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# ESTABLISHING THE FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY OF EGYPT (FSAE)

Summary Information and Progress Report

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This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by P. Vincent Hegarty

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Summary Information and Progress Report

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR POLICY REFORM II  
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## **BACKGROUND**

A detailed review of the current food safety control systems in Egypt was conducted in July 2007. The review was written by Dr. P.V. Hegarty, TAPRII Consultant under USAID Contract No. USAID: 263-C-00-05-00063-00. The report is available in both Arabic and in English. It provided 37 recommendations for improvements that would bring food safety control in Egypt up to international best practice standards. The key to meeting this objective is the creation of a new and independent food safety agency to be known as the Food Safety Authority of Egypt (FSAE).

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Food Safety Authority of Egypt (FSAE) is an open and independent authority to protect consumers' health and consumers' interests by ensuring that food consumed, distributed, marketed or produced in Egypt meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of FSAE are to ensure that the Egyptian food supply is safe along the entire food chain. This involves food from the production phase (including imported food) through to consumption. This will result in the following positive outcomes:

- Public health will be improved in all segments of the population.
- Economic improvements will occur along the entire food chain.
- Tourism will be enhanced by a safe food supply.
- Food exports will have lower rejection rates.
  
- Food imports will be inspected according to best practices that meet international standards.
- All segments of the food industry (production, processing, distribution, imports/exports) will have food safety guidelines that are consistent and based on risk assessment.
- Agricultural practices involving the safety of food will be improved.
- Wholesale and retail distribution of food will be more efficient.
- Egypt will have effective representation at international food safety forums and international food/health agencies because of the concentration of food safety expertise within FSAE.

## **FUNCTIONS of FSAE**

- **FOOD LAWS AND REGULATIONS:** FSAE will create and implement food laws and regulations that are modern, effective, efficient, and are accepted internationally. All food laws and regulations will be based on good science. Creation and application of all food laws and regulations will be done in a transparent manner. FSAE will represent Egypt at all international food safety forums.
- **FOOD INSPECTION SERVICE:** FSAE will have a food safety inspection service that is professional, transparent and equitable. All food inspections will be based on good science and on risk assessment principles. Food safety inspections will be conducted along the entire food chain and in establishments where food is sold/consumed by consumers.
- **FOOD LABORATORIES:** FSAE will contract with government and private laboratories to test on a fee-for-service basis. All laboratories must be modern food safety laboratories consisting of a professional staff, modern equipment and accredited by respected international accrediting agencies
- **OUTREACH:** FSAE will provide information on Egyptian food laws and regulations to consumers, all segments of the food industry and to food importers and exporters. This information will be available electronically and in printed form.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

- Prime Minister --- FSAE reports to the Prime Minister
- Board of Directors --- representation from:
  - All Government of Egypt agencies related directly or indirectly to food safety;
  - All segments of the food industry from production to consumption
  - Consumer groups
  - Universities
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

## **OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE**

FSAE will consist of nine Departments with the following duties and obligations:

- **FOOD INSPECTIONS** --- The safety of food for human consumption that is produced domestically or is imported will be inspected. Food inspections will be based on risk assessment principles. All inspections will be done in a professional manner and will be transparent.
- **AUDIT, COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT** --- Documentation of audits and compliance, and enforcing appropriate actions when food safety is compromised.

- **LABORATORIES** --- Analysis of food for chemical, biological and physical hazards to human health. All laboratories will have accreditation from international accrediting agencies.
- **LEGAL AFFAIRS** --- Deals with all legal aspects of food safety issues including assessment of criminal negligence when the health of the population is affected adversely by unsafe food.
- **REGULATIONS DEVELOPMENT** --- Development of new food safety legislation; updating current food safety legislation; interactions with food safety agencies in other countries on harmonization of food safety regulations; active participation in Codex Alimentarius, World Animal Health Organization (OIE), and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) on all food safety issues involving human health.
- **PRE-MARKET APPROVAL** --- Cooperative work with all segments of the food chain in Egypt to ensure that new food products are in compliance with all food safety regulations. Evaluation of new export markets to ensure that Egyptian foods are in compliance with the food safety regulations of the importing country.
- **INFORMATION / EDUCATION** --- Maintenance of the FSAE website and other means of electronic and hardcopy distribution of information on food safety. Organizing and delivering Better Process Control Schools and workshops on topics such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), etc.
- **FINANCE** --- FSAE will be an independent agency having a separate line item in the Government of Egypt budget.
- **HUMAN RESOURCES** --- Hiring and administration of all personnel appointments in FSAE. Conducting various staff improvement programs.

## **STAFFING**

The broad grouping of staff of FSAE will be:

- Managerial
- Scientific
- Technical (including Food Inspectors)
- Office and support staff

## **FACILITIES**

- **BUILDINGS AND OFFICES** --- Temporary office space has been designated in the Ministry of Trade and Industry building in Lazogly, Garden City, Cairo. Both

temporary and permanent office space for FSAE will be modern, clean and accessible. Permanent location of FSAE will be in Cairo (main office) and office space for FSAE food inspectors and office staff in major locations outside of Cairo.

- **LABORATORIES** --- All food safety laboratories doing work for FSAE will have professional personnel, modern equipment and will be updated constantly in the latest methodologies.
- **CONFERENCE / TRAINING** --- FSAE will have modern facilities to provide information to all segments of the food chain on how food safety hazards can be avoided. Personnel within FSAE will be updated with the latest developments in food safety.
- **ACCESSABILITY** --- All relevant information pertaining to the mission and operation of FSAE will be available both electronically and in printed form to all interested parties in Egypt and abroad.

## BUDGET

The estimated budget expenditures for the first year of operation of FSAE is:

**L.E. 18.3 million**

**NOTE:** The budget for subsequent years will be higher when food inspections and laboratory analyses are in full operation (See footnote 2. below).

The L.E. 18.3 million will allow the hiring and implementation of the following in the first year of operation of FSAE (All figures are on an annual basis):

L.E. 300,000	CEO (This figure may be higher so as to hire an internationally known and respected individual in the food safety area)
L.E. 2,160,000	DEPARTMENT HEADS (L.E. 240,000 x 9)
L.E. 1,800,000	MANAGEMENT / SUPPORT STAFF (Office, outreach, etc. L.E. 60,000 x 30)
L.E. 9,000,000	INSPECTORS (L.E. 30,000 x 300) <sup>1</sup>
L.E. 240,000 L.E. 12,000 x 20)	OTHER SUPPORT STAFF (Technicians, drivers, messengers, etc.
L.E. 500,000	SHORT-TERM CONSULTANTS

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<sup>1</sup> This assumes that food inspectors will only be deployed in Cairo the first year and that the FSAE adopts risk-based inspections. Another estimate of the number of inspectors needed will be made after the inspection working group has completed its work. The number of food inspectors to be deployed in other governorates will depend on how many food establishments are estimated to operate there.

L.E.	1,000,000	TRAINING and CAPACITY BUILDING
L.E.	1,000,000	BUILDINGS and EQUIPMENT
L.E.	1,000,000	LABORATORY ANALYSES
L.E.	500,000	OPERATING EXPENDITURES
L.E.	300,000	TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL
L.E.	500,000	PUBLIC and FOOD INDUSTRY AWARENESS PROGRAMS

FSAE will also earn income from licensing fees, workshop fees, etc., which will need to be built into subsequent years' budgets.

**FOOTNOTES:**

1. As a comparison, the 2005 budget for the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) was 17.6 million Euros = L.E. 143 million (And this does NOT include the cost of operating the food inspection service and food laboratory analyses: [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie))

2. An estimate of the FSAE operating budget for the second year is L.E. 40.3 million (with appropriate increases in subsequent years to cover inflation). This additional L.E. 22 million comes from the added activities in laboratory analyses and food inspection when FSAE is operational fully from its second year onwards:

L.E. 1,000,000 LABORATORY ANALYSES

L.E. 21,000,000 FOOD INSPECTION (L.E. 30,000 x 700 inspectors)

3. The FSAE budget must:

- Be from reliable sources (Government of Egypt, appropriate international agencies, etc)
- Sustainable
- Cover annual cost increases
- Fund all aspects of FSAE
- Include possibility of collecting fees (e.g. licensing fees, training, etc.)

4. Significant cost effectiveness will occur in the current food inspection service by incorporating the following changes:

Currently a portion of the food inspection service in Egypt consists of:

- ✓ 6,000 Inspectors (Ministry of Health)
  - 4,300 Health Inspectors in rural areas
  - 1,700 Food Inspectors in cities
- ✓ 194 Veterinary Inspectors (Agriculture)

✓ 599 GOEIC

6,793 TOTAL NUMBER OF FOOD INSPECTORS

**Compare:**

- L.E. 57,061,200 is the salary cost of operating the present food inspection service of 6,793 inspectors (Based on an annual salary per inspector of L.E. 8,400)
- L.E. 30,000,000 is the salary cost of a more efficient and effective food inspection service (Based on a total of 1,000 inspectors on an annual salary of L.E. 30,000)
- L.E. 27,061,200 is the SAVINGS while providing a MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE food inspection service.

1. The more efficient and effective food inspection service in FSAE will have:

- Well trained food inspectors
- Inspections and sampling will be based on risk assessment. Foods will be categorized by their food safety risk potential. This is a huge improvement over the present food inspection system where all foods are sampled for analysis. This is both inefficient and ineffective
- There will be proper interactions between the inspection service and the testing laboratories

2. Increased effectiveness and significant cost reductions in laboratory analyses will be achieved by having all FSAE food analyses conducted by existing internationally accredited laboratories in Egypt. This will be done on a fee-per-sample basis. Service contracts will be on a 3-year basis, renewable upon review. Advantages of this approach are:

- Immediate implementation of FSAE's laboratory analyses programs
- Reliable food safety analyses because testing will be done in internationally accredited laboratories only
- Reduced costs to FSAE. This is based on an estimate of 10,000 food samples per year. At an estimated average cost of L.E. 200 per sample this amounts to L.E. 2 million per year. This is far less than the cost of FSAE staffing and equipping its own food analyses laboratories.

- This approach of using a fee-for-service program will improve competition and performance between good food analyses laboratories in Egypt.

## **TIMELINES**

It is recognized that some of the timelines below are very short. However, they are maintained here with the view of sustaining the present momentum for the creation of FSAE.

- JANUARY 2008      Finalize a detailed 1st year budget for FSAE and draft a long-term budget. Submit a budget to the Steering Committee for approval.
- JANUARY 2008      Begin to submit funding proposals to donors
- JANUARY 2008      Review temporary space allocated for FSAE. If it is suitable for FSAE use then receive written confirmation of the space allocation
- JANUARY – MARCH 2008      Write job descriptions for CEO and Department Heads (Done). Prepare recruitment process for CEO and Department Heads (January). Begin recruitments once the FSAE law is passed
- FEBRUARY 2008      Submit law to Parliament for the creation of FSAE
- FEBRUARY 2008      Recommendations on which laboratories are to be used by FSAE on a fee-for-service basis
- MARCH 2008      Inspection and approval of laboratories that meet FSAE requirements
- MARCH – APRIL 2008      Interview and hire support staff, including a website manager
- MARCH – APRIL 2008      Launch public awareness campaign in support of the FSAE law
- APRIL 2008      Upon passage of FSAE law hire senior food inspectors for training. Some inspectors may be trained abroad in a “Train the Trainer” program. These people would then become recruiters and trainers of food inspectors in FSAE.
- APRIL – MAY 2008      Launch FSAE website with information on FSAE’s mission, objectives, functions, timelines, etc

- APRIL 2008 Hold an initial information conference in Cairo immediately following the passage of the law creating FSAE
- APRIL 2008 Develop a Risk Assessment policy for food inspections and for laboratory analyses
- JUNE 2008 FSAE managers begin work. Within 30-days they submit a strategy, annual work plan, annual training plan, budget, etc for the units they manage
- JULY 2008 Recruit and train the first group of Food Inspectors
- SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2008 Implement an internal standardization of laboratory procedures and results
- SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2008 Conference to explain FSAE's mission, strategy, structure, outreach programs, etc.
- OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2008 Set up LIMS (Laboratory Inspection Management System) or equivalent system for FSAE and the laboratories it is interacting with on a fee-for-service basis
- JANUARY 2009 All components of FSAE operational
- JANUARY 2009 Food Inspectors in Cairo, and, depending on available budget, other urban areas begin work
- JANUARY 2009 FSAE begins use of laboratories
- JANUARY 2009 FSAE has an "Open House" for all of its constituents

## **PROGRESS REPORT**

- JULY 2007 Initial report advocating the creation of FSAE
- OCTOBER 2007 Creation of Working Groups:
  - Legal/Policy
  - Food Inspection
  - Laboratories

- Human Resources
- DECEMBER 2007 Recommendations on FSAE budget, personnel, operating procedures, budget, etc submitted to the Steering Committee
- DECEMBER 2007 Job descriptions written for FSAE senior management
- DECEMBER 2007 Progress reports from the Working Groups:
  - **LEGAL / POLICY WORKING GROUP:** Final stages of draft of the law establishing FSAE; work began on a unified food law.
  - **FOOD INSPECTION WORKING GROUP:** Food inspection-related information received from the Ministries and summarized. Manual of procedures for food inspectors drafted.
  - **LABORATORY WORKING GROUP:** Laboratory-related information received from the Ministries and summarized. Work on reviewing the food testing laboratories is being finalized. Data on private and government laboratories collected for review
  - **ID/HR/CB WORKING GROUP:** Job descriptions written for FSAE administrators; first year budget drafted; capacity building initiatives proposed.

#### **IMPORTANCE OF FSAE IN A REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT:**

A Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) food safety official reported recently:

**“It has become a realization that effective food control at the national level can be undermined by the existence of fragmented legislation, multiple jurisdictions, and inconsistencies in enforcement and weakness in food surveillance and monitoring.”**

*Gulf Daily News. December 9, 2007*

At: [www.gulf-daily-news.com/printnews.asp?Article=202336](http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/printnews.asp?Article=202336)

The Food Safety Authority of Egypt will ensure that the above unsatisfactory situation will not occur in Egypt.

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