



Údarás Sábháilteachta Bia na hÉireann
Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Strategy 2025–2029



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Foreword



On behalf of the Board, I am pleased to introduce our 5-year Strategy 2025–2029 and 3-year implementation plan, a comprehensive roadmap that aligns with

Government policies and positions our organisation for success in a dynamic regulatory environment. This Strategy reflects our commitment to upholding the highest standards of public service and regulatory excellence, in order to protect consumers' health.

The Board is responsible for the preparation and adoption of the Strategy as per the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* and it has been actively engaged from the start of the development process.

Over the last 25 years, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) has delivered on its vision and purpose with the greatest of dedication and with the protection of consumers' health at the heart of all its endeavours. The development of this Strategy was a meticulous process, deeply rooted in extensive engagement with our stakeholders. We conducted numerous consultations, workshops, and feedback sessions with our partner organisations, Government representatives, food industry experts, food business operators and consumers to ensure that our Strategy is both inclusive and responsive to the needs of all parties involved. This collaborative approach has enabled us to craft a Strategy that is robust, well-informed, and reflective of the diverse perspectives within our area of responsibility.

At the heart of our Strategy are key goals and objectives designed to deliver on our purpose. Our primary aim is to enhance regulatory

effectiveness, promote transparency, and ensure the highest levels of compliance and safety within our remit. We are committed to fostering innovation, improving operational efficiency, and enhancing stakeholder trust through proactive engagement and accountability.

The Board is fully committed to the diligent monitoring of the Strategy's implementation. We recognise the importance of remaining agile and adaptable to the ever-changing food system landscape. We will regularly review our progress, assess emerging trends, and be prepared to make necessary adjustments to stay aligned with our strategic objectives and external developments.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who played a role in developing this Strategy. Special thanks go to our CEO, the Senior Leadership Team, and every staff member whose dedication and hard work have been instrumental in shaping this vision. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and integral to our collective success.

As we embark on the implementation of this Strategy, we are filled with optimism and confidence. This Strategy is not just a plan on paper; it is a shared vision for a brighter, more efficient, and more responsive regulatory future. Let us move forward with determination and unity, knowing that together, we will achieve our goals and make a lasting positive impact on our stakeholders.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment and support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ann Horan', positioned above a horizontal green line.

Ms Ann Horan

Chair of the Board, December 2024

Introduction



The FSAI has played an important leadership role in strengthening Ireland's food control system over the last 25 years since it was established in 1999.

This new Strategy has been developed to continue this leadership role to safeguard public health and to foster trust in Ireland's food systems. This will ensure that the food reaching consumers in Ireland and consumers of Irish food abroad is safe, authentic, and produced to the highest standards in line with our legal mandate under the FSAI Act, 1998.

This 5-year Strategy and the supporting implementation plan for the first 3-years sets out how we will deliver on our legal mandate and prepare for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

This Strategy builds on the significant achievements of the previous Strategy that guided the FSAI in an evolving policy, legislative and risk environment. As the central competent authority, the FSAI has led and supported the continuous improvement of Ireland's food control system to address the changes associated with Brexit, the introduction of a significant change in the EU legislation for how we carry out food controls, managed several large food incidents, investigations and protected disclosures to address significant risks, and worked with official agencies to support an effective official control system as they have undergone changes in their delivery models. The FSAI also intensified its efforts in strengthening our European and international relationships through our commitment to the European Food Safety Authority, the European Heads of Food Safety Agencies and the International Heads of Food Agencies Forum.

We have carried this out by working with our team and our partners in Government, State agencies, and our international partners, and with the industry, while navigating a myriad of challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing geopolitical situations that continue to create challenges to the safety of our food system, as well as growth in Ireland's food industry – an industry that continuously embraces new technologies and innovation across complex supply chains but that is also navigating challenges that have the potential to impact on food safety and authenticity. A strong and effective national regulatory system is critical to underpinning a safe and sustainable food industry.

As we look to the next 5 years, we will need to be cognisant of the external policy environment – nationally and internationally. We will need to understand the dynamics of a rapidly evolving food landscape where global supply chains, emerging technologies, the impacts of climate change, the transition to more sustainable food systems, and shifting consumer expectations and preferences, all of which will create both opportunities and challenges. Within this complex landscape we will continue to protect consumers here in Ireland and consumers of Irish food in more than 180 markets across the world in partnership with the Government Departments and State agencies in Ireland and through our engagement with our European and international counterparts.

The FSAI has recently undergone a Periodic Critical Review process with the Department of Health, and we look forward to working with the Department to implement improvement opportunities that arise from this. We are also looking to the organisation and system opportunities provided by the transfer of the Local Authority Veterinary Service to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine from 2025 which will result in a

significant change to some aspects of the FSAI operations as well in the food control system that the FSAI oversees.

Our vision of “safe and trustworthy food for everyone” remains our guiding principle, continuing from our last two strategies. Extensive stakeholder consultation has reaffirmed this vision, ensuring it remains relevant and central to our objectives. In this Strategy, we clearly articulate our purpose as a public sector body, supported by four strategic goals that position us to effectively navigate future challenges and opportunities.

As Ireland’s independent, statutory food safety regulator and the central competent authority for food safety, we will uphold our duty to protect public health and consumer interests by:

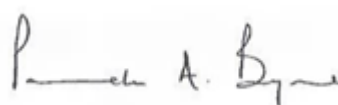
- ▶ Building a culture of food safety
- ▶ Improving food safety within a risk analysis framework
- ▶ Leading a robust food safety control system
- ▶ Continuing to drive organisational excellence.

This Strategy outlines the FSAI’s commitment to our leadership utilising a proactive, evidence-led regulatory approach that will strengthen Ireland’s food safety practices while promoting transparency, accountability, and collaboration across the entire food chain. With clear 5-year goals and objectives, and a set of high-level deliverables to be achieved within the first 3-years of the Strategy, the FSAI is positioning itself to respond effectively to new risks and challenges. This new Strategy will build on our strong foundations, embracing new ways of working; leveraging modern tools and technologies to drive greater efficiencies; utilising data to inform faster and more effective decisions and gain insights; advancing organisational excellence through developing our people and our systems to meet the challenges and opportunities that will

undoubtedly arise in the future. Our strategic goals are focused on:

- ▶ Advocating for the importance of food safety and authenticity in our engagement with all stakeholders to better protect consumers’ health and interests and increase compliance
- ▶ Enhancing our ability to protect consumers’ health and interests by anticipating, assessing, and managing risks that impact on the safety and authenticity of food
- ▶ Ensuring and verifying compliance with food law, taking appropriate enforcement action, to protect consumers within a coherent national regulatory framework
- ▶ Delivering better food safety outcomes for consumers through empowering our people, aligning our systems, and demonstrating adaptive, values-driven leadership.

As stated above, we have set out our 5-year goals and objectives that will guide our activities supported by a number of high-level deliverables that we will achieve in the first 3-years of the Strategy. We will report annually on our progress against these deliverables. We also commit to reviewing this Strategy at its mid-point, to ensure we stay responsive to the external environment and we will adapt our approach accordingly. We look forward to collaborating with our Board, colleagues in the Departments of Health and Agriculture, Food and the Marine, our regulatory partners, laboratories, and other State agencies in Ireland and across the island. Together, we will continue to protect consumer health and interests.



Dr Pamela A. Byrne
Chief Executive Officer, December 2024

About Us

Who we are

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) was established under the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 as an independent government agency responsible for the enforcement of food legislation in Ireland. This Act was enacted in July 1998 and came into effect on 1 January 1999.

The FSAI is a statutory, independent and science-based regulatory enforcement body dedicated to protecting public health and consumer interests in the areas of food safety, hygiene, integrity and authenticity. It reports to the Minister for Health, who appoints a 10-member Board. The FSAI also has a 15-member Scientific Committee (also appointed by the Minister for Health) which assists and advises the Board. As a result, decisions relating to food safety, hygiene and integrity are made using the latest and best scientific advice, evidence and information available. This ensures that people in Ireland, as well as consumers of Irish food in 180 countries across the world, have access to safe and trustworthy food.

The FSAI is legally mandated to take all reasonable steps in order to make sure that food consumed, produced, distributed or marketed in Ireland meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene reasonably attainable, and that food complies with legal requirements or, where appropriate, with recognised codes of good practice. These activities are key to underpinning Ireland's societal health and economic growth.

What we do

The FSAI's key remit is the enforcement of food legislation, which is coordinated through working in partnership with other food regulatory authorities.

Food legislation is enforced on behalf of the FSAI by a network of official agencies through a system of service contracts, which the FSAI monitors. The FSAI also reports on the official agencies' activities and seeks continuous improvement and accountability through a programme of regular audits.

The FSAI has a statutory obligation to foster the highest standards of food safety and hygiene in the food industry in Ireland. One of the ways it does this is through working closely with our stakeholders in the food industry fora in order to raise compliance.

The FSAI manages risks in the food chain and responds effectively to any national or international food incident or crisis, including through the European Commission's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed. The FSAI aims to ensure the safety, integrity and authenticity of the food chain by detecting, deterring and preventing breaches of food law and taking action to protect consumers.

The FSAI has a statutory role of providing advice to Government to support risk-based decision-making and policy development with high-quality, independent scientific and technical expertise.



Our Strategy 2025–2029

Our Vision

Safe and trustworthy food for everyone

Our Purpose

As Ireland’s independent regulator and the central competent authority for the enforcement of food safety legislation, we will protect consumers’ health and interests by:

- ▶ Building a culture of food safety
- ▶ Improving food safety within a risk analysis framework
- ▶ Leading a robust food safety control system
- ▶ Continuing to drive organisational excellence.

Our Values

We develop and inspire people to build a better organisation through **teamwork**

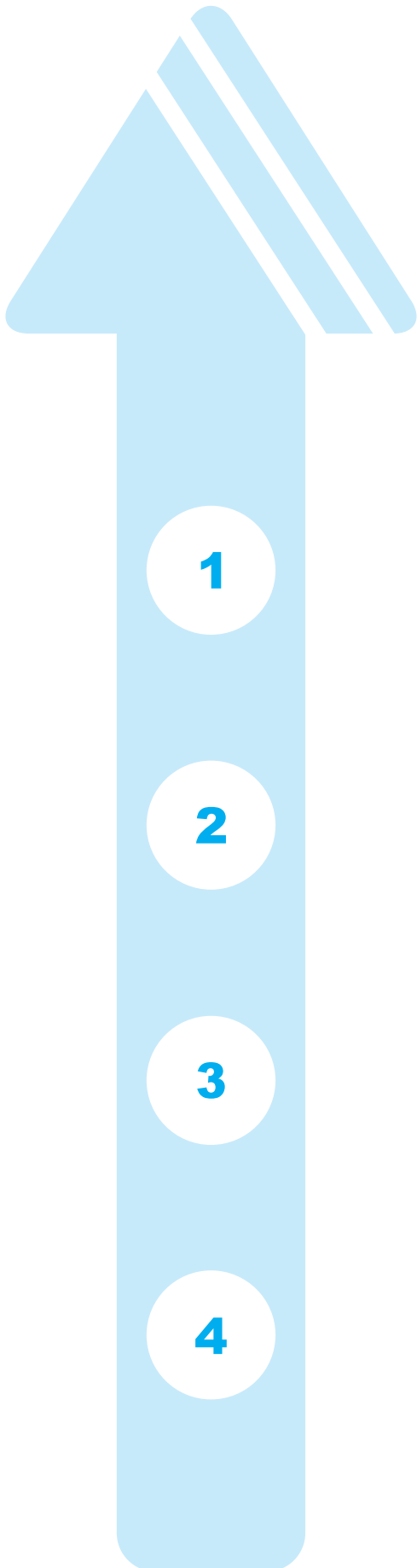
We act with **integrity** and are honest, open and independent in all we do

We are **passionate** about protecting consumers

We act with **respect** and take personal responsibility

We recognise and value **collaboration** with our partners

We are **transparent** and open, and we communicate clearly



Our Goals

1

Advocate and Engage

2

Reduce Risk

3

Enforce Food Law

4

Drive Organisational Excellence

Goal 1 Advocate and Engage

Advocate for the importance of food safety and authenticity in our engagement with all stakeholders to better protect consumers' health and interests and increase compliance.

As the independent and trusted voice for consumers within an evolving food system, we will:

Objective

Identify and take opportunities to promote the importance of food safety and authenticity through dialogue and working collaboratively

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ Rolling 3-year work programme for our Food Safety Consultative Council agreed, delivered and aligned to food safety and authenticity priorities.
 - ▶ The importance of food safety and authenticity is promoted through engagement with relevant stakeholders, including professionals, the media and the public.
 - ▶ Opportunities to raise the importance of food safety and authenticity actively pursued, at national and international level.
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Objective

Provide accessible and evidence-based advice, tools, and communications to raise compliance with food safety standards

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ An evaluation of the evidence relating to hygiene rating schemes for food businesses and a recommendation made on their future place in Ireland's official control system.
 - ▶ Targeted supports, based on insight, delivered to assist with food business compliance.
 - ▶ Communication to food businesses streamlined through improved use of technology platforms.
-



Objective

Work with Government, State agencies, and our partners, to ensure that food safety and authenticity is prioritised

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ Advocate for food safety as we transition towards healthy and sustainable food systems and meet the challenges and opportunities arising from innovation in the food industry.
 - ▶ Using existing, and where relevant, new memoranda of understanding with State agencies and other partners to focus our collaborative efforts.
 - ▶ Identify and work with the relevant Government Departments, State bodies and others to strengthen food safety and the protection of public health throughout the agrifood chain.
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Objective

Foster the highest standards of food safety, integrity, and authenticity in the food industry

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ Reviewed and renewed industry fora in place with agreed workplans, aligned to the current and future food safety and authenticity challenges.
 - ▶ Food safety and authenticity promoted at events targeted to the food industry.
 - ▶ Ad-hoc food industry sectoral groups established, where necessary, to address and improve specific compliance issues.
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Outcomes

- ▶ The FSAI continues to be the trusted voice for food safety and authenticity.
- ▶ Food safety and authenticity remains a high priority for Ireland.
- ▶ The FSAI continues to provide supports to food businesses to assist in compliance with food law.

Goal 2 Reduce Risk

Enhancing our ability to protect consumers' health and interests by anticipating, assessing, and managing risks that impact on the safety and authenticity of food.

As the independent evidence-based regulator for food safety and authenticity, we will:

Objective

Lead on the management and communication of risk in the food chain and respond effectively and transparently to national or international food incidents or crises

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ Food incidents, protected disclosures and investigations of non-compliance with food law managed efficiently and effectively to protect consumers.
- ▶ Coordinated and consistent management of food incidents through cross agency engagement and agreement.
- ▶ Food safety risks communicated effectively to consumers to enable informed choices.

Objective

Continue to strengthen Ireland's capability and capacity to proactively identify, assess, manage, and communicate risks

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ The FSAI is an active partner of the European Food Safety Authority contributing to the advancement of European risk assessment and risk communication.
- ▶ Ireland's ability to manage risk is strengthened through simulation activities, crisis preparedness and cooperation initiatives with national, European and international partners.
- ▶ Emerging risks and threats to and from the food system are identified and managed through improved systems and collaboration.

Objective

Augment risk-based decision-making and policy development through independent expertise

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ The expertise of our Scientific Committee and our subject matter experts is fully utilised to assess risk and consider risk management options.
 - ▶ The FSAI provides timely independent food safety advice to Government to support the development of policy that impacts food systems.
 - ▶ Our expertise is strengthened through collaboration with national and international regulatory and scientific partners.
-

Objective

Expand the knowledge and evidence base through science, research, and engagement

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ Our regulatory science capability is enhanced in line with our Science Roadmap.
 - ▶ Our knowledge and evidence base is expanded through collaborative and contractual relationships with relevant partners.
 - ▶ Our data systems are designed to extract insight from the knowledge and evidence base to support improvements in food safety.
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Outcomes

- ▶ Food safety risks arising from incidents and crises are well managed.
- ▶ National approaches to risk reduction are fit for purpose and aligned to International best practice.
- ▶ Internal and external food safety expertise is harnessed to inform risk management activity and relevant national food systems policy.
- ▶ Our experts have access to the science and evidence they need.

Goal 3 Enforce Food Law

Ensuring and verifying compliance with food law, taking appropriate enforcement action, to protect consumers within a coherent national regulatory framework.

As the central Competent Authority for food law enforcement in Ireland, we will:

Objective

Lead and support Ireland's food safety inspectorate to implement a fair, consistent, and effective system of enforcement to the highest standards set out in national, European or international legislation

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ Effective delivery of service contracts by the official agencies, managed and supported by the FSAI, supplemented by our direct official controls.
- ▶ The ongoing effectiveness of official controls is verified and demonstrated through independent audits of the official agencies, data analysis and other appropriate tools.
- ▶ Service contract arrangements are reviewed to identify areas for improvements.

Objective

Strengthen the national regulatory framework for food safety and authenticity to deliver the best outcomes for consumers, as part of an effective European food control system

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ Strategic improvements in Ireland's official control system developed and delivered through cross-agency working, including the enforcement of food laws on specialised topics and approaches to deterring non-compliance.
- ▶ Our regulatory delivery improved in partnership with the official agencies and in line with our Regulatory Roadmap.
- ▶ A consistent methodology for assessing, reporting and improving the effectiveness of official controls agreed with the official agencies.


Objective

Engage in the development of food standards and regulatory approaches at national, European, and international levels

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ The FSAI has a consistent and effective approach to support legislative development, provide advice and input to policies to address gaps and inconsistencies in the legislative framework.
- ▶ European and international food standards and regulatory approaches influenced by the FSAI, and advice provided to Government.
- ▶ The FSAI adds public value and benefits from appropriate developmental opportunities by working with partners across Europe and internationally.

Outcomes

- ▶ The FSAI leads a national regulatory system for enforcement of food legislation.
 - ▶ Consumers of food produced or consumed in Ireland have high levels of confidence in its safety and authenticity.
 - ▶ Ireland's food control system continues to be effective and responsive.
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Goal 4 Drive Organisational Excellence

Delivering better food safety outcomes for consumers through empowering our people, aligning our systems, and demonstrating adaptive, values-driven leadership.

Given our commitment to excellence in everything we do, we will:

Objective

Enhance our inclusive, innovative, and collaborative working environment which encourages a culture of continuous improvement and supports our people to excel

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ People Strategy implemented that builds the capacity, strengthens the capabilities and shapes the culture to achieve our goals.
- ▶ Cultivate a positive, inclusive and engaging culture, where staff and stakeholders feel valued, driving enhanced performance across the organisation.
- ▶ Operate as a high performing organisation which thrives on innovation and continuous improvement.

Objective

Ensure that our systems, processes, and procedures are fit-for-purpose and underpinned by a culture of excellence and efficiency

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ Project outcomes optimised through the application of the project management framework.
 - ▶ Enhance the framework to plan and evaluate business performance that uses data-driven insights, supports agile prioritisation and ensures compliance with ISO 9001.
 - ▶ All digital systems migrated to a secure and reliable cloud platform to increase availability, deliver efficiencies and support sustainability.
-

Objective

Ensure our governance structures enable informed and accountable decision-making; prioritisation; adaptive leadership; risk management; and adherence to compliance standards

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ Governance frameworks maintained which are compliant, optimise effectiveness and ensure robust data protection practices.
- ▶ Maintain a robust, and tested, Business Continuity Plan, that also aligns with cyber security baseline standards, to ensure resilience and operational continuity.
- ▶ Maintain strategic resourcing practices, including financial and procurement, to enhance decision making and ensure ongoing compliance.

Objective

Embrace and leverage the opportunities provided by digitalisation, new technologies and the optimal use of data

High-level Deliverables 2025–2027

- ▶ Data driven roadmap, to advance the FSAI's Data Vision, agreed and implemented.
- ▶ Digital technologies leveraged to deliver operational efficiencies and data driven insights.
- ▶ Customer experience enhanced and improved service delivery provided through the effective use of technology.

Outcomes

- ▶ The FSAI is recognised as a great place to work.
- ▶ Effective systems, processes and procedures in place, with ISO accreditation maintained.
- ▶ The FSAI delivers enhanced performance and is compliant with Public Sector Governance standards.



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