



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation

Project Report on

**Improving Transparency and Knowledge
of Food Safety Requirements for Trade
Food in the APEC Region**

December 2023

APEC SUB-COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND CONFORMANCE



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Economic Cooperation**

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Note: The terms 'National' and 'Nation' used in the text are for purposes of this report and do not imply the 'political status' of any APEC member economy.

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Acronyms List

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
WTO	World Trade Organization
FSCF	Food Safety Cooperation Forum
Codex/CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
SPS	Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
GRP	Good Regulation Practice
SCSC	Committee on Standards and Conformance
GACC	General Administration of Customs, P. R. China
FSPCA	Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance
CQC	China Quality Certification Center
SME	Small/medium-sized Enterprise
AFGC	Australia Food and Grocery Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FSCF	Food Safety Cooperation Forum
MICOR	Manual of Importing Country Requirements
CFIA	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
CFSAN	Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FSMA	Food Safety Modernization Act
SMA	Safety Modernization Act
FSIS	Food Safety and Inspection Service
USDA	The U.S. Department of Agriculture
ACFS	National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards
TAS	Thai Agricultural Standard



IT	Information Technology
FSIEWP	Food Safety Information Early Warning Program
SFA	Singapore Food Agency
MSE	Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment
IBR	Food Cargo Inspection Body Recognition
IEFSB	Import and Export Food Safety Bureau
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CFS	Centre for Food Safety
MPOB	Malaysian Palm Oil Board
PORIM	Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia
PORLA	Palm Oil Registration and Licensing Authority
CCCF	Codex Committees particularly Contaminant in Food
CCFO	Codex Committee on Fats and Oils
ASOEX	Association of Chilean Fresh Fruit Exporters
FIA	Fundación para la Innovación Agraria
EU	European Union
USA	United States of America
CNAS	China National Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IQNet	International Certification Network
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
CCIC	China Certification & Inspection Group
CNCA	Certification and Accreditation Administration of the People's Republic of China
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
CPADC	China Poverty Alleviation and Development Center
SIST	Shenzhen Institute of Standards and Technology
SAC	Standards Administration Of China
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership

INTRODUCTION

ISO	International Organization for Standardization
OIG	Optimize Integration Group
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
MCPDE	3-monochloropropane-1,2-diol esters
GE	Glycidyl Esters
WHO	World Health Organization
WOAH	World Organization for Animal Health
CA	Certificate Authority
CFSAN	Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
VQIP	Voluntary Qualified Importer Program
PREDICT	Predictive Risk- based Evaluation for Dynamic Import Compliance Targeting
MEWR	Ministry of Environment and Water Resources
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
IEC	International Electro technical Commission
DG SANTE	Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety
MPI	Ministry of Primary Industries
NZ-SG-EU	New Zealand-Singapore- European Union
EFSB	Import and Export Food Safety Bureau
CPO	Crude Palm Oil
MS	Malaysian Standard
CODEX-STAN	Codex Standard
NSC	National Sub-Committee
TC	Technical Committee
FDF	Fundación para el Desarrollo Frutícola
EMC	Electromagnetic Compatibility
CMA	China Inspection Body and Laboratory Mandatory Approval
CB	Certification Bodies' Scheme
FSSC	Food Safety System Certification
BRC	British Retail Consortium



QR	Quick Response
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
CIQA	China Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Association
CCBA	China Customs Brokers Association
GMPP	Global Meat Plants Platform
CIFER	China Import Food Enterprises Registration
HS	Harmonized System



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Food safety stands as a paramount concern for APEC economies. Member economies constantly adapt and enhance food safety regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures for imported and exported food products. Hence, it becomes imperative for these adjustments to be executed with transparency. This transparency ensures that food industries acquire and maintain accurate and up-to-date knowledge, enabling them to comprehend and adhere to the prevailing food safety requisites. In addition, recognizing the intricacies inherent in food safety regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures, as well as the language barriers that often complicate matters, it becomes apparent that certain industries, especially small and medium industries, encounter difficulties in accessing and better understanding food safety requirements of their trading partners. In this context, information sharing is pivotal in aiding these industries, facilitating access to and deepening their understanding of food safety requirements. Economies must foster a culture of knowledge exchange, allowing them to draw inspiration and insights from one another on strategies for enhancing the transparency of food safety requirements.

The project has three components:

a. Solicit best practice cases on how economies assist the industries to gain access to and deepen understanding on food safety requirements of trade partners and those of their own;

The solicitation of Examples of Best Practices was officially opened through the Secretariat on 21 March 2023. As of 31 August 2023, 21 cases have been submitted, originating from 11 economies: Australia; Canada; Chile; China; Hong Kong, China; Malaysia; New Zealand; Singapore; Thailand; the United States; and Viet Nam. These submissions comprise 10 cases of practice from food safety competent authorities, seven from food safety service organizations, and four from food industries.

Recognizing the multifaceted responsibilities and roles of food safety

stakeholders, the Examples of Best Practices focuses on three key stakeholders: food safety competent authorities, food safety service organizations, and food industries. The solicitation results are presented separately for each stakeholder category.

Across APEC member economies, commendable efforts have been made by all relevant stakeholders to enhance food safety transparency. It is essential to underscore that Examples of Best Practices does not purport to be an exhaustive inventory but strives to serve as a valuable reference for advancing food safety transparency.

The main components comprising the Examples of Best Practices include an introductory overview, and an analysis, of best practice cases. Each case contributed by the participating economies within three stakeholder groups is initially introduced in the overview section, followed by a detailed examination in the subsequent section titled "Analysis of good practice".

b. Survey on key issues and challenges that member economies face;

The survey, officially disseminated by the Secretariat on 29 May 2023, garnered a substantial response, with a total of 61 completed questionnaires received from 10 economies by 10 July 2023. These economies included Australia; Canada; China; Malaysia; New Zealand; the Philippines; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; and the United States, with 19 questionnaires from food safety competent authorities, 16 from food safety service organizations, and 26 from food industries.

Within the framework of this project, the culmination of research findings has been analyzed and synthesized in this research report. The report encapsulates an understanding of the obstacles and trials encountered by diverse stakeholders in APEC member economies in improving food safety transparency.

The report is structured into two sections, excluding the executive summary and the table of contents. The first section, "Overview of Questionnaire Survey Results", provides a comprehensive overview of findings derived from the responses to the questionnaires received from food safety competent authorities, food safety service organizations, and food industries. The second section, "Statistical Analysis of Questionnaire Results", delves deeper into survey outcomes generated by food safety authorities, food safety service organizations, and food industries.



c. Hold a virtual seminar to share and discuss the methods and approaches on how economies assist the industries to gain access to and deepen understanding on food safety requirements.

The workshop was held on 16-17 August 2023. The workshop was attended by 75 participants from 11 APEC member economies and two representatives from the Codex and the WTO. Workshop participants enthusiastically embraced two days of knowledge raising, ideas sharing, and views that resulted in a range of recommendations to be taken forward within APEC, such as language and understanding barriers, which were agreed upon during the workshop.

Participants engaged in robust discussions on strategies to surmount these challenges, offering comprehensive solutions. Notably, the most prominent suggestion revolved around leveraging science and technology to effectively eliminate language and understanding barriers. Harmonizing regulations with established international standards also emerged as a critical consideration. Creating a collaborative platform for idea exchange was emphasized to disseminate information to a wider audience of practitioners, thus mitigating these barriers. Additionally, it was deemed valuable to encourage relevant stakeholders to access the advantages and challenges of current regulations in the economies they already implemented. All aforementioned suggestions represent valuable contributions, serving as promising concept notes for prospective APEC projects.

These proposals, rooted in constructive dialogue, hold the potential to enhance the transparency of import and export food safety requirements among member economies. Additionally, they stand poised to empower industries, enabling them to gain access to and deepen their understanding on food safety requirements more effectively. By doing so, these initiatives promise to bolster the compliance capabilities of food industries and facilitate international trade in food across the APEC region.



INTRODUCTION

I. Background

For APEC economies, food safety is an issue of great concern. In achieving food safety, the first step is to ensure transparency and knowledge of food safety requirements so that food industries can maintain up-to-date and accurate knowledge and implement food safety requirements effectively.

In the 8th Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF) Statement, "Discuss the Strategies to Improve the Transparency and Knowledge of Import and Export Food Safety Requirements" was listed as one of the plans and ideas for future projects. Therefore, China proposed the project "Improving Transparency and Knowledge of Safety Requirements for Trade of Food in the APEC Region" in 2020, which was co-sponsored by Chile; Malaysia; New Zealand; the Philippines; Singapore; and the United States, and which got approved by APEC in May 2021 (Project No. SCSC 03 2021T).

The project has three components:

- a. Solicit best practice cases on how economies assist the industries to gain access to and deepen understanding on food safety requirements of trade partners and those of their own;
- b. Survey key issues and challenges that member economies face;
- c. Hold a virtual seminar to share and discuss the methods and approaches on how economies assist the industries to gain access to and deepen understanding on food safety requirements.

II. Objectives

Implementing the project will benefit the transparency of import and export food safety requirements within member economies. Furthermore, it plays a pivotal role in assisting industries to access and deepen comprehension of these essential food safety requirements. As a direct consequence, this initiative effectively elevates the compliance capability of food industries, ultimately facilitating and fostering the international trade in food throughout the APEC region.

III. Methodology

From March to August 2023, a solicitation of best practice examples was conducted on improving transparency of food safety requirements for three groups of stakeholders in APEC economies, and the Examples of Best Practices were compiled, including a total of 21 cases from 11 economies. From May to July 2023, survey questionnaires were distributed to APEC economies by the APEC Secretariat, and the Survey Report on Key Issues and Challenges was compiled, including 61 results of survey questionnaires from 10 economies.

To achieve the project's objectives, a Discussion on Improving Transparency and Knowledge of Safety Requirements for Trade of Food in the APEC Region Workshop was held online on 16–17 August 2023. The economic representatives at the workshop demonstrated their good practices for improving transparency of food requirements. The China project team presented the results of the questionnaire survey and the completion of the Examples of Best Practices. Finally, the workshop evaluation was conducted, and the report was finalized within two weeks after the meeting.

IV. Glossary

Food safety competent authorities: Mainly refer to the authorities responsible for supervising the production, circulation, and sales of food, as well as the formulation of food safety standards and supervision and inspection, including but not limited to departments of food safety management, food safety supervision, food safety law-making, and food safety customs management in the economies.

Food safety service organizations: Mainly refer to organizations responsible for providing services to ensure food safety, which can be government agencies, non-governmental organizations, or private companies, including but not limited to research institutes on food safety laws, regulations, and standards, food safety compliance review service agencies, food safety research institutes, and food clearance service agencies.

Food industries: Food industries include operators in the food industry system engaged in planting, breeding, food manufacturing, catering, distribution, import and export, and related industries.



EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES

I. Solicitation of Practice Cases

The Examples of Best Practices encompasses a total of 21 best practices derived from 11 economies, namely Australia; Canada; Chile; China; Hong Kong, China; Malaysia; New Zealand; Singapore; Thailand; the United States; and Viet Nam. These practices have been contributed by nine food safety competent authorities, six food safety service organizations, and three food industries, reflecting a wide range of perspectives and expertise within the field of food safety.

II. Analysis of Best Practices

Based on the analysis of the examples provided by several economies, this section summarizes the best practices of food safety stakeholders in accessing, understanding, and implementing food safety requirements.

1. Analysis of Best Practices for Food Safety Competent Authorities

According to the analysis, the food safety competent authorities' best practices usually include the following six measures to help food safety related organizations or the food industries within and outside the economies to access, understand, and implement food safety requirements. The practices cover a wide range of aspects, such as risk regulation of food safety requirements, consultation and guidance, establishment of organizations, formation of a database, and communication.

1.1 Enhancing the Exchange of Food Safety Requirements inside and outside the Economy

a. Establishing Channels of Communication

To enhance the accessibility and understanding of food safety requirements among stakeholders, food safety competent authorities in the mentioned economies have implemented channels of communication.

China: In the case provided by the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, GACC held activities ranging from The National Food Safety Awareness Week to the Customs Theme Day to promote attention to and participation in the work of import and export food safety by the whole society.

Hong Kong, China: The case provided by the Centre for Food Safety of Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Hong Kong, China, shows that the CFS regularly conducts the Trade Consultation Forum. Besides providing an effective platform for the CFS to exchange views on food safety matters with the trade, including the new requirements under respective regulations, it serves as a channel to collect their views and comments on food safety control measures as well as the risk communication activities. The presentations at each forum are made available online so that the food trade can review the materials afterward.

New Zealand: In the case provided by New Zealand, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) operates outreach programs to support stakeholder engagement.

Singapore: An example from Singapore is the organization of Townhalls with the food industry. These Townhall meetings are conducted in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and are focused on addressing specific topical issues related to food safety. They aim to share important food safety information, raise awareness about potential risks, and foster dialogue between competent authorities and the food industry. For instance, Singapore has organized Townhall sessions to share allergen-related food safety practices and learn from recent food poisoning incidents.

b. Active Participation in International Food Safety Affairs and Enhanced Cooperation with Other Economies

As the formulators and releasers of food safety requirements, food safety competent authorities actively participate in international food safety matters in two main ways:

b1. Participation in the Formulation of International Standards

Australia: The case provided by Australia shows that the Ministry actively participates in Codex Alimentarius meetings and committees by attending these meetings and contributing to the development of standards, guidelines, and principles. They also invite other food organizations in their economy to participate in the work.



Malaysia: In the case provided by the Malaysian Palm Oil Board, Malaysia has actively participated in Codex, particularly in Codex Committees on Contaminant in Food (CCCF) and Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO). In addition, Malaysia is co-chairing with the EU on the establishment of Code of Practice for the reduction of 3-monochloropropane-1, 2-diol esters (3-MCPDE) and glycidyl esters (GE) in refined oils and products made from refined oils, especially infant formula.

The United States: The US case shows that FSIS can provide opportunities for food organizations to participate in the formulation of food safety regulations.

b2. Organization of Food Safety Conferences and Outreach Activities

Food safety competent authorities take the initiative to organize, establish platforms, or participate in food safety conferences and outreach activities. These events serve as platforms for discussing food safety challenges, trade issues, and promoting collaboration among stakeholders.

China: Meanwhile, the Shenzhen Institute of Standards and Technology in China hosted the Shenzhen Food Safety Forums for the purpose of improving food safety risk communication.

China: In the case provided by the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, GACC has deepened its interaction and communication with the industry, enterprises, and consumers by taking the Imported Food Safety Summit and other multiple economies conferences as a platform. GACC has also actively participated the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum, the Vienna Food Safety Forum, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Forum so as to continuously enhance the understanding of China Customs' food safety management concepts.

Singapore: For instance, since 2019, Singapore's Food Authority (SFA) has held three Roundtables on Novel Foods Regulations to provide platforms to raise awareness about new technologies for novel food production, discuss the challenges in safety assessment and explore opportunities to advance the regulatory agenda, while encouraging food innovations. The Roundtable is attended by overseas regulatory counterparts, international organizations (e.g. FAO, WHO), industry players and academia.

The United States: The United States case demonstrates that the Food Safety and Inspection Service conducts outreach activities to facilitate the understanding

of FSIS food safety policies, strategies, and import criteria.

1.2 Provide Consultation and Guidance on Food Safety Requirements

a. Development of Interpretation Materials on Food Safety Requirements

To ensure accessibility, understanding, and implementation of food safety requirements, competent authorities in various economies have developed comprehensive interpretation materials tailored to different food industries. These materials encompass a wide range of information, covering aspects such as requirements for the procurement of materials to production requirements, testing requirements, and transportation standards. The preparation of these materials involves collaboration with multiple food industries and food service organizations, leading to a deeper understanding of the requirements while ensuring their practicality in the market. Moreover, many of these interpretation materials are translated into the languages of trade partners, facilitating their implementation of the requirements.

Australia: In the case presented by Australia, the Exports Standards Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry highlights the maintenance of the Departmental MICOR and meat cut manuals.

Hong Kong, China: In the case provided by the Centre for Food Safety of Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Hong Kong, China, a designated web page is launched to facilitate the food trade in accessing the latest information on the amendments, and a guide may be produced to encourage and assist the trade in providing safe and healthy food according to the new regulations.

New Zealand: The case provided by MPI shows that the organization works with industries to develop food safety guidance, promote food safety culture within industries, and monitor food safety and suitability outcomes.

Singapore: SFA has released a document detailing the food safety information that would be required for the novel food safety assessment. As novel food is a rapidly evolving area, the document is periodically updated and revised to facilitate the industry in performing safety assessments of their innovations and ensure food safety.

The United States: Similarly, the US develops guidance specific to the food safety industries it regulates.

b. Conduct consultation and training in food safety requirements



As a common measure to help food safety relevant organizations like industries access, understand, and implement the requirements, most economies provide guidance to food industry professionals, such as training.

Most economies provided guidance to practitioners in the food industry, from consultation to training.

Australia: The case submitted from Australia illustrates how food safety competent authorities impose minimum training and competency standards to ensure compliance with technical specifications for personnel involved in manufacturing industries and specific positions.

China: The case provided by the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China shows that GACC offered the guidance (English) for the enterprises expected to be registered, held a number of seminars involving various stakeholders to collect feedback of the regulations to help enterprises successfully complete the registration during the transition period for the implementation of relevant regulations. At the same time, GACC has established a comprehensive service platform accepting business consulting, customs clearance assistance, complaints and reports, petitions and suggestions from citizens, legal persons and other organizations, and provides 24-hour consulting services for the public.

New Zealand: In the case provided by New Zealand, the MPI website lists other government agency websites where exports can seek help. MPI also operates an Exporter Regulatory Advice Service (ERAS), which supports New Zealand exporters by bringing together the requirements for an export market/product combination into one place and describing them in plain English. Exporters can contact ERAS online, by phone or email for advice about any commercial exporting issues.

1.3 Enhance Food Safety Risk Management

Based on the analysis, the food safety competent authorities in the respective economies practiced the following measures to access, understand, and implement food safety requirements by organizations within and outside their economies. These practices encompass various areas, including risk regulation, consultation and guidance, establishment of dedicated organizations, database creation, and effective communication. While acknowledging the efficacy of supporting food safety-related organizations from diverse perspectives, these measures also reflect the unique considerations of each economy in enhancing the transparency of food

safety requirements based on their specific circumstances.

a. Implementation of food safety risk regulation

Some food safety competent authorities in the economies implement regulations on food production, operation, and distribution within their jurisdictions to prevent and mitigate higher food safety risks. These regulations often involve proactive measures such as conducting tests, compliance reviews, setting standards, and notifying non-compliant industries. The aim is to discourage the production and sale of unsafe food, and some economies have strengthened their collaboration with industries. This approach ensures that food safety regulation remains consistently robust within the economy while minimizing the potential impact of industries' non-compliance on food safety domestically and in trading partner economies. Several economies highlighted this approach in the Examples of Best Practices.

Australia: Australia provides detailed insights into food safety risk regulation.

New Zealand: The case provided by New Zealand indicated that MPI designs and coordinates scientific research and carries out science and risk assessments to support the development and implementation of standards and other risk management activities.

The United States: The United States implements preventive controls for the production and distribution of human and animal food, as well as agricultural products, through the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

b. Establishment of An Early Warning System for Food Safety Information

Food safety competent authorities in select economies have established an advanced early warning system for food safety. This system aims to facilitate seamless communication with food safety stakeholders, proactively prevent food safety risks, and ensure timely dissemination of crucial information to these stakeholders.

China: The case provided by the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China shows that GACC continuously optimizes the risk classification model for imported food safety and improves the supervision, sampling, and risk monitoring system for import and export food safety. Meanwhile, GACC has strengthened the collection of risk information, organized a professional team within the Customs, collected food safety risk news at home and abroad in a timely manner, and issued a hundred or more reports.



Thailand: The case provided by Thailand highlights the efforts of the State Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards, which disseminates comprehensive updates on international food safety regulations, import measures, global trade, and relevant agri-food recalls. These updates are shared through various media, including traditional media (such as publications) and new media platforms (such as online media and mobile applications). By promptly transmitting such information, food safety stakeholders can stay informed about the food safety requirements in their own economies and trading partners. This enables them to respond swiftly, rectify any issues, and take proactive measures to mitigate food safety risks effectively.

1.4 Encouraging Third-Party Certification Efforts

Most food safety competent authorities in the economies mentioned in the Examples of Best Practice have implemented measures to encourage third-party certification, highlighting its significance. Practices from China; and Singapore illustrate the importance of third-party certification in ensuring food safety.

China: In particular, China has a substantial number of certification industries that carry out certification for branded food products.

Singapore: The Singapore Food Agency has launched the Food Cargo Inspection Body Recognition (IBR) Programme to build up inspection capabilities in the private sector.

These economies recognize the value of third-party certification for two main reasons.

Firstly, third-party certifiers can assist food safety competent authorities in enhancing their monitoring of food safety.

Secondly, third-party certification simplifies access, comprehension, and implementation of food safety requirements for food industries, both domestically and internationally, streamlining the certification process.

By encouraging third-party certification, food safety competent authorities promote a robust food safety ecosystem that ensures effective monitoring and compliance while facilitating the industry's understanding and adherence to food safety regulations in their own economies and across trading partners.

1.5 Establishment of Food Import and Export Requirements Libraries

The establishment of food import and export requirement libraries by some

economies is an effective approach to improving the transparency of food safety requirements. These libraries are designed to assist food industries and other relevant organizations in accessing, understanding, and implementing food safety requirements.

Canada: In the case of Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has published a food export requirements library on their publicly available external website. The food export requirements library (library) outlines destination economy requirements that Canadian industries need to meet when exporting. The library includes conditions the Canadian government has accepted for issuing export certificates. The purpose is to facilitate access to overseas markets for Canadian exporters.

Singapore: In the case of Singapore, the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) has created a Library of Export Market Requirements to host Singapore's key trade partners' importing requirements on SFA public website. This greatly enhances the accessibility of the information for food exporters, shortens the learning curve for market research, and reduces reliance on SFA in providing them with information.

The United States: In the case presented by the United States, the Food Safety and Inspection Service provides a wide range of information and data for the public, including domestic establishments, other economies, and all stakeholders. FSIS collects scientific information and releases data sets and reports to help advance food safety policy and increase transparency.

It is worth noting that food safety service organizations in various economies have also recognized the importance of database creation as an essential tool for assisting industries in accessing information on food safety requirements.

1.6 Establishment of Professional Food Safety Service Organizations

In addition to private service organizations, many food safety competent authorities establish their own specialized service organizations. These organizations cater to various food safety stakeholders involved, offering services such as food safety requirements consultation, food standards development, food monitoring and auditing, and food compliance certification. Their primary goal is to assist food safety organizations in accessing, understanding, and implementing requirements swiftly and accurately to ensure food safety.

China: Shenzhen Institute of Standards and Technology plays a crucial



role in various activities, including the formulation of Chinese food-related standards, International food safety risk communication, and the establishment of databases.

2. Analysis of Best Practices for Food Safety Service Organizations

Based on the analysis, the service organizations that provide cases usually help domestic and foreign industries to access, understand, and implement food safety requirements in nine measures, including establishing food safety think tanks, promoting the standardization and structured operation in food safety, offering comprehensive solutions to food safety challenges, sharing of food safety information and experience, establishing food safety-related databases, assisting industries with export compliance, disseminating notification alerts, conducting certification services, promoting food traceability.

2.1 Establishing Food Safety Think Tanks

Food safety service organizations are known for their ability to assemble a diverse and highly skilled team of food safety professionals. These professionals possess extensive expertise and are well-equipped to offer comprehensive guidance and support to various stakeholders involved in food safety. Recognizing the importance of fostering excellence and innovation, some food safety service organizations have taken the initiative to establish dedicated food safety think tanks.

Chile: The case provided by Chile shows that ASOEX determined that it was necessary to formalize activities to support Chilean growers, packers, and exporters of fresh fruit. To this end, a Food Safety Committee was organized to work on food safety in a structured manner. Its members are professionals from industries associated with ASOEX who have knowledge and experience in Food Safety. The Committee meets with a variable frequency of around two months, but there are frequent contacts with its members between each session, and where required, technical advice is provided. Additionally, the Committee publishes a monthly Food Safety Bulletin, which is freely (free of any charge) distributed to all ASOEX associates.

China: According to the case provided by China, Foodmate (www.foodmate.net) has a research and service team dedicated to domestic and international food standards and regulations. All members of the research and service team dedicated to international food standards and regulations have professional backgrounds in food and languages.

China: The case provided by China, Shenzhen Institute of Standards and Technology shows that the agriculture and food team established by the Institute has been committed to the field of agricultural products and food safety research involving food standards, certification, and other contents.

2.2 Promoting the Standardization and Structured Operation in Food Safety

Professionals within food safety service organizations, drawing upon their extensive experience in the field, actively contribute to the standardization and structural development of the food industry. They play a crucial role in formulating standards, guidelines, and codes that serve as benchmarks for food safety practices.

Chile: The case provided by Chile shows that ASOEX determined that it was necessary to formalize activities to support Chilean growers, packers, and exporters of fresh fruit. To this end, a Food Safety Committee was organized to work on food safety in a structured manner.

China: In the case provided by China, Shenzhen Institute of Standards and Technology, as a professional standardization and research institute, has formulated/ revised over 300 standards in the field of agricultural products and food safety.

2.3 Offering Comprehensive Solutions to Food Safety Challenges

Food safety service organizations play a vital role in complementing the efforts of food safety competent authorities by offering specialized services tailored to address specific and practical challenges faced by the food industry. These organizations provide a level of detail and specificity that goes beyond the macro-level policies and guidance provided by competent authorities. Their services are designed to assist food industries in meeting the stringent food safety requirements mandated by the government or imposed by trading partner economies.

Chile: The case provided by Chile shows that the ASOEX has developed compliant and complete copies of records for Chilean export fruit growers and packers to provide product records and ensure product traceability. To ensure the copies are operational, ASOEX convened a Technical Committee made up of a group of fruit production professionals. A professional with long experience in records in the food sector was added, who served as a facilitator. In meetings of the Technical Committee and tests with growers, facsimiles of forms were



developed, taking care to prepare simple but complete facsimiles of records for every activity in the farm or packing house, not just examples, so that a farmer could directly use copies of these forms in their fields.

China: The case provided by the China Quality Certification Center shows that the recognition of Chinese GAP certificates by APEC member economies has not only propelled the "going global" strategy of China's GAP certification systems and certification body brands but has also aided in securing more favorable regulatory treatment for China's competitive agricultural products in export economies.

2.4 Sharing of Food Safety Information and Experience

Access to food safety information is crucial for ensuring transparency and compliance with food safety requirements. Food safety service organizations, as specialized professional stakeholders, often have faster access to up-to-date food safety information compared to industries and other stakeholders. They leverage this advantage to provide valuable information exchange services.

Chile: The case provided by Chile shows that the Committee publishes a monthly Food Safety Bulletin, which is freely distributed to all ASOEX associates, who then redistribute it at their convenience.

Viet Nam: The case provided by Viet Nam shows that CCIC Viet Nam immediately translates it into Vietnamese after accessing the foreign food safety requirements, sending it to domestic rice export industries for reference, and providing free explanations.

2.5 Establishing Food Safety-Related Databases

Indeed, food safety requirements are often intricate, structured in a complex manner, and subject to frequent updates. To address the needs of food safety stakeholders in accessing vast amounts of food safety information, food safety service organizations in certain economies have established dedicated food safety databases.

China: The example provided by China shows that the Shenzhen Institute of Standards and Technology set up a Global Food Regulation and Standards Comparison Database. The Comparison Database covers 38 international organizations, states, and regions, has more than 16,000 items of standards regulation text, and covers more than two million items of index data. It has been translated into more than 15 languages, with its five million words of text

systematically classifying and correlating more than 200 items.

China: At the same time, Foodmate has built a series of import and export-related databases based on years of data accumulation and IT system development experience.

2.6 Assisting Industries with Export Compliance

As international food trade continues to grow, tariff barriers have gradually decreased, barriers to technical trade measures have gradually increased, food trade has become more prosperous, and import and export economies and regions have continued to expand. Exporting food industries are expected to meet the compliance standards of their target economies in order to successfully export their products. In response to this need, food safety service organizations in certain economies provide export food compliance services.

China: The case provided by China shows that with years of information, technology and resource accumulation, Foodmate provides food export compliance services for food import and export enterprises based on systematic and in-depth research on China and major trading economies' compliance management requirements for imported and exported food. This includes providing import and export compliance analysis reports and their products relevant consulting services.

2.7 Disseminating Notification Alerts

To mitigate food safety risks effectively, service organizations prioritize thorough research of food safety requirements. This allows them to disseminate targeted notification alerts that address specific needs and circumstances. Given the service-oriented nature of these organizations, they may even employ one-to-one fixed-point alerts to ensure precise and personalized communication.

China: The case provided by China shows that CQC made organized efforts to engage technical personnel in the translation of the Indonesian regulations on Plant Quarantine Measures for Importation of Fresh Vegetable Bulbs into the Territory of the Republic of Indonesia. Through this effort, essential information concerning Indonesia's list of harmful pests applicable to Chinese garlic, quarantine treatment requirements, restricted ports, processing standards, and base management was brought to light. The acquired insights were communicated to the government authorities and exporting industries.



2.8 Conducting Certification Services

Third-party certification is a significant aspect of the services provided by certain food safety service organizations. These certification organizations play a crucial role in helping industries expand into new markets and enhance their market competitiveness.

China: The case presented by WIT from China highlights its active engagement in international mutual recognition and its dedication to using product certification services to contribute to the goal of "precise poverty alleviation." The organization collaborates closely with local product certification service centers involved in poverty alleviation efforts, aiming to provide effective certification services and training in relevant areas.

2.9 Promoting Food Traceability

The increasing consumer demand for product quality information and the rising willingness to spend has led to a growing need for food import and export traceability. In response to this demand, some food safety service organizations offer food traceability services, often in combination with certification and inspection activities.

China: The case presented by CCIC demonstrates how their overseas pre-inspection and whole-process quality traceability services have effectively enhanced the shelf life of fresh dairy products.

3. Analysis of Best Practices for Food Industries

In contrast to food safety competent authorities and service organizations, food industries adopt a more specialized approach when it comes to meeting food safety requirements within their respective domains. To improve their understanding and implementation of food safety requirements more effectively and efficiently, food industries of certain economies have established think tanks, information exchange platforms and provide the feedback to the competent authorities. Some food industries proactively share their research results and information after conducting technical investigations. Furthermore, some industries developed standardized procedures and enforced regulatory standards. These practices contribute to enhancing the overall transparency of food safety requirements in the industry.

3.1 Establishment of Think Tanks and Active Interaction with Competent Authorities

Food industries devote their attention to researching specific fields within food safety to drive in-depth advancements. In some economies, industry-specific think tanks are established, which not only cater to the industry's needs but also share food safety information and research findings with the wider public. This function aligns with that of food safety service organizations.

China: A compelling example from China is Cargill's establishment of the Taskforce. It is a cross-function team in Cargill, China, to assist global businesses to build the capacity of accomplishing overseas facility registration as well as solve issues related to compliance. The Taskforce attended meetings with GACC to provide feedback on the Decree 248 implementation so that GACC can better understand the industry's challenges and adjust the implementation requirements accordingly to help the industry be well prepared by 1 January 2022 and minimize the risk related to the new regulation.

3.2 Creating Information Exchange Platforms for Communication

Accessing food safety information is the first step to ensure the implementation of food safety requirements. Therefore, some economies industries would take the initiative to improve communication and develop information exchange platforms specifically dedicated to food safety.

China: A notable example is the OIG Research Institute's development of the Global Meat Plants Platform (GMPP) in China. The GMPP global meat plants platform, independently developed and researched, covers information about all frozen food (meat, aquatic products) source factories worldwide and provides consulting services. Through this platform, subscribers can access factory information of overseas meat and aquatic products exporting enterprises to China by alerting factories to various risks, the safety of imported frozen goods has been dramatically improved.

China: Mars Wrigley China proactively participates and advocates industry recommendations in Codex committees and continuously engages regional and global trade associations to share company perspectives. At the same time, the industry is also proactively monitoring regulatory and policy trends, opening a common point website for mobile phone standards database and upcoming regulatory changes.



China: As a member of Food Industry Asia (FIA), Mars Wrigley Asia actively supports the exchange of information between FIA and domestic industry associations in the region. Through the communication platform, the industry is working with the International Federation of Food Additives through the Sweeteners and Sweetness Working Group to promote the safe use of sweeteners and to inform regulators, policymakers, and other stakeholders about the industry's efforts to reformulate formulations in the region in response to changes in health policy and consumer behavior.

3.3 Carrying out Technical Research and Providing Technical Services

In some economies, food industries offer valuable technical support services to other food industries as a result of their expertise in food safety technology research.

China: The case submitted by China shows that OIG Research Institute actively helps industries solve the problems encountered in implementing the new regulations from a technical perspective. At the same time, OIG Research Institute has launched one-on-one technical support services for industries in need. These measures not only drive the development of food safety within the respective industries but also contribute to the overall progress of the entire food industry chain.

3.4 Developing Standardized Procedures and Enforcing Regulatory Standards

With the changing food safety requirements, some industries will develop a complete set of processes and systems to ensure they can accurately understand and implement food safety requirements.

China: In Mars Wrigley China, there is a solid and integrated process and system to implement regulation and standard communication, interpretation, and activation. They collect End-to-End information, evaluate the potential risks and opportunities by external consultation, scientific professional opinions, and training, define the execution gap and impact with an internal cross-functional team, and escalate when needed for strategic decisions.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion, food safety competent authorities, food safety service organizations, and food industries each emphasize different aspects of their

practices regarding accessing, understanding and implementing food safety requirements. This divergence in focus may be attributed to the distinct responsibilities and job roles of these three stakeholders.

Firstly, when compared with food safety service organizations and food industries, practices taken by the food safety competent authorities are more macroscopic. The primary objective of most practices taken by the food safety competent authorities is to enable all food safety-related stakeholders to quickly and accurately access and implement food safety requirements, encompassing a broad spectrum of practical applications and widespread applicability. Most of their practices are conducted on a non-profit basis or even free. Certain practices and measures by food safety competent authorities are mandatory for food safety stakeholders, and failure to comply may result in administrative penalties.

Secondly, compared with food safety competent authorities and food industries, food safety service organizations emphasize providing detailed and solution-oriented services regarding food safety requirements to clients in need. Their practices are service-centric, targeted, highly specific, and microscopic.

Finally, when compared with food safety competent authorities and food safety service organizations, the practices of food industries focus on their self-improvement. Most tend to confine their efforts to areas directly related to their food-related business, with the majority of their practices aimed at serving their own development. They are committed to rigorously complying with food safety requirements of their own and trading partners' economies while remaining adaptable to shifts in their business landscape. Some mature industries may also contribute to the broader food safety community by sharing the results of their food safety practices to improve whole food safety transparency.



SURVEY REPORT ON KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

I. Respondents

The survey was officially disseminated through the Secretariat on 29 May 2023, and a total of 61 responses were received from 10 economies by 10 July 2023. The economies included Australia; Canada; China; Malaysia; New Zealand; the Philippines; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; and the United States, with 19 questionnaires from food safety competent authorities, 16 from food safety service organizations, and 26 from food industries.

II. Survey Methodology

This questionnaire investigates key issues and challenges in facilitating industries' access to, understanding of, and compliance with food safety requirements. It aims to empower industries to better navigate and implement food safety requirements within their economies and those of their trading partners.

The questionnaire was crafted with a focus on three food safety requirements stakeholders:

- a. food safety competent authorities,
- b. food safety service organizations,
- c. food industries.

The full text of the survey questions is attached as Appendix B.

The questionnaire was sent and collected from member economies through the APEC Secretariat. To ensure the scientific validity and feasibility of the questionnaire, representatives from four economies: China; Malaysia; Singapore; and New Zealand, held a co-sponsor online workshop on 28 April 2023 to revise and improve the questionnaires.

The survey ran from 29 May 2023 to 10 July 2023.

III. Analysis of Questionnaires

1. Overview of Questionnaire Results for Food Safety Competent Authorities

Food safety competent authorities are organizations releasing food safety requirements, mainly refer to organizations responsible for regulating the production, logistics, and sales of food, and those formulating food safety standards, and supervising and inspecting food safety, such as food safety management departments, food safety supervision departments, food safety law-making departments, and customs food safety management departments.

A total of 19 responses were received from a diverse array of economies, encompassing Australia; Canada; China; the Philippines; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; and Thailand. Among these, seven responses (36.84%) originated from the Philippines, whereas four responses (21.05%) were contributed by China, three from Australia (15.79%). Additionally, one response (5.26%) was received from Canada; Malaysia; Singapore, Chinese Taipei; and Thailand.

The majority of food safety competent authorities who participated in the survey revealed that they disseminate information regarding food safety requirements to their respective economies and others through official websites and notices. This communication method accounted for an impressive proportion of 89.47% of the respondents.

Among the respondents of food safety competent authorities, 87.5% reported accessing information on food safety requirements from other economies through the official websites of their counterparts. However, 55.56% of the respondents encountered obstacles when attempting to access the food safety requirements of other economies. The primary challenges identified were twofold. Firstly, respondents found it difficult to access the necessary information on other economies' official websites. Secondly, the food safety requirements of other economies were often not available in the language used by the respondents' respective economies.

Among the respondents of food safety competent authorities, 89.47% have proactively released detailed interpretations or operational guidelines through their official websites. These guidelines serve to facilitate the access, understanding, and implementation of food safety requirements within their respective economies. While supporting industries in this process, it was observed that the most prevalent challenge encountered was the issue of insufficient funding for food industries,



which accounted for 37.5%.

Among the food safety competent authorities respondents, 55.56% of them publish information on the food safety requirements of other economies on their official websites, conduct food safety requirements training, and notify industries to facilitate their access, understanding, and implementation of these requirements. However, during the process of assisting industries, these organizations often encounter obstacles related to the implementation. The most common challenge faced is the conflict of interests among food industries and their limited cooperation, which accounts for 18.75%.

In the process of revising food safety requirements, the respondents of food safety competent authorities from various economies actively participate alongside agricultural institutions, food industries, and other relevant organizations. Remarkably, 73.68% of food safety competent authorities have already participated in the preparation, revision, and provision of feedback on food safety requirements in other economies. Among those who have not yet participated, an encouraging 80% have expressed their intention to engage in future revisions.

Surprisingly, 42.11% of the food safety competent authorities participating in the survey expressed a lack of awareness regarding existing platforms for sharing and exchanging information on food safety requirements with other economies. However, an overwhelming majority of 63.16% acknowledged the significance of such platforms and expressed their belief in the necessity of establishing them.

2. Overview of Questionnaire Results of Food Safety Service Organizations

Food safety service organizations play a pivotal role in assisting food industries in accessing, understanding, and implementing food safety requirements. These organizations cover a wide range of entities, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private industries, such as food safety law, regulation and standard research institutions, food safety compliance review service agencies, food safety research institutions, and food customs clearance service agencies, whose responsibilities are to provide services for the purpose of food safety.

A total of 16 responses were received from a diverse array of economies, encompassing China; the Philippines; and Thailand. Among these, 13 responses (81.25%) originated from China, whereas two responses (12.5%) were contributed by Thailand, and one (6.25%) from the Philippines.

Among the food safety service organizations respondents, 55.56% of them reported receiving funding from the government, and 68.75% of them stated that they serve clients in other economies in addition to their own. These organizations cater to a wide range of stakeholders, including food industries, food safety competent authorities, trading platforms, and organizations or individuals in other industries who require food safety requirements. Furthermore, it was observed that 56.25% of these organizations update food safety requirements irregularly.

The food safety service organizations respondents mainly access the information on food safety requirements of the economy through the official website of the food safety competent authority, with a proportion of 87.5%. Among the respondents from food safety service organizations, a notable 18.75% reported encountering obstacles in their work. One of the common challenges identified was the difficulty in accessing food safety requirements information on the official websites of the food safety competent authorities. In addition, 25% of respondents from food safety service organizations access information on food safety requirements of the economy through unofficial channels and would verify the authenticity of the information through official channels.

Among the food safety service organizations respondents, 87% of them access information on food safety requirements from other economies through the official website of the food safety competent authorities.

Among the respondents of food safety service organizations, 56.25% reported facing barriers when attempting to access information on food safety requirements in other economies. Among the respondents with barriers, 88.89% chose that the food safety requirements of other economies may not be available in the language(s) used in their own economy. Furthermore, 43.75% of the respondents from food safety service organizations reported accessing unofficial information on food safety requirements of other economies. However, it is worth noting that these organizations took measures to verify the authenticity of such information by cross-referencing it with official channels.

Among the food safety service organizations respondents, 81.25% of them reported providing consulting services on food safety requirements to assist industries in accessing, understanding, and implementing the food safety requirements of their respective economies. However, during the process of helping industries, half of the respondents faced challenges related to the industries' lack of professional talents and their uncooperative nature.



Among the food safety service organizations respondents, a significant 68.75% reported assisting industries in accessing, understanding, and implementing food safety requirements by helping industries to investigate whether their production and operation meet the food safety requirements of the trading partners. During the process of helping industries, 30% of the respondents encountered the challenge of language barriers.

Among the food safety service organizations respondents, 62.5% of them reported their participation in the formulation/revision and feedback process of food safety requirements in their own economies. Additionally, 31.25% of the respondents had participated in the formulation/revision and feedback of food safety requirements of other economies. Furthermore, it was found that the majority of respondents who have not been involved expressed their willingness to participate in the future.

None of the food safety service organizations respondents are aware of the platforms for sharing and exchanging information on food safety requirements with other economies. However, 87.5% of them considered it necessary to establish a platform for sharing and exchanging information on food safety requirements with other economies.

3. Overview of Questionnaire Results of Food Industries

Food industries play a pivotal role in driving the implementation of stringent food safety standards, encompassing a wide spectrum of industry participants involved in cultivation, livestock rearing, food production, hospitality services, supply chain management, international trade, and associated sectors.

A total of 26 responses were received from a diverse array of economies, encompassing Australia; China; New Zealand; the Philippines; Thailand; and the United States. Among these, 19 responses (73.08%) originated from China, two (7.69%) questionnaires were from the United States, and two (7.69%) questionnaires were from the Philippines, one response each (3.85%) was received from Australia; New Zealand; and Thailand.

The survey encompassed a wide range of food industries, spanning from micro and small-scale enterprises to medium and large-scale establishments. These included entities engaged in food production, primary processing of agricultural products, food distribution, primary agricultural product storage, as well as planting and breeding operations. 50% of the surveyed food industry participants

have proactively established dedicated departments to diligently monitor and study the food safety requirements of their respective economies and trading partners. These established departments are operating at full capacity, ensuring a robust adherence to food safety standards. Furthermore, 70% of the remaining food industry respondents currently lack a dedicated department for food safety requirements and have expressed intentions to establish one in the near future.

Among the food industry respondents, 96.15% of them obtain food safety requirements through official channels, primarily utilizing the official website and attending training conferences organized by food safety competent authorities. Industry respondents have reported that accessing relevant information within their economy is convenient and expeditious, thanks to the availability of various channels. Furthermore, 38.46% of industry respondents have acknowledged accessing information on food safety requirements through unofficial sources. However, they exercise caution by verifying the authenticity of such information through official channels.

A significant proportion of food industry respondents, specifically 73.08%, have encountered challenges in comprehending food safety requirements. These difficulties arise from the complexity of the regulations and the absence of comprehensive interpretation or operational guidance, hindering their ability to fully grasp and implement the requirements effectively.

In order to better meet the food safety requirements of their own economies, food industries are most interested in receiving assistance such as "Through interpreting and explicating the food safety requirements released by your economy and providing guidance for implementation, understanding, and fulfillment can be facilitated for industries" to strengthen the implementation of food safety requirements of their own economies.

Only 36.62% of the food industry respondents have actively participated in the formulation, revision, and providing feedback on food safety requirements within their respective economies. However, it is encouraging to note that a majority of 56.25% of the respondents who have not been involved expressed their willingness to actively participate in future endeavors related to shaping food safety requirements.

Among the food industry respondents, 80% of them access the food safety requirements of other economies through the food safety competent authorities in their own economies. They rely primarily on the official websites of these



competent authorities to obtain such information. Traders and notifications from the food safety competent authorities of other economies also serve as additional sources of accessing these requirements. The respondents reported that they could easily and promptly access information on food safety requirements in other economies through various channels, indicating a favorable environment for acquiring such information. Furthermore, 40% of the food industry respondents have acknowledged accessing information on food safety requirements of their own economies through unofficial channels. However, they adopt a responsible approach by verifying the authenticity of such information through official channels, ensuring reliability and compliance with official guidelines.

A minority of the food industry respondents encountered challenges when attempting to access information on food safety requirements of other economies through the websites of their own economy's service organizations and the food safety competent authorities of other economies.

Among the food industry respondents, 80% of them face challenges in comprehending the requirements of other economies. These difficulties stem from multiple factors, including the complexity of the requirements themselves, the absence of detailed interpretation or operational guidance, and the lack of a language version that corresponds to their own economy.

In order to better comply with the food safety requirements of other economies, food industries are most interested in receiving assistance: "Through interpreting and explicating the food safety requirements released by trading partners and providing guidance for implementation, understanding, and implementation can be facilitated for import and export industries" to strengthen the implementation of food safety requirements of other economies.

Among the food industry respondents, 70% of them have not actively participated in the formulation, revision, and providing feedback on the food safety requirements of other economies. However, it is encouraging to note that a substantial 60% of those who have not been involved expressed their willingness to participate in the future.

Among the food industry respondents, 70% of them are not aware of the existence of a platform for sharing and exchanging information on food safety requirements with other economies. Additionally, an equal percentage of respondents believe that such a platform should be established.



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

I. Workshop Objectives

The workshop objectives are aligned with the overarching goals of the project, with a primary emphasis on the following key aspects:

a. To disseminate and discuss the crucial issues and challenges confronted by food safety stakeholders within member economies concerning their access to, understanding of, and implementing food safety requirements. These issues have been identified through a comprehensive analysis of the questionnaire.

b. To present attendees with exemplary instances of effective transparency in food safety requirements in member economies, drawn from the Examples of Best Practices.

c. During the workshop, representatives from diverse economies convened to share their experiences and practices aimed at improving the transparency of food safety requirements. This collaborative exchange of insights and knowledge enabled economies to gain valuable learning experiences and insights on strategies to improve the transparency of food safety requirements.

II. Workshop Date and Time

The online workshop was held at 8:30am.–11:30am. on 16–17 August 2023 (SGT).

III. Participants

The workshop was attended by 75 participants from 11 APEC member economies and two representatives from Codex and WTO.

IV. Workshop Highlights

DAY ONE

Section 1: Welcome and Opening Address

The workshop was welcomed by Mr Gang Wang (Division of SPS Research, Centre for Standards and Technical Regulations Research, General Administration of Customs, China). He thanked participants and announced the official start of the

workshop. Afterward, Mr Wang briefly introduced the background of the workshop and proposed the objective of this two days workshop.

Section 2: Project Report and Previous APEC work

Four presentations were in this section, and the moderator was Ms Danqing Wang (Centre for Standards and Technical Regulations Research, General Administration of Customs, China).

Project Background and Implementation Report

Ms Juan Wu (Standards and Technical Regulations Research, General Administration of Customs, China) introduced the background of the project "Improving Transparency and Knowledge of Food Safety Requirements for Trade Food in the APEC Region" and presented three project tasks. The first task involves soliciting cases to gain insights into how economies assess industry practices when accessing, understanding, and implementing food safety requirements. The second task centers on comprehending the central issues and challenges that APEC member economies encounter as they endeavor to enhance the transparency of food safety requirements, a matter explored through a questionnaire survey. The third task revolves around the sharing and discussion of approaches and methodologies employed by economies to aid industries in both accessing and deepening their understanding of food safety requirements.

Survey Analysis Report

Ms Qingqing Jiang (Agriculture and Quality Research Center, Shenzhen Institute of Standards and Technology, China) introduced the structure of the research questionnaire. She engaged participants by discussing the questionnaire's purpose and how it was distributed. Additionally, Ms Jiang delved into a concise analysis of the solicited questionnaires. Her analysis shed light on the challenges and barriers faced by food safety competent authorities, food safety service organizations, and food industries. These challenges pertain to their ability to access, comprehend, and effectively implement food safety requirements.

Examples of Best Practices Report

Ms Jiang introduced Examples of Best Practices, delving into the background of the best practice case solicitation process for these exemplary cases and



presenting a thorough analysis of practice cases. Then, she explained the definition of each food safety stakeholder and selected the example of best practice cases of food safety competent authorities, food safety service organizations, and food industries for analysis.

APEC and Good Regulatory Practices

Ms Renee Hancher (Regulatory Policies, Office of the United States Trade Representative, the United States) introduced APEC and Good Regulatory Practices, including the history of good regulatory practices, and demonstrated that GRP was one of the key factors contributing to the emergence of APEC economies from the impact of the epidemic. Ms Hancher provided valuable insights into two key bodies within APEC dedicated to GRP, namely the SCSC and the Economic Committee, elucidating their functions. She emphasized the significance of GRP in fostering the development of APEC regional economies and elucidated the nine core principles of GRP.

Section 3: Food Safety Regulators Responsibility, Experiences, Gaps

In this pivotal section, moderated by Ms Kelly J. McCormick (US Food and Drug Administration), three engaging presentations were featured.

Practicing Home and Abroad, Expanding Exchanges to Enhance the Safety and Transparency of China's Import and Export Foods

Ms Si Cheng (Shenzhen Customs District of P.R. China) provided a concise introduction to GACC and elaborated on several impactful practices undertaken by GACC to enhance the transparency and knowledge of safety requirements for food trade. These initiatives included refining the risk alert system, bolstering information solicitation efforts, implementing the operation of the guardian of the state gate, organizing the "National Food Safety Awareness Week", and establishing the "12360" China customs hotline.

Shenzhen's Innovative Initiatives to Promote Food Safety Strategies Through Standardization

Ms Na Zhu (Agriculture and Quality Research Center, Shenzhen Institute of Standards and Technology, China) delivered a comprehensive presentation on food safety in Shenzhen, a city with substantial consumer demand. She introduced a

range of strategic initiatives centered around standardization, aimed at assisting organizations in adhering to food safety laws and regulations. Notably, Ms Zhu highlighted the creation of a prestigious urban brand, "Shenzhen Quality Food", designed to meet stringent food safety requirements and enhance overall citizen satisfaction with food safety standards.

Risk Communication works of the Centre for Food Safety

Dr Jessica Wong (Risk Communication Section, Centre for Food Safety of Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Hong Kong, China) introduced risk communication works of the Centre for Food Safety from online platforms (websites, such as Facebook and Instagram) to offline practice (Consumer Liaison Group, Trade Consultation Forum and so on). These efforts aim to furnish valuable, contextually relevant, and precise information in a lucid and comprehensible manner tailored to the specific needs of the pertinent audiences, all while ensuring timely dissemination.

Section 4: Food Safety Service Organizations' Responsibility, Experiences, Gaps and Suggestions

Three presentations were included in this pivotal section, moderated by Mr Bruce Burdon (New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries).

US Food Safety Modernization Act FSPCA Training and Outreach Programs

Dr Jason Wan (Institute for Food Safety and Health, the United States) presented an enlightening overview of the training initiatives to assist industries in formulating food safety plans for animal food production and achieving compliance with preventive control regulations. Their outreach program encompasses programming controls for human food and problem controls for animal food, all designed to enhance regulatory compliance.

A One-Stop Food Safety Service Organization

Ms Windy Zhang (Foodmate, China) discussed the barriers impeding the transmission of food safety information. She emphasized the pivotal role played by a "One-Stop Food Safety Service Organization", capable of surmounting these barriers through timely solicitation, diligent tracking, translation, and publication measures. She introduced "Foodmate", an organization that excels in these aspects.



China Quality Certification Center Assists Enterprises in Obtaining Garlic Export Quotas

Mr Yan Minglei (Product Certification Department VII, China Quality Certification Center, China) shared brief information about CQC and the case, showing the importance of GAP and the measures CQC took to cope with new regulations on garlic exports. He underscored the necessity of international mutual recognition of conformity assessment results, emphasizing its importance in facilitating economic cooperation among nations.

DAY TWO

Section 5: Industries' Responsibility, Experiences, Gaps and Suggestions

Three presentations were in this section, and the moderator was Mr Bruce Burdon.

Food Regulation Transparency and Knowledge: An Industry Perspective

Dr Duncan Craig (Nutrition and Regulation, Australia Food and Grocery Council, Australia) outlined the role that the Australia Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) plays in supporting companies to understand their obligations and demonstrated how industry can contribute to developing domestic and international food standards. He underscored the necessity for collaborative and concerted efforts to address them effectively.

Best Practice Sharing: Collaboration Between the Government and Industry to Ensure the Food Safety

Ms Wendy Gao (Regulatory & Scientific Affairs, Greater China and South Korea, Cargill, China) adeptly illustrated the multifaceted challenges the government and industry encountered. She then presented viable solutions, focusing on the critical aspect of collaboration between these two entities, from internal regulatory mechanisms to external information exchange. In her conclusion, Ms Gao succinctly distilled five key principles essential for effective collaboration and underscored their importance.

Mutuality for promoting food safety together!

Ms Lily Xu (Scientific & Regulatory, Mars Wrigley China) introduced that the changing regulatory environment and consumers' awareness require hybrid

collaboration among industries, regulators, and service organizations to enable industries' sustainable growth. She also demonstrated the achievement of Mars by collaborating with government and service organizations.

Section 6: Harmonization with International standard and International Cooperation

Three presentations in this section, and the moderator was Ms Danqing Wang.

Good Regulatory Practice- From the Perspective of Codex

Ms Sarah Cahil (Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, Codex Secretariat) showed the role of good regulatory practices as a core value. She also demonstrated the framework for effective regulation, outlining the measures adopted to address pressing challenges. Additionally, Ms Cahil outlined future plans in this context.

ePing - An Important Tool to Disseminate Information on WTO SPS and TBT Notifications

Ms Serra Ayral (WTO Secretariat) provided an overview of key SPS/TBT transparency provisions and demonstrated the data on notifications. She elucidated the functionality of ePing in disseminating critical information to subscribers and offered valuable takeaways and reminders.

Chinese Food Safety Standards and Codex.

Dr Hao Ding (China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment, China) started by introducing the China domestic food safety standard system. She highlighted China's active involvement and increased responsibilities in Codex activities, addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by Codex from a novel perspective. Dr Ding identified limited resources as a primary Codex challenge and proposed the resolution by establishing specific criteria.

Section 7: Discussion

For one presentation in this section, the moderator was Ms Kelly J. McCormick.



Discussions Around Best Practices, Tools, and Next Steps

Ms Qingqing Jiang (Shenzhen Institute of Standards and Technology, China) summarized the project's previous work (SCSC 03 2021T) and pointed out the challenges from five aspects. She proposed five practical solutions to these challenges, igniting lively discussions during the workshop. Language barriers emerged as a prominent issue, prompting participants to call for greater stakeholder involvement to address and overcome these obstacles.

Mr Bruce Burdon (Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand) recommended aligning with existing international standards when formulating regulations, thereby reducing regulatory complexity. This alignment, he argued, would facilitate smoother communication among parties by minimizing the need to navigate divergent technical requirements.

Ms Lily Xu (Mars Wrigley China, China) expected that more active stakeholders could be involved to share their points and make recommendations. More real case studies and sharing are important to increase the capability of the language and how to practice for industries.

Ms Sarah Cahill (Codex Secretariat) hoped to make more economies have translation software options and use AI to facilitate access to technical jargon.

A Thai participant proposed creating a chat room for exchanging and consulting various translations, along with inquiries about the current landscape. Similar to discussions under WTO, this initiative could prove particularly helpful for vulnerable practitioners, including SMEs, who may be somewhat distanced from such discourse. In response, Ms Kelly J. McCormick shared valuable links in the chat, such as FSPCA Community (site.com) and Welcome to Standards and Trade Development Facility Standards and Trade Development Facility (standardsfacility.org), allowing people to ask questions and access information.

Ms Wendy Gao (Cargill, China) made three points. Firstly, she emphasized the role of various tools and platforms in enhancing food safety capacity building. Secondly, Ms Gao stressed the importance of providing comprehensive interpretations to aid diverse stakeholders in grasping the intricacies of regulations. Lastly, she urged relevant stakeholders to critically assess the existing regulations in each economy and identify the barriers they encounter.

As the moderator, Ms Kelly J. McCormick eloquently encapsulated valuable insights shared by the speakers. She emphasized the importance of deepening relationships with international standard-setting bodies, underscoring how this

approach could greatly contribute to future efforts.

Furthermore, she highlighted the significance of work streams in the realm of transparency, emphasizing their potential in advancing these initiatives. Ms McCormick stressed the necessity of ensuring that existing platforms and tools encompass the entire supply chain process, recognizing this as a crucial aspect of enhancing transparency. Additionally, she underscored the value of sharing case studies at an economic level, offering lessons learned that can be broadly applied to make information more practical and relevant.

In the quest to bolster the food safety capabilities of small-scale companies, Ms McCormick suggested exploring alternative tools and platforms, such as GFISI. She advocated for providing Q&A sessions for industry stakeholders and different actors to understand regulations through comprehensive, frequent, and accessible interpretations. She also encouraged relevant stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of current regulations in their respective economies and identify existing barriers.

These ideas collectively serve as a treasure trove of potential concept notes, offering valuable reference points for future projects in the field.

Section 8: Conclusion and Closing Speech.

Mr Gang Wang extended his gratitude to the participants and called for international collaboration and communication to promote sustainable development.



CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

By completing the Examples of Best Practices, different approaches to accessing, understanding, and implementing food safety requirements in three different stakeholders were solicited.

The primary objective of most practices taken by the food safety competent authorities is to enable all food safety-related stakeholders to quickly and accurately access and implement food safety requirements, encompassing a broad spectrum of practical applications and widespread applicability. Most of their practices are conducted on a non-profit basis or even free. Certain practices and measures by food safety competent authorities are mandatory for food safety stakeholders, and failure to comply may result in administrative penalties.

Food safety service organizations emphasize providing detailed and solution-oriented services regarding food safety requirements to clients in need. Their practices are service-centric, targeted, highly specific, and microscopic.

The practices of food industries focus on their self-improvement. Most tend to confine their efforts to areas directly related to their food-related business, with the majority of their practices aimed at serving their own development. They are committed to rigorously complying with food safety requirements of their own and trading partners' economies while remaining adaptable to shifts in their business landscape. Some mature industries may also contribute to the broader food safety community by sharing the results of their food safety practices to improve whole food safety transparency.

In this report, we delve into the analysis of obstacles and challenges faced by various stakeholders involved in food safety requirements across different economies. Our survey report examines the issues at hand, shedding light on the difficulties encountered by these stakeholders in their efforts to access, understand, and implement food safety requirements within their respective regions.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

<p>Food Safety Competent Authorities</p>	<p>1. Over half of the Competent Authorities face various obstacles in accessing the food safety requirements of other economies.</p> <p>2. The limitation of financial inputs is the main obstacle to helping the industries implement the food safety requirements in their own economies.</p> <p>3. Language barrier is the main obstacle to helping the industries implement the food safety requirements of other economies.</p>
<p>Food Safety Service Organizations</p>	<p>1. There are difficulties and other obstacles in accessing information on food safety requirements through the official websites of the food safety competent authorities.</p> <p>2. Lack of professionals and collaborations of industries are the main obstacles to helping them implement the food safety requirements.</p> <p>3. Language barriers are the main obstacle for food safety service organizations to access food safety requirements from other economies and to assist food industries in accessing, understanding, and implementing food safety requirements from other economies.</p>
<p>Food Industries</p>	<p>1. A few food industries need help to quickly or easily access information on food safety requirements of other economies from the food safety competent authorities.</p> <p>2. A few food industries need help to quickly or easily access information on food safety requirements of other economies from the food safety service organizations.</p> <p>3. A few food industries need help to quickly or easily access information on food safety requirements of other economies from the food safety service organizations of other economies.</p> <p>4. Lack of detailed interpretation is the main obstacle for food industries to understand the food safety requirements in their own economies.</p> <p>5. Lack of detailed interpretation is the main obstacle for food industries to understand the food safety requirements in other economies.</p> <p>6. Most food industries hope to gain help in interpreting the food safety requirements.</p>

Numerous factors impede the transparency of food safety requirements in the APEC region, with language and understanding barriers being a widely



acknowledged challenge, as confirmed during the workshop. Participants engaged in extensive discussions aimed at dismantling these barriers and put forth a range of potential solutions. Notably, the most prominent suggestion revolved around leveraging science and technology to effectively eliminate language and understanding barriers. Harmonizing regulations with established international standards also emerged as a critical consideration. Creating a collaborative platform for idea exchange was emphasized to disseminate information to a wider audience of practitioners, thus mitigating these barriers. Additionally, it was deemed valuable to encourage relevant stakeholders to access the advantages and challenges of current regulations in the economies they already implemented. All suggestions above are constructive and can be recommended as future concept notes for APEC projects.



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