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Cocreating a Local Food Safety Certification in Senegal

#FES #BD4FS #BrightHouse #foodsafety #GFB #SME #USAID #feedthefuture #certification

In Senegal, the safety of food products is a central concern of public authorities and consumers alike. As such, food safety compliance of businesses is a major priority for the agrifood sector, especially for small- and medium-sized enterprises. Feed the Future Business Drivers for Food Safety (BD4FS), funded by USAID and implemented by Food Enterprise Solutions (FES), partners with agribusinesses who are committed to improve the safety of their products. BD4FS refers to these committed partners as growing food businesses (GFBs).

In support of the program's capacity-building objective, BD4FS initiated a series of training activities in Senegal to address key constraints identified by partnering businesses. An important step in understanding constraints and needs was a BD4FS-hosted public-private dialogue, held in September 2021, to discuss the desirability of a national certification for small agribusinesses. Part of this discussion surrounded the challenges that GFBs face in achieving food safety certification.



BD4FS public-private dialogue on a national food safety certification, held September 2021; Photo credit, Astou Diop.

On December 16, BD4FS and its training partner Bright House Consultancy and Training, an African woman-owned business, organized a training webinar on barriers to certification for GFBs. An important goal of the workshop was to deepen business knowledge and skills on the issue of certification. The webinar included a presentation by BD4FS Food Safety expert James R. Eason, who brings 30 years of experience in cold chain and logistics, and facilitation was led by Mariama Dieng, BD4FS Senegal Program Director, Eason, and Martin Muturi, also an expert in food safety.

The 22 Senegalese participants represented various sectors of the food system including local processors for dairy, fruits and vegetables, meat, poultry, and seafood; and a few participants operate in the distribution sector. Over half of the participants were women (54%) and four (18%) were young entrepreneurs under the age of 30.

The workshop was informative and engaging, providing GFBs an opportunity to share experiences. Participants praised the presentation and the timeliness of the topic. They also expressed their concern that existing certification systems can be cost-prohibitive. This feedback supports BD4FS and Bright House's training and capacity building goals to work with businesses to codesign a certification that meets the needs of local markets while being accessible to small and medium food enterprises.

Learn more about FES and BD4FS activities at <https://www.foodsolutions.global/> and <https://agrilinks.org/activities/business-drivers-food-safety/>; and follow us at:

