

Preface

The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 was enacted to consolidate multiple laws in the country relating to food safety, to establish a single point reference system, and to establish the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for formulating science based standards for food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import, to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

The performance audit attempts to examine the efficacy of the regulatory and administrative mechanisms for implementation of the Act, the food testing laboratory infrastructure and human resources framework, adherence to Licensing and Registration procedures in terms of the Act, systems for inspection, sampling and prosecution procedures, regulation of import of food articles, mechanisms for grievance redressal, and IEC (information, education and communication) activities of FSSAI.

The audit revealed systemic inefficiencies, including delays and deficiencies in the framing of various regulations and standards. Audit also observed amendments to regulations in violation of the Act and specific directions of the Supreme Court. Most of the state foods laboratories entrusted with food testing and certification functions, were not only ill equipped but also did not possess accreditation of the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL). Further, enforcement activities relating to licensing, registration, inspection, sampling and prosecution were inadequate. FSSAI has failed to finalise the recruitment regulations. Irregularities were also observed in the appointment of contractual employees.

While the performance audit primarily covers the period from 2011-2012 to 2015-2016, matters relating to subsequent periods have also been included, wherever necessary.

The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India containing the results of audit of Implementation of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 has been prepared for submission to the President under Article 151 of the Constitution of India. The audit has been conducted in conformity with the Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.