

POLICY BRIEF:



Identification of standards gaps in the bakery and confectionery industries (IDE-STABACO)

Muyanja Charles, Department of Food Technology and Nutrition, Makerere University
Email: ckmuyanja@gmail.com OR charles.muyanja@mak.ac.ug



Executive Summary

Food safety is a critical component for sustainable development. Safer food contributes to less illness, and hence increased productivity and improved livelihood. Safe food, conforming to international food safety standards, contributes to increased export, hence, increased income. In Uganda, bakery and confectionery products have remained important in the economy of the country and consumption is increasing due to their taste, convenience and it has a big market share. To take advantage of the large market many small scale bakery and confectionery establishments have cropped up in the country. However, there is a safety concern with respect to the products they produce. Some bakery and confectionery establishments have been implicated in food borne illnesses involving *Salmonella* spp, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Bacillus cereus*. In January 21, 2020 UNBS imposed bans on some Bakeries for not complying with the mandatory standards. These bans further exposed the limited application of food safety standards and guidelines with respect to food hygiene within the sector. Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) in collaboration with the School of Food Technology, Nutrition and Bioengineering, Makerere University and other key industry stakeholders in 2022 developed easy to use Information, Education

and Communication (IEC) dissemination materials based on existing Uganda Standards for Bread (US EAS 43:2012) and Cake (US 1923:2020). The materials developed were intended to enhance standards promotion in order to improve implementation and compliance with the available standards in the bakery sector which will results in quality and safe products being produced and placed on the market. The standards were summarized, translated in two languages, Swahili and Luganda and printed in graphic form for easy use by the stakeholders from different bakery and confectionery industries

What is the problem?

The major challenge the food regulators in standardization face is low level of public awareness of standards among food processing industries. The standards are technically complex combined with low level of education of processing industries actors aggravates the problem. Further hindrances to standards use is partly due to the high cost of undertaking information, education and communication awareness campaigns with respect to food standards. As a result, consumers are unknowingly exposed to cheap, unsafe and substandard food produce or products that in many cases hazardous to their lives and lead to illnesses or at times death.

In January 2020 Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) imposed ban on several bakeries and supermarkets in different districts in the country such as Arua, Kampala, Mbale Masindi and Kiboga for not complying with the mandatory standards. These bans exposed the limited application of food safety guidelines with respect to food hygiene. Compliance to technical regulations is low in bakery sector. This is due to insufficient regulatory regimes, low levels of awareness among producers, manufacturers and suppliers, and in some cases lack of education among the various chain actors on standards.

Approaches and Results

The project focused on the bakery and confectionery value chain actors. The research approach was a cross sectional study designed for gathering as much information as much as possible regarding the knowledge on food standards, use of food standards, and challenges associated with use of food standards amongst the bakery and confectionery establishments and different value chain actors. A review of literature, examining the various specific standards associated with the value chain. Collection of information through interviews and consultative interactions with different stakeholders in bakery and confectionery sector and government regulatory departments standards/quality regulators was done. The project targeted the raw material supplier, bakery and confectionery establishment owners, employees of the establishments, transporters, distributors and retailers of the bakery and confectionery products. Consumer survey were conducted to seek information on their knowledge regarding food safety and quality of bakery and confectionery products. Purposive sampling was used to select the actors who are really impacting on the value chain and affected by the non-compliance with standards. Food standards gaps

in bakery and confectionary value chain assessed by conducting surveys using structured questionnaires. The questionnaire focused on the use of standards and their associated challenges hindering their application. Check list were to assess the knowledge on vital aspects of standards. Check list for standards compliance were used to assess the implementation of standards in the industries, GMP checklist were used to assess the compliance of the establishments with Good Manufacturing practices. A Technical committee of UNBS together with other stakeholders examined and simplified the bread US EAS 42, 2021 Bread specification and cake US 1932, 2020 Cake specification standards. The standards were fine-tuned by the UNBS technical committee and other relevant stakeholders for clarity.

The simplified standards were translated by language experts in Swahili and Luganda for the start. Capacity building of the bakery stakeholders was conducted using the simplified, translated and graphical standards developed by the project. Gender equity and inclusiveness was considered during the training on food standards

Key Findings

- Food standard gaps and challenges for bakery and confectionary industries were identified
- Relevant food standards for bakery and confectionary industries were simplified and translated in local languages
- Complex food standards for bakery and confectionary industries were presented in to graphical or pictorial form
- Value chain tailored training material were developed and trained conducted using the simplified, translated standards for bread and cakes

Summary of challenges identified in the bakery industries

- Complex of standards in the bakery sector this need to translate all the available standards to ease their use
- Limited knowledge on UNBS services
- Packaging materials for the products where holes in the polythene package cause contamination by insects and dust, operators were advised to properly store the bread
- The cost of production including analysis and product certification
- The short shelf life of bread impacts negatively on the returns, this is attributed to high moisture content,
- Product fraud and counterfeiting, similar product brands that do not comply with standard. Non-compliance of bread and substandard bread on the market Competition from the informal sector and non-uniform prices for bread and cake.
- Poor hygienic conditions and the need to train in good manufacturing practices (GMP) and good hygienic practices (GHP)
- Limited capacity/capital to invest in recommended bakery equipment
- Short inspection time by the auditors or inspectors during the certification process

sugar, high moulds contaminated environment

- Lack of training and standards awareness campaigns in the sector
- Too many emerging bakery products on the market which are not conforming to standards.

- Poor quality and variation in raw materials
- Lack of skilled labour in the sector
- Consumers are more interested in quantity than quality

Implications of the findings

- Bakers need to work together to foster the application of the standard as a platform in the sector.
- The existing umbrella organization for bakers which is basically composed of senior managers should be inclusive of other members are. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen this platform to involve all stakeholders.
- The complexity of standards can be solved by the simplification, pictorial presentation and translation of the standards in to different local languages for easy implementation
- Short term tailored capacity building programs in baking should be developed to cater for the lack of skilled manpower in the sector

Policy recommendations

- The Government should support the efforts for implementation of standards in the bakery sector through public private partnerships
- The standards for the bakery should reviewed putting into consideration the level of maturity and the size of some bakery enterprises
- The Government should consider and value the contribution of the home bakeries as part of economy
- Bakeries should regularly be inspected regardless of the size and be motivated to implement bakery standards and ensure compliance.
- The Government should support the campaigns which aim at implementation of guidelines for product labelling and packaging in the bakery sector, including requirements for ingredient disclosure, nutritional information, weight and allergen warnings.
- The regulatory agency, Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) should strengthen the testing for food safety, quality, and authenticity of baked products.
- Bakeries should be encouraged to test their

products with UNBS for certification

- The Government should continuously support the initiatives and campaigns which promote and create awareness of standards among the bakers and the consumers.
- Consumers should be encouraged to report baked products on the market they think to do not comply with the relevant standards
- The Government regulatory body should provide training programs for bakery owners, operators, and workers on food safety, quality control, and quality assurance.
- Technical assistance should be provided to bakeries to help them upgrade their equipment, infrastructure, and processes to meet international standards.
- Enforcement mechanisms for the standards should be strengthened to address non-compliance issues, including fines, penalties, or closure of the premises, and revoking licenses for bakeries which do not comply with standards.
- The bakery sector with help from the government should invest in research and development initiatives to improve the quality, safety, and competitiveness of baked goods in Uganda.
- Research institutions such as Makerere university should collaborate with stakeholders in the bakery sector to develop new technologies, products, and processes that meet relevant standards.

Conclusions

The project aimed to identify the standards gap and challenges in the bakery sector in Uganda. The study revealed that the bakery sector in Uganda faces considerable number of challenges in terms of skilled manpower, poor quality infrastructure, food safety, quality, and hygiene standards. The results indicated that most bakeries in Uganda are not adhering to bakery standards, which poses a risk to public health and the reputation of the industry. The study highlighted the need for a strong regulatory framework, frequent inspections, adequate training and capacity building for bakery owners and workers,

and increased awareness among consumers about the importance of food safety and quality. The project also identified the need for improved infrastructure, equipment, and technology to support the growth of the industry and improvement of the quality and safety of its products.

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