

FSA 2021 Science Fellowship Opportunity

Shared Outcomes Fund: Path-Safe

Overview

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is inviting expressions of interest for a 2 and a half year senior Fellowship in pathogen genomic surveillance. This flexible post can be taken either full time or as a part-time Fellowship. We are seeking a talented scientist with expertise in whole-genome based surveillance methodologies and large scale bioinformatic databases to take on the scientific leadership of the new, cross-governmental project PATH-SAFE (Pathogen Surveillance in Food, Agriculture and the Environment).

Applications close **midnight 10 October 2021**.

Background

The FSA is an independent non-ministerial government department, set up by the [Food Standards Act 1999](#). The main objective of the Agency is to “protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food (including risks caused by the way in which it is produced or supplied) and otherwise to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food”. We work across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to protect public health and consumer’s wider interests in food. We make sure food is safe and is what it says it is.

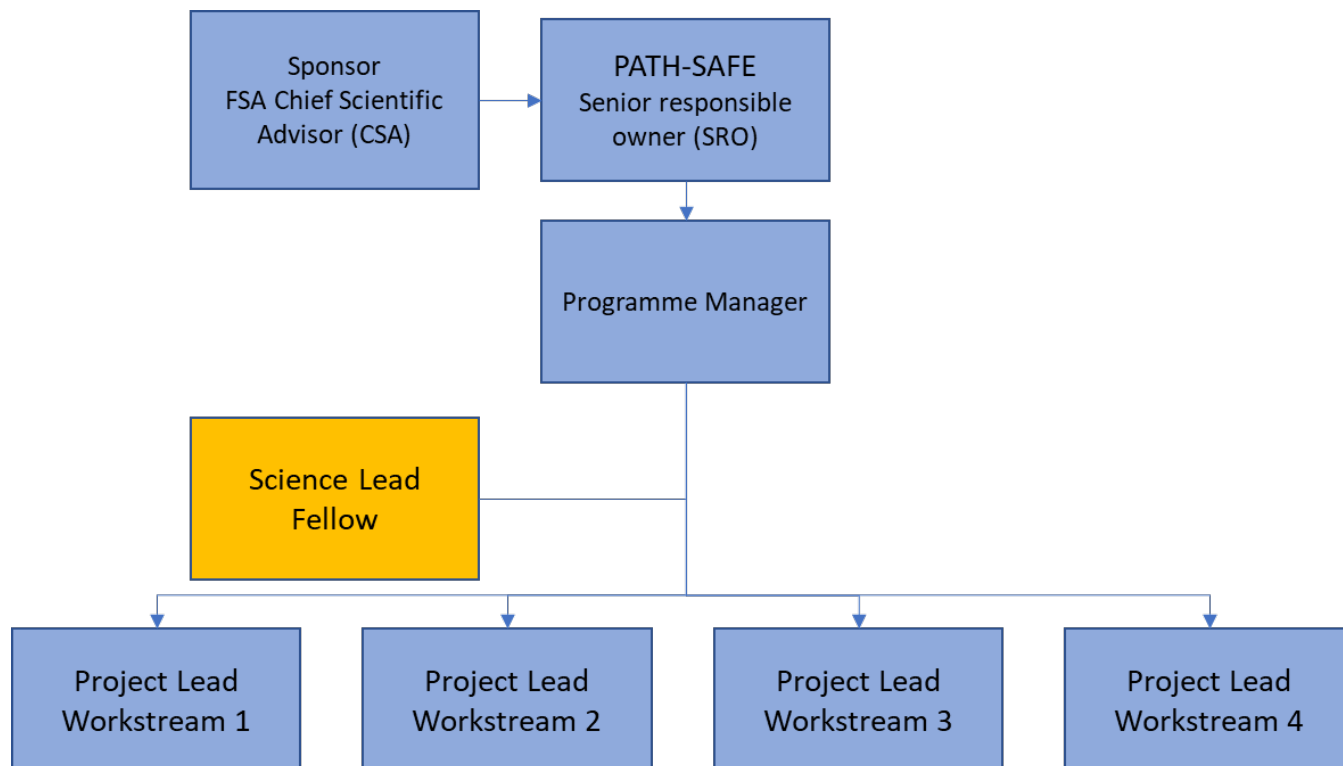
As part of a [major cross-government consortium](#), the FSA will be leading a new [Shared Outcomes Fund](#) (SOF) project, called PATH-SAFE (Pathogen Surveillance in Food, Agriculture and the Environment), which aims to harness the power of genomic technology to identify and track foodborne pathogens and antimicrobial resistant organisms through the agri-food system and environment. This programme will build accessible datasets on AMR and antimicrobials in the environment, and a national database to enable ‘user-friendly’ analysis, storage and sharing of pathogen whole-genome data and associated metadata. It will also explore the development of novel remote sampling and diagnostic approaches, and their

applicability for microbial surveillance. Through this programme, we are bringing together partners from academia, government and industry to produce a world-leading pathogen surveillance system. We are looking for a talented scientist, in the field of microbial genomics and/or bioinformatics (or related disciplines) to lead on the scientific delivery of this programme.

Programme Description:

With SOF funding of over £19M, the PATH-SAFE programme is a cross government initiative led by the FSA, with partners including the Department for Environment, Rural and Food Affairs (Defra), Public Health England (PHE), Environment Agency (EA), the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS). Approved in May this year, the FSA and its partners are in the process of establishing the programme, putting the requisite governance structures in place, building a central programme management team and developing the extensive links and partnerships, across government departments, academia, industry and other stakeholders, that will be necessary to deliver this challenging programme of work.

The PATH-SAFE programme is made up of a 4 key workstreams: data, sampling, remote diagnostics, and environmental antimicrobial resistance (AMR). These workstreams will be delivered by different partners within the consortium, but with the FSA having full oversight and responsibility for these workstreams as well as being accountable for the delivery of the required benefits and outcomes. Much of this will be done via the central programme team, which will ensure that appropriate governance is established to drive and maintain the workstreams and projects that make up the programme to its strategic objectives. The Fellowship post described here will play a senior leadership role within the FSA Programme team, reporting directly to the Programme Manager, but working closely with the FSA's Head of Science, Evidence & Research (as project Senior Responsible Owner; SRO) and the FSA's Science teams and Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA).



Role requirements and how to apply:

Person Specification:

We are recruiting a talented scientist to lead on the science and technical delivery of this project. As well as having proven expertise in microbiology and/or genomics/bioinformatics, you will also have experience of leading large collaborative research projects and/or extensive sampling and surveillance programmes. Through this experience, you will lead on the translational of complex strategic requirements into deliverable workstreams across the programme.

You will combine a detailed understanding of whole-genome based surveillance and bioinformatics with strong networking and coordination skills, to build effective partnerships both within the PATH-SAFE programme and beyond into the wider scientific community. Through establishing these partnerships, you will consider how the benefits and outcomes of the project can be sustained in the longer-term and develop a future implementation plan.

You will be someone who not only thrives in a fast paced, dynamic environment but is also comfortable engaging external stakeholders across a range of departments and sectors. Linked

to this, you will have the ability to communicate complex technical concepts and ideas to non-specialist audiences.

Finally, while experience of programme and project management are desirable, the requirement of this role is to be able to rapidly assimilate complex stakeholder requirements into practicable deliverable actions through networking and influencing, both in the FSA and departments outside the FSA sphere of direct control.

Application process:

Applications are welcomed from suitable individuals with relevant expertise in this area. Note that your current UK university and/or other public sector/not-for profit research establishment must be willing to support your application. In your application, you will be expected to provide:

- Up-to-date CV (detailing your background experience and research interests)
- Personal statement (see below)
- Letter from your employer, confirming their support.

This Fellowship will operate using a model where the FSA will select the successful individual and pay pro-rata salary/employment costs to the host institution for their time. A breakdown of these cost will be required should the candidate be short-listed for interview.

We are interested in hearing from people at a range of seniority levels, so please contact us if you are unsure about your suitability for the role.

Please send your completed application to Rick.mumford@food.gov.uk

If you require further information on this opportunity, please contact [Rick Mumford](#) (FSA Head of Science) or [Robin May](#) (FSA Chief Scientific Adviser).

Experience, expertise, skills, behaviours and strengths

Applicants should provide a personal statement (not exceeding 1200 words) on how they meet the specification below:

- Their academic background and suitable scientific expertise

- Their ability to use extant research groups and/or networks of collaborators, to contribute to the programme
- Demonstrable experience of running large collaborative research projects and/or extensive sampling and surveillance programmes (providing evidence of at least one relevant example that you are currently undertaking or have recently completed).
- A strong track record of applying their research skills to policy problems
- Experience in research design
- Evidence of working as part of a team, motivating and influencing others and managing the delivery of work across a group of colleagues
- Excellent organisational and communication skills and the ability to explain complex ideas clearly.