



Memorandum of understanding

between

The 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 or the Authority) and *safefood* and an agreed framework for co-operation.

Signature.....

Dr. Pamela Byrne
Chief Executive Officer
FSAI

Signature.....

Ray Dolan
Chief Executive Officer
safefood

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This MOU sets out an agreed framework for co-operation between the Executive 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 customers. Officials 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 Authority 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 Authority is to protect consumers by leading a collaborative food safety community to continuously raise food standards and create a culture of excellence.

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

The FSAI is responsible for -

- Putting consumer interests first and foremost
- Providing advice to Ministers, regulators, the food industry and consumers on food safety issues
- Ensuring the co-ordinated and seamless delivery of food safety services 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
- Working with the food industry to gain their commitment in the production of safe food
- Setting food standards based on sound science and risk assessment
- Risk management in association with frontline agencies and the food sector, and communicating risks to consumers, public health professionals and the food industry.

¹ Hereafter referred to as *safefood*

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 co-operate fully where joint programmes or initiatives are appropriate (see Annex(es) for further details);

4. Operation, communication and review of MOU

4.1 The Authority and *safefood* welcome opportunities for collaboration. When opportunities arise for the Authority 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 Authority and *safefood* agree to establish and maintain a close relationship based on co-operation and consultation. Meetings between the senior teams of the Authority 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 Authority and *safefood*. The Authority 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 Authority 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 Authority 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 An up-to-date list of the contact details and areas of responsibility of key personnel involved in the work covered by this MoU shall be maintained. Both the Authority and **safefood** will nominate a staff member in each organisation to act as liaison contacts. These Liaison Contacts will be identified in the agreed contacts list which will be reviewed and updated at least once per year or when the contacts in either the **safefood** or the Authority 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 Authority and **safefood** will work within the resources available to each party.

Annex 1: Joint Projects planned for 2016 / 2017

Title	Brief description	Lead person in each organisation
Sous vide	Following a meeting between FSAI and <i>safefood</i> in 2015 to discuss ideas for future research, <i>safefood</i> decided in 2016 to fund research on the safety of sous vide cooking at lower temperatures. FSAI worked with <i>safefood</i> on the technical content of the research tender call document. The tender was posted in May 2016.	Dr. Lisa O Connor, Chief Specialist Biological Safety, FSAI Dr Linda Gordon, Chief Specialist Food Science, <i>safefood</i>
Dairy chain vulnerability analysis	The objective of the project will be to enhance consumer protection by providing a Food Chain Vulnerability Analysis of the Irish Dairy sector, from farm to fork, including recommending improvements to controls and providing indicators to detect and deter illegal activity in the sector. This project will review the Irish dairy sector to identify potential vulnerabilities which could provide opportunities for fraudulent activity that will impact consumers' health and/or interests. The project will produce a documented analysis of the dairy sector, its vulnerabilities and a range of control strategies that could be applied to prevent or mitigate the impact of fraudulent activities that could potentially threaten the safety, quality and integrity of food derived from the dairy industry.	Eibhlin O' Leary, Manager, Audit and Investigations, FSAI. Dr James McIntosh, Chief Specialist Toxicology, <i>safefood</i>
Food supply chain integrity and authenticity conference 2017	Explore the possibility of hosting a joint conference in 2017. May also include FSA NI (TBC).	John Coady, Chief Audit Manager, Audit and Investigations, FSAI. Dr Gary Kearney, Director Food Science, <i>safefood</i>