



## **REQUEST FOR TENDERS**

**For**

**Expert Facilitation Services**

**To the**

***safefood* Knowledge Network**

**Programme 2016-18**

***safefood***  
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## Request for Tender

### 1. Introduction

**safefood** invites tenders from suitable parties for expert facilitation services for the **safefood** Knowledge Network 2016-18 in accordance with the requirements specified below in Section 4. A new Knowledge Network Expert Facilitator Group (EFG) will act as a mechanism for developing a network of food safety professionals in the following thematic sectors; dairy, animal feed, red meat, poultry and white meat, fresh produce and fish & shellfish.

To make an application to the call for Knowledge Network Facilitation services, tenderers must complete the application requirements which must be received by **safefood** by 4pm on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

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

The Request for Tender relates to the provision of services to the Cork Headquarters. However, it is noted, that as an independent function, the service provider will attend a number of meetings and events, and liaise with stakeholders at other locations. Formal meetings of the Expert Facilitator Group shall be in **safefood**'s Dublin and Belfast offices.

For more information on **safefood**, please see our web site at [www.safefood.eu](http://www.safefood.eu).

### 2. Background to **safefood**

Since its establishment in 1999, the Food Safety Promotion Board (**safefood**) has promoted food safety on the island of Ireland in accordance with its legislative remit, which is to promote awareness and knowledge of food safety 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 food producers, processors and distributors at all levels, including caterers, as well as the general public. 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 protection continue to be assured.

**safefood** fulfils its mandate by communicating relevant and targeted public health messages, commissioning and funding relevant research, coordinating scientific cooperation, undertaking education and awareness campaigns, communicating food safety advice and publishing independent reports of interest to consumers and other key stakeholders. **safefood** relies on two primary support structures to fulfil its mandate: 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.

### 3. Overview of the **safefood** Knowledge Networks 2011-2015

**safefood** recognises the importance of science-based knowledge being applied to promote and underpin the integrity and reputation of the food chain on the island of Ireland. As part of its scientific cooperation function, we have endeavored to bring together those involved in creating and applying knowledge at all parts of the food chain in order to support and enhance food safety.

In 2011, **safefood** established a number of collaborative arrangements called 'Knowledge Networks' that created and augmented scientific cooperation and linkages across the island between food safety professionals throughout the whole food chain. The networks helped facilitate greater knowledge sharing by those involved in all parts of the food chain to support and enhance food safety.

Seven Knowledge Networks were established covering specific food safety topics: four covered microbiological parameters - Verocytotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (VTEC), *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *Listeria*, two dealt with chemical safety topics - Chemical Residues and Biotoxins, and a seventh network that focused on Food Allergy and Food Intolerance. Each Knowledge Network was externally facilitated by an expert in the particular field and underpinned by a formal contract for services with their place of employment.

The **safefood** Knowledge Networks (KNs) explored current food safety issues, identified new risks and emerging challenges and facilitated more rapid dissemination of information and ideas. They facilitated early access to on-going and completed research acted as a catalyst for industry-focused food safety research and innovation. The Networks assisted professionals in meeting new and emerging challenges with the overall aim of ensuring that consumers can continue to have confidence in the food they eat.

The Network membership included food safety personnel from across the health, food industry, academia, government and agricultural arenas on the island of Ireland. To date, they have attracted more than 2,700 members who have benefited from the various services provided including a dedicated website that facilitated dissemination of up-to-date food safety information and online discussion, attendance at conferences and workshops, tri-weekly eNewsletter summaries and a quarterly published KN magazine called 'The Food Chain'. KN members were also eligible to apply for bursaries from the **safefood** Training and Mobility Programme if they wish to develop broader experience through visits to centres of excellence and conferences within the Network themes.

During the period January 2011 to December 2015, over 44 different events were held with 2,772 attendees who listened to 295 presentations including 82 international speakers. Twenty eight newsletters together with 30 eNews network summaries were distributed to ca. 55,000 recipients and there have been 2,985 uploads onto the KN website including news, events, discussions and forum postings. In addition, 101 videos have been produced by **safefood** and facilitators covering a broad range of food safety topics and conference reviews. **safefood** has also facilitated 52 food safety professionals participate in the Training and Mobility programme.

The Knowledge Networks have provided **safefood** with a valuable way of promoting food safety across the food chain, and it has been widely acknowledged by aforementioned stakeholders that this sharing of knowledge and experiences has helped to further connect the various strands of food safety information across the island of Ireland, and provide up-to-date food safety news and solutions to the issues of most concern. The KNs have also helped food companies keep abreast of potential and emerging food safety and authenticity risks in relation to the ingredients they source.

The sterling work of our previous network facilitators in the provision of interesting and insightful work programmes etc has encouraged better use of existing resources to obtain best value in order to protect public health and augment the resilience of the agri-food industry.

#### **4. New 2016-18 Knowledge Network Framework**


From 2016 onwards, **safefood** intends to build on the compelling strengths and solid successes of the 2011-2015 programme. The KNs are a strong foundation upon which **safefood** can continue to promote its legislative mandate and ethos of promoting food safety right across the Iol food supply chain. Consequently we will further develop the KN concept during 2016-18 by establishing a food sector-based framework for a single Network instead of the present model of specific pathogens/chemicals.

The Network shall focus on the following food chain sectors for a three year period;

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

The new framework shall cover a wide variety of food safety topics 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, new food safety innovations, as well as broader topics which may impact on food safety, including trade and economic issues, climate change and sustainability.

##### **4.1 Key Objectives of the 2016-18 Knowledge Network Framework**

-  In the broadest sense, promote multi-disciplinary and cross-jurisdictional cooperation, collaboration and synergies in common food safety themes between professionals in the food safety arena both throughout the Iol and with international counterparts;

- ⑦ To raise awareness amongst KN members of current food safety challenges and developments at all points of the food chain, to include technological advances, monitoring, surveillance, regulatory developments and on-going research both on the island of Ireland (IoI) and internationally;
- ⑦ To provide opportunities for the sharing and dissemination of current food safety knowledge, practices and emerging issues on the IoI;
- ⑦ To provide an accessible source of expertise for **safefood** and identify emerging issues and challenges in food safety;
- ⑦ Advise on priorities for food safety research, including how **safefood**-funded research could be used to address knowledge gaps.
- ⑦ To help raise awareness of **safefood** activities among key professional stakeholders and enhance its profile in the overall food safety and promotion field on the IoI;

#### **4.2 Delivery Mechanism**

**safefood** will form an Expert Facilitation Group (EFG) to collaboratively direct the activities of the new Knowledge Network at a strategic level. The Group shall be supported by a KN Manager who will be responsible for event management & logistics, network promotion, food safety information uploads onto the Network website, contributions to KN newsletters and also acting as secretariat to the Group.

A programme of activities based on the priority issues will be identified by the EFG which shall run for three years, with the flexibility to address other food safety issues that may arise in the interim. It is envisaged that KN membership services would be customised and focused around the priority issues, but with the flexibility to respond to emerging issues.

### **5. Details of Requirements**

**safefood** is establishing an Expert Facilitation Group of facilitators (EFG) who shall provide a broad range of professional services in regard to further developing and enhancing the new Knowledge Network concept and associated activities. These services include the provision of strategic, technical and operational advice and guidance to assist **safefood** in successfully delivering on elements of the three-year KN strategy.

Accordingly, **safefood** is tendering for professional services to provide expert facilitation assistance and to serve as a member on the EFG. **safefood** is seeking expressions of interest for ten (10) positions on the EFG. The service requirement for members of the EFG shall be for the three years of the KN Strategic Plan, 2016-2018. It is expected that the first meeting of the EFG shall be during April 2016.

### 5.1 **Role Specification for Expert Facilitator Group Services**

The facilitation services required of each EFG member will be:

- (i) To provide high level strategic and technical food safety advice and direction for the Knowledge Network. Members will be expected to describe the state of play in term of food safety vulnerabilities in the relevant sectors, commensurate with specialised expertise, experience and background.
- (ii) To actively and strategically contribute to the administration, development and promotion of the KN, associated activities and food safety promotion mechanisms across the food chain.
- (iii) To actively assist **safefood** and the KN Manager increase the multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral membership of the KN on an all-island basis.
- (iv) To participate fully in the work programme of the EFG and any sub-committee(s) as appropriate.
- (v) To contribute to the preparation, development and enhancement of eNewsletters and quarterly 'The Food Chain' magazine to benefit the members and ensure it is fit-for-purpose.
- (vi) To use their own professional networks (incl. international networks or collaborations) to access expertise in specific areas identified by the Group and **safefood** for the benefit of the Knowledge Network.
- (vii) To provide one monthly update on a food sector(s) for the network website that would be of interest to the members. As examples, such updates may be;
  - a. new publications/articles/website links or information of interest;
  - b. announcements about relevant national and international meetings or schemes;
  - c. information on funding or job opportunities.

*(Please note that new material must be added to the network website at least on a monthly basis)*
- (viii) Contribute to the preparation, development and enhancement of KN 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;
  - b. direct assistance in drawing up of event programmes and speaker selection;
  - c. when required, chair, present or attend various KN events and/or training throughout the year. Such attendance is wholly dependent on the nature and relevance of the event for each EFG facilitator based on their respective expertise and experience.
- (ix) Contribute as part of the EFG to an annual KN report that shall be drafted by **safefood**.

## 5.2 Expertise specification for Expert Group Facilitators

**safefood** wishes to invite expressions of interest from both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom for the provision of the services detailed in section 5.1 above from suitably qualified individuals with the required professional expertise, experience and competencies. **safefood** is seeking expressions of interest for ten (10) positions on the EFG.

Applicants would be expected to have substantial experience in at least one of the following categories of professional expertise:

Category Number	Service Category	Eligible Professional Expertise Topics
1	<b>Chemistry &amp; Toxicology</b> (Requirement: 1 position)	Chemical contaminants, chemical residues, biotoxins, food fraud, food-related toxicology, food hypersensitivity
2	<b>Food Microbiology</b> (Requirement: 2 positions)	Microbiological pathogens (in particular, <i>Campylobacter</i> , <i>Listeria</i> , VTEC and <i>Salmonella</i> ), viruses, food hygiene, antimicrobial resistance
3	<b>Food Industry</b> (Requirement: 3 positions)	Food production, processing, upskilling, training and support, catering/food service, animal feed
4	<b>Trade/Economic</b> (Requirement: 1 position)	Industry support & promotion, food economics, policy and development, European & global trade agreements
5	<b>General Food Safety</b> (Requirement: 3 positions)	Food safety innovation and new technologies, food integrity and traceability, food sustainability, risk assessment, management and communication, climate change mitigation (food chain), knowledge transfer, foresight studies, transnational food research

## 5.3 Expressions of interest in role of Chairperson of the Expert Facilitator Group

The services of Chairperson of the EFG shall be chosen from the ten selected tender applications and **safefood** welcomes expressions of interest in this regard. All such declarations of interest should be supported with relevant supplementary information (please see appendix 1).

## 6. Time Commitment, Remuneration and Duration

The service requirement for members of the EFG shall be for a period of three years. There will be five meetings per year of the EFG with meetings generally requiring a whole day. These meetings shall alternate between Belfast and Dublin. Short bilateral meetings between **safefood** personnel and EFG facilitators may also be required; these will be convened at a venue convenient for the EFG facilitator. In addition, EFG facilitators shall be expected to attend two to three KN events throughout the year. Such attendance will be dependent on the



nature and relevance of the event for each EFG member and the contribution that their respective expertise and experience would facilitate.

**safefood** and the EFG shall consider as required the possibility of smaller sub-group(s), formed as required to focus on specific issues.

The facilitation service fee payable for membership of the EFG shall be €6,000 per annum in addition to vouched travel and subsistence expenses. Travel and subsistence expenses will not exceed civil service allowances. There is an additional fee of €2,000 attached to the supplementary service of Chairperson of the EFG. Please note that funding for successful EFG members will be provided through their employment authority for the provision of a professional service. It is not a contract of employment.

**safefood** shall monitor progress of the Knowledge Network on an ongoing basis and carry out, in association with the EFG facilitators, a formal review of the 2016 KN programme after 18 months to ensure that the new KN concept is organised, focused and fit-for-purpose. Funding for the final 18 months services is contingent on the successful delivery of the key objectives of the New 2016 Knowledge Network Configuration.

## **7. Evaluation of Tenders for the Network Facilitator Services**

**safefood** will ensure a confidential, fair, and equitable evaluation of tender applications. Network Facilitator applications must be relevant to both the **safefood** and Knowledge network requirements as indicated above (Section 4 & 5) in this document. All eligible applications shall be evaluated following which **safefood** shall be in communication with all tender applicants.

### **7.1 Qualifying Criteria**

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

- (1) Addressing in full the requirements set out in this document (sections 4 and 5), and a stated ability to meet all requirements;
- (2) Demonstrate a strong knowledge and understanding of the food safety environment and infrastructure supporting the role specification above and aims of the Knowledge Network.
- (3) Demonstrated experience in one or more of the aforementioned categories of professional expertise (section 5.2);
- (4) Inclusion of all information requested.

Only those tender applications which satisfy all of the above qualifying criteria will be considered for further evaluation.

### **7.2 Award Criteria**

Tender contracts will be awarded to the ten highest-scoring qualifying tenders on the basis of demonstrated response to tender requirements, relevant experience and competencies by applying the following award criteria (and descriptors):

**Criteria 1: Meeting the Knowledge Network objectives**

Demonstrable evidence of high level strategic and lateral thinking around;

- (1) Assisting **safefood** in the development and promotion of the KN in order to promote and enhance awareness of food safety along the food supply chain on the island of Ireland;
- (2) Fostering cooperation, collaboration and synergies between key professionals and organisations in the food safety arena on the Iol and beyond.

**Criteria 2: Organisational and networking experience**

- (1) Experience of participation in, and coordination of, multi-disciplinary groups of professionals and/or networks;
- (2) Relevant committee and working group participation and leadership;
- (3) Cross-jurisdictional work experience.

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

- (1) Provision of technical, innovative and operational advice and guidance around current and future challenges and issues in regard to food safety pertaining to at least one of the Service Categories in section 5.2.
- (2) Previous experience of concept creativity and development in regard to fit-for-purpose scientific/technical newsletters, conferences and events;
- (3) Experience in food safety knowledge generation, information dissemination, policy formulation and the communication of scientific information or innovation;

**Criteria 4: Professional competence and qualities**

- (1) The capacity to think and act both strategically and analytically;
- (2) A demonstrated ability for collaborative problem solving and a commitment to fully participate in membership role;
- (3) Good judgement with a high level of integrity and responsibility.

## **8. Information Required**

All tenders must include the following:

- A Curriculum Vitae;
- A cover letter outlining how they meet the qualifying criteria for provision of the services listed above, **and** specifying which Service Category (section 5.2) for which they are applying;
- Completion of the 'Key Requirements Form' (please see appendix 1)

All tender applications must be made electronically to [knowledge@safefood.eu](mailto:knowledge@safefood.eu) marked for the attention of Dr Linda Gordon. If you wish your application to be facilitated in a different format, or have any queries, please contact Ms. Jadwiga O'Brien on +353 (0)21 2304100.

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

Tenderers should take care when submitting their tender applications as the Assessment Panel will make its recommendation(s) based on consideration of the documentation submitted. It is most important that the Cover letter, supporting Curriculum Vitae and 'Key Requirements Form' clearly demonstrate how a particular set of skills, expertise and experience meet the Qualifying and Award Criteria.

## 9. Time Frame for the Process

Tender applications must be received by 4 pm on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016. It is the responsibility of the tenderer 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 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016. It is expected that tender appointments will be confirmed towards the end of March 2015.

Successful tender applicants will have their appointment confirmed in writing by **safefood** and will be required to confirm, in writing, their acceptance. All other tender applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application once the appointments have been made.

## 10. 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 or HM Revenue & Customs;
- 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) Tenders delivered late will not be considered. In addition, incomplete tenders may be rejected;
- g) 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;

- h) Funding for the successful Network Facilitator Services will be provided through their employment authority for the provision of a professional service. It is not a contract of employment;
- i) Network contracts (including all payments) shall be issued and arranged only with the employment authority of the successful applicant, so named in the their CV;
- j) The decision of **safefood** will be final;
- k) Award of contract may be subject to a successful clarification meeting with the tenderer and it is anticipated that this meeting will be held during the weeks commencing 21<sup>st</sup> /28<sup>th</sup> March 2016.
- l) The tender should be emailed to [knowledgenetwork@safefood.eu](mailto:knowledgenetwork@safefood.eu) on or before 4pm on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016.
- m) Any queries should be emailed to [lgordon@safefood.eu](mailto:lgordon@safefood.eu) .

## **11. Conduct and Conflicts of Interest**

In regard to services provided by the EFG, members must disclose any information or personal connections which, if their application was successful, could lead to a conflict of interest or be perceived as such.

