



CALL FOR PROPOSALS¹ AND GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Call reference: EUBA-EFSA-2024-ENREL-01

Call title: Selection of hosting sites and fellows for EFSA's European Food Risk Assessment Fellowship (EU-FORA) Programme

Budget Line: 3210

Project/process code: EPA07.02-L3

Restricted to **the list of competent organisations** established by the Authority's Management Board in application of article 2 the Commission Regulation (EC) No 2230/2004 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 with regard to the network of organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's remit.

Brief description of the call objectives and key messages: The call seeks to identify consortia of hosting sites and fellow sending organisations, both of which must be competent organisations under Article 36 of the Regulation (EC) 178/2002, EFSA's Founding Regulation. The sending organisation will propose a fellow to be trained under a work programme offered by the other consortium partner, who will act as hosting site and will be responsible for the training of the fellow. Hosting sites are expected to have a strong capacity and broad experience in one or more activities relevant to food safety risk assessment. The focus of the EU-FORA fellowship programme will be targeted to activities falling within EFSA's remit.

¹ The SENSITIVE marking is applied to EFSA documents that need to be protected due to their sensitive nature. Mandatory handling instructions for SENSITIVE information are given at <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/corporate-pubs/handling-sensitive-information-snc-issued-efsa>



INDICATIVE PROCEDURE TIMETABLE

Milestone	Date ²	Comments
Launch date	26/11/2024	Date of call publication on EFSA's website and Funding & Tender portal.
Deadline for applicants to raise clarification questions to EFSA	12/03/2025	If, after having read this Call for proposals and guide for applicants, you have any questions, you may address them to EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu by indicating the Call reference.
Deadline for EFSA to reply to clarification questions	14/03/2025	Replies will be provided on EFSA's webpage where this Call is published and which the applicants are requested to consult regularly.
Deadline for submission of proposals	20/03/2025 At 17:00 (CET)	Applicants can submit proposals by following the instructions in section 3.1 of this call for proposals. All applications must be submitted through the EU Funding and Tenders portal, following the instructions provided. Hard copy paper applications will not be accepted.
Notification of the evaluation results	June 2025	Estimated <i>Attention: outcome of the present call will be communicated to all applicants to the e-mail address indicated in their proposal. Accordingly, applicants who have submitted proposals under the present call are strongly invited to check regularly the inbox in question.</i>
Grant agreement(s) signature	June 2025	Estimated

² All times are in the time zone of the country of the EFSA.



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Annex 1: Draft grant agreement

Documents to be submitted with proposals (to be downloaded from the EU Funding and Tender portal Submission Service, see section 2 'Selecting proposal'):

Annex 2: Administrative Declaration

Annex 3: Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria

Annex 4: Declaration on honour on selection criteria

Annex 5: Selection criteria template (all requirements including CVs)

Annex 6: Award criteria template



1. GRANT OPPORTUNITY AND CONDITIONS³

1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Article 36 (1) of the Regulation (EC) 178/2002⁴ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety, stipulates that the Authority shall promote the European networking of organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission. The aim of such networking is, in particular, to facilitate a scientific cooperation framework by the coordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects⁵, the exchange of expertise and best practices in the fields within the Authority's mission. The list of competent organisations designated by the Member States, which may assist EFSA with its mission, is approved and regularly updated by EFSA's Management Board. The full list of Article 36 organisations can be found [here](#).

EFSA's founding regulation was amended by Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain.

The Commission Regulation (EC) 2230/2004 of 23 December 2004 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) 178/2002 with regard to the network of organisations operating in the fields within the EFSA's mission specifies in Article 4 that tasks may be entrusted by the Authority to organisations on the list of competent organisations.

The present call specifically focuses on the below tasks defined in Article 4(3):

1. disseminating best practices and improving methods of collecting and analysing scientific and technical data, particularly for the purposes of facilitating comparability and producing a Community-level summary;
2. preparing the harmonisation of risk assessment methods.

Article 5(2) of the Commission Regulation (EC) 2230/2004⁶ of 23 December 2004 specifies that the financial support to the networking organisations shall take the form of subsidies (grants) awarded in accordance with the EFSA's financial regulation and implementing rules.

The present Call for proposals and guide for applicants (hereinafter referred to as "the Call") is procedurally governed by Title VIII of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024⁷).

³ The applicant is reminded that this Call and guide for applicants contains a selection of the most important conditions for the grant implementation. For the full set of conditions, the applicant is invited to consult the draft grant agreement in Annex 1 of this Call.

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:031:0001:0024:EN:PDF>

⁵ Project is frequently referred to in this Call as "action", in line with EU Financial Regulation terminology.

⁶ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:379:0064:0067:EN:PDF>

⁷ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj>



This call is based on EFSA Founding regulation⁸ and EFSA's 2024 Work Programme for grants and operational procurements as presented in Annex XII of the Programming Document 2024-2026, available on the EFSA's website⁹.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

BACKGROUND

In 2016, in close cooperation with EFSA's Advisory Forum and Focal Points, EFSA established the European Food Risk Assessment Fellowship (EU-FORA) Programme to help achieve EFSA's strategic objectives. Moreover, EFSA's Strategy 2027 Strategic Objective No. 2 states that EFSA should ensure preparedness for future risk analysis needs. The expected outcome under Strategic Objective No. 2 is to achieve increased risk analysis capabilities (knowledge, expertise, methodologies, and data) to maintain relevance for the future.

The legal framework for the programme is Article 23(b) (Tasks) of EFSA's Founding Regulation: "To promote and coordinate the development of uniform risk assessment methodologies in the fields falling within its mission".

With all this in mind, the EU-FORA programme establishes a 12-month learning-by-doing fellowship, the objectives of which are to:

- increase the pool of experts available in Europe;
- stimulate the involvement of Member States in regulatory risk assessment work;
- build a common EU culture for risk assessment;

The professionals that participate in the programme as fellows, supervisors, tutors, programme coordinators and others will constitute a pool of experts, available to support the risk assessment activities of EFSA and the Member States. The programme contributes to strengthening the overall capacity in regulatory food safety risk assessment in Europe allowing more countries to support such activities at European level.

Furthermore, the exchange of staff (fellows) through the programme and the interaction between supervisors, tutors, coordinators and others from different EU countries and different EU institutions, will greatly contribute to the harmonisation of food safety risk assessment methodologies in Europe and the subsequent building of a common EU risk assessment culture. The first 12-month cycle of fellowships started in September 2017 and since then, over 100 fellows have already graduated, constituting the so-called EU-FORA Alumni.

Each 12-month fellowship is complemented by a common training programme of seven weeks in total, comprising one three-week induction training module and four one-week training modules (see 1.2.8 The training programme to complement the 'learning by doing' fellowship for more information).

The focus of the EU-FORA fellowship programme will be targeted to activities falling within EFSA's remit, so as to attract professionals from relevant fields such as: agriculture, biochemistry, bioinformatics, biology, biometrics, biotechnology, chemistry, dietary exposure, environmental sciences, epidemiology, food science, food technology, genetics, health and food safety, human

⁸ Regulation (EC) 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain.

⁹ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-01/programming-document-2024-2026.pdf>



medicine, life sciences, mathematics, microbiology, molecular biology, natural sciences, nutrition, pharmacy, public health, statistics, toxicology, veterinary medicine or related areas.

Funding, organising, steering and monitoring the EU-FORA fellowship programme is the responsibility of EFSA.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

The specific objectives of this call are to:

- (1) **select hosting sites** for the training of one or more fellows for a period of 12 months; and
- (2) **select fellows** as proposed by their institutions of origin.

Specifically, the call seeks to identify **consortia of hosting sites and fellow sending organisations**, both of which must be competent organisations¹⁰ under Article 36 of the Regulation (EC) 178/2002, EFSA's Founding Regulation. The sending organisation will propose a fellow to be trained under a work programme offered by the other consortium partner, who will act as hosting site and will be responsible for the training of the fellow. Hosting sites are expected to have a strong capacity and broad experience in one or more activities relevant to food safety risk assessment.

In order to achieve the objectives of the Call, the two eligible organisations (competent organisations under Art. 36 of the EFSA founding regulation) must be from **two different** EU countries, Norway or Iceland.

The detailed selection and award criteria to be used to select the fellow hosting sites and the fellows are listed in section 2.4 & 2.5 of this call for proposals.

1.2.1 Obligations and benefits of becoming a fellow hosting site

Obligations:

The fellow hosting site is responsible for the design of the work programme, its implementation and the overall training of the fellow.

The fellow hosting sites need to appoint a supervisor for each fellow¹¹ according to the criteria listed in Section 2.4 and propose the area and range of activities, in the form of a work programme, in which the fellow(s) will be involved during the 12-month assignment. The details of this work programme, including the learning objectives, will be finalized in agreement between the assigned fellow and the supervisor at the start of the fellowship period.

Appendix A provides a list of scientific topics, each with a brief description of a scientific challenge and a corresponding desired output, which applicant organisations to this call can consider when deciding on the work programme to be proposed. These topics fall into areas of interest of EFSA, which may have relevance to future risk assessment needs. Applicant organisations may opt for a work programme that includes in whole or in part one or more of the topics of the aforementioned list. Please note, however, that using the topics of the list is **not mandatory**. Hence, including (or not) a topic from the list in the proposed work programme will **not** affect the way that the proposal will be evaluated, and will have **no** impact on EFSA's financial contribution or any of the project's implementation modalities.

During the fellow's stay at the hosting site indicated in the proposal (set with a minimum of 3 months, see below), the fellow hosting site coordinates the activities of the fellow placed in its premises. All

¹⁰ <https://efsa.my.site.com/competentorganisations/s/>

¹¹ The applicant does not have to provide individual named supervisors at this stage.



activities of the fellow must comply with host country administrative labour law, regulations and codes of conduct. It is important to note, however, that the fellow is not an 'employee' of the hosting site but remains an employee of the organisation of origin.

Moreover, EFSA should not be responsible for any breach of national legislation of the fellow hosting site. **EFSA will not be directly liable to the fellows for any payments or reimbursement due to the fellow's stay at the hosting site.** Should EFSA incur in any costs for defending any legal action resulting from the fellowship within the hosting site country, it reserves the right to seek legal compensation from the fellow hosting site.

The fellow's stay at the hosting site is set with **a minimum of three (3) months**. EFSA does not prescribe the maximum duration of the stay of the fellow at the hosting site, as long as the minimum duration is three (3) months. However, it is to be noted that **EFSA will not increase the grant amount** in any case and that the length of the stay (if longer than the minimum required) will not be considered an award criterion.

The stay at the hosting site can be split into several shorter periods with no limitation as long as the total length of the stay remains within the stated range (minimum of 3 months, no maximum prescribed). However, splitting the placement in shorter periods should not jeopardise its ultimate objective of enhancing networking and supporting the learning by doing.

During their placement at the hosting site, the fellow should be entitled to leave days, justified absences and working hours equivalent to those of other individuals working at the hosting organisation. However, leaves are to be avoided during the period the fellow will attend the on-site placement at the hosting site and must be agreed in advance between the employer of the fellow and the hosting site. **Leaves must not be taken during the induction training and four one-week training sessions.**

Depending on the nature of the work programme, hosting sites may ask fellows to sign a confidentiality agreement covering the duration of the work programme. This will be dependent upon the work to be carried out by the fellow at the hosting site and is to be decided between the sending organisation and the fellow hosting site.

The fellow hosting site will sign a grant agreement with EFSA as the leading partner in the consortium.

If a fellow hosting site successfully applies for and is granted more than one fellow, the fellow hosting site will receive one lump sum grant per confirmed fellow and will sign one grant agreement for each fellow. Further information on the evaluation of applications and ranking, in particular in situations where one fellow hosting site applies to host more than one fellow, is included in section 2.5.

Benefits:

As a fellow hosting site, the hosting organisation will have the opportunity to (1) profit from the skills and knowledge a fellow will bring from their institution of origin; (2) understand the issues and perspectives of colleagues in other countries; (3) strengthen bilateral co-operations with other institutions. Moreover, during the 12-month fellowship, the fellow will become part of the scientific workforce of the fellow hosting site, contributing to their tasks and activities.

The fellow hosting site will also benefit from the participation of the appointed supervisor(s) to the EU-FORA Community and the publication of the technical summary report of the work performed by the fellow under the proposed work programme in a special issue of the EFSA journal.



Additionally, all the material produced by the training contractor's team¹² for the modular training throughout the year may be used also for teaching purposes in the fellow hosting sites.

1.2.2 Obligations and benefits of the fellow hosting site supervisor

Obligations:

The fellow hosting site will assign a supervisor to each fellow hosted.¹³ The supervisor is expected to:

- Define the work programme for the fellow;
- Be the fellow's closest supervisor/mentor during the 12-month fellowship and therefore, they are expected to create an environment and conditions so that the learning objectives can be achieved by the fellow.
- Supervise the implementation of the 'learning by doing' assignment, regularly liaise with EFSA, and ensure smooth integration of the fellow;

At least 8 hours per week will have to be invested in the supervising and mentoring of each fellow, of which at least 2 hours should be carried out by the appointed supervisor.

Supervisors are nominated by the fellow hosting site, and it should be noted that there will not be a separate call for supervisors.

Benefits:

The supervisor will have the opportunity to work closely with EFSA and will become part of the EU-FORA Community. They may also appreciate getting to know colleagues from across Europe, build a common forum with other hosting site supervisors to exchange experience and best practice as well as supporting and promoting promising talents in the food risk assessment community.

1.2.3 Obligations and benefits of becoming a fellow sending organisation

Obligations:

The sending organisation shall identify an eligible fellow according to the criteria listed in section 2.4, and in agreement with the hosting organisation with which they will co-submit the application. Sending organisations are encouraged to identify in the proposal an alternate fellow as potential replacement in case of non-eligibility of the first proposed fellow during the assessment phase of the proposal or in case of early drop-out of the programme by the appointed fellow.

The proposed fellow(s) (and alternate(s), if applicable) to be trained must not have been a fellow in past editions of the EU-FORA Programme.

The fellow's employer must continue to pay their salary, to maintain their administrative status throughout the period of fellowship, and to inform EFSA of any change in the fellow's status in this regard.

The sending organisation shall ensure that the appointed fellow be released from their regular duties in order to perform the work programme, including participation in the common scheduled training activities where the fellow is obliged to take part, i.e. the induction training and the four one-week training modules spread throughout the 12-month fellowship period. The fellow sending organisation will ensure that any activity performed by the fellow will not prevent them from performing the work programme and following the mandatory trainings.

¹² Under call for tenders OC/EFSA/ENCO/2021/01 "Developing, organizing and delivering of training activities under the EFSA European Food Risk Assessment Fellowship Programme", a contractor was selected to design training materials and deliver training. Those training materials are the property of EFSA and will be made available to the fellow hosting sites and fellow sending institutions upon request, including any subsequent updates.

¹³ See footnote 11.



The fellow should also continue to be entitled to leave days, justified absences and working hours equivalent to those of other individuals working at the fellow sending organisation. However, leaves are to be avoided in particular during the period the fellow will attend the on-site placement at the hosting site and must be agreed in advance between the employer of the fellow and the hosting site. **Leaves must not be taken during the induction training and four one-week training modules.**

The fellow's employer must also pay all travel and accommodation expenses related to their physical presence at the hosting site and participation in the work programme. Travel and accommodation expenses related to attendance at the induction training and the one-week training modules will be covered by the training provider through a contract signed with EFSA.

During the fellow's stay at the hosting site (see further details above), all activities of the fellow must comply with host country administrative labour law, regulations and codes of conduct. It is important to note that EFSA should not be responsible for any breach of national legislation of the fellow hosting site. **EFSA will not be directly liable to the fellows for any payments or reimbursement due to the fellow at the hosting site.** Should EFSA incur in any costs for defending any legal action resulting from the fellowship within the hosting site country, it reserves the right to seek legal compensation either from the fellow sending organisation and/or the fellow hosting site.

Benefits:

The organisation of origin of the fellow will benefit from (1) the knowledge and experience in different aspects of food safety risk assessment that the fellow will acquire and bring back after the completion of the programme; (2) the direct contacts established with the fellow hosting site; (3) the publication of a technical summary report of the scientific work performed under the Programme in a special issue of the EFSA journal; and (4) the participation in the EU-FORA Community.

Additionally, all the material produced by the training contractor's team¹⁴ for the modular training throughout the year may be used also for teaching purposes in the fellow sending institution.

1.2.4 Obligations and benefits of becoming a fellow

Obligations:

Attendance to EU-FORA induction training and training modules is mandatory, and both hosting site and institution of origin shall facilitate this.

Leaves are to be avoided in particular during the period the fellow will attend the on-site placement at the hosting site and must be agreed in advance between the employer of the fellow and the hosting site. **Leaves must not be taken during the induction training and four one-week training sessions.**

The fellow must comply with any legal requirements, regulations or codes of conduct which are required of the regular staff of the fellow hosting site during the time they are placed there.

Selected fellows may also be asked to complete a declaration of interest or sign a confidentiality agreement by the hosting organisation during the time of placement. This will be dependent upon the work to be carried out by the fellow at the hosting site and is to be decided by the fellow hosting site.

¹⁴ See footnote 12.

**Benefits:**

With the participation in the fellowship programme, fellows will gain an extended and practical knowledge of scientific aspects related to food safety risk assessment, such as how to collect and analyse relevant data, how to select and apply risk assessment methodologies, how to use computer models in risk assessment, or how to provide effective risk communication.

Fellows will be inspired by the many interesting, innovative and enthusiastic people of the food risk assessment knowledge community they will meet during the 12-month period. They will stay in touch with these colleagues and actively shape the EU-FORA Alumni network and, subsequently, the EU-FORA Community.

The fellow's participation in the programme will be rewarded by a certificate of participation issued by EFSA and the technical report of their scientific work may be published in a special issue of the EFSA journal.

1.2.5 Accumulation of roles

Competent organisations may undertake different and accumulated roles in the participation of the EU-FORA programme. They can apply to become a fellow hosting site and/or send fellows to participate in the programme.

It is possible for a single hosting site to train more than one fellow, e.g. via participation in more than one different consortium or in a consortium where more than one fellow is identified by the fellow sending organisation. The maximum number of fellows to be trained in a hosting site **under the same work programme** is three (3) fellows. The maximum number of assignments per country is set to a maximum of five (5) fellow placements per country.

1.2.6 Overall fellow selection and placement process

Fellows will be identified by their sending organisation in agreement with the hosting organisation and selected following the criteria listed in section 2.4. **Sending organisations are encouraged to identify in their proposals an alternate fellow as potential replacement in case of non-eligibility of the first proposed fellow during the assessment phase of the proposal or in case of early drop-out of the programme by the appointed fellow.**

During the fellowship, fellows will remain at their place of employment except for the time to attend the trainings intended as physical events¹⁵ and the time indicated in the proposal for the placement at the hosting site. These placements (set with a minimum of 3 months, no maximum prescribed¹⁶) are intended to enhance networking and to support learning by doing. The duration, learning and training objectives of the placement are to be indicated in the proposal. The suitability of the fellow for the proposed work programme will also be evaluated.

Early drop-out of a fellow: in the event of a fellow deciding to drop out of the programme prior to the commencement of the programme or at any time during the first two months, the consortium will provide written justification to EFSA. On a case-by-case basis, EFSA, in consultation with the consortium shall consider the individual circumstances¹⁷ of the drop out and reserves the right to

¹⁵ See 1.2.8 The training programme to complement the 'learning by doing' fellowship for further information.

¹⁶ See 1.2.1 Obligations and benefits of becoming a fellow hosting site.

¹⁷ Evidence of family bereavement, serious illness of the fellow or immediate family member or any other extenuating circumstances would not result in proportional recovery of the grant.



recover¹⁸ proportionally the grant for the period already undertaken and to terminate the agreement. However, at such an early stage in the programme, the consortium, in consultation with EFSA, would have the possibility to consider the alternate fellow identified in the proposal as potential replacement, if applicable. If for any reason, the alternate fellow would not be available/was not identified in the proposal, the grant agreement would be terminated, and written reasons should be provided by the consortium to EFSA in order to document the drop out of the original fellow. If a suitable replacement is found, the grant agreement with the consortium will continue, and any financial/administrative matters will be documented and agreed in writing accordingly.

Drop-out of a fellow after the first two months: In the event a fellow drops out of the programme any time after the first two months, the grant agreement should be terminated and reasons for the termination documented by the consortium. On a case-by-case basis, EFSA, in consultation with the hosting site, shall consider the individual circumstances¹⁹ related to the drop out and reserves the right to recover²⁰ proportionally the grant. It would not be possible to offer the fellowship to the alternate fellow in the proposal as any new replacement fellow would have missed the initial phase of the programme, preventing proper performance during the remaining of the programme.

1.2.7 Support provided to the fellows, fellow sending organisations and the fellow hosting sites

The management of the Fellowship Programme is ensured by EFSA through a Programme Manager, who will liaise with both the fellow(s), the fellow sending organisation and the fellow hosting site supervisor(s) at the fellow hosting site and will also act as observer in the training modules. The Programme Manager will also organise remote or in-person meetings along the fellowship with all the parties to assure the smooth integration of the fellow and progress of the programme.

Issues related to the satisfactory performance of the agreed work programme: in case of issues arising during the 12-month fellowship (e.g. professional or personal issues either on the part of the fellow, the fellow's sending organisation or the fellow hosting site) with impact on the satisfactory performance of the agreed work programme, the fellow sending organisation, the fellow hosting site, the hosting site supervisor, and the fellow shall consult in the first instance the Programme Manager at EFSA. It will be assessed, on a case-by-case basis, the situation and the actions to be taken. Any proposed action should be documented by EFSA, communicated to all parties and the necessary steps taken in order to address the issues.

1.2.8 The training programme to complement the 'learning by doing' fellowship

Training modules: These common training modules are intended to complement the 12-month 'learning by doing' fellowship. They will last seven weeks in total and are **compulsory**. The fellow's hosting site and the fellow's sending organisation will need to plan the programme they offer to accommodate the training module dates, which will be fixed by EFSA, to allow all fellows to attend²¹.

The modules will be composed as follows:

1. Induction training (3 weeks) at the start of the programme in September 2025, at EFSA's premises in Parma, Italy.

¹⁸ Recovery would be by EFSA from the hosting site as the coordinator of the grant agreement.

¹⁹ See footnote 17.

²⁰ See footnote 18.

²¹ The decision to hold a training virtually or physically will be taken by EFSA closer to the time of the training and all parties will be informed in due time. Except in case of force majeure, the 3-week induction training will be held in person.



2. Four specific modules spread over the remainder of the 12-month period:

Module 1 (one week – estimated late November-early December 2025) covering:

- Animal Health and Welfare risk assessment
- GMO risk assessment
- Plant Health risk assessment
- Nutrition risk assessment
- Regulated Products risk assessment
- Environmental risk assessment

Module 2 (one week – estimated mid-March 2026) covering:

- Identification of Emerging Risks
- Nanomaterials and areas of application
- Adverse Outcome Pathway (AOP)
- Mode of Action (MoA) and the IATA approach
- OMICs in Risk Assessment
- Risk Ranking

Module 3 (one week – estimated mid-June 2026) covering:

- Introduction to Risk Communication and Crisis Response
- Risk perception
- Risk participation
- 'Hands-on' Risk Communication

Module 4 (one week – estimated late August 2026) covering:

- General introduction and Legislative background of data collection
- Guidance documents for data reporting
- Data models
- Catalogues and reporting tools
- Data validation

The training modules will be balanced between interactive teaching methods / case studies (50-60%) and theory (40-50%).

Training contractor: The training contractor is selected by EFSA via a procurement open call for tenders. The contractor will be responsible for organising, developing and delivering the compulsory training modules described above. In addition, the contractor is also responsible for all logistics such as travelling or accommodation of the fellows to attend the training if held physically.

The hosting sites and fellow's sending institutions have no active role in relation to the contractor's duties. It is simply requested to respect the time schedules for the training modules so that the fellows can attend all the compulsory training modules. It should be noted that the **travel and subsistence costs** of the fellow to attend all the above-mentioned trainings, are **not** to be paid by the fellow, their sending institutions or by the fellow hosting site. The contractor coordinating these trainings for EFSA will cover such costs.



1.3 TASKS, DELIVERABLES, TIMELINES, MEETINGS AND PAYMENTS

No.	Deliverables	Deadline
1	<p>Agreed work programme: A final finetuned version of the work programme (based on a template to be provided by EFSA following the signature of the grant agreement) will have to be co-submitted by the hosting site, in agreement with the fellow and the fellow sending organisation, no later than one month after the actual beginning of the fellowship.</p>	1 month from the start of the fellowship i.e. by 30/09/2025
2	<p>Interim Report: An interim report (based on a template to be provided by EFSA following signature of the grant agreement) will have to be co-submitted by the hosting site (for each fellow hosted) and the fellow's sending organisation, indicating the initial work plan, how it has been rolled out during the first six months of the placement and if progress is being made towards meeting the learning objectives defined between the fellow and the supervisor at the start of the placement. The interim report should be submitted by the coordinator (fellow hosting site) to EFSA six months from the commencement of the fellowship.</p>	6 months from the start of the work programme i.e. by 28/02/2026
3	<p>Final Report: A final report (based on a template to be provided by EFSA following signature of the grant agreement) will have to be co-submitted by the hosting site (for each fellow hosted) and the fellow's sending organisation, indicating the initial work plan, how it has been rolled out during the 12-month placement and if the learning objectives defined between the fellow and the supervisor at the start, have been met. The final report should be submitted by the coordinator (fellow hosting site) to EFSA no later than the end of July (1 month prior to the formal end of the work programme).</p>	1 month prior to the end of the work programme i.e. by 31/07/2026
4 (not linked to payment)	<p>Technical report Each fellow, with support of the hosting site supervisor, will draft a technical summary report (template to be provided by EFSA) of their scientific work at the hosting site. This technical summary report may be published in a special issue of the EFSA journal expected in Autumn 2024. This technical report should be provided to EFSA not later than the end of the fellowship (i.e. before 31st August 2026).</p>	at the end of the fellowship i.e. by 31/08/2026
5 (not linked to payment)	<p>Recorded slide show with or without video of the work programme performed Each fellow, with support of the hosting site supervisor, will prepare some slides (based on a template to be provided by EFSA following signature of the grant agreement) to present the outcomes of the work performed during the fellowship (information to be extracted from the technical report). The slides will need to: - Include notes</p>	at the end of the fellowship i.e. by 31/08/2026



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be recorded with narration for further use as training material (learning 'pill'). The fellow can opt for a video recording if preferred. The duration of the presentation should be between 5 and 10 minutes.²² This deliverable should be provided to EFSA not later than the end of the fellowship (i.e. before 31st August 2026). 	
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No.	Meetings	Deadline for finalisation
1	Although no physical meetings are foreseen between the fellow hosting site, the fellow's sending institution and EFSA, the fellow hosting site will be expected to liaise with the Programme manager to finalise arrangements for the commencement of the programme, as well as for follow-up during the 12-month placement.	As required

No.	Payment from EFSA to the fellow hosting site (coordinator)	Linked to EFSA approval of deliverable No.
1	Pre-Financing payment as specified in articles I.4.1 and I.5.2 of the draft grant agreement (Annex 1 of the call for Proposals).	Not linked to deliverables
2	Payment of the balance as specified in article I.4.4 and I.5.4 of the draft grant agreement (Annex 1 of the call for Proposals).	1/2/3

Deliverables must be drafted in English. The use of the grant deliverables may be subject to publication, subject to the terms and conditions set out in the draft grant agreement (Annex 1 of this call for proposals).

1.4 INFORMATION ON THE GRANT AGREEMENT

Applicants should note that the draft grant agreement is published with the call for proposals. If any applicant should have specific comments on the provisions of the draft grant agreement, these must be raised in a clarification, prior to the deadline for receipt of proposals so that a clear and transparent reply may be published for the benefit and information of all applicants.

1.4.1 Direct Agreement

This Call for proposals aims to conclude 15 Direct Grant Agreements.

The maximum duration of each Direct Agreement is **12 months** from the start of the induction training, which usually takes place the first week of September.

The total amount EFSA has available to award grants under this call for proposals is **€ 825,000**, based on a total amount per grant (for each fellow) of **€ 55,000**. The full amount will be paid on condition the fellowship programme is completed in full by the fellow and the deliverables under the grant are received and approved by EFSA. Evidence of actual costs incurred by both parties in the consortium are not required.

²² The material produced may be used by EFSA as learning/teaching material to be shared via virtual learning platforms.



As regards to the budget, please note the following: in the Funding and Tender opportunities portal submission service under Administrative Form (Part A) there is an obligatory field regarding the budget (section 3).

Applicants should insert the total amount (55,000 EUR) in the total field. In the Administrative Form the split of the budget between the two partners needs also to be indicated. However, please note that the amount allocated to each partner is not binding for the consortium as EFSA does not prescribe how the grant should be divided between the two organisations.

The total amount of the EFSA grant intends to support the costs incurred by the fellow sending organisation by releasing an employee of their tasks while they remain a staff member of the institution, as well as the costs derived from the payment of fellow expenses for physical attendance at hosting site. Moreover, the sum is intended to compensate the costs of supervision by the hosting site. Finally, the sum will serve to contribute to the administrative costs associated to the signature and implementation of the Programme by both organisations²³. The budget amount (€ 55,000) is intended to support all costs of both the fellow sending organisation and the hosting site, and EFSA does not prescribe how the grant should be divided between the two organisations. Such decision is entirely at the discretion of the consortium, but EFSA reminds that payment of the grant will only be made to the coordinator (fellow hosting site) and it is their responsibility to transfer the agreed proportion of the funds to the fellow sending organisation in due time.

EFSA intends to fund proposals for the placement of 15 fellows. EFSA reserves the right to award more than 15 fellow placements in the event that more than 15 proposals pass the assessment of the award criteria and in case of increased budget availability.

EFSA further reserves the right not to award placements for all 15 fellows if the quality of the submitted proposals is not satisfactory. EFSA also has the right not to award any grant and to cancel the whole grant procedure at any time before the signature of the grant agreement without any compensation to be paid to the applicant.

1.5 ELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS

To be eligible, applicants must be on the list of competent organisations designated by the Member States in accordance with Article 36 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002 and Commission Regulation (EC) 2230/2004.²⁴

In order to achieve the objectives of the call, proposals must be submitted by a consortium of **two eligible organisations** from **two different** EU countries. Norway or Iceland. The applicant (consortium leader) is responsible for identifying consortium partners. **The fellow hosting site will be the consortium leader** (applicant) and will propose a work programme and be responsible of the training of the fellow. The other partner in the consortium is the fellow sending organisation and will propose a fellow to be trained under the proposal.

Applicants may search for a consortium partner through:

- 1) their designated Article 36 Organisation's contact person having granted the access to the Article 36 Database and/or
- 2) their respective EFSA national Focal Point.²⁵ EFSA national Focal Points have the role to support and facilitate the creation of consortia acting as a networking interface between

²³ From the budget foreseen, fellows may, with the agreement of the fellow sending institution and the hosting site, attend conferences, workshops, etc which may take place away from the hosting site. Any costs for such attendance must be covered by the grant provided to the consortium.

²⁴ <https://efsa.my.site.com/competentorganisations/s/>

²⁵ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/partnersnetworks/eumembers#focal-points-eu-food-safety-connecting-hubs>



national organisations (e.g. having access to EFSA databases of contacts, project ideas and other networking activities facilitating MS engagement in fields of EFSA's remit, among others).

1.6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For proper understanding of this call it is important to have clarity on the terminology regarding involved organisations and their roles.

Proposals submitted by consortium:

- **The Applicant** submits the proposal to EFSA on behalf of the consortium. The applicant is the leading entity of the consortium **and the hosting site**. There can only be one applicant per application.
- **The Partner** is the other entity in the consortium **and the fellow sending organisation**, in charge of the identification of a staff member to be trained under the proposal. There can only be one partner per application.

Once the grant is awarded, the grant agreement is signed between EFSA and the applicant (leading entity of the consortium).

Partners do not sign the grant agreement directly but instead sign a mandate (template provided by EFSA) authorising the applicant to sign the grant agreement and any future amendments on their behalf.

As soon as the grant agreement is signed, the applicant becomes the Coordinator and the partner becomes co-beneficiary. The coordinator and co-beneficiary are referred to as the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries are jointly and severally liable for the technical implementation of the project as described in the proposal which becomes Annex 1 of the grant agreement. If a beneficiary fails to implement its part of the project, the other beneficiaries become responsible for implementing that part.

The coordinator has the following important roles:

- Takes part in implementing the project;
- Provides supervision and training to the fellow and liaises daily with them and liaises directly with EFSA on issues related to supervision of the work programme;
- Monitors the action is implemented properly;
- Act as intermediary for communication between the consortium and EFSA;
- Receives and answers all claims EFSA might have in relation to implementation of the project;
- Requests and reviews any documents or information required by EFSA and verifies their completeness and correctness before passing them to EFSA;
- Informs EFSA and the partner/s of any event that is likely to substantially affect implementation of the project;
- Submits the deliverables and reports to EFSA;
- Requests and receives payments from EFSA and distributes the funds to partner/s without unjustified delays.

The coordinator may not delegate the above-mentioned tasks to the co-beneficiary or subcontract them to any third party.

The other beneficiary:

- Takes part in implementing the project;
- Continues to pay the salary to the fellow during the whole period of fellowship, including the time of placement at the hosting site;



- Ensures that the fellow remains subject to the national social security and pension rights system;
- Releases the fellow from their working obligations to ensure adequate performance of the working programme and training;
- If applicable, liaises with the hosting site to ensure the fellow is adequately insured for, e.g., lab work if so required;
- Forwards to the coordinator the data needed to draw up reports, financial statements and other documents required under the grant agreement;
- Informs the coordinator of any event or circumstances likely to substantially affect or delay the implementation of the project.

1.7 IMPLEMENTING CONTRACTS AND SUBCONTRACTING

Implementation contracts:

Where the implementation of the project requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), e.g. purchase of services and/or goods or equipment necessary for the implementation of the action, the beneficiary must award the contract to the entity offering the best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests. The beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity as contracting authorities within the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU²⁶ must comply with the applicable national public procurement rules.

Sub-contracting:

Subcontracting is not permitted under this call for proposals.

1.8 GRANT PRINCIPLES

The financial help provided by EFSA under this Call is a grant governed by the EU Financial Regulation referred to in part 1.1.

The form of grant awarded under this Call is based on **financing not linked to the costs** of the relevant operations in accordance with Article 125 (1)(a) of the EU Financial Regulation. Grants financed in this way require the fulfilment of conditions set out in sector specific rules of Commission decisions or the achievement of results measured by reference to previously set milestones or through performance indicators.

The present call for proposals comes with an innovative and simplified grant management, where the grant amounts paid to the partner are based on the pre-defined sums which are not linked to the actual costs of the action. This means there is no need for co-financing from the partner, and no need for completion of estimated budgets or timesheets to record the work. The agreed sums are set at a level designed to stimulate the mutually convenient partnership creation. The payment of agreed sums from EFSA will be carried out based on the acceptance by EFSA of the delivered work. If you have questions on this grant form, during the application period, please raise any clarification questions to EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu.

²⁶ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65-242)



The financial support provided by EFSA under this Call is a grant governed by the EU Financial Regulation referred to in part 1.1. Accordingly, the grant awarded following this Call must comply with certain grant principles established in the EU Financial Regulation, specifically:

- **Non-retroactivity:** A grant may be awarded for a project which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate in the grant application the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed. In accordance with Article 196 of the Financial Regulation. The tasks entrusted by EFSA should not be performed before the signature of the grant Agreement.

Article 183(3) of the EU Financial Regulation specifically states that **the following grant principles are NOT applicable** where the grant takes the form of financing not linked to the costs pursuant to article 125(1)(a):

- **Co-financing:** In accordance with Article 193 of the Financial Regulation, grants shall involve co-financing.
- **No-profit:** In accordance with Article 195(3)(d) of the Financial Regulation, grants shall not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the project for the applicant or partner.
- **Non-cumulative:** In accordance with Article 194(3) of the Financial Regulation, in no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice from the EU budget.

1.9 PUBLICITY

All beneficiaries are expected to follow the rules on visibility of EFSA funding set out in Article 17 of the grant agreement.

According to Article 38 of the EU Financial Regulation EFSA is bound to publish information on recipients of its grants at its website. Such publication shall take place no later than 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded and shall cover these data of the beneficiaries:

- name of the beneficiary
- address of the beneficiary
- subject of the grant
- amount awarded

1.10 PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA IN RELATION TO GRANT PROCEDURES AND ANTIFRAUD STRATEGY

Processing of personal data by EFSA

Information on the processing of personal data by EFSA in the context of this grant procedure is available in the [Privacy Statement](#) on the EFSA website as well as in Article 15 of the draft grant agreement. Any personal data included in the Agreement must be processed by EFSA in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725.²⁷

Applicants should note that personal data as applicant or selected beneficiary may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if you are in one of the situations mentioned in Article 138 of the Financial Regulation. For more information see the Privacy Statement on:

²⁷ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC



http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm#BDCE).

Processing of personal data by the beneficiary

In case the implementation of activities under the grant agreement resulting from this call entails the processing of personal data, the beneficiary shall comply with the relevant rules in Article 15 of the Grant Agreement (Annex 1) as a data processor of EFSA.

Antifraud Strategy

Frauds involving EU funds have a particularly high impact on EFSA's and the EU's reputation. The current [EFSA Anti-Fraud Strategy](#) ("the Strategy") was adopted on 14 October 2021. In case of award of an EFSA contract/grant agreement, it is obligatory for the Project Manager to follow the [EFSA Anti-Fraud Module](#). It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to make sure the training has been followed before start of grant agreement implementation.

IT support for access to the module please contact: servicedesk@efsa.europa.eu

Request on the topic of anti-fraud please contact: ethics-integrity@efsa.europa.eu

1.11 PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

In the general implementation of its activities and for the processing of grant procedures in particular, EFSA observes Regulation (EC) N° 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.

1.12 OPEN ACCESS

EFSA is committed to the publication of grant outputs in the [Knowledge Junction](#) in order to improve transparency, reproducibility and evidence reuse. The Knowledge Junction runs on the EU-funded Zenodo research-sharing platform where uploaded items receive a unique Digital Object Identifier to make them citable. Any part of the output resulting from the action under this grant may be published (at EFSA's discretion) on the Knowledge Junction with attribution to the beneficiary.

1.13 HUNGARIAN PUBLIC INTEREST TRUSTS ESTABLISHED UNDER HUNGARIAN ACT IX OF 2021

Following the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16th December 2022, no legal commitments (including the grant agreement itself as well as subcontracts, purchase contracts, financial support to third parties etc.) can be signed with Hungarian public interest trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain.

Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, in case the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties).

In this case, co-applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly.]



2. SELECTING PROPOSALS

The **Evaluation Committee** established by EFSA specifically for this call will evaluate the submitted proposals in five steps:

1. Verification of submission requirements (2.1)
2. Eligibility criteria (2.2)
3. Exclusion criteria (2.3)
4. Selection criteria (2.4)
5. Award criteria (2.5)

If the proposal fails at any step it is automatically excluded from further evaluation. EFSA may contact the applicant during the evaluation process if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or for the correction of clerical mistakes.

2.1 VERIFICATION OF SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The following will be verified:

- proposal was submitted within the deadline for submission of proposals;
- administrative data for grant application form is duly signed by the authorised representative of the applicant;
- proposal is complete and includes all the supporting documents.

2.2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Criterion No. 2.2	Requirements and requested evidence
1	Eligibility criteria
	The following requirements will be verified:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant applies in a consortium with partner; • At the day of deadline for submission of proposals, the applicant and also its partner are on the list of competent organisations designated by the Member States in accordance with Art 36 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002 and Commission Regulation (EC) 2230/2004; • Applicant and also its partner are involved in the execution of the project.
	Requested evidence:
	<p>ADMINISTRATIVE DECLARATION</p> <p>Annex 2, available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal under Part B Templates. The applicant and partner must complete and sign the form. The applicant must upload the signed form in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.</p>



2.3 EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Criterion No. 2.3	Requirements and requested evidence
2	Exclusion criteria
	The following requirements will be verified:
	The applicant and partner/s must sign a declaration on their honour certifying they are not in one of the exclusion situations referred to in the Articles 138(1) of EU Financial Regulation.
	Requested evidence:
	<p>THE DECLARATION ON HONOUR ON EXCLUSION CRITERIA</p> <p>Annex 3, available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal under Part B Templates. The applicant and the partner(s) (if applicable) must complete and sign separate forms. The applicant must upload the form in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal. If applying in consortium, the consortium leader must convert all declarations on honour on exclusion for all partners into one single pdf and upload the single document in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.</p>

2.4 SELECTION CRITERIA

A) Financial capacity

Criterion No. 2.4A	Requirements and requested evidence
1	Financial capacity
	The purpose of the selection criteria is to verify the financial capacity of the applicant and its partner.
	The applicant and its partner must have stable and sufficient financial resources to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain their activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out.
	Requested evidence:
	<p>Documents to be provided by the applicant:</p> <p>DECLARATION ON HONOUR ON SELECTION CRITERIA</p> <p>Annex 4, available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal. Only the applicant (or consortium leader if applicable) is required to complete and sign the form. The applicant must upload the form in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.</p>



B) Professional and operational capacity

Criterion No. 2.4.B	Requirements and requested evidence
1	Professional and operational capacity:
	Requirements:
	<p>The consortium as a whole must have the professional resources, competencies and qualifications necessary to complete the proposed project:</p> <p>1. Requirements for the fellow hosting site: For the organisation as a whole (not specifically for individual supervisors), scientific capacity demonstrating relevant, high-level knowledge and expertise in conducting scientific work in relation to Food Safety Risk Assessment.</p> <p>2. Requirements for the fellow hosting site: Sufficient resources to allocate a dedicated supervisor to each hosted fellow, with provision for a back-up supervisor in case of need. Supervisors should have at least 5 years of professional experience in the field in which they would supervise a fellow.²⁸</p> <p>3. Requirements for the fellow hosting site: If the only common language between the supervisor and fellow is English, the supervisor must be able to carry out their supervisory role using a level of English of at least B2 level according to CEFR.</p> <p>4. Requirement for the fellow sending organisation: The fellow (and alternate fellow, if applicable²⁹) must be a staff member of or have a working relationship with a competent organisation under Art. 36 of EFSA's founding regulation (sending organisation); they must have worked for this organisation under a permanent or contract basis for at least 12 months before their fellowship and shall remain in the service of that employer throughout the period of fellowship³⁰. The fellow (and alternate) must not have been a fellow in past editions of the EU-FORA Programme.</p> <p>5. Requirement for the fellow sending organisation: The fellow (and alternate fellow, if applicable³¹) must have a level of education which corresponds to completed university studies of at least three (3) years attested by a diploma in one of the following fields: agriculture, biochemistry, bioinformatics, biology, biometrics, biotechnology, chemistry, dietary exposure, environmental sciences, epidemiology, food science, food technology, genetics, health and food safety, human medicine, life sciences, mathematics, microbiology, molecular biology, natural sciences, nutrition, pharmacy, public health, statistics, toxicology, veterinary medicine or related areas.</p> <p>6. Requirement for the fellow sending organisation:</p>

²⁸ See footnote 11.

²⁹ The identification of an alternate fellow is not a requirement. However, sending organisations are encouraged to identify in the proposal an alternate fellow as potential replacement in case of non-eligibility of the first proposed fellow during the assessment phase of the proposal or in case of early drop-out of the programme by the appointed fellow.

³⁰ EFSA may request to submit original supporting documents in the course of the fellowship.

³¹ See footnote 29.



	<p>The fellow (and alternate fellow, if applicable³²) must have a good knowledge of English language (at least B2 level according to CEFR), with strong ability to communicate clearly and effectively in both spoken and written English.</p> <p>7. Requirement for the fellow sending organisation: The fellow (and alternate fellow, if applicable³³) must have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 years of experience in performing scientific work or tasks related to food safety³⁴ before their fellowship.</p> <p>8. Environmental management (the answers to this section are for information purposes and will not be considered under any criteria, neither selection nor award criteria) Environmental protection is an integral part of EFSA's governance. EFSA has established, implemented and maintains a certified environmental management system in accordance with the international standard ISO 14001 and the European EMAS regulation. Environmental impacts of EFSA's activities are identified, managed and monitored in order to improve environmental performance. This commitment to environmental sustainability requires us to consider a life-cycle perspective when purchasing our services.</p> <p>For this reason, we are asking you some information on the environmental management of your activities, to be provided filling in Annex 5 (Selection criteria - Information on environmental management).</p>
	<p>Requested evidence:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 1: A written summary of expertise gained by the organisation as a whole over at least the past 10 years by reference to major projects and or publications in the field of the proposed fellow work programme. • EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 2: A statement confirming that any supervisor (and their back-up) nominated for implementation of the project will have at least 5 years of professional experience in the field in which they would supervise a fellow and confirmation the fellow hosting institution has sufficient resources to allocate one supervisor to each hosted fellow, with a back-up if required. • EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 3: A statement confirming that any supervisor (and their back-up) nominated for implementation of the project will be able carry out their supervisory role using a level of English of at least B2 level in the event that the only common language between the supervisor and fellow is English. • EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 4-7: CURRICULUM VITAE of each fellow (including alternate, if applicable) to be provided in EUROPASS FORMAT³⁵, with clear indication of the aspects to be assessed under selection criteria 4-7. <u>For each experience</u> declared as evidence for requirement No. 7, the CV must provide:

³² See footnote 29.

³³ See footnote 29.

³⁴ In this call, 'food safety' is to be understood as a comprehensive expression including risk assessment, risk management and risk communication activities in any of the fields under EFSA's remit.

³⁵ <https://europa.eu/europass/en/create-europass-cv>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear indication of starting and ending dates. - Clear indication whether the experience was part or full time. - Clear description of the tasks and responsibilities. <p>Failure to provide information or the provision of incomplete or inaccurate information may result in the rejection of the proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 8 (the answers to this section are for information purposes and will not be considered under any criteria, neither selection nor award criteria): Annex 5 – Selection criteria, Information on environmental management <p>For requirements 1-8 a template (Annex 5) is available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal. The applicant must upload the completed template (a single pdf document of all requirements including CVs and additional information) in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.</p>
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2.5 AWARD CRITERIA

Appendix A includes a list of projects of interest to EFSA that can be chosen by the EU-FORA applicants as a topic (or part of a topic) for their EU-FORA proposal, so they wish. The list includes a brief description of the project and a list of desirable deliverables. It is to be noted that using the topics of the list is not mandatory. Hence, including (or not) a topic from the list in the proposed work programme will not affect the way that the proposal will be evaluated, and will have no impact on EFSA's financial contribution or any of the project's implementation modalities.

Criterion No. 2.5	<p>For the award criteria a template (Annex 6) is available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal. The applicant must upload the completed template (a single pdf document of all criteria) in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.</p> <p>The award criteria serve to assess the quality of the proposals in relation to the objectives of the Call. The following award criteria are applicable in this call.</p>
1	<p>The extent to which the proposed work programme (e.g. areas and range of relevant activities) meets the overall objectives of the EU-FORA Programme. The consortium should provide a detailed description of the proposed work programme, including the duration of the physical placement at the hosting site³⁶ (set with a minimum of 3 months, no maximum prescribed³⁷), training and learning objectives of the physical placement of the fellow at the hosting site, training and learning objectives of the remote part of the work programme, for which points (MAX 70 POINTS) will be awarded as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarity of the description of the proposed fellow work programme and relevance to EFSA, as well the sending and hosting organisation's activities (MAX 30 POINTS); 2. Range of specific activities which the fellow will be involved in, so as to maximise acquisition / exchange of knowledge in addition to desk and/or laboratory work (for

³⁶ In the case of award, this information should be finetuned in the agreed work programme to include, among others, the selected time for the physical placement (deliverable No. 1, see 1.3 tasks, deliverables, timelines, meetings and payments for more information).

³⁷ See 1.2.1. Obligations and benefits of becoming a fellow hosting site.



	<p>example: participation to workshops, conferences, panels and working groups meetings etc.) (MAX 25 POINTS);</p> <p>3. Degree to which the proposed work programme offers a wide understanding of the whole risk assessment process (MAX 15 POINTS);</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>The adequacy of the proposed possible supporting activities for ensuring smooth and effective fellow supervision by the dedicated supervisor of the fellow throughout the 12-month fellowship programme, including activities to integrate the fellow in the organisation culture and work practices during the period of placement (MAX 30 POINTS), as follows:</p> <p>a. Specific provisions and activities to assure effective supervision and integration of the fellow in the organisation (for example: regular meetings with the main supervisor, mentoring provided by other relevant staff, info-sessions, etc.), with special stress on the time the fellow will be trained remotely (MAX 20 POINTS);</p> <p>b. Supporting measures and actions to assist the smooth settlement of the fellow in the environment of the hosting organisation (for example: assistance in identifying accommodation, language lessons, other training, learning and networking opportunities etc.) (MAX 10 POINTS)</p>

In order to be ranked in the reserve list, the proposal must:

- score a minimum of 55 points out of a maximum possible 100 points; and, at the same time;
- score at least half of the points attributed to each criterion overall (i.e. 35/70 for criterion 1 and 15/30 for criterion 2).

Ranking: Each proposal will be evaluated individually and separately, against the above award criteria and given a score. Proposals which have satisfied these award criteria thresholds will be ranked in a list based on the award criteria score. The fifteen highest ranked proposals will be proposed for grant award, subject to the below-mentioned limitations of maximum number of fellows per fellow hosting site and per country (see 1.2.5 Accumulation of roles).

A reserve list will be established from the remaining proposals (over and above the 15 highest ranked) which have passed the evaluation of the award criteria. The award of any grant for fellow hosting, over and above the 15 highest ranked (in case of increased budget availability at EFSA or inability to conclude a grant agreement with one of the 15 highest ranked), will reflect the ranking of proposals in the reserve list.

Consortium where the fellow hosting sites offer to host more than one fellow:

In the event that a fellow hosting site proposes to host more than one fellow, they can do so in the following way:

- by the submission of a single proposal with a work programme which could be offered to more than one fellow of the same consortium, indicating the number of placements applied for, or;
- by the submission of different proposals, in different consortia, with the same or different work programmes (one per fellow).

It is important to note that the maximum number of fellows to be trained in a hosting site **under the same work programme** is (3) fellows. **Please indicate clearly in Annex 6 how many fellows are proposed to be sent for training and fellowship placements.**



In the case of submission of different proposals, each proposal will be evaluated individually and separately, given a score and ranked as above indicated, but always subject to the already mentioned limitations of maximum number of fellows per country (see 1.2.5 Accumulation of roles).

Countries with more than one fellow hosting site ranked:

There is a maximum limit of five (5) placements per country. For example, if country X, from all submissions received from different consortia with fellow hosting site within that country, has seven placements ranked on the reserve list, only the first five ranked will be awarded an EFSA grant. Should it not be possible to conclude the grant agreement with one of those five ranked placements, the 6th placement within country X would become eligible for grant award.

Applicants are reminded:

- That consortia must be made of only two Art. 36 organisations from two different EU countries, Norway or Iceland, one acting as the Applicant (leading entity of the consortium and the hosting site in charge of the working programme and training of the fellow) and the other organisation as the Partner (the institution of origin of the fellow). There can only be one applicant and one partner per application.
- To indicate clearly in the template (Annex 6 for award criteria) how many fellows are proposed to participate in the fellowship programme from the same fellow sending organisation.
- That a single hosting site can train more than one fellow, e.g. via participation in more than one different consortium or in a consortium where more than one fellow is identified by the fellow sending organisation.
- That the maximum number of fellows to be trained in a hosting site **under the same work programme** is (3) fellows.
- That the number of fellows to be trained in the same hosting country is a maximum of five (5) fellows per country.
- That the minimum stay of the fellow at the hosting site is of 3 months³⁸, no maximum prescribed. **EFSA will not increase the grant amount** in any case and the length of the stay (if longer than the minimum required) will not be considered an award criterion.
- That, although not mandatory, sending organisations are encouraged to identify in the proposal an alternate fellow as potential replacement in case of non-eligibility of the first proposed fellow during the assessment phase of the proposal or in case of early drop-out of the programme by the appointed fellow.

2.6 PROCESS FOLLOWING THE ASSESSMENT AGAINST AWARD CRITERIA

The applicant(s) will be notified, once the evaluation has been finalized, whether they are placed on the reserve list or not.

Following their ranking on the reserve list, EFSA reserves the right to invite applicants to adapt their proposal based on the evaluators' comments, in accordance with article 203(5) EU FR. The number of applicants invited to adjust their proposals and ultimately awarded an EFSA grant will be decided based on the value of grants requested compared to the overall available budget of EFSA for this Call.

Following the successful conclusion of the adaptation phase, the award decision will be taken by EFSA. Subsequently, the grant agreement will be prepared.

In case some applicants fail to adapt the proposal, EFSA reserves the right to reject the proposal. The budget made available in this way may be used for projects of next applicants on the reserve lists.

³⁸ See footnote 37.



EFSA may repeat the adaptation process until the available budget of the call is assigned to other applicants on the reserve list.



3. SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

3.1 SUBMISSION MODALITIES

You must submit your proposal electronically via the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#) before the time limit for receipt of proposals (indicated on page 2 of this call). A webinar showing step-by-step the use of the EU funding and Tender Portal for Grant submission on a pilot EFSA call is available at [this link](#) (from minute 15:39 to minute 45:55).

Registration in the Participant Register

Applicants submitting a proposal must be registered in the Participant Register - an online register of organisations and natural persons participating in European Commission's calls for tenders or proposals.

On registering, each participant obtains a Participant Identification Code (PIC, 9 - digit number) which acts as its unique identifier in the Participant Register. A participant needs to register only once – the information provided can be further updated or re-used by the participant in other European Commission's calls for tenders or calls for proposals.

At any moment during the grant procedure the Research Executive Agency Validation Services (hereafter the EU Validation Services) may contact the participant and ask for supporting documents on legal existence and status.

The requests will be made through the register's messaging system to the e-mail address of the participant's contact person indicated in the register. It is the responsibility of the participant to provide a valid e-mail address and to check it regularly.

The documents that may be requested by the EU Validation Services are listed in the [EU Grants and Tenders Rules on Legal Entity Validation, LEAR appointment and Financial Capacity assessment](#). Please note that a request for supporting documents by the EU Validation Services in no way implies that the grant application has been successful.

Submitting your proposal

The EU Funding & Tenders Portal allows applicants to respond to calls for proposals by preparing applications electronically in a structured and secured way and submitting proposals electronically.

To find more information on submitting your proposal, please read carefully the information on the page [Submit a proposal – electronic submission system](#). On the same page useful links to the [User guide of the submission system](#) and an [FAQ on proposal submission](#) are provided.

Make sure you submit your application on time: you are advised to start completing your application early. To avoid any complications with regard to late receipt/non-receipt of applications within the deadline, please ensure that you submit your application several hours before the deadline. It is not possible to submit an application after the deadline.



3.2 LANGUAGE OF THE PROPOSAL AND THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Proposals may be submitted in any official language of the European Union. However, as EFSA's working language is English, the submission of proposals in English would speed up the evaluation process.

Please note that some supporting documents (e.g. CVs) are required. These supporting documents are an integral part of the proposal. If these supporting documents are in a language other than English, in order to facilitate and speed up the evaluation, it would be appreciated if a reliable translation of the relevant parts of the documents into English is provided with the proposal.

3.3 EXPECTED DURATION OF PROCEDURE

In accordance with Article 197(2) of the Financial Regulation, the maximum time-limits for the procedure are as follows:

- All applicants will be informed of the decision regarding their application within 6 months of the deadline for submission of proposals.
- Signature of the grant agreement will take place within 3 months from the date the successful applicant/s has/have been informed of the decision on their application.



APPENDIX A. LIST OF SCIENTIFIC TOPICS FOR POTENTIAL USE BY THE APPLICANTS

APPENDIX A. LIST OF SCIENTIFIC TOPICS FOR POTENTIAL USE BY THE APPLICANTS UNDER CALL EUBA-EFSA-2024-ENREL-01

No	Title	Description	Desirable Key Deliverables	Further info	Category	Free keywords
1	Improving the evidence base on the impact of plastics, including micro- and nano- plastics, on the food chain	Plastic pollution is becoming increasingly prevalent in all environments worldwide, meaning that organisms will inevitably be more exposed to plastic. Recent studies demonstrate the hazard of plastic and its impact to living organisms and their ecosystems. Microplastics may also act as a vehicle of other contaminants and concerns are raised.	More information is needed about the harmful effects of plastic pollution on human health and the environment. Of particular interest is information/research on the degradation of plastics within living organisms, as well as their biological absorption, distribution, elimination, and toxicity.	https://image.outreach.efsa.europa.eu/lib/fe3811717564047c711779/m/1/7a358789-b1fd-4fa2-abf3-d37fcbce1cb5.pdf	Contaminants	Plastic, plastic pollution, plastic degradation, toxicology
2	Improving the understanding of the risk of <i>Providencia</i> spp. for the safety of the food chain	<i>Providencia</i> spp. are ubiquitous, gram-negative, anaerobic, rod-shaped bacteria that belong to the Enterobacteriaceae family. There are currently nine species within the genus, including <i>P. alcalifaciens</i> , <i>P. stuartii</i> , and <i>P. rettgeri</i> , which are commonly associated with urinary tract infections and diarrhea. <i>Providencia</i> spp. outbreaks have been reported worldwide and can be transmitted through contaminated food. Although the prevalence of <i>Providencia</i> spp. in food is not well understood, it is driven by factors such as international trade, travel, and rising temperatures due to global warming. Moreover, their ability to develop antibiotic resistances (to penicillins and cephalosporins, for example) deserve attention.	Data on the prevalence, pathogenicity of <i>Providencia</i> spp. Data that can improve the understanding of the needed infectious dose. Data on possible antimicrobial resistance.	https://image.outreach.efsa.europa.eu/lib/fe3811717564047c711779/m/1/9d02b8f6-458e-4e06-bc74-e810d7d54cd6.pdf	Biological hazards	<i>Providencia</i> spp., prevalence factors, AMR
3	Microbiological risk of plant-based dairy-alternative products	In recent years, there has been a growing trend towards vegan, often non-thermal processed nut-based cheese and milk alternatives. However, recent outbreaks of foodborne illnesses linked to these products have raised concerns about their safety. Studies have shown that nuts, especially cashews, almonds, and walnuts, commonly used as a base for fermented nut cheeses, can become contaminated with pathogenic bacteria during harvesting, processing, and storage. Furthermore, soaking nuts in water and the aging/ripening process, can lead to the formation of undesirable moulds and the grow of pathogenic bacteria. Past incidents associated with vegan cheese based on nuts in the past, evolving in outbreaks of <i>Listeria</i> and <i>Salmonella</i> indicate a possible need for additional information on this.	Information on the microbial stability of such products that could support an assessment of the risk on the consumer side (i.e., after the products are purchased from a point of sale).		Biological hazards	microbial stability, plant-based products, predictive microbiology

4 New mycotoxin-producing fungi species	Several new strains of mycotoxin-producing fungi were discovered in the Fusarium genus, some of which could induce severe symptoms of Fusarium Head Blight, an important disease of cereal crops, as reported in a study [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33434214/] published in January 2021. Further data would be needed to understand if - and under which conditions - these strains could be of concern to consumer health.	Information/ data on any of the following: - Conditions for toxin production - Toxicity of these new identified mycotoxins and their occurrence in food - Information on the impact of climate change in prevalence of the new strains	Biological hazards	Mycotoxins, Fusarium, toxicology
5 Health effects of emulsifiers	Between 2021 and 2023, multiple studies highlighted the potential association between emulsifiers and intestinal inflammation, as well as colorectal, breast, and prostate cancers. Moreover, a recent cohort study [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38349899/] published in 2024 revealed that consuming specific emulsifiers (E407, E407a, E471) could increase the risk of cancer.	Information on the potential impact on human health, e.g., human cases data, such as epidemiological studies or clinical data	Food additives and flavourings	Emulsifiers, inflammation, cancer, epidemiology.
6 Arcobacter risk to the food industry and human health	A publication [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35567892/] in 2022 found that 22.3% of food samples collected in 2015 were contaminated with Arcobacter, with A. butzleri being the most prevalent species and the one most linked to human disorders, while another study [https://doi.org/10.3390/antibiotics12081292] published in 2023 showed that all the tested strains of A. butzleri isolated from food and clinical samples were resistant to tetracycline and cefotaxime.	Information on the prevalence in foodstuff; data linking human illness with contaminated food consumption; aetiology and epidemiology information	Biological hazards	Arcobacter spp., prevalence, food safety.
7 Alongshan virus in ticks	In 2023, a study [https://doi.org/10.3390/microorganisms11030543] was published indicating that the Alongshan virus (ALSV) is extensively distributed among ticks in Germany, suggesting that that animals are highly likely to encounter this virus frequently. The relevance of these findings to human and animal health requires further investigation.	Data regarding the presence of ALSV in tick populations in other areas in the EU; Epidemiological data related to host range; Information/data that can be used to evaluate the risk to animal/human health	Animal Health	Alongshan virus, ticks, epidemiology

8 Evaluating the feasibility of integrating the exposome concept into regulatory risk assessment	<p>The exposome concept which includes the totality of the human exposures, has primarily gained interest within the academic community. Despite its complexity, and heterogeneity of exposome data, this concept holds potential to revolutionise both human health and environmental risk assessment. This concept can be key to support the transition to next generation scientific assessments that consider multiple substances, routes and sources of exposure. Although efforts have been made need to integrate different methodologies (e.g. bioassays, chemical analyses) through open-source platforms, the adoption of the exposome concept in regulatory risk assessment remains minimal. This project proposes to provide an overview of the major scientific and regulatory obstacles to incorporating the exposome concept into risk assessment frameworks. The recommendations should include a prioritization of actions to move forward, starting with immediate priorities.</p>	<p>A comprehensive scientific report that synthesises literature findings and/or analyses of survey responses from national competent authority risk assessors, highlighting the encountered challenges associated with the use of the exposome concept in risk assessment. The report will also detail identified scientific knowledge gaps in the field and provide recommendations for a prioritised action plan to move forward.</p>	Methodological development	Exposome, regulatory risk assessment
9 Integrating Human Biomonitoring Data into Exposure Assessment: Opportunities and Scientific Gaps	<p>The project aims to analyse the application of human biomonitoring (HBM) in assessing chemical exposure. HBM entails the measurement of harmful and beneficial chemicals, including their metabolites or reaction products, in human biological samples such as hair, blood, or urine. This data is crucial for complementing traditional exposure assessments. The project shall explore the advantages and challenges associated with using HBM data or biomarkers of exposure. It shall provide an overview of the benefits, limitations, and existing scientific knowledge gaps. Additionally, the project shall evaluate the 'readiness' of integrating HBM data into exposure assessments through a review of relevant literature and/or a case study at the national level.</p>	<p>A comprehensive scientific report that synthesises literature findings and/or analyses a case study to highlight the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of human biomonitoring data in exposure assessment. The report will also detail identified scientific knowledge gaps in the field.</p>	Methodological development	Human biomonitoring data, chemical exposure

<p>10 New technologies for a real-time data collection of chemical monitoring data in food</p>	<p>Within the current EU food safety system, chemical monitoring data in food are primarily generated by Member States and submitted to EFSA through an annual data collection. Due to the different steps required by this process (i.e. sample collection, sample analysis, compilation, submission, validation and publication of results), publications of EFSA often rely on samples taken at least two years earlier. This project aims at investigating how new technologies could support Member States and EFSA to move towards a real-time collection of such monitoring data. The project would need to build on the findings of the Advisory Group on Data (under the umbrella of the EFSA Advisory Forum) and its report from 2020 (see further info), possibly analysing each step of the process and providing recommendations on new technologies that would facilitate interoperability and automation at each step. The project would also assess readiness of the stakeholders within the process to adopt such new technologies.</p>	<p>A comprehensive scientific report that clearly describes the different steps of the current data collection process and provides recommendations on how new technologies would contribute to the improvement of automation and interoperability at each step of the process.</p>	<p>https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/sp.efsa.2020.EN-1901</p>	<p>Methodological development</p>	<p>data collection, chemical contaminants, new technologies</p>
<p>11 Possible framework for the use of non-target screening methods for the routine monitoring of chemicals in food</p>	<p>The current EU control programs for chemicals in food primarily rely on the use of targeted analytical methods. While these methods are considered the gold standard for a reliable identification and quantification of chemicals within a regulatory framework, the use of non-target analysis (NTA) allows for the analysis of a wider range of chemicals at the same time. This project aims to explore how the use of NTA may contribute to an improved food safety system. This includes possible benefits on the identification of early warnings on new (mixtures of) chemicals and, when combined with other information (e.g. use level data, targeted analysis), the adequate identification and quantification of chemicals that are already regulated. The project would also identify possible blockers for such implementation (e.g. legal restrictions, data models, data collection tools, etc.) and propose possible solutions to overcome such blockers.</p>	<p>A comprehensive scientific report that synthesises the benefits of implementing NTA into the routine monitoring of chemicals in foods and, provides clear proposals on the actions needed to facilitate such implementation within the current EU food safety system.</p>	<p></p>	<p>Methodological development</p>	<p>Chemical contaminants, control programmes, non-target screening methods</p>

12 Investigating Probabilistic Approaches for Quantitative Risk-Benefit Assessments	<p>This project aims to develop and test quantitative probabilistic approaches to integrate diverse datasets, including food intake data, food occurrence data (nutrients, contaminants, inherent compounds of concern etc.), epidemiological data (relative risk/dose-response), and data from toxicological studies alongside Health-Based Guidance Values (HBGVs). The goal is to investigate the creation of a robust framework for conducting quantitative, probabilistic Risk-Benefit Assessments (RBAs) that can support decision-making in food safety and public health while being relevant to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and its stakeholders. Such probabilistic approaches could conditionally serve in the field of regulated products too (e.g., novel foods). The integration of these various data sets could improve the reliability of risk assessments, and while they might not account for the worst-case scenario, they could provide helpful insights to policy-makers regarding scenarios closer to reality. Probabilistic methods will take into account uncertainties and variability in exposure and health effects. The project will focus on developing models that can provide clear insights into the potential risks and benefits associated with different food consumption patterns.</p>	<p>Conduct a thorough scoping review of existing methodologies and frameworks for integrating intake, occurrence, epidemiological, and toxicological data under a common quantitative probabilistic framework. Develop a probabilistic modelling framework that integrates the identified data sources. Apply this to a case study (time permitting). Prepare a comprehensive report detailing the methodologies identified, (findings from the case study) and best practice guidelines for applying the probabilistic approach in RBAs, and any identified gaps/areas for improvements.</p>	Methodological development	Probabilistic approach, quantitative risk-benefit assessment, data
13 How predictable are microbiological risks in novel foods?	<p>Novel foods (including novel food ingredients and foods resulting from new production processes) may pose a new source of microbiological hazards, thereby challenging current risk prediction and assessment processes due to data scarcity. Moreover, existing predictive microbiology models used for quantitative microbiological risk assessment rely on decades of research in well-established food applications, and their ability to predict the microbiological safety and shelf-life of novel foods (e.g., plant, marine and insect-based proteins, single cell proteins, protein-rich by-products, cell culture-derived foods of animal or plant origin, food ingredients derived from precision fermentation) remains uncertain. On the other hand, accelerated shelf-life testing (ASLT) is increasingly used for predicting the shelf-life of novel foods, but real-time testing or predictive microbiology modelling are typically required alongside ASLT for accurate predictions.</p>	<p>(i) Scoping literature review on predictive microbiology models applied to novel foods, including growth/survival/inactivation kinetics for relevant pathogenic and spoilage microorganisms in novel foods (ii) Appraisal of novel predictive microbiology approaches (e.g., data mining, machine learning, neural networks), as well as integrated approaches with ASLT, in relation to their prospective applicability and advantages for the risk assessment of novel foods (iii) Recommendations for fit-for-purpose predictive microbiology models/approaches for the risk assessment of novel foods</p>	Novel foods	Predictive microbiology modelling, novel foods

14 Clinical relevance of novel proteins: the missing piece in the allergenicity risk assessment	<p>Currently, the lack of a curated database of allergen sequences categorised according to their allergenic potential is hampering the development of improved in silico and in vitro methods for allergenicity risk assessment. A recent systematic review undertaken within the framework of the project OC/EFSA/GMO/2021/04 has developed a curated set of allergen sequences considering their clinical relevance in a ranking manner, which is an essential step for future refinement of bioinformatic tools.</p>	<p>(i) Update of the curated set of allergen sequences with clinical relevance ranking (ii) Development of a searchable repository for the allergen sequences and associated metadata, which are downloadable in forms tractable to sequence analysis (iii) Propose a fit-for-purpose database for allergenicity risk assessment and recommend database maintenance and updating</p>	<p>https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.2903/sp.efsa.2024.EN-8840</p>	Novel foods	Allergenicity, innovative proteins, GMO
15 Identifying key endpoints linked to microbiome-associated xenobiotic toxicity	<p>Gut microbiota and its metabolic products can regulate host metabolism, intestinal epithelial barrier integrity, and immune functions among others which are essential for host health. A recent publication of EFSA on the relevance of gut microbiome in food safety assessment emphasised its importance in the metabolism of xenobiotics (e.g., dietary components, industrial chemicals), and its influence on their bioavailability, toxicity, and biological activity. Xenobiotics can also in turn influence the composition and the activity of the gut microbiota, introducing deviations with an impact on host physiology. Further to this, interspecies and high inter-individual variability of gut microbiota composition and its evolving capacity, hamper its implementation in kinetics and toxicological studies. The use of in vitro methodologies (e.g., simulator of the human Intestinal microbial ecosystem, and triple co-culture) mimicking the human gut and its microbiota dynamics will be applied to investigate the intestinal microbial xenobiotics metabolism. The goal of this project is to identify validated endpoints/biomarkers/metabolites that could represent potential, steady, and translatable markers of the host functions which are associated with a deviated composition and activity of the gut microbiota triggered by xenobiotics.</p>	<p>(i) Detect key microbial metabolites related to xenobiotic metabolism by using omics-based approaches; (ii) Identify gut barrier function and inflammation-related genes via molecular biology methodologies; (iii) Provide insight into the molecular and mechanistic understanding of the functionality of the gut microbiota in the metabolism of xenobiotics and the interaction with host metabolism, contributing to its potential implementation in human toxicological risk assessment protocols.</p>	<p>https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39360551/</p>	Other	xenobiotics, gut microbiome, microbial metabolism, bacterial metabolites, endpoints, toxicity.

16 Benchmarking/evaluating Bioinformatic Tools for Microbiome Data Analysis	As outlined in the in the recently published EFSA roadmap on the human and animal gut microbiome, the available evidence for the existing in silico tools for the analysis of metagenomics data in general, and the study of microbiome-host-xenobiotics in particular, showed that although there are many tools, there is a general lack of standards and adequate benchmarks. The goal of this project is to test and evaluate several publicly available bioinformatics pipelines used for microbiome data analysis, such as QIIME2, Mothur, and MetaPhlAn, specifically focusing on their potential ability to identify changes linked to dietary xenobiotic exposure. This project will support the need to harmonize methods for microbiome data analysis, contributing to standardization in microbiome-based food risk assessment.	i) To use curated datasets to run different bioinformatics workflows and evaluate their performance based on specific metrics, such as accuracy, sensitivity, reproducibility, and the ability to detect functional genes related to xenobiotic metabolism. ii) To compile results into a best-practices guide for analysing gut microbiome data, highlighting the strengths/limitations, commonalities/differences of each tool.	https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.2903/sp.efsa.2024.EN-8597	Other	gut microbiome, bioinformatics, data analysis
17 Decoding food allergy: Microbiome-based predictive models for novel proteins	Recent research points to a central role of the gut microbiota in the molecular mechanisms underlying food allergy. For instance, human cohort studies have shown that individuals with food allergy have distinct gut microbiota compared to healthy controls, and that early-life gut dysbiosis may precede the onset of sensitisation. Moreover, animal studies have clearly demonstrated that the composition of the gut microbiota can imprint susceptibility or resistance to food allergy on the host. In this sense, alterations in the gut microbiota and the lack of microbiota-mediated signalling have been associated with deficiencies in regulatory T lymphocytes and consequent expression of effector cells in individuals with allergy to, e.g., peanuts, eggs, or cow's milk. Furthermore, the levels of regulatory T cells in the intestinal mucosa seem to be linked to the presence of specific bacterial genera in the intestinal microbiota (e.g., Lactobacillus, Bifidobacterium, Clostridium) and the production of short-chain fatty acids such as butyrate, which for instance seem to promote tolerance to allergens like cow's milk. Interestingly, a unique population of microbially responsive ROR γ t-positive FOXP3-positive regulatory T cells has been identified as critical for the maintenance of oral tolerance to food antigens. In light of these findings, computational models (e.g., recurrent neural networks) have recently been developed to predict food allergy, e.g., based on longitudinal gut microbiome taxonomic profiles.	(i) Scoping literature review on the roles and mechanisms of gut microbiota in food allergy, with particular focus on novel proteins. (ii) Mapping of available datasets (e.g., microbiome datasets, immune response data, in silico allergenicity predictions) and modelling approaches for the development of allergenicity predictive models, aimed at identifying critical knowledge gaps and defining future research priorities. (iii) Development of a proof-of-concept allergenicity predictive model for non-novel proteins, laying the groundwork for future applications to novel proteins.		Novel foods	Food allergy, microbiome, novel proteins, predictive modelling

<p>18 Using the open access TKPlate 1.0 platform to predict blood and organ concentrations for food and feed chemicals in humans, test species and farm animals.</p>	<p>Over the last decade, EFSA together with a number of national agencies and academic partners have developed the 'TKPlate 1.0' as an open access platform allowing simulations of generic physiologically-based kinetic (PBK) models and toxicokinetic-toxicodynamic models for human health, animal health and ecological risk assessment. These models allow the derivation of quantitative metrics related to toxicokinetic (TK) processes (what the body does to the chemical) and toxicodynamic (TD) processes (what the chemical does to the body) for hazard characterisation and risk characterisation. These in-silico tools as new approach methodologies (NAMs) support the integration of mechanism-based understanding of chemical toxicity and the reduction of animal testing in risk assessment. Overall, EFSA's TKPlate includes suite of generic PBK models for humans, test species (rat, mouse, rabbit, dog), farm animals (cattle, sheep, pig, chicken) and species of ecological relevance. TKPlate allows the simulations of concentrations of chemicals in body fluids (blood, urine) and organs of interest using the PBK models, chemical-specific data, exposure patterns and related time scales (a process which is called 'forward dosimetry'). This project aims to predict such concentrations of food and feed chemicals in plasma and a range of organs as well as plasma kinetic parameters in humans, test species (rat, mice, dog, rabbit) and fram animals (pig, cattle, chicken, sheep). These predictions across the different species will be compared with available experimental data.</p>	<p>Report summarising the results of the predictions and comparsion with available experimental data for selected chemicals of relevance to EFSA in humans, test species and farm animals</p>	<p>TKPlate : https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2903/j.efsa.2023.e211101</p>	<p>Methodolocial development</p>	<p>NAMs, Tkplate simulations</p>
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APPENDIX B Note on the processing of personal data in the context of the EU-FORA Fellowship Programme



Appendix B. Note on the processing of personal data in the context of the EU-FORA Fellowship Programme

Regulation (EU) 2018/1725¹ regarding the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies ('the EUDPR'), is applicable in the context of the EU-FORA Fellowship Programme. In accordance with Article 15 and 16 of the Regulation, the following information is provided:

1. Information on the controller and data protection officer:

- ✓ The Engagement & External Relations (ENREL) Unit of EFSA is the controller of the processing operation. The Unit can be contacted writing to: EU-FORA@efsa.europa.eu
- ✓ EFSA's data protection officer can be contacted writing to DataProtectionOfficer@efsa.europa.eu

2. Purpose of the personal data processing:

- ✓ The European Food Risk Assessment Fellowship ('EU-FORA') Programme aims at strengthening Europe's food safety risk assessment capacity and at building the risk assessment knowledge community. The Programme is intended for 'mid-career' scientists and is designed to offer them a 12-month, learning-by-doing fellowship placement accompanied by a specific Food Risk Assessment training programme.
- ✓ The personal data processing will concretely happen in the context of the grant application, submitted by the organisation acting as hosting site, in consortium with the fellow sending organisation. The fellow will be trained under a work programme offered by the fellow hosting site, who will be responsible for the training of the fellow.
- ✓ Personal data will also be collected in relation to obligations for grant procedures and antifraud strategy in line with the Data Protection Notice on the Processing of personal data in the context of EFSA procurement and grants available on EFSA's website (<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/assets/procurementprivacystatement.pdf>)

3. Legal basis:

¹ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC



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- ✓ EFSA's Founding Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, Articles 22,23and 36 ;
 - ✓ Commission Regulation (EC) 2230/2004 of 23 December 2004 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) 178/2002 with regard to the network of organisations operating in the fields within the EFSA's mission, Articles 4 and 5;
 - ✓ EU's Financial Regulation 2024/2509, Title VII.

4. Categories of data subjects:

- ✓ Candidates to the EU-FORA Fellowship Programme and selected Fellows;
- ✓ Representatives or contact persons of fellow sending institutions and fellow hosting sites.

5. Categories of personal data processed:

- ✓ Data provided by the fellow candidate in the context of the annual Fellowship application and selection process, including the candidate's results against the evaluation of the selection criteria for the fellowship proposed;
- ✓ Personally identifiable information on the fellow acquired in the course of the implementation of their one-year Fellowship programme (e.g. among others, name, affiliation, hosting site and authorship of activities carried out during the fellowship).

6. Recipients of personal data:

- ✓ The EFSA Evaluation Committee responsible for evaluating the proposals received from the consortium (fellow sending institution and fellow hosting site);
- ✓ ENREL Unit staff in charge of the implementation of the Programme, the Head of ENGAGE Department, the Executive Director of EFSA;
- ✓ Fellow Hosting Organisations in EU Member States operating in fields within EFSA's mission in accordance with Article 36 of the EFSA Founding Regulation;
- ✓ On a need-to-know-basis only and under strict confidentiality obligations, a training service provider (contractor) assisting EFSA in the delivery of training to fellows under the EU FORA fellowship scheme;
- ✓ Institutions or bodies having a legitimate purpose of audit, of the exercise of supervisory tasks or in charge of judicial proceedings: the Internal Audit Service, the EU Court of Auditors, the EU Ombudsman, OLAF, the EU Court of Justice, the European Data Protection Supervisor.



7. Data subject's right of access and rectification:

- ✓ Candidates for the Fellowship and selected Fellows can contact the ENREL Unit to exercise their rights as a data subject pursuant to the EUDPR, namely their right of access, rectification and related other rights, using the above controller contact details. They have a possibility at any time to update or correct their identification data. On the other hand, data demonstrating compliance with the eligibility and selection criteria for the Fellowship cannot be modified after the closing date of the relevant call for expressions of interest.

8. Information security:

- ✓ Upon receipt, applications submitted from the fellow sending institution will be stored in EFSA's Document Management System, complying with state-of-the-art security standards that ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the information it contains with access restrictions to authorised EFSA staff only;

Individuals having authorised access to the data are subject to specific confidentiality requirements.

9. Retention period of personal data:

- ✓ EFSA maintains an annually updated Fellowship Alumni list with the name and contact details of alumni fellows which is shared among the alumni target group as long as it serves the purpose of the EU-FORA Programme in order to promote networking among EU-FORA fellows as well as EFSA;
- ✓ The rest of data of selected Fellows will be kept for 10 years after the end date of the Fellowship in EFSA and at the Hosting Organisations;
- ✓ The data of unsuccessful candidates will be kept for 5 years after the completion of the annual Fellowship selection process;
- ✓ Hosting Organisations will retain personal data on the Fellowship Programme in accordance with the rules and policies applicable to them.

10. Right to lodge a complaint:

- ✓ In their capacity as data subjects, fellows have the right to lodge a complaint on the processing of their personal data in the context of the EU-FORA Fellowship Programme with the European Data Protection Supervisor - [EDPS complaints form](#).