CALL FOR PROPOSALS

AND GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Call reference: EUBA-EFSA-2026-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.

INDICATIVE PROCEDURE TIMETABLE

Milestone	Date[1]	Comments
Launch date	04/11/2025	Date of call publication on EFSA's website and Funding & Tender portal.
Deadline for applicants to raise clarification questions to EFSA	~~18/02/2026~~ 02/03/2026	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	~~20/02/2026~~ 04/03/2026	Question and answers will be published with the Call documents in the Funding & Tender portal, which the applicants are requested to consult regularly.
Deadline for submission of proposals	~~26/02/2026~~ 10/03/2026 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	06/2026	Estimated *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.*
Grant agreement(s) signature	06/2026	Estimated

[1] All times are in the time zone of the country of the EFSA.

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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 the form for CV provided)

Annex 6: Award criteria template

1. GRANT OPPORTUNITY AND CONDITIONS[2]

1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Article 36 (1) of the Regulation (EC) 178/2002[3] 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 projects[4], 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) 2230/2004[5] 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, 26.9.2024[6]).

This call is based on EFSA Founding regulation[7] and EFSA's Draft 2026 Work Programme for grants and operational procurements as presented in Annex XII of the Draft Programming Document 2026-2028, available on the EFSA's website[8].

[2] 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.

[3] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:031:0001:0024:EN:PDF

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

[5] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:379:0064:0067:EN:PDF

[6] http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj

[7] 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.

[8] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/corporate-pubs/programming-documents

1.2 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

BACKGROUND

The European Food Risk Assessment (EU-FORA) Fellowship Programme is a key initiative for ensuring preparedness for future risk analysis needs. Created in 2016, in agreement and cooperation with EFSA's Advisory Forum, for building the EU's scientific assessment capacity and knowledge community, the Programme aims to increase the pool of food safety risk assessment experts available in Europe and stimulate the involvement of Member States (MS) in risk assessment work, all with the ultimate objective of building a common EU culture for risk assessment.

The current scheme was adopted following a thorough evaluation initiated in 2020 to assess whether the Programme was achieving the expected impact and maximising the return on investment. The evaluation also informed the development of a new, more sustainable, EU-FORA Programme based on the experience from past cycles and present strategic directions; concretely Strategic Objective 2 under EFSA Strategy 2027 (*"Ensure preparedness for future risk analysis needs"*), with increased risk analysis capabilities (knowledge, expertise, methodologies, and data) to maintain relevance for the future as a specific expected outcome. Moreover, ensuring a harmonised risk assessment culture, with the necessary knowledge and expertise at EU level, by developing strategic and operational partnerships with Member State (MS) competent organisations to boost the sustainability of the risk assessment system is an expected operational result also under EFSA Strategy 2027.

In addition, EFSA's draft Programming Document 2026-2026 indicates that EFSA aims to promote a harmonised culture of risk assessment across the EU by enhancing engagement, partnerships and capacity-building initiatives, as well as implementing innovative workforce solutions. Through its objectives, the EU-FORA Programme contributes to EFSA's effort in the capacity building area. By its design, the programme supports the Partnership concept.

The Programme is now based on eight years of experience, the implementation of over 100 work programmes, and the participation of more than 80 supervisors from 50 organisations in 19 different EU Member States and the UK, and over 120 fellows that now constitute the EU-FORA Alumni.

EU-FORA offers a 1-year, learning-by-doing fellowship, to attract mid-career professionals from the EU with limited experience in food safety risk assessment. Fellows are staff members of Art. 36 organisations ('fellow sending organisation'). The learning-by-doing work programme is offered also by Art.36 organisations from different MS, Norway or Iceland ('hosting sites') with solid risk assessment capacity. The fellowship foresees stays at the organisation identified as hosting site with the objective of maximising the knowledge transfer and networking. The fellowship is complemented by a food risk assessment training plan (see 1.6 The complementary training 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 medicine, life sciences, mathematics, microbiology, molecular biology, natural sciences, nutrition, pharmacy, public health, statistics, toxicology, veterinary medicine or related areas.

Through the participation in the EU-FORA Programme, all parties involved (hosting sites, fellow sending organisations, supervisors and fellows) will benefit from the exchanges of knowledge, experience, and skills; the direct contacts established; the publication of a technical summary report of the scientific work performed under the Programme in a special issue of the EFSA journal; and the participation in the EU-FORA Community, among others.

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 organisations[9] 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 and 2.5 of this call for proposals.

1.3 INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTIES INVOLVED AND THEIR OBLIGATIONS

1.3.1 Obligations of a fellow hosting site

- The fellow hosting site is responsible for the design of the work programme (area and range of activities), its implementation and the overall training of the fellow(s) for the **totality of 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.
- 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.
- The fellow hosting site shall appoint a supervisor for each fellow[10] according to the criteria listed in Section 2.4.
- 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 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 either from the fellow sending organisation and/or 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.

[9] https://efsa.my.site.com/competentorganisations/s/

[10] The applicant does not have to provide individual named supervisors at this stage. Supervisors are nominated by the fellow hosting site, and it should be noted that there will not be a separate call for supervisors.

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. 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.

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.

1.3.2 Obligations of a fellow sending organisation

- 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 to perform the work programme. 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.
- The fellow sending organisation shall facilitate the attendance of the fellow to the mandatory trainings (see below for more information).
- 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.
- 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.

1.3.3 Obligations of the fellow hosting site supervisor[11]

The appointed supervisor shall:

[11] See footnote 10.

- Define the work programme for the fellow;
- Be the fellow's closest supervisor/mentor during the 12-month fellowship. Therefore, they are expected to create the adequate environment and conditions to achieve the training objectives.

  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.
- Supervise the implementation of the 'learning by doing' assignment, regularly liaise with EFSA, and ensure smooth integration of the fellow;

1.3.4 Obligations of a fellow

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

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT LEAVES

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.**

1.3.5 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.

1.4 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 events[12] 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 prescribed[13])

[12] See 1.6 The complementary training for further information.

[13] See 1.3.1 Obligations of a fellow hosting site.

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.

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 circumstances[14] of the drop out and reserves the right to recover[15] proportionally the grant for the period already undertaken and to terminate the agreement. However, 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 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 of a fellow deciding to drop out of the programme any time after the first two months, the grant agreement would 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 circumstances[16] related to the drop out and reserves the right to recover[17] proportionally the grant.

1.5 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 to address the issues.

1.6 THE MANDATORY COMPLEMENTARY TRAINING

The training modules, common to all fellows, are intended to complement the 12-month 'learning by doing' fellowship. They will last seven weeks in total and attendance is **mandatory**. 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 attend[18].

[14] 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.

[15] Recovery would be by EFSA from the hosting site as the coordinator of the grant agreement.

[16] See footnote 15.

[17] See footnote 16.

[18] EFSA can request the organisation of the trainings as virtual/remote events. The decision to hold the training virtually or in person will be taken by EFSA closer to the time of the training.

The training modules are organised by EFSA via a contractor selected through a separate open call for tenders. The contractor will be responsible for organising, developing and delivering the mandatory training modules described below. 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 fellows' sending institutions have no active role in relation to the trainings.

The travel and subsistence costs of the fellow to attend all the below-mentioned trainings are to be covered by the contractor selected by EFSA and **not** by the fellow, their sending institutions or by the fellow hosting site.

The modules will be composed as follows:

1. **Induction training** (3 consecutive weeks) at the start of the programme in September 2026, at EFSA's premises in Parma, Italy, and covering the basics of the EU Food Safety system, food safety risk analysis, and chemical and microbiological risk assessment.
2. **Module 1** (one week, from Monday to Friday – estimated late November-early December 2026), in person, covering other areas related to food safety risk assessment not covered in the induction training, such as Animal Health and Welfare, Genetically Modified Organisms, Plant Health, Nutrition, Regulated Products or Environmental risk assessment.
3. **Module 2** (one week, from Monday to Friday – estimated mid-March 2027), in person, covering emerging topics related to risk assessment in food safety and horizon scanning; e.g. emerging risks, nanomaterials, OMICs, or risk ranking, among others.
4. **Module 3** (one week, from Monday to Friday – estimated mid-June 2027), in person, covering risk communication, including risk perception and participation, and the principles of crisis response.
5. **Module 4** (four days, from Monday to Thursday – estimated late August 2027), online, covering the legislative background for different data collection, guidance documents for data reporting, data models, catalogues and reporting tools:

The trainings will consist of a balanced mix of theoretical and practical trainings per training week, with emphasis on the practical exercises, including discussion sessions, interactive exercises and the use of online or other educational tools.

All the material produced by the training contractor's team[19] for the modular training throughout the year is available for teaching purposes for the hosting site and the fellow sending organisation.

1.7 TASKS, DELIVERABLES, TIMELINES, MEETINGS AND PAYMENTS

No.	Deliverables	Deadline
1	***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.	1 month from the start of the fellowship i.e. by 30/09/2026

[19] Under call for tenders EFSA/2025/OP/0019 "*Developing, organizing and delivering of training activities under the EFSA European Food Risk Assessment Fellowship Programme*", a contractor will be 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. Former materials developed past contracts are also available upon request.

2	***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.	6 months from the start of the work programme i.e. by 28/02/2027
3	***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).	1 month prior to the end of the work programme i.e. by 31/07/2027
4 **(not linked to payment)**	***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 2027. This technical report should be provided to EFSA not later than the end of the fellowship (i.e. before 31st August 2027).	at the end of the fellowship i.e. by 31/08/2027
5 **(not linked to payment)**	***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 - 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.[20] This deliverable should be provided to EFSA not later than the end of the fellowship (i.e. before 31st August 2027).	at the end of the fellowship i.e. by 31/08/2027

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

No.	Meetings	Deadline
1	Although no in-person 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. At least one online meeting will be organised by EFSA with the hosting site and the fellow during the fellowship.	As required
2	EFSA may propose a meeting at the beginning of the work programme implementation between EFSA and the project core team (fellow and supervisor(s)), especially in the cases where the proposal has up-taken one or more projects listed in Appendix A to this Call.	As required

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).

1.8 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.

The total amount EFSA has available to award grants under this call for proposals is € **€ 825,000**. Applicants should note that 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.**

1.8.1 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 budget 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.

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 organisations[21].

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 following this Call. However, EFSA reserves the right not to award all the funds available at any cost, e.g. if the quality of submitted proposals will not be satisfactory. 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.

Please note that EFSA reserves the right not to award any grant and/or 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.

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

1.9 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. This list is regularly updated by EFSA Management Board and is available for consultation using this link https://efsa.force.com/competentorganisations/s/.

In order to achieve the main objective 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.

If you are searching for consortium partners, please contact your Focal Point at the following address: https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/partnersnetworks/eumembers (**section: Focal Points members and observers).**

[21] 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.

1.10 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 partner/s become co-beneficiary/ies. The coordinator and co-beneficiary/ies 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;
- 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/ies or subcontract them to any third party.

The other beneficiary:

- Take part in implementing the project;
- Forward to the coordinator the data needed to draw up reports, financial statements and other documents required under the grant agreement;
- Inform the coordinator of any event or circumstances likely to substantially affect or delay the implementation of the project.

1.11 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/EU[22] must comply with the applicable national public procurement rules.

Sub-contracting:

Subcontracting is not permitted under this call for proposals

1.12 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. Accordingly, the grant awarded following this Call must comply with the following principles:

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.

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.

[22] 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)

- **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.

1.13 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

1.14 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.[23]

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:

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

The Data Protection Notice on the EU-FORA Fellowship Programme provided in Appendix B is applicable in the context of the EU-FORA Fellowship Programme.

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

[23] 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

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

1.15 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.

1.16 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.

1.17 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 case of multi-beneficiary grant calls, co-applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity. Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly.

1.18 USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS AND MODELS FOR DRAFTING THE OFFER AND IN DELIVERING SERVICES

Applicants must clearly indicate in their application whether Large Language Models, such as ChatGPT, were utilised in the preparation of their proposal.

The use of the AI systems/models in the frame of implementation of this grant is allowed, however the applicant must specify such intention in their proposal in the description of the proposed methodology.

1. Requirements for AI system/model, in case those are proposed by the applicant:

The beneficiary using AI system/model in the implementation of this grant must adhere to Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 (hereafter: 'the AI Act')[24] . This regulation is already in force, however it becomes applicable in a gradual way. This regulation also stipulates the obligations of deployers of high-risk AI systems (Article 26). Under no circumstances may the prohibited AI practices (outlined in article 5 of the AI Act) be applied during the implementation of this grant.

A mandatory requirement for the use of AI system / model, and irrespective when relevant provisions of the AI Act become applicable, must be the compliance of the applicant/beneficiary with Regulation

[24] Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Artificial Intelligence Act), OJ L, 2024/1689, 12.7.2024 - https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj

(EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. In particular, Art. 24 of the EUDPR and Art. 22 of the GDPR provide data subjects with the right not to be subject to decisions based solely on automatic processing including profiling, hence confirming the need for ensuring human oversight and validation for all activities and deliverables under the present contract.

2. Information required for award criteria:

EFSA, as the contracting authority, is committed to ensuring that the quality of outsourced outputs/deliverables is not compromised by the use of Artificial Intelligence systems/models. As you prepare your proposal, please note that EFSA requires assurance that your reliance on AI technologies will not jeopardize the quality of outputs/deliverables to be provided to EFSA in the future in case your proposal is selected.

Due to the inherent risks associated with AI technologies, EFSA must have confidence in the ability of applicants to manage these risks effectively and in a trustworthy manner. To this end, applicants are requested to provide evidence that the use of AI systems/models will not only maintain, but ideally enhance, the quality of outputs/deliverables provided to EFSA.

By addressing this requirement, you will help EFSA to assess your ability to deliver high-quality outputs/deliverables while leveraging AI technologies in a responsible and controlled manner.

Accordingly, if the applicant intends to use AI system/model in grant implementation, the proposal must specify the following information:

- The purpose of the use of AI system/model;
- At which stage / for which output/deliverable AI system/model is to be used;
- The added value expected from the use of AI system/model compared to relying on traditional IT systems;
- The risks linked with the use of AI system/model and the mitigating measures put in place by the applicant;
- The indication on how the human oversight and quality validation will be guaranteed.

This information will be assessed in section 2.5 award criteria, under criterion 1.

3. Other transparency requirements in use of AI:

For the sake of transparency, should generative AI systems/models such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT) have been employed in producing deliverables for EFSA, EFSA requires that the beneficiary inserts in the deliverable an explicit mention acknowledging the use of such AI systems/models and confirming human oversight and validation. This requirement applies to all deliverables in written or audio-visual formats, including but not limited to reports, images, videos and soundtracks.

The applicant must clearly indicate in their proposal whether generative AI systems/models such as Large Language Models (e.g. ChatGPT), were utilised in the preparation of their proposals.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW AI SYSTEMS/MODELS DURING GRANT IMPLEMENTATION

Introducing AI systems/ models into the grant implementation, if it was not part of the initial methodology explicitly foreseen in the call for proposals or in the application submitted by the beneficiary, equals to a change of the agreed delivery methodology. Therefore, any change is treated as any other methodology change: the beneficiary, **before starting to use such AI systems/models in the grant implementation** must first inform EFSA in writing of its intention to use AI systems/models. The beneficiary shall provide EFSA with the following information:

- The purpose of the use of AI system/model and of the added-value compared to initially proposed implementation method;
- At which stage of the process and/or for which specific tasks the AI system/model is to be used;

- The risks linked with the use of AI system/model and the mitigating measures put in place by the beneficiary;
- The indication on how the beneficiary will guarantee the human oversight and quality validation.

Only if EFSA agrees in writing to such a change of methodology, the beneficiary can start to use AI system/model for the implementation of the grant.

EFSA will only endorse request if the following conditions are met:

- EFSA receives convincing reassurance that the change of methodology will not have negative effect on quality of the outputs/deliverables;
- The change does not substantially alter the initial proposal.

EFSA reserves the right to refuse beneficiary's requests to use AI systems/models.

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:
	• The applicant applies in a consortium with partner; • At the day of deadline for submission of proposals, the applicant and in case of consortium also its partner/s 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 its partner are involved in the execution of the project;
	Requested evidence:
	ADMINISTRATIVE DECLARATION Annex 2, available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal under Part B Templates. The applicant and partner(s) (if applicable) 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.

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:
	THE DECLARATION ON HONOUR ON EXCLUSION CRITERIA Annex 3, available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal under Part B Templates. The applicant and the partner must complete and sign separate forms (**section A**). The applicant must upload the **Declaration on Honour** in the relevant field under *Part B and Annexes* of the Funding and Tenders Portal. The consortium leader must convert all declarations on honour on exclusion into one single pdf and upload the single document in the relevant field under *Part B and Annexes* of the Funding and Tenders Portal.

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 in case of consortium also of its partner/s.
	The applicant and in case of consortium also its partner/s must have stable and sufficient financial resources to: • maintain their activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out. If the EFSA Authorising Officer considers that the financial capacity is insufficient, the application may be rejected.
	Requested evidence:

	Documents to be provided by the applicant: **DECLARATION ON HONOUR ON SELECTION CRITERIA** Annex 4, available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal. Only the consortium leader 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.

B) Professional and operational capacity

Criterion No. **2.4.B**	Requirements and requested evidence
1	**Professional and operational capacity:**
	Requirements and requested evidence:
	The consortium as a whole must have the professional resources, competencies and qualifications necessary to complete the proposed project: **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. **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. **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.[25] **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. **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. **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

[25] See footnote 10.

	of English of at least B2 level if the only common language between the supervisor and fellow is English. **4. Requirement for the fellow sending organisation:** The fellow (and alternate fellow, if applicable[26]) 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 fellowship[27]. The fellow (and alternate) must not have been a fellow in past editions of the EU-FORA Programme. **5. Requirement for the fellow sending organisation:** The fellow (and alternate fellow, if applicable[28]) 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. **6. Requirement for the fellow sending organisation:** The fellow (and alternate fellow, if applicable[29]) 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. **7. Requirement for the fellow sending organisation:** The fellow (and alternate fellow, if applicable[30]) must have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 years of experience in performing scientific work or tasks related to food safety[31]before their fellowship. **EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 4-7:** **CURRICULUM VITAE** of each fellow (including alternate, if applicable) to be provided filling in the information requested in ANNEX 5 - SELECTION CRITERIA with **clear indication** of the aspects to be assessed under selection criteria 4-7. For each experience declared as evidence for requirement No. 7, Annex 5 must provide: - Clear indication of starting and ending dates. - Clear indication whether the experience was part or full time. - Clear description of the tasks and responsibilities. Failure to provide information or the provision of incomplete or inaccurate information may result in the rejection of the proposal. **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)**

[26] 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.

[27] EFSA may request to submit original supporting documents in the course of the fellowship.

[28] See footnote 26.

[29] See footnote 26.

[30] See footnote 26.

[31] 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.

	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. 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).** **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.**

2.5 AWARD CRITERIA

Criterion No. **2.5**	**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.** 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.
1	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 site[32] (set with a minimum of 3 months, no maximum prescribed[33]), 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: a. Clarity of the description of the proposed fellow work programme covering the totality of the fellowship, and relevance to EFSA, as well the sending and hosting organisation's activities ***(MAX 30 POINTS)*;** b. Range of specific activities which the fellow will be involved in, to maximise acquisition / exchange of knowledge in addition to desk and/or laboratory work (for example: participation to workshops, conferences, panels and working groups meetings etc.) ***(MAX 25 POINTS)*;** c. Degree to which the proposed work programme offers a wide understanding of the whole risk assessment process, especially in the area of the proposal ***(MAX 15 POINTS).*** **Total max points for criterion 1: 70 points.**
2	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

[32] 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).

[33] See 1.3.1. Obligations of a fellow hosting site.

	organisation culture and work practices during the period of placement **(MAX 30 POINTS)**, as follows: a. Specific provisions and activities to assure the effective supervision, and according to the specifications of this Call, and the 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)*;** 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)*** **Total max points for criterion 2: 30 points**

In order to be considered for a 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).

Proposals which have satisfied these quality thresholds will be ranked in a reserve list. The reserve list will be valid for six months from the signature of the feedback letter.

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 1.3.5 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 1.3.5 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 months[34], 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. EFSA may repeat the adaptation process until the available budget of the call is assigned to other applicants on the reserve list.

[34] See footnote 33.

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.

APPENDIXES A & B

APPENDIX A. LIST OF SCIENTIFIC TOPICS FOR POTENTIAL USE BY THE APPLICANTS UNDER CALL EUBA-EFSA-2026-ENREL-01						
No	**Title**	**Description**	**Desirable Key Deliverables**	**Further info (URL)**	**Category**	**Free keywords**
1	Comparative analysis of the scientific criteria applied by the former Science Steering Committee and EFSA in the assessment of applications in the area of animal by-products	The EU green agenda promoting circular economy practices, the recycling and reuse of waste and animal by-products and the deficit in basic raw food and feed materials in the EU is generating an interest in developing new and alternative methods for the processing of animal by-products (ABP), and the increase of the throughput using the methods already approved. ABP represent a potentially valuable resource for many purposes, and it is crucial that innovation in this field is supported by science to ensure that the appropriate level of safety is guaranteed. However, there are risks associated to the reuse of ABP. EFSA - and before its establishment, the former Science Steering Committee (SSC) - has been advising the European Commission on the risks and safety of alternative methods of the use, processing, storage and disposal of ABP. This project aims to do a comparative analysis of the scientific criteria applied by the SSC and EFSA when assessing the safety/risks or evaluating alternative methods of the use, processing, storage and disposal of ABP.	A comprehensive review of the evolution of the approaches and methodology adopted by the SSC and EFSA to assess the safety of safety/risks or evaluating alternative methods of the use, processing, storage and disposal of animal by-products	(the list of SSC and EFSA opinions on animal by-product applications will be provided by EFSA)	Biological hazards	Animal by-products, recycling, processing, biological hazards
2	Impact of microbial biomass used as novel foods on the composition and metabolic activity of the healthy human gut microbiota	There is a growing demand for new protein sources that could meet consumer needs and support more environmentally-sustainable food systems. Insects, along with algae, fungi, cell culture-derived foods, proteins of microbial origin and plant-derived proteins, are increasingly explored as viable alternatives. For example, dried and heat-killed biomass of Yarrowia lipolytica and dried Clostridium butyricum TO-A were assessed by EFSA and found to be safe, while microbial biomasses of other microbial species are currently under assessment (e.g., Anaerobutyricum soehngenii and Clostridium tyrobutyricum). However, the impact of these novel proteins of microbial origin on the gut microbiota remains largely unexplored. Given the microbiota's critical role in digestion, immunity, and metabolism, understanding how microbe-derived proteins interact with gut microbial communities is essential. This project will investigate the effects of microbial biomass used as novel foods on the composition and metabolic activity of the healthy human gut microbiota. Using established in vitro gut simulation models, the project will focus on the colon compartment of the gastrointestinal tract. Metabolite analysis will address outputs related to protein metabolism and in particular production of amines (e.g., tyramine, putrescine, histamine) and phenolic and indolic compounds from the fermentation of aromatic amino acids (e.g., indole, phenol, p-cresol). Changes in gut microbiota composition pertaining to bacterial taxa involved in protein metabolism will be analysed using basic taxonomic profiling. This combined approach will allow for controlled, reproducible analysis of microbial community shifts and metabolite production in response to exposure to proteins of microbial origin. The project's outcomes will inform regulatory assessment and support the safe, sustainable integration of microbial proteins into the novel protein landscape.	1. Investigation of potential changes in the levels of amines and phenolic and indolic compounds and 2. Reporting of potential changes in basic bacterial taxa after the digestion and fermentation of proteins of microbial origin in the colon.		Nutrition	Microbial biomass, gut microbiota, metabolites, novel foods, novel proteins, dietary shift

3	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.	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 farm animals (pig, cattle, chicken, sheep). These predictions across the different species will be compared with available experimental data.	Report summarising the results of the predictions and comparison with available experimental data for selected chemicals of relevance to EFSA in humans, test species and farm animals	TKPlate https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2903/j.efsa.2023.e211101	Methodological development	NAMs, TKplate simulations
4	Metabolic Fate of Filamentous Fungal Biomass as Novel Foods in Human Digestion: Bridging Knowledge Gaps for Safe Food Ingredient Use	Filamentous fungi, such as Aspergillus, Fusarium, Rhizomucor and Rhizopus species, are increasingly being explored as alternative protein sources due to their efficient biomass production and nutritional profiles. However, significant knowledge gaps remain regarding the metabolic processing of these fungal biomasses once ingested, particularly in terms of digestibility, bioavailability of nutrients and the implications for human health. This project aims to investigate the metabolism of filamentous fungal biomasses when incorporated into food products, focusing on potential safety concerns (e.g., metabolites of concern: secreted secondary metabolites, allergenic proteins, potential antifungal resistance genes) their biochemical transformation during digestion, the impact on gut microbiota. The ultimate goal is to support the safe, informed, and effective use of fungal biomass as a novel food ingredient.	1. Literature Review Report: A comprehensive synthesis of existing research on the digestion, absorption, and health effects of filamentous fungal biomass in food systems. 2. Metabolic Profiling Study: Experimental data on the biochemical changes and metabolite profiles of fungal biomass during in vitro gastrointestinal digestion simulations. 3. Gut Microbiota Interaction Assessment: Analysis of the effects of fungal biomass on gut microbial composition and activity using fecal fermentation models. 4. Risk and Safety Assessment Brief: Identification and analysis of any safety risks, including allergenicity, mycotoxin presence, or poorly metabolized compounds. 5. Project Report & Dissemination Plan: Compilation of all findings into a comprehensive report, with a plan for academic publication and stakeholder dissemination.		Nutrition	filamentous fungi, biomass, novel foods, metabolic fate, gut microbiota

5	Contribution to the monitoring and control of antiparasitic drug resistance	Antiparasitic drug resistance, though less discussed than antimicrobial resistance, is an emerging threat recognised by both veterinary and human medicine for its potential to have broad One Health impacts. Soil-transmitted helminths affecting livestock like goats, sheep, and cattle have shown resistance to major anthelmintics such as benzimidazoles and macrocyclic lactones. Misuse of treatments, poor grazing practices, and climate change accelerate resistance development. This growing problem threatens animal health and productivity, with potential consequences to human health. To combat resistance, alongside residue and resistance monitoring, new strategies are needed, including improved parasite control practices and incentives for research into alternative antiparasitic treatments.	- Data on the levels of antiparasitic drug resistance in livestock - Use of recent data to analyse how antiparasitic resistance affects livestock productivity and identify the broader implications for food security - Literature review of practices to mitigate the development of resistance to antiparasitic drugs (can be focused on specific livestock production or region). - Investigation of the patterns of multidrug resistance in soil-transmitted helminths and comparison with antimicrobial resistance to identify commonalities and unique challenges - Evaluation of the environmental persistence of antiparasitic agents and of any parallels with antimicrobial persistence	ER Newsletter briefing note	Animal Health	emerging risks, drug resistance, helminths, parasites, animal health
6	How predictable are microbiological risks in novel foods?	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.	1. 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 2. 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 3. Recommendations for fit-for-purpose predictive microbiology models/approaches for the risk assessment of novel foods	https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/call/npefsanif202402-microhaz-microbiological-hazards-novel-foods	Novel foods	Predictive microbiology modelling, novel foods
7	Clinical relevance of novel proteins: the missing piece in the allergenicity risk assessment	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 (EFSA 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.	1. Identify sequences with clinical relevance ranking 2. Develop a searchable repository for the allergen sequences and associated metadata, which are downloadable in forms tractable to sequence analysis 3. Propose a fit-for-purpose database for allergenicity risk assessment and recommend database maintenance and updating	https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.2903/sp.efsa.2024.EN-8840	Novel foods	Allergenicity, innovative proteins, GMO

8	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, for instance, 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 RORγt-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.	1. Scoping literature review on the roles and mechanisms of gut microbiota in food allergy, with particular focus on novel proteins. 2. 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 informing future research priorities. 3. 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
9	Risk assessment of breast-milk-identical food ingredients derived from precision-fermentation.	The production of food ingredients identical to specific human milk components (e.g., oligosaccharides, proteins, lipids) through precision fermentation (PF)* has gained increasing interest in recent years. In principle, these products require premarket authorisation under the Novel Foods (NFs) Regulation and, thus, are subject to EFSA's risk assessment (RA). For instance, EFSA has long-standing experience in the RA of human-identical milk oligosaccharides (HiMOs), a category of NFs for which the general margin of exposure (MOE) approach is not applied due to the particular nature and properties of these substances. Instead, the intake of the NF under the proposed conditions of use is compared with the natural intake of the native counterpart from human milk in exclusively breastfed infants (safety comparator). Although EFSA has not yet assessed NFs identical to other specific human milk components, a similar RA approach could reasonably be expected. In such cases, literature data on their mean occurrence in human milk and natural intakes would be required, as well as dietary exposure estimates from other sources. *In absence of a legal definition, as taken for the purpose of the 27th EFSA's Scientific Colloquium, PF refers to the use of engineered microbial cell factories in the production of food ingredients.	1. Mapping of food ingredients identical to specific human- and animal-milk components (e.g., HiMOs, lactoferrin, alpha-lactalbumin, osteopontin, casein, immunoglobulins, IgG concentrates, triacylglycerols, OPO, DHA, ARA, etc.), which are available in the EU and international markets 2. Scoping literature review on the individual/mean concentrations in human/animal milk of relevant components, as affected by, e.g., the lactation period, milk phenotype, gestational age at birth or region/nationality of the subject population 3. Estimation of the natural intakes of relevant components and, when relevant, dietary exposure 4. Overview of the scientific requirements for the risk assessment of relevant components in international regulatory frameworks, with particular focus on potential safety concerns	https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/en-8994	Novel foods	Human milk, precision fermentation, novel foods

10	Collecting evidence to support the risk assessment of Tralopyril and its transformation products in salmon (or other aquaculture species).	A recent study assessed tralopyril, an antifouling agent in aquaculture nets, and its transformation product HTFCCP (a de-brominated derivative) in salmon. Despite its short seawater half-life, tralopyril accumulated in salmon tissues after 30-day exposure to treated nets under controlled conditions. LC-QqQ and LC-HRMS analyses found tralopyril in muscle, liver, and faeces, with highest concentrations in faeces. While no maximum residue limits exist for tralopyril, the study suggests need regulatory reassessment to determine whether the compound's persistence in edible tissues poses food safety and environmental concerns despite rapid degradation in seawater.	Evidence that could be used in the case of reassessment, such as: - bioaccumulation studies about concentration of tralopyril and its metabolites in the various parts of salmon (or other farmed fish species if likely to be exposed) - toxicological effects on aquatic organisms and potential implications for human consumption - effect of time and preservation conditions - evaluation of the effect of long-term exposure to the substance from salmon consumption - evaluation of the endocrine-disrupting effects and oxidative stress induced by exposure to tralopyril - study of whether tralopyril offers a safer alternative or presents new challenges, and identification of potential improvements or alternatives for net coatings.	https://www.hi.no/en/hi/nettrapporter/rapport-fra-havforskningen-en-2024-43 33 EREN Minutes: https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-06/Minutes_33rd_EREN_May_2025.pdf	Contaminants	Tralopyril, antifouling agents, aquaculture, contaminants
11	Investigating Probabilistic Approaches for Quantitative Risk-Benefit Assessments	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.	1. Scoping review of existing methodologies and frameworks for integrating intake, occurrence, epidemiological, and toxicological data under a common quantitative probabilistic framework. 2. Development of a probabilistic modelling framework that integrates the identified data sources. Application of this framework to a case study (time permitting). 3. 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.		Methodological development	Probabilistic approach, quantitative risk-benefit assessment, data

12	Improving the evidence base on the prevalence and impact of 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 (micro)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 (micro/nano)plastic pollution on human health and the environment. Of particular interest are: - information/research on the degradation of plastics within living organisms; - their biological absorption, distribution, elimination, and toxicity; - information on their potential as carrying agents of pathogens or contaminants.	Emerging Risks Newsletter	Contaminants	Plastic, plastic pollution, plastic degradation, toxicology
13	Evaluating the feasibility of integrating the exposome concept into regulatory risk assessment	The exposome concept which includes the totality of the human exposures, has primarily gained interest within the academic community. Despite its complexity, and heterogenicity 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 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.	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.		Methodological development	Exposome, regulatory risk assessment
14	Integrating Human Biomonitoring Data into Exposure Assessment: Opportunities and Scientific Gaps	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 will explore the advantages and challenges associated with using HBM data or biomarkers of exposure. It will provide an overview of the benefits, limitations, and existing scientific knowledge gaps. Additionally, the project will evaluate the 'readiness' of integrating HBM data into exposure assessments through a review of relevant literature and/or a case study at national level.	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.		Methodological development	Human biomonitoring data, chemical exposure
15	New technologies for a real-time data collection of chemical monitoring data in food	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 interoperaperability and and automation at each step. The project would also assess readiness of the stakeholders within the process to adopt such new technologies.	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.	https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/sp.efsa.2020.EN-1901	Methodological development	data collection, chemical contaminants, new technologies

16	Possible framework for the use of non-target screening methods for the routine monitoring of chemicals in food	The current EU control programs for chemicals in food rely, primarily, 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 could 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.	A comprehensive scientific report that synthesises the benefits of implementing NTA into 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.		Methodological development	Chemical contaminants, control programmes, non-target screening methods
17	Migration studies on bioplastics used as food contact materials	As bioplastics gain traction as sustainable alternatives to conventional food contact materials, concerns are emerging over their potential to release harmful substances. While materials like polylactic acid (PLA), derived from corn starch or sugarcane, align with EU environmental goals, they are not without risks. Studies indicate that PLA can absorb and release various contaminants, including pharmaceuticals, heavy metals, and non-intentionally added substances (NIAS), especially under heat. Some bioplastics also incorporate nanoparticles, raising toxicological questions that remain largely unanswered. Of particular concern are potential allergens, such as gluten, migrating from biobased packaging made from wheat or rye. Advanced migration studies with such materials in real-food matrices would help to better frame the problem. Specifically for PLA, toxicity assessment of PLA nanoparticles in mammalian models would be useful.	Migration studies for bioplastics used in real food matrices; Study of the toxicity of PLA nanoparticles in mammalian models	Emerging Risks Newsletter	Food contact materials	food contact materials, bioplastics, migration, nanomaterials
18	Screening Tool for nutritionally disadvantageous novel food substitutions	Develop a simple screening model (Excel-based, with optional R prototype) to assess potential nutrient deficits or excesses when conventional foods are replaced by novel foods. The tool will quantify nutrient differences per serving and daily scenarios, benchmark against reference intakes and tolerable upper levels, and present traffic-light outputs. By highlighting key nutrients of interest, it will provide a rapid and transparent way to inform the “nutritionally disadvantageous” assessment required in novel food evaluations, supporting both applicants and risk assessors.	1. Prototype Excel tool (with option for R version) and user manual with assumptions, thresholds, and worked examples 2. Short methodological report linking tool use to the “nutritionally disadvantageous” criterion in novel food assessments	Guidance on the scientific requirements for an application for authorisation of a novel food in the context of Regulation (EU) 2015/2283	novel foods, nutrition	novel foods, replacement, substitution, screening tool, food composition
19	Comparative analysis of severity weighting in food-related Risk-Benefit Assessments (RBAs)	This project will provide a methodological overview of how different approaches to weighting the severity of health outcomes (e.g., DALYs, categorical severity scores, expert-judgement based scales) could be applied in food-related RBAs. The work will be desk-based, focusing on a small number of illustrative, published examples from the scientific literature (not EFSA-specific) to show how outcomes may vary depending on the weighting method chosen. The aim is to produce practical insights and simple guidance on how severity weighting can influence interpretation of RBA results, supporting EFSA’s future methodological development in this area.	1. Short review of existing severity weighting methods relevant to food and nutrition. 2. Comparative illustration, using 1–2 simplified case examples from literature. 3. Practical guidance note on the advantages, limitations, and transparency needs of each method.	EFSA Guidance on Risk–Benefit Assessment 2024	Methodology, risk–benefit assessment	severity weighting, DALY, sensitivity analysis, case studies, risk-benefit assessment, RBA
20	Criteria for prioritising uncertainty in food-related Risk-Benefit Assessments (RBAs)	Develop a structured set of criteria to identify and prioritise uncertainties that most strongly affect outcomes of food-related Risk-Benefit Assessments. The project will review common uncertainty types (exposure, severity weighting, health effect evidence) and propose a simple scoring system to rank their impact. The framework will be applied to one illustrative worked example from the literature or a simplified case study, to demonstrate its added value in improving clarity, transparency, and communication of RBA results.	1. Review of uncertainty sources in RBAs 2. Draft prioritisation framework (criteria + scoring) and application to one worked example 3. Short methodological report with recommendations	EFSA Guidance on Uncertainty 2018	Methodology / Risk–Benefit Assessment / Uncertainty analysis	uncertainty prioritisation, framework, risk-benefit assessment, RBA, sensitivity, transparency

21	Mapping and prioritising uncertainties in novel food assessments	Provide a structured overview of uncertainties that typically arise in novel food evaluations (e.g., compositional variability, intake estimates, nutritional disadvantage, allergenicity). The project will build on EFSA's Novel Food Guidance and Uncertainty Guidance to propose a checklist and scoring approach to prioritise which uncertainties matter most for decision-making. An example will be used to illustrate the framework.	1. Catalogue of common uncertainty types in novel food assessments 2. Draft prioritisation checklist/scoring system and application to one illustrative example 3. Methodological note for applicants/assessors	EFSA Guidance on Uncertainty 2018 + EFSA Novel Food Guidance 2024	Novel foods, Uncertainty analysis	uncertainty prioritisation, framework, novel foods, sensitivity, transparency

Appendix B. Data Protection Notice on the EU-FORA Fellowship Programme

Regulation (EU) 2018/1725[1] 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 Head of EFSA's Engagement & External Relations (ENREL) Unit is the controller of the processing operation. The controller 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 complementary 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.

3. Legal basis:

- ✓ EFSA's Founding Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, Articles 22, 23 and 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)

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

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.