

Regional Bureau for **Eastern Africa**



World Food  
Programme

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LIVES

# FOOD Safety and Quality



WFP/Arete/Luke Dray



## Key Highlights

**18** support and oversight missions to country offices in 2023.

**22** regional and country office trainings conducted reaching more than **3,500** participants.



**28** supplier audits/assessments conducted in 2023.\*

**59** food incidents managed.

Food safety and quality are critical pillars of WFP's mission to alleviate hunger and food insecurity worldwide. WFP is committed to providing safe, nutritious, and high-quality food to those in need, recognizing the health implications of consuming substandard or unsafe food. This commitment is not only driven by the immediate need to address hunger and malnutrition but also by the responsibility to ensure that donors' contributions are effectively used to purchase good, nutritious food. WFP's approach to food safety and quality involves meticulous oversight at every step of the supply chain, from production and processing to storage, handling, and distribution.

### Food Safety and Quality Oversight and Support

In 2023, following the introduction of Food Safety and Quality (FSQ) corporate guidelines in 2022, WFP Food Safety and Quality unit at the Regional Bureau launched FSQ field missions to various country offices, including Rwanda, South Sudan, Djibouti, and Kenya. These missions aimed to enhance the risk mitigation strategies within the WFP Supply Chain and facilitate the integration of FSQ practices into the operations and programmes across our country operations.

Additional 14 support missions were directed to country offices, focusing on local food procurement, programme support and capacity strengthening, external partnerships establishment, food inspection and laboratories assessment, resolution and investigation of food incidents.

During the Sudan crisis, WFP Food Safety and Quality activated its Emergency Response protocols to facilitate timely response. This included waiving food inspections for early releases and early dispatches, as well as streamlining the supplier qualification process for low and medium-risk foods. This facilitated the swift movement of essential food supplies.

### Supplier Quality Assurance and Food Incidents Management

Food supplier audits and assessments were conducted to ensure food safety and quality, checking compliance with regulations, manage risks, improve operational efficiency, and maintain consumer confidence. As part of local and regional food supplier capacity development, WFP Food Safety and Quality team conducted 38 supplier audits/assessments, surpassing the target for 2023 by 20 percent. These efforts aimed to support the implementation of the local/regional food procurement policy (LRFPP) and monitor the performance of existing suppliers.

Concerted efforts between the Regional Bureau and country office Food Technologists, resulted in the management of 59 food incidents; categorized as 3 critical, 17 major, and 9 minor. In 2023, the total food impacted was 72,985 MT, a 50 percent decrease from 2022's 164,790 MT. This reduction highlights the effectiveness of implemented controls and interventions in mitigating food loss and ensuring food quality and safety.

## Capacity Strengthening

The region organized 22 regional and country office trainings, reaching about 3,500 participants, including WFP staff, external partners, government workers, and other key players in the food supply chain. The training sessions included food handling, warehouse management, food incident management, FSQ guidelines, traceability, and post-harvest management, aiming to enhance food safety and quality. A regional training on Integrated Pest Management was held in Mombasa in September, bringing together CO Food Technologists, logistics staff, inspection service providers, and government agencies to share pest control knowledge and best practices.

## Food Safety and Quality Terrain Utilization

Food Safety and Quality Terrain (FOSTER) platform is an online solution that enables WFP and its partners, to manage food safety and quality more effectively and safeguard the delivery of food to its beneficiaries. The platform is used to manage five core WFP food safety and quality business processes; pre-shipment Inspections, Supplier Audits, Supplier Corrective actions, compliance and products testing, products specifications management.

By the end of 2023, the platform's utilization across the region had reached 70 percent, falling short of the global Regional Bureau's target of 95 percent. This gap can be attributed to changes related to a high volume of early releases in Sudan, and the exclusion of vendors who are not listed as Logistics services providers, such as millers, affecting approximately 328,265 metric tons of food.

## Partnerships

WFP food safety and quality team in the region actively collaborated with various stakeholders, including Trademark Africa, IITA, BHA, and Partners in Food Solutions (PFS), to further WFP's goals. Trademark Africa focused on reducing trade barriers, such as levies and harmonizing food standards and SPS measures. BHA funded Aflatoxin control projects and strategies in the region. PFS aimed to help food processors meet technical standards.

## Country Office highlights



In Rwanda, an agreement was established with the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) to support the development, implementation, and compliance monitoring of food safety and quality standards, as well as capacity building. WFP supported national and regional meetings under the Quality Framework Facilitation pillar and funded RSB's laboratory equipment purchase. Initial engagements included consultations with Rwanda Food and Drugs Authorities (Rwanda FDA) and the National Industrial Research and Development Agency (NIRDA) for quality inspection and technical support. Training workshops were conducted for school-level stakeholders on procurement and food safety, aiming to ensure safe and high-quality meals. Additionally, a national training workshop on FSQ in School Feeding for District Officials was organized to address FSQ gaps and raise awareness.



In Burundi, WFP FSQ led the development and introduction of fortified whole grain and refined maize meal, offering technical assistance to millers (Unikorn, BFF, and Minolacs) for regulatory compliance and Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) enhancement. WFP FSQ also supported the implementation of an agreement signed in October 2022 between Bureau Burundais De Normalisation (BBN) & WFP for supporting small and medium millers in food fortification. Additionally, WFP provided practical training to five cooperatives on post-harvest handling, storage, and warehousing practices, significantly improving the

quality of grains supplied to WFP. WFP conducted technical assessments of food factories, recommending four for further support to be included in the local food vendor roster. WFP FSQ also developed specifications for biofortified beans to improve household nutrition.



In Djibouti, WFP assessed the Golden Africa Djibouti, a fortified vegetable oil manufacturer with an annual capacity of 216,000 MT, as part of WFP's local and regional food procurement policy (LRFPP) and national capacity strengthening strategy.



In Sudan, the WFP FSQ led a Food Safety & Quality integration mission, aiming to enhance FSQ service delivery and collaboration with various country office programmes. WFP also conducted onsite FSQ training for ten farmer organizations in North Kordofan and South Darfur, supporting the LRFPP.



In Kenya, WFP supported in onboarding five local wheat millers, 2 of which was used by the Government to manage in-kind wheat that was redirected to the Mombasa port after challenges were foreseen in taking the grain to Ethiopia following the pause in distribution.



In Ethiopia, WFP streamlined and standardized its grain re-bagging operations, salvaging 29,300 MT of food commodities, a 75 percent increase from 2022, to mitigate food loss. WFP also conducted technical assessments on five local vegetable oil and iodized salt manufacturers for LRFPP support and led a USAID-funded milling project that transformed 10,000 MT of wheat grain into 8,000 MT of wheat flour, aiding thousands of internally displaced people in Afar.



In Uganda, WFP conducted 34 technical assessments, including 27 grains & pulses suppliers and 7 processed food suppliers. Through these assessments, 15 suppliers met food safety and quality requirements and were recommended for inclusion on the local food vendor roster to support the LRFPP initiative.



In Somalia, WFP secured its status as a Technical Committee member for food standards within the Somalia Bureau of Standards (SOBS), a key step in enhancing Somalia's capacity for standard harmonization as it integrates with the East African Community (EAC). This achievement highlights Somalia's dedication to improving regulatory frameworks and ensuring compliance with international standards. WFP also negotiated the exemption of its commodities from import inspection, improving pipeline efficiencies and ensuring smooth delivery of humanitarian food assistance. Additionally, WFP successfully negotiated with the regional Governor to lift restrictions on foreign pest control management firms, enhancing agricultural resilience and supporting government bodies in pest control. WFP is currently engaged in warehouse management and supply chain capacity building initiatives, demonstrating its commitment to improving Somalia's food safety and logistics management capabilities.



In South Sudan, WFP led in engagements with the South Sudan Bureau of Standards and partners to develop a fully operational laboratory in South Sudan, supporting Country Capacity Strengthening. This aimed to enhance the Quality Assurance Framework and support government efforts in monitoring and enforcing food standards, improving public health and controlling food cross-border movement. Currently, a review of initial needs assessments with the FAO is ongoing to identify equipment and technical skill gaps for upgrading the national laboratory to accreditation status.



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