



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO



ECOWAS SPS Systems

**Advancing SPS integration in West Africa:
achievements, priorities and opportunities
for collective action**

**Third Meeting of the African Food Regulatory
Authorities Forum (AFRAF) ·**

1 October 2026



1/3

of the obstacles to intra-regional trade in ECOWAS relate to SPS measures and technical barriers to trade

- For agricultural exporters, conformity assessment is the most burdensome category of non-tariff measures
- Quality, food safety, plant and animal health are the passport of our products to regional and global markets



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO



A regional journey, built step by step

2013–17

Seven regional
standards for key agro-
products adopted

2023

Accra: regional food
safety convergence
strategy and roadmap
validated

2010

Regional SPS
Regulation
C/REG.21/11/10
adopted

2017–24

Harmonised risk-
based sanitary
inspection guide

2026

EU-funded ATCMA
launched; sanitary
guide under revision



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO



What we have delivered together

335

phytosanitary
inspectors trained
and equipped
with inspection
kits

17

countries reached
by national
phytosanitary
trainings

9

Member States
whose inspectors
were trained on
the risk-based
sanitary guide

7

harmonised
regional
standards for key
agricultural
products



A shared regional toolbox

Harmonised phytosanitary certificate

One certificate model adopted for the whole ECOWAS region

Phytosanitary inspection guide

Common procedures for inspection and import/export decisions on plants and plant products

Risk-based sanitary inspection guide

Harmonised food safety inspection for ECOWAS and the Sahel, now being revised with a simplified version

Aflatoxin control guide

Practical guidance for West Africa on a major hazard for cereals and groundnuts

Support to national laboratories

Grants to strengthen testing capacity in Member States

Value chain training

SPS training for butchers, meat processors, distributors and dairy actors



Regional standards already in force

Standard	Code	Adopted by
Specification for rice grains	ECOSTAND 001:2013	C/REG.18/12/13
Specifications for maize grains	ECOSTAND 003:2013	C/REG.16/12/13
Standards for fresh tomatoes	ECOSTAND 015:2014	C/REG.33/12/15
Code of practice: aflatoxin in groundnuts	ECOSTAND 031:2017	C/REG.26/12/17
Code of practice: fresh cassava	ECOSTAND 072:2017	C/REG.27/12/17
Dry beans (ARSO standard adopted)	ARS 864-2013	C/REG.24/12/15
Brown rice (ARSO standard adopted)	ARS 859-2013	C/REG.35/12/15



What still holds us back

- The 2023 regional food safety roadmap is validated but unfunded;
- National SPS laws are not yet reviewed against Annex 7 of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Goods;
- Not all Member States are trained on the sanitary guide; many National SPS Committees are inactive;
- Our standards date from 2013–2017; sorghum, millet, soybean and cowpea are not yet covered;
- SMEs, cooperatives and young agripreneurs have limited awareness and few accessible training tools



ATCMA PROGRAMME

The EU-funded Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market Access Programme targets quality compliance, SPS harmonisation and market access

- 1** Regional SPS coordination and regulatory convergence
- 2** Inspection, laboratories and conformity assessment
- 3** Quality standards for raw materials and complementary foods
- 4** SME compliance, agribusiness and market access



Our priorities

- 1. Reactivate National SPS Committees; align laws with AfCFTA Annex 7**
- 2. Laboratory proficiency testing and ISO/IEC 17025**
- 3. Map SPS requirements and trade barriers for cereals, legumes and oilseeds**
- 4. Relaunch the Regional Food Safety Regulatory Convergence Forum and its roadmap**
- 5. Deployment of training session on the revised sanitary inspection guide**
- 6. Design e-SPS certification and a rapid alert system**
- 7. Codex-aligned standards for sorghum, millet, soybean, cowpea**



Where RECs and AFRAF can act together

Regulatory convergence

Share roadmaps between RECs and align national SPS laws with AfCFTA Annex 7

Digital trust

Interoperable electronic SPS certification and rapid alert systems for food and feed

Laboratories

Regional proficiency testing and a shared pathway to ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation

Common standards

Codex- and ARSO-aligned standards for staple raw materials, used across RECs

One African voice

Coordinated positions in Codex, WTO SPS, IPPC, WOH and CCAfrica

Operators at the centre

Shared, practical training tools for SMEs, cooperatives and young agripreneurs



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO



ECOWAS COMMITMENT

1. Revive regional SPS coordination and implement our convergence roadmap
2. Bring harmonised inspection to every Member State
3. Put SMEs and young agripreneurs at the heart of compliance



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

MERCI
OBRIGADO
THANK YOU

ONE REGION, ONE PEOPLE, ONE DESTINY
UNE RÉGION, UN PEUPLE, UN DESTIN COMMUN
UMA REGIÃO, UM POVO, UM DESTINO COMUM