



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

2014/SOM3/027anx4
Agenda Item: 4.2

Action Plan to Enhance Connectivity of APEC Food Standards and Safety Assurance

Purpose: Consideration
Submitted by: PPFS



**Third Senior Officials' Meeting
Beijing, China
20-21 August 2014**

CHINA, Australia and New Zealand PROPOSAL

Action Plan to Enhance Connectivity of APEC Food Standards and Safety Assurance

(Endorsed in the PPFS 2014 Plenary meeting, August 15, 2014, Beijing, China)

Background

While the PPFS is primarily focused on attaining regional food security by 2020 defined as access to adequate supplies of safe and nutritious food, the linkage between food security and food safety is vital.

Also, recent research has indicated that poor practices along the value chain lead to significant post-harvest loss and waste of consumable foods, estimated to be in the region of 30-50% of all food produced with some economies suffering up to 80% losses in certain categories.

The APEC Food Safety Co-operation Forum (FSCF) was established on 4 April 2007, to enhance food safety and encourage the use of international food safety standards and best practices as key factors for improving public health and safety and facilitating trade in food for APEC member economies. The FSCF works to build robust food safety systems, improving and strengthening information sharing and capacity building, so as to accelerate progress towards the harmonisation of regional food standards with international standards, to improve public health and facilitate trade. The FSCF's Partnership Institute Training Network (PTIN) is a public-private-academic partnership to conduct food safety capacity building in the APEC region.

Vision

To facilitate the implementation of the APEC Food Security Road Map Towards 2020, it is necessary to work with the FSCF to increase efforts to harmonize existing food standards and systems, including international, science-based safety and technical specifications, with their SPS measures, such as food safety standards, based on international standards, guidelines and recommendations in accordance with WTO/SPS Agreement. With universally accepted

standards across the region, it helps to assure safety, enhance productivity, build capability and reduce barriers to food trade.

The plan recognizes that food safety is vital to supporting food security goals and will build on the already established the work of the FSCF and explore public-private partnerships relevant to the goals of this plan, explore opportunities for collaboration through established global fora such as World Bank Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP) as well as the Consumer Goods Forum's Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), as set out below.

The PPFS will coordinate closely with the FSCF to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts in the food safety area.

Goals

1. Enhance a dialogue and consultation for food standard and safety issues in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Activities:

- a. Review information on food trade disputes arising from the food specification problems in the Asia-Pacific Region, to identify the extent of the trade problem across APEC economies.
- b. Enhance regional consultation, bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation coordinated by relevant economies in the region on the subject of food quality assurance and safety.
- c. Hold a Dialogue Conference on The Role of Food Standards and Trade in Food Security. The dialogue will explore the nature and extent of related disputes in food trade, identify existing work on food standards development, and promote communication to help mitigate conflicts and build understanding to support an enabling environment for food trade.

2. Advance cooperation on food safety and food quality assurance in the Asia-Pacific Region

- a. Promote harmonization with internationally accepted, science-based standards, and supply chains such as the APEC approved Global Data Standards initiative.
- b. Promote collaboration in the following aspects:
 - Recommend a more focused approach where initially 2-3 commodities (wheat, rice, maize) that are most actively traded within the APEC region are considered. Invite economies to nominate 1-2 others
 - Develop a database of relevant food standards.
 - Commission an expert team to analyse the relevant food standards of across the APEC region.
 - One thing for sure is that no new standards will be developed in this case.
- c. Explore the possibilities of establishing a regional industry standards and regulatory harmonization committee to ensure a cohesive approach and outcomes.

3. Carry out research and exchange on risk management and control and food specification and safety assurance

Activities:

- a. Conduct research on existing food traceability systems in the region. With a view to sharing information on technology and best practices. Aligns to GFSP, GFSI and APEC GDS initiatives and suggests collaboration.
- b. Conduct the research, training and exchange on identifying and managing food safety hazards such as mould proof, detoxification and heavy metal non-hazardous disposal of grain and feed, inputs to the production of livestock and food of animal origin (i.e. feed) and production of grains and food of plant origin (i.e. fertilizers). Propose pilot projects or technical exchanges may emerge to advance technology R&D in the related areas and promote the application of the potential outcomes.

4. Work with the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum to strengthen coherence to internationally- accepted food safety technical regulations, as well as science-based food inspection technology research and technical communication

Activities may include:

- a. Review work on current international and regional rapid inspection technologies.
- b. Study and adopt rapid inspection technologies (e.g. on heavy metals and mycotoxins).
- c. Advance the cooperative development and application of new inspecting technologies according to the R&D project achievement.
- d. Support the FSCF PTIN to facilitate technical exchanges, cooperation and technical training among food safety inspecting institutions/agencies within economies on the case studies.

5. Assist farmers, fisherfolk, SMEs and other stakeholders to comply with food safety regulation.

Activities may include:

Outreach and educate program on cost effective technologies and codes of practice for assisting farmers, fisherfolks, SMEs and other stakeholders to enable them to comply with food safety regulation.