



STANDARDS *and* TRADE
DEVELOPMENT FACILITY



World Health
Organization

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Strengthening food safety control capacities in Cabo Verde

STDF/PPG/869

Executive Summary

Prepared by:

Dr. Simone Moraes Raszl (WHO)

Dr. Katherine Helena Oliveira de Matos (WHO)

July 2024

Introduction

In November 2022, the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) approved a project preparation grant (PPG), requested by Cabo Verde through the Independent Regulatory Authority for Health (ERIS), focused on supporting the application of the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool in Cabo Verde.

With the support from WHO facilitators, the PPG applied the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool to assess and evaluate Cabo Verde's food control system capacities and objectively identify gaps in the system and opportunities for improvement. The assessment results informed the preparation a project proposal for the consideration of the STDF and other potential donors.

The FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool

The national food control system plays a pivotal role in protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade. When we can assess the performance of the system thoroughly, it can identify priority areas of improvement and plan sequential and coordinated activities to reach expected outcomes. In 2019, FAO and WHO jointly developed a comprehensive tool to assist Member States in assessing the effectiveness of their national food control systems. The FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool aims to provide an approach to analyzing a national food control system not only for its "traditional" system dynamics (inputs, processes, and outputs) but also for the interactions occurring within its processes and for its capacity to evolve and improve¹.

The FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool comprises four Dimensions (A, B, C, D); nine Sub-Dimensions, 25 System Competencies, and 162 Assessment Criteria. Table 01 presents the Dimensions, Sub-Dimensions, and System Competencies of the FAO/WHO assessment tool. The Assessment Criteria are distributed in the System Competencies.

Dimensions	Sub-Dimensions	System Competencies
A Inputs and Resources	A.1 Policy and legal frameworks	A.1.1 Policy and legal drafting process
		A.1.2 Institutional framework
		A.1.3. Elements for food control legislation
	A.2 Infrastructure and Finance	A.2.1. Financial resources
		A.2.2. Infrastructure and equipment
		A.2.3 Analytical resources
	A.3 Human resources	A.3.1. Qualification of personnel
		A.3.2. Capacity development of personnel
		A.3.3. Staff management and staff motivation
B Control Functions	B.1 Routine control activities over food products	B.1.1. Domestic controls
		B.1.2. Import controls
		B.1.3. Export controls
	B.2	B.2.1. Monitoring programs in relation to the food chain

¹ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240028371>

	Monitoring, surveillance, and response functions	B.2.2. Foodborne disease surveillance B.2.3. Management of food safety emergencies
C Interactions with stakeholders	C.1 Domestic stakeholders	C.1.1. Relationships between Competent Authorities (CAs) and private sector regarding training needs
		C.1.2. Information flows and integration of Food Business Operators (FBOs) in risk management
		C.1.3. Communication flows and involvement with consumers
	C.2 International stakeholders	C.2.1. Interactions among CAs at international level C.2.2. Engagement of CAs with International Organizations
D Scientific/knowledge base and continuous improvement	D.1 Evidence/risk base	D.1.1. Access of CAs to updated scientific and technical information
		D.1.2. Capacity to collect and analyze data for risk analysis purposes
		D.1.3. Knowledge and use by the CAs of the risk analysis framework
	D.2 Continuous improvement	D.2.1. Performance monitoring of CAs and continuous improvement
		D.2.2. Mechanism to ensure consideration of newest scientific and technical information for food control

Table 01 – Structure of the FAO/WHO food control system assessment tool.

According to the FAO/WHO tool, for each assessment criterion, the assessment team shall decide if the status is:

- **Not Achieved** - this can be converted as a score of "0".
- **Partially Achieved** - this can be converted as a score of "1", regardless of the level of achievement, whether it is 20 or 80%, the score will always be "1".
- **Achieved** - this can be converted as a score of "4" if it completely meets everything that is established in the assessment criterion.

The status of each criterion shall be determined at a system level, as a global achievement, and not at a separate Competent Authority level. It means that the score of each criterion is based on the evidence submitted and the national position, i.e., a consolidated response, prepared jointly by the focal points of the Competent Authorities for each assessment criterion.

The Assessment of the Cabo Verde National Food Control System

The assessment process started with the development of a country profile, prepared by the WHO facilitators with the support of the Independent Health Regulatory Authority (ERIS). A workshop was conducted in April 2023 in Praia City (Cabo Verde) by the WHO facilitators to present more details of the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool to the focal points of the CAs with a role in the national food control system. During the workshop, WHO facilitators highlighted the key information/data that would be required for the assessment,

the process of collecting information/data, and how to elaborate a final response for all the tool assessment criteria. They also emphasized the need to submit pieces of evidence for the assessment criteria. The WHO facilitators also proposed some activities to allow focal points to exercise how the assessment works.

After the workshop, the focal points started the data collection phase. From May to November 2023, a series of meetings happened among the focal points in Cabo Verde to review all data collected and to reach a consensus for a consolidated response (national position) for all the assessment criteria. Following up on the analysis of the national position and the piece of evidence provided for the assessment criteria, a country mission with the participation of one of the WHO Facilitators happened in December 2023 to validate the information/data received, to clarify questions, and to collect any missing information. Technical meetings were held with all CAs, and other stakeholders located on three islands (Santiago Island, São Vicente Island, and Salt Island). The mission also included a visit to the Competent Authorities' facilities, including offices, laboratories, etc. During the mission, the WHO facilitator was able to visit some FBO facilities, e.g. two salt mines, two public markets, one public slaughterhouse, and one stakeholder facility (consumer association).

After the mission, the WHO facilitators completed the evaluation process, scoring the 162 assessment criteria of the tool, and began, in collaboration with ERIS, the development of recommendations for those criteria that are not fully implemented in Cabo Verde. In January 2024, a summary of the assessment's main findings (Graphic summary of each assessment Dimension) and the proposed recommendations were circulated for the review of the focal points. After that, all focal points were invited for an online meeting to validate the assessment scores and recommendations. In total, 60 recommendations were elaborated for all four Dimensions.

Following, all focal points worked on prioritizing the recommendations. It means that all recommendations were analyzed by the focal points and those with a higher impact on the national food control system were considered priorities for Cabo Verde. In total, 31 recommendations were prioritized by the focal points. An independent consultant led the preparation of a project proposal addressing those priority recommendations.

The assessment results were discussed during the PPG final workshop in June 2024 in Praia city. The workshop provided another opportunity for all the focal points and key decision-makers of CAs to validate the assessment findings (including the priorities list) and to develop a plan to work toward implementing the priority recommendations. A preliminary national strategic plan was elaborated during the workshop, and it will continue to be discussed and refined by the focal points within the National *Codex Alimentarius* Commission (in Portuguese, *Comissão Nacional do Codex Alimentarius - CNCA*).

A comprehensive report of the evaluation of the national food control system was developed, encompassing all the assessment details (available only in Portuguese). The final report was validated by all the focal points of the CAs.

Key findings of the assessment:

- Cabo Verde has the potential to increase its food production, including producing traditional food products with high export potential. The current limited food control capacity remains a challenge for the country in accessing regional and global markets. However, the Cabo Verde Government is committed to strengthening the country's food safety capacity.
- Currently, national food control functions are conducted by various CAs with limited capacity (human resources and infrastructure), and scenarios are identified that compromise the effectiveness of the system, such as overlaps in the roles and responsibilities, uncovered control areas, and lack of coordination mechanisms that enable them to develop a common vision of the food control and to perform their work in a harmonized/standardized manner.
- A National Food Control System (in Portuguese, *Sistema Nacional de Controlo de Alimentos - SNCA*), a network of public and private entities, and the civil society organizations with a role in the food control system, established by a Decree-Law published in 2010 and updated in 2016, worked well until 2018; however, currently, the system is not operating. Although the SNCA is inoperative, the National Codex Alimentarius Commission, established by a Decree-Law in 2012, continues to operate, with periodic

meetings, including advising the Government on decisions to be taken related to Codex Alimentarius and other food safety topics.

- The national food safety legislation does not cover all steps of the food chain (“from farm to fork”) and needs to be revised and updated.
- Most of the CAs do not have a periodic inspection plan. And for those who have one, the inspection plan is not based on a risk-categorization framework. Consequently, the CAs are not deployed with a robust risk-based approach to control food safety risks properly.
- The country doesn't have a food monitoring programme to support the detection and monitoring of risks related to food safety in the entire food chain.
- The country doesn't have a national surveillance system for foodborne diseases. Such surveillance system can ensure the effective detection of foodborne diseases and help in the management of the food safety outbreaks and emergencies.
- The process for licensing, registration, and monitoring of Food Business Operators (FBOs) is not standardized and harmonized among the CAs.

Strategic Plan

During the PPG final workshop, CA focal points drew up a strategic plan for the recommendations classified as priorities. Initially, the priority recommendations were grouped into thematic areas, and then, activities/actions to be developed related to the priority recommendations were listed, as well as the CAs involved, time frame, expected results, and potential sources of funding. A total of 47 activities/actions were included in the draft strategic plan. It is important to highlight that the CA focal points consider this national strategic plan for the food control system strengthening as a preliminary proposal, and it is necessary to deepen the actions to be carried out and to estimate the needed resources. This draft strategic plan will continue to be discussed within the scope of the National *Codex Alimentarius* Commission.

Acknowledgments

WHO expresses its gratitude to the professionals who participated and dedicated themselves to carrying out this evaluation: Dr. Katherine Helena Oliveira de Matos, author of this report, Consultant, WHO Headquarters; Dr. Simone Moraes Raszl, author of this report, Scientist, WHO Headquarters; Ms. Edith Pereira, National Officer in Charge of Health Promotion and Social Determinants of Health, WHO Cabo Verde Office and Ms. Lusubilo Witson Mwamakamba, Food Safety Technical Officer, WHO Regional Office for Africa. In addition, WHO would like to acknowledge the significant support received from the STDF secretariat during the entire process of this assessment.

WHO is also grateful for the commitment of the representatives of senior management and officials of the CAs and other partner institutions listed below², and in particular to Mrs. Patrícia Miranda Alfama, Executive Administrator, ERIS, and Mr. Edson Cabral dos Santos, Director of Food Regulation, ERIS who coordinated the assessment process in the country.

- National Agency for Water and Sanitation (**ANAS**)
- General Directorate of Agriculture, Livestock and Forestry (**DGASP**), of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (**MAA**)
- General Directorate of Customs (**DGA**), of the Ministry of Finance (**MF**)

² The abbreviations of the CAs and other partner institutions names are in Portuguese.

- National Directorate of Industry, Commerce and Energy (**DNICE**), of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Energy (**MICE**)
- National Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (**DNPA**), of the Ministry of the Sea (**MM**)
- General Inspectorate of Fisheries (**IGP**), of the Ministry of the Sea (**MM**)
- National Directorate of Health (**DNS**), of the Ministry of Health (**MS**)
- National Institute of Public Health (**INSP**)
- Institute of Tourism of Cabo Verde (**ITCV**), of the Ministry of Tourism and Transport (**MTT**)
- General Inspectorate of Economic Activities (**IGAE**)
- Institute for Quality Management and Intellectual Property (**IGQPI**)
- National Association of Municipalities of Cabo Verde (**ANMCV**)
- Association for Consumer Protection (**ADECO**)
- Sotavento Chamber of Commerce (**CCS**)
- Barlavento Chamber of Commerce (**CCB**)
- University of Cabo Verde (**UniCV**)

ANNEXES

Workshop conducted by the WHO facilitators to present the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool to the focal points of the Competent Authorities with a role in the national food control system | April 2023



Mission to Cabo Verde for validation and additional data collection | December 2023





Final workshop to present the assessment results | June 2023

