



State of Palestine

National Strategy for Food Safety

2017-2022





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1. Introduction

1.1 Strategy goals and their relation to Palestinian Development Plan

This strategy comes within the framework of the recognition of relevant authorities that food safety crucially requires collaborative efforts and advancement of competence and effectiveness, in addition to dedication to team work to promote all components and branches of public health services relevant to food safety.

This strategy directly contributes to the State of Palestine's approach to integrate in global market systems through focusing on the adaptation of national monitoring and food safety systems with the requirements to join various relevant international conventions, treaties and organisations. Additionally, it emphasises the commitment of the State of Palestine to build a comprehensive system - based on optimal international standards, as well as scientific procedures and rules to monitor and ensure food safety.

This strategy is also connected the Palestinian Development Plan 2017-2022 which is reflected in the National Policy Agenda in various sectorial and cross-sectorial strategies. Specifically, it is aligned with the 2017-2022 sectorial strategies for agriculture, national economy, health and education, as well as the strategy of the Palestinian Standards Institute such that it complements some of the programmes and activities of those strategies and contributes to the achievement of their goals.

1.2 Food safety: justification, concepts and limits of the food safety system

Food safety within the framework of this strategy refers to the prevention of all sources of chronic or acute hazards that could make food endanger the health of consumers. Food quality alternatively refers to all the features that influence the consumer's assessment of products, whether negative or positive. These features include: nature and percentages of food ingredients, poor packaging materials, change of colour, or the presence of an odorous smell. Positive features include: product, colour, taste, smell, texture, source and percentages of ingredients and food processing. This strategy focuses on food safety in terms of the aforementioned definition of food safety.

The food safety monitoring system mentioned in this document requires the presence of monitoring authorities that have specific, complementary and coordinated tasks. These authorities would provide services relevant to the development of the food sector on a professional and scientific basis, as well as implement inspection activities, enforce legislation in accordance with their competence and work on development and training. The term "National Control Authorities" refers to all relevant monitoring bodies, including those working at the local level.

Food control in this context refers to any organisational compulsory activity that is enforced by the National Control Authorities to provide protection to consumers and ensure that all foods are safe and fit for human consumption. The monitoring takes place during the production, handling, storage, processing and distribution phases to ensure that the phases comply with the safety conditions and the products are branded in an honest and accurate manner as provided for by law. The most important responsibility in food control is the enforcement of legislation relevant to food that protects consumers from unsafe, impure and fake food, through the prohibition of the selling of foods that do not reach the standard required by the consumer in terms of nature, composition and quality and that pose a danger to the consumer's health.

Some relevant definitions according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO):

From the Farm to the Table	Various steps in the food production, storage, handling, distribution and preparation chain
Food Contaminants	Any biological, chemical or physical factor or strange material or otherwise that is unintentionally added to food but that harms food safety or suitability for consumption
Food Hygiene	All health measures and circumstances that are necessary to ensure food safety and suitability during all stages of the food chain
Food Inspection	The examination of food products or diets by an official authority that enjoys a regulation or enforcement mandate or both, to monitor raw materials, and processing and distribution. This includes the products during the production phase and final products to ensure they comply with regulatory requirements.
Food Supervision	The continued monitoring of shelved food to ensure that consumers are not exposed to ingredients that could pose danger to their health including chemical contaminants or biological hazards.
Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points System	The Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points System is a science based and systematic method used to promote food safety starting from the beginning of production to final consumption. The system identifies specific hazards and measures for their control to ensure the safety of food. This system is a tool to assess hazards and establish control systems that focus on prevention rather than relying mainly on end-product testing.
Source of Danger	A biological, chemical or physical factor present in or around food and is capable of causing damage.
Risk Monitoring	A process that consists of three components: risk assessment, risk management and risk reporting
Risk Assessment	A science-based process that consists of the following steps: identification of the source of danger, characterisation of the source of danger, assessment of extent of exposure and characterisations of repercussions.
Risk Reporting	Exchange of information and opinions in an interactive manner about the dangers between workers in risk assessment and management, consumers and all other relevant stakeholders.
Risk Management	Process of weighing policy alternatives in light of risk assessment results, selection from appropriate control options and implementation of selection when necessary, including regulatory measures.

1.3 Palestinian demographic, social, economic and political reality

Population: results of official statistics and population projections over the next thirty years affirm that significant demographic changes will occur in the Palestinian society, which emphasises the importance of investing in building and developing food safety monitoring systems. The population in Palestine was estimated to be approximately 4.7 million individuals in 2015, 2.86 million in the West Bank and 1.8 million in the Gaza Strip.¹

Poverty: according to the latest estimations by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics on the status of poverty in the Palestinian territories, 25.8% of individuals in Palestinian society lived below the poverty line in 2011 according to the monthly consumption patterns of the family. The percentage reached 17.8% in the West Bank and 38.8% in the Gaza Strip. Results showed that 12.9% of Palestinians lived in deep poverty according to monthly consumption patterns, including 7.8% of the population in the West Bank and 21.1% of the population in the Gaza Strip.

Agricultural Sector: the value added of the agricultural sector in Palestine reached 322.6 million dollars in 2012, representing 5.9% of the gross domestic product at the time. This contribution regressed to

¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the situation of the Palestinian population in Palestine in 2015.

3.9% in 2014². It regressed further to reach 3% in 2016. With time, agricultural imports exceeded exports significantly, such that the net agricultural imports reached 127 million dollars in 2014, while agricultural exports stood at 67 million dollars, equivalent to 7% of the net exports.³

Cultivated areas and agricultural holdings: the area of the West Bank and Gaza Strip reaches 6.023 million dunums, 94% of which is in the West Bank.⁴ The area used for agriculture is approximately 1.2 million dunums, equivalent to 20% of the total area of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 90% of which is in the West Bank and 10% in the Gaza Strip.

Livestock Production: the number of families that primarily or secondarily depend on livestock is estimated at 32,200 families. The size of livestock in Palestine, according to the results of the Livestock Survey conducted in 2013, which is classified within the definition of agricultural holdings, is estimated as follows: 33,980 heads of cattle; 730,894 heads of sheep; 215,335 heads of goats; 2,058 heads of camels; 32.5 million heads of chickens (994,600 heads of breeders); 1.8 million heads of hens; 546,400 heads of turkeys; 19,690 heads of rabbits; and 46,226 beehives. In addition, there is a large number of domestic poultry, including 258,900 domestic chicken; 285,600 pigeons; 5,000 turkeys; 29,100 rabbits; 20,000 quail; and 29,700 other types of poultry.

Dairy Production: there are two types of production systems in the dairy sector –traditional and industrial. The traditional breed includes young and medium cattle breeders who predominantly sell their products on the local level and produce raw cow's milk annually. Ten factories work in the industrial production sector, and these produce 155,000 tons of fresh milk annually. In total, 182,000 tons of milk is produced annually in Palestine, with a value reaching 382 million dollars. The gap between demand and supply in the Palestinian market is bridged through the import of dairy products, particularly from Israel, where exports reach 17,416 tons of milk annually with a value reaching 22.6 million dollars.

Slaughterhouses: there are 13 cattle slaughterhouses in Palestine, 8 in the West Bank and 5 in the Gaza Strip; as well as 9 poultry slaughterhouses in the West Bank and 1 in the Gaza Strip. The total number of animals slaughtered per year reaches 32,389 heads of cows; 39,648 heads of sheep; 6,666 heads of goats; and 72 camels. The total production of these slaughterhouses reaches 6,968.42 tons of red meat. Meat products are considered the most dangerous in terms of food safety, and unfortunately most meats reach Palestinian consumers without passing through slaughterhouses and under veterinarian and medical supervision.

Hatcheries: 19 hatcheries operate in the poultry industry in the West Bank and an additional four in the Gaza Strip. The number of chicks produced by these hatcheries reached 64,524,000 chicks in 2012 (432,000 of which were egg chicks and 64,091,600 were meat chicks). The number of eggs ready for spawning reached 91,861,700 eggs (1,158,700 eggs from egg chicks and 90,703,000 eggs from meat chicks).⁵ The total production of meat reached 72,680 tons in the agricultural year 2011/2012.

1.4 Strategy Development Methodology

Based on the decision of the Cabinet number (06/39/17) on 12/02/2015, a "National Committee to prepare a National Strategy for Health and Food Safety in Palestine" was created, comprising the Ministry of Health as a "rapporteur," and Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of National Economy, Ministry of Planning and Palestine Standards Institution as members, in addition to representatives of Palestinian universities, Palestine Society for Consumer Protection, Palestinian Food Industries Union and Federation of the Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture.

The National Committee organised a number of meetings and workshops that were headed by the Ministry of Health during the period extending from February 2015 and January 2017. The committee

² Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, National Accounts 2014

³ Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development, Arab Agricultural Statistics Yearbook, Issue Number 34, 2014.

⁴ Ministry of Local Government, <<http://www.molg.pna.ps/Palestine.aspx>>

⁵ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/Livestock-2012-E-%208.htm>

received technical assistance from an international expert in food safety strategies, commissioned by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). These workshops yielded the first draft of the food safety strategy.

A small group comprising the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Palestine Standards Institution, with assistance from FAO, reviewed and adapted the strategy. The adaptation came in accordance with the technical guidelines for the preparation of sectoral strategies for 2017-2022, published in August 2016 by the Ministry of Finance and Planning as a frame of reference for the preparation of sectoral and cross sectoral strategies of the State of Palestine. The adaptation focused on clarifying the connections between the Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, National Policy Agenda 2030 and relevant national sectoral plans, including –to the largest extent possible- the budget programme 2017-2022.

1.5 Contents of the strategy's report

The contents of the strategy's report are divided into nine sections. Following this introduction, the second section provides a focused analysis to the context of the plan, presenting an analytical description of the issues relevant to food safety and the environment that influences food safety, as well as an analysis of the stakeholders of the strategy. The third section presents national policies of food safety. Section four presents the strategic framework that explains the long-term strategy of food safety in Palestine, the basic pillars requisite for the achievement of this vision and the strategic goals to be achieved in the period 2018-2022. Section five clarifies the connection between the strategy and National Policy Agenda, while section six presents these connections with the Sustainable Development Goals. The seventh section presents governmental interventions that seek to achieve the goals of the strategy, followed by the work plan (in section eight) and the strategy implementation management plan (section nine).

2. Context Analysis

2.1 Stakeholders relevant to food safety and their current tasks

1. Main Governmental Institutions with Responsibilities Relevant to Food Safety

Relevant Authority	Responsibilities/ Tasks
Ministry of Agriculture	- Formulate and implement policies to improve the competitive capacity of Palestinian food products in national and external markets through improvement of safety and quality standards. - Regulate imports and exports of food of plant and animal origins. - Enforce laws and regulations relevant to animal health and plant prevention; monitor and prevent spread of plant and animal diseases. - The primary responsibility in the Ministry of Agriculture in relation to veterinarian services is the protection of the health of animals through: plan and implement animal vaccination programmes; monitor and diagnose animal diseases and take medical quarantine measures of animals and animal products and feeds; supervise food of animal origin safety and implement programmes to eradicate diseases through examinations and inspections. - Monitor and ensure animal care. - Inspect the work of farms, livestock production factories and slaughterhouses.
Ministry of National Economy	- Contribute to the development of production sectors and develop the industrial and commercial sectors. - Support and protect national products, promote their competitive capacity and representation in national and international markets. - Protect consumers and regulate the national market. - Ensure the safety of industrial food products during manufacturing (from raw materials to packaging, except inputs from animal origin). - Monitor compliance with technical regulations for food products in stores and markets (such as expiry date, branding...etc.) - Formulate economic policies in support of the abilities and capabilities of the private sector and promote the competitive capacity of national products.
Ministry of Health	- Quality and effective response to food programming. - Develop health, hygiene and sanitation guidelines for service providers to serve the public and food safety. - Monitor food safety through checks and inspections. - Regulate services relevant to health, hygiene and sanitation. - Strengthen measures to combat infectious diseases. - Develop, in coordination with relevant stakeholders, the necessary conditions to ensure occupational safety and health in work places, as well as inspection mechanisms. - The Ministry, in coordination with relevant stakeholders, is responsible for monitoring foods during circulation, control of imported foods upon arrival to customs departments and locally produced foods inside production and processing places. - Prohibit the circulation of announcement of special foods until their registration and the obtainment of necessary permits for their circulation and announcement.
Palestine Standards Institute	- Develop national regulations and technical specifications of goods and food products. - Support small and medium-sized institutions to promote, and monitor the implementation of criteria for sustainable industrial, social and economic development. - When necessary, ratify compliance of food products with technical regulations and national standards.
Ministry of Local Governance	- Raise the competence of municipalities and local councils to plan, guide and supervise the local governance sector (including services relevant to food safety). - Monitor markets in terms of compliance with general conditions for public health with focus on main goods, such as bread, meat, fish, fruits and vegetables; and destroy any expired products. - License, allocate and appoint veterinarians for meat inspection. These are the persons with the authority to enter and inspect any store or butchery, and inspect extend of compliance with public health conditions. - Create public slaughterhouses and control refrigerated meats.

Relevant Authority	Responsibilities/ Tasks
Ministry of Education and Higher Education	• Follow-up on food safety on foods in school cafeterias (safety and quality). • Contribute to providing students and teachers with knowledge and skills relevant to food safety and quality with the view of contributing to prevention of diseases and raising their capacities in taking right and proper decisions in handling of foods. • Several universities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip give training courses in health, plant health and food safety within the framework of sustainable development.

2. Palestinian Society for Consumer Protection: the Palestinian Societies for Consumer Protection have spread widely in West Bank governorates, while only one works in the entirety of the Gaza Strip. Additionally, there is also a Consumer Protection Department in the Ministry of National Economy and in the Council of Food Industries. With the view of controlling trade operations from a public safety perspective and prevention of smuggling, these societies work closely with the Food Control Departments in the Ministry of Health, Consumer Protection in the Ministry of National Economy, Customs Control, Ministry of Agriculture and Palestine Standards Institution.

3. Private Sector: Palestinian food industries are coordinated by the Palestinian Food Industries Union. The union represents approximately 200 companies and works on promoting and improving locally manufactured products through the provision of trainings in administration and marketing skills, and provision of support to company members to access export markets. The total investment in food industries in Palestine exceeded USD 580 million, and more than 15,000 employees work in the sector, representing 20% of the total employees in the industry.

4. United Nations Organizations: in particular the Food and Agriculture of the United Nations, World Organization for Animal Health, Codex Alimentarius Commission and World Health Organization. United Nations organisations contribute to the provision of technical support and facilitate capacity building towards the provision of a conducive environment to the accession of the State of Palestine to international conventions and treaties.

2.2 Analysis of Environment Affecting Food Safety

The analysis of the internal environment (strengths and weaknesses) and external environment (opportunities and threats) affecting the work of national control authorities over food safety is summarised in the table below. The analysis identifies a set of strengths and opportunities that can be leveraged to address a number of identified weaknesses and mitigate threats imposed by external circumstances. Perhaps the most important strength is the capacity of the various institutions (albeit with some shortcomings) and the desire of the different control authorities to join forces to improve food safety at a national level, which enables it to overcome financial difficulties and obstacles imposed by the occupation.

Table 2: SWOT Analysis of Environment Affecting Food Safety

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Presence of qualified cadre with many years of experience in inspection, monitoring, awareness-raising and other fields. • Presence of the basic infrastructure necessary for inspection, control and risk management. • Presence of a set of laws and legislations that promote the inspection and control role and give judicial control authorities to food inspectors. • Availability of forms, guides and tools that promote transparency, professionalism and ability to keep pace with developments. • Presence of an understanding private sector that is prepared to invest in improving production to promote competitiveness (albeit on a limited scale). • Presence of sectoral strategies that serve food safety goals. • Presence of environmental health departments in different governorates. • Presence of veterinary departments in all governorates and presence of veterinarians despite the lack of staff. • Some organisations commenced in monitoring and evaluating risks. • Agreement between all organisations in the importance of activating joint work. • Presence of strong and effective consumer societies, particularly in the West Bank. • Deep knowledge in the requirements to accede to international conventions, treaties and organisations. • Presence of the Palestine Standards Institutions whose cadre has the technical expertise to support food safety systems. • Availability of business service providers who are specialised in comprehensive quality management, including ISO 22000. • Presence of a number of companies that received and maintained quality certifications that could disseminate their experience. • Strong primary healthcare system. • Educated society. • Public health laboratory in the Ministry of Health serves as a referral for food safety.	• Weaknesses in some legislative aspects, conflicts of power and unclear power in some cases. • Incomplete legislative system. • Shortage of cadre quantitatively and qualitatively. • Weak training and career development opportunities. • Weak financial resources for logistical support and development. • Inability to undertake some laboratory tests for several reasons, most importantly absence of necessary machines and equipment, and lack of resources. • Inability to implement planned inspection activities or respond to complaints of inspections in light of absence of transportation. • Weak food safety culture among consumers and producers in general. • Weak conviction among citizens of effectiveness of reporting dangers. • 80% of slaughtered cattle were not subjected to veterinary inspections before and after slaughtering (outside slaughterhouses and any veterinary medical inspection). • Absence of sufficient accountability. • Low wages of inspectors in general, which weakens the system as a whole. • Weak protection of inspectors. • Absence of technical, logistical and financial capacities to take and test samples. • Penalties are not deterrents. • Absence of sufficient information that enable taking informed policy decisions in food safety and risk reduction sectors. • Negative competition between relevant stakeholders on food safety inspection, and preference of undertaking work that requires less effort.
Opportunities	Threats
• Presence of funding opportunities and interest of some donors to support food safety programmes and projects. • Presence of external Palestinian expertise that can be used. • Presence of a number of existing projects that do not target food safety directly but can be used in the implementation of some strategic activities because of the proximity of their objectives to the strategy's goals. • Available technical expertise by a number of international organisations can be used on a number of levels (by the government and producers) • Presence of regional experiences that can be used.	• Lack of control over borders and border crossings, which makes smuggling easier. • Inability to enforce judicial control in Area "C". • Urban expansion and population growth in light of scarcity of resources and possibilities. • Regression in external funding of the government's budget, which limits availability of resources that the government can allocate to the strategy. • Spread of diseases in nearby countries. • Lack of control over water resources, which limits ability to provide and control safety measures. • Obstacles imposed by Israel on entry of necessary laboratory equipment and supplies. • Persistence of Gaza electricity crisis.

2.3 Analysis of issues relevant to food safety

The control of food safety through the adoption of a comprehensive monitoring approach requires the building of a holistic and supportive legislative and institutional system that would render protection of consumers' health and public health, as well as encourage fair practices in food trade national priorities. Consequently, and within the framework of identifying the issues that ought to be addressed to develop the food safety system in Palestine, the following paragraphs present the main problems that emerged during the consultations that took place during the preparation of this strategy, which will be addressed concurrently during implementation.

Issue one: weak legislative framework in relation to food safety

a review and assessment of Palestinian legislation pertaining to food safety in Palestine reveals significant operational weaknesses in the Palestinian food safety system. Firstly, there is no primary or secondary legislation that covers all aspects of food safety at all levels of the food chain. The legal framework regulating food safety in Palestine is fragmented and includes a number of legislations that cover various aspects of food safety but they are not harmonized. Furthermore, there is not a clear coordination mechanism to comply with the requirements of a modern legal framework for food safety that is in harmony with international standards.

Issue two: lack of control over borders and trade as a result of the Israeli occupation and economic agreements

the continuation of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including full and complete control over areas classified as 'Area C', which comprises 62% of the West Bank in accordance with the Oslo Accords, prevent and hinder the ability of Palestinian control authorities to enforce policy and procedures relevant to food safety in large areas of the Palestinian territories. Furthermore, the Paris Protocol which governs economic relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority restricts the ability of the State of Palestine to control imports by Palestinian merchants. The protocol restricts the requirements for food import in the State of Palestine to the approval by the Israeli Ministry of Health and Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture. This leads to the presence of large amounts of food products that are smuggled into the Palestinian market without the prior receipt of permission from the Palestinian Ministries of Health and Agriculture.

Issue three: multiple official institutions monitoring food safety and weak coordination amongst them

the complex nature of the food system resulting from the very diverse nature of foods and the multiplicity of food production, transport, marketing and storage systems renders food safety a cross-sectoral issue in which the responsibilities of different governmental bodies and agencies -with their legal and organisational frameworks and their human and financial capabilities- overlap. This requires strong, clear and flexible institutional arrangements that enable decision-makers in these institutions to make decisions on food safety in a timely manner, especially in times of crisis or emergency. The need for such arrangements is further exacerbated by the absence of a central system in Palestine for the collection and analysis of data on food safety; for the conversion of raw data into information leading to a specific and applicable methodology and policies. Therefore, the development of a data management, analysis and storage systems should be considered as a priority for developing food safety systems.

Issue four: increased challenges concerning food safety and relevant to globalisation, free markets and provisions of the World Trade Organisation

within the framework of Palestine's membership quest in the World Trade Organisation and to accomplish economic growth through increased exports, the obligations of the State of Palestine within the framework of the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures- (SPS) increase. The World Trade Organization identified restrictions on the policies of state parties relevant to food safety (bacterial contaminations, pesticides, inspection and marking), as well as animal and plant safety relevant to exported diseases and disorders. Currently, and despite advancements during the past years, the institutions of the State of Palestine lack the necessary capacity to effectively respond to the needs of building an economy based on exports and globalised trade.

Issue five: weak monitoring and control of diseases relevant to food safety

as a result of the weak control system in general, diseases relevant to food safety and poisoning often go unreported or improperly identified, such that the vast majority are attributed to unknown reasons. This hinders and weakens the capacity of relevant authorities to implement the necessary responses and procedures to address the problems incurred by these diseases or that could be causes in the future. Additionally, there are other hazards transmitted through foods such as diseases that affect both humans and animals, for example, Brucellosis, so that there is an increase in its prevalence. Another aspect pertains to chemical contaminants from pesticides or remnants of veterinary treatments whose impact might emerge in the long term, as well as many obstacles relevant to consumption of meat that is not subjected to veterinary inspection of slaughterhouses.

Issue six: weak monitoring over production chains and food distribution

despite the efforts of different monitoring institutions, monitoring over production systems and food distribution along production chains to ensure safe usage and consumption still lack a number of elements, most importantly monitoring of remnants and contaminants (biological, chemical and physical). The absence of such restraints has a negative impact on food safety, such that the system does not allow appropriate follow-up, in addition to the inability to evaluate the safety of food production systems and its distribution rapidly to ensure adherence to national standards and prevent the spread of diseases or epidemics as a result of unsafe food. Perhaps the most important shortcoming in the monitoring system on food production systems lies in weak monitoring over food and exported production inputs, including inspection, control and testing of exports to ensure their safety and quality. Another important shortcoming lies in weak monitoring at the beginning of the food chain that is locally produced, including over animal products, meats that are slaughtered outside of slaughterhouses and home-processed dairy products, in addition to the spread of joint diseases and the consumption of pesticide-contaminated plants.

Issue seven: absence of procedures and measures in response to emergencies and spread of new diseases

food safety hazards tend to increase in times of crises and emergency. There is usually a scarcity in resources to address hazards in these cases. Additionally, the safety of produced and donated foods given in times of emergency require special attention in many cases. Food safety control systems in Palestine, despite political events and emergencies over the years, are characterised by the absence of mechanisms that ensure their effectiveness in times of emergency, in addition to weak official coordination, including with the private sector and non-governmental organisations, to mitigate and manage risks and prevent unwanted food safety practices along the food chain during times of emergency.

Issue eight: weak food safety culture

studies undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reveal weak awareness among producers and consumers about important issues pertaining to food safety. The lack of awareness on issues and practices pertaining to food production among producers and families involved in food processing pose a serious source of concern.

Issue nine: absence of a risk analysis policy

the necessities to activate risk analysis in accordance with the basic principles of the Codex Alimentarius remain weak. The three components of risk analysis are risk evaluation management and reporting. Risk analysis requires a high degree of advancement in data collection and analysis, and thereafter high coordination and communication among stakeholders in risk management, in addition to reporting to stakeholders of food safety. There is also a need to connect risk management into all monitoring activities.

Issue ten: limited interaction with international and regional organisations

this reflects on the development of technical and organisational capacities.

Section 3: National Food Safety Policies

This section addresses all aspects of the practices and guiding principles that will govern food safety systems that are sought to be achieved through the implementation of this strategy. This policy includes all public and private bodies involved in the practical, technical, operational and administrative aspects of food safety and monitoring systems in Palestine.

3.1 Governmental Policy Commitments

The government within the framework of the implementation of the aforementioned policies and their strategic goals outlined in the following section commits to:

- Implement appropriate policies and programmes to organize and ensure regulation in production and processing of different types of foods, in accordance with adopted modern international standards.
- Ensure that locally consumed or internationally exported foods are safe, sound and healthy.
- Develop and maintain a monitoring, evaluation and control system to support the decision-making process.
- Build on adopted priorities from risk analysis in accordance with scientific principles.
- Develop and implement systems that facilitate compliance with bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.
- Effective participation in the development of national, regional and international standards and guiding principles relevant to foods.
- Allocation of sufficient resources to develop, implement and sustain an effective national system to monitor food safety along the full length of the food chain.
- Support undertaking of research to guide decisions based on the national system for food safety guide.
- Design and implement general and relevant awareness-raising programmes for consumers to receive information on best practices of food hygiene.
- Development of appropriate programmes to achieve basic data affected to food hygiene standards that seek to protect the weakest segments of the society and include the whole of the food chain.
- Develop and maintain a national information system on food safety that serves the creation of an official risk analysis system, as well as making decisions and setting priorities in risk analysis based monitoring.
- Development of systems to ensure the availability of safe food in times of crises and emergency.
- Facilitate and expedite processes of adoption of legal frameworks and amendments to serve the achievement of policies adopted by the government towards food safety.

3.2 Policies at the Level of Identified Issues

On the legislative level	• Rationalisation of existing legislation and enactment of modern legislation on food safety in accordance with international standards. • Adoption of clear and deterrent legal texts to punish violators in food safety cases. • Harmonization of legislations with international systems and global concepts of monitoring food safety
On the trade level	• Where necessary, develop and/or promote existing systems in internal trade concerning food products, including meeting the demands of Palestine's regional and international trade partners.
On the follow-up level	• Facilitate creation of follow-up "farm to table" systems. • Implement appropriate practices to monitor foods, including both animal and plant products and their ingredients. • Promote follow-up activities and ensure the inclusion of the transportation of animals from spaces to slaughterhouses.

On the risk analysis level	• Take the necessary measures to promote official mechanisms to analyse risks that include capacity building of governmental institutions. • Invest in technical capacity building of governmental human resources and basic structures, including laboratories and research mechanisms. • Make citizens a key partner in risk monitoring (encouragement of reporting).
On the level of international relations	• Ensure the official participation of Palestine in relevant meetings on the national, regional and international levels. • Relevant ministries and official institutions have to ensure the dissemination of information gathered in international forums to stakeholders. • Accession to international agreements and organisations relevant to food safety. • Ensure compliance with all agreements concerning food safety that Palestine has acceded to.
On the development and scientific research level	• Develop a mechanism to coordinate food safety research within the context of current initiatives that focus on science and technology. • Encourage partnerships with scientific and other relevant circles in food safety research. • Use research to inform policy formulation and proceed with expanding export abilities and improvement of the status of national products in the local market. • Encourage and allocate resources to undertake applied research, where appropriate and practical.
On the disease monitoring level	• Promote the current system to monitor foodborne communicable diseases and create a more comprehensive database. • Invest in the development of a comprehensive system for early warning regarding food safety. • Promote systems monitoring national animal and plant diseases and prevent their occurrence. • Supply consumers with information on the incidence of foodborne diseases in Palestine.
On the awareness level	• Develop and implement programmes on food safety. • Integrate food safety topics in school and university programmes and activities.
On the legislative level	• Rationalisation of existing legislation and enactment of modern legislation on food safety in accordance with international standards. • Adoption of clear and deterrent legal texts to punish violators in food safety cases. • Harmonization of legislations with international systems and global concepts of monitoring food safety
On the trade level	• Where necessary, develop and/or promote existing systems in internal trade concerning food products, including meeting the demands of Palestine's regional and international trade partners.
On the follow-up level	• Facilitate creation of follow-up "farm to table" systems. • Implement appropriate practices to monitor foods, including both animal and plant products and their ingredients. • Promote follow-up activities and ensure the inclusion of the transportation of animals from spaces to slaughterhouses.
On the risk analysis level	• Take the necessary measures to promote official mechanisms to analyse risks that include capacity building of governmental institutions. • Invest in technical capacity building of governmental human resources and basic structures, including laboratories and research mechanisms. • Make citizens a key partner in risk monitoring (encouragement of reporting).
On the level of international relations	• Ensure the official participation of Palestine in relevant meetings on the national, regional and international levels. • Relevant ministries and official institutions have to ensure the dissemination of information gathered in international forums to stakeholders. • Accession to international agreements and organisations relevant to food safety. • Ensure compliance with all agreements concerning food safety that Palestine has acceded to.

On the development and scientific research level	• Develop a mechanism to coordinate food safety research within the context of current initiatives that focus on science and technology. • Encourage partnerships with scientific and other relevant circles in food safety research. • Use research to inform policy formulation and proceed with expanding export abilities and improvement of the status of national products in the local market. • Encourage and allocate resources to undertake applied research, where appropriate and practical.
On the disease monitoring level	• Promote the current system to monitor foodborne communicable diseases and create a more comprehensive database. • Invest in the development of a comprehensive system for early warning regarding food safety. • Promote systems monitoring national animal and plant diseases and prevent their occurrence. • Supply consumers with information on the incidence of foodborne diseases in Palestine.
On the awareness level	• Develop and implement programmes on food safety • Integrate food safety topics in school and university programmes and activities.

4. Strategic Framework

4.1 Vision

“Safe and Healthy Food in Palestine”

Food safety monitoring authorities⁶ seek to protect the health and rights of the Palestinian consumer, as well as ensure public health. Furthermore, they seek to ensure fair practices in food trade through continuous work to enforce an effective and comprehensive system on foods with the view of ensuring the safety of the entirety of the food chain, from the farm to the table; encouraging investment; and meeting international needs and standards. The vision to reach food safety emanates from the national vision set in the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022, particularly relevant to a safe environment for Palestinians, opening to the international community, enjoying a transparent and responsible government that responds to its citizens’ needs and seeks to produce competitive and quality products and services.

We perceive that the responsibility of the provision of safe, healthy and nutritious food is a collective responsibility along the entire length of the food chain. All stakeholders in food production, processing, trade and consumption including farmers, fishermen, workers in slaughterhouses, food processors, transporters, distributors, merchants and consumers, alongside state institutions are entrusted with the protection of public health. We also believe that the presence of a national policy that is supported by organisational structures on the national and international levels with set and clear standards, systems and programmes to monitor foods on the local and national levels along the length of the food chain is a main pillar to ensure safe and healthy food.

We also believe as national monitoring authorities that food safety in Palestine should be based on science and a wise approach in risk analysis, management and reporting relevant to food safety. It is also important to adopt a modern follow-up system for the primary product and post-harvest products, including food processors and animal products, as well as develop food safety specifications in accordance with international standards that are in keeping with developments in the food sector.

4.2 Principles and Values

The food control authorities in Palestine will work within the framework of the identified vision on adopting a set of principles and values that promote their role in accessing optimal results in the area of food safety on the regional and international levels with the view of enhancing the trust of the consumer and the food trade system.

1. “Complementary Principle” from the farm to the table: all stakeholders to work on the development of a preventative approach along the length of the production, processing and marketing chain through the integration of safety and quality principles in food production, starting with production and ending with consumption. This would take place through ensuring that producers, processors, transporters, sellers, buyers and consumers play an active role in ensuring quality and food safety, as well as achieving societal awareness on food safety.

2. Continuous and renewed scientific approach in risk analysis: the food safety control bodies will rely in their work on international and national data and expertise relevant to risk analysis, particularly risk assessments issued by international organisations and joint committees of relevant UN agencies (food, agriculture and health). Risk management will take into consideration economic results and the capability of implementing risk management choices, as well as recognition of the need for flexibility in accordance with the needs to protect consumers’ and public health. Continuous work will be

⁶ Food safety monitoring authorities include Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of National Economy and Ministry of Local Government/ Municipalities.

undertaken to identify and describe risks relevant to food safety, as well as evaluate, in consultation with stakeholders, exposure and implications of political choices, taking into consideration all relevant factors to protect consumers' and public health.

3. Transparent approach: dissemination policies will be adopted to reveal activities of food safety control authorities with the view of garnering consumers' trust in the integrity of food safety control authorities and consequently in food safety. Food safety control authorities will work on interpreting and explaining undertaken work and justifications of decisions with the view of promoting cooperation between all stakeholders and control authorities to increase everyone's compliance with food safety systems along the length of the food chain.

4. Evaluation of the impact of monitoring systems (regulations and policies): food safety control authorities will continuously work on evaluating the results of the adoption of regulations on food production and distribution and their impact on consumers in terms of health and food cost, particularly since some regulations and policies will lead to increased food prices.

5. Upholding of responsibility and accountability: adherence to the highest standards of internal accountability and within an organisational framework for each ministry and institution, as well as accountability before the public, national organisations, universities and researchers, particularly the Palestine Society for Consumer Protection and before producers, processors, human rights organisations and the media. Monitoring authorities will continuously work on the issuance and dissemination of periodic reports on their work, as well as partake in public accountability sessions or workshops on the national or regional levels to present achievements against goals and desired results.

6. Justice and inclusiveness in laws and regulations: national laws and regulations will take into consideration international standards and frameworks, such that these standards promote justice, inclusiveness and specialisation into all food sectors, taking into consideration national needs while accommodating fair trade standards on both the level of imported and exported products.

7. Compliance and gender empowerment: food safety control authorities and all stakeholders will work on the promotion of gender equality, as well as the empowerment of women, children and marginalised groups to access safe food without gender, age or economic background-based discrimination. Monitoring authorities will adhere to consideration of gender in employment, promotion, training and continuing education of cadre, and particularly inspectors.

8. Partnership and complementarity with the private sector: monitoring authorities will focus in their work on true partnership with all stakeholders, official institutions, civil society organisations, international organisations and private sector institutions, particularly chambers of commerce and specialised unions, such as the Palestinian Food Industries Union. The true partnership that sought is based on context analysis and joint identification of priorities, as well as holding continuous consultations in the submission of legislative proposals and evaluation of interventions and roles.

4.3 Strategic Goals and Sectoral Results 2017-2022

Dimension one: promotion of legislation

First strategic goal: to harmonise Palestinian legislation with national needs and international standards and frameworks relevant to food safety.

Sectoral results:

- 1.1 Decision by cabinet to create Palestinian Council for Food Safety that is mandated with higher powers to control food safety.
- 1.2 Palestinian legislation on food safety that is in compliance with international standards, national interests and needs is enacted.
- 1.3 Supplementary legislation relevant to food safety is completed in harmony with the food safety law.

Dimension two: capacity building of food safety control authorities

Second strategic goal: to improve performance of food safety control authorities within the framework of an effective food safety management system.

Sectoral results:

- 2.1 A group of specialised employees with experience in food safety are recruited in accordance with an organisational structure.
- 2.2 Means, tools and logistics are provided to employees in monitoring authorities to fulfil their duties.
- 2.3 Good performance culture among food safety control authorities is promoted.
- 2.4 Employees in monitoring authorities adopt administrative best practices.
- 2.5 Laboratory capacities in Palestine are in harmony with the requirements of modern food monitoring.
- 2.6 Knowledge, communication and monitoring systems are institutionalised and developed to support and promote food safety control services.
- 2.7 Food safety standards are adopted in harmony with international standards.

Dimension three: enforcement of legislation

Third strategic goal: promote control over the food chain (from the farm to the table) within the framework of national legislation.

Sectoral results:

- 3.1 Programmes and interventions of food safety monitoring authorities are amended in harmony with the guidelines of the Palestinian Council for Food Safety.
- 3.2 Food safety policies are founded on a scientific basis and on the farm to table methodology for all national and imported products.
- 3.3 Food inspectors acquire necessary expertise, legal authority, scientific knowledge and capacity for auditing.
- 3.4 Food inspectors work within a framework of clear and risk analysis-based inspection procedures.
- 3.5 Food industry sector is familiar with the requirements of food safety laws, regulations and standards.
- 3.6 Palestinian citizens are aware of their role in promoting food safety and public health.

Dimension four: risk management and analysis

Fourth strategic goal: to enable food safety regulators to utilise optimal means and scientific guides in risk management relevant to food safety.

Sectoral results:

- 4.1 Food safety monitoring authorities and ministries utilise risk assessments effectively and efficiently.
- 4.2 Risk management decisions are transparent and obligatory on all stakeholders of the food sector.

Dimension five: international and regional cooperation

Fifth strategic goal: to promote work in accordance with international standards relevant to food safety and coordinate and cooperate with relevant international organisations.

Sectoral results:

- 5.1 Specialised bodies in food safety work on the achievement of the recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in all topics relevant to food safety and quality.
- 5.2 Effective contribution to setting goals and formulating policies on the regional level relevant to food safety.
- 5.3 Bilateral and multilateral relations with regional and Arab organisations to promote knowledge and exchange of experience for Palestinian cadre.

5. Relationship and Connection with National Policy Agenda

The “National Policy Agenda 2017-2022, Putting Citizens First”, alongside sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies, is the fourth national development plan prepared by the State of Palestine published since 2008.

The Palestinian Development Plan 2017-2022 is based on the premise that Palestinians deserve the human rights they are entitled to as citizens of an independent, welfare and prosperous state that enjoys full sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, over the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Although this plan cannot determine the path towards independence in particular, it can certainly promote and strengthen the resilience of our people by ensuring that every state institution possesses full readiness that enables it to exercise its powers and provide its services to all Palestinian citizens.

The Palestinian government adopted the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022 “Putting Citizens First” in December 2016, which forms a national programme that serves its citizens and strives to achieve liberty and prosperity. The document focuses primarily on the provision of basic quality services to all citizens in all places without discrimination, to ensure the promotion of steadfastness, particularly in so-called Area “C” and East Jerusalem- the capital of the State of Palestine and the Gaza Strip. The preparation of the agenda was based on a comprehensive consultative process with local and international partners and stakeholders, inside and outside Palestine, with the view of continuing and building on previous achievements. The agenda is based on three pillars: path to independence, government reform and sustainable development.

The government seeks in its development and reform policies as stipulated in the national policy agenda to improve quality of services provided to citizens, promote responsiveness of public institutions to citizens needs and to ensure equality and justice in access to and receipt of these services. The government also seeks to promote accountable and transparent public institutions and optimise utilisation of available resources. To ensure sustainability of development we seek to achieve economic independence and provide a robust investment environment that facilitates the development of Palestinian industry and promising production sectors and ensures availability of appropriate work opportunities for all. Social justice lies at the core of the National Policy Agenda, such that we commit to work on limiting poverty, providing appropriate and complementary systems for social protection to poor and marginalised groups and promote access to justice for all, alongside working on promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment, and ensuring a better future to Palestinian youth. We also commit to the provision of good and holistic education and comprehensive and quality healthcare services to all. We also seek to provide necessities to promote resilience of citizens, through ensuring safety, security and rule of law, as well as provide basic needs, advance agriculture and rural communities and ensure environmental sustainability through sustainable natural resource management and the protection of Palestinian identity and cultural heritage.

The National Policy Agenda document specified 10 national priorities, 29 national policies and a large set of proposed policy interventions within the framework of the 29 national priorities. The below table clarified the intersections between the national policies and sectoral results of the National Strategy for Food Safety.

Intersections between National Policy Agenda and Sectoral Results of National Strategy for Food Safety

National Priority	National Policy and Interventions	Intersection between National Priorities and National Strategy for Food Safety
Third National Priority: Strengthen Palestine's International Status	Fifth National Policy: Broadening Palestine's International Participation - Fulfil obligations arising from Palestine's accession to international treaties and membership in international organisations. - Actively participate in international forums. - Gradually seek accession to additional international conventions and organisations.	Relevant policies: - Continuously follow-up, remain updated about and utilise current international progression in food safety. - Participate in regional and international activities relevant to food safety and partake in the work of relevant international and regional organisations. Relevant sectoral results: 5.1 Specialised bodies in food safety work on the achievement of the recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in all topics relevant to food safety and quality. 5.2 Effective contribution to setting goals and formulating policies on the regional level relevant to food safety. 5.3 Bilateral and multilateral relations with regional and Arab organisations to promote knowledge and exchange of experience for Palestinian cadre.
Fifth National Priority: Effective Government	Ninth National Policy: Strengthening Accountability and Transparency - Strengthen transparency in government, including the approval and implementation of access to information legislation. - Promote effective human resources management and development.	The strategy identified a set of values to govern the work of food safety monitoring authorities and other stakeholders; most importantly the third value of transparent approach and the fifth value of upholding responsibility and accountability. Relevant sectoral results: 2.1 A group of specialised employees with experience in food safety are recruited in accordance with an organisational structure. 2.3 Good performance culture among food safety control authorities is promoted. 2.4 Employees in food safety control authorities adopt administrative best practices. 3.3 Food inspectors acquire necessary expertise, legal authority, scientific knowledge and capacity for auditing.
Sixth National Priority: Economic Independence	Fourteenth National Policy: Promoting Palestinian Industry Support and protect national products and increase competitiveness.	One of the three goals of food safety control is: To contribute to economic development by maintaining consumers' trust in the food system and place a solid foundation for local and international food trade.

Ninth National Priority: Quality Healthcare for All	Twenty Second National Policy: better healthcare services • Improve the quality of health-care services (infrastructure, equipment, drugs, IT, training of healthcare workers, standards). Twenty Fifth National Policy: improving citizens' health and wellbeing • Strengthen preventative health-care, raise awareness and promote healthy lifestyles.	Relevant sectoral results: 2.2 Means, tools and logistics that employees in monitoring authorities to fulfil their duties are provided. 2.5 Laboratory capacities in Palestine are in harmony with requirements of modern food monitoring. 2.6 Knowledge, communication and monitoring systems are institutionalised and developed to support and promote food safety control services. 2.7 Food safety standards are adopted in harmony with international standards. Two of the three goals of food safety control are: • Protect public health by reducing the hazards of foodborne diseases. • Protect consumers from unhealthy, non-nutritious, poorly branded or forged foods.
Tenth National Priority: Resilience Communities	Twenty Sixth National Policy: ensuring community and national security, public safety and rule of law • Strengthen capacity for disaster response and crisis management. Twenty Eighth National Policy: ensuring a sustainable environment and adapting to climate change • Manage, protect and promote sustainable use and conservation of natural resources (land, water and energy).	Relevant sectoral results: 4.1 Food safety monitoring authorities and ministries utilise risk assessments effectively and efficiently. 4.2 Risk management decisions are transparent and obligatory on all stakeholders of the food sector. The strategy follows the complementarity “from the farm to the table” principle, by which monitoring authorities will work with all stakeholders to develop a preventative approach along the length of the production, preparation and marketing chain, through the integration of safety and quality principles in food products, starting with production and ending with consumption by focusing on that producers, processors, transporters, buyers and consumers play an active role in ensuring quality and food safety.

6. Relationship and Connection with Sustainable Development Goals

193 states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a non-compulsory framework for the United Nations and world states in January 2016. The United Nations expects that the adoption of the development agenda will contribute to increased efforts by states in eliminating all forms of poverty, combating all forms of inequality and address global warming. The sustainable development agenda identified 17 goals and 169 targets whose achievement is required within the Sustainable Development Goals framework. The table below clarifies the Sustainable Development Goals and relevant results that are connected to the National Strategy for Food Safety 2022.

Relevant Sustainable Development Goals	Relevant Result	Intersection between National Strategy for Food Safety and Sustainable Development Goals
Goal 2: end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.	The National Strategy for Food Safety intersects primarily with the second goal through the national vision for food safety "Safe and Healthy Food in Palestine". The five dimensions of the strategy seek to ensure access of all citizens to safe food by focusing on a number of principles, most importantly "from the farm to the table".
Goal 3: ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	- By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases. - By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination. - Strengthen capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.	Monitoring authorities in general seek the achievement of three goals, two of which directly relate to societal health patterns. - Protect public health by reducing hazards of foodborne diseases. - Protect consumers from unhealthy, non-nutritious, poorly branded or forged foods, and focus on societal awareness and research. The five dimensions of the strategy seek to promote the role of the monitoring authorities to achieve its goals, and consequently contribute to the commitment of the State of Palestine to the third strategic goal through the reduction of the hazards that result from pollution or food toxicity of various sources, whether locally produced or imported foods. The fourth dimension seeks to enable food safety regulators to utilise optimal means and scientific guides in risk management relevant to food safety, thus contributing to building our capacities in early warning, risk reduction and management and limitation of dangerous contaminants that impact food safety.
Goal 12: ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	- By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature. - Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.	Result 2.6 "Knowledge, communication and monitoring systems are institutionalised and developed to support and promote food safety control services" directly contributes to the achievement of the goal, as well as the results stipulated within the framework of the fourth strategic goal "to enable food safety regulators to utilise optimal means and scientific guides in risk management relevant to food safety." Result 3.6 "Palestinian citizens are aware of their role in promoting food safety and public health" identifies the importance of societal awareness in accessing safe food and adopting policies that ensure integration of awareness in school and university programmes and activities.

7. Programme Policy Act (Interventions by Governmental Institutions)

Monitoring authorities will work through the 2017-2019 and 2019-2022 budget programmes on the achievement of the results through a set of outputs and activities within the framework of every relevant budget programme. Also, United Nations organisations, international organisations, local authorities, civil society organisations and the private sector will implement a set of interventions and policies relevant to the results in this strategy. This section presents the intersections between the sectoral results of the National Strategy for Food Safety with the 2017-2019 programmes of food safety monitoring authorities.

7.1 Ministry of Agriculture Budget Programmes Relevant to Food Safety

The outputs of the three budget programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture contribute to the National Strategy for Food Safety results. Nonetheless, the outputs specified within the framework of the fifth result of the fifth strategic goal is the one that is most connected and impacts food safety. See below the most important project and non-project outputs that form part of the 2017-2019 budget programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture.

1. Outputs and results of first programme: agricultural development

1.2 Agricultural techniques, varieties and breeds utilised by farmers are improved.

2017-2019 Non-Project Outputs	2017-2019 Project Outputs
1. National numbering of live stock 2. Immunise 3,000,000 sheep and cows against endemic infectious diseases; monitoring and control of communicable, infectious and common diseases; bird flu is monitored and controlled; slaughterhouses, animal production factories, hatcheries, storehouses and veterinary pharmacies are monitored; periodic monitoring and checkups of farms. 3. (11,800) guidance tours for farmers and breeders 4. (753) celebratory days for farmers and breeders are organised. 5. (598) agricultural viewings are undertaken. 6. (493) training courses for farmers are conducted. 7. (1,515) guidance materials are created and published. 8. (22) agricultural awareness episodes are broadcast on TV and radio. 9. A guidance website is created and managed. 10. (97) guidance messages are spread through cell phones. 11. (130) researches and experiments are implemented.	1. (90) trained farmers in soil fertility 2. (60) programmes on fertilisation are created. 3. (42) fertilisation views are implemented. 4. (200) trained farmers in different agricultural sectors. 5. (15) agricultural viewings were undertaken. 6. (15) agricultural pamphlets are created and distributed 7. (30) livestock views are implemented. 8. (15) pamphlets on livestock are published 9. (45) workshops on livestock are conducted. 10. (50) experimental models of field crop varieties.

2.2 Quality and safety of locally produced agricultural and animal products match international best standards and enjoy high competitiveness in national and international markets.

2017-2019 Non-Project Outputs
1. (36) reports on institutional safety and safety of exported agricultural products. 2. Reports on food safety of animal origin. 3. (15) agricultural product quality related experiments through implementation of available post harvest techniques. 4. (12) proposals on specifications and standards relevant to agricultural and agricultural processed products are submitted for accreditation. 5. (84) community awareness campaigns for livestock breeders and consumers. 6. (37,000) veterinary certificates and reports are issued.

2.3 Cost of animal and plant agricultural production becomes more competitive.

2017-2019 Non-Project Outputs

1. (600) technical approvals for fertilisers.
2. (300) fertiliser samples are tested and analysed
3. (12) reports on fertiliser quality in the market are prepared.
4. () monitoring reports on veterinary medicines.
5. Technical permissions are issued to import plants, plant products and pesticides.

2.4 Limit spread of diseases and epidemics that infect plants and animals.

2017-2019 Non-Project Outputs

1. Veterinary quarantine of animals and their products.
2. Veterinary vaccines and immunisations are provided.
3. (1,350) monitoring reports on animal diseases and joint animal-human diseases are prepared.
4. (112,000) laboratory examination of animals and their products.
5. (6) pest-spraying campaigns are organised.

2. Outputs and results of second programme: improvement of relevant agricultural services

4.1 Agricultural and veterinary guidance and research, risk avoidance, agricultural insurance, agricultural credit and agricultural control services are continuously developed.

2017-2019 Non-Project Outputs	2017-2019 Project Outputs
1. An annual directly on pesticides is released. 2. Continuing education for (150) veterinary doctors, technicians and trainers. 3. (30) service managers, agricultural monitoring inspectors are technically and administratively trained.	1. (90) agricultural engineers and (150) vets and technicians are trained. 2. A facility for safe disposal of confiscated and expired pesticides is created. 3. Provision of tools and equipment for experimentation facilities. 4. (20) agricultural research cadres are trained. 5. (2) mobile veterinary clinics are fully prepared. 6. (15) materials are provided to veterinary laboratories. 7. A veterinary laboratory building is fully equipped.

4.2 Agricultural marketing services, including wholesale markets, enjoy competent administration and appropriate infrastructure.

2017-2019 Non-Project Outputs	2017-2019 Project Outputs
1. (2,700) import licences for agricultural products, agricultural production inputs and machines are issued. 2. (12) market researchers for agricultural products are issued. 3. The centralised market system is developed.	1. (7,200) internationally accredited printed and electronic phytosanitary certificates are issued.

3. Outputs and results of third programme: administrative programme

5.1 Agricultural legislation is complementary and supportive of sustainable agricultural development.

2017-2019 Non-Project Outputs

1. (12) proposed agricultural legislations are submitted to stakeholders.
2. (3,000) field report to follow-up on agricultural products and ensure compliance with national regulations and instructions.
3. An electronic agricultural monitoring system is utilized.

5.3 Accession to international conventions and organisations relevant to agriculture and supporting Palestinian presence in international agricultural organisations.

2017-2019 Non-Project Outputs
1. (21) agricultural cooperation agreements and a work plan to implement international cooperation agreements are adopted. 2. Steady relationships with organisations of Arab League, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations. 3. (8) detailed reports on accession to international organisations and conventions are prepared.

5.4 Cooperation, exchange of knowledge and partnerships between organisations working in the agricultural sector so as to enhance results-based management and implementation of the national strategy for the agricultural sector.

2017-2019 Non-Project Outputs	2017-2019 Project Outputs
1. National agricultural statistics reports are annually updated. 2. Regular meeting for the sectoral working group.	1. A disease control strategy, cadre training and serological survey to detect diseases is developed.

5.5 Agricultural sector organisations implement policies and procedures to ensure health and plant health in accordance with market requirements.

2017-2019 Non-Project Outputs	2017-2019 Project Outputs
1. (7) animal health related legislations. 2. (2) legislative and policy proposals related to plant health are submitted to relevant stakeholders. 3. Facilities of animal breeding and veterinary clinics are licensed. 4. (12) studies on animal health and animal products' health are prepared. 5. Veterinary reports to relevant local and international authorities are provided. 6. (655) licences for nurseries, seedling sale centres and pesticide sale centres. 7. (3500) plant health certificates are issued. 8. A plant health database is created. 9. An animal health and animal products database is created. 10. (2550) periodic reports to test the quality of plant products are issued.	1. Plant health centre is established and fully equipped. 2. A comprehensive database for all issues and prevention services relevant to plants and plant quarantine. 3. A database for information management on veterinary services and animal health is created and cadre is trained on its usage. 4. (7,200) internationally accredited print and electronic certificates on plant health are issued. 5. National programme for animal numbering is implemented.

7.2 Ministry of National Economy Budget Programmes Relevant to Food Safety

The Ministry of National Economy works on the realisation of four sectoral strategic goals through two budget programmes. The first programme is industrial and commercial development, and the second is consumer protection. The table below demonstrates the specific objectives and sectoral interventions relevant to food safety in the budget programmes of the Ministry of National Economy.

Programme 1: Industrial and Commercial Development

Objectives Relevant to the Programme	Relevant Policy Interventions
- Facilitate Palestinian trade in accordance with international best practices. - Encourage and promote Palestinian exports. - Create a competitive legal and organisational framework. - Increase competitiveness of the national product. - Develop the infrastructure for quality production in Palestine in harmony with international requirements.	- Activate signed economic agreements and sign new agreements with world nations. - Provide necessary statistical data for studies, research and planning purposes. - Develop administrative and central records. - Support, protect and develop quality of the national product. - Increase consumers' trust in the national product. - Full partnership and dialogue with private sector organisations.

Programme 2: Consumer Protection

Objectives Relevant to the Programme	Relevant Policy Interventions
- Provision of safe goods for use and consumption. - Combat cheating, forgery and counterfeiting. - Awareness and guidance.	- Implement compulsory technical instructions on all products produced; monitor specifications of imported goods; and enforce legislation laws against violators. - Highlight the role and work mechanisms of monitoring authorities before Palestinian consumers and monitor prices. - Encourage implementation of quality systems in economic establishments.

7.3 Ministry of Health Budget Programmes Relevant to Food Safety

The Ministry of Health works on the realisation of the National Strategy for the Health Sector through three main health programmes; they are: sustainable primary healthcare services of high quality and promotion of healthy lifestyles programme; sustainable secondary and tertiary healthcare services of high quality programme; and administrative and health governance programme.

Programme one: sustainable primary healthcare services of high quality and promotion of healthy lifestyles programme

Goal one: to ensure sustainable provision and development of primary healthcare and public health services in accordance with the adopted set of provided services with the view of providing full coverage.

Relevant Goals	Relevant Outputs
Ensure provision of environmental health services including pesticide spraying, crafts and industries licensing, water analysis, food analysis water and food safety programmes to control and prevent diseases and epidemics and protect public health.	80% of craft and industry shops and facilities are duly licensed. - Microbial pollution rates of drinkable water networks do not exceed 5%. - Chemical materials registration system is 100% implemented.

Goal two: limit risk of infection with infectious and communicable diseases.

Relevant Goals	Relevant Outputs
Ensure monitoring of infectious and communicable diseases and limit their spread.	1. Effectively control animal diseases and waterborne and foodborne diseases.

Goal four: develop preventative health and health awareness programmes, as well as early detection of diseases and health problems, particularly non-communicable diseases and disabilities programmes.

Relevant Goals	Relevant Outputs
Promote healthy lifestyle and practices through health awareness programmes and activities and national strategies.	Vast community awareness campaigns are effectively implemented around the most significant proposed problems and issues.
Support and develop prevention and limitation of non-communicable diseases programmes.	An adopted and implemented legal framework that regulates trade of foods with saturated and hydrogenated fats.

Goal five: develop health monitoring systems in different fields

Relevant Goals	Relevant Outputs
Develop health monitoring systems in different fields.	Health monitoring systems effective in different fields including food monitoring.

Administrative and Health Governance Programme

Goal one: to provide qualified human resources that are capable of delivering high quality health services.

Relevant Goals	Relevant Outputs
Provide qualified human resources that are capable of providing health services and finalize staff job description.	1. National system for continuous professional development and job description table are adopted and implemented. 2. New training programmes that ensure the qualification of professional human resources in accordance with the needs.

Goal one: promote governance and performance of the health sector.

Relevant Goals	Relevant Outputs
Promote performance of the medication sector and ensure implementation of adopted medication policies.	All dietary supplements are registered in the Ministry of Health.
Promote and develop system recording special foods and mineral and vitamins supplemented foods.	1. All special foods are registered in the Ministry of Health. 2. 60% of mineral and vitamin supplemented foods are registered in Ministry of Health.

7.4 Palestine Standards Institution Budget Programmes Relevant to Food Safety

The Palestine Standards Institution will fulfill its vision “a pioneer local internationally active organisation in the fields of quality infrastructure” and its mission “promote competitive capacity of the Palestinian product and facilitate trade and contribution to protection of the health and wellbeing of the consumer and environment in cooperation with partners through building and implementing systems that are in harmony with international best practices in quality infrastructure through the budget programme “develop quality infrastructure,” which includes the following components that are relevant to food safety:

1. Develop and adopt Palestinian standards that are in harmony with international and regional specifications while taking into consideration the special circumstances of the Palestinian case, and meeting the needs of and developing continuous national trade in the food, chemical industry, construction industries, engineering industries, energy, IT, trade, consultancy, training and quality systems areas and sectors.
2. Prepare compulsory technical instructions with relevant stakeholders to contribute to the regulation and continuous development of the Palestinian market and trade in areas of appropriate food ingredients, food safety, food supplements and food statements, as well as in the areas of equipment, barometers, measurement devices and magnetic interference fields.
3. Give quality and quality management systems certificates.
4. Provide technical information, raise awareness and train producers and importers in the areas of work of the Institution to raise awareness on quality.
5. Represent Palestine in regional and international activities that are relevant to the Institution’s work, as well as join relevant organisations.

8. Work Plan

(Initiatives that Require the Endorsement of the Cabinet)

According to the work guide issued by the Ministry of Finance and Planning on the preparation of sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies for the period 2017-2022, a work plan is defined as a set of initiatives that are implemented by the food health monitoring authorities that require approval or special revision by the cabinet, such as proposed legislations, regulations, international conventions and special strategic papers, so as to enable the cabinet to plan beforehand for the necessary tasks to support the strategy. This plan will be reviewed and amended by the end of each year against the progress made in the achievement of the documents that will be directly tackled by food safety control authorities.

Type of Document	Brief Description	Title of Initiative	Year
Decision	The creation of the Palestinian Council for Food Safety to work on the development of a comprehensive and ambitious programme, where achievement of internal reform on food safety and health in accordance with Codex Alimentarius and international standards is a priority.	Creation of the Palestinian Council for Food Safety	2017
Law	The new law relies on the Codex Alimentarius standards and relevant international guiding principles and texts that will cover the length of the production chain. The law specifies the roles and responsibilities of governmental authorities along the food chain, as well as the authority/body that has the supreme responsibility to enforce the law. This authority/body could be a newly created body or an existing one. This law should also describe a mechanism to ensure coordination that includes report preparation tasks and a decision-making hierarchy. The law will identify the necessary legal powers that are recognised by all regarding the implementation of the law, particularly (i) administrative tasks; (ii) operational tasks, including identification of entry and exit points, approval of import and export requirements, risk assessment, issue and review licences, market monitoring and inspection operations; and (iii) coordination tasks to ensure appropriate participation by other authorities that play a role in food safety.	Food Health Law	2018
Law amendment	The enactment of the Food Health Law requires introduction of amendments to the following laws: - Public Health Law number 20 of 2004. - Agriculture Law number 2 of 2003. - Standards Law number 6 of 2000. - Consumer Protection Law number 21 of 2005. - Decree-Law on industry of 2011. - Law number 1 of 1997 on Palestinian Local Authorities. - Crafts and industries law number 16 of 1953.	Amendment of Laws	2019

9. Management Plan

9.1 Establishment of Palestinian Council for Food Safety

Similar to some countries that transitioned from multiple-authority food safety systems to a singular national body responsible for food safety monitoring and supervision, and in light of the approach of national monitoring authorities to introduce short-term and long-term legislative amendments, the supervisory committee team that worked on the preparation of the National Strategy for Food Safety 2017-2022 suggests that the process of adopting the Palestinian Council for Food Safety System, which will be entrusted with supreme powers to control food safety, is expedited. The next phase will include reaching high coordination between different authorities to achieve the five strategic goals for food safety, ensure good performance and active participation in control operations over food safety through inspections and enforcement of relevant regulations.

Food safety control authorities seek the representation of all relevant governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations in the Council. The authorities also seek that the council enjoys clear powers that enable it to follow-up, monitor and submit reports on progress of implementation of National Strategy for Food Safety.

Particularly, the Palestinian Council for Food Safety will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Develop and follow-up on the implementation of an action plan to implement the National Strategy for Food Safety.
2. Ensure coordination of services of food safety control authorities so as to avoid any duplication of work.
3. Submit proposals on work mechanisms utilised in food safety control to maximise benefit from and effectively and efficiently manage available resources.
4. Develop a monitoring and evaluation system for the entire work undertaken by the food safety control authorities with the aim of improving learning and accountability to relevant interventions by monitoring authorities.
5. Work towards the enactment of a unified Food Safety Law.
6. Monitor enforcement of legislations, standards and practices relevant to business in the food sector.
7. Design an effective early warning system, or retrieve and withdraw products to protect consumers and public health.
8. Provide consultations to Ministries and specialised bodies on any issue pertaining to food, whether in response to a request by the specialised body or as appropriate.
9. Issue necessary guidelines on food safety within the context of risk analysis and effective management along the length of the food chains.
10. Identify financial and logistical needs to implement the strategy.
11. Review efficiency of adopted food safety practices from time to time and submit reports to the cabinet on this issue at the end of each year.

9.2 Establishment of Consultative Scientific Committee for Food Safety

The Palestinian Council for Food Safety will work on the creation of a committee specialised in the provision of scientific consultations to the Council, so as to become the technical extension of the council. The committee is to have a clear structure, goals, roles and legal and administrative reference to facilitate communication with Ministries and stakeholders. The committee will work on the collection of data and analysis of information relevant to food safety with the view of supporting risk management processes.

The scientific committee will comprise researchers and experts in veterinary, animal health, plant prevention, chemistry, biochemistry, microbiology, toxicology, nutrition, food processing, packaging and auditing sciences fields, and any other fields relevant to food safety.

9.3 Revision of budget programmes of food safety control authorities

Ministries' and relevant governmental institutions representatives will review the budget programmes of the 2017-2019 period, and particularly outputs and tasks undertaken by the Ministry and governmental institution that are relevant to food safety. The review will be primarily based on the goals and sectoral strategies for the National Strategy for Food Safety 2017-2022, and will be based on the components of the budget programmes that were adopted by the cabinet for the different sectors.

Budget programmes will be reviewed ensuring that amendments are adopted prior to the endorsement of the 2018 public budget. This will be undertaken through focusing on reviewing the budget programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of National Economy, Ministry of Local Governance, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Environment Quality Authority, Water Authority and Palestine Standards Institution.

9.4 Performance Indicators

The first year of the implementation of the strategy will include working on the development of a monitoring system that includes a monitoring and evaluation matrix, a description of data collection tools, special information of monitoring and evaluation and a description of the required reports, their content, accountability lines, necessary preliminary studies and any studies and evaluations relevant to monitoring and evaluating the strategic framework. Performance indicators form the main pillar of the monitoring and evaluation system; accordingly, progress in the implementation of the strategy will be measured against general indicators relevant to food safety:

1. Percentage increase in implementation of self-examination systems in the productions input, primary production and food and rural processing sectors.
2. Percentage decrease in pesticide and fertiliser traces in local and imported fruits and vegetables.
3. Percentage of Aflatoxins in food.
4. Percentage of tested eggs and meat samples with matching Dioxine percentages.
5. Percentage of fish and marine product samples that are tested and render matching mercury percentages.
6. Number of reports on Salmonella infections (per 100,000 per year).
7. Number of reports of collective food toxin infection (per 100,000 per year).
8. Percentage of samples tested from dairy products, factories, workhouses and the distribution industry with matching bacteria and mould.
9. Percentage of sample tested to slaughterhouses and meat distribution shops with matching bacteria, hormones and antibiotics.
10. Percentage of tested eggs from chicken farms that give eggs whose results reveal the absence of Salmonella.
11. Percentage of feeding material samples that are tested with matching Dioxins levels.
12. Percentage of imported meat product samples that are tested and found to be compliant.
13. Percentage of samples tested for additives (colours, preservatives, flavours and other materials) that match the permitted level.
14. Increased percentage of meats to the Palestinian consumer that come from slaughterhouses (which are under health inspection of the total used meat).
15. Percentage of human infections with Brucellosis.

Annexes

Annex 1: National Strategy for Food Safety Endorsement Decree (Arabic)



دولة فلسطين

مجلس الوزراء

قرار مجلس الوزراء رقم (17/171/02/م.و.ر.ح) لعام 2017م
المصادقة على الاستراتيجية الوطنية لسلامة الأغذية 2017م-2022م

بناءً على الصلاحيات المخولة لنا قانوناً

وبناءً على مقتضيات المصلحة العامة

ويعد الاطلاع على القانون الأساسي المعدل لسنة 2003م وتعديلاته؛
وعلى توصيات اللجنة الوطنية لإعداد استراتيجية وطنية لصحة وسلامة
الغذاء في فلسطين في اجتماعها رقم (8) بتاريخ 2017/02/05م؛
قرر مجلس الوزراء في جلسته المنعقدة في مدينة رام الله بتاريخ (2017/09/26م) ما يلي:

المادة الأولى

المصادقة على الاستراتيجية الوطنية لسلامة الأغذية 2017م-2022م، المرفقة بهذا القرار.

المادة الثانية

على الجهات المختصة تنفيذ أحكام هذا القرار كل فيما يخصه، ويعمل به من تاريخ صدوره.

صدر في مدينة رام الله بتاريخ 2017/09/26م.

رامي حمد الله

رئيس الوزراء



Annex 2: Minister's Council Decree on the formation of the National Committee for the formulation of a National Strategy for Food Safety in Palestine (Arabic)



دولة فلسطين
مجلس الوزراء

قرار مجلس الوزراء رقم (17/39/06/م.و.ر.ح) لعام 2015م
بتشكيل لجنة وطنية لإعداد استراتيجية وطنية لصحة وسلامة الغذاء في فلسطين

بناءً على الصلاحيات المخولة لنا قانوناً

وتنسيب وزير الزراعة

وبناءً على مقتضيات المصلحة العامة

وبعد الاطلاع على القانون الأساسي المعدل لسنة 2003م وتعديلاته؛

وعلى نظام عمل اللجان المنبثقة عن مجلس الوزراء لسنة 2004م؛

قرر مجلس الوزراء في جلسته المنعقدة بمدينة رام الله بتاريخ (2015/02/17) ما يلي:

المادة الأولى

تشكيل لجنة وطنية لإعداد استراتيجية وطنية لصحة وسلامة الغذاء في فلسطين تضم في عضويتها كلاً من: وزارة الصحة "مقرراً"، وزارة الزراعة، وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي، وزارة الاقتصاد الوطني، وزارة التخطيط، مؤسسة المواصفات والمقاييس، ممثلاً عن الجامعات الفلسطينية، ممثلاً عن مؤسسة حماية المستهلك، ممثلاً عن اتحاد الصناعات الغذائية الفلسطينية، ممثلاً عن اتحاد الغرف التجارية.

المادة الثانية

للجنة الاستعانة بمن تراه مناسباً من ذوي الخبرة والاختصاص لإنجاز أعمالها، وترفع توصياتها إلى مجلس الوزراء.

المادة الثالثة

على الجهات المختصة تنفيذ أحكام هذا القرار كل فيما يخصه، ويعمل به من تاريخ صدوره.

صدر بمدينة رام الله بتاريخ 2015/02/17.

رامي حمد الله
رئيس الوزراء

Annex 3: National Committee Members for the formulation of the National Strategy for Food Safety

National Committee members for the formulation of National Food Safety Strategy

#	Representative	Organization
1.	Ibrahim Atteyah	Ministry of Health “Chairman”
2.	Amjad Salah	Ministry of Agriculture
3.	Saleem Jayoussi	Palestinian Standards Institution
4.	Ziad Fadel	Ministry of National Economy
5.	Mohammed Reemawi	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
6.	Yousif Subeh	Academia
7.	Rania Al Khyri	Consumer Protection Council
8.	Naser Attayani	Food Industry
9.	Reyad E'wadah	Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (FPCCIA)
10.	Niveen Salameh	General Secretariat for the Council of Ministers “Committee Secretariat”

Strategy formulation support team from FAO

1. Dr. Azzam Saleh
2. Dr. Khawla Al Njoum
3. Dr. Ludovic Plee



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

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