



CONCEPT NOTE

THIRD AFRICAN FOOD REGULATORY AUTHORITIES FORUM (AFRAF)

Advancing Africa's Integrated Food Regulatory Future

30 September – 2 October 2026 • Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

Hosted by the National Food Safety Authority of Egypt (NFSA)



With the partnership and participation of:

Africa's Regional Economic Communities

African Food Competent Authorities

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)



Organized by the Global Food Regulatory Science Society



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Executive Summary

The Third African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum (AFRAF) will convene senior leaders of African food competent authorities, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Codex contact points, development partners, the private sector and technical partners in Cairo from 30 September to 2 October 2026. The meeting will mark AFRAF's transition from a forum for dialogue into a **regulator-driven implementation platform** connecting national regulatory systems, regional SPS coordination mechanisms and continental food safety priorities.

AFRAF was established in Cairo in October 2023 as a forum made by regulators, for regulators, under the Cairo Declaration adopted at its inaugural meeting. Its Charter positions the Forum as a mechanism for information exchange, collaborative initiatives, regulatory harmonization and implementation of the Food Safety Strategy for Africa (2022–2036), while contributing to the institutional foundations of the Africa Food Safety Agency (AFSA). The Second AFRAF Meeting, held in Cairo on 10–11 December 2025, moved the Forum toward implementation by establishing three Expert Working Groups: Risk-Based Food Regulatory Oversight; Regulatory Transformation to Support Food Innovation; and Capacity Building Coordination and Enhancement, known as the AFRAF Academy.

The 2026 meeting is organized under the theme “**Advancing Africa's Integrated Food Regulatory Future**”. It recognizes that continental integration must be built on practical experience, workable governance arrangements and sustainable investments at national and regional level. AFRAF provides the space in which these regional efforts can be compared, connected and translated into a common continental agenda.

The centrepiece of the meeting is a **structured dialogue on regional SPS coordination**, running across the three days: REC-specific SPS strategy and coordination meetings on the technical day; a moderated panel of RECs on SPS integration achievements, priorities and opportunities for collective action; and a REC–Member State dialogue on how regional coordination translates into national impact and trade solutions. Beyond conventional presentations, participants will learn from each other about what works in SPS coordination and which tools are transferable, and will engage directly with the private sector and international partners on the enablers of food regulatory integration. The exchange is intended to produce practical recommendations and proposed actions rather than a series of institutional reports.

The principal meeting output will be a set of **regulator-led recommendations and priority actions to further enable food regulatory integration at the continental level**, consolidated in the closing session. These recommendations can feed into a roadmap followed by participating food regulators and RECs, supporting practical implementation of the Food Safety Strategy for Africa and the operationalization of the Africa Food Safety Agency, whose founding Statute was adopted by the African Union Assembly in February 2025. They will also inform the implementation plans of SPS coordination mechanisms adopted by RECs and the 2027 workplans of the AFRAF Working Groups.

Technical sessions on the first day and on the final day deepen the programme:

- **From Risk Analysis to SPS Strategy**, an ATCMA-supported session revisiting the principles of food risk analysis as the foundation for science- and risk-based SPS decision-making and for robust, actionable regional SPS strategies;
- **Advanced Analytical Methods for Food Contaminants** (AFRAF Academy, hybrid), focused on the latest analytical technologies and reference methods for **pesticide residues, mycotoxins, heavy metals** and **food authenticity**, with emphasis on method harmonization, laboratory quality assurance and capacity building;
- **Food Innovation as an Engine for Food and Agri-Food Sector Development**, focused on identifying priority regulatory reforms and creating a regulation-ready environment for safe innovation and investment;
- **Risk-Based Oversight** and **AFRAF Academy priority-setting** working sessions, producing practical pilots and a draft 2027 capacity-building workplan;
- **Modernizing Food Control Systems** and **Mainstreaming Risk Analysis in Africa**, plenary sessions on regulatory innovation, data, voluntary third-party assurance, remote auditing and the building of sustainable risk assessment capacity with European partners (BfR/ANSES) and the xORA team;
- **Strengthening Codex Engagement in Africa**, exploring cooperation between CCAFRICA and CCNE.

Item	Details
Theme	Advancing Africa's Integrated Food Regulatory Future
Dates	30 September – 2 October 2026 (Day 0 technical day; Days 1–2 plenary)
Location	Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Host	National Food Safety Authority of Egypt (NFSA)
Organizer	Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GForSS)
Partners	Africa's Regional Economic Communities; African food competent authorities; UNIDO, through the EU-funded Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market Access (ATCMA) Programme

1. Background and Evolution of AFRAF

1.1 Establishment of a regulator-driven African platform

Food safety is central to public health, food and nutrition security, sustainable livelihoods, industrial development and the expansion of intra-African trade. The stakes are substantial. According to the latest estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2026), the African Region bears the highest burden of foodborne diseases of any WHO region, with the world's highest incidence of foodborne illness and a disability-adjusted life year (DALY) rate of approximately 774 DALYs per 100,000 population—around three times higher than the next most affected region. Unsafe food continues to impose major human and economic costs, with the World Bank estimating productivity losses and medical expenses exceeding US\$110 billion annually across sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia. At the same time, food regulatory systems across the continent operate in a rapidly changing environment characterized by new hazards, emerging technologies, climate pressures, increasingly complex value chains, and growing expectations for regulatory cooperation and trade facilitation under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum (AFRAF) was established during the inaugural **high-level meeting of African food competent authorities** held in Cairo from 11 to 13 October 2023, at the initiative of the National Food Safety Authority (NFSA) of the Arab Republic of Egypt, in partnership with the African Union Commission. The resulting Cairo Declaration and associated founding Charter defined AFRAF as a collaborative, regulator-driven forum serving African Union Member States. It established objectives related to information exchange, shared initiatives, regulatory harmonization, AfCFTA implementation, delivery of the Food Safety Strategy for Africa and the development of a foundation for the Africa Food Safety Agency.

The Forum was deliberately conceived to complement, rather than duplicate, the work of the African Union Commission, RECs, the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA) and other regional and international mechanisms. Its comparative advantage lies in direct engagement among the authorities responsible for making and implementing food regulatory decisions.

1.2 From dialogue to technical collaboration

The Second AFRAF Meeting, convened in Cairo on 10–11 December 2025 as a hybrid event gathering heads of African food safety authorities and international experts, confirmed the need to translate high-level cooperation into sustained technical work. Participating regulators identified three thematic priorities and established corresponding Expert Working Groups.

The **Working Group on Risk-Based Food Regulatory Oversight** supports practical exchange on risk-based inspection, monitoring, surveillance, imported food control, establishment oversight and the use of evidence in regulatory prioritization. The **Working Group on Regulatory Transformation to Support Food Innovation**—whose inaugural expert meeting was held in Cairo in June 2026—examines innovation-enabling pathways, novel foods and ingredients, traditional foods, functional claims and proportionate pre-market oversight. The

Working Group on Food Regulatory Capacity Building, also identified as the **AFRAF Academy**, coordinates capacity-building resources, peer learning, mentoring and south-south cooperation.

Together, these groups constitute AFRAF's technical implementation structure. Complemented by a growing programme of **AFRAF webinars** on topics such as food fraud, food data strategy and intra-African agricultural trade, their work should now be connected to REC-level SPS programmes and to the broader continental policy framework. Each Working Group holds a dedicated working session on the technical day of the Third AFRAF Meeting and reports back to the plenary.

1.3 A new continental context

The policy environment has evolved significantly since AFRAF was created. The Statute establishing the Africa Food Safety Agency was adopted by the 38th Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly in Addis Ababa in February 2025, and the African Union Commission has been tasked with accelerating operationalization. The Agency is expected to coordinate and harmonize food safety policies across Member States, establish a continental food safety data hub and rapid alert system, support Member States in managing food safety risks and emergencies, and work with RECs to strengthen food control systems. This creates a need for practical regulator-led inputs concerning cooperation, risk analysis, data, laboratories, capacity development and interaction with RECs. Furthermore, the African Union has adopted the **Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Kampala Declaration** and the **CAADP Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2035**, which establish the strategic framework for advancing food security, resilient agri-food systems and agricultural transformation across the continent. The Strategy explicitly recognizes sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) systems and food safety as essential pillars for protecting public health, facilitating trade and achieving the objectives of the AfCFTA.

At the same time, the European Union (EU)-funded **Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market Access (ATCMA)** Programme, implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Trade Centre (ITC), is supporting regional integration, market access, regional SPS frameworks, quality infrastructure and trade competitiveness across Africa. Dedicated regional components have been launched in partnership with the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Its implementation approach recognizes RECs as the building blocks of the AfCFTA, creating a unique opportunity to strengthen SPS coordination mechanisms, roadmaps and programmes at the regional level while fostering their integration into a coherent continental framework. ATCMA directly supports the Third AFRAF Meeting, in particular the technical session on risk analysis and SPS strategy and the REC SPS coordination meetings.

The **Third AFRAF Meeting** is therefore a timely opportunity to provide the operational bridge between national regulators, REC SPS structures, Codex mechanisms and emerging continental arrangements.

2. Rationale for the Third AFRAF Meeting

Africa does not lack SPS initiatives. The principal challenge is that many remain fragmented by country, sector, project or region. Food safety, animal health and plant health programmes are often developed through different institutional channels, while **national Codex structures may not be systematically linked to REC SPS coordination**. Capacity-building programmes may overlap, technical tools may be recreated, and successful approaches in one REC may not be visible to others.

The next phase of continental integration should therefore begin by connecting what already exists. **RECs are the practical laboratories of regional integration** and the recognized building blocks of the AfCFTA. Their governance models, SPS committees, technical programmes and experience can provide the foundation for a continental platform.

AFRAF is well placed to perform this connecting function because **it is led by regulators** and focused on the operation of food regulatory systems. Working with the RECs and their Member States, and in alignment with the continental policy framework set by the African Union, it can translate regional experience into continental

recommendations, offer a technical interface with the future Africa Food Safety Agency and help materialize the Food Safety Strategy for Africa.

Core Proposition

AFRAF is a key regulator-driven continental platform through which national competent authorities and RECs convert Africa's food safety strategies into coordinated, practical action.

3. Meeting Theme and Vision

3.1 Meeting Theme: Advancing Africa's Integrated Food Regulatory Future

The theme reflects a clear implementation logic: national food regulatory authorities strengthen cooperation through regional coordination mechanisms; RECs exchange experiences, align approaches and promote mutual learning through AFRAF; and AFRAF consolidates regulator-led priorities to support continental implementation of the Food Safety Strategy for Africa and the operationalization of the Africa Food Safety Agency.

The meeting also places a strong emphasis on fostering structured dialogue between food regulators, the food industry, academia and development partners. A dedicated plenary session engages the private sector and other international partners, and the Chamber of Food Industries of Egypt participates in the official opening. By promoting meaningful regulator–industry engagement, AFRAF seeks to ensure that regulatory decisions are informed by science, practical implementation experience and innovation needs. Such dialogue supports the development of fit-for-purpose, science-based regulatory frameworks that protect public health while facilitating market access, encouraging innovation and investment, and preventing market failures arising from regulatory requirements or standards that are technically unfeasible, disproportionate, or developed without adequate stakeholder engagement.

3.2 Vision

An integrated, science-based, risk-informed and innovation-enabling African food regulatory ecosystem in which national authorities, RECs and continental institutions cooperate to protect public health, facilitate safe trade and support development of Africa's food and agri-food sectors.

3.3 Guiding principles

- By regulators, for regulators
- African ownership and leadership
- RECs as the building blocks of continental integration
- Science-based and risk-informed decision-making
- Practical cooperation
- Transparency, inclusiveness and consensus
- Alignment with Codex Alimentarius
- Measured implementation and annual accountability

4. Objectives

The Third AFRAF Meeting will pursue the following objectives:

- Reinforce AFRAF as a key **regulator-driven platform** for **food regulatory cooperation** in Africa.
- Connect the work of **national food competent authorities with REC SPS coordination structures** and continental priorities.
- Revisit **food risk analysis as the foundation of science- and risk-based SPS decision-making** and of robust, actionable regional SPS strategies.

- Create a **sustained mechanism for REC-to-REC and REC–Member State exchange** on SPS governance, programmes, trade solutions and transferable tools.
- Support the **reactivation or strengthening of REC SPS subcommittees** and further progress in the **development and implementation of regional SPS coordination strategies and roadmaps**, including opportunities for inter-REC linkages for Member States with overlapping memberships.
- Strengthen links between REC SPS mechanisms, National Codex Contact Points, CCAFRICA and CCNE.
- Strengthen **regulator–industry engagement to support food security, facilitate innovation and market access**, and prevent market failures arising from standards or regulatory requirements that are impractical, disproportionate, or not sufficiently informed by science and stakeholder consultation.
- Advance **the workplans of the three AFRAF Expert Working Groups**, including practical pilots, and connect them to REC priorities.
- Define a **coordinated African approach to capacity building in risk analysis, laboratory systems and food regulatory science** through the AFRAF Academy, including a draft 2027 workplan.
- Identify practical avenues for **modernizing food control systems**—regulatory innovation, better use of regulatory data, voluntary third-party assurance and remote auditing.
- Provide **regulator-led recommendations** supporting implementation of the Food Safety Strategy for Africa and operationalization of the Africa Food Safety Agency.

5. Signature Feature: The REC SPS Coordination Dialogue

The defining feature of the 2026 meeting is a **structured, multi-level dialogue on regional SPS coordination** that replaces conventional institutional presentations with facilitated, comparative exchange focused on experience, challenges, transferability and action. It runs through the three days of the meeting:

- **Day 0 – REC SPS Strategy / SPS Coordination Meetings (hybrid).** REC-specific working meetings for COMESA, ECCAS, ECOWAS and other participating RECs, focused on the status of SPS coordination and strategic frameworks, lessons from implementation, operationalization of existing structures and the next concrete actions required. Supported by ATCMA.
- **Day 1 – Advancing SPS Integration in Africa.** A moderated panel with representatives of RECs on SPS coordination, regional integration, achievements, ongoing initiatives, future plans and opportunities for inter-REC cooperation.
- **Day 1 – From Regional Coordination to National Impact.** A REC–Member State dialogue on the benefits of REC-level SPS initiatives, resolution of trade issues, and expectations for more responsive regional SPS coordination.
- **Day 2 – From Discussion to Action.** Reporting back and consolidation of key conclusions, priority needs and proposed actions, identifying common priorities for AFRAF, RECs, Member States and partners.

5.1 Purpose

The dialogue allows **REC representatives and Member States to examine the practical operation of SPS coordination across Africa**, learn directly from one another and **formulate recommendations for regional and continental action**. It is intended to become a recurring AFRAF mechanism and a source of implementation evidence for the follow-up of the Third AFRAF recommendations.

5.2 Proposed Approach and Expected Outputs

The dialogue provides a structured platform for RECs to exchange **practical experience on the governance and implementation of SPS coordination mechanisms**. Using a common discussion framework, participants examine governance models, institutional arrangements, successful practices, implementation challenges, mechanisms for translating regional priorities into national action, engagement with laboratories and the private sector, and opportunities for enhanced collaboration with AFRAF and development partners. The discussions focus on identifying practical, transferable solutions that can strengthen regional SPS coordination and support the implementation of the AfCFTA SPS Agenda.

The REC-specific meetings on Day 0 are prepared with the RECs and ATCMA regional components; their conclusions feed the Day 1 panels and the Day 2 consolidation session.

Expected outputs include:

- Comparative overview of SPS coordination models and strategic frameworks across participating RECs.
- Consolidated inventory of transferable practices, tools and governance approaches.
- Identification of strategic priorities, coordination mechanisms and capacity and technical support needs for each participating REC.
- Priority recommendations to strengthen regional SPS coordination, REC-to-REC collaboration and inter-REC linkages.
- Agreed priority actions and indicative commitments for implementation in 2027.
- Recommendations to inform AFRAF's next steps and future programme of work.

6. Meeting Architecture

The meeting combines closed technical work, regulator-led plenaries, high-level policy dialogue and targeted technical sessions. The programme is designed so that every component contributes directly to the recommendations and priority actions consolidated on the final day. The detailed preliminary agenda is provided as a separate document; an overview is given in Section 11.

Date	Orientation	Principal components
30 September 2026	Day 0 – Technical Meetings and Orientation Day	ATCMA session: From Risk Analysis to SPS Strategy AFRAF Academy session: Advanced Analytical Methods for Food Contaminants (hybrid) Parallel AFRAF Working Group sessions: Food Innovation; Risk-Based Oversight; AFRAF Academy priorities; REC SPS Strategy / SPS Coordination Meetings (hybrid) Debrief and preparation of inputs to the plenary
1 October 2026	Day 1 – High-Level Continental Dialogue	Official opening and keynote interventions by key leaders of food safety in Africa and globally REC panel on advancing SPS integration in Africa REC–Member State dialogue on SPS achievements, trade solutions and expectations Engagement with the private sector and other international partners
2 October 2026	Day 2 – Technical Solutions and Roadmap Adoption	Modernizing food control systems: regulatory innovation, data and new approaches to oversight Mainstreaming risk analysis: risk assessment, data and scientific capacity Strengthening Codex engagement: CCAFRICA–CCNE cooperation Reporting back, definition of AFRAF priorities and closing

7. Proposed Participants

- Heads and senior officials of African food competent authorities and AFRAF members.
- Representatives of the RECs and their SPS coordination structures, in particular COMESA, ECCAS, ECOWAS, EAC and SADC.

- Member State representatives engaged in REC SPS coordination and Codex work.
- National Codex Contact Points and representatives of CCAFRICA and CCNE.
- UNIDO, ITC and ATCMA programme representatives, and the European Commission (DG SANTE) as development partner.
- African Union Commission, FAO, WHO, WTO/STDF, AfCFTA Secretariat and other relevant international partners.
- African laboratories, national reference institutions, universities and centres of expertise.
- European food risk assessment agencies and networks, including BfR and ANSES, and the xORA team.
- The Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GForSS) and other technical partners supporting organization and facilitation.
- Private-sector, producer, consumer and innovation representatives, including the Chamber of Food Industries of Egypt and international partners such as ISDI, SGS Global, ICBA and Safe to Trade.

8. Technical Workstreams

The technical content of the meeting is organized around the following workstreams, each of which is addressed in one or more sessions of the agenda.

8.1 Regional SPS governance and coordination

Governance of REC SPS structures; reactivation of SPS subcommittees; regional SPS strategies and roadmaps; coordination among food safety, animal health and plant health; links with Member States and Codex; inter-REC linkages; sustainable secretariat and reporting arrangements. *Addressed in the Day 0 ATCMA and REC SPS coordination sessions and in Day 1 Sessions 2 and 3.*

8.2 Regulatory transformation and food innovation

Novel and traditional foods; innovative ingredients; health and functional claims; proportionate pre-market review; regulatory reliance, recognition and common guidance; predictable pathways; enabling environments for SMEs and agri-food value addition. *Addressed in the Day 0 Food Innovation working session and in Day 2 Session 5.*

8.3 Risk-based oversight and modernized food regulatory practices

Priority regulatory functions for risk-based oversight and a practical pilot through participating RECs; better use of regulatory data; voluntary third-party assurance (vTPA) information in food control; remote auditing; e-certification and interoperable SPS information systems; modernization of food laws; AFRAF's role in supporting pilots, knowledge-sharing and wider adoption. *Addressed in the Day 0 Risk-Based Oversight working session and in Day 2 Session 5.*

8.4 Codex and cross-regional coordination

Stronger operational links between National Codex Contact Points, RECs and AFRAF; collaboration between CCAFRICA and CCNE; common food standards priorities; capacity building; improved regional participation in and uptake of Codex work. *Addressed in Day 2 Session 7.*

8.5 Capacity building and the AFRAF Academy

Mapping programmes and centres of expertise; African competency priorities; peer mentoring; south-south cooperation; risk analysis curricula; laboratory systems; annual programme coordination and reduction of duplication. *Addressed in the Day 0 AFRAF Academy sessions and the Day 2 session on mainstreaming risk analysis.*

8.5.a Risk assessment and risk analysis cooperation

Development of national and regional risk assessment capacity; data generation; expert networks; joint assessments; fellowships; collaboration with European risk assessment bodies (BfR/ANSES) and the xORA team; connection between risk assessment, risk management and risk communication.

8.5.b Harmonized analytical methods and laboratory credibility

Reference methods and latest technologies for pesticide residues, mycotoxins, heavy metals and authenticity determination; laboratory quality assurance; method harmonization; regional capacity for regulatory testing of priority food contaminants.

9. Technical Sessions

9.1 From Risk Analysis to SPS Strategy: Strengthening Food Control and Enabling Predictable Trade in Africa

Day 0, Session 1 – supported by the EU-funded ATCMA Project. Science-based risk assessment is a cornerstone of modern food control systems and underpins transparent, proportionate and internationally credible risk management decisions. As African countries modernize their food regulatory systems and implement the AfCFTA, the ability to conduct or effectively use food risk assessments is becoming increasingly important for establishing food standards, setting priorities, managing emerging risks and supporting SPS measures consistent with international obligations. Significant differences nevertheless remain across the continent in technical capacity, access to data, exposure assessment capabilities, modelling tools and institutional arrangements.

The session revisits the principles of food risk analysis as the foundation for science- and risk-based SPS decision-making; reviews the essential foundations for developing a robust and actionable SPS strategy; explores how African RECs can leverage SPS cooperation to strengthen food control systems and regulatory convergence; examines how greater SPS alignment can enable safer, freer and more predictable intra- and inter-regional trade and access to global markets; and discusses investment in risk assessment capacity, data and expertise as critical infrastructure supporting evidence-based SPS decisions. It will identify recommendations for a coordinated African programme on food risk assessment capacity building, scientific collaboration and regional expertise development.

9.2 Advanced Analytical Methods for Food Contaminants – Harmonized Methods of Analysis and Credibility of Laboratory Results

Day 0, Session 2 – AFRAF Academy, hybrid session broadcast live. Confidence in laboratory results is essential to public-health decisions, enforcement, market access and fair trade. Differences in sampling plans, analytical methods, reporting conventions and laboratory performance can result in inconsistent regulatory decisions and unnecessary trade disruption. Testing for pesticide residues, mycotoxins, selected heavy metals and the verification of food authenticity represent some of the most critical analytical areas for food control systems, with food authenticity playing an increasingly important role in preventing food fraud, protecting consumers and maintaining confidence in agri-food supply chains.

The session focuses on the latest technological advances in analytical methods and laboratory solutions for the determination of **pesticide residues, mycotoxins, selected heavy metals** and **the verification of food authenticity**, with particular emphasis on the development, validation and adoption of reference methods covering the broadest possible range of regulated contaminants and authenticity markers relevant to both African domestic markets and export markets. **Technology providers and scientific partners** will demonstrate state-of-the-art analytical platforms, multi-residue and multi-contaminant methods, quality assurance approaches and reference materials. The session also explores **opportunities for regional capacity building, technology transfer and laboratory networking**, including potential collaboration with the FAO–IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture and other international partners.

9.3 Food Innovation as an Engine for Food and Agri-Food Sector Development

Day 0, parallel Working Group session. Africa's biodiversity, traditional food heritage, entrepreneurial base and expanding processing sector offer major opportunities for value addition—from indigenous functional ingredients such as moringa, baobab, teff, fonio, millet and sorghum to fermentation-derived and other novel production systems. However, unclear or outdated regulatory requirements can delay safe products, discourage investment and prevent innovative African ingredients from reaching regional and international markets. The objective is not deregulation, but a regulation-ready environment in which requirements are clear, proportionate, science-based and capable of assessing innovation. This session builds directly on the AFRAF

discussion paper on modernizing food regulatory frameworks to enable innovation and on the first meeting of the Regulatory Transformation Working Group (Cairo, June 2026), and connects to the ongoing Codex dialogue on New Food Sources and Production Systems. It will identify priority regulatory reforms to facilitate safe food innovation and investment in the African agri-food sector, including opportunities for reliance, recognition and common guidance, and will support the advancement of pilot initiatives for the AFRAF Innovation Working Group.

9.4 Risk-Based Oversight and AFRAF Academy Priority-Setting

Day 0, parallel Working Group sessions. The **Risk-Based Oversight** session plans priority interventions to promote risk-based oversight in Africa, including priority regulatory functions and a practical pilot that could be implemented through participating RECs. The **AFRAF Academy** session discusses the capacity-building roadmap covering regulatory science, laboratory systems, risk analysis and regulatory innovation, including priority competencies, partnerships, implementation actions and a draft 2027 workplan. A debrief session at the end of Day 0 reviews the outputs of all parallel sessions and prepares the updates to be provided to the AFRAF plenary.

9.5 Modernizing Food Control Systems in Africa

Day 2, Session 5. Short interventions and panel discussion on managing food innovation, better use of regulatory data, voluntary third-party assurance, remote auditing, modernization of food laws and AFRAF's role in supporting pilots, knowledge-sharing and wider adoption. The session draws on the Day 0 Working Group outputs and on Codex guidance on the use of voluntary third-party assurance information in food control.

9.6 Mainstreaming Risk Analysis in Africa: Building Risk Assessment, Data and Scientific Capacity

Day 2, Session 6. Presentations and moderated discussions involving GForSS, European partners (BfR/ANSES) and the xORA team on data, scientific expertise, knowledge transfer, expert networks and sustainable risk-assessment capacity. The session showcases practical approaches to strengthening food risk assessment capacity across Africa—exposure assessment, microbiological and chemical risk assessment, data generation and the application of internationally recognized methodologies—together with innovative capacity-building programmes, digital learning platforms, mentoring initiatives and regional centres of excellence. It explores regional cooperation through shared scientific resources, joint assessments, communities of practice and collaborative training involving AFRAF, the AFRAF Academy, European food risk assessment agencies, universities and other partners, with emphasis on long-term scientific partnerships and twinning arrangements. The overall objective is to identify practical mechanisms for building a sustainable African network of food risk assessors capable of supporting science-based regulatory decisions and regional harmonization.

9.7 Strengthening Codex Engagement in Africa

Day 2, Session 7. Opportunities for cooperation between CCAFRICA and CCNE: sharing expertise, coordinating common food standards priorities, capacity building and strengthening regional participation in Codex work.

10. Expected Meeting Deliverables

- Recommendations of the Third AFRAF Meeting, consolidated in the closing sessions, identifying common priorities for AFRAF, RECs, Member States and partners.
- Outcomes of the REC SPS coordination dialogue: comparative overview of coordination models, transferable practices and priority actions for regional SPS strategies.
- Recommendations for a coordinated African programme on food risk assessment capacity building, scientific collaboration and regional expertise development.
- Updated workplans and proposed pilots for the three AFRAF Expert Working Groups.
- AFRAF Academy capacity-building roadmap and draft 2027 workplan.

- Proposals for enhanced CCAFRICA–CCNE and Codex Contact Point coordination.
- Recommendations from the private sector and other stakeholders on enablers of food regulatory integration.

11. Agenda Overview

The full preliminary agenda is provided as a separate document (*2026 Third AFRAF – Preliminary Agenda*) and continues to be updated based on input from NFSA, UNIDO/ATCMA, the AFRAF Working Groups and the AFRAF Steering Group. The main sessions are summarized below.

Day	Sessions
Day 0 – Wednesday 30 September	Registration and orientation; joint technical opening (NFSA, UNIDO, GForSS) Session 1 (ATCMA): From Risk Analysis to SPS Strategy Session 2 (AFRAF Academy, hybrid): Advanced Analytical Methods for Food Contaminants Parallel Working Group sessions: Food Innovation; Risk-Based Oversight; AFRAF Academy priorities; REC SPS Strategy / SPS Coordination Meetings (hybrid) Debrief session
Day 1 – Thursday 1 October	Official opening Session 1: Keynote interventions – key leaders of food safety in Africa and globally Session 2: Advancing SPS Integration in Africa – REC achievements, priorities and opportunities for collective action Session 3: From Regional Coordination to National Impact – REC–Member State dialogue Session 4: Engagement with the private sector and other international partners Networking reception (funding permitting)
Day 2 – Friday 2 October	Recap and orientation Session 5: Modernizing Food Control Systems in Africa Session 6: Mainstreaming Risk Analysis in Africa Session 7: Strengthening Codex Engagement in Africa – CCAFRICA and CCNE Session 8: From Discussion to Action – reporting back and defining AFRAF priorities Closing session: Charting a Collective Path Forward