



Údarás Sábháilteachta Bia NA hÉIREANN
Food Safety AUTHORITY OF IRELAND



Memorandum of Understanding

between

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

and

***safefood* – the Food Safety Promotion Board**

The objective of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to set out areas of mutual responsibility, shared expertise and shared interest between the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) and *safefood* and an agreed framework for co-operation.

The FSAI and *safefood* hereby consent to concluding this MoU by means of e-signature.

Signature:

Dr Pamela Byrne
Chief Executive Officer
Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Date: 23 April 2024

Signature:

Dr. Gary Kearney
Chief Executive Officer
safefood

Date: 23 April 2024

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This MOU sets out an agreed framework for co-operation between the Executives of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) and *safefood* - the Food Safety Promotion Board¹. It is not a legally binding agreement or a contract between the FSAI and *safefood*, nor is it intended to cover every detailed aspect of the relationship between the two organisations. Rather, it is a statement of the principles that will guide working relations between the FSAI and *safefood* to ensure sufficient communication and co-ordination to enable each to discharge their respective responsibilities efficiently and effectively.
- 1.2 The MOU cannot override the statutory duties and powers of either organisation.
- 1.3 The FSAI Chief Executive and the Chief Executive of *safefood* jointly affirm their commitment, in the interests of food safety and consumer protection, to develop effective working relations, so as to ensure that the best possible service is delivered to their respective stakeholders. Officials in both organisations shall maintain regular contact (both formal and informal) in order to discuss business of mutual interest. It is recognised that good communication will be essential to effective and efficient working within and between both organisations.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Food Safety Authority of Ireland

The FSAI is the central competent authority responsible for the enforcement of all food legislation in Ireland and was established in 1999 under the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. The principal function of the FSAI is to protect consumers and raise compliance through partnership, compliance and food law enforcement.

The FSAI has national responsibility for the enforcement of all food safety legislation in the Republic of Ireland.

The FSAI is responsible for:

- Putting consumer health and interests first and foremost
- Providing advice to Ministers, regulators, the food industry and consumers on food safety issues
- Ensuring the coordinated and seamless delivery of official food control system to an agreed high standard by the various State agencies involved
- Ensuring that food complies with legal requirements, or where appropriate, with recognised codes of good practice
- Enforcing food law and increasing compliance by food industry, in collaboration with our regulatory partners, through a world-class official food control system

¹ Hereafter referred to as *safefood*

- Advancing food safety and integrity through independent science, expertise and a strong evidence base
- Risk management in association with frontline agencies and the food sector, and communicating risks to consumers, public health professionals, the food industry and other relevant stakeholders.

2.2 **safefood**

safefood is an all-island implementation body and its functions are prescribed in the North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order, 1999 and the British-Irish agreement Act, 1999.

safefood's remit is:

- Promotion of food safety, including the provision of advice on nutritional matters
- Research into food safety
- Food alert communication
- Surveillance of foodborne diseases
- Promotion of scientific co-operation and linkages between laboratories
- Development of specialised laboratory testing

3. **Areas of mutual interest and future actions:**

In particular, the FSAI and **safefood** agree:

- To keep each other promptly and regularly informed about all work in which the other organisation has an interest
- To ensure, as far as is practicable, that the activities of each organisation do not unnecessarily duplicate the activities of the other
- To ensure that respective roles and responsibilities are clearly set out so as to avoid confusion among consumers, health professionals, industry and enforcement bodies
- To give appropriate consideration to each other's views
- To inform the other body without delay of any relevant information which would require action
- To provide each other, where possible, with full, open and timely access to research findings, surveillance data, food alerts and other relevant information
- To pursue opportunities for joint planning and cooperate fully where joint programmes or initiatives are appropriate through specific working groups in the areas of food safety; public health nutrition; communications; and food safety training. See Annex 1 for further details on these working groups.

4. **Operation, communication and review of MOU**

- 4.1 The FSAI and **safefood** welcome opportunities for collaboration. When opportunities arise for the FSAI and **safefood** to collaborate, we will work together to ensure the best use is made

of public resources and avoid duplication of tasks and responsibilities so as to ensure the statutory responsibilities of both organisations are fulfilled.

4.2 In the context of this MoU and the wider context of food safety and public health protection, the FSAI and **safefood** agree to establish and maintain a close relationship based on co-operation and consultation. Meetings between the senior leadership teams of the FSAI and **safefood** will be held at least twice per year or more frequently, as requested by either party. The meetings will be hosted and chaired in rotation by the FSAI and **safefood**. The FSAI and **safefood** are committed, wherever possible, to resolving any disagreement under this MOU through normal administrative channels.

4.3 At every such meeting convened under paragraph 4.2 the following shall be discussed as standing items on the agenda:

- activities in areas of shared responsibility and mutual cooperation
- review of practical cooperative measures
- contact arrangements

Minutes from each meeting shall be prepared, in rotation, and circulated for agreement.

The meeting minutes shall be adopted at the next meeting and will form an ongoing review of the operations of this MOU convened under 4.2.

4.4 Additional meetings covering more specific areas in detail may be arranged, if required.

4.5 The FSAI and **safefood** agree to assist each other and co-operate in relation to the preparation of any relevant reports or other documentation being prepared in relation to the remit of this MoU.

4.6 The FSAI and **safefood** agree to share relevant and timely data as agreed within this MoU and taking into account the constraints of data sharing.

4.7 The FSAI and **safefood** agree to share relevant corporate knowledge, where appropriate.

4.8 Annex 2 contains a list of the contact details and areas of responsibility of key personnel involved in the work covered by this MoU and also details of the staff member in each organisation who act as liaison contacts. This contact list which will be reviewed and updated when the contacts in either the FSAI or **safefood** change.

5.0 Duration

5.1 It is agreed that this MoU will remain in force for a period of three years from the date of signature, with the operational effectiveness being reviewed on an annual basis.

5.2 In the achievement of the objectives of this MoU, the FSAI and **safefood** will work within the resources available to each party.

Annex 1: Working Groups of Joint Cooperation

Food Safety Working Group

Purpose: To discuss items of mutual interest in the areas of biological hazards; chemical hazards; food science and technology; veterinary public health; and environmental health. For example, joint work on allergens; national surveys of food and related consumer behaviour and attitudes surveys; potential areas for research funding; etc.

Members: FSAI: Biological Safety Team; Chemical Safety Team; Food Science & Technology Team; Veterinary Public Health Team; and Environmental Health Team and *safefood*: Food Safety Team and Chemistry & Toxicology Team.

Public Health Nutrition Working Group

Purpose: To discuss public health nutrition areas of mutual interest, e.g. nutrition labelling, reformulation, healthy eating guidelines, supplementation policies, etc.

Members: FSAI: Public Health Nutrition Policy Team, Public Health Nutrition Safety Team, Food Reformulation Task Force Team and *safefood*: Nutrition Team.

Communications Working Group

Purpose: To provide updates on upcoming communications activities of mutual interest, such as press releases; advertising campaigns; events; publications; social media campaigns; etc.

Members: FSAI: Communications Team and *safefood*: Communications Team.

Food Safety Training Working Group

Purpose: To discuss items of mutual interest in the area of food safety training. For example, training courses; e-learning; etc.

Members: FSAI: Training and Compliance Team and *safefood*: Food Safety Team.

Annex 2: Contact Details

safefood	
Name	Area of responsibility
Dr Gary Kearney	Chief Executive Officer
Trish Twohig	Director of Food Safety
Fiona Gilligan	Director of Communications
Dr Aileen McGloin	Director of Nutrition
Patricia Fitzgerald	Director Corporate Operations
Alison Dries	Liaison contact
Dermot Moriarty	Communications Manager

FSAI	
Name	Area of responsibility
Dr Pamela Byrne	Chief Executive
Dr Michelle Minihan	Director of Audit, Incidents and Investigations
Gail Carroll	Director of Regulatory Affairs and Compliance Building
Dr Wayne Anderson	Director of Food Science and Standards
Dr Bernard Hegarty	Director of Enforcement Policy
Kevin Roantree	Director of Corporate Affairs
Jane Ryder	Communications Manager
Eileen Lippert	Liaison contact