

fssai

FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS
AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Inspiring Trust, Assuring Safe & Nutritious Food
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India



FOOD SAFETY
MITRA
Friend of Food Safety

FOOD SAFETY MITRA

FRIEND OF FOOD SAFETY





1 Introduction

With the second largest population in the world (and likely to become the largest within next few decades), India promises to be one of the largest food markets in the world. With 32 lakh registered food business operators and unregistered businesses of multitude proportions in the informal economy, it poses interesting challenges and opportunities for the food safety regulation. With FSSAI adopting a paradigm shift in its approach, ways of working and regulation, the focus has shifted to being an “enabler” for the food ecosystem. There is fundamental clarity that working on its own, the scale of impact will be limited and FSSAI needs to engage with and collaborate with a larger set of stakeholders to unlock the true potential of the food sector.

2 Role of Individuals

While FSSAI continues to engage with food business, government & non-government institutions, the private organisations & the civil society at large, the role of a motivated individual in enabling the food safety could be a game-changer - similar to how individual awareness and action was the key to the success of Swachha Bharat mission. Through Food Safety Mitra scheme, FSSAI plans to engage with motivated individuals to enable the food safety ecosystem from grounds up.

Opportunity 1 : Licensing & Registration

As a strategic priority of the “Eat Right India” movement, one of the aims of strengthened compliance is to take number of licensed/registered food businesses to 60 lakhs from the current 32 lakhs. This can not be achieved unless the FBOs find it easy to register/ license / renew while using IT platforms of FSSAI. With a low awareness of compliance requirements and lack of digital literacy, several registered and non-registered FBOs are likely to rely on different agencies and individuals. In the past, there have been complaints that FBOs are over-charged for these services or are provided a poor quality of service.

Through Food Safety Mitra scheme, we aim to enable individuals with entrepreneurial mindset to become certified licensing & registration professionals. With adequate training, these individuals will become self-employed last-mile solution providers for FBOs

Opportunity 2 : Food Safety Training

FSSAI has launched Food Safety Training & Certification program (FoSTaC) to increase the number of trained and certified food safety supervisors to 10 lakhs from existing 1.55 lakhs. This 5x growth will require a new pool of trainers to satisfy the demand of trainings as supervisor training becomes a compliance norm. Through FoSTaC under the Food Safety Mitra initiative, we aim to onboard individuals as FSM trainers with domain knowledge of the food safety processes to become trainers through our “Train the Trainer” programs. With up-skilling of these food industry professionals, they will become catalysts to ensure food safety habits reach a larger set of food professionals. They will also be certified as FSM.

Opportunity 3 : Hygiene Auditing

Hygiene rating of food service establishments is one of the key goals for “Eat Right India” movement. There are currently only 600 establishments which have undergone such rating audits and the goal is to scale this 100x or more. To achieve this stretched compliance goal, we plan to engage individuals with relevant domain knowledge as FSM for Hygiene audits. They will engage with food service establishments & campuses for food hygiene audits and provide a FSSAI designed hygiene rating through a technology-enabled transparent audit process.

Opportunity 4 : Campaign Ambassadors

As a key strategic priority on the consumer side, empowering consumers will require awareness campaigns through campuses, social media & mass media platforms. Even though it may not pay financially, there are great social returns to ensure that the community around you is eating right. Through Food Safety Mitra scheme, we plan to engage enthusiastic individuals as our campaign ambassadors for community & consumer focussed initiatives.

3

Benefits of Engaging Food Safety Mitra



Employment Generation

Food Safety Mitras will engage a set of FBOs → 25 lakhs by providing them services such as licensing, registration, hygiene rating and training etc. A FBO will spend less than Rs 2000-3000 for these services resulting in a new service sector worth at least Rs 500 Cr being created.



Ease of Doing Business

Through Food Safety Mitra scheme, we are creating a transparent, accountable & organised ecosystem supporting food businesses. This will enable FBO to locate service providers in their vicinity, standardised services available and a fair price for use of these services. In case of grievances or queries, we will be creating quick resolution practices & guidelines - thereby significantly improving the ease of doing business for FBOs.



Strengthened Compliance

As FSSAI improves compliance environment and pushes for regulatory compliance, FBOs will discover trained service providers at fair prices - lowering the costs of compliance. Food Safety Mitra who generate income from these services also have their skin in the game to promote the compliance with FBOs. Through a feedback loop, we sustain this transparent marketplace of FBOs and FSMs. FSMs could also play a very important part in ensuring campaign success for different schemes/ goals of FSSAI by creating awareness



Strengthened food Safety ecosystem

Through Food Safety Mitra scheme, we will create a last mile self-driven & selfemployed compliance structure which complements the work of FSSAI and the State food authorities. It also provides an opportunity to FBOs to engage service providers to get quick resolution for their applications, queries, training needs or hygiene rating etc.

4 Food Safety Mitra - Operational Guidelines

Definition of Food Safety Mitra

Food Safety Mitra is an individual professional certified by FSSAI and performs limited actions on behalf of/for FBOs with respect to the implementation of FSS Act, Rules & Regulation.

Job Role Descriptions



Digital Mitra for Licensing & Registration

- Filing of new application for License/Registration
- Further online correspondence regarding queries raised by Authorities
- Filing application for modification of License/Registration
- Filing of Annual Returns/ Declarations
- Filing applications for approval of Product/ label/ Advertisement Claim
- Filing appeal for revocation of Suspended Licenses/Registration



Trainer Mitra for Food Safety Training

- Conducting training of food safety supervisors under FoSTaC
- Conducting training at Eat Right Campuses
- Conducting training of food safety personnel in businesses on demand



Hygiene Mitra for Hygiene Auditing

- To audit the hygiene of FBO outlets as per prescribed guidelines
- To help FBOs with implementation of hygiene guidelines
- To train the food safety supervisors and food handlers about safe & hygienic food handling practices

Eligibility

Digital Mitra : Candidates between the age of 21 to 60 years, possessing bachelor's degree from a recognised university along with working knowledge of computers, internet etc. are eligible to apply.

Trainer Mitra : Eligibility criteria for trainers as under FoSTaC scheme will be applicable.

Criteria	Basic Level	Advance Level	Special Courses
Educational Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum graduate in science/food technology/food science/chemistry/biology/microbiology or other related subjects. If graduate in other streams minimum 5 years experience in relevant food industry (catering, manufacturing, retail, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum graduate in science/food technology/food science/chemistry/biology/microbiology subjects. If graduate in other streams minimum 7 years work & implementation experience in relevant food industry (catering, manufacturing, retail, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum graduate in science/food technology/food science/chemistry/biology/microbiology subjects. If graduate in other streams minimum 7 years work & implementation experience in the particular sector of the industry (meat, fish, milk, etc.).
Training Experience as Trainer & Implementation Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 3 years training experience on food safety & hygiene including FSMS, HACCP and other similar food safety systems in the relevant Food Industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 5 years training experience on food safety & hygiene including FSMS, HACCP and other similar food safety systems in the relevant Food Industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 5 years training & implementation experience on food safety & systems regulations in the particular sector of the Industry.
General Training Received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of FSS Rules & Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of FSS Rules & Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of FSS Rules & Regulations
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should have good communication and motivational skill. Shall be available for training at least 20 days in a year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should have good communication and motivational skill. Shall be available for training at least 20 days in a year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should have good communication and motivational skill. Shall be available for training at least 20 days in a year

Hygiene Mitra*: Candidates between the age of 21 to 60 years, possessing bachelor's degree in Catering Technology / Hotel Management / Food /Dairy/ Fisheries/ Oil Technology/ BioTechnology,/ Agricultural Sciences/ Veterinary Sciences / Biochemistry/ Microbiology from a recognised university are eligible to apply.

Additionally, such candidates must possess the knowledge of the FSSAI Act and the Rules and Regulations there under. Sector specific knowledge of hygienic and sanitary practices, processing techniques, hazards identification, knowledge/analysis/control of contaminants & allergens is a plus.

* Tentative

Code of Conduct

Integrity

As individuals responsible for helping FBOs with compliance, the first norm for a FSM is integrity at all times. This may include -

1. Due diligence at all times - filing applications, conducting hygiene audit
2. Advising FBOs correctly about processes, regulatory requirements & liabilities
3. Advising FBOs to correct mis-declarations and non-compliance
4. Charging only prescribed fees from clients, against receipt.

Transparency

As they are the human face of FSS Act for FBOs, it is essential that FSMs maintain transparency about their services.

1. Applications filed by them on behalf of FBOs - they must quote their unique identification number whenever a service is offered by them to the FBOs
2. Service charges should be transparently communicated to FBOs. All receipts & acknowledgements must be shared with FBOs.
3. FSM will not represent themselves as officers of FSSAI or use its name or logo without authorisation

Quality

1. Whether it is training, audit or filing of applications, FSMs will maintain a highest quality standard
2. Apart from the work itself, FSMs will ensure quality service level by being knowledgeable, friendly and available to their client FBOs

Renewal & Cancellation of Food Safety Mitra Certification

Once certified, the validity of FSM certification will be 2 years. Depending on the kind of work they do, FSMs may be required to undergo intermediate trainings. To ensure that FSMs are invested in the success of the scheme and its goals, a refundable security deposit may be collected at the time of certification. Presently, Rs 5000/- shall be collected from FSMs. This security deposit will be refunded in case a FSM chooses to exit from the scheme.

FSM may continue to act as such, unless:

- The FSM Certificate issued to him under this scheme is suspended or withdrawn by the FSSAI; or
- This scheme is withdrawn by the Authority.
- Non renewal after the expiry of validity of FSM Certificate.

In case of a complaint or on assessment of the performance, FSSAI may impose penalty by way of forfeiture of deposit, suspension for a time period, cancellation of certificate of FSM or debarring future registration as FSM for a specified period.

The grounds of the cancellation which may warrant such action may be –

- if State Food Safety Authorities report any misconduct of FSM.
- if FSM refuses to give a copy of the receipt/acknowledgement to the FBO;
- if FSM fails to furnish his name and unique identification number in the application/ return filed by him;
- if FSM fails to enter any information made available to him by the FBO, correctly in the application/ return by him;
- if FSM makes repeated mistakes relating to filing of applications/returns prepared by him;
- if FSM makes a wrong or fraudulent application/return despite being in the know;
- if FSM is engaged in any financial irregularity, forgery or fraud;
- if FSM fails to comply with the directions issued by the FSSAI from time to time;
- if FSM fails to upgrade the skills as required by the FSSAI from time to time; or
- if FSM, after issuance of FSM Certificate to him under this Scheme, takes an employment in any Government Department.
- Any act in violation of these guidelines or otherwise which may lead to a wrong declaration to the Authority by FBO.

Before, cancellation, Food Authority may give an opportunity to FSM to explain his/her position.

Certification Process

Digital Mitra

1. Register on FSM website
2. On being shortlisted, complete the online training.
3. On completion of training, appear for CBT at one of the specified test centres.
4. On successful completion of assessment, Digital Mitra certificate is issued - to be renewed every 2 years.

Trainer Mitra

1. If a candidate meets the criteria for being a trainer, he/she will be registered under FoSTaC.
2. The candidate will complete the classroom training & assessments to become a certified training Mitra, as per FoSTaC norms
3. Validity of the certificate will be 2 years.

Hygiene Mitra

1. If a candidate meets the criteria for being a hygiene auditor, he/she will be registered as a candidate for Hygiene Mitra
2. The candidate will complete the classroom training & assessments to become a certified Hygiene Mitra.
3. Validity of the certificate will be 2 years.

A candidate may opt for any one or more variants of the Food Safety Mitra for example a Digital Mitra can also be Hygiene Mitra, provided he fulfills all the prescribed qualification and criteria.

Service Charges

S.No	Nature of Service	Service Charges
1	Filing of registration application, modification & annual declaration for registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rs 100/-
2	Filing of licensing application, modification & annual returns for license	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rs 500/-
3	Training - basic level / advanced level / special level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be negotiated by Trainer Mitra • Rs 2000/- for FBOs with Less than 15 employees* • Not to exceed Rs 5000/- for FBOs with More than or equal to 15 employees*
4	Hygiene audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be negotiated by Hygiene Mitra • Rs 2000/- for FBOs with Less than 15 employees* • Not to exceed Rs 5000/- for FBOs with More than or equal to 15 employees*

*Tentative/indicative

FSSAI or State Food Authority may publish indicative benchmark rates or even specify rates from time to time.

5 Conclusion

By engaging motivated and skilled individuals in the food ecosystem, Food Safety Mitra initiative will lead to hassle-free regulatory compliance for food businesses, create new economic opportunities for individuals and improve ability of FSSAI and the State Food Authorities to unlock the potential for growth of the food sector.

Food Safety Mitra initiative will serve as a marketplace for different stakeholders to discover each other and thereby improve the ease of doing business as well. FSMs will also create a strong last mile footprint for the food regulation and the food safety.

With 50,000 FSMs to be certified over next 5 years, Food Safety Mitra will be a key strategic initiative as part of the larger Eat Right India movement.



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