

BRIEFING TO THE PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TRADE

NATIONAL REGULATOR FOR COMPULSORY SPECIFICATIONS (NRCS)

RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL DISASTER OF CLASSIFIED FOODBORNE ILLNESSES

18 FEB 2025

NRCS Delegation

- ☐ Mr D Mutengwe
 - ☐ Acting Chief Executive Officer
- ☐ Ms M Katz
 - ☐ General Manager: Foods and Associated Industries

Scope of Presentation

- ❑ NRCS Mandate
- ❑ Regulated Industries
- ❑ NRCS Value Chain
- ❑ Food Products falling within NRCS' Scope
- ❑ Market Surveillance Activities
- ❑ NRCS Regulatory Work
- ❑ NRCS participation at NATJOINTS priority committee
- ❑ Outcome and Ongoing Inspections

NRCS Mandate

Mandate

- NRCS mandate is to promote public health, safety and environmental protection through the development and enforcement of compulsory specifications/technical regulations and ensuring fair trade

Legislative Mandate

- **National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications Act (Act No. 5 of 2008)**
- **Legal Metrology Act (Act No. 9 of 2014)**
- **Other Legislative Mandate**
 - National Building Regulations and Buildings Standards Act
 - National Road Traffic Act

Industries regulated by NRCS

Automotive

Chemicals, Mechanical and Materials

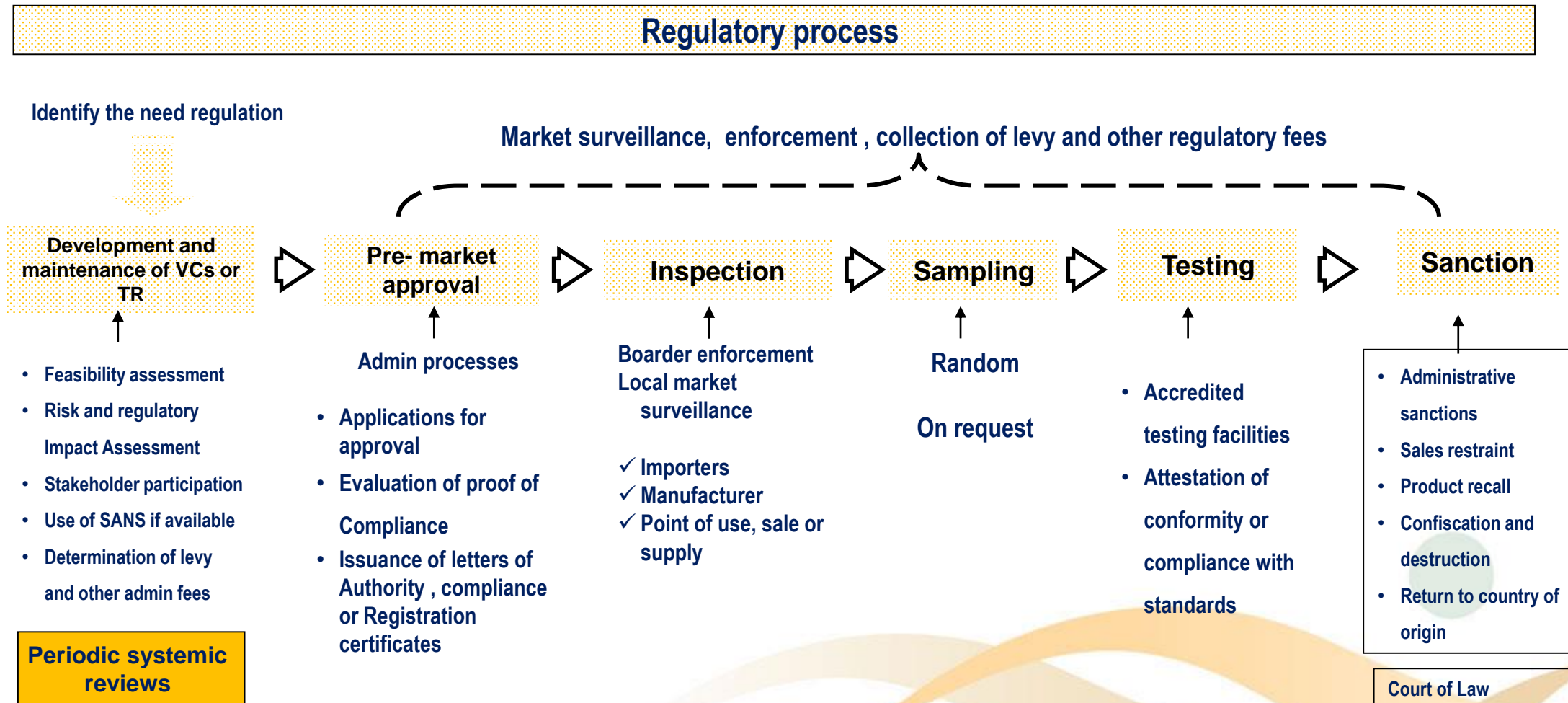
Electro-technical

Food and Associated Industries

Legal Metrology

National Building Regulations

NRCS Value Chain



Regulated Food Products falling within NRCS' Scope

The NRCS scope is defined or limited within the compulsory specifications. The compulsory specifications outline the compliance requirements and provide the regulatory and legal requirements for the sale, manufacture, import and export of products regulated by the NRCS.

The following food products are regulated by the Food and Associated Industries Business Unit Department of NRCS:

☐ **Fish and Fishery Products**

- ☐ Chilled, live and frozen fish
- ☐ Canned Fish

☐ **Canned Meat**

☐ **Processed Meats**

- ☐ Mainly high-risk which are ready-to-eat

Market Surveillance Activities

- ❑ Market surveillance activities are conducted at:
 - ❑ Source (manufacturer, producers or factories)
 - ❑ Ports of Entries
 - ❑ Retail
- ❑ Regulatory work is mostly at Source and Ports of Entry.
- ❑ Regulatory work focuses on both illicit goods and properly documented imports.
- ❑ Regulating at the source largely assists in locking out non-compliant products before they enter the trade and ensures that NRCS is more efficient and effective in regulating the market.
- ❑ Source inspections entail points of manufacture wherein a sample is drawn and tested before release to the market.

Market Surveillance Inspections for known consignments

Products	Inspection and Sample frequency
Local produced Fisheries	
Canned Fish	Each production run manufactured
Canned Meat	Each production run manufactured
Frozen Fishery products	Monitoring process
Imported Fisheries	
Canned products	Each consignment imported
Frozen products	Each consignment imported
Exports Fisheries	
Frozen Products	Each consignment on request of exporter
Chilled Fish	Each consignment exported to the EU
Live Export consignments	Each consignment on request
Fisheries Facility inspections	
Factory inspections	Bi-annually
Vessel inspections	Annually

NRCS Regulatory Work – Food and Associated Industries

- ❑ On average, the NRCS conducts about 26580 inspections annually for fish and fishery products, canned meat and processed meats.
 - ❑ These inspections are conducted on retailers, wholesalers, fishing vessels, canning facilities and factories.
- ❑ Through NRCS inspections, in the 2023/24 Financial year, the NRCS discovered about R92 million worth of non-compliant food products that were sanctioned and not for sale.
 - ❑ These were either destroyed or returned to the country of origin.

NRCS's participation at NATJOINTS priority committee

- ❑ NRCS has been participating at the NATJOINTS priority committee of foodborne incidences since 14 November 2024.
- ❑ The NRCS participates mainly in economic, legal and enforcement workstreams as well as plenary sessions to keep up with where the NRCS needs to supply information to other workstreams.
- ❑ NATJOINTS workstreams action plans:
 - ❑ NRCS is required to deploy inspectors for multisectoral raids and related follow-ups.
 - ❑ Business owners' regulatory compliance awareness training which is necessary to support the spaza shops registration process /tuck-shops/processing facilities.

Outcome and Ongoing Inspections

- ❑ Majority of the identified products leading to food poisoning fall outside of the scope of the NRCS
- ❑ In relation to the NRCS Regulatory Scope, illicit products, and product handling (dented cans, date code markings) were discovered
- ❑ NRCS has noted the regulated non-compliant products, especially in Spaza shops
- ❑ The Spaza Shops have been identified as high risk
 - ❑ In response, the NRCS is increasing the number of retail inspections, especially for Spaza shops
 - ❑ Investing in intelligence gathering to determine the source of the products being sold at the Spaza shops
 - ❑ Increased compliance awareness training to support retailers, importers, tuck shops, and processing facilities.
 - ❑ Participation in various multidisciplinary team raids in various provinces eg Gauteng, KZN and Eastern Cape

Outcome and Ongoing Inspections

❑ Investigations:

- ❑ A total of 82 Gauteng Spaza shops in Gauteng alone have been inspected.
- ❑ The inspection findings included identification of illicit products, non-compliance on date coding, and dented cans caused by product handling.

❑ Blitz inspections:

- ❑ NRCS participated in the KZN multisector inspections led by ProvJoints
- ❑ There were a total of 6 Spaza shops inspected, non-compliant processed meat that failed to comply with labelling requirements as well as dented cans falling within the regulatory scope.

❑ Training and awareness:

- ❑ NRCS collaborated with the Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency (SEDFA) in order to coordinate training and awareness for small enterprise business operators.
- ❑ Regulatory compliance awareness sessions coordinated by SEDFA took place on 23-24 and 28-29 January 2025 for 4 districts (Mpumalanga, Free State, Gauteng and Limpopo).

Conclusion

- NRCS key message to the public for verification of NRCS-regulated canned products to avoid buying/stocking Illicit products:

1. All locally produced canned fish and canned meat product are registered with the NRCS with unique code, the code can be verified as per the pic below. These products should be accompanied by the compliance certificate from NRCS.



2. All imported canned fish and meat products must also have a compliance certificate issued by NRCS

Thank You