

*APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum*

*Operating Principles*



**APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum**

**Operating Principles**

**[Amended and endorsed by FSCF, May 2011]**

1. Background
	1. In November 2004, the 16th APEC Ministerial Meeting in Santiago noted China’s efforts to promote cooperation among APEC member economies on food safety and encouraged member economies to determine how APEC might complement the ongoing work of other international organisations.
	2. In June 2005, APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade noted and welcomed the efforts of Australia, China, Thailand and Viet Nam to advance food cooperation and commended officials for their work in identifying an appropriate role for APEC. In November 2005, the 17th APEC Ministerial Meeting noted the outcomes of the Food Safety Cooperation Seminar held in September 2005 in Korea and welcomed the progress made by member economies including the establishment of an Ad Hoc Steering Group.
	3. The Ad Hoc Steering Group met in February 2006 and September 2006 and presented their Final Report to the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC) on 8 September 2006, recommending the formation of the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF).
	4. On 4 April 2007, the FSCF was formerly established in the Hunter Valley, Australia. FSCF agreed to work together to build robust food safety systems so as to accelerate progress towards harmonisation of food standards with international standards to improve public health and facilitate trade.
2. Mandate
	1. The FSCF implements the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Initiative, agreed to in 2006, by Member Economies, in accordance with the Purpose and Goals described below.
	2. The FSCF reports to, and is subject to review by, the SCSC.
3. Purpose
	1. Enhancing food safety and encouraging use of international food safety standards and best practices are key factors for improving public health and safety and facilitating trade in food for APEC member economies.
	2. To accelerate progress towards these outcomes, APEC will improve and strengthen information sharing and capacity building activities in food safety by enhancing cooperation between member economies and in regional activities.
	3. The FSCF will identify, prioritise and coordinate capacity-building activities in APEC, including the needs of developing member economies, taking into account other capacity building activities in the region.
4. Goals
	1. The FSCF goals reflect those of the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Initiative, that is, to assist APEC member economies to achieve:
		1. Transparent information-sharing and communication networks that provide accurate and timely information to consumers and producers on food safety.
		2. Food safety regulatory systems within economies, including food inspection/assurance and certification systems that:
			1. are consistent with members’ rights and obligations under the World Trade Organisation Agreements on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) **;** and
			2. are harmonized**,** to the extent possible, with international standards (such as Codex, OIE, IPPC).
		3. Enhanced skills and human resource capacities to enable the development of national food safety regulatory frameworks that are harmonized with international standards.
5. Scope of Activities
	1. The FSCF will identify priority food safety capacity building needs in the following areas:
		1. food safety regulatory systems
		2. food inspection/certification systems
		3. technical skills and human resource capacity
		4. information-sharing and communication networks
	2. The FSCF will coordinate potential capacity building activities in response to priority needs, in the APEC region. It will also assist member economies in their delivery and participation in these activities by providing advice, information and networking support from FSCF members.
	3. The FSCF Partnership Training Institute Network (PTIN) established in 2008, will further support capacity building activities by enlisting leadership from the private sector and academia to bring additional expertise, resources, and commitment towards addressing the capacity building priorities and goals identified by members of the FSCF.
	4. The food safety capacity building activities undertaken by the FSCF and its PTIN will complement existing activities carried out by international and regional organisations.
	5. Member economies should consider joint development and delivery of capacity building opportunities recommended by the FSCF. Funding of capacity building activities should be sought by member economies from normal APEC funding rounds or other domestic and international funding programs.
	6. FSCF members will participate in the FSCF Network and the FSCF PTIN Network to share information on capacity building activities, and other food safety related matters, coordinated by the APEC FSCF Secretariat and the FSCF PTIN Steering Group, as appropriate.
	7. To advance capacity building achievements, the FSCF will encourage opportunities for food safety regulatory cooperation, where appropriate.
	8. The FSCF will invite input to its activities, where appropriate, from relevant APEC Sub-Committees and fora as well as the APEC Business Advisory Council.
	9. The FSCF will report its involvement in food safety capacity building, and other activities, as requested by APEC.

5.10The FSCF will carry out other activities as necessary, as requested by the SCSC.

1. Structure and Operation
	1. Co-chaired by Australia and China, the FSCF will consist of senior officials (e.g. Chief Executive Officer equivalent) food safety regulatory representatives from each APEC member economies, with other trade and economic representatives, as appropriate.
	2. The FSCF will establish and maintain informal expert networks, as required, to promote information sharing, with representatives from each APEC member economy. Representatives will have specific expertise, for example in risk assessment or food safety incident management. Any networks that are established will not duplicate work being undertaken by existing networks.
	3. The FSCF will make recommendations to the SCSC, based on agreed priorities, in its consideration of funding proposals.
	4. The FSCF will meet again in 2013 in the margins of SCSC2, to review and evaluate progress and to consider its forward work plan, to 2015.
2. Coordination
	1. The FSCF will work closely with other APEC fora and related groups with an interest in food safety.