



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

THE NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY POLICY
FINAL DRAFT

PRODUCED BY:
MINISTRY OF LIVESTOCK FORESTRY AND RANGE

JUNE 2024

FOREWORD

The impact of globalization on food safety has emerged as a significant factor in governance, given its implications for public health, agriculture, trade, investment, poverty, hunger, and tourism. Food-borne illness is a global scourge that affects billions of people, causing diseases due to contaminated and poorly cultivated, handled, processed, or prepared foods along the supply chain. This hampers economic activity and exacerbates national poverty, underlining the urgent need for action in this area. In Somalia, the government is actively transforming the food supply chain (farm-to-table) by revising and updating key components of the national food safety control system. This concerted effort is a promising stride towards a safer food system.

The agriculture and food industries are also playing their part by enhancing food safety practices. However, the overall food safety situation is still a work in progress. In 2010, the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) conducted an assessment of Somalia's food safety system and the food industry's status as part of technical assistance from development partners. The findings revealed an outdated food safety system and an industry eager to collaborate with the government for improvement, indicating a potential for positive change.

The key challenges facing the enhancement of food safety system/standards in the country include a lack of awareness of the socio-economic importance of food safety, paucity of data and information on the incidence of food-borne disease outbreaks, lack of understanding of food safety and quality standards as outlined in international agreements, inability to enforce compliance with international standards and global best practices, inadequate infrastructure and resources to support scientific risk analysis and upgrading of food safety regulatory systems, inefficient food supply chain and poor traceability system. However, with the collaboration and support of all stakeholders, there is an opportunity to strengthen the existing Food Safety System at each enterprise level at the Federal and State platforms to develop a safe and reliable food supply chain from farm to table, making everyone feel valued and integral to this process of change and improvement.

This policy will focus on building the capacity of both the public and private sectors to strengthen the activities of the food safety control agencies, considering recent developments at national and international levels. The Government will develop and implement mechanisms for training relevant stakeholders in the skills, tools and techniques for effective food safety management at every point of the farm-to-table continuum.

In addition to the key considerations of protecting human health, agricultural resources and ecology, the new global environment for trade in food and farming products requires countries to base their control systems on international standards and risk-based measures. The food safety system proposed in this policy would give the government the tools necessary to protect public health, incentivize domestic investment in agricultural foods value chains and improve local, regional and international trade while meeting international expectations.

PREFACE

The food safety practices in Somalia are below the recommended global standard, leading to frequent outbreaks of food-borne illnesses and a lack of international interest in our food and tourism. This situation may be due to a combination of factors, including complicated legislation across different sectors, weak surveillance, monitoring, and enforcement, cultural and lifestyle practices, poor agricultural methods, food production, handling, storage, preparation, and transportation, as well as unhealthy eating habits.

The National Food Safety Policy has been created to meet the country's requirements for adopting and implementing a modern and effective national food safety system. The policy was developed through a participatory process involving multiple stakeholder meetings to incorporate their inputs and comments and to consider all articulated views.

The policy document is outlined in seven chapters, a glossary and References as summarized here under:

- Chapter one provides a background of the need for the policy, as well as the rationale for the policy and its scope of applicability. It also provides a brief on the activities undertaken to develop the policy.
- Chapter two analyses the existing food safety systems and reviews the Somalia food sector in general, the International food safety framework, the national policies, strategies and laws related to food safety, the institutional framework, including testing, inspection and certification services, as well as the status of food safety financing.
- Chapter three describes the policy objectives including the vision and mission of the policy implementation.
- Chapter four details the food safety policy issues and the proposed interventions both at Federal and state levels.
- Chapter five describes the framework for effective implementation of the proposed policy interventions.
- Chapter six describes the framework for effective financing of the implementation process.
- Chapter seven describes the framework for effective monitoring and evaluation of food safety along the food chain (farm-to-table).
- The references are provided at the end of this policy document.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Food Safety Policy document has been developed with the active involvement and participation of various stakeholders who play a critical role in ensuring the safety of locally produced food for local consumption and export, including imported food from global markets. The process also involved the active participation of various industry players in the food value chain.

Several stakeholder consultation forums were held to gather data and information necessary to develop the Food Safety Policy. The aim was to gain support and agreement from stakeholders, which is crucial for ensuring ownership of the document and subsequent adoption of policies. These forums formed the basis for the provisions outlined in the policy document.

The Contribution of the under-listed organisations to the development of this policy document is immensely acknowledged and appreciated.

1. Federal Ministry of Livestock Forestry and Range
2. Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
3. Federal Ministry of Fisheries, Marine and Blue Economy
4. Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industry
5. Somalia Bureau of Standards
6. Somalia Meat Company (SOMEAT)
7. Zamzam Dairy and Fodder Farm
8. Calaf Fodder Farm
9. Horseed University
10. IGAD Sheikh Technical Veterinary College
11. Central Regions Livestock Professional Association (CERELPA)
12. Ministry of Livestock Forestry and Range - Jubaland State
13. Ministry of Livestock Forestry and Range - Galmudug State
14. Ministry of Livestock Forestry and Range - Southwest State
15. Ministry of Livestock Forestry and Range - Hirshabelle State
16. Ministry of Livestock Forestry and Range - Puntland State

We would like to express our gratitude for the valuable contribution of our consultant, M/S DEKRAFT STRATEGIES, who assisted the Ministry in developing the policy. The consultant played a crucial role in engaging stakeholders and gathering data and information important for the development of the Food Safety Policy. They also helped in gaining support from stakeholders, which was essential for ensuring ownership and eventual adoption of the Policy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	4
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	9
1. INTRODUCTION.....	10
1.1 Background.....	10
1.2 Rationale.....	10
1.3 Scope	11
1.4 Policy Development Process	12
2 SITUATION ANALYSIS	13
2.1 Somalia's Food Sector Outlook	13
2.1.1 Agriculture	13
2.1.2 Livestock.....	13
2.1.3 Fishery.....	14
2.1.4 Poultry.....	14
2.1.5 Honey Sector	15
2.1.6 Retail Food Sector.....	15
2.2 International Food Safety Framework.....	15
2.3 National Food Safety Policies and Strategies	17
2.3.1 Somali Health Policy	17
2.3.2 Somalia Health Sector Strategic Plan 2022– 2026.....	18
2.3.3 Livestock Sector Development Strategy.....	18
2.3.4 National Animal Health Strategy for Somalia	18
2.3.5 The National SPS Strategy.....	18
2.3.6 Marketing Strategy for Livestock and Livestock Products.....	18
2.3.7 National Action Plan for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)	19
2.4 Food safety laws	19
2.4.1 The Veterinary Law Code 2016.....	19
2.4.2 Meat Inspection and Control Act	19
2.4.3 Somali Standards and Quality Control Act No. 27 of 2020	19
2.4.4 The Fish (Fishery and Aquaculture Products) (Quality Assurance) Rules, 2017.....	19
2.4.5 Somali Inspection and Clearance of Imported Goods Regulations, 2023	20

2.4.6 Somali Export, Certification and Quality Mark Regulations, 2023.....	20
2.5 Food Safety Institutional Framework	20
2.5.1 The Directorate of the Animal Health Department, MoLFR.....	20
2.5.2 Somali Bureau of Standards	20
2.6 Food Testing Services.....	20
2.7 Food Inspection and Certification Services	21
2.8 Information, Education/Training and Communication.....	21
2.9 Emerging and Re-emerging Food Safety Issues.....	21
2.10 Food Safety Financing.....	22
3 POLICY OBJECTIVES	23
3.1 Vision.....	23
3.2 Mission.....	23
3.3 Broad Policy Objective	23
3.4 Specific Policy Objectives	23
4. POLICY ISSUES AND INTERVENTIONS	24
4.1 Policy Issue No. 1: Policy and Legal Framework.....	24
4.2 Policy Issue No. 2 Institutional Framework	24
4.3 Policy issue No. 3: Education and Training	25
4.4 Policy Issue No. 4 Food Testing Services.....	25
4.5 Policy issue No. 5: Information and Communication	26
4.6 Policy issue No. 6: Risk Analysis.....	26
4.7 Policy Issue No. 7: Emerging and Re-emerging Food Safety Issues	27
4.8 Policy issue No. 8: Traceability.....	27
4.9 Policy issue No. 9 Participation in International Meetings and the Implementation of Agreements	28
4.10 Policy issue No. 10: Food Safety Financing	28
5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK.....	29
5.1 General Implementation Guidelines.....	29
5.2 Implementation Framework	30
6. FINANCING.....	35
7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	36
8. REFERENCES.....	37

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AfCFTA	Africa Continental Free Trade Area
AGDP	Agricultural Gross Domestic Product
AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
AUC	African Union Commission
CAADP PP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Partnership Platform meeting
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
Cirad	French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development
DALYs	Disability Adjusted Life Years
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FSSA	Food Safety Strategy for Africa
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
ISPMs	International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures
OIE	Office International des Epizooties
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
WB	World Bank
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WOAH	World Organization for Animal Health
WTO	World Trade Organization

DEFINITIONS/GLOSSARY

Codex Alimentarius	A collection of international standards, guidelines and codes of practice to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade
Codex Alimentarius Commission	The Codex Alimentarius Commission is a UN food standards body established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). It protects consumer health and ensures fair practices in international food trade.
Food chain.	The series of processes by which food is grown or produced, sold, and eventually consumed
Food Control	A mandatory regulatory activity of enforcement by national or local authorities to provide consumer protection and ensure that all food is safe, wholesome and fit for human consumption during production, handling, storage, processing and distribution; that it conforms to food safety and quality requirements; and is labelled honestly and accurately as prescribed by the law
food control system	The integration of regulatory activities across all responsible, competent authorities to achieve the key objectives of food control, including preventive and educational strategies that protect the whole food chain
Food Recall	Removing food from further sale or use or correcting its label at any point in the supply chain is a risk mitigation action.
Food safety	The assurance that food will not harm the consumer when it is prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use.
Food traceability	The ability to track the movement of a food product and its ingredients through all steps in the supply chain, both backwards and forward
HACCP	A science-based systematic system that identifies specific hazards and measures for their control to ensure food safety. It assesses hazards and establishes control systems that focus on prevention rather than relying mainly on end-product testing.
Surveillance	The ongoing systematic collection, collation, analysis, and interpretation of data are followed by disseminating information to all those involved so that directed actions may be taken.
World Organization for Animal Health	Formerly, the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) is an intergovernmental organisation that coordinates, supports, and promotes animal disease control.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Somalia adheres to international standards established by standard-setting organizations, including the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH/OIE), and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). As a member of regional economic communities, this policy has been aligned to these international and regional standards and strategies. This alignment aims to enhance food safety within the country and to boost the competitiveness of Somali food products in the regional and international markets.

Ensuring food safety is a crucial aspect of achieving food security. Unfortunately, food safety has not been prioritized in the country's development plan. Food security policies and initiatives have often given scant attention to food safety. This lack of emphasis can be partly attributed to limited data on the impact of food-borne illnesses (both on health and other aspects) and the associated costs and benefits of addressing these issues. The lack of a food safety policy in Somalia has led to inefficiencies in the national food safety control system, posing a risk of food-related hazards, rejecting food exports by importing countries, and other undesirable consequences.

A food safety policy plays a pivotal role for policy direction and serves as a national regulatory framework. To better understand the current food safety situation, we held meetings with key stakeholders. During these meetings, we assessed the various agencies involved in different aspects of the food control system. We emphasized the roles and mandates of each agency, the legal basis of their work, existing coordination mechanisms, and areas of concern that need to be addressed. We identified several areas of food safety controls that are weak or insufficient, including legislation and enforcement, education and training, food control and inspection, traceability, surveillance of foodborne diseases, and the involvement of consumers and stakeholders in food safety activities.

The infrastructure, number, and expertise of food safety personnel, as well as traceability and recall systems, training, education, and research on food safety, are currently inadequate and need improvement. There are overlaps and gaps in the responsibilities of agencies involved in food safety activities, and coordination and information sharing among these agencies need to be strengthened.

This policy addresses challenges in food safety controls and proposes a participatory implementation plan with performance measures for outlined actions and initiatives. The policy covers food safety throughout the entire food chain, involving both public and private organizations responsible for researching, developing technology, providing training, and managing food safety. It aims to protect public health and facilitate food trade.

This policy deals with the country's food safety controls, including regulatory and institutional frameworks, as well as processes and practices, continuous training of stakeholders, public education, awareness creation, and strengthening of food safety infrastructure. These efforts are intended to ensure that food safety recommendations align with regional and international food safety governance statutes and effectively address hazards through a risk-based approach. The successful implementation of this policy will depend largely on the enactment and enforcement of appropriate legislation impacting food safety.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Access to safe and nutritious food is key to sustaining life and promoting good health. Unsafe food containing harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances causes more than 200 diseases. Diarrhoeal diseases are the most common illnesses resulting from the consumption of contaminated food, causing 550 million people to fall ill and 230,000 deaths every year. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), every year, about 600 million, almost 1 in 10 people in the world – fall ill after eating contaminated food, and more than 400,000 die every year because of food-borne diseases resulting in the loss of 33 million healthy life years (DALYs). These diseases contribute significantly to the global burden of disease and mortality. Children under 5 years of age carry 40% of the foodborne disease burden, with 125,000 deaths every year.

This growing public health problem causes considerable socioeconomic impact through strains on healthcare systems, lost productivity coupled with negative impact on tourism and trade.

The most recent World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases estimated that, in Africa, food safety hazards were responsible for approximately 137,000 deaths and about 91 million cases of acute foodborne illnesses on an annual basis, the highest estimates worldwide. A World Bank (WB) report (2019) estimated that this situation of unsafe foods costs low- and middle-income economies, mainly Sub-Saharan and Southeast Asia economies, the equivalent of \$110 billion in lost productivity and medical expenses alone each year. Foodborne diseases impede socioeconomic development by straining healthcare systems and harming national economies, tourism and trade.

Food contamination may occur at any stage in the process, from food production to consumption (“farm to fork”); food safety is best assured by an integrated, multidisciplinary approach that considers the entire food chain. A food safety system should consider the complexity of food production and the globalisation of the food supply and should be risk-based. Hazards and potential risks should be considered at each stage of the food chain, i.e. primary production, transport, processing, storage and distribution, to ensure that appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place.

The key challenges in Somalia's food safety controls include weak policy and legal framework on food safety, low human and infrastructural capacity for implementation and enforcement of laws, testing, inspection and certification as well as research and poor communication between the various stakeholders

1.2 Rationale

The main objective of a food control system is to ensure that food is produced and handled throughout the production and distribution chain in a process that results in safe food. To ensure this, there is a need to have systems that monitor food safety risks. An adequate food safety risk monitoring, inspection and testing, and certification system enhances food quality and safety, positively impacts human health and increases the competitiveness of the foods produced in Somalia in regional and international markets.

An effective food safety control system incorporates strengthening the coordination of public agencies involved in food safety controls. There is a need, therefore, to strengthen existing institutional capacities and linkages and facilitate public/private sector cooperation.

The food safety control system in Somalia takes a multi-sectoral approach and is governed by several laws enforced by various government ministries, departments, and regulatory agencies. Each agency collaborates with federal state-line institutions and communicates with the Somali Bureau of Standards. However, there is currently insufficient coordination among these institutions and between the two levels of government. Additionally, there is weak enforcement of existing legislation and standards, which increases the risks to human health and the food trade.

It is crucial to establish and maintain a rational, integrated farm-to-fork food safety system that harmonizes inter-agency efforts, minimizes possible conflict and overlap, and ensures public health protection and safe food trade in line with international requirements. The government should also increase investment in food safety controls from both the public and private sector stakeholders across the food chain. The overall food safety situation, enforcement of regulations, and national capacity to deal with emerging food safety issues can only be strengthened by a specific food safety policy and better coordination among major stakeholders.

There is a need to develop policy and legal frameworks to establish and maintain early warning and risk management mechanisms to prevent food safety risks and to develop a data bank of food safety issues. This policy will address the identified gaps and develop systems that align with the national health and trade objectives.

The challenges affecting Somalia's food systems include:

1. Weak policy and legal framework on food safety
2. Weak communication between government agencies at Federal and State Governments
3. Weak communication between government agencies and the private sector/industry on food safety concerns
4. Inadequate human resource capacity and food safety control infrastructure
5. Lack of laws addressing food safety aspects along the food chain
6. Low testing, inspection and certification capacity
7. Low public awareness of food safety issues
8. Inadequate mainstreaming of food safety issues into formal curricula at various levels of training institutions.
9. Low funding for food safety controls.
10. Low adoption and implementation of national regulations relating to safe food production and trade

1.3 Scope

The policy covers all aspects of food safety along the food chain. This includes all public and private institutions engaged in research, education, technical, food, and animal-sourced food production and trade. The aim is to protect public health and contribute to economic development, especially in Somalia's livestock-based economy. The policy also addresses the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, the legal and institutional framework, and the strengthening of food safety infrastructure.

The policy will ensure that Somalia's food safety control system meets regional and international requirements. It includes an implementation framework to guide the execution of the policy. Additionally, it will address legislative instruments, existing and future, that are expected to have a positive impact on food safety and trade.

1.4 Policy Development Process

An extensive situational analysis was carried out with key stakeholders, including officers from federal and state ministries, departments, and agencies involved in regulating the food system, as well as representatives from the food industry. We also studied existing policies, strategies, laws, and regulations to identify weaknesses in the current food safety control system. The findings from the situational analysis were used to define policy issues and potential interventions, which were then presented to the various stakeholders for validation and ownership.

2 SITUATION ANALYSIS

2.1 Somalia's Food Sector Outlook

2.1.1 Agriculture

Agriculture, mainly driven by livestock production, is the dominant sector of the Somali economy. Its performance significantly influences the overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate. The sector contributes over 65% to the national GDP, with livestock accounting for more than 70% of the agricultural GDP. Agriculture is the highest foreign exchange earner for Somalia, with food and other related imports amounting to around \$460 million annually.

Maize and sorghum are the primary staple food crops in Somalia. Since 2017, annual production has dwindled to an average of about 250,000 tonnes, as opposed to 650,000 tonnes in 1988. Production is marked by low yields (1 to 1.50 tonnes/ha for maize and 0.3 to 0.6 tonnes/ha for sorghum), especially for small-scale farmers. These low yields are mainly due to the lack of high-quality seeds, widespread pests and diseases, and inadequate crop management practices. Other crops grown include rice, legumes (black-eyed peas and mung beans), oil crops (sesame and sunflower), bananas, citrus fruits, vegetables, sugarcane, cotton, and lemons.

Agriculture and livestock sectors encounter numerous constraints that hinder productivity and efficiency. These include unpredictable and extreme weather patterns, underdeveloped and fragmented markets, inadequate value addition, lack of access to quality inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and animal vaccines, and underdevelopment of human capital.

The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for overseeing and inspecting agricultural crop production, focusing mainly on quality control, such as seed quality. However, there is limited regulation for food safety at the production level and no testing capacity to assess food safety risks associated with food production.

2.1.2 Livestock

Livestock is vital to Somalia's economy, with approximately 7.1 million camels, 5.3 million cattle, 30.9 million goats and 13.6 million sheep (World Bank, 2018; Ojanji et al., 2023). Around 80% of the Somali population is involved in livestock farming. This sector contributes to about 80% of the agricultural GDP and 45% of the national GDP. Livestock exports account for 80% of the country's foreign currency earnings.

The primary animal products are milk, meat, hides, and skins. Moreover, there are developing commercial dairy systems in peri-urban areas of most cities. The market-driven peri-urban camel and cattle dairy systems are fueled by increasing demand in expanding towns and cities, where the sale of raw milk is a significant economic activity.

The Somali livestock sector is primarily focused on exports. The main export destinations are Middle East and Kenya. While the trade mostly involves live animals, there is also a growing trend in chilled meat exports to certain Middle Eastern countries. Livestock export opportunities to Middle Eastern

countries have become increasingly competitive, with stricter food quality and safety requirements leading to occasional bans and a loss of market (Nga'sike et al., 2020).

According to the Somalia Livestock Sector Development Strategy, the majority of milk sold in Somalia comes from agro-pastoral and pastoral milk production. The dairy value chain is mainly informal, with individual producers selling directly at nearby markets or to milk traders who collect milk in bulk from wide areas and sell it in towns. However, there are no laws in place to regulate milk safety throughout the entire chain, from production to final sale. There is legislation in place for meat safety control, but its enforcement is weak due to factors such as low human and infrastructure capacity. There is also limited awareness of aspects of food safety among the value chain actors

2.1.3 Fishery

Fishing is a small-scale and artisanal activity in Somalia. In coastal villages and towns outside the main urban centers, fish consumption is not a common part of the diet. The diet is mainly dominated by meat and dairy as the primary sources of protein, especially for the nomadic population. Along Somalia's 3,333 km coastline, there are 50 fishing villages and towns. The country's fisheries sector contributes to around 2% of Somalia's GDP. It is predominantly small-scale, employing around 30,000 people full-time, 60,000 part-time, and 500,000 in ancillary activities.

The fishery sector in Somalia suffers from a lack of coordinated governance and proper fisheries infrastructure. This has resulted in uncontrolled harvesting by foreign commercial fishing vessels along the Somalia coastline. Challenges facing Somalia's fishery sector include a lack of knowledge, skills, and information required to operate the sector, as well as inadequate equipment and technologies. Additionally, there are limited investments, access to international markets, and access to finances. Although the Fish (Fishery and Aquaculture Products) (Quality Assurance) Rules have been in existence for a number of years, the implementation of the rules is limited.

2.1.4 Poultry

Poultry farming in Somalia is vital for food security, income generation, and economic resilience. The majority of poultry farming in Somalia is small-scale and traditional, forming an essential part of the country's agricultural system which is characterized by, low input, and an unorganized market system. In Somalia, poultry farming primarily serves as a source of livelihood and a food source for domestic consumption. While the exact chicken population in Somalia is unknown, it is estimated that Indigenous birds make up 96.9% of the total population, while hybrids and exotic birds represent 0.54% and 2.56% respectively.

Poultry farmers in Somalia face numerous challenges as they work to maintain successful operations. These include climate and environmental issues, disease management, feed and nutrition, market access and value chain, security and conflict, financial constraints, and skills and knowledge gaps. Despite these obstacles, many poultry farmers in Somalia persevere by adapting to their local context and seeking innovative solutions. However, the understanding of food safety among the stakeholders as well as regulation and control of food safety along the poultry value chain is limited. It is crucial for organizations and initiatives to address these issues to support their efforts.

2.1.5 Honey Sector

Honey production in Somalia is primarily done through traditional methods. It is estimated that around 225,000 liters of honey are produced annually, with a total value of approximately 110-300 thousand US dollars. However, there is currently no legislation in place to regulate food safety throughout the production process.

2.1.6 Retail Food Sector

The retail and food service sectors consist mainly of informal, family-owned microbusinesses, with women playing a significant role. The primary traded foods are fish, meat, and milk. However, the stakeholders have a limited understanding of food safety and minimal infrastructure for value addition.

The domestic food import markets are characterized by numerous small and medium-sized traders who typically rely on large importers operating across the whole country or in specific regions. Products include powdered and condensed milk, milk products (such as cheese, yoghurt, and other dairy products), poultry, eggs, and other meat products/processed meat, with the exception of fresh meat and fish. As in the production nodes of the food chain, there is also limited regulation and control of food safety in the retail and food service sectors

2.2 International Food Safety Framework

Safe food is a primary determinant of human health. Access to safe and healthy food is a basic human right. In seeking to guarantee this right, governments must ensure that available food meets safety standards.

Since its establishment in 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) has committed to reducing the burden of foodborne illness on global health. In pursuit of continuous improvement in food safety, in the First FAO/WHO/AU International Food Safety Conference, which was held in Addis Ababa on 12–13 February 2019, WHO and other partners set to identify food safety priorities, align strategies across sectors and borders, reinforce efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and support the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition. In April 2019, the WTO International Forum on Food Safety and Trade met in Geneva and continued the discussions, addressing the trade-related aspects and challenges of food safety such as the use of new technologies, multi-stakeholder coordination and harmonizing regulation in a time of change and innovation.

The conclusions from both conferences were integrated into Resolution WHA73.5, “Strengthening efforts on food safety” adopted by the Seventy-third World Health Assembly in 2020, reaffirming that food safety is a public health priority with a critical role in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The resolution acknowledged that governments must act at the global, regional, and national levels to strengthen food safety. It also called on Member States to remain committed at the highest political level to recognizing food safety as an essential element of public health to develop food safety policies that take into consideration all stages of the supply chain, the best available scientific evidence and advice, as well as innovation; to provide adequate resources to improve national food safety systems; to recognize consumer interests; and to integrate food safety into national and regional policies on health, agriculture, trade, environment, and development. In turn, Member States requested WHO to update the Global Strategy for Food Safety to address current and emerging

challenges, incorporate new technologies, and include innovative approaches for strengthening national food safety systems (WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030)

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) is the body responsible for all matters regarding the implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. CAC was established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1963. Codex main work is the development of international food standards, guidelines, and codes of practice to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade. The Commission also promotes the coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations. The Commission establishes risk management standards which may be used by Member Countries or used as non-legislative standards by the food trade. The Commission establishes these standards using the principles of risk analysis and bases its work on the scientific advice provided by the joint FAO/WHO expert bodies and consultations, for which there needs to be sufficient and sustainable funding. International food safety standards established by the Commission are explicitly recognized in the World Trade Organization's Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO SPS Agreement). Codex standards also serve as references under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO TBT Agreement)

Founded in 1924, the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) establishes international standards that form the basis for national legislation. These standards focus on addressing foodborne pathogens of animal origin and aim to eliminate hazards before the animals are slaughtered or their products are processed. Additionally, WOAH standards cover the role of Veterinary Services in food safety systems and the connections between food production, processing, and distribution. Apart from developing international food safety standards, WOAH collaborates with other international organizations to ensure proper regulation of the entire food production chain. The WOAH is recognized as one of the standard-setting bodies by the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO SPS Agreement).

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) sets standards (so-called ISPMs) for the safe movement of plants and plant products to prevent the spread of plant pests and diseases internationally. Compliance with IPPC obligations and ISPMs is a vital element in countries' ability to trade internationally and to food security. These standards are important as they allow for the protection of domestic consumers, producers and the environment from the risks of introduced pests, and help exporters demonstrate that their products are safe.

To operationalize the Africa Union Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) framework, AUC developed the Food Safety Strategy for Africa 2022 - 2036 (FSSA), which addresses the adoption and promotion of effective measures that will:

- a) increase the capacity of government food control functions,
- b) strengthen the capacity of the business sector along the food continuum to produce safe food and
- c) empower the consumer to demand safe food.

All these interventions will improve the capacity of the food safety systems, help manage food safety risks and threats and reduce the current burden of foodborne diseases that afflict the continent. The Strategic Objectives of the FSSA are to:

- (i) Strengthen food policy, legal and institutional frameworks
- (ii) Strengthen the human and infrastructure capacity of food control systems
- (iii) Promote food safety culture, evidence-based advocacy, communication, and information sharing to raise consumer awareness and empowerment
- (iv) Improve trade and market access at national, regional, continental and global levels
- (v) Strengthen research, innovation, technology development and transfer
- (vi) Establish and strengthen coordination mechanisms and enhance national, regional, continental and global cooperation.

The 14th Annual Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Partnership Platform meeting (CAADP PP), held in 2018, underscored the importance of improving food safety and quality standards in Africa to avoid the health burden from food-borne diseases and also to improve the competitiveness of African agriculture and food trade.

The East African Community (EAC) Food and Nutrition Security strategy and the EAC SPS Strategy incorporate various aspects of food safety. These include raising awareness, controlling aflatoxins, documenting food safety practices, and enhancing the capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in food safety.

The Government of Somalia will harmonize its policy and implementation framework with the international and regional strategies and guidelines mentioned above.

2.3 National Food Safety Policies and Strategies

Before the Somalia Civil War, the central government had a comprehensive food quality control system, which included laboratory and inspection divisions. However, currently, the federal government lacks strong public health controls for sanitation and hygiene-related matters. Food business operators conduct quality control without government oversight due to the absence of appropriate public health laws, enforcement, and inspection services.

Somalia does not have a specific policy addressing food safety, although there are several national policies and strategies that indirectly touch on different aspects of food safety. While some of these policies have been published, many are still under development. Limited public resources and competing priorities, particularly security and food security, have hindered progress in developing food safety governance.

2.3.1 Somali Health Policy

The Somali Health Policy was developed collaboratively by the Ministry of Health and Human Services of the Federal Government of Somalia, the Ministry of Health of Puntland, and the Ministry of Health of Somaliland. It was approved by the Health Advisory Board in September 2014.

The key directions of the Somali Health Policy prioritize engaging the public to promote health, personal hygiene, safe drinking water, sanitation, environmental hygiene, food safety, and proper waste disposal. It also focuses on introducing standardized rapid diagnostic technologies for common communicable diseases, establishing active disease surveillance and early warning systems to detect potential outbreaks, and pre-positioning medical supplies and kits for rapid response coordination. Additionally, the policy aims to promote laboratory-based surveillance of food-borne diseases by

developing food safety guidelines and interventions throughout the entire process from importation and production to consumption.

2.3.2 Somalia Health Sector Strategic Plan 2022– 2026

Published in 2021, the Health Sector Strategic Plan acknowledges that the internal conflict in the 1990s resulted in the destruction of the health system, sanitation, and safe drinking water infrastructure. Currently, public health service delivery is weak. The main goal of the plan is to strengthen the public health system in order to reduce the disease burden. One of the focus areas for improvement is emergency preparedness and response, as well as epidemiological surveillance.

2.3.3 Livestock Sector Development Strategy

The strategy was published in 2019. With regard to food safety, the strategy recognizes the unhygienic handling of food and the weak control system in all livestock subsectors. It also acknowledges and aims to address the livestock sector's weak infrastructure and human capacity, the low capacity of livestock training institutions to train enough personnel, poor student enrollment, and poor absorption of trained veterinary personnel in the public sector.

2.3.4 National Animal Health Strategy for Somalia

This strategy was published in 2020 with key objectives of improving livestock disease surveillance and reporting systems, strengthening laboratory diagnostic services at federal and state levels, developing mechanisms for quality control, safety, and efficacy of veterinary drugs and biological products, strengthening quarantine veterinary services, inspection, and certification systems, developing regulations on animal welfare and protection, instituting veterinary profession service providers regulation to facilitate registration of professionals to uphold professional standards and ethics. It also envisions establishing a National Food Safety and Consumer Protection Authority (NFSA).

2.3.5 The National SPS Strategy

The National SPS Strategy was published in 2019 with the main objectives of identifying and prioritizing key SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary) issues in Somalia. This involves updating outdated laws, legislations, and SOPs, as well as ensuring that staff, the general public, and key government officers are familiar with the challenges and opportunities of SPS compliance. The strategy also aims to enhance the analytic capacity of laboratories and quarantines, improve staff capacity, and strengthen technical networking. Additionally, it will bolster the coordination of the national SPS committee to create a common platform for discussing, advocating, and promoting SPS measures. The strategy seeks to enhance regional and international cooperation in animal health, plant health, animal welfare, food safety, and antibiotic and chemical residues in food to facilitate cross-border, regional, and international trade.

2.3.6 Marketing Strategy for Livestock and Livestock Products

The strategy was published in 2018 and proposes the establishment of a certification and quality control body to ensure adherence to international standards. It also aims to develop livestock certification mechanisms and implement suitable quarantine registration and management procedures. Additionally, the strategy seeks to inform policy-making for the establishment of slaughterhouses and

tanneries at the national level and translate them into bylaws for enforcement at the municipal level. It aims to improve meat industry standards, the quality of meat, and support services, as well as enhance capacity for service provisions and promote observance of meat hygiene codes. Furthermore, it aims to raise public awareness about the importance of meat hygiene, rehabilitate and improve the management of local and urban markets, and expand market information collection, analysis, and dissemination by developing the local capacity of the private and public sectors.

2.3.7 National Action Plan for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

This action plan is in its final stages of development. The AMR situational analysis has been carried out, and the action plan is based on the information gathered during the situational analysis

2.4 Food safety laws

It is crucial to establish meaningful and enforceable food laws and regulations as part of food control systems. There are several laws related to food safety that are being developed or put into practice at different levels. However, enforcing these laws is a challenge in many areas. Furthermore, it is important for the various food laws to address coordination in domestic food safety governance adequately. The lack of coordination has had a significant impact on public health protection and food trade.

2.4.1 The Veterinary Law Code 2016

The Veterinary Law Code 2016 aims to improve the quality of care and the health status of livestock, as well as protect human health. It also focuses on implementing international veterinary certification procedures, supervising and auditing their application, and safeguarding animals and their welfare. These objectives are achieved through various measures such as controlling zoonoses, ensuring food hygiene and meat inspection, preparing for and responding to emergencies, and inspecting and certifying animals and animal products according to international standards. However, enforcement of this law is weak in several federal states as some have not implemented the necessary regulations.

2.4.2 Meat Inspection and Control Act

This act is currently in its final stages of development. Once enacted, it will grant authorities the power to regulate the production of meat and meat products, oversee slaughterhouses and places where such meat is processed. The act will be implemented in conjunction with the Somalia Bureau of Standards to ensure the safety of meat for import and export, as well as for domestic consumption.

2.4.3 Somali Standards and Quality Control Act No. 27 of 2020

The purpose of this act is to establish the Somali Bureau of Standards. This includes developing the National Standards and Quality Control policy for standards, metrology, inspections, and quality assurance of products. Moreover, it aims to control the quality of goods and services, including those imported and exported, as well as those produced or used within the country.

2.4.4 The Fish (Fishery and Aquaculture Products) (Quality Assurance) Rules, 2017

The rules prescribe measures for monitoring and controlling fish, fishery, and aquaculture products, as well as the inputs used in the aquaculture value chain. They also outline procedures for monitoring substances and groups of residues that are likely to contaminate fish, fishery, and aquaculture products.

The rules specifically cover the appointment of fish inspectors, conditions for storing and transporting fish, packaging, distribution, and the monitoring of water. Additionally, they include provisions for the approval of fish processing establishments and general requirements for fishery products.

2.4.5 Somali Inspection and Clearance of Imported Goods Regulations, 2023

These regulations are for implementing the Somali Standards and Quality Control Act, Law No. 27 of 2020, and apply to all goods entering the various border points of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

2.4.6 Somali Export, Certification and Quality Mark Regulations, 2023

These regulations are designed to implement the Somali Standards and Quality Control Act, Law No. 27 of 2020. They specifically pertain to the use of the SOBS quality standardization mark. These regulations apply to system certification as established by any SOBS certification scheme, as well as to all measurements and calibrations, including inspection equipment, measurements, volume, and weighing instruments used in relevant business and trade.

2.5 Food Safety Institutional Framework

There are several institutions and agencies involved in food safety control systems. Each agency operates independently to fulfil its mandate as established by the law.

2.5.1 The Directorate of the Animal Health Department, MoLFR

Under the Veterinary Law Code, the Directorate of Animal Health is responsible for authorising the management of livestock production enterprises and related agribusiness, such as marketing livestock and livestock products and participating in veterinary extension services. Establishing inter-sectoral public health cooperation between human health and animal health services and with the animal production, agriculture and environmental departments in controlling animal reservoirs of human diseases and the control of zoonoses, food hygiene and meat inspection;

2.5.2 Somali Bureau of Standards

The Bureau, established under the Somali Standards and Quality Control Act No. 27 of 2020, is charged with the responsibility of establishing policies, by-laws, regulations, procedures, and standards. These are aimed at determining the quality of all goods, services and commodities used in the country, to ensure that all products and other imported goods do not carry risks and dangers that may harm the public. In addition to preparation of standards and measures preventing the health effects to the society by the expired foods and medicines, or lower quality foods and medicine or those whose quality has been deliberately reduced it also establishes a national laboratory to check the quality of imported and exported goods and materials.

2.6 Food Testing Services

Food testing and laboratory confirmation are an important part of food control. In food safety, testing determines the presence and level of physical, chemical or microbial contamination in food. Testing can range from simple to very complex. Laboratories must perform tests and analysis according to internationally accepted laboratory standards.

The Somalia Bureau of Standards, among its other functions, is to investigate and ensure that all products and other imported goods do not carry risks and dangers that may damage the public, to

ensure the quality of domestic production to safeguard the health and financial well-being of the Somali people by establishing a National Laboratory to test the quality of local, imported and exported goods and materials.- current capacity for testing is limited by inadequate human and infrastructure capacity.

The Three (3) National Central Veterinary Laboratories and the three subnational veterinary laboratories have testing capacity for live animals but limited capacity for food testing, with only a few trained technicians. Some institutions of higher learning have established testing facilities that may be used for both live animal and food testing. There are also a few private laboratories in Somalia which are used by the food industry players

2.7 Food Inspection and Certification Services

Inspection is carried out at the export and larger local slaughterhouses but minimally in the small slaughterhouses and slabs. This is mainly due to limited human capacity, both in number and in training in food inspection.

The Somalia Bureau of Standards mainly carries out certification for the import of foods. The implementation of food inspection is also impacted negatively by the lack of food safety infrastructure, including food processing facilities and testing laboratories.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy, jointly with the Somalia Bureau of Standards, has established the Fish Inspection and Quality Assurance Office (FIQA), but it is yet to be operationalised. This will address aspects of fish safety.

2.8 Information, Education/Training and Communication

The flow of information is critical for an effective food safety control system. Communication between public agencies and food industry stakeholders is crucial for the early detection and management of food safety issues.

Currently, there is limited understanding of food safety among various stakeholders and insufficient communication of information on food safety issues between stakeholders and between the federal government and the states. Multiple studies have highlighted the lack of knowledge and skills in food safety, which are crucial for domestic, regional, and international markets. Several Universities offer training in animal production and health, and these programs are included in their curriculum. The individual institutions develop these curricula, which are then moderated by the Ministry of Livestock, Forestry and Range and the Ministry of Higher Education to ensure consistency and quality control.

2.9 Emerging and Re-emerging Food Safety Issues

There is a shortage of information on emerging and re-emerging food safety issues, and the data from different public agencies doesn't provide a national overview. The collection and collation of information on food safety issues is limited. Food safety is not a high priority at the moment due to factors such as the absence of a comprehensive regulatory framework and insufficient human, technical, and financial resources. The national food control system is fragmented, and the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders are not clearly defined and may overlap.

2.10 Food Safety Financing

Food safety control is purely financed solely by the government, with some aspects, particularly capacity development, being supported by development partners. There is, however, minimal investment in food safety due to competing priorities. While public universities have some capacity to research to respond to food safety challenges, these institutions have limited resources to make their contribution more sustainable.

3 POLICY OBJECTIVES

3.1 Vision

A healthy population with increased life expectancy and facilitation of food trade through producing and consuming safe and healthy foods.

3.2 Mission

To provide safe food from production to consumption through a robust food safety control system based on inter-sectoral cooperation, addressing the farm-to-table continuum, stakeholder participation, and establishing priorities based on risk analysis and sectoral policy integration.

3.3 Broad Policy Objective

1. To ensure public health through safe food along the food chain continuum.
2. To align food safety control to regional and international standards to facilitate trade.
3. To develop capacity for food safety controls for all stakeholders.

3.4 Specific Policy Objectives

1. To align existing food safety policy and legal frameworks with current food safety needs.
2. To develop a food control system that is grounded on a risk-based approach and addresses all food safety concerns along the food chain.
3. To harmonize and strengthen coordination, oversight, enforcement and functionality of food control mechanisms at federal and state levels.
4. Enhance institutional capacity for food safety risk analysis.
5. Align food control regulatory framework to regional and international standards and guidelines
6. To strengthen human resource development in food safety.
7. Establish a national food safety control information management system.
8. Promote institutionalization of food safety in the national education system
9. To establish a national food safety communication mechanism among stakeholders.

4. POLICY ISSUES AND INTERVENTIONS

Most food safety concerns in Somalia can be attributed to a weak food control system that lacks the ability to detect food safety concerns in time, lack of monitoring and management for emerging and re-emerging food safety concerns, no data collection for risk assessment or sharing of information for proper coordination of risk management. This arises from a lack of effective legal and regulatory framework, poor capacity for information and education, human and infrastructure development, low capacity for testing, inspection and certification and low prioritization of investment in food safety.

4.1 Policy Issue No. 1: Policy and Legal Framework

Somalia's food safety control system is multi-sectoral in approach, with various government agencies implementing their specific legislation independently of each other. There is no harmonization or coordination among these agencies. The existing legislation does not effectively capture some aspects of food safety in certain sectors. For example, while the aquaculture quality assurance rules cover traceability, other sector laws do not. The current policy and legal environment lack the capacity for human and infrastructure development, information sharing, communication, and research and development of effective science-based data systems. This results in a failure to systematically identify areas of greatest risk and effectively manage those risks. Furthermore, there is a lack of coordination mechanisms to cover all aspects of food safety throughout the food chain.

Policy intervention;

The federal government shall ensure that policies and legal frameworks addressing food safety are developed and regularly reviewed to address emerging and re-emerging food safety issues. Additionally, the government will support the review of legislation in food safety to provide clearly defined mandates for the various food safety control agencies. Specifically, the government will:

- Review existing laws relating to food safety and strengthen enforcement of the same
- Enact a food safety act
- Enact new laws/regulations to strengthen food controls in relevant ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs)
- Define the roles and responsibilities of the regulatory agencies at the Federal and State government levels and align them to the policy

The State Governments shall implement the national policies and laws by aligning their laws with the national policies and legislation

4.2 Policy Issue No. 2 Institutional Framework

A national food safety control system should be designed and organized in a coordinated and integrated way to deliver a high level of public health and consumer protection in line with local and international requirements. Currently, there are no defined coordination mechanisms among the food safety institutions in Somalia, leaving food safety in jeopardy.

Policy Interventions

The federal government will establish a coordinating mechanism, including a coordination office responsible for liaising with relevant competent authorities. This mechanism will identify and advise on policy gaps and inadequate regulation in food safety. It will assess the adequacy of food safety

preparedness and make recommendations to the relevant competent authority. Furthermore, an information management system for food safety and feed safety will be established. The mechanism aims to strengthen institutional capacities on food safety, enhance food safety research, develop a scientific data bank for informed decision-making in the food safety system, and establish a communication mechanism for information sharing.

Specifically, the government will:

- Develop legislation to establish a food safety coordination agency
- Develop a coordination mechanism identifying specific mandates and responsibilities of different MDAs and State Governments for food safety controls Strengthen the relevant MDAs to carry out the identified mandates

The state governments shall undertake co-regulation with the federal food safety agencies and strengthen the institutional capacities of these state agencies.

4.3 Policy issue No. 3: Education and Training

Though there are several public and private training institutions on livestock production and animal health, incorporating food safety in the curriculum is only prioritized in a few of these institutions. Where food safety is trained, there is inadequate coverage of food safety in the curriculum of most higher education institutions.

There is minimal capacity for short-term training for stakeholders in the industry, especially in the private sector. Several institutions have the capacity to organize and host such training, but there is a need for collaboration with the government and industry to identify the training needs and organize such training.

Policy intervention

The Federal Government shall ensure;

- Systematic education on food safety for personnel involved in food safety controls,
- Inclusion of food safety issues in the general education and curricula of relevant training programmes,
- Incorporation of food safety into the curriculum of basic and higher education institutions training on animal production, animal health, and human health,
- Development of a training strategy for all stakeholders, including primary producers, food processors, food handlers, food inspectors and analysts, and,
- Development and dissemination of required/essential tools to strengthen the competencies of all relevant personnel at various levels involved in all related food safety controls.

The state governments shall build the capacity of stakeholders in their states by incorporating training and education in their food control systems and promoting awareness of food safety within the states. They shall also sensitize all food chain stakeholders on their obligations and the responsibility of the different stakeholders in food safety controls

4.4 Policy Issue No. 4 Food Testing Services

One of the requirements from trading partners is for countries of origin to have an effective food testing system with robust laboratory services, well-trained human resources, and infrastructure for

food safety surveillance, product certification, and quality assurance. The current state, characterized by weak food safety surveillance and testing systems, hinders the market access of Somali products in regional and international markets, especially livestock-derived foods for which Somalia has great potential.

Policy interventions

The relevant MDAs at Federal and State Governments shall:

- Establish mechanisms and criteria for approval testing laboratories, both in the public and private sector
- Compile and maintain an inventory of food safety laboratories and their scope of analysis and capacities for food testing
- Develop laws and procedures for the use of private laboratories for official controls
- Support the establishment and enhance the capacity of specialized food safety laboratories, both private and public
- Develop laboratory quality management systems and implement Good Laboratory Practices system
- Develop and maintain coordination mechanisms for food safety surveillance.

4.5 Policy issue No. 5: Information and Communication

Effective communication between public agencies and food industry stakeholders is crucial for early detection and management of food safety issues. It is important to have a timely flow of information to ensure a rapid response to food safety concerns. However, currently, there is limited information flow between the different stakeholders and between the federal government and the states.

Policy intervention

The Federal Government shall;

- Establish a mechanism for information sharing among agencies involved in food safety activities
- Establish an effective information and communication system between competent authorities and stakeholders involved in food control to exchange relevant information about the entire food chain.
- Establish an information-sharing system/database covering all aspects of food safety
- Promote public awareness of food safety.
- Define the clear roles and responsibilities of various agencies at the federal and state levels.

4.6 Policy issue No. 6: Risk Analysis

Risk analysis is crucial for providing policymakers with the information needed for effective and transparent decision-making. It contributes to better food safety outcomes, improvements in public health, and facilitates food trade. The risk analysis paradigm, including risk assessment, risk management, and risk communication functions, is internationally recognized as the best way to develop food safety standards and systems for global food safety. This approach offers national food safety authorities a systematic and disciplined way to make evidence-based food safety decisions.

However, there is currently no established mechanism for risk analysis in Somalia, which limits the country's evidence-based policy and legal development.

Policy intervention

The federal government will implement measures to enhance formal risk analysis mechanisms, including capacity building in key agencies and risk assessors. It will also strengthen the technical capabilities of its human resources and its infrastructure, such as laboratories and research mechanisms. Specifically, the government will:

- Establish a national data collection mechanism required for risk assessments.
- Strengthen foodborne disease surveillance, including research and scientific capacity of the national food control system
- Develop capacity in critical areas such as risk analysis, surveillance, investigation, control and prevention of outbreaks.
- Establish independent institutions for risk assessment and risk management

4.7 Policy Issue No. 7: Emerging and Re-emerging Food Safety Issues

There is limited information available on emerging and re-emerging food safety issues. This is primarily due to the absence of a surveillance and monitoring mechanism and a national database for foodborne diseases. Although various public agencies may have some information, a comprehensive national overview is lacking. Food safety is currently not a top priority primarily because of the absence of a proper regulatory framework and inadequate human, technical, and financial resources. Additionally, the national food control system is fragmented, and the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders are not well-defined and often overlap.

Policy intervention

The government shall:

- Establish a national surveillance monitoring and reporting mechanism/system
- Establish an early warning and a rapid alert system for emerging and re-emerging food safety issues.
- Strengthen the capacity of Federal & State agencies to investigate food-borne illnesses, identify causative agents and trace outbreaks to their respective sources.
- Develop a plan for emergency response to outbreaks and recalls.
- Establish a national database for food-borne diseases.

4.8 Policy issue No. 8: Traceability

Traceability in the food sector is a crucial tool for fostering innovation and competitiveness, and it plays a vital role in trade, economic development, and social progress. It provides evidence of compliance with regulations, agreements, and standards. Additionally, traceability is essential for the rapid alert system in food safety, enabling early warning and swift response to food safety and quality incidents. Moreover, traceability can contribute to building cross-border transparency, which is necessary to access regional and global markets.

Currently, there is a weak traceability system in both the public and private sectors, primarily due to inadequate human and technological capacity, a lack of data, and weak information flow.

Policy Intervention

The Federal government shall:

- Incorporate traceability and recall mechanisms in food safety controls.
- Develop regulations for implementing traceability and recall by food business operators.
- Develop guidelines and systems for traceability based on international best practices

4.9 Policy issue No. 9 Participation in International Meetings and the Implementation of Agreements

In order to effectively compete in the global market, a country needs to harmonize its policies, laws, and regulations with international standards. It is crucial to enhance the expertise of public officials in food safety by involving them in international standard-setting organizations such as Codex, WOAHI, and by adopting these standards domestically. While the National Codex Committee (NCC) for Somalia and the Codex contact point have been established, there has been limited involvement of the national committee members in the relevant Codex committees.

Policy intervention

The federal government shall:

- Ensure participation in relevant meetings at the national, regional and international levels,
- The relevant Agencies shall ensure that information gathered at international fora is disseminated among the relevant stakeholders, including MDAs, Industry, Academia, and Researchers.
- Adopt, domesticate or implement international protocols on Food Safety

The state governments should encourage their officers to participate in national, regional, and international standard-setting committees and harmonize their standards and legislation with international ones.

4.10 Policy issue No. 10: Food Safety Financing

Food safety requires financial resources to support the various operations, human resources, and infrastructure development and maintenance.

Policy interventions

The federal and state Governments shall make specific budgetary allocations for food safety and develop strategies for resource mobilization from both public and private entities.

5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

5.1 General Implementation Guidelines

Effective food control systems require policy and operational coordination at the national level. Coordination would include the establishment of a leadership function and administrative structures with clearly defined accountability for issues such as the development and implementation of an integrated national food control strategy, operation of a national food control programme, securing funds and allocating resources, setting standards and regulations; participation in international food control related activities; developing emergency response procedures; carrying out risk analysis; among others.

Core responsibilities include establishing regulatory measures, monitoring system performance, facilitating continuous improvement, and providing overall policy guidance. The objective of this policy is to establish an effective control system.

The implementation of this policy will follow a value chain approach with interventions carried out along the food chain from the farm to fork, with each food safety institution addressing the aspects based on their competence and mandate. A coordination mechanism will be established to coordinate the various agencies to minimize overlaps and duplication.

The federal government shall develop or review policies, laws, regulations, strategies, guidelines and related legal and regulatory frameworks on food and food safety that support the implementation of this policy. These will include the agriculture, health, livestock, fisheries and environmental sectors, which have an impact on aspects of food safety at different levels of the food supply chain.

The federal government shall develop new laws and review existing laws and regulations to be in tandem with the changing trends in food safety and food trade and establish a mechanism for coordinating food safety matters.

The state governments will align their laws to the national policy and laws

5.2 Implementation Framework

	STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
<i>Policy Issue No. 1: Policy and Legal framework</i>				
1.1	Adopt a National Food Safety Control System.	Adopt the national policy and implementation plan on food safety.		
1.2	Review existent laws, regulations, guidelines, codes of Practices, SOPs and by-laws in line with International requirements.	Adopt and implement a plan for the development of new laws and review of existing laws by relevant ministries, departments and agencies.		
		Enact a Food Safety Act.		
		Update the system to align with that of the Federal Government and define roles and responsibilities of the regulatory officers at the State government level.		
<i>Policy Issue No. 2 Institutional Framework</i>				
2.1	Develop a national Food Safety Coordination Mechanisms	Review/develop relevant legislation to establish a food coordination agency		
		Develop structure and functions of the Entity		
		Identify the inter-Ministerial & inter-agency representation in the governing structure of entity		
2.2	Streamline the multi-sectoral food safety regulatory agencies	Identify roles and responsibilities for food safety control of different MDAs and, State Governments		
		Strengthen the relevant MDAs to carry out the identified mandates		
<i>Policy issue No. 3: Education and Training</i>				
3.1	Build capacity and enhance capability on training, education and research on food safety	Develop systematic education on food safety for personnel involved in food safety controls		
		Carry out capacity needs assessment for the training institutions to carry out training for regulatory officers and food business operators		
		Develop relevant/appropriate curriculum on food safety at tertiary institutions.		

	STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
		Integrate the curriculum with existing educational programs.		
		Strengthen relevant/appropriate curriculum and activities on food safety at primary and secondary institutions.		
		Promote continuing education for existing food safety handlers and other stakeholders.		
		Develop appropriate guidelines and manuals in appropriate languages for different stakeholders.		
		Build the capacity of MDAs and Private Sector players on the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of food safety programmes.		
		Build capacity of meat inspectors, Agricultural Extension workers and other relevant stakeholders involved in the inspection and enforcement of Food Safety laws, regulations and guidelines.		
		Capacity building to improve skills of relevant private stakeholders involved in farming, processing, packaging, storage, transportation, distribution etc. of food and food products.		
3.2	Develop partnership with training institutions, professional bodies and skill acquisition centres	Establish protocols for partnerships with relevant MDAs		
<i>Policy Issue No. 4 Food Testing Services</i>				
4.1	Build the capacity of laboratories on food testing.	Compile and maintain an inventory of food safety laboratories, and their scope of analysis and capacities for food testing.		
		Enhance infrastructural & Human resource capacity of existing laboratories		
		Establish mechanism and criterion for approval of testing laboratories, both in public and private sector.		
		Enhance laboratory quality management systems		
		Develop and maintain coordination mechanism for food safety surveillance		

	STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
<i>Policy issue No. 5: Information, and Communication</i>				
5.1	Develop an effective, information and communication system.	Identify information & communication requirements for food safety emergencies & initiatives		
		Define clear communication roles and responsibilities for various agencies both at federal and state levels		
		Establish information sharing system/database covering all aspects of food safety		
		Develop guidelines for coordination & implementation of the programmes of all concerned ministries and agencies		
		Enhance information sharing among agencies involving in food safety activities		
5.2	Carry out advocacy and sensitization of policy makers, opinion leaders, food handlers, health workers, consumers, religious groups, traditional rulers, and owners of food industries.	Develop advocacy & sensitization tools including IEC materials and social media.		
		Undertake advocacy/sensitisation for policy makers, development partners, and other relevant stakeholders.		
5.3	Develop education campaign for all stakeholders along the food supply chain.	Develop effective food safety campaign materials.		
		Identify and train the trainers at State and Local Government levels.		
		Develop an effective educational campaign for food operators along the food supply chain.		
<i>Policy issue No. 6: Risk Analysis</i>				
6.1	Identify critical food safety risks in the Country.	Evaluate the existing risk assessment systems.		
		Identify and profile food safety risks at federal and state levels.		
		Develop a National Master plan to mitigate the identified risks.		
		Establish national data collection mechanism required for risk assessments.		

	STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
		Manpower development in critical areas such as surveillance, investigation, control and prevention of outbreaks.		
		Establish a National Food Risk Assessment Coordinating Centre.		
<i>Policy Issue No. 7: Emerging and Re-emerging Food Safety Issues</i>				
7.1	Establish an early warning system for emerging and re-emerging food safety issues.	Set up and maintain tools for collecting and disseminating relevant data in the States and integrate them into a national database for food safety outcomes.		
7.2	Strengthen the capacity of Federal & State agencies to investigate food-borne illnesses, identify causative agents and trace outbreaks to their respective sources.	Conduct needs assessments of the Federal & State agencies to identify the gaps.		
		Develop a protocol for collecting, collating, and evaluating food-borne illness outbreak data, including its review and follow-up action.		
		Develop a national network for reporting, collecting, collating and transmitting data to a Central Database.		
7.3	Develop a plan for emergency response to outbreaks and recalls.	Determine indicators that can be used as the basis for outbreaks and recalls.		
		Improve the existing health-reporting system and train health workers on information gathering, collation and dissemination related to food-borne illnesses.		
7.4	Strengthen control system for import and export of foods.	Review, update and streamline existing import-export inspection system.		
		Establish requirements for the import of foods in line with international standards.		
7.5	Strengthen the capacity of regulatory inspectors, auditors and compliance systems.	Facilitate the training of inspectors, industry and other stakeholders.		
		In-depth assessment of the existing systems.		
		Review inspection tools (SOPs, checklists, and guidelines).		
		Provide adequate and appropriate human and material resources to ensure regular inspection.		

	STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
		Strengthen procedures for registering and licensing cottages, small, medium, and large-scale food establishments, food business operators, and food vendors.		
<i>Policy issue No. 8: Traceability and recall</i>				
8.1	Establish and implement a national “Farm-to-Table” traceability and recall system.	Incorporate traceability and recall in official food safety controls.		
		Develop regulations for the implementation of traceability and recall by food business operators.		
		Develop guidelines and systems for traceability based on international best practices		
<i>Policy issue No. 9 Participation in International Meetings and the Implementation of Agreements</i>				
9.1	Enhance participation in relevant meetings at the national, regional and international levels for MDAs	Identify relevant international institutions where participation would add value to national food safety standards and controls.		
		Resource mobilization for participation in the International standards-setting bodies for meetings and working groups		
		Support officers at Federal & State levels to participate in relevant international fora		
		Disseminate information gathered at international fora among the relevant stakeholders.		
9.2	Adopt & implement international protocols on Food Safety	Coordination with major stakeholders to prioritize food commodities of national interest		
		Develop a national position on draft Codex standards through NCC.		
<i>Policy issue No. 10: Food Safety Financing</i>				
10.1	Create a budget line for food safety programmes.	Relevant MDAs at the Federal & State levels to create a budget line for food safety activities.		
		All food and agro-industries to create a budget line for food safety activities.		
		Partner with international development agencies to support the internal funding mechanisms for food safety activities.		

6. FINANCING

Since the policy is designed to ensure the Somali people's public health security and increase market access and competitiveness of foods from the country, it is the responsibility of the national government to provide budgetary support for institutional and technical development in line with international standards.

This policy will be financed through funds allocated through an annual budgeting cycle, cost recovery mechanisms, public-private partnerships, and relevant donor funding.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The policy division in the Ministry/National agency approved by the Government, which will have overall responsibility for the food safety policy, will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policy. The success in implementing this policy shall require the Ministry/National agency approved by the Government to collaborate with all stakeholders on effectively monitoring and implementing the key activities outlined in the implementation framework.

Monitoring and evaluation programmes shall involve tracking the progress made in food safety practices in the country at regular intervals. Detection and identification of non-compliance, including where and how they occurred, shall be statistically evaluated. An acceptable format shall be developed to evaluate the performance of these activities in the implementation framework.

A mechanism for periodically monitoring the realisation of specific indicators of the activities shall also be developed. The reports of such periodic monitoring and evaluation shall be properly documented and reviewed annually by the Ministry/National agency approved by the Government.

This policy is anticipated to require periodic review to ensure progress with local and international developments. The policy document is dynamic and should address policy issues raised during the IHR evaluation assessment of foodborne disease surveillance, WOAHPVS, and response to new science findings.

8. REFERENCES

1. WHO Guidelines for Developing and Implementing a National Food Safety Policy and Strategic Plan
2. FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool
3. WHO Strategic Plan for Food Safety; Including Foodborne Zoonoses 2013–2022
4. Assuring food safety and quality. Guidelines for strengthening national food control systems, FAO Food and Nutrition Paper 76 (FNP 76)
5. **Gabor Molnar, Samuel Benreheb Godefroy (2020)** Review of mechanisms for food safety-related SPS measures within African regional Economic Communities (RECs): Paving the way for a continent-wide food safety coordination effort. *Food Control Volume 115, 107206*
6. IGAD Regional Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) 5-year Strategy and Plan of Action 2017 – 2021
7. FAO/WHO (2010) framework for developing national food safety emergency response plans
8. Promoting responsible investment in agriculture and food systems: Guide to assess national regulatory frameworks affecting larger-scale private investments *FAO Legal Papers No. 101 2016*
9. World Bank report (2019)
10. **IHR JEE (2016)** International Health Regulations Joint External Evaluation of IHR Core Capacities of the Federal Republic of Somalia
11. International Health Regulations Joint External Evaluation Tool (2005)
12. **Theresa Musumhi, (2013)** Regional Lessons Learned for Somalia in the Apiculture (Beekeeping) Sector