EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

2026 Traineeship Call

Areas of Interest

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GUIDANCE TO APPLICANTS

*This document is designed to guide you in selecting your **areas of interest for the 2026 Traineeship Call**. It provides a brief description of the various areas available, to support you in selecting your 1st and 2nd choices.*

While approximately 120 traineeship positions will be offered, there is no predefined number of positions per area. The final allocation of trainees will be based on business needs and selection outcomes.

*During the application process, you will be asked to **select two areas of interest** and answer a specific questionnaire related to your selections.*

We encourage you to carefully review the descriptions below and select the areas that best align with your expertise, interests, and professional aspirations.

AREAS OF INTEREST

ADMINISTRATION AND COORDINATION

This area focuses on supporting administrative coordination, planning, and internal communication activities across the organisation.

Trainees will assist in the organisation and follow-up of meetings, coordination of workflows and deadlines, preparation of briefings, reports and corporate documents, and facilitation of information flow within and across teams. The role will involve supporting business planning and monitoring activities, contributing to internal communication and change management initiatives, and liaising with internal and external stakeholders.

Through this experience, trainees will gain hands-on exposure to organisational processes, governance structures, and operational coordination in a dynamic EU agency environment, developing strong organisational, communication, and stakeholder engagement skills.

ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE

This area focuses on the study and management of vector-borne diseases, epidemiology of infectious diseases, particularly highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and African swine fever (ASF), and the implementation of One Health activities.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

This area involves contributing to the implementation of AI tools and governance within EFSA. Trainees will support change management activities, internal communication on AI, and act as ambassadors for AI tools. Tasks include exploring innovative AI applications, ensuring compliance with ethical standards, and promoting AI-driven solutions to enhance EFSA's operations.

ASSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

This area focuses on internal audits, risk assessment, and compliance monitoring to strengthen EFSA's governance and decision-making. Trainees will assist in coordinating with external audit bodies, providing risk-based oversight, and ensuring alignment with EU and international standards. This area offers insights into performance, quality, and control frameworks.

BIOINFORMATICS

Bioinformatics services support the analysis and interpretation of biological data in food safety. Trainees in this area will support the analysis and interpretation of biological data, focusing on food safety risk assessments. They will assist in integrating omics technologies and other biological information to identify potential threats and assess their implications.

BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS & MONITORING

This area focuses on zoonoses—diseases transmitted between animals and humans through food, contact with infected animals, or other means. Using data from EU/EEA Member States, the team provides an overview of zoonoses, foodborne outbreaks, and antimicrobial resistance. It offers scientific advice on biological hazards related to food safety and foodborne diseases, helping EU decision-makers protect consumers.

BIOLOGICAL MONITORING DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In this area, trainees will support the collection, validation, and analysis of biological monitoring data in collaboration with the scientific data steward and data providers. They will contribute to projects aimed at enhancing IT tools for data management and improving methodologies, tools, and controlled terminologies. Additionally, trainees will assist in processing, cleansing, and verifying biological hazard data, gaining hands-on experience in data stewardship and contributing to EFSA's scientific data workflows.

BUSINESS ANALYSIS

Business analysis at EFSA involves gathering and interpreting data to enhance decision-making processes. Trainees will support business requirement collection, process mapping, and stakeholder engagement. They will also analyze trends and patterns in business data, prepare reports, and help develop test plans to ensure that proposed solutions align with EFSA's operational needs. Knowledge of business intelligence tools, data visualization, and digital workflow platforms (such as Azure DevOps) is an advantage.

CAMPAIGNS & COORDINATED COMMUNICATION

This area focuses on developing and implementing public awareness campaigns, such as *Plant Health 4 Life* and *Safe2Eat*. Trainees will support procurement and administrative activities related to these campaigns, assist in engagement strategies with EU Member States, and contribute to the design of coordinated communication efforts. They will also help monitor campaign performance and optimise outreach activities to enhance public understanding of food safety topics.

CHEMINFORMATICS

Cheminformatics services support EFSA scientific units to enable the efficient analysis and interpretation of chemical data in the context of food safety. Trainees will support risk assessment processes to identify potential hazards and assess exposure levels.

CHEMICAL TOXICOLOGY (INCL. NANOTOXICOLOGY)

Chemical toxicology focuses on assessing the potential health risks posed by chemicals, including nanomaterials, in food and the environment. This area focuses on the work coordination for cross-cutting guidance developments, relevant for panels dealing with chemical risk assessments. This includes preparatory work for guidance development in collaboration with key players. The aim is to support applicants and risk assessors when performing chemical risk assessment, and specifically toxicological evaluations. Special attention is currently given to the development of provisions in the field of nanotoxicology and nanomaterials risk assessment.

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Trainees in this area will support the activities of the Focal Points operational framework, including preparing draft agendas, briefing notes, and minutes for Focal Points meetings and thematic sessions. Tasks will also involve planning, monitoring, and reporting on Focal Points principal and tailor-made activities, as well as record and CRM contact management. Trainees will assist in the implementation of Community Management engagement services, including supporting dissemination activities to targeted audiences via the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool.

CONTAMINANTS IN THE FOOD AND FEED CHAIN

Contaminants are unwanted substances that enter food or feed due to production, processing, or environmental factors. EFSA assesses the risks associated with contaminants such as mycotoxins, heavy metals, and residues of unauthorized substances. Trainees will support data collection, exposure assessment, and risk analysis, contributing to scientific opinions that help safeguard consumer health.

COORDINATION & ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT (to risk assessment mandate processes)

In this area, trainees will support the logistical and administrative activities related to the management of scientific mandates, from validation to the publication of scientific opinions. Trainees will also assist with data stewardship for relevant tools and facilitates communication with scientific units, applicants, and other key stakeholders.

COORDINATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT (to risk assessment meeting processes)

In this area, trainees will support the logistical and administrative activities related to the organisation of scientific meetings and targeted events, from planning, monitoring to execution of meetings and targeted events. Trainees will also facilitate communication with scientific units and attendees, and contributes to developing materials to support experts participating in EFSA meetings.

DATA COLLECTION, MANAGEMENT & ANALYSIS

Trainees in this area will assist in the technical setup and configuration of data management tools, supporting the systematic collection, organization, and analysis of data across various domains, including Biological Monitoring, Chemical Monitoring, Food Consumption, and Animal Health. Their work will contribute to EFSA's ability to conduct comprehensive risk assessments and support informed decision-making in food safety.

DIGITAL CONTENT MANAGEMENT, USER EXPERIENCE & SCIENTIFIC PUBLISHING

Trainees in this area will support the processing of web publishing requests and contribute to enhancing the usability and accessibility of EFSA's website. They will participate in activities focused on optimising website navigation, content structure, and overall user experience. Additionally, trainees will assist in monitoring and implementing the publication process of scientific outputs, ensuring a smooth transition from adoption/approval to online publication and in the EFSA Journal.

EMERGING RISKS IDENTIFICATION & CRISIS RESPONSE

Trainees in this area will support the activities and operations of the Environmental Scanning process, which monitors potential emerging risks in food safety. They will assist in organising crisis preparedness exercises, support EFSA's crisis coordinators in urgent requests for assistance and contribute to activities related to the implementation of the Serious Cross-Border Threats to Health Regulation.

ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE

In this area, trainees will support the development and maintenance of EFSA's enterprise architecture by assisting in creating architectural documentation, including diagrams, models, and reports. They will collaborate with different teams to gather requirements, understand business processes, and ensure alignment with architectural goals. Trainees will also participate in training sessions and workshops to build expertise in enterprise architecture and governance principles. Additionally, they will gain hands-on experience using Azure DevOps (AzDO) to support various tasks related to design, governance, and process optimization.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ASSESSMENT

In support of the process for the assessment of pesticides, EFSA provides scientific and technical support concerning both the characterisation and exposure of the active substances, as well as risk assessment of their environmental impact through considerations of ecotoxicology and environmental science. Trainees will support on both the pesticides review processes as well as to developmental activities designed to improve the risk assessment processes by integrating new scientific approaches.

EVENTS & HOSPITALITY

This area supports the coordination of EFSA's events, meetings, and hospitality activities. Trainees will gain experience in event logistics, vendor relations, and protocol management, ensuring that EFSA's institutional engagements run smoothly. A strong focus is placed on creating impact, inclusivity, and sustainability.

EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT

In this area, trainees will support on exposure assessment to chemicals and nutrients. This includes the extraction, preparation and analysis of the relevant data (e.g. dietary consumption data, chemical monitoring data in food) and the development and execution of statistical models for exposure assessment. Furthermore, web applications are developed to facilitate the execution of such models by different stakeholders.

FEED ADDITIVES, ANIMAL NUTRITION & PHYSIOLOGY

This area focuses on the safety and efficacy of substances used in animal feed, such as additives that improve animal health or productivity. Trainees will assist in evaluating scientific data on feed components and their effects on animals, users, and the environment. A background in animal physiology, nutrition, or toxicology is valuable for this area.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

EFSA's financial services ensure the efficient management of budgets, reimbursements, and financial reporting. Trainees will assist in processing budget implementation delegations, handling mission and meeting reimbursements, and managing service-level agreements. They will also contribute to financial data analysis and reporting.

FOOD CONSUMPTION & FOOD COMPOSITION

This area studies dietary habits and the composition of food products to assess risks associated with food intake. While this may not be a priority for this year's traineeship programme, applications will be considered based on business needs. Trainees will support data collection, statistical analysis, and the development of models that inform food safety risk assessments.

FOOD INGREDIENTS (additives, enzymes, flavourings)

A food ingredient is any substance that is added to a food to achieve a desired effect. Under EU regulation, they are described as food improvement agents. They include for example food flavourings, smoke flavourings, food additives (such as food colours and sweeteners) and food enzymes. In general terms: Food additives are used to preserve, colour and stabilise food and drinks during their production, packaging or storage. Enzymes have specific biochemical actions which serve technological purposes at any stage of the food chain. EFSA provides scientific advice on the safety of food enzymes obtained industrially from various sources. Trainees will contribute to the assessment of dossiers related to these substances. Knowledge in food science and technology, chemistry, enzyme technology, exposure assessment or computer science is an asset in this area.

FOOD PACKAGING

Food packaging materials must be safe and free from harmful chemical migration. This area focuses on scientific advice on the safety of chemical substances used in food packaging and related processes, including the recycling of plastic for use in food contact materials. In this context, trainees should have knowledge on one or more of the following areas of expertise: food science and technology, chemistry (polymer chemistry, analytical chemistry), chemical engineering, toxicology or exposure assessment.

FRONT DESK, SUPPORT & COMMUNICATION TO BUSINESS OPERATORS

EFSA provides guidance to businesses on regulatory requirements for applications for placing food and feed products on the EU market. Trainees will assist in providing support and guidance on the application procedures. They will also support the logistical and administrative activities related to the team work on the application procedure and support to applicants.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOs)

EFSA ensures the evaluation of dossiers on genetically modified organisms to be placed on the market as food and/or feed (or for cultivation), including post-market monitoring assessment and the provision of scientific advice in the area of genetically modified organisms and new genomic techniques. Trainees will support scientific evaluations of GMO dossiers, post-market monitoring, and research on new genomic techniques. A background in bioinformatics, molecular biology, or genetics is advantageous.

HUMAN NUTRITION

EFSA provides scientific advice on human nutrition, such as the setting of dietary reference values for nutrients, the potential of certain food ingredients to cause allergic reactions, the substantiation of health claims on food, the safety of other substances intentionally added to food (e.g. plants), and the safety and suitability of foods for special groups. Trainees will contribute to nutrition risk assessments, data extraction, and systematic literature reviews. Knowledge of pharmacognosy, toxicology, and food science is beneficial in this area.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources shapes the organisation's most valuable asset: its people. Focusing on attracting, developing, and retaining talent, key functions include talent acquisition and management, learning and development, workforce planning, and employee engagement. Trainees will gain insights into HR policy, staff rights and obligations, change management, and innovative work methods, along with hands-on experience in data-driven decision-making and business partnering.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

EFSA’s IT operations involve managing cloud services, digital workplace tools, and outsourced IT support. Trainees will support in the management of IT operations, including Cloud operations and the management of the main platforms used by EFSA (Microsoft Azure, Appian, Salesforce, Oracle). Trainees will also contribute to implement Service Management best practices, and relying on many vendors and suppliers, in a context where system administration is outsourced.

INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

Trainees in this area will support EFSA's exchanges with institutional partners, draft strategic advocacy messages, and monitor discussions in the European Parliament and Council. Tasks will include preparing briefings for senior management and assisting in the organisation of senior management visits to Brussels.

INFRASTRUCTURE & BUILDING MANAGEMENT

EFSA's facilities management team ensures smooth operations of the agency's infrastructure. Trainees will assist in contract and supplier management, project coordination, and budget planning for outsourced services. This area requires an understanding of facilities operations and service management best practices.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge management ensures that scientific and operational data within EFSA are effectively organised and shared. Trainees will support the development of strategies and tools for information management, facilitate knowledge exchange initiatives, and enhance accessibility to scientific insights. While this may not be a priority for this year's traineeship programme, applications will be considered based on business needs.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

Legal Affairs Services provides expert legal guidance and ensures EFSA's compliance with EU legal and ethical frameworks. This area focus on human resources and ethics, data protection under the lead of the Data Protection Officer, food law, and operational legal matters. Trainees will gain hands-on experience in litigation, transparency policies (proactive and reactive), independence rules, anti-fraud mechanisms, and legal aspects of AI. They will also support governance bodies, such as the Management Board and scientific panels, and contribute to regulatory matters related to access to documents and confidentiality decisions, including document sanitisation. This area offers exposure to cross-cutting legal support, risk mitigation, and regulatory compliance, providing a comprehensive understanding of EFSA's legal operations and decision-making processes.

MICROBIOLOGY, MOLECULAR BIOLOGY & BIOCHEMISTRY

This area focuses on advancing risk assessment through expertise in microbiology, microbiome research, food and feed science innovation, molecular biology, biochemistry and chemical characterization. Contributions may include supporting scientific research, project management, stakeholder engagement, trend monitoring, and knowledge-sharing activities to enhance EFSA's scientific and regulatory capabilities.

NEW APPROACH ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES (NAMs)

This area focuses on innovative non-animal testing methodologies for risk assessment, including omics technologies, in vitro and in silico tools, read-across, adverse outcome pathways and toxicology. Trainees will contribute to implementing these approaches in human health and environmental risk assessment, supporting scientific projects, stakeholder engagement, trend monitoring, and intelligence gathering to enhance EFSA's risk assessment capabilities.

NOVEL FOODS

EFSA ensures the evaluation of dossiers concerning the safety of novel foods, i.e., all foods or food ingredients not consumed in the EU prior to 1997, as well as traditional foods consumed in third countries and nutrient sources. Trainees will support the assessment of scientific dossiers related to novel foods, assisting in chemical characterization, allergenicity evaluation, and toxicological risk assessments. Knowledge of chemical characterization, microbiology, molecular

biology, botanicals, food science and technology, allergenicity, nutrition, pharmacognosy, and toxicology is beneficial in this area.

ONE HEALTH APPROACH

One Health is defined as an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimise the health of people, animals, and ecosystems. EFSA, in collaboration with EU agencies, supports its implementation in Europe through evidence-based risk assessments, research, and capacity building. Trainees will support the implementation of the One Health - Joint Framework for action, specifically the strategic objectives on research and capacity building.

PESTICIDES

EFSA is responsible for the EU risk assessments of pesticide active substances used in plant protection products, in close cooperation with EU Member States. The risk assessment of active substances evaluates the hazardous properties of the active substances and whether they are likely to have any direct or indirect harmful effects on human or animal health under the proposed conditions of use. Trainees will support the assessment of the possible risks related to the presence of pesticide residues in food and feed treated with plant protection products, for which EFSA makes proposals regarding the setting of Maximum Residue Levels.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, CORPORATE PLANNING & MONITORING, QUALITY MANAGEMENT

This area ensures that EFSA's strategic goals are met by integrating human and financial resource planning, performance monitoring, and quality management systems. This ensures alignment with organizational objectives. It drives strategy execution and enhances stakeholder satisfaction through quality management. Trainees will assist in strategy execution, data analysis, and reporting to enhance organisational efficiency.

PHYSICAL SECURITY, INFORMATION SECURITY & BUSINESS CONTINUITY

This area brings together physical security, cybersecurity, and resilience planning under a Converged Security framework to ensure a comprehensive and proactive approach to safeguarding EFSA's people, assets, and operations. Trainees will support various security and resilience activities, including travel safety, facility protection, threat intelligence, and vulnerability assessments. They will also contribute to ensuring compliance with international standards such as ISO 27001 (information security), ISO 22301 (business continuity), and EU Regulation 2023/2841 (cybersecurity resilience). Through risk management, governance, and disaster recovery planning, trainees will help implement a cohesive and resilient security strategy.

PLANT HEALTH

This area focuses on Risk Assessment & Monitoring for Emerging Pests. EFSA provides scientific and technical advice on the risk of new, emerging and quarantine plant pests for the EU agriculture, forestry and environment. Trainees will support horizon scanning; quantitative pest risk assessment and modelling; pest categorisation and rapid assessment; climate suitability

assessment; impact assessment for prioritisation; commodity risk assessment; scientific and technical support to surveillance; databases.

PRESS OFFICE

Trainees in this area will assist in managing incoming media requests to EFSA through the functional mailbox. They will participate in activities aimed at optimising media distribution and promoting EFSA's communication outputs to target audiences. They will also contribute to targeted promotion efforts for EFSA's scientific outputs.

PROCUREMENT, GRANTS & CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

This area supports all phases of procurement and grant procedures, from market analysis to contract implementation. Trainees will assist in call preparation and launch, support in clarification and offers opening phase, support in evaluation and award of offers/proposals, support with second feedback letters, support in preparing, signature and filing of the contracts and grant agreements. This area provides insight into EU procurement rules and public sector contract management.

PROCESS PLANNING, COORDINATION & MONITORING OF SCIENTIFIC WORKFLOWS

In this area, trainees will support the management and optimisation of scientific workflows related to applications and generic mandates. This includes assisting in dossier intake, coordinating workforce planning, and monitoring progress to ensure efficient processing. They will gain experience in overseeing the acceptance of generic mandates and the negotiation on terms of reference, and in supporting the strategic allocation of scientific resources. This role provides valuable insights into regulatory workflows, project coordination, and the planning of scientific assessments within EFSA.

PROGRAMME & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project management at EFSA involves coordinating scientific and non-scientific initiatives to ensure timely and effective delivery. Trainees will assist in project planning, stakeholder communication, and tracking key performance indicators. This area provides insight into managing complex and cross-functional projects.

SCIENCE TO POLICY

This area focuses on bridging scientific research with policy development. Trainees will support evidence-based decision-making through strategic foresight analysis, research advocacy, monitoring the science-policy ecosystem, and external engagement with EU institutions, member States, and international organisations.

SCIENTIFIC CAPACITY BUILDING & PARTNERSHIPS

Trainees in this area will assist in enhancing external collaboration and building internal capacity within EFSA. Tasks will include compiling and maintaining databases of stakeholder inputs, providing partnership intelligence, and supporting the coordination of activities under the "Engagement, Cooperation, and Partnership" area, ensuring effective follow-up on partnership initiatives. Trainees will help facilitate communication between relevant units, analyze and

harmonize capacity-building activities, and assist in organizing workshops and training sessions. Additionally, will provide support to the ISA scheme.

SCIENTIFIC COMPLETENESS CHECK OF APPLICATIONS FOR AUTHORISATIONS

In this area, trainees will support the review of applications for the authorisation of food and feed products by assisting in scientific and administrative completeness checks. These checks cover various areas, including nutrition and novel foods, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), food improvement agents and packaging, feed additives, and pesticides. Trainees will gain experience in evaluating dossiers, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements, and assisting applicants in understanding the application process and requirements. They will also contribute to the registration and identification of substances, supporting cross-cutting identification of substances across different application areas.

SOCIAL MEDIA & MULTIMEDIA

Trainees in this area will support EFSA's social media activities, assisting in the planning of social media strategies and editorial calendars. They will also help produce short video content for various EFSA social media channels. In addition, trainees will support the development of multimedia projects outsourced to contractors, such as infographics, interactive scrollers, videos, and data visualisation.

SOCIAL SCIENCES & ANALYTICS

Trainees in this area will conduct literature reviews and support both quantitative and qualitative research in areas related to the social aspects of food safety. This includes studying citizens' awareness, concerns, and attitudes regarding various food safety topics. Trainees will assist in data analysis and visualisation to inform EFSA's risk communication and assessment efforts. They will also aid in the construction and visualisation of different indicators, and help design and maintain dashboards to monitor EFSA's performance and improve the efficiency of internal processes.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS & MODELLING

Trainees in this area will support the extraction, preparation, and analysis of relevant data, as well as the development and execution of statistical models. These models may involve various statistical techniques, such as dose-response modelling, sampling and survey design, spatial-temporal analysis, and Bayesian statistics. Additionally, trainees will have the opportunity to contribute to the development of web applications that facilitate the use of these models by different stakeholders, gaining hands-on experience in advanced statistical methods and tools for food safety risk assessment.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT & EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Trainees in this area will support the engagement and external relations activities. Tasks may include providing engagement advice on scientific mandates, assisting in the organization of activities related to preparedness, reputation, and quality of science, and mapping and analysing external stakeholders. Trainees will also prepare briefing notes and agendas for EFSA's senior management, support building relationships with international organisations, EU institutions,

Member States, and other EU agencies, monitor the external ecosystem, and contribute to drafting cooperation agreements and knowledge management.

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Trainees in this area will support evidence-based risk assessments by assisting the End2End Evidence Team in consolidating and improving methods related to evidence use within EFSA's scientific assessment processes. This includes contributing to activities such as evidence mapping, developing standard templates for data extraction, supporting critical appraisal tools, scoping reviews, and uncertainty analysis. The team is also focused on enhancing the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in systematic reviews, providing trainees with valuable exposure to cutting-edge methodologies in risk assessment and evidence synthesis.

TOXICOLOGY

Toxicology at EFSA involves the scientific assessment of the harmful effects of substances (such as chemicals, biological agents, and environmental factors) on human, animal, and environmental health. It plays a critical role in risk assessment, providing evidence-based conclusions that support policy decisions regarding the safety of products and substances. This area offers opportunities across different units within the organisation.

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