



FDA Holds Maiden Stakeholder Meeting on Regulatory Activities and 2022 Performance

The Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) on the 27th of July 2023, held a stakeholder meeting, the first of its kind, to update stakeholders on the Authority's regulatory activities and 2022 achievements. The meeting, which was held at the Authority's Head Office in Shiashie, forms part of FDA's performance monitoring indicators and targets instituted with the support of the State Interest and Governance Authority. The meeting created a platform for the Authority to engage with stakeholders, solicit stakeholder feedback on the Authority's performance and suggest areas for improvement, as well as promote awareness and understanding of the Authority's role in protecting public health and safety.

2022 Performance

Evaluating the performance of the institution, the FDA presented the highlights of its 2022 performance, including product registration and facility licensing against its performance in 2021. For instance, the Authority recorded a 24% increase in the number of facilities inspected from 7,913 in 2021 to 9,829 in 2022. In the area of import and export controls, FDA's operations increased by a significant margin of 36%. Other presentations made highlighted the number of street food vendors licensed with permits, FDA's market surveillance activities and product quality testing done in 2022.

Proposed Amendment to the Public Health Act, 2012 (Act 851)

As part of the FDA's mandate to advise the Health Minister on measures for the protection of consumer wellbeing, the Authority proposed some relevant amendments to Parts 6,7 and 8 of the Public Health Act 851 and advocated for a standalone Act that will guide its operations. This has become necessary because of changes in the regulatory space and also to accommodate provisions from the Africa Union Model Law on Medical Products Regulation and other new and emerging international best practices.

Notable Achievement in 2022

Highlights of 2022 achievements include the following:

- ❖ The Centre for Laboratory Services and Research (CLSR) expanded its ISO 17025:2017 accreditation from 48 to 58 tests. The Food Laboratory was accredited for the first time for 5 tests.
- ❖ The Drugs Laboratory of the CLSR achieved WHO GBT ML4 and was awarded a WHO-Prequalified Quality Control Laboratory (QCL) status. This means that the results of analysis from this laboratory are acceptable globally.

❖ The FDA-Ghana Standard Authority (GSA) joint application system was operationalized to enable applicants to obtain the FDA registration and GSA certification simultaneously with a single application.

❖ The FDA opened new offices bringing its services closer to its clients and consumers by operationalising the Western North Regional Office in Sefwi Wiawso and two District Offices in the Central Region.

❖ The FDA in collaboration with ProPer Alliance, launched the ProPer Platform to enable consumers to verify the registration status of FDA regulated products and batch control of products.

Despite the significant achievements in 2022, the operations of the Authority were met with many challenges. Some of the key challenges identified are inadequate vehicles and other logistics for inspections, ageing laboratory equipment and the absence of a module for processing exports on the ICUMS, amongst others.

The Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Delese Darko assured stakeholders that the Authority is putting in measures to improve its regulatory processes. She called for improved conditions of service to help retain the highly trained staff of the Authority. To help improve the financial state of the Authority, she asked that FDA should be allowed to retain all its internally generated funds or at least the service charges.

Present at the meeting were members of the FDA Governing Board, and representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, GSA, Customs and the State Interest and Governance Authority (SIGA) as well as some trade organizations.