



## **RSM2SNF Stakeholder engagement with the management team of the Oyo State Ministry of Health**

On October 7<sup>th</sup> 2024, the RSM2SNF project team and the staff from the food safety and quality unit of the state Ministry of Health, Oyo state held a stakeholder engagement at the State Secretariat in Ibadan Oyo state. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the possible co-creative interventions towards supporting MSMEs in providing safe and nutritious foods and discuss the possibility of collaborating with the Ministry on shared goals and objectives vis-a-vis food safety in Nigeria. The meeting was a follow-up to the project's participation at the invitation of the Oyo State Ministry of Health, in the 2024 World Food Safety Day Program in July where the project represented by the stakeholder engagement lead made a presentation on the food safety component of the Project's work and also shared the policy brief (titled 'Enhancing food safety in Oyo State) on food safety-related issues based on the findings from the wholesale market studies exercise. In attendance at the October meeting was the management of the Oyo State Ministry of Health; Honourable Commissioner Dr Oluwaserimi Adewumi Ajetunmobi, the permanent secretary, Dr Akintunde Ayinde, the Director, Secondary Health Care Dr Aremu, Director, tertiary health Care Dr Fasasi, the Director of Nursing Services, Dr Oyebode, Director

Food water and laboratory services Mrs Akande, Director Administration and supplies Mr Jayeola and food safety desk officer Mr Sefiu who facilitated the meeting—the RSM2SNF Project Team; Prof. Oyinkan Tasie and Amadi Grace who participated in-person and Profs. Saweda Liverpool-Tasie and Obadina Adewale Olusegun participated virtually.

The principal investigator began by appreciating the ministry for the invitation, she then introduced the RSM2SNF project, its objectives and activities as they relate to food safety. Below are the highlights from her presentation:

*Figure 1: The Principal investigator Prof. Saweda Liverpool Tasie*

- The interrelated activities of the actors, especially in the midstream along the value chain have significant impacts on food security in areas such as cost and food contamination.
- The project conducted research work in 8 states of the country collecting data from wholesale markets on the infrastructure and the various activities of the traders.

- The projects have since been engaging with markets in Oyo state to understand and learn about their activities and their impact on providing safe and nutritious foods.

The food safety lead thereafter spoke briefly on the data collected during the market studies and how the project's research activity has formed the basis on which some of the project's publications such as the policy briefs are based. He also provided a background to the training conducted for the fish processors/traders in Rahama market and the guidelines for good handling practices for fish and vegetables that were developed by the project.

*Figure 2: RSM2SNF food safety lead Prof Obadina*

The Ministry also spoke on their activities as they relate to food safety and the RSM2SNF project. Below are the highlights:

- Oyo State Ministry of Health is committed to food safety issues, given the World Food Safety Day convening held in July which is probably the only state in the country that conducts such.
- Three motions were moved by the Oyo State House of Assembly this year and were all food safety-related especially in the informal sector.
- The Public health work in Oyo state is currently being reviewed to include food safety, this is the first since 2000.

- The state is working on the development of the annual operational plan for Oyo state taking into cognizance the World health approach.
- Plans are ongoing for the mapping of market infrastructure next year.
- The state has had a food safety management committee since 2018 and currently has 2 unified national manuals on food safety in Nigeria used to train the officers of the ministry to enhance food safety practices.
- Oyo State has platforms that can absorb the research findings from the project and is willing to collaborate.

Possible areas of collaboration discussed include:

- Training of key stakeholders along the value chain, as well as the possibility of involving school pupils who would take the learnings home to their parents.
- Possibility of enforcing compliance with safe handling practices as well as proper waste disposal methods leveraging the activities of the state environmental health officers.
- Collaboration between the state Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment.
- Engaging the youth through the National Youth Service Corp by setting up a Food Safety Corp arm that will be empowered to oversee the activities of traders in the markets.

- Packaging findings from research in a way relevant to the different stakeholders.
- Advocacy for markets to have functional toilets and where there are there should be an adequate number as well as adequate water supply.

The Commissioner of the Health Ministry in her remarks appreciated the project team and reiterated that the Ministry looks forward to future engagements to deliberate on possible collaboration with the project.

## **Photo Gallery**

*Figure 3: RSM2SNF team with the staff of the Ministry*

*Figure 4: Mr Sefiu the food safety front desk officer during the meeting*