

# Future-Proof Food System:

Saudi Arabia's  
Strategic Commitment  
to Biotechnology and  
Innovation



# Within the framework of its ambitious Fourth Strategic Plan (2023-27)

The Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) is systematically building a regulatory ecosystem that advances food innovation. With strategic priorities focused on developing legislation and regulation of new biotech products and supporting research and innovation, the

Kingdom is positioning itself at the forefront of the global shift towards modern, sustainable food production systems. This forward-looking approach aims to balance the imperative of public health protection with the vast potential of biotechnology to enhance food security and sustainability.





# The SFDA is translating this vision into action

through a series of initiatives to build an integrated framework regulatory for novel foods. This involves establishing a robust regulatory system for biotechnology and novel food and feed products, establishing rigorous scientific evaluation and risk assessment guidelines, and

developing mechanisms to actively support research and innovation. A key component of this strategy is fostering collaboration with academic institutions and the private sector, ensuring that Saudi innovators have a clear pathway from the laboratory to the market.



## Saudi Arabia's leadership in international standard-setting bodies

including the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Gulf Standardisation Organisation (GSO), highlights its active contribution to shaping the global dialogue on new food sources. This international engagement ensures that the Kingdom is not merely an adopter of global standards but an active contributor to the governance of food biotechnology. Domestically, this global perspective informs a sophisticated scientific approach to risk assessment. The SFDA has established methodologies for identifying molecular characteristics and genetic sequence data for genetically modified foods, alongside analysing nutrient composition using verified scientific databases to ensure safety and nutritional equivalence.



## To provide clarity and certainty for businesses and researchers,

the SFDA has established clear regulatory procedures. All novel food products must comply with the Technical Regulation for General Requirements of Novel Foods (SFDA.FD 5013), a standard specifically designed for foods with no history of significant consumption in the Kingdom. This is supported by a dedicated guideline for submitting approval

applications, assisting innovators in preparing dossiers that include essential molecular characterisation and safety data. The process is streamlined through the SFDA Platform (Investor Journey), a unified digital portal that features a dedicated track for innovative foods, outlining the scientific and regulatory requirements for market entry.



## Further cementing its commitment to a knowledge-based economy,

the SFDA published the Guideline for Research and Innovation Support in the Food and Feed Sector in early 2024. This initiative promotes collaboration between the authority, researchers and universities, channelling academic expertise towards applied research that aligns with national food safety goals. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, represented by the SFDA, serves as the official



national contact point for the FAO GM Foods Platform. The SFDA ensures Saudi Arabia's active participation in global data-sharing networks. Through this multi-faceted strategy, the SFDA is ensuring that biotechnology serves as a bridge to a safe, innovative, and sustainable food future, benefiting consumers, industry and the global community alike.

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