



African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum (AFRAF)
Working Group on
Regulatory Transformation to Support Food Innovation
Terms of Reference

Background

- ❖ Food systems globally are undergoing rapid transformation driven by innovation in ingredients, processing technologies, production systems, and value addition. African food and agri-food sectors hold significant untapped potential to benefit from innovation, including through the use of traditional crops, functional ingredients, and emerging production technologies.
- ❖ However, many African food regulatory frameworks face challenges in addressing innovation in a predictable, science-based, and proportionate manner. In several cases, existing regulatory provisions are silent on innovation-related issues or create unintended barriers to the introduction of safe and beneficial food products. African food regulators have therefore identified the need for structured dialogue, cooperation, and shared learning to modernize regulatory approaches while maintaining high levels of consumer protection.
- ❖ In response, the Second AFRAF Meeting (Cairo, December 2025) agreed to establish a dedicated Working Group focused on regulatory transformation in support of food innovation.

Purpose

- ❖ The purpose of this Working Group is to support African food regulators in **exploring, developing, and sharing innovation-enabling regulatory approaches**, consistent with science-based decision-making, Codex principles, and international best practices, while safeguarding public health and consumer interests.

Scope of Work

The Working Group shall facilitate:

- Exchange of experiences on regulatory approaches to novel foods, novel ingredients, and innovative production systems, including innovation-friendly regulatory pathways;
- Promotion of the development of guidance to support African food regulators in designing and adopting proportionate, science-based pre-market oversight models for novel foods, novel ingredients, and associated health or functional claims;
- Identification and analysis of regulatory barriers and opportunities specific to African contexts, including those affecting traditional foods and ingredients;

- Exploration of alignment between proposed regulatory requirements for novel foods and ingredients and Codex guidance as well as relevant international best practices;
- Support for dialogue on innovation as a driver of food and agri-food sector development, including the promotion of innovation-friendly food regulatory frameworks in Africa.

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.
- Scientific and technical partners may support discussions and activities, as appropriate, in a facilitation or advisory capacity.

Membership

- Membership is open and voluntary to AFRAF member authorities.
- Participation is based on technical interest and relevant expertise.
- Observers may be invited, as appropriate, to support specific discussions or activities.

Expected Outputs

Indicative outputs of the Working Group may include:

- Discussion papers and technical notes on regulatory transformation and food innovation;
- Overviews of existing and emerging regulatory approaches to innovation across African countries;
- Proposals for AFRAF guidance concepts or learning initiatives related to regulatory measures covering innovative foods, ingredients, production systems, and claims associated with non-nutrient or functional ingredients.

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, with adjustments made as needed based on experience and evolving priorities.