



FOOD SAFETY & QUALITY AUTHORITY



Strategic Plan

2026 - 2030

Safer Food, Healthier Nation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) extends its sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan (2026–2030). We are grateful to the office of the Vice President, our Governing Board, management, and staff for their commitment and dedication throughout the process, and to the many stakeholders from government ministries, local authorities, the private sector, consumer groups, and development partners whose insights and perspectives enriched this Plan.

FSQA also acknowledges the valuable technical support provided by SMD Policy Management Group, whose facilitation, expertise, and guidance were instrumental in shaping this Strategic Plan. Their contribution reflects a shared commitment to strengthening public institutions and advancing The Gambia's national development agenda.

This Strategic Plan stands as a collective achievement and a testament to the collaborative spirit of all who worked to ensure that food safety and quality remain central to protecting public health, supporting trade, and building consumer confidence in The Gambia.

Signature

FSQA
DECEMBER 2025





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FOOD SAFETY & QUALITY AUTHORITY

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LIST OF ACCRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
AU	African Union
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa’s Development
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCAFRICA	Coordinating Committee for Africa (Codex regional body)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DG	Director General
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCAC	Food Control Advisory Committee
FSIS	Food Safety Information System
FSQA	Food Safety and Quality Authority
FSSA	Food Safety Strategy for Africa
GMD	Gambian Dalasi
GRA	Gambia Revenue Authority
GRF-NDP	Green Recovery Focused National Development Plan
GSCC	Gambia Standards Control Committee
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGF	Internally Generated Funds
INFOSAN	International Food Safety Authorities Network

ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ISO/IEC 17025	International Standard for Laboratory Competence
IT	Information Technology
JEE	Joint External Evaluations
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LIMS	Laboratory Information Management System
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MoALFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Security
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoTIE	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NARI	National Agricultural Research Institute
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OVP	Office of the Vice President
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental (analysis)
PMO	Project Management Office
PPS	Planning and Policy Services
QR	Quick Response (codes for traceability)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement (WTO)
SWOC	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges
TGSB	The Gambia Standards Bureau
UN	United Nations
WACOMP	West Africa Competitiveness Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

WTO	World Trade Organization
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Message from the Board Chairman



Apart from the air we breathe, food is the most important commodity in life. Globally, unsafe food is responsible for a massive burden on public health, causing an estimated **600 million cases of foodborne diseases and 420,000 deaths** annually (WHO Foodborne Diseases Estimates), a reality that profoundly undermines human development and consumer confidence. For The Gambia, where agriculture, fisheries, and trade are key drivers of economic growth, food safety is not just a health issue — it is central to our economic competitiveness, our capacity to export, and our ability to assure consumers of nutritious, safe food every day. A large share of the food consumed in The Gambia is imported, making effective border inspection and import control vital to protecting consumers.

The establishment of the Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) in 2011 was a bold national decision to build a trusted, science-driven institution that safeguards public health while enabling trade.

This Strategic Plan (2026–2030) builds on this foundation. It charts a forward-looking vision that aligns national systems and blueprints, Green Recovery Focused National Development Plan (GRF-NDP) with international frameworks such as Codex Alimentarius, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement, and the African Union's Food Safety Strategy.

This plan is more than a regulatory blueprint. It is a call to action for all stakeholders to work hand in hand with FSQA in making food and feed safety a national priority.

Mobilizing adequate financial, human, equipment, material resources and strengthening the Authority's institutional capacity and service delivery will be essential to achieving the ambitious goals of this plan.

By investing in stronger systems, modern accredited laboratories, skilled professionals, and effective communication, The Gambia can elevate its food safety framework to one that protects citizens, supports farmers and processors, and strengthens confidence in Gambian products at home and abroad.

The Board will continue to provide high-level oversight, mobilize political support, and advocate for the integration of food safety into national development priorities and plans.

We are committed to ensuring that FSQA's vision is not only endorsed but fully realized in transforming food safety and feed into a visible driver of health, prosperity, and trust.

Dr. Amadou Sowe
Chairman of the Governing Board
Food Safety & Quality Authority (FSQA)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Signature'.

Foreword by the Director General



This Strategic Plan (2026–2030) represents a critical moment for the Food Safety and Quality Authority of The Gambia. It is both a reflection of the institution's progress since its establishment in 2011 and a roadmap for strengthening FSQA's systems, capacity, and partnerships over the next five years.

The plan was developed through extensive consultations with government Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs) and other stakeholders. It sets clear priorities: strengthening national food control systems, modernizing laboratory and inspection services, enhancing staff capacity, and embedding risk analysis and communication into everything we do. These are not abstract commitments — they are concrete steps toward ensuring that everyone residing in The Gambia, regardless of income level or location, has access to safe, nutritious, and good-quality food.

Operationalizing this strategy will require discipline, innovation, and collaboration. FSQA is committed to efficient service delivery, transparent management of resources, and continuous learning to anticipate and address existing and emerging risks, from Mycotoxins and water borne pathogens, food fraud, chemical, microbial, antimicrobial resistance to climate-related food safety threats, amongst others. We are also committed to empowering food, feed, and water business operators with guidance and support, so that compliance becomes not just an obligation but a pathway to competitiveness and market access.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Government of The Gambia, the FSQA Board, our staff, partners and all other stakeholders for their trust and commitment. Together, we can make FSQA not only a guardian of public health but also a catalyst for inclusive growth, trade facilitation, and consumer confidence. This Strategic Plan is our shared roadmap, and I am confident it will take FSQA to new heights of excellence and impact.

Mamodou Bah

Director General

Food Safety & Quality Authority (FSQA)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mamodou Bah', written in a cursive style.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) presents its Strategic Plan (2026–2030) as a practical roadmap to safeguard public health, build consumer confidence, and enhance The Gambia's competitiveness in regional and international markets. The plan focuses on modern, risk-based food control; institutional strengthening; laboratory and digital modernization; and inclusive stakeholder engagement aligned with GRF-NDP, Codex, WTO-SPS, ECOWAS, and AU frameworks.

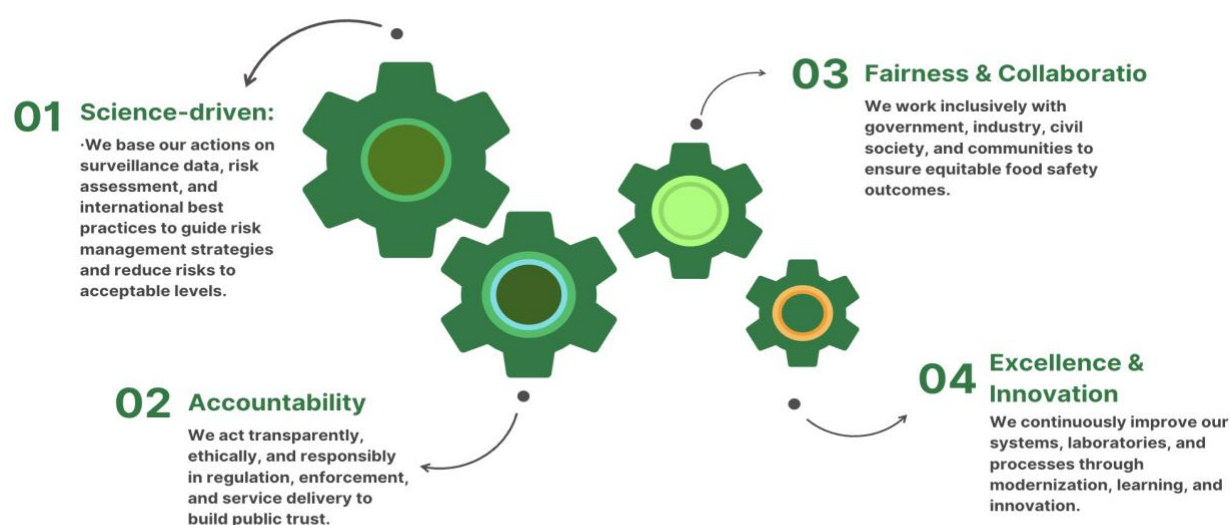
Our Mission is:

To safeguard public health and facilitate safe trade by ensuring the safety and quality of food across The Gambia through effective regulation, risk-based inspections, stakeholder engagement, and continuous capacity building.

Our Vision is:

To be a leading, trusted, and science-driven authority ensuring food safety and quality for all.

Our Core Values (SAFE)



Our Strategic Objectives (SOs) are:

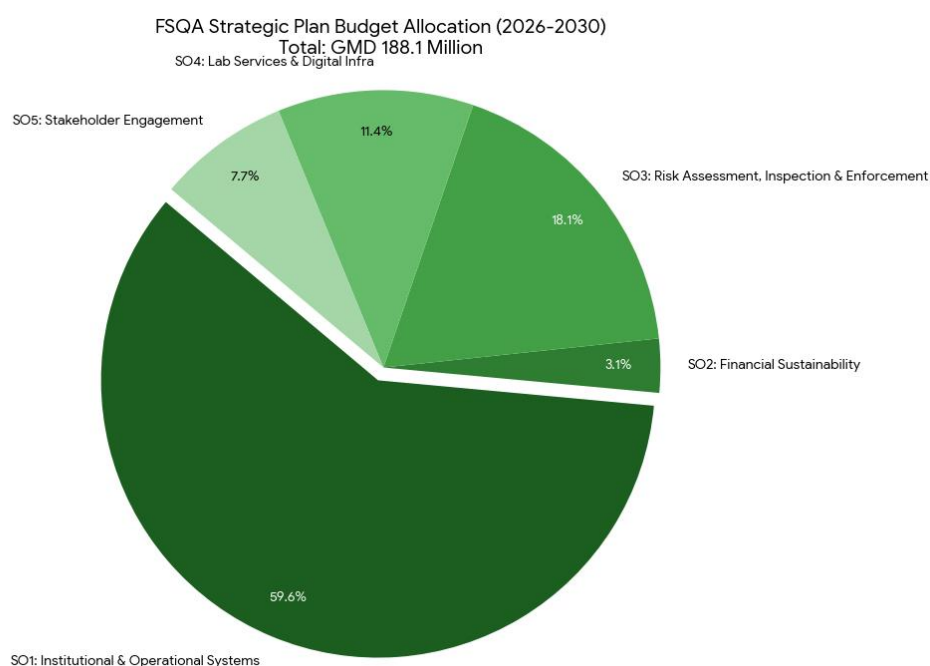
1. **SO1:** Strengthen FSQA's institutional and operational systems.
2. **SO2:** Improve financial sustainability and resource mobilization.
3. **SO3:** Strengthen Risk Assessment, Inspection, Surveillance, and Enforcement Systems.
4. **SO4:** Modernize laboratory services and digital infrastructure, including Food Safety Information System (FSIS).
5. **SO5:** Strengthen stakeholder engagement and public awareness.

Implementation Approach

Implementation is anchored in a clear governance and a disciplined results culture: Board oversight and national coordination structures guide delivery by the Director General and core departments, with regional offices ensuring operational reach. A Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) framework supported by a performance dashboard will track progress in real time. Key enablers include a competency-based Human Resources (HR) system, standard operating procedures (SOPs), digitized registration, licensing, and inspection via FSIS, and a laboratory quality management system aligned with ISO/IEC 17025. Partnerships will extend beyond ministries and municipalities to include the security services (police, GRA etc.), academia, producers, vendors, and other relevant stakeholders, ensuring coherence and collective accountability

Budget Overview (2026–2030)

The total estimated cost of implementing the FSQA Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2030 is **GMD 188.1 million**. The largest share, **GMD 112.2 million (59.6 percent)**, will support institutional and operational systems, including governance, human resource development, performance management, and monitoring and evaluation. Approximately **GMD 21.5 million (11.4 percent)** is allocated to laboratory and digital modernization, covering equipment operationalization, data management, traceability mechanisms, and steps toward accreditation. A total of **GMD 34 million (18.1 percent)** will strengthen risk assessment, inspection, surveillance, and enforcement systems. Stakeholder engagement, communication, and advocacy will receive **GMD 14.5 million (7.7 percent)**. Financial sustainability and resource mobilization initiatives are allocated **GMD 5.9 million (3.1 percent)**. This allocation ensures a balanced investment across FSQA’s core priorities and reinforces institutional capacity, modernization, operational effectiveness, and public engagement.



Priority Actions (first wave, 10 items)

To operationalize the FSQA Strategic Plan (2026–2030), a set of ten first-wave priority actions has been identified. These actions represent the most critical institutional, regulatory, and operational measures to be implemented during the initial phase (2026–2027) to establish momentum, strengthen core systems, and position the Authority for sustained delivery across the strategic period.

No.	Priority Action	Key Activities / Deliverables
1	Institutional Reset	Approve the organogram; finalize SOPs and internal coordination protocols; establish a Program/Project Management and M&E function for the delivery of the plan.
2	People & Performance	Fill critical posts (inspectors, lab analysts, IT/FSIS support); roll out competency-based training; implement a results-based appraisal system.
3	Legal & Enforcement Strengthening	Update regulations and fee schedules; standardize sanctions and case handling with MoJ; issue enforcement SOPs and guidance.
4	Risk-Based Inspections	Implement sector risk profiling; harmonize inspection checklists; equip inspectors; run periodic calibration and joint inspections.
5	Laboratory Modernization	Procure priority equipment; implement a quality management system; participate in proficiency testing; start ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation roadmap; deploy a basic Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS).
6	Surveillance, Monitoring, and Risk Assessment	Launch a national risk monitoring plan (e.g., mycotoxins, residues, contaminants and heavy metals); conduct structured risk assessments coordinated by the Scientific Committee and SAD; standardize sampling; publish annual food safety status reports with risk categorization and mitigation recommendations.
7	FSIS at Scale	Digitize registration, licensing, inspections, and certificates; introduce inspector tablets and QR-coded permits; integrate complaints and rapid alerts; build analytics dashboards.
8	Communication & Compliance Support	Roll out national campaigns; strengthen food handler training and certification; co-design vendor hygiene programs with municipalities and market committees and other key stakeholders.
9	Resource Mobilization	Operationalize transparent cost-recovery; and build a partner pipeline tied to priority investments.
10	Partnership Platforms	Institutionalize the Stakeholder Consultative Forum; sign MOUs with MoH, MoALFS, TGSB, GRA, local councils, Police, UTG, and other key stakeholders; set up data-sharing and joint response protocols.

Performance Dashboard (Top 10)

To ensure accountability and track progress toward its five strategic objectives, FSQA has defined measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) under the Strategic Performance Dashboard. The table below presents the ten top-level indicators that reflect institutional effectiveness, regulatory performance, and stakeholder engagement during the 2026–2030 period.

No.	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Linked Strategic Objective	Target (2026–2030)
1	% of staff with completed annual appraisals	SO1 – Institutional Systems	≥90% completion
2	% of strategic indicators tracked quarterly	SO1 – Institutional Systems	100% indicators tracked
3	% of decisions informed by M&E data	SO1 – Institutional Systems	≥75% data-driven decisions
4	Number of labs accredited to ISO/IEC 17025	SO4 – Laboratory & Digital Systems	≥2 labs accredited
5	% of inspections conducted using risk-based checklist	SO3 – Risk-Based Inspection	≥80% inspections risk-based
6	Average time to resolve consumer complaints	SO5 – Stakeholder Engagement	≤5 days
7	Number of stakeholder forums convened annually	SO5 – Stakeholder Engagement	≥10 forums
8	IGF retention rate and percentage of plan funded	SO2 – Financial Sustainability	≥85% funding coverage
9	Public trust score on food safety information	SO5 – Stakeholder Engagement	≥85% trust rating
10	% of food businesses licensed digitally via FSIS	SO4 – Laboratory & Digital Systems	≥90% licenses digitalized

Risk Management Priorities

FSQA’s Risk Management Matrix identifies potential threats that could impede delivery of the Strategic Plan and sets clear mitigation measures and ownership lines. The table below summarizes the five most critical risks and their corresponding mitigation strategies.

No.	Key Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measure	Responsible Unit
1	Absence of a dedicated MEAL framework	Weak performance tracking, donor dissatisfaction	Institutionalize a MEAL system with trained staff and tools	M&E Specialist
2	Insufficient government funding and donor dependency	Inability to sustain core operations	Develop a financial sustainability plan and diversify funding sources	Director of Finance & Admin
3	High staff turnover in technical roles	Loss of institutional memory, delays in service delivery	Implement staff retention strategies and improve working conditions	HR Manager
4	Poor internal communication between HQ and regional offices	Delayed decisions and inefficiencies	Establish structured internal communication protocols and digital tools	Director of Finance & Admin
5	Low compliance in the informal food sector	Persistent food safety risks	Deploy mobile enforcement teams and incentive-based compliance programs	Director of Food Control



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SECTION 1:

CHARTING OUR COURSE



1.1 Introduction

This Strategic Plan (2026–2030) provides a roadmap to strengthen the Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) as The Gambia’s national competent authority for food and feed safety. Anchored in the Food Safety and Quality Act (2011), the Plan outlines FSQA’s institutional mandate, the national and international context in which it operates, and the inclusive, evidence-informed process used in its development. It also highlights the structure and priority areas of the strategy, ensuring alignment with national development goals, regional commitments, and global food safety standards.

1.2 About FSQA

1.2.1 Mandate

The Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) is The Gambia’s national competent authority mandated to protect public health and consumer interests by ensuring that all food and feed, whether produced, imported, marketed, or exported are safe, fit and wholesome, and correctly described. Established by the Food Safety and Quality Act (2011) and under the purview of the Office of the Vice President, FSQA operates as a corporate body with powers to regulate, inspect, license, certify, and enforce compliance across the entire food value chain.

FSQA delivers its mandate through an integrated system of risk-based official controls, science-led regulation, and stakeholder engagement. Core functions include: (i) risk analysis (assessment, management, and communication) to guide proportionate measures; (ii) inspection, sampling, testing, and certification of establishments, food and food products, vehicles, and consignments; (iii) import and export controls aligned with Codex guidance and WTO–SPS obligations; and (iv) traceability, incident management, and emergency response, including public advisories, market withdrawals/recalls, and coordination through national and international alert networks.

As part of The Gambia’s national quality infrastructure, FSQA works closely with the Gambia Standards Bureau (TGSB) and serves as the country’s Codex Contact Point and SPS Enquiry Point, facilitating harmonization with GRF-NDP, Codex, ECOWAS, AU, and FAO frameworks. The Authority also oversees designated food testing laboratories to ensure compliance with ISO/IEC 17025 standards and also develops guidelines and codes of practice for food business operators.

FSQA’s legal powers—entry and inspection; document examination; sampling, seizure and detention; licensing and its suspension/cancellation; emergency measures; and prosecution, enable effective, preventive control measures “from farm to fork.” Through this coordinated model, FSQA safeguards health, underpins fair trade, and strengthens confidence in Gambian food systems at home and in international markets.

1.2.2 Structure

The Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) is anchored in a governance framework that balances national oversight, strategic direction, and operational delivery.

At the apex, the Office of the Vice President (OVP) serves as the supervising authority. It provides policy direction, ensures cross-sector coordination on food safety matters, and receives reports directly from the Food Control Advisory Committee, which advises on legal and regulatory issues.

The Board of Directors guides FSQA’s institutional direction, approves strategic and annual plans, and ensures the Authority remains accountable and efficient in applying resources. Its work is complemented by two advisory and consultative mechanisms:

- The Scientific Committee, which offers independent technical and scientific guidance; and
- The Stakeholder Consultative Forum, which channels perspectives from industry, civil society, and consumers into the national food safety agenda.

The Management, led by the Director General, is responsible for executing FSQA’s mandate on a day-to-day basis. The Director General is supported by four core departments, namely Scientific Affairs, Food Control, Regulatory Affairs, and Finance & Administration as well as decentralized regional offices that extend FSQA’s presence nationwide.

This arrangement ensures that FSQA combines political oversight, professional governance, and technical competence to deliver its role as The Gambia’s competent authority for food safety and quality.

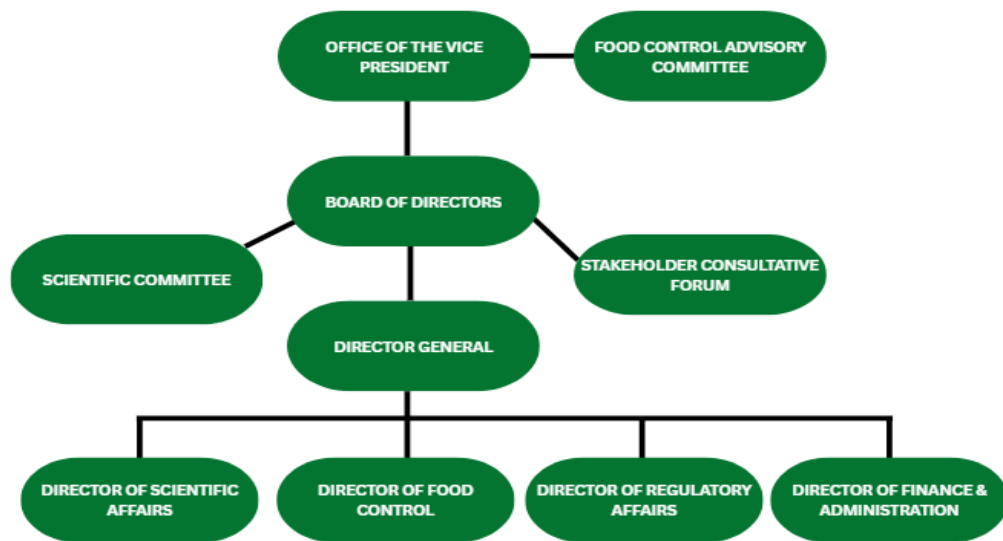


Figure 1: Governance Structure

1.3 Strategic Plan Development Process

The preparation of this Strategic Plan (2026–2030) followed a systematic and inclusive process designed to combine evidence with stakeholder perspectives.

The first stage involved an **extensive desk review** of legal instruments, institutional reports, and national and international policy documents to establish the baseline for food safety governance in

The Gambia. A **SWOC analysis** was then carried out to identify FSQA’s internal strengths and weaknesses alongside external opportunities and challenges, while a PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental) analysis examined external factors likely to influence the organization over the next five years.

Building on this foundation, the consultancy team conducted **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with government counterparts, private sector actors, and development partners, as well as **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** with FSQA staff. These consultations provided valuable insights into operational realities, strategic risks, and opportunities for institutional strengthening.

A **pre-validation workshop** was convened with relevant stakeholders to review initial findings, test strategic priorities, and ensure broad consensus. Feedback from this session was incorporated into the draft plan, which was further refined to ensure coherence with FSQA’s mandate and alignment with national development priorities.

This structured approach ensured that the plan was not only grounded in rigorous analysis but also shaped by diverse voices, fostering ownership and commitment to its successful implementation.

1.4 Structure of the Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan (2026–2030) provides a comprehensive framework to guide the Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) in fulfilling its mandate to protect public health, regulate food and feed systems, and support trade competitiveness. It sets out strategic priorities that align with national development goals, international food safety commitments and guidelines, and the operational realities of the Authority. The plan is designed to consolidate institutional capacity, strengthen regulatory oversight, expand partnerships, and embed food safety into The Gambia’s broader development and trade agenda.

The document is structured into six key sections. The first presents FSQA’s mandate, governance, and institutional framework, while the second provides a situational analysis based on SWOC, PESTLE, and stakeholder assessments. The third chapter defines the strategic framework, articulating FSQA’s mission, vision, and strategic objectives. This is followed by an implementation roadmap that details priority actions, resource requirements, and a communication component to enhance visibility and stakeholder engagement. The fifth section establishes a results and monitoring framework with clear indicators and accountability mechanisms. The final section addresses risk management and sustainability, outlining measures to safeguard the Authority’s long-term resilience.



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SECTION 2

ORGANISATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN



2.1 Introduction

This section sets the stage for the Food Safety and Quality Authority's (FSQA) Strategic Plan (2026–2030) by analyzing the internal and external factors shaping its mandate. As The Gambia's national competent authority for food and feed safety, we operate at the intersection of consumer protection, trade competitiveness, trade facilitation, and public health. The situational analysis draws on institutional reviews, stakeholder consultations, and analytical tools including SWOC, PESTLE, and stakeholder mapping. It highlights our internal strengths and capacity gaps while identifying risks and opportunities linked to national development priorities, regional integration, and global food safety obligations. By examining both the international and national context of food safety governance, this diagnostic provides the foundation for setting strategic priorities that will strengthen FSQA's effectiveness, sustainability, and leadership over the next five years.

2.2 Context

2.2.1 International Context

The international response to food safety has expanded considerably over the past two decades, shaped by global agreements, scientific networks, and regulatory frameworks that promote a coordinated approach to reducing risks from unsafe food and supporting safe trade. Institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have increasingly emphasized the role of food safety in public health, sustainable development, and international commerce. The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), established by FAO and WHO, remains the cornerstone of this framework, setting harmonized international standards, guidelines, and codes of practice that form the global reference for food and feed safety.

According to WHO's latest global estimates, unsafe food causes 600 million cases of foodborne diseases and 420,000 deaths annually, leading to a loss of 33 million healthy life years (DALYs). Children under five account for 30% of these deaths, despite representing only 9% of the global population.¹ This significant burden has positioned food safety not only as a public-health priority but also as a fundamental requirement for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

At the heart of this evolving landscape is the recognition that science–policy interfaces are critical for translating global food safety standards into locally relevant practices. The WTO's Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures mandates that national food safety regulations be based on science and aligned with Codex standards, ensuring fair trade while

¹ [Estimating the burden of foodborne diseases](#)

safeguarding consumer health.² This framework presents a strategic opportunity for institutions such as FSQA to consolidate their role as regulators and enforcers of science-based measures, enabling The Gambia to meet both domestic health needs and international market requirements.

The global food safety landscape is increasingly shaped by international frameworks and collaborative mechanisms that emphasize risk-based systems, rapid data sharing, and institutional capacity building. A key initiative is the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), coordinated jointly by FAO and WHO, which facilitates swift communication between national authorities during food safety emergencies, ensuring coordinated responses to cross-border risks.³⁴ Complementing this, the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool (2019) provides countries with a structured framework to benchmark and strengthen their food control systems in line with international best practices.⁵

Global assessments using this tool show that while high-income countries have achieved advanced, risk-based systems, most low- and middle-income countries remain at early stages of development, particularly in laboratory accreditation, surveillance, and digital information management. For The Gambia, the tool offers a valuable reference point for aligning FSQA's reforms—such as laboratory modernization, the Food Safety Information System (FSIS), and the MEAL framework—with international best practices and guiding the country toward a maturing, resilient food safety system.

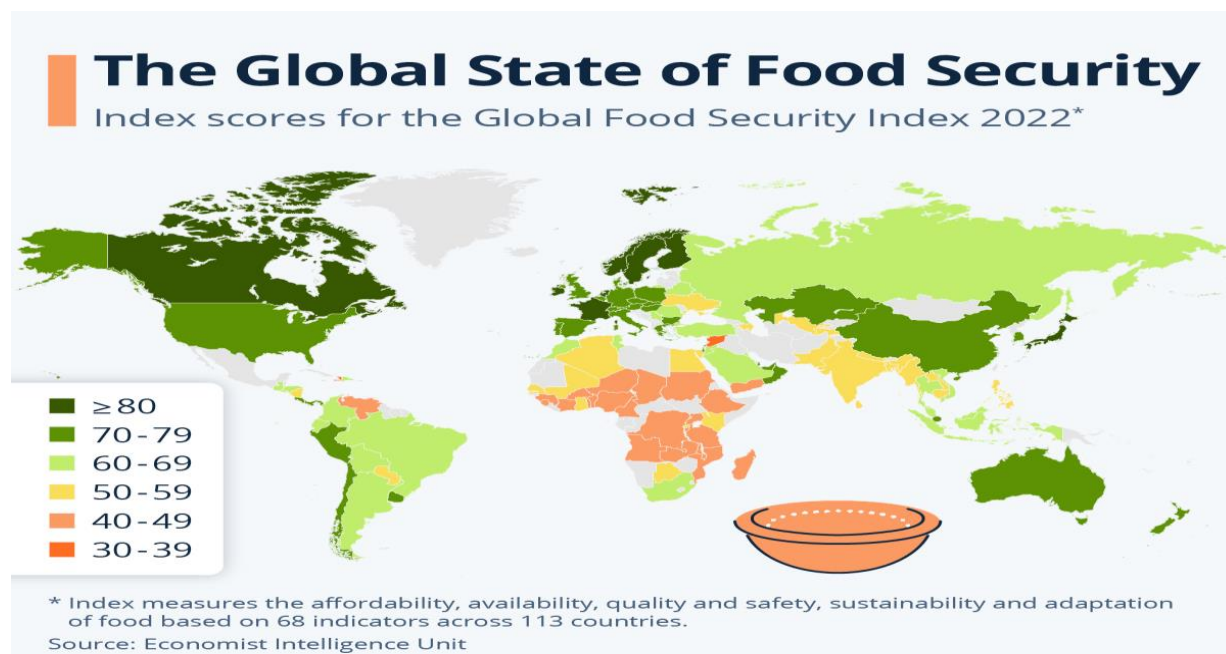


Figure 2: Global disparities in food security and safety systems (Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, 2022; Statista)

² https://www.wto.org/library/events/event_resources/sps_1803202410/381_1367.pdf

³ <https://www.fao.org/food-safety/emergencies/infosan/en/>

⁴ <https://www.who.int/news/item/31-07-2024-infosan-quarterly-summary--2023--4>

⁵ [content](#)

Figure 2 above is the index scores for the Global Food Security Index (2022), and it shows that most low- and middle-income countries remain below 60, reflecting systemic challenges in food availability, quality, and safety. Strengthening food control systems, including risk-based inspection and laboratory capacity, is critical for bridging this gap.

Global financial institutions, including the World Bank, have also increased investments in food safety modernization to boost agricultural competitiveness and facilitate trade. Access to these funding streams depends on the presence of credible institutions capable of implementing robust systems, positioning FSQA to benefit from such opportunities.

Finally, the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) and the One Health approach underscore the interconnectedness of food safety, nutrition, animal health, and environmental sustainability. These global compacts call for stronger cross-sectoral collaboration, greater focus on consumer awareness, and the integration of food safety into broader development strategies. In this regard, FSQA's relevance is amplified: its work overlaps with multiple SDGs and international commitments, ensuring that global standards translate into national action while safeguarding Gambian consumers and enhancing access to regional and international markets.

2.2.2 Regional Context

Food safety in Africa remains a critical concern, with the continent shouldering a disproportionate share of the global burden of foodborne illnesses. It is estimated that Africa experiences around 137,000 deaths annually from unsafe food, accounting for about one-third of global mortality, despite having roughly 16 % of the world's population (AFRAF / FSSA documents).⁶

In response, the African Union adopted the Food Safety Strategy for Africa (2022–2036), aiming to harmonize regulations, strengthen surveillance and laboratories, improve stakeholder coordination, and build capacity across national food control systems.⁷ A landmark development in 2025 was the AU's adoption of a statute to establish a continental Food Safety Agency, intended to standardize food safety policy, risk assessment, and rapid alert systems across member states.⁸

Within the region, many national systems face structural gaps: laboratories often lack capacity or resources, inspection services are underfunded, regulatory frameworks are outdated, data systems are weak, and collaboration across sectors (health, agriculture, and trade) is inconsistent. A major underlying factor is that most public laboratories in the region, including The Gambia, do not operate on a business model and are therefore unable to generate the revenue needed to sustain operations.

⁶ https://afraforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/AFRAF_Prez-3_Amare.pdf

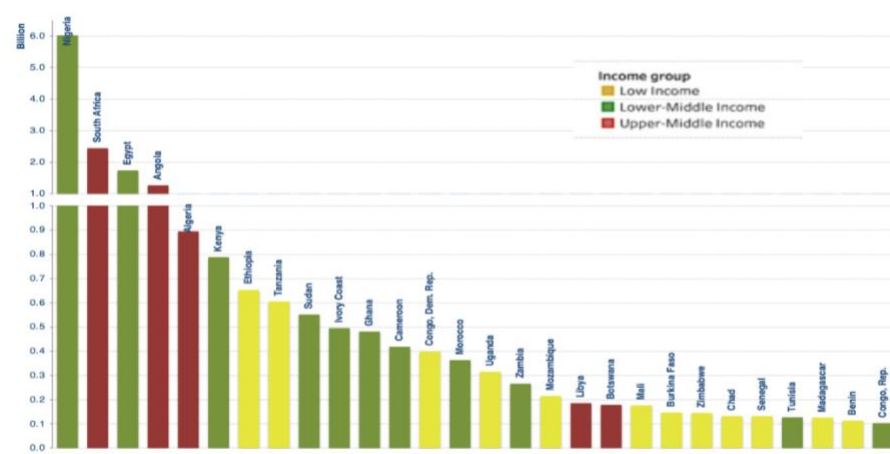
⁷ https://assets-global.echocommunity.org/publicationissues/876226e7-6a6c-4e2a-8e6c-7e43a8272079/en/en_food-safety-strat_print.pdf

⁸ <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20250305/african-union-adopts-statute-establishment-continental-food-safety-agency>

Addressing this will require building the technical and institutional capacity of Gambian laboratories to operate sustainably. In the long term, The Gambia can leverage these strengthened capacities to extend analytical services to neighboring countries, thereby enhancing financial viability and regional collaboration in food safety. In addition, the WHO African Region has published a regional framework for implementing the Global Strategy for Food Safety (2022–2030), which underscores the need for risk-based approaches, evidence generation, digitalization, multisectoral coordination, and strengthening informal sector oversight.⁹

Several initiatives and partnerships are emerging to address these challenges. FS4Africa is a regional program focused on improving food safety in informal markets by building evidence, co-creating tools, and supporting market transformation.¹⁰ Also, the European Union and AU are collaborating on food safety technologies, mycotoxin reductions, and harmonized standards to enhance trade and consumer protection.¹¹

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), launched in 2021, represents a transformative opportunity for Africa’s economic integration, creating the world’s largest single market of 1.4 billion people and a combined GDP of over US\$3.4 trillion. However, the benefits of AfCFTA depend heavily on the ability of member states to comply with harmonized sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards and demonstrate credible food safety systems. Estimates suggest that non-tariff barriers related to food safety and quality cost African exporters billions of dollars annually in rejected goods, testing delays, and compliance costs. For The Gambia, strengthening FSQA’s capacity to align with AU and AfCFTA standards will be crucial for expanding access to regional markets and improving consumer protection across borders.



Source: Jaffee et al. (2019), based on data from WHO-FERG (2015) and World Bank (2019). Note: The estimated loss for the indicated countries totals US\$19.5 billion. The estimated loss for all other African countries totals US\$0.5 billion.

Figure 3: Estimated productivity loss due to foodborne disease, Africa (Source: Jaffee, et al. 2019)

⁹ <https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2024-07/AFR-RC74-10%20Framework%20for%20implementing%20the%20WHO%20global%20strategy%20for%20food%20safety%202022-2030%20in%20the%20African%20Region.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://foodsafety4africa.eu/>

¹¹ <https://www.horizon-europe.gouv.fr/eu-africa-union-food-safety-33370>

As can be seen in figure 3 above, Africa suffers annual productivity losses estimated at over US\$20 billion due to foodborne diseases, with Nigeria, South Africa, and Egypt among the hardest hit. This illustrates the economic cost of unsafe food and the importance of aligning national systems with the AU Food Safety Strategy (2022–2036) and AfCFTA SPS measures to enable safer trade.

Together, these developments create both urgency and opportunity. For FSQA, alignment with AU’s strategy, participation in continental efforts like the new Food Safety Agency, leveraging regional capacity networks, and contributing to continental standards can help The Gambia bridge domestic gaps while positioning itself to benefit from regional trade and technical cooperation.

2.2.3 National Context

The Gambia’s food safety landscape reflects both the opportunities and constraints of a small, trade-dependent economy. Agriculture contributes about 25 percent of GDP and employs roughly 70 percent of the population, yet the country relies heavily on imported food to meet domestic demand—particularly for staples such as rice. This dependence exposes consumers to external food-safety risks and underscores the need for a strong national control system. According to the 2024 Gambia National Food Security Survey, 24% of Gambians were food insecure in 2024 (down from 29% in 2023 and 27% in 2022), while severe food insecurity remained stable at about 2%.

Recent studies confirm that contamination within domestic food chains remains a pressing concern. A 2024 microbiological survey of 104 food samples from 19 government primary schools in Kombo Central District found that 92.3 percent of samples were contaminated, and 43.3 percent exhibited extremely high bacterial loads ($\geq 10^7$ cfu/g)¹². *Escherichia coli* was detected in 32.7 percent of samples, of which 73.5 percent were pathogenic strains. These findings highlight systemic weaknesses in hygiene practices, market oversight, and consumer awareness, particularly in informal and school-based food environments.

Institutionally, the Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA)—established under the Food Safety and Quality Act of 2011—serves as the national competent authority responsible for coordination and regulation across the food chain. Over the past decade, FSQA has developed inspection protocols, laboratory services, and public-education initiatives, and has fostered collaboration with ministries of Health, Agriculture, Trade, and Lands and Regional Governance. FSQA also continues to play a pivotal role in coordinating national food safety systems and aligning them with regional and international obligations. As part of this effort, the Authority has established statutory committees that underpin its regulatory and advisory functions — including the Scientific Committee, National Codex Committee, and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Committee. These structures provide technical guidance, facilitate inter-agency coordination, and ensure that scientific evidence and stakeholder input inform national food control decisions. Through these mechanisms, FSQA is strengthening its role as a science-based, transparent, and collaborative regulator. Nevertheless,

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https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383561575_The_prevalence_of_pathogenic_E_coli_in_food_sold_at_government_primary_schools_in_Kombo_central_district_the_Gambia_using_biochemical_tests

significant gaps persist: laboratory accreditation is still incomplete, risk-based inspection coverage remains limited, surveillance data are fragmented, community and public awareness is limited, and enforcement within the informal sector is inconsistent.

The 2017 Joint External Evaluation (JEE) of The Gambia further noted that the Department of Livestock Services operates a largely passive surveillance system with no digital data-sharing and no legal obligation for livestock disease reporting; wildlife-related monitoring is virtually absent. These systemic weaknesses limit the country's ability to respond swiftly to existing and emerging risks and to generate the evidence base required for science-driven policymaking.

To address these systemic weaknesses, the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool offers a structured framework for evaluating and strengthening national food control systems. Its application will enable The Gambia to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement across surveillance, laboratory capacity, coordination, and enforcement. The findings can inform targeted investments and reforms toward a more efficient, science-based, and resilient food control system.

2.3 Institutional Achievements Since Our Establishment

Since its establishment in 2013, the Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) has made important strides in formalizing and enforcing food safety across The Gambia. Through policy reform, regulatory enforcement, institutional capacity building, and public engagement, FSQA has transformed food and feed safety from a fragmented set of functions into a centralized, scientific system. While operating without a formal M&E system or strategic framework, FSQA has nonetheless achieved significant institutional progress.

Over the past five years, FSQA has strengthened its regulatory, institutional, and technical capacity. It has developed or revised 12 national regulations, expanded annual inspections to nearly 6,000 in 2023, and taken over 300 enforcement actions nationwide. Capacity development has been central, with 87 technical staff trained and more than 25 supported for higher education. FSQA now operates five regional offices, has installed three state-of-the-art laboratory equipment (Ultra High-Performance Liquid Chromatography, Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer, and UV-Visible Spectrophotometer), which are yet to become operational due to resource constraints in procuring the required consumables and reagents. Partnerships with national agencies and councils have strengthened coordination, while FSQA's leadership in Codex and CCAFRICA positions The Gambia as a regional contributor to food safety governance. Table 1 summarizes these institutional achievements.

Table 1: Institutional Achievements

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Values	Notes
National Regulations Developed and Enforced	8 Finalized; 4 Drafted	Groundnut, alcohol, maize, rice, food handlers, fortification, labelling, registration and licensing
Establishment and Operationalization of FSQA Statutory Committees	3 Committees (Scientific Committee, Codex Committee, SPS Committee) established	Support risk assessment and standard setting functions of FSQA
Establishment of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Framework	SPS Committee established and functional; national coordination improved.	Strengthens compliance with international food safety and trade standards.
Annual Food Inspections Conducted	2,843 (2022); 5,971 (2023); 4,621 (2024)	Coverage by category and region provided
Development of Guidelines for Food Business Operators and Departmental SOPs	Import and Export Guidelines, Start-up Business Guidelines, Traceability and Recall Guidelines, Registration and Licensing Procedures (FSIS-based), and SOPs on Handling SOPs	Enhance compliance and standardize operations across departments
Enforcement Actions Taken	>300 Cases (2020–2024)	Fines, closures, seizures, warnings
Technical Staff Trained (Cumulative)	87 Staff Members	HACCP, ISO 22000, risk-based inspection, sampling, risk assessment, laboratory management
Higher Education (BSc/MSc)	25 Staff Supported	Professional and academic development
FSQA Regional Offices and border posts operationalized	9	Basse, Brikama, Soma, Farafenni, Amdalai, Kudang, Wassu, Jiboro, Essau
Laboratory Equipment Procured and Operationalized	3 Major Sets Installed	Modern tools installed; accreditation pending
Digital Systems Introduced	FSIS (since 2018)	Partially operational; underutilized
Strategic Partnerships & MoUs Signed	9 Active Agreements	With councils, chambers, PPS, MoH, GSCC, etc.
National Food Safety Policy Adopted	1 (in 2023)	Provides formal legal and strategic direction

Codex and Regional Leadership Roles	2 High-Level Posts	Codex Africa Coordinator (2025–2027); CCAFRICA Advisor
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2.4 Institutional Assessment

An institutional assessment was conducted to guide the development of this Strategic Plan. The review examined internal factors such as governance, human and technical capacity, and operational systems, alongside external influences within the policy, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental context. The findings, summarized through SWOT and PESTLE analyses, form the basis for identifying FSQA’s key strengths, constraints, and opportunities in achieving its 2026–2030 objectives.

2.4.1 SWOC Analysis

The following SWOC analysis summarizes FSQA’s internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and challenges that shape its strategic direction. It draws on staff consultations, stakeholder meetings, and desk review findings. It is organized using the Balanced Scorecard approach and supports strategic priority identification for the 2026–2030 plan.

Strengths

FSQA’s core strengths lie in its legal mandate, growing inspection infrastructure, technical staff capacity, and regional leadership role. These foundations enable it to act as the national authority in food safety regulation and public health protection.

Table 2: Strengths

Strategic Feature	Strategic Response
Legal mandate under the FSQA Act of 2011	Utilize the existing legal framework to drive national compliance and advocate for the amendment of the Act to reflect emerging risks (e.g., e-commerce, novel foods, biotechnology) and to clearly define types and levels of fines applicable to individuals and companies.
Operational presence in all regions	Strengthen regional inspection capacity by upgrading field logistics and ensuring decentralized decision-making for faster and effective enforcement.
Technical staff trained in the Risk Analysis Framework (Risk Assessment, Risk Management, and Risk Communication).	Establish a continuous professional development program to maintain standards and keep up with national and international requirements.
Codex Coordinator role (2025–2027) and advisor to CCAFRICA	Leverage regional leadership roles to attract technical partnerships, increase visibility, and influence regional harmonization processes.
National Food Safety Policy adopted (2023)	Use the policy as a platform for donor alignment, resource mobilization, cross-sectoral coordination, and institutional reform planning.

Established public awareness activities (42 campaigns)	Scale up behavior change campaigns to underserved regions and harmonize messaging through a national food safety communication strategy.
Modern laboratory equipment installed	Enhance laboratory performance through recruitment of specialists, routine calibration, and structured maintenance plans.
FSIS introduced	Fully digitize the inspection lifecycle by integrating FSIS into all inspection points and training staff on real-time reporting.

Weaknesses

Key institutional weaknesses include gaps in internal systems (e.g., M&E, SOPs), inconsistent digital usage, limited lab accreditation, and a lack of financial autonomy. These constrain operational efficiency and programmatic responsiveness.

Table 3: Weaknesses

Strategic Feature	Strategic Response
Absence of a performance appraisal system	Introduce a results-based performance appraisal framework linked to professional development and rewards.
Weak National Quality Infrastructure	Strengthen collaboration with the Gambia Standards Bureau (TGSB) and other quality assurance institutions to reinforce the National Quality Infrastructure and support effective implementation of food safety regulations.
Poor internal communication across head office and regional offices	Establish internal communication protocols and monthly coordination check-ins across units.
No dedicated M&E framework	Develop and institutionalize a MEAL system to track strategic and operational performance.
Underutilization of FSIS and inspection data	Embed FSIS usage into job descriptions and integrate into staff KPIs.
Inadequate coordination between departments	Develop SOPs for cross-functional operations and joint planning templates.
Delays in fund release and inadequate financial autonomy	Adopt rolling budgeting and multi-year budget ceilings. Expand IGF sources.
No orientation or induction program for new staff	Design a structured onboarding program to ensure alignment with institutional values and protocols.
High staff turnover, especially in technical roles	Conduct root-cause analysis (e.g., job satisfaction, contract terms), implement retention strategies such as career pathways, performance-based rewards, and improve working conditions and job security for core functions.

Opportunities

FSQA can leverage regional integration, global food safety trends, and digital advancements to enhance its services, deepen partnerships, and diversify funding streams.

Table 4: Opportunities

Strategic Feature	Strategic Response
ECOWAS food safety harmonization initiatives	Align FSQA's regulatory reforms with regional frameworks and position FSQA as a pilot country for regional implementation.
Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)	Strengthen compliance with AfCFTA's Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) framework to facilitate cross-border trade, reduce export rejections, and position The Gambia as a reliable source of safe, high-quality food products within the continental market.
Increased donor interest in food system transformation	Develop bankable proposals targeting food safety, climate resilience, and public health; engage proactively with FAO, ECOWAS, WHO, and AUDA-NEPAD.
Digital innovations in inspection and laboratory services	Integrate mobile apps, QR-based certificates, and AI-supported lab diagnostics into FSQA's service delivery.
Urbanization and growing consumer demand for safe food	Prioritize inspection in high-density urban areas and introduce traceability programs for high-risk products.
Growing relevance of climate change on food safety (e.g., mycotoxin, contamination)	Mainstream climate-sensitive risk analysis into inspection protocols and awareness materials.

Challenges

FSQA faces challenges from funding volatility, increasing food system risks, and public skepticism. These external risks require institutional adaptability and strategic positioning.

Table 5: Challenges

Strategic Feature	Strategic Response
Unreliable government funding and donor dependency	Develop a financial sustainability plan with earmarked revenue channels and donor diversification.
Informal sector's low compliance with food safety standards	Expand routine enforcement, create more awareness programs, create mobile compliance units, and offer incentives for formalization.
Rising risk of food contamination linked to climate change	Align food safety issues into climate change programs and policies. Collaborate with meteorology and agriculture sectors to forecast risks and issue timely advisories.
Low consumer trust in food control, especially rural areas	Establish a rural engagement strategy using community radio, social media, traditional leaders, and local languages.

2.4.2 PESTLE Analysis

This PESTLE analysis outlines the key external Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental factors shaping FSQA’s strategic context. Derived from staff consultations, stakeholder feedback, and national/regional policy trends, it highlights the external dynamics that FSQA must navigate to remain effective and resilient over the 2026–2030 period. See Table 6 below for the PESTLE analysis



Table 6: PESTLE Analysis

Category	Key Factors	Implications for FSQA
Political	• Evolving decentralization policies and local government reforms • International and regional food safety harmonization under ECOWAS • Potential restructuring of ministries and food-related agencies	• Requires formal collaboration with municipal councils to strengthen local food safety enforcement while FSQA retains oversight. • Opportunity to align national food control with regional and international protocols • Calls for cross-ministerial coordination frameworks
Economic	• Limited public funding and fiscal constraints • Inflation affecting operational costs (e.g., fuel, lab reagents) • Donor shifts toward systems-based and resilience-focused funding • Growth in agri-food SMEs and informal vendors • Over dependence on government budget allocations	• However, digitization of the revenue system is needed to enhance transparency and minimize leakages. • Necessitates operational cost-efficiency and value-for-money strategies • Opens avenues for donor proposals tied to food systems transformation • Requires regulatory innovation to engage informal food economy • Risks operational delays if government subventions are unpredictable
Social	• Low food safety awareness in rural and peri-urban areas • Cultural food practices and informal vending dominance • Rising youth unemployment and skill gaps • Gender gaps in enforcement and staffing	• Calls for behavior change communication tailored to diverse communities • Need to strengthen food handler education and licensing • Presents opportunity for youth-focused training and job creation through inspection support roles • Gender mainstreaming in inspections and field operations
Technological	• Underutilized FSIS and low digital literacy among inspectors • Inadequate lab information systems and traceability tools • National digital transformation drive (e.g., e-services agenda)	• Requires investment in digital infrastructure and mobile-friendly FSQA tools • Opportunity to establish a Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) with potential linkage to FSIS and to strengthen digital traceability across the food value chain.

	• Growing market for digital inspection and certification platforms • Gaps in Lab capacity	• FSQA can pilot traceability systems for high-risk foods (e.g., poultry, water) • Aligns with e-governance reforms to streamline licensing and compliance • FSQA should facilitate trainings for its Lab technicians
Legal	• Outdated FSQA Act (2011) lacking provisions for e-commerce, biotechnology, climate risks, and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) • Weak enforcement mechanisms and limited administrative penalties • Ambiguity in local authority roles under decentralization • Lack of comprehensive food traceability law	• FSQA must advocate for legal reform to reflect modern food safety threats • Requires review of enforcement procedures and fine schedules • Calls for legislative clarity on inspection roles under decentralization • Opens opportunity for stakeholder dialogue on traceability legislation
Environmental	• Climate change impacts on food safety (e.g., contamination from floods, heat-related spoilage) • Seasonal foodborne disease surges (e.g., rainy season outbreaks) • Urban waste and food hygiene issues • Water scarcity and sanitation infrastructure gaps • Poor industrial zoning and inadequate enforcement of land-use regulations	• Necessitates climate-informed inspection protocols and rapid response systems • Justifies stronger food hygiene education targeting high-risk seasons • FSQA can partner with sanitation, water, and climate agencies to mitigate cross-sectoral risks • Adds urgency to implement environment-smart lab and inspection systems • Increase the risk of cross-contamination, as seen in cases where heavy industries operate near food processing facilities.

2.4.3 Stakeholder Analysis

The following stakeholder analysis outlines the key institutions, sectors, and actors that influence or are directly served by FSQA’s regulatory functions. It maps each stakeholder's level of influence and interest, their expectations from FSQA, and tailored engagement strategies to strengthen partnerships and ensure aligned, accountable service delivery.

This analysis is grounded in extensive consultation data, including representatives from ministries, councils, private sector associations, regulatory partners, and staff bodies, and serves as a strategic tool to reinforce FSQA’s legitimacy, responsiveness, and coordination going into the 2026–2030 strategic period. See Table 7 below for the Stakeholder Analysis

Table 7: Stakeholder Analysis

S/N	Stakeholder Group	Role	Needs/Expectations	FSQA's Value Proposition	Influence	Interest	Priority Engagement Strategy	Engagement Level
1	FSQA Board Members	Provide governance oversight, approve policies and strategic plans	Clear reporting, accountability, policy alignment	FSQA delivers strategic plans, risk data, board reporting	High	High	Quarterly board sessions and strategic briefings	Management Team
2	FSQA Management and Staff	Lead operations, policy implementation, institutional development	Functional systems, budget control, team coordination, regular meetings for effective communication	FSQA ensures results tracking, risk management, and staff oversight	High	High	Weekly leadership coordination, KPI dashboards	Internal
3	Government Ministries & Agencies	Develop national food, health, and trade policies and fund FSQA	Policy integration, enforcement coordination, fiscal accountability	FSQA provides data-driven support and technical enforcement	High	High	Policy dialogues, joint operations, MTEF integration	Executive & Technical Units
4	Regulatory & Trade Agencies	Ensure border control, standards enforcement, and public order	Clear mandates, SOPs, legal clarity, coordination with FSQA	FSQA enables risk-based enforcement, Codex compliance	High	High	Formal MoUs, risk profiling, joint task forces	Technical / Legal Units
5	Private Sector Actors & Representatives	Operate food businesses and represent private sector interests	Transparent procedures, licensing support, training access	FSQA offers inspections, certification, and guidance services	Medium	High	Public–private forums, feedback mechanisms, vendor clinics	Communications & Field Units

6	Civil Society & Consumer Groups	Advocate for consumer rights, hygiene, and transparency	Public accountability, complaints systems, awareness	FSQA supports risk communication and consumer protection	Medium	Medium–High	Community outreach, hotline services, civil society platforms	Awareness & Legal Units
7	Academia & Research Institutions	Training future workforce and supporting food safety research	Access to data, collaborative studies, training partnerships	FSQA enables evidence-sharing and curriculum integration	Medium	Medium	Develop MOUs with universities and joint research projects	Technical Unit
8	Regional & International Partners	Provide technical, policy, and financial support	Transparent reporting, alignment with global frameworks	FSQA contributes to Codex, receives support for labs/training	High	High	Donor relations, regional standard-setting, proposal co-creation	Management Team
9	FSQA Statutory Committees	Facilitate coordination with national and international partners	Ensure that scientific evidence underpins regulatory decisions.	legal and operational framework through which the committees function	High	High	Evidence-based advisory and collaboration framework	Management Team

Stakeholder Mapping

The stakeholder map provides a visual classification of our key stakeholders based on their level of influence and interest in the authority's mandate. This typology supports strategic planning by guiding where to focus collaboration, consultation, empowerment, or simple information flow, depending on each stakeholder's positioning. It ensures resources are invested in partnerships that maximize institutional reach, policy impact, and regulatory effectiveness.

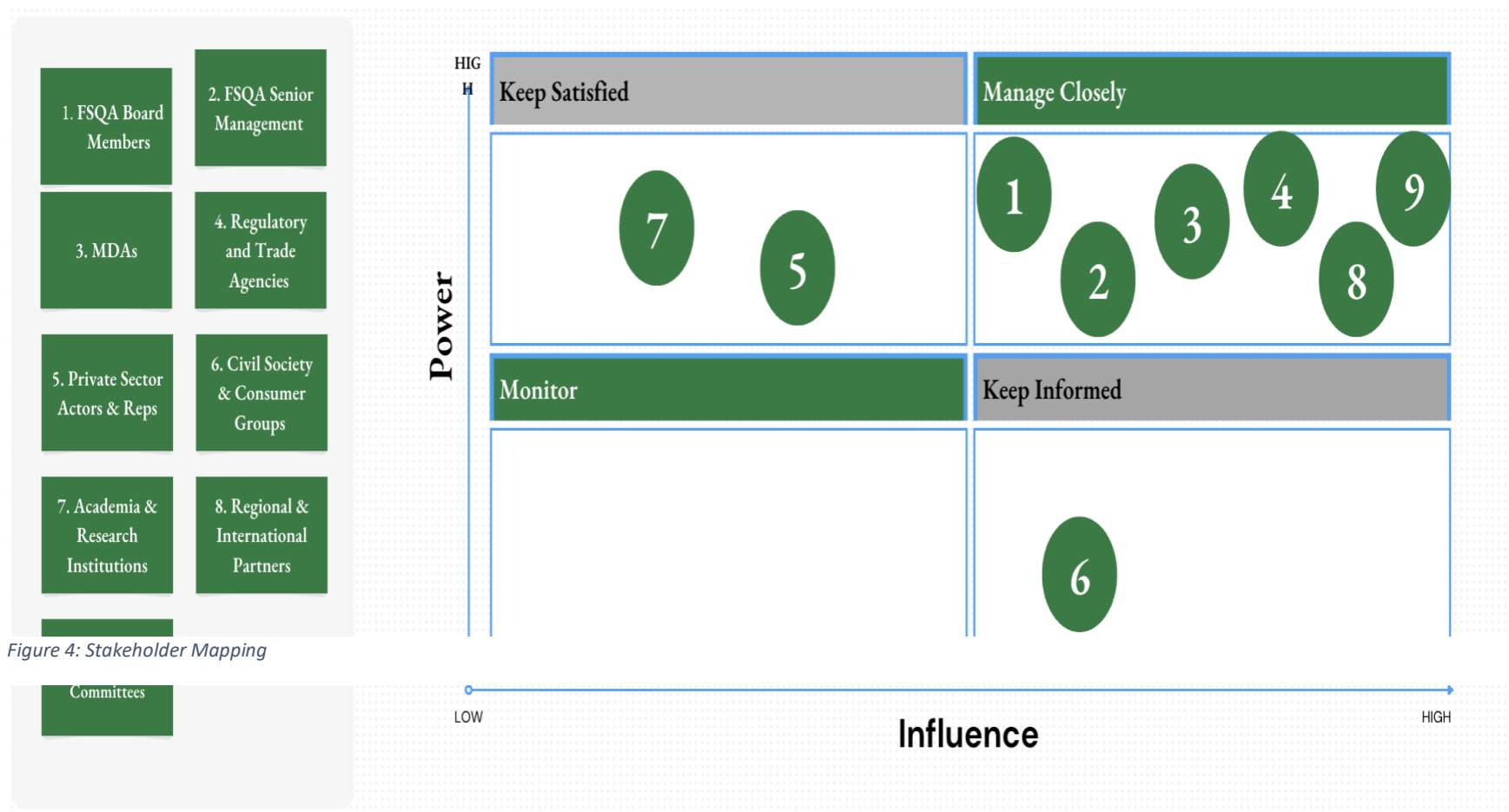


Figure 4: Stakeholder Mapping



SECTION 3

CORE STRATEGIC PILLARS

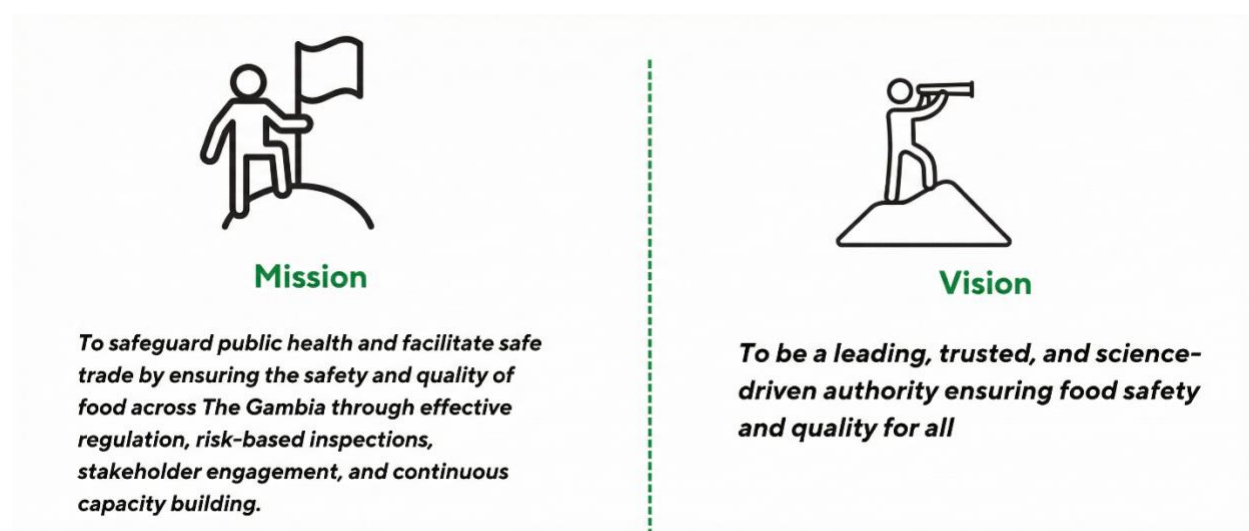


3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the strategic pillars that will guide the Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) over the 2026–2030 period. Drawing on institutional reviews, staff and stakeholder consultations, and the situational analysis of national, regional, and international food safety contexts, the pillars define our direction in fulfilling its mandate as the national competent authority for food and feed safety. They emphasize strengthening institutional efficiency, modernizing regulatory and enforcement systems, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and safeguarding consumer health while enabling trade competitiveness. Overall, they provide a results-oriented framework for implementation, monitoring, and sustainability over the next five years.

3.2 Corporate Statement

3.2.1 Proposed Mission and Vision



3.2.3 Core Values (SAFE)

FSQA’s core values define the legal, ethical, and professional principles that underpin its work in food safety regulation, inspection, and consumer health protection. These values reinforce its commitment to transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and service excellence, while shaping how the Authority collaborates with partners and stakeholders to ensure a safe and resilient food system:



3.3 Strategic Goals (Core Strategic Pillars)

FSQA’s 2026–2030 Strategic Plan is built around five integrated Strategic Goals that reflect national food safety priorities, institutional reform needs, and consumer health imperatives. Each goal is supported by targeted focus areas that guide regulatory improvements, institutional capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and technology adoption.

Table 8: Strategic Objectives

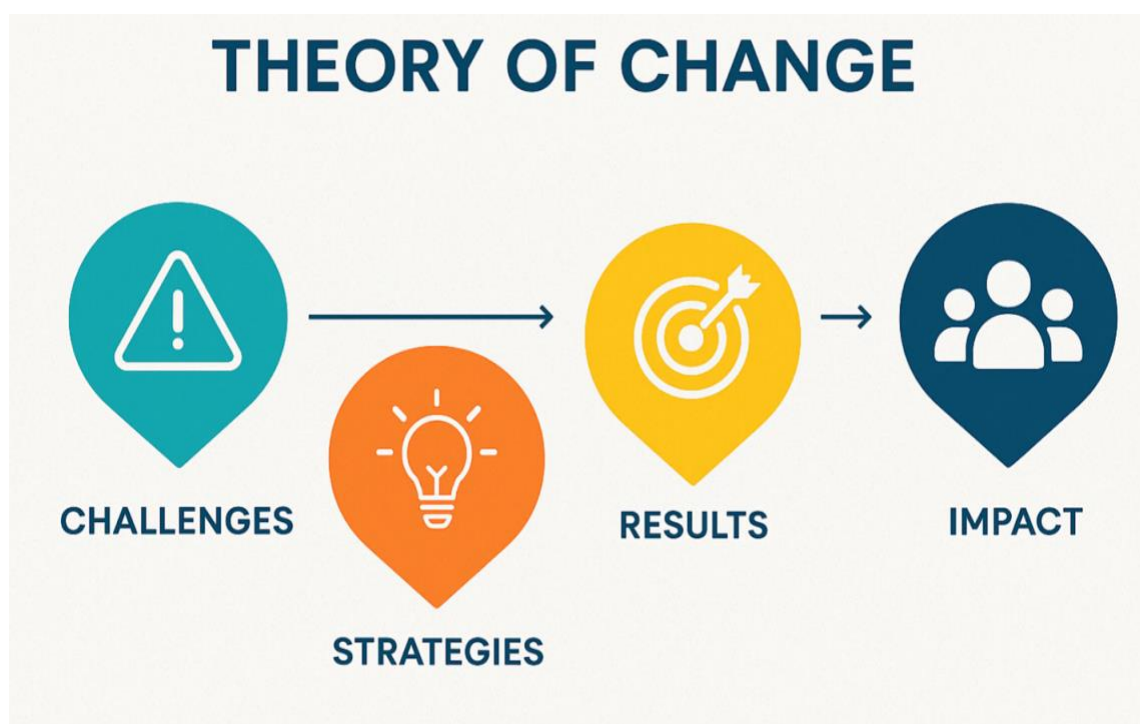
Strategic Objective	Focus Areas
SO1: Strengthen FSQA’s Institutional and Operational Systems	Implement robust internal communication protocols; develop and institutionalize SOPs; roll out a performance appraisal and staff retention system; clarify roles and responsibilities; introduce structured onboarding and mentorship programs to reduce staff attrition and increase coherence.
SO2: Improve Financial Sustainability and Resource Mobilization	Strengthen internally generated funds through paid regulatory services; advocate for predictable government subvention; engage development partners; establish a Resource Mobilization and Partnerships role under the Office of the Director General to coordinate funding outreach and strategic alliances; and institutionalize multi-year budgeting and expenditure tracking systems.
SO3: Strengthen Risk Assessment, Inspection, Surveillance, and Enforcement Systems	Institutionalize risk-based inspection SOPs; embed FSIS in inspection KPIs; expand surveillance of existing and emerging hazards; coordinate enforcement with legal authorities; and increase compliance in informal markets via mobile units. This Strategic Objective also emphasizes the development of structured risk assessment functions, including data generation, monitoring, and analysis to guide evidence-based inspection, enforcement, and policy decisions.

SO4: Modernize Laboratory Services and Digital Infrastructure	Fully operationalize and staff laboratories; digitize inspection, sample tracking, and licensing workflows; integrate traceability tools; upgrade data analytics and reporting systems; and support applied research aligned with regulatory needs.
SO5: Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement and Public Awareness	Develop a national food safety communication strategy; launch behavior change campaigns; establish complaint/feedback systems; engage informal vendors and community actors; coordinate messaging across Health, Fisheries, Agriculture, and Trade.

3.4 Theory of Change

FSQA’s Theory of Change articulates how the implementation of the five strategic goals will lead to systemic improvements in national food safety governance, public health, and regulatory service delivery during the 2026–2030 period. It connects institutional challenges, including limited resources, capacity gaps, weak stakeholder engagement, and fragmented enforcement systems to targeted interventions aimed at strengthening governance, digitizing operations, expanding food testing and inspection services, and building public trust.

Through this approach, we aim to evolve into a responsive, science-based, and citizen-centered food safety authority. These strategic interventions will enable us to better prevent, detect, and respond to food safety risks; promote a culture of compliance among food business operators; and safeguard consumer health across The Gambia.



Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen FSQA's Institutional and Operational Systems

#	Key Challenge	5-Year Strategy	Expected Outcome	Overall Impact
1	Absence of a performance appraisal system	Introduce a results-based appraisal framework linked to institutional KPIs and promotion pathways	Improved staff accountability, motivation, and performance culture	A professionally managed, cohesive, and performance-driven institution delivering efficient, coordinated food safety services nationwide
2	High turnover and loss of institutional memory	Implement structured onboarding, mentorship, and career development programs	Improved staff retention and institutional continuity	
3	Poor internal communication across Head office and regional offices	Establish protocols and platforms for structured internal communication and coordination	Faster and efficient decision-making and consistent messaging	
4	Lack of SOPs and unclear roles in many departments and units	Develop and roll out harmonized SOPs for administration, inspections, certifications, and enforcement	Standardized procedures and clearer institutional accountability	
5	Weak coordination between departments and units	Introduce joint planning and reporting frameworks for interdepartmental operations	Improved institutional cohesion and operational efficiency	
6	No dedicated M&E system	Develop and institutionalize a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) system to track and report performance, support learning, and guide strategic planning	Evidence-based programming and improved partner confidence	

Strategic Objective 2: Improve Financial Sustainability and Resource Mobilization

#	Key Challenge	5-Year Strategy	Expected Outcome	Overall Impact
1	Overdependence on government funding and delayed disbursements	Develop a multi-year financial sustainability and Resource Mobilization plan and advocate for timely fund release and increased budget ceilings	More predictable funding and reduced operational disruptions	A financially resilient FSQA with diversified and sustainable funding sources to support its mandate and strategic priorities
2	Low IGF generation due to weak cost recovery	Introduce structured fees for services (e.g., inspections, training, lab testing) aligned with market rates and value	Increased institutional revenue through service-based IGF	
3	Weak partner diversification and short-term external funding	Develop a donor engagement strategy focused on long-term partnerships and food system resilience funding	Broader funding base and improved financial stability	
4	Absence of a dedicated fundraising and financial partnership unit	Establish a cross-functional resource mobilization unit with technical and donor liaison skills	Institutional capacity for sustainable funding mobilization strengthened	

Strategic Objective 3: Strengthen Risk Assessment, Inspection, Surveillance, and Enforcement Systems

#	Key Challenge	5-Year Strategy	Expected Outcome	Overall Impact
1	Inconsistent inspection practices due to lack of standardized procedures	Roll out risk-based inspection protocols and harmonized SOPs across all regional offices	More consistent, efficient, and science-based inspection processes	A modernized, risk-based national food control system that improves compliance, protects public health, and builds consumer confidence
2	Underutilization of FSIS (digital inspection system)	Fully integrate FSIS into all inspection points, embed usage in job descriptions and KPIs, and provide continuous training	Real-time inspection data reporting, traceability, accountability and efficiency	
3	Weak surveillance for existing and emerging foodborne hazards (e.g., mycotoxins, pesticide residues)	Develop a national surveillance plan, evaluation of risk and establish cross-sectoral monitoring with health, agriculture, and research partners	Early detection of hazards and improved rapid response capabilities	
4	Limited coordination for enforcement and legal follow-up	Establish interagency MoUs and SOPs for legal escalation and consistent enforcement actions	Enhanced credibility of regulatory actions and improved legal compliance	
5	Low inspection coverage in informal markets	Create mobile inspection teams and partner with local councils to reach and regulate informal food vendors	Increased food safety compliance in high-risk informal food chains	

Strategic Objective 4: Modernize Laboratory Services and Digital Infrastructure

#	Key Challenge	5-Year Strategy	Expected Outcome	Overall Impact
1	Incomplete operationalization of modern lab equipment	Recruit qualified lab analysts, establish preventive maintenance schedules, and provide continuous technical training	Fully functional laboratories delivering high-quality analytical services	A modern, data-driven food safety system equipped with reliable laboratories and digital infrastructure for real-time decision-making, surveillance, and public health protection
2	Limited digital integration in inspection and licensing workflows	Expand FSIS usage across all regions, digitize licensing processes, and embed system usage in staff KPIs	Streamlined, transparent, and traceable food control operations	
3	Weak data generation and documentation systems	Adopt the FSIS tool, enforce reporting protocols across departments, and strengthen monitoring of data quality and completeness	Reliable, consistent, and timely data to support regulation, policy, and communication	
4	Underutilization of inspection and testing data	Develop centralized data systems, train staff in analytics, and incorporate data into regulatory planning and risk communication	Evidence-based regulatory decisions and improved risk forecasting	
5	Weak food traceability and alert systems	Introduce QR-code/Barcode-based traceability tools, product registration and coordinate food alert systems with health and agriculture sectors	Faster containment of food safety incidents and enhanced consumer protection	
6	No accreditation of labs to international standards	Pursue ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation through phased quality system improvements and documentation	Greater credibility of food control system and international recognition of FSQA laboratory results	

Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement and Public Awareness

#	Key Challenge	5-Year Strategy	Expected Outcome	Overall Impact
1	Weak communication with consumers, especially in rural areas	Develop and implement a national food safety communication strategy, including local language content and use of community radio	Increased public awareness and safer food handling behaviors	A well-informed public and engaged stakeholder ecosystem that supports a culture of food safety compliance and shared responsibility across formal and informal food systems
2	Inadequate structured mechanism for public complaints and feedback	Develop a two-way complaint handling and incident reporting system (digital and manual)	Strengthened transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to consumer concerns	
3	Limited engagement with informal vendors and market actors	Partner with local councils and trade associations to co-develop training and phased compliance incentives	Increased voluntary compliance and improved food safety practices in informal markets	
4	weak collaboration with private sector and civil society	Strengthen stakeholder engagement framework that maps and aligns actors to FSQA initiatives	Stronger partnerships, policy co-ownership, and improved implementation of food control measures	
5	Inconsistent messaging across platforms	Coordinate interagency food safety communication with Ministries of Health, Fisheries, Agric, and Trade	Clear, harmonized messaging that boosts public trust in FSQA's role and guidance	
6	Limited policy influence and weak visibility of food safety priorities in national discourse	Strengthen evidence-based advocacy and communication to influence policies, mobilize resources, and elevate food safety in national and sectoral agendas	Greater policy alignment, resource mobilization, and stakeholder commitment to food safety	

3.5 Key Stakeholders

Effective execution of FSQA's Strategic Objectives hinges on the meaningful involvement of a broad set of stakeholders. These entities bring legitimacy, technical support, funding, enforcement collaboration, and public reach to FSQA's work.

Table 9: Key Stakeholders

Strategic Objective	Key Stakeholders	Role / Contribution
SO1: Strengthen FSQA's Institutional and Operational Systems	Office of the Vice President (OVP) / Food Control Advisory Committee	Policy oversight, national coordination, FSQA reporting line
	FSQA Board	Oversight, approval of internal reforms, accountability
	FSQA Management Team	Lead design & implementation of systems, interdepartmental coordination
	Regional & Department Heads	Ensure local adherence, supervision, and feedback into central procedures
	HR & Administration Units	Operationalize onboarding, performance appraisals, and communication
	Public Service Commission / PMO	Align FSQA HR policies with national service standards
SO2: Improve Financial Sustainability and Resource Mobilization	Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs	Provide subvention, budget allocation, support IGF retention
	Development Partners (FAO, WHO, World Bank, AfDB, EU, AU, IsDB, IFAD)	Grants, technical assistance, and co-financing for projects
	Private Sector (food businesses, labs, exporters)	Clients for certification, licensing, testing, and training
	FSQA Finance & Accounts Unit	Manage revenues, donor funds, compliance with financial rules

	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration & Employment (MOTIE)	Mainstream food safety into trade and export competitiveness
	Ministry of Agriculture	Integrate food safety components into agriculture and value-chain projects; channel resources from donor-funded programs (e.g., World Bank, IsDB, IFAD, AfDB) to strengthen FSQA's inspection, laboratory, and awareness activities.
SO3: Strengthen Risk Assessment, Inspection, Surveillance, and Enforcement Systems	Customs & Border Control (GRA)	Joint inspections, clearance, and interception of unsafe food
	Local Government Authorities & Municipal Councils	Facilitate food control at markets and community levels
	Ministry of Health (Public Health Services, Epidemiology Unit)	Share surveillance data, coordinate outbreak response
	FSQA Inspection & Enforcement Units	Implement risk-based inspections and enforcement nationwide; implement national surveillance system for existing and emerging hazards; conduct risk assessment using national surveillance data to inform risk management decisions.
	Law Enforcement Agencies (Police, Judiciary)	Support prosecution and enforcement of violations
SO4: Modernize Laboratory Services and Digital Infrastructure	FSQA Central & Regional Labs	Conduct food testing, maintain accreditation, support enforcement
	ICT/Digital Systems Team	Develop & manage FSIS, traceability, and inspection data systems
	Universities & Research Institutions (UTG, WACOMP Labs, regional partners)	Research collaboration, advanced testing, methods validation

	Technical & Development Partners (FAO, AU, IAEA, Codex Trust Fund donors, etc.)	Supply lab equipment, training, and digital systems support
	Gambia Standards Bureau / Accreditation Bodies	Support certification, calibration, and compliance with global standards
SO5: Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement and Public Awareness	Consumer Protection Associations & Civil Society Groups	Represent consumer interests, amplify complaints, support outreach
	Informal Vendor Associations (market women, butchers, street food vendors)	Frontline compliance, feedback on food safety practices
	Media (radio, TV, print, digital)	Disseminate sensitization campaigns, alerts, and educational programs
	Traditional & Religious Leaders / Community Influencers	Mobilize communities, build trust, support rural outreach
	Line Ministries (Health, Agriculture, Trade, Tourism, Education)	Mainstream food safety into sectoral policies & programs
	Development Partners & Regional Bodies (ECOWAS, AU)	Support harmonization of food safety systems, cross-border campaigns



SECTION 4

EXECUTIVE ROADMAP



4.1 Introduction

FSQA's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan will be delivered through a coordinated implementation framework that translates strategic objectives into actionable results. This framework defines high-level priorities, clarifies institutional responsibilities, and outlines mechanisms for interdepartmental and interagency collaboration. Emphasis is placed on strengthening operational systems, aligning partner engagement, and ensuring accountability across all levels of the Authority. Communication is integrated as a cross-cutting enabler to support behavior change, stakeholder alignment, and public trust in food safety governance. Through this structured approach, we aim to enhance service delivery, institutional coherence, and regulatory impact nationwide.

4.2 Optimal Organizational Structure for Implementation

FSQA's organizational structure is designed to enable effective delivery of its strategic priorities through strong governance, executive leadership, and technical efficiency. It balances high-level political oversight with professional management and operational execution, ensuring that food safety systems in The Gambia remain credible, science-based, and responsive to existing and emerging risks and innovations.

1. Office of the Vice President (Policy-Level Oversight)

At the apex of FSQA's governance system is the Office of the Vice President (OVP), which provides policy direction and ensures cross-sectoral coordination on food safety matters. The OVP also supervises the Food Control Advisory Committee (FCAC), which advises on regulatory and legal issues, ensuring FSQA's mandate aligns with national development and public health and trade priorities.

2. Board of Directors (Institutional Oversight)

The FSQA Board of Directors provides strategic oversight, approves annual and strategic plans, and ensures accountability in resource use. It is supported by two consultative mechanisms: The **Scientific Committee**, which provides technical and scientific advice, and the **Stakeholder Consultative Forum**, which channels perspectives from industry, civil society, and consumers. This structure ensures that decisions are both evidence-based and inclusive of key actors in the food and feed control system.

3. Director General (Executive Leadership)

The Director General (DG) serves as the executive head of FSQA, translating Board policy into operational programs and ensuring institutional performance. The DG oversees all departments and represents the Authority nationally and internationally. To strengthen accountability and performance tracking, a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist is proposed, reporting directly to the DG. This role will lead the development of FSQA's MEAL system and ensures real-time tracking of strategic outcomes, learning, and adaptive management. In addition, a Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Officer will be positioned under the Office of the DG to coordinate funding outreach, partnership engagement, and donor reporting. This role will serve as the institutional focal point for

resource mobilization and external relations for the next few years, with potential to evolve into a full-fledged unit as FSQA's functions and resource base expand.

4. Core Departments (Operational Delivery)

FSQA's mandate is operationalized through four specialized departments:

- **Scientific Affairs Directorate** – Leads laboratory assessments, data coordination and generation, risk assessment, risk profiling, research, and evidence generation for policy and regulatory decision-making.
- **Food Control Directorate** – Oversees routine inspection, export and import inspections and certification, and annual audits,
- **Regulatory Affairs Directorate** – Develops and reviews food laws, regulations, and standards to align with Codex, SPS, and other international obligations. The Directorate also carries out enforcement activities through its Inspectorate Unit, ensuring that inspection findings lead to appropriate regulatory actions.
- **Finance & Administration Directorate** – Manages finance, HR, procurement, logistics, and administrative support, ensuring institutional efficiency.

5. Cross-Cutting Structures and Regional Presence

The Authority is supported by internal functional roles such as ICT and communications, and maintains regional offices that extend its inspection, enforcement, and surveillance functions across all administrative regions. These decentralized structures allow FSQA to rapidly respond to food safety risks and build relationships with local authorities and food business operators. The three technical directorates are interlinked under the Risk Analysis Framework — with Scientific Affairs providing evidence for inspections, Food Control implementing risk-based oversight, and Regulatory Affairs ensuring enforcement and policy alignment.

6. Internal Coordination and Stakeholder Engagement

Internal collaboration is driven by the FSQA Management Team, composed of the DG and directors, which meets regularly to coordinate implementation, review performance, and ensure cross-functional alignment. Externally, FSQA engages a wide range of stakeholders, including ministries (Health, Agriculture, Trade, Local Government), consumer associations, and food businesses—through structured consultation mechanisms, MOUs, and joint programming.

7. Optimization of Resources and Systems

FSQA's structure is designed to maximize efficiency and sustainability by digitizing inspection and enforcement processes (through FSIS), mainstreaming risk-based approaches, leveraging regional representation, and aligning national food control with Codex and other international frameworks. This approach ensures that the Authority remains fit-for-purpose despite budget constraints and emerging challenges and needs.

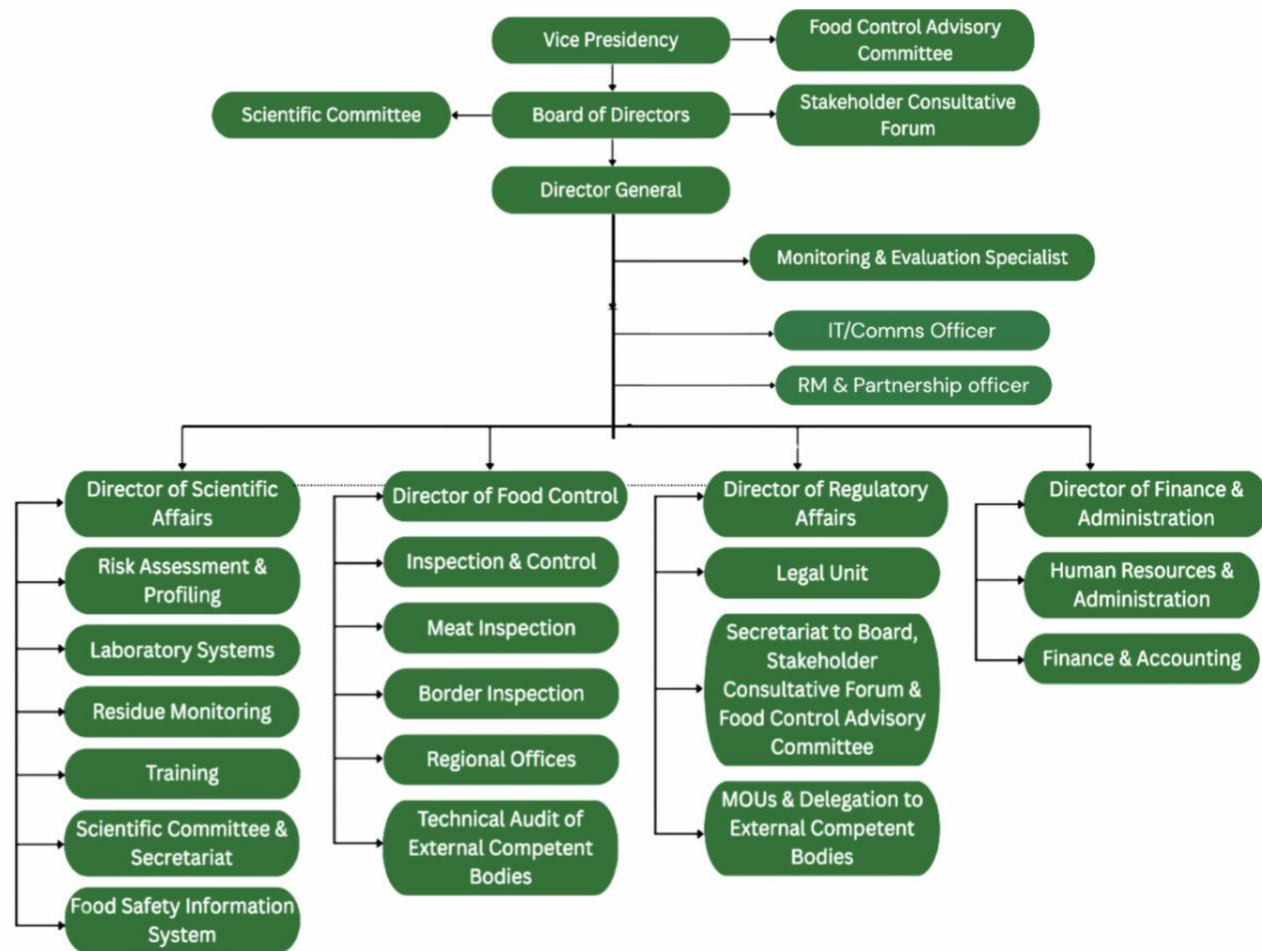


Figure 6: Organogram

4.4 Implementation Plan & Budget

This section outlines how FSQA’s 2026–2030 Strategic Plan will be operationalized through a results-oriented, phased approach. It details the implementation framework that translates strategic goals into concrete actions, clarifies institutional responsibilities, and supports efficient resource use. The plan is designed to strengthen operational coordination, promote accountability, and ensure that the authority’s regulatory, enforcement, and public health mandates are effectively delivered within the national, regional, and international food safety context. It also includes an indicative budget framework to guide financial planning and investment priorities.

1. 5-Year Implementation Plan

FSQA will roll out its Strategic Plan through a phased five-year implementation framework, aligned with institutional capacity and resource availability. Key actions under each strategic objective will be sequenced annually, with clear outputs, timelines, and lead departments. This structure ensures gradual, coordinated progress and allows for adaptive management across core areas like inspection, enforcement, stakeholder engagement, and lab modernization.

2. Output Indicators

Each strategic objective will be tracked using practical output indicators such as inspection coverage rates, IGF volumes, lab accreditation status, public awareness campaigns conducted, and staff trained under CPD initiatives. These indicators will feed into FSQA’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) system, enabling data-driven reviews, learning, and course corrections.

3. Budget

An indicative budget will be developed and aligned with strategic priorities to guide annual planning and resource mobilization. It will include cost estimates for major activities, projected IGF growth, government contributions, and donor funding. The budget will be reviewed annually to reflect funding realities, implementation progress, and shifting national needs.

4. Implementation Responsibility

The Director General will lead implementation with strategic oversight from the FSQA Board. Directors of Food Control, Scientific Affairs, Regulatory Affairs, and Finance & Administration will be responsible for operational execution. A dedicated M&E Specialist will support cross-departmental coordination, ensuring alignment, accountability, and timely reporting on strategic outcomes.

Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen FSQA's Institutional and Operational Systems

Strategy 1.1: Introduce a Results-Based Performance Appraisal Framework

Activities	
- Design and pilot a performance appraisal system aligned with FSQA KPIs. - Train managers and staff on appraisal procedures and performance metrics. - Link appraisal outcomes to professional development and promotion pathways.	
Expected Results	- Enhanced staff accountability and motivation. - Transparent and merit-based progression system.
Results Indicators	% of staff with completed annual appraisals. - Number of staff promoted through appraisal-linked processes. - Staff satisfaction rate on appraisal fairness.
Implementation Period	2026–2027
Budget (GMD)	1,500,000
Basis	Covers system development, implementation cost and M&E integration.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: HR Manager Collaborators: DG and Director of Finance & Admin

Strategy 1.2: Strengthen Onboarding and Staff Retention Mechanisms

Activities	
- Develop and implement a formal onboarding program. - Establish mentorship arrangements for new staff. - Document and digitize institutional knowledge for staff access.	
Expected Results	- Improved staff retention. - Faster integration of new recruits. - Reduced loss of institutional knowledge and memory.
Results Indicators	% of new hires completing onboarding within first month. - Number of mentorship pairings is maintained annually. - Staff turnover rate.
Implementation Period	2026–2030
Budget (GMD)	700,000
Basis	Includes onboarding toolkits, digital knowledge repository setup, mentorship incentives.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: HR Manager Collaborators: Line Managers and Director of Finance & Admin

Strategy 1.3: Improve Internal Communication and Coordination

Activities	
• Establish internal communication protocols across units. • Hold monthly interdepartmental coordination meetings. • Launch internal newsletters and digital communication platforms.	
Expected Results	• Faster internal decision-making. • Unified messaging across regional and Head Office.
Results Indicators	• Frequency of coordination meetings. • Staff rating of communication effectiveness. • % of units using communication tools regularly.
Implementation Period	2026–2030
Budget (GMD)	1,000,000
Basis	Covers IT tools and implementation cost
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Admin & Finance Collaborators: Communications Officer, Regional Coordinators

Strategy 1.4: Institutionalize Joint Planning and Reporting Mechanisms

Activities	
• Develop a joint annual planning framework. • Conduct cross-departmental planning and review sessions. • Introduce harmonized reporting templates and timelines.	
Expected Results	• Improved cross-unit collaboration. • Streamlined operational alignment with strategic priorities.
Results Indicators	• Number of departments participating in joint planning. • Timeliness and completeness of reports submitted.
Implementation Period	2026–2028
Budget (GMD)	1,500,000
Basis	Implementation cost.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: M&E Collaborators: Director of Scientific Affairs, Director of Regulatory Affairs, and Director of Food Control

Strategy 1.5: Develop and Operationalize an M&E (MEAL) System

Activities
• Design FSQA’s MEAL framework aligned with the Strategic Plan. • Establish M&E protocols, tools, and data dashboards. • Train departmental focal persons on data collection and use.

Integrate financial, operational, and stakeholder indicators into the MEAL system to enable holistic performance tracking and adaptive management	
Expected Results	- Regular tracking of institutional performance. - Data-informed decision-making.
Results Indicators	% of strategic indicators tracked quarterly. - Number of MEAL reports produced annually. % of decisions informed by M&E data.
Implementation Period	2026–2029
Budget (GMD)	2,500,000
Basis	Consultant-led design, dashboard subscriptions, periodic review sessions and implementation cost
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: M&E Specialist Collaborators: Director of Scientific Affairs, Director of Regulatory Affairs, Director of Food Control, and Director of Finance & Admin

Strategy 1.6: Strengthen Management and Governance Systems

Activities	
- Provide adequate resources for the governance and management of FSQA, including the Board of Directors, DG’s Office, and key cross-cutting functions (M&E, ICT & Communications, and Resource Mobilization & Partnership). - Ensure competitive and sustainable staffing through salaries, allowances, and benefits that promote retention and institutional stability. - Facilitate regular Board and management meetings, performance reviews, and policy oversight sessions. - Support FSQA’s participation in national, regional, and international coordination and technical platforms. - Maintain efficient administrative systems and logistical support for day-to-day operations.	
Expected Results	- Strong corporate governance and effective leadership oversight. - Sustained institutional functionality through adequate human and financial resources. - Enhanced representation and visibility of FSQA at national, regional, and international levels.
Results Indicators	- Number of Board and management meetings held and reported annually. % of Board resolutions implemented within set timelines. - Staff retention rate and vacancy-to-fill ratio. - Participation rate in national, regional, and international coordination forums.
Implementation Period	2026–2030

Budget (GMD)	105,000,000
Basis	Covers staff salaries and allowances, Board fees and meeting costs, governance workshops, administrative overheads, and operational expenses for the 5-years.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Finance & Admin Collaborators: Director of Scientific Affairs, Director of Regulatory Affairs, Director of Food Control.

Strategic Objective 2: Improve Financial Sustainability and Resource Mobilization

Strategy 2.1: Develop and Implement a Financial Sustainability Plan

Activities	
- Commission a financial gap and scenario analysis to forecast medium-term funding requirements. - Draft and validate a multi-year financial sustainability and resource mobilization strategy. - Advocate with Ministry of Finance and Parliament for increased, timely subvention, and budget support.	
Expected Results	- A coherent financial sustainability and resource mobilization plan guiding FSQA's funding trajectory. - More reliable government funding flows.
Results Indicators	- Strategy approved and adopted. - Year-on-year increase in government allocation reliability.
Implementation Period	2026–2027
Budget (GMD)	2,200,000
Basis	Consultancy, stakeholder workshops, validation, dissemination
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Finance & Administration Collaborators: Director General

Strategy 2.2: Strengthen IGF via Cost Recovery & Service-based Revenue

Activities	
- Conduct a comprehensive costing analysis for FSQA regulatory services (e.g., inspections, certifications, laboratory testing, and licensing). - Design and approve a transparent, equitable fee structure for these services. - Implement an electronic billing and collection system to improve IGF capture and accountability. - Monitor compliance and service uptake trends to refine the pricing model.	
Expected Results	- IGF increases as FSQA monetizes core regulatory services. - Enhanced sustainability through reduced reliance on government or donor funding.
Results Indicators	- Percentage increase in IGF contributions to annual FSQA budget. - Number of services with implemented cost recovery mechanisms. % of fees successfully collected through digital billing systems.
Implementation Period	2026–2029
Budget (GMD)	1,700,000
Basis	Costing consultancy, stakeholder validation, digital platform enhancement

Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Finance & Administration Collaborators: Food Control Director, Regulatory Affairs Director, ICT Officer
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Strategy 2.3: Establish Resource Mobilization & Partner Relations Unit

Activities	
	- Recruit and designate a Resource Mobilization and Partnership Officer under the DG's Office to lead donor engagement and fundraising. - Map prospective donors, prepare institutional profiles, and pursue multi-year grants. - Develop partnerships with academic, regional, and international institutions to co-submit grants.
Expected Results	- Institutional capacity for proactive fundraising. - Larger, diversified donor portfolio supporting strategic programs.
Results Indicators	- Number of proposals submitted / funded. - Percentage of budget funded by donors.
Implementation Period	2026–2028
Budget (GMD)	2,000,000
Basis	Outreach, partner coordination, the resource mobilisation plan development and implementation over the 5 year period
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Resource Mobilization officer Collaborators: DG, Director of Finance & Admin, Regulatory Affairs Director

Strategic Objective 3: Strengthen Risk Assessment, Inspection, Surveillance, and Enforcement Systems

Strategy 3.1: Roll out risk-based inspection protocols and harmonized SOPs

Activities	
	- Develop and validate risk-based inspection protocols aligned with Codex standards. - Develop and implement hygiene rating schemes to strengthen enforcement - Roll out harmonized SOPs for inspection procedures across regional offices. - Train inspectors on risk-based methodologies and SOP application.
Expected Results	- Unified inspection practices across the country. - Inspection activities aligned with food safety risk prioritization.
Results Indicators	% of regions implementing standardized inspection protocols. - Number of inspectors trained on new SOPs. - Non-compliance rate (inspection protocols) by region.

	• Increase in compliance rates among food business operators in high-risk sectors (annual % change)
Implementation Period	2026–2028
Budget (GMD)	2,000,000
Basis/Assumption for Budget	Development workshops, printing/distribution of SOPs, , M&E tools
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Food Control Director Collaborators: Scientific Affairs Director, Regional Offices, Regulatory Affairs Director

Strategy 3.2: Digitize inspection and certification workflows through full FSIS integration

Activities	
	• Integrate all inspection and certifications into the FSIS • Conduct routine training and user support on FSIS reporting features. • Embed FSIS usage into performance metrics and procedures.
Expected Results	• Timely and traceable inspection data across all locations. • Greater transparency and accountability in inspection workflows. • End-to-end traceability and digitized compliance documentation. • Real-time inspection, certification and licensing records.
Results Indicators	• Number of staff trained on FSIS. • Licensing requests processed via digital platform. • % of inspections logged through FSIS. • Number of staff evaluated based on FSIS usage. • Inspection reporting turnaround time.
Implementation Period	2026–2028
Budget (GMD)	3,000,000
Basis/Assumption for Budget	System upgrades, licenses, training costs, change management and software support
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Scientific Affairs Director Collaborators: Food Control Director, HR Manager, Regional Offices

Strategy 3.3: Strengthen foodborne disease surveillance systems

Activities
• Develop a national foodborne disease surveillance plan. • Strengthening laboratory capacity for foodborne disease surveillance

• Operationalize existing MOUs • Establish MOUs with MoH, Department of Livestock Services, Department of Parks and Wildlife, and NARI for data sharing and lab cooperation. • Coordinate periodic hazard-specific sampling and reporting.	
Expected Results	• Structured surveillance systems aligned with public health risks. • Increased national capacity to detect and respond to existing and emerging hazards.
Results Indicators	• Number of active surveillance programs launched. • Number of outbreaks detected early and controlled through surveillance and risk-based interventions. • Number of MoUs signed for data sharing. • Frequency of joint surveillance reports produced.
Implementation Period	2026–2029
Budget (GMD)	4,000,000
Basis/Assumption for Budget	Surveillance framework development, inter-agency meetings, testing costs
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Scientific Affairs Collaborators: MoH, NARI, Food Control Director, Labs, PPS.

Strategy 3.4: Improve coordination and legal enforcement mechanisms

Activities	
• Develop internal SOPs for legal referral and escalation. • Sign MoUs with legal bodies and enforcement agencies. • Train staff on regulatory enforcement and documentation. • Draft and operationalize a Product Registration Regulation	
Expected Results	• FSQA actions legally grounded and consistently enforced. • Stronger deterrence for non-compliance.
Results Indicators	• % of enforcement cases with legal follow-up. • Number of staff trained in regulatory enforcement. • MoUs signed with legal institutions. • Mandatory product registration and testing system established
Implementation Period	2026–2028
Budget (GMD)	1,500,000
Basis/Assumption for Budget	Legal consultancy, training workshops, documentation templates
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Regulatory Affairs Director Collaborators: Legal Affairs (MoJ), Food Control Director, Scientific Affairs Director

Strategy 3.5: Expand inspection coverage in informal markets

Activities	
• Form mobile inspection teams equipped with logistics and basic testing kits. • Partner with local governments and relevant stakeholders to identify and register informal vendors. • Conduct public sensitization on basic food safety standards, in line with Codex standards.	
Expected Results	• Broader inspection reach into high-risk informal food environments. • Improved hygiene practices among informal actors.
Results Indicators	• Number of mobile teams operational. • Number of informal vendors reached and registered. • % change in compliance rates among informal vendors.
Implementation Period	2026–2030
Budget (GMD)	10,000,000
Basis	Vehicles, training, coordination meetings, IEC materials
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Food Control Director Collaborators: Local Government, Public Health Offices, Communications Officer

Strategy 3.6: Develop SOPs and Clarify Roles Across Departments

Activities	
• Map key functions across departments. • Develop and validate SOPs for inspection, enforcement, and admin processes. • Train staff on SOP use and compliance.	
Expected Results	• Standardized internal procedures. • Improved clarity of roles and accountability.
Results Indicators	• Number of SOPs finalized and distributed. • % of staff trained on relevant SOPs. • Internal audit compliance score.
Implementation Period	2026–2028
Budget (GMD)	2,000,000
Basis	Budget includes expert consultants, stakeholder workshops, printing, and training sessions.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Food Control Collaborators: Director of Scientific Affairs & Director of Regulatory Affairs

Strategy 3.7: National surveillance program for existing and emerging hazards and risk assessment

Activities	
• Develop a National Surveillance program for existing and emerging hazards • Conduct trend analysis of recurring hazards over defined periods • Develop a risk assessment protocol for microbiological and chemical risk assessment • Conduct risk assessment on reoccurring hazards and propose risk management strategies	
Expected Results	• Strengthened National Surveillance Capacity. • Improved Understanding of Hazard Patterns and Trends • Standardized and Transparent Risk Assessment Processes • Evidence-Based Risk Management Decisions • Reduction in Foodborne Disease Incidence • Enhanced Regulatory Planning and Resource Optimization • Strengthened Stakeholder Confidence and Compliance
Results Indicators	• Number of priority hazards/diseases included in the national surveillance system, and Percentage of reporting institutions submitting timely and complete surveillance • Number of identified hazard trends showing statistically significant changes over defined periods. • Percentage of regulatory decisions informed by trend analysis data. • Number of commodities or sectors with updated risk prioritization based on trend analysis. • Percentage of risk assessments conducted using standardized protocols. • Number of staff trained in risk assessment methodologies. • Number of reoccurring hazards assessed using formal risk assessment. • Reduction in high-risk non-compliance findings linked to reoccurring hazards (year-over-year % change). • Percentage of inspections guided by risk-based criteria (rather than routine scheduling). • Percentage of regulatory programs revised based on surveillance and risk assessment results.
Implementation Period	2026–2030
Budget (GMD)	11,500,000
Basis	National hazard profiling, recurrent sampling, consultants, trend analysis, risk assessments, and risk management workshops.

Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Scientific Affair Directorate Collaborators: Scientific Committee, Food Control Directorate, and Regulatory Affairs Directorate
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Strategic Objective 4: Modernize Laboratory Services and Digital Infrastructure

Strategy 4.1: Operationalize modern laboratory equipment and enhance technical capacity

Activities/Programmes/Projects	
	- Recruit and train laboratory specialists with expertise in food microbiology, contaminants, and residues. - Develop and implement a laboratory maintenance and calibration schedule. - Procure essential consumables and reference materials to sustain operations.
Expected Results	- Laboratories are fully equipped, staffed, and operating at optimal capacity. - Improved accuracy and reliability of test results.
Results Indicators	- Number of lab personnel trained. - Percentage of lab equipment under active maintenance schedule. - Number of operational tests conducted monthly.
Implementation Period	2026–2028
Budget (GMD)	15,000,000
Basis/Assumption for Budget	Training workshops, consumables, equipment servicing, and specialist recruitment.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Scientific Affairs Collaborators: HR Manager, Director of Finance & Admin

Strategy 4.2: Digitize laboratory workflows through a Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)

Activities	
	- Develop and operationalize a LIMS - Conduct routine training and user support on LIMS reporting features. - Embed LIMS usage into performance metrics and procedures. - Integrate the LIMS and FSIS
Expected Results	- Timely generation and traceable laboratory results - Greater transparency and accountability in laboratory workflow and results

	• Real-time feeding of laboratory results in the FSIS • Support continuous accretition of the laboratory (ISO 17025)
Results Indicators	• Number of staff trained on LIMS • % of tests logged through LIMS. • Number of staff evaluated based on LIMS. • Test results turnaround time.
Implementation Period	2026–2028
Budget (GMD)	3,000,000
Basis/Assumption for Budget	System development, training costs, change management and software support
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Scientific Affairs Director Collaborators: Food Control Director, HR Manager, Regional Offices

Strategy 4.3: Strengthen Data Generation and Documentation Systems

Activities	
	• Enforce FSIS use across all departments and regions. • Develop reporting protocols and templates. • Conduct regular data audits and train staff on data entry.
Expected Results	• Reliable and timely data supporting regulation and policy.
Results Indicators	• % of departments submitting complete and timely data through FSIS. • Frequency of data audits conducted. • Number of staff trained on digital data management.
Implementation Period	2027–2029
Budget (GMD)	500,000
Basis/Assumption for Budget	training workshops, data audit exercises, and reporting tool development.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Scientific Affairs Collaborators: ICT Officer, Director Food Control

Strategy 4.4: Train Staff on data analytics and decision-support systems

Activities	
• Train technical staff in data analytics, visualization, and regulatory planning. • Regularly generate risk trend reports and dashboards.	
Expected Results	• Data-informed policy and inspection planning. • Strengthened forecasting and emergency response.
Results Indicators	• Number of staff trained in data analysis. • Quarterly risk reports generated. • Inspection and lab data integrated into planning documents.
Implementation Period	2027–2029
Budget (GMD)	-
Basis/Assumption for Budget	There is in house expertise for training and learning.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Scientific Affairs Collaborators: ICT Officer, Director Food Control

Strategy 4.5: Implement food traceability and alert mechanisms

Activities/Programmes/Projects	
• Design and roll out QR-code-based traceability tools for high-risk foods. • Coordinate with MOH and MOA to develop joint food alert protocols. • Pilot recall simulations and emergency drills.	
Expected Results	• Faster traceability of unsafe food and swift public alerts. • Integrated early warning systems for food hazards.
Results Indicators	• Number of traceability tools deployed. • MoUs signed with MOH and MOA. • Number of simulated alerts and recalls conducted.
Implementation Period	2028–2030
Budget (GMD)	3,000,000
Basis/Assumption for Budget	Tool design, IT integration, stakeholder training, joint simulation costs.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Food Control Collaborators: ICT Officer, MOH, MOA

Strategy 4.6: Attain international lab accreditation (ISO/IEC 17025)

Activities/Programmes/Projects	
• Conduct lab gap assessment and develop accreditation roadmap. • Train lab personnel in ISO/IEC 17025 quality requirements. • Implement documentation systems and quality assurance procedures.	
Expected Results	• FSQA labs meet international quality standards.

	• Credibility of national food safety test results strengthened.
Results Indicators	• Number of labs assessed and upgraded. • Accreditation status achieved. • Number of external audits successfully completed.
Implementation Period	2027–2030
Budget (GMD)	2,000,000
Basis	Consultancy, audits, training, documentation systems, certification fees.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Scientific Affairs Collaborators: Quality Assurance, Finance & Admin Director

Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement and Public Awareness

Strategy 5.1: Develop and implement a national food safety communication strategy

Activities	
- Design a national communication strategy tailored to rural and urban contexts. - Produce food safety education materials in local languages. - Leverage radio, community events, and social media for outreach. - Harmonize food safety messaging across MoH, MoALFS, and Trade through an interagency taskforce and joint campaigns	
Expected Results	- Increased public knowledge of food safety risks and behaviors. - More informed and proactive food safety practices by consumers and vendors.
Results Indicators	- Communication strategy adopted. - Number of outreach activities conducted. % increase in public awareness based on periodic surveys.
Implementation Period	2026–2028
Budget (GMD)	6,200,000
Basis	Consultancy, content development, translation services, media airtime, outreach logistics.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Communications Officer Collaborators: Regional Offices, Public Health Unit, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture

Strategy 5.2: Enhance public complaint handling and incident reporting systems

Activities	
- Enhance the FSIS platform for complaints. - Train staff to manage and respond to public queries. - Monitor and analyze complaints for trends and response.	
Expected Results	- Improved consumer trust and institutional accountability. - Timely resolution of food safety issues.
Results Indicators	- Complaint system operational. - Number of complaints received and resolved. - Average response time.
Implementation Period	2026–2027
Budget (GMD)	500,000
Basis	ICT infrastructure, hotline staffing, system maintenance.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Scientific Affairs

	Collaborators: Communications officer, Regulatory Affairs Director, Regional Offices
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Strategy 5.3: Engage informal vendors and market actors through harmonized guidelines

Activities	
	• Collaborate with local councils to map and register vendors. • Organize workshops and food safety sensitization for market actors. • Offer phased compliance tools and incentives. • Development of prototypes for stationary and mobile vending apparatus
Expected Results	• Higher rates of voluntary compliance. • Reduced risk of foodborne illness in informal food chains. • Increased hygiene compliance
Results Indicators	• Number of vendors trained. • % increase in registered and compliant vendors. • Number of prototypes developed
Implementation Period	2026–2030
Budget (GMD)	3,800,000
Basis	Training costs, materials, vendor incentives, coordination with councils.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Director of Food Control Collaborators: Local Councils, Market Associations, Ministry of Local Government

Strategy 5.4: Develop a stakeholder engagement framework for civil society and private sector

Activities/Programmes/Projects	
	• Map key stakeholders by influence and interest. • Create a partnership engagement calendar. • Host annual stakeholder roundtables.
Expected Results	• Strengthened collaboration and joint programming. • Broader stakeholder participation in food safety governance.
Results Indicators	• Engagement framework endorsed. • Number of stakeholder forums held. • Level of participation by sector.
Implementation Period	2026–2030
Budget (GMD)	1,000,000

Basis/Assumption for Budget	Stakeholder mapping consultancy, event logistics, facilitation.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Communications Officer Collaborators: Director General, Regulatory Affairs Director, Civil Society Groups

Strategy 5.5: Strengthen Evidence-Based Advocacy and Communication

Activities	
	• Develop and implement a policy advocacy framework linking food safety to national development, health, and trade priorities. • Produce evidence briefs and position papers for policymakers and parliamentary committees. • Convene high-level policy dialogues with government, development partners, and private sector actors. • Establish a media-engagement mechanism for informed policy reporting on food safety.
Expected Results	• Food safety recognized as a national development and public health priority. • Stronger policy alignment and increased public-sector investment in food safety.
Results Indicators	• Number of policy briefs and advocacy sessions conducted. • Number of national policy documents referencing food safety.
Implementation Period	2026–2030
Budget (GMD)	3,000,000
Basis	policy advocacy plan, production of briefs, facilitation of dialogues, and engagement with Parliament and ministries.
Responsible for Implementation	Lead: Communication Officer Collaborators: Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Trade, and Fisheries. Parliamentarians.

Budget Summary (2026-2030)

The total cost of implementing the FSQA Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2030 is **GMD 188.1 million**. The allocation reflects the core needs of the Authority across institutional strengthening, field operations, laboratory modernization, financial sustainability, and public awareness.

Strategic Objective 1: Institutional and Operational Systems receives **GMD 112.2 million**, which represents **59.6 percent** of the total budget. This covers staffing, governance, administrative

operations, and the MEAL system. These costs form the foundation of the Authority’s overall functionality.

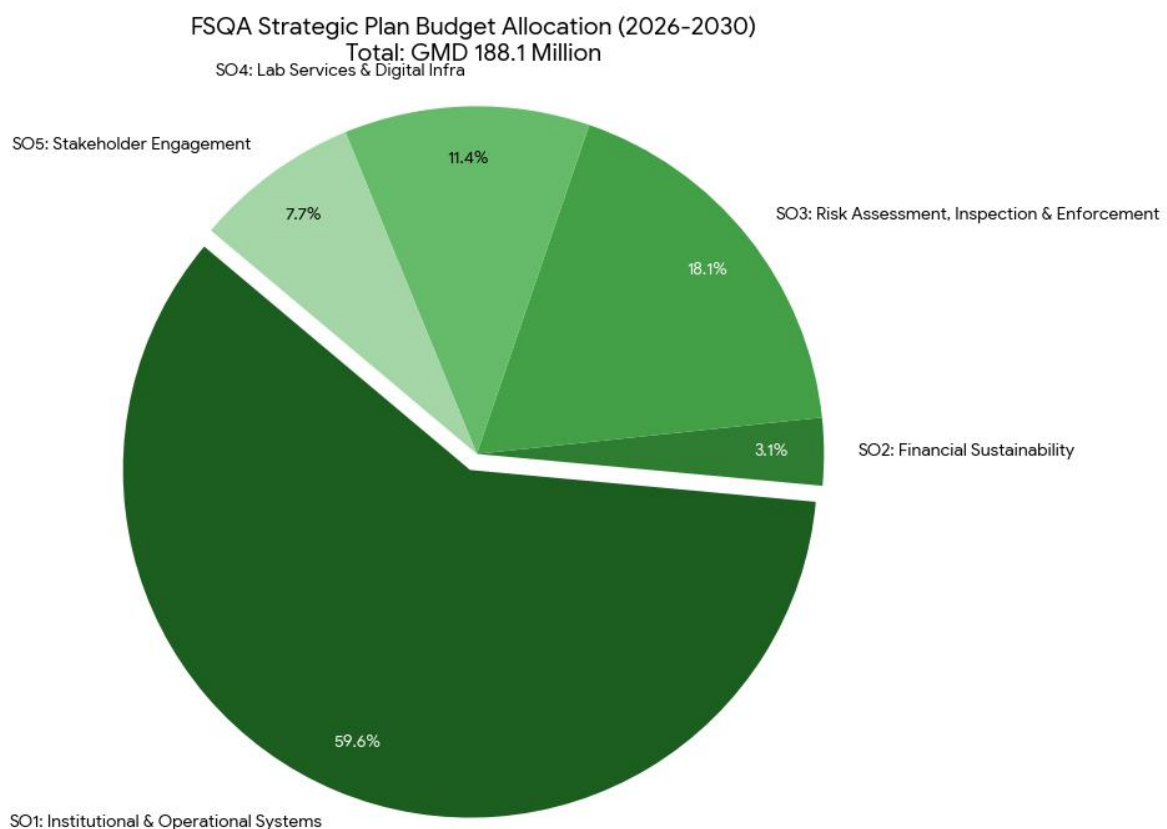
Strategic Objective 2: Financial Sustainability is allocated **GMD 5.9 million**, representing **3.1 percent** of the total. This supports work on cost recovery, financial planning, and donor engagement.

Strategic Objective 3: Risk Assessment, Inspection, Surveillance, and Enforcement receives **GMD 34 million**, which accounts for **18.1 percent** of the budget. This reflects the operational cost of inspections, hazard surveillance, enforcement, and FSIS digital integration at the national level.

Strategic Objective 4: Laboratory Services and Digital Infrastructure accounts for **GMD 21.5 million**, equal to **11.4 percent** of the total. This supports laboratory operations, specialized training, consumables, traceability tools, and preparation for ISO 17025 accreditation.

Strategic Objective 5: Stakeholder Engagement and Public Awareness is allocated **GMD 14.5 million**, representing **7.7 percent** of the budget. This covers communication campaigns, vendor engagement, complaint systems, and policy advocacy.

Overall, the budget reflects a balanced investment that strengthens FSQA’s institutional capacity while also supporting technical operations, laboratory reliability, and public-facing engagement activities.



4.5 Communication & Visibility Strategy

FSQA's effectiveness hinges not only on regulatory and technical capacity but also on strong communication, both internally and externally. Consultation feedback consistently highlighted gaps in internal communication, limited capacity of communication personnel, and weak external visibility. To address these, FSQA will adopt a dedicated communication and visibility strategy as an integral component of implementation (rather than a side activity). This strategy will cover: (a) internal communication systems and capacity building, (b) external stakeholder and public-facing visibility, and (c) performance monitoring of communication outputs.

Key Components

1. **Internal Communication & Capacity:** Consultations revealed that staff often feel isolated from central decision-making and lack clear channels for feedback or coordination. To remedy this, FSQA will institutionalize monthly briefings, internal newsletters, digital intranet platforms, and clear communication protocols across HQ and regional offices. A dedicated Communications Officer — whether in-house or outsourced based on cost-effectiveness, will coordinate these functions and report to the DG.
2. **External Visibility & Stakeholder Outreach:** FSQA must enhance its public profile to build trust, encourage compliance, and mobilize partnerships. The Authority will expand use of media (radio, TV, social media), stakeholder forums, newsletters, and issue risk advisories in local languages. The already established Stakeholder Consultative Forum offers a platform to co-design messaging and feedback loops.
3. **Communication Governance & Integration:** The communications unit will be embedded within the implementation structure, working closely with all directorates. Communication planning will be part of annual workplans, coordinated through the M&E framework, and reviewed quarterly. Standard templates, brand guidelines, and crisis communication protocols will ensure consistency.
4. **Monitoring & Evaluation of Communication:** Communication outputs — such as number of media appearances, stakeholder events, message dissemination reach, public knowledge surveys, will be tracked via the MEAL system. Regular reviews will inform adjustments to messaging, channels, and emphasis. This will allow FSQA to adapt its communication in response to audience feedback and emerging food safety issues.



SECTION 5

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD



5.1 Introduction

The Strategic Performance Dashboard is FSQA’s key instrument for managing, tracking, and communicating progress of the 2026–2030 Strategic Plan. It links strategic objectives and priority actions to measurable outcomes and indicators across departments, regional offices, and functional units, providing a clear line of sight from activity to institutional impact.

Built upon our Theory of Change and implementation framework, the Dashboard supports real-time monitoring, promotes intra-agency learning, and strengthens accountability to stakeholders including government, partners, and the public. It integrates both quantitative and qualitative metrics to capture institutional efficiency, risk assessment and management, inspection performance, laboratory services, stakeholder engagement, financial sustainability, and communication outcomes.

This tool is designed to guide data-informed decision-making and facilitate coordinated adjustments, ensuring alignment of resources with strategic priorities. The Dashboard will be central in quarterly performance reviews, annual reporting, and mid-term evaluation—helping FSQA remain adaptive, transparent, and results-driven throughout the strategy cycle.

Table 10: Performance Dashboard

Strategic Objective	Expected Results	Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	Baseline	Target (2026–2030)	Frequency	Responsible Party
SO1: Strengthen FSQA's Institutional and Operational Systems	Enhanced staff accountability and motivation; Transparent and merit-based progression system	% of staff with completed annual appraisals; Number of staff promoted through appraisal-linked processes; Staff satisfaction rate on appraisal fairness	No standardized performance system	≥90% completion; ≥70% satisfaction rate; Appraisal-based promotions institutionalized	Annual	HR Manager
	Improved staff retention; Faster integration of new recruits; Reduced loss of institutional knowledge	% of new hires completing onboarding within first month; Number of mentorship pairings maintained annually; Staff turnover rate	Ad hoc onboarding; high staff turnover	≥95% onboarding; ≥50 pairings/year; ≤10% turnover	Annual	HR Manager
	Faster internal decision-making; Unified messaging across regional and Head Office	Frequency of coordination meetings; Staff rating of communication effectiveness; % of units using communication tools regularly	Fragmented communication systems	≥12 meetings/year; ≥75% satisfaction; ≥90% unit tool usage	Quarterly	ICT/Communication Officer
	Standardized internal procedures; Improved clarity of roles and accountability	Number of SOPs finalized and distributed; % of staff trained on relevant SOPs; Internal audit compliance score	Varies by department	≥10 SOPs; 100% staff trained; ≥80% compliance score	Annual	Director of Finance & Admin
	Improved cross-unit collaboration anchored on the risk analysis framework; Streamlined operational alignment with strategic priorities	Number of departments participating in joint planning; Timeliness and completeness of reports submitted	No joint planning	All departments engaged; ≥90% timely reports	Biannual	M&E specialist

	Regular tracking of institutional performance; Data-informed decision-making	% of strategic indicators tracked quarterly; Number of MEAL reports produced annually; % of decisions informed by M&E data	No MEAL framework	100% indicators tracked; ≥4 reports/year; ≥75% data-driven decisions	Quarterly	M&E Specialist
SO2: Improve Financial Sustainability and Resource Mobilization	A coherent sustainability plan guiding FSQA's funding trajectory; More reliable government funding flows	Strategy approved and adopted; Year-on-year increase in government allocation reliability	No sustainability plan	Strategy implemented; ≥25% increase in government reliability	Annual	Director of Finance & Admin
	IGF increases as FSQA monetizes core regulatory services; Enhanced sustainability through reduced reliance on government or donor funding	Percentage increase in IGF contributions to annual FSQA budget; Number of services with implemented cost recovery mechanisms; % of fees successfully collected through digital billing systems	Low IGF recovery and digital billing	≥30% increase in IGF; ≥5 costed services; ≥85% digital collection	Annual	Director of Finance & Admin
	Institutional capacity for proactive fundraising; Larger, diversified donor portfolio supporting strategic programs	Number of proposals submitted / funded; Percentage of budget funded by donors	Limited donor engagement	≥10 proposals/year; ≥25% budget from donors	Annual	Resource Mobilization and Partnership Officer
	Adaptive and responsive finance strategy aligned with evolving needs; Enhanced accountability and	% of financial KPIs meeting targets annually; Number of strategic adjustments made based on review	No systematic financial monitoring	≥80% KPI targets met; ≥3 strategic adjustments/year	Annual	M&E Specialist

	course correction in resource mobilization					
SO3: Strengthen Risk Assessment, Inspection, Surveillance, and Enforcement Systems	Unified risk-based inspection system implemented	% of regions implementing standardized inspection protocols; Number of inspectors trained on new SOPs; Inspection non-compliance rate by region	Fragmented inspection approaches	100% regions standardized; ≥50 inspectors trained; ≥30% reduction in non-compliance	Annual	Food Control Director
	Hygiene Rating Scheme introduced	% of establishments rated; % improvement in compliance post-rating	No hygiene rating system	≥80% of registered establishments rated; ≥30% compliance improvement	Annual	Food Control Director
	Digital inspection system (FSIS) operational nationwide	% of inspections logged through FSIS; Number of staff evaluated based on FSIS usage; Inspection reporting turnaround time	Manual logging; FSIS underutilized	100% inspections digital; 90% staff evaluated via FSIS; 50% reduction in turnaround time	Annual	ICT Officer
	Integrated national food hazard surveillance in place	Number of active surveillance programs; Number of MoUs signed; Frequency of joint surveillance reports produced;	No structured national surveillance	≥3 programs; ≥3 MoUs; Quarterly surveillance reports	Biannual	Director of Scientific Affairs
	Standardized risk assessment system institutionalized	% of risk assessments conducted using standardized protocols; Number of staff trained in risk assessment methodology; Number of recurring hazards assessed using formal risk assessment; Number of regulatory decisions informed by risk assessment outputs	No standardized protocols; limited staff training	≥80% of risk assessments standardized ≥10 staff trained ≥10 recurring hazards assessed ≥70% regulatory decisions evidence-based	Annual	Director of Scientific Affairs

	Strengthened legal and enforcement coordination	% of enforcement cases with legal follow-up; Number of staff trained in regulatory enforcement; MoUs signed with legal institutions; Product Registration Regulation drafted and adopted	Inconsistent legal referrals	≥80% legal follow-up; ≥50 staff trained; ≥3 MoUs; Regulation developed and validated	Annual	Regulatory Affairs Director
	Expanded inspection coverage in informal markets	Number of mobile teams operational; Number of informal vendors registered; % change in compliance rates	Limited informal sector reach	≥5 mobile teams; ≥500 vendors reached; ≥30% increase in compliance	Annual	Food Control Director
SO4: Modernize Laboratory Services and Digital Infrastructure	Operational laboratories and skilled staff delivering quality analytical services	Number of lab specialists trained; % of lab equipment with preventive maintenance; Number of tests conducted per month	Limited staff; No structured maintenance	≥20 staff trained; 100% equipment maintained; ≥100 tests/month	Biannual	Director of Scientific Affairs
	Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) established and operational	% of laboratory functions digitized; Number of lab staff trained on LIMS	Manual lab records; fragmented data systems	100% lab functions digitized; ≥ 10 lab staff trained	Annual	Director of Scientific Affairs
	Centralized data systems enabling evidence-based decisions	Number of staff trained in data analytics; Number of quarterly risk trend reports; Frequency of data use in planning	Underutilized data	≥25 trained staff; 4 reports/year; Data used in all annual planning	Quarterly	Director of Scientific Affairs
	Traceability and alert systems operationalized	Number of traceability tools deployed; Number of MoUs with health/agriculture; Number of recall simulations conducted	No traceability system	≥3 tools; ≥3 MoUs; ≥2 simulations/year	Annual	Director of Food Control

	Accredited labs aligned with international standards	Number of labs assessed for ISO 17025; Accreditation status; Number of audits passed	No lab accreditation	≥2 labs accredited; ≥2 audits/year	Annual	Director of Scientific Affairs
SO5: Deepen Stakeholder Engagement and Public Awareness	Improved communication with the public on food safety	Communication strategy adopted; Number of community engagement activities; % increase in public food safety awareness	No structured communication strategy	Strategy implemented; ≥50 outreach events; ≥40% increase in awareness	Annual	Communications Officer
	Efficient complaint and feedback mechanisms operational	Number of complaints resolved; Average complaint resolution time; Existence of public reporting dashboard	No complaint system	≥90% resolution rate; ≤5 days avg. resolution; Dashboard operational	Annual	ICT Officer
	Engagement of informal food vendors in food safety compliance	Number of informal vendors engaged; Number of collaborative sessions with councils; % compliance increase	No informal sector programs	≥2000 vendors; ≥10 sessions; ≥30% compliance increase	Annual	Director of Food Control
	Strengthened partnerships with private sector and civil society	Number of stakeholder meetings; MoUs signed; % of stakeholders involved in FSQA initiatives	Ad hoc stakeholder engagement	≥10 forums; ≥5 MoUs; ≥70% stakeholder involvement	Annual	Director General
	Coordinated and harmonized food safety messaging	Number of joint campaigns with ministries; Number of risk communication materials produced; Public trust score	Inconsistent messaging	≥6 joint campaigns; ≥10 materials; ≥75% trust rating	Annual	Communications Officer

5.2 Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) Arrangements

To drive evidence-based implementation of FSQA’s Strategic Plan (2026–2030), a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) system will be institutionalized. Housed within the Office of the Director General and led by a designated M&E Specialist, this system will ensure strategic oversight, operational coherence, and continuous institutional learning across FSQA’s functions.

The MEAL system will enable FSQA to monitor delivery against strategic objectives, assess performance at all levels, and promote adaptive management. It will also ensure alignment with national development goals and regional and international benchmarks, including The Gambia’s Recovery Focus-National Development Plan, Codex Alimentarius, the AU Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, it will strengthen upward accountability to FSQA’s Board, the Office of the Vice President, the Food Control Advisory Committee (FCAC), and external partners, while reinforcing internal learning loops.

Key Elements of FSQA’s MEAL System

FSQA’s MEAL approach is structured around five interrelated elements designed to ensure transparency, institutional effectiveness, and adaptive learning:

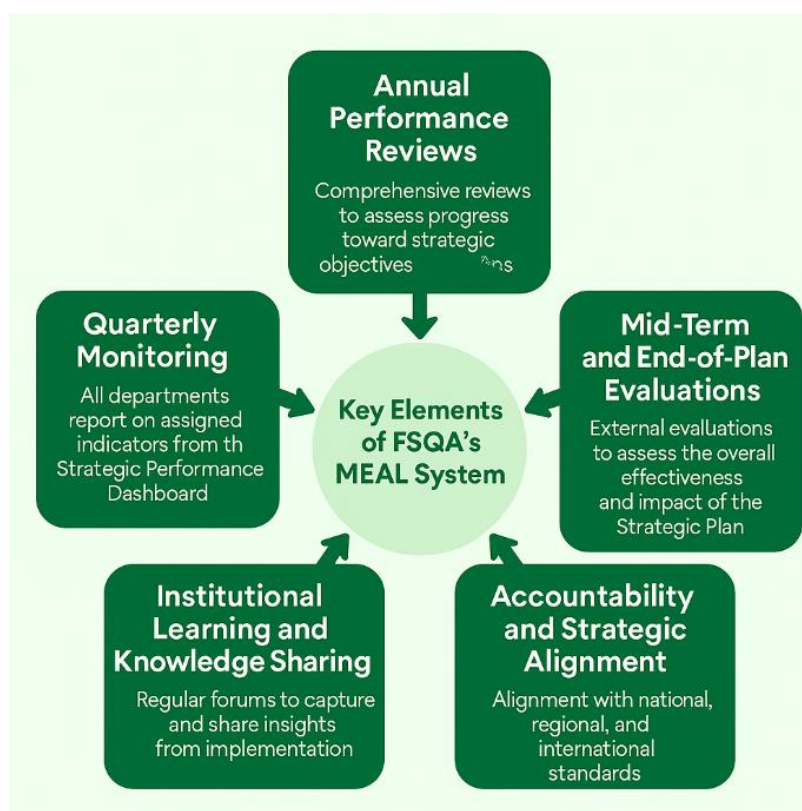


Figure 8: Key MEAL Elements

- **Quarterly Monitoring:** All departments will report quarterly on assigned indicators from the Strategic Performance Dashboard. Data will be consolidated and analyzed by the M&E Specialist to track progress, flag emerging risks, and support real-time decision-making across FSQA’s operational and regulatory functions.
- **Annual Performance Reviews:** Comprehensive reviews will be held each year to assess progress toward strategic objectives, identify implementation challenges, and recalibrate priorities. Outputs from these reviews will inform the annual institutional performance report, shared with the Board, FCAC, and key stakeholders.
- **Mid-Term and End-of-Plan Evaluations:** External evaluations will be conducted in Years 3 and 5 to assess the overall effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the Strategic Plan. These evaluations will provide an evidence base for course correction, institutional learning, and the design of future strategies.
- **Institutional Learning and Knowledge Sharing:** FSQA will establish regular forums such as staff retreats, technical learning sessions, and after-action reviews to capture and share insights from implementation. These sessions will foster a culture of continuous learning and encourage cross-departmental collaboration.
- **Accountability and Strategic Alignment:** The MEAL system will reinforce accountability by aligning FSQA’s reporting with national, regional, and international standards. Mechanisms such as performance dashboards, stakeholder feedback tools, and transparent reporting protocols will ensure responsiveness to both internal and external accountability demands.



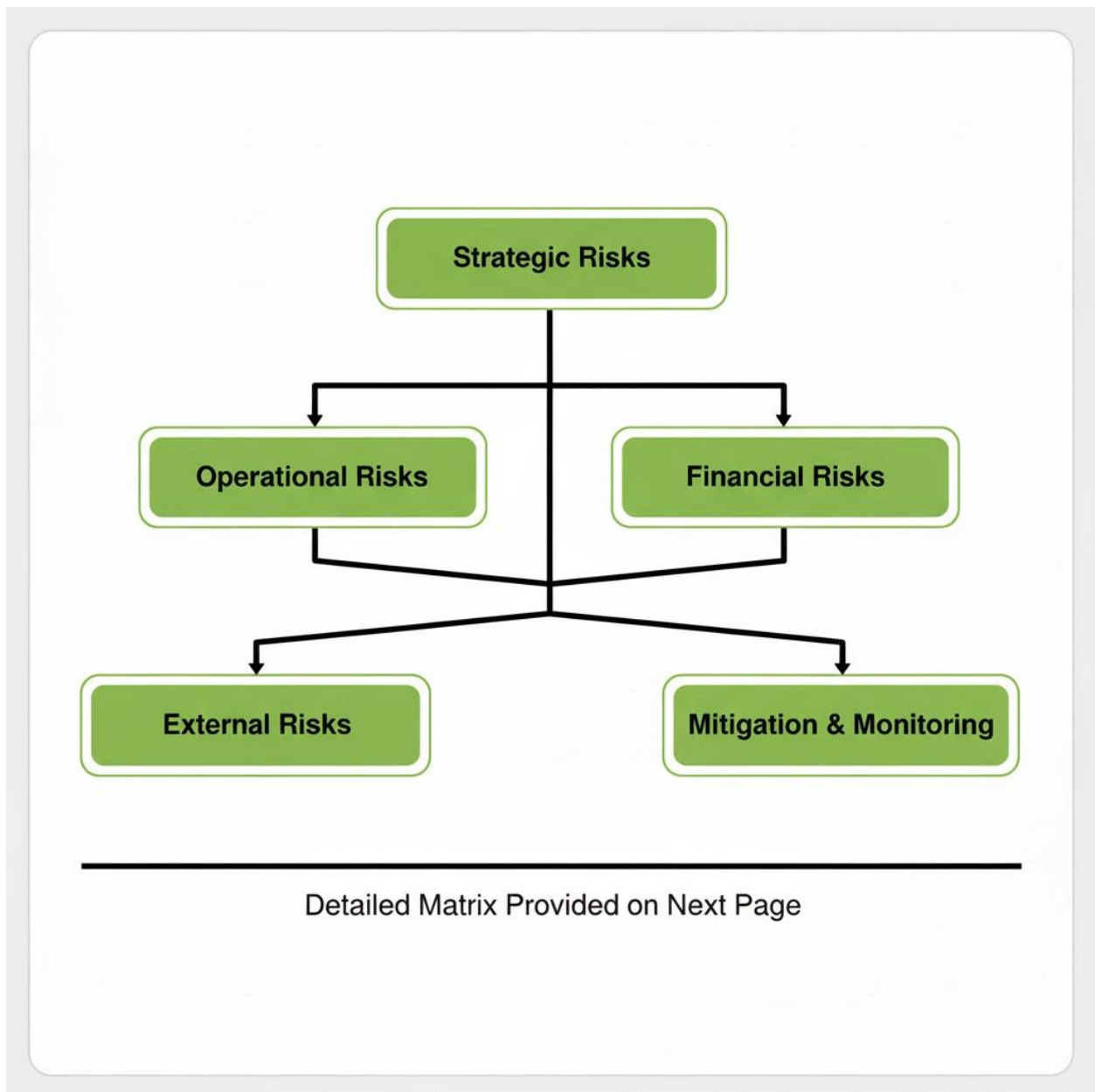
SECTION 6

RISK MANAGEMENT MATRIX



6.1 Introduction

The successful execution of FSQA’s Strategic Plan (2026–2030) hinges on proactively identifying and managing risks that could derail performance, financial stability, or institutional credibility. Given FSQA’s operating environment, which includes regulatory, funding, capacity, and external pressures — a structured risk assessment framework is vital. This Risk Management Matrix categorizes strategic, operational, financial, and external risks, ranks them by likelihood and impact, and proposes mitigation strategies with designated risk owners. The goal is to embed resilience, accountability, and agile response within FSQA’s governance and execution.



6.2 Institutional Risk Management Matrix

Table 11: Risk Management Matrix

Risk Category	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures	Risk Holder
Strategic	Absence of performance appraisal system	High	High	●	Poor staff motivation, low accountability	Implement a results-based performance appraisal system	HR Manager
	No dedicated MEAL framework	High	High	●	Lack of performance tracking, donor dissatisfaction	Institutionalize a MEAL system with trained staff and tools	M&E Specialist
Operational	Poor internal communication between HQ and regions and between directorates	High	High	●	Delayed decisions, inefficiencies	Set up structured internal communication protocols and tools	ICT/Communications officer
	Lack of SOPs and cross-functional coordination	Medium	High	●	Duplicated efforts, inconsistent service delivery	Develop SOPs and joint planning templates	Director of Food Control
	High staff turnover in technical roles	High	High	●	Loss of institutional memory, delays in service delivery	Implement staff retention strategies, improve conditions	HR Manager
Financial	Insufficient government funding and donor dependency	High	High	●	Inability to sustain core operations	Develop a financial sustainability plan; diversify funding	Director of Finance & Admin
External	Low compliance in informal sector	High	High	●	Persistent food safety risks	Strengthen mobile enforcement teams and awareness levels should be increased across board	Director of Food Control
	Climate-induced food contamination risks	High	High	●	Health hazards, emergency responses	Collaborate with climate and agriculture sectors	Director of Scientific Affairs

	Low consumer trust, especially in rural areas	Medium	Medium	●	Public resistance, low reporting	Roll out rural-focused communication strategy	Communications Officer
	Overdependence on short-term/project staff	Medium	High	●	Institutional instability, limited continuity	Absorb core posts into government payroll progressively	Director of Admin & Finance

Key for Risk Level Color Codes:

Color	Risk Level	Meaning
●	Critical	Immediate attention and high-priority mitigation required
●	Major	Active management and frequent monitoring required
●	Moderate	Regular monitoring required
●	Low	Minor risk; periodic review sufficient



Food Safety and Quality Authority

Strategic Plan



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