



CLARIFICATIONS 1 TO 16

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

Question 1: The first question is relative to the eligibility of a fellow. The call says that "*the fellow 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. The fellow must not have been a fellow in past editions of the EU-FORA Programme.*" If there is a fellow, who has worked in the sending organization during September 2021 to May 2023 (contract of 21 months) and then stopped (June 2023 to August 2026), and the fellow will sign a new contract again in September 2026 to September 2027 (contract of 12 months), then the fellow is eligible? or should have a contract exactly before the fellowship (i.e., contract September 2025 to September 2027 to cover 12 months before and 12 months after the fellowship)?

Answer: As indicated in Section 2.4.B Professional and operational capacity, requirement No. 4, The fellow 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) for at least 12 months before their fellowship and shall remain in the service of that employer throughout the period of fellowship. While continuity of 12 months in this working relationship is needed, it does not necessarily need to be assured by the same contract.

Please also note that EFSA may request to submit original supporting documents proving this working relationship in the course of the fellowship.

Therefore, to meet requirement No. 4, the fellow should have a working relationship with the fellow sending organisation for a minimum of 12 months before 1st September 2026, date of start of the fellowship, and remain at the service of that same employer minimum until the end of the fellowship (i.e. 31st August 2027). Kindly note that, as indicated in Section 1.3.2 Obligations of a fellow sending organisation, the fellow's employer must inform EFSA of any change in the fellow's status in this regard.

Question 2: The second question is relative to the role of the organizations and the submission of a proposal, if the first organization acts as a fellow hosting (this organization also submits the final proposal) and the other as a fellow sending organization, it is possible these organization to have the opposite role at the same time for the same submitted proposal (because the concept of the proposal is the same), i.e., organisation 1 as host and sending, and organisation 2 as sending and host, respectively? or these organizations should apply a different proposal with different concept and roles? If the first is possible (i.e., both organizations to have both roles) then which organization submits the proposal?

Answer: 2. As indicated in Section 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 under the same Call. However, please note that as pointed out in Section 1.10 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, the applicant (organisation submitting the proposal to EFSA) is the leading entity of the consortium and the hosting site. Therefore, if a same organisation applies as hosting site and fellow sending



organisation, this needs to be done through the submission of two different proposals; one of which will be submitted by that organisation in its role of hosting site and leading entity of the consortium; and the other one, by their counterpart, the other organisation acting as hosting site and leading entity of the consortium.

Question 3: According to the call documents and the FAQ, the €55,000 grant is transferred entirely to the hosting organisation. In contrast, the sending organisation may receive very little or no financial compensation, depending on the internal agreement between the two institutions.

My question concerns the fellow's salary coverage. As fellows remain staff members of their sending organisation for the entire 12-month period, how do sending organisations typically manage the fact that they must continue paying the fellow's salary? At the same time, the grant funds are allocated primarily to the host?

Answer: As indicated in the Call for Proposals, section 1.8.1 Direct Agreement, 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.

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.

Question 4: Is there an age or time limit after obtaining a doctorate for fellows for EU-FORA (call EUBA-EFSA-2026-ENREL-01)? I couldn't find this information on the website—maybe I overlooked it. We have a partner for the consortium and want to assess whether we can only be a host institution or whether our employees can be fellows.

Answer: Kindly note there is no age limit for participation in the EU-FORA Programme. However we invite you to thoroughly check Section 2.4.B Professional and operational capacity of the Call; namely requirement No. 7, where it is stated that the fellow must have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 years of experience in performing scientific work or tasks related to food safety before their fellowship, understanding 'food safety' as a comprehensive expression including risk assessment, risk management and risk communication activities in any of the fields under EFSA's remit.

Question 5: However, we are uncertain whether Switzerland is eligible to participate in this Initiative. Could you kindly provide clarification on this matter?

Answer: Only [competent organisations](#), based on designations by Member States, are eligible to apply for a call. The competent organisations are based in EU countries, Norway or Iceland. Switzerland is not among these countries.

Question 6: My administration is asking for the *mandate template (provided by EFSA)* mentioned on page 15 of the call:

"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."



Answer: The mandate ('Accession forms') is annex 3 of the Draft Grant Agreement published with the Call for proposals in the Funding and Tender portal.

Question 7: We have received an inquiry from a research group interested in submitting an EU-FORA application for a promising young researcher.

This researcher will be hired by the organisation starting on January 1, 2026, for a period of two years, funded by a European project.

Upon hearing about the EU-FORA grants, this group saw a great training opportunity for the young researcher and wondered if it would be possible to use part of the funds allocated to the EU-FORA project to cover her salary expenses, that is, if she could be hired directly by EU-FORA, temporarily leaving the European project.

Answer: As indicated in Section 1.8.1 Direct Agreement of the Call for Proposals, the total amount of the EFSA grant (€ 55,000) 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. 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. Evidence of actual costs incurred by both parties in the consortium are not required.

Moreover, as indicated in Section 1.3.2 Obligations of a fellow sending organisation, 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.

Finally, in order to meet requirement No. 4 of the Selection criteria (Section 2.4.B Professional and operational capacity), the fellow must have worked or had a working relationship with the fellow sending organisation, under a permanent or contract basis, for at least 12 months before their fellowship (i.e. for at least 12 continued months before 1st September 2026) and shall remain in the service of that employer throughout the period of fellowship.

Question 8: Following up on the question just done in the Q&A session about EU-FORA: *what categories of early-mid research fellows can apply?* You kindly and rightly answered what is reported in the call and repeated in the FAQ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/engage/fellowship>: Research fellows from ex art 36 organisations can apply if they meet the selection criteria: min 3 years of experience and max 15 years, min B2 level of English, food safety (comprehending risk assessment, risk management, and risk communication).

"Identified fellows must be professionals in food safety working at a competent organisation (Art. 36 organisation) for a minimum of 12 months, with a full university degree in a relevant area and a good knowledge of English language (at least B2 level according to CEFR), and a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of 15 years of experience in performing scientific work or tasks related to food safety before their fellowship."

Further questions are:

- In the EU/Italian categories of research fellows, does it mean that both personnel with a fixed term position and junior categories with a temporary contract may apply?



- How might the EU-FORA grant be included in the terms of the researchers' ongoing contracts?

Answer:

- Identified fellows must meet criteria 4 to 7 indicated in Section 2.4B Professional and operational capacity of the Call for proposals. Moreover, as indicated in Section 1.3.2 Obligations of a fellow sending organisation, the fellow's employer must continue to pay their salary, maintain their administrative status throughout the period of fellowship, and inform EFSA of any change in the fellow's status in this regard; i.e. Fellows must keep their administrative status and salary during EUFORA and they must keep their working relationship of the fellow sending organisation. As long as the fellow and the fellow sending organisation meet the requirements to apply, the actual type of contract is not relevant for EFSA.
- As indicated in Section 1.8.1 Direct Agreement, EFSA's grant amount of 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. **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.

Question 9: As regards the EU-FORA call, hosting sites, can different mini-projects not listed in Appendix A of the call be proposed?

Answer: As indicated in Section 1.3.1 Obligations of a fellow hosting site, applicant organisations may opt for a work programme that includes in whole or in part one or more of the topics listed in Appendix A. 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. Therefore, applicants can propose any topic for the training of the identified fellow, always taking into consideration the criteria in Section 2.5 Award Criteria and that the focus of the EU-FORA fellowship programme targets activities falling within EFSA's remit.

Question 10: I am writing to inquire whether my practical experience qualifies as "performing scientific work or tasks related to food safety" according to your criteria (proposal manual EUBA-EFSA-2026, page 24, 7. Requirement for the fellow sending organisation). I am somewhat unclear about what qualifies as practical experience in your assessment. I hold an M.Sc. degree in Food and Nutrition, obtained following 5 years of university study. I have attached a detailed description of my internship/practice, outlining the tasks performed, duration, and institution [...]. Could you please assess whether this experience, combined with my academic background, meets your requirements for scientific work in food safety?

Answer: EFSA cannot pre-assess the information you provide, since CVs are an integral part of the application and therefore they can only be assessed after submission of the proposal, during the evaluation phase of the Call.



As indicated in section 2.4.B.7 of the Call for Proposals (Professional and operational capacity, 5. Requirement for the fellow sending organisation), the fellow must have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 years of experience in performing scientific work or tasks related to food safety (including risk assessment, risk communication and risk management aspects) before the starting date of the fellowship.

This experience does not necessarily need to be paid/work experience but it needs to include experience in performing food safety tasks and not only following studies or lessons on food safety-related topics.

Therefore, Master studies and subsequent dissertation can be considered as experience in performing these tasks e.g. if lab work, research, etc. is performed and not only classroom/virtual lessons, as well as internships or PhDs.

This information needs 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.

Question 11: My first question concerns the role of the host tutor. I would be very interested in acting as the host tutor myself; however, at present I have four years of experience at my current institution. I would therefore like to ask how strictly the requirement of five years of experience for the host tutor is applied. As an alternative, we have considered proposing my colleague who is currently a member of the ongoing EUFORA cohort. However, it is unclear whether she would be eligible to apply as a host tutor while still being involved in the programme.

Answer: As indicated in the Section 1.3.1 Obligations of a fellow hosting site, footnote No. 10, the applicant does not have to provide individual named supervisors at this stage. However, it is an obligation of the fellow hosting site to appoint a supervisor for each fellow according to the criteria listed in Section 2.4.

According to Section 2.4.B Professional and operational capacity, the fellow hosting site (as an organisation) needs to provide a statement indicating that they have 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. Kindly note that this does not mean necessarily 5 years of experience in the fellow sending organisation, but on the field of the proposed work programme.

Regarding your last question, fellows from the ongoing EUFORA cycle can be considered by the fellow hosting organisation as supervisors as long as they meet the requirements in Section 2.4.B Professional and operational capacity.

Question 12: Firstly, concerning the required B2 level of English, I would like to know whether it is mandatory to hold and submit an official B2 certificate, or whether demonstrating an equivalent level of proficiency without formal certification would be sufficient to be eligible for the call.



Secondly, I would appreciate your guidance regarding my specific employment situation and the eligibility criteria related to prior experience at the host institution or similar organisations.

I started my current contract as an *Assistant Professor* in January of this year. Prior to this, during 2025, I was employed under a *Postdoctoral* contract. Additionally, between 2019 and 2024, I worked continuously at the University.

In this context, I would like to ask whether the required 12 months of prior employment must be continuous, or whether non-continuous periods can be considered eligible, particularly given my previous six years at the University and one year at a comparable research institution.

Answer: As indicated in Section 2.4.B Professional and operational capacity, requirement No. 6, The fellow must have a good knowledge of English language, with strong ability to communicate clearly and effectively in both spoken and written English. No certificate is required.

As indicated in Section 2.4.B Professional and operational capacity, requirement No. 4, the fellow 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) for at least 12 months before their fellowship and shall remain in the service of that employer throughout the period of fellowship. While **continuity of 12 months in this working relationship is needed**, it does not necessarily need to be assured by the same contract. Please also note that EFSA may request to submit original supporting documents proving this working relationship in the course of the fellowship.

Question 13: I would like to ask you a question about the budget of EU-FORA because I have received multiple requests from other organizations. I have found a fellow for the project, but I have received another three requests. The call permits the host to have up to three fellows working on the same project. However, I don't know what to tell about the budget when they ask me, i.e., the budget is 55000 in total independently the number of fellows working on the same project (one, two or three) or the budget is 55000 per fellow because the fellow-sending organizations are different?

Answer: As indicated in Section 1.3.5 Accumulation of roles, it is possible for a single hosting site to train more than one fellow. This can be done via participation in more than one different consortium (i.e. with different partners) or in a consortium where more than one fellow is identified by the same fellow sending organisation. This can be indicated in the corresponding place under the award criteria.

Kindly note that the maximum number of fellows to be trained in a hosting site under the same work programme is three (3) fellows.

Regarding the grant amount, as indicated in Section 1.8.1 Direct Grant Agreement, 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.

Question 14: I am writing to request clarification regarding the completion and submission of Annex 3. According to the instructions, both the hosting and the sending organisations are required to complete and sign separate forms, which are then merged into a single PDF file for submission. However, when merging the two electronically signed PDF documents, the digital signature validation appears to be affected and, in some cases, only the stamp remains visible.

Could you please confirm the correct procedure in this case? In particular:

- Is it acceptable to submit electronically signed documents with the official institutional stamp visible, even if the digital signature validation is not fully preserved after merging?



We would prefer to avoid manual (handwritten) signatures if possible, but we would like to ensure full compliance with EFSA's submission requirements. Let me know what is the correct procedure.

Answer: You can use the option 'Print to pdf' to maintain the digital signature visible or sign manually.

Question 15: I am preparing the annexes for the EU-FORA call and had a question about Annex 6. I could not find clear guidance on whether it should include a project abstract, or if there is any recommended word limit for the overall project and its sections.

Answer: Annex 6 refers to the proposal of a work programme itself. The sending organisation will propose a fellow to be trained under a work programme offered by the other consortium partner. In Annex 6 the applicant is required to fill in the table as well as to explain how the proposed work programme will meet Award criteria 1 and 2.

While there is no limitation in the number of words, all sections need to be filled in, including the table on first page (which already includes a field for a short summary of the proposal). The proposal will be assessed against all the criteria and sub-criteria indicated in Section 2.5 Award criteria of the Call for proposals.

Question 16: I'm trying to submit an EUFORA proposal through the EU Funding & Tenders portal but apparently I cannot upload any pdf documents signed by electronic signature. We double-check that the documents are not locked during the signature process. Please, could you help me with that? Thank you.

Answer: For any issues related to the submission tool, please refer to funding portal service desk (EC-FUNDING-TENDER-SERVICE-DESK@ec.europa.eu).

As workaround, you can also 'print as pdf' the signed documents and submit them.