



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Food Safety

SHIRAKA Training Program



Netherlands Enterprise Agency



The Netherlands invites senior civil servants from the Arab region with between five and ten years' relevant work experience to apply for a professional development course on Food Safety.

Eligible countries for this course: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco¹, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

The objective of the course is for civil servants working in the field of food safety to share their knowledge and skills enabling them to lead and inspire the modernisation of food safety in their home countries. The course also aims to strengthen participants' ties with the Netherlands and the Dutch government; especially between Dutch civil servants and their counterparts in the target countries.

Course Context

Food safety is a fundamental part of the EU policy on consumer protection and health, agriculture and trade.

The EU integrated approach to food safety aims to assure a high level of food safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health within the European Union through coherent farm-to-table measures and adequate monitoring, while ensuring the effective functioning of the internal market. It involves the development of legislative and other actions:

1. To assure effective control systems and evaluate compliance with EU standards in the food safety and quality, animal health, animal welfare, animal nutrition and plant health sectors within the EU and in third countries in relation to their exports to the EU;
2. To manage international relations with third countries and

international organizations concerning food safety, animal health, animal welfare, animal nutrition and plant health;

3. To manage relations with the [European Food Safety Authority \(EFSA\)](#) and ensure science-based risk management.

Important elements of the EU legislative framework that cover food safety issues and related aspects are:

- Food legislation, including general rules for hygiene and control, food labelling, food additives, food packaging and genetically modified food;
- Veterinary legislation, including animal health, animal welfare, animal identification and registration, internal market control systems, external border controls and public health requirements for organisations dealing with animal products;
- Phytosanitary legislation, including plant health (harmful organisms, pesticides, etc.), seeds and propagating material and plant hygiene;
- Animal feed legislation, including the safety of feed materials and additives, contaminants in feed, labelling, control and inspections.

Safety is an element of the enlargement process where the EU made it clear that it cannot accept a situation that might lead to lower food safety standards or any risks to consumers. Compliance with the above mentioned legislative acts by the new and future member states is therefore essential. Also in countries neighbouring the European Union it is important to have a food safety system in place that is compatible with the EU standards as agri-food chains are becoming increasingly integrated across national borders. Food health scares can affect all consumers and undermine the confidence of the European citizens in the agricultural sector and food industries as well as the authorities involved in setting and controlling the safety and quality standards.

¹ Applicants from ONSSA, Morocco are kindly requested to contact Ms. Zeineb El Bouchikhi (ONSSA) and ask permission to apply for the course. E-mail: elbouchikhi.z@gmail.com

A common European market cannot function properly without a well-functioning food safety system that is fully harmonised and of a consistent high standard. It is essential that consumers in all member states have trust and confidence in the products they consume. The scope of the various legislative acts is therefore broad and the process of compliance is demanding not only in terms of transposing the EU regulations and directives on food safety into the national legislation, but also related to the implementation and enforcement.

The effective implementation and enforcement of the food safety framework implies:

- The understanding of the history, objectives and practical implications of the EU food safety laws;
- The strengthening and reforming of institutional arrangements, administrative structures and procedures;
- Redefinitions of organizational and staff responsibilities;
- Changes in staff attitudes and the development of new skills and approaches.

Improving the safety of imports and adapting EU controls to take into account the radical change in trading conditions over the past decades are key objectives of the food safety strategy. The aim is to have the highest possible level of protection against the different threats that certain imports can pose to human and animal health. The EU does not intend to impose a rigid new border control system or create unnecessary burdens for EU importers and trading partners. Instead, controls will be focused on the high risk imports, and communication with trading partners will be strengthened to allow earlier and more accurate warnings on risky products of non-EU origin. At the same time, there will be renewed efforts to help third countries to combat threats to food safety and animal health at the source, which should help to improve the safety of the final products sent to Europe.

Goals of the Shiraka Food Safety professional development course

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands is organising the professional development course with the following aims:

1. Facilitate bilateral cooperation between Dutch organizations involved in food safety and respective food safety organization in the countries represented by the course participants.
2. Enhance knowledge and skills of participants in the selected countries so that they can be “change agents” and can contribute to further development of their national food safety systems thereby allowing for strengthened relationships with the EU.
3. Create networks
 - a. by organizing the course in the Netherlands in coordination with parties of the Dutch food safety networks so that participants can establish contacts with Dutch experts in the field of food safety
 - b. facilitate establishments of east – east cooperation (among course participants)

Additionally, the course provides participants with the opportunity to develop a valuable network with other civil servants in the region and in the Netherlands.

More specifically the food safety course is designed to ensure that by the end of the course the participants are able to:

Institutional context

- A. Explain the principles, objectives and key elements of the EU legislative framework pertaining to food safety and the role of EU and other international organisations (e.g. Codex, WHO, EFSA, OIE, FAO, FVO) pertaining to food safety;

- B. Outline the main institutional responsibilities of the European and national institutions involved in planning and operation of the food safety systems at national level (role of MANCP);
- C. Explain the importance of an integrated chain approach as key to enhanced food safety and the importance of transparency in the agri-food chain;
- D. Summarise the key features of the Dutch food safety system and the role of the main stakeholders;
- E. Explain sharing of responsibilities for action among public and private stakeholder related to food safety in order to manage food safety controls effectively and efficiently and in line with EU food safety requirements.

Risk analysis (risk assessment, risk management, risk communication)

- A. Explain the principles of risk based inspection system in the Netherlands
 - Explain the impact of physical, chemical and biological hazards on food safety
 - Highlight the differences between inspection and audit, and between auditing, monitoring and surveillance
 - List problems and possible solutions related to export and import of food and feed
 - Explain the role of RASFF and TRACES;
- B. List the main trends and developments in research and development on detection and inspection and certification methods, food safety monitoring and health risk assessments;
- C. Summarize the key features of effective communication systems in relation to food safety with focus on the role of government.

Process management

- A. Explain the main management principles and approaches that lead to successful organisational and/or institutional change;
- B. Analyse food safety system in the home country and identify constraints within / to EU trade respectively;
- C. Discuss the importance of organisational and societal culture, staff attitude in light of effective food safety services and integrity;
- D. Analyse and plan change processes within own professional context aimed at strengthening food safety systems;
- E. Effectively communicate the proposed changes and innovations to different stakeholders.

Course outline and content

In order to achieve the general objectives listed above and to allow for sufficient flexibility to meet the individual participant's needs and interests the two-week course is sub-divided into different components. Each course component contains a combination of theory, practice and study visits in forms of presentations, excursions, discussions, group work and individual assignments and visits of different institutes which will enable the course participants to tailor the programme within the context of the overall objectives towards their own areas of needs and interest. The participants will work towards an action plan that addresses a critical issue in the food safety system at home. New skills, insights and approaches gained during the course will be integrated in this action plan.

The two-week course will be divided into two modules. The first module (10 days) will be given in the Netherlands allowing sufficient time for participants to familiarize themselves with the key stakeholders in the Dutch food safety systems, their roles, tasks, method of operations and their challenges. The second module (3 days) will be given in one of the participating countries, and the main objectives will be to reflect on the action plans participants developed during the first module, to get exposure to the food safety system of the selected country, and identify its challenges.

Course components

Component I: Introduction to course and to the context of food safety

The objectives, programme and approach of the course are explained. Furthermore the background, leading principles and objectives of the EU food safety system are introduced and discussed; the importance and philosophy behind the EU food safety systems in the context of a common market, consumer confidence and integrity will be explained. Mission and tasks of various international organizations involved in food safety are elaborated. The food safety systems of the Netherlands are introduced, and how they have been developed within the organisational and societal institutional set-up of the Netherlands. Comparisons are made with the situation in the respective countries of origin of the participants. Also the chain approach used to pursue integrated food safety from 'farm to fork' is explained with an emphasis on chain analysis techniques and practical applications.

Component II: Multi-stakeholder approaches

Tools and techniques for developing food safety systems with the active participation of public and private sector stakeholders are introduced. The participants are familiarised through presentations, manuals and practical assignments with stakeholder assessments, situation analyses (SWOT, issue analysis), strategic and policy planning techniques within a participatory context. Practical assignments will be based on real cases to test their newly acquired skills in a relevant context.

Component III: Roles and cooperation in public & private sectors in the area of Food Safety

The participants are briefed on the institutional set-up and current policy issues within the Netherlands and the EU through visits to the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Directorate General Agro and Nature and The Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA).

Component IV: Research & development in Food Safety

Research and development on detection and inspection techniques, food safety monitoring, health risk assessments, traceability, etc. is an extremely important part of the European food safety system. Participants are familiarized through visits to Dutch food safety laboratories (Institute of Food Safety (RIKILT), Animal Health Services (GD) and other institutes on various state-of-the-art techniques and developments.

Component V: Planning for change

During the two weeks of the course, participants will prepare in small groups (4–6 group members) a plan of action around a current food safety related theme – chain approach, institutional reform, risk analysis, R&D, transparency and communication. The sub-groups will be facilitated and supported by WAGENINGEN CDI and other WUR resource persons. The sub-group assignments will enable participants to apply newly acquired skills and insights from previous course components and thus will consolidate the process of learning.

On the last day the sub-groups will present their plans of action which will be discussed during the last day's plenary session. This component will also deal with integrity and anti-corruption measures as key point in developing food safety systems.

Training approach

Since a group consisting of 25 individuals is too big for interactive didactical working methods, most of the time the group will be split up into smaller groups of 4–6 persons. Assignments will be carried out also in small working groups of 4–6 participants or on individual basis. The opening and closing of the course, some of the presentations and the (social) excursions will be organized as plenary sessions.

Organization

The Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation will be responsible for the overall organisation and coordination of the Shiraka course on food safety. Ms Monika Sopov will act as project manager. During the preparation and implementation of the course she will be assisted by her colleague Mr Camiel Aalberts. Together the project team has broad international experience with capacity building activities for public organisations around food safety, food industry development, supply chain management, institutional set-up around sanitation and phytosanitary systems, needs assessments, planning and management of change.

The project team has ample experience in Arabic countries, and with development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of numerous food safety courses including the predecessor of Shiraka: Matra South Training Program on Food safety (2013, 2014, 2015)

To fine tune the program, WAGENINGEN CDI will work closely together with:

- NVWA in further developing the overall program for the course with special attention to NVWA contribution in risk analysis (assessment, management, communication)
- RIKILT and WUR experts with regard to further developing the R&D component of the training program, research programs including emerging risks, risk assessment.
- Several other stakeholders involved in food safety in the Netherlands to provide a comprehensive view on the food safety system in the Netherlands (private monitoring, auditing companies, GD Animal Health Service, Dutch Food Retail Association, Food Centrum (Ministry of Public Health), Producer Associations, Consumer Organization (Milieudedefensie, Consumenten Bond).

Dates, locations

The 1 st module of the course:	The 2 nd module of the course:
The Netherlands	to be announced at a later stage
17–27 June, 2018	2018
(10 days)	(2 days)

The courses will be in English, with limited interpretation into Arabic and French.

After completing the course, participants will receive a certificate.

Excursions will be organized, among others, to:

- Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and/or Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA)
- Animal Health Service Deventer
- RIKILT

Costs and fees

The Dutch government will take care of all relevant costs for participants from countries on the [OECD-DAC list](#). This includes international travel, board and lodging, visa and insurance, and tuition fees for the course.

Participants from countries that are not on the OECD-DAC list will pay for their own international travel costs; flight tickets and visa. Board and lodging, insurance and tuition fees for the course will be covered by the Dutch government.

All applicants are responsible for the organisation and costs of travelling to the airport in their own country. In case of no-shows or cancellations within four weeks before the start of the first part of the training, the organisation has the right to claim all costs incurred from the participants' employer.

Selection criteria are:

- Administrative check. Fully documented applications received before the deadline.
- Match of job position and learning goals with the topics of the course and motivation.
- Between 5 and 10 years relevant work experience as civil servant in food safety and international experience.
- No (previous) participation in other Shiraka or Matra-South Training Programmes.

We encourage female civil servants to apply. There are 25 places available, which will ideally be divided equally between the invited countries. A passive understanding of the English language would be a plus. Please be aware that this won't be used as a selection criteria.

Applications

Application should be made online before 7 April, 2018. To apply you have to create an account first which will enable you to fill out the online application form. Go to the website: <http://www.shiraka.nl/en/courses/>
The total number of applicants will be limited to 25. Admission will be on a competitive basis.

Click on "Apply" and scroll to Food Safety. Click on "Apply here: application form". Click on create an account and enter your personal information and login information. Click on register. After you have registered, your account is created. Log on to fill in the application form for the Food Safety training, and save the form. Once you save your application form, you will have successfully applied. You will receive a confirmation e-mail.

Applicants who have been accepted for the course are expected to attend. In case of no-show or (too) late cancellations (i.e. three weeks before the course commences), the course organizers have the right to claim all costs incurred from the candidate's employer.

Shiraka training programme

The course will be organised as part of the Shiraka programme, an initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. Shiraka is a Dutch bilateral effort dedicated to contributing to political development in the MENA region. Through this Shiraka training programme, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs aims to stimulate and support sustainable transition in the MENA region and to strengthen relations between the Netherlands and the target countries.

More information on the application procedure and course organization of Shiraka Food Safety course can be obtained from:

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation
P.O. Box 88
6700 AB Wageningen, the Netherlands



Contact person:
Monika Sopov
Phone: +31 317 48 14 06
E-mail: monika.sopov@wur.nl



For logistical issues, please, contact:
Elisabeth Burma
Phone: +31 317 48 68 85
E-mail: elisabeth.hopperusbuma@wur.nl

The Shiraka Training Programme is an initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The unit International Projects, Missions & Matchmaking of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency implements the Shiraka Training Programme. The Food Safety professional development course will be organized by Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Bezuidenhoutseweg 67
P.O. Box 2006
The Hague, the Netherlands