



Memorandum of Understanding

between the

Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI)

and the

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The objective of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to set out areas of mutual responsibility, shared expertise and shared interest between the FSAI and EPA particularly in relation to food and environmental monitoring, emergency planning and environmental research.

Signed:

Eimear Cotter

Dr. Eimear Cotter
Director General, EPA

Date: 18/9/26

Signed:

Mr Greg Dempsey
Chief Executive, FSAI

Date: 7/10/26

1.0 Roles and Responsibilities

1.1 The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI)

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 take all reasonable steps to ensure that food¹ produced, distributed or marketed in the State meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene reasonably attainable.

1.2 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The Environmental Protection Agency is an independent public body established in 1993 under the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992. The other main instruments from which the EPA derives its mandate are the Waste Management Act 1996, the Protection of the Environment Act 2003 and the Radiological Protection (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) 2014. The Environmental Protection Agency is one of Ireland's official laboratories for food. The EPA has a wide range of functions to protect, improve and restore our environment so that we live sustainably in a healthy environment that is valued and protected by all.

2.0 Areas of Shared Interest and Future Actions

2.1 The FSAI and the EPA agree to co-operate and work closely in order to promote, encourage and foster the establishment and maintenance of high standards of food safety in the interests, and for the protection, of public health by ensuring that food consumed, distributed, marketed, processed or produced in the State meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene. This can be supported by maintaining a healthy environment which is essential to a sustainable and healthy food supply.

¹ 'food' (or 'foodstuff') means any substance or product, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, intended to be, or reasonably expected to be ingested by humans. 'Food' includes drink, chewing gum and any substance, including water, intentionally incorporated into the food during its manufacture, preparation or treatment. It includes water after the point of compliance as defined in Article 6 of Directive (EU) 2020/2184 and without prejudice to the requirements of Directive (EU) 2020/2184.

- 2.2 The main areas of shared interest for the FSAI and the EPA are outlined in Annex I of this MoU, with areas of explicit legislative responsibilities detailed in Annex II.
- 2.3 The FSAI and the EPA welcome opportunities for collaboration. When opportunities arise for the FSAI and the EPA to collaborate they will work together to ensure, where possible, the best use is made of public resources and avoid duplication of tasks and responsibilities to fulfil the statutory responsibilities of both organisations.
- 2.4 The FSAI and the EPA agree to cooperate to ensure that appropriate monitoring of food is in place so as to ensure compliance with all relevant Irish and European legislation and standards.
- 2.5 The FSAI and the EPA may explore potential opportunities for integrated assessments and research on the life cycle of chemicals in the environment, the potential effects on food safety and the risks to human health. This could include activities such as the examination of synergies between available datasets and analysis of potential links between environmental pollution, food safety and human exposure to chemicals and, where appropriate, food monitoring for determination of risks of exposure to contaminants of emerging concern.
- 2.6 When carrying out research that falls within the ambit of this MoU, the FSAI and the EPA will consider if there are opportunities for collaboration in relation to the research.
- 2.7 The FSAI and the EPA may exchange experience and best practice in regulatory enforcement and in the professional development of inspectors.
- 2.8 In the event of emergencies involving potential radioactive or other contamination of foodstuffs, including those where the Framework for Major Emergency Management, a National Level Emergency Response or the National Plan for Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Exposures ('the

National Plan') may not be activated, the EPA and FSAI agree to collaborate (Annex III). Such collaboration may include, but is not restricted to, provision of:

- sample collection;
- staff with appropriate expertise;
- data, software and modelling tools;
- laboratory facilities and equipment.

3.0 Operational Liaison

3.1 In the context of this MoU and the wider context of food safety, public health and environmental protection, the FSAI and the EPA agree to establish and maintain a close relationship based on co-operation and consultation.

3.2 The FSAI and the EPA, in respect of their shared interests outlined in Annex I to this MoU, agree to:

- operate to generally recognised Codes of Practice, Standard Operating Procedures or Accreditation Systems as may be agreed between them.
- co-operate and assist in mutual training of the staff of each organisation and/or the Official Agencies of the FSAI in relation to matters concerning the remit of this MoU.
- keep each other informed of developments in legislation and technology relating to the remit of this MoU.
- share relevant media press releases that fall within the remit of this MoU.
- inform each other of relevant committees and meetings and where permissible, to share information, proceedings or similar such documents that may be circulated following the conclusion of such meetings.
- participate in and provide support and assistance to the relevant Committees of each organisation, such as FSAI participation in research coordination groups, or as and when requested.

- assist each other, as required, in relevant national and international programmes, including those organised by the European Commission to assess compliance with EU legislation, such as EPA participation in the FSAI's National Cross Agency Working Group on the EU Coordinated Control Plan on Contaminants in Food (radiological parameters) and FSAI participation in the EPA Working Group on Nuclear Emergency Food Protective Actions and Advice to the Public.
- 3.3 Liaison meetings between the FSAI and EPA will be held at least annually or more frequently as requested by either party. The meetings will be hosted and chaired in rotation by the FSAI and the EPA. The meeting agendas may include, but are not restricted to, consideration of the items listed in Annex IV.
- 3.4 Minutes from each meeting shall be prepared, in rotation, and circulated for agreement. The meeting minutes shall be adopted at the next meeting.
- 3.5 Additional meetings covering more specific areas in detail may be arranged if required.
- 3.6 The EPA and the FSAI agree to share relevant and timely reports, data, information and other documentation taking into account the constraints of data sharing legislation. Each party will satisfy itself that any such data transfer is not in breach of its own legislative provisions regarding confidentiality or in breach of any other relevant statutory provisions, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016. The EPA and FSAI may develop or revise data sharing agreements under the terms of the Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019.
- 3.7 The FSAI and the EPA 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.
- 3.8 The EPA agrees to consult with the FSAI on any significant changes to its radioactivity in food monitoring programme.
- 3.9 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 FSAI and the EPA will nominate a liaison contact who will be identified in the agreed contacts list which will be reviewed and updated when necessary.

4.0 Duration

- 4.1 It is agreed that this MoU will remain in force for a period of five years from the date of signature with the operational effectiveness being reviewed on an annual basis.
- 4.2 To ensure successful cooperation in areas of shared interest and on future actions, the liaising officers confirm that the FSAI and the EPA will work within the resources available to each party.

5.0 Contact Persons

- 5.1 The contact persons responsible for the operation of this MoU are:

EPA Contact: Radiation Monitoring Laboratory Manager, Office of Radiation Protection & Environmental Monitoring

FSAI Contact: Chief Specialist Chemical Safety

- 5.2 Upon signing this MoU, each party will ensure that the identity and contact details (email and telephone number) of the persons referred to above will be exchanged with the other party. In the event that there is a change in the identity of a contact person referred to above during the term of the MoU, the relevant party will inform the other party of same and will forward the contact details of the replacement contact person as soon as practicable

Annex I – Main Areas of Common Interest between the FSAI and EPA

- i. **Food**
 - Persistent Organic Pollutants in food, including PFAS and dioxins;
 - Other food contaminants;
 - Incidents/exceedances in water supplies used in food production;
 - Emerging contaminants of concern that may arise.
- ii. **Radiation**
 - Human-made radioactivity in food;
 - Natural and Human-made radioactivity in Natural Mineral Waters, Spring Waters and Other Waters in Bottles or Containers;
 - Food protective actions following radiological accidents;
 - Food Import Control;
 - Emergency exercises.
- iii. **Water**
 - Contamination of groundwater supplies;
 - Irrigation;
 - Registration of water supplies for food businesses;
 - Bathing water and quality of shellfish waters.
- iv. **Soil Quality**
 - Application of wastewater treatment plant sludge and biosolids to arable land;
 - Soil fertilisers;
 - Organic soil improvers;
 - Radionuclides in soil.
- v. **Emerging Risks/Technologies in Food Production**
 - Food contact materials;
 - Nanoparticles;
 - GMOs;
 - Climate change;
 - Plant Protection Products and Biocides;
 - Endocrine disruptors.
- vi. **Packaging, Waste and Recycling**
 - Potential impacts of the circular economy initiatives on the environment and food safety;
 - Minimisation of food waste;
 - Use of recycled plastic, which has achieved end of waste status, in food contact materials, meeting the obligations of Commission Regulation (EU) 2022/1616;
 - Changes in food packaging arising from the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (EU) 2025/40;
 - Packaging and food re-use;
 - Secondary derived nutrients used in food packaging and processing;
 - Management of food waste and packaging.

Annex II – Legislative Framework

- i In accordance with the requirements of the Radiological Protection Act 1991 (Ionising Radiation) Regulations 2019, the EPA has general responsibility for monitoring levels of radioactive contamination in food. This function is vested in the EPA, subject to the amendments made to the Radiological Protection Act, 1991 by Part VI of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998, which provide for the FSAI together with various Government Departments to be consulted by the EPA in certain matters and authorise the FSAI to appoint inspectors and to prosecute offenders under the Radiological Protection Act 1991 (as amended).
- ii The Office of Radiological Protection and Environmental Monitoring, Environmental Protection Agency, i.e. the EPA's Radiation Monitoring Laboratory, has been designated by the Minister of Health as an official laboratory for the purposes of radioactivity testing of natural mineral waters, spring waters and other waters in bottles or containers under S.I. No. 282 of 2016 (as amended) and other foods under S.I. No 747/2007 (as amended).
- iii The EPA conducts annual food sampling plans for the purposes of radiation monitoring. Food sampling for this programme shall continue to be carried out, as appropriate, by staff of the EPA or staff of Official Agencies with whom the FSAI has contracts as provided for in section 48 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998.
- v The EPA and the FSAI agree to co-operate in their respective responsibilities relating to food irradiation facilities in the European Communities (Foodstuffs Treated with Ionising Radiation) Regulations, 2000 (S.I. No. 297 of 2000).
- vi The EPA and the FSAI agree to co-operate in their respective responsibilities relating to the European Union (Persistent Organic Pollutants) Regulations, 2020 (S.I. No. 146 of 2020).
- vii In accordance with the requirements of the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023 (S.I. No. 99 of 2023) as amended by European Union (Drinking Water) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 (S.I. No. 673 of 2025), the EPA has responsibility for reporting data relating to drinking water quality to the European Commission. From 13 January 2026 staff of some of the Official Agencies with whom the FSAI has contracts as provided for in Section 48 of

the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 will have responsibility for assessing food business operators against the criteria set out in Regulation 3(3) of S.I. 99 of 2023. In line with data sharing provisions set out 3.6 of this MoU and, upon request from the EPA, the FSAI agrees to provide the EPA with information it may hold that is relevant to the implementation of Regulation 3(3) and which is required by the EPA to meet European Commission reporting requirements.

- viii The FSAI has been assigned a support role in response to a nuclear or radiological accident and may collect food samples and provide a media spokesperson if required. The FSAI and the EPA agree that where and when the National Plan for Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Exposures is activated then, to avoid confusion, this MoU shall be suspended.

Annex III – Emergency Planning and Response

- i The National Plan for Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Exposures (“the National Plan”) provides a framework for the national response to nuclear emergencies and large-scale radiological incidents. Lead responsibility for the National Plan lies with the Department of the Climate, Energy and the Environment. The EPA has been assigned a number of key functions under the National Plan including early warning, technical assessment of the incident, provision of technical advice on protective actions and monitoring of the environment and the food chain.
- ii The arrangements outlined in this MoU shall not alter those outlined under the National Plan.
- iii The FSAI and the EPA each agree to collaborate within the framework of the National Plan to assist each other in fulfilling their respective roles and responsibilities under the National Plan. This can be achieved through the participation in relevant working groups, joint training and exercises, development of protocols in the preparedness phase and sample collection, sharing of data for modelling/predictive purposes, implementation of food restrictions and seizure/destruction of foodstuffs unfit for consumption during the emergency response, transition and recovery phases.
- iv The FSAI and the EPA agree to collaborate in the development and operation of their radiation emergency preparedness plans insofar as food safety is concerned. In particular, the FSAI and the EPA shall work to maintain an appropriate level of expertise in protective actions, food recovery, food safety and security of supply.
- v The FSAI and the EPA agree to develop and maintain their shared expertise, particularly through participation in relevant national and international meetings related to the areas outlined in Annex I, including those organised by the European Commission, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the OECD - Nuclear Energy Agency, European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Annex IV - Meeting Agenda topics

The following topics may be included as agenda items at annual or other meetings:

- i. ongoing and intended activities in areas of shared responsibility and mutual cooperation;
- ii. enforcement practices;
- iii. review of practical cooperative measures;
- iv. review of areas of shared interest and mutual co-operation (Annex I);
- v. relevant ongoing and new research activities;
- vi. contact arrangements;
- vii. operational experience and review of international alerting mechanisms;
- viii. environmental monitoring;
- ix. emerging concerns relating to substances suspected of posing hazards to human health and/or the environment;
- x. emergency preparedness;
- xi. amendments to legislation or standards.

