



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

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2014/SCSC/WKSP3/029

## **Outcomes of APEC Wine Regulatory Forum 2014**

Submitted by: United States



**APEC Wine Regulatory Forum  
Beijing, China  
11-12 September 2014**



## **APEC Wine Regulatory Forum 2014 Technical Workshop Beijing, China**

The fourth meeting of the APEC Wine Regulatory Forum (WRF) was held on September 11-12, in Beijing, China. It was the first meeting to be held in Asia and the second of six technical fora under the multi-year project. Government officials and industry representatives from sixteen economies participated<sup>1</sup>. The WRF seeks to eliminate non-science based testing and certification requirements for wine trade in an effort to increase wine production, to expand trade, and to create jobs in the region.

### **Outcomes and Next Steps**

APEC economies, through the WRF, continued to acknowledge that wine is a low risk food product and that testing requirements should be risk-based, fit for purpose, and kept to a minimum so as to facilitate trade.

Key sessions included an economy roundtable where participants discussed recent or upcoming changes on wine regulations. Changes to policies on taxes and health warnings were mentioned. Presentations were also given on China's wine production and consumption, testing for sugar and metal in wine, a review of the World Wine Trade Group (WWTG) "Tbilisi Statement on Analytical Methodology and Regulatory Limits on Constituents and Potential Contaminants in Wine"<sup>2</sup>, and current wine activities in Codex Alimentarius committees.

Economies committed to continue to share examples of good regulatory practices for wine and the United States offered to explore opportunities for increased APEC involvement in the International Wine Technical Forum<sup>3</sup>.

Participants identified the following key actions to be initiated in 2015 in advance of the next meeting, which is expected to be held in November of 2015 in Australia in coordination with the WWTG.

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<sup>1</sup>Australia; Canada; Chile; China; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Russia; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; Philippines; United States; and Viet Nam. Argentina participated as an Observer.

<sup>2</sup> APEC economies can review the Tbilisi Statement at the WWTG Government website: <http://ita.doc.gov/td/ocg/wwtg.htm>

<sup>3</sup> The International Wine Technical Forum is an informal and open gathering of industry wine technical experts from around the world, organized by the United States. It meets annually to discuss the international aspects of wine trade issues with a view to finding practical solutions and facilitating trade. It has several working groups that progress projects between meetings. The next meeting will be held May 5-7 in Napa, CA.



### Continuation of Public-Private Electronic Working Groups

Members were encouraged to participate to the fullest extent possible in the WRF Working Groups (WGs). Nominations should be directed to the Project Overseer by January 1, 2015. Just prior to the meeting, China announced six new participants to the Compendia and Enhanced Risk Controls WGs.

The four WGs established in 2013 will continue to develop and manage specific APEC WRF activities: (1) Working Group on Export Certificates, (2) Working Group on Compendia, (3) Working Group on Enhanced Risk Controls, and (4) Working Group on Pesticide Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs). Communication will take place via email and conference calls and WGs will report their progress to the Project Overseers on a three month basis. In addition, the United States will continue to organize quarterly regulator conference calls, noting that the opportunity to talk to each other is important for information exchange.

Economies are requested to update the APEC WRF Contact List and consider nominating a single point of contact to the Project Overseer by January 1, 2015.

### Reduction in Export Certificates

Members adopted the 2014 Export Certification WG Report. Canada noted that it is developing capacity to accept and issue electronic certificates to support trade in food. Chile announced that it is expanding its electronic certification scheme to the EU, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Argentina. Members agreed that by the end of the WRF in 2018, steps should be taken to eliminate unnecessary export certification requirements.<sup>4</sup> Before the 2015 meeting, the WG will:

- Draft a model APEC wine export certificate for use in economies where certification is required. The objective should be to design a certificate which includes no requirement for chemical analysis, with a preference being given to systems-based approaches. Identification of the underlying rules and regulations which set out the requirements for certification would be examined.
- Promote electronic certification and self-certification of export certificates with an eventual goal of mutual acceptance of winemaking practices among other regulatory requirements.
- Encourage information exchange between the WRF and the WWTG as a means of further supporting the work on export certification, noting that membership in the WWTG is open to all economies, including non-wine producing economies.

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<sup>4</sup> The goals were shared at the SCSC and CTI in August 2014. No objections to these goals were raised.



## Compendia

Members adopted the 2014 Compendia WG Report. Malaysia requested a change to the Compendia noting that it does not require export certifications for wine. The following next steps were agreed to:

- Review the completed Compendia posted on the WRF website and confirm and update the information by contacting the Project Overseers by January 1, 2015.
- Explore the promising existing sites and tools that the WG report identified as a means to complement the existing compendia and/or to serve as repositories going forward.
- Issue a selective tender (e.g., Request for Proposal) in which different organizations may submit proposals for incorporating and maintaining the Compendia for access by all APEC WRF participants. Until a database is selected, the Compendia WG will continue to post the completed Compendia (on Export Certificates, Food Safety, Labeling, and Pesticide MRLs) on the APEC WRF website (<http://wineregulatoryforum.blogspot.com<sup>5</sup>/>). This will allow APEC economies to ensure the accuracy of their requirements, as well as review other economies' information while a more formal repository is selected.

## Enhanced Risk Controls

Members adopted the 2014 Enhanced Risk Controls WG Report and reconfirmed the importance of establishing risk assessments as the justification for regulatory intervention, and noted the need for enhanced laboratory capabilities and technical exchanges to ensure that regulatory authorities have the capacity to assess risk and to use sound science in regulating wine. Members also recognized that although wine is a low risk food product, there are specific risks that require control. When determining the degree of inspection and testing necessary in relation to a particular batch of wine, members should take into account evidence that a systems based approach has been adopted in the production of that product. The following next steps were agreed to:

- Establish a ring test, open to laboratories from all APEC economies, to promote consistency and accuracy of analytical testing of key wine parameters: alcohol, sugar, sulfites, and possibly metals.
- The WG will liaise with the WG on Compendia to create a compendium of methods of analysis. Members agreed that the WG should evaluate method performance based on ring test results, and Members should use fit for purpose methods across the APEC region, particularly for those tests that are important for protecting human health and safety.

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<sup>5</sup> The Compendia are password protected. Contact the Project Overseers for the login and password.



- The WG was asked to consider how the wine regulatory principles in the WWTG Tbilisi Statement might be incorporated into the WRF going forward.
- Given the identified objective of APEC economies to determine ways in which to facilitate trade, the WG should explore means by which reports from ISO 17025 accredited labs can be considered by member economies in support of any further routine testing by the importing economy.
- The WG encourages all laboratories to complete the previously distributed capacity building survey prior to the next meeting.

#### Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs)

Members adopted the 2014 Maximum Residue Limits WG Report and agreed to the following next steps:

- Develop priority lists of pesticides for which Codex MRLs could be progressed and to identify pathways for getting Codex MRLs established based on good agricultural practices to ensure the lowest possible consumer exposure.
- Future work could include engaging in MOUs or similar agreements to exchange data and share work plans. The exchange of data and work plans will be beneficial in cases where an importing member does not produce a particular product (e.g., setting of pesticide MRLs for grapes in economies that do not grow grapes for wine production).
- Members agreed to continue the dialogue on MRLs for agrochemicals with a view to facilitating trade and encouraging cooperation with relevant international bodies such as Codex, the WWTG, and the Food Safety Cooperation Forum.

#### Future Work

WRF participants recognized that the use of geographical indications (GIs), trademarks (TMs), and common names are important to wine trade among the APEC economies and recommend that the Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) consider this issue intersessionally and request that the Intellectual Property Rights Experts Group (IPEG) at IPEG1 in 2015 complete a Compendium on how governments regulate GIs, TMs, and common names in their economies. The WRF has considerable expertise in this area and offers its services to complete the task.

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