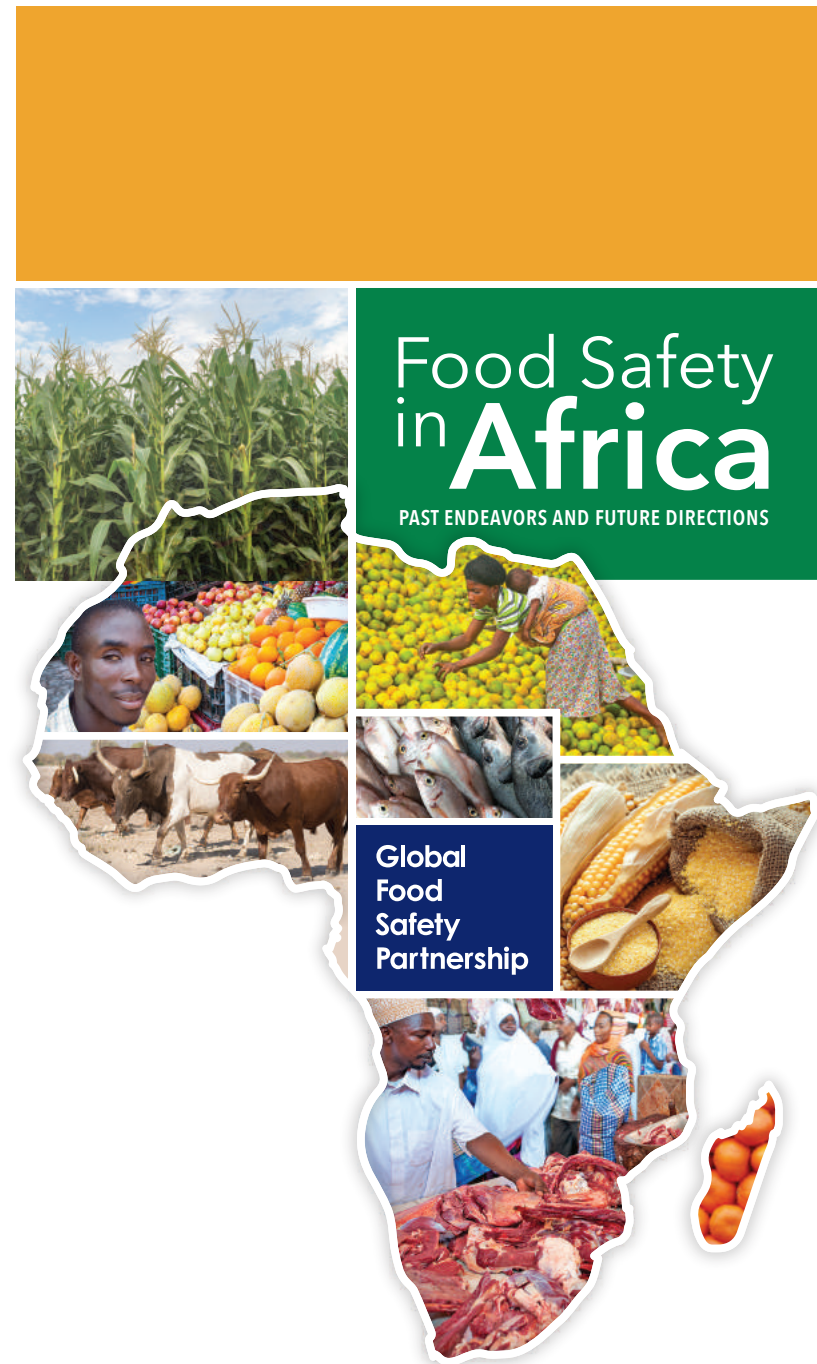


The Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP) is a public-private partnership dedicated to promoting global cooperation for food safety capacity building in developing countries. Hosted at the World Bank, the GFSP promotes food safety systems based on prevention underpinned by science to reduce the public health burden of food borne disease and advocates that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are unattainable without the achievement of **safe, adequate and nutritious food for all**.

Visit the GFSP website for more information:  
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# Food Safety in Africa

## Past endeavors and future directions

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Current donor investment in food safety in sub-Saharan Africa largely reflects the concerns of previous decades and as a result is substantially focused on access to regional and overseas export markets, with emphasis on national control systems. Relatively little is being done to reduce foodborne illness among consumers in sub-Saharan Africa. More investment in food safety, by donors, African governments and the private sector, with more focus on local and informal markets, is needed to help ensure that Africans have safe food.

New understanding of foodborne disease burden and management, along with rapid and broad change within societies and agri-food systems in sub-Saharan Africa, has led to food safety emerging as an important public health and development issue. There is need to reconsider donor and national government investment strategies and the role of the private sector.

The full report by the Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP) provides up-to-date information on key food safety actors, presents the first-ever analysis of food safety investments in sub-Saharan Africa, captures insights from a wide-ranging expert consultation and makes suggestions for attaining food safety, based on evidence but also consensus principles, successful elsewhere but not yet applied widely in mass domestic markets in sub-Saharan Africa. This brief presents a summary of the key messages of the report, opportunities to improve food safety in the continent, and recommendations for donors, African governments and the private sector.

### Key messages - Needs and opportunities for improvement

While national governments have central responsibility for ensuring safe food for their citizens, international donor organizations are, and have been, the major providers of food safety investments. The report documents investments from over 30 bilateral and multilateral agencies, development banks and foundations. Although their goals, priorities and strategies have been largely uncoordinated, investments have been appreciated by stakeholders who nevertheless see opportunities for re-orientation of investments towards greater impacts.

Current donor investment in food safety remains substantially focused on access to regional and overseas export. Much of this donor investment involves activities that are not linked to health outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa. The focus reflects priorities which dominated in past decades and which still have relevance but are insufficient to address the food safety needs of consumers in Africa.

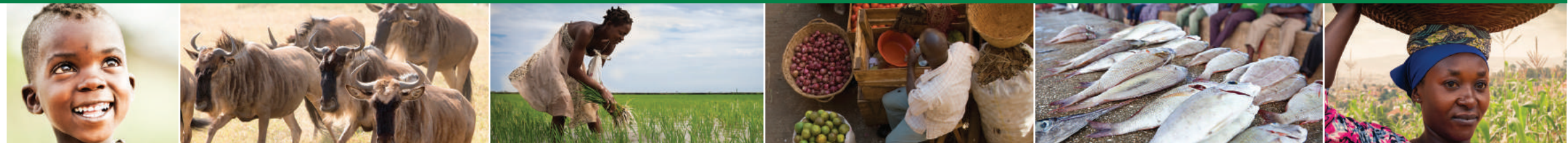


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SAFER FOOD  
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HEALTHIER WORLD



**Better address the health of domestic consumers dependent on informal markets.**

Most of the health and economic burden of foodborne illness in sub-Saharan Africa is borne by the majority who depend on informal markets, where only a small fraction of donor investment has been focused. There is a lack of data on the impacts of specific hazards required for prioritization and on the range, effectiveness and cost of intervention options.

International donors should increase and diversify investment in food safety and prioritize the development of knowledge and of intervention strategies to effectively reduce health risks. National governments and regional institutions in sub-Saharan Africa, in dialogue with the donor community, should establish evidence-based food safety goals, priorities and implementing strategies that consider health burden and development impacts, with emphasis on informal markets.



**Build capacity for well-governed, evidence- and risk-based food safety systems.**

Risk-based approaches to food safety management are increasingly the norm among governments and firms producing for formal markets. Approved by governments in sub-Saharan Africa, they have yet to be implemented in the informal sector. They provide structured and efficient ways of mitigating risk (such as farm-to-table management) but require adaptation for informal markets and an enabling regulatory environment. Lack of donor coordination and underfunded, fragmented and often poorly governed national food safety systems all contribute to regulatory failure and a significant gap between food safety policy and implementation in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa.



The donor community and national governments should endorse and implement principles of science and risk-based prevention, adapted to local conditions. Donors and governments in sub-Saharan Africa should mutually commit to improving food safety governance. These include sub-Saharan Africa country ownership of improving food safety; government commitment to improving institutions and tackling corruption; donor harmonization and alignment with national priorities; and managing for results and mutual accountability.

**Harness marketplace drivers of progress on food safety.**

The private sector plays a central role in assuring food safety and experience has shown that improvements in food safety come mostly from private sector response to public and market demands. In sub-Saharan Africa, a 'push' approach still predominates, focusing on the public sector and trade goals. In contrast, 'pull' approaches use consumer demand for safe food as the major lever for improvement, while supporting the private sector to respond to this demand. The public sector provides an enabling regulatory environment that supports private efforts, provides incentives and accountability for meeting food safety standards and increases awareness of food safety among all stakeholders.

National governments and donors should use their resources and standing to recognize, catalyze and enable the consumer and marketplace drivers of progress on food safety. This requires well-informed and empowered consumers, able to demand food safety, and a private sector that has the capacity and accountability to respond to consumer demand.



**Recommendations**

It is recommended that, in response to changing needs, donors and national governments should broaden their approach to food safety. In keeping with best practice, they should focus more on public health and on harnessing consumer awareness and market forces to drive progress. Focus on export markets remains relevant, but investments need to be broadened, built on, prioritized and targeted to alleviate health risks in the domestic markets mainly responsible for the public health burden of unsafe food in sub-Saharan Africa.