

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS ASSESSMENT SERIES

Integrated Approach to Food Safety, Plant & Animal Health: National Biosecurity Capacity

Country Report The Republic of the Gambia



Case Study 4

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS ASSESSMENT SERIES

Implementing an Integrated Approach to Food Safety, Plant and Animal Health (Biosecurity)

Country Situation Report Republic of The Gambia



This country report was prepared by the Food and Nutrition Division (AGN) and the Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), under the FAO and Multi-Partnership Programme (FMPP) under direct supervision of Dr Masami Takeuchi, Food Safety Officer of FAO. The assessment and implementation activities were carried out and the report written by Dr. Londa Vanderwal (FAO International Consultant), based on work conducted between October 2008 and December 2009.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AGN	Food and Nutrition Division of FAO
AGP	Plant Production and Protection Division of FAO
AHPS	Animal Health and Production Services
AI	Avian Influenza
APMS	Agricultural Pest Management Services
AU	African Union
BTSF	Better Training for Safer Food
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CPAG	Consumer Protection Association of the Gambia
CBD	Convention for Biological Diversity
DHS	Directorate of Health Services (Ministry of Health)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EC	European Commission
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FD	Fisheries Department
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
FP	Farmers Platform
FSQHE	Food Standards, Quality and Hygiene Enforcement Directorate (Ministry of Health)
FTS	Food Technology Services (Ministry of Agriculture)
GBOS	Gambian Bureau of Statistics
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMD	Gambian Dalasi (US\$1= 26 GD as of 23 December 2009)
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GHP	Good Hygienic Practices
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
GRA	Gambia Revenue Authority
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
LMO	Living Modified Organism
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOFE	Ministry of Forestry and the Environment
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOLG	Ministry of Local Government
MOTIE	Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Employment
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
NaNA	National Nutrition Agency
NARI	National Agricultural Research Institute

NAWFA	National Association of Women Farmers
NCSPSC	National Codex, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee
NEA	National Environmental Agency
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
NNC	National Nutrition Council
NPPO	National Plant Protection Organization
OIE	World Animal Health Organization (Organization Internationale des Epizooties)
PHL	Public Health Laboratory (Ministry of Health)
PPS	Plant Protection Services
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan
PWD	Parks and Wildlife Department
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
STDF	Standards and Trade Development Facility
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TBT	WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UTG	University of The Gambia
WAQP	West African Quality Programme (EC-funded, UNIDO-implemented)
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Promoting an integrated approach to biosecurity (food safety, animal and plant health) at national level in the Gambia

1. Introduction

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) promotes among its member countries the use of a strategic and integrated approach to analyse and manage risks in the sectors of human health (particularly food safety and zoonoses), animal life and health (including fisheries), and plant life and health (including forestry), including associated environmental risk. This approach, which FAO has termed “biosecurity”, encompasses the policy and regulatory frameworks (including instruments and activities such as inspection, diagnostic services, certification, and others).

Biosecurity covers the introduction of plant pests, animal pests and diseases, and zoonoses, the introduction and release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and their products, and the introduction and management of invasive alien species and genotypes. Strengthening overall biosecurity at the national level enables that country to improve domestic food safety, animal and plant health, which in turn can improve domestic food security through increased access to safe food. Another very important aspect of improved biosecurity is that it enables countries to participate in an increasingly standards-driven international food and agricultural trading market, which is one of the necessary means to alleviate poverty in developing countries. Accordingly, the described activities address many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), as well as points in the Gambian Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan (PRSP).

FAO held a regional workshop in Accra, Ghana (June 2007) on implementing a Biosecurity approach at the country level, which two participants from the Gambia attended. The government of the Gambia then submitted a proposal to FAO, as requested to all countries participating at the workshop, to implement such an approach in the Gambia. The National Codex , Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC) of the Gambia developed and submitted the initial proposal, and as such, served as the implementing body for the project. The first phase of the project (October 2008- March 2009) conducted the following activities: a) identified the major components and stakeholders in the national food safety, animal and plant health system; b) assessed capacity needs, gaps and overlaps in this area; and c) further developed a strategic plan for implementing a Biosecurity approach in The Gambia. Based on the success of the pilot project, FAO implemented a second phase of the project (August-December 2009) through a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the NCSPSC. The second phase of the project was designed to address some of the items identified in the strategic plan, particularly technical activities related to policy development, strengthening laboratories, inspection, and information exchange in food safety, animal and plant health.

This report has been prepared using the results of the application of the procedure outlined in part 2, the “Guide to Assess Biosecurity Capacity”, of the *FAO Biosecurity Toolkit*. The toolkit sets out a systematic process to examine critically the capacity and performance of the existing national food control systems, plant and animal life and health, as well as associated risks to the environment. This process is envisaged to improve future controls, pinpoint areas for improvement and identify options to address the identified needs. The capacity needs are

the gaps between the current situation and what is desired. The report also outlines the initial implementation of this integrated approach in the Gambia, which primarily occurred in the second phase of the project.

The international consultant undertook her first mission to the Gambia for approximately 3 weeks in October 2008, and remained in the country until March 2009 to conduct her PhD dissertation research (on a separate subject), which coincided with the duration of the first phase of the project. The consultant officially undertook additional project activities in January and February 2009, and also informally supported other project activities throughout the duration of the first phase of the project. The international consultant returned to the Gambia on 23 August 2009 to assist with the implementation of the second phase of the project. The consultant remained in the country until 10 September 2009 and returned for a longer-term mission from 4 October- 14 December 2009. The terms of reference of the international consultant for the various missions are presented as Annex 1.

The consultant worked closely with the NCSPSC, particularly the NCSPSC secretariat, NCSPSC chairperson, Codex Contact Point, and the two attendees from the Gambia at the Regional Biosecurity training workshop in the implementation of this project.

This assessment was undertaken as part of the FAO project FNOP/INT/NOR/102 Objective D1 Biosecurity (2008-2009) “promoting an integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health at national level.” Countries involved in this project include the Gambia, Ghana, and Malawi. The second phase of the project was funded through the FAO project FMPP/GLO/004/MUL.

2. Scope, Objectives and Process of the Assessment

2.1 Scope and Objective

The scope of the current assessment is an evaluation of the Gambian biosecurity system, including policy framework, legislation, organizational arrangements, communication, inspection, verification and enforcement, quarantine and certification, diagnostic services, emergency preparedness and response, risk analysis, monitoring and surveillance. The process followed steps 3 and 7 of Guide to Assess Biosecurity Capacity, which is Part 2 of the *FAO Biosecurity Tool Kit*.

The objective of the assessment was to evaluate the current situation of the Gambia’s biosecurity system, and using that assessment as a baseline, to revise a 5 – Year Strategic Plan, which the NCSPSC was in the process of developing at the beginning of the first phase of the project. The second phase of the project then implemented some of the key components of the strategic plan. Other donors are also utilizing the strategic plan as a basis to plan their technical assistance activities in the Gambia, and the plan can also be used to request for funding of other future activities, projects and programs from the government and donors.

2.2 Assessment Process

The assessment was undertaken by a team consisting of an international consultant and core national counterparts, primarily in October 2008 and again in August- September 2009, which further informed the activities of the first and second phases of the project, respectively. A participatory stakeholder workshop was held in November 2008 to conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the various competent authorities in food safety, animal and plant health. A workshop was held in January 2009 was held to finalize the strategic plan. A workshop to assess the inspection and certification system in the Gambia and develop a short term action plan to address the identified weaknesses was held in September 2009.

The initial assessments were carried out primarily through direct interviews of stakeholders and key players in biosecurity in the country. The main respondents were the government officials involved in the development of biosecurity- related policy, standards and regulations and enforcement activities, as well as private sector and civil society stakeholders.

The objective of the assessment was explained to respondents before interviews were conducted, using a list of broad questions prepared by a previous biosecurity capacity needs assessment exercise as a guide (list of questions available in Annex 2). In addition, information was gained by visits to laboratories, border posts, production and processing facilities, and other relevant biosecurity-related locations in the Gambia.

At both assessment workshops, the various competent authorities (CA) presented on their perceived capacity, strengths, and weaknesses. At the November 2008 workshop, participants then divided into groups to complete a SWOT analysis of each CA, and also developed strategies to address the identified weaknesses. In the September 2009 workshop, participants developed a short term action plan to identify and address the weaknesses of the inspection and certification system (updated version attached as Annex 7). Reports of all the workshops (and training programmes carried out as a result of the assessments) affiliated with both phases of the project are attached as Annex 8. The report of each workshop/ training programme includes the concept note developed for it, the participant list, the timetable, texts of the opening statements provided in the opening ceremony, and the presentations from each workshop/ training programme.

Contact details of those met (in addition to those in attendance at the project workshops/ training programmes) are presented as Annex 3. The day by day summary of activities carried out during the missions is available in Annex 4.

3. Country Profile and factors that influence biosecurity

3.1 Main features and activities

3.1.1 Geography

The Gambia is a small West African country (11,000 km²- the smallest on the continent of Africa), lying between 13 and 14 degrees north latitude. It consists of a narrow strip of land lying inside of the country of Senegal, following the Gambia River some 400 km from the Atlantic Ocean in the west (see map in Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map of The Gambia within West Africa.



The terrain of the country is predominantly the flood plain of the Gambia River flanked by some low hills. The highest point in the country is only 53 m above sea level. The country area includes 1,295 km² of water, with 80km of coastline.

The climate is characterized by a long dry season (November to May) and a short rainy season (June-October), with rainfall ranging from 850mm to 1,200mm annually. The short production period and variability in rainfall amount and distribution inhibit food production with domestic production accounting for only 50% of national food consumption requirements. The remainder of the food needs are met by imported food. In view of this, guaranteeing the safety of both locally produced and imported food is very important in the entire chain, from farm to the table.

3.1.2 The Gambia's history and people

The Gambia was colonized by the British, who ruled the country until 1965. Geographically surrounded by Senegal, it formed a short-lived federation of Senegambia between 1982 and 1989. In 1991 the two nations signed a friendship and cooperation treaty, but tensions have flared up intermittently since then. The current president led a military coup in 1994 that overthrew the previous president, and subsequently banned political activity. A new constitution and presidential elections occurred in 1996, followed by parliamentary balloting in 1997, which completed a nominal return to civilian rule. Presidential elections have occurred since 1996, with the current president winning all subsequent elections, including most recently in late 2006.

The Gambia has a population of 1.8 million (July 2009 estimate), growing at 2.6% with a population density of 128 people/ km². The Gambia has a youthful population with 44% under the age of 14 years. The population has been experiencing rapid urbanization with 57% of the people now residing in the urban area.

Many of the government ministries, as well as the Parliament and State House, are located in Banjul, the historical capital. An increasing number of government ministries and businesses are moving to the Serrekunda area, the largest city in the Gambia (near Banjul).

In 2008, The Gambia was positioned at 160 out of 179 countries worldwide in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)'s Human Development Index. Poverty is pervasive with 50% of the population living on less than 1US\$ per day. Life expectancy at birth is 53 overall with 52 for males and 55 for females respectively. There is a diverse population of various native tribes and immigrants, with Muslims comprising 90% of the population and Christians 8%.

3.1.3 Natural Resources

The Gambia is endowed with some natural resources, namely fish, titanium, tin, zircon, silica sand, clay, and petroleum. The mineral deposits are currently not exploited on a large-scale basis. The petroleum industry is still in its early stages in the Gambia, with plans underway for further exploration and utilization of this resource, intended to occur after human resources in the Gambia in this area have been developed.

About 75% of the population depends on crops and livestock for its livelihood. Small-scale manufacturing activity features the processing of agricultural commodities of peanuts, fish, and hides. The Gambia's natural beauty and proximity to Europe has made it one of the larger markets for tourism in West Africa.

The Gambia faces a number of environmental challenges, including deforestation, desertification, water-borne diseases, and drought (rainfall has dropped by 30% in the last 30 years).

3.1.4 Economy

The Gambia is among the world's poorest countries, ranking 159th of 180 countries in the world in terms of nominal GDP per capita. One- third of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from agriculture, with 59% from the services sector (including tourism). However, as of 1996, three-fourths of the population was engaged in agriculture, with 19% in various industries (largely small-scale) and 6% in services. Unemployment and under-employment levels are also very high.

The main agricultural products of the Gambia include groundnuts, millet, rice, sorghum, sesame seed, vegetables, maize, palm kernels; cattle (including milk), sheep, and goats. The main industries are processing peanuts, fish, and hides; tourism, woodworking, and metalworking (both on an artisanal basis).

3.1.5 Trade

In 2008, the Gambia exported an estimated US\$85 million in goods; a small quantity compared to the remainder of the world, largely due to its small size. The country exports peanut products, fish, cotton lint, palm kernels (in decreasing quantities), cashews and fresh fruits and vegetables (in increasing amounts). The Gambia also receives a great deal of products through its seaport to be re-exported by land to the near-by countries of Guinea-Bissau and Mali. The main destinations for the country's exports are to India (30.5%), Japan (25.6%), Belgium (6.3%), China (5.5%) the UK (5.3%), and Spain (4.1%). The Gambia currently imports an estimated US\$299 million in goods per year (an increase from the estimated \$262.9 million in goods in 2007), with the main commodities and products being sugar, linseed oil, rice, palm oil, wheat flour, prepared foodstuffs, fuel, machinery and transportation equipment. The main countries that the Gambia imports from (data from 2008) are China (20.6%), Senegal (12.1%), Cote d'Ivoire (8.7%), Brazil (7.7%), and the Netherlands (5%).

3.1.6 Statistics on Agriculture in the Gambia

Table 1. Agricultural production

Rank	Commodity	Value of production (\$1000)	Production (Metric Tonnes)
1	Groundnuts	31 003	72 557
2	Millet	13 984	89 186
3	Cow milk, whole, fresh	2 100	8 715
4	Rice, paddy	2 099	11 395
5	Sorghum	2 021	17 951
6	Sesame seed	1 946	2 200
7	Vegetables, fresh	1 876	10 000
8	Game meat	1 801	1 100
9	Maize	1 571	31 408
10	Palm oil	772	2 550

Table 2. Agricultural imports

Rank	Commodity	Value of imports (\$1000)	Quantity imported (Metric Tonnes)
1	Refined sugar	40 250	138 773
2	Linseed oil	18 063	36 716
3	Rice, broken	11 127	75 511
4	Palm oil	10 900	34 000
5	Rice, husked	6 980	15 865
6	Wheat flour	5 325	33 816
7	Cigarettes	5 239	517
8	Tomato paste	4 970	8 816
9	Rice, paddy	4 500	10 427
10	Prepared food (not elsewhere specified)	3 623	1 027

3.2 Trends in production, processing and distribution that influence biosecurity

Agricultural production is being intensified in isolated incidences in some sectors, particularly crops for export, but most of the agricultural production in the Gambia continues to be carried out by small scale farmers, where there is often very little control over disease. The government of the Gambia is currently promoting a “back to the land” call, encouraging people to return to farming and to increase their acreage of land in production. These efforts have been successful, with the number of hectares in agricultural production increasing in 2009, compared to 2008. However, the Gambia still imports large quantities of rice - its main current staple food - to meet consumer demand, as well as meat and dairy products, processed food, and numerous agricultural inputs. These products may be of inferior quality and safety upon arrival in the country, which can be further exacerbated by poor storage and transport conditions often occurring in the country.

Animal production in the country is generally still done on a small scale basis, although some efforts are being made to intensify production in the poultry sector. However, producers are challenged by a lack of a reliable supply of quality feed, chicks/breeding stock, veterinary drugs, and other such inputs.

Deforestation is also a large problem in the Gambia; thus, the government is trying to reduce the export of unsustainable wood products and the mass production of charcoal by smallholders. Fish stocks in the Gambia River and areas in the Atlantic Ocean near the shore are decreasing, which can lead to changes in fishing practices and has also led to an increase in aquaculture production.

Most food processing in the Gambia is currently done on a small scale basis, often under unhygienic conditions. Some processing facilities have been built by government projects, but are limited by lack of hygienic packaging materials, adequate electricity, and other such inputs. This lack of adequate food processing facilities also causes large quantities of processed food to be imported into the country to meet the growing demand for more convenient food products. Food processors must establish HACCP systems, particularly for products with export potential, in order to meet the increasingly stringent requirements of large food importing markets and also to increase the safety of foods consumed in the Gambia. Many hotels and restaurants that cater to the tourist market require foods to be produced and processed under a HACCP system, but local producers and processors often cannot meet these requirements. Because of the small population of the Gambia and limited food and agriculture processing facilities in the country, many larger producers (particularly in highly perishable products such as fresh fruits and vegetables) must look to export markets, which have strict sanitary and phytosanitary requirements.

In terms of distribution, large supermarkets are on the rise in the Gambia, which brings in many more imported products which must be inspected, stored and transported properly. The substantial tourist industry in the Gambia leads to numerous imports of food products, which may bring disease or pests with them. Many food storage facilities in the Gambia are often not

constructed or maintained in a manner that would enable the food stored there to maintain the proper temperature or hygienic conditions. The transport system for food products and other agricultural inputs is largely informal, with little temperature or hygienic control. The majority of Gambians purchase their food from small neighbourhood shops and local markets, which currently experience have little inspection and control, although these shops were slightly better controlled in the past.

The large seaport in the Gambia receives large quantities of food bound for other countries such as nearby Mali (landlocked) and Guinea- Bissau (smaller seaport). However, health and agriculture inspectors at the seaport do not have the authority to inspect these food products, and due to the inadequate transportation system, the products are unloaded from the sealed ocean shipping containers onto open trucks. Thus, the products can potentially be sold in the informal sector in the Gambia, or may re-enter the country informally through the porous land border with Senegal (without any inspection or control) once the products do pass out of the Gambia.

Many processed foods and agricultural inputs enter the country from Senegal, occasionally through informal border crossings to avoid the customs duties and inspection required at major land border posts. Many of these products, particularly agricultural inputs such as pesticides, are sold in weekly markets in the rural “upcountry” areas. Due to the great distance of many of these rural areas from the more populated western region of the country, government inspection and control of these products is often limited.

3.3 Pathways for introduction of biosecurity hazards

The major pathways for introduction of identified biosecurity hazards into the Gambia include the following:-

- (i). Products coming into the Gambian seaport for re-export to other countries, which are not inspected by Gambian health and agriculture officials.
- (ii). Informal trade across the long, porous land border with Senegal; Senegal does have reasonable control over animal and plant diseases and food quality and safety, but any issues occurring there will easily cross into the Gambia.
- (iii). The goods brought into the country by VIP travelers (such as high government officials, etc) are normally not inspected and could potentially bring plant, or possibly animal, disease into the country.
- (iv). Lack of adequate systems for disease control in the country, particularly animal diseases; any isolated cases of disease can easily become a large problem due to lack of adequate disease surveillance and control systems.
- (v). The large number of tourists to the country could bring plant or animal pests with them, and also cause increasing movements of goods into the country
- (vi). Imported goods may meet inspection requirements, but their quality may deteriorate once in the country due to poor storage and transport conditions
- (vii). Refugees coming into the country from nearby countries experiencing political instability may bring pests and disease with them
- (viii). Unintentional or intentional introduction of alien invasive species in water and land

- (ix). Food production, processing, preservation and storage carried out under sub-standard hygienic conditions
- (x). Bird migration and regional trade- a pathway for avian influenza and other diseases.

Table 3 below gives a summary of the biosecurity hazards across the sectors, which were identified through discussions with stakeholders.

Table 3: Biosecurity hazard/threats identified by stakeholders

Threat/ Hazard	Effects/impacts	Responsible Agencies
Food and water-borne illnesses	Human health; illness and death	MOH, MOA, MOLG
Avian Influenza, Swine Influenza	Animal and human health	AHPS, MOH
Foot and Mouth Disease	Animal health (economic losses)	AHPS, PWD
Aflatoxins	Human health, post harvest losses, rejection of exports	MOH, PPS, NARI
Fish diseases/ poor hygiene	Fish health/ production, rejection of exported products	FD
Alien invasive species	Environment and biodiversity	PPS, MOFE, PWD, FD
Plant pests	Plant health and economic losses	PPS, NEA, NARI
LMOs and GMOs	Environment and Biodiversity	PWD, MOFE, MOA, MOH
Indiscriminate use of pesticides/ pesticide residues in foods	Human health, environment, plant health, animal health	PPS, NEA, MOH, AHPS
Indiscriminate use of veterinary drugs/ veterinary drug residues in foods	Human health, animal health	AHPS, MOH, Medicines Board
Rabies	Human health and animal health	AHPS, MOH, PWD

Note: This list is not necessarily comprehensive of all Biosecurity hazards in the country, but attempts to address some of the key hazards (not listed in any particular order).

3.4 Cultural perceptions and practices

The term “biosecurity” is unfamiliar to most Gambians and is generally not well understood. Accordingly, in most of the project activities, the terminology “an integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health” was used.

Rice has become the staple of the Gambian diet, along with fish. Therefore, pests and diseases that affect rice, either in production or storage, are critical. Food is very important to Gambians, with extended families eating together, out of the same bowl.

The Gambian economy has become quite dependent on tourism in the past years; however, due to the world financial crisis and other factors, tourism in the Gambia has decreased. Many young people that previously worked in the tourism sector are having difficulty finding other

employment, but do not want to work in the agriculture or food processing sector because it is perceived as an inferior occupation.

Many small holder farmers keep a few chickens near their homes, and may even bring the animals inside their homes at night. Therefore, controlling the spread of diseases such as Avian Influenza is also very important to the health and culture of Gambians.

4. The Gambia's Biosecurity capacity and performance assessment

In accordance with the procedure outlined in the *FAO Biosecurity Toolkit*, step 4: "Assess existing biosecurity capacity and performance", this assessment of the Gambia's biosecurity status addresses the policy framework, legal and regulatory framework, organizational arrangements, and communication, followed by an examination of the sectors of biosecurity/risk analysis functions at an organizational level.

4.1 Policy Framework

Through the activities of this project, Dr. Ruth Frampton, an international Biosecurity policy expert provided assistance to the Gambia to develop an integrated national Biosecurity policy. A stakeholder consultation workshop was held through the project (1-2 December 09), which informed the development of a draft version of the policy that was submitted by Dr. Frampton to the Gambia Policy, Legal, Organization and Management (PLOM) sub-committee of the NCSPSC on 10 December 2009 (attached as Annex 9.1). The PLOM sub-committee will continue to develop the policy and seek further input from stakeholders, and finally, facilitate enactment of the policy. In addition to the integrated framework policy, some fragmented policies related to Biosecurity do exist across various sectors, but many of those policies are outdated. The integrated Biosecurity policy is intended to contribute towards the Gambia's broader Vision 2020 strategy for poverty reduction and socio-economic development.

4.2 Legal and Regulatory Framework

There is currently no integrated legal framework on biosecurity and sectoral legislations are often outdated or inadequate. There is very limited domestication of international standards and requirements into national laws, although efforts are currently underway in this regard, particularly by the NCSPSC in food-related legislation. Efforts are also underway through the WAQP (UNIDO-implemented project) to revise food safety-related legislation to create a single national food control agency. The following are the main sectorial legislations in place that relate to biosecurity. The agencies responsible for their coordination and/or implementation is also indicated by listing its abbreviation after the name of the act:

- The Food Act, 2005 (coordination by NaNA; numerous agencies in implementation)
- The Public Health Act, 1990 (and Public Health Regulations, 1990) (MoH)
- The Quarantine Act, 1964 (and Quarantine Regulations, 1964 and Quarantine (Aerial Navigation) Regulations, 1964) (MoH)
- The Plant Quarantine Bill 2008 (and Plant Importation Regulations 2008) (PPS)
- The Pesticides and Hazardous Chemicals Act, 1994 (NEA)
- The Pesticides (Registration) Regulations, 1993 (NEA)
- The Medicines Act (MoH)
- The National Environment Management Act, 1994 (NEA)

- The Gambia Veterinary Council Act, 2000 (Gambia Veterinary Council)
- The Biodiversity and Wildlife Act, 2003 (DPW)
- The Local Government Act, 2002 (MOLG)
- The Fisheries Act, 2007 (and Fisheries Regulations, 2008; Fisheries Products Regulations (draft)) (FD)
- The Aquaculture Product Regulations, 2006 (FD)
- The Animal Diseases Control Act, 1948 (AHPS)
- The Livestock Marketing Agency Act, 2008 (AHPS)
- The Forestry Act, 1998 (and Forestry Regulations, 2000) (DPW)
- Gambia Statistics Act (2005) (Gambia Bureau of Statistics)

The international policy consultant obtained copies of most of these legislations during her mission to the Gambia; plans are underway to include electronic copies of the legislations in the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health (www.ipfsaph.org).

4.3 Institutional Framework

Various ministries, departments, and other bodies in the Gambia all have diverse roles and responsibilities related to various issues of biosecurity. The National Codex, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC) currently provides coordination of the various aspects of Biosecurity, and is working to improve the various sectors of Biosecurity, as well as its integration. However, this committee consists of technical level officials, and the committee recognizes that improved coordination at the policy and operational levels is also needed. The committee also currently does not have a strong legislative mandate, or adequate manpower in the secretariat, for extensive coordination in Biosecurity.

The NCSPSC initially began as the National Codex Committee, which was reactivated in 2005, in conjunction with the adoption of the Food Act (2005). The Gambia recognized the need to address food safety, animal and plant health in a more integrated manner and the need to meet its membership obligations of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This prompted the government to declare that the NCC would also serve as the national Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) committee, as most of the stakeholders that should be involved in a national SPS committee were already involved in the NCC. In the Food Act 2005, the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) is charged with coordination of food safety matters in the country. Thus, the executive director of NaNA was selected as the Codex Contact Point and one of the NaNA staff members as the NCC (now NCSPSC) secretariat. The NCSPSC secretariat also now serves as the SPS enquiry point in the Gambia. The Ministry of Trade and Industry serves as the SPS Notification Authority.

The NCSPSC does include members from the key agencies involved in food safety, animal and plant health in the Gambia, as well as some private sector experts. The committee serves many functions in the Gambia, including the following (as listed in the NCSPSC strategic plan 2009-2013):

- Advising the government on the implications of the various food standardization and food control issues that may have arisen and that are related to the work undertaken by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, as well as matters related to SPS and the work of the WTO SPS committee;
- Proposing to the government the acceptance of Codex, OIE, and IPPC standards and suggesting which organizations should take action;
- Serving as a national forum to assist the government in ensuring a supply of safe food to consumers, whilst at the same time maximising the opportunities for industrial development, and for the expansion of both domestic and international trade;
- Appointing the technical (sub) committees to assist in the study or consideration of technical matters;
- Studying Codex, IPPC, OIE, and WTO SPS documents, collecting and revising all relevant information related to science, technology, economics, health and control systems, so as to be able to give supporting reasons in the preparation and acceptance of Codex, IPPC and OIE standards;
- Cooperating with the Codex Alimentarius Commission, IPPC and OIE secretariats and nominating delegates to participate in Codex, IPPC and OIE sessions;
- Cooperating with other national and foreign organizations whose scope covers food safety, animal and plant health;
- Mobilizing resources for Codex, IPPC and OIE activities;
- Raising awareness in the general public on Codex, IPPC, OIE, and the WTO and their procedures; and,
- Providing advice and support to the structures and bodies established under the Food Act 2005 and other relevant legislation.

Despite the good work of the NCSPSC to help coordinate efforts in food safety in the Gambia, improved integration and coordination is still needed in food safety, where numerous agencies are currently involved in various functions, including inspection and diagnostic services. For example, a new Food Standards, Quality and Hygiene Enforcement Directorate was established within the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in early 2009. However, the relationship of this body with existing entities, both within and outside of the Ministry of Health, has not been well defined.

Most of the biosecurity-related agencies in the Gambia are represented at the main national border posts and in the urban areas; however, many agencies have a limited presence at the national borders and in the rural areas.

In addition to the legislative responsibilities of various agencies indicated in the listing of biosecurity-related legislation above, many stakeholders have other various roles and responsibilities related to biosecurity, as listed below. Some details of the capacity assessment are included, with more detailed notes on the visits with each of the stakeholders and biosecurity-related locations available from the project consultant.

4.3.1 Ministry of Agriculture

Note that the Minister of Agriculture is currently the Head of State of the Gambia.

The Ministry of Agriculture has gone through numerous re-organizations and re-structuring in recent years. The organizational structures changed throughout the course of the project; the structures listed below reflect the situation as of December 2009.

a. Animal Health and Production Services

- field veterinary officers
 - note that there are currently only 2 DVMs in the public sector in the Gambia
 - others in country are in private practice/ consultancies or have retired
 - responsible to inspect incoming animal and animal products, animal feeds, vet drugs
 - check permits, general appearance of product, packaging condition
 - responsible for animal health matters in the country
 - issue animal health import and export certificates
 - serve as OIE contact point, Chief Veterinary Officer
 - responsible to inspect meat at abattoirs and slaughter slabs
 - OIE conducted a Performance, Vision, and Strategy (PVS) assessment of the animal health system in October 2009
 - noted that the system is in need of extensive capacity building
- Central Veterinary Laboratories
 - conduct diagnostic microbiological, hematological, parasitological, and serological investigations on farm animals; conduct microbiological tests of animal products (milk and milk products, meat and meat products)
 - CVL can issue import certificates for meat and milk products, but if products test positive for pathogens, CVL alerts the Ministry of Health (MOH)
 - o MOH inspectors may also take samples of meat and send to CVL if problems are suspected
 - labs are not currently internationally accredited
 - No capacity to analyze for vet drug residues, irradiated products
 - No toxicology lab

b. Plant Protection Services

- Had an FAO TCP project with AGPP, which ended in 2009
 - o Project provided assistance and most equipment necessary to conduct pesticide residue analysis
 - o Project developed a Plant Protection Bill, currently awaiting final approval by higher government officials
 - o Project rehabilitated quarantine greenhouse facilities and strengthened other plant protection functions in the Gambia
- The Gambia is not yet a member of IPPC- awaiting final submission of membership request to IPPC by top Ministry of Agriculture officials
- Oversee plant protection border inspectors
 - o Conduct produce and grain inspections, pest control
 - o Posted at seaport, airport, main land border posts
- Issue plant health certificates for imports and exports
- Conduct research and diagnostic services on plant pathology, nematology, entomology
- WAQP is planning to fund a capacity assessment of PPS in 2010

c. Food Technology Services

- representative from group (Seedy Fofana) serves as chair of one of the NCC sub-committees
- provides technical assistance to Banjulding women's food processing plant
- provides training and assistance to other food processing ventures in the Gambia, including in food safety/ good hygienic practices

d. Department of Agricultural Services

- posts agricultural extension workers throughout the country
 - should provide assistance to farmers/ processors in plant protection, animal health and food processing at the local level

e. National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI)

- A semi-autonomous agency of MoA
- Conduct laboratory analysis on mycotoxins, other aspects of fats and oils
 - o provide export certificates for groundnuts (main agricultural export of the Gambia)
 - exporters must bring in their product to have it tested and must pay for testing
- Conducts laboratory tests on safety and quality of non-animal product food imports, particularly oils and cereals
 - o Ministry of Health inspectors take the samples
 - o Lab fees are paid by the importer
 - o West African Quality Program is trying to help the lab to gain international accreditation
 - o They contract out some lab testing (primarily to Senegal) if needed; they may also conduct duplicate testing
- Conduct research on plant pathology, entomology, integrated pest management, etc
- Developing animal health research program
- NARI is in the process of developing a biotech lab
 - o The Gambia currently has very little capacity in biotech and no research currently being conducted.
 - o Officially, there are no GMO crops planted in the country
 - o NARI is involved in various biosafety committees in the Gambia
 - o Currently no legislation in the Gambia directly dealing with biosafety
 - There are other legislations which deal with aspects of biosafety

f. International Trypanotolerance Center (ITC)

- ITC was built by the Gambian government in the 1980s and was proposed to be a CGIAR center, but this did not occur
 - o intended to be a regional center, with Gambia as the host country
- Formerly had international directors, now acting director is the NARI director
- Have conducted research on zoonoses such as Tuberculosis and Brucellosis
- has a demonstration milk processing unit (not active now); conduct research on milk quality and safety

- conducting research on other animal diseases and disease control
- conducted training in these areas in the past, now training activities are project-based

4.3.2 Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

a. Directorate of Public Health Services

- carries out food inspection at seaport, airport, land border posts, and in locations outside of Greater Banjul area
 - o checks for spoiled products, expired products, general product condition at borders/seaport
 - o carries out meat inspection when no veterinary officers are available in that locality
 - o routinely checks hygienic conditions of restaurants, stores, marketplaces, other food vending sites, and markets outside of Greater Banjul area
- issues food export certificates, either at headquarters or at the airport or seaport
- conducts disease surveillance throughout country- could include food-borne diseases and zoonoses
- Monitors general sanitation of border posts/ seaport and airport; checks vaccination records and general health of people going through border post/ seaport and airport
 - o Public health officers are posted at seaport and near the airport and land border posts
 - Those at airport and land border posts also cover villages near airport/ border posts

b. Directorate of Food Standards, Quality and Hygiene Enforcement (FSQHE)

- Established in early 2009
- Formed through the merger of the existing Food hygiene and safety unit in the MoH Directorate of Public Health Services with a newly created Food standards unit
- Personnel currently housed at the National Public Health Laboratories (NPHL)
- Director of NPHL was serving as interim director of the FSQHE from its formation until time of writing this report (December 2009)
- Intended to carry out all the food inspection-related duties of MOH laid out in the Food Act 2005; responsible for control of the following:
 - o foods in restaurants, hotels, schools and other boarding facilities (with the Ministry of Tourism)
 - o Hospitals and clinics, food establishments and premises, including markets and streets (with Ministry of Local Government)
 - o Meat, poultry, milk and other processed or unprocessed foods of plant or animal origin after post-mortem inspections, including those in markets and groceries
 - o Certification of food businesses
- As the directorate is still in its early stages, it has limited capacity to carry out all the above listed duties, and currently works primarily in the greater Banjul area.

c. National Public Health Laboratories (NPHL)

- Building was constructed in 2008; current director was hired in early 2009
- Currently conducting some microbiology testing and other public health-related analyses
- receiving assistance from WAQP to attain international accreditation in food chemistry analysis
 - o planning to also seek international accreditation in food microbiology
- conducting screening of food handlers (food handlers)
- Director of NPHL was serving as interim director of the FSQHE from its formation until time of writing this report (December 2009)
 - o Causes some confusion among staff of inspectorate and laboratories about their roles and responsibilities

4.3.3. Office of the Vice President (OVP)

a. National Nutrition Agency (NaNA)

- Directly under the office of Vice President of the Gambia
- serves as Codex contact point, NCSPSC secretariat, SPS enquiry point
- main counterpart for FAO Food Control TCP project (2002), this Biosecurity project
- governed by the National Nutrition Council
- has a food quality and safety unit, which includes a Codex Information Center
- Serves as coordinating body for food safety issues in the Gambia

4.3.4. Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA)

- Gambia Revenue Authority
 - o Department of Customs and Excise
 - Serves as focal point for inspection/ allowing products in and out of country at border crossings/ ports
 - Collect customs of imported goods
 - Also recognizes their role in assuring safety and quality of imports and exports
 - Active member of NCSPSC and other national and regional boards related to trade
 - Research and determine national trade policy

4.3.5. Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment (MoTIE)

- Standards and Consumer Protection Unit
 - o Metrology department should check weights and measures used in the Gambia
 - Currently receiving assistance from WAQP to strengthen services
- Currently in the process of developing a Standards Bureau through WAQP project
- Serves as TBT Enquiry Point
- Host of West African Quality Program (WAQP), funded by UNIDO

- Program is assisting laboratories and other activities related to food safety, animal and plant health in the Gambia
 - Have a national project coordinator (Joseph Ndenn) that works closely with the NCSPSC to provide useful assistance
 - One workshop in first phase and two workshops in second phase of project were funded and implemented jointly with WAQP)
 - Funding an international consultant working on institutional arrangements and legislative requirements to assist in establishing a single food control agency
- Serve as focal point for WTO and trade matters in the Gambia
 - Receive correspondence from EU and other donors for capacity building assistance related to meeting SPS standards for trade

4.3.6. Ministry of Fisheries, Natural Resources, and National Assembly Matters (MFNRNAM)

Department of Fisheries

- Serves as competent authority for fisheries
- have laboratory, currently functioning at approximately 90% capacity for testing of fish and fish products, primarily for export
 - lab receiving assistance from WAQP to attain international accreditation
- conduct inspection of fish and fishery products at landing sites and for export
- also oversees the water quality laboratory
 - tests potable water and effluents

4.3.7. Ministry of Forestry and the Environment (MOFE)

a. Department of Parks and Wildlife Management

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) focal point for the Gambia, which is the parent of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Gambia signed in 2000)
- The department led the development of the national biosafety framework document, which will lead to a National Biosafety Act
 - the framework sets out institutional structures for biosafety
 - A Cabinet paper has been developed on biosafety
- a Biosafety Clearinghouse has been established, with the Dept of Wildlife coordinating
- there is currently no structures in place in the Gambia to detect GM products
 - educated consumers may be nervous that GM foods are being sold in the Gambia

b. National Environmental Agency (NEA)

- responsible to test pesticide formulation composition and quality
 - Do not currently have capacity to carry out this testing; samples are sent out of the country for testing

- Would also like to conduct testing for pesticide residues, but do not have the equipment or capacity to do so
- involved in all other matters related to the environment in the Gambia, such as issues related to biosafety

4.3.8. Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology

a. Gambia College

- School of Agriculture- mainly trains (to certificate and HND level) agricultural extension workers posted throughout country and other middle-management level agriculturalists
 - Offers a course on veterinary public health (taught by the Department of Veterinary Services)
 - Provide training in crop production- teach Integrated Pest Management, plant pathology, pesticide safety, entomology, etc
 - Students work with Department of Veterinary Services and NARI for practical training and teaching
- School of Public Health- mainly trains (to certificate and HND level) public health officers that may be involved in food inspection, meat inspection, zoonoses control, and other public health- related functions in the country
 - Have theory and practical training in meat inspection, international health and port sanitation, zoonoses, and other subjects
 - The deputy public health officer (MoH) teaches some courses at the College
 - Students have practical training with MOH

b. The University of the Gambia (UTG)

- School of Agriculture- provides BS degree-level training for agriculturalists, who primarily will work in management in the public sector
- School of Public Health- provides BS (and MS in collaboration with the University of Leeds) degree-level training for public health officials, who primarily will work in management in the public sector
- In the process of merging with the Gambia College; UTG administrative offices have moved to the campus of the Gambia College in Brikama

4.3.9. Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

Attorney General's Chambers

- assist in the development and enactment of all legislation in the Gambia

4.3.10. Ministry of the Interior

Gambia Police Force

- concerned with all security issues in the country
- operate security road blocks, check points
- part of team at seaport, airport and land border posts
- can assist more with Biosecurity matters if they are properly sensitized

4.3.11. Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Religious Affairs

Local municipalities

- oversee food vendors, markets, commerce, etc
 - o control the placement of markets, organization within markets, conditions of marketplaces, etc
 - o this affects the spread of disease through poultry in markets, the safety of food sold, conditions of food and plant products sold, etc

4.3.12. Ministry of Information and Communication

Gambia Radio and Television Services

- provide excellent radio and television coverage of project workshops and training programmes
- high-level officials actively involved in NCSPSC IEC sub-committee and activities of both phases of the project
 - o involved in the development of a food advertising code adopted in 2009
 - o organized radio and television spots to provide information to general public on food safety, animal and plant health

4.3.13 United Nations agencies related to Biosecurity

- UNDP
 - o Coordinates the Gambian Disaster management program
 - o Provides project funding for various programs
- WHO
 - o Provides technical and financial support to the MoH in food safety and zoonoses control
 - o WHO Environmental Health officer is member of NCSPSC
 - o Planning to provide support for food safety policy development in 2010
- FAO
 - o Implemented Food Control TCP project, finishing in 2000
 - o Phytosanitary TCP finished in 2009
 - o Numerous Avian Influenza (AI) and poultry-related projects
 - o Various telefood projects of some relevance to Biosecurity
 - o Food security projects, forestry, fisheries, etc
- UNIDO
 - o Implementing the West African Quality Programme (see notes from MOTIE)

4.3.14. Donor Countries/ Agencies

- Medical Research Council (MRC) (based in the United Kingdom)
 - mainly conducts infectious disease research (in humans) in the Gambia

- does not conduct much analysis on safety or composition of locally-consumed foods
 - o any analysis conducted is for research purposes and not typically shared with local officials
- works with MoH; calibrates lab equipment for NPHL and government hospital
- USAID
 - implementing various AI-related projects
- EU
 - have implemented multiple projects in mycotoxin laboratory analysis and control
 - did SPS-related needs assessment 3 years ago
 - implementing “Better Training for Safer Food” project, providing inspection training and risk assessment of poultry production facilities and abbatoirs
 - funding the West African Quality Programme (implemented by UNIDO)
 - implementing/ have implemented multiple other projects related to Biosecurity
- Taiwan
 - implementing a number of projects in the Gambia, mainly related to horticulture and rice production
- African Development Bank
 - have implemented a number of technical assistance projects of relevance to biosecurity
- World Bank
 - have implemented a number of technical assistance projects of relevance to biosecurity, particularly in groundnut quality and safety
 - provide assistance to NaNA, including capacity building of staff
- Arab Development Bank (BADEA- French acronym)
 - have a number of technical assistance projects related to Biosecurity, particularly in the fisheries sector

4.3.15. Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs)/ private sector involvement in Biosecurity in the Gambia

4.3.15.1 Consumer Protection Association of the Gambia (CPAG)

- active participant in the NCSPSC
- involved in WAQP survey of the street food sector
- assisted in the development of manual on GHPs in street foods through this project
- represent the interests of consumers, including related to food safety

4.3.15.2 Chamber of Commerce

- work to assist private sector businesses to increase their ability to trade, which includes meeting Biosecurity- related standards

4.3.15.3 Private sector organizations

- Producer organizations and independent producers
 - o National Farmers Platform, National Women's Farming Association, etc
 - o Poultry Farmers Association
 - working together to ensure that the government facilitates safe production and marketing of poultry raised in the Gambia
 - o Cashew farmers association
 - o Numerous others
- Importers/ exporters of food and agricultural products
- Shipping and clearing agents
 - o Head of association of shipping and clearing agents was actively involved in relevant workshops of Phase 2 of the project
- Distributors, retailers and traders in food and agricultural products
- Transporters
 - o Have a Transporter Owners Association; Head of Association (previously a public health officer) was active in Phase 2 of project
- Food processors association
 - o A representative of this organization serves on the Food Advisory Board
 - represents interests of food processors in the Gambia
 - Needs to be strengthened

4.3.15.4 Private national consultants

- numerous people involved in Biosecurity- related activities in the Gambia serve as private consultants for various agencies and projects
- for example, the chair of the NCSPSC, Dr. Omar Touray has worked at high levels in the government in the past and now serves as a private consultant on various projects.

4.3.15.4 Private sector media houses

4.3.15.5 Local and International NGOs

- Concern Universal
 - o Assisting in the production and marketing of fruits and vegetables, as well as other livelihood enhancement projects which involve some biosecurity components
- Catholic Relief services
 - o Promoting the production and marketing of sesame, which requires meeting SPS standards

5. Communication

The agencies involved in biosecurity in the Gambia do have a certain level of informal and formal communication with each other and other relevant stakeholders, most of which is facilitated through the NCSPSC. The NCSPSC meetings and related activities provide an

opportunity for various stakeholders to interact with each other and to communicate on important biosecurity-related issues. The NCSPSC also has an active Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) technical sub-committee which facilitates the flow of information to the general public and various stakeholders. The NCSPSC secretariat also does an excellent job of facilitating information flow, despite limited resources and multiple other work responsibilities in addition to his duties as NCSPSC secretariat.

During both phases of the project, IEC was identified as a key component. One of the items highlighted in the 2009-2013 strategic plan was to train the media to assist in accurately disseminating information on biosecurity to the general public. In the first phase of the project, a seminar was held (12 February 2009) on the role of the Media in the Gambia's Food Safety System (report attached as Annex 8.3). This seminar very effectively communicated to representatives of various media houses in the Gambia of their role in the food safety system and provided a useful interchange of ideas and information between those involved in biosecurity and those in the media.

As indicated in the Institutional Framework section, the media plays a key role in the Biosecurity system in the Gambia, and provided excellent coverage of the various workshops and training programmes held through the project, and was also very involved in the development of a food advertising code that was adopted by the NCSPSC through Phase 2 of the project. The IEC sub-committee of the NCSPSC is the most active of all the sub-committees and the media was very interested in attending and providing media coverage for the various events associated with the project.

High-level/ diplomatic communication on matters related to biosecurity at the regional (such as ECOWAS and AU) and international level exists, but could be further developed. In particular, ECOWAS is working to harmonize and strengthen food safety, animal and plant health systems in its member countries. Some officials do readily share the information discussed at such regional and international meetings when they return back to the Gambia, but this could also be further strengthened.

As Senegal is the only country with which the Gambia has a land border - and the border is porous - biosecurity in the Gambia is highly dependent on biosecurity in Senegal. Relationships with Senegal, as well as other nearby countries, are adequate, but could be strengthened. The NPHL has an MoU with the Institute of Food Technology in Dakar for testing of food products that the NPHL does not currently have capacity to conduct. The MoU also covers other areas of collaboration between the Gambia and Senegal.

6. Sectors of biosecurity/risk analysis functions

Core biosecurity- related activities or functions include the following: inspection, verification and enforcement; quarantine and certification; diagnostic services; emergency preparedness and response; and risk analysis. More details on the current situation in each of these core functions are reflected in other sections of this report.

Most biosecurity related activities in the Gambia are undertaken by MOA (PPS and AHPS), NaNA, MOH, GRA, and the Fisheries Department. Agencies such as NEA, PWD, MoTIE, and others also play key roles in their respective areas within the broader topic of biosecurity. More details on the roles of the various agencies involved in biosecurity-related functions in the Gambia is included in Section 4 of this document, the Institutional Framework. Brief information on these functions in each of the biosecurity sectors is included below to give an indication of the situation in each sector.

6.1 Food safety

The National Nutrition Agency plays a key role in coordinating activities in food safety in the country. They serve as the National Codex Contact Point, the secretariat of the NCSPSC, SPS Enquiry Point, and are commissioned by the Food Act 2005 with coordinating food safety activities. As there is currently no standards body in the Gambia (although one is under development), the NCSPSC also serves to establish food standards (and then recommends them to the appropriate government agency for adoption and implementation).

As described in the institutional framework section above, the MOH Directorate of Health Services and the FSQHE are responsible for inspecting imported food, markets, supermarkets, and food processing facilities. The Ministry of Tourism and MOH are responsible for inspecting hotels, restaurants, and other food establishments for hygienic conditions and food safety. The Ministry of Local Government and MOH are responsible for inspecting markets for hygienic conditions and food safety. The Fisheries Department is responsible for inspection of fish and fishery products and AHPS for inspecting other products of animal origin. AHPS is also currently responsible for meat inspection at abattoirs and slaughter slabs. These current roles and responsibilities in inspection are further detailed in the inspection guidelines that were developed through this project and are attached as Annex 9.6.

Currently, microbial testing of food products, particularly foods of animal origin (including fish) is conducted at the Central Veterinary Laboratory. Plans are underway for food microbiological testing, particularly of fish, to be conducted at a laboratory under development in the Fisheries Department. The National Public Health Lab is developing its capacity to conduct food chemistry analysis of food products, as well as some food microbiology. NARI currently has the capacity to conduct some chemical analysis of food products, particularly fats and oils. NARI is also developing its capacity to test for aflatoxins in food products, particularly groundnuts. The PPS is working to develop its capacity to test pesticide residues in foods. A more complete capacity assessment of the food safety-related laboratories in the Gambia was conducted by the WAQP, with a report available from them.

Overall, there are multiple gaps and overlaps in the entire food safety system, along with a need for strengthened coordination. Accordingly, efforts are underway - facilitated by the WAQP – to implement a single food control agency in the Gambia, which would greatly modify the current responsibilities described in this document.

6.2 Animal and plant health

The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for these areas through PPS and AHPS. NEA is also responsible for monitoring pesticide formulations, but does not currently have the

laboratory capacity to conduct such analysis in the Gambia. Details on these agencies are given in Section 4.3.1. The Ministry of the Environment (mainly DPW and NEA) are also involved in various aspects of plant health, namely in forestry and biosafety. DPW also plays a key role in protecting the health of wild animals, which impacts the health of domestic animals.

6.3 Human Health (zoonoses)

In addition to its responsibilities in food safety, the Ministry of Health works with AHPS in prevention and control of zoonotic diseases, including rabies, swine influenza and avian influenza, among others.

7. Stakeholder Analysis

The analysis of stakeholders was carried out as guided by Annex 7 of the *FAO Biosecurity Toolkit*. The roles of different stakeholders are described in detail in section 4.3 of this report and are summarized below (Table 4).

Table 4: Current institution mandates, roles, and responsibilities

Roles and mandates	Responsible institutions and agencies
Formulation of policies and legislation	
Public health	MOH
Food safety	MOH, AHPS, MoTourism, MoLG, FD, NaNA
Animal health	AHPS
Plant health	PPS
Environment	NEA, DPW (Min Environment)
Invasive alien species	PPS, NEA
Biosafety and biotechnology	NEA, DPW
Fisheries	FD
Forestry	Min Environment
Implementation and enforcement	
Public health	MOH
Food safety	MOH, AHPS, MoTourism, MoLG, FD, NaNA
Animal health	AHPS
Plant health	PPS
Environment	NEA, DPW
Invasive alien species	PPS, NEA, DPW
Biosafety and biotechnology	DPW
Fisheries	FD
Forestry	Min Environment
Services (Regulatory, research, diagnostic and certification)	
Quarantine	PPS, AHPS
Risk Analysis	PPS, MOH
Standards setting	NCSPSC;

	Standards Bureau- once established
Diagnostic services	PPS, AHPS, NARI, FD, NPHL
Biosafety/biotechnology	NARI, DPW
Research and scientific advice	NARI, UTG
Early warning on food-borne disease outbreaks	MOH, NCSPSC
Monitoring and surveillance	MOH, AHPS, PPS
Advocacy and trade	MOTIE, GRA
Inspections and Certification	MOH, GRA, AHPS, PPS, MoTourism

8. SWOT Analysis

In the initial development of their strategic plan (mid 2008), the NCSPSC conducted a SWOT analysis of their committee and the general Biosecurity situation in the Gambia. That version of the SWOT analysis reflects the national Biosecurity situation at the beginning of this FAO project, and is included in the NCSPSC strategic plan, attached as Annex 5. The analysis was updated at the conclusion of Phase 2 of the FAO project (Dec 2009) by the FAO consultant, reflected in Table 5.

A SWOT analysis of each competent authority was also conducted at the Competent Authority workshop (Nov 2008), which is included in the report of that workshop (attached as Annex 8.2).

A brief assessment of the inspection sites and laboratories visited at the beginning of Phase 2 of the project (Aug- Sept 09), including staffing levels, primary activities/concerns, strengths, and challenges/needs, was also conducted and is attached as Annex 6. A brief SWOT analysis of the networking of laboratories was also conducted by participants at the laboratory networking workshop (17 Nov 2009), which is included in the report of that workshop (attached as Annex 8.9).

Table 5. SWOT analysis of the NCSPSC and Biosecurity system in the Gambia

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced understanding of Codex Alimentarius and the SPS Committee amongst the membership; training sessions held for committee Convene regular meetings – with minutes prepared and disseminated Properly anchored the NCSPSC on the Food Act 2005 Multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral membership spanning 25 different organizations Embarked upon publicity and engendered information sharing Existence of 5 technical committees working on relevant themes Active participation in Codex activities at regional and international levels Hard-working and competent secretariat; good support from NaNA Active and insightful NCSPSC chairman Active involvement of media in NCSPSC and biosecurity issues Food Advisory Board and Compliance Committee now in place Strategic plan in place Receiving assistance through various projects (WAQP, BTSF, FAO, etc) Development of technical guidelines/ manuals for inspection and GHPs for cereal processors and street food vendors Existence of NCSPSC website, information brochures, and some advocacy materials
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- Laboratory capacity assessment conducted and efforts underway to strengthen some laboratories
- Joint National Codex and SPS committee, with the same secretariat, allowing for greater synergy and streamlining resources.

WEAKNESSES

- Secretariat has limited resources and limited personnel
- Absence of sustained government funding for NCSPSC activities
- Some NCSPSC committee members and biosecurity stakeholders have limited knowledge/training
- Lack of standards bureau to develop standards
- Website not updated; other IEC not consistent
- Absence of a functional disease surveillance system
- Lack of research in food processing, biotechnology, limited in other areas of biosecurity
- Food processors association not active
- Networking on Biosecurity issues could be strengthened
- Absence of a recent comprehensive capacity assessment of the Plant Protection Services
- No laboratories are internationally accredited; all laboratories need strengthening
- No facilities for holding imported products until laboratory test results can approve the product for entry
- No functioning animal or plant quarantine facilities in the country
- Compliance Committee and Food Advisory Board should become more active
- Conflicting roles and interests of implementing agencies

OPPORTUNITIES

- Huge potential exists for enhanced trade in agro-products at local, regional and international levels
- High-level government officials support need for strengthening food safety, animal and plant health, and improving coordination and collaboration
- Excellent support from donors, including WAQP (EU funded), BTSF (EU funded), FAO, WHO
- High political and policy-level commitment
- Regional organizations (AU, ECOWAS) promoting improved harmonization and strengthening of food safety, animal and plant health

THREATS

- Competition for limited funds with other national structures and entities
- Erosion of institutional memory and experience with high rate of staff attrition and skills from implementing agencies, partially due to improved job opportunities outside of government
- Rapidly changing standards of trade partners, which are becoming increasingly stringent (EU, US, etc)
- Emerging plant and animal diseases, food contaminants

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

The activities undertaken during the course of this project helped to sensitize all those contacted of the value of an integrated biosecurity approach to food safety, animal and plant health, as well as associated environmental risks. All the stakeholders met in the project workshops and trainings, individual interviews, and through on-site visits seemed to understand the value of such an approach. Most stakeholders also acknowledged the following:

- The Gambia is particularly vulnerable to increased pests and diseases, including food-borne illnesses, due to its porous borders, high levels of imported food, and extensive movement of people, goods and animals to and from Senegal.
- In order to continue and to strengthen its export markets, the Gambia must be able to meet sanitary and phytosanitary standards of importing countries

The current biosecurity control and management systems in the Gambia are scattered in different ministries and agencies, and although efforts are being made to strengthen and coordinate the prevention and management of biosecurity threats, these efforts must be strengthened. A number of positive initiatives have been taken or are currently underway to strengthen biosecurity-related policy, legislation, inspection services, laboratory analysis, and hygienic practices of producers and processors. However, great efforts are still needed to strengthen the biosecurity framework in the country in order to reduce the Gambia's vulnerability to biosecurity threats. The activities carried out in this project, particularly in its first phase, helped to identify key areas where capacity building should occur, many of which were implemented in the second phase of the project. Most stakeholders in the Gambia recognize the need for improving coordination and strengthening Biosecurity in the country.

Through the second phase of the FAO project, an integrated Biosecurity framework policy was developed and a stakeholder consultation held on the policy (draft policy submitted by policy consultant on 10 Dec 09 attached as Annex 9.1). However, this policy still requires implementation, and the development of sectoral policies under the overarching policy, for it to function effectively to reduce biosecurity threats.

Based on the findings of this project, the consultant makes the following recommendations to the Government of the Gambia:

- The NCSPSC should continue to follow-up on all the activities initiated through this project, such as printing and disseminating the brochures and manuals developed through this project
- The NCSPSC should develop and submit further project proposals to receive funding and technical assistance to continue with the activities of the project,
 - Assistance should be sought from FAO and other relevant agencies
- Further stakeholder consultations must be held on the Biosecurity framework policy (including with high-level government officials), followed by implementation of the policy
 - development of sectorial sub-policies (in food safety, animal health, plant health, and associated environmental risks) should occur after the overarching Biosecurity policy is in place

- Strategies for implementing the policy should also be developed, based on the NCSPSC 2009-2013 strategic plan
- The Gambia should implement a unified food control agency, as suggested by the WAQP food safety management consultant, and as recommended by ECOWAS
 - The proposed Food Control Agency must work closely with the animal health and plant health functions of the Ministry of Agriculture
 - Any food safety (sectoral) policy should be a sub-policy of the overarching Biosecurity framework policy initiated through this FAO project
 - All food safety functions of the government should be overseen by this agency; some functions could continue to be carried out by the institution currently carrying them out if they have adequate capacity, but through an MoU arrangement with the food control agency that would coordinate such activities to ensure no overlap or gaps
- The government of the Gambia must provide continuous support, including financial support, to the NCSPSC to continue to strengthen coordination and implementation of Biosecurity efforts
 - In particular, the NCSPSC secretariat/SPS Enquiry Point must be strengthened as follows:
 - additional personnel/ increased time of the current personnel
 - a high- output photocopy machine, computer (with strong anti-virus protection) and printer, filing cabinets, cabinets for displaying reference materials, paper, ink cartridges, and other such stationary materials are needed
 - the government should provide cell phone units to the secretariat for use to coordinate activities
 - high speed internet should be made available to the secretariat, and also provision made for NCSPSC members and for others coming to the SPS Enquiry Point to have access to high speed internet when visiting the NCSPSC secretariat
 - personnel should be assigned (and trained) to keep the NCSPSC website updated with current information
 - The materials in the Codex Information Center are very useful and should be displayed prominently and made as accessible as possible to NCSPSC members (while still ensuring the materials will also be available to future visitors)
 - Further training should be provided to the NCSPSC on the value and means of implementing a biosecurity approach in the Gambia
 - Support must be provided to delegates from the Gambia to attend relevant Codex, IPPC and OIE meetings
 - Those attending from the Gambia must be well-prepared to attend and to participate effectively
- The Gambia's Biosecurity-related legislations, standards, and related texts must be made more easily accessible to trading partners, private sector stakeholders, government employees, consultants working in the country, and any others interested

- The Gambia should make such texts available through the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health
 - This would enable the Gambia to meet its transparency obligations of the WTO SPS Agreement
 - Many government officials may not have easy access to the legislations in other sectors, or even in their sector, and thus do not exactly know the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies involved in Biosecurity
 - This would also facilitate the work of various consultants working on legislative and policy issues
 - Could make the information on the NCSPSC website automatically available in the portal
- A food technology/ processing research center must be established to provide advice to food processors, including in hygienic issues
 - The Food Processors Association must be strengthened
- Coordination and communication between biosecurity-related laboratories should be strengthened, through the network of laboratory technicians initiated in the 17 Nov 09 workshop on the subject
 - Laboratories should work together to better utilize the available facilities and capacity
 - Laboratories receiving assistance from the WAQP should ensure that they implement the recommendations of those consultants and work to obtain international accreditation
- A code of ethics for inspectors must be developed, implemented, and enforced
- Other recommendations made in the various workshops and activities of the project (included in the attached reports) should also be carefully considered and implemented accordingly
- The actions outlined by the inspection assessment workshop action plan should be carried out as described.
- The animal health system in the Gambia must be strengthened as a matter of priority. The relevant recommendations from the OIE PVS mission should be implemented in this regard.
 - In particular, legislations must be updated
- Any follow-up recommendations or actions from the FAO TCP to strengthen the Plant Health system in the Gambia should be implemented. In particular,
 - The Gambia must finalize its membership in the IPPC
 - The Plant Protection bill should be adopted into law
 - The quarantine greenhouse should be made operational
 - The pesticide residue testing laboratory should be completed

- All stakeholders, particularly the general public, must be further sensitized on the importance of biosecurity for the Gambia
 - o Press releases, billboards, and radio and TV ads could be used
 - These messages must be well-coordinated (by the NCSPSC IEC sub-committee) to ensure that appropriate and coordinated messages are communicated.
- The record system of imported food and agricultural products at the seaport should be strengthened and used to implement a risk-based approach to inspection
 - o Such a records system should be implemented at other entry points as well (land borders, airport, etc)
 - o The system could also be expanded to include (and link) disease surveillance data, food contaminant monitoring, laboratory testing results, etc
- Research and academic institutions in the Gambia should be better integrated into the Biosecurity system, including improved coordination and collaboration
 - o In particular, the ITC research facilities are not being fully utilized
 - o The Schools of Public Health and Agriculture at the Gambia College and the University of the Gambia should be more integrated with the Ministries of Health and for Agriculture (as appropriate).
 - Government agencies should continue to provide feedback on the performance of the graduates of these programs, and provide their expertise to assist in training the students.
 - These academic institutions could also be better integrated with the government research and extension programs to better train and utilize human capacity in the Gambia.

The following recommendations are made to the various Biosecurity-related stakeholders in the Gambia:

- All national stakeholders in the areas of food safety, animal and plant health should involve, or at least inform, the NCSPSC of all current and planned activities and projects so that such activities can be well-coordinated.
- Stakeholders should keep in mind that they should be working toward a common goal of strengthening food safety, animal and plant health in the Gambia.

10. Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of Reference of International Consultant

Annex 2. Broad questions covered during interviews

Annex 3. Contact details of persons met (other than those at project workshops)

Annex 4. Day by day summary of activities

Annex 5. NCSPSC strategic plan (2009-2013); developed in Phase 1 of project (finalized in workshop on 21 Jan 09), many activities implemented in phase 2 of project

Annex 6. Matrix of brief capacity assessment of inspection sites and laboratories (Sept 09)

Annex 7. Inspection action plan- developed at inspection assessment workshop (9-10 Sept 09; updated as of 4 Dec 09)

Annex 8. Project workshop/ training session reports

Phase 1 events:

- Training workshop on an integrated approach to biosecurity (16 October 2008; Annex 8.1)
- Information sharing workshop of the Competent Authorities for food safety, animal and plant health (11-12 November 2008; not included due to space constraints)
- Seminar on the role of the media in the Gambia's food safety system (12 February 2009; not included due to space constraints)

Phase 2 events:

- Workshop to conduct an assessment of the inspection and certification system and develop an action plan to address the needs identified (9-10 September 2009; Annex 8.2)
- Training and working session of the NCSPSC (20-21 October 2009; Annex 8.3)
- Training of laboratory technicians (27-28 October 2009; Annex 8.4)
- Training of local food processors on Good Hygienic Practices (GHPs- including review of GHP manuals) (3-4 November 2009; Annex 8.5)
- Training of inspectors (including review of inspection guidelines) (11-12 November 2009; Annex 8.6)
- Workshop on networking of laboratories (17 November 2009; Annex 8.7)
- Development of a national Biosecurity policy (Dr. Ruth Frampton, policy expert mission- 20 Nov-3 Dec; stakeholder consultation workshop 1-2 December 09; workshop report attached as Annex 8.8)

Annex 9. Notes of key NCSPSC (and sub-committee) meetings held during the project

- NCSPSC Executive committee (also serves as main project steering committee; 27 August 2009; Annex 9.1)
- NCSPSC Executive committee (6 October 2009; Annex 9.2)
- NCSPSC Information, Education, and Communication sub-committee (26 October 2009; Annex 9.3)
- NCSPSC debriefing from mission of BTSF consultant (5 November 2009; Annex 9.4)
- NCSPSC meeting (16 November 2009; Annex 9.5)

Annex 1: International Consultant TORs

International Consultant Biosecurity follow-up activities in the Gambia

Under the direct supervision of the Director, Nutrition and Consumer Protection division (AGN) and the relevant technical officers at AGP/AGN, the consultant will conduct biosecurity follow-up activities in the Gambia.

1. First mission- October 2008

The International Consultant will:

- Be briefed by AGN/AGP officer(s) about the purposes and expected outcomes of the activities, and be debriefed about Malawi mission (Rome, 3 working days)
- Prepare the activity plan with time frame with national counterpart and submit the plan to AGN/AGP officer(s) for approval
- Carry out the activity implementation in Gambia (12 days WAE)
- Assist local counterparts for logistical arrangement of FAO backstop mission
- Liaising with national counterparts, draft a detailed final report, including day-by-day activity report. If workshops/trainings/seminars involved, attach the programme, list of participants and presentations as annexes to the final report. Submit the report by no later than 31 October 2008.

2. Second mission (7 days WAE, January and February 2009)

The International Consultant will:

- Follow up the national action plan developed during the previous mission in October 2008.
- Assist local counterparts for logistical arrangement of FAO backstop mission
- Perform relevant activities as required.
- Submit brief report on the activities completed.

3. Third mission Duty stations:

- Rome - Depart Sioux Falls, South Dakota, USA (home base) on 17 August and arrive in Rome on 18 August, 2009 (overnight on plane).
- Banjul, the Gambia: Depart Rome, Italy on 21 August and arrive in Banjul, the Gambia on 22 August – spend night in Dakar, Senegal on 21 August en route due to flight availability. Depart Banjul, the Gambia on 11 September and arrive in Sioux Falls, SD on 12 September, 2009 (overnight on the plane)

The Consultant will:

- Be briefed by AGN/AGP officer(s) about the purposes and expected outcomes of the activities
- Prepare detailed plan of training programmes and workshops including a list of participants and lecturers with national counterpart and submit the plan to AGN/AGP officer(s) for approval no later than 31 August 2009
- Oversee the planning of activities and the initial implementation of the Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the Gambia National Codex/ Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee
- Liaising with national counterparts, draft a detailed interim report of the project activities, including day-by-day activity report. If workshops/trainings/seminars involved, attach the programme, list of participants and presentations as annexes to the final report. Submit the report by no later than 30 September 2009.

4. **Fourth mission:** Duty stations:

- Rome: Depart Sioux Falls, South Dakota, USA on 28 September and arrive in Rome on 29 September, 2009 (overnight on the plane).
- Gambia: Depart Rome, Italy on 3 October and arrive in Banjul, the Gambia on 4 October – spend night in Dakar, Senegal on 3 October en route due to flight availability. Depart Banjul, the Gambia on 16 December and arrive in Sioux Falls, SD on 17 December, 2009 (overnight on the plane).
- South Dakota, USA (home base): Report writing work

The Consultant will:

- Be briefed by AGN/AGP officer(s) about the purposes and expected outcomes of the activities, and be debriefed about the previous mission
- Continue to oversee the implementation of the activities of the LoA, including project coordination and management. Project activities (prior to report writing) to be completed by 31 November, 2009.
- Assist local counterparts for logistical arrangement of missions of any other project consultants and all project activities
- Liaising with national counterparts, draft a detailed final project, including day-by-day activity report. If workshops/trainings/seminars were involved, attach the programme, list of participants and presentations as annexes to the final report. This should take the form of a country situation report, following the model of such report prepared for Malawi. Submit the report by no later than 31 December 2009.

Annex 2: Broad questions covered during interviews¹

Taking account of the definition of “biosecurity” (meaning a strategic and integrated approach that encompasses the policy and regulatory frameworks for analysing and managing relevant risks to human, animal and plant life and health, and associated risks to the environment):

1. What biosecurity-related responsibilities does the Ministry have?
2. What biosecurity-related activities does it undertake?
3. What resources does it have for these – human and funding?
4. In regard to its biosecurity-related activities, what data is collected?
5. Who else is responsible for/involved in the *human* OR *animal* OR *plant* health aspects of biosecurity?
6. What *human* OR *animal* OR *plant* health risks constitute the biggest threats?
7. Are there preparations for the occurrence of these pests or diseases?
8. Who is involved? What are their responsibilities?
9. What are their qualifications? What training has been undertaken?
10. What diagnostic facilities are required? Are these present in the Gambia?
11. Are there written standards or procedures relating to the responsibilities/activities referred to above?

¹ depending on the role of the person/group being “interviewed” and whether involved in managing risks to human, animal or plant life and health

Annex 3.

List of persons met (in addition to those at the project workshops)

Note that the country telephone code in the Gambia is +220.

Most of the persons met attended at least one of the various project workshops and training programmes, so their contact details are listed in the report of those events.

Dr. Famara Sanyang,
(former) Acting Director
International Trypanosomiasis Research Center (ITC)
Tel: 7773810 (mobile)

Babou Ousman Jobe
Director General
National Agriculture Research Institute
PMB 526, Serrekunda
Tel: 4484 925 (office); 9733137 (mobile)
Fax: 4484 921
Email: babjobe@yahoo.com

Alhagie Darboe
Field Supervisor
Gambia is Good vegetable project
Concern Universal
PO Box 2164, Serrekunda
Tel: 449 4473/ 449 5716 (office); 9891560/ 7218048 (mobile)
Fax : 449 4474
Email : alhagieb6@hotmail.com

Essa Khan
Coordinator
UNDP disaster management project
Cape Point, Bakau
Tel: 449 6302 (office); 642 9386 (mobile)

Mrs. Fatou Jasseh Kuyateh
Permanent Secretary
Office of the Vice President of the Gambia
State house
Banjul
Tel: 4202655; 4227605 (office); 996 1222 (mobile)
Fax: 420 1463
Email: fatou@qamtel.gm

Madelyn Njie
Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment
Banjul
Tel: 9919267 (mobile)

Banjul seaport (October 2008)
Balong Jobarthe, Public Health Officer
Lamin Njie (head inspector), Sehou Jobe, Roney Salleh, Plant Health inspectors
Fatima Cole-Jah, Veterinary Public Health officer

Ansumana Jammeh
General Manager
Central Abbatoir
Yondum
Tel: 437 5882 (office); 990 8156 (mobile)

Amdalaye border post inspectors (August 2009)
Ansumana Trawally- Senior border officer- customs
Saihou Balajo- assistant customs officer
Lamin Saho, public health inspector (Tel: 7836005)
Anamana Drammeh- fisheries inspector
Banding Daffeh, plant health inspector
Kumba Jyfang- plant health inspector
Ibrima Gaye- veterinary officer
Cherno Lowe- forestry officer

National Environmental Agency (Sept 2009)
Mamadou Conteh, Director of Technical Services
Tafal Jallow, technical services (tel: 9917012)
Alieu Sallah, lab manager (tel: 787 1111)
Adama Cham, pesticide registrar
Ousman Ndenn (lab assistant)

Jiboroh border post officials (Sept 2009)
Haddy Ngom, Plant health inspector

Seaport inspectors (Sept 2009)
Baboucarr Joof, Senior port health officer
Modou Lamin Njie, principal plant health officer
Seikou E Jobe, plant health inspector
Rohey Sallah, plant health inspector
Fatima Cole- Jah, animal health inspector
Ebrima Jobe, public health officer
Habibo Mbye, public health officer

Annex 4: Day by day summary of activities

Mission 1 (Phase 1):

Monday, 6 October 2008

- Briefing session with FAO Representative and FAO project officers
- Met with Mr. Modou Phall, Dr. Omar Tourey, Ms. Oulaye Taal, Ms. Mama Saho, Mr. Malong Fofana, Mr. Seedy Fofana, and Mr. Sambeh Conteh, core members of the NCC and the national project team, to discuss mission, workshop, and project plans.
- Began to arrange for appointments for capacity needs assessment visits

Tuesday, 7 October 2008

- Met with Dr. Famara Sanyang, (former) Acting Director of the International Tryptosomiasis Research Center (ITC)
- Met with Ibriama Cham, Head of the School of Agriculture at the Gambia College
- Met with Dr. Babou Ousmane Jobe, Director General of the National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI)
- Met with Mr. Lamin Jobe, Director of Research at NARI
- Met with Alhagie Darboe, field supervisor of vegetable farm/ agrotourism, *Gambia is Good* project of Concern Universal
- Met with Alagie Manjang, Deputy Director of the Department of Parks and Wildlife Management
- Informal tour of Kombo Farms meat processing facility

Wednesday, 8 October 2008

- Visited Central Veterinary Laboratory; met director Biriam Fye, laboratory assistants, and toured laboratory
- Visited Banjul International airport, Yondum; Met Lamin Ceesay, Public Health inspector responsible for the airport
- Visited Banjulding women's food processing plant; met Seedy Fofana, Department of State for Agriculture Food and Nutrition Unit- overseer of the plant
- Visited Ali Khan, President of Gambia Poultry Farmer's Association and owner of Farmhouse Bakeries; toured bakery

Thursday, 9 October 2008

- Met with Essa Khan, coordinator of UNDP disaster management program
- Met with the Permanent Secretary of the Vice President (VP) of the Gambia, Mrs. Fatou Jasseh Kuyateh. The VP's office is directly responsible for the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA), and thus the secretariat of the NCC/ SPS committee.
- Met with Joseph Ndenn, National Technical Coordinator for West African Quality Program (UNIDO implemented, EU funded) and Madelyn Njie, Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment
- Met with Hassan Njie, Head of School of Public Health, The University of the Gambia
- Met with Modou Njie, Principle Fisheries Officer, Fisheries Department

Friday, 10 October 2008

- Met with core team members to discuss progress on project thus far and plan for remainder of the mission
- Drafted and discussed timetable for workshop
- Arranged appointments for the remainder of the mission.
- Most offices in the Gambia close at 12:30 on Fridays, so no appointments could be made for the afternoon.

Monday, 13 October 2008

- The President of the Gambia declared the day to be a public holiday (declared on Sunday afternoon, 12 October) as the Gambian football team eliminated Senegal from World Cup qualifying competition. Therefore, most offices in the Gambia were closed (other than the UN agencies).
- Worked on strategic plan revisions and report writing at the FAO- Gambia office.

Tuesday, 14 October 2008

- Met with Mr. Nget, Head of the Food Hygiene Unit of the Department of State for Health
- Visited the Banjul seaport, met the Public Health, Phytosanitary and Veterinary Public Health officers, and saw the facilities
- Toured the Department of Fisheries laboratories in Banjul, escorted by Mr. Modou Njie, Principle Fisheries officer
- Met with NCC chair, Codex Contact Point, NCC secretariat, Ms. Oulaye Taal, and Ms. Mama Saho to discuss progress of the project, as well as the timetable for the upcoming workshop

Wednesday, 15 October 2008

- Met with Landing Sonko, Director of Technical Services Department of the Department of State for Agriculture. Also IPPC contact point for the Gambia
- Visited Central Abattoir, main meat slaughterhouse in the Gambia (owned by the President's Farm). Met Ansumana Jammeh, General Manager and Christopher Belford, Abattoir Manager and toured facility
- Met with Dr. Kebba Daffee, Chief Veterinary Officer, Acting Director of the Department of Veterinary Services, OIE contact point
- Met with Mr. Alpha Jallow, WHO Environmental Health Officer for the Gambia
- Met with FAO- Gambia representative, Mr. Babagana Ahmadu, to discuss details for the workshop and his opening speech.

Thursday, 16 October 2008

- Held stakeholder workshop to raise awareness of a Biosecurity approach and to review NCC/ SPS committee strategic action plan. Workshop was opened by the FAO- Gambia representative
- A copy of the workshop report, including participant list, workshop timetable, presentations given, and general discussions held is attached as Appendix 4.

Friday, 17 October 2008

- Met with core members of national project team to de-brief from the workshop, plan remainder of mission and project
- Met with Joseph Ndenn, West African Quality Project (WAQP) Technical Manager for further discussions on WAQP project and to discuss the forthcoming competent authorities workshop.
- Incorporated comments from workshop working groups into strategic plan

Monday, 20 October 2008

- Worked on workshop report with national counterparts
- Worked on mission report and related documents
- Reviewed mission executive summary, NCC/SPS strategic action plan, project budget, and next steps for the project with the national project counterpart

Tuesday, 21 October 2008

- Worked on mission report and related documents
- Discussed strategic action plan and functioning of the NCC with NCC secretariat
- de-briefed with FAO Representative regarding the outcome of the mission and next steps, as well as with the FAO administrator regarding logistical details for the project and mission
 - o gave FAO-R a copy of executive summary of the mission, will send report and other relevant information from the mission when completed

Thursday, 23 October 2008

- Finalized workshop report with project counterparts
- Met with NCC to discuss workshop and mission outcomes, among their other business items

Mission 2 (Phase 1): (Worked on a WAE basis while the consultant was in the Gambia conducting PhD dissertation research)

18-20 January 2009:

- Assisted local counterparts in logistical arrangements for the mission of Dr. Masami Takeuchi, FAO staff member
- Assisted in the preparations for Strategic Plan finalization workshop
- Discussed plans for other project activities with local counterparts

21 January 2009:

- Assisted in facilitating NCSPSC strategic plan finalization workshop

11 February 2009:

- Assisted in preparations for NCSPSC Media Sensitization workshop

12 February 2009:

- Assisted in facilitating NCSPSC Media Sensitization workshop

13 February 2009:

- Wrote report of NCSPSC Media Sensitization workshop
- Discussed plans for final project activities with local counterparts

Mission 3 (Phase 2):

18- 21 August 2009

- arrival in Rome
- discussions with AGN officers about the purposes and expected outcomes of the activities
- initial planning of the details of the project
- finalization and signature by FAO of the LoA

22-23 August 2009

- Travel to Banjul, the GAMBIA

Monday, 24 August 2009

- met with FAO- Gambia office (FAO-Representative, FAO Program Officer, and other officers) for briefing and discussion of project
- met with National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) authorities (main project counterparts) to discuss LoA, project, activity plans, current biosecurity-related activities in the Gambia, etc
- reviewed and revised plans for project
- contacted FAO-RAF Food and Nutrition Officer
- worked on arrangements for mission of Biosecurity policy expert

Tuesday, 25 August 2009

- met with NCSPSC Chair to sign LoA and discuss project, activity plans, current biosecurity-related activities in the Gambia, etc
- made arrangements and sent invitations for NCSPSC executive committee (and key stakeholders) meeting to be held 27 August
- scanned signed copies of LoA and returned to FAO- Rome
- continued to review the status of Biosecurity-related activities in the Gambia occurring since the completion of the pilot project
- Reviewed past project documents and FAO/ Codex materials available for training
- Discussed proposed timetable and budget for training programmes, workshops, and other activities of the project with national counterpart.

Wednesday, 26 August 2009

- Obtained and reviewed existing evaluations of laboratory capacity in the Gambia
- Prepared for meeting with NCSPSC executive committee/ key stakeholders to plan project activities
- Continued to make plans for project activities, budget, etc

Thursday, 27 August 2009

- met with executive committee of NCSPSC, as well as heads of animal health, plant health, and public health laboratories to discuss current Biosecurity-related activities in the country, the planned FAO project, the inspection assessment workshop, and other relevant matters
 - notes of meeting attached as Annex 10.1

Friday, 28 August 2009

- Visited Amdalaye land border post (2 hours travel each way)
- *Note that public offices in the Gambia close at 1PM on Fridays*
- Worked on concept note and plans for inspection assessment workshop

Monday, 31 August 2009

- Met with NCSPSC secretariat (Malang Fofana- main project counterpart) and national project manager of WAQP (Joseph Ndenn) to plan details of inspection assessment workshop (held in collaboration with WAQP)

Tuesday, 1 September 2009

- Finalized plans for inspection assessment workshop, including preparation of invitations for speakers and participants
- Met with core members of national project team (Dr. Omar Touray, Mr. Modou Phall, Mr. Malang Fofana, and Joseph Ndenn) to discuss plans for inspection assessment workshop
- Visited National Environmental Agency laboratory

Wednesday, 2 September 2009

- Visited Public Health Laboratory, Directorate of Food Standards, Quality and Safety Enforcement in Kotu
- Met with WHO-Gambia Environmental Health officer (responsible for food safety)
- Visited Central Veterinary Laboratory
- Visited Agriculture Pest Management Services laboratory and quarantine facilities
- Distributed invitations for workshop

Thursday, 3 September 2009

- Continued to distribute invitations for workshop, called speakers
- Visited FAO-Representative to discuss project progress and upcoming workshop
- Prepared for workshop and worked on other project plans

Friday, 4 September 2009

- Visited agriculture produce chemistry laboratory at the National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI)
- Visited the Gambia College
- Continued to distribute workshop invitations, visiting with invitees as possible
- Visited local cashew processing facility
- Visited local bread baking facility

Saturday, 5 September 2009

- Visited fish landing site and ice plant facilities at Tanji beachfront
- Visited Jiboroh land border post (1.5 hour drive each way)
- Visited Radville Farms, fruit and vegetable production for export

Monday, 7 September 2009

- Visited Banjul seaport (food safety, animal health and plant health officers)
- Visited Fisheries Department laboratory
- Prepared for workshop and other project plans

Tuesday, 8 September 2009

- Developed Terms of Reference (TORs) for local consultants to be hired through the project and other workshop and project plans
- Met with core members of national project team to discuss project activity plans, local consultants to hire in project, final details of the inspection assessment workshop,

Wednesday-Thursday, 9-10 September 2009

- Workshop on the assessment of the inspection and certification system in food safety animal and plant health
 - Held in collaboration with WAQP
 - Workshop report, including programme, list of participants, presentations, and action plan developed will be submitted to FAO as an annex to NaNA's interim project report, by 30 September 2009.

Thursday, 10 September 2009

- Agreed upon the TORs and the local consultants to be hired to draft each of the following:
 - Guidelines for inspection and monitoring
 - Good Hygienic Practices (GHP) manual for food processors and handlers
 - Awareness raising materials for the NCSPSC/ food safety, animal and plant health matters for the general public and for government officials

11-12 September 2009

- Consultant departure from the Gambia

Mission 4 (Phase 2):

Note that numerous preparatory and follow-up activities for the various project activities were conducted by the consultant in conjunction with the local counterparts and are not detailed in the activities below. Some of these activities include drafting concept notes for the events, drafting and distributing invitations, planning the timetable and agenda, contacting presenters, drafting opening speeches, planning the budget and logistical details, preparing presentations and the report of the event. For the texts developed through the project, multiple consultation were held with those preparing the texts, in addition to editing of the documents.

Thus, the other major activities undertaken are indicated below. The workshop and training programme reports, texts developed through the project, and notes of other meetings held reflect the other project preparatory and follow-up activities.

1 October 2009

- Consultant departure for Rome

2 October 2009

- Consultant departure for Rome
- Consultant arrival in Rome
- Meetings with various FAO-Rome officials to discuss project

3-4 October 2009

- Consultant travel from Rome to the Gambia

5-9 October 2009

- Discussions with local counterparts on status of project activities
- Briefing with FAO Rep and other FAO-Gambia officials
- Preparation for NCSPSC executive committee meeting
- NCSPSC executive committee meeting (notes attached as Annex 10.2)
- Meeting with local consultants preparing the inspection manual
- Meeting with OIE PVS mission (with other core members of the NCSPSC)
- Preparatory work for Policy consultant mission

12-16 October 2009

- Met with NCSPSC chair to finalize plans for NCSPSC training
- Attended World Standards Day event, organized by WAQP, involving the NCSPSC (14 October 2009)
- Meeting with core NCSPSC members to discuss development of NCSPSC Policy, Legal, Organization, and Management sub- committee (PLOM)
- Meeting with FAO Rep to discuss upcoming project events

19-23 October 2009

- NCSPSC training and working session (20-21 October 2009)
- Meeting of NCSPSC Policy, Legal, Organization, and Management sub- committee (PLOM) with WAQP Food Safety Management consultant
- Meeting with WAQP National Technical Coordinator and WAQP Food Safety Management consultant

26-30 October 2009

- NCSPSC Information, Education, Communication (IEC) sub-committee meeting (notes attached as Annex 10.3)
- WAQP Food Safety Management workshop- presented findings of consultant mission- including recommendations for establishing a single food control agency (27 Oct 2009)
- Lab technician training (28-29 Oct 2009)

2-6 November 2009

- Training on Good Hygienic Practices (GHPs) for food processors and vendors, including review of manuals developed in project (3-4 Nov 2009)
- Meeting with heads of Competent Authorities to plan inspection training
- Debriefing of BTSF consultant (hygiene of poultry production and abbatoirs) with NCSPSC (5 Nov 2009; notes attached as Annex 10.4)

9-13 November 2009

- Inspector training, including review of manual developed through project (11-12 Nov 2009)
- Preparations for policy consultation mission

16-20 November 2009

- NCSPSC meeting (16 Nov 09; notes attached as Annex 10.5)
- Lab networking workshop (17 Nov 09)
- WAQP sensitization workshop for consumers and the media (18 Nov 09)
- Planned and arranged meetings for policy consultant (arrived on 20 Nov 09)

23- 27 November 2009

- Met with NCSPSC PLOM sub-committee with FAO policy consultant (23 Nov 09)
- Accompanied policy consultant to meetings with various stakeholders
- Note that 27 November was a public holiday in the Gambia

30 November- 4 December 2009

- Policy stakeholder consultation workshop (1-2 Dec 2009)
- Accompanied policy consultant to de-briefing meetings with FAO- Gambia and various stakeholders
- Departure of policy consultant (3 Dec 09)

7-11 December 2009

- Finalized and compiled all workshop reports
- Updated inspection action plan and carried out correspondence as indicated in plan
- Edited manuals and brochures developed through project
- Began work on final project report

14 December 2009

- Final (in-person) discussions with national project counterparts
- De-briefing with FAO-Gambia, all project counterparts
- Departure from the Gambia for the USA (arrival on 15 December 2009)

16- 31 December 2009

- Finalized project reports, and other project follow-up, on a WAE basis

Annex 5:

NCSPSC strategic plan (2009-2013); developed in Phase 1 of project (finalized in workshop on 21 Jan 09), many activities implemented in phase 2 of project

**STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
2009-2013**

NATIONAL CODEX COMMITTEE/ NATIONAL SPS COMMITTEE, THE GAMBIA

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APMU	Agricultural Pest Management Unit
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CPAG	Consumer Protection Association, The Gambia
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAB	Food Advisory Board
HDI	Human Development Index
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
NaNA	National Nutrition Agency
NARI	National Agricultural Research Institute
NNC	National Nutrition Council
NCC	National Codex Committee
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Agreement (of the World Trade Organization)
TOT	Training of Trainers
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

1. COUNTRY PROFILE

The Gambia, lying between 13 and 14 degrees north latitude, consists of a narrow strip of 11,000 km² with a length of some 400 kilometres and a maximum width of about 30 kilometres on each side of the River Gambia. It has a population of 1.4 million growing at 2.6% per year with a population density of 128 people per square kilometre. The Gambia has a young population with 60% under the age of 25 years. The population has been experiencing rapid urbanization with almost 51% of the people now residing in urban areas.

In 2008, The Gambia was positioned at 160 out of 179 countries in the UNDP's Human Development Index. Poverty is pervasive with 50% of the population living on less than 1US\$ per day. Life expectancy at birth is 59 years, ranking 140th of 179 countries in the world.

The climate is characterized by a long dry season (November to May) and a short rainy season (June-October), with rainfall ranging from 850mm to 1,200mm annually. The short production period and variability in rainfall amount and distribution inhibit food production with local production accounting for only 50% of national food consumption requirements. The remainder of the food needs are met by imported food. In view of this, guaranteeing the safety of both locally produced and imported is very important in the entire chain from farm to the table.

2. BACKGROUND

Over the course of the last 10-15 years there has been a growing recognition in the country of the need for safe food by both the public sector and individuals. This has culminated from incidences of food borne diseases with many individuals infected with food borne pathogens. Parallel to this has been the rapid increase in nutrition- related diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. The public has consequently become more aware and concerned about the health risks posed by pathogens and potentially hazardous chemicals in food. Changes in the way food is produced, distributed and consumed globally and locally presents new challenges for ensuring the safety and wholesomeness of our food. With a large proportion of our food imported, the concern for food safety becomes critical for public health and trade.

Further, there is a growing recognition that in order to produce and consume safe food, efforts must also be made to improve animal health and plant health. The Gambia has recognized that work in the areas of food safety, animal and plant health can be better coordinated and streamlined in order to improve domestic food safety, animal and plant health, which in turn can improve domestic food security through increased access to safe food. This integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health, including associated environmental risk has been termed "Biosecurity" by FAO. Improving national biosecurity enables countries to participate in an increasingly standards-driven international food and agricultural trading market, which is one of the necessary means to alleviate poverty in the Gambia.

As food safety concerns have become widely recognized, the public sector has responded with the formulation and enactment of the Food Act (2005) and the reactivation of the National Codex Committee (NCC) in 2005, whilst the citizenry have established the Consumer Protection Association, The Gambia (CPAG)- a civil society association. The growing recognition of the need for the Gambia to address food safety, animal and plant health in a

more integrated manner and the need to meet the obligations of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) committee has prompted the country to declare that the NCC will also serve as the national SPS committee, as most of the stakeholders that should be involved in a national SPS committee are already involved in the NCC.

A number of agencies/ institutions at the national level have principal responsibilities for regulating food safety, animal and plant health. These are:

- The National Nutrition Agency under the Office the Vice President for coordination of food and nutrition issues; Overseen by the National Nutrition Council (NNC)
- The Department of State for Health through the Public Health Unit;
- The Department of State for Agriculture through the Agricultural Pest Management Unit (APMU), the Veterinary Services Department and the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI);
- The Department of State for Trade Industry and Employment; and,
- The National Environment Agency (NEA).

1.1 The National Codex Alimentarius Committee (NCC)/ WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) committee

The Codex Alimentarius Commission, established in 1963, is the principal body responsible for the execution of the joint FAO/WHO food standards programme. It is aimed at protecting the health of consumers and facilitating international trade. The purposes of the commission are:

- To protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practice in food trade;
- To promote coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organisations;
- To determine priorities and initiate and guide the preparation of draft standards through and with the aid of appropriate organisations; and,
- To finalise standards and after acceptance by governments, publish them in the Codex Alimentarius either as national, regional or international standards.

The Codex Alimentarius is a collection of international food standards adopted by the Commission and presented in a uniform manner. It includes standards for many principal foods, whether processed, semi-processed or raw. The Codex Alimentarius also includes provision in respect to the hygiene and nutritional quality of foods, including microbiological norms, provision for food additives, pesticides residues, contaminants, labelling and presentation, and methods of analysis and sampling. It also includes texts of an advisory nature in the form of codes of practice, guidelines and other recommended measures.

In order to facilitate coordination and communication among all relevant stakeholders in the food control system, many countries have established National Codex Committees. The establishment of a National Codex Committee not only facilitates the implementation of national Codex activities, but also the functioning of the Codex Contact Point. In The Gambia, a National Codex Committee made of all relevant government departments, agencies and civil society organizations concerned with food safety, quality, standards, production and trade was established in 2002 and the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA), the government agency mandated with the responsibility for the coordination of food and nutrition related activities in The Gambia was identified as Codex Contact Point for the country and the Secretariat for the National Codex Committee.

The Gambia is also a member of WTO, and therefore signatory to the SPS Agreement. Thus, the country has an obligation to have a national committee dealing with sanitary and phytosanitary matters in the country. Since the NCC was functioning well and already included most of the stakeholders involved in food safety, animal and plant health in the country, it was decided that the NCC could also effectively serve as the SPS committee for the country. The NCC secretariat also serves as the SPS enquiry point in the Gambia.

A number of working groups were established to ensure the effective and smooth operation of interventions. These interventions include:

- Advising the government on the implications of the various food standardization and food control issues that may have arisen and that are related to the work undertaken by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, as well as matters related to SPS and the work of the WTO SPS committee;
- Proposing to the government the acceptance of Codex, OIE, and IPPC standards and suggesting which organizations should take action;
- Serving as a national forum to assist the government in ensuring a supply of safe food to consumers, whilst at the same time maximising the opportunities for industrial development, and for the expansion of both domestic and international trade;
- Appointing the technical (sub) committees to assist in the study or consideration of technical matters;
- Studying Codex, IPPC, OIE, and WTO SPS documents, collecting and revising all relevant information related to science, technology, economics, health and control systems, so as to be able to give supporting reasons in the preparation and acceptance of Codex, IPPC and OIE standards;
- Cooperating with the Codex Alimentarius Commission, IPPC and OIE secretariats and nominating delegates to participate in Codex, IPPC and OIE sessions;

- Cooperating with other national and foreign organizations whose scope covers food safety, animal and plant health;
- Mobilizing resources for Codex, IPPC and OIE activities;
- Raising awareness among the general public on Codex, IPPC, OIE, and the WTO and their procedures; and,
- Providing advice and support to the structures and bodies established under the Food Act 2005 and other relevant legislation.

1.2 Technical Sub-Committees:

Whilst the NCC² is charged with the overall coordination of the above-listed activities, 7 technical subcommittees have been established with responsibility for implementing thematic areas under their competence. These subcommittees and their objectives include:

1. Food Labelling, Additives, Contaminants, Weights and Measures

Provision of information on and assurance of the content, quality, quantity and origin of feed/food to consumers in the quest for safe food for consumption and fair trade by 2013

2. Food Hygiene, Food Import and Export Inspection Systems

Continuously improve the national food hygiene, food import and control system consistent with international standards

3. Communication and Media Support

Establish an effective Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) strategy that will address Biosecurity matters in the country by 2013

4. Analysis and Sampling of Pesticide Residues in Plants, Animals and Veterinary Drugs in Foods

² Note that the abbreviation “NCC” refers to the National Codex Committee/ WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures committee

Monitor and control import and export of plant and animal products related to pesticide residues and veterinary drugs by 2013

5. Nutrition and Food for Special Dietary Needs/ Uses

Ensure optimal health and nutritional status of the Gambian population by 2013

6. NCC Secretariat/ SPS Enquiry Point

Cater for administrative and logistic support and coordination requirements of the NCC

2. VISION, MISSION AND GOAL OF THE NCC/ SPS COMMITTEE

2.1 VISION

The vision is for an NCC/ SPS committee that is strong in food control systems/ biosecurity ensuring quality food for consumption and trade and healthy plants and animals.

In this way, the biosecurity regime is in a better position to enable Gambian produce to compete in international trade as well as provide safe food for domestic consumption. Furthermore, a strengthened and effectively functioning NCC/ SPS committee will be capable of providing guidance for the establishment of a robust biosecurity system in ensuring competitive international trade and safe domestic consumption.

2.2 MISSION

Serving as a national forum to assist the government and other actors in the agricultural and food industry in ensuring a supply of safe food to consumers, while at the same time maximising the opportunities for industry development, keeping animals and plants healthy, and for the expansion of both domestic and international trade.

2.3 GOAL

The primary goal of the NCC/SPS committee is to have *Effective standards, quality control and safety systems in place for food, feed, and animal and plant health by 2013.*

3. SWOT ANALYSIS OF NCC/ SPS COMMITTEE

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis has been conducted for the NCC/SPS Committee and is detailed in Table 1 below. It presents the key strengths of the organization as enhanced understanding of the Codex Alimentarius by members and the establishment of technical sub-committees; key weaknesses include absence of secured funding for NCC activities; opportunities consist of the potential for enhanced trade and applying standards whilst the threats include competition for scarce funds and rapidly changing trade standards.

The key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the NCC (as of January 2009)

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced understanding of Codex Alimentarius amongst the membership • Convene regular monthly meetings – with minutes prepared and disseminated • Properly anchored the NCC on the Food Act 2005 • Multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral membership spanning 25 different organizations • Embarked upon publicity and engendered information sharing • Establishment of 5 technical committees working on relevant themes • Active participation in Codex activities at regional and international levels • Food Advisory Board now in place • Capacity assessment of laboratories has occurred • NCC also serves as National SPS committee, with the same secretariat, allowing for greater synergy and streamlining resources 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary Secretariat with limited resources • Absence of a strategic plan • Absence of secured funding for NCC activities • Lack of a fully-functional NCC Secretariat • Limited training/capacity building available to committee members • Absence of technical guidelines/ manuals on specific and relevant commodities • Lack of aggressive IEC (website, newsletter, etc) • Absence of a functional research/surveillance system • Limited Networking on Biosecurity issues • Limited capacity for enhanced laboratory analysis and certification • No facilities for holding imported products until laboratory test results can approve the product for entry • No functioning animal or plant quarantine facilities in the country
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge potential exists for enhanced trade in agro-products at local, regional and international levels • Availability of a comprehensive Food Act which provides legal backing to NCC • Greater possibility for multisectoral support to NCC activities, including agencies involved in food control, animal health and plant health • Greater national ownership of food standards, animal and plant health measures is possible • Existence of laboratories and relevant facilities in the country • High political and policy-level commitment • Existence of willing partners at regional and multi-lateral levels (FAO, WHO, etc) 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition for limited funds with other national structures and entities • Lack of Complementary Structures (functioning Compliance committee), • Erosion of institutional memory and experience with high rate of staff attrition and skills from implementing agencies • Absence of accredited laboratories in the country • Rapidly changing standards (EU, WTO Economic Partners Agreement, private standards) • Emerging plant and animal diseases, food contaminants • Conflicting roles of implementing agencies

4. *STRATEGY FOR THE NCC*

The NCC will employ the following strategies in order to achieve the organizational goals and objectives within the stated time frame:

- Efforts will be made to increase membership and to upgrade capacities to the required level, thus availing them the opportunity to address the new development challenges that lie ahead at local, regional and national levels.
- A needs assessment will be carried out in order to identify gaps that would be the main focus for interventions.
- Sound project proposals will be developed and submitted to potential donor partners to diversify the funding sources. This will supplement other funding sources for the NCC so that it does not have to depend on only one major funding source.
- Ensuring that all interventions are demand-driven, participatory, gender responsive and proactive.
- Putting in place appropriate mechanisms to facilitate and ease the project monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Taking cognizance of the fact that other development actors are also in the same area, collaboration and partnership to harness resources to attain shared goals will be high on the agenda.
- Recognize that an integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health will allow for greater synergies and more effective control of these issues in the country.

Within this strategic direction, the NCC will endeavour to apply proactive participatory techniques in order to judiciously harness the required input resources to consolidate the achievements and ensure sustainability.

5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The proposed strategy is to be implemented over a 5-year period (2009-2013). The interventions proposed have been grouped into 4 major themes: 1) Food Safety and Biosecurity Policies and Institutional Aspects; 2) Biosecurity-Related Standards, Legislation and Regulations; 3) Biosecurity- Related Inspection, Testing Laboratories and Enforcement; and 4) Communication And Cooperation. The plan includes an emphasis on capacity building and skills acquisition - key ingredients for a young organization on a growth path. The logframe tables present details of the implementation plan indicating responsibility, time frame for interventions, budgets and outputs. The responsibilities, depending on the nature of the interventions, will be at national, regional and local levels as highlighted in the table.

6. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Institutional arrangements of NCC/SPS Committee will follow the hierarchy:

- The National level committee will have overall responsibility for policy, coordination of program and projects and will consolidate work plans and budgets for the

organization. It will also mobilize resources for the organization and interact with national and international level institutions. The national level will include the Secretariat based at NaNA. Key activities will include identification, selection, appraisal and implementation of interventions coordinated by the NCC/SPS committee .

- The role of the Technical Sub-committees will centre around guiding the implementation of interventions. In this regard, the sub-committees will collaborate with local authorities and community organizations in its operation.
- The Secretariat for the logistical and secretariat support.

Roles and responsibilities will be clearly demarcated to ensure a vibrant and effective organization to realize the Mission and Vision espoused.

7. MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Monitoring and evaluation of programs will be conducted on a regular basis to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the operations of the organization. Monitoring indicators will be developed and utilized in reporting progress in monthly, quarterly and annual reports as required.

The monitoring mechanism will be boosted by regular and effective communication channels and feedback amongst the executive committee members, technical sub-committees, and all other stakeholders with regular meetings and information flow through reports. The key monitoring indicators have been developed in the strategic framework.

8.0 THEMES

THEME 1:

TOPIC: FOOD SAFETY AND BIOSECURITY POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

ELEMENT 1: FOOD SAFETY AND BIOSECURITY POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

OBJECTIVE:

To develop a coherent National Food Safety and Biosecurity Policy and Programme based on the sharing of responsibilities between all levels of public authorities, industry and consumers; taking into account the entire food supply chain, including plant health and animal health.

OUTPUTS

1. A national Food Safety and Biosecurity policy elaborated and implemented
2. Policy makers, public and private stakeholders and donor agencies sensitized on the national Food safety and Biosecurity policy
3. Effective coordination and communication mechanisms between all stakeholders in Food Safety and Biosecurity developed
4. National Food Safety and Biosecurity programmes formulated involving relevant public institutions, private sector and consumers
5. Implementation of the national Food Safety and Biosecurity policy reviewed periodically

ACTIVITIES

- Drafting, validation and approval of a national Food Safety and Biosecurity policy document through review and consultations at all levels; policy to include guidance for effective public-private partnerships in food safety and Biosecurity
- development of sectoral guidelines in relation to the policy, including plant health, animal health and food safety
- Mobilization of resources for implementation of the Food Safety and Biosecurity policy (including proposal development, budgetary allocation for related activities from the government, organization of a round table meeting of donors and partners)

- Organize national sensitization activities at various levels: national level (for policy makers, civil society and donor communities, etc), regional (in the 6 regions- for governors, regional multidisciplinary field teams, etc) and local (for village development committees, local multidisciplinary field teams, etc)
- Utilize radio, TV, traditional communicators, other IEC materials such as brochures, etc to communicate information on food safety and biosecurity
- Formulation of a communication strategy, along with the IEC committee of the NCC, as also reflected in Theme 4 of this plan,
- Convene stakeholder meetings to discuss roles and coordination and communication mechanisms related to food safety and biosecurity
- Sensitization of the Food Advisory Board, Compliance Committee and the National Nutrition Council on the contents of the strategic plan
- Develop capacities at the local/ institutional level (human, physical, and technical capacities) for planning and implementation of a Food Safety and Biosecurity programme.
- Conduct annual progress review of the implementation of the strategic plan and bi- yearly reviews of the Food Safety and Biosecurity policy
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation system for the implementation of the strategic plan and the Food Safety and Biosecurity policy

ELEMENT 2: INSTITUTIONAL

OBJECTIVE:

To establish and strengthen the national institutional basis for Food safety and Biosecurity

OUTPUTS

1. Implementation of a national Biosecurity/ Food Safety policy, with the National Nutrition Council responsible for the formulation, implementation and overall supervision of this policy
 - NCC/SPS committee to hold responsibility for the technical-level coordination of Biosecurity activities in the Gambia
2. Strengthening of the organizational and institutional capacities of the National Codex Committee/ SPS Committee, the various sector institutions and all other stakeholders with roles and responsibilities in food safety/ biosecurity, including the following
 - a. Plant Protection authority
 - b. Animal Health authority
 - c. Food Safety authority
 - d. Gambia Revenue Authority

3. Harmonisation and coordination of the activities of the Food Safety/ Biosecurity institutions. Roles, responsibilities and reporting requirements for agencies clearly defined.
4. Access to Food Safety/ Biosecurity-related information facilitated/ improved.

ACTIVITIES

- Draft national Biosecurity³ policy
- Support and strengthen the functioning of the NCC/ SPS committee secretariat and committees
- Assess the existing resources and capacities of institutions with roles and responsibilities in Biosecurity
- Build capacity in the institutions working in the area of Biosecurity.
- Assess and support the institutional and organizational development of food and agricultural producers, processors, traders, and consumer associations.
- Define roles, responsibilities, and reporting requirements for various stakeholders in the Biosecurity/food control system
- Strengthen the SPS Enquiry Point/ NCC secretariat (also included in Theme 2).

³ Note that references to “Biosecurity” includes food safety, animal and plant health

THEME 2:

Biosecurity-related Standards, Legislation and Regulations

Objectives:

Develop or revise legislation, regulations, standards & codes of practice related to Biosecurity as well as harmonizing them with international requirements.

Output:1

- Capacity of NCC/ SPS committee & Technical Sub-Committees enhanced

Activities

- Fortnightly meetings for technical sub-committees
- Carry out training needs assessment and develop and implement training plan for NCC /SPS committee members
- Strengthen Codex secretariat/ SPS Enquiry point
 - o Consider housing NCC members in one complex to strengthen collaboration
- Acquire international standards developed by Codex, IPPC and OIE, as well as some private standards such as ISO where necessary
- Incorporate the Gambia ISO contact point into the NCC and subcommittees of the NCC
- Develop national standards & guidelines based on Codex, IPPC and OIE texts, as well as private standards such as ISO, where appropriate.
- Increase Gambia's level and quality of participation in international and regional standard setting processes.
 - o Need to have political will to do this
- Increase Gambia's participation in the meetings & networks of Codex, IPPC, OIE, WTO SPS committee, and where appropriate, private standard-setting organizations such as ISO.
- Enhance the functioning of the Codex(/SPS Enquiry Point), IPPC, OIE, and ISO contact points in the Gambia
- Take action to officially join IPPC as soon as possible
- Ensure proper reporting and fulfilment of all membership requirements to Codex, IPPC, OIE, and the WTO SPS committee, including payments as necessary

Output: 2

- Development and implementation of effective national legislation, regulations & codes of practice that are harmonized with international standards.

Activities:

- Seek to establish a select committee for food safety, animal and plant health in the National Assembly
- Carry out comprehensive reviews of the Food Act, Plant Health bill & all other food safety, animal and plant health- related legislation & regulations.
- Develop new food safety, animal and plant health- related legislation & regulations, as determined necessary by the review of existing legislation;

- Ensure effective public-private partnerships in the legislative framework.
- Ensure that adequate enforcement mechanisms are in place to ensure implementation of the legislation.
- Utilize risk analysis in establishing new legislation and regulations
 - Hold training on concept of risk analysis in Biosecurity, using FAO training materials
 - Conduct specialized training on the use of risk analysis in the various Biosecurity sectors, using available materials from FAO.
 - Training in safety assessment and risk management of foods derived from modern biotechnology (GM foods)
- Carry out public consultations & sensitization on proposed legislation & regulations.
- Implement new Biosecurity- related legislation & regulations
- Notify Codex, OIE, IPPC, & WTO of new legislations and regulations and other required information.
- Educate all actors & the public on the new legislation & regulations
- Reinforce capacities of institutions mandated to implement the new legislation & regulations

Log frame for theme 2

Objectives:

Develop or revise legislation, regulations, standards & codes of practice related to Biosecurity as well as harmonizing them with international requirements.

Output 1	Activities	Indicators	Time frame	Budget	Responsibilities
Capacity of NCC/SPS committee, Technical Committees enhanced	Carry out training needs assessment and develop and implement training plan for NCC/SPS committee members	60 members trained - Capacity/ needs assessment report - Training plan	2009-2013	D5,000,000	-NCC
	Strengthen Codex secretariat/ SPS Enquiry point	Documentation centre, communication equipment , website developed, 2 staff NCC Records, annual operational budget	2009-2013	D3.0M	NCC
	Acquire international standards developed by Codex, IPPC and OIE, as well as some private standards such as ISO where necessary	Number of standards acquired	2009-2013	D3.M	-NCC
	Develop national standards & guidelines based on	Number of national standards approved	F2009-2013	D650,000	NCC, NCC

	Codex, IPPC, OIE & private standards such as ISO, where appropriate.				
	Increase Gambia's level of participation in international and regional standard setting processes	2 Delegates/meeting	2009-2013	D250,000 x 4	DOSFEA & Organizers
	Increase Gambia's participation in the affiliated meetings & networks of OIE, Codex, IPPC and WTO SPS committee.	# of statutory meetings attended - 3 Delegates/session	2009-2013	D250,000 x 4	DOSA, DOSFEA, OP
	Enhance the functioning of the OIE, & IPPC contact points	# of activity reports, # of notifications, enquiries & documentation	2009-2013	D400000 (OIE) D? (IPPC)	NaNA, DVS, DTS (APMU)
	Government to officially join IPPC	Voting right restored and maintained			
	Government to report disease status to OIE and fulfil other membership requirements				
National legislation, regulations & codes of practice harmonized with international standards.	Carry out comprehensive review of the Food Act, Plant Health bill & all other sectoral legislation & regulations	-# of legislations and regulations reviewed	March-June 2009	D3M	Consultants, & technical assistance Depts. and NCC
	Recruit technical assistance & consultants	2 TAs 2 Local consultants	-Feb.-Sept. 2009	D2M	NCC and sectoral departments
	Carry out public consultations & sensitization	6- 12 press consultative meetings releases/radio/TV announcements and panels/validation workshops	-Jul-Dec 2009	D1.5M	DOSJ, NAM, NCC, Dept. of State and NCC
	Put in place new Biosecurity-related legislation & regulations	# of new Biosecurity-related legislations/regulations	2009-2013	D1M	
	Notify Codex, OIE, IPPC, & WTO of the new legislation and other required information. Educate actors & the public on the new legislation & regulations	# of notifications -# of sensitizations, workshops, training sessions, IEC materials	2009-2013		Competent authorities, NaNA, NCC, CPAG and media
	Reinforce capacities of institutions mandated to implement the new legislation & regulations.	# of people trained, # of technical assistants and consultants, level of investment and operational budget	Awaiting input from policy group 2009	D10M	NaNA, NCC, private sector, consumer representat

					ives & sectoral departments
	Develop Biosecurity policy & related legislative framework ensuring public-private partnership	Biosecurity policy -appropriate Biosecurity regulations in place -# of certified private enterprise assessors, auditors and inspectors (and other relevant service providers			Government regulatory bodies and West Africa Quality Program

THEME 3:

BIOSECURITY- RELATED INSPECTION, TESTING LABORATORIES AND ENFORCEMENT

Element 4: Food Safety, Animal Health, and Plant Health Inspection Programs and Techniques and quarantine facilities

Objective: To ensure the efficient and effective inspection and monitoring of all food products imported or locally produced for consumption and/or export, as well as animal health and plant health

Activities:

- 4.1.1 - Development of HACCP manual on food handling (producing and processing)
- 4.1.2 - Develop advisory services to encourage and assist food producers to practice diligence by implementing effective national food control systems,
 - Regular monitoring/ inspection of food processing and selling establishments,
 - Development of Good Hygienic Practices (GHP)/ Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) Guidelines based on FAO&WHO standards for food processing and handling.
 - Develop advisory services and training programs to enable farmers to improve animal and plant health
 - Establish regular surveillance of animal and plant health status at farm level, as well as stored agricultural products
 - Regular collection of appropriate representative samples for analysis
- 4.1.3 - Training on safe food preparation and hygienic practices, (covering, materials/utensils used, personal and environmental suitability and cleanliness),
 - Training of food processors and handlers on Good Hygienic Practices/ Good Manufacturing Practices in line with FAO/WHO and Codex guidelines

- include training on control of heavy metal contamination, such as lead
- 4.1.4 - Identification and procurement of food safety, animal health and plant health inspection tools, continuous training of inspectors on food safety, animal health and plant health inspection methods and equipment maintenance.
 - including the ability to detect emerging pathogens and contaminants, such as melamine, Genetically Modified foods, emerging infectious diseases
 - monitoring of inspector practices by their superiors to ensure they are carrying out their duties properly
- 4.1.5 - Provision of FAO/WHO food safety, animal health and plant health manuals and laboratory testing methods and standards to Biosecurity/ food safety- related inspectors and reference laboratories
- 4.1.6 - Development of facilities to store imported food products until laboratory test results can confirm the products are safe for entry.
- 4.1.7 – Create/ upgrade plant and animal quarantine stations at strategic location(s) throughout country
 - Review and update quarantine manuals addressing protocols, procedures, quality assurance, reporting, etc
 - Training of quarantine inspectors
- 4.2
- 4.2.1 Draft, procure, and implement a project through FAO or other agencies at regional and subregional level (using Economic/Political groupings) on harmonization of inspection methods, and creation of early warning systems for food safety, animal and plant health issues of concern
- 4.2.2
- 4.2.3 Establish data management system on Biosecurity- related disease surveillance, food contaminant monitoring, inspection results, laboratory testing results, etc

Element 5: Improve efficiency in sampling, sample testing, results communication

Food control, animal health and plant health testing laboratories and quarantine facilities

Objective: To have well- equipped, accredited laboratories with highly trained staff to carry out food safety, animal and plant health- related analysis

Activities:

- 5.1.1 - Identification of labs involved in food control, animal health and plant health
 - Determine strengths and weaknesses of the different labs (needs analysis),
 - Provision of necessary equipment, capacity building of lab staff

- train analysts and technicians on chemical analysis, microbiology, pest and disease identification, pesticide and veterinary drug residue analysis, GMOs, etc, and use and maintenance of available equipment
 - ensure that labs currently functioning at partial capacity are functioning at full capacity
 - Establishment of standard procedures and manuals (technical and managerial), based on available texts from FAO/WHO, etc.
 - Improve efficiency in sampling, sample testing and communication of results.
- 5.1.2 – Sensitization on the need for private sector involvement in food control, animal health and plant health laboratory analysis
- Enacting regulations allowing establishment of private food control, animal health and plant health labs
- 5.1.3 – Facilitate and strengthen the networking, coordination and collaboration of existing food control, animal health and plant health labs.
- 5.1.4 – Sensitization of policy makers on the need for a national certification body to facilitate food product, animal and plant export
- Establishment of a national competent authority for the identification of reference labs and their certification; delineate roles of various authorities in food, animal and plant product export certification (including phytosanitary and veterinary certificates as required)
 - Develop plan for accreditation of appropriate labs as long-term goal
- 5.1.5 – Provision of rapid mycotoxin detection methods such as AFLA CARD to all institutions/ stakeholders involved in the aflatoxin control chain.
- 5.1.6 – Subscribe to the different regional and international conventions, agreements, impacting on food control, animal and plant health laboratories
- 5.1.7 Establish a toxicology laboratory in the country

5.2 Relevant organizations are encouraged to:

- 5.2.1 - Develop project proposals, TCPs/MOUs with the relevant international organizations (such as FAO/WHO, National Authorization Office Support Unit of the EU) to facilitate the procurement of chemicals and reference materials for the labs.

Element. 6: Monitoring food-borne and animal diseases, plant pests, and safety of foods and animal feeds on the market

Objective: To ensure the availability of safe food and animal feed, and healthy plants and animals through a farm-to- table contamination preventive strategy

- Identify food and animal feed safety, animal health and plant health problems that pose the greatest risks to public health (set inspection priorities based on risk)
 - Develop/adopt tools that could reduce or prevent food safety, animal and plant health hazards (Manuals, guidelines, etc.)
 - Conduct targeted trainings of food handlers, including street food vendors and food processors, on good manufacturing and hygienic practices (note that these activities are also listed in section 4.1 above)
 - Evaluate other countries' food and feed safety, animal and plant health strategies for possible adoption locally
- 6.1.2 - Conduct a gap analysis of the food- and feed- borne and animal disease and plant pest surveillance and food contaminant monitoring system
- Identify criteria to improve, audit and consolidate the existing programs related to biosecurity
 - Improve the inspection and surveillance activities (capacity and material)
 - Integrate in the disease surveillance system a data base on food- and feed- borne disease at all major health facilities countrywide (Note that this point is similar to point 4.2.3 above and should be considered accordingly)
- 6.1.3 - Conduct a sensitization campaign of policy-makers on Biosecurity
- Create a monitoring and evaluation system
 - Hold radio and TV panel discussions/programs on food safety/ biosecurity issue(s)
- 6.1.4 - Subscribe to the different regional and international agreements and conventions on food safety, animal health and plant health, particularly those related to disease surveillance and monitoring of the safety of foods on the market
- 6.1.5 - Establish an emergency rapid response system/network countrywide for food contaminants/ food-borne illnesses, animal and plant pests and diseases
- Adapt the existing National Animal Health Emergency Plan and General National Disaster Management Plan (including responsibilities) for use in general biosecurity emergency situations
 - Develop decision-making and operational procedures for biosecurity emergencies and provide training of all involved parties (including victims)

THEME 4: COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

NOTE: The activities related to sensitization listed in the previous themes should be carried out in conjunction with activities of Theme 4.

OBJECTIVE

TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY THAT WILL ADDRESS FOOD SAFETY, ANIMAL HEALTH AND PLANT HEALTH IN THE GAMBIA BY 2013

ELEMENT 8 COMMUNICATION AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

ACTIVITIES (8.1.1- 8.1.4)

NATIONAL LEVEL

- Produce a video documentary and leaflets to introduce the NCC/ SPS committee, its role and how consumers can take part in and benefit from the NCC/SPS committee
 - Provide an opportunity for consumers to learn how to improve the safety of the food they consume
 - Translate into the 3 major languages (Mandinka, Wolof, and Fula) of the country
- Develop and implement an effective national communication strategy for Biosecurity (also noted in Theme 1)
- Conduct half-yearly forums on current food safety, animal and plant health issues at the divisional levels for stakeholders in the food chain (regulators, handlers, consumers, etc)
- Build capacity of the consumer association in the Gambia and provide necessary information for their dissemination to consumers
- Provide half-yearly Biosecurity bulletins for policy makers and the general public, prepared by the NCC
- Quarterly radio and TV talk shows on Biosecurity issues
- Develop radio and TV publicity spots on Biosecurity issues
- Train spokespersons and communicators in concerned agencies to effectively convey information about Biosecurity issues in the Gambia
- Training of journalists and editors to disseminate accurate Biosecurity-related messages to the general public
- Develop and operate a website for the Codex/SPS program.
- Improve communication within the NCC/SPS committee, through enhancing email communication and other means.
- Improve communication between the NCC/SPS committee and other related committees and entities in the country (biosafety committee, disaster management, etc)
- Organize an annual national inter-schools competition on food safety/ SPS issues (5000 Euros cost)
- Establish food safety/ SPS clubs at schools

ELEMENT 9: NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

ACTIVITIES 9.1.1 NATIONAL (LOCAL) LEVEL

- Familiarisation tour of NCC/SPS committee members to all area councils, municipalities and other stakeholders
- Strengthening coordination and cooperation in NCC/SPS committee and the secretariat
- Establish regional sub-committees on food safety and SPS matters

- Organise annual '*bantaba*' for the NCC sub-committees to informally discuss issues of concern to that committee
- Identify and observe an annual national food safety/ Biosecurity day to be observed a few days before World Food Day (16 October)

ACTIVITIES 9.2.1 REGIONAL/ INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

- Participation in regional and international Codex, IPPC, OIE, and related forums
- Participation in ECOWAS forums regarding food safety, animal and plant health issues
- Organise regional and international meetings and conferences on food safety, animal and plant health matters
- Create network linkages with similar food safety, animal and plant health organisations and institutions in other African countries

INDICATORS

- 1 NCC/ SPS committee introductory documentary to be produced in English and translated into three languages; Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, (in 2009) to be broadcast on TV and radio
- 2 more documentaries (Y3, Y5) to be translated in the same languages as above (20,000Euro estimated)

Responsibilities:- members of the information sub-committee/NCC

- Conducted biosecurity stakeholder analysis to profile actors in the food safety, animal and plant health sectors in October 2008. Report available.
- Hold regional food safety/ biosecurity meetings (1 per year)
- Organise seminars, conferences and workshops annually by 2013 to be organised by the IEC committee estimated at (20,000Euro)
- 10 newsletters and production of other IEC materials (including T-shirts, posters, caps, brochures etc.) by 2013 estimated at 25,000Euro to be facilitated by the IEC sub-committee.
- Quarterly Radio and TV talk shows plus spot adverts annually by 2013 estimated at 30,000Euro to be coordinated by the IEC committee
- Training of 40 journalists and editors (2 from each media house) for 3 days to be done in Y1, Y2, Y3 estimated 9,000Euro to be coordinated by IEC sub-committee
- Website developed by 3rd quarter of 2009 and subsequent maintenance/updating until 2013. estimated cost of 3,000Euro
- 6 day national tour for local government authorities and other stakeholders to raise awareness of the NCC/SPS strategic plan; estimated at 1800Euro
- Observance of a national food safety/Biosecurity day including parade, 'Bantaba', exhibition. This is an annual event and the date to be decided by NCC- to be held a few days before World Food Day (16 October). It is estimated at 30,000Euro

Theme 4/ Element 8 logframe.

Objective: TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY THAT WILL ADDRESS FOOD SAFETY, ANIMAL HEALTH AND PLANT HEALTH IN THE GAMBIA BY 2013

Output 1	Activities	Indicators	Time frame	Budget (Euro)	Responsibilities
Awareness, communication and stakeholder involvement improved	Provide a documentary on the activities of the NCC/SPS committee	1 NCC/ SPS committee introductory documentary to be translated into six languages; English, Mandinga, Wollof, Fulla, Jola and Sarahulleh to be broadcast in TV and radio 2 more documentaries to be translated in the same languages as above (20,000Eur estimated)	(April 2009) (Y3, Y5)	20, 000	IEC Sub-committee
	Conduct a survey aimed at profiling the food safety, animal and plant health actors	1 baseline survey to profile actors in the food, animal and plant industries	April-June 2009	10,000	IEC sub-committee/ NaNA estimated
	Conduct half-yearly forums on Biosecurity issues	5 regional meetings; 1 per year	Annually	20,000	IEC committees
	Build capacity of consumer associations and provide necessary information for dissemination	Number and type of Professional, technical and institutional support to consumer associations	annually by 2013	75,000	NCC
	Provide half-yearly food safety/ biosecurity bulletins	Number of bulletins/magazines (2 per year) produced. Number and types of IEC materials (T-shirts, posters, caps, brochures etc) produced.	2013	25,000	IEC sub-committee
	Quarterly radio and TV talk shows	Quarterly Radio and TV talk shows plus spots adverts	annually by 2013	30,000	coordinated by the IEC sub-committee, and NCC
	Develop radio and TV publicity spots	Number of spots	Annually		
	Training of journalists and editors	Training of 40 journalists and editors (2 from each media house) for 3 days	Y1, Y2, Y3	estimated 9,000	coordinated by IEC sub-committee

					and NCC
	Develop and operate a website for the Codex/SPS program	Website developed and subsequent maintenance/updating	3rd quarter of 2009 until 2013	3,000	NCC Secretariat
	Create network linkages with similar food safety, animal and plant health organisations and institutions in other African countries				
	Organising joint workshops and training courses	Training of 40 artists, musicians and traditional communicators (TCs)		15,000	IEC and NCC
	Group study tours and exchange visits	3 study tours in Senegal (10), Ghana (5) and Mali (5)	2013	32,000	coordinated by the IEC and NCC
	Establishment of Food Safety clubs in the schools				NCC
	Organization of inter-school competitions				
National, Regional and International Cooperation strengthened	Familiarisation tour of Codex/SPS committee members to all Area Councils, Municipalities and other stakeholders	5 days national tour to local government authorities and other stakeholders	March 2009	2,000	IEC
	Strengthening NCC/SPS committee and the secretariat	Secretariat provided with equipment and materials required for its operationalisation and improved communication	March 2009 – December 2013	30,000	NCC/Secretariat
	Establish regional sub-committees on food safety and SPS	Professional, institutional (e.g. support staff, mobility, communication etc.) and technical support	Annually by 2013	80,000	
	Organise annual national <i>'bantaba'</i> for the committees	<i>'Bantaba'</i> , exhibition. This is an annual event and the date be decided by NCC.	Annually by 2013	30,000	NCC
	Identify and observe a national food safety/Biosecurity day	Observance of a national food safety/ Biosecurity day including parade	Annually by 2013	30,000	NCC
	Participation in regional and international Codex, IPPC, and OIE and related forums	Number of meeting participated	Annually by 2013	50,000	NCC
	Participation in ECOWAS forums regarding food safety, animal and plant health issues	Number of ECOWAS Forums attended and participated	Annually by 2013	50,000	NCC

	Organise regional and international meetings and conferences on food safety, animal and plant health matters	Number of regional and international meetings and conferences organised	Annually by 2013	45,000	NCC
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9. POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS

A number of potential risk factor need to be borne in mind in implementing this strategy and include:

- Scarcity and limitations of operational funds for the organization due to competition with other agencies for financing;
- Multiplicity of members and tendency for interest in activities linked to specific areas at the detriment of the general goal;
- Inadequacy in the capacity of NCC to steer the organization on a sustainable path;
- Multiplicity of donors, implementing agencies, and projects related to food safety, animal and plant health in the country;
- Political instability in the country and the sub-region
- Delay in fund releases from funding sources;
- Increases in oil prices, which could spark fuel and commodity price increases in The Gambia.

The key requirements of the NCC Secretariat in order to make it fully functional include the following:

- Computers with accessories (3 sets)
- Reliable, high speed internet capabilities
- Installation of a permanent telephone line
- Fax
- Photocopier
- Stationery
- Filing cabinets
- Vehicle

Total funding requirement 60,000 Euro first year, then 15,000 Euro annually

Annex 6. Matrix of brief capacity assessment of inspection sites and laboratories (Sept 09)

****Note that all agencies involved in inspection made formal presentations on their activities, strengths and challenges at the Inspection Assessment workshop (presentations included in the report from the 9-10 September workshop). The information below is that which was observed by the consultant in site visits and interviews.**

Site visited	Staffing levels	Primary activities/ concerns	Strengths	Challenges/ needs
Banjul seaport	Customs, police, etc- numerous Public health-3 Plant health- 3 Animal health- 1	Busy port- majority of food consumed in the Gambia comes through the port; Check certificate of origin from consignee; take samples of first-time products for lab analysis; Officer is present at the opening of the seal of a container	Biosecurity-related officers work well together and share an office; Work well with other agencies (NIA, police, customs, etc); Utilize private sector labs as necessary; Senior port health officer has good knowledge of the Food Act and utilizes it well in his work; Keeping electronic records of imports- send to MoH, AHPS, APMS, regional public health offices; Good collaboration with PHL; Good record keeping system in place;	Need to educate importers, clearing agents, etc on importance of biosecurity; No coolers for sample transport; no transport to their labs (officers pay themselves); Consigners store product at their own warehouse until lab results returned- not able to easily enforce that they honor this; Most product warehouses are in poor condition; Do not have system in place where import certificates are required; Have few written inspection guidelines; No inspection equipment; They do not inspect transit products, but these could be sold in the Gambia on black market or come back in through border; Inspectors work long hours
Amdalaye border post	Customs- 17 officers Plant health- 3 Public health- 1 Fisheries- 1 Animal Health-	Busy post between Banjul and Dakar, Senegal (SN); open 24 hours; Export mangoes, some fruit, frozen fish; Import vegetables, fruits,	Good collaboration between officers and agencies; biosecurity-related officers share (small) office; Safety of imports and disease control is somewhat protected	No quarantine facilities at border; Long hours required by inspectors- no replacements if they can't come; Officers pay for their own cell phone units; No lab or inspection equipment available;

	1 Forestry- 1	processed products, some live animals; H1N1, AI, cholera, Newcastle, plant pests- main concerns;	by system in Senegal; Plant health and forestry can issue certificates at border; Animal health gives temporary movement permit;	No sample storage facilities; Officers do not have means to transport samples to labs- other than public transport; Consignee is asked to take sample to lab on their own (little enforcement of this is possible- consignee does not always comply); No transport to patrol borders for wild birds, etc;
Jiboroh border post	Customs officers; Plant health- 3 Forestry- 1	Border between Brikama (south of Banjul) and the fertile Casamance region of Senegal ; Import: vegetables, cashews, palm oil, cassava; Some food shipped to the Banjul seaport will pass through to reach Senegal or Guinea-Bissau	Few pests or diseases seen as products generally come through in small quantities; Few animals or animal products come through border- can call veterinarian at Abuko to come if necessary (~45 min drive in private car); Plant health officers can alternate shifts so someone always available	No public health, animal health, or fisheries officers are actively working at the border post; No manual or written procedures for inspection (same is true at other entry points also); (other challenges similar to those listed above- no quarantine facilities, no transport, storage, sampling kits, etc)
Agriculture Pest Management Services (inspectorate and lab)	~3 inspectors at each of 7 border posts (~21 total); 1 lab technician with adequate external training, 1 lab tech with some external training, Numerous with	Inspection of plant products at entry points; Import and export certification of plant products; Diagnostic lab for plant health; Developing pesticide residue analysis lab;	Multiple plant health inspectors posted at main border posts; FAO TCP providing assistance in multiple areas- improving quarantine facilities, pesticide residue testing equipment and training, legislation, info exchange, etc; Use Phytosanitary certificates; Have nearly finished facility for pesticide residue testing (AELP locust funds);	Draft plant health inspection bill stalled by MoA restructuring- working to adopt; Need chemical standards for pesticide residue analysis; Some infrastructure changes still required to lab; Need to finish installing pesticide residue analysis equipment; Need to finish refurbishment of quarantine facilities and begin to use

	local training			
Food Standards, Quality and Safety Enforcement Directorate (MoH)	Two 1 ^o Food Standards Officers – Public Health Officers; One Senior FSO – Veterinary (BSc level); Five FSOs (all BSc) -3 Public Health Officers - 1 Scientist : Chemistry - 1 Scientist : Microbiology	Inspection of food premises; Administer screening of food handlers (fecal tests); Inspect supermarkets; Inspect hotels and restaurants; Inspect food processing facilities	newly formed at request of president; governmental budget support; staff with (somewhat) varied background; work closely with the national public health laboratories- housed at same complex and have same director;	Need for clear delineation of responsibilities for food safety within Ministry of Health; Need for continued sensitization of all stakeholders of the creation and role of the Directorate; In development stage of Directorate- need time to establish procedures, relationships, etc; Current lack of transport; Limited staff – few at central level and none at regional levels; Need food standards in place to be able to enforce them;
Public Health laboratory	2 PhDs 2 MS Some at BS level 4 microbiologists 1 chemist (for entire lab, not only food safety portion)	Now only lab in country to conduct fecal tests for food handler screenings; Planning to conduct chemical analysis of fats and oils, milk, other food products; Have microbiology labs for other items - plan to expand this to food micro;	Have new facilities in central location; Receiving support from WAQP for food chemistry lab- equipment, reagents, guidance through accreditation process; Able to do foodborne illness outbreak investigation- have lab capability and mandate to take food samples; have MOU with Institute of Food Technology, Dakar, Senegal for food testing and training until lab is ready;	Working to decentralize lab analysis to regional levels; In process of seeking accreditation for food chemistry lab; Planning to seek international accreditation for food micro lab eventually also; Need to receive and install equipment and begin to use equipment for testing;
Central	Lab manager-	Micro testing of foods of	Staff are well-trained and	Cannot meet ISO 17025 standards now;

Veterinary Laboratory	BS in lab technology 5 technicians-BS Lab assistants-certificate level	animal origin (local production and imported); Could test fish also- only need reagents; Also have animal health diagnostic lab (not seeking international accreditation); Have functioning virology lab (including serology);	experienced; use validated methods; Diagnostics lab (parasitology and hematology) is functioning; Participate in proficiency testing; WAQP will help with quality manual, which is under development; Virology lab- receiving assistance from another small FAO project, as well as a regional project;	Have floor plan for necessary remodeling of lab - estimated to cost \$4000, but no funds available from gov or outside donors; Need to implement recommendations of WAQP lab assessment, but no funds or gov support to do so; Need to install biosafety hood which they have on hand;
Fisheries Department laboratory	1-MS 1-working on MS in Taiwan now Hiring 2 technicians (BS level)	Currently not doing any testing as lab is undergoing renovation (should be finished by late September); should do environmental monitoring of fishing areas also;	Currently undergoing structural renovations as advised by WAQP, funded by government; In process of recruiting 2 lab technicians; Have most of equipment for micro testing, some for chemical testing	Very little lab staff- newly hired staff will require a great deal of in-house training; Need method to test benzopyrenes in smoked fish- main cause of EU rejections; Transport system for fish in the Gambia needs strengthening- cold chain and hygiene; Need capacity to conduct environmental monitoring; Pesticide use in fish salting is a problem;
National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI) – agriculture produce chemistry lab	2 technicians with some external training	Conduct aflatoxin (currently with TLC) and chemical analysis of fats and oils; Planning to separate the aflatoxin lab from lab where other chemical analyses are conducted;	Building and basic infrastructure is adequate; Receiving equipment and support from EU and from WAQP for aflatoxin analysis; chemicals and lab accreditation support from WAQP; Have applied to another	Technicians have not used HPLC before: have received training, but no hands-on training; stable water and electricity supply is a problem: have a stand-by generator, but it is broken now; Need someone to look at their draft quality and technical manuals; Need to find and use an aflatoxin

			programme to have someone review quality and technical manuals;	detection method with a lower limit of quantification; Need a technician trained on equipment maintenance; Need reagents for testing of food colors; Need for more networking of labs in country;
National Environmental Agency (NEA) laboratory	1- MS (lab manager) 1-HND 1-in-house training	In past, conducted pesticide formulation analysis (qual and quantitative)- was reference lab for 9-country sub-region; planning to do pesticide residue analysis in future- could compare results with APMS for verification;	Recently built new facilities; Could build another floor above to have 2 levels as necessary; Lab manager has good training in HPLC, GC, etc; Experienced and skilled lab technicians; Experience and regional recognition in pesticide formulation analysis;	Trying to get funds for equipment (and workbenches, etc) as there is none in the new lab facility; equipment in old facility is outdated; currently sending new pesticides to Dakar for analysis; Were collaborating with LocustTox in Senegal and received funding from them, but not now as LocustTox is now private foundation;

Annex 7. Inspection action plan- developed at inspection assessment workshop (9-10 Sept 09; updated as of 4 Dec 09)

Action plan for strengthening food safety, animal health, and plant health in the Gambia
Workshop on assessment of inspection and certification systems (9-10 Sept 2009)

Issue (weakness in system)	What needs to be done (practical action)	By whom (responsibility)	By when (specific date)	Indicator of completion of action	Remarks (4 December 09)
Weak capacity of phytosanitary inspection staff- skills & number of staff	Assessment of training needs of phytosanitary inspectors	Deputy Director of Plant Protection Services	October 2009	Assessment report including list of participants	Letter sent by NCSPSC secretariat to Landing Sonko on 23 November 2009 to ascertain status
Lack of skilled inspectors	Provide a list of items to be included in inspection training program	Directors of CAs in food safety, animal health, and fisheries	October 2009	List of items provided	Completed
Lack of skilled inspectors	Hold (in-service) training session for inspectors including items indicated by directors of CAs. Include information on the roles and responsibilities of each CA according to the Food Act. Include information on proper use of livestock permits. Include the police force in the training- possibly as resource persons.	NCSPSC- FAO project, WAQP	November 2009	Training report including list of participants	Completed (11-12 Nov 09); report drafted, to be finalized in December
Lack of skilled inspectors	Advocate that training at the Gambia College	NCSPSC to write letter to the Gambia	November 2009	Letter sent; participant list of	Letter sent to GC and UTG by

	(School of Public Health and School of Agriculture) includes information on the Food Act, proper inspection procedures	College (GC) to advocate for this; include GC and the University of the Gambia (UTG) in inspector training program.		inspector training program; Meetings held	NCSPSC on 23 November to request consultative meeting on 13 January 2010; GC and UTG actively participated in inspection training
Inconsistent and improper sampling methods	Training on proper sampling methods (to be included in training program and outlined in inspection manual)	NCSPSC Technical committee on analysis (FAO project, WAQP)	November 2009	Training report and list of participants	Included in inspection training and manual; further training needed
Inadequate skill in HACCP and Good Hygienic Practices (GHPs)- inspectors and processors	Conduct training in HACCP, GHPs	NCSPSC- FAO project to conduct training of a) inspectors and b) processors	November 2009	Report of training programme	Inspector training held (11-12 Nov 09); processor training held (3-4 Nov 09)
Overlap in inspection of food and agricultural products	Conduct training of staff of the different Competent Authorities (CAs) including inspectors on their role and activities according to the Food Act	NCSPSC- inspector training planned by FAO project, WAQP	November 2009	Training report including list of participants	Inspector training held (11-12 Nov 09)
Overlap in inspection of products, although roles outlined clearly in the Food Act	Need to ensure that the Food Act is followed in the inspection of food products.	Food Advisory Board to write to the CAs to clarify their roles; they bring the issue to the Compliance Committee	November 2009	Letter written	NCSPSC sent letter to Food Advisory Board on 23 November 2009 to request their action
Weak and inconsistent	Assessment of inspection procedures of the various	NCSPSC- brief assessment conducted	November 2009	Assessment report	Assessment completed August

inspection and certification procedures	CAs, with a view of standardization and harmonization with international standards	by FAO consultant			2009; report submitted to FAO in Sept 09
Lack of a formal inspection manual/ guidelines for most sectors	Development/ updating of an inspection manual with clear and specific procedures (<i>fisheries has a checklist; Plant health has standard phytosanitary certificates; Tourism uses a checklist</i>)	NCSPSC- FAO project	November 2009	Distribution of the manual	First draft presented 11-12 November 09; revised draft to be completed and printed in December 09.
Low level of public awareness on inspection and certification procedures, and generally on food safety, animal and plant health issues	Conduct sensitization campaign of the general public and other stakeholders including businesses (broadcast TV programs, radio programs, newspaper articles, brochures, etc). Include sensitization on proper use of livestock movement permits	IEC committee of NCSPSC	Ongoing Sept to March 2010	Records of the number of activities and coverage	Some IEC brochures drafted through FAO project; Good media coverage of NCSPSC events; continued activities needed
Weak levels of collaboration among stakeholders in inspection and certification	Organize regular meetings of the NCSPSC- inspection sub-committee to discuss issues related to inspection and certification	NCSPSC- inspection sub-committee	Begin in January 2010	Minutes of the meetings	Initial planning of meetings has occurred
Improper disposal of confiscated foods	Initiate the development guidelines for disposal of confiscated products. Include the role of security forces in the guidelines	CAs	March 2010	Distribution of guidelines	Some information included in inspection manual- to be further developed into a

					separate code
Inspectors may operate in an unethical manner	Develop a Code of Ethics for inspectors	Food Control Advisory Board	Begin by March 2010	Code of Ethics enacted	Some information included in inspection manual- to be further developed into a separate code
Lack of identity cards for inspectors	Initiate an ID system for inspectors	CAs	Begin by March 2010	Identity card system in use	No action taken yet; indicated to begin March 2010
Lack of sensitization of police force on food safety, animal and plant health inspection issues	Advocate for the inclusion of inspection issues at Police training School	Police Service	November 2009	Revised syllabus of police training school	Letter written to Police Service on 23 November 2009 to enquire of status

Items related to overall food safety, animal and plant health					
Absence of a food safety policy	Formulate a food safety policy (important to include the role of the police in such a policy)	NCSPSC- FAO project- a consultant will come to assist in drafting a policy	November-December 2009	Draft policy document	Policy consultant in Gambia from 20 Nov- 3 Dec 09; Policy consultation workshop held 1-2 Dec 09
Gambia not a member of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)	Conduct assessment of the National Plant Protection Services for conformity to IPPC requirements; Obtain membership in IPPC;	DD PPS	December 2009	Application letter for membership, instrument of adherence document	Application now with Ministry, explanatory note sent; WAQP planning to include an assessment of NPPO in 2010 workplan.
Weak pesticide residue laboratory facilities	Work to ensure that the pesticide residue lab is functional	Plant Protection Services	February 2010	Laboratory analysis report	Pending- slated for Feb 2010
Plant Protection bill not yet enacted	Presentation of draft bill to the technical regulation coordinating committee (MOTI)	DD Plant Protection Services	March 2010	Statement from MOTI	Pending- slated for March 2010
Weak public/private partnership in plant protection	Address in IPPC Assessment	DD Plant Protection Services	February 2010	Request letter to IPPC; TOR for the assessment & report	WAQP planning to include an assessment of NPPO in 2010 workplan.
Use of fumigants on imported products	Seek clarification based on scientific evidence on the use of methyl bromide	DD PPS, ED NEA	Sept/Oct 2009	Submission of information	NCSPSC sent letters on 23 November 2009 to Lamin Jobe and

				to NCSPSC	Landing Sonko to hold a scientific working session to discuss; initial plans made for session.
Inadequate finances	Fund raising through partnerships and project proposal development	DD PPS	October 2009 to March 2010	MOUs & project proposal document	NCSPSC planning to meet in December to plan project proposals
Limited capacity of Department of Veterinary Services	Contact OIE to conduct an assessment of the Dept of Vet services	AHPS	October 2009	Report of OIE assessment	Assessment conducted October 2009; initial report received from Dr. Daffeh
Issues to address in the long term					
Mis-use of veterinary drugs	Advocate for updated veterinary drug legislation; conduct training courses with producers on proper use of veterinary drugs; strengthening public-private partnership in this regard; improve documentation system of veterinary drug use	AHPS and regional director	Ongoing process	Number of training sessions occurring, # people reached in sessions	Pending
Weak logistics	Provision of adequate essential logistics such as: transport, computers (with internet capability), sampling kits, inspection gears, etc.	GoTG, WAQP, WHO, FAO, EU, WFP	BY 2013	Adequate logistics and essential working tools in all food control points.	Pending; some proposed to be provided by WAQP in 2010

Outdated legislation- disease control act of 1949 is legislation currently in place in Animal Health	Development and enactment of relevant legislation	DOA, AHPS	Dec 2010	Updated legislation in force	Pending- should come as outcome of OIE assessment
Low level of on-farm disease control measures	Improve on disease control measures	Producers, inspectors- AHS	Ongoing process	Improvement in system	Ongoing
Inadequate material and financial resources	Increased budget allocation; seek donor support	AHPS, DOA	2010	Increased allocation in 2011 budget	Ongoing
Weak disease surveillance	Improve the effectiveness of the surveillance system	AHPS and regional directors	Ongoing	Distribution of surveillance reports	Pending
Inadequate laboratory facilities	1.strengthen food testing , animal and plant health labs (training ,reagents ,equipment) 2. establish regional labs	AHPS, FD, MoH, PPS	By 2013	Well equipped and functioning accredited national & regional labs	Pending; some assistance provided by WAQP
Inadequate manpower in inspection and certification system	1. Lobby for increased budgetary funding for human resources 2.Recruitment and training of personnel in the inspection and certification system 3.Establish and strengthen regional food inspection services	GoTG,WAQP,WHO,FAO,EU, WFP	BY 2013	1.Well trained, competent and highly motivated food safety personnel 2.Availability of fully functional regional food inspectors in	Ongoing

				all regions	
Weak levels of collaboration among stakeholders in inspection and certification	1.Increase exchange of information and collaboration in food safety among stakeholders in the inspection and certification system 2.Organise regular meetings among stakeholders	NCSPS, Stakeholders in food safety	By 2013	High level of collaborative approach for inspection and certification in food safety .	Ongoing
Inadequate incentives to personnel in the inspection and certification system	Provision of incentives	GoTG and donor agencies	By 2013	Provision of incentives	Ongoing

Annex 8. Project workshop/ training session reports

Phase 1 events (continued):

- Training workshop on an integrated approach to biosecurity (16 October 2008; Annex 8.1)

Final Report

Training Workshop on an Integrated Approach to 'Biosecurity' in The Gambia

Held at the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA)

Funded by FAO

Thursday, 16th October 2008

Report prepared by Isatou Jeng Ngon, workshop rappateur

Edited by Londa Vanderwal, FAO project consultant

Training Workshop on an Integrated Approach to 'Biosecurity' in The Gambia

At the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA), Thursday, 16th October 2008

A one-day training workshop on an Integrated Approach to 'Biosecurity' in The Gambia was convened at NaNA Headquarters on Thursday, 16th October 2008. In his Opening Remarks, Dr. Omar Touray, the Chairperson of the National Codex Committee (NCC)/ Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Committee (SPS) who also chaired the proceedings of the day, welcomed all the participants to this important training workshop (Participant List is attached as Annex 1). He also recognised the presence of the new FAO Country Representative in The Gambia, Mr. Babagana Ahmadu and the FAO Consultant, Ms. Londa Vanderwal.

Dr. Touray gave an overview of the NCC/SPS committee and informed the gathering of the \$22,950 FAO grant given to the NCC to promote and facilitate the adoption of an integrated approach to Biosecurity in The Gambia. He assured the gathering that this grant will be used to tackle problems, concepts and approaches to biosecurity interventions and all individuals/institutions with a stake in Biosecurity would be involved and not just limited to the NCC members.

Work on drafting of the project proposal, he continued, started in December 2007 and since then the NCC has developed a Strategic Plan (2009 – 2013) for Food Safety, and Sanitary & Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures.

Mr. Malang Fofana, a Senior Programme Officer at NaNA who deputised for the Executive Director of NaNA gave the background, objectives and programme for the workshop (timetable available in Annex 2). According to Mr. Fofana, a Regional Biosecurity Training Workshop was held in Accra, Ghana in June 2007 and was attended by Mrs. Oulaye Njie-Taal, a Principal Programme Officer at NaNA and Ms. Mama Saho of the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI). At the Ghana workshop, all participating countries were requested to submit a project proposal, which The Gambia did. The project proposal was approved, hence this workshop.

The objectives of this workshop are to

- Raise awareness about an integrated approach to biosecurity;
- Facilitate improved communication related to biosecurity in the country;
- Review the national NCC/SPS action plan;
- Discuss further steps for the project.

In his statement, the newly arrived FAO Country Representative remarked that this is his first official opening of a workshop since his arrival. He also mentioned that today, October 16th is an important day in the calendar of FAO, being World Food Day, and how appropriate that this workshop on Biosecurity is taking place on this day, knowing the importance of Biosecurity in having a safe and abundant food supply.

According the Country Representative, the FAO promotes among its member countries the use of a strategic and integrated approach to analyse and manage risks in the sectors of human health (particularly food safety and zoonoses), animal life and health (including fisheries) and plant life and health (including forestry) including associated environmental risk. This approach, termed 'Biosecurity' by FAO, encompasses the policy and regulatory frameworks (including instruments and activities such as inspection, diagnostic services, certification and others).

According to the FAO Representative, biosecurity is very important and strengthening overall biosecurity in a country enables that country to improve domestic food safety, animal and plant health, which in turn can improve domestic food security through increased access to safe food. Improved biosecurity also enables countries to participate in an increasingly standards-driven international food and agricultural trading market, which is one of the necessary means to alleviate poverty in developing countries.

He assured the gathering of the FAO's willingness to provide support to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders in biosecurity. He also acknowledged the work done by the NCC (which has now expanded to also be the World Trade Organisation (WTO) SPS Committee) on the Biosecurity Project. He then officially declared the training workshop opened.

After the opening ceremony, the Consultant, Ms. Londa Vanderwal gave a presentation (Annex 3) on 'Introduction to an Integrated Approach to Biosecurity'. Her presentation was followed by a presentation (Annex 4) on 'Avian Influenza Biosecurity Plan for The Gambia' by Dr. Daffeh, the Director of the Department of Veterinary Services.

A lively question and answer session ensued following the presentations.

Questions, comments, concerns and answers

Participants commended the speakers for the presentations and the workshop organisers for this timely training workshop on Biosecurity.

A participant wanted to know the view of the Consultant on the different and conflicting aflatoxins standards set by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) and EU, which is a grave concern for developing countries such as The Gambia. As the EU has stricter standards than Codex, many products (i.e. groundnuts, maize) from The Gambia are considered to be sub-standard, and therefore not allowed in the EU Zone.

In her reply, the consultant stated that setting of standards in Codex is based on scientific evidence and are then agreed upon by all countries participating in Codex. However, countries don't have to accept these standards and they are entitled to have stricter standards provided that they are based on scientific evidence. If the standards cannot be scientifically justified, a country has the right to take the importing country to the WTO to settle the case. According to her, the EU does not want to loosen their standards in order to protect their consumers, but they do provide funds and projects for capacity building to reduce aflatoxin levels in imported foods.

Another participant said that although threats arising from Avian Influenza (AI) have been contained, it is important that awareness is created amongst the general population, especially in the rural areas where people live in close proximity to their livestock. As only less than 1% of the population are likely aware of biosecurity, there is the need for more awareness creation, otherwise the entire purpose of biosecurity will be defeated. Also, the sale of domestic poultry in markets in the midst of people is a cause for concern.

In his response, Dr. Daffeh stated that when the threat of AI was very high in the country, awareness was created and people were alert. However, he also agreed that more awareness needs to be raised, and elaborated on an AI Project (Integrated National Awareness Plan) where funding will be available to create awareness through television and radio spots. He divulged that there are trained personnel (to recognise signs of AI) working in high-risk areas such as 'lumos' (local market day), live bird markets, poultry farms, etc. They conduct rapid tests for the presence of AI; unfortunately, this test cannot determine the type of AI.

He also acknowledged that selling live birds in congested markets posed a huge threat, especially to the human population due to their close proximity. However, it is the responsibility of the municipal councils to provide marketplaces for the sale of live birds and he is happy that they are also participating in this training workshop. Dr. Daffeh emphasized the significant role that domestic poultry play in spreading AI in Africa, and said that there has been no implication of migrating birds spreading AI in Africa. He went further to divulge that there is a website giving information on the global prevalence of AI, and that importation of poultry products and live poultry is not allowed from countries until they have been declared free from AI. He concluded by saying that The Gambia is very committed to global AI control efforts and have hosted a number of international meetings on AI.

The role of migrating birds in the spread or not of AI generated a lively debate. One of the participants was adamant that migrating birds played a huge role in spreading AI in Africa and gave reference to an international conference attended where it was reported that the source of AI from the first case reported in Nigeria was from migrating birds.

Dr. Daffeh reiterated that in Africa, live domestic poultry are more of a threat as far as spreading AI is concerned than migrating birds, although migrating birds have been incriminated in AI in other parts of the world. He further went on to say that the risk of spreading AI is higher from live chickens than in those already slaughtered and frozen. Another participant commended Dr. Daffeh for the information given. Nonetheless, he was also of the view that migrating birds are a source of spreading AI in Africa. The chairman had to intervene at this juncture as the debate was really heating up and a number of people wanted to participate.

The establishment of well-equipped laboratories, a Biosecurity Centre and a magazine for Biosecurity-related information dissemination were proposed by another participant to facilitate the aims and objectives of Biosecurity. The Centre would serve as a source for information sharing, coordination and management for biosecurity measures, both nationally and regionally. The participant also suggested the inclusion of Bioterrorism and Biodefence in

Biosecurity, which may be issues of concern to the country sooner or later, and not only restricted to food safety issues.

These suggestions were highly welcomed and participants were encouraged to consider them as they work on the Strategic Plan 2009 –2013 later on in the day. Dr. Daffeh reiterated the need for effective laboratories and informed the gathering that with assistance from the West Africa Quality Project, plans are underway to ensure that biosecurity-related laboratories in The Gambia are up to standard. It was also reiterated that Biosecurity includes food safety, animal and plant health, but that the project was initially formulated by the NCC, whose main focus is on food safety issues.

A participant also wanted to know whether the Consultant conducted a situational analysis to find out the level of Biosecurity-related capacity in the country. In her reply, the Consultant said that she's only been in the Gambia for about a week, and has tried to assess the entire Biosecurity situation as much as possible during that time. She also acknowledged the numerous related works and projects already done and ongoing in the country.

Another participant lamented the lack of a Biostatistics Programme in the country. Biodata and its management pose a major problem in the country, and there was total agreement from the gathering that action must be taken in this regard.

Another question related to the integration of sectors such as Customs & Excise and the Police in Biosecurity, and the status of AI in rural villages. The participant went on to ask about the measures taken at the borders to ensure food safety as most chickens and eggs consumed in the country are imported and there is little evidence that record checking/ inspection occurs at the border posts. The participant also suggested that Public Health and Veterinary Inspectors should work together more.

It was agreed that good control measures are lacking at the border posts. Although Senegal, which surrounds the country on three sides, and Holland, where most of the poultry imports comes from, are free from AI, the Gambia must not be complacent. All things coming into the country by air, land or sea should be thoroughly inspected. It was pointed out that Public Health and Veterinary Inspectors are working together as well as other security and enforcement personnel. Several intersectoral taskforces were stated to be in place. A participant lamented that Custom Officers are frequently accused of restricting trade and being insensitive. However, he also noted that if customs officers are sensitized on the need for Biosecurity measures, they can provide more assistance in that regard. It was also noted that customs officers do work jointly with inspectors from other agencies at the border posts and do provide data on trade statistics upon request.

Other questions related to the measures taken to ensure the safety of domestic poultry, whether poultry farms in the country are up to standards, the effectiveness of Biosecurity measures, what strategies and criteria are in place for the construction of poultry farms in the country and what should be done and whether the Gambia is doing enough to prevent AI.

Dr. Daffeh informed the gathering that there is an AI Taskforce, the Rapid Response Team, which meets on a regular basis to discuss and address issues relating to AI. Information is given to people to not live in close proximity with their domestic poultry. With regards to poultry farms, they should not be located in residential areas; however, ensuring that people comply with this directive is very difficult.

At the end of the session, participants concurred that there is the need for well-trained personnel on biosecurity.

In summing up the session, Dr. Touray informed the gathering of a forthcoming EC- funded Training Programme to ensure quality assurance for export and consumption of safe products. He also implored to them to tackle some burning issues namely:

- The non-reporting of animal diseases and the threat of AI in the country
- The need for strengthening biosecurity-related data collection
- The potential biosecurity risks at border posts, for example, day old chicks from Senegal brought into the country. Are our border posts up to International Standards?

He implored the participants to work fervently on the strategic plan so that at the end of the day, the end product will be a robust document owned by everybody. Everything written in the document, he continued, will be taken cognisance of, and may lead to a Biosecurity Framework and Policy for The Gambia. He informed the gathering that a National Validation Workshop on the Strategic Plan will take place in the future and among those invited will be the National Nutrition Council, participants present at this training workshop and every sector with a stake in Biosecurity including the Department of State for Finance, who are also important as they allocate resources. According to Dr. Touray, the Strategic Plan is also eagerly awaited by the National Assembly Members. He therefore urged the participants to come up with resolute recommendations on improving Biosecurity in the country.

He said that some of the concerns raised would be addressed by the newly inaugurated Food Advisory Board. He reminded the participants that the biosecurity needs assessment funded by the FAO project is a continuous assessment and the results of that assessment would be reflected in the strategic action plan. He also noted that another workshop will be held in November for more integration and harmonisation, particularly in the area of inspection, where all competent inspection authorities mentioned in the Food Act, 2005, would be participating.

Mr. Malong Fofana, NCC secretariat, then presented the NCC/ SPS committee's 5- year strategic plan for food safety that has been under deliberation in the NCC. Based on the previous presentations on Biosecurity and the recent change in the role of the NCC to also serve as the SPS committee for the Gambia, the workshop participants divided into groups to revise the strategic plan to ensure that the plan included the necessary components to implement a biosecurity approach in the Gambia.

Conclusion of the workshop

Following the presentations of the working groups on their revisions to the strategic plan, the FAO consultant made her closing remarks, along with Mr. Joseph Ndemmm, a member of the

NCC and Manager of the West African Quality Program. The participants were reminded of the upcoming activities related to the project and were informed that the workshop's comments on the strategic plan would be included in the version which would be further discussed by the NCC and eventually presented to the National Assembly for endorsement.

List of Annexes

Annex 1. Participant list

Annex 2. Workshop timetable

Annex 3. Slides of presentation by Ms. Londa Vanderwal

Annex 4. Slides of presentation by Dr. Kebba Daffee

Annex 1. Participant list- 16 October 2008

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Annex 8. Project workshop/ training session reports (continued)

Phase 1 events (continued- (full text of these reports available from international consultant or national project counterparts, not included in this document due to space constraints):

- Information sharing workshop of the Competent Authorities for food safety, animal and plant health (11-12 November 2008;
- Seminar on the role of the media in the Gambia's food safety system (12 February 2009)

Phase 2 events: (the annexes to these reports are available from international consultant or national project counterparts, not included in this document due to space constraints)

- Workshop to conduct an assessment of the inspection and certification system and develop an action plan to address the needs identified (9-10 September 2009; Annex 8.2)
- Training and working session of the NCSPSC (20-21 October 2009; Annex 8.3)
- Training of laboratory technicians (27-28 October 2009; Annex 8.4)
- Training of local food processors on Good Hygienic Practices (GHPs- including review of GHP manuals) (3-4 November 2009; Annex 8.5)
- Training of inspectors (including review of inspection guidelines) (11-12 November 2009; Annex 8.6)
- Workshop on networking of laboratories (17 November 2009; Annex 8.7)
- Development of a national Biosecurity policy (Dr. Ruth Frampton, policy expert mission- 20 Nov-3 Dec; stakeholder consultation workshop 1-2 December 09; workshop report attached as Annex 8.8)

Annex 9. Reports of key NCSPSC (and sub-committee) meetings held during the project

- NCSPSC Executive committee (also serves as main project steering committee; 27 August 2009; Annex 9.1)
- NCSPSC Executive committee (6 October 2009; Annex 9.2)
- NCSPSC Information, Education, and Communication sub-committee (26 October 2009; Annex 9.3)
- NCSPSC debriefing from mission of BTSF consultant (5 November 2009; Annex 9.4)
- NCSPSC meeting (16 November 2009; Annex 9.5)

Listing of texts developed through the project (full text available from international consultant or national project counterparts, not included in this document due to space constraints)

- Draft Biosecurity framework policy
- Brochure on the NCSPSC for policy makers
- Brochure on food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary matters for the general public
- Manual on application of GHPs for local street food vendors
- Manual on application of GHPs for local cereals processors
- Manual on guidelines for inspectors

Annex 8.2

Final report of the workshop on assessment of the inspection and certification system in food safety, animal and plant health

9-10 September 2009; NaNA headquarters, Bakau, The Gambia

Introduction

This workshop was organized by the National Codex/ Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC) to clarify and assess the current situation of various competent authorities in food safety, animal and plant health- related inspection and certification activities, and to develop an action plan to improve the inspection and certification system in the Gambia. The workshop was held as one of the initial activities of the second phase of an FAO-funded project in the Gambia on “Implementing and integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health in the Gambia (a Biosecurity approach)”. It was held in collaboration with the West Africa Quality Program, which is implementing a three-year program in the Gambia to support the competitiveness and harmonization of TBT and SPS measures in the Gambia. A concept note for the workshop, which includes more information on the background, objectives, invitees, and other information is attached as Annex A. Numerous stakeholders involved in the inspection and certification system in food safety, animal and plant health in the Gambia were invited to the workshop, with many of those in attendance (participant list attached as Annex B).

Proceedings

The opening ceremony of the workshop was chaired by Mr. Modou Njie, chair of the NCSPSC sub-committee on inspection. The timetable for the workshop is attached as Annex C.

After the welcome by the chair and introduction of the high table, Dr. Babagana Ahmadu, FAO- Representative in the Gambia welcomed all participants to the workshop on behalf of FAO and emphasized the value of implementing an integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health as promoted by FAO in the Gambia. He also highlighted the important role of strong inspection and certification systems in food safety, animal and plant health in order to strengthen agriculture and food security in the country (remarks attached as Annex D). On behalf of the Honourable Mariatou Jallow, Minister of Health, the Permanent Secretary Mr. Sainey Susso officially opened the workshop. The speech emphasized the important role of inspection to ensure the health of all Gambians, and the timely nature of the workshop in light of recent media coverage of food safety-related issues (speech attached as Annex E).

Following self-introductions by all participants, Dr. Londa Vanderwal, FAO consultant, provided an overview of the modalities and benefits of an integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health, as well as a brief introduction to the concepts and approaches of modern, risk-based inspection (presentation attached as Annex F). In a time of discussion following the presentation, the consultant emphasized that FAO does not prescribe a particular organizational arrangement to achieve an integrated approach, but does promote improved coordination and collaboration in the way best suited to the situation in each country. The

NCSPSC chair reported that the Gambia is moving towards having a single food control agency, likely in the year 2011.

Mr. Malang Fofana, NCSPSC secretariat, then presented the report, particularly the recommendations, of the November 2008 Competent Authority workshop (presentation attached as Annex G). The presenter clarified that some of the recommendations and strategies from that workshop were implemented, and that the Phase II of the FAO-funded Biosecurity project, including the emphasis of the current workshop on the inspection and certification system, is a result of those recommendations.

Presentations were then given by each of the various competent authorities in the area of inspection and certification in the Gambia, including the following:

- Dr. Mackie Taal: Directorate of Food Standards, Quality and Safety Enforcement-Ministry of Health (MOH); (Annex H)
- Mr. Sana Jawara: Directorate of Health Services; (Annex I)
- Mr. Landing Sonko: Agriculture Pest Management Services (Annex J)
- Mr. Modou Njie: Fisheries Department (Annex K)
- Mr. Joseph Njie: Gambia Revenue Authority (Annex L)

The Department of Veterinary Services was also asked to make a presentation, but the Director had travelled and so deputized someone from the department to make the presentation, but that person was bereaved so was not able to make the presentation. Handouts of the presentation given by the Department at the November 2008 Competent Authority workshop were provided to all participants for their information and use in the development of the action plan.

Mr. Modou Ceesay of the Gambia Horticulture Enterprise, a private sector horticultural exporter, also presented on his company's experience with inspection and certification systems in the Gambia, particularly trying to gain access to the EU vegetable export market (presentation in Annex M). The speaker highlighted the challenges for the private sector to meet the stringent standards of the EU market, and the need for increased support to the private sector to increase their export earnings.

Overview of discussion items

A brief time of discussion was held after each presentation, with numerous questions and great interest from all participants. The need for more training in the area of inspection, as well as sensitization of the general public, producers, processors, vendors, food handlers, importers and other stakeholders on food safety, animal and plant health issues was emphasized. The workshop also discussed the need for clarity of responsibilities of inspection of various portions of the chain of food production and consumption, and the need for current and future inspectors in the country to be taught about the Food Act. The need for strengthened public-private partnerships in this area was also emphasized.

In discussion, the presenter from the Directorate of Health Services recalled that in the past, MOH had the sole responsibility for inspection of food products in the Gambia. He affirmed that the MOH welcomes the involvement of other agencies in food inspection, and that it was important to have the roles of the various stakeholders well-defined in the Food Act. The

workshop noted that the government of the Gambia is placing a large emphasis on food safety matters, as the President of the Gambia requested that the MOH create a directorate to deal specifically with food safety issues.

Upon questioning, the presenter from the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA) affirmed that customs inspectors are able to conduct proper documentation checks of imported items, as there were no health or agricultural inspectors at the port in the past and customs officers were then responsible for such checks. The speaker also underlined the important role that customs plays in inspection and certification, as they see all the products coming in and out of the country. He also indicated that customs officers escort vehicles carrying transit goods to the border; however, there is no way to know that anti-social goods will not come back into the Gambia as the Gambia has porous borders.

Group work

All participants were then randomly assigned to participate in one of three groups, focusing on the inspection and certification system in a) food safety, b) animal health, or c) plant health. In addition, the most senior government official present at the workshop working in each of the areas (food safety, animal health or plant health) was asked to participate in that group as a resource person. Each group was provided with a matrix to be completed for the area to which they were assigned, which included the following:

- listing the various weaknesses in the system in that area;
- identifying the practical action that should be done in the short term to address that weakness;
- agreeing upon who should be responsible for that action to occur;
- a date for that action to take place; and
- an indicator that the action is completed.

Each group was then asked to present the results of their discussion to the plenary session, which was followed by a brief time of question and answer. The outcomes of the various groups were then compiled and briefly analyzed by the workshop secretariat, and presented to the plenary session. This presentation included an indication of which of the actions were planned to be carried out by either the FAO project or the West African Quality Programme. Participants reviewed the compiled action plan (attached in Annex N) and made comments to ensure that the plan effectively addresses the key weaknesses in the inspection and certification system in the Gambia.

Conclusion of the meeting

The secretariat of the NCSPSC then closed the workshop, thanking the participants for their active participation and by calling on the FAO consultant and the NCSPSC chairman to provide their concluding remarks. Participants were informed that the report of the workshop, including the action plan, would be reviewed by the executive committee of the NCSPSC and then sent to the workshop participants so that they could begin to implement the activities of the action plan.

Annexes

- Annex A: Workshop concept note
- Annex B: Participant list
- Annex C: Workshop timetable
- Annex D: Opening remarks from Dr. Babagana Ahmadu, FAO-representative
- Annex E: Opening address from Honourable Mariatou Jallow, Minister of Health
- Annex F: Presentation by Dr. Londa Vanderwal, FAO consultant
- Annex G: Presentation by Mr. Malang Fofana, NCSPSC secretariat
- Annex H: Presentation by Dr. Mackie Taal: Directorate of Food Standards, Quality and Safety Enforcement- Ministry of Health (MOH)
- Annex I: Presentation by Mr. Sana Jawara: Directorate of Health Services
- Annex J: Presentation by Mr. Landing Sonko: Agriculture Pest Management Services
- Annex K: Presentation by Mr. Modou Njie: Fisheries Department
- Annex L: Presentation by Mr. Joseph Njie: Gambia Revenue Authority
- Annex M: Presentation by Mr. Modou Ceesay, Gambia Horticulture Enterprise
- Annex N: Action plan to improve the inspection and certification system in food safety, animal and plant health

**Report of the National Codex, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC)
training and working session**

20-21 October 2009; NaNA headquarters, Bakau, The Gambia

Introduction

This training and working session was organized by the National Codex/ Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC) to provide participants with background information on the organization of Codex and SPS at international and national levels, and to utilize the information gained to finalize three draft standards and to agree on a work plan for the development and finalization of standards until the end of 2009. The workshop was held as part of the second phase of an FAO-funded project with the NCSPSC in The Gambia on “Implementing and integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health in The Gambia (a Biosecurity approach)”. A concept note for the workshop, which includes more information on the background, objectives, invitees, and other information is attached as Annex A. Members of the NCSPSC, as well as others affected by the standards to be discussed were invited to the workshop, with many of those in attendance (participant list attached as Annex B).

Proceedings

The opening ceremony of the workshop was Chaired by Mr. Sana Jawara, Chair of the NCSPSC sub-committee on food hygiene. The timetable for the workshop is attached as Annex C.

After the welcome by the chair and introduction of the high table, Dr. Babagana Ahmadu, FAO- Representative in The Gambia welcomed all participants to the workshop on behalf of FAO and emphasized the importance of strengthening food safety, animal and plant health in order to increase the availability of food in the Gambia. He also congratulated The Gambia for combining their national Codex and SPS committees, which FAO is using as a model for other countries to increase the effectiveness of both committees (remarks attached as Annex D). On behalf of the Dr. Thomas Sukwa, WHO representative in The Gambia, a WHO Environmental Health Officer, Mr. Kebba Dibba, provided welcoming remarks from WHO. He noted that the Codex Alimentarius Commission is a joint FAO/WHO body and that WHO is committed to assist the Gambia to strengthen its food safety system (speech attached as Annex E).

Dr. Londa Vanderwal, FAO consultant, presented on the organization of Codex and SPS committees at an international level, including information on the scientific basis of Codex and SPS work (presentation attached as Annex F). The consultant then presented on the expected roles of national Codex committees and more information on Codex-related activities at a national level (presentation attached as Annex G).

Dr. Omar Touray, the NCSPSC Chairperson, gave the background on the development and role of the NCSPSC in The Gambia, including information on the structure and configuration, overarching responsibilities and key functions of the committee (content of presentation

attached in Annex H). He provided information on standards development activities that have already occurred in 2009, as well as an introduction to the working sessions for the finalization of standards and the discussion of the work plan for the last quarter of 2009 that would take place on Day 2 of the workshop.

Participants appreciated the information provided in the presentations as it provided background information on the work of the NCSPSC. In the discussions, the need for national food safety, animal and plant health measures to be scientifically justified was emphasized, as well as the need for increased information on food safety to be shared with government policy makers, as well as the general public. The session also noted that the NCSPSC would be a part of the national standards body that will be developed in the future, and that the committee does not belong to a particular agency, but that it consists of many different stakeholders, including various governmental agencies, private sector groups, and civil society.

Group work

On day 2 of the workshop, participants discussed 3 draft standards, namely Labelling of pre-packaged foods, Edible fats and oils, and Code of good practice for food advertising. The work on each standard was led by the person that had been serving as Chair or rapporteur of the previous development of that standard, with the remaining participants being allowed to select the group discussing the standard of their choice (composition of the working groups is attached as Annex I).

The working group present the results of their work on their standard to the plenary session, which was followed by a brief time of discussion on each standard. The NCSPSC members agreed to adopt each of the standards as presented. The Chairs of each of the standard development task forces will develop a timeline for the editing and finalization of the standard for forwarding to the relevant institutions to have them implemented as regulations.

The participant/workshop noted that in order to meet WTO SPS requirements, all regulations developed must be based on science, and that these standards developed were based, as much as possible, on existing Codex standards which are recognized under the SPS Agreement. The NCSPSC chair indicated that the government regulatory committee needs to be sensitized that these regulations will be coming to them through the relevant ministry, as follows:

- Food labelling- Ministry of Health
- Food advertisement- Ministry of Health
- Edible fats and oils- likely the Ministry of Health, but could also go through the Ministry of Agriculture.

The workshop then reviewed the status of the action plan that was developed at the 9-10 September 2009 FAO/West African Quality Programme (WAQP) inspection assessment workshop to determine the activities that were occurring as planned and those that need to be addressed during the last quarter of 2009. In particular, the session was informed of the numerous activities planned and underway through the FAO Biosecurity support project, as well as the WAQP. The NCSPSC chair also indicated that three standards currently in draft form (package water, poultry and poultry products, and street foods) will be further developed

by their respective committees, as much as possible, in the last quarter of 2009. The session also recalled that at the previously mentioned inspection assessment workshop (9-10 September 2009), the Ministry of Health proposed the development of a code of ethics for inspectors and agreed that a task force should be established to work in this area. The need to develop guidelines for the proper disposal of condemned food products was also discussed.

The importance of information, education, and communication (IEC) regarding NCSPSC-related matters was also emphasized. The Chairman of the NCSPSC IEC Sub-Committee pledged to prepare a press release on 22 October 2009 regarding the meeting and the adoption of the three standards. The IEC Sub-Committee also made plans to meet soon after this workshop to further develop a communications strategy and develop proposals for funding of their activities.

The NCSPSC chairperson also presented the request for budgetary allocation to support the operations of the NCSPSC under the 2010 government budget, including funding for further equipping the committee secretariat, operational costs for the committee, and participation in international and regional activities of Codex and OIE (World Organization for Animal Health). The Chairperson also noted their plans to request additional technical assistance from FAO in 2010.

Conclusion

Mr. Sana Jawara, the workshop chairperson then closed the workshop, thanking the participants for their active participation and by calling on the FAO consultant and the NCSPSC chairman to provide their concluding remarks. Participants were informed of the upcoming events of the FAO project and other NCSPSC-related activities and were encouraged to actively participate, in order to strengthen the food safety, animal and plant health system in The Gambia.

Annexes

- Annex A: Workshop concept note
- Annex B: Participant list
- Annex C: Workshop timetable
- Annex D: Opening remarks from Dr. Babagana Ahmadu, FAO-representative
- Annex E: Welcoming remarks from Dr. Thomas Sukwa, WHO-representative
- Annex F: Presentation by Dr. Londa Vanderwal, FAO consultant
 - o Organization of Codex and SPS committees at an international level
- Annex G: Presentation by Dr. Londa Vanderwal, FAO consultant
 - o Expected roles of national Codex committees and Codex-related activities at a national level
- Annex H: Presentation by Dr. Omar Touray, NCSPSC chairperson
 - o Development and role of the NCSPSC in the Gambia
- Annex I: Composition of the standards working groups

Report of the Food safety, animal and plant health-related laboratory technician training programme

28-29 October 2009; National Public Health Laboratory, Kotu, The Gambia

Introduction

This training programme was organized by the National Codex/ Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC) to strengthen the knowledge and experience of technicians currently working in food safety, animal and plant health-related laboratories in The Gambia so that they can better protect the health of people, plants, and animals in The Gambia, as well as increase opportunities for export of food and agricultural products from the Gambia. The training programme was held as part of the second phase of an FAO-funded project with the NCSPSC in The Gambia on “Implementing and integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health in the Gambia (a Biosecurity approach)”. A concept note for the training programme, which includes more information on the background, objectives, invitees, and other information is attached as Annex A. Laboratory technicians working in various public and private sector laboratories in the areas of food safety, fisheries, animal and plant health were invited to the training, with many of those in attendance (participant list attached as Annex B).

Proceedings

The training programme was Chaired by Dr. Makie Taal, director of the National Public Health Laboratories (NPHL), and Acting Director of the Food Standards, Quality and hygiene Enforcement (FSQHE) Directorate of the Ministry of Health. The timetable for the training programme is attached as Annex C.

After the welcome by the Chair and introduction of the high table, Mr. Omar Sey, Deputy Permanent Secretary – Technical Services of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare welcomed all participants to the workshop on behalf of the Ministry of Health and emphasized the importance of strengthening laboratories in The Gambia to better monitor the safety and quality of foods, and to improve human health. He also acknowledged the assistance of various donor and technical agencies in The Gambia in strengthening laboratories, particularly in the area of food safety and quality (remarks attached as Annex D). On behalf of Dr. Babagana Ahmadu, FAO representative in The Gambia, Dr. Londa Vanderwal, FAO consultant, provided welcoming remarks from FAO. Dr. Ahmadu noted the importance of effective laboratory analysis to verify that food products meet standards and to ensure that animals and plants remain healthy. The speech also acknowledged the urgent need for continued capacity building of laboratory technicians to be able to meet international requirements (speech attached as Annex E).

Following self-introduction by all participants, Dr. Makie Taal presented on Good Laboratory Practices (GLPs), which also included information on health and safety in the laboratory, as well as the benefits of implementing GLPs (presentation attached as Annex F). Mr. Borrie Jabang, head of the Central Veterinary Laboratory of the Department of Agriculture presented on Laboratory quality assurance, in particular detailing with the ISO 17025 requirements for the accreditation of testing labs (presentation attached as Annex G). A presentation on

Laboratory biosafety was made by Mr. Biram Fye, Focal Point: Food and Clinical Microbiology, Central Veterinary Laboratory. The presentation provided detailed information on the classification of microorganism by risk group, as well as the requirements and procedures for the four Biosafety levels (presentation attached as Annex H). Each presentation was followed by questions, responses, and discussion, which will be detailed in a later section of this report.

Participants then toured the National Public Health laboratories, particularly the food chemistry and microbiology labs, and discussed the functioning and maintenance of the various pieces of equipment in the lab, as well as the plans for future development of the laboratories. The procedures undertaken in food handler screening and other laboratory activities were also demonstrated. Demonstrations were carried out on the operation of the autoclave and the incinerator used by the laboratory. Participants were able to ask numerous questions to the operators of the various pieces of equipment and gain hands on experience in some of the activities of the laboratory.

The second day of the training began with a presentation on laboratory accreditation, including the development of laboratory manuals, by Mr. Joseph Ndenn, coordinator of the West Africa Quality Programme (WAQP). Mr. Ndenn also provided background information on the WAQP, which is providing extensive support to food control laboratories in The Gambia (presentation in Annex I). Mr. Abdoulie Phaal, controller, Weights and Measures Bureau of the Ministry of Trade and Industry presented on the proper use, calibration and maintenance of laboratory equipment. He outlined the various types of laboratories in The Gambia, and the plans to develop a course in The Gambia to train technicians to maintain and calibrate laboratory equipment (presentation in Annex J). The final presentation of the training was made by Dr. Makie Taal, on laboratory workflow and efficiency. This presentation included information on sampling procedures, transportation, sample receipt, storage and handling, processing, and test reporting (presentation in Annex K).

As previously mentioned, time was provided for questions and discussion after each presentation (on both days of the training), with active participation from many of those in attendance. The following items were discussed by the participants:

- There are a number of occupational safety risks in working in a laboratory. An occupational and environmental risk assessment should be conducted for every chemical and biological agent in the lab, as well as every procedure undertaken in the lab. Based on this assessment, laboratories should have a occupational safety program in place, which is a pre-requisite for laboratories to have insurance coverage. Laboratories must develop occupational health and safety manuals, and the workers must adhere to the measures outlined in the manual. NPHL has already developed a Code of Safe Laboratory Practices, but assistance may be needed to develop such measures for some of the other laboratories in The Gambia.
- Laboratories working in the areas related to food safety, animal and plant health in The Gambia should build a strong network of laboratories and an association of laboratory personnel to improve their situation, as they face similar challenges. It was noted that

the FAO project will be holding a workshop in mid-November to discuss such a network, as well as the interface between laboratories and inspectors. Such a network/association can work in the following areas:

- Implementation of a national insurance scheme for lab personnel, including compensation in case of accidents.
 - Improving the pay grade of laboratory personnel
- Laboratory workers should never reject a sample that is brought to them for analysis. If that laboratory does not have the capability to test it, the laboratory should sub-contract with a more competent laboratory that can conduct the necessary tests for the customer. A lab should have a list of all the labs with which it sub-contracts and should submit any necessary samples to the relevant lab on behalf of the customer.
- It was noted that laboratory Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) can only be changed by a laboratory manager, while a “method” can be developed and revised by the laboratory personnel. It was emphasized that laboratories should have certain “controlled documents” which can only be altered by laboratory managers, rather than by laboratory personnel. Participants also emphasized that laboratory technicians must adhere to a code of ethics for lab workers.
- There is currently no laboratory accreditation body in The Gambia. Laboratories can have accreditation of their GLPs, Good Clinical Laboratory Practices (GCLPs), Good Clinical Practices (GCPs), or for specific laboratory tests (such as specific microbiology or chemical tests). The WAQP is assisting three laboratories in The Gambia to achieve accreditation, but other laboratories can also seek accreditation on their own or with the help Fisheries Lab for Microbiology, NPHL for Chemists and NARI for Aflatoxin of other sources.
- The WAQP is planning a workshop for the upcoming National Meteorological Institute where maintenance of laboratory equipment can occur. A syllabus for the training course on maintenance and calibration of laboratory equipment will be developed in collaboration with The Gambia Technical Training Institute based on a needs assessment of the area, which will be conducted in the future. The Ministry of Health has plans to train two biomedical engineers to maintain their laboratory equipment.
- The importance of Scientific sampling procedures was emphasized. The existence of internationally- recognized sampling standards was also noted.
- Procedures in place for food handler screening (faecal testing) were discussed. The Food Standards, Quality and Hygienic Enforcement (FSE) Directorate conducted sensitization through mass media means of the importance of food handler screening and of the process food handlers must follow in this regard. Ministry of Health is equipping FSE in other regional Lab to also conduct food handler screenings and issue food handler certificates, rather than private laboratories issuing certificates.

Conclusions and Recommendations

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants were asked to list their main conclusions and recommendations emanating from the workshop, as follows:

- Many food safety, animal and plant health-related laboratories including the National Meteorological Lab in The Gambia need capacity building, including the Weights and Measures Bureau. Agencies such as FAO should consider assisting these laboratories.
 - o Training may be needed in the area of proposal writing, to assist lab technicians and others seeking funds to write effective proposals to submit to donor agencies for review.
- A laboratory personnel association should be developed. The association should carry out the following:
 - o Sensitize NAMs and policy makers on the importance of laboratories and of supporting the needs of laboratory technicians.
 - o Promoting regular medical screening and a risk allowance for laboratory personnel.
 - o Serve as, or advocate for, an inspection board for laboratories
- The Ministry of Health (MoH) has developed a draft laboratory policy for the MoH laboratories
 - o The policy has been finalized at the technical level, and only requires approval from Cabinet
 - o This policy should expand to include other government Ministries that also have laboratories.
- Advanced training is needed for laboratory retraining in The Gambia, particularly at and above the BSc level.
 - o Training is particularly in the area of toxicology needed in The Gambia.
- The Gambia should organize an open day for laboratories to sensitize the general public, as well as NAMs, on the importance of laboratories.
 - o NAMs need to be sensitized on the concerns of laboratories

Conclusion of the meeting

Dr. Makie Taal, the Training workshop chairperson then closed the training session, thanking the participants for their active participation. Participants were informed of the upcoming events of the FAO project, particularly the laboratory-networking workshop planned for 17 November 2009. The FAO consultant thanked the National Public Health Laboratory personnel for an excellent job in hosting the training session, particularly the laboratory aspects of the training.

Annexes

- Annex A: Workshop concept note
- Annex B: Participant list
- Annex C: Workshop timetable
- Annex D: Opening remarks from Dr. Omar Sey, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

- Annex E: Welcoming remarks from FAO
- Annex F: Presentation by Dr. Makie Taal, National Public Health Laboratories
 - o Good Laboratory Practices
- Annex G: Presentation by Mr. Borrie Jabang, Central Veterinary Laboratory
 - o Laboratory quality assurance
- Annex H: Presentation by Mr. Biram Fye, Central Veterinary Laboratory
 - o Laboratory Biosafety
- Annex I: Presentation by Mr. Joseph Ndenn, WAQP national technical coordinator
 - o Laboratory accreditation
- Annex J: Presentation by Mr. Abdoulie Phaal, Weights and Measures Bureau
 - o Proper use, calibration, and maintenance of laboratory equipment
- Annex K: Presentation by Dr. Makie Taal, National Public Health Laboratories
 - o Laboratory workflow and efficiency

Annex 8.5

Report of the training programme on Good Hygienic Practices for local food processors

3-4 November 2009; National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) headquarters, Bakau, The Gambia

Introduction

This training programme was organized by the National Codex/ Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC) to strengthen the knowledge and skills of food processors in The Gambia, particularly in the area of Good Hygienic Practices (GHPs) so that they can produce safer food for domestic consumption, as well as for export possibilities. The training programme was held as part of the second phase of an FAO-funded project with the NCSPSC in The Gambia on “Implementing an integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health in The Gambia (a Biosecurity approach)”. A concept note for the training programme, which includes more information on the background, objectives, invitees, and other information is attached as Annex A. Processors working in various sectors of the food industry, including cereals processing, street foods preparation, fish processing and other areas, as well as government agencies working in related fields were invited to the training, with many of those in attendance (participant list attached as Annex B).

Proceedings

The training programme was chaired by Mr. Malang N. Fofana, NCSPSC Secretariat, on behalf of Mr. Seedy Fofana of the Food Technology Services of the Department of Agriculture, who was bereaved. The timetable for the training programme is attached as Annex C.

After the welcome by the Chair and introduction of the high table, Dr. Londa Vanderwal, FAO consultant, provided welcoming remarks on behalf of Dr. Babagana Ahmadu, FAO representative in The Gambia. He emphasized the importance of improving the quality and safety of foods processed in The Gambia and also increase food availability, in order to

increasing the shelf life of foods produced by Gambian farmers. The need for processors to increase the safety and quality of any foods they wish to export was also underlined (remarks attached as Annex D). Mr. Kekoi Kuyateh, Deputy Permanent Secretary, then welcomed all participants to the training programme on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and noted that the increase in agricultural production in The Gambia must be accompanied by an increase in the volume and the safety of food processing undertaken in The Gambia. The role of the government and of the private sector in producing and processing an abundant supply of safe and nutritious food was also mentioned (speech attached as Annex E).

Following self-introductions by all participants, Dr. Londa Vanderwal presented on personal hygiene and the basic principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). The presentation underlined the importance of food safety to The Gambia, as well as the need for food producers, processors and vendors to implement systems to ensure food safety. The importance of personal hygiene, one aspect of Good Hygienic Practices (GHPs), was also emphasized (presentation attached as Annex F). Each presentation was followed by a time of questions, responses, and discussion, which will be detailed in a later section of this report.

The national project team for the previously mentioned FAO project identified that street food vending and cereals processing were two important areas in The Gambia that would benefit from the development of manuals for the implementation of GHPs by food processors/handlers. It was recognized that other areas of food processing were also important, but the project could only fund the development of two manuals on the implementation of GHPs by food processors, so selected these two areas as a start. In this regard, Mr. Sana Jawara, Principal Public Health Officer of the Ministry of Health presented the Guidelines for implementation of GHPs for street food vendors that was developed by Mr. Jawara, as well as Saul Madi Sillah (Consumer Protection Association of The Gambia) and Ndeye Corr Sarr (National Association of Food Processors).

Mr. Malang N. Fofana then presented the Manual on GHPs for Cereals processing, on behalf of the group that developed the manual, including Mr. Seedy Fofana (Food Technology Services Department of Agriculture) and Yassin Mbye (food processor). A presentation on the concept of the implementation of voluntary food safety control systems and the relationship between processors and inspectors was presented by Dr. Londa Vanderwal (presentation attached as Annex G). The presenter noted that producers, processors, and handlers have the ultimate responsibility for food safety, and that the role of the government is primarily to monitor compliance of the private sector with food safety regulations and to provide education and information. In a modern, risk-based inspection system, the inspectors should serve more as partners in improving the safety of the entire food production process, rather than as “police” only checking the safety of the final product.

Participants were then allowed to select if they would like to participate in the group validating the Street Foods manual or the cereals manual and took a copy of the relevant manual home to review for the evening. On the second day of the training, each of the two groups worked together to review the manuals and make their comments. The rappateur of each group then provided a summary of their discussion to the plenary session, which was followed by discussion.

After the conclusion of the training, the participants toured a local food processing facility, led by Mr. Seedy Fofana. The participants appreciated the opportunity to view the facility and discuss practical applications of Good Hygienic Practices in a local processing facility. Women on another training course were utilizing the facility during the tour, so participants were able to discuss possible improvements to the facility, as well as the processing operation, to improve hygiene.

As previously mentioned, time was provided for questions and discussion after each presentation (on both days of the session), with active participation from many of those in attendance. The participants discussed the following items:

- Food vendors should try to form an association so that they can work together in unison bring their concerns to the Ministry of Health, potential donors for projects, and other similar groups.
 - o Such an association must seek out and involve people in The Gambia with expertise in the area
 - o Such a group could also serve to monitor the hygienic conditions of the vendors in the group, and would encourage other vendors to also meet hygienic standards
- One participant suggested that manuals/ posters should also be developed for shopkeepers to improve their GHPs
- More education should be provided to the general public to improve their GHPs when preparing and processing food. For example, in homes, women often use their head covering or their skirt/ wrapper to wipe plates, which is unhygienic. Great sensitization efforts may be needed to bring about such behaviour change.
- Food processors and vendors need to take more personal responsibility for the safety of the food that they process and sell.
 - o Consumers must also take responsibility by encouraging food vendors to use more hygienic practices. This will require more education of the general public regarding food safety and hygienic practices.
 - o Awareness raising campaigns are needed in this regard so that people are informed of how to improve food safety. Legislators also must be sensitized on the need for food safety.
- Regarding the manual for GHPs and street foods, the following points were noted:
 - o Men are also involved in street food vending; therefore some of the illustrations and points raised in the manual should be revised accordingly.
 - o The illustrations in the manual should clearly indicate good practices are unacceptable, in a way that is understandable to non-literate populations.

- These illustrations should be pre-tested with selected people before they are included in the final manual.
 - Some of the diagrams need to be better explained.
 - The Directorate of Health should propose some model reading devices for vendors. It was noted that the FAO GHPs for street foods manual includes some examples in this regard.
- Regarding the cereals manual, the following points were noted:
 - The example on micro and small scale the principles of HACCP should be simplified to improve understanding and implementation by food processors.
 - It is recognized that a HACCP system is difficult to implement but processors must adhere to at least GHP and GMP.
 - More illustrations are needed, particularly showing the critical areas for GHPs to be implemented
 - The order of the chapters should be re-arranged chronologically following the preparation process, beginning with what happens at the farm and continues with information on processing
 - The manuals must be based on science, not anecdotal information.
- The food processors to develop a central food processing plant, which would facilitate movement towards a HACCP-based system, among other benefits.
 - This would also encourage processors to work together, sharing good ideas with each other and encouraging one another.
 - Working together would also enable expansion of food processing in The Gambia and make the businesses more viable
 - Inputs could be purchased in bulk, at a reduced cost.
 - Donors can more easily work with a strong association than with individual processors, thus facilitating access to funds
 - Processors should come together to develop a strong project proposal to propose to donors
 - The quality and safety of foods processed in a centralized facility should also be improved, as the facilities and equipment could be more hygienically designed.
 - A centralized facility should also facilitate marketing of products
 - Improved quality and safety of products should also help with product marketing
 - Securing hygienic packaging would also be facilitated if processors work together
 - Hygienic packaging is currently a severe constraint in The Gambia as there are now very few packaging production companies in the Gambia.

- A food processing technology research center is needed in The Gambia to strengthen food processing in The Gambia.
 - o The Food Standards Directorate of the Ministry of Health does have a relationship with the Food Technology Institute in Dakar.
- Improvements must be made in the following areas in food processing, vending, and handling in The Gambia:
 - o Control of food additives- including dosage, acceptability, and quality of any that are used
 - The NCSPSC has plans to develop legislation in this area
 - o Pest control (including insects, rodents, and others)
 - o Cats and dogs must be kept out of food preparation and selling areas.
- Government inspectors must carry out their responsibilities in a fair and ethical manner. Inspectors and food processors should be working together for the health and safety of the consumer, rather than for any personal gain.
- Local government authorities need to also take responsibility for inspection of street food vending areas.
- All street food vendors and other food handlers should undergo medical screening. However, it is unclear if this is being done in all areas, as there are many informal street food vendors. The Ministry of Health is currently working to sensitize the general public on the need for this, particularly upcountry.
 - o The Food Standards, Quality, Hygiene and Safety Enforcement Directorate should do a press release about the need for, and procedures of the food handlers' certificate so that vendors will comply.
 - o Having an association of street food vendors would also help in this regard as the association could ensure that all vendors comply with the rules.
 - o Further discussions should be held on exactly how and where such screenings should be conducted.
 - o The manuals should state that "medical screening should be done at an approved laboratory", until further decisions have been taken on the conducting of such screening.
- One role of this workshop can be to help record the needs of food processors and to try to direct each of those needs to the right place to be addressed.

At the conclusion of the training session, participants were asked to list their main conclusions and recommendations emanating from the workshop, as follows:

Conclusions and Recommendations

- There is an existing food processors organization in the Gambia
- Food processors should organize themselves and work together, for numerous reasons as indicated above. In particular, working together, under strong leadership would enable increased donor support of food processing in The Gambia.
 - o They should identify their potential donors
 - o Project proposals should be developed so that they can be presented to potential donors for funding
 - o Such an association should meet regularly and must be well organized so that any projects implemented will succeed.
- (Agriculture extension workers should in the future be invited, as they should be providing training on hygiene to local farmers and food processors in the rural areas)
 - o The Ministry of Agriculture should be more involved in food processing, and specifically in the safety of such foods.
- Food processors, handlers, and vendors must work together in a cordial relationship with inspectors, keeping focused on the ultimate goal of protecting the health of consumers.
 - o Each group must take responsibility for their role in the food chain
- This workshop was intended to engage processors and inspectors
 - o A workshop will be held under the same project from 11-12 November, for training of food inspectors.
 - The group was asked to nominate 4 people to attend the inspectors' workshop on behalf of food processors and vendors to ensure that the needs of the private sector are understood and addressed by inspectors.
- The NCSPSC will take note of the concerns of the food processors and consider them in the development of future project proposals.

Annexes

- Annex A: Workshop concept note
- Annex B: Participant list
- Annex C: Workshop timetable
- Annex D: Welcoming remarks from FAO
- Annex E: Opening remarks from Mr. Kekoi Kuyateh, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture
- Annex F: Presentation by Dr. Londa Vanderwal, FAO consultant
 - o Personal hygiene and the basic principles of HACCP
- Annex G: Presentation by Dr. Londa Vanderwal, FAO consultant
 - o Implementation of voluntary food safety control systems and the relationship between processors and inspectors

Report of food safety, animal and plant health inspectors information and training seminar

11-12 November 2009; National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) headquarters, Bakau, The Gambia

Introduction

This information and training seminar was organized by the National Codex/ Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC) to strengthen the knowledge and experience of inspectors currently working in the areas of food safety, animal and plant health in The Gambia so that they can better protect the health of people, plants, and animals in The Gambia, as well as increase opportunities for export of food and agricultural products from The Gambia. The seminar was held as part of the second phase of an FAO-funded project with the NCSPSC in The Gambia on “Implementing an integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health in The Gambia (a Biosecurity approach)”. It was held in collaboration with the West Africa Quality Program (WAQP), which is implementing a three-year program in The Gambia to support the competitiveness and harmonization of TBT and SPS measures in The Gambia. A concept note for the training seminar, which includes more information on the background, objectives, invitees, and other information is attached as Annex A. Inspectors working in the various areas of food safety (including fisheries), animal and plant health, stationed at various locations, along with others working in areas impacted by inspections were invited to the training, with many of those in attendance (participant list attached as Annex B).

Proceedings

The opening session was chaired by Mr. Joseph Njie of The Gambia Revenue Authority, with Dr. Omar Touray, NCSPSC chairman, chairing the technical sessions of the seminar. The timetable for the seminar is attached as Annex C.

After the welcome by the chair and introduction of the high table, Mr. Alpha Jallow, WHO-Gambia Environmental Health Officer and focal point for food safety provided a statement on behalf of Dr. Thomas Sukwa, WHO Representative in The Gambia. He emphasized WHO's commitment to strengthening food safety in The Gambia and their support of the NCSPSC (remarks attached as Annex D). Dr. Londa Vanderwal, FAO consultant, then provided welcoming remarks on behalf of Dr. Babagana Ahmadu, FAO representative in The Gambia. He recalled the inspection assessment workshop that was supported by FAO and WAQP from 9-10 September 2009, which provided input to the organization of this current workshop. He also underlined the importance of working together in an integrated manner, both at the national and international levels, to strengthen food safety, animal and plant health (remarks attached as Annex E). Mr. Joseph Ndenn, National Technical Coordinator of WAQP, recalled the workshop held in November 2008 to assess the overall strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the various competent authorities in food safety, animal and plant health. The Workshop informed the organization of the inspection assessment workshop held in September 2009. He also reiterated the support of the WAQP to strengthen the food safety system in The Gambia (remarks attached as Annex F). Mr. Amadou Saine, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries, Water Resources, and National Assembly Matters, decline the

opening statement of the seminar. He noted the importance of fishery products for both domestic consumption and for export, thus necessitating sanitary conditions for production and processing of fish and fishery products. He also commended the NCSPSC for the work they are doing to strengthen food safety, animal and plant health in The Gambia, and for their efforts aimed at the harmonization of the food control system in line with international standards and best practices (speech attached as Annex G).

Following self-introductions by all participants, Dr. Londa Vanderwal gave a brief summary of the inspection assessment workshop report (9-10 September 2009) and reported on the status of the activities included in the action plan developed at that workshop, particularly those items being addressed by the current FAO project (presentation attached as Annex H). Dr. Makie Taal of the Food Standards, Quality, Hygiene and Safety Enforcement Directorate of the Ministry of Health then presented on the rationale for and benefits of harmonization of the inspection system (presentation attached as Annex I). This presentation was based on the contents of a workshop on Harmonization of Food Hygiene Inspection within Africa held in Accra, Ghana, 06-10 July 2009, organized as part of the European Union funded “Better Training for Safer Food”, Dr. Taal, Dr. Kebba Daffeh. (Deputy Director of Animal Health and production services,) and Mr. Modou Nai Ceesay, (a private poultry farmer) attended the training in The Gambia.

Mr. Madi Kuyateh on behalf of presented on the interface between animal health inspection and food safety inspection (text of presentation attached as Annex J). The Deputy Director of Plant Protection Services, Mr. Landing Sonko, presented on the interface between plant health inspection and food safety inspection (presentation attached as Annex K). The presentation addressed the inspection-related mandate of the plant protection services, and areas where overlaps with food safety inspection may occur. An introduction to a risk-based approach to inspection in food safety, animal and plant health was given by Dr. Londa Vanderwal, which explained the rationale for such a system, and some practical applications of this approach (presentation attached as Annex L). This was followed by discussions details in the later section of the report. As part of the previously-mentioned FAO project, a manual containing guidelines for inspection in food safety, animal and plant health in The Gambia was developed by a team of four resource persons working in the competent authorities in each of the following areas: food safety, animal health, fisheries, and plant health. Mr. Landing Sonko served as the team leader of the group and as such, provided an introduction and an overview of the manual prepared by the group. The other team members presented the section of the manual for which they were responsible, as the following: Mr. Omar Njie- food safety, Mr. Biram Fye- Animal health, Mr. Modou Njie- fisheries, and Mr. Landing Sonko- plant health. This was followed by of questions and discussion on the manual, which will be detailed in a later section of this report. All participants were provided with a copy of the manual, which they took home to review for the evening.

On second day Mr. Gabriel Gomez presented the results of a risk assessment carried out by the previously- mentioned Better Training for food project on poultry farms and livestock enterprises (presentation attached as Annex M). Mr. Gomez worked as a national consultant with the mission of an international consultant who visited various poultry farms and livestock enterprises in The Gambia and compared the conditions found to the relevant EU standards.

The presentation generated a great deal of discussion, which is detailed in a later section of this report.

Participants were divided into four groups to review the relevant section of the manual. The rapporteur of each group presented the results of their respective work to the plenary session, followed by discussion by all participants.

The following items were discussed:

- The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has recommended that its member states (including The Gambia) should move towards having a single national food control authority. The Gambia. Should strengthen its national food control system as well, so that it can be in line with regional recommendations. ECOWAS is also working to harmonize the inspection systems in the various countries within the regions.
- The seminar emphasized that all food safety, animal and plant health measures that are taken must be science-based.
- The important role of the National Environmental Agency in this subject was underlined, particularly when conducting risk assessments.
- Participants noted the reduced visibility of Public Health Inspectors in The Gambia in recent years, particularly in Banjul. Others noted that the workload of Public Health Inspectors is getting broader, while the number of working inspectors is decreasing.
 - o The Ministry of Health recognized the need to increase their inspections of shops, restaurants, and other food establishments, but noted the limited staff they have to carry out such inspections.
 - o Local government authorities also have an important role to play in food safety inspection, and must work together with competent authorities to protect the health of all those in The Gambia.
 - o School/children should be sensitized on the importance of learning science, so that more young people will be interested in Science related fields such as food safety, animal and plant health
- A consensus meeting should be held to discuss the need for strengthening the training on food safety, animal and plant health inspectors at the University of The Gambia, The Gambia College, including increasing the number of full-time lecturers in those Institutions.
- The need to strengthen inspections related to animal health throughout the Gambia was emphasized.

- Ante-mortem procedures, which should be used by abattoirs, including the resting and washing of animals before slaughter, were discussed at length.
 - Customers must be sensitized to buy only meat that has an inspection stamp.
 - Meat inspectors also have a daily record of what they inspected that can be cross-referenced with the stamp and certification system
 - The need for improving the hygiene of meat transport was also stressed
 - It was also discussed that many animals, particularly small ruminants are not slaughtered in abattoirs (or slaughter houses or slaughter slabs), including during religious and cultural ceremonies; improved hygiene is needed for slaughter of these animals as well.
 - The seminar also noted the need to develop and enforce hygienic standards for livestock production.
- Inspection and control of veterinary drugs, as well as the resulting veterinary drug residues must be strengthened. Other agricultural inputs, such as pesticides and fertilizers, must be inspected more carefully, particularly at the weekly local markets (lumos).
 - Strict monitoring of expiry dates of food products, as well as the need for enactment and enforcement of the recently adopted food labeling standard to mandate the type of ink used in printing expiry dates was emphasized.
 - It was also noted that some people often buy food from supermarkets that is near its expiry date and will sell it in the local markets at a reduced price.
 - Consumer organizations in The Gambia were encouraged to strengthen their capacities and increase consumer awareness, so that consumers will have adequate information to demand for safer food.
 - The Consumer Protection Association of The Gambia (CPAG) indicated that they are in the process of holding consumer parliaments on various issues, and are planning to address the issue of food safety in the future.
 - CPAG and NaNA is planning to do a survey of street food in December 2009 with support from WAQP. CPAG also assisted in the development of a manual on implementing good hygienic practices for street food vendors through the same FAO project.
 - Inspectors must conduct inspections in a professional manner
 - Inspectors should write an official report and submit it through the proper channels soon after the inspection is conducted.

- If such reports eventually reach the importer of that product and the inspection is conducted professionally, importers are less likely to resist sampling of their products.
 - Consignees should be sensitized by inspectors on their rationale for sampling and the need for proper inspection
 - Inspectors should ensure that they use proper documentation, such as a certificate of destruction for goods to be destroyed.
 - Inspectors must have proper identification
 - They should show an official inspector identity card when entering premises.
 - There should be a register of inspectors, which establishments can reference to see if that inspector has the authority to enter their premises.
 - The government should consider assigning inspectors to work in a specific geographic area.
 - Inspectors must insist that any deficiencies found in the inspection are improved.
 - Inspectors must take samples in a professional manner, following established regulations and ensuring they only take what is needed for analysis.
- Prosecution of establishments and personnel that do not pass inspection was discussed.
 - It was emphasized that a strong scientific evidence as well as strong legislation, is needed to be able to prosecute the violator.
 - A risk assessment to identify the magnitude of the risk should be carried out, and fines should be levied accordingly.
- The need for increased surveillance and reporting of plant pests (insects, weeds, plant diseases, etc) within The Gambia by both government officials, farmers, and the general public was noted.
 - The personal effects of VIP travelers are often not carefully checked when entering The Gambia, and they are likely to bring in foreign plant materials that could threaten local crop production
 - These VIP travelers need to be sensitized on the importance of Phytosanitary inspection to prevent threats to plant production from entering The Gambia.
- Continued sensitization in the area of food safety, animal and plant health is needed

- The general public must be sensitized on the need for, as well as ways to improve food hygiene
- Inspectors and all other government officials must be sensitized on the Food Act 2005.
 - Institutions must carry out their assigned responsibilities to strengthen food safety, animal and plant health in The Gambia.
- Producers, processors, and handlers must be provided with viable alternatives to the unsanitary/ unhygienic methods they may currently be using.

Specifically regarding the inspection manual, the following points were raised:

- Information must be included on the inspection of transportation
 - Products such as fish should be carried in enclosed, refrigerated containers.
- Proper sampling methods should be included in all sections of the manual.
- There should be one table of contents, at the beginning of the manual.
- Should include the need for inspectors to use proper inspection kits to utilize a scientific approach
 - Inspectors should use gloves and other personal protective equipment (PPE), wear clean clothes, use hygienic approach, etc.
- The manual should discuss that inspection should be done along the food chain- from production to consumption. The manual could be re-ordered to reflect this.
 - The manual should note that The Gambia is moving towards a single food control agency and a more harmonized system, but can explain what is currently being done in each sector, “along the food chain”.
- The manual must reflect the legislation that is currently in force in The Gambia, particularly the roles of the various inspectorates according to the 2005 Food Act.
 - For example, veterinarians are responsible for meat inspection at the abattoirs, and the Ministry of Health should take over after the meat leaves the abattoirs. Therefore, there is need for improved communication between these sectors to monitor safe and suspect products.
 - Items included in the manual should be laid out in the relevant legislation.
- All items included in the manual should be based on a scientific risk assessment, with all aspects of the statement carefully considered
 - For example, testing for TB and other animal diseases throughout the country may be very costly and not a high priority.

Food safety section of the manual:

- Training of the food industry (producers, processors, handlers, etc) should be included in the list of responsibilities of food inspectors.

- The section on the relationship between the food industry and inspectors should be generalized and included in the overall portion of the manual.
- The relevant NSCPSC sub-committee should hold a scientific discussion on the issue of testing food handlers for tuberculosis (TB)
 - o The manual should state “People found to be infected with TB should not be allowed to sell food”.
- The section on disposal of confiscated products should be included in the introductory section
 - o Should include all relevant groups involved in confiscation

Animal health section of the manual:

- A lengthy discussion was held on exactly when post-mortem inspection should take place in relation to the onset of rigor mortis, as well as what the timing of the onset of rigor mortis should indicate to an inspector.
 - o The manual should include text related to the onset of rigor mortis similar to the following:
 - “The inspector should check if the carcass is dropsical (watery) or not; if rigor mortis is delayed in this case, then disease is likely”
- Animals with notifiable diseases must be removed before slaughter- blood samples are not needed in that case
- Discussion was also held on the distance that abattoirs should be from human settlements
 - o Need to see what is prescribed in legislation and include that in the guidelines
 - o The issue can be further discussed in the future, in a scientific forum.

Recommendations

At the conclusion of the seminar, participants were asked to list their main conclusions and recommendations for follow-up actions emanating from the seminar, as follows:

- All inspectors need more training and need to have effective communication with all stakeholders in the sector
- The legislation currently in place must be enforced, and updated legislation in certain areas must be adopted.
- Practical or administrative interference with the work of the inspector by political and other forces must be reduced
- Inspection kits, including PPEs, are needed in all sectors; inspectorates must request for this from the relevant competent authority and/ or from WAQP; a letter should be sent to WAQP in this regard
- Need to have a hotline number for all competent authorities.

- Posters should be made and posted near the entrance of stores and other animal and plant health- related facilities with information on food safety, animal and plant health, as well as the number of the competent authorities that the public can call if they see a problem related to food safety, animal or plant health.
- Inspectors need to be trained on proper sampling methods
- Specifically related to food safety:
 - Training sessions are needed on good hygienic practices for butchers and bakeries, particularly those producing local bread (tapalapa)
 - Need a review of research findings from the Gambia
- Animal health:
 - The health status of Veterinary public health officers need to be monitored in light of their exposures risk to zoonotic diseases.
 - Livestock movement permits- need to be solely issued by the Vet authorities, rather than by the livestock dealers as is currently occurring
 - Standards Abattoirs and animal production facilities must improve their standards- which should be enforced by veterinary officers
 - Need to develop animal health standards
- Fisheries:
 - The authority must engage stakeholders for awareness creation on requirements for compliance and on enforcement of the technical regulations.
 - Use of mass media (public and private) to sensitize the general public on food safety measures as it affects fish and fishery products.
- Plant health:
 - Same as other general recommendations

The Chair concluded the session with a number of remarks, including the following:

- The Gambia is currently in transition to a harmonized, integrated system of inspection
 - Moving away from a sectoral approach, but will take some time
- Inspection must move towards a process-based, systems approach to inspection
 - Inspections must be prioritized, using a risk-based approach
- Training in inspection at The Gambia College and the University of The Gambia must be revised
 - Inspectors need to be convenient with HACCP principles at every level of production and processing, rather than only in one stage.
- The Gambia should be moving towards having a world-class inspection system. The NCSPSC will play its role in improving the system, and will work with others to continue to strengthen the system.
 - Many of the issues raised at the seminar are already on the agenda of the NCSPSC.

- The ultimate responsibility for food safety remains with food producers, but inspectors must also play their role in the system
 - o Consumers need more information and sensitization so they will reject unsafe food products and identify threats to animal and plant health, as inspectors cannot be everywhere.

The participants indicated their overall agreement with the manual, on the expectation that it will be revised as suggested by the seminar. The NCSPSC will establish a quality control group to further refine the manual and it will then be distributed to all relevant stakeholders.

The Chair concluded by thanking all participants, presenters, and organizers of the seminar and reminded participants of the upcoming activities to be organized by the NCSPSC.

Annexes

- Annex A: Seminar concept note
- Annex B: Participant list
- Annex C: Seminar timetable
- Annex D: Statement from WHO
- Annex E: Statement from FAO
- Annex F: Statement from WAQP
- Annex G: Opening statement from Mr. Amadou Saine, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries, Water Resources, and National Assembly Matters
- Annex H: Presentation by Dr. Londa Vanderwal
 - o Brief summary of inspection assessment workshop report
- Annex I: Presentation by Dr. Makie Taal
 - o Rationale for and benefits of harmonization of the inspection system
- Annex J: Presentation by Mr. Madi Kuyateh, prepared by Dr. Kebba Daffeh
 - o Interface between animal health inspection and food safety inspection
- Annex K: Presentation by Mr. Landing Sonko
 - o Interface between plant health inspection and food safety inspection
- Annex L: Presentation by Dr. Londa Vanderwal
 - o Introduction of a risk-based approach to inspection for food safety, animal and plant health
- Annex M: Presentation by Mr. Gabriel Gomez
 - o Results of risk assessment carried out by the Better Training for Safer Food project on poultry farms and livestock enterprises

Report of workshop on networking of food safety, animal and plant health-related labs

17 November 2009; National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) headquarters, Bakau, The Gambia

Introduction

This workshop was organized by the National Codex, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC) to identify areas where improved networking is needed between laboratories and other aspects of the food safety, animal and plant health control system in The Gambia and to develop an action plan to address these areas.

The workshop was held as part of the second phase of an FAO-funded project with the NCSPSC in The Gambia on “Implementing an integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health in The Gambia (a Biosecurity approach)”. A concept note for the workshop, which includes more information on the background, objectives, invitees, and other information is attached as Annex A. Laboratory technicians and managers from public and private sector food safety, animal and plant health-related laboratories in The Gambia, as well as representatives of relevant inspection bodies, private sector producers and processors, and relevant public sector policy makers were invited to the training, with many of those in attendance (participant list attached as Annex B).

Proceedings

The workshop was chaired by Mr. Lamin Jobe, Director Research, National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI), and the chair of the NCSPSC Sub-Committee responsible for laboratories. The timetable for the workshop is attached as Annex C.

After the welcome and introductory remarks by the chair, Dr. Londa Vanderwal, FAO Consultant, delivered welcoming remarks on behalf of Dr. Babagana Ahmadu, FAO Representative in The Gambia. He recalled a training programme for food safety, animal and plant health-related laboratory technicians supported by FAO (held 28-29 October 2009), where participants strongly called for the creation of a network of laboratories and laboratory technicians in The Gambia, thus providing input to the organization of this current workshop. The speech also underlined the importance of laboratories working effectively with the other actors of the food safety, animal and plant health control system, such as inspectors (remarks attached as Annex D).

Dr. Babou Jobe, Director General of NARI then delivered the opening statement of the workshop. He noted the importance of laboratories in ensuring food safety, animal and plant health in The Gambia, as well as the value of creating a network of laboratories in this regard. He provided some goals for the network, as well as modalities for its operation (speech attached as Annex E).

Following self-introductions by all participants, Dr. Makie Taal, Director of the National Public Health Laboratories, a presentation on the current situation of the role, functions, and positioning of National Laboratories in the food control, animal and plant health control system in the Gambia (presentation attached as Annex F). The presentation outlined the challenges of laboratories in The Gambia, recommendations to improve the situation, information on the

creation of a network of laboratories, as well as human resources development. (Each presentation was followed by questions, responses, and discussion, which will be detailed in a later section of this report.)

Mr. Joseph Ndenn, National Technical Coordinator of the West African Quality Program (WAQP) then presented on the improvement of the national laboratory system, including the activities of WAQP in this regard (presentation attached as Annex G). In addition to explaining the approach and activities of WAQP, the presentation also outlined other items that are needed to improve testing laboratories in The Gambia, including the development of policy in this regard.

The workshop participants were then randomly assigned to groups to work on a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of the current laboratory system and development of an action plan for improved laboratory networking and coordination. Groups work on the following areas: 1) legal, policy, and institutional (including funding and inter-lab collaboration and coordination); 2) staffing/ human resources/ capacity building; 3) conformity assessment, accreditation, and calibration; and 4) infrastructure. Each of the groups were asked to identify the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in their assigned area. The groups were then asked to develop an action plan to address the identified weaknesses, including the following: what needs to be done, by whom, when, and indication of completion of action. Groups were also asked to discuss the agenda for the workshop on network of laboratories, as well as the modalities for such a network, and a long-term vision for laboratories in the Gambia.

Each group presented the outcome of their discussions to the plenary session, which was followed by discussion by all participants. A compilation of the discussions from each of the groups is attached as Annex H.

. The following items, in addition to those included in the results of the group working sessions, were discussed by the participants:

- Well-functioning laboratories are essential to safeguard the health of all Gambians and also plants and animals.
- The Gambia must consider the sustainability of its laboratories, particularly financial sustainability.
- The need to sensitize the general public (particularly in the rural areas) about the importance of laboratories and generally about food safety, animal and plant health was underlined; it was noted that this process is underway, particularly as the National Assembly members are in attendance at the workshop and providing positive feedback.
 - o Lab personnel should work with the National Assembly members to develop a strong, well justified, proposal for strengthening funding of laboratories.
 - o It was noted that flyers, leaflets, and billboards, in addition to radio and TV programs, are needed for sensitization of the general public on food safety, animal and plant health issues

- The draft laboratory policy that was developed for laboratories in the Ministry of Health should be expanded/ generalized to be a comprehensive national policy including all laboratories
 - o The policy was originally developed with funding from WHO; therefore, it focused on laboratories in the Ministry of Health
 - o The workshop urges the Ministry of Health to revise this policy so that it includes all laboratories in the country
 - o A strong policy should be in place before other actions should occur
 - o A framework policy for laboratories could be developed; could also have branches of the policy
- The importance of strong leadership and committed management of laboratories was emphasized
 - o Management must work out adequate staff retention packages, training, and other such activities
- A scientific resource center should be available in the country for reference by all laboratories and others interested
 - o Scientists must keep up with the latest developments
 - o FAO has a facility called “AGOA” which The Gambia has access to, which provides scientific information for agricultural-related researchers in developing countries
- Laboratories must be independent from regulatory bodies in carrying out their work currently rely on regulatory bodies for their funding
 - o The proposed single food control agency (slated for 2011) should interface with laboratories, but the agency should not *include* laboratories.

The following items were discussed regarding the presentations from each group:

- It was noted that the Veterinary Laboratory services is decentralized, however the regional labs are not as strong as they should be.

Conclusions

At the conclusion of the seminar, the session chair provided a number of remarks, including the following:

- Sharing resources (personnel training, reagents, equipment facility, etc) between laboratories is more challenging when laboratories have different specializations, as well as separate management
- Labs have a great deal of data, but it is not well organized or analyzed

- It was noted that flyers, leaflets, and billboards, in addition to radio and TV programs, are needed for sensitization of the general public on food safety, animal and plant health issues
- Labs have different strengths and weaknesses, so each can complement each other
For example, the University of The Gambia does not have a functioning lab yet, but have personnel in place

Recommendations

The workshop agreed that Ms Nelly Lloyd Evans of RVTH and Mrs Tida Ceesay Bojang of the Central Veterinary Laboratory should be the focal points for the continuation of the network, supported by the NCSPSC sub-committee on methods of analysis and sampling.

- Labs must keep improving themselves, moving toward international accreditation for labs
- National Assembly Members could provide support to laboratories, particular for ensuring that the proper legal framework is in place and for funding support
 - NAMs must be sensitized on laboratories' need for assistance and provided with adequate justification for such assistance
 - The National Assembly should be sensitized on the need to support all NCSPSC activities
 - Many stakeholders are vying for funds from the National Assembly, so requests must be well justified
- The Gambia must strengthen the conducting, recording, and reporting of data on disease surveillance related to food safety, animal health, and plant health
- "Networking" means to bring together people of common interests; this workshop can be the start of people working in food safety, animal and plant health-related labs to know each other
 - A forum must be created where lab technicians can meet and discuss their work
 - Various labs should know what the other labs are doing so they can assist each other as necessary
 - Members of the network can validate methods for each other (proficiency testing)
 - Labs have different strengths and weaknesses, so each can complement each other
 - For example, the University of the Gambia does not have a functioning lab yet, but have personnels in place
 - Other labs may have good facilities, but lack trained personnel
- To have Memorandum of Understand (MOU) for the network
 - Continuous discussion will be required on how best to fine-tune the network

- Everyone in the network should be working together for the good of the entire country

The NCSPSC Chair Dr. Omar Touray also provided some concluding remarks, including the following:

- Projects that provide assistance to The Gambia may only last a limited amount of time, but the people that have been trained through the projects will remain in the country and provide service to the country
- The NCSPSC is looking for project ideas that can be supported to improve the food safety, plant and animal health system in The Gambia, and will also look for donors for such projects
 - The NCSPSC will try to ensure that every quarter, there will be one project related to strengthening laboratories to be funded by West African Quality Programme.
 - Donors want to see that governments are committed before they fund projects; thus, lab technicians should sensitize their line ministries on the importance of supporting the lab so that donors will be more likely to provide support to complement the contribution of the government to a project.
- Lamin Jobe of NARI is the focal point for the NCSPSC on Laboratories Sub-Committee
- Lab technicians and managers should bring the issues that they would like the NCSPSC to address to Mr Lamin Jobe to be taken to the entire NCSPSC.
- WAQP through NCSPSC will support the lab network, with the support of the NCSPSC
 - However, laboratory technicians and managers must take the lead in improving their situation.

The Chair concluded by thanking all participants, speakers, and organizers of the seminar and reminded participants of the upcoming NCSPSC activities.

Annexes

- Annex A: Seminar concept note
- Annex B: Participant list
- Annex C: Seminar timetable
- Annex D: Statement from FAO
- Annex E: Opening statement from Dr. Babou Jobe, Director General of the National Agriculture Research Institute
- Annex F: Presentation by Dr. Makie Taal (ppt file)
- Annex G: Presentation by Mr. Joseph Ndenn (ppt file)
- Annex H: Compilation of group discussions on SWOT analysis, action plan, and plans for development of laboratory network

**Report of consultation workshop- food safety, animal and plant health draft policy
1-2 December 2009
Held at the National Nutrition Agency (NaNA), The Gambia**

Introduction

This workshop was organized by the National Codex, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC) to provide information to stakeholders on the importance of a strong integrated food safety, animal and plant health policy for The Gambia and for stakeholders to provide feedback on a draft of such a policy prepared by an FAO consultant. The workshop was held as part of the second phase of an FAO-funded project with the NCSPSC in The Gambia on “Implementing an integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health in the Gambia (a Biosecurity approach)”. A concept note for the workshop, which includes more information on the background, objectives, invitees, and other information is attached as Annex A. Policy makers and public and private stakeholders in the Gambian food safety, animal and plant health control system were invited to the workshop, with many of those in attendance (participant list attached as Annex B).

Proceedings

The opening ceremony was Chaired by Mr. Modou Phall, Codex Contact Point of The Gambia, and the Executive Director of the National Nutrition Agency. The technical sessions of the workshop were Chaired by Dr. Omar Touray, the NCSPSC Chairman. The timetable for the workshop is attached as Annex C.

After the welcome by the chair and introductory remarks, Mr. Alpha Jallow, WHO-Gambia Environmental Health Officer and focal point for food safety, provided remarks on behalf of the WHO-Representative in The Gambia, Dr. Thomas Sukwa (remarks attached as Annex D). The speech noted the growing importance of a Biosecurity approach, with emergence of H1N1 influenza virus in the world, along with other such concerns. The speaker also acknowledged that poverty causes many people in The Gambia to consume food of lesser quality and safety, and re-affirmed WHO’s willingness to assist in strengthening the national food control system in The Gambia. Mrs. Mariatou Njie Taal, FAO Deputy Country Representative then provided welcoming remarks on behalf of Dr. Babagana Ahmadu, FAO representative in The Gambia (remarks attached as Annex E). The speech also emphasized the importance of an integrated approach, and the large number of stakeholders involved in Biosecurity in The Gambia. She also described FAO’s definition of and approach to Biosecurity, the FAO project that has been working to assist The Gambia in this area, and challenged the workshop participants to develop a strong policy to strengthen the current system.

The Permanent Secretary of the Office of the Vice President of The Gambia gave remarks (remarks attached as Annex F). She noted the improvements to the coordination of food safety since in the adoption of the Food Act 2005, as well as the good work of the NCSPSC to strengthen the food safety, animal and plant health control system in The Gambia. He also provided support for the development of a unified Food Safety Agency in The Gambia. Dr. Ruth Frampton, FAO International Biosecurity Policy Consultant on mission in The Gambia

from 20 November- 3 December then provided a brief introduction to herself, the objectives of her consultancy, and the expected outcomes of the workshop. Mr. Baboucarr Jallow, Permanent Secretary then provided the opening statement of the workshop, on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Trade, Industry and Employment (speech attached as Annex G). He emphasized the importance of food safety, animal and plant health to trade and industry in The Gambia, as well as the importance of food and agricultural trade for The Gambia. He noted that as The Gambia must meet its regional and international obligations, including in the World Trade Organization, and must adopt policies and procedures accordingly. The speaker declared the workshop open and encouraged the attendees to actively participate in the review of the policy document.

Following self-introduction by all participants, Dr. Ruth Frampton made a presentation on the need for, and key components of a draft a National “Biosecurity” Policy for The Gambia (presentation attached as Annex H). The presentation provided background information on Biosecurity, some thought-provoking questions on what should be included in the policy, as well as some examples of Biosecurity vision statements from other countries. The presentation was followed by a time of questions, responses, and discussion, with active participation from many of those in attendance. The following items, in addition to those that will be reflected in the revision of the policy, were discussed by the participants:

- The Gambian government’s Vision 2020 defines the problem that the policy addresses.
 - o Biosecurity is a means to meet part of the Gambia’s Vision 2020 objectives
- The scope of Biosecurity was discussed; it addresses threats or hazards (diseases and pests) that animals and plants are exposed including forestry and animals (terrestrial and aquatic)
- FAO’s definition of agriculture includes forestry and fisheries, in addition to field crops and terrestrial animal production, which is typically considered as agriculture in The Gambia.

The workshop participants were then randomly assigned to groups to discuss the vision statement, as well as the accepted definition of Biosecurity for The Gambia. Each group then presented the outcome of their discussions to the plenary session, which was followed by a time of discussion by all participants. Each of the groups agreed to use the FAO definition of Biosecurity (which is thus internationally accepted), with only a minor revision to specify that “animals” include terrestrial and aquatic animals. The policy consultant will further refine these vision statements to include one vision in the draft policy, which she will provide to the NCSPSC Secretariat and Chair by 10 December 2009.

Each of the participants was provided with a Draft Policy issues document prepared by the consultant, which they took home to review overnight. On the second day of the workshop, the groups worked in their same groups to review the Draft Policy document, provide comments and feedback, and identify any gaps in the document. Each group then presented the results of their discussion to the plenary session, which was followed by a time of questions and discussion. The Consultant took note of all comments on the policy document, and will incorporate the relevant comments into the draft of the policy she will provide to the NCSPSC chair and secretariat, which will be circulated to the relevant stakeholders in due course.

In addition to those items that will be reflected in the revision of the Draft Policy document, the following items were discussed based on the presentations from each group:

- This policy is an overarching, framework, with the four “pillars” of Biosecurity included, namely human health (particularly food safety and zoonotic diseases), terrestrial and aquatic animal health, plant health (including forestry), and associated risks to the environment.
 - o More specific details of each pillar, such as institutional arrangements and relationships between the public and private sector, will be included in subsidiary the attendant policies.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of the workshop, the NCSPSC chair provided a number of remarks, including the following:

- The Consultant was also requested to provide more guidance to The Gambia on what elements should be included in a plant health policy.
 - o The Gambia is working to have the International Plant Protection Convention conduct an evaluation of the National Plant Protection Organization
- The NCSPSC Chair and other key members of the Policy, Legal, Organization, and Management ad hoc Sub-Committee of the NCSPSC will try to meet with the Executive Director of the National Environmental Agency to further discuss environmental aspects of the policy
- This policy is an over-arching policy which deals with interfaces between various sectors; therefore, the “custodian” of the policy should be at a high level
 - o The subsidiary policies will be “owned” at the ministry level (other than the food safety policy, which will also be inter-ministerial)
- This policy will first need to go to the National Nutrition Council, as they are the current overseers of the NCSPSC.

The chair concluded by thanking all participants, facilitators, and organizers of the workshop, as well as the international policy consultant for their active participation.

Annexes

- Annex A: Workshop concept note
- Annex B: Participant list
- Annex C: Workshop timetable
- Annex D: Statement from WHO
- Annex E: Statement from FAO
- Annex F: Remarks from the PS, Office of the Vice President
- Annex G: Opening Statement provided on behalf of the Honorable Minister of Trade, Industry, and Employment.
- Annex H: Presentation by Dr. Ruth Frampton (ppt file)

**Preparatory meeting for the FAO project on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health/
Executive committee meeting of National Codex and Sanitary and Phytosanitary
Committee (NCSPSC)**

Meeting notes

27 August 2009, NaNA headquarters, Bakau

Those present:

Dr. Omar Touray,	Chair of National Codex/ Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee
Mr. Modou Phall,	Codex Contact Point
Mr. Malang Fofana,	NCSPSC Secretariat
Mr. Modou Njie,	Fisheries department
Mr. Seedy Fofana,	Food Technology Services (MoA)
Dr. Mackie Taal,	Directorate of Food Standards, Quality & Safety Enforcement; MoH
Mr. Sana Jawara,	Principal Public Health Officer
Mr. Landing Sonko,	Agricultural Pest Management Services
Mr. Ousman Sillah,	Codex IEC sub-committee chairperson
Dr. Kebba Daffeh,	Animal Health and Production Services (MoA)
Mr. Joseph Ndenn,	West African Quality Programme
Dr. Londa Vanderwal,	FAO consultant

3 public health students on practical attachment from Gambia College

Agenda:

- 1) Discussions on the Letter of Agreement and preliminary activity plan of FAO project
- 2) Finalization of 7 draft standards
- 3) Letters received
- 4) Article in the Daily Observer regarding the sale of cheap frozen chicken from the US
- 5) Any other business

Discussion:

1) Letter of Agreement and preliminary activity plan of FAO project

The purpose, activities, and other details of the project Letter of Agreement were discussed. Various agencies and other projects, such as the West African Quality Programme (WAQP), provided information on their current status and planned activities in areas related to items in the FAO project. The importance of many activities outlined in the LOA, such as policy development, was underlined. The meeting emphasized the need for collaboration and information exchange among various stakeholders in food safety, animal and plant health.

The following revisions or clarifications to the project plans were indicated:

- The policy initiated through the FAO project should be called a Food Safety and Biosecurity policy
- The project should gather and analyze the other lab capacity assessments that have been carried out and update the current situation; this information should be widely

distributed so that people have current and complete information when making related decisions

- The FAO project can particularly consider assisting pesticide residue testing labs and animal health diagnostic labs with a plan for accreditation, as these were not covered by the WAQP
- Technicians from all government labs in the country should be invited to the laboratory training programs
- Should plan to have a workshop to assess the current capacity of the inspection system as a kickoff to the project. At that workshop, an action plan for the inspection and certification system can be developed, which can include the development of guidelines and a training program for inspectors.
- Agreed that those present at the meeting could serve as the steering committee of the project.

2) Finalization of 7 draft standards

- a. NCSPSC secretariat will send drafts to all involved
- b. Chairperson of each standards development committee, along with one or two others should work to finalize the standards
- c. Very important to finalize these standards

3) Letters received

- a. Sana Jawara will be replacing Samba Conteh as representative from the MoH Directorate of Health Services in the NCSPSC –related activities
- b. Letter from the Ministry of Trade and Industry
 - i. A country trade review will be conducted in October. NCSPSC secretariat should give them workshop reports, strategic plan, and other relevant documents for their information.

4) Article in the local newspaper (the Observer) regarding the sale of frozen chicken from the US at a very low cost

- Discussed the need for an improved certification system for imports. In addition to a certificate from the country of origin, proper import approval is needed from Gambian authorities as well. Customs officers also play an important role in this system.
- The livestock dealers association (private) is currently issuing livestock movement permits. This goes contrary to the existing legislation.
- Emphasized the need for food standards to be in place and enforced
- **Action point:** Dr. Daffeh to look into the matter and provide feedback.

5) Any other business

- a. The Gambia College requested to be involved in the NCSPSC. The meeting discussed that they should write a formal letter to the committee, expressing their interest.
- b. The EU-funded “Better training for safer food” project is looking for a local facilitator- someone that does not work for the government; suggestions are solicited

**Executive committee of National Codex and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee
(NCSPSC)**

Meeting notes

6 October 2009, NaNA headquarters, Bakau

Those present:

Dr. Omar Touray,	Chair of National Codex/ Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC)
Mr. Modou Phall,	Codex Contact Point
Mr. Malang Fofana,	NCSPSC Secretariat
Mr. Seedy Fofana,	Food Technology Services (MoA)
Mr. Sana Jawara,	Principal Public Health Officer
Mr. Joseph Ndenn,	West African Quality Programme
Dr. Londa Vanderwal,	FAO consultant

Sending apologies:

Mr. Lamin Jobe,	National Agriculture Research Institute
Mr. Modou Njie,	Fisheries department
Dr. Mackie Taal,	Directorate of Food Standards, Quality and Safety Enforcement; P.H. lab- MoH
Mr. Landing Sonko,	Agricultural Pest Management Services
Mr. Ousman Sillah,	Codex IEC sub-committee chairperson
Dr. Kebba Daffeh,	Animal Health and Production Services (MoA)

Agenda:

- 6) Review of notes from previous meeting (27 August 2009)
- 7) Update on FAO Biosecurity support project activities
- 8) Update on NCSPSC-related activities of WAQP
- 9) Finalization of 7 draft standards
- 10) Correspondence received
- 11) Any other business

Discussion:

6) Review of notes of previous meeting (27 August 2009)

While reviewing the notes from the previous meeting, the following items were discussed:

1. The NCSPSC strategic plan mainly requires editing to be finalized; editing planned for October
2. Information regarding the NCSPSC must be shared as widely as possible, in all relevant sectors
 - a. The reports of all workshops organized by NCSPSC should be printed, bound, and sent to all relevant institutions

- b. Invitations for events sent to various people should be copied to their PS and directorate to ensure that the relevant policy makers know what NCSPSC is doing.
- c. It was noted that those attending NCSPSC workshops and meetings need to report back to their sector about the information gained

Action Items:

- Londa and Malang to distribute NCSPSC workshop reports
 - a. Make a list of all available reports
 - b. Print and bind copies of reports, particularly including the November 2008 Competent Authority workshop and the 2009 inspection assessment workshop
 - c. establish a circulation list where to send such information
 - i. include National Nutrition Council (NNC) members, relevant government ministries, University of the Gambia/ Gambia College officials, Chamber of Commerce, EC, FAO, WHO, etc...
 - d. Copy future meeting invitations to the PS of each government participant

7) Update on FAO Biosecurity support project activities

The executive summary of the interim progress report was distributed. The report of the inspection assessment workshop (9-10 Sept 09), including the inspection action plan was also distributed and reviewed. In the course of these discussions, the following points were noted:

- a. Plan of upcoming activities is ambitious, but achievable with dedication and hard work
- b. Status of local consultants working on texts for the project:
 - i. The group developing IEC materials has some texts drafted and will be completed by November (Ousman Sillah, leader)
 - ii. GHPs for street food vendors group has some text started; leader to send to NCSPSC secretariat/ FAO consultant by 10 October (Sana Jawara, leader)
 - iii. GHPs for cereals group has an advanced draft; FAO consultant discussed it with them (Seedy Fofana, leader)
 - iv. Inspection guidelines group has assigned tasks to group members and planning to meet together within the week (Landing Sonko, leader)
- c. NCSPSC training (and working session) planned for 20-21 October 2009, should include the following:
 - i. Training as planned in project activity document (day 1)
 - ii. 2nd day: Working sessions on standards: food labeling, fats and oils, food advertising
 - 1. Chairman and rapporteur of each of these task forces should attend
 - 2. Concerned sectors should attend the discussion on the relevant text
 - 3. Draft water standard needs to be critiqued and revised accordingly

4. Need to have some standards finalized by the end of 2009
- iii. 2nd day: Develop a priority list of other standards to develop
 1. Develop a workplan for the development- and finalization- of standards (until Dec 2009)
 2. Workplan for standards development (and other NCSPSC activities) for 2010 to be developed in January 2010

8) Update on NCSPSC-related activities of WAQP

- a. Experienced international consultant on food safety legal and institutional arrangements coming from 14-28 October
 - i. Mission was moved earlier than originally planned due to consultant's schedule
 - ii. Will ask for the CV of the consultant to see how he can best help and complement the mission of the FAO international biosecurity policy expert (planned for 19 November- 3 December; CV received)
 - iii. WAQP consultant could get information now and come again in 2010 to provide more assistance
 - iv. WAQP consultant could consider if the planned (for Jan 2011) single food safety agency should stand alone or as a food and drug agency
 1. Extensive sensitization and information sharing is needed before people will agree to the enactment of such an agency
 2. NCSPSC (technical level) is making recommendation to form a single food control agency to the NNC (policy making level)
 - a. A strategy must be developed for this
 3. May need to establish a policy, legal and management committee: consultant can provide advice on this
 - v. Among other things, the WAQP consultant should hold a workshop
 - b. World Standards Day celebration- 14 October
 - i. NCSPSC and Ministry of Trade were invited to organize the celebrations and were sent a concept note on the event
 - ii. Plan to produce publicity materials, flyers, newspaper articles, etc
 - iii. Proposed to have presentations from NCSPSC and Min of Trade at an event
 1. Ministry of Trade planning to launch a TBT committee at this event
 2. Lamin Jobe could be asked to give a presentation on behalf of the NCSPSC on the value of standards
 - iv. NCSPSC will listen to recommendations made at event, and will ensure that some representatives of the committee are present
- Action item:* Malang and Londa (on behalf of NCSPSC) to send NNC members (through their PS) the executive summary of the FAO Biosecurity project interim report, as well as the final version of the Biosecurity project LoA (by 9 October 2009).
- o Send also to the Secretary- General on Agriculture (PS), copy to the chairperson of the Food Advisory Board

9) Finalization of 7 draft standards

- a. Will be worked on at 21 October workshop, as noted above

10) Correspondence received

- a. Animal Health and Production Services (Dr. Daffeh) sent a letter to the NCSPSC that OIE will be conducting a PVS capacity assessment in the Gambia from 4-14 October
 - i. NCSPSC exec committee to meet with them at 10AM on 8 October 2009 (need to contact those not present at meeting to inform them)
 - ii. Should print relevant documents to provide to them
 - iii. Discussed that an (IPPC) capacity assessment of the plant health system in the Gambia could be included in the WAQP 2010 budget

11) Any other business

- a. Next exec committee meeting planned for the end of October
- b. Dr. Touray, Mr. Ndenn, Mr. Phall, Malang and Londa should meet with FAO-representative sometime during week of 19 October
 - i. Mr. Ndenn to arrange a time with FAO-representative

Annex 9.3

Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) technical sub-committee of the National Codex and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC)

Meeting notes

26 October 2009, NaNA headquarters, Bakau

Those present:

Mr. Malang Fofana	NCSPSC Secretariat
Mr. Ousman Sillah	Codex IEC sub-committee chairperson
Ms. Mam Jeng	GRTS Marketing
Alhagie Serigne Faye	GRTS Radio
Mr. Bakary Touray	Brikama Community Radio
Mr. Seikou Omar Dibba	University of the Gambia
Dr. Londa Vanderwal	FAO consultant

Agenda:

- 1) Review the strategic plan, particularly after the adoption of the 3 standards
- 2) Plan activities for Oct 09- Jan 2010
- 3) Any other business

Discussion:

1) Review of the 2009-2013 Strategic plan

The committee reviewed the communication and cooperation section of the 2009-2013 NCSPSC strategic plan and revised and updated it, particularly after the adoption of the 3 standards by the NCSPSC. The plan was revised as below (in track changes mode). A list of questions to be considered in the development of an IEC strategy were also posed by one member (list attached as Annex 1).

ELEMENT 8 COMMUNICATION AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

ACTIVITIES (8.1.1- 8.1.4)

NATIONAL LEVEL

- Produce a video documentary (15-30 minutes) and leaflets (already started) to introduce the NCC/ SPS committee, its role and how consumers can take part in and benefit from the NCC/SPS committee
 - Provide an opportunity for consumers to learn how to improve the safety of the food they consume
 - Translate into the 3 major languages (Mandinka, Wolof, and Fula) of the country
 - Ousman to write a project proposal for video documentary

- Content: importance of food safety, animal and plant health, standards, role of the committee
 - GRTS said they could produce it
 - Leaflet should be printed annually
- Develop and implement an effective national communication strategy for Biosecurity (an integrated approach to food safety, animal and plant health) (this portion of the strategic plan serves as part of this national communication strategy.)
- Conduct half-yearly forums on current food safety, animal and plant health issues at the divisional levels for stakeholders in the food chain (regulators, handlers, consumers, producers, processors, etc)
 - Hold in the 5 regions and 2 municipalities; can do 1 division every 6 months
- Sensitization of the consumer associations in the Gambia and provide necessary information for their dissemination to consumers
 - Provide information on NCSPSC, food safety, animal health, plant health, etc
 - Consumer associations: Consumer Protection Association of the Gambia (CPAG) and Foundation Gambia Incorporated (FGI)
- Provide half-yearly Biosecurity bulletins for policy makers
- Provide information on Biosecurity to the general public through local newspapers
- Quarterly radio and TV talk shows on Biosecurity issues
 - GRTS, Brikama Community Radio, City Limits, West Coast, Paradise, Unique, KWTS
- Develop radio and TV publicity spots on Biosecurity issues (same stations as above)
 - Need good communicators- provide them with messages
- Train NCSPSC members on advocacy and communication skills to effectively convey information about Biosecurity issues in the Gambia
- Training of journalists and editors to disseminate accurate Biosecurity-related messages to the general public (use Feb 09 training course as a model)
- Train advertisers and animators to disseminate accurate Biosecurity-related messages to the general public
 - They can do the radio and TV spots
- Develop a logo for the NCSPSC/ biosecurity matters
- Develop and operate a website for the Codex/SPS program (website in place- need to update it)
 - Address: www.codexgambia.gm
- Improve communication within the NCC/SPS committee, through enhancing email communication and other means.
- Sensitize other related committees and entities in the country (biosafety committee, disaster management, etc) on NCSPSC matters.
- Establish food safety/ SPS clubs at lower and upper basic, high school, colleges, universities
 - Work with 2 regions a year
 - Where agriculture and health clubs exist, encourage them to deal with food safety issues as well

- Organize an annual national inter-schools competition on food safety/ SPS issues (quizzes, essays, debates, posters, etc)
 - Could have live radio coverage of quiz competition
 - Can target this for January 2010

ELEMENT 9: NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

ACTIVITIES 9.1.1 NATIONAL (LOCAL) LEVEL

- Establish regional sub-committees on food safety and SPS matters
 - Suggest that the regional TAC establish a food safety sub-committee
 - Need to write to suggest to the governor of the TORs of the committee, composition of the committee, importance of such a committee, etc.
 - Would need to go to the regions to talk to them directly
 - Familiarisation tour of NCC/SPS committee members to all area councils, municipalities and other stakeholders
 - May need to have a focal point within the area councils
 - Strengthening coordination and cooperation in NCC/SPS committee and the secretariat
 - Organise annual '*bantaba*' for the NCC technical sub-committees (include regional sub-committees) to informally discuss issues of concern to that committee
 - Could hold this during national food safety day/ week
 - Identify and observe an annual national food safety/ Biosecurity day to be observed on 9 October, one week before World Food Day (16 October)
- 2) Plan activities for Oct 09- Jan 2010, including activity, responsible person, and deadline
- a. Develop proposal for video documentary- Ousmane Sillah; submit proposal to IEC committee by 30 November
 - b. Finalize leaflets for the general public and for policy makers- Malang and Ousmane- submit to IEC committee by 15 November
 - c. Update website- Malang- by 30 November
 - d. Hold radio/ TV talk shows- first have Codex members to introduce Codex and food safety issues; then later can have panel discussions
 - a. Brikama radio station- a slot is available every Thursday from 5-6PM

- i. Can have phone-in and/or presentation
 - ii. 2nd and 4th Thursday of the months
- b. GRTS TV- may be able to get 2-4 programmes (30 minutes) for free
 - i. Mam Jeng will talk to relevant people
- c. GRTS radio- can have weekly one hour programme- Seringe Fye
 - i. Including phone-in
 - ii. Possibly starting 2nd week of November- on Wednesdays
- d. Need to contact the other radio stations to discuss with them- Malang and Ousmane
 - i. Tell them the number of programs requested
 - ii. Need to prepare a list of key messages, presenters, etc
 - 1. Dr. Touray, Modou Phall, Malang Fofana, Mr. Ndenn, Omar Njie, etc.
 - iii. Stations can provide moderators

3) Any other business

Next meeting is planned for Tuesday, 10 November- 2PM; otherwise Friday, 13 November- morning. Members will be contacted before the meeting.

Annex 1.

List of questions to consider in developing an IEC strategy

What is the executing agency? The NCSPSC
 What is the proposed activity?
 What is the overall objective?
 What do we want to communicate? (what is the content?) specific themes and sub-themes?
 With whom do we want to communicate?
 Why this particular audience(s)?
 What is the expected outcome of this activity?
 What is the timeframe? (years and quarters)
 Main communication activities- mass media, interpersonal, mixture, etc?
 What is the cost (per annum) involved?
 What is the mechanism for coordination, monitoring and management of the strategy?
 Are the messages clearly stated and ready for dissemination now, or do they need to be further developed?
 Can we build in a feedback mechanism? Clarifications, etc?
 Is there any baseline information available?
 Do messages need to be pre-tested?
 Are there equivalent terminologies for food safety, Codex, etc in local languages?

**Executive committee of National Codex and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee
(NCSPSC)**

**Debriefing with “Better Training for Safer Food” consultant- meeting notes
5 November 2009, NaNA headquarters, Bakau**

Those present:

Dr. Omar Touray,	Chair of National Codex/ Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC)
Mr. Modou Phall,	Codex Contact Point
Mr. Seedy Fofana,	Food Technology Services (MoA)
Mr. Sana Jawara,	Principal Public Health Officer
Mr. Modou Njie,	Fisheries department
Mr. Joseph Ndenn,	West African Quality Programme
Dr. Londa Vanderwal,	FAO consultant

Sending apologies:

Mr. Lamin Jobe,	National Agriculture Research Institute
Dr. Mackie Taal,	Directorate of Food Standards, Quality and Safety Enforcement; P.H. lab- MoH
Mr. Landing Sonko,	Agricultural Pest Management Services
Mr. Ousman Sillah,	Codex IEC sub-committee chairperson
Dr. Kebba Daffeh,	Animal Health and Production Services (MoA)
Mr. Malang Fofana,	NCSPSC Secretariat

A consultant was in the Gambia for 9 days (26 October- 5 November 2009), through the EU-funded “Better Training for Safer Food” project, to assess the level of compliance of selected poultry farms and abattoirs in the Gambia with EU regulations. Gabriel Gomez served as the national consultant for this mission, accompanying the international consultant throughout the mission. The international consultant (from Norway) briefly presented the relevant EU regulations to the meeting, as well as the main findings of his mission, which was followed by a time of discussion, the main points of which were as follows:

- Only one of the facilities visited in the mission was even close to meeting EU regulations for the physical structures in place. However, this farm was not yet in operation, so other aspects of the farm could not be assessed.
- The consultant recommends that the NCSPSC should support an initiative to include more information on food hygiene, on-farm food safety, and HACCP at the Gambia College School of Agriculture and School of Public Health
 - o NCSPSC should have a consultative meeting with Gambia College officials on this matter
- Most of the farms visited in the mission want to improve their hygienic standard, and need support to do so.

- The four (4) Gambia College students (School of Agriculture) that were involved as trainees in the project need to be further supported. They must be properly employed after graduation. They can also continue to provide training to other farmers in the Gambia. These trainees will be invited to the inspection training programme to be held 11-12 November 2009 (WAQP and FAO-sponsored).
- The Government of the Gambia is very aware of the importance of food safety, which is evidenced by the large number of projects currently occurring in the Gambia in the area of food safety.
- The consultant had limited time in the Gambia (9 days this mission), so was really only able to carry out an assessment of the situation, and was only able to do limited training.
- The consultant listed detailed recommendations for each establishment visited in his report, in addition to the general recommendations of the mission.
- The need for updated legislation, as well as the enforcement of such legislation, was emphasized.
 - o The competent authority in the area needs to ensure that such legislation is in place and enforced.
 - o There is currently no approval process in place for poultry farms or abattoirs to be registered, which allows farms to operate in a sub-standard manner and with inadequate facilities.
 - o There are currently no guidelines for food processing establishments in the Gambia.
 - o Regulations can be adopted relatively easily under the current Food Act (2005), so such regulations could be developed soon, rather than waiting for a new Food Act to legislate for necessary changes.
 - o This information should be included in the food safety, animal and plant health policy which will soon be developed, as well as the Food Act to be developed in the future
- This mission can be considered as part of a process; improvement is necessary for products raised and slaughtered for the domestic market, in addition to the future possibility of exports
 - o Some of the weaknesses identified should be able to be fixed relatively easily
- The project was designed so that the poultry establishments visited would identify some of their employees to accompany the assessment mission, to provide training for those employees; however, the farms already were short-staffed, so only students from the Gambia College accompanied the assessment mission
 - o the project planned that the establishments visited in the mission would provide meals for the trainees; however, the establishments did not even provide meals for their own employees, so did not want to provide meals for the trainees either
 - the local consultant personally provided funds for meals and transport for the trainees to assist the trainees.
- The NCSPSC established a task force to develop poultry production standards earlier in 2009, but that group was asked to first address the issue of pre-packaged poultry, at the request of the Minister of Health

- The work on the poultry production standards must be expedited
 - Standards developed must be made mandatory (rather than voluntary) so that they will be enforced more easily
 - Standards will be based on Codex, and will also consider EU regulations in this regard
- Working groups should be established under the NCSPSC on 1) animal health and 2) plant health
 - Such groups can help to expedite work in these areas
 - Private sector representatives and other experts already in the Gambia should be included in such groups
- FAO does have some guidance available for meat processors and poultry in developing countries, which should be obtained and utilized appropriately
- Farmers wishing to export from the Gambia need to improve their hygienic practices to be able to export.
- The NCSPSC should develop project ideas and seek to mobilize funds to assist in this area, as well as other areas of national concern (such as information, education and communication).
 - Will look to WAQP, FAO, and other donors
- The importance of in-service training of inspectors and other s working in this area, in addition to training of Gambia College students, was emphasized
- The consultant emphasized that most of the information he presented was PRELIMINARY

The NCSPSC chair concluded with the following statements:

- The NCSPSC appreciated the mission, looks forward to his future missions, but noted that the time for the missions was too short
 - The consultant only was allotted 20 working days for all the missions he is to undertake to the Gambia, which leaves very limited time for his next missions
 - The committee will pay more attention to this in any future consultancies coming to the Gambia.
- Incentives should be provided to the trainees for them to be able to more fully participate
- The NCSPSC requests that TORs for future consultancies should be provided to the NCSPSC earlier, so that they will have more time to respond and plan accordingly.
- The NCSPSC executive committee should basically serve as the steering committee for this Better Training for Safer Food project (as they are for the FAO “Biosecurity” project)
- NCSPSC will do its best to continue working in this area
- Mr. Gomez should help to make some of the documents the international consultant mentioned available to the NCSPSC.

**National Codex and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (NCSPSC) Meeting notes
16 November 2009, NaNA headquarters, Bakau**

Those present:

Dr. Omar Touray (NCSPSC)	Chair of National Codex, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee
Mr. Modou Phall	Codex Contact Point
Mr. Malang Fofana	NCSPSC Secretariat
Mr. Seedy Fofana	Food Technology Services (MoA)
Mr. Sana Jawara	Principal Public Health Officer
Mr. Joseph Ndenn	West African Quality Programme
Dr. Londa Vanderwal	FAO consultant
Mr. Amadou Gaye	Consumer Protection Association of the Gambia (CPAG)
Mrs. Oulaye Taal	National Nutrition Agency
Dr. Mackie Taal	Directorate of Food Standards, Quality and Safety Enforcement;
P.H. lab- MoH	
Mr. Gabriel Gomez	Consultant, Better Training for Safer Food
Mr. Ousman Sillah	Codex IEC sub-committee chairperson
Mr. Amadou Bah	GRTS Radio
Mr. Saja Konateh	Plant Protection Services
Mr. Alfusainey Jabbi	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
Mr. Abdoulie Phaal	Weights and Measures Bureau
Mr. Modou Njie	Fisheries department

Agenda:

- 12) Review of reports of recent consultancies
 - a. WAQP-funded food safety legal and institutional arrangements consultant
 - b. EU- funded “Better Training for Safer Food” consultant looking at poultry farms and abbatoirs
- 13) Update on the FAO “Biosecurity” project
 - a. Activities that have occurred and the key issues raised in those fora
 - b. Upcoming activities
- 14) Progress report on the implementation of the workplan developed at the inspection assessment workshop (9-10 September 2009)
- 15) Plan for the next NCSPSC working session, to include the following items:
 - a. Planning the workplan for 2010
 - b. Discussion of follow-up project possibilities
- 16) Any other business

Discussion:

- 1) **Review of reports of recent consultancies**
 - a. WAQP-funded food safety legal and institutional arrangements consultant (and update on other WAQP activities)

- The following items were discussed
 - The aide memoir of the legal and institutional arrangements consultant will be made available to all NCSPSC members in due course
 - The aide memoir has been made available to all competent authorities
 - It was noted that the aide memoir should include participant's reactions at the stakeholder workshop held
 - The consultant made some follow-up recommendations
 - A media and consumer sensitization event and a metrology workshop are planned for 18 and 19 November, respectively
 - A metrology consultant is coming to the Gambia the week of 17 November
 - Value chain studies (on smoked fish and sesame) were to be conducted, but have not yet been completed
 - WAQP has a booth at the Trade Fair; Codex should provide any available IEC information there
 - It was noted that pesticide residue analysis training is being requested from WAQP
- b. Better Training for Safer Food consultant conducting a risk assessment of abattoirs and poultry production facilities
- The following items were discussed
 - Letters will be written to the farmers to suggest the improvements they should make; these should be carried out by the end of December
 - Farmers first need to make basic hygiene improvements, can move towards implementing HACCP in the future
 - A half-day training session was held with the farmers
 - Students from the Gambia College were involved in the assessment
 - They are supposed to assist with training in the future, but there is no guarantee they will assist; particularly there is currently no financial incentive for them to be involved.
 - The NCSPSC should encourage the Animal Production and Health Services to hire these 4 students
 - Animal disease control in the Gambia is currently very limited
 - An ad hoc committee/ task force on animal health, attached to the relevant technical committees, should be established
 - The committee can be long term, and may eventually be institutionalized
 - Private vets, pharmacists, private sector producers, and other experts should be included
 - The group needs to develop standards/ regulations as a matter of urgency, after which a proper risk assessment (comparing establishments to the standards) and other activities of enforcement, etc can follow
 - Must use OIE, Codex standards as a basis
 - Should complete the imported poultry meat standards, develop standards for live poultry production and other aspects of livestock and poultry production

- Will first establish standards, which can then be adopted as regulations
 - Capacity building must be done gradually, over time
 - Standards should start out being less stringent, and become more stringent over time, as establishments improve their hygienic levels
 - The technical sub-committee chairs should suggest names of people to be involved in this task force.
 - Should have ~ 12 members, with ~3 core members of the committee
- Animal Health and Production Services must be strengthened

2) Update on FAO “Biosecurity” project

- a. Activities that have occurred and the key issues raised in those for a
 - A number of activities have occurred, including the following:
 - Brief assessment of capacity of laboratories and inspection operations (August 2009)
 - Information found here fed into development of further project activities
 - Inspection assessment workshop (9-10 September 2009)
 - Developed an action plan to improve inspection, as well as other areas of food safety, animal and plant health in the Gambia
 - Used as input in the development of inspection manual, inspection training, and other project activities
 - NCSPSC training and working session (20-21 October 2009)
 - Provided training for committee and reviewed and adopted 3 standards
 - NCSPSC IEC sub-committee meeting (26 October 2009)
 - Discussed means to provide information on the standards adopted, as well as on general NCSPSC issues
 - Laboratory technician training (28-29 November 2009)
 - Made a number of recommendations, including to develop a network of laboratories in the Gambia- used as input to networking workshop
 - Training on GHPs for food processors, including validation of manuals developed through project on a) GHPs for street food vendors and b) for cereal processing (3-4 November 2009)
 - Emphasized the need for food processors to work together and form a strong association
 - Provided suggestions to improve the manuals, which will be finalized before the end of November and will be printed and distributed
 - Training and information session for inspectors, including validation of manual developed through project for food safety, animal and plant health inspectors (11-12 November 2009)
 - Also provided information gained at a EU-funded Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) inspection training workshop, as well as a

presentation on a risk assessment of abattoirs and poultry production facilities conducted by BTSF

- Provided suggestions to improve the inspection manual, which will be finalized before the end of November and will be printed and distributed
- Development of IEC materials regarding the committee for policy makers and general food safety information for the general public
 - to be finalized by the end of November

b. Upcoming activities

- The following upcoming activities are planned:
 - Workshop on networking of laboratories, including the development of an action plan to facilitate such a network (17 November 2009)
 - Mission of an international policy consultant to develop a draft integrated food safety, animal and plant health policy (19 November- 3 December 2009)
 - Stakeholder consultation workshop on the draft integrated policy (2 December)
 - Finalization of materials as indicated above
 - Preparation of country biosecurity profile and reporting to FAO (by 31 December 2009)

The following points were noted regarding the FAO project:

- Reports have been (and will be) prepared for all the workshops held through the project. Stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback on the reports as soon as possible so that they can be finalized in a timely fashion.
- Following the IEC sub-committee meeting, the IEC committee was able to secure a timeslot on GRTS to have a round table discussion with the competent authorities in food safety, animal health and plant health. However, only the NCSPSC secretariat was able to come to the roundtable. It is recommended that in the future, people must ensure that they are committed to such events if they say they can come, or they should delegate someone else from their agency to attend.

3) Progress report on the implementation of the action plan developed at the inspection assessment workshop (9-10 September 2009)

- The action plan was reviewed and all completed and yet outstanding items were noted.
- Discussed that a “remarks” column should be added to the plan to indicate its status
- Discussed that a code of ethics for inspectors and a code for disposal of confiscated products should be developed (apart from relevant overview information included in the inspection manual)
- The NCSPSC secretariat should write letters to those that have outstanding items included in the action plan and to those that the NCSPSC has committed to contact in the action plan

4. Plan for the next NCSPSC working session, to include the following items:

- a. Planning the workplan for 2010
 - Planning meeting to be conducted in December (2 days)
 - Could be funded by WAQP
 - NCSPSC secretariat should prepare and provide a report of 2009 activities
- b. Discussion of follow-up project possibilities
 - Need to look to FAO, ITC, STDF, and other places for funding
 - Projects should include a large IEC component, including awareness creation, education, training for farmers/ producers, processors, general public and others
 - Should consider activities included in 2009-2013 strategic plan that have not yet been completed
 - Policies related to animal health and plant health must be included in policy development
 - Should also look at the list of standards that should be developed in the future to plan when they can be addressed

5. Any other business

- a. Sub-committee on methods of analysis (Lamin Jobe, chair) should be provided with and review the EU aflatoxin report
 - i. Need to request a electronic copy as well
- b. NCSPSC Website needs to be updated

Key item agreed at meeting:

- Agreed to establish a task force on animal health issues, including all relevant stakeholders, particularly to address poultry production issues
 - Take note of risk assessment that has been done
 - Need to develop policy accordingly, as well as standards and related texts.