



RULES OF CONTEST

Reference: CONTEST/EFSA/AMU/2020/01

Design of an Artificial Intelligence solution to detect fake news using EFSA's body of scientific opinions

to safeguard the credibility of information in EU
about food and feed safety



Table of Contents

1.	OBJECTIVES PURSUED	3
2.	EXPECTED RESULTS.....	3
3.	ARRANGEMENTS FOR REGISTRATION AND SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES...	4
4.	EVALUATION PROCESS.....	7
5.	GUIDANCE FOR THE CONTESTANTS	8
6.	AGREEMENT ON OWNERSHIP AND PAYMENT OF THE PRIZE	8
7.	CONDITIONS FOR CANCELLATION OF THE CONTEST, IF ANY.....	9
8.	CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION	9
9.	OTHER RULES	10



1. OBJECTIVES PURSUED

The contest is a public procurement procedure to acquire a plan or design, to be selected by a jury, after being put out to competition. The overall objective of this contest is to enhance some of EFSA key values such as openness and innovation in order to enable stakeholders to understand the basis EFSA's scientific work in an innovative manner.

The specific objective of the present contest is to come up with a prototype of Artificial Intelligence solution to detect fake news in the area of Food and Feed Safety leveraging whole EFSA's body of Scientific Opinions, from its foundation to present days.

Such contest is framed in the general context of efforts from European Commission to tackle misleading information: "The exposure of citizens to large scale disinformation, including misleading or outright false information, is a major challenge for Europe. The Commission is working to implement a clear, comprehensive and broad set of actions to tackle the spread and impact of online disinformation in Europe and ensure the protection of European values and democratic systems... Disinformation is "verifiably false or misleading information created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public". It may have far-reaching consequences, cause public harm, be a threat to democratic political and policy-making processes, and may even put the protection of EU citizens' health, security and their environment at risk."¹

The contest is carried out with the support of the European Institute of Technology (EIT²) and the EIT Alumni³ in particular. The EIT Alumni supports the promotion of the rules of contest and provides Hackathon platform.

2. EXPECTED RESULTS

Detecting fake news is a challenging topic, therefore in addition to the credibility ranking of the provided set of news, participants should emphasize on the design idea and the methodology that it has been adopted to address the given challenge. A creative adoption of data processing AI techniques will be positively welcomed. The criteria that will be used to evaluate the proposed solutions are detailed in Section 4.

¹ European Commission Policy on "Tackling online disinformation" <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/tackling-online-disinformation>.

² The [EIT](#) is an independent body of the European Union set up in 2008 to deliver innovation across Europe. The EIT brings together leading business, education and research organisations to form dynamic cross-border partnerships. These are called Innovation Communities, and each is dedicated to finding solutions to a specific global challenge. EIT Innovation Communities develop innovative products and services, start new companies, and train a new generation of entrepreneurs.

³ [EIT Alumni Community](#) is an interdisciplinary and multicultural network of networks gathering all graduates and alumni from EIT's education & business creation programs, regardless of what Innovation Community they belong to, what area they specialise in.



3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR REGISTRATION AND SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES



Registration of applicants (mandatory): 28 January 2021 at 14:30 CET⁴

- Any economic operator may request clarifications on the present rules of contest by latest 21/01/2021.
- Please notice that EFSA offices will be closed from 24/12/2020 to 04/01/2021.
- Requests for clarification may only be submitted in writing to the following email account: EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu

Disclosure contest's challenge: 19 February 2021 at 16:00 CET

On-line Hackathon event (optional): 20-21 February 2021

Submission of entries: 22 February 2021 at 14:30 CET

Award Ceremony: 19 March 2021

Timelines and phases

The contest is divided in 3 main phases: a registration phase, a contest phase and an award phase. The full timeline with an overview of all steps included in each phase is depicted below.



⁴ Central European time



Registration phase

The first step in this phase is the publication of the present **rules of contest**. At the same time, EFSA will publish the topic of the challenge that will be the subject of the competition. At this stage, the disclosed information about the topic will include:

- A set of “example test” news related to the domain of food and feed safety (**Annex 3**).
- Access to the EFSA’s body of scientific opinions (see Section 5 for more detailed instructions).

Therefore, immediately after publication of the rules of contest, potential applicants can already start the design, implementation and testing of a model to rank the credibility of the given set of news.

The second step is the actual registration of the applicants. Registration with EFSA is required at this stage to be admitted to the actual contest. The deadline for registration is 28 January 2021 at 14:30 CET.

All registered participants (contestants) will receive an invitation to access, on a voluntary basis, an Hackathon platform⁵ made available by EIT (i.e. the platform will allow interaction, collaboration and matchmaking between applicants in view of stimulating the creativity and enhancing the quality of the designed solutions according to the Hackathon collaborative knowledge creation process). Contestants can decide to join or not the collaborative Hackathon platform, participation is optional.

Contest phase

The competition phase will take the form of a time intensive contest.

It will start on Friday 19/02/2021 at 16:00 CET and will close on Monday 22/02/2021 at 14:30 CET.

At the beginning of the contest, the final challenge will be disclosed to all contestants including:

- The final set of news to rank by their credibility using the model/solution proposed by the contestants.
- An additional “hacking task” consisting of complementing the model and its output via an application to make it user-friendly and accessible by human users.

For those contestants that decided to join the Hackathon platform, matchmaking will be possible throughout the contest days.

At the end of the contest, contestants should submit the final version of the entries as specified in the **Submission of Entries** paragraph of this section.

⁵ <https://eventornado.com/>



Award phase

Following the contest, the EFSA's jury will assess all the submitted entries against the criteria described in Section 3. Entries will be assessed anonymously. Upon completion of their evaluation work the jury shall sign a record of all the entries examined, containing an assessment of their quality and identifying to which according to the final ranking of their overall team's score the prizes may be awarded⁶.

The first 5 solutions (i.e. top 5 team rankings by overall score) will be invited to a half-day on-line award ceremony event which will take place on 19/03/2021. The awarded teams will be asked to provide a description of the educational/professional background of their members for info to EFSA in preparation of the award ceremony.

The awarding ceremony will include:

- A presentation of the solution to the EFSA Jury of a maximum of 15 minutes per entry.
- Announcement of the results and award of the prizes.

Possible prizes

1st The winning team will be awarded a prize of 7.000 €.

2nd best solution – 6.000 €

3rd best solution – 5.000 €

4th and 5th best solution – 3.500 €



Registration of applicants

The registration should be made via email by the deadline indicated above to the following email account: EFSAProurement@efsa.europa.eu.

The email should include the following documents:

- **the Administrative Data Form,**
- **the [Legal Entity Form](#),**
- **the Declaration of Honour on Exclusion**

The above documents are available [here](#) on EFSA website.

⁶ In case of multiple entries from the same contestant, EFSA reserves the right to depart from the final ranking in order to distribute the prizes among different contestants.



Submission of entries

The entries describing the proposed solution should be submitted via email by the deadline indicated above to the following email account EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu.

The entry must include the following material:

- **Updated Administrative Data Form** (only if the composition of the initial team has changed as a result of the matchmaking with other registered participants)
- A **Written Report** describing in more detail the proposed solution. The maximum recommended number of pages (including references and appendices, if any) is 8 and the attached template should be used (**Annex 1**). This part of the entry should not include any reference to the identity/name of contestant or his/her organisation as assessment of jury will be anonymous.

The submitted material should be in PDF in order to be perfectly legible and minimize any risk of unclarity content-wise. In addition, feel free to include in your report screenshots, mock-ups, and test results showing the proposed solutions.

4. EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation of the submitted material will be carried out by the EFSA's jury according to the 5 criteria that are listed below. The process consists of assigning for each criteria a score ranging from 0 to 5. Then an overall **entry's score** will be computed by aggregating the scores obtained for each evaluation criteria according to their weights and will be used to rank the entry's score against all others. The threshold indicates a minimum score that must be obtained (i.e. the score needs to be equal to or higher than the threshold) for the entry to be eligible for the final ranking.

Evaluation criteria	Threshold	Weight	Range
1. Clarity			
- Is the solution clearly presented?			
- Is the submitted material well-structured and easy to follow?	2	15%	0-5
- Is the language usage correct?			
- Is the methodology adopted to tackle the challenge clearly described?			
2. Relevance			
- Does the solution fit into the domain of Food and Feed safety opinions?			
- Does the solution fit into the EFSA business?	2	20%	0-5
- Has the solution used only or mostly the data sources provided by EFSA?			
3. Originality			
- Does the proposed solution represent novel work or just a reuse of existing work?	2	20%	0-5
- Does it address the challenge in a creative, never-seen-before way?			



4. Technical Achievement

- Does the solution provide the credibility ranking before the deadline for the submission of entries?	2	25%	0-5
- Is the solution capable of generating a ranking for the newly introduced set of news?			
- Has the hacking task been completed?			

5. Applicability

- Is the solution directly applicable to the proposed challenge or is it a theoretical study?			
- Does it scale further than the provided set of fake news?	2	20%	0-5
- Does the model and the hacking task fit together to form a unique solution usable by a human user?			

Total	10	100%	-
--------------	-----------	-------------	----------

5. GUIDANCE FOR THE CONTESTANTS

Contestants are free to use any methodology/technology openly and publicly accessible to address the proposed challenge. In addition, EFSA publishes two specific datasets that can be useful:

- The [EFSA's Journal](#)
- EFSA's [Knowledge Junction](#)

The EFSA's Journal contains all scientific output produced by EFSA, whereas knowledge junction contains the output of other food safety authorities. Both data sources are also accessible via APIs⁷ that are publicly available on the [EFSA's Developer Portal](#). Upon registering an account on that portal, in specific the [API Deposits](#) allows you to retrieve all deposits (documents and data) published by EFSA, namely, EFSA's Journal and Knowledge Junction.

All submitted entries will be evaluated according to the criteria described in Section 4 and usage of those suggested dataset is welcomed.

6. AGREEMENT ON OWNERSHIP AND PAYMENT OF THE PRIZE

An agreement will be signed between EFSA and the successful contestants whereby EFSA takes the full ownership of the successful prototype IT solutions, including any source codes, for which it has paid a prize. The ownership will effectively pass to EFSA only once the prize has been paid to the successful contestant.

In no case will the contestant be allowed to publicize or make available to the public or any third party in any way the prototype IT solution awarded under this contest, without the prior written agreement of EFSA.

All prizes will be paid in one instalment to the bank account indicated by the prize winners within a maximum of 30 days from signature of the draft Ownership Transfer Agreement enclosed in **Annex 2**.

⁷ Application Programming Interface



Documents requested:

For EFSA to be able to pay the prize, the awarded contestant shall send, a 1 page [Bank Account Form](#).

7. CONDITIONS FOR CANCELLATION OF THE CONTEST, IF ANY

EFSA has the right to terminate the contest before its closing date without any obligation to indemnify contestants in case the objective of the contest has been achieved in any other way.

8. CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

8.1 Eligibility criteria

Participation in this contest is open on equal terms to all natural and legal persons falling within the scope of the EU Treaties. Applicants established in third countries (non-EU countries) do not have the right to participate in contest unless other bilateral or special international agreements in the field of public procurement grant them the right to do so.

When applying the rules of access to the market, it is the country where the applicant is established which should be considered. As regards a natural person, it is the State in which he/she has his/her domicile.

Currently applicants from the following third countries are considered eligible based on signed and ratified international/bilateral agreements in the field of public procurement: Republic of North Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.

Please note the above list is not exhaustive and is subject to updates. In case of queries regarding eligibility to apply please contact EFSA via above indicted e-mail.

It is possible that a contestant is competing in the contest alone or as a group of persons. In the second case all participating persons must be eligible according to above criteria. One person shall be indicated in the entry as the leading person. If such contestant then wins the prize EFSA will sign the Ownership Transfer Agreement only with the leading person.

Documents requested:

For EFSA to be able to verify the participation eligibility the applicant is required to send at registration stage the Administrative Data Form (available [here](#) on EFSA website) and a 1 page [Legal Entity Form](#).

8.2. Exclusion criteria

Applicants which are in one of the situations referred to in Article 136 of the EU Financial Regulation are excluded from participating and from award of a prize under the present contest.

Documents requested:

The applicant is required to send at registration stage, a 1 page Declaration on Honour on exclusion criteria (available [here](#) on EFSA website).



9. OTHER RULES

9.1 Sole liability of contestants

EFSA may not be held responsible for any claim relating to the activities carried out in the framework of the contest by the contestant. EFSA shall not be held liable for any damage caused or sustained by any of the contestants, including any damage caused to third parties as a consequence of or during the implementation of the activities related to the contest.

9.2 Checks and audits

The contestants accept that, if they are awarded a prize, EFSA, OLAF and the Court of Auditors may carry out checks and audits in relation to the contest and the received prize.

9.3 Publicity

EFSA may use, for its communication and publicizing activities, information relating to the action, documents notably summaries for publication and public deliverables as well as any other material, such as pictures or audio-visual material that it receives from the winner of the prize, including in electronic form.

9.4 Processing of personal data

All personal data contained in the entry shall be processed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data⁸. Such data shall be processed by the EFSA Controller solely in connection with the implementation and follow-up of the entry of the selected contestants, without prejudice to a possible transmission to the bodies in charge of a monitoring or inspection task in accordance with European Community and European Union legislation.

Applicants should be aware that EFSA relies on the hackathon platform of the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT), an EU body established in Budapest (Hungary). The hackathon platform is provided by the company Eventornado, based in Tallinn (Estonia), which relies on subprocessors inter alia for the storage of personal data. Most of these subprocessors are located in the USA. More information can be found in the Eventornado Privacy Policy - <https://eventornado.com/privacy-policy>. With their registration to the contest, contestants authorize EFSA to communicate their name and email address to EIT and to the hackathon platform Eventornado for the purposes of managing the contest and their access to the platform.

Contestants may, on written request, gain access to their personal data and correct any information that is inaccurate or incomplete. They should address any questions regarding the processing of their personal data to the Controller, via the contact announced in the

⁸ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of individuals 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, OJ L 295/39 21.11.2018, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018R1725&from=EN>



rules of the contest. Please send in addition a scanned copy of your letter to the email address announced in the rules of the contest.

Contestants may, at any time, lodge a complaint against the processing of their personal data with the European Data Protection Supervisor.

EFSA will publish on its website and social media the name of the prize winner/s, its location, the prize amount and a presentation of the winning team(s) and their successful solution. The contestant may request EFSA to waive such publication if disclosure risks threatening its security and safety or harm its privacy or commercial interest.

As concerns any processing of personal data by means of the developed solution selected by EFSA, the contestant shall make sure it complies with the Guidelines on the protection of personal data processed by mobile applications, available on the website of the European Data Protection Supervisor⁹.

9.5 Applicable law and competent jurisdiction

The contest is governed by the applicable Union law complemented, where necessary, by the law of Italy. The General Court or, on appeal, the Court of Justice of the European Union, shall have sole jurisdiction to hear any dispute between the Union and any contestant concerning the interpretation, entry or validity of the rules of this contest, if such dispute cannot be settled amicably.

9.6 Financial penalties

Financial penalties and exclusion decisions may be imposed on participants under the situations in Article 136 of the EU Financial Regulation.

ANNEXES:

- Annex 1: Template Written Report
- Annex 2: Draft Ownership Transfer Agreement
- Annex 3: Example Test News

⁹ https://edps.europa.eu/sites/edp/files/publication/16-11-07_guidelines_mobile_apps_en.pdf