



# **Overview of the Food Safety Strategy for Africa & African Food Safety Agency: Expected Roles and Interaction with African Food Regulators**

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1. Background
2. Relevant decisions of AU policy organs
3. Highlight of Food Safety Strategy for Africa
4. Introducing the Africa Food Safety Agency: roles, mandate, functions, structure
5. What FSSA and AFSA mean for African food regulators/role of African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum?

# Africa is disproportionately impacted by unsafe food and the status quo can't continue

- With an estimated 137,000 deaths annually, Africa bears one-third of the global mortality due to foodborne illness, with only 16% of world population
- Burden on African economies with estimated US\$16 billion in annual productivity loss alone
- Major African commitments - such as tripling intra-Africa trade, ending hunger, implementation of AfCFTA (trade in ag goods), Agenda 2063 - difficult to meet without addressing food safety challenges

# AU Policy Organs Major Decisions related to food safety

- **2007:** AU-EU Summit in 2007 in Lisbon - AUC to establish a Food Safety Authority within its structure and a Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)
- **2011:** AU Executive Council endorsed the Referential and Guideline developed under the Africa-EU BTSF Africa program
- **2012:** EX.CL. endorsed the decision of AU Joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture and Ministers of Trade to establish the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA)
- **2013:** AU-IBAR led MS consultation report submitted to the AUC with recommendations for an African Union Food Safety Management Coordination Mechanism (AUFSMCM), leading up to the establishment of a functional African Food Safety Authority at a future date.

# AU Policy Organs Major Decisions related to food safety (continued)

- **2019:** Announcement by the AUC Chairperson to establish AU Food Safety Agency at the FAO/WHO/AU First International Food Safety Conference
- **2019:** Scoping study on the value addition of the AU Food Safety Agency presented to AU STC on Agriculture Rural Development Water and Environment
- **2019:** Proposal to establish AFSA considered by AU STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment
- **2020:** AU Executive Council approved AFSA as a new STO in the new structure of the AUC
- **2020:** AU Ministers in charge of Agriculture, Trade and Finance committed to put in place trade facilitation measures, including mechanisms such as fast-tracking the establishment of the Africa Food Safety Agency
- **2022:** EX.CL requests AUC to develop structural, legal and financial implications of AFSA
- **2022:** EX.CL endorsed the Food Safety Strategy for Africa

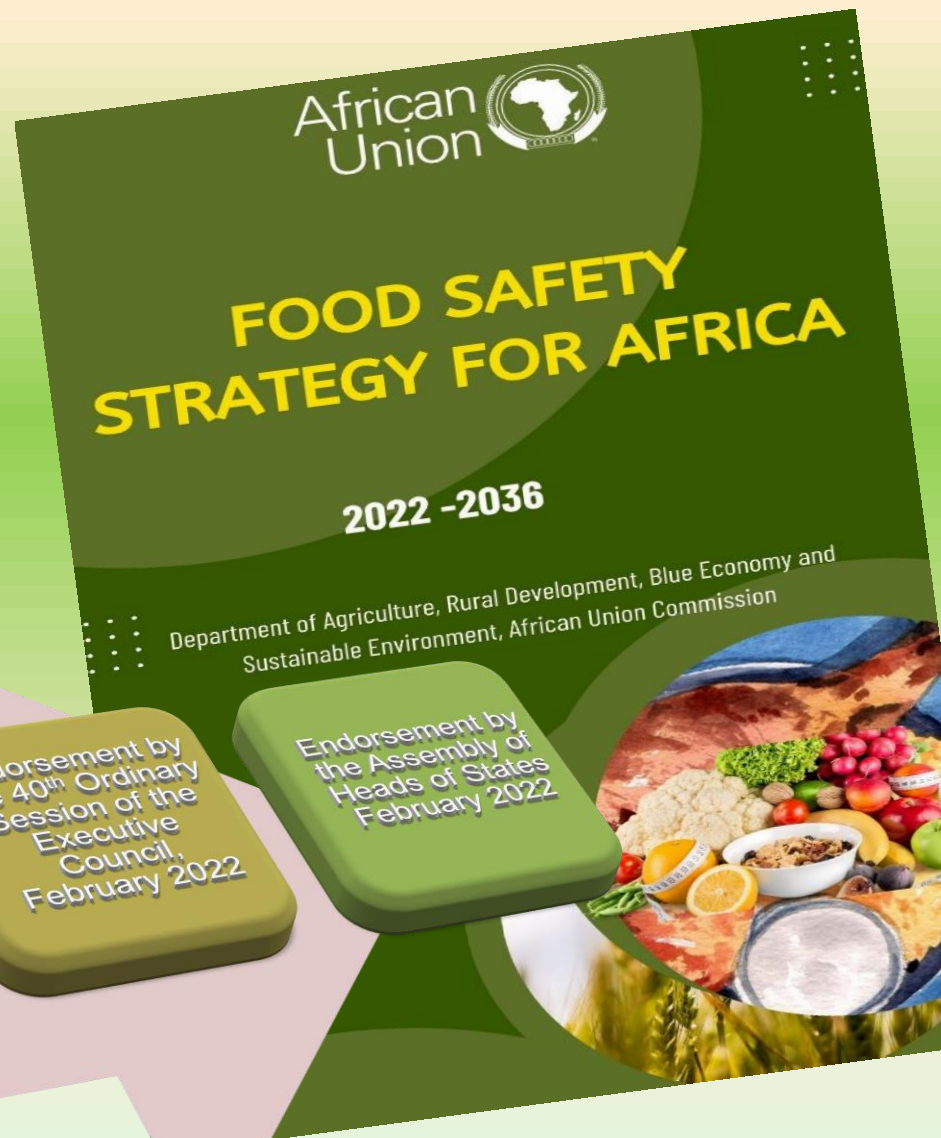
In 2021/22, Food Safety Strategy for Africa developed through inclusive, consultative process:

Technical discussions and validation from October 2020 – September 2021

Approval by the 4<sup>th</sup> Specialized Technical Committee on Agric, Rural Development, Water and Environment December 2021

Endorsement by the 40<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, February 2022

Endorsement by the Assembly of Heads of States February 2022



The product is a strategy that focuses on addressing continental food safety priorities using international best practices

# The Food Safety Strategy for Africa: Results Logic

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

## Expected Outcomes

Enhanced Consumer Protection

Increased Safe Food Trade

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

## Strategic Objectives

Strengthen capacity to manage food safety risks along the food value chain:

### SO 1

Strengthen food safety policy, legal and institutional frameworks

### SO 2

Strengthen the human and infrastructure capacity for food control systems

### SO 3

Promote food safety culture, evidence-based advocacy, communication, information and knowledge

### SO 4

Facilitate trade and market access at national, regional, continental and global levels

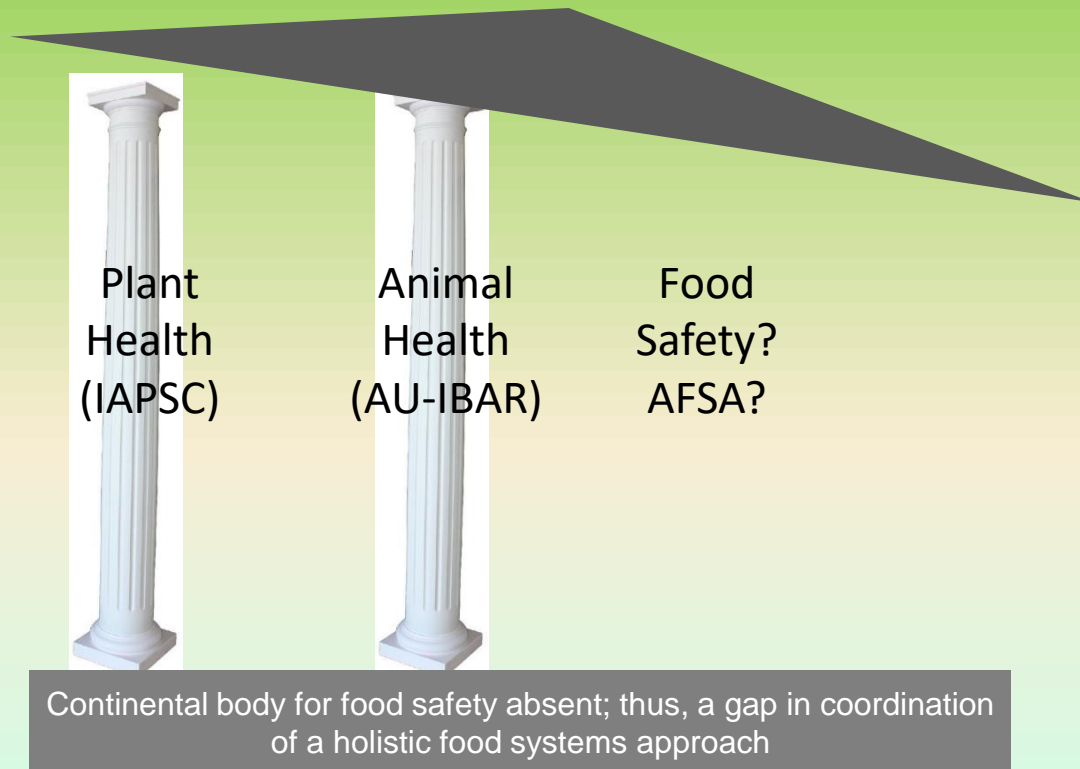
### SO 5

Strengthen research, innovation, technology development and transfer

### SO 6

Establish and strengthen coordination mechanisms and enhance cooperation and investments

# Overwhelming consensus on the need for a continental food safety agency: “the house needs one more pillar”





# Value Proposition of the AU Food Safety Agency

- Marshalling political will at continental level for legislative modernization and governance reform, especially to address regulatory fragmentation and overlap
- Enhancing the performance of food control systems in Africa through Evidence-based decision making: AU-FSA offering a “Data hub” for risk related information and a Centre of Expertise for food safety risk assessment in Africa
- Elevating consumer and industry awareness of food safety to generate demand for both legislative and governance reform and greater private sector priority investment.
- Complementing and strengthening the food safety coordination function of RECs by offering scientific and technical capacity to MS and RECs and striving towards a more coherent and harmonized food safety policy/approach at the continental level

# Mission and Mandate of AFSA

- **Mission:** to support agricultural transformation, safeguard consumer health and facilitate trade by catalyzing, coordinating and increasing food safety along the food continuum
- **Mandate:** to coordinate food safety initiatives, promote harmonization of food safety policies and provide technical support to address food safety issues along the food continuum
- **Scope:** AFSA will mainly focus on coordination, communication, advisory, and capacity building towards harmonized concepts, principles and procedures to allow AU Member States and food business operators to more effectively meet their respective food safety management obligations

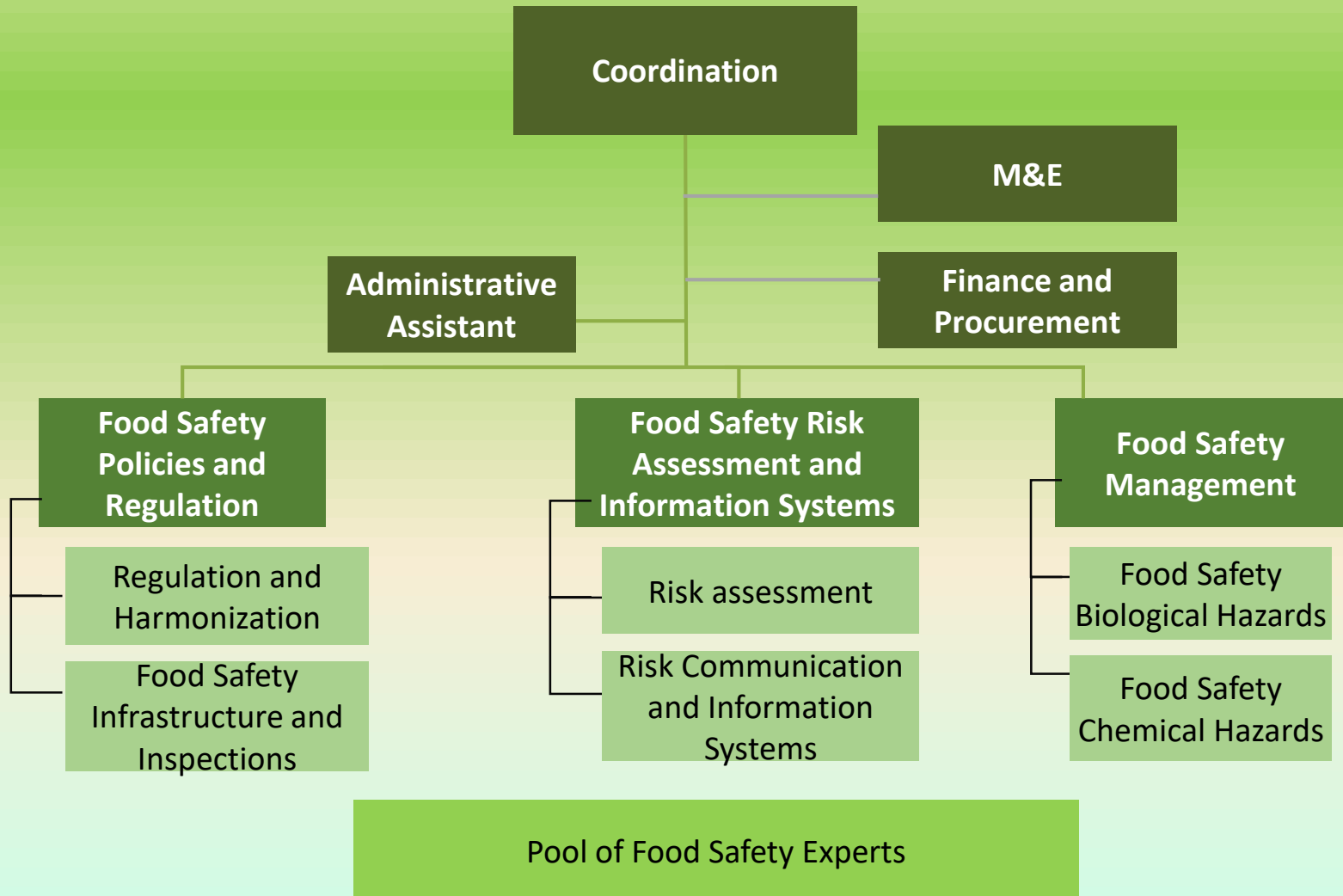
# Roles and Functions of AFSA

- Advocate, guide and support the modernization of national food policy, legislative and institutional frameworks
- Strengthen capacities for scientific advice and risk analysis in AU MS and RECs.
- Establish for the continent an operational African Rapid Alert system for Food and Feed
- Provide technical, and logistical support to laboratories that provide testing services for official controls of food safety
- Collaborate with relevant institutions to facilitate provision of certification services on food safety for food products for intra-African and global trade

# Roles and Functions of AFSA (cont.)

- Support and sustain the participation of AU MS in standard setting process and coordinate the African voice
- Coordinate the development and harmonization of requisite professional skills, knowledge and expertise for effective food control
- Advocate for investments and collaborate with relevant institutions to enhance the competitiveness of African food commodities and products

AFSA structure under consideration is very lean with 3 technical units for a holistic and effective delivery (RA and RM are split in 2 units):



# Role of Africa Food Regulatory Authorities Forum

- The focus of AFRAF, AFSA, REC and MS competent authorities should be on achieving functional partnerships/complementarity as modus operandi
- AFRAF will primarily serve as information exchange and collaboration platform among food competent authorities and other stakeholders
- AFRAF anticipated to serve as the general assembly of the AFSA with a business session dedicated to governance and strategic issues

# Main message:

- AU member states and continental organizations are increasingly prioritizing food safety given the heavy burden of unsafe foods
- AU actions in food safety have evolved towards concrete initiatives in the past decade
- The Food Safety Strategy for Africa is an inclusive document developed in a participatory manner
- Africa Food Safety Agency primarily meant to fill in gaps in coordination, marshalling buy in and capacity
- AFRAF would expedite the establishment of AFSA but also serve as accountability mechanism
- AFSA, AFRAF and other regional, sub-regional and member state initiatives should aim at partnership and complementarity in the interest of the continent

# Thank You



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