

REPORT OF THE 2025 ASIA CODEX AND FOOD REGULATORY FORUM

05.00 PM

BANGKOK - THAILAND

& Next Steps

20 AUGUST 2025













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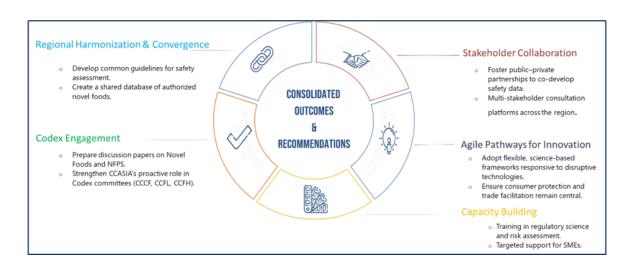
The 2025 Asia Codex and Food Regulatory Forum, held from 18 to 20 August 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand, marked a significant milestone in advancing regional collaboration on food regulatory science and Codex engagement in Asia. The Forum was co-organized by the International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST), a Codex Observer, through its disciplinary organization for food regulatory science, the Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS), in collaboration with the Food Science and Technology Association of Thailand (FoSTAT), the Food Innovation and Regulation Network (FIRN), the Federation of the Institutes of Food Science and Technology in ASEAN (FIFSTA), and the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS), and convened under the leadership of the Chair of the FAO/WHO Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA). The Forum provided a platform to strengthen the coordination and engagement of CCASIA member countries in shaping science-based and globally harmonized food standards.

The meeting convened a total of 85 participants, including Codex Contact Points (CCPs), representatives from 18 CCAISA member countries, and a wide range of stakeholders, reflecting broad regional participation and commitment (full list of participants in Annex 1). Discussions focused on enhancing meaningful engagement in Codex committees, aligning regulatory priorities, and exploring opportunities for regional coordination and advocacy.

Participants reviewed recent outputs from Codex committees, including CCEXEC88, CCCF18, CCMAS44 and CCGP34, and received briefings on upcoming work from CCPR56 and CCSCH8. Key emerging issues (novel foods, food contact materials and ultraprocessed foods), were examined, highlighting opportunities and challenges for harmonized regulatory approaches.

The Forum reached consensus on the value of agile and transparent regulatory pathways and the importance of pursuing further the development of discussion papers on how Codex could advance guidance for more harmonized approaches to manage novelty in food ingredients and processes, as well as to regulate Food Contact Materials (FCMs). Progress was reported on regional collaboration for data collection on contaminants such as aflatoxins and arsenic. Participants also underscored the need for continued capacity building, including laboratory capabilities and risk assessment, as well as broader stakeholder engagement.

Overall, the Forum reaffirmed Asia's commitment to science-based standards, consumer protection, and fair trade, reinforcing regional solidarity and ensuring that Asia's perspectives are effectively represented in global standard-setting processes.



Day One: Reviewing the Codex Landscape

Day One was dedicated to reviewing the Codex landscape, with a strong engagement of Codex Contact Points from CCASIA countries. The sessions aimed to provide participants with a comprehensive overview of recent Codex committee outcomes, prepare regional delegates for effective participation in upcoming sessions (CCPR56, CCSCH8, CCASIA23 and CAC48), and to identify strategic areas where Asia could strengthen its collective voice in Codex processes.

The Forum opened with welcoming remarks from the organizers' leadership: Prof. Samuel Godefroy, President of IUFoST and President/COO of GFoRSS, and Prof. Pavinee Chinachoti, President-elect of IUFoST.



This was followed by Ms. Aya Orito Nozawa, Chair of CCASIA, who presented the objectives of the Forum and stressed the importance of collective regional engagement.

Dr. Tian Jing, Vice-Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, then highlighted the global significance of Asia's role in Codex and underscored the need to strengthen regional contributions. Ms. Nozawa also introduced the day's agenda and guided participant introductions, creating an atmosphere encouraging collaboration, networking, and regional coordination.

Session 1: Reviewing Outcomes of Recent Codex Committees

The first technical session provided an indepth review of Codex committee outcomes relevant to CCASIA members.

CCEXEC88 (Executive Committee)

- The presentation delivered by Japan provided a critical overview of Codex work, including cross-cutting topics and monitoring indicators for the Strategic Plan 2026–2031.
- Discussions raised the potential merger of CCFFV and CCPFV; matter which may be revisited at CAC48.

CCGP34 (General Principles)

- Japan provided a review of the discussions held at CCGP34 concerning updates to Codex procedural rules and guidance.
- Discussions recommended continuing informal communication among committee chairs regarding the use of "reservations" in Codex proceedings.

CCCF18 (Contaminants in Foods)

 Following the presentation by Thailand, discussions stressed the need for coordinated regional data submission to ensure Codex maximum levels (MLs) reflect Asian dietary exposure and avoid trade barriers.













- National updates: Availability of aflatoxin data in cereals was confirmed, and the implementation of a national aflatoxin monitoring plan was reported. Clarifications were provided that data on Arsenic are required for both local and imported rice. The need to submit data on Ethylene oxide and 2chloroethanol (2-CE) via GEMS/Food was also emphasized.
- Clarification provided that a Circular Letter will announce the call for arsenic (organic/inorganic) data.

CCMAS44 (Methods of Analysis and Sampling)

- The delivered presentation by Bangladesh highlighted the endorsement of new and updated Codex methods of analysis and sampling, reinforcing science-based approaches for fair trade and consumer protection.
- The discussion on dual methods (types I & IV) for moisture in whey powder was reopened. An observer organization cautioned against adopting type IV methods with questionable reliability, even if they are aiming to suit lowcost conformity assessment techniques.
- Discussions addressed also allergen list updates, where soybean was removed from the global allergen list, but clarifications highlighted that it may remain nationally or regionally, and sesame was added as a priority allergen, meeting global criteria of prevalence, severity, and potency.

Cross-cutting issues included the reaffirmation of science-based decision-making in Codex to support fair trade and consumer protection, the need to address data gaps through regionally representative data collection and submission, and the ongoing importance of building capacity in risk analysis and laboratory capabilities.

Session 2: Preparing for Future Codex Committees

CCPR56 (Pesticide Residues)

Following the presentation delivered by China, discussions underscored:

- The importance of CCASIA23 as a platform to coordinate regional positions on CCPR priorities, strengthen cooperation with JMPR, and ensure timely submission of Asian data.
- The support to the updates to guidelines on stability and purity testing of reference materials to improve laboratory reliability.
- The need for resources to review compounds with limited support.
- The promotion of regional alignment of pesticide registration information to enhance Asia's representation in MRL settings.
- The importance of the collaboration with CCRVDF on dual-use compounds and noted ongoing discussions on dietary exposure models (IEDI vs. GECDE).

CCSCH8 (Spices Culinary and Herbs)

Following the presentation delivered by India, the chair of CCSCH, discussions highlighted the need to:

- Provide region-specific data on production, trade, and contamination of key spices and culinary herbs.
- Promote harmonized Codex standards, support for small-scale farmers, and capacity building on GAP/post-harvest handling.
- Encourage active CCASIA engagement in EWGs and submission of data to support new work.



- Allergen Labelling Guidance: Divergence on ED01 vs. ED05 doses was noted. The use of technology in labelling, such as QR codes, was highlighted. It was noted that technology-driven labelling cannot replace mandatory physical labels; digital solutions are intended to provide complementary or additional information.
- Performance criteria for allergen methodologies were discussed, highlighting ongoing efforts within CCMAS to endorse validated detection methods. These methods will enable the generation of reliable data to support risk assessment and the evidence-based application of precautionary allergen labelling (PAL). It was agreed that more guidance is needed on allergen risk assessment in food production settings, including the way allergen testing methods results would be used to guide decisions on PALs.

Sessions 4 & 5: Group Work on CCASIA Priorities and Plenary Synthesis

Day One included group work sessions followed by a plenary synthesis, both aimed at defining regional priorities and collective strategies for CCASIA.

Group 1: Focused on strengthening data generation for contaminants, pesticides, and additives. The group emphasized the need for alignment with the Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031 and called for joint regional positions on GSFA timely updated, precautionary allergen labelling (PAL) methodologies, and spice trade standards.

Group 2: Identified Goals 2 (management systems) and 4 (visibility of Codex standards) as top priorities. They highlighted weak analytical capacity and lack of exposure assessments, and proposed regional datasharing platforms, baseline surveys, and struc-

tured engagement with stakeholders to close critical gaps.

Key Recommendations – Day 1

The plenary session consolidated these discussions into joint regional recommendations:

- Close the data gap: Strengthen data generation and submission on contaminants, residues, and additives to ensure Codex decisions reflect Asian realities.
- Promote coordinated regional positions: Align stances on allergen labelling, GSFA consistency, and spice standards to avoid trade fragmentation.
- Enable inclusive participation: Support hybrid/virtual modalities to ensure all countries, regardless of resources, can contribute effectively.
- Build regional capacity: Invest in laboratory infrastructure, risk analysis skills, and active engagement in EWGs.
- Empower producers and regulators: Support small-scale farmers and national authorities through Codexaligned standards and guidance.
- Secure sustainability: Advocate for strong political and financial support at the national level to sustain Codex participation and implementation of outcomes.

Day One provided a comprehensive review of Codex outcomes, preparation for upcoming sessions, and strategies for regional collaboration. The emphasis was on data generation and representativeness, alignment of standards, and capacity building. CCA-SIA members reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening Asia's collective role in Codex and to preparing coordinated contributions for upcoming committees, particularly CCA-SIA23 and CAC48.









Day Two: Food Regulatory Challenges and Opportunities – Role of Codex and Effective Contribution of CCASIA Members (Part 1: Food Innovation)

The program was formally opened by Ms. Aya Orito Nozawa, Chair of CCASIA. In her opening remarks, Ms. Nozawa set the scene for the day's discussions, underlining the importance of multi-stakeholder participation in shaping effective and science-based regulatory approaches to food innovation.



She highlighted that regulators, scientists, industry, and observers must work together to ensure both consumer protection and fair access to innovation across the region. She also presented a recap of the key outcomes of Day 1, emphasizing the main discussions on Codex committee outputs, the importance of coordinated data generation, harmonization of analytical methods, updates on allergen management, and the strengthening of CCASIA's contributions to Codex priorities.

Dr. Tian Jing, Vice-Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, then delivered the official opening remarks, reaffirming Codex's central role in balancing innovation with consumer safety.

This was followed by Dr. Pongthai Thaotin, Deputy Secretary-General of the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS), speaking on behalf of the Government of Thailand. He welcomed participants, emphasized Thailand's commitment to Codex work, and formally declared the Forum open.

Opening statements were also delivered by Prof. Pavinee Chinachoti (President Elect, IUFoST) and Prof. Samuel Godefroy (President of IUFoST; President/COO, GFoRSS). Both stressed Asia's leadership role in food innovation and the need for Codex to provide science-based guidance on novel foods and production systems. They further emphasized that Asia, home to nearly half of the world's population and the region where much of global food innovation originates, carries a special responsibility to lead in shaping regulatory approaches that balance consumer protection with enabling innovation.

Focus Area 1: Regulatory Approaches to Food Innovation – Stakeholder Perspectives and the Role of Codex

Global Perspective on Managing Food Innovation

Prof. Samuel Godefroy (IUFoST/GFoRSS) outlined the drivers of food innovation sustainability, nutrition diversification, and consumer values, while emphasizing regulatory challenges such as limited history of consumption, lack of harmonized definitions, and unpredictable approval processes. stressed Codex's role in supporting sciencebased, transparent frameworks, and encouraged CCASIA to take leadership in harmonizing safety criteria for novel ingredients, piloting collaborative reviews, and building shared databases to help enable innovationdriven Codex agenda.















Thailand's Experience: The Food Innovation & Regulation Network (FIRN)

Prof. Pavinee Chinachoti (Chair, FIRN; President Elect, IUFoST) presented Thailand's regulatory model integrating functional food claims (FFC Thailand) with positive lists of nutrients and bioactive compounds. She noted challenges such as weak post-market surveillance and unauthorized claims, proposing four pillars of effective regulation: validated test facilities, robust consumer monitoring, empowered regulatory authority, and strengthened R&D capacity. FIRN was highlighted as a model for balancing innovation with consumer protection.

Singapore's Novel Food Regulatory Framework

Ms. Seah Peik Ching (Singapore Food Agency) presented Singapore's Food Safety and Security Act (FSSA 2025), which formalizes the pre-market approval of novel foods and GM foods. The framework includes:

- Pre-market safety assessments by applicants.
- Rigorous review by the Novel Food Safety Expert Working Group.
- Regulatory compliance with Codexaligned standards.
- Licensing of production facilities.
- Market surveillance.
- Risk communication, including guidance on halal acceptance of cultivated meat.

The presentation highlighted the active engagement of Singapore internationally, contributing to Codex proposals (e.g., cell culture media assessment, hygienic practices for cell-based foods) and ISO standards.

Roundtable Discussion: Towards Convergence

The roundtable underscored the lack of consistent definitions of novel food across CCASIA countries, a gap that creates regulatory uncertainty, slows approvals, and increases costs for innovators. Participants cautioned that divergent frameworks could lead to market fragmentation, hinder innovation, and disadvantage Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

To mitigate these risks, Codex was identified as the most effective platform to establish harmonized definitions, classification criteria, and safety assessment benchmarks. support was expressed for mutual recognition and joint reviews of safety assessments, which would reduce duplication, strengthen trust, and accelerate access to products such as cellbased meat, microbial proteins, and algaebased foods.

Beyond technical considerations, participants highlighted the importance of risk communication and consumer engagement. Harmonized labeling and transparent communication were seen as critical to building public confidence and countering misinformation.

The session concluded with consensus that CCASIA should assume a leadership role by piloting shared databases, expert task forces, and Codex discussion papers, positioning the region at the forefront of global regulatory convergence on novel foods.

Group Work: Advancing Agile Regulatory Models

Small group discussions explored mechanisms for accelerating innovation while aligning with Codex principles.



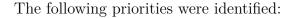












- Develop common regional guidelines for novel food safety assessment, which would be anchored in a CCASIA Codex text.
- Establish a shared CCASIA database of authorized novel foods and processes.
- Conduct joint scientific reviews to improve trust and efficiency.
- Strengthen capacity building in toxicology, allergenicity, biotechnology, and regulatory science.
- Encourage public-private partnerships for dossier preparation and pilot studies.
- Draft Codex discussion papers on novel foods and New Food Production Systems (NFPS), positioning CCASIA as a proactive contributor.

Key Recommendations – Day 2

From the plenary synthesis and consolidated outcomes, the session concluded with a set of recommendations designed to strengthen CCASIA's role in advancing regulatory convergence and enhancing Codex engagement on novel foods. The key points were:

- Regional Harmonization calls for developing shared definitions and guidelines and creating a CCASIA-wide database of novel foods and processes.
- Codex Engagement focuses preparing proposals and discussion papers on novel foods and NFPS, while enhancing CCASIA's participation in Codex horizontal committees.
- Capacity Building emphasizes the need for training in dossier preparation, safety assessment, and regulatory science, with targeted support for SMEs.
- Stakeholder Collaboration encourages partnerships between regulators,

- academia, and industry to co-develop safety data and strengthen trust.
- Agile Pathways highlight the importance of establishing flexible, sciencebased frameworks that can adapt to disruptive technologies while ensuring consumer safety and fair trade.

Day 2 reaffirmed that Asia is at the forefront of food innovation but risks regulatory fragmentation without harmonized approaches. Codex was recognized as the essential platform to achieve convergence, consumer protection, and fair market ac-CCASIA members expressed strong commitment to joint action, including regional data sharing, coordinated safety assessments, strong engagement with stakeholders and leadership in Codex work on novel foods and production systems.











Day 3 of the Forum brought together member countries, Codex observers, and stakeholder organizations to continue discussions on emerging food regulatory challenges and opportunities, with a focus on Food Contact Materials (FCMs) and Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs) and how Codex can support regulatory convergence and provide a platform for sharing best practices in this regard.

Focus Area 2: Regulatory Approaches to Food Contact Materials (FCMs) - Stakeholder Perspectives and the Role of Codex

The IUFoST/GFoRSS discussion paper highlighted global heterogeneity in FCM regulation, challenges with NIAS (non-intentionally added substances), and gaps in oversight of recycled materials.

Participants recognized the lack of Codex guidance and converged on the need for a phased Codex program that could:

- Develop horizontal guidance on risk assessment, GMP, and documentation (Declarations of Compliance).
- Provide specific guidance for recycled materials.
- Pilot a Codex "cleared applications" list, starting with plastics and adhesives/coatings.

The group discussion focused on formulating future directions for the management of Food Contact Materials (FCMs) in Asia, aiming to enhance regional convergence and provide informed input to Codex.



Participants identified key regional priorities and common needs, highlighting the most urgent issues: the lack of a harmonized migration testing framework, absence of a common Documentation of Compliance (DoC) format, and gaps in NIAS screening and risk assessment methods.

A phased approach for regional alignment and Codex contribution was endorsed. The group proposed starting with developing shared definitions and horizontal safety objectives to create a common scientific foundation, followed by joint approaches to GMP, documentation practices, NIAS methodology, and recycled material requirements.

Operationalizing the phased approach, participants agreed on three sequential steps: (1) preparation and circulation of a discussion paper supported by a Circular Letter (2025), (2) an FAO/WHO expert meeting to develop baseline testing methods and NIAS risk assessment approach (2026), and (3) the launch of an Ad Hoc Task Force to draft guidelines, guidance on recycled materials, and pilot a cleared applications list (2027–2029). CCA-SIA's contributions would include coordinating regional responses, nominating experts for FAO/WHO activities, supporting pilot applications, and potentially leading or co-leading the Task Force.

Leadership roles were proposed for each phase: the CCASIA Coordinator for the dis-







cussion paper, FAO/WHO and a regional expert group for the expert meeting, and a CCA-SIA member country, co-leading with experienced non-Asian partners for the Task Force. Mechanisms to ensure success included dedicated financial support or trust funds, formation of a regional expert group, and a transparent data-sharing platform.

Overall, the discussion emphasized a practical, stepwise approach that allows inclusive participation, capacity building, and proactive regional leadership to strengthen FCM oversight and alignment with Codex guidance.

Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs)

The presentation introduced by IUFoST examined food classification approaches, including those linked to "Ultra-Processed Foods" (UPFs), with the objective of promoting sound, evidence-based systems to guide Codex standard setting and policy decisions. It emphasized the importance of anchoring classification in Codex principles, such as nutrition labelling, and called for integrating multiple measurable attributes (nutrition, safety, affordability, sustainability, and palatability).

Scientific perspectives, including those from communications by IUFoST (2024), highlighted the limitations of the UPF concept as applied in systems like NOVA, and the need to explore alternative methodologies for more reliable and comprehensive approaches.

Participants noted divergent national approaches and underlined the risk of oversimplified classification systems influencing policy. Consensus emerged that Codex may play a role in clarifying definitions and guiding evidence-informed policy discussions.

Stakeholder Engagement and Regional Collaboration

The session on stakeholder engagement highlighted that while most CCASIA countries have National Codex Committees involving industry, academia, and competent authorities, structured and inclusive mechanisms, particularly on emerging issues such as novel foods, allergens, and food contact materials,

remain limited.

Some countries have multi-stakeholder platforms, but others lack formal systems, creating gaps in consistent consultation. gional experiences, including the ASEAN Task Force and global forums, were noted as useful models, though participants emphasized the value of open dialogue and NCC involvement.



The groups proposed establishing regional roundtables, enhancing industry participation, and creating a multi-stakeholder advisory mechanism to inform CCASIA's work. Capacity-building through training, information exchange, and online platforms was recommended to improve transparency and inclusiveness. Priority areas identified for immediate engagement included food contact materials, allergens, and nutrition labelling, with a call for institutionalizing a structured regional mechanism ahead of CCASIA23 and CAC48.

Key Recommendations – Day 3

Based on the discussions and the synthesis session, the following recommendations were endorsed:

- Capacity-Building: Invest in regional laboratory and regulatory capacity for FCM testing, NIAS evaluation, and evidence-based policy dialogue.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Develop structured mechanisms to involve Codex observers and regional stakeholders in CCASIA activities.
- Regional Coordination and Aligned Advocacy: Establish collaborative networks to pool expertise, align











priorities, and prepare joint contributions to Codex.

- Codex Work on FCMs: Seek consensus towards initiating Codex guidance on FCM management.
- UPFs and Food Classification: Continue dialogue on definitions, classification schemes, and regulatory implications, ensuring science-based and culturally sensitive approaches.





General Recommendations

• Strengthen Data Generation and Sharing

Coordinate regional data collection (e.g. aflatoxins, arsenic) and promote timely sharing with Codex and international bodies.

• Promote Structured Stakeholder Engagement

Establish transparent and inclusive mechanisms with industry, academia, and consumer groups to support Codex positions and implementation.

• Foster Regional Collaboration and Convergence

Leverage regional organizations and networks to harmonize approaches, exchange expertise, and develop coordinated Codex strategies.

• Sustain Capacity-Building Efforts

Invest in ongoing training, knowledge exchange, and mentoring to strengthen Codex-related expertise (risk assessment, laboratory competence and infrastructure).

• Advance Codex Work on Emerging Issues

Seek consensus on approaches for management of Food Contact Materials (FCMs) and progress towards CCASIA guidelines on regulatory frameworks to oversee "novelty".

• Ensure Forum Follow-Up in Codex Proceedings

Submit a Conference Room Document (CRD) to CCASIA23 capturing the Forum outputs and recommendations.





ANNEX 1: List of Participants

Name China National Center for Food China Safety Risk Assessment 2 Hao Ding China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment 2 Hao Ding China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment 3 Jianbo Zhang China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment 4 Yidan Wang China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment 5 Shifana Mohamed Maldives Food and Drug Maldives Authority 6 Khalisa Mohamed Maldives Food and Drug Maldives Authority 7 Jambay Dorji Royal Government of Bhutan Bhutan Syeshi Nidup Bhutan Food Safety and Drug Maldives Authority Ministry of Health 9 Latifal Indonesian Food and Drug Bhutan Bhutan Food Safety and Drug Authority Ministry of Health 10 Nuri Wulansari National Standardization Agency of Indonesia Authority 11 Siti Nasreyah Ahmed Brunei Darussalam Food Brunei Darussalam Brunei Darussalam Food Authority Darussalam Food Authority Darussalam Darussalam Food Authority Darussalam Darussalam Darussalam Food Authority Darussalam Food Brunei Darussalam Food Authority Darussalam Food Food Food Food Food Food Food Foo		Name	Ormanization	Country
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30	Ulysses Madrid Montojo	National Codex Organization - Technical Committee	Philippines
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32	Wong Ying Lei Eleanor	Singapore Food Agency (SFA)	Singapore
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