

Institute of Food Science & Technology

Invitation to Tender: Sponsorship Development Services

August 2026

1. Introduction

The Institute of Food Science & Technology (IFST) is inviting proposals from consultants and agencies to secure event sponsorship income on our behalf. This is a new outsourced arrangement, starting on 15 October 2026, initially for a pilot year.

This document sets out what we are looking for, how the relationship would work, what we need from you in your proposal, and how proposals will be assessed.

2. About IFST

IFST is the UK's leading professional body for food science and technology. We are a registered charity (no. 1121681) and were awarded a Royal Charter in 2025. We have around 3,500 members, a digital audience of more than 200,000, and over 435,000 website users a year.

We run a full events programme including:

- Our Autumn Conference
- The Binsted Lecture (in collaboration with IFT & Campden BRI)
- Webinars
- Student competitions
- Regional branch events across eight UK branches

Our Corporate Supporter brochure accompanies this invitation. It sets out the packages and events on offer for 2026 and gives a good picture of what you would be selling for 2027.

3. What we need

We are looking for a consultant or agency to find, win and hand over sponsors across the full breadth of our offer:

- Event sponsorship: conferences, lectures, summits, student competitions and branch events
- Webinar sponsorship: both IFST-hosted sponsored webinars and sponsor-created webinars
- Corporate Supporter packages (Gold, Premier Platinum and bespoke packages)

Advertising sales, in print or digital, are not in scope. Nor is the solicitation of charitable donations: this tender covers commercial sponsorship only.

4. How the relationship will work

You own the sales process from first contact through to an signed commercial proposal with a prospective sponsor. Before any commitment is signed, prospective sponsors must be approved by IFST to assure fit with our charitable object, to assess reputational risk and to check our independence as a trusted scientific voice is not compromised. We will aim to turn this approval around quickly.

Once a sponsor is approved and signed, you hand over to IFST. We will invoice the sponsor and deliver everything they have bought: exhibition space, event logistics, promotion, webinar hosting and ongoing account management.

All sponsor relationships belong to IFST. We expect full visibility of your pipeline and activity, with a short monthly update as a minimum.

Our existing corporate supporters are not off limits and you may build on those relationships, but our clear preference is new business. Your proposal should explain how you would treat renewals of existing supporters compared with genuinely new accounts, including in your commission structure.

You will be representing IFST to prospective sponsors. You may describe our packages and offer as set out in the accompanying brochure. Published pricing, packages or terms may only be varied after agreement with IFST, and you must not make commitments on our behalf without our sign-off. Any use of the IFST name or logo in your outreach materials must be agreed with us in advance.

5. Targets

We want as much sponsorship income as we can credibly secure. Our minimum expectation for the pilot year is £40,000 of event sponsorship. Your proposal should state what you believe is achievable and on what assumptions.

6. Commercial model

Our preference is a pure commission arrangement. We are open to a retainer plus commission, and we are open to alternative structures if you can make the case for them. Whatever you propose, please state:

- Commission rates, and whether they differ by product or by new versus renewal business
- Any retainer or fixed fees
- When payment falls due. Our working assumption is that commission is payable once the sponsor has paid IFST, not on signature
- Whether your fees and commission are quoted inclusive or exclusive of VAT

7. Contract term and termination

The contract will run for a pilot year from 15 October 2026, with a break clause at six months exercisable by either party on one month's written notice. Continuation beyond the pilot year will depend on results.

IFST also reserves the right to terminate the contract with immediate effect, at any point during the pilot year, for material breach, including misuse of data, conduct that damages IFST's reputation, or failure to comply with the approval process set out in Section 4.

8. Compliance, data protection and insurance

You will be handling contact data on IFST's behalf, so all activity must comply with UK GDPR and be governed by a data processing agreement between IFST and you as our data processor. Any prospect and sponsor data gathered during the contract belongs to IFST and must be handed over in full at the end of the engagement, with no retained copies.

As sponsorship activity undertaken on behalf of a charity, your approach must also be consistent with the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice, even though this tender covers commercial sponsorship rather than charitable donations.

You must hold, and provide evidence of, professional indemnity insurance and public liability insurance appropriate to the scope of this engagement.

9. Eligibility

To be considered, your proposal must confirm:

- Sound financial standing to deliver a 12 month engagement
- Current professional indemnity and public liability insurance, with cover levels stated
- No unresolved conflicts of interest that would prevent you acting for IFST (see Section 10.5)
- Willingness to sign a data processing agreement on the terms in Section 8

Proposals that do not confirm the above will not be scored against the criteria in Section 11.

10. What to include in your proposal

Please keep your proposal short, no more than six pages, covering:

1. Your approach: how you would build a pipeline and win sponsors for IFST
2. Relevant track record, ideally with membership bodies, charities or the food sector, with two referees
3. Proposed commercial terms as set out in Section 6
4. What you would need from IFST to succeed
5. Any conflicts of interest, including work for organisations that compete with IFST for sponsorship, and any connection to IFST trustees, staff, committee members or persons connected to them
6. Confirmation that you meet the eligibility requirements in Section 9, including insurance cover and data protection requirements

11. Evaluation criteria

Proposals that meet the eligibility requirements in Section 9 will be assessed and scored against the following weighted criteria:

Criterion	Weighting	What we are looking for
Quality of approach	35%	A credible, well-evidenced pipeline strategy tailored to IFST's offer and audience.
Track record and references	25%	Demonstrable success winning sponsorship, ideally with membership bodies, charities or in the food sector. Referee feedback.
Commercial terms	25%	Value for money and alignment with our preferred commission-led model, including fair treatment of new versus renewal business.
Understanding of IFST and sector fit	15%	Evidence of understanding IFST's charitable status, governance requirements and sector context, and

Criterion	Weighting	What we are looking for
		what support you would need from us.

We may also take up references and hold a short online meeting with shortlisted bidders as part of this assessment.

12. Timeline

- Invitation issued: 19 August 2026
- Clarification questions by: Friday 4 September 2026
- Proposals due: Friday 11 September 2026
- Interviews (online): week commencing 28 September 2026
- Appointment confirmed: by Friday 9 October 2026
- Contract start: 15 October 2026

13. Submission and questions

Send proposals and any questions to info@ifst.org. We may ask shortlisted bidders to talk through their approach in a short online meeting. IFST reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without providing reasons. IFST is not liable for any costs incurred by Suppliers in preparing their submission. All information contained within this ITT and any accompanying materials is confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties. IFST shall be under no obligation to accept the lowest priced or any tender. IFST reserves the right to seek clarification from any Supplier at any stage of the process. This ITT does not constitute an offer or contract. A contract will only come into effect upon signature by both parties.