



Food Safety Skills Fund Programme Guidelines – 2024

Programme Guidelines for Participants

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Important Guideline Summary – please read carefully

- This programme is only available for members of the **safefood** Knowledge Network employed by organisations on the island of Ireland.
- **safefood** strongly promotes cross border & cross-sectoral exchanges and visits.
- Applicants must be resident & employed by organisations on the island of Ireland.
- **safefood** sponsored/funded programmes are excluded from the Food Safety Skills Fund.
- **safefood** will fund a limited number of bursaries in each calendar year, each up to a maximum of €1200 or sterling equivalent (subject to reasonable vouched costs travel & subsistence rates in line with the prevailing civil service subsistence rates. Please refer to “Costs” on page 6 for further details).
- A “cap” of 4 funded bursaries per organisation per calendar year is in place, it is therefore strongly recommended that enquiries are made by email to fssf@safefood.net prior to completing an application to avoid disappointment.
- Applications for travel outside of a programme year may only be submitted from the beginning of the relevant programme year. Selection of successful applications shall be on a first-come first-served basis or until such time as the programme fund is used. All travel/visits need to be completed by the end of December of the applicable programme year.
- **safefood** will not be responsible for the loss of monies relating to missed/curtailed/cancelled travel or event attendance costs – **safefood** strongly recommends the participant obtain travel insurance (at their expense) that would provide cover for such circumstances.

Applications should be sent to:

Ms. Tracey Thompson
Knowledge Network Food Safety Skills Fund
safefood
7 Eastgate Avenue
Eastgate Business Park
Little Island
Co. Cork
Republic of Ireland
T45 RX01

For further information, please contact: Ms. Tracey Thompson at +353 21 230 4100 or Email: fssf@safefood.net

1. Background to the **safefood** Knowledge Network Food Safety Skills Fund

The overall purpose of the **safefood** Knowledge Network is to create linkages between food safety professionals on the island of Ireland. We are a community of professionals with an interest in food safety who meet, share and exchange information and knowledge. The Knowledge Network has international linkages and we provide opportunities to develop your professional skills.

The **safefood** Food Safety Skills Fund enables Knowledge Network members to visit and spend time in another organisation to develop their knowledge/expertise in an area related to the scope of the **safefood** Knowledge Network. Participants can broaden their expertise, exchange knowledge and encourage collaboration to enhance food safety between organisations and/or disciplines.

We have issued the following guidelines to provide you with information on this programme offered by **safefood**, and to help you complete the application form. Application forms are available on the **safefood** Knowledge Network website, www.safefoodkn.net or alternatively from Ms. Tracey Thompson at **safefood** Tel: + 353 21 230 4100 or email: fssf@safefood.net

2. General Information

Participants are advised that:

- This programme is only open to those who are employed by organisations on the island of Ireland with a professional interest in food safety.
- This Food Safety Skills Fund covers only applications in the subject matter of the specific Knowledge Network of which the applicant is a member. The purpose of the programme is to facilitate a member to visit another organisation or Centre of Excellence, attend a conference, workshop or seminar or to attend a training course.
- This Food Safety Skills Fund is only available for programmes not already funded or sponsored by **safefood**.
- The application must demonstrate that the proposed visit has significant food safety and public health merit. The application should demonstrate how the proposed transfer of any knowledge gained will be facilitated within the **safefood** Knowledge Network. Exchanges between different sectors (e.g., industry and academia) are particularly encouraged.
- Bursaries will only be awarded where the knowledge and expertise gained can provide benefit across a particular sector/discipline/network.
- This programme is open only to those who reside on the island of Ireland.

- Only one application will be funded for travel to any one particular event.
- There will be no more than 4 funded bursaries per organisation in any one calendar year. This may be reviewed by **safefood** on an ongoing basis. It is therefore recommended that any interested applicants contact **safefood** at fssf@safefood.net to enquire whether funding is still available to their home organisation prior to completing and submitting an application.
- It is the responsibility of the participant and their employing organisation to arrange all aspects of the visit with the host organisation, including initial contacts.
- This call for applications is for members of the **safefood** Knowledge Network only.
- This programme will fund vouched costs, up to a maximum of **€1,200.00, or Sterling equivalent** (subject to reasonable vouched costs travel & subsistence rates in line with the prevailing civil service subsistence rates. Please refer to “Costs” on page 6 for further details).
- A programme year commences on the 1st of January and is completed on the 31st of December.
- All eligible applications will be evaluated. If required, a copy of the evaluation criteria is available from **Ms. Tracey Thompson** at **safefood** on **Tel: + 353 21 230 4100**.

3. Conditions of Application

- 1) Proposals will not be accepted if the application is:
 - a. Incomplete
 - b. Not signed by the appropriate authority
 - c. Received after 1st December of the relevant programme year
 - d. For travel after 31st December of the relevant programme year
- 2) **safefood** accepts no responsibility for applications improperly made or incomplete.
- 3) The decision of **safefood** on any application is final.

4. Application Procedure

The applicant and his/her Line Manager must both complete the application and submits it by post to **safefood** **6 weeks before travel**.

- **safefood** checks the application is eligible and acknowledges its receipt by email.
- **safefood** evaluates all eligible applications and informs the applicants of the outcome of the evaluation.
- **safefood** issues two copies of the Food Safety Skills Fund contract to successful applicants. The applicant and Line Manager must sign both copies of the Food Safety Skills Fund contract, and return them to **safefood** together with confirmed travel dates, at least **4 weeks before travel**.

- **safefood** will send the applicant all relevant documentation along with formal notification that the visit will be funded.
- The applicant must return the following documents to **safefood** no later than **four weeks after completing** the visit;
 - Certificate of Attendance
 - A typed “End of Visit Report” in Word format (to include a maximum 600 worded article for the Network e-newsletter and delegate attendance photograph/s)
 - Expense Claim Form and **all original** travel receipts **in the name of the participant**
 - **Original** course/conference invoice (if applicable)

When all the completed documents have been received and approved, **safefood** will reimburse the applicant as per the programme conditions. Note: Approved applications cannot be subsequently transferred to another organisation member.

5. General Programme Conditions

General provisions

- 1) **safefood** is not responsible for the remuneration of a participant’s salary or for the provision of a locum/replacement staff member for the duration of the participant’s exchange or visit.
- 2) **safefood** will not be responsible for the loss of monies relating to missed/curtailed/cancelled travel or event attendance costs – **safefood** strongly recommends the participant obtain travel insurance (at their expense) that would provide cover for such circumstances.
- 3) It is the participant’s sole responsibility to ensure that, if required, he/she has adequate travel insurance.
- 4) **safefood** is not responsible for any injury or ill effect suffered by a participant during the course of an exchange or visit. The participant must ensure that he/she is covered under the relevant personal indemnity insurance policies of the host organisation or establishment.
- 5) **safefood** requires acknowledgement of its support in all relevant public outputs, including publications.
- 6) **safefood** or any of its representatives may audit a contract at any time.
- 7) **safefood** Food Safety Skills Fund contracts are non-negotiable.

Costs

- 1) **safefood** will refund all **reasonable** vouched costs in line with the prevailing civil service travel and subsistence rates (within the maximum bursary specified - €1200 or Sterling equivalent at the time of contract in each case) incurred while travelling from your home organisation to the host organisation. Receipts in the name of the participant are required for all accommodation, travel, subsistence and course/conference costs, up to a maximum of €1200 or Sterling equivalent. Original itemised transaction receipts should be included – credit card receipts alone are not accepted.
- 2) Costs such as accommodation may vary significantly depending upon location and country therefore it is essential that applicants seek **prior approval** for such costs from **safefood** that may be deemed to be in excess of prevailing civil service travel and subsistence rates. Supporting documentation will be required. If prior approval is not sought, then **safefood** will only refund the cost of accommodation based on the prevailing civil service travel and subsistence rates.
- 3) Travel costs incurred i.e., rail coach or air etc., must be based on the most economic rate of travel, i.e., standard economy rate. Local and regional travel will only be covered if it is directly linked to the participant's visit. Should a participant choose to incur travel and subsistence costs at a premium rate, **safefood** will only reimburse costs based on the prevailing civil service travel and subsistence rates.
- 4) Travel by car will only be acceptable if there is no alternative, more economical, means of transport, i.e., rail coach or air. (Rate per Km: €0.4087 cent)
- 5) Taxis may only be used to travel from/to the host organisation, the overnight accommodation (if appropriate) and railway station/airport.
- 6) As value for money will be assessed, extraordinary expenses will require a detailed justification of the costs. All travel expenses must be shown to be directly relevant to the exchange or visit.
- 7) Applicants must include details of the course costs (where appropriate) in their application form and attach a copy of the course brochure/leaflet.
- 8) Hospitality costs including alcohol are not allowable.

Payment of expenses

No staged payments will be made. Total payment will be made on acceptance by **safefood** of:

- 1) A satisfactory End of Visit Report (to include 600 word (max) article for the Network e-newsletter) and accompanying photograph(s), using the safefood report format.
- 2) Fully completed Expense Claim Forms accompanied by originals of all relevant travel receipts in the name of the participant. (NB: Any receipts issued in the name of the employing organisation must be

accompanied by a letter from the employing organization indicating that the participant will reimburse the employing organisation any monies paid by their organisation on their behalf).

- 3) Signed Certificate of Attendance.
- 4) Original of the course/conference invoice (if applicable).
- 5) Photograph of participant attending the agreed programme.
- 6) The documents must be submitted to safefood no later than four weeks after completion of the visit.

6. Guidance on Completing the Application Form

The purpose of this section is to help the applicant make a good quality application. The points below relate to each question on the Application Form.

- 1) Applicant Details (Network member) applying to participate in the programme.
- 2) Work Contract Details. The Home Organisation is the applicant's normal place of work. All correspondence relating to the application will be sent to this address.
- 3) Confirmation that applicant is a member of a safefood Knowledge Network.
- 4) Line Manager. This is the Line Manager of the Home Organisation who will sign the Food Safety Skills Fund contract if the application is successful.
- 5) An overview of the Applicant's experience. Please indicate if the applicant has participated previously on a safefood Food Safety Skills Fund. General duties should be outlined, with particular reference to food safety responsibilities. The applicant's main academic qualifications and other relevant professional credentials should be listed.
- 6) Details of Event & Host Organisation. Information pertaining to the event i.e., the Name of the Event/Workshop/Conference/Training Programme and where it is to be held (if there is a website relating to the event, this should be included in the application. The host organisation is the organisation and department therein, responsible for the event organisation (this may differ from the event name and location). Contact details for the organiser or organisation with whom the applicant intends to work must be given.
- 7) Dates and times of visit and estimation of travel and/or course costs. Please give the dates and times of the visit as near as possible if they are not confirmed at time of application — these may be subsequently amended up until the contract is signed (include all time spent travelling to and from the host organisation). The applicant should also give a breakdown of estimated rail, air or car costs as appropriate.

- 8) Applicants are required to include any estimated course/conference costs (if relevant) in their application form together with a brochure/information leaflet of website link.
- 9) Outline the specific purpose of the intended visit. Give a very brief account of the purpose of the visit and indicate its relevance to the applicant's organisation's food safety work.
- 10) Addressing gaps in food safety and its added value. The applicant must indicate how the visit will result in a concrete and tangible benefit and/or address current gaps in knowledge in food safety, e.g. will new production methods, new tests or methodologies be introduced or will existing protocols/procedures be improved? What expertise exists in the host organisation that will assist the applicant in this regard?
- 11) Description of activities that will take place during the visit/exchange. The applicant must give a brief outline of the work schedule, the type of work that the applicant will engage in.
- 12) Undertaking to share learning and knowledge gained; it is a contractual condition of the safefood programme that successful applicants agree to share any potential learning and knowledge gained with other food safety professionals, both within your home organisation and with other Network members. The applicant must indicate how the transfer such knowledge is proposed.
- 13) End of Visit Report to safefood. A very short, standardised End of Visit Report will be required from successful applicants on completion of their visit and in addition to the End of Visit Report, there should be a 600 word (max) non-technical article which may be used for the Network e-newsletter.
- 14) safefood reserves the right to use any part of these reports, including any photographs provided in your end of visit report, for the purpose of evaluating and promoting the Food Safety Skills Fund.
- 15) Undertaking to take suitable quality photographs. Applicants must agree to take photographs during their visit of a quality suitable for publication. These may be used alongside the newsletter article and for promotional purposes generally. The photograph/s should include pictures of the delegate in a location on the conference site with signage referencing the conference. Please also for GDPR purposes the pictures should NOT include anyone else.
- 16) Successful applicants must agree to and be in acceptance of all provisions and conditions as listed in the Guidelines for Participants before safefood approves any application. Participants agree to maintain records of all travel expenditure. safefood requires each participant to retain all travel receipts arising from participation in the safefood Food Safety Skills Fund.
- 17) Both the participant and the Line Manager should print their names in capital letters and sign the application form. The form must also bear the official Home organisation stamp.