

# Call for expression of interest for participation in the MoPS2 project



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# CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE MOPS2 PROJECT

## 1 BACKGROUND

Microorganisms, genetically modified or not, may be used in the food chain as active agents or as production strains of substances of interest. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has introduced the use of Whole Genome Sequence (WGS) and WGS-based data analysis for the microorganism's identification, characterisation, and safety assessment of regulated products. WGS-based microbial risk assessment can be complex and require standardisation. Therefore, EFSA developed and released in 2023 a bioinformatic tool, the MoPS (Microorganisms pipelines service) portal, for harmonising the analysis of WGS data for risk assessment.

The [MoPS portal](#) analyses WGS data for risk assessment by using three bioinformatic pipelines (i.e. bacteria, fungi, viruses). Currently, applicants do not have access to the MoPS portal.

EFSA has initiated a project, the "MoPS2 project", aimed at further developing the MoPS portal by providing secure access for applicants to analyse their WGS data using EFSA's bioinformatic pipelines. The objective of this project is to deliver an enhanced version of the MoPS portal enabling EFSA to obtain standardised and reliable WGS analyses for risk assessment, without requesting the submission of WGS data by applicants.

In this context, EFSA met industry representatives in the context of ad hoc meetings with stakeholders to explore the possibilities for the development of an enhanced version of MoPS.<sup>1</sup> EFSA considered the engagement with stakeholders valuable for testing purposes. On 15 May 2025, a kick-off meeting marked the beginning of EFSA's collaboration with applicants interested in participating in the MoPS2 project.<sup>2</sup>

## 2 ABOUT THE CALL

In line with EFSA's commitment to transparency and engagement with its stakeholders, EFSA is launching a call for expressions of interest addressed to applicants to test the three bioinformatic pipelines mentioned above. The testing is expected to focus, in particular, on issues such as the characterisation of genetically modified microorganisms (GMMs), detection of genes of concern, WGS quality checks or identification of uncommon strains.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/ad-hoc-meeting-stakeholders-external-use-efsa-mops-portal>; <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/ad-hoc-meeting-stakeholders-wgs-data-submission-efsa-mops-portal>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/ad-hoc-stakeholder-meeting-kick-meeting-participate-mops2-project>



EFSA will select a limited number of applicants to participate in this project, namely five, for a limited period in time, i.e. until beginning of 2026.

EFSA will invite the selected applicants to test the MoPS portal with their own data to verify that enhancements are working properly and ensure its final version is fit for purpose. The selected applicants will be asked to share with EFSA WGS raw data of genetically modified microorganisms representative of the applications that are or will be submitted to EFSA.<sup>3</sup> They will receive EFSA's codes for the pipelines to test the functioning of the three bioinformatic pipelines and will be asked to provide feedback and suggestions for improvements.

This collaboration is a first step in the development of the enhanced version of MoPS and EFSA plans to further engage with applicants in the next steps of its testing.

## 2.1 WHAT IS OUT OF SCOPE

Applicants participating in the MoPS2 project are not meant to act as co-developers/authors of the codes or the enhanced version of MoPS.

## 2.2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be considered eligible, candidates must meet all following requirements:

- The candidate must be an entity that submitted an application for the authorisation of a food or feed substance or product under European Union law;<sup>4</sup>
- The candidate must be able to share with EFSA WGS data (either because the candidate is the data owner or it has permission to share the data with EFSA) from genetically modified bacteria, yeasts, filamentous fungi, viruses, and/or microalgae;
- The WGS data should be in the form of complete genomes for bacteria, and of excellent quality for other taxonomic units, in the form of raw sequencing reads (from any sequencing technology).

## 2.3 SELECTION CRITERIA

To ensure the efficient management of the MoPS2 project, EFSA must limit the number of applicants that may participate. EFSA will select a **maximum of five (5) applicants** from the pool of eligible candidates received through this call.

Selection will be carried out **on a first-come, first-served basis**, determined by the time of receipt of the completed form submission by EFSA.

## 2.4 HOW YOU CAN APPLY

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<sup>3</sup> The data does not need to originate from strains currently under assessment or previously assessed by EFSA.

<sup>4</sup> Applicant as defined in Article 3(1)(a) of the Decision of the Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority Laying down practical arrangements concerning transparency and confidentiality, available at: [https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate\\_publications/files/210111-PAs-transparency-and-confidentiality.pdf](https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/210111-PAs-transparency-and-confidentiality.pdf). Note that entities qualifying as a natural or legal person representing an applicant are not eligible to participate in this call for expression of interests.



Eligible candidates interested in participating in the MoPS2 project are invited to submit their interest via the

**DEDICATED FORM**  
**by 24 August 2025**

### 3 APPLICANTS INVOLVEMENT

The participation of the selected candidates in the MoPS2 project is subject to their written acceptance of the Terms of Reference (ToR). EFSA will provide the ToR to the selected applicants. Upon receiving their written agreement, EFSA will organise a kick-off meeting and share with the applicants the codes of the bioinformatic pipelines.

WGS raw data from the selected applicants are expected to be received by EFSA via any electronic data transfer method (password protected or not) chosen by the submitter of the data.

Applicants are expected to i) copy locally the bioinformatic code and databases shared by EFSA; ii) use the code to successfully run a pipeline; iii) identify suggestions/changes; iv) test the changes implemented by EFSA in the bioinformatic code.

If the selected applicants require any assistance with the submission of the WGS data to EFSA, it is advised to reach out to EFSA for support.

Selected applicants will meet to discuss the progress of the work in 3 online meetings (organised via Microsoft Teams) between September 2025 and December 2025. This project is expected to run until beginning of 2026.

Participation in the MoPS2 project, including attendance at meetings organised within its scope, is restricted to selected applicants only and cannot be extended to third parties. Additionally, participants must ensure that the codes provided by EFSA are neither used nor shared with any third party. EFSA will refine the codes as necessary and will publish the final versions upon the deployment of the enhanced version of MoPS.

### 4 NOTIFICATION OF THE CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST OUTCOME

The selection process of applicants expressing their interest to participate in the MoPS2 project is expected to be finalised by approx. September 2025.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their expression of interest via e-mail, which will be sent to the address provided in their expression of interest form.

### 5 TIMELINE

Opening of the call:	4 August 2025
Deadline to submit interest via the dedicated form:	24 August 2025
Notification of the outcome of the request:	September 2025



Kick-off of the collaboration:

September 2025

## 6 INQUIRIES

Any questions or requests for assistance regarding this call or the submission of the form should be sent via the [Ask a Question service](#) including in the subject field "MoPS2 project".