Guidelines for Developing and Implementing a National Food Safety Policy and Strategic Plan

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
Regional Office for Africa
Brazzaville 2012

World Health Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR Africa

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Brazzaville ● 2012

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Printed in Republic in Congo.

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Abbreviations

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GHP	Good Hygiene Practices
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement
WHO	World Health Organization

Preface

Food safety is essential for increasing food security which exists when all people have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet the dietary needs and food preferences for active and healthy living. Increasing the supply of safe and wholesome food reduces the impact of foodborne diseases that cause both human suffering and significant economic losses to countries in the Region.

The establishment of effective food safety systems is pivotal to ensuring the safety of national food supplies as well as food products for regional and international trade. The development of relevant and enforceable food safety policy and regulations is an essential component of an effective food safety system. Relevant and enforceable policies are required to create an enabling environment in which to develop and enforce food safety measures. The capacity of stakeholders involved in different aspects of food safety is dependent, in part, on the effectiveness of this national legal framework.

At its Fifty-seventh session in 2007, the WHO Regional Committee for Africa endorsed the Regional Strategy on Food Safety and Health which identifies key actions for strengthening national food safety systems. Among the priority interventions, the Regional Strategy identifies the formulation and implementation of food safety policy and regulations. While efforts have been made by some countries to develop and implement policies and strategies to improve food safety, survey results show that most national policies and programmes have weaknesses and there are inadequate linkages between strategies to ensure food safety.

The WHO Regional Office for Africa has realized that assistance in the preparation of food safety policies and action plans will greatly enhance progress in establishing modern food safety systems. This document provides guidance on the process and content of national food safety policies and strategic plans including the conduct of a situation analysis, the first phase of the policy formulation process. The document is intended for use by ministry of health officials or national agencies responsible for food safety as well as other stakeholders and relevant ministries that influence national food safety policy.

It is hoped that the document will be used to conduct situation analyses of national food safety programmes as well as to develop food safety policies and plans. Member States in the WHO African Region are invited to adapt the manual to suit individual country needs.

Acknowledgements

This document has been prepared with contributions from staff members of the Health Promotion Cluster, WHO Regional Office for Africa. We are grateful to the WHO food safety and nutrition country focal points who participated in the meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 19 to 23 October 2009 and provided technical input for the assessment tools.

Our gratitude also goes to the members of the WHO Regional Office Publications and Research Committee for their invaluable comments which were used to enrich the content of this document. The document was compiled and finalized by Dr Patience Mensah, WHO Regional Office Programme Coordinator for Food Safety and Nutrition, and Ms Lusubilo Mwamakamba, Technical Officer, Food Safety in the WHO Intercountry Support Team in West Africa.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Food safety issues and challenges

Available data on diarrhoea due to contaminated food and water estimate mortality the related mortality at around 700 000 persons per year in all ages. African children suffer an estimated five episodes of diarrhoea per child per year. Outbreaks of cholera, due to contaminated food and water, are common in the Region and available data show an upward trend (1). There are also concerns about chemical contaminants such as pesticides, microbial toxins, veterinary drug residues, antimicrobial resistance as well as new and emerging threats such as avian influenza.

The food safety challenges facing the African Region include among others inadequate commitment; outdated food regulations and weak law enforcement; and inadequate capacity for food safety (1, 2). Responsibilities and functions in food safety in many countries within the Region are spread among a myriad of government departments and agencies. Coordination and communication within and among the agencies remain inadequate. Compounding the problem is the patchwork of food safety laws and food safety statutes. A national food safety policy and action plan can provide a framework within which to enhance coordination among such agencies and bring together fragmented initiatives and actions in the area of food safety. A well-conceived national food safety policy would clearly describe the roles of the different governmental agencies, the food industry and consumers as well as establish mechanisms for cooperation and the means for dealing with existing and emerging food safety challenges.

Effective national food control systems are essential to protect the health and safety of consumers by assuring the safety of imports and exports as well as foods produced for domestic consumption. It is essential to use the same standards for food exports and those for domestic consumption.

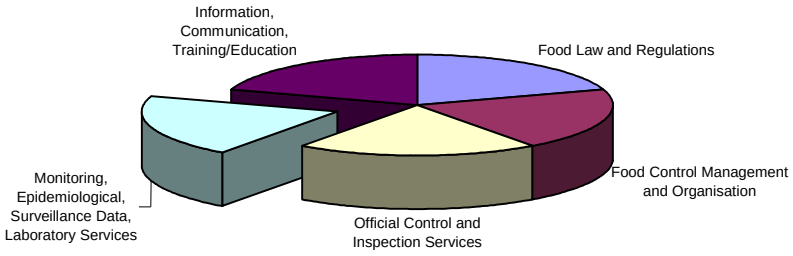
1.2 Purpose

The aim of these manual is to provide practical step-by-step procedures for countries on the formulation of food safety policies and plans with a view to strengthening all aspects of national food control (Figure 1). The document provides a simple and yet practical manual to enable national authorities to undertake these important processes. The manual is not prescriptive but provide options and suggestions for the process. The aim is to facilitate the strengthening of national food control and food safety systems including development and adoption of a national food safety policy and strategic plan.

The manual discusses how to systematically assess the entire food control system, the development of a food safety policy and the development of a strategic plan with the flexibility necessary for each country. Specifically, the document describes a general process and steps for conducting a situation analysis, outlining the issues to be addressed and what information and data should be collected to inform the analysis. It also details out the process for developing a national food safety policy and strategic plan and provides insights into key considerations that are relevant to a national food safety policy and plan. This manual builds on and complement previous FAO and WHO documents (3, 4).

The target users are national authorities concerned with ensuring food safety at the policy and operational level and other stakeholders that influence national food safety policy. It is also intended for all organizations and consultants involved in activities to strengthen the capacities of food safety systems. The Ministry of Health or other agency responsible for food safety in the country can spearhead or assume the lead role in the development of the national food safety policy and strategic plan.

Figure 1 Elements of a National Food Control System



Chapter 2: Situation Analysis of National Food Control Systems

Undertaking a situation analysis of food safety systems is a crucial element and an indispensable first step in the formulation of national food safety policy and strategic plans. Analysis is important to identify food safety problems and their underlying causes as well as limitations of existing legal, institutional, administrative and technical infrastructure and relevant constraints to addressing the problem. Importantly, an assessment will provide baseline information on the status and performance of the food safety system.

The general objective of a situation analysis is to facilitate the development of national food safety policies, strategies and implementation plans for strengthening food control systems.

The specific objectives include:

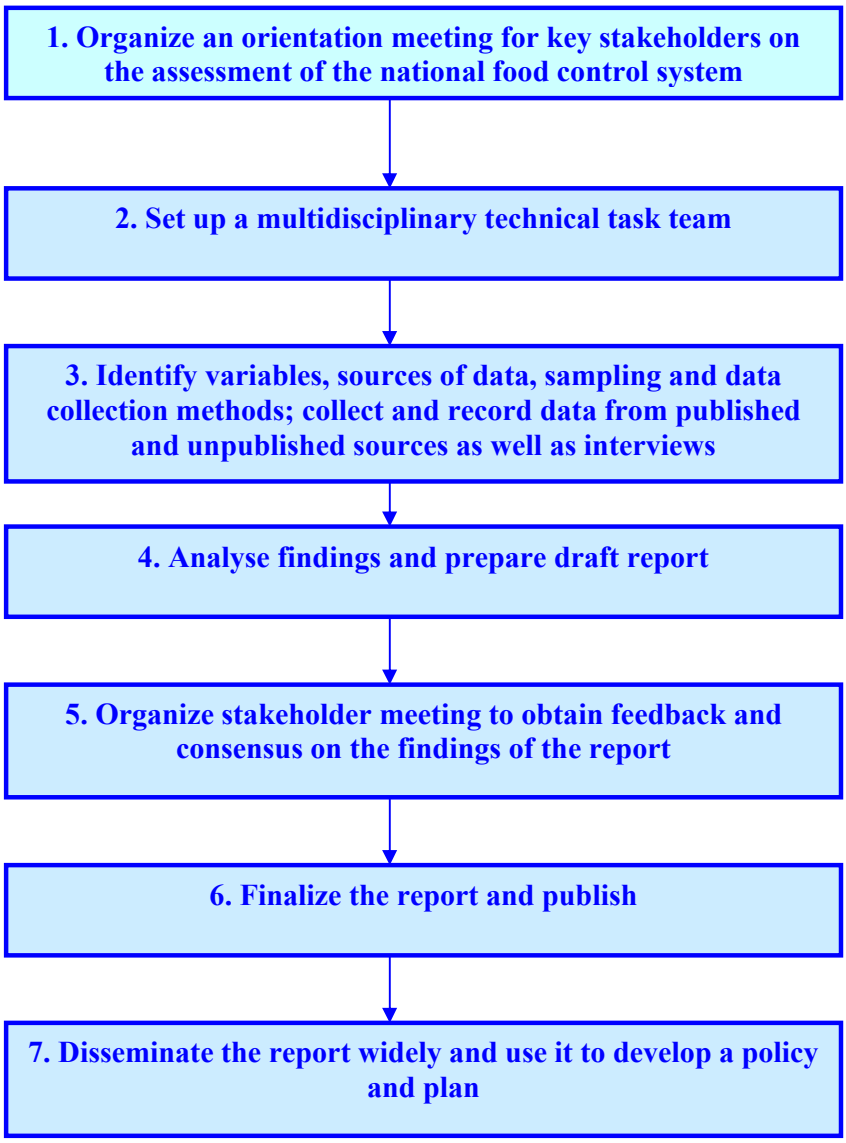
(a) To analyse the performance of the different components of the national food safety system (Figure 1).
(b) To identify the institutions and agencies involved in food safety focusing on their roles and mandates, the legal basis for their work, and level of collaboration and coordination.
(c) To identify key indicators that could be measured through a food safety monitoring system for assessment of trends and for evaluating performance of interventions.
(d) To identify strengths and weaknesses with special emphasis on policy issues to be addressed in the development of policies and action plans.

The analysis should be of the highest quality. Additionally, the process of conducting the analysis, vetting the results and communicating the results at appropriate public forums is important in establishing the credibility of the analysis and building consensus on the final product.

2.1 Conducting a situation analysis

This section discusses some basic steps (Figure 2) to be followed when conducting a situation analysis of national food control systems. The time required for the process will vary among countries depending on availability of resources and the priority accorded to the initiative. It is advisable to develop a plan of action at the beginning of the process, detailing out all the major steps, responsibilities and timelines. This would serve as a stimulus to facilitate the process.

Figure 2: Process for undertaking a situation analysis of the national food control systems



Organize an orientation meeting for key stakeholders on the assessment of the national food control system

Before starting the assessment, the very first step should be to obtain the support of all the key stakeholders including officials of relevant government agencies expected to participate in the assessment. This can be done through an orientation meeting. During the meeting, the necessity to strengthen the national food control system and the potential benefits for conducting the assessment should be explained. A consensus should be reached on the goals of the assessment and the process to be followed. A decision could be made on the expected timeframe for the assessment and if need be for tailoring the tools presented in this guide to the national conditions. The meeting will also provide a platform to identify who will be engaged in the assessment including setting up a multidisciplinary technical task team; how

coordination will be ensured; who will conduct the assessment (e.g. team of consultants or officials from concerned government agencies or consulting firm); what methodology will be employed for the assessment and how it would be administered.

Set up a multidisciplinary technical task team and steering committee

Multidisciplinary technical task team

The multisectoral nature of food safety requires the involvement of a broad-based appropriately qualified and multidisciplinary team at the highest level of government to carry out the analysis of the food safety situation. This should involve sectors responsible for agriculture, health, nutrition, commerce, environment, education, schools of public health, national health research institutions, and associations of formal and informal industries as well as consumer group representatives. A multidisciplinary technical task team should be set up and coordinated by a high-level steering committee with an advocacy capacity. In some cases, the assessment may be supported by consultants (see Annex 2 for sample terms of reference) working together with the multidisciplinary team.

The terms of reference for this multidisciplinary team may include:

(a) Identifying types of information to be collected; data sources; sampling and data collection methods.

(b) Working either independently or with consultants in the collection of data and information as well as in the preparation of a report describing the current situation of food hygiene and food safety programme in the country.

(c) Reviewing the information critically, and summarizing conclusions and policy issues.

(d) Identifying key resource persons and partners that will be involved in the policy development process.

(e) Facilitating stakeholder consensus-building meetings on the situation analysis report.

(f) Ensuring the production of a final report, policy and action plan.

(g) Reporting to the steering committee.

The multidisciplinary technical task team should include a core group of members with relevant expertise and experience in different areas related to food safety. They should be able to commit the time required in light of other existing commitments and responsibilities, and have the authority necessary to conduct the assessment and ensure the participation of relevant staff within their respective organizations.

The task team should have a senior chairperson who can provide guidance on issues to be dealt with in the process. The chairperson should have good contacts with relevant departments, ministries and institutions. A focal point, acting as the secretariat, will make arrangements for meetings of the committee and partners. In addition, there should be representatives from key ministries and departments such as health, food and agriculture, fisheries, trade and industry, environment, and local government; associations of consumer groups, industries etc.

Steering committee

The steering committee will support the multidisciplinary technical task team, provide input in the entire policy and plan development processes, and advocate at the highest levels of the health system. The steering committee will include high-level senior staff with representations from the Ministry of Health and other key ministries including agriculture, planning and local government; schools of public health and national health research institutions; associations of formal and informal food industries, consumer groups etc. This committee will serve as the advisory body and is mandated to facilitate and oversee the policy and plan development processes as well as play an advocacy role in the implementation of the policy document and mobilization and allocation of resources.

Collect data

The situation analysis should be holistic and broad-based capturing both existing and emerging trends as well as factors influencing food safety at each stage of the food chain. Considering the fact that food safety management and control are shared responsibilities of many institutions and agencies, the analysis should also take into account the relevance and failures of other sectoral policies. Similarly, it should identify economic, social, cultural, legal, environmental and other pertinent factors that directly or indirectly contribute to the problem and define the related issues.

Data type and variables

Data and information to be collected should cover among others:

(i) *Current characteristics and trends* related to food and agricultural production and processing, as well as food imports and exports.

(ii) *Epidemiological profile* listing the prevalence and incidence of foodborne diseases, as well as procedures for investigating and notifying foodborne diseases.

(iii) *Laboratory capacities* for food testing including human, financial and material resource needs of food control laboratories and public health laboratories.

(iv) *Data on the availability of food policy, laws and legislation* and their enforcement including the level of participation in setting international standards and harmonizing national standards.

(v) *Institutional analysis* of the key institutions and agencies involved in food safety, focusing on their roles and mandates, the legal basis for their work as well as inter-agency coordinative mechanisms related to food safety administration and enforcement.

(vi) *Profile of food safety information, education and communication* (IEC) activities and services in the country, including consumer participation, extension and advisory services, human resources and training requirements.

(vii) *Capacity of food inspection services* including human and material resource needs.

Data sources

Different methods can be used to gather this information depending on the type and source of the information to be collected. Information may be drawn from reviews of documents and studies such as inspection records, legal texts directly related to food, toxicological and epidemiological studies or academic research. It can also come from focus group discussions,

written surveys or key person interviews. A generic questionnaire tool can also be adapted and used for data collection (see Annex 1). Numerous appropriate methods of information-gathering can be combined to provide a clear picture of the situation of food safety in a country.

Authorities responsible for food control management are important sources of information; these include government ministries or agencies with operational responsibility for particular aspects of food safety. Similarly, agencies or ministries in charge of setting national development policies and priorities may be useful sources.

Analyse findings and prepare draft report

The next step involves synthesizing and analysing the available information and then drafting the findings (Box 1). Data analysis is critical to the assessment process as it identifies gaps, constraints and challenges so that actionable recommendations can be made. Given the wide range of issues emerging from a situation analysis, it is not possible to deal with them comprehensively in a policy document. Therefore, it is necessary to determine the priority issues, challenges and problems to address.

Organize stakeholder meeting to obtain feedback and consensus on the report findings

The draft report should be shared with all the relevant authorities and stakeholders. This is an important step in validating the report as well as for ensuring commitment and ownership among stakeholders. A meeting of stakeholders could proceed with the following objectives:

(a) To familiarize partners and stakeholders with the situation analysis.
(b) To present and discuss the findings of the situation analysis, and obtain specific inputs from participants for incorporation in the report.
(c) To reach a consensus on the report as to the accuracy and validity of its findings, conclusions and policy recommendations.
(d) To agree on priority issues, challenges and subsequent strategic actions.
(e) To prioritize recommendations on the basis of feasibility and impact, and identify which sectors should be involved in implementation.

In order to ensure meaningful participation during the meeting, stakeholders should be given sufficient advance notice, and a copy of the draft document should be circulated to all stakeholders for review.

Finalize and publish the report

The sixth step should lead to finalization and production of a report describing the situation of food safety and status of the national food control system. The report should be revised based on the inputs and feedback received from the various stakeholders during the validation workshop before finalization.

Disseminate report and use it to develop policy and plan

Once the report has been finalized and printed, there is need to disseminate the report as widely as possible. Such dissemination should encompass all the relevant national

stakeholders and partners. A dissemination strategy should be developed so that the report can be used as an advocacy tool to raise awareness of stakeholders on the food safety situation in the country. Possible dissemination mechanisms may include press materials, media and meetings.

2.2 Outline of the situation analysis report

The outline for a situational analysis report is provided in Box 1. Apart from providing baseline information on the status of food safety and national food control systems, a situation analysis is useful for developing or reviewing food safety policies, plans and strategies. It also includes a review of all available scientific literature on food safety and foodborne diseases, both published and unpublished. The analysis should be updated as the situation evolves and as new information becomes available.

Box 1: Outline of a situation analysis report

Introduction

- Brief description of country
- Rationale and objective for undertaking the food safety situation analysis and the national food control system.

Methodology and limitation of the analysis

- Briefly describe the approach used in performing the assessment including variables, sampling framework, data collection methods, data sources, major weaknesses and limitations in data collection and analysis.

Main findings

Food safety challenges including foodborne diseases and food contamination (review of scientific literature)

- Epidemiological information including morbidity and mortality, aetiology of foodborne diseases, procedures used for notifying foodborne diseases
- Types of foods and the levels of contamination, sources of contamination (bacterial, mycotoxins, others), including information on high-risk foods and relatively safe foods
- Risk factors (environmental sources of contamination, water, practices that predispose to contamination)

Status of food control management

- Listing of government departments and authorities concerned with food safety and food control activities in the country
- Description of the food control system highlighting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of food control management, including an overview of the resources, responsibilities, functions and coordination between the entities.

Status of food safety policy, legislation and regulations

- Current food legislative arrangements, including food safety policy, regulations, standards and codes of practice
- Authorities empowered to prepare regulations and standards, and how they coordinate their activities
- Extent of harmonization of legislation, regulations and standards with international requirements and regional agreements
- Analysis of gaps or inconsistencies in food legislation, regulations, standards and codes of practice.

Status of food inspection services

- Organization of inspection and enforcement activities in the country, including ministries or agencies involved and their mandates and roles
- Number and qualifications of inspection personnel
- Ratio of food inspectors to the population served/food service establishments
- Resources within inspection agency, and assessment of strengths and weaknesses in food inspection services
- Reports on activities conducted by food inspectors: samples collected for testing, results obtained, corrective actions taken.

Status of food control laboratories and surveillance

- Current situation of food analysis in the country
- Number of official food control laboratories, including public health laboratories and the type of analyses performed/conducted, procedures and methods used
- Number of facilities and equipment available to support food analysis
- Existence of a quality assurance programme.

Status of food safety IEC programmes

- Existing food safety IEC activities in the country including extension and advisory services for the food sector as provided by the government, industry, trade associations, educational institutions etc
- Existing consumer education initiatives in food hygiene
- Involvement and participation of consumer associations in risk communication activities
- Human resources and training requirements: category of personnel involved in food safety, career structures and qualifications for food safety personnel.

General characteristics and trends of food control

- Quantity/estimates of agricultural production and processing in the country
- Status of food manufacturing firms including safety and quality management programmes
- Food imports and exports: quantity and value of food imports and exports; data on detentions or rejections of food exported; mechanisms for collecting information on food exports rejected by foreign buyers; mechanism for monitoring food imports; main food safety and quality problems encountered with the country's imports and exports
- Existing research in food safety and quality.

Recommendations

- Proposed short-term, medium-term and long-term recommendations and solutions on the main food safety issues and challenges, including policy issues.

Conclusion

- Summary of main highlights of situational analysis, issues raised and way forward.

References

- Reference documents.

Appendices

- Present other relevant information such as persons consulted, statistical analysis, additional background as relevant etc.

Chapter 3: Developing a National Food Safety Policy

3.1 Components and content

A food safety policy provides highly visible opportunities to demonstrate both medium- and long-term commitment, values, aspirations and decisions by government in ensuring that food safety concerns are prioritized and addressed. It provides a strong basis for establishing national food safety objectives and requirements, and guidance for application to specific sectors of the food continuum: production, processing, storage, transportation and marketing.

Food safety policy represents an important effort to strengthen the means for improving food control systems and creating a forum for national discussions on food safety issues. The policy offers significant opportunity for jointly establishing priorities and mechanisms to enhance awareness and sectoral incentives for food safety management in countries.

A national food safety policy should fit within the framework of the national health policy and be consistent with overall national health objectives. The content of the policy should be based on the situation analysis and review, scientific evidence and national food safety goals. The policy should clearly describe the objectives, principles, regulatory mechanisms and actions for addressing the main food safety issues and concerns of the sector. Box 2 provides an example of an outline of a national food safety policy.

3.2 Process

The aim of the policy formulation process should be to identify and recommend a policy for the long-term management and control of food safety that ensures consumer confidence and protects public health. Particular attention must be paid to the technical content of food safety policies in order to achieve satisfactory results. Of equal importance is the process by which the policy is ultimately formulated and implemented.

The success of policy planning and implementation will depend, in part, on channelling and considering stakeholder input as well as gaining political commitment. An important step in the policy development process is to identify those having a vested interest in food safety and hence in the design, discussion and implementation of the policy. Consultations should include all stakeholders in order to build commitment and make the end result as effective and achievable as possible. Stakeholder involvement should be viewed as an ongoing partnership that encompasses all aspects of policy development and implementation.

Analyse the food safety situation

From the food safety situation analysis report, summarize the main findings of the status of food safety and challenges to be addressed, focusing on those issues requiring policy direction.

Draft the national food safety policy

The multidisciplinary team earlier constituted during the situation analysis phase can be convened to draft the national food safety policy. Technical committees or smaller working groups comprising of members of the multidisciplinary team may be set up and assigned the

responsibility to develop various sections of the policy document. The policy needs to be flexible and adaptable to emerging risks and new developments in the food chain.

Circulate and finalize the policy document

Additional consultations are required from the Ministry of Health and other relevant government ministries and departments, institutions, academia, consumers etc. for further inputs into the draft policy document including expression of concerns etc. The document should be widely circulated, ensuring representation from all the main stakeholders. Objectivity and transparency should prevail during the review process. The draft document should be revised and finalized based on the suggestions and feedback received during the consultations.

Obtain formal endorsement and approval

It has been noted that although policy requires technical expertise for development, it requires political will for implementation. Political endorsement and support are therefore central elements of policy development. A number of factors will govern what constitutes the most effective or desirable level at which the national food safety policy is adopted or approved. Formal adoption involves legal or administrative processes including a referendum and endorsement by parliament or cabinet in order to obtain legitimacy for the policy.

Disseminate the policy

Once formally approved, the food safety policy should be disseminated as widely as possible. Such dissemination should encompass all the national stakeholders. A public event and government announcement should be planned. Possible dissemination mechanisms and channels may include press materials, media and meetings with specific implementation partners.

Box 2: Content of a Food Safety Policy

Foreword
This section should explain how and why the policy came about and emphasize the commitment of government. A suitable authority should sign the foreword so that it is recognized and carries weight.

Background to the policy
This section should briefly summarize the situation analysis further highlighting the main findings and key recommendations requiring policy direction. It may also include the main achievements, challenges and processes involved in developing the policy.

Statements of vision, mission and policy objectives
The content of the policy document should indicate the vision, mission and policy objectives. It should also define the key principles that guide the policy. Examples would include intersectoral cooperation; addressing the farm-to-table continuum; stakeholder participation; establishing priorities based on risk analysis, sectoral policy integration, safety of consumers, social fairness etc.

Policy directions
Policy directions should be based on priority issues identified. This may include: (i) guidance to promote adequate research, monitoring and foodborne disease surveillance activities of the sector; (ii) human resource development which seeks to ensure that skills are established to carry out the essential functions of the sector and to ensure consistency between national food safety needs and the number of personnel that are trained and their skills and functions; (iii) regulatory and legislative control for food safety; (iv) guidance for the promotion of public education, information and communication.

Implementation framework
This section will include a definition of strategies, followed by actions to ensure that policy principles are applied and action is taken to reach specified objectives. It will define the process of developing a comprehensive national plan for food safety as the main instrument for implementation.

Institutional mechanisms for achieving policy objectives
This section will broadly outline national institutional arrangements and structures to ensure successful implementation of the policy. Institutional structures must provide for effective inter-ministerial coordination to adequately provide support to the national food safety policy.

Monitoring and evaluation
The policy should include mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness and performance of the policy.

Funding mechanisms
This section should describe how policy implementation will be funded.

Chapter 4: Developing a Food Safety Strategic Plan

4.1 Components and content

A strategic plan for food safety is developed in order to operationalize the food safety policy and to determine what actions need to be taken to reach the goals set down in the policy document. The plan tries to elaborate on what the policy will achieve and how it will be implemented. The strategic plan describes what priority interventions are needed, when interventions are needed, who is responsible, the budgetary requirements, and the timeframe with clearly defined milestones and reporting mechanisms so that progress can be monitored. Capacity building and training should be considered for timely and effective implementation of the plan.

The outline shown in Box 3 provides the content that should go into each section of the strategic plan. In broad terms, the strategic plan should strive:

(a) To develop human resources for promotion of food safety and enforcement of food safety regulations.
(b) To develop or revise regulatory standards and guidelines.
(c) To strengthen foodborne disease surveillance, including research and scientific capacity of the national food control system.
(d) To promote systems for improving food safety along the entire food chain.
(e) To develop and organize training programmes for primary producers, food handlers, food inspectors and analysts.
(f) To promote consumer education and community outreach initiatives.
(g) To close any gaps in the existing food safety system.

4.2 Process

The process for developing the strategic plan for food safety is as important as the plan itself. The following sections provide details on the steps to take in developing a strategic plan for food safety.

The multidisciplinary team that was earlier constituted for the situation analysis and policy development phase should be convened to provide the necessary framework for promoting and coordinating activities to prepare the strategic plan. These activities include:

(a) Collaborating, where appropriate, with donor agencies to assess and secure technical and financial assistance for formulating and implementing the strategic plan.
(b) Facilitating wide participation and consultations with key stakeholders and organizations in developing the plan.
(c) Preparing a strategic plan with resource requirements for various components of the plan.

Draft the strategic plan

The plan will describe the steps required and priority actions to address the food safety problems identified in the situation analysis and meet policy expectations. A realistic timeframe should be outlined, and organizations and stakeholders responsible for implementation should be determined. The proposed outline of a strategic plan for food safety is shown in Box 3.

Adopt the plan

Once the first draft plan is completed, regular consultations will be required with all the key stakeholders to gain their inputs and views on the major aspects of the plan. These consultations may be either formal or informal meetings the purpose of which is to build consensus among all the stakeholders on the national plan of action. Comments and suggestions made during these consultations should be carefully noted for inclusion in the document. Following the consultations, it is useful to conduct a final national consensus-building meeting with all the key stakeholders, potential donors and other partners. The objectives of the consensus-building meeting are:

(a) To widen the scope of the consultation and expand ownership of the strategic plan.
(b) To obtain a consensus of the plan and ensure that it is fully understood and accepted.
(c) To agree on the timeframe and responsibilities for implementation of the plan.
(d) To secure the commitment, cooperation and collaboration of all concerned stakeholders, partners and agencies.

Finalize and print the plan

After due consideration of the suggestions and feedback received from the different stakeholders during the consensus-building workshop, the multidisciplinary drafting team should revise the draft and prepare the final plan.

Disseminate the strategic plan for food safety

Once the action plan has been finalized and printed, it should be widely disseminated to all key stakeholders. An official launch of the plan could be organized to facilitate its dissemination. Other means such as press releases, media interviews, and inclusion in selected popular press articles could be used.

Monitor and evaluate the plan

A multidisciplinary committee should be established to monitor the implementation of the plan using agreed indicators. The terms of reference of the committee and frequency of meeting should be decided beforehand.

Box 3: Content of a Food Safety Strategic Plan

- ***Contents***
- ***Foreword***
- ***Acknowledgment of those who contributed to the plan***
- ***Executive summary highlighting the main elements of the plan***
- ***Abbreviations used in the plan***

Introduction
This section should provide the rationale behind the plan. Reference should be made to the policy document, highlighting the main policy statements and targets set and how developing and implementing the plan will meet the policy objectives. This section should make reference to the linkage of the plan to overall national economic and development plan objectives. The socioeconomic, demographic and epidemiological profile of the country should be described to provide the general health system context of the plan.

Situation of food safety and national food control system
This section contains a summary of the existing situation of food safety and food control system in the country. It provides analyses of each of the priority food safety problems identified in the national food safety policy document, including the main challenges and constraints encountered in assuring food safety in the country.

Strategic interventions and targets
This section will outline the main interventions that the plan intends to implement in order to address the issues raised in the situation analysis and, importantly, meet the policy expectations. It will also describe the specific objectives, main actions, indicators and targets.

Financial implications
A detailed and clear budget is one of the most crucial components of the plan. The budget should include all the resources that will be required for successful implementation of the plan. The budget should take into account the following: costing of the inputs needed to implement the interventions; estimating the resources available for food safety from all sources; estimating any resource gaps; and identifying strategies for bridging the resource gaps.

Implementation framework
This section describes the institutional arrangements including the structures, institutions, and other key actors involved in implementing the plan, specific roles and the coordinating ministry. The framework should include a timeframe for implementation of the plan.

Monitoring and evaluation
This section proposes mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the plan including indicators and frequency of reporting.

Conclusion

References
This consists of a list of documents referred to or used while developing the plan.

Annexes
This section will consist of all relevant information that is useful to the plan.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Food safety is an increasingly important public health concern worldwide. In the African Region, weak or nonexistent regulatory capacities, institutional structures, administrative capacities exacerbate the situation. Meaningful advances in food safety within the Region will require comprehensive and sustainable food safety systems with coherent national food safety policies and strategic action plans. A food safety policy sets out the principles, values, priorities and strategies necessary to enable the development of actions to address the main concerns of the sector.

The main objective of this document is to support countries to conduct situation analyses of their national food safety programmes, and develop food safety policies and plans with a view to strengthening national food control systems. The specific circumstances of developing a situation analysis, food safety policy and strategic plan can vary considerably from one country to another. This manual was prepared for use by countries. They are flexible and practical, and adaptable by Member States as appropriate to enable them to strengthen their food safety and food control systems.

References

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4. WHO. Guidelines for developing national health policies and plans. World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa, Brazzaville, 2005.

Annex 1: Tool for Conducting Assessment of National Food Safety Programme

The primary aim of the assessment of country food safety programmes is to assess the status of food control and food safety programmes in the country.

Objectives:
Specifically, the assessment is intended**:**

1. To identify the institutions and agencies involved in food safety while concentrating on the following questions:

   (i) their roles and mandates
   (ii) the legal basis for their work
   (iii) the level of cooperation, collaboration and coordination

2. To collect data on availability of food policy, laws and legislation and their enforcement
3. To evaluate the level of participation in international standard-setting and harmonization with national standards
4. To assess the food inspection and laboratory capacity for food testing
5. Evaluate food production, imports and exports and advisory services
6. To identify the research and scientific evidence for food safety
7. Evaluate Information, education and communication activities and participation of consumers
8. To identify key indicators that could be measured through a food safety monitoring system to assess changes in trends.

This questionnaire is intended to be used as a framework for interviews or guide to orient you on the key questions for gaining information and structuring discussions. Questions are classified by main topics, and should be tailored to the specific types of institutions (e.g. consumer association, bureau of standards etc). It should also be remembered that an interview cannot be solely based on a list of questions, since the interviewed person may prefer to stress some specific aspects. Whenever possible or appropriate, the interviews should be completed by a short visit to the facilities.

Institutions and agencies involved in food safety

This section of the questionnaire can be administered to the competent authorities or agencies responsible for food control management, including other government ministries or agencies with operational responsibility for particular aspects of food safety, as well as agencies in charge of setting national development policies and priorities.

1. Is there a national food control agency?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please specify_____

2. Which institutions/ministries and agencies are in charge of food safety and quality control activities?

- ☐ Health
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Fisheries
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Trade
- ☐ Others, please specify_____

3. Are their mandates defined in legislation/policy? (Please tick either yes or no.)

Institutions	Are mandates defined in policy?	
Health	Yes ☐	No ☐
Agriculture	Yes ☐	No ☐
Fisheries	Yes ☐	No ☐
Environment	Yes ☐	No ☐
Trade	Yes ☐	No ☐
Others, please specify _____ _____ _____		

4. Are there any overlaps or gaps in their roles and responsibilities?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If so, please indicate_____
_____

5. What are their specific roles, responsibilities and mandates?

_____
_____
_____

6. Are there any overlaps or gaps in their roles and responsibilities?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If so, please indicate_____

Table I: Template for Stakeholder Analysis (To complete Table 1, collect documents with details on the roles, responsibilities and mandates of these institutions)

Stakeholders	**Current roles/interests** (What is their current mandate/role/ interest in food legislation?)	**Future needs/expectations** (What would they like to be included in food legislation and why?)
Government agencies (central, regional and local)		
Food inspection services (independent or part of a government agency)		
Food laboratories (central, regional and local; official food control laboratories or independent)		
Food enterprises		
Consumers		
Judicial system/courts		
Other stakeholders		

Food legislation

Information on food legislation can be obtained from legal texts directly related to food, including laws, regulations and standards. In addition to actual legal texts, the questionnaire may be administered to government ministries, departments and agencies involved in developing, implementing and enforcing food law and regulations.

7. Is there a national food safety and quality policy with commitment from higher authorities, based on risk analysis i.e. risk assessment, risk management and risk communication?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8. Is there a coordination body for food control activities?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If so, does it work?

Yes ☐ No ☐

9. What is there legal framework for food control?

_____

_____

Is there one national food law or several different laws?

One national law ☐
Several laws ☐

10. What food laws are currently in force and when were they enacted/amended?

_____

_____

11. Which are the implementing authorities:

(a) At the central/national level?

_____

_____

(b) At the provincial/regional level?

_____

_____

(c) At the local (urban/district) level?

_____
_____

12. Does the legislation currently in force cover food adulteration during:

(a) Storage? ☐
(b) Distribution? ☐
(c) Manufacturing/processing? ☐
(d) Preparation? ☐
(e) Sale? ☐

Table II: Template for Collection of Information on Food Law(s)

Title of law	Coverage/scope of sections dealing with food	Date of enactment (and amendment(s) if any)	Responsible agency

Regulations and Standards

Information on regulations and standards can be obtained from existing legal documents related to food. In addition to actual documents, the questionnaire may be administered to government ministries, departments and agencies involved in developing and setting regulations and standards.

13. Are there regulations and standards related to food safety and quality?

(a). Yes ☐

(b) No ☐
If yes list them

_____
_____

14. Which authority is empowered to make rules and regulations under the food laws?

(a) At the central/national level?

_____
_____

(b) At the provincial/regional level?

_____
_____

(c) At the local (urban/district) level?

_____
_____

15. Do these authorities consult consumers, trade interests, and nongovernmental organizations in the preparation of rules and regulations?

Consumers ☐ **Trade interests** ☐ **NGOs** ☐

16. Are there constraints on their implementation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes list them:

_____

_____

17. Have the following been taken into consideration in preparing the rules and regulations on:

Food additives

(a) International (FAO/WHO) recommendations? ☐
(b) Other national rules and regulations? ☐
(c) Approval procedures? ☐
(d) Toxicological facilities and expertise? ☐

Pesticide residues

(a) International (FAO/WHO) tolerance levels? ☐
(b) Other national rules and regulations? ☐
(c) Toxicological facilities and expertise? ☐
(d) Registration procedures? ☐

Veterinary drug residues

(a) International (FAO/WHO) tolerance levels? ☐
(b) Other national rules and regulations? ☐
(c) Toxicological facilities and expertise? ☐

Heavy metals

(a) International (FAO/WHO) recommendations? ☐
(b) Other national rules and regulations? ☐
(c) Toxicological facilities and expertise? ☐

Sanitary facilities at food processing and food service levels

(a) Water supply? ☐
(b) Plumbing? ☐
(c) Maintenance? ☐
(d) Insect control? ☐
(e) Toilet facilities? ☐
(f) Waste disposal? ☐
(g) Ventilation? ☐

Waste disposal

(a) Sea waste disposal ☐
(b) Disposal of rejected food consignments ☐
(c) Waste disposal in food service establishments ☐

18. Do the rules and regulations provide for:

(a) Food labelling, including its composition? ☐
(b) Date marking and marking of weights and measures? ☐
(c) Sampling procedures? ☐
(d) Importation and exportation of food? ☐
(e) In-process quality control? ☐
(f) Licensing and registration of food premises? ☐
(g) Closure of unhygienic food premises? ☐
(h) Health control of food handlers, e.g. personal hygiene,

(i) Medical examinations, etc.? ☐
(j) Food advertising? ☐
(k) Use of safe food packaging material? ☐
(l) Ante-mortem and/or post-mortem examination of food animals? ☐
(m) Provision and adequacy of sanitation measures on board aircraft, trains, ship, in-service terminals and land transportation? ☐
(n) Measures to be implemented in the event of national disasters like floods, cyclones, earthquakes, etc.? ☐
(o) Food irradiation? ☐
(p) Quality certification by an appropriate authority? ☐
(q) Quarantine measures? ☐
(r) Warranty measures? ☐
(s) Penalties? ☐

19. Is there a national policy for quality assurance in food firms, including micro-enterprises?

Yes ☐ No ☐

20. Are there rules for self -regulation, HACCP and quality assurance in some food firms?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

TABLE III: Template for collection of food regulations

Title	Description of coverage/scope	Date enacted(and amendment(s) if any)	Responsible agency

Guidelines, codes of practice, advisory standards

Information on the guidelines, codes of practice and standards can be obtained by gathering the existing documents (guidelines, codes of practice and standards). Additional information may be obtained from government ministries, departments and agencies involved in the formulation of guidelines, codes of practice and standards.

21. Are there national codes of hygienic practice for (please tick either yes or no)?

Food production	Yes ☐	No ☐
Food processing	Yes ☐	No ☐
Food storage	Yes ☐	No ☐
Food distribution	Yes ☐	No ☐

22. Do the codes make provision for (please tick either yes or no):

Cultivation of fresh water and saltwater species of fish;	Yes ☐	No ☐
Prohibition of commercial harvesting of shellfish from contaminated waters;	Yes ☐	No ☐
Specific storage conditions, such as temperature, in ports and stations for transportation of perishable foods by land, water or air;	Yes ☐	No ☐
Safe food packaging;	Yes ☐	No ☐
Food handling by street vendors	Yes ☐	No ☐
Materials in contact with food such as plates, cups and cooking utensils		

23. Enumerate or list the existing national codes of hygienic practice.

_____
_____
_____

24. How frequently are these codes reviewed?

_____
_____

TABLE IV: Template for collection of information on guidelines, codes of practice and other related documentation

Title	Description of coverage/scope	Responsible agency

Harmonization of National and International Standards

Information on the national food standards can be obtained from existing legal documents. In addition to the documents, the questionnaire may be administered to government ministries, departments and agencies involved in developing and setting standards (for example, the standards bureau). Collection of the standards could be limited to only those standards that have been harmonized with codex standards.

25. Are national standards harmonized with Codex standards?

Yes☐ No ☐

If yes list the standards:

Table V: Template for Collection of Food Standards

Title	Description of coverage/scope	Date (specify date enacted if legally binding and amendments if any)	Responsible agency

26. Does the country participate in Codex activities?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes who funds your participation?

_____
_____
_____

27. Is there a National Codex Committee or a multisectoral forum to formulate national positions?

Yes ☐ No ☐

28. What is the position of the country with respect to SPS, TBT, ISO?

_____
_____

29. How many trained persons are there for food standard formulation?

_____

30. Describe their roles and levels of education?

_____
_____

31. Is the country a member of any regional groupings?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes specify _____

(a) Is there some regional collaboration/coordination with respect to food control?

Yes☐ No ☐

If yes list the areas of collaboration/coordination

_____

(b) Are food regulations harmonized with regional requirements?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes list them _____

Food inspection

Information on food inspection can be obtained by administering the questionnaire to key persons e.g. leaders of inspection agencies, and other ministries involved in food inspection. In addition to the interviews, information can be obtained from collecting available documents related to food inspection (e.g. organizational, mandates, operational rules and procedures, reports on annual reports etc).

32. List the institutions involved in food inspection and category of people.

_____
_____
_____
_____

33. Are there training institutions for food inspectors in the country?

Yes ☐ No ☐

34. What is the ratio of food inspectors to population served?

_____

35. Indicate the number of food inspectors per institution and their coverage.

_____
_____
_____
_____

36. Are food inspections carried out consistently by officers at different locations?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes specify number of times per month_____

37. Does the inspection of food establishments cover the following?

(a) Food processing plants? ☐
(b) Eating places? ☐
(c) Markets? ☐
(d) Bakeries? ☐
(e) Fish or meat shops or stalls? ☐
(f) Grocery stores? ☐
(g) Milk shops? ☐
(h) Slaughterhouses? ☐

38. Are the following items included in the prescribed inspection form for inspectors? (Refer to the documents)

(a) Food handlers' certificates? ☐
(b) Food establishments' permits/licenses? ☐
(c) Health certificates of food handlers? ☐

39. Are specific procedures and/or guidelines laid down with reference to the following: (Obtain copy of guidelines)

(a) Sampling procedures? ☐
(b) Sealing storage, and transportation of samples? ☐
(c) Reporting schedules? ☐
(d) Collection of evidence of non-compliance? ☐
(e) Advice to food industry and trade? ☐
(f) Consumer complaints? ☐
(g) Import/export inspections? ☐
(h) Food processing plant inspections? ☐

40. What equipment is currently available for food inspection? Please list them:

_____
_____
_____

41. What are the minimum qualifications for food inspectors?

_____
_____
_____

42. Do food inspectors have opportunities for continuous professional development?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please give details:_____
_____

TABLE VI: Template for Collection of Information on Food Inspection

Authorities involved in inspection of food, animal, fisheries products (central level, regional level and local level)	**Terms of reference**	**Are there any capacity building needs? If so specify level of qualification required**

Food control laboratories including public health laboratories

Information on food control laboratories can be obtained by consulting officials in charge of food control laboratories (analysts, technicians and managers), including public health laboratories. In addition, information may also be obtained through the collection and review of available documents related to food control laboratories (laboratory publications, organizational mandates etc).

43. Are there laboratory facilities for (i) chemical and (ii) microbiological analysis of food?

(i) Yes ☐ No ☐

(ii) Yes ☐ No ☐

44. Which institutions have food control laboratories?

_____
_____
_____
_____

45. How many laboratories are equipped for food analysis:

(a) For chemicals? _____
(b) For biotoxins? _____
(c) For microbiological contamination? _____

46. Are the laboratories performing statutory work?

Yes ☐ No ☐

47. Do the laboratories participate in national monitoring programmes for contaminants such as pesticide residues, heavy metals and mycotoxins?

Yes ☐ No ☐

48. Do the microbiological laboratories have the following facilities:

(a) Equipment for sample collection? ☐
(b) System for sample collection and dispatch? ☐

49. Microbiological examinations:

(a) Are they done routinely?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(b) At what intervals are they done?

_____
_____

(c) What kinds of foods are tested microbiologically?

_____
_____
_____

(d) What kind of microbiological examinations are carried out?

_____
_____
_____

(e) Are statistical data on results analyzed?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(f) Where is the analysis done and by whom?

_____
_____
_____

(g) Is there a reporting system on microbiological surveillance? (Please describe)

_____
_____
_____

(h) Describe the feedback system including timelines for feedback.

_____

_____

50. Are the following agents, related to foodborne diseases, tested for?

Bacteria

- ☐ *Bacillus antiracis*
- ☐ *Bacillus cereus*
- ☐ Brucella abortus
- ☐ *Campylobacter jejuni*
- ☐ *Clostridium botulinum*
- ☐ *Clostridium perfringens*
- ☐ *Escherichia coli*

  - enterotoxigenic (ETEC)
  - enteropathogenic (EPEC)
  - enteroinvasive (EIEC)
  - others specify:_____

- ☐ *Listeria monocytogenes*
- ☐ *Mycobacterium bovis*
- ☐ *Salmonella typhi*
- ☐ *Salmonella* (non-typhi)
- ☐ *Shigella*
- ☐ *Staphylococcus aureus (enterotoxins)*
- ☐ *Vibrio cholerae 01*
- ☐ *Vibrio cholerae non-01*
- ☐ *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*
- ☐ *Yersinia enterocolitica*

Viruses

- ☐ hepatitis A virus
- ☐ norwalk agents
- ☐ rotavirus
- ☐ Others specify: _____

Protozoa

- ☐ *Entamoeba histolytica*
- ☐ *Giardia lamblia*

Helminths

- ☐ *Taenia saginata and T. solium*
- ☐ *Trichinella spiralis*
- ☐ *Trichuris trichiura*
- ☐ Others, please specify _____

  _____

51. Are the chemical laboratories equipped to undertake testing of:

(a) Pesticide residues? ☐
(b) Additives? ☐
(c) Heavy metals and other chemicals, e.g., zinc, copper, lead, mercury? ☐
(d) Toxins of fish and shellfish? ☐
(e) Toxic plants and mushrooms? ☐
(f) Mycotoxins? ☐
(g) Antibiotics? ☐
(h) Hormones? ☐

(i) Radioactive contaminants? ☐
(j) Others, please specify_____

52. Do these laboratories have quality assurance and/or registration systems?

Yes ☐ No ☐

53. Are these laboratories accredited?

Yes ☐ No ☐

54. Does your country participate in the Total Diet Study?

Yes ☐ No ☐

55. Are there guidelines for handling hazardous materials?

Yes ☐ No ☐

TABLE VII - i: Inventory of Official Food Control Laboratories

	Laboratory 1	**Laboratory 2**	**Laboratory 3**
Name			
Location (including name and location of sub-laboratories if existing)			
Status (publicly or privately operated)			
Affiliation (responsible ministry or authority)			
Scope (types of analyses performed, e.g. mycotoxins, pesticide residue analysis, heavy metals, etc)			
Date established			
Accreditation status (Yes/No)			

TABLE VII - ii: Inventory of Official Food Control Laboratories

Name of Laboratory:				
Date of Inventory:				
Instrument/ Equipment	**Quantity**	**Use** (for which analyses)	**Quality** (age, working condition, etc.)	**Remarks** (technical support, calibration, maintenance, etc.)
Food chemistry (e.g. MS/GC, HPLC, GC etc.)				
Microbiology				
Incubators				
centrifuges				
Equipment to analyse physical food properties (e.g. colour, texture, extraneous matter)				
Sample preparation equipment				

Computer and communication equipment				
Computer				
Printer				
Modem (type and speed of access: dial-up, DSL, wireless, fixed network, etc.)				
Digital camera				
Fax				
Telephone				
Other (describe)				

TABLE VII - iii: Capacity of Official Food Control Laboratories

	Food Analysts			Laboratory Managers		
	Number of Staff	**Average years experience**	**Salary range (monthly)**	**Number of Staff**	**Average years experience**	**Salary range (monthly)**
Food chemistry						
Doctoral level						
Masters level						
Bachelors level						
Lower than Bachelors Degree						
Microbiology						
Doctoral level						
Masters level						
Bachelors level						
Lower than Bachelors Degree						
Other (specify)						

Epidemiology and foodborne disease surveillance

Information on epidemiology and foodborne disease surveillance can be obtained by consulting the ministries in charge of food contamination monitoring as well as through the collection and review of available documents related to food contamination, and studies on prevalence of foodborne diseases.

56. Is notification of cases of foodborne diseases done?

Yes ☐ No ☐

57. Is notification of cases of foodborne diseases required by law?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(a) If so, by whom and to whom should the notification be made?

_____

_____

(b) List the foodborne diseases for which notification is required.

_____

58. Are statistics of foodborne diseases compiled nationally?

Yes ☐ No ☐

59. Investigation of foodborne diseases

(i) Is the cause identified by:
- (a) Physician/clinicians? ☐
- (b) Public health worker? ☐
- (c) Food control officials? ☐
- (d) Others (specify)? _____

(ii) Is the source identified by:
- (a) Public health authority? ☐
- (b) Food control authority? ☐
- (c) Others (specify) ☐

_____

(iii) Are the laboratory examinations done by:

(a) Public Health laboratory? ☐
(b) Food control laboratory? ☐
(c) Veterinary laboratory? ☐
(d)Any others please specify?_____

(iv) Is the follow-up done by:

(a) Public health authority? ☐
(b) Food control authority? ☐
(c) Veterinary authority? ☐
(d) Any others, please specify _____

(v) Who is responsible for corrective measures?

(a) Public health authority? ☐
(b) Food control authority? ☐
(c) Veterinary authority? ☐
(d) Any others, please specify _____

(vi) Who receives information and reports?

(a) Public health authority? ☐
(b) Food control authority? ☐
(c) Veterinary authority? ☐
(d) Any others, please specify _____

60. Is there a Public Health laboratory which is involved in food safety assurance?

Yes ☐ please specify _____ No ☐

If yes, please continue at question 59. If No, go to 60.

61. Is your country involved in the Global Food Infections programme (Global Salm-surv)
Yes ☐ No ☐

62. Are the following tested for?

Bacteria

☐ *Bacillus antiracis*
☐ Brucella abortus
☐ *Bacillus cereus*
☐ Campylobacter jejuni
☐ *Clostridium botulinum*
☐ *Clostridium perfringens*
☐ *Escherichia coli*
- *enterotoxigenic (ETEC)*
- *enteropathogenic (EPEC)*
- *enteroinvasive (EIEC)*

☐ *Listeria monocytogenes*
☐ *Mycobacterium bovis*
☐ *Salmonella typhi*
☐ *Salmonella* (non-typhi)
☐ *Shigella*
☐ *Staphylococcus aureus (enterotoxins)*
☐ *Vibrio cholerae 01*
☐ *Vibrio cholerae non-01*
☐ *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*
☐ *Yersinia enterocolitica*

Viruses

- ☐ Hepatitis A virus
- ☐ Norwalk agents
- ☐ Rotavirus

Protozoa

- ☐ *Entamoeba hisolytica*
- ☐ *Giardia lamblia*

Helminths

- ☐ *Taenia saginata and T. solium*
- ☐ *Trichinella spiralis*
- ☐ *Trichuris trichiura*

Chemicals

- ☐ Pesticide residues
- ☐ Veterinary drug residues
- ☐ Heavy metals and other chemicals e.g. lead, mercury, zinc, copper etc.
- ☐ Additives
- ☐ Any others, please specify _____ _____

Mycotoxins

- ☐ Aflatoxins
- ☐ Fumonisins
- ☐ Ochratoxin
- ☐ Zearalenone
- ☐ Any others, please specify _____ _____

Human resources and training requirements

Information on human resources and training requirements can be obtained by consulting key officials from the key ministries and agencies involved in food control.

63. What categories of personnel are involved in food safety and food control?

(a) Food Inspection

- ☐ Health inspectors
- ☐ Food inspectors
- ☐ Veterinary officers
- ☐ Meat inspectors
- ☐ Supervisory staff
- ☐ Environmental Health Officers
- ☐ Others, please specify_____ _____

(b) Laboratory services:

- ☐ Chemists
- ☐ Technician chemists
- ☐ Microbiologists
- ☐ Others (please specify)_____ _____

(c) Epidemiological services

- ☐ Epidemiologist
- ☐ Disease control officers
- ☐ Public health nurses
- ☐ Public health physicians
- ☐ Environmental Health Officers
- ☐ Others (please specify)

(c) Health Education: ☐

(d) Standards officers: ☐

64. What are the educational and training requirements for them?

Categories of personnel involved in food safety and food control	**Education and training requirements**
Food inspection Health inspectors Food inspectors Veterinary officers Meat inspectors Supervisory staff Others:	
Laboratory services Chemists Technician chemists Microbiologists Others:	
Epidemiological services Epidemiologist Disease control officers Public health nurses Public health physicians Others:	
Health education	
Standards officers	

65. Are there provisions for continuing education, and periodic assessments of country capacity building needs?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Extension and advisory services to the food industry and trade

Information on extension and advisory services can be obtained by consulting key officials from the key ministries and agencies involved in food control.

66. Does government provide extension and advisory services to the food industry:

(a) Food producers	Yes ☐	No ☐
(b) Processors	Yes ☐	No ☐
(c) Retailers	Yes ☐	No ☐
(d) Transporters	Yes ☐	No ☐

67. Do nongovernmental organizations provide extension and advisory services to the food industry?

(a) Food producers	Yes ☐	No ☐
(b) Processors	Yes ☐	No ☐
(c) Retailers	Yes ☐	No ☐
(d) Transporters	Yes ☐	No ☐

68. Are training courses conducted for:

(a) Managers/owners of food establishments? ☐
(b) Farm managers ☐
(b) Food handlers? ☐
(c) Distributors ☐
(e) Others, please specify _____ ☐

Primary food production

Information on primary food production can be obtained by collecting key documents on food production and consumption.

69. What is the estimated total production of the following foods?

(i)	Cereals	:_____ (T)
(ii)	Fats/oils	:_____ (T)
(iii)	Meat, poultry, eggs	:_____ (T)
(iv)	Fish	:_____ (T)
(v)	Pulses and legumes	:_____ (T)
(vi)	Sugar	:_____ (T)
(vii)	Fruits and vegetables	:_____ (T)
(viii)	Milk and milk products	:_____ (T)
(ix)	Others, please specify	:_____ (T)

70. What is the volume of national production going into exports?

(i) Cereals : _____ (T)
(ii) Fats/oils : _____ (T)
(iii) Meat, poultry, eggs : _____ (T)
(iv) Fish : _____ (T)
(v) Pulses and legumes : _____ (T)
(vi) Sugar : _____ (T)
(vii) Fruits and vegetables : _____ (T)
(viii) Milk and milk products : _____ (T)
(ix) Others, please specify : _____ (T)

71. What are the main production problems?

_____
_____

72. Are there associations for primary producers?

_____
_____

73. Do primary producers receive technical assistance on food safety?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Food manufacturing firms

Information on food manufacturing firms can be obtained by collecting key documents as well as interviews with key officials in charge of manufacturing firms.

74. Describe country food manufacturing firms as follows:

(a) Number:_____

(b) Ownership:

Nationalized ☐
Domestic ☐
Foreign owners ☐

(c) Size distribution in number of employees and turnover:_____
_____

(d) Characteristics of main exporting firms: _____
_____

(e) Proportion of employees with relevant technical knowledge related to food safety and quality:
_____

(f) Participation in training programmes:

Yes ☐ No ☐

75. Does the food industry have knowledge of GHP, GMP, HACCP, Quality assurance, certification and other food safety requirements?

(i) Food producers GHP	Yes ☐	No ☐
Other food safety requirements	Yes ☐	No ☐
(ii) Processors GMP	Yes ☐	No ☐
GHP	Yes ☐	No ☐
HACCP	Yes ☐	No ☐
Quality assurance certification	Yes ☐	No ☐
Other food safety requirements	Yes ☐	No ☐
(iii) Retailers HACCP	Yes ☐	No ☐
Other food safety requirements	Yes ☐	No ☐

(iv) Transporters GHP Yes ☐ No ☐
HACCP Yes ☐ No ☐
Other food safety requirements Yes ☐ No ☐

76. What are the recent/common food safety incidents?

_____
_____

77. What are the characteristics and main safety problems associated with food micro-enterprises?

_____
_____

78. What are the characteristics and main safety problems associated with street vended food?

_____
_____

79. What is the relationship between food manufacturing/processing firms and national regulatory authorities or other agencies/NGO concerning food safety and quality?

_____
_____

80. Do food manufacturing/processing firms receive any training and assistance provided

Yes ☐ No ☐

81. What are the main concerns of food firms regarding the national food control system (such as costs of compliance with legislation, food inspection etc)?

_____
_____

82. Describe the relationship between food manufacturing firms and primary producers with regard to safety and quality of commodity supplies?

_____
_____

83. Describe the relationship between food manufacturing firms and the transport sector, retail sector as well as other stakeholders in the food chain regarding food safety and quality matters?

_____
_____

Food imports and exports

Information on food imports and exports can be obtained by collecting key documents as well as interviews with key officials from key government ministries and agencies in charge of food imports and exports.

84. What is the volume of the following foods imported into the country?

(a) Cereals : _____ T/Year
(b) Fats/oils : _____ T/Year
(c) Meat, poultry, eggs : _____ T/Year
(d) Fish : _____ T/Year
(e) Pulse and legumes : _____ T/Year
(f) Sugar : _____ T/Year
(g) Fruits and vegetables : _____ T/Year
(h) Milk and milk products : _____ T/Year
(i) Others, please specify : _____ T/Year

85. What are the main food imports in terms of quantity and value, and the countries from which they are imported?

Product	Quantity (T)	Value (USD)	Countries

86. What mechanism exists for monitoring food imports?

_____
_____
_____

87. What are the main food safety and quality problems encountered with the country's imports?

_____
_____
_____

88. What controls related to food safety and quality are in place for food imports and exports and which Ministries, departments or agencies are in charge?

_____
_____

89. Are there analytical tests and data concerning these imported foods?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐ If yes give details_____

_____

90. Which standards are used for accepting/rejecting these imported foods?

_____
_____

91. How much food is rejected by importing countries and what is its value?

Product	Quantity (T)	Value(US$)

92. How is the rejected food disposed of?

_____
_____
_____

93. How do imported foods compete economically with locally produced foods?

(i) Rice _____
(ii) Raw Meat _____
(iii) Fruits and Vegetables _____

94. Why do they compete with locally produced foods?

_____
_____

95. What are the main food exports in terms of quantity and value, and the major countries to which they are exported?

Product	Quantity (T)	Value (US$)	Countries

96. What are the present food safety and quality standards implemented for the existing exports?

_____
_____

97. What are the present food safety and quality problems encountered by foreign buyers with the country's food exports?

_____
_____
_____

98. Presently are there any significant product rejection problems?

Yes:☐ No: ☐

99. Within the past two years, how much food has been rejected and what is its value?

Product	Quantity (T)	Value (US$)

100. Have economic studies been carried out concerning these obstacles and how to circumvent them?

Yes☐ No☐ If yes list studies_____
_____

101. What is the mechanism for the collection and dissemination of information on food exports rejected by foreign buyers?

_____
_____
_____

102. What food safety and quality standards and requirements (Codex, international, national, retailers, NGO.) are likely to be requested in the future?

_____
_____

103. Are the exporting sectors aware of the standards?

Yes ☐ No ☐

104. Do the exporting sectors have a pro-active strategy for meeting the requested standards?

Yes ☐ No ☐

105. What are the main problems for meeting the up-coming requirements in terms of knowledge, facilities, investment capital, training, running costs, government and fiscal support?

_____
_____

Research

Information on research can be obtained through interviews with key officials from research institutions including universities. **For each of the following collect copies of reports and publications if available:**

106. Are there studies on traditional food preparation/transformation techniques indicating beneficial/detrimental effects on food safety and quality (in particular research on safe food storage methods to reduce food losses and improve food safety?

Yes ☐ No ☐

107. Is research being carried out on the safety of uncooked foods, cooked foods including street foods and foods sold in restaurants?

(i) Uncooked foods	Yes ☐	No ☐
(ii) Cooked foods including street foods	Yes ☐	No ☐
(iii) Foods sold in restaurants	Yes ☐	No ☐

108. Is research being carried out on the burden of foodborne diseases?

Yes ☐ No ☐

109. Is there collaborative food research on a national, regional and/or international basis?

Yes ☐ No ☐

110. Are the university facilities and human resources being used by the national institutions in charge of food safety and quality, and food control?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Consumer education and participation

Information on consumer education and participation can be obtained through interviews with key officials and persons such as leaders of food control agencies; agriculture, health, education ministries; and consumer organizations. Additional information may be obtained through the collection of existing IEC materials, as well as studies on IEC.

111. Is there a food safety and quality information and communication policy?

Yes ☐ No ☐

112. What are the specific programmes for public education?

_____
_____

113. How is the community involved in food safety activities and how are they funded?

_____
_____
_____

114. Is there a system for grievances on food safety and economic fraud?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, Please specify _____
_____

115. Is food safety a part of the school curriculum at:

(i) Primary/basic level?
Yes ☐ No ☐

(ii Secondary level?
Yes ☐ No ☐

(iii) Tertiary level?
Yes ☐ No ☐

116. Are there national, regional, district consumer organizations?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If so, what role (if any) do these groups play with regards to food safety and quality?
_____
_____

117. What are the structures of consumer groups for monitoring the safety and quality of foods?

_____
_____

118. Are there any studies on the general level of awareness and knowledge among consumers about food safety and quality?

_____
_____

119. What are the main concerns of consumers with regard to the safety and quality of food produced locally, imported foods, etc.?

_____
_____
_____
_____

120. To what extent are these concerns addressed by the government and/or the food industry?

_____
_____

121. Which government agencies are involved in the production of IEC activities and materials?

_____
_____

122. Which government agencies are involved in the delivery of IEC activities and materials?

_____
_____

123. What kinds of IEC materials related to food safety and quality are currently produced and disseminated in the country?

_____
_____
_____
_____

TABLE VIII: Inventory of Food Safety and Quality IEC Materials

Type of IEC material (i.e. leaflet, video, poster)	**Focus** (topics addressed)	**Target Audience**	**Organizations responsible for preparation and/or delivery**	**Date of production**

TABLE VIII - i: Stakeholder Analysis for Food Safety and Quality IEC

Information Providers*	**Target Audience/Potential Users****

Note: * Information providers could include organizations at the central, regional and local level such as government ministries and line departments (agriculture, health, trade etc.); food inspectorates; universities, schools and colleges; research institutes; laboratories; NGOs; development projects, etc.

**** Target audiences and potential audiences of IEC activities and materials could include consumers and their organizations; grassroots groups, community organizations, women's groups, health workers, agricultural extension officers; food industry and industry associations; food producers, processors, traders, retailers, market stall keepers; eating places and street food vendors; the media; etc.**

Annex 2: Sample Terms of Reference for Consultants Assessing National Food Safety Programmes

INTRODUCTION

Food safety is an integral part of food security and is defined as protecting the food supply from microbial, chemical and physical hazards that may occur during all stages of food production, including growing, harvesting, processing, transportation, retailing, distribution, preparing, storing and consumption, in order to prevent foodborne illness.

In the African Region, the majority of consumers are only concerned with satisfying hunger and do not give due attention to the safety of food. Outbreaks of cholera, foodborne zoonotic diseases and chemical contamination of food from pesticides are of concern. The inadequate coordination between ministries and agencies, overlap of mandate of food regulatory authorities, and the lack of national policy on food safety has compounded the problem.

Policy development and implementation would reduce the burden of foodborne diseases in the country. A national food safety policy would provide a basis for the establishment of national safety objectives and requirements, and guidance for application to specific sectors of the food chain, that is, from farm to fork. In view of this, the Ministry of Health may lead the development of a national food safety policy with relevant ministries, departments, agencies and partners. The aim of the policy formulation process is to identify and recommend a policy for the long-term management and control of food safety that commands consumer confidence and ensures public health.

The development and implementation of a national policy is a complex process that needs to be grounded in firm and informed analysis of the issues at hand. The first phase of the policy formulation process will therefore involve a detailed analysis of food hygiene and food safety programmes in the country.

The situation analysis should be holistic and broad-based capturing both existing and emerging trends as well as dynamics influencing food safety at each stage of the food chain. Considering the fact that food safety management and control are shared responsibilities of many institutions and agencies, the analysis should take into account the relevance and failures of other sectoral policies. The specific objectives of the situation analysis are outlined below.

OBJECTIVES

(a) Analyse the food safety situation.
(b) Outline the burden of foodborne diseases and the surveillance system in place for its monitoring.
(c) Identify and describe the systems and capacity in place for the production of safe food.
(d) Review laws and regulations as well as the enforcement of them.
(e) Identify all the stakeholders that play a role in ensuring food safety.
(f) Identify gaps, overlaps and make relevant recommendation for the development of a national food policy.

CONSULTANCY TEAM

The consultancy team may consist of four consultants: (i) one senior scientist to conduct a desk review of all existing literature on food safety and to be the lead person for the preparation of the situation analysis document; (ii) one microbiologist, biochemist or similar technician to evaluate laboratory infrastructure; (iii) one food scientist, food technologist or similar technician to evaluate the institutional set-up of food safety; (iv) one lawyer to review the laws, legislation, and bye-laws in the country.

The consultancy team is required to work in collaboration with the technical task team in producing a situation analysis of food hygiene and food safety in the country. The consultants will be responsible for carrying out the specific tasks outlined in the following paragraphs.

Specific tasks

1. Senior scientist, team leader

Acting as the team leader, the senior scientist will have the following tasks:

(a) Conduct a desk review of all previous studies and evaluation exercises of foodborne diseases, food hygiene and food safety issues in the country. The focus should be on microbiology and official food control laboratories including public health laboratories, food standards, legislation and institutional frameworks, food inspection services, food safety information, education and communication and any other issues associated with food contamination.

(b) Validate the data/information collected by the other consultants and collate the work.

(c) Analyse the information collected, identifying strengths and weaknesses, with special emphasis on policy issues and present it in a form that can be readily understood by all.

(d) Prepare a draft report on the situation of food hygiene and food safety programmes in the country and submit the report to the task team for review.

(e) Revise the draft report to incorporate comments from the task team.

(f) Present findings of the draft report at a stakeholder validation workshop. The workshop will have the objectives of:

  (i) Orientating partners and stakeholders on the situation analysis report;

  (ii) Present and discuss the findings of the draft situation analysis report;

  (iii) Obtain specific input from participants;

  (iv) Reach a consensus on the report, its findings, conclusions and policy recommendations.

(g) Revise and finalize the draft report using the comments from the stakeholder validation workshop.

(h) Make recommendations and identify key issues for policy formulation.

Qualifications:

(a) Postgraduate degree in food science and technology, and/or nutrition, microbiology, food chemistry and biochemistry; or medical or veterinary and at least a postgraduate diploma in the field of food safety.

(b) Must have at least 15 years working experience in the field of food safety and hygiene.

(c) The applicant should have preferably specific working experience in the issues defined for the duties/tasks mentioned above.

Skills and competencies:

(a) Considerable interest and practical experience in food safety and public health.

(b) Good communication, negotiation, planning skills and team coordination.

(c) Excellent writing and analytical skills.

2. Microbiologist or biochemist, or similar technician

The microbiologist or biochemist will do the following:

(a) Collect data and collate relevant information on laboratory capacities for food testing in the country using the tool for conducting evaluation of country food safety situation.

(b) Assess human, financial and material resources and identify related gaps as well as needs of food control laboratories, including public health laboratories.

(c) Prepare and submit to the team leader a synthesized report and analysis of the capacity and efficacy of food control laboratories including epidemiological and foodborne disease surveillance.

(d) Collaborate with the other consultants in the team to address key multi-faceted issues.

(e) Conduct additional tasks as will be required by the team leader in preparation for a stakeholder validation workshop on the findings of the preliminary/draft situation analysis report.

Qualifications:

The applicant should have preferably specific working experience in the issues defined for the duties/tasks mentioned above. Postgraduate degree in microbiology, biochemistry, food chemistry or related field and must have at least 10 years working experience in the field.

Skills and competencies:

(a) Considerable interest and practical experience in food safety and public health.
(b) Good communication, negotiation, and planning skills as well as ability to work on a team.
(c) Excellent writing and analytical skills will be an advantage.

3. Food scientist, food technologist or similar technician

The specific tasks of the food scientist will include the following:

(a) Using the tool for conducting evaluation of country food safety situation, conduct an institutional analysis of the key institutions and agencies involved in food safety with a focus on:
    - their roles and mandates,
    - inter-agency coordinative mechanisms related to food safety administration and enforcement.
(b) Collect data and assess the current situation of food safety information, education and communication (IEC) in the country, including the ministries, agencies, and institutions involved in IEC activities, and major gaps as well as needs in existing food safety IEC programmes.
(c) Assess human and material resources as well as identify related needs of food inspection in the country including institutional set-up and organizations involved in food inspection.
(d) Prepare and submit to the team leader a synthesized report describing the current institutional framework for food control in the country, including food safety IEC and inspection capacities in the country.
(e) Collaborate with the other consultants on the team to address key multi-faceted and cross-cutting issues.
(f) Conduct additional tasks as required by the team leader in preparation for a stakeholder validation workshop on the findings of the preliminary/draft situation analysis report.

Qualifications:

The applicant should have preferably specific working experience in the issues defined for the duties/tasks mentioned above. Postgraduate degree in food science and technology, and/or nutrition and must have at least ten years working experience in the field.

Skills and competencies:

(a) Considerable interest and experience in food safety and public health.
(b) Good communication, negotiation, and planning skills as well as ability to work on a team.
(c) Excellent writing and analytical skills will be an advantage.

4. Lawyer with experience in food safety legislation, policy and standards

The specific tasks of the lawyer will include the following:

(a) Using the tool for evaluating the food safety situation in the country, conduct an inventory of existing policies, laws, regulations and other directives related to food safety as well as associated standards.
(b) Review and analyse the existing legal documents, identifying gaps and overlaps and extent to which the laws, regulations and standards meet or fail to meet current needs, challenges and requirements related to food safety and food control.
(c) Prepare and submit to the team leader a synthesized report and analysis of the existing regulatory and legislative frameworks for food safety in the country including their enforcement.
(d) Collaborate with the other consultants in the team to address multi-faceted and cross-cutting issues.

(e) Conduct additional tasks as required by the team leader in preparation for a stakeholder validation workshop on the findings of the preliminary/draft situation analysis report.

Qualifications:

The applicant should have preferably working experience in the food and agriculture sector or issues defined for the duties/tasks mentioned above. Must have a degree in law and at least ten years working experience preferably in food and agriculture.

Skills and competencies:

(a) Considerable interest and experience in food safety regulation, legislation and food law.

(b) Good communication, negotiation, and planning skills as well as ability to work on a team.

(c) Excellent writing and analytical skills will be an advantage.