







Expert Working Group on
REGULATORY TRANSFORMATION
 To Support
FOOD INNOVATION IN AFRICA
 • Inaugural Meeting •

CAIRO EGYPT 24-25 JUNE 2026
 Le Méridien - Cairo Airport - Skyline Ballroom

Organized by:



EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON REGULATORY TRANSFORMATION TO SUPPORT FOOD INNOVATION IN AFRICA

*Building Innovation-Ready
Food Regulatory Systems for Africa*

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Setting the Stage

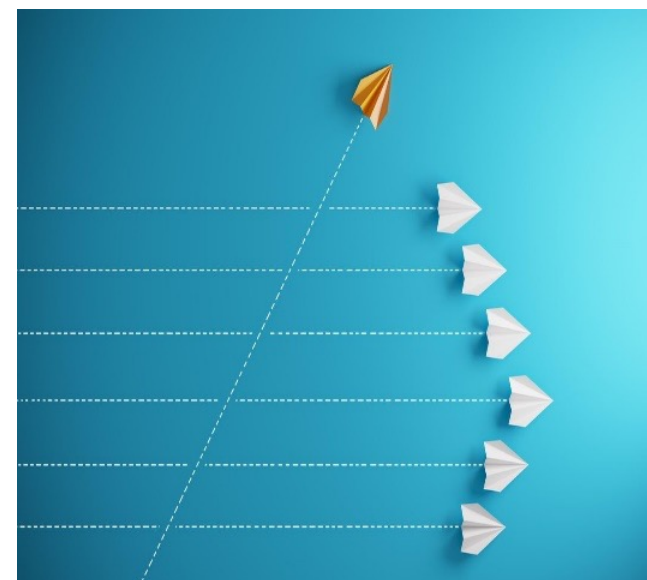


SETTING THE STAGE: DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Food Innovation is Accelerating Globally and Regionally

□ Drivers:

- Population growth and urbanization
- Climate change and food system resilience
- Nutrition and public health challenges
- Demand for sustainable food production
- Digitalization and scientific advances
- Growing consumer interest in health-promoting foods





FRAMING THE ISSUE: AN EVOLVING INNOVATION SPACE

□ Emerging Areas

- Functional ingredients
- Botanical extracts
- Traditional ingredients in new applications
- Precision fermentation
- Alternative proteins
- Bioactive compounds



Food innovation is no longer a niche activity—it is becoming a strategic component of food security, nutrition, economic development, and sustainability.



WHY FOOD INNOVATION MATTERS IN AFRICA

Africa's Opportunity

Africa Possesses:

- Rich biodiversity
- Unique traditional foods
- Valuable indigenous knowledge
- Expanding consumer markets
- Growing scientific capacity
- Emerging food industries

Examples:

- Moringa
- Fonio
- Baobab
- Hibiscus
- Teff
- Indigenous botanicals
- Traditional fermentation systems





EXPECTED BENEFITS

- ✓ Value addition
- ✓ SME development
- ✓ Rural economic growth
- ✓ Export opportunities
- ✓ Improved nutrition
- ✓ Increased competitiveness



Key Message

Africa can become a source of food innovation, not merely a recipient of innovations developed elsewhere.



THE CURRENT REALITY: ONE INGREDIENT – DIFFERENT PATHWAYS OF ACCESS TO MARKET

- ❑ Same ingredient → different pace of market access / regulatory approval – including possible divergence in regulatory outcomes across countries of Africa
- ❑ Same claim → accepted in some jurisdictions, rejected in others
- ❑ Limited access to existing scientific assessments
- ❑ Duplication of effort across regulatory systems
- ❑ Absence of Regulatory Awareness in relation with Innovative Ingredients, Processes and Claims



Result

Regulatory uncertainty

Increased costs

Duplication of effort

Delayed market access

Reduced investment confidence



THE REGULATORY CHALLENGE

- Identification of Products, Ingredients, Processes and Claims in Need for Market Access in Africa
- Level of Readiness of Food Regulatory Environments in Africa
- How to Harness the Potential of Africa's Efforts in SPS and Food Regulatory Integration



Can Play A Major Role!



AFRAF

An Opportunity to Drive Food Regulatory Integration and Support Innovation

□ A collaborative platform of African food regulatory authorities dedicated to strengthening food regulatory systems through cooperation, information exchange, capacity building, and science-based decision-making.

□ AFRAF's Role

- Strengthen collaboration among African food regulators
- Promote science-based and risk-based food regulation
- Support regulatory capacity development
- Foster greater regulatory convergence and consistency
- Facilitate Africa's engagement in international food governance
- Address emerging regulatory challenges, including food innovation





AFRAF WORKING GROUP: FOOD REGULATORY TRANSFORMATION TO SUPPORT INNOVATION



Enable AFRAF to be an ENABLER of Food Innovation!

Purpose

To Support African Cooperation on the modernization of food regulatory systems in Africa with a focus on enabling innovation while ensuring consumer protection and science-based oversight.



AFRAF WG ON FOOD INNOVATION: INAUGURAL MEETING

Objective

To initiate a structured regional dialogue on the modernization of food regulatory systems in Africa with a focus on enabling innovation and Support Charting a Path Forward for collaborative initiatives

Initial Objectives

Establish a shared understanding of food innovation

Review existing regulatory approaches

Identify key regulatory irritants

Learn from international experiences

Explore pathways for regulatory transformation

Initiative the Development of a Workplan for regional collaboration





SCOPE OF INTERVENTION

Focus Areas

Innovative food ingredients

Traditional ingredients in new applications

Functional ingredients

Botanical products and extracts

Associated non-nutrient claims

Market access challenges

Areas of Exploration

Identify Food regulatory Irritants

Develop the Basis of Common Guidance

Identify Enablers: CCAFRICA, ATCMA,
ACFTA



WHAT WOULD SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

Short Term:

- Better understanding of current regulatory landscapes
- Better Understanding of Requirements to Remove Food Regulatory Obstacles to Innovation : Identification of priority challenges
- Identification of Enablers:
 - Network of engaged regulators and experts
 - Information sharing mechanisms
 - Regional guidance discussions
 - Capacity-building activities – Inter-Regional Cooperation Efforts





LONGER TERM OBJECTIVES

- More predictable regulatory pathways
- Increased consistency
- Reduced duplication



In Support of Market Access of Innovative Ingredients and Processes in Africa.

