

Job Description for Professional Posts

Reference: NA2025/55

Position and Grade:	Associate Research Officer (Food Metal Contaminant Control), P2
Organizational Unit:	Food Safety and Control Laboratory Food Safety and Control Section Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture
Duty Station:	Seibersdorf, Austria
Type/Duration of Appointment:	FT-JPO, 1 year

Organizational Setting

The Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture is established between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and is housed in the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications at the IAEA in Vienna. The Joint Centre assists Member States of the FAO and IAEA to use nuclear techniques and related technologies to enhance and improve food security, alleviate poverty and to promote sustainable agriculture. It does so by coordinating and supporting research, providing technical and advisory services, laboratory support and training, and collecting, analysing and disseminating information.

The Joint Centre consists of five sections, each with an associated laboratory, in the areas of food safety and control, animal production and health, plant breeding and genetics, insect pest control, and soil and water management and crop nutrition. The five associated laboratories are located at the FAO/IAEA Agriculture and Biotechnology Laboratories in Seibersdorf, 45 km south-east of Vienna. The laboratories undertake strategic and applied research within the agreed programme and provide training for scientists from developing Member States and analytical and other laboratory services.

The food safety and control sub-programme provides support to countries in their efforts to ensure the safety and quality of food and agricultural commodities while at the same time facilitating trade in foods. A primary objective of the sub-programme is to improve Member State laboratory practices and analytical methodologies to enhance food safety and quality control.

Main Purpose

As a member of a team led by the Head of the Food Safety and Control Laboratory (FSCL), the Associate Research Officer (Food Metal Contaminant Control) provides analytical and regulatory expertise to aid capacity building and research in FAO and IAEA Member States in order to enhance food safety and quality and to help meet requirements for trade in food commodities.

Role

The Associate Research Officer (Food Metal Contaminant Control) is: (1) an analyst, developing, adapting and validating analytical methods for the detection and control of metal contaminants for transfer to Member State laboratories; (2) a trainer of personnel in Member States' laboratories in

analytical methods and laboratory procedures; and (3) an advocate of laboratory quality assurance & quality control procedures in Member State laboratories and in FSCL.

Partnerships

The Associate Research Officer (Food Metal Contaminant Control) closely interacts with scientists and technical staff from Member States' laboratories in technology transfer activities and advises on issues related to analytical methodology and regulatory control of metal contaminants in food. There is also close collaboration with Joint FAO/IAEA Centre colleagues in the laboratories and at IAEA Headquarters.

Functions / Key Results Expected

- Develop and/or adapt and validate analytical/instrumental methods for the analysis of food samples for the control of metal contaminants.
- Perform sample preparation procedures for food analysis.
- Operate and carry out basic maintenance of laboratory instrumentation, including LC-ICP-MS (liquid chromatography-inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry) and ED-XRF (energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence).
- Prepare and present training materials and laboratory exercises, including eLearning materials.
- Evaluate scientific data, perform statistical analysis and modelling and prepare technical reports and scientific manuscripts for publication.

Competencies and Expertise (do not revise or edit)

Core Competencies		
Competence	Occupational Role	Behavioural Indicator
Communication	Individual Contributor	Communicates orally and in writing in a clear, concise and impartial manner. Takes time to listen and understand the perspective of others and proposes solutions.
Achieving Results	Individual Contributor	Takes initiative in defining realistic outputs and clarifying roles, responsibilities and expected results in the context of the Department/Division's programme. Evaluates his/her results realistically, drawing conclusions from lessons learned.
Teamwork	Individual Contributor	Actively contributes to achieving team results. Supports team decisions.
Planning and Organizing	Individual Contributor	Plans and organizes his/her own work in support of achieving the team or Section's priorities. Takes into account potential changes and proposes contingency plans.

Functional Competencies		
Competence	Occupational Role	Behavioural Indicator
Analytical thinking	Associate	Gathers and analyses information, identifying critical relationships and patterns among data and proposes workable solutions.
Technical/scientific credibility	Associate	Acquires and applies new skills to remain up to date in his/her area of expertise. Reliably applies knowledge of basic technical/ scientific methods and concepts
Commitment to continuous process improvement	Associate	Identifies opportunities for process, system and structural improvement as well as improving current practices, increasing effectiveness and achieving efficiency gains. Actively supports the application of sound quality management standards and process improvement.
Knowledge sharing and learning	Associate	Actively seeks opportunities to learn by formal and informal means; learns from others, adopting and sharing best practice.

Expertise	
Expertise	Description
Food Science and Technology/Chemistry	Strong laboratory skills: knowledge and practical skills in methods for the analysis of foods for metal contaminants. An overview of international guidelines and regulations for the control of metal contaminants in food.
Food Safety	A good overview of food safety issues affecting consumer health and trade, international food safety guidelines, and food safety control systems.

Education, Experience and Language Skills

- University degree in chemistry, analytical chemistry, or a related field.
- Minimum two years of working experience in analytical chemistry laboratory on testing metal contaminants in food with liquid chromatography-inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry.
- Experience of teaching or training in laboratory activities an advantage.
- Excellent oral and written command of English. Knowledge of other official IAEA languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish) is an asset.