



EVENT 1: REGIONAL THINK TANK ON INNOVATION-READY FOOD REGULATORY SYSTEMS IN ASIA

20-21 April 2026 • Sun Yat-Sen University Institute of Advanced Studies, Hong Kong, China

Logistical Details: <https://gforss.org/2026/03/30/asiaregionalthinktank/>

1. Purpose and Strategic Context

Asia is leading food innovation by **transforming traditional ingredients**—particularly those derived from **traditional medicine systems**—into modern health-focused food products in response to growing demand for wellness. However, this evolving landscape raises regulatory challenges related to differing rules on novelty, approvals, safety, claims, and market access across countries.

This meeting is designed to serve as a **launch event for an initiative aiming to “advance innovation-ready food regulatory systems in Asia”**. It supports **actionable measures** in support of the outcomes of the discussions held at the 23rd Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA23), building on the discussion paper on “Novel Functional Ingredients and Claims, the role of CCASIA in Guiding Food Regulatory Practices” introduced as a [Conference Room Document \(CRD\) by China and IUFOST](#) and the discussions under the [2025 Asia Codex and Food Regulatory Forum](#).

Its primary purpose is to bring together a **focused group of scientific leaders** with a focus on members of the Food Science and Technology Community, Food Regulatory partners and Food Industry contributors to:

- Align on the **strategic direction** for innovation-ready regulatory systems in Asia.
- Define **priority areas of work**, particularly for functional ingredients (including those derived from traditional medicine systems).
- **Develop and agree on a structured two-year implementation workplan**.

2. Core Objective

To **develop, refine, and formally agree on the two-year workplan** for shaping a path forward for innovation-ready food regulatory frameworks in Asia to address functional food ingredients and their associated claims, with emphasis on ingredients derived from traditional knowledge systems.

Day 1: 20 April 2026, 9:30-17:30

5/F, Building 16E, Technology Avenue East, Hong Kong Science Park, Pak Shek Kok, Shatin District, Hong Kong, China

8:30-9:30	Registration
9:30-10:30	<p>Opening Session: Introduction of the Event, the Partnership and Setting the Scene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prof. Junshi Chen, Honorary President, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GForSS); Chief Science Advisor, China National Center of Food Safety Risk Assessment (CFSA) ○ Ms. Aya Aya ORITO NOZAWA, Chair Person FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia, Associate Director, International Standards Office, Food Safety Policy Division, Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan ○ Prof. Anlong Xu, Dean, Institute of Advanced Studies, Sun Yat Sen University, Hong Kong, China, Chairman of the 2026 World Food Congress ○ Prof. Pavinee Chinachoti, Professor Emeritus, Chair Food Innovation Regulation Network (FIRN), Thailand, President Elect, International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST) ▪ Setting The Stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prof. Samuel Godefroy, Professor, Food Risk Analysis and Regulatory Policies, Laval University, Quebec, Canada; President GForSS; President IUFoST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction and Review of the Objectives of the Think Tank Meeting ○ Scope and Vision of the Initiative - Sought After Outcomes ▪ Introduction of Participants – Self introduction and review of objectives from participation ▪ Group Photo
10:30 -11:00	Health Break
<p>Session 1: 11:00- 13:00</p> <p>Review of Regulatory Frameworks Covering Innovative Functional Ingredients and Non-Nutrient Claims in Asia: Perspectives and Opportunities</p> <p><i>Objective: To review the current regulatory frameworks for functional food ingredients and associated claims in Asia, establish a shared understanding of the policy landscape, identify key impediments, and explore opportunities, within the confirmed scope of the initiative.</i></p>	
11:00 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of Current Practices related to Regulating Innovative Functional Food Ingredients and Claims in Various Asian Jurisdictions - Current Practices and Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ China: Ms. Claire Hao Ding, Food Safety Standards Division V, China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment (CFSA) China ○ Indonesia: Ms. Sintia Ramadhani, Indonesia Food and Drug Authority (BPOM) ○ Malaysia: Prof. E-Siong Tee, Vice-President, Federation of Asian Nutrition Societies ○ Philippines, Prof. Maria Leonora Lotis dL. Francisco, President of the Philippines Association of Food Technologists (PAFT Inc.) ○ Singapore: Dr. Richard Khaw, President of the Singapore Institute of Food Science and Technology, Singapore

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- **Thailand: Prof. Pavinee Chinachoti, FIRN / Ms. Suvaluk Asavasanti, FIRN Thailand**
- *Other jurisdictions as may be further identified*

12:00-13:00

- **Moderated Discussion**

- Best practices to leverage
- Key market access impediments (national and regional)
- Opportunities from existing frameworks (e.g. ASEAN claims guidance)
- Areas for strengthened regulatory cooperation
- Contribution of the Asia Food Innovation Initiative to solutions and collaboration

13:00-14:00**Lunch Break** (provided)**Session 2: 14:00- 15:30****Prioritizing Functional Ingredients and Claims for Convergent Regulatory Pathways in Asia**

Objective: To identify and prioritize functional food ingredients and non-nutrient claims suitable for a pilot phase aimed at facilitating market access through convergent regulatory approaches across Asia.

- **Framing & Instructions (10 min – Plenary)**

- Overview of session objectives and expected outputs
- Introduction to the pilot concept (leveraging existing approvals/reviews in Asia)
- Explanation of working group tasks and deliverables

- **Working Group Discussions (two groups working in parallel)**

- **Pillar 1: Prioritization of Ingredients and Claims (40 min)**

- **A. Development of Prioritization Criteria**

- Ingredient already approved/used in at least one Asian jurisdiction
- Potential for wider application across food categories in Asia
- Documented barriers to market access in key jurisdictions
- Linkages to traditional use or knowledge systems in Asia (incl. TCM)

- **B. Identification of Priority Substances**

- Shortlisting of functional ingredients meeting the criteria
- Consideration of scalability and regional relevance
- Identification of candidates for pilot “convergent review”

- **C. Prioritization of Non-Nutrient Claims**

- Claims with existing scientific substantiation but fragmented acceptance
- Claims linked to prioritized ingredients
- Potential for alignment across jurisdictions

- **D. Output**

- Draft list of priority ingredients

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- Draft list of priority non-nutrient claims
- **Pillar 2: Unlocking Barriers to Market Access (30 min)**
 - A. Enhancing Regulatory Guidance**
 - Need for clearer guidance on regulating innovative functional ingredients
 - Identification of “novelty triggers” across jurisdictions
 - Potential for regional guidance / Codex (CCASIA) consideration
 - B. Promoting Predictability in Market Access**
 - Mapping commonalities/divergences in safety assessment requirements
 - Opportunities for consensus on data requirements
 - Alignment approaches for claims substantiation
 - C. Improving Access to Scientific Assessments**
 - Challenges in accessing existing regulatory reviews and data
 - Opportunities to compile/share scientific opinions underpinning approvals
 - Concept of a shared repository of assessments
 - D. Output**
 - Identification of 2-3 priority areas for barrier reduction
- **Pillar 3: Models for Regulatory Cooperation (10 min)**
 - A. Leveraging Existing Initiatives**
 - Lessons from Thailand’s Food Innovation Regulation Network (FIRN)
 - Applicability to broader Asian context
 - B. Pathways for Regional Collaboration**
 - Network of regulators and experts
 - Joint or sequential review models
 - Information-sharing platforms
 - C. Role of the Asia Food Innovation Initiative**
 - Facilitating coordination and technical exchange
 - Supporting pilot implementation
 - Acting as a regional convening platform
 - D. Output**
 - Initial options for collaborative mechanisms
- **Expected Outputs of the Session**
 - Shortlist of priority functional ingredients and non-nutrient claims for pilot phase
 - Identification of key regulatory barriers and priority actions
 - Initial directions for regional cooperation toward convergent approaches

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15:30-16:00 Health Break**Session 3: 16:00-17:30****Towards Convergent Regulatory Pathways: Debrief and Path Forward**

Objective: To consolidate working group outcomes and define a practical path forward toward more convergent and predictable regulatory approaches for priority functional ingredients and claims in Asia.

- **Working Group Debriefs (30 min)**
 - Presentation of prioritized Functional ingredients, Non-nutrient claims
 - Summary of key impediments to market access
 - Identification of priority areas for action
- **Consolidation of Priorities (20 min)**
 - Identification of commonalities across groups
 - Validation of a consolidated shortlist of: Priority substances ; Priority claims
 - Initial agreement on focus areas for pilot phase
- **Path Forward: Building a Convergent Agenda (30 min)**
 - **Pillar 1: Regulatory Guidance**
 - Development of guidance for regulators on innovative ingredients and claims
 - Clarification of novelty triggers and regulatory pathways
 - Potential for regional alignment and Codex (CCASIA) consideration
 - **Pillar 2: Pilot Assessments**
 - Conduct of pilot safety assessments and claims substantiation
 - Leveraging evaluations from leading jurisdictions in Asia
 - Exploring models for mutual reliance or sequential review
 - **Pillar 3: Knowledge Hub / Information Sharing Platform**
 - Development of a shared repository of scientific assessments and regulatory decisions
 - Enhancing transparency and accessibility of evidence
 - Supporting both regulators and industry
- **Next Steps and Engagement (10 min)**
 - Identification of interested jurisdictions and partners
 - Initial steps toward operationalizing the pilot phase
 - Role of the Asia Food Innovation Initiative in coordination and follow-up
- **Expected Outputs**
 - Consolidated list of priority ingredients and claims
 - Agreed directions for pilot actions under three pillars
 - Initial alignment on a collaborative, convergent approach

Day 2: 21 April 2026, 9:00-12:30

Boardroom 1/F, Marriott Skyline Hotel, Hong Kong, China

9:00-9:30

Recap and Orientation

- Synthesis of key outcomes from Day 1
- Confirmation of priority: Functional ingredients, non-nutrient claims
- Initial discussion toward a shared direction of convergence
- Introduction and validation of the three-pillar workplan as core building blocks

Session 4: 9:30-12:30

Structuring the Three-Pillar Workplan – Discussing Governance and Operational Organization

Objective: To translate agreed priorities into a structured implementation pathway, including governance arrangements, operational modalities, and next steps toward a convergent regional agenda.

- **Structuring the Three-Pillar Workplan**
 - **Pillar 1: Development of Regional Regulatory Guidance**
 - Exploration of a CCASIA-oriented paper providing guidance to regulators promoting more consistent approaches to Innovative functional ingredients, claims assessment and substantiation
 - Leveraging existing national practices and identifying areas for alignment
 - Clarification of novelty triggers and regulatory pathways
 - **Pillar 2: Pilot Collaborative Assessments (Safety & Claims)**
 - Defining the “What”***
 - Selection of priority substances and claims for pilot phase
 - Focus on candidates with existing approvals and regional relevance
 - Defining the “How”***
 - Leveraging existing scientific assessments and regulatory reviews
 - Structuring pilot work toward convergent or sequential assessment approaches
 - Use of emerging consensus guidance to support the process
 - Defining the “Who”***
 - Identification of possible participating jurisdictions and partners
 - Mobilization of a network of scientific and regulatory experts
 - Clarification of roles and coordination mechanisms
 - **Pillar 3: Transparency and Knowledge Dissemination**
 - Development of a knowledge-sharing mechanism / information platform:***
 - Repository of scientific assessments
 - Access to regulatory decisions underpinning market approvals
 - Initiation of a proceedings paper capturing outcomes of the Think Tank:***
 - Agreement on outline and key messages

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- Identification of contributors/authorship
- Initial allocation of drafting responsibilities

▪ **Discussion of Governance and Next Steps**

A. Governance and Institutional Anchoring

- Discussion on scaling Thailand's Food Innovation Regulation Network (FIRN) into a regional (Asian) model
- Exploration of governance options:
 - Informal network vs structured initiative
 - Potential hosting arrangements (institutional or multi-partner)

B. Leveraging Upcoming Regional Events

- Alignment with key upcoming events to advance the initiative:
 - Vitafoods Asia, Bangkok (2–4 September 2026)
 - Food Ingredients Asia (Fi Asia Thailand) – co-located regional platform (September 2026, Bangkok)
 - Food Ingredients Asia (Fi Asia Indonesia) – regional industry platform (2026, Indonesia – dates TBC)
 - IUFoST World Food Congress, Hong Kong (25–29 October 2026)

▪ **Identification of opportunities for Stakeholder engagement, Presentation of pilot concept, Mobilization of partners**

○ **Expected Outputs**

- Agreement on a three-pillar implementation framework
- Initial alignment on governance and coordination mechanisms
- Identification of pilot scope (substances, claims, participants)
- Roadmap for advancing work through upcoming regional platforms

3. Key Output of the Event

The **primary output** of this think tank is:

A FORMALLY AGREED TO TWO-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION WORKPLAN FOR THE CCASIA ROADMAP

Including:

- Defined priorities and scope.
- Identified pilot ingredients that could benefit from a collaborative approach for their assessment and their dissemination.
- Confirmed timeline of future activities and events.