



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Institute of Standards and Technology

Food Nutrition and Safety (FNS) Measurements and Methods Consortium

AGENCY: National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of Research Consortium.

SUMMARY: The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), an agency of the United States Department of Commerce, in support of efforts to develop and evaluate measurement methods and standards, including reference materials, to support quality and safety for the food testing community, is establishing the Food Nutrition and Safety (FNS) Measurements and Methods Consortium (“Consortium”). The Consortium will bring together stakeholders to identify and address measurement and standards needs related to analytical testing of food ingredients and food products. The Consortium efforts are intended to advance food measurement capabilities, support the development of food reference materials, and collect data to support the development of best practices and standard methods. Participants will be required to sign a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA). At NIST’s discretion, entities that are legally prohibited or not legally authorized to enter into CRADAs may be allowed to participate in the Consortium under an agreement other than a CRADA with terms that may differ, as necessary, from the Consortium CRADA terms.

DATES: The Consortium's activities will commence **[INSERT DATE 90 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]** (“Commencement Date”).

NIST will accept letters of interest to participate in this Consortium on an ongoing basis.

ADDRESSES: Completed letters of interest must be submitted via the letter of interest webform at <https://forms.gle/HBnwvinURpiGJrKF6>, by email to [melissa.phillips@nist.gov](mailto:melissa.phillips@nist.gov), or via hardcopy to the Consortium Manager, Dr. Melissa Phillips, Chemical Sciences Division of NIST's Material Measurement Laboratory, 100 Bureau Drive, Mail Stop 8390, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899. Organizations whose letters of interest are accepted in accordance with the process set forth in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this notice will be asked to sign a consortium CRADA with NIST. A consortium CRADA template will be made available to qualifying applicants.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: J'aime Maynard, Consortia Agreements Officer, National Institute of Standards and Technology's Technology Partnerships Office, by mail to 100 Bureau Drive, Mail Stop 2200, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899, by electronic mail [agreements@nist.gov](mailto:agreements@nist.gov), or by phone (301) 975-8408.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The objective of the FNS Measurements and Methods Consortium is to develop and evaluate measurement methods and standards to support quality and safety in the food testing community. Food manufacturers rely on accurate analytical testing methods to ensure consistency in food production and accuracy in product labeling, and thus, compliance with food labeling laws. Additionally, testing is critical to understand potential contamination sources and levels to ensure food ingredients and food products are safe for human consumption and to reduce the need for product recalls.

The focus of this Consortium is to compare measurement methods to characterize and quantify nutrients and/or contaminants in food ingredients and food products, toward improving overall comparability within the community and enabling organizations that join the Consortium (“Consortium Members”) to improve the accuracy and precision of their own, internal measurements. The Consortium will organize at least one interlaboratory study annually based on candidate reference materials and/or commercial products with the following goals:

- Evaluate the applicability of current reference materials for food ingredient and food product testing, and develop new reference materials to support advancement of the food testing industry.
- Compare the suitability of current published methods, including standard methods, to measure nutrients and/or contaminants in food ingredients and food products.
- Utilize common materials to collect reproducibility data in support of measurement assurance and standards development, and propose tests(s) that can be standardized through the AOAC International or similar consensus process, using outcomes from Consortium efforts as a foundation.

No proprietary information will be shared or accepted as part of the Consortium. Contributions of materials to be used as interlaboratory study samples, such as food ingredients or products, are highly encouraged.

*Participation Process:*

Eligibility to participate in the Consortium will be determined by NIST based on the information provided by prospective participants in response to this notice. Prospective participants can submit a letter of interest by completing the letter of interest webform at <https://forms.gle/HBnwvinURpiGJrKF6>; alternatively, parties can answer the questions detailed in LETTER OF INTEREST, below, and send via email or hardcopy (for reference, see

**ADDRESSES** section above). NIST will contact interested parties if there are questions regarding the responsiveness of the letters of interest to the project objective or requirements identified below.

Each responding organization's letter of interest should include the address, point of contact, and following information:

- (1) The contribution(s) the organization will make to the Consortium efforts. All Consortium members must contribute one or more of the following:
  - a. Analytical Testing: Narrative of interest and experience in analytical testing of food ingredients and food products and description of the services and/or technical capabilities they will contribute to Consortium activities. Please describe thoroughly or attach information about available instrumentation, relevant accreditations, published methods, etc.
  - b. Materials: Narrative of interest and description of the food ingredients or food products they will contribute to Consortium activities.
  - c. Unique Industry or Community Perspective: Narrative of interest and description of other relevant expertise (e.g., trade associations, regulatory oversight, standards development) they will contribute to Consortium activities.
- (2) List of anticipated participating individuals (anyone contributing to Consortium activities, such as laboratory analysts, should be included).

Letters of interest must not include proprietary information, including proprietary business information. NIST will not treat any information provided in response to this notice as proprietary information. NIST will notify each organization of its eligibility to join the Consortium. In order to participate in this Consortium, each eligible organization must sign a CRADA. Entities that are legally prohibited or not legally authorized to enter into CRADAs may

be allowed to participate in the Consortium, at NIST's discretion, under separate non-CRADA agreements with terms that may differ, as necessary, from the Consortium CRADA terms. NIST does not guarantee participation in the Consortium to any organization submitting a letter of interest.

Authority: 15 U.S.C. 3710a.

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