN programme. Consequently, we will further develop the KN concept during 2016-18 by establishing a food sector-based framework for a single overarching KN instead of the present model of several individual KNs devoted to specific pathogens and chemicals. The framework will be based on the following food sectors for a three year period;

- 1) Dairy
- 2) Poultry & white meat
- 3) Animal feed
- 4) Red meat
- 5) Fresh Produce
- 6) Fish & shellfish

This new 2016-2018 KN configuration will have the necessary flexibility to address a wide variety of food safety concerns which shall be prioritised on the basis of their impacts on public health and the wider food chain. These will include chemical and microbiological food safety, food production and processing issues, food fraud/crime, new food safety innovations, as well as broader topics which may impact on food safety, including trade and economic issues, climate change and sustainability.

Under this new configuration, the activities will be directed by **safefood** with the assistance of an expert group, and supported by a KN Manager. A programme of activities, based on the priority issues, will run for three years, with the flexibility to address other food safety concerns which may arise during that time.

4. Details of Requirements

safefood is tendering for the services of a *Knowledge Network Manager*, who will be responsible for event logistics, KN promotion, uploads to the KN website, contributing to the KN newsletters and also acting as secretariat to the expert group. The contract will be for three years with a review after 18 months.

The services required of the KN Manager will include:

1. Organising all aspects of the programme of events agreed by **safefood**, including booking suitable venues and catering, sourcing and arranging speakers, managing registration, printing promotional and other materials as required, arranging audio/visual services, and organising delegate packs. The services required also include managing the annual events budget (see Section 5) and managing payment of all third party suppliers;
2. Liaising between **safefood** personnel and the expert group in the development and delivery of all aspects of the KN work programme;
3. Providing professional secretariat services for the expert group, including all meeting logistics, the preparation of the agenda, reports and other documentation in advance of meetings, minute-taking and preparation of minutes, and following up on agreed actions;
4. Developing a targeted promotional and marketing plan, in collaboration with **safefood**, to expand the KN membership and to raise the profile of the KNs among key stakeholders in industry, research and government;
5. Contributing to the preparation and development of *The Food Chain* newsletter, by planning and sourcing content of interest to the membership and ensuring the publication is engaging and appropriate for the target audience;
6. Contributing to the KN website by uploading content provided by members of the expert group, as well as seeking out and uploading publications, articles, reports, funding opportunities, jobs, events and other information of relevance to the KN membership. New material must be added on at least a weekly basis, with a minimum of six uploads per month;

Please note that this is a tender for services, and will not lead to a contract of employment with *safefood*.

5. Budget

The maximum budget available for the services of the KN Manager is €40,000 per annum, inclusive of VAT, and excluding travel and subsistence.

The budget for events, which will be managed by the successful tenderer, is €60,000 per annum, including VAT. See Appendix 1 for an indicative breakdown of this budget.

The successful tenderer will be required to maintain a separate bank account for the management of the events budget. The funds will be transferred on a quarterly basis, following the submission of a detailed workplan by the successful tenderer and subsequent approval by **safefood**. Cost statements and copies of receipts will be submitted to **safefood**, quarterly.

safefood shall monitor progress of the KNs on an ongoing basis, and carry out a formal review of the management services after 18 months. Funding for the final 18 months' services is contingent on the successful accomplishment of the deliverables outlined in the contract.

6. Time commitment

The KN Manager must be available to **safefood** three days per week, wte, and will report to the Technical Executive Food Science, in **safefood**.

There will be a requirement to attend an initial briefing at **safefood**'s Cork offices, at the beginning of the contract, as well as to attend meetings at **safefood**'s offices in Dublin, Cork and Belfast throughout the year.

The expert group will meet up to five times per year and the KN Manager shall meet with **safefood** in advance of the meetings, as well as attending each meeting.

The KN Manager will prepare a quarterly plan for services, detailing all the deliverables for each requirement, to be approved by **safefood**. The successful tenderer will submit a quarterly report to **safefood** detailing progress against the deliverables outlined in the plan and will meet with **safefood** monthly, at the Dublin or Cork Headquarters.

6. Evaluation of Tenders

6.1 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; stated ability to meet all requirements;
- b) Demonstrating a knowledge and understanding of food safety and the wider agri-food sector
- c) Previous experience of the administration of programmes and management of associated funding
- d) Inclusion of all information requested.

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

6.2 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 requirements in relation to the provision of requirements;
- b) Proven experience in stakeholder management, including engaging with diverse audiences, as well as developing and implementing promotional plans;
- c) Proven experience in providing professional secretariat services, minute taking and report writing;
- d) Proven experience in event management, including planning, logistics, scheduling, marketing, etc.;
- e) Proven experience in programme management, including planning and achieving business goals;
- f) Proven experience in managing budgets;
- g) Demonstrated ability to manage information, including sourcing and disseminating information to a diverse audience through appropriate channels;
- h) Overall cost of the proposal on offer;

Award of contract may be subject to a clarification meeting. It would be desirable, but not essential, that the key personnel assigned to this contract should be available and present at this meeting.

It is anticipated that these meetings will be held during the week commencing 30th

November 2015.

In the event that the key person to act as the Network Manager is not in place at the time that the contract is awarded, it shall be a condition of the contract that a **safefood** representative will sit on the panel for the recruitment of the Network Manager.

7. 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 one designated individual with overall responsibility for delivery of the tender requirements, where available;
- d) A list of existing customers with contact names for at least two sites where similar services have been provided;
- e) The full cost of the proposal including appropriate cost breakdown. Costs should be submitted in Euro only and VAT should be separately stated.

8. 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) The tender should be emailed to lgordon@safefood.eu on or before 4pm on Monday 16th November 2015;
- g) Applicants may be required to attend a presentation / clarification meeting in our Cork office and this is provisionally scheduled to be held during the week commencing 30th November 2015;
- h) Tenders delivered late will not be considered. In addition, incomplete tenders may be rejected;

- i) Any queries should be emailed to lgordon@safefood.eu;
- j) 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;
- k) The decision of **safefood** will be final.

Appendix 1

Table 1 Indicative schedule of events and associated costs

Event Type	Approx no. of Attendees	Venue	Catering	Design/ Printing	No. of Speakers	Estimated Costs €
Training/ Workshop (1/2 day)	25	3-4* Hotel	Tea/coffee, scones Lunch	Flyer, course material	4 speakers	2,900
Breakfast/lunchtime briefing	40	3-4* Hotel /conference centre	Breakfast	flyer	2 speakers, (1 international) -	3,200
Symposium (1 day)	80	3-4* Hotel /conference centre	Tea/coffee, scones Lunch	Flyer, abstracts	2 international speakers - 4 IOI speakers -	8,800
Symposium (1/2 day)	60	3-4* Hotel /conference centre	Tea/coffee, scones lunch	Flyer, abstracts	1 international speaker 3 IOI speakers	6,200

Annual events schedule:	4 x training/workshops	€11,600
	2 x breakfast/lunchtime briefings	€6,400
	2 x 1 day symposium	€17,600
	4 x 1/2 day symposium	€24,800
Total		€60,400