



AFRAF: Expert Working Group on Regulatory Transformation to Support Food Innovation in Africa

24-25 June 2026 • Skyline Ballroom, Le Méridien Cairo Airport, Cairo

1. Purpose and Strategic Context

Africa possesses a rich diversity of traditional food ingredients and botanicals with strong potential for value-added innovation, regional trade, and contribution to health and nutrition. However, the regulatory treatment of innovative food ingredients, traditional products, extracts, and associated claims remains fragmented across jurisdictions, often creating barriers to innovation, investment, and market access.

This inaugural meeting is designed to serve as the launch event for the AFRAF Expert Working Group on Regulatory Transformation to Support Food Innovation. It aims to initiate a structured regional dialogue on the modernization of food regulatory systems in Africa, with a focus on enabling innovation while ensuring consumer protection and science-based oversight. It will be preceded by an open training program outlining the requirements for “innovation-ready food regulatory systems” destined primarily to African food competent authorities.

This first meeting of the Expert Working Group will bring together food regulatory authorities, among AFRAF members, who has volunteered to be part of the Expert Working Group, in response to the call for membership from the AFRAF Secretariat. It will also include experts from food industry academia, and international partners with the aim to:

- Establish a shared understanding of food innovation in the African context.
- Review current regulatory approaches and identify key gaps and irritants.
- Explore lessons from other regions and discuss their applicability to Africa.
- Identify priority traditional ingredients and innovation areas for future collaborative work.
- Define initial pathways toward more innovation-ready and science-based regulatory systems in Africa.

2. Core Objectives

- ❖ Map existing regulatory approaches, gaps, and challenges related to innovative and traditional ingredients in Africa, across African jurisdictions,
- ❖ Raise awareness on the importance of adaptive, predictable, and science-based regulatory systems, through learning from other global jurisdictions e.g., Asian jurisdictions,
- ❖ Identify priority regulatory irritants affecting market access and innovation,
- ❖ Establish initial directions for future AFRAF collaborative work on food innovation.

DAY 1: 24 JUNE 2026

8:30-9:30	Registration
9:30-11:00	<p>Opening Session: Introduction of the AFRAF Initiative and Setting the Scene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Dr. Tareq El-Houby, Chairman of the National Food Safety Authority in Egypt (NFSA)</i> ○ <i>Dr. Khaled Soufi, Chairman of the Egyptian Standardization and Quality (EOS), President of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)</i> ○ <i>Ms. Rana Gamali, Vice Chair of the Egyptian Food Industries Chamber and Chairwomen of the Businesswomen Committee at the Federation of Egyptian Industries</i> ○ <i>Dr. Mamodou Bah, Director General Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA), The Gambia, and Coordinator for Africa, Chair of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA)</i> ○ <i>Dr. Gabor Molnar, Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO</i> ○ <i>Prof. Aman Wirakartakusumah, Immediate Past President of International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST), Rector of IPMI Institute, Indonesia</i> ▪ Setting The Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Prof. Samuel Godefroy, Professor, Food Risk Analysis and Regulatory Policies, Laval University, Quebec, Canada; President GForSS; President IUFoST</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduction and Overview of the AFRAF Working Group – Scope and Vision of the Initiative – The Strategic Importance of Food Innovation for Africa – Valorization of traditional ingredients – Economic and trade opportunities – Role of regulatory systems in enabling innovation ▪ Introduction of Participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self introduction and review of objectives from participation ▪ Group Photo
11:00-11:30	Health Break

DAY 1: 24 JUNE 2026**Session 1: 11:30- 13:00****Training Session on Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory Environments**

Objective: To review and discuss the key principles underpinning innovation-ready food regulatory environments, drawing on internationally recognized good regulatory practices, including relevant OECD approaches and experiences from OECD member countries. The training will focus on the development of predictable, science-based, and risk-proportionate food regulatory systems grounded in food risk analysis that support responsible food innovation while maintaining consumer protection and public confidence.

The training will further examine practical approaches for managing uncertainty and emerging risks associated with innovative foods, ingredients, and technologies, through the review of international best practices and the promotion of constructive collaboration between public authorities, academia, and private-sector stakeholders.

- **Module 1 — Foundations of Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory Systems**
 - Defining innovation-ready regulation
 - Principles of good regulatory practice
 - International and OECD approaches and experiences
- **Module 2 — Risk Analysis and Predictable Regulatory Pathways**
 - Science-based and risk-proportionate decision-making
 - Role of risk assessment, risk management, and risk communication
 - Regulatory predictability, transparency, and clear data requirements
- **Module 3 — Managing Emerging Risks and Regulatory Uncertainty**
 - Regulatory approaches for innovative foods, ingredients, and technologies
 - Addressing uncertainty and evolving scientific evidence
 - Balancing innovation support with consumer protection
- **Module 4 — International Practices and Collaborative Approaches to Manage Innovative Ingredients and Claims**
 - Selected case studies from international jurisdictions
 - Regulatory reliance and use of existing scientific assessments
 - Strengthening collaboration between public and private stakeholders

Session 2: 13:00- 14:00**Review of Regulatory Frameworks Supporting Food Innovation in Africa – Sharing Experiences**

Objective: To review current regulatory approaches related to innovative food ingredients, traditional products, and associated claims across African jurisdictions and identify common challenges and opportunities.

13:00 14:00**Country Perspectives and Current Practices**

- **Presentations from selected African jurisdictions covering:**
 - Regulation of novel foods and innovative ingredients
 - Treatment of traditional ingredients and botanicals
 - Claims frameworks and substantiation approaches
 - Existing pathways for market authorization
 - Key challenges and limitations
- **Possible participating jurisdictions:**
 - Egypt, Nigeria, Tanzania, Morocco, Ghana, South Africa, and other AFRAF member countries

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<p>14:00-14:30</p>	<p>Moderated Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Topics for discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key similarities and divergences across jurisdictions ○ Regulatory gaps affecting innovation ○ Market access impediments ○ Opportunities for greater cooperation and harmonization ○ Areas requiring guidance or technical support
<p>14:30-15:30</p>	<p>Lunch Break (provided)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Session 3: 15:30-17:30</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Learning from Other Regions and Exploring Pathways for Regulatory Transformation</p> <p><i>Objective: To explore lessons from innovation-ready regulatory systems in other regions and discuss their applicability within the African context.</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comparative Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lessons from Asia Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory Systems Initiative ○ International approaches to innovation-enabling regulation ○ Emerging practices for novel ingredients and claims ○ Regulatory cooperation and reliance models ▪ Moderated Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applicability to African regulatory environments ○ Opportunities for regional collaboration ○ Potential mechanisms for scientific cooperation and knowledge sharing ▪ Expected Outputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identification of transferable practices. ○ Initial reflections on collaborative approaches for Africa. 	

DAY 2: 25 JUNE 2026**9:30-10:00 Recap and Orientation**

- Summary of Day 1 Outcomes

Session 4: 10:00- 11:30**Identifying Opportunities to Address Regulatory Barriers Affecting Food Innovation and Market Access in Africa**

Objective: To review and discuss key regulatory challenges affecting food innovation and market access in Africa, including issues related to product classification, predictability of approval processes, claims substantiation requirements, and duplicative regulatory procedures across jurisdictions. The session will also provide an overview of emerging food innovation trends and examples of innovative products and ingredients relevant to African markets.

Through the review of a practical regulatory example, participants will examine approaches used internationally for the regulation of novel and functional ingredients, the consideration of traditional history of use, the scientific substantiation of claims, and the implementation of risk-proportionate authorization pathways and regulatory reliance mechanisms. The session aims to encourage reflection on practical opportunities to support more predictable, science-based, and innovation-supportive food regulatory environments in Africa.

- **Food Innovation and Regulatory Challenges in Africa**
 - **Common regulatory challenges affecting innovation and market access such as**
 - Unclear product classification
 - Limited predictability of approval processes
 - Complex or inconsistent claims requirements
 - Duplicative administrative requirements across jurisdictions
 - **Overview of emerging food innovation trends in Africa**
 - **Examples of innovative products and ingredients**
- **Review of a Practical Regulatory Example**
 - **Review and discussion of a selected example illustrating:**
 - Regulatory approaches for novel and functional ingredients
 - Management of products with traditional history of use
 - Approaches to scientific substantiation of claims
 - Risk-proportionate authorization pathways
- **Regulatory reliance and use of existing assessments**

11:30-12:00 Health Break**Session 5: 12:00- 14:00****Strengthening Regional Collaboration for Food Innovation in Africa**

Objective: To discuss practical opportunities for strengthening food regulatory systems in Africa to better support responsible food innovation through greater regulatory clarity, predictability, transparency, and science-based decision-making. The session will explore approaches to enhance regional cooperation, regulatory reliance, and consistency in the regulation of innovative foods, ingredients, and associated claims.

DAY 2: 25 JUNE 2026

Discussions will also consider the potential development of regional guidance for African food regulators, including possible future work under CCAFRICA, to support more harmonized and predictable approaches for the assessment and management of innovative ingredients and claims. The session will conclude with reflections on priority areas for future collaboration, technical work, and capacity building.

- **Opportunities for More Innovation-Ready Regulatory Approaches**

- **Discussion of practical opportunities to:**

- Improve regulatory clarity and predictability
- Enhance transparency of requirements and procedures
- Encourage regional cooperation and reliance approaches
- Support proportionate, science-based decision-making
- Develop guidance for African food regulators on a consistent approach to regulate innovative ingredients and claims e.g., through a CCAFRICA guideline

- **Key Reflections and Next Steps**

- Identification of priority areas for future work
- Reflections from participants
- Possible areas for regional collaboration and capacity building

14:00-15:00**Lunch Break** (provided)**Session 6: 15:00- 17:00****Regulatory Transformation and the Path Forward for Africa**

Objective: To consolidate outcomes from the meeting and define initial pathways for continued AFRAF collaboration toward more innovation-ready food regulatory systems in Africa. The session will further examine opportunities for the development of regional guidance aligned with Codex principles. Discussions will also explore practical mechanisms enabling African food regulators to make use of third-party scientific assessments and regulatory reliance approaches, while maintaining national decision-making authority, including a possible pathway for the development of a CCAFRICA guideline on regulating novel ingredients to be used by African Food Competent Authorities aiming for more convergence and consistency.

- **Identification of Regulatory Challenges Where Regional Cooperation and Guidance Can be Most Effective**

- **Conformation of Priority regulatory challenges**
- **Discussion of areas requiring regional cooperation**
- **Possible development of Codex-aligned regional guidance under AFRAF/CCAFRICA offering support to food regulators in Africa to address:**
 - Safety assessment considerations
 - Claims substantiation
 - Opportunities for reliance on existing assessments
- **Identification of possible approaches for future AFRAF pilot work**

3. Key Outputs



Initial AFRAF Roadmap for Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory Systems

Including:

- Mapping of current regulatory approaches in Africa
- Short-term priorities
- Medium-term collaboration opportunities
- Future meetings and capacity-building activities
- Areas for regional cooperation and harmonization



Proposal of the Establishment of an AFRAF Food Innovation Regulatory Network

Including:

- A network of African regulators and scientific experts
- Regular technical exchanges
- Information-sharing mechanisms
- Future collaboration on innovation-related regulatory issues