



African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum (AFRAF)

Working Group on

Risk-Based Food Regulatory Oversight

Terms of Reference

Background

- ❖ Effective food control systems increasingly rely on risk-based approaches to ensure proportionality, efficiency, and optimal use of limited regulatory resources. Across Africa, food regulatory authorities are at varying stages of developing and implementing risk-based inspection systems, food monitoring programs, and evidence-driven prioritization mechanisms.
- ❖ AFRAF members have identified a strong need for structured exchange of experience on how risk is applied in regulatory decision-making, particularly in areas such as food monitoring, inspection planning, surveillance activities, and oversight of food establishments.
- ❖ In response, the Second AFRAF Meeting (Cairo, December 2025) agreed to establish a dedicated Working Group on Risk-Based Food Regulatory Oversight.

Purpose

- ❖ The purpose of this Working Group is to promote coordination, peer exchange, and practical learning on the application of risk-based approaches in food regulatory oversight across African food authorities.
- ❖ The Working Group also aims to support the incremental development and implementation of food regulatory provisions related to the management of food production and handling establishments, using risk as the basis for regulatory intervention and prioritization. This includes, *inter alia*, the application of risk-based approaches to prerequisite programs (PRPs), preventive controls, inspection planning, and the management of imported foods.

Scope of Work

The Working Group shall support:

- Identification of challenges and enabling factors for implementing risk-based oversight in African regulatory contexts;

- Identification of priority areas where guidance is needed on food regulatory provisions for food establishment management, using risk as a guiding principle;
- Leveraging Codex Alimentarius guidance to inform the development of tailored regulatory provisions on food safety management by African food regulators;
- Exchange of national experiences on risk-based inspection and control systems, including the development of practical guidance to support new or emerging adopters;
- Sharing of practices related to food monitoring, data generation, and the use of evidence to inform regulatory decisions;
- Promotion of understanding and application of Codex risk analysis principles;
- Exploration of opportunities for regional or sub-regional cooperation on food monitoring, surveillance, and data-sharing initiatives.

Governance and Coordination

- The Working Group operates under AFRAF, with strategic oversight provided by the AFRAF Steering Committee.
- A Lead Authority (Chair) and a Co-Lead Authority (Co-Chair) shall be designated on a voluntary basis and endorsed by the Steering Committee.
- External technical expertise may be invited to contribute to specific activities where relevant.

Membership

- Membership is open and voluntary to AFRAF member authorities.
- Participation is expertise-driven and technical in nature.
- Observers may be invited where appropriate, subject to agreement within the Working Group.

Expected Outputs

Indicative outputs of the Working Group may include:

- Compilations of risk-based oversight practices, including newly developed guidance concepts for food regulators to consider in national regulatory development (e.g. PRPs, preventive controls);
- Proposed regional guidance concepts that could be further developed and propagated through CCAFRICA and other relevant mechanisms;
- Practical technical notes on food monitoring, inspection prioritization, and risk-based oversight models;
- Proposals for collaborative pilots, peer exchanges, or technical cooperation initiatives.

All outputs are non-binding and intended to support national and regional regulatory strengthening efforts.

Duration and Review

The Working Group is established for an initial two-year period, subject to review by the AFRAF Steering Committee.