



---

# Food Safety Strategy for Africa 2022 - 2036

## **DISCLAIMER**

All rights are reserved. Reproduction and/or dissemination of information from this document for educational or other non-commercial purposes are authorized without prior written permission from the copyright holders provided the source is fully acknowledged. Reproduction and dissemination of information in this document for sale or commercial purposes is prohibited unless prior written consent is given by the copyright holders. Applications for such permission should be addressed to:-

The Director  
Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy  
African Union Headquarters  
P.O. Box 3243, Roosevelt Street W21K19  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: +251 11 551 77 00  
Fax: +251 11 551 78 44

## Foreword



Food safety is poised to play a key role in Africa's agricultural transformation due to increased demand for food fueled by the continent's rapid population growth and the entry into force of the exciting era of the African Continental Free Trade (AfCFTA) Area Agreement. Within the broader context of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, food safety presents an enormous opportunity for food trade under the AfCFTA since over 75% of trade in Africa is dominated by agriculture products. However, Africa's food safety records remain the worst compared to other regions, and accounts for 30% of global deaths associated with foodborne illnesses. Consumption of unsafe food accounts for approximately 137,000 deaths and about 91 million cases of acute foodborne illnesses on an annual basis in Africa, the highest estimates worldwide. Moreover, these foodborne diseases affect disproportionately the most vulnerable of the society, the infants, young children (under five years), pregnant women, the elderly and immunocompromised people. Besides the human suffering caused by foodborne illnesses, the economic impact on African economies due to unsafe foods is staggering.

A situation which if not addressed could seriously jeopardize the attainment of the goals set in the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agriculture growth and Transformation because of the cost of lost productivity to African economies the cost of lost opportunities in agriculture food trade gains that could prevent the achievement of the goal set of tripling intra-African trade by 2025.

The Food Safety Strategy of Africa (FSSA) will provide a harmonized framework to implement activities that mitigate various food safety threats that negatively impact consumers' health. The strategy will help to address non-tariff barriers, particularly those related to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures or standards that have the potential of slowing down the attainment of the Malabo Declaration aspirations and ultimately the African Union Agenda 2063 and related flagship programmes impacted by food safety. An additional benefit of the strategy will be reduction of duplication of efforts, facilitating synergy leveraging on resources and capabilities, and enhancing lesson learning and best practices. This strategy is developed as a tool for the implementation of the Continental SPS Policy Framework for Africa endorsed by AU policy organs in 2020.

The FSAA was developed through a consultative process with various stakeholders from the food safety domain across the continent and beyond. Alongside this stakeholder consultation, in-depth strategic analysis and iterative process were also undertaken in order to come up with a robust strategy that for a practical implementation of priority actions in food safety. Key to the strategy development process was 26 – 28 October 2020 SPS Consultative Meeting; the 08-11 June 2021 Regional Consultation Meetings that attracted over 170 delegates from the continent and beyond; the on-line Survey Report which was specifically conducted to solicit stakeholder input into the development of the strategy; and the various continental and regional policies and strategies. The African Union Food Safety Advisory Group constituted of representatives from relevant institutions to the strategy and food safety experts, provided technical support and general guidance during the preparation of the FSSA.

The FSSA addresses the adoption and promotion of effective measures that will: a) increase the capacity of government food control functions, b) strengthen the capacity of the business sector along the food continuum to produce safe food and c) empower the consumer to demand safe food. All these interventions will improve the capacity of the food safety systems, help manage food safety risks and threats and reduce the current burden of foodborne diseases that afflict the continent.

The Strategic Objectives of the FSSA are to:

- a. Strengthen food policy, legal and institutional frameworks
- b. Strengthen the human and infrastructure capacity of food control systems
- c. Promote food safety culture, evidence-based advocacy, communication, information sharing to raise consumer awareness and empowerment
- d. Improve trade and market access at national, regional, continental and global levels
- e. Strengthen research, innovation, technology development and transfer
- f. Establish and strengthen coordination mechanisms and enhance cooperation at national, regional, continental and global levels.

So far, food safety has mostly been driven by trade consideration on the continent. To be successful, the implementation of the FSSA will require a commitment by all the stakeholders to widen the scope of intervention and focus on domestic foods and markets and most importantly a paradigm shift in approaches to regulation and management of food safety by governments. Public health institutions taking a lead role in policy formulation and setting public health goals while Agriculture and other competent authorities in charge of value chains ensure compliance and production of safe food by the private sector. Moreover, traditional approaches of “official food control” current in place in Member States are not considered effective and well adapted for the management of food safety risks in the context of African domestic food in which smallholder farmers, micro and small enterprises, and informal food channels predominate and are characterized by a very low capacity to meet set standards. Adapted and creative solutions will have to be developed. Beyond the traditional role of oversight, governments will have to play an active leadership role of creating an enabling environment with adapted and appropriate policy instruments, facilitate, capacitate, incentivize and mobilize the resources needed for the successful implementation of the Strategy.

It is under the above conditions that the proposed FSSA will be able to realize its stated vision of ensuring that all people in Africa have access to safe and nutritious food and I would like to welcome, encourage and appeal to all Member States, Partners and all other stakeholders to support the successful implementation of the Strategy for the economic and social development of the peoples of Africa. Safe food is foundational to a healthy workforce that Africa needs for its development.

**H.E. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko**

*Commissioner for the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Development*



# Table of Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acronyms and Abbreviations</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>x</b>
Background and rationale for the Strategy	x
The Strategy	x
Formulation process of the FSSA	x
Strategic approach	xi
Strategic Objectives	xi
Implementation arrangements	xii
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>1.0. Background and Context</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Context and Rationale for the FSSA	2
<b>2.0. Situational Analysis of Food Safety in Africa</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.0. The Strategy</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1. Vision, Mission, Goal and Strategic Approach	7
3.1.1 Vision, Mission and Goal	7
3.1.2 Strategic Approach	7
3.2. Scope	9
3.3. Guiding Principles	9
3.4. Target Audience and Timeframe	10
3.5. Alignment with Other Frameworks	10
<b>4.0. Strategic Objectives and Key Strategies</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1. Strategic Objective One: Strengthen Food Safety Policy, legal and institutional frameworks	12
4.2. Strategic Objective Two: Strengthen the human and infrastructure capacity for food control systems	14
4.3. Strategic objective Three: Promote food safety culture, evidence-based advocacy, communication, training, information and knowledge sharing to raise awareness and empowerment	15
4.4. Strategic Objective Four: Improve trade and market access at national, regional, continental and global levels.	16

4.5.	<i>Strategic Objective Five: Strengthen research, innovation, technology development and transfer</i>	17
4.6.	<i>Strategic Objective Six: Establish and strengthen coordination mechanisms, and enhance cooperation and investments at national, regional, continental and global levels</i>	18
<b>5.0.</b>	<b><i>Implementation Arrangements</i></b>	<b>20</b>
5.1.	<i>Food Safety Strategy Theory of Change</i>	20
5.2.	<i>Results Framework, Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	21
5.2.1	<i>Results Framework</i>	21
5.2.2	<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	21
5.2.2.1	<i>Key Performance Indicators</i>	22
5.2.2.2	<i>Reporting on Performance</i>	23
5.2.2.3	<i>Performance Evaluation</i>	23
5.2.2.2.4	<i>Measuring impact</i>	23
5.3.	<i>Key Actors, their Roles and Responsibilities</i>	23
5.4.	<i>Coordination and Implementation of the FSSA</i>	25
5.4.1	<i>Cross cutting Issues</i>	25
5.5.	<i>Critical Success Factors</i>	26
5.6.	<i>Budgetary and Investment considerations</i>	27
5.7.	<i>Risk Assessment, Management and Mitigation</i>	29
	<b><i>References</i></b>	<b>31</b>
	<b><i>Appendix</i></b>	<b>32</b>
	<i>Appendix 1: Consolidated SWOT Analysis</i>	32
	<i>Appendix 2: Simplified FSSA Results Framework</i>	34

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Food Safety Life Cycle with Levels of Economic Development	6
Figure 2: Framework for action on food safety	8

## List of Tables

Table 1: Result framework	21
Table 2: Key Actors/Roles and Responsibilities	24
Table 3: Structure and nature of additional costs sustained in strengthened SPS controls	28
Table 4: Risk factors and mitigation strategies	29

# Acronyms and Abbreviations

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Agreement
AFSA	African Food Safety Agency
AFSI	Africa Food Safety Index
AOAC	Association of Analytical Communities (formerly Association of Official Analytical Chemists)
ARSO	African Regional Organization for Standardization
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUC-DARBE	African Union Commission - Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa’s Development
FBD	Foodborne disease
FS:	Food safety
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CA:	Competent Authority
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CABI	Center for Agriculture and Bioscience International
CCAFRICA	FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee on Africa
CEBEVIRHA	Commission Économique du Bétail, de la Viande et des Ressources Halieutiques
CFSAN	The Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
CODEX	Codex Alimentarius Commission
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAO-RAF	FAO - Regional Office for Africa
FBO	Food Business Operator
FS	Food Safety
FSSA	Food Safety Strategy for Africa
FSSI	Food safety system index
FSPHI	Food safety public health index
FSTI	Food safety trade index
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
ISSBs	International Standard-Setting Bodies
LMICs	Low and Middle-income countries
MENA:	Middle East and North Africa region

MS	Member States
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OIE	World Organization for Animal Health
PACA	Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
REC	Regional Economic Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards Measures
STDF	Standards and Trade Development Facility
STC	Specialized Technical Committee
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Agreement
UEAC	Union des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale
UN	United Nations
USDA-FAS	United States Department of Agriculture -Foreign Agriculture Services
vTPA	Voluntary Third-Party Assurance
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization of the United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organization

# Acknowledgements



**T**he Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Development (DARBE) would like to extend its heart-felt appreciation to all stakeholders who have participated in the preparation of the FSSA. The stakeholders have undertaken various functions aimed at bringing this important Strategy together, including provision of information and other resources that has been used to put this document together. Dr. Jean Kamanzi is acknowledged for the long hours he has spent in providing expert services as the consultant in developing the FSSA. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is commended for providing valuable technical support during the preparation of this Strategy.

DARBE extends its appreciation to the EU, WHO, USFDA-CFSAN, Texas A&M University and the team of Ignite for their valuable contribution in information and the Food Safety Strategy Advisory Group which provided technical backstopping. The Advisory Group consists of the following institutions: AUDA-NEPAD, AUC Department of Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining (ETIM), AUC Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, AUC Directorate of Women, Gender and Development and Representatives of RECs who were joined by the ad hoc invited representatives of the following organizations: The STDF, FAO, WHO, EU, AfDB, USDA-FAS, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UNIDO, CCAFRICA, ILRI, WB and ARSO.

Our thanks also go to the representatives of the Member States and to the various experts who actively participated in the development of this strategy.

This strategy was developed under the Leadership of Dr. Simplicie Nouala Head of Agriculture and Food Security at DARBE and valuable editorial, technical insights, procedural and administrative contribution from Ms. Diana Akullo Ogwal, Mr. John Oppong-Otoo of AU-IBAR, and Dr. Amare Ayalew, Officers at DARBE.

Last but not the least, all those who have been working behind the scenes at DARBE and elsewhere are appreciated for their support in dealing with all the attendant logistical needs. Without their input, this document would not have been put together.

## **Godfrey Bahiigwa**

*Director, Department of Agriculture Rural Development,  
Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy*

# Executive Summary

## *Background and rationale for the Strategy*

Unsafe food have huge public health and economic impacts for Africa. The most recent World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases estimated that, in Africa, food safety hazards were responsible for approximately 137,000 deaths and about 91 million cases of acute foodborne illnesses on an annual basis, the highest estimates worldwide. A World Bank (WB) report (2019) estimated that this situation of unsafe foods cost low- and middle-income economies mainly Sub-Saharan and Southeast Asia economies the equivalent of \$110 billion in lost productivity and medical expenses alone each year.

If not addressed, the public health and socio-economic costs of unsafe food can undermine the attainment of the goals set in the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agriculture growth and Transformation and the African Continental free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Specifically, unsafe food will not only undermine the goal to triple intra-Africa trade in agricultural products and achievement of food security goals but it lead to lost opportunities in food trade gains due to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) challenges. Hence, the African Union SPS Policy Framework and Annex VII of the Agreement establishing the AfCFTA are policy instruments endorsed recently to address SPS matters and pave way for smooth intra-Africa trading. The proposed Food Safety for Africa (FSSA) will help operationalize the AU SPS policy framework by providing a harmonized framework on how to address SPS issues related to food safety with the overall objective to protect consumers and at the same time facilitate trade.

## *The Strategy*

### **Formulation process of the FSSA**

The process for developing the FSSA included three main approach to solicit inputs for the Strategy: (a) Review of relevant documentation including policies and strategies on the continent; (b) Stakeholder Consultative meetings held in June 2021 that was attended by 170 food safety stakeholders from the continent and beyond, and; (c) An on-line survey for generating stakeholders' inputs into the FSSA.

A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted to understand from a scientific, economic and socio-cultural perspective, the forces driving the high foodborne diseases burden in Africa. The development of the strategy drew from the concept of a food safety life cycle that creates a gap between need and capacity of managing food safety risks as economies develop and the concept of "pull and push" in improving food safety.

It is on the basis of all the inputs and the above in-depth analysis that the strategic approach, the vision, mission and goal and the strategic objectives of the FSSA were developed.

## Strategic approach

The Strategic approach adopted is based on the concept of shared responsibilities in the management of food safety risks by the following three key players: a) government with its oversight and enforcement functions; b) food business sector which has the primary responsibility for ensuring the safety of food and, c) consumers as risk managers at their level.

The strategies defined in the FSSA will lead to enhanced protection of consumers' health and facilitation of trade through the implementation of national food safety systems which are context specific but based on international standards. In Africa, majority of the population source their food from the domestic informal food markets, this is also where there is minimal application and compliance with food safety standards. Emphasis will therefore be placed on creating innovative policy and regulatory environment that facilitate bridging capacity gaps in informal food markets. This will enable the sustainable delivery of safe food. The FSSA will further promote knowledge and awareness on food safety to enable consumers to demand for safer food and to manage food safety risks within their control.

The vision, mission, goal and strategic objectives were derived on this basis.

**Vision:** All people in Africa have access to safe and nutritious food

**Mission:** To strengthen national food safety systems to protect consumers and ensure fair practices in food trade

**Goal:** To contribute to improved public health, food and nutrition security, sustainable livelihoods and economic growth

## Strategic Objectives

The FSSA identifies 6 key strategic objectives to improve the safety of food by strengthening the capacity of the three key players in the control of food safety that is a government responsibility, and the management of food safety which is the responsibility of food business operators (the private sector) and consumers. For the implementation of the FSSA to be successful, new strategic approaches for the management of food safety are proposed. Governments will require a paradigm shift in the way regulation is conducted. The traditional “command and control” model is not well adapted to informal food markets where most of the population source their food in Africa. Beyond the traditional oversight role, governments will have to play an active leadership role of creating an enabling environment with adapted and appropriate policy instruments, to facilitate, capacitate, incentivize and mobilize the resources needed to reinforce the capacity of the private sector to produce safe food and empower consumers to demand safe food that will drive improvements in food safety. This approach will enhance the capacity and performance of food safety systems, close the gap between need and capacity as African economies develop and help to reduce the current unacceptable burden of foodborne diseases afflicting the continent.



The six strategic objectives are as follows:

**Strategic objective 1:** Strengthen food safety policy, legal and institutional frameworks

**Strategic objective 2:** Strengthen the human and infrastructure capacity for food control systems

**Strategic objective 3:** Promote food safety culture, evidence-based advocacy, communication, information and knowledge sharing to raise consumer awareness and empowerment

**Strategic objective 4:** Improve trade and market access at national, regional, continental and global levels

**Strategic objective 5:** Strengthen research, innovation, technology development and transfer

**Strategic objective 6:** Establish and strengthen coordination mechanisms and enhance cooperation at national, regional, continental and global levels

### *Implementation arrangements*

Seven (7) elements have been identified and deemed critical for the implementation of the FSSA. They are:

- a. FSSA Theory of Change (ToC):** This sets the business case for the FSSA, stipulating what will be achieved if certain inputs are employed;
- b. The Results Framework and Monitoring and Evaluation:** The Results Framework is the bedrock for an effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. It presents objectives at the various levels of the objective hierarchy, their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which are objective markers and conditions/assumptions which must obtain for the achievement of the objectives. A baseline study will be conducted to provide KPI baseline values to facilitate the assessment of change in future evaluations. The tracking of KPIs has been proposed to be undertaken on an annual basis in order to identify challenges early enough and consequently employ appropriate corrective measures.
- c. Roles and Responsibilities of Key Actors:** The implementation of the FSSA is at various levels, namely; national, regional and continental. At each level, key actors who will be involved in the implementation process have been identified as well as their roles and responsibilities. These include stakeholders representing relevant government entities, the food industry, NGOs, academia and research institutions. Identification and alignment of roles and responsibilities of key actors is meant to avoid duplication, enhance resource leveraging and promote accountability and transparency among others.

- d. Coordination Mechanisms of FSSA:** Coordination of the strategic actions will be based on the principle of subsidiarity and comparative advantage. The overall coordination of this strategy will be done by AUC-DARBE. AUC-DARBE will coordinate inter-regional actions requiring harmonization at the continental level. RECs will be responsible for coordinating the harmonization of food control systems, trade facilitation mechanisms and capacity building in core food safety competencies to ensure that their member states attain the threshold of capabilities required to produce safe food. Government designated Competent Authorities or national coordination mechanisms on food safety or SPS will be responsible for coordination of country-specific activities that will lead to the overall achievement of the objectives of this strategy. These coordination structures will need to be strengthened for them to effectively undertake their mandate.
- e. Success Factors: For the successful implementation of the FSSA, seven (7) success factors have been given attention. These are:** (i) Political leadership and commitment; (ii) Stakeholder ownership; (iii) Existence of vibrant private and public sectors; (v) An effective institutional framework that links the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation and Reporting system across the Continental, Regional and Member States levels with improved communication and sharing of resources and information (vi) Food safety culture, and; (vii) Gender mainstreaming during implementation of the Strategy.
- f. Budgetary and investments considerations:** Currently there is insufficient budgetary allocation for food safety systems. Moreover, there is need for enhanced investments to build the capacity of the various actors along the value chain and to empower consumers handle food in a safe manner. The FSSA emphasizes on the need for resource mobilization and adequate funding to invest in ensuring availability of safe food. In this regard, the FSSA identifies various possible sources of funding which could be harnessed in order to sustain its effective implementation.
- g. Risk Assessment, Mitigation and Management: Seven (7) possible risks have been identified which may negatively impact the implementation of the FSSA. These are:** (i) Lack of high-level leadership and commitment sometimes due to change in leadership at country level; (ii) Inadequate funding to support the implementation of the FSSA (iii) Inadequate participation of key stakeholders in the implementation of the FSSA; (iv) Lack of focus on the domestic food markets including informal markets; (v) Poor foodborne disease data and disease reporting to provide the rationale for continued support and investments; (vi) Lack of gender mainstreaming and, (vii) disasters and pandemics such as Covid-19 crisis that could have a negative impact on the implementation of the Strategy. Each of the 7 risks has been assessed for its likelihood and impact. Mitigations measures embedded in the Strategy were identified to reduce the risk to a low level.

# Glossary

*The terms used in this document are consistent with their definitions in Codex texts*

**Capacity:** The combination of all the strengths, attributes and resources available within a community, society or organization that can be used to achieve agreed goals.

**Codex Alimentarius:** A collection of internationally recognized standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other recommendations relating to food, food production and food safety.

**Competent authority:** A government agency responsible for managing food safety risks including developing and enforcing food safety rules and regulations.

**Farm-to-table/folk:** Includes all steps involved in the production, storage, handling, distribution and preparation of a food product.

**Food:** Any substance, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, which is intended for human consumption, and includes drinks, chewing gum and any substance that has been used in the manufacture, preparation or treatment of “food”, but does not include cosmetics or tobacco or substances used only as drugs.

**Food business operators:** The owner of the business or the person in control of the food business including farmers, food producers, processors and distributors, and food service providers, retailers, wholesalers, as well as suppliers of equipment, technology and ingredients

**Food control:** A mandatory regulatory activity of enforcement by national or local authorities to provide consumer protection and ensure that all foods during production, handling, storage, processing and distribution are safe, wholesome and fit for human consumption; conform to quality and safety requirements; and are honestly and accurately labelled as prescribed by law.

**Food control system:** the integration of a mandatory regulatory approach with preventive and educational strategies that protect the whole food chain.

**Food handler:** Any person who directly handles packaged or unpackaged food, food equipment and utensils, or food contact surfaces and is therefore expected to comply with food hygiene requirements.

**Food hygiene:** All conditions and measures necessary to ensure the safety and suitability of food at all stages of the food chain.

**Food inspection:** The examination of food products or systems for the control of raw materials, processing and distribution. This includes in-process and finished product testing to verify that they conform to regulatory requirements.

**Food monitoring:** Monitoring is a statistically-based, unbiased, random sampling, processing and analysis of samples to provide profile information on the occurrence and/or levels of food safety hazards in pre-defined, normal sample populations.

**Food safety assurance:** assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use.

**Food Safety Culture:** Within a food business, a food safety culture is a combination of shared values, attitudes and behaviors of all staff to ensure the food they produce and market is safe.

**Food safety emergency:** A situation, whether accidental or intentional, that is identified by a competent authority as constituting a serious and as yet uncontrolled foodborne risk to public health that requires urgent action.

**Food safety system:** As a component of the food system, it is the combination of all stakeholders' activities in the food and feed chain that contributes to safeguarding the health and well-being of people, animals, and the environment.

**Food security:** Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

**Foodborne disease:** Any disease of an infectious or toxic nature caused by the consumption of food.

**Foodborne disease surveillance:** The systematic collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of health data on an ongoing basis, to gain knowledge of the pattern of disease occurrence and potential in a community, in order to control and prevent disease in the community

**HACCP (Hazard analysis and critical control points):** A system that identifies, evaluates, and controls hazards that are significant for food safety

**Hazard:** A biological, chemical or physical agent in, or condition of, food with the potential to cause an adverse health effect.

**One Health approach:** Collaborative multidisciplinary work at the local, national, and global levels to attain optimal health for humans, animals and the environment.

**Risk:** A function of the probability of an adverse health effect and the severity of that effect, consequential to a hazard(s) in food

**Risk analysis:** A process consisting of three components: risk assessment, risk management and risk communication.

**Risk assessment:** A scientifically based process consisting of the following steps: hazard identification; hazard characterization; exposure assessment; and risk characterization.

**Risk communication:** The exchange of information and opinions concerning risk and risk- related factors among risk assessors, risk managers, consumers and other interested parties.

**Risk management:** The process of weighing policy alternatives in consultation with all interested parties, considering risk assessment and other factors relevant for the health protection of consumers and for the promotion of fair-trade practices, and, if needed, selecting appropriate prevention and control options

**SPS Agreement:** Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the World Trade Organization

**TBT:** Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade of the WTO

# I.0. Background and Context

## I.1 Background

Agriculture is central to the African economy, accounting for about 40 percent of Gross Domestic Products (GDP)<sup>1</sup>, 15 percent of exports and between 60 to 80 percent of employment on the continent. Moreover, about 75 percent of intra-African trade is in agricultural products. In addition, there is considerably large informal food trade. It is therefore expected that agricultural commodities will contribute substantially to trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The continent is currently experiencing a rapid growth of the intra-African agri-food market fueled by high population growth, rapid urbanization, dietary change and income growth. Intra-African food demand is projected to increase by 178% by 2050<sup>2</sup>. Africa's net food import bill is currently over USD 40 billion a year and is projected to reach USD 400 billion by 2030. While these rapid transformations provide major commercial opportunities, they also present major challenges such as the management of food safety risks and related foodborne diseases due to unsafe food. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Africa currently has the world's highest per capita incidences of foodborne illness.

The "Africa We Want" as expressed in Agenda 2063, the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation, and the AfCFTA have a set of goals that contribute to ensuring food security and the wellbeing of the African populations. The African Union (AU) Commission has developed policy instruments to help meet those goals. Among them is the Annex no. 7 on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) of the Agreement establishing the AfCFTA. Its goal is to facilitate trade while safeguarding human, animal and plant life. The AU SPS policy framework for adopted in October 2019 to facilitate coordination of SPS work of the AU and to support implementation of Annex no. 7 of the Agreement establishing the AfCFTA. Food safety being one of the three SPS areas along with animal health and plant health, the proposed Food Safety Strategy for Africa (FSSA) will contribute to the operationalization of the AU SPS framework and help the continent achieve its food security, public health and trade goals. The FSSA will ensure the establishment of science-based and effective, efficient food regulatory environment, enhanced compliance leading to safer agri-food value chains across the continent, reduced foodborne disease burden in Africa, and improved competitiveness of Africa's food commodities for increased intra-African and global trade. In addition, the Strategy will minimize duplication of efforts, facilitate synergy leveraging on common resources and capabilities, and enhancing learning and implementing best practices.

<sup>1</sup> FAO Regional Conference on Africa: Intra-Africa Trade in Food and Agriculture: Issues, Challenges and Prospects in the Context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) [www.fao.org/3/nc707en/nc707en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/nc707en/nc707en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> FAO projected increase in Africa's food demand by 2050

## 1.2 Context and Rationale for the FSSA

While food safety is an integral part of food security, it is also a significant public health issue on its own right. Access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food is key to sustaining life and promoting good health which contributes to the overall socioeconomic development on a sustainable basis. Governments have the responsibility to protect their people by ensuring that food available and offered to consumers meet food safety standards. Unfortunately, continued unintended consumption of unsafe food by African citizens lead to high public health and economic costs and these costs are expected to grow enormously in the coming years if no remedial actions are taken done to reverse the course. Currently, the continent has the highest proportional burden of foodborne diseases in the world. According to the WHO<sup>3</sup>, 91 million Africans fall ill each year due to foodborne diseases and 137,000 of them die of the same cause, representing one third of the global death toll for foodborne diseases. Moreover, these foodborne diseases disproportionately affect the most vulnerable of the society notably; infants, young children (under five years), pregnant women, the elderly and immunocompromised people. Foodborne illnesses contribute to decreased worker productivity, disability and early death thus lowering incomes and access to food. In summary, foodborne illnesses contribute to human suffering.

An economic impact study done by the World Bank (WB) in 2019<sup>4</sup> estimated that unsafe foods cost low- and middle-income economies mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, about \$110 billion in lost productivity and medical expenses alone each year. Additionally, African countries have also witnessed costly trade rejections and in some cases loss of market share due to trade of unsafe food. This problem is exacerbated by the loss or waste of about one-third of food produced globally according to the FAO<sup>5</sup>. A loss which can be attributed to weaknesses in food safety and quality management along value chains.

In the past, food safety was mostly driven by trade and market access issues with tangible success as attested by expanded markets and exports of safe food to foreign markets. This has led to the relatively low food safety investment in domestic food markets, an estimated 96% of marketed farm output in Africa is supplied through domestic markets, leaving only 4% for export markets<sup>6</sup>. Domestic food supply chains are therefore crucial to farmers and consumers in Africa since it is the main source of livelihood and driving national economies. The same World Bank study estimated that the cost of productivity losses due to unsafe food sold in domestic, largely informal markets is 40 to 50 times compared to the trade-related costs. There is an urgent need for a paradigm shift on how food safety is managed in Africa in domestic food markets. It is a matter that should be at the forefront of the public health and economic development agendas of member states by prioritizing the availability of safe food in domestic food markets for the African populations.

<sup>3</sup> FERG Report WHO estimates of global burden of foodborne diseases (2015). [https://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/foodborne\\_disease/fergreport/en/](https://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/foodborne_disease/fergreport/en/)

<sup>4</sup> The Safe Food Imperative: Accelerating Progress in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (2019). <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/30568/9781464813450.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.fao.org/food-loss-and-food-waste/flw-data>

<sup>6</sup> AGRA (2019): The hidden middle, a quiet revolution in the private sector driving agricultural transformation, Africa Agricultural Status Report <https://agra.org/re-source-library/africa-agriculture-status-report/>



With current Africa's rapid urbanization, population growth and dietary changes, the human and economic costs related to food safety are expected to increase enormously if no effective and efficient measures are taken to reverse the trend. Moreover, it is also obvious that under the current situation, Africa will not be able to achieve its food security, public health and agricultural trade goals such as the Malabo Declaration that seeks to triple trade in agricultural products to enhance food security and drive economic development.

The African Union Commission is systematically prioritizing food safety at various levels. The 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union held, on 9 - 10 February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia endorsed the African Union Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Policy Framework (Doc. EX.CL/1187 (XXXVI)). The aim of the AU SPS Policy Framework is to facilitate strengthening African Union Member States' SPS capacities and support implementation of the Agreement establishing Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Annex number 7 on SPS measures. The objectives of the policy framework are to (i) Establish harmonized science-based SPS systems (ii) Increase efficiencies and reduce trading costs by working towards a harmonized continental SPS system (iii) Build technical capacity and (iv) Increase political support and investment in SPS systems. The proposed Food Safety Strategy for Africa (FSSA) is one of the three instruments, besides the Animal Health and the Plant Health Strategies for Africa that will lead to the implementation of the AU SPS Policy Framework. FSSA will define the guiding principles for establishing and/or implementing food safety systems in Africa; recommend strategies for reducing the foodborne disease burden on the continent; outline and emphasize the strategies for facilitating safe food intra-African and global trade in the AfCFTA and for facilitating trade between Africa and the rest of the World and; highlight the importance of reinforcing regional cooperation and integration through leveraging on existing RECs policies, frameworks and initiatives on food safety and coordination and harmonization of food safety systems in Africa based on international standards.

### *Formulation process of the FSSA*

The development of this FSSA required a wide-ranging stakeholder consultation and in-depth strategic analysis and an iterative process in order to produce a robust, yet feasible strategy. The materials used in the development of the strategy were drawn from various sources, the key ones being: Continental SPS Committee Meeting Report (26 – 28 October 2020); the Continental Consultative Meeting of (08-11 June 2021); the on-line Survey Report which was specifically conducted to solicit stakeholder input into the development of the strategy, and; various continental and regional policies and strategies. In June 2021, the AU organized a continental stakeholder consultative meeting attended by 170 food safety experts from AU Member States, technical and development partners that identified major weaknesses related to the continental food safety systems (see Appendix I for the Consolidated SWOT Analysis by the stakeholders). The stakeholders provided their views on how to address these weaknesses in the development of the Strategy.



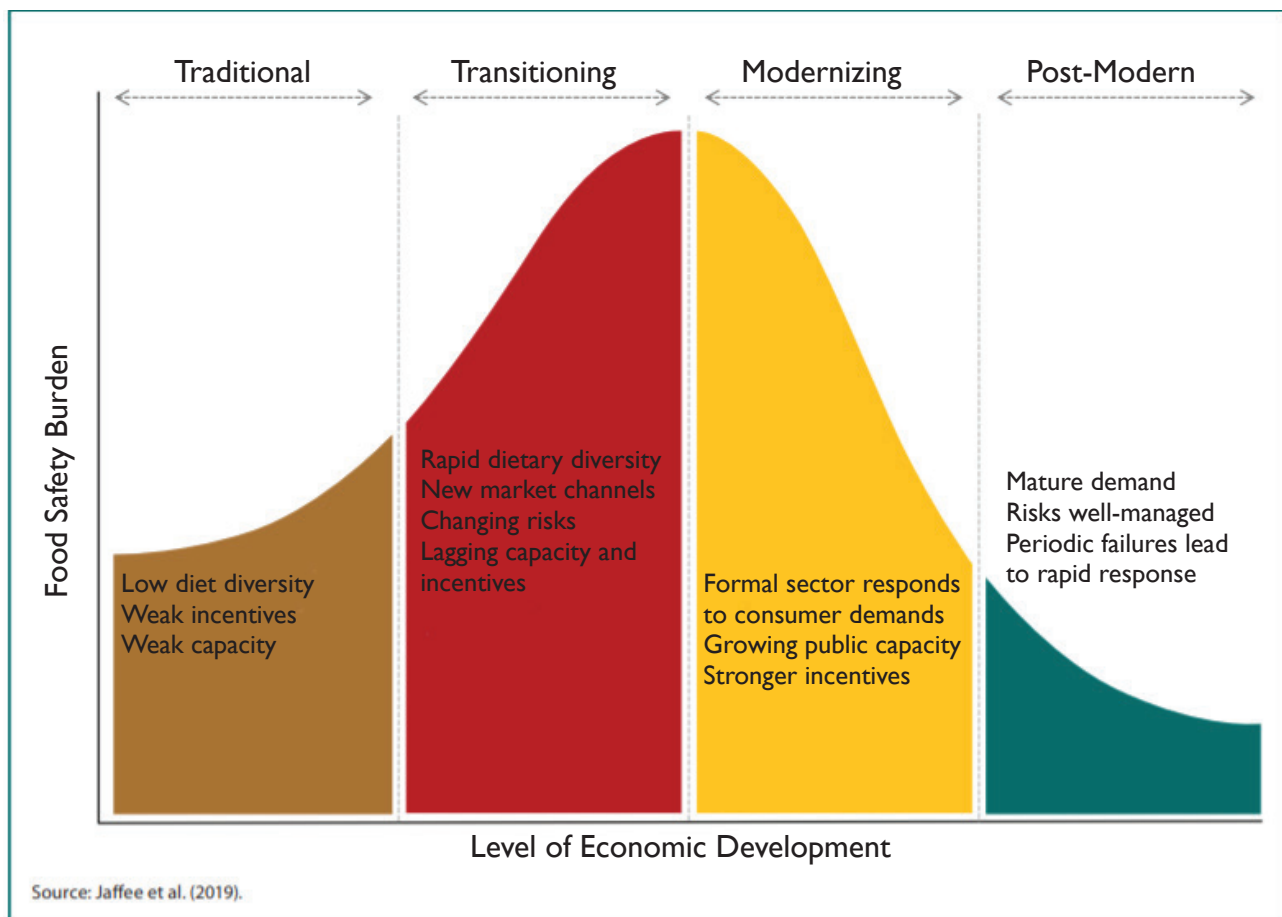
## 2.0. Situational Analysis of Food Safety in Africa

A SWOT analysis from the June 2021 stakeholder consultation of the Africa's food safety status (Appendix I) mainly identified weaknesses and gaps relating governments' oversight role. Other analyses indicate that the high burden of foodborne diseases is the result of the gap between the needed, and actual food safety management capacity of the domestic food sector by all the stakeholders. There are major weaknesses among the food business operators and the consumers. These are key in managing food safety risks in the domestic food supply comprised of informal channels and traditional community markets where the majority of the population source its food.

The burden of unsafe food generally evolves in a systematic manner, in line with processes of economic development. Specifically, the challenges of tackling food safety in the process of economic development come from market failures associated with lack of cohesion within the food value chain. The World Bank has outlined the concept of a food safety life cycle that creates a gap between need and capacity as economies develop as outlined in figure 2.

The food safety life cycle across countries and over time reflects evolving food safety challenges, and the degree of mismatch with food safety management capacity in the public and private sectors. The transformation of the food system during the process of economic development leads to a food safety life cycle for Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) in which the socioeconomic burden of food safety increases as countries move from the low- to middle-income stage. As part of this life cycle, there is a lag in the public and private response to emerging food safety challenges.

The level of food safety management capacity reflects the market-based and political incentives for public and private sector actors to make required investments. Food safety concerns are more important in transitioning lower-middle-income countries that are experiencing rapid demographic and dietary change, giving rise to dynamic and visible food safety risks, which typically overwhelm existing food safety management capacities. The vast majority of African countries are presently situated in either the traditional or the transitioning stage of the food safety life cycle, meaning that their capacities to manage food safety risks, in both government and the private sector, lag considerably behind the need for such capacity. Furthermore, the gap between capacity and need is expected to widen with the rapid urbanization, population growth and dietary changes that are occurring in an increasing number of African countries. Nevertheless, neither the widening gap between food safety management capacity and need, nor the escalation of public health and economic costs due to foodborne diseases is inevitable. The same World Bank study found a strong correlation between high performing food safety systems and reduced burden of foodborne disease in Africa. Prevailing food safety capacity and the evolution of agri-food systems are not acts of nature outside of human influence. They are largely the results of actions taken by governments, the private sector, and consumers. These are the same actors who can reverse the course by adopting incremental and systematic building up of food safety management capacities and mainstreaming preventive practices in the food system "from farm to fork."



**Figure 1:** Food Safety Life Cycle with Levels of Economic Development

**Source:** World Bank

Managing food safety in times of pandemics is another, and an added challenge for national food control systems that will have to be considered and addressed. Whilst there is currently no evidence that SARS-CoV-2 can be transmitted through food, the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the lack of robustness of the current food control systems. Covid-19 pandemic led to disruptions in food inspections, audits, market surveillance, laboratory services and import and export control. It exposed the need to rethink our approaches and design food control systems capable to adapt and ensure the safety of the food supply in times of pandemic or disaster situations. Systems using advanced technologies and not relying on the physical human presence in the execution of some regulatory functions such as the use of electronic certifications and e-commerce should be developed and adopted.

## 3.0. The Strategy

The Strategy is formulated within the context of the Continental SPS policy framework to advance the CAADP Malabo commitments on ending hunger and malnutrition and tripling intra-African trade. Using the farm-to-folk continuum approach, the Strategy focuses on strengthening the capacity of all actors along the value chain to produce safe food and is complementary to the animal health and plant health strategies that focus on the protection of animal and plant resources. The differential capacity in MS and RECs with their food safety systems was considered while developing the Strategy. Other relevant frameworks and best practices at the national (MS level) and regional (RECS level) including the SADC Food Safety Strategy, le Règlement UEAC-CEBEVIRHA régissant la sécurité sanitaire des animaux, des aliments et des produits d'origine animale, the EAC Codex forum and ECOWAS' network of food safety actors also informed the development of the Strategy.

### 3.1. Vision, Mission, Goal and Strategic Approach

#### 3.1.1 Vision, Mission and Goal

**Vision:** All people in Africa have access to safe and nutritious food

**Mission:** To strengthen national food safety systems to protect consumers and ensure fair practices in food trade

**Goal:** To contribute to improved public health, food and nutrition security, improved trade, economic growth and sustainable livelihoods

#### 3.1.2 Strategic Approach

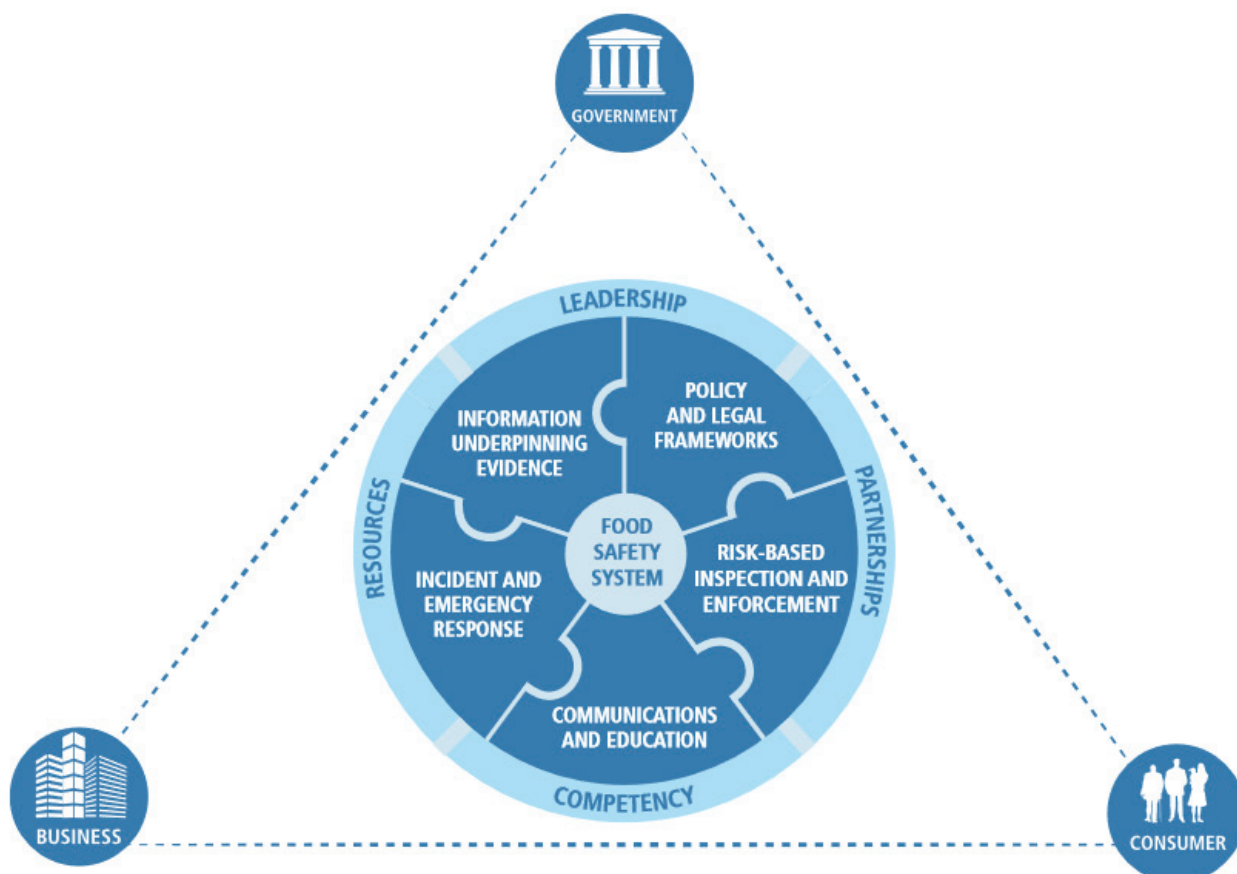
The approach taken is the one promoted by FAO and WHO of shared responsibilities in the management of food safety systems with sensitivity to informal food markets and economies specific to the African situation. As illustrated in figure 1, WHO identifies three pillars of a food safety system and their interactions in the management of food safety risks that also impact the FSSA. The three pillars are defined below:

**Government:** includes all ministries, departments and agencies involved in official food control. While the number of ministries, departments and agencies involved varies from one country to another, the central government ministries, for example typically encompasses the ministry of health, ministry of agriculture, livestock and fisheries, ministry of trade and industry, ministry of commerce, and ministry of tourism. Autonomous or semiautonomous agencies, Government-controlled media and public academia and research institutions are also included in this group of stakeholders. It is the government's responsibility to verify that food businesses comply with applicable food safety rules and regulations and supply safe food to the market. There are different models of governance and it is often recommended to have one

ministry or agency dedicated to coordinating the overall national food safety management. When this is impractical or a multi-agency is the preferred option, then a strong coordination mechanism is essential.

**Business:** includes food business operators (FBO) who are the owner of the business or the person in control of the food business including farmers, food producers, processors and distributors, and food service providers, retailers, wholesalers, as well as suppliers of equipment, technology and ingredients. Food industry associations, food consulting companies/enterprises, private research institutions and private media are also included in this group of stakeholders. Food producers carry the overall responsibility that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use. In this Strategy, food business operators and private sector may be used interchangeably.

**Consumer:** includes people consuming food as well as consumer groups. It is the responsibility of consumers to manage food safety risks when preparing and consuming food by adhering to good food hygiene practices and by preventing food contamination in their homes. Figure 1 illustrates the framework for action on food safety systems. It shows how food safety systems consist of interrelated core components, enablers and stakeholders that together protect public health from unsafe food and facilitate food trade.



**Figure 2:** Framework for action on food safety  
**Source:** World Health Organization.



Governments' efforts to have strong national food control systems include strengthening the capacity of FBOs and consumers to manage food safety risks. Hence, governments need to convene stakeholders and lead the process of setting a clear vision, provide reliable information to stakeholders on issues related to food safety; and deploy a set of policy instruments that induce positive actions by farmers, food business operators, and consumers. Governments ought to make a deliberate effort to train and equip the food business sector and consumers to respectively produce safe food including managing risks at their level and empower them to demand safe food. This process that will induce a new way of approaching food safety regulation and enforcement.

The domestic food markets across most of Africa is dominated by women. Women serve as food farmers/producers, food processors, food retailers and distributors, food shoppers and they are mostly the ones responsible for preparing food in different settings starting from within the households. This implies the need to pay due attention to gender considerations to improve the safety of domestic food and in reducing food safety risk in the continent. Substantial investments will be required to improve the capacity of the three key stakeholders and pillars of the food safety system to meet the increasing needs. This include strengthening the capacity of governments to undertake their control and enforcement functions; strengthening the capacity of the food business sector in particular the informal sector to manage food safety along the value chains and; advocating for, and improving awareness of the consumers to manage risks at their own level. This is a more favourable approach to the traditional "control and command" approach that focuses on the control and enforcement role played by the government.

### 3.2. *Scope*

The strategy will cover the entire food value chain from primary production to consumption and covers strategies to strengthen food safety assurance systems, control elements and programs of a national food control system and the empowerment of consumers.

### 3.3. *Guiding Principles*

These principles provide guidance and direction for the development and implementation of initiatives for all aspects of food safety by Governments, food business operators (FBOs), and other stakeholders in the AU MS, RECs and among partners. These principles underscore the Strategy's focus and philosophy with regards to quality assurance and performance management:

- a. The primacy of consumer protection over all other considerations,
- b. Science-based, evidence-based and risk-based decision making using the risk analysis framework,
- c. Harmonization, equivalence and mutual recognition of measures and systems to facilitate trade,
- d. Transparency and non-discriminatory measures
- e. Integrated approach to food safety covering the entire food chain,
- f. The promotion of food safety culture and behaviour change,
- g. Respect for the principles of subsidiarity, solidarity and complementarity based on mandate and comparative advantage,



- h. Inclusivity taking into consideration small and medium scale producers, gender and indigenous knowledge and technologies
- i. Participation, partnerships, coordination and collaboration at national, regional and international levels,
- j. Gender inclusivity,
- k. Adoption of One Health approach

### 3.4. *Target Audience and Timeframe*

The target audience for this strategy is all stakeholders involved in the food safety domain. Specifically, they include policy-makers (national governments), competent authorities (CAs) (Institutions/Agencies), academic and research institutions in public health and food safety, food business operators/private sector, consumers, civil society organizations and other local NGOs, and regional and international organizations in the field of food safety and trade.

The proposed timeframe for the implementation of the FSSA is the period 2022 – 2036. This timeframe is deemed long enough for the actions proposed in this Strategy to be implemented and for the results to begin to show. However, some targets have been set for implementation in the short and medium term ranging for two and five-year. An evaluation will be done after that period.

### 3.5. *Alignment with Other Frameworks*

The Strategy aims to harmonize delivery of food safety programs on the continent in line with relevant global and continental strategies and frameworks and, therefore, serves as an overarching strategy to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of food safety on the continent. The strategy will adopt the One-Health approach through a collaborative, multi-sectorial and trans-disciplinary approach, for working nationally, regionally and globally through continental and international frameworks referred to below:

#### **Continental Frameworks**

The Strategy will contribute to the achieving the goals and objectives set in the Agenda 2063 that establishes the strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent, the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Growth and Transformation, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) framework, the Annex 7 of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement and the AU Continental SPS Framework.

#### **Global Frameworks**

The Strategy is aligned with the World Trade Organisation SPS and TBT Agreement intended to ensure fair practices in international food trade; with the Codex Alimentarius for its provision of international food standards and guidelines on best practices for managing food safety and fair practices agreed upon by MS; with the WHO Global Food Safety Strategy for its guidance to MS on strengthening national food control systems; with the Global Action Plan on Antibiotic Resistance using risk management measures;



with the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE) strategies and guiding documents with respect to ensuring the safety of food of animal origin. The strategy also seeks to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. Notably, food safety contributes to achieving SDG 1 (ending poverty), SDG2 (ending hunger), SD 3 (good health and wellbeing), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 17 (global partnership for sustainable development).





## 4.0. Strategic Objectives and Key Strategies

To achieve the vision and goals of the FSSA, AU Member States, the RECs and the AUC will work collectively to address the major challenges in the priority areas of the strategy supported by the six (6) identified strategic objectives (SO) and related actions as elaborated below.

- SO1** Strengthen Food Safety and quality Policy, Legal and Institutional frameworks
- SO2** Strengthen the human and infrastructure capacity for food control systems
- SO3** Promote food safety culture, evidence-based advocacy, communication, information and knowledge sharing to raise consumer awareness and empowerment
- SO4** Improve trade and market access at national, regional, continental and global levels
- SO5** Strengthen research, innovation, technology development and transfer
- SO6** Establish and strengthen coordination mechanisms and enhance cooperation at national, regional, continental and global levels

Each of these strategic objectives is briefly discussed below.

### 4.1. *Strategic Objective One: Strengthen Food Safety Policy, legal and institutional frameworks*

The current food safety framework in many African countries is characterized by inadequate policies, laws and institutional arrangements. Some food legislations may not be updated, some of which are not science-based, and others are fragmented in various statutes and codes and have limited linkages to international commitments. With respect to institutions, despite progress made in improving institutional arrangements for better coordination of food safety interventions, fragmentation of institutional responsibilities with multiple agencies involved and overlap of mandates still exist. At a continental level, there is no dedicated institution in charge of coordinating food safety actions as it is the case for animal health and plant health.

The strategic objective aim is to provide leadership in coordinating food safety governance at continental level that subsequently strengthens the work of regional and national organizations with a solid legal basis to implement and enforce food safety-related activities at the national level.

**Strategic actions**

- i. Enhance the capacity for the formulation and implementation of food safety policy at national and regional levels
- ii. Support the review and strengthening of modern food safety legal frameworks and their harmonisation
- iii. Support the establishment of institutional frameworks that ensure distribution of powers and responsibilities as well as the coordination mechanism among competent authorities (CA) to enhance a government oversight of all food value chains
- iv. Support MS to operationalise regulatory innovations in informal food markets in Africa
- v. Establish and operationalise an African Food Safety Agency (AFSA) to provide leadership and coordinate capacity building in food safety risk assessment, support the establishment of reference laboratory networks and other food safety related issues at the continental level
- vi. Establish an African Union Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

## 4.2. *Strategic Objective Two: Strengthen the human and infrastructure capacity for food control systems*



The food safety situation on the continent is plagued by inadequate human and infrastructure capacity for official control and management of food safety hazards and risks; lack or weak food monitoring and foodborne disease surveillance programs; weak capacity in food safety risk assessment and inadequate laboratory services among other gaps. This leads to poor risk management strategies and non-optimal enforcement of necessary actions for strengthening food safety systems.

The aim of the strategy is to strengthen the human and infrastructural capacity in the public sector, informal and formal food sectors and economies to ensure that qualified and well-trained workforce and the relevant support services are available for the management of food safety hazards, risks and emergencies.

### **Strategic actions**

- i. Strengthen scientific capacity and support food safety risk assessment and management including risk-based food inspection
- ii. Support implementation of standards and application of evidence-based toolkits and user-friendly innovations in the management of food safety in informal and formal food sectors
- iii. Improve public and private laboratory infrastructure, analytical capacity and performance, laboratory networking, twinning and designating reference laboratories



- iv. Develop and strengthen food supply monitoring and foodborne disease surveillance programs and the management of food safety emergencies and response systems
- v. Build a public and private sector data exchange platform to support evidence-based decision making

#### *4.3. Strategic objective Three: Promote food safety culture, evidence-based advocacy, communication, training, information and knowledge sharing to raise awareness and empowerment*



African consumers have insufficient knowledge on food safety hazards, risks and their preventive or mitigation measures due to weak communication and inadequate creation of awareness on these food safety challenges and how to address them. History and scientific evidence indicate that consumer demand (pull approach) for safe food and the ensuing market pressures (push approach) have triggered modernization of the regulatory efforts of the last decades and sustained continued progress on food safety in other regions of the world. Empowering the consumer to demand safe food and the food business sector (informal and formal) to respond to these pressures to produce safe food will be critical for reducing the foodborne disease burden in Africa.



This strategy aims to raise awareness of the general public and empower the consumers to manage food safety at the relevant levels and demand safe food. This strategy also aims at strengthening the capacity of all actors along the food continuum in particular, those in the informal sector to produce safe food.

### **Strategic actions**

- i. Develop a communication strategy to raise awareness on food safety for the general public
- ii. Strengthen and support relevant consumer and civil society organizations to raise awareness on food safety
- iii. Develop a dedicated interactive and easily accessible platform for sharing food safety information
- iv. Develop innovation, tool kits and interactive food safety educational activities for schools and children as agents of change
- v. Strengthen the capacity of the FBOs along the value chain to enhance compliance to food safety measures and the production and trade in safe food
- vi. Incorporate the science of behavior change by redesigning training programs, information campaigns, and other interventions

### **4.4. Strategic Objective Four: Improve trade and market access at national, regional, continental and global levels.**



The entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement, has heightened the need for approaches that facilitate compliance by small farmers and SMEs with food safety requirements. Harmonizing food safety measures on a continental basis and fostering regulatory cooperation will be critical in engendering transparency and confidence in the regulatory environment. Implementation of these approaches will also contribute to removing non-tariff barriers to trade and facilitating access to national, regional, intra-African and global markets.



Leveraging on past decisions, priority will be given to the food that have been identified as strategic food commodities in the Abuja declaration of 2006<sup>7</sup> and other priority regional agri-food value chains to facilitate intra-African trade.

The aim of this objective is to ensure coherence, consistency and build on lessons and best practices to facilitate market access and trade at national, regional and international levels.

### **Strategic actions**

- i. Operationalize mechanisms for improving participation of MS and RECs in food standard setting, support harmonization and domestication of food standards to facilitate trade
- ii. Support compliance to food safety requirements and standards to increase market access
- iii. Promote mutual recognition arrangements, systems equivalence and facilitate regulatory coherence and cooperation among MS to reduce non-tariff trade barriers and enhance transparency and trust-build in food control systems in Africa
- iv. Promote regional recognition agreements of testing certificates from accredited food safety laboratories
- v. Enhance border control facilitation through the operationalization of One Stop Border Post for faster

## **4.5. Strategic Objective Five: Strengthen research, innovation, technology development and transfer**



Research development is key to strengthening of food safety systems. Academia and scientific institutions play a prominent role in strengthening food safety research, innovation, technology development and transfer. Partnership between academia, competent authorities and FBOs can facilitate the prioritization and addressing the important food safety issues, allow more research questions on food safety to be answered in a timely manner, and help develop risk-based approaches and the scientific basis for food safety systems. Recognizing that most consumers in Africa source their food from the informal sector which is also associated with low compliance, academia and scientific institutions will have a critical role in developing best practices to help transition from the informal to the formal markets.

<sup>7</sup> Declaration of the Abuja Food security summit: website: [www.africa-union.org](http://www.africa-union.org)

Despite their critical role, there is limited number of universities and centers of excellence that provide food safety education programs and best practices tailored to local conditions and stakeholders' needs. Limited vocational training on food safety for business operators along the value chain inhibit the capacities of technicians to promote preventive measures and effective quality assurance programs

The aim of the strategic objective is to strengthen the capacity for research, training and education in food safety, to innovate in food safety technologies and increase the capacity to conduct risk assessments and provide risk management options to both the public and private sectors. The strategic actions to be implemented include:

### **Strategic actions**

- i. Facilitate the adaptation and wider adoption of food safety technologies and digital transformation in food control systems.
- ii. Develop a continental food safety research agenda for data generation and use in risk assessments and risk management policies, legislation and standard setting and implementation including monitoring, evaluation and continued improvements
- iii. Support the conduct of research on best practices to transition from informal to formal markets
- iv. Support regional centers of excellence in the development of vocational and teaching curriculum for food safety professionals
- v. Promote investments in research and innovation in food safety and ensure protection of intellectual property
- vi. Support context-specific research on food culture and traditional and indigenous technologies which may or may not meet modern food safety requirements and investigate alternative production technologies when necessary

## ***4.6. Strategic Objective Six: Establish and strengthen coordination mechanisms, and enhance cooperation and investments at national, regional, continental and global levels***

Food safety is managed at country level mostly by multiple ministries, departments, agencies and stakeholders. There are also several initiatives and activities at REC level and yet there is a need to link to the international fora on food safety and trade. Moreover, there is need for improved coordination between MS and RECs for food traded within the region to ensure harmonization of food safety and quality standards, harmonization of standard operating procedures and border trade facilitation mechanisms.

This strategic objective aims to have well-coordinated and well-funded food safety programs at national, regional and continental levels. This strategic objective will further promote inclusive and innovative RECs and continental level coordination mechanisms to advance the African Voice in international negotiation fora on food safety issues.



### **Strategic actions**

- i. Establish a coordination mechanism of competent authorities from Agriculture, Health and trade and other CAs in managing food safety programs.
- ii. Develop mechanisms for strengthening coordination and collaboration among researchers, regulators, policy makers, food industry and other stakeholders at MS, REC and AU levels.
- iii. Establish a coordinating mechanism at the AU level of all Departments and Agencies involved in food safety including the CDC.
- iv. Strengthen coordination mechanism at AU and RECs level that ensure effective MS participation in ARSO and other ISSOs' activities.
- v. Establish a mechanism to identify investments and funding priorities at national, REC and AU levels.
- vi. Develop a collaborative platform to facilitate information sharing among various categories of stakeholders.
- vii. Enhance international cooperation for technical and financial support.



## 5.0. Implementation Arrangements

The Food Safety Strategy for Africa requires effective implementation arrangements including: a) A clear food safety strategy theory of change; c) A well designed results framework and M&E System; d) An elaboration of key actors, their roles and responsibilities and e) Coordination mechanisms of the FSSA; Critical success factors for consideration; Budgetary and investments considerations, and Risk assessment and management. Each of these is briefly discussed in sequence.

### 5.1. *Food Safety Strategy Theory of Change*

The Theory of Change for the Food Safety Strategy for Africa is informed by the context of a burden and associated human and economic costs of foodborne diseases to African population and economies. The theory of change is driven by a desire for all people in Africa to have access to safe and nutritious food. In pursuit of this vision, the theory of change is built on the following premises platform: strengthening the food safety systems by allocating adequate resources to all relevant segments of the food safety value chain to implement activities for mitigating the costs and burden associated with consumption of unsafe food, increasing investments to improve the capacities of private sector actor for production of safe food, mobilizing and ensuring availability of food safety technical expertise, establishing effective coordination of food safety actions at various levels (country, regional, and continental), and addressing food safety-related matters contained, or relevant for implementation of Annex no. 7 of the Agreement establishing the AfCFTA. All these deliberate actions and processes will lead to desired outcomes including strengthened institutional capacity at country, regional, and continental levels; improved capacities for food safety management strategies to produce safe food; and enhanced continental harmonization of food safety policies, regulations, and standards.

The above inputs and outcomes will in turn lead to a vibrant agricultural sector on the continent characterised by increased production and productivity, improved food safety, nutrition and food security, and income at smallholder farm level, improved access to market for exports with ripple effect on increased contribution to the agricultural GDP and a more diversified and resilient economic growth on the continent powered by the agriculture sector.

For the FSSA's theory of change to be realized, certain critical assumptions need to hold, including the adequate and timely availability of financial, technical, and other resources such as infrastructure and equipment; willingness of stakeholders at various levels (country, regional and continental) to participate in food safety actions; continued government support to agriculture (including food safety) across all countries; and existence of economic and political stability at country, regional and continental level.

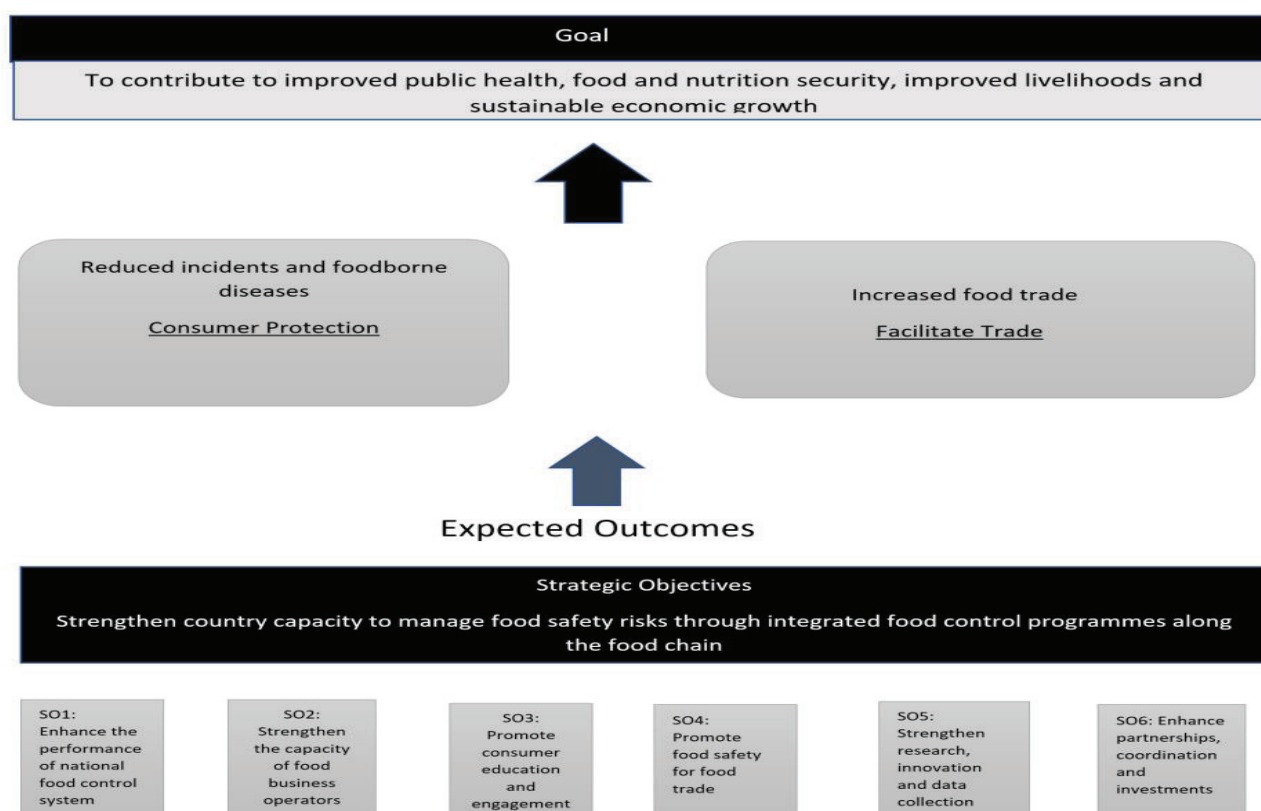
## 5.2. Results Framework, Monitoring and Evaluation

### 5.2.1 Results Framework

The FSSA simplified results framework is presented in below Table 1. The impact level focuses on increased household food, income, and food safety and nutrition security. This is the ultimate goal and impact for any agricultural sector that is performing well, leading to sustained economic development. At outcome level, the emphasis is the consumer protection and trade facilitated by fair trade practices.

In order to achieve the desired impacts and outcomes as stipulated above, there is need for appropriate inputs to be in place. The key ones include: resources for improved food safety system; increased budgetary allocation for capacity building for technical experts and food business operators to mitigate risks and hazard and to manage food safety; establishment of effective coordination at various levels (country, regional and continental). For each of these hierarchy of objectives, appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been developed. The means of verification and assumptions have also been developed (see **Appendix 2** for details).

**Table 1: Result framework**



### 5.2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The African Food Safety Index (AFSI) will be used as one of the tools to capture the effectiveness of food safety systems being implemented by countries. The BR review and use of the AFSI will be used to track progress in the implementation of the Strategy in an environment that fosters alignment, harmonization and coordination among multi-sectoral efforts and multi-platforms for peer review, mutual learning and mutual accountability in a transparent manner.

### 5.2.2.1 Key Performance Indicators

African Union member states have different capacities in their food control systems and their priorities and areas of focus may vary. However, given the mandate of the AU to ensure that all member states are supported in the spirit of the Union of an integrated and prosperous continent, where no country is left behind, the expectations are that all MS will strive to achieve the results articulated in this strategy after a given period in the results framework. The following priority results are expected after 5 years of implementation of the Strategy:

#### **Member States level:**

- a. A food safety policy guidance with a clear articulation of goals and objectives, expected outcomes, and performance frameworks for food safety and quality;
- b. An updated and modernized legislation that (i) applies to all the steps of the food chain in a coherent and coordinated manner; (ii) introduces the principle of risk analysis as a basis for establishing food safety measures and (iii) recognises the primary responsibility of food business operators for safe food;
- c. A governance structure that ensures the distribution of responsibilities as well as the coordination mechanism among competent authorities;
- d. A dedicated budget for food safety programs from the government;
- e. A robust national monitoring and surveillance programme for priority hazards in at least 5 priority consumed foods;
- f. A functional and reliable laboratory system underpinned by a national assessment of in-country laboratory capacity (public-private) demonstrating that the system has the capacity to meet identified needs of the food safety programs;
- g. A national food safety emergency plan with a mechanism of coordination of all relevant CAs including public health and INFOSAN is operational;
- h. A government capacity building program to strengthen the capacity of all the actors along the value chain of the domestic food (formal and informal) to produce safe food and empower the consumers to manage risks, and demand safe food informed by a market driven strategy.

#### **Regional Economic Community level:**

- a. All food standards are harmonized (technical and mandatory standards) with priority on identified strategic food commodities in the Abuja Declaration (2006);
- b. Trade facilitation mechanisms for safe food trade at border points are developed or updated and operational;
- c. Resources available for implementation of regional priority activities and supporting regional value chains.

#### **African Union level:**

- a. The African Food Safety Agency or a Coordinating mechanism is established and is operational;
- b. Capacity to perform microbiological and chemical risk assessments is available, priority data needs identified and a framework for data collection is in place.

- c. A rapid alert system for food and feed for the continent linked to INFOSAN is in place and operational;
- d. Resources available for implementation of continental priority activities and coordination.

#### ***ISSOs and Development Partners level:***

- a. Information on support and provision of technical services for capacity building.
- b. Information on resource made available to support implementation of the FSSA

#### ***5.2.2.2 Reporting on Performance***

Reporting on the performance of the food safety actions will take place at various levels, starting from country, to regional and continental. At the least, reporting will be on an annual basis. The Focal Point institutions at country, regional and continental level will be responsible for reporting. A feedback mechanism is part of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. The M&E process will enable various stakeholders responsible for the implementation of various food safety actions to provide requisite to a central point for harmonization and reporting. Within the existing fora, space will be created for reporting of food safety actions and their outcomes. This is important in promoting mutual accountability, transparency and build confidence on the process of realizing the objectives and vision and goal of the FSSA.

#### ***5.2.2.3 Performance Evaluation***

An evaluation of the performance in achieving the goals of this Strategy by respective actors will be done after 5 years of implementation of the Strategy. When appropriate a baseline survey should be conducted before the Strategy implementation commences to allow a better assessment of improvements and progress made.

#### ***5.2.2.2.4 Measuring impact***

For impact assessment, two indicators namely the food safety health index (FSHI) and the food safety trade index (FSTI) will be used. With high performing national food safety systems, the risks will be better managed with expected results of an enhanced consumer protection due to reduced incidences of foodborne diseases and increased safe food trade. The two indicators are contained and used in CAADP BR processes.

### ***5.3. Key Actors, their Roles and Responsibilities***

The strategy will be implemented at national by the AU member states and relevant stakeholders in the food value chain, Regional Economic Commissions and other regional organizations and stakeholders in the food value chain and the African Union level in collaboration with technical and development partners. In defining the key actors and their roles, the main principle considered is that of subsidiarity as well as the respective comparative advantage of the actors involved. Successful implementation of this strategy will require strengthening of the capacities of existing structures at continental, regional and national levels to address the weaknesses highlighted in the SWOT analysis. Actors at the international



level play a key role in facilitating effective implementation of food control systems on the continent. Table 2 provides all key actors and their main responsibilities.

**Table 2:** Key Actors/Roles and Responsibilities

S.N	Key Actor	Roles/Responsibilities
1.	The African Union (Continental organizations embodied under the AUC, Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (DARBE), Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, Department of Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining, Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development and other relevant institutions under AUC such as AUDA-NEPAD and Africa Centre for Disease Control (CDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the efforts to promote the FSSA and adoption of strategies, policies and programs on food safety</li> <li>• Coordinate major continental food safety programs including building the capacity of various stakeholder to manage food safety risks and hazard</li> <li>• Provide leadership and capacity building in laboratory infrastructure through a network of national reference laboratories to ensure reliability of results</li> <li>• Establish a continental rapid alert system for food and feed emergencies</li> <li>• Provide coordination/linkages/advocacy at international level</li> <li>• Support MS participation in ISSOs in particular in ARSO and Codex meetings</li> <li>• Support resource mobilisation for major food safety programs</li> </ul>
2.	RECs, CCAFRICA, ARSO and all other Regional Food Safety Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the development and harmonization of food safety and quality standards for regional and international trade</li> <li>• Facilitate adaptation of the FSSA to regional context</li> <li>• Develop and implement regional policies on food safety</li> <li>• Support capacity building programs for MS</li> <li>• Support resource mobilization for implementation of the various activities in the FSSA</li> <li>• Coordinate and develop linkages between national, continental, and international standards setting bodies</li> </ul>
3.	National Governments/Policy makers through National Codex Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the implementation of the FSSA at country level</li> <li>• Promote the use of relevant local adopted preventive measures and adoption of international standards and their domestication in national policies</li> <li>• Lead policy development and implementation relating to food safety and the FSSA at national level</li> <li>• Provide oversight of regulatory compliance by FBOs</li> <li>• Create an enabling and incentivizing policies for domestic food and informal markets</li> <li>• Create strong advocacy for funding and implementation of the different interventions outline in the FSSA</li> </ul>
4.	National and International Research Centres (ILRI, Universities and other research entities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct research development in food safety in particular for domestic food and informal markets</li> <li>• Ensure sharing of information and knowledge related to food safety including up scaling technologies</li> <li>• Enhance awareness by national and international research centers using a variety of platforms</li> <li>• Develop and test best practices to transition from informal to formal sector</li> </ul>
5.	Extension services, Civil Society, NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate and sensitize on food safety compliance</li> <li>• Promote food safety technology uptake and exchange</li> <li>• Provide necessary information to food business sector and consumers</li> </ul>

S.N	Key Actor	Roles/Responsibilities
6.	Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support advocacy and participation in education</li> <li>• Establish partnerships and collaboration with competent authorities for the development and adoption of best practices for managing food safety risks</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with existing and adopted food risk preventive measures and food safety regulations</li> <li>• Participate in Voluntary Third Party Assurance (vTPAs) and other PPP models</li> </ul>
7.	Consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the promotion and the demand of safe and nutritious food</li> <li>• Advocate for effective training in safe food handling</li> <li>• Provide feedback on government and private sector initiatives on food safety</li> </ul>
8.	WHO, FAO, WTO, STDF, UNIDO, Codex, IPPC, OIE, Development Partners International Funding Agencies African Development Bank, World Bank and global financial institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate adoption of food safety and quality international standards.</li> <li>• Support capacity development initiatives</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance</li> <li>• Provide financial assistance where applicable</li> </ul>

## 5.4. Coordination and Implementation of the FSSA

Most of the activities outlines in the Strategy will be implemented at national level with support from RECs and the AUC. The established national legal instrument for overall coordination of food safety obligations of a MS will be the entry point for activities related to the implementation of FSSA at national level. Alternatively, the entry point at MS may be the Codex contact Point (CCP) or the SPS contact point where the FSSA may be coordinated through the National Codex Committee where all relevant stakeholders are represented<sup>8</sup>. Member States will use the option the consider as the best in terms of coordination and efficiency.

Existing regional coordination mechanisms will be strengthened to coordinate the implementation of the strategy at the RECs level.

At the continental level, the Continental SPS Committee will support coordination and guide implementation of the FSSA.

### 5.4.1 Cross cutting Issues

Some cross cutting issues such as gender, environment and climate change will be taken into consideration during the implementation of the Strategy.

**Climate:** climate change impacts such as rising temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns, drought stresses and extreme weather events may lead to increased risks of food contamination and increase the occurrence of foodborne diseases. Although detailed quantitative models of these impacts are limited, there is a strong indication for the need for preparedness to address climate change impacts on food safety.

<sup>8</sup> Regional Guidelines for CCP and NCC (Africa) CAC/IGC-43-2003

**Environment:** the impact of the environment on the safety of food when it is produced in a polluted environment or produced in contaminated soils have a direct impact on the safety of the food. These contaminations are managed through preventive measures and programs adopted along the food continuum to ensure the food safety. Moreover, the risk of emergence of infectious agents capable of jumping the species barrier from animals to humans is increasing, with the ability of novel infectious agents to spread rapidly around the globe and cause devastating pandemics due to increased travel and trade. The food pathway for such pandemics cannot be overlooked. Hence, the adoption of One health approach and the integration of food monitoring systems of food supply with the public health surveillance systems of foodborne diseases will help to detect risks early, prevent and respond to emerging diseases at the human-animal-environment interface.

**Gender:** gender is an important element to consider in the food business environment. Considering: i) the important role that women and women's groups play in the food supply chain (from production, processing, and distribution), ii) differences in the characteristics and types of businesses owned by men and women, iii) gender differentials in access to resources including capacities, and iv) the differences in how men and women FBOs experience the business enabling environment, it is important that a gender lens be adopted in the engagement of FBOs. This will ensure that the perspectives of men and women FBOs are taken into consideration in the design of food safety measures and interventions, which will in turn increase compliance and adoption rates. To achieve gender inclusivity and integration, a gender lens in food safety research and risk analysis, and establishing a gender sensitive planning, M&E and reporting system that meets the different needs of men, women, youth and other marginalized groups will inform implementation of the FSSA. It is in this regard that a gender perspective was considered during the development, validation and for future implementation of the Strategy to achieve the goal of the FSSA.

## 5.5. Critical Success Factors

- a. Political leadership and commitment:** effective political leadership by way of providing a conducive operating environment will be critical for macroeconomic stability, building investor confidence and attracting foreign and local investments during the implementation of the Strategy.
- b. Stakeholder Ownership:** The FSSA has been designed with active participation of key stakeholders in food safety at continental, regional, and national levels whose contribution has informed the design of the strategy. Effective implementation is only expected if active participation of the stakeholders is sustained at all levels of development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- c. Existence of vibrant public and private sectors:** the public sector will provide the leadership in coordinating policy development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting and will also be responsible for providing a conducive operating environment. The role of the private sector will be to focus on the actual implementation of the FSSA with the expected result of delivering safe food. It is imperative that a vibrant private sector is built alongside adequate development of state institutional and human capacities for the mobilization and application of resources for the

implementation of the strategy.

- d. **An effective institutional framework that links the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation and Reporting system across the Continental, Regional and Member States levels:** while the ultimate leadership in implementation of the FSSA will take place at national level, coordination of planning, monitoring and evaluation and reporting at continental, regional and country level is crucial for successful implementation. In view of this, Planning, M&E and Reporting cycles need to be synchronized; with M&E frameworks that have clear measurable targets defined across all levels.
- e. **Food Safety Culture:** There is clear evidence that scientific knowledge and policies are not enough to achieve food safety sustainably in an organization. Measures that raise individual awareness and lead to actual behavior changes are required from the perspective of social-behavioral sciences. That is the basic idea of food safety culture that should be promoted with all actors in the value chains up to the consumer level.
- f. **Adoption of One Health approach:** While the focus of the Strategy is the human health protection, food safety relies on a healthy and sustainable animals and plant resource base and therefore, the FSSA is linked and is complementary to the animal health and plant health strategies. Moreover, food safety is multisectoral and multidisciplinary and risks to be managed along the food continuum span over the environment, animal and human sectors providing an excellent case for following the One Health approach as the best way to detect, prevent and respond to emerging diseases at the human-animal-environment interface.
- g. **Gender mainstreaming during implementation:** women are central to a successful implementation of the FSSA considering the crucial role they play in agriculture in general and in particular in food safety for preventing foodborne diseases incidents. It is therefore imperative to meet the set goals and targets for gender in the implementation process to achieve the aspirations of the FSSA.

## 5.6. Budgetary and Investment considerations

A dedicated budget for food safety by the ministry responsible for allocating funds at the national level should be established. In the Maputo Declaration countries committed to allocate at least 10% of national budgets to Agriculture and Rural Development. A percentage of the 10% budget for agriculture should be allocated to enhance food safety systems. Countries should also consider mainstreaming activities related to the Food Safety Strategy into national and regional agriculture investments plans under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) framework.

Moreover, the implementation of the FSSA will require additional and new activities related to increased government oversight of the domestic food and informal markets, activities related to capacity building of the private sector along the value chains to produce safe food and empowering consumers to demand safe food. Since many stakeholders are involved in the informal markets and they include

small scale farmers, small and medium entrepreneurs (SMEs) and consumers, adequate resources will be required to finance their capacity to produce safe food. Hence the need to have a clear and well-coordinated resource mobilization by MS, RECs and the AU with the contribution of financial institutions and development partners. It could include the development of financial instruments for food safety related investments for FBOs at all levels of the supply to ensure that their access to soft loans, small loans and grants is facilitated. This could be through capital grant or loan to share investment cost (recognizing that loan don't work well with small scale operators). This could be also by governments and development banks shifting their agro-industry subsidy policy away from only inputs support (seed/fuel/agro-chemicals/services) to sectoral structural adjustment to finance cold chain, upgrading facilities, installation of HACCP. In brief, the financial structure will need: (i) a sectoral policy to define eligibility of sectors, investments, operators, (ii) the creation of a paying agency, and financial control mechanisms and finally (iii) development banks and governments to provide finance and distribution mechanisms. Due consideration will be paid to specific challenges faced by women to access investments when creating the financial structure. Table 3 provides the structure and nature of additional costs sustained in strengthening SPS controls.

An ad hoc resource mobilization from development banks and development partners for the implementation of specific programs of the Strategy could also be explored at MS, RECs and AUC levels. The WB has provided a framework to calculate additional costs related to strengthening SPS controls for both the public and private sector that is found in table 3. Noting the need for developing countries to improve their SPS capacities and to increase –food exports and contribute to their development goals, the Standards and Development Facility (STDF) developed the P-IMA tool as a framework to facilitate improving SPS planning and decision-making processes. It is an evidence-based tool that helps to correlate SPS investments to public policy goal covering trade, agricultural productivity, and poverty reduction. Countries can use the P-IMA tool in prioritizing strategic objectives and activities outlined in the FSSA and to catalyse public-private dialogue that is much need in the food value chain and improve economic efficiency regarding decisions made in the strategy implementation.

**Table 3:** Structure and nature of additional costs sustained in strengthened SPS controls<sup>9</sup>

Type of Cost	Sector	
	Private sector	Public sector
<b>Non-recurring (Investments)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment and training of staff</li> <li>Upgrading of internal controls (HACCP)</li> <li>Upgrading of plant equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrading of controls</li> <li>Upgrading of laboratories</li> <li>Recruitment and training of inspectors</li> <li>Equipment for inspectors</li> <li>Risk assessment institution</li> </ul>
<b>Recurring (Operating cost)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional hygiene measures</li> <li>Additional QC controls (HACCP system)</li> <li>Increased rejections/Withdrawals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sampling and testing</li> <li>Import and risk manager salaries</li> <li>Monitoring programme</li> <li>Risk assessment studies</li> <li>Enforcement actions</li> </ul>

Source: World Bank

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from World Bank Report No.31207, Food Safety and Agricultural Health Standards challenges and opportunities for developing country exports, 2005

## 5.7. Risk Assessment, Management and Mitigation

Seven (7) risks have been identified which may negatively impact the implementation of the FSSA. These are: lack of high-level political leadership and commitment, inadequate funding, lack of ownership and inadequate participation of stakeholders, lack of focus on domestic food and informal markets, lack of reliable data on foodborne diseases, lack of gender mainstreaming and COVID-19 restrictions and are provided in Table 4.

A risk rating based on the likelihood and impact was undertaken for each risk factor as well as an analysis on mitigations measures embedded in the FSSA to deal with the identified risks. Based on the risk mitigation measures, it can be concluded that the Strategy has incorporated within it the necessary measures and actions to mitigate all the identified risks to bring them at a minimum level of risk.

**Table 4:** Risk factors and mitigation strategies

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation strategy
<b>Risk rating: H=High; M=medium; L=low</b>			
Lack of high-level political leadership and commitment to support improvements in food safety.	M	H	The SWOT analysis of the Strategy (Appendix 1) has identified available opportunities to build on including ongoing efforts to advocate and increase awareness among political and other high-level decision-makers about the importance to improve food safety capacity in both the public and private sector, linked to national and regional objectives, trade, job creation and economic growth, etc. This will help to build awareness and harness commitment for improving food safety.
Inadequate funding and investments to support implementation of the FSSA: resulting in the failure to realize the aspirations outlined in the Strategy.	M	H	The need for effective resource mobilization has been underscored in the FSSA with a focus on budget allocation in national budgets from the government, mainstreaming the Strategy in national Agriculture Investment plans under CAADP and resource mobilization with development partners. The establishment at the AU of the Food Safety Agency will be another substantive boost for advocacy and resource mobilization.
Lack of ownership and inadequate participation of key stakeholders in the implementation of the FSSA which could undermine the achievement of the set targets	M	M	There are currently a wide range of opportunities and a real momentum at international level on raising awareness about the importance to improve food safety and reduce the current unacceptable burden of foodborne diseases which have been detailed in the Strategy. All stakeholders at national, RECs and at the AU need to seize these opportunities and secure the political will and resources needed to implement the FSSA.



Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation strategy
<b>Risk rating: H=High; M=medium; L=low</b>			
Lack of focus on food safety for the domestic markets driven by business and trade considerations	H	H	Almost all African countries are at the low- and middle-income levels and their food safety cycle projects a widening of the gap between needs and capacity to manage food safety risks. Since Africa has the worst global record of foodborne diseases burden, business as usual approach is not an option and the Strategy has provided the data and rationale to shift the focus and investments on domestic food.
Poor reporting systems for foodborne diseases in MS and lack of reliable data from WHO to estimate the burden of foodborne diseases and provide the rationale for the importance of continued investments in food safety.	M	M	The Strategy laid down the grounds for improved monitoring and surveillance programs as well as for strengthening the epidemiological surveillance programs for foodborne diseases whose performance is assessed through the food safety public health Index. The reporting on progress made should provide a solid rationale for continued investments in food safety.
Lack of gender mainstreaming due to poor knowledge of gender and social dimensions of food safety	M	M	Support context/country specific gender analysis of food safety to understand the gender dimensions of food safety risks—who is affected, why are they more affected, how gender inequalities in access to resources and in participation influences food safety risks or exposure to foodborne illnesses, etc., and use this information to inform the design of interventions and innovations to improve food safety.
Continuation of the Covid-19 Pandemic	H	H	<p>The implementation of the Strategy will be reviewed and adapted in the inception phase given the ongoing risks related to COVID-19. The implementation will facilitate remote collaboration between local, regional, continental and international experts given the current travel restrictions. COVID-19 has pushed the status quo into a new reality where the number of remote/ online meetings is starting to increase, creating opportunities for more sustainable exchanges between the different actors as it has been the case for the consultation meetings to develop the current Strategy.</p> <p>Covid-19 has also increased awareness of hygiene measures, which as an indirect spill over could positively contribute to improvement in food safety.</p>



## References

1. FAO Regional Conference on Africa: Intra-Africa Trade in Food and Agriculture: Issues, Challenges and Prospects in the Context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
2. FAO projected increase in Africa's food demand by 2050 - [www.fao.org/3/nc707en/nc707en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/nc707en/nc707en.pdf)
3. Why Food Safety Matters to Africa: Making the Case for Policy Action Steven Jaffee, Spencer Henson, Delia Grace, Mateo Ambrosio, and Franck Berthe
4. FERG report: WHO estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases (2015). [https:// www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/foodborne\\_disease/fergreport/en](https://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/foodborne_disease/fergreport/en)
5. The Safe Food Imperative: Accelerating Progress in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (2019). <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/30568/9781464813450.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=>
6. "Understanding the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures". WTO 1998. [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/sps\\_e/spsund\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/spsund_e.htm)
7. Codex Alimentarius: Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems CAC/ GL-82-2013
8. AU (2019). Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Policy Framework for Africa. African Union Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture. [https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/40036-doc-au\\_sps\\_policy\\_framework\\_-\\_full\\_document.jpg](https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/40036-doc-au_sps_policy_framework_-_full_document.jpg)
9. Accelerating-progress-in-low-and-middle-income-countries - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/publication/the-safe-food-imperative->
10. Food safety in Africa: [https://www.gfsp.org/sites/gfsp/files/public/GFSP%20Report\\_Food%20Safety%20in%20Africa-web.pdf](https://www.gfsp.org/sites/gfsp/files/public/GFSP%20Report_Food%20Safety%20in%20Africa-web.pdf)
11. Food Safety Handbook: A Practical Guide for Building a Robust Food Safety Management System - <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org>
12. FAO and WHO. 2019. Food control system assessment tool: Dimension D – Science/knowledge base and continuous improvement. Food safety and quality series No. 7/5. Rome.

# Appendix

## Appendix I: Consolidated SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of National Codex Committees (NCC) in most MS</li> <li>Existence of a Codex Contact Point (CCP)</li> <li>Existence of regional harmonization of food standards in some RECs</li> <li>Regional SPS protocols in some RECs</li> <li>Existing of some One stop border points for inspection activities</li> <li>Some RECs have proficiency testing scheme for food safety</li> <li>One REC has a food safety strategy</li> <li>Some MS are modernizing their food safety laws and align with them with Codex</li> <li>Most MS are members of INFOSAN</li> <li>Public interest in food safety increasing</li> <li>Effective participation by African countries in ISSBs including Codex</li> <li>Increased awareness of food safety issues by decision makers</li> <li>Increased convening role of the African Union to address food safety and developing continental policies such as SPS policy framework and Annex 7 of the AfCFTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of modern food safety policies</li> <li>Obsolete legislations</li> <li>Fragmented legislations not covering the entire value chains</li> <li>Unclear mandates and overlapping mandates of institutions</li> <li>Low capacity to enforce regulations</li> <li>Low human capacity for inspections</li> <li>Poor financial resources and infrastructures</li> <li>Weak cooperation between the public and private sector in food safety</li> <li>Weak coordination among various competent food safety authorities</li> <li>Poor coordination between central authorities and decentralized entities</li> <li>Lack of coordination of food safety programs</li> <li>Poor foodborne diseases reporting systems</li> <li>Absence of monitoring and surveillance programs</li> <li>Inadequate funding for laboratories</li> <li>Limited laboratory capacity</li> <li>Unreliable laboratory results</li> <li>Poor food safety education and training programs</li> <li>Poor performance of the private sector in delivering safe food</li> <li>Lack of data for risk assessments</li> <li>Focus on end product testing instead of process risk-based approaches</li> <li>Curriculum in food safety not adequate and adapted to local needs</li> <li>Lack of information on food safety</li> <li>Lack of traceability systems</li> <li>Lack of emergency management plans</li> <li>Lack of expertise in risk assessments</li> <li>Limited enforcement activities for domestic food</li> <li>No enabling environment to support decision-making processes</li> <li>Dual inspection system, one for domestic and another for exports</li> <li>Non harmonized risk-based inspection procedures for food regulated by various competent authorities</li> <li>Command and control of regulatory approach with “punishment” for non-compliance versus rewarding approaches for compliance.</li> <li>Weak participation of other stakeholders such as academia, research institutions in food safety</li> <li>Weak consumer organizations and associations</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The AfCFTA is in place and has been ratified by 37 Member States, this provides SPS measures those countries need to put in place in order to participate in safe trade in agriculture goods and services</li> <li>Commitment to the Continental frameworks (CAADP, Malabo Declaration, SPS Policy framework, AfCFTA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low priority accorded to food safety matters</li> <li>Weak consumer awareness</li> <li>Focus more on trade than on protecting the health of local populations</li> <li>Weak oversight of domestic food and too many unsafe foods on the market</li> </ul>

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of Regional Economic Communities that provide support for capacity building in food safety</li> <li>• Development partners that provide technical and financial support</li> <li>• Existence of continental programs such as PACA</li> <li>• Strong demographic growth and expanded markets under AfCFTA</li> <li>• Existence of Regional organizations such as CCAFRICA and ARSO working on harmonization of standards</li> <li>• Improved participation of member countries in ISSOs</li> <li>• Recent high-level interest in food safety at the AU level</li> <li>• Recent high-level interest in food safety at country levels</li> <li>• Existence of private management systems industry led for exported products</li> <li>• Initiatives at AUDA-NEPAD and CCAFRICA on modernizing food laws and and harmonizing standards</li> <li>• Technology and innovation such as electronic certifications and e-commerce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor funding and resources for programs</li> <li>• Many regulations without clear guidance creating confusion in enforcement activities</li> <li>• New and emerging food safety hazards and no laboratory capacity or system in place to detect them</li> <li>• Political interventions in risk management decisions</li> <li>• Unstable and changing workforce at both inspectional level and at executive management level</li> <li>• Stakeholders having different and conflicting interests</li> <li>• New food process technologies without adequate capacity for oversight</li> <li>• Corruption at all levels of the inspection system</li> <li>• Non-risk-based regulations and risk management decisions.</li> <li>• COVID-19 restrictions</li> <li>• Insufficient knowledge of pests and pathogens</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: Simplified FSSA Results Framework

**Goal:** To contribute to improved public health, food and nutrition security, improved livelihoods and sustainable economic growth

Objective hierarchy Indicator		Key Performance Indicators			Means of Verification	Assumptions, risks and mitigations
		Baseline value (2021)	Target (2036)			
IMPACT	Increased household food, income and nutrition security	1.1. Percentage change in average house hold food security			Baseline, midline, endline, health surveys	Assumptions: Favourable Leadership Political stability Favourable national and sectoral policy framework (including food safety) Stakeholders are willing to participate in food safety actions
		1.2. Percentage change in average house hold income per year (US \$)				
		1.3. Percentage change in level of malnutrition (stunting) in under 5 children				
OUTCOMES	2.1 Improved consumer protection	2.1.1 Percentage change in number of consumers affected by foodborne diseases			Country Public health data	
		2.1.2 Percentage change in number of illnesses due to foodborne diseases				
	2.2 Increased safe food trade	2.2.1 Percentage change in rate of food commodities trade rejection due to non-compliance to food safety measures			Country statistical offices Management Information CAADP Biennial Review reports Regional performance reports Country performance reports	
	2.2 Improved access to export market	2.2.1 Percentage change in the quantity (MT) of agricultural products accessing export market				
	Strengthening food safety systems					

Objective hierarchy Indicator		Key Performance Indicators			Means of Verification	Assumptions, risks and mitigations
		Baseline value (2021)	Target (2036)			
OUTPUTS	3.1 Strengthened Food Safety Policy, Legal and Institutional frameworks	3.1.1. Number of countries who have reviewed, revised and harmonized their national frameworks to the FSSA 3.2.2. Level of satisfaction with Food Safety Policy, Legal and Institutional Frameworks at the RECs, in countries, including the private sector 3.1.3. Change in the performance in national food safety systems (qualitative and quantitative)			Country, food safety	Willingness by countries and regions to strengthen national food control systems, invest in the private sector and empower consumers Financial resources to food safety are adequate and timely
	3.2 Strengthened human and infrastructure capacity for food control	3.2.1. Level of food safety infrastructure improvement in countries 3.2.2. Number of food safety experts and food business operators trained by gender at country, regional and continental level 3.2.3. Level of participation of countries in standard setting (Codex) meetings 3.2.4 Percentage change in the level of resourcing food safety infrastructure			Country, regional and continental budgets and investments	
		3.2.4 Percentage change in the amount of public investments (in US \$) for building stakeholders' capacities on food safety				

Objective hierarchy Indicator		Key Performance Indicators			Means of Verification	Assumptions, risks and mitigations
		Baseline value (2021)	Target (2036)			
OUTPUTS		3.2.5 Percentage change in private investments (in US \$) for food safety. 3.2.6: Percentage change in allocation of funds for food safety (in US \$) by partners to both public and private sectors				
	3.3 Enhanced knowledge on food safety culture, evidence-based advocacy, communication, information and knowledge sharing to raise consumer awareness and empowerment	3.3.1. Level of appreciation of awareness on food safety culture 3.3.2. Availability of information for improved consumer awareness on food safety culture and food safety in general 3.3.3. Level of change in rate of sharing information of food safety among stakeholders			Country, regional and continental food safety reports	
	3.4 Increased trade and market access at national, regional, continental and global levels	3.4.1. Percentage change in food commodity trade volumes at varies levels 3.4.2. Level of market access across borders for food commodities 3.4.3: Number of mutual arrangements (equivalence)				
	3.5. Strengthened research, innovation, technology development and transfer	3.5.1. Percentage change in the level of investments (in US \$) for food safety research and innovation 3.5.2. Number of PPPs formed to enhance food safety at varies food value chains				

Objective hierarchy Indicator		Key Performance Indicators			Means of Verification	Assumptions, risks and mitigations
		Baseline value (2021)	Target (2036)			
OUTPUTS	3.6 Establish and strengthen coordination mechanisms and enhance cooperation at national, regional, continental and global levels	3.6.1. Level of stakeholder satisfaction with food safety coordination mechanism in place at various levels				
		3.6.2. Level of consumer appreciation and involvement in the implementation of the FSSA 3.6.3. Number of food safety programmes being jointly implemented				



