JUNE 10, 2024

IFSS Regulatory and Laboratory Training System

Implementation Plan

October 2023 – September 2025

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INTRODUCTION

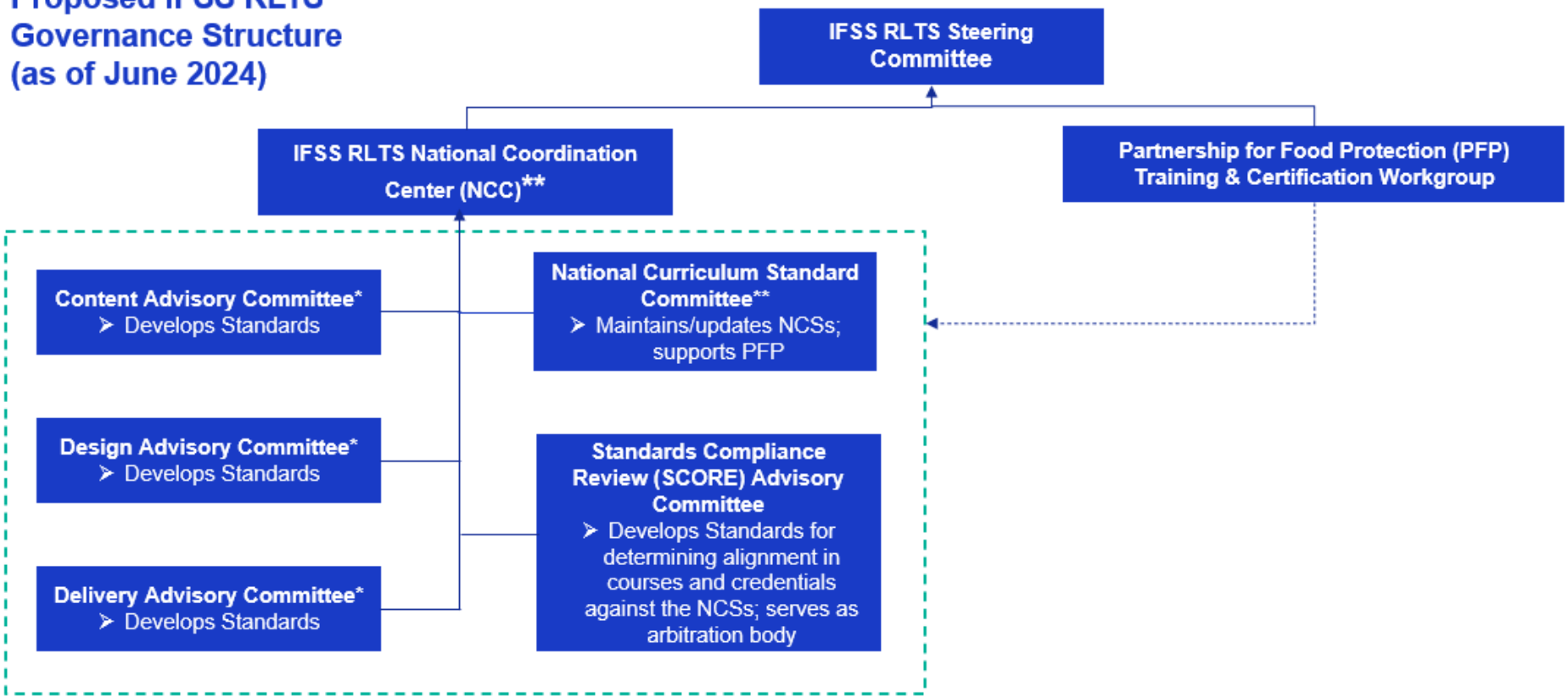
An integrated food safety system (IFSS) consists of seamless partnerships and collaboration among federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) agencies, as well as academic, foreign, industry, and consumer stakeholders to achieve the public health mission of a safer human and animal food (HAF) supply. Considering the breadth and depth of knowledge needed to achieve this mission, the IFSS Regulatory and Laboratory Training System (RLTS) Strategic Plan aims to establish an optimal, sustainable, integrated national regulatory and laboratory training system that will advance mutual reliance and support the goals of an IFSS. High-quality regulatory training will allow the IFSS workforce to apply consistent inspectional, investigatory, and laboratory practices, and stay abreast of and adopt current regulations and standards. The process of building an effective IFSS RLTS depends on a strong foundation. Specifically:

- **A collaboratively governed and administered IFSS RLTS:** The Strategic Plan outlines the necessity for a governance structure that is comprised of members of all facets of the IFSS RLTS, including but not limited to SLTT agencies, the FDA, other federal agencies, training organizations, and professional associations. Each of these entities are equal partners in responsibility for oversight and direction of the new system.
- **A fully built-out NCS:** As laid out in the Strategic Plan, it is essential to develop and maintain the Food Protection Professionals National Curriculum Standard (NCS) and the Food and Feed Laboratory NCS to create a training framework that can be applied across the system. The NCSs will establish a clear framework for competencies, ensuring that the IFSS workforce can perform comparable work across all jurisdictions and settings.

Given that the development of the NCSs is still underway, this two-year implementation plan accounts for time to complete and validate the NCSs and lays the groundwork for trainers to adjust existing training accordingly. This plan also lays the foundation for the IFSS RLTS by establishing governance, structure, framework, and policies so that the system can be operationalized smoothly and quickly.

The graphic on the next page shows the proposed governance structure of the IFSS RLTS and the roles of each implementation body.

Proposed IFSS RLTS Governance Structure (as of June 2024)



Committees will communicate and collaborate to ensure harmonization of standards
*Involves adult learning/training/instructional design SMEs, not HAF technical SMEs
**Involves FDA & SLTT HAF technical SMEs, working in collaboration with IFPTI, AFDO, NEHA, APHL, & PFP

IFSS RLTS Proposed Governance Structure Roles

Committee	Role
IFSS RLTS Steering Committee (SC) **(*Role will transfer to the NCC once it is stood up.)**	• Sets strategic direction for the RLTS. • Creates a charter. • Determines final RLTS governance body, structure, and roles. • Oversees the implementation of the IFSS RLTS Strategic Plan, Implementation Plan, and tracker. * • Oversees communications related to the IFSS RLTS. * • Approves updates to the Strategic and Implementation Plans. • Charges, oversees, evaluates, and approves recommendations made by committees and the NCC regarding the development of standards for training content, design, delivery, and equivalency/ Alignment determinations. • Execute other deliverables in this Implementation Plan. * • "Decider" for the national content, design, delivery, and equivalence/alignment standards and policies.
National Coordination Center (NCC)	• Implementation operations body. • Oversees the day-to-day administration of the RLTS and implementation of the IFSS RLTS Strategic Plan, Implementation Plan, and tracker. • Oversees communications related to the IFSS RLTS. • Updates the strategic and implementation plans working with stakeholders. • Completes standing up the governance structure and processes for the RLTS. • Establishes a process for stakeholders to recommend changes to course content, design, delivery, and equivalence/alignment standards and policies. • Recommends changes to course content, design, delivery, and equivalence/alignment standards and policies to the IFSS RLTS Steering Committee for approval. • Determines equivalency of courses and credentials against the National Curriculum Standards (NCSs), (based on standards set by the Equivalency Advisory Committee). • Charges and oversees committees to develop/revise standards for training content, design, delivery, and equivalency determinations and execute other deliverables in this Plan.

Committee	Role
	• Issues sub-awards and contracts to assist in the execution of the RLTS as needed.
PFP Training and Credentialing Workgroup	• Recommends competency standards and policies. • Provides guidance on the NCSs. • Secures SMEs for NCS development and validation. • Assists in the updating of content, policies, and procedures in the NCSs (working in collaboration with the NCS committee under the NCC). • Revalidates the competencies every 5 years. • Develop feedback mechanism to ensure IFSS partner needs are being met.
National Curriculum Standard (NCS) Maintenance Committee	• Works in collaboration with the PFP Training and Credentialing Workgroup to reaffirm the purpose, objectives, and intended use of the NCSs. • Oversees the build-out of the NCSs. • Maintains the NCSs so they stay updated. • Receives feedback from IFSS partners for evaluation and incorporation into NCS.
Content Advisory Committee	• Recommends standards and policies.
Design Advisory Committee	• Recommends standards and policies.
Delivery Advisory Committee	• Recommends standards and policies.
Standards Compliance Review (SCORE) Advisory Committee	• Recommends standards and policies. • Determines equivalency/alignment of courses and credentials against the NCSs until NCC is stood up. • Acts as arbitration body for appeals to the NCC's determinations on equivalency/alignment.

Assumptions

- The FDA will take the lead in establishing and funding any necessary public-private partnerships, cooperative agreements, etc. necessary to facilitate the implementation of the RLTS and execution of the IFSS RLTS Strategic Plan.
- This Implementation Plan assumes that the FDA will obtain additional funding in its FY24 budget to launch the formation of the NCC.
- FDA's Office of Training, Education, and Development (OTED) will continue being an important course developer and deliverer in the RLTS. OTED will also have representation on the IFSS RLTS Steering Committee.
- The Training Content, Training Design, and Training Delivery Advisory Committees will require federal, SLTT, association, academic, and industry volunteer SMEs with a strong background in adult learning, instructional design/delivery, and training. In contrast, the NCS Committee will require volunteer SMEs with strong technical expertise in NCS's professional tracks and a clear understanding of the competencies needed in the specific content areas at various levels within the curriculum framework.
- A roster of SMEs will need to be built and maintained so that the workload on SMEs within this implementation plan can be distributed equitably.

Implementation Plan

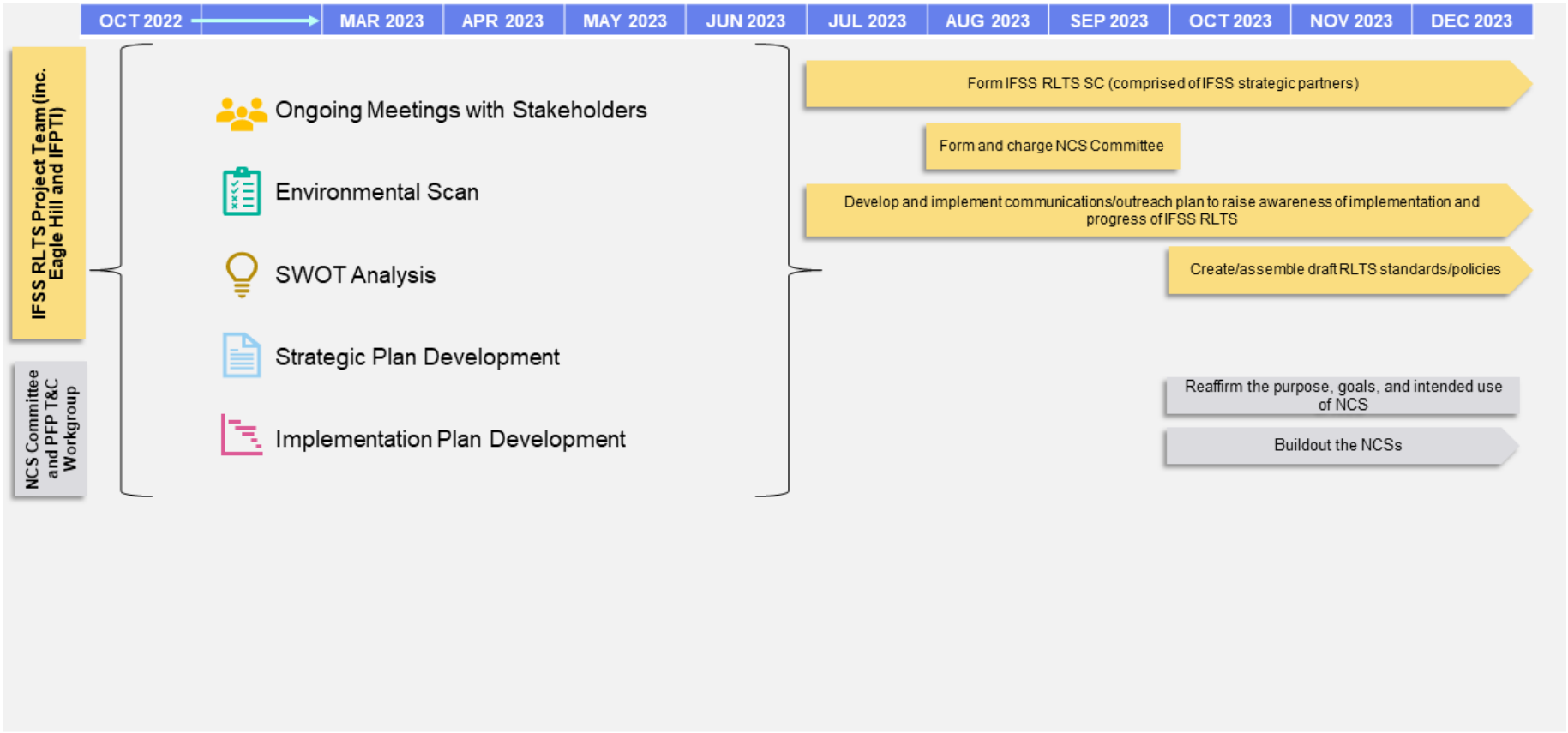
ACTIVITY / TASK / TACTIC	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	START DATE	END DATE	STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT
YEAR 1 (OCT 2023 – SEP 2024)					
Form IFSS RLTS SC (comprised of IFSS strategic partners)	Roster	IFSS Regulatory and Laboratory Training Strategic Plan Project Team	Jul 2023	Mar 2024	1.2.1 4.1.1 4.1.2
Develop and implement communications/outreach plan to raise awareness of implementation and progress of IFSS RLTS	Comms/Outreach plan	IFSS Regulatory and Laboratory Training Strategic Plan Project Team & SC (for input and clearance)	Jul 2023	Sep 2025	1.1.1
Form and charge NCS Committee	Charge document; Charter	IFSS Regulatory and Laboratory Training Strategic Plan Project Team	Aug 2023	Oct 2023	1.4.1

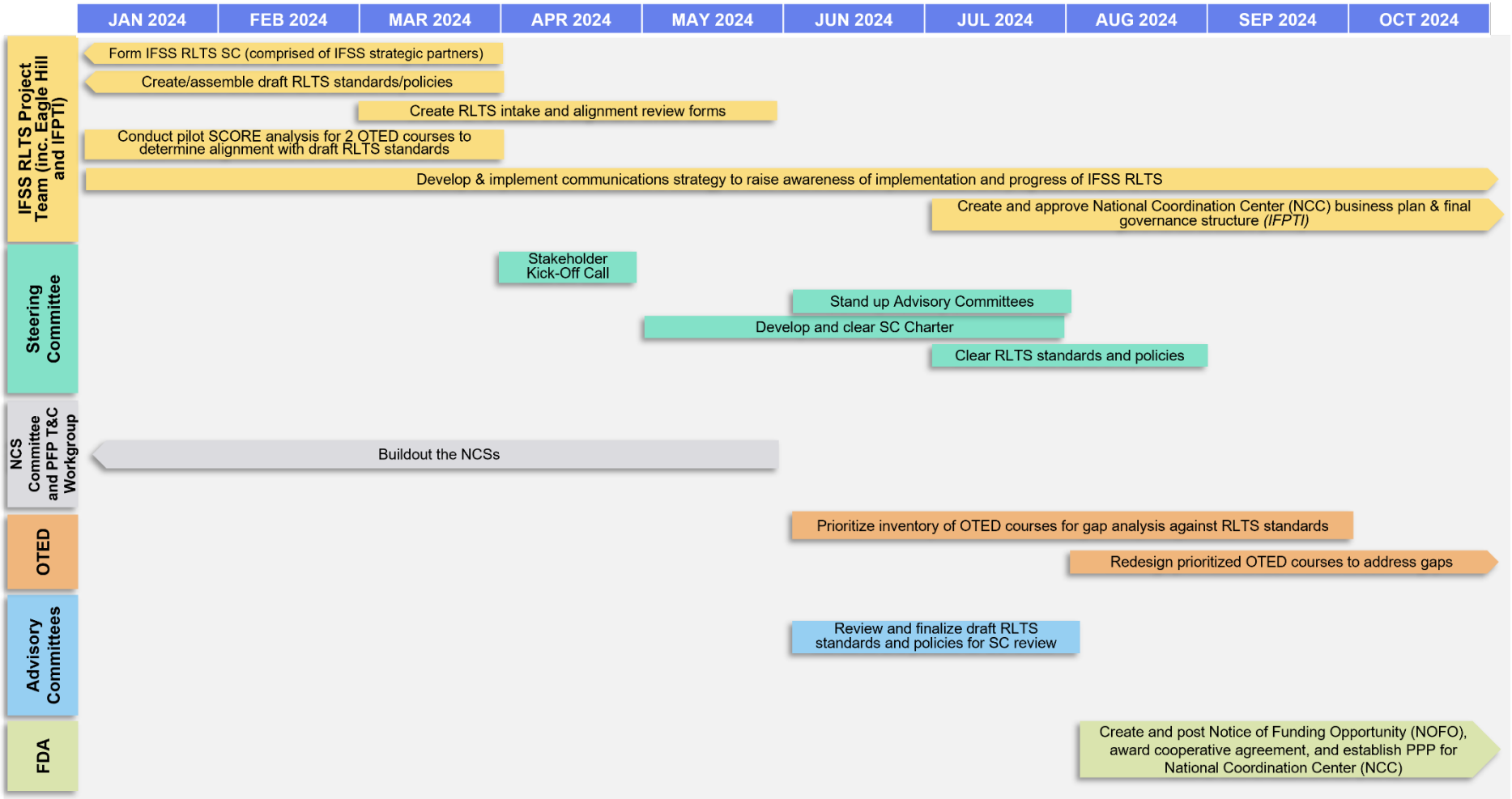
ACTIVITY / TASK / TACTIC	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	START DATE	END DATE	STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT
Reaffirm NCS purpose and goals, intended use	Decision memo	NCS Committee and PFP Training and Certification Workgroup	Oct 2023	Dec 2023	1.4.2
Buildout the NCSs	Validated NCSs	NCS Committee and PFP Training and Credentialing Workgroup	Oct 2023	Jun 2024	1.4.1
Create/assemble draft RLTS standards/policies*: NCS Development and Maintenance; Learning Resource Content Development; Learning Resource Design Standards; Learning Resource Delivery Standards; Learning Resource Alignment Standards; NCS Demonstration of Competency; CCPES for Alignment to the NCS; RLTS Process Credential Competency Profile Evaluation; RLTS Policy Credential Competency Profile Evaluation Standard	Draft standards/policies	Eagle Hill working with IFPTI	Oct 2023	Apr 2024	1.1.3 1.2.2 1.3.2 1.4.4
Create RLTS learning resource intake and alignment review forms	Draft intake and alignment review forms	Eagle Hill	Jan 2024	Apr 2024	1.2.2
Conduct pilot gap analysis for 1 – 3 OTED courses to determine alignment with draft RLTS standards	Completed alignment review forms	Eagle Hill	Jan 2024	Apr 2024	1.4.2 1.4.4
Stakeholder "50-State" Kick-Off Call (official launch of Strategic Plan, Implementation Plan, Website, Promotional Video, Infographics, etc.)	Meeting with stakeholders	SC	Apr 2024	Apr 2024	1.1.1
Stand up Advisory Committees	Rosters & Charge documents	SC working with Eagle Hill	Jun 2024	Jun 2024	1.2.1 4.1.1

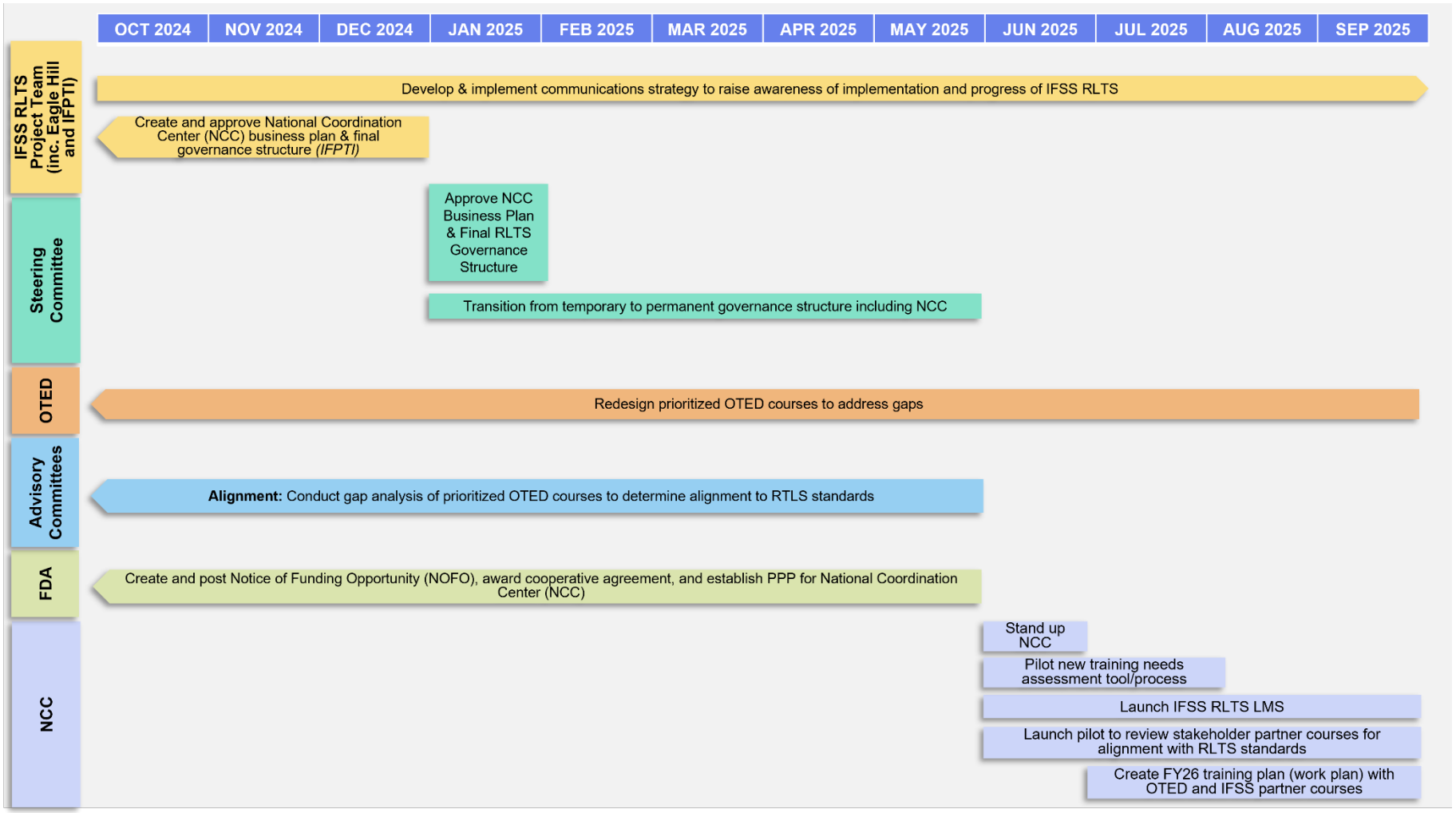
ACTIVITY / TASK / TACTIC	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	START DATE	END DATE	STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT
Develop and clear SC charter	Charter	SC	Mar 2024	Jun 2024	4.1.1 4.1.2
Prioritize inventory of OTED courses for gap analysis against RLTS standards	Prioritized Inventory List	OTED	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	1.4.4
Review and finalize draft RLTS standards and policies for SC review*	Recommended Standards & Policies	Advisory Committees working with Eagle Hill	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	1.1.3 1.2.2 3.1.2 3.1.3 3.1.4
Clear RLTS standards and policies*	Final standards & Policies	SC working with Eagle Hill	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	1.1.3 1.2.2 3.1.2 3.1.3 3.1.4
Create business plan supporting the funding and activities of the National Coordination Center (NCC) & final recommended governance structure	NCC Business Plan	IFPTI	Jul 2024	Dec 2024	1.2.1
Conduct gap analysis of prioritized OTED courses to determine alignment with SC-cleared RTLS standards (can be initiated as applicable NCS content areas are validated)	Completed alignment review forms	OTED	Aug 2024	Jun 2025	1.4.4
Create and post Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), award cooperative agreement, and establish Private-Public Partnership (PPP) for National Coordination Center (NCC)	NOFO, Notice of Award Letter, PPP MOU	FDA	Aug 2024	Jun 2025	1.2.1

ACTIVITY / TASK / TACTIC	DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	START DATE	END DATE	STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT
Redesign prioritized OTED courses to address gaps identified in gap analysis (as bandwidth permits)	Revised course materials	OTED	Aug 2024	Sep 2025	2.1.3
YEAR 2 (Oct 2024 – Sept 2025)					
Approve NCC Business Plan & Final RLTS Governance Structure	Decision Memo	SC	Jan 2025	Jan 2025	4.1.1
Transition from temporary to permanent governance structure including NCC	Transition Plan	SC	Jan 2025	Jun 2025	N/A
Officially Stand up NCC and PPP	Grantee Project Plan	NCC	Jun 2025	Jun 2025	4.1.1
Pilot new training needs assessment tool/process	Needs list	NCC	Jun 2025	Jul 2025	1.1.2
Launch IFSS RLTS LMS (include all OTED courses that meet NCS & stakeholder partner courses once deemed equivalent)	LMS	NCC	Jun 2025	Sep 2025	3.2.1
Launch pilot to review stakeholder partner courses for alignment with RLTS standards	Pilot Plan	NCC	Jun 2025	Sep 2025	1.2.2 1.3.2 1.3.3
Create FY26 training plan (work plan) (includes OTED and IFSS partner courses)	Course listing in RLTS LMS	NCC	Jul 2025	Sep 2025	3.1.1

TIMELINE


OCT 2022
MAR 2023
APR 2023
MAY 2023
JUN 2023
JUL 2023
AUG 2023
SEP 2023
OCT 2023
NOV 2023
DEC 2023
IFSS RLTS Project Team (inc. Eagle Hill and IFPTI)
NCS Committee and PFP T&C Workgroup
Ongoing Meetings with Stakeholders
Environmental Scan
SWOT Analysis
Strategic Plan Development
Implementation Plan Development
Form IFSS RLTS SC (comprised of IFSS strategic partners)
Form and charge NCS Committee
Develop and implement communications/outreach plan to raise awareness of implementation and progress of IFSS RLTS
Create/assemble draft RLTS standards/policies
Reaffirm the purpose, goals, and intended use of NCS
Buildout the NCSs


JAN 2024
FEB 2024
MAR 2024
APR 2024
MAY 2024
JUN 2024
JUL 2024
AUG 2024
SEP 2024
OCT 2024
IFSS RLTS Project Team (inc. Eagle Hill and IFPTI)
Form IFSS RLTS SC (comprised of IFSS strategic partners)
Create/assemble draft RLTS standards/policies
Create RLTS intake and alignment review forms
Conduct pilot SCORE analysis for 2 OTED courses to determine alignment with draft RLTS standards
Develop & implement communications strategy to raise awareness of implementation and progress of IFSS RLTS
Create and approve National Coordination Center (NCC) business plan & final governance structure (IFPTI)
Steering Committee
Stakeholder Kick-Off Call
Stand up Advisory Committees
Develop and clear SC Charter
Clear RLTS standards and policies
NCS Committee and PFP T&C Workgroup
Buildout the NCSs
OTED
Prioritize inventory of OTED courses for gap analysis against RLTS standards
Redesign prioritized OTED courses to address gaps
Advisory Committees
Review and finalize draft RLTS standards and policies for SC review
FDA
Create and post Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), award cooperative agreement, and establish PPP for National Coordination Center (NCC)


OCT 2024
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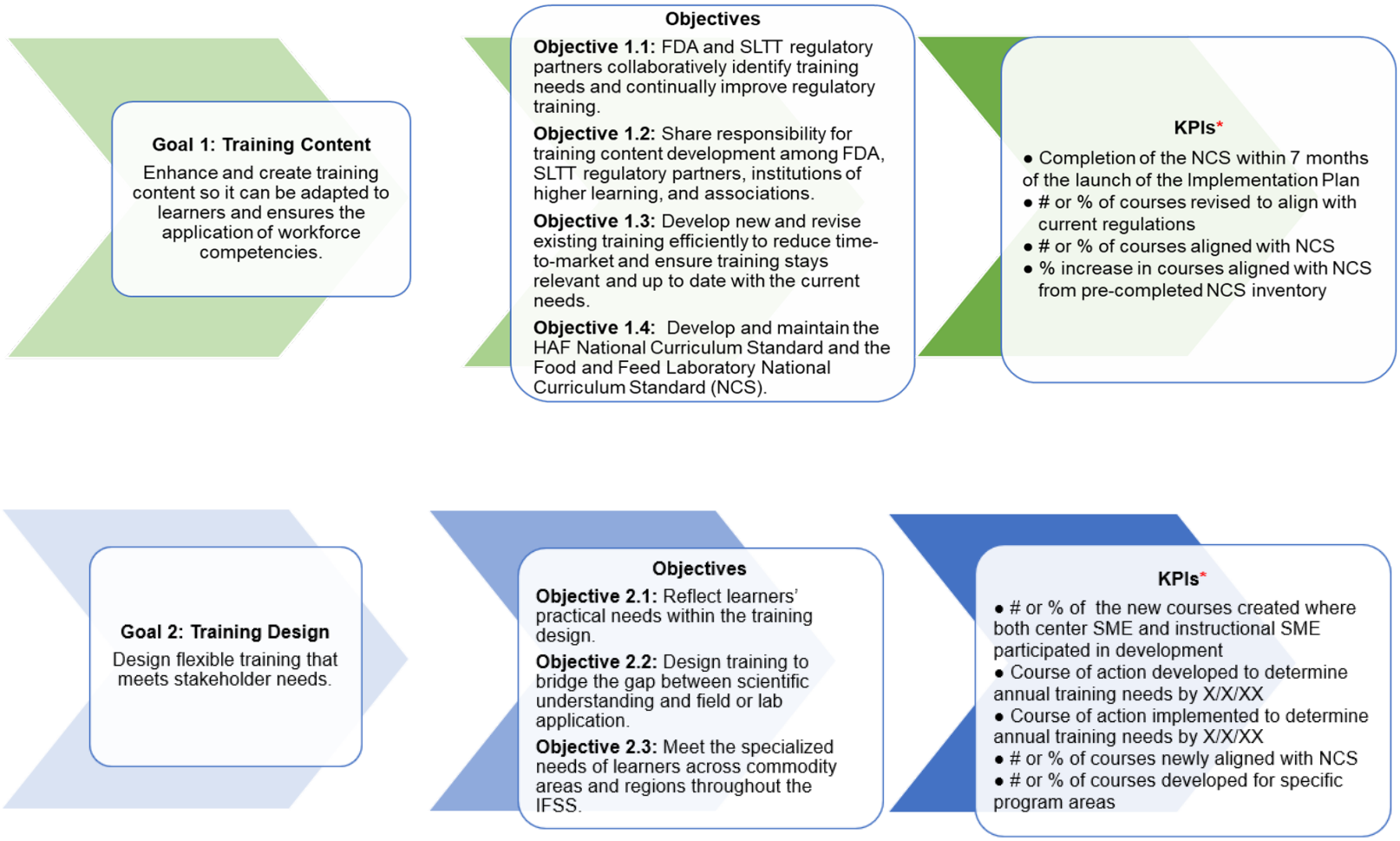
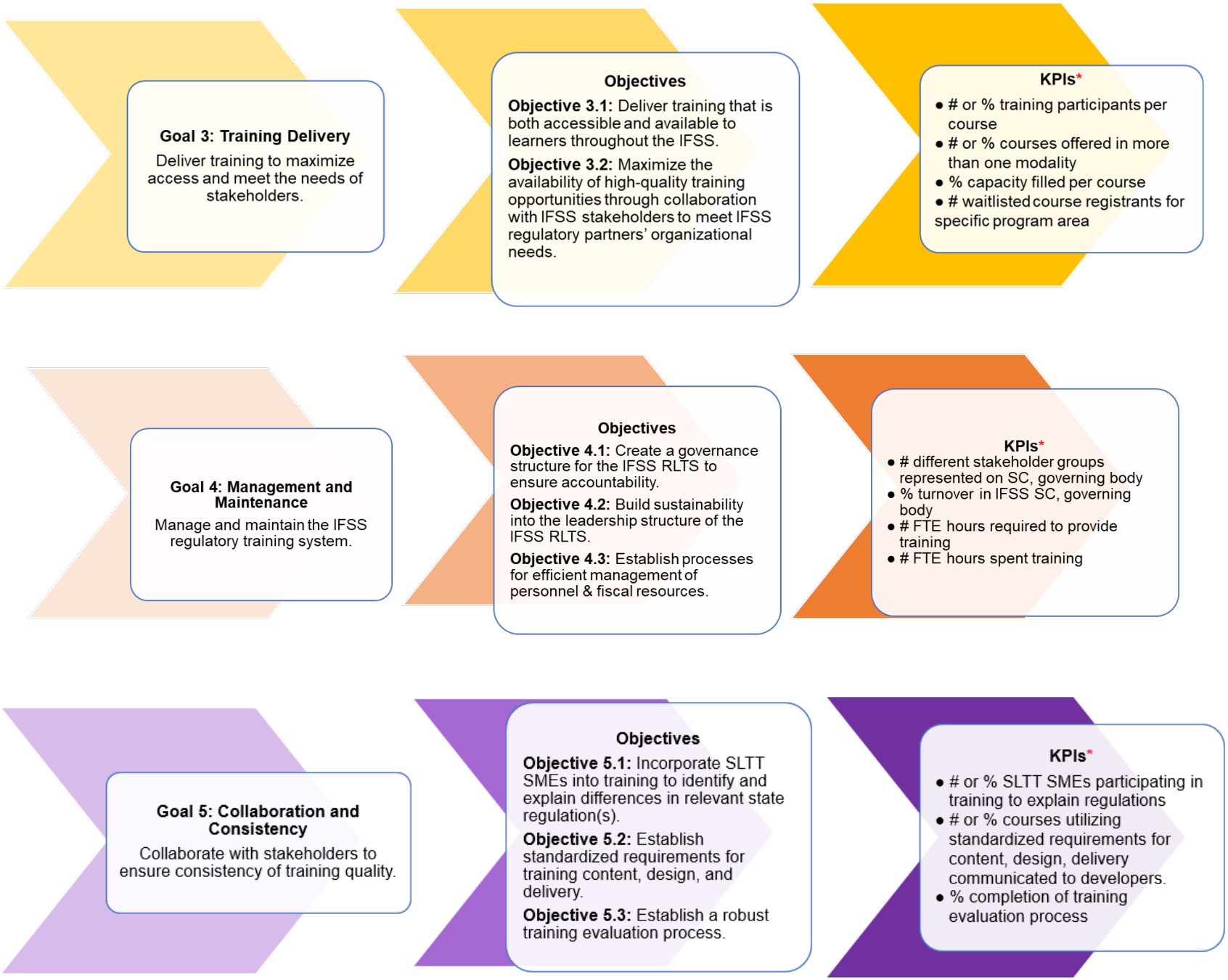
JAN 2025
FEB 2025
MAR 2025
APR 2025
MAY 2025
JUN 2025
JUL 2025
AUG 2025
SEP 2025
IFSS RLTS Project Team (inc. Eagle Hill and IFPTI)
Steering Committee
OTED
Advisory Committees
FDA
NCC
Develop & implement communications strategy to raise awareness of implementation and progress of IFSS RLTS
Create and approve National Coordination Center (NCC) business plan & final governance structure (IFPTI)
Approve NCC Business Plan & Final RLTS Governance Structure
Transition from temporary to permanent governance structure including NCC
Redesign prioritized OTED courses to address gaps
Alignment: Conduct gap analysis of prioritized OTED courses to determine alignment to RTLS standards
Create and post Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), award cooperative agreement, and establish PPP for National Coordination Center (NCC)
Stand up NCC
Pilot new training needs assessment tool/process
Launch IFSS RLTS LMS
Launch pilot to review stakeholder partner courses for alignment with RLTS standards
Create FY26 training plan (work plan) with OTED and IFSS partner courses

Proposed Key Performance Indicators

The KPIs below are intended as a reference point for the Steering Committee. The SC will determine which KPIs to use to best track progress and fidelity of the IFSS RLTS. Some of the KPIs below cannot be measured in the first two years of implementation. The SC will decide when to start measuring each KPI and whether to develop new ones that better fit the IFSS RLTS' needs. The measurement increment for each of the proposed KPIs is quarterly.




Goal 3: Training Delivery
Deliver training to maximize access and meet the needs of stakeholders.
Objectives
Objective 3.1: Deliver training that is both accessible and available to learners throughout the IFSS.
Objective 3.2: Maximize the availability of high-quality training opportunities through collaboration with IFSS stakeholders to meet IFSS regulatory partners' organizational needs.
KPIs*
• # or % training participants per course
• # or % courses offered in more than one modality
• % capacity filled per course
• # waitlisted course registrants for specific program area
Goal 4: Management and Maintenance
Manage and maintain the IFSS regulatory training system.
Objectives
Objective 4.1: Create a governance structure for the IFSS RLTS to ensure accountability.
Objective 4.2: Build sustainability into the leadership structure of the IFSS RLTS.
Objective 4.3: Establish processes for efficient management of personnel & fiscal resources.
KPIs*
• # different stakeholder groups represented on SC, governing body
• % turnover in IFSS SC, governing body
• # FTE hours required to provide training
• # FTE hours spent training
Goal 5: Collaboration and Consistency
Collaborate with stakeholders to ensure consistency of training quality.
Objectives
Objective 5.1: Incorporate SLTT SMEs into training to identify and explain differences in relevant state regulation(s).
Objective 5.2: Establish standardized requirements for training content, design, and delivery.
Objective 5.3: Establish a robust training evaluation process.
KPIs*
• # or % SLTT SMEs participating in training to explain regulations
• # or % courses utilizing standardized requirements for content, design, delivery communicated to developers.
• % completion of training evaluation process

ACRONYMS

- CCPES – Credential Competency Profile Evaluation Standard
- IFPTI - International Food Protection Training Institute
- IFSS – Integrated Food Safety System
- LMS – Learning Management System
- NCC – National Coordination Center
- NCS – National Curriculum Standard
- OTED – Office of Training Education and Development
- PFP – Partnership for Food Protection
- RLTS – Regulatory and Laboratory Training System
- SC – Steering Committee
- SOP – Standard Operating Procedures