Regional Think Tank on Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory Systems in Asia

Setting the Stage

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SETTING THE STAGE: OBJECTIVES

- ❑ Introduce the scope, ambition, and boundaries of the initiative
- ❑ Clarify what problem we are solving—and what we are not
- ❑ Frame the expected outcomes of the two-day Think Tank
- ❑ Position the work within CCASIA23 follow-up and broader regional efforts

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FRAMING THE ISSUE: A RAPIDLY EVOLVING INNOVATION SPACE

- Asia is at the forefront of transforming traditional ingredients into modern food applications
- Increasing integration of bioactive substances into food products positioned for health and wellness
- This evolution is outpacing regulatory frameworks, creating:
  - Divergent definitions of novelty
  - Inconsistent safety and claims requirements
  - Fragmented market access pathways

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DEFINING THE SCOPE: WHAT WE MEAN BY "FUNCTIONAL INGREDIENTS"

Core clarification of scope

- Focus on ingredients that are added or supplemented to food – including ingredients originating from traditional diets (e.g., TCM, TTM etc.)
- The food product is the primary vehicle for delivering the "functional ingredient" and the claimed benefit
- Functionality is acquired through addition, not intrinsic

Explicit inclusions

- Bioactive compounds, extracts, and preparations
- Ingredients derived from traditional medicine systems, used in food formats
- Substances introduced to deliver specific physiological or health-related effects through food

Explicit exclusions

- Foods that are inherently functional by nature
- Examples: fruits, such as bananas, staple foods, naturally nutrient-rich foods
- Products where functionality is not the result of deliberate addition

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CLARIFYING THE SCOPE OF CLAIMS

- ❑ Focus on non-nutrient function claims
- ❑ Claims related to physiological or health effects beyond basic nutrition
- ❑ Exclusion of:
  - Nutrient content claims (e.g. “high in vitamin C”)
  - Traditional nutrition labeling domains

Key Challenge

Scientific substantiation of these claims is heterogeneous across jurisdictions

Leads to inconsistent acceptance and regulatory decisions

THE CORE PROBLEM WE ARE ADDRESSING

- ❑Same ingredient → different pace of market access / regulatory approval – including possible divergence in regulatory outcomes across countries of Asia
- ❑Same claim → accepted in some jurisdictions, rejected in others
- ❑Limited access to existing scientific assessments
- ❑Duplication of effort across regulatory systems

Result

Reduced predictability for innovators

Increased burden on regulators

Slower access to safe innovation

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STRATEGIC FRAMING: NOT HARMONIZATION, BUT CONVERGENCE

- ❑ The initiative is not (necessarily) about full regulatory harmonization
- ❑ It is about:
  - Convergence of approaches
  - Alignment of scientific methodologies
  - Facilitating mutual confidence and reliance

This reflects the direction highlighted under CCASIA23 discussions

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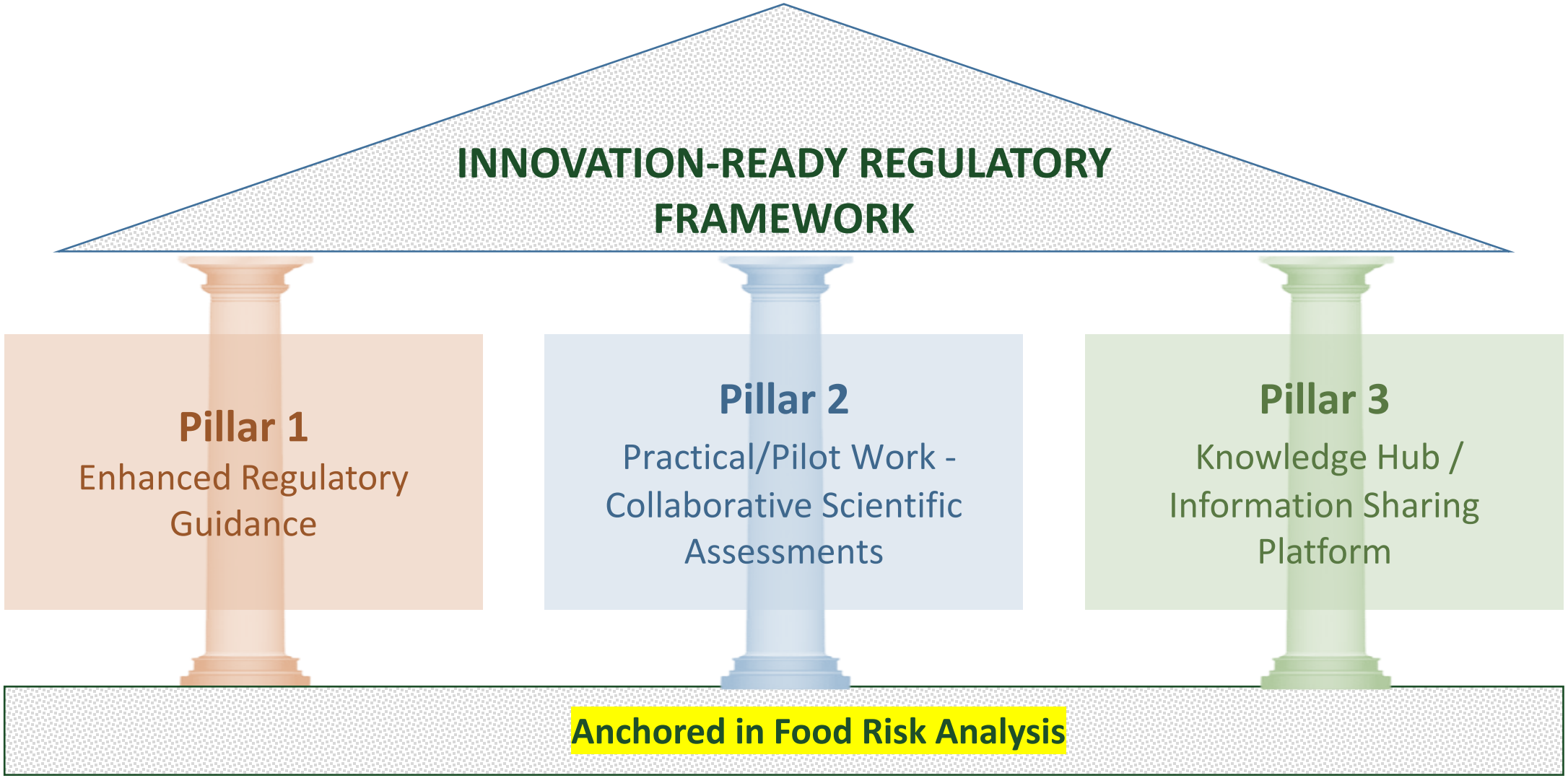
THE THREE PILLARS OF THE PROPOSED INITIATIVE



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PILLAR 1
ENHANCED REGULATORY GUIDANCE

OBJECTIVE

Create a more predictable and transparent regulatory environment

Approach

- ❑ Develop Codex-consistent, regionally relevant guidance on:
  - Novelty triggers
  - Safety assessment requirements
  - Claims substantiation principles

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PILLAR 2
PRACTICAL/PILOT WORK - COLLABORATIVE SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT

OBJECTIVE

Generate real-world evidence and methodologies

Approach

- ❑ Leverage existing evaluations and test joint or sequential review models by:
  - Conducting practical, pilot assessments for:
    - Ingredients approved in some jurisdictions but not others
    - Claims with fragmented acceptance

PILLAR 3
KNOWLEDGE HUB / INFORMATION SHARING PLATFORM

OBJECTIVE

Improve transparency, accessibility, and reuse of evidence

Approach

- Provide access to:
  - Safety evaluations
  - Claims substantiation reviews
  - Regulatory decisions

KEY ENABLERS

Build on Existing Regional Experience

- ❑ The initiative does not start from zero - Builds on innovative regional models, notably:
  - Thailand's Food Innovation Regulation Network (FIRN)
  - Multi-stakeholder collaboration
  - Science–regulation–industry interface

Scale and regionalize FIRN model and similar approaches across Asia

RELATIONSHIP WITH CODEX AND CCASIA

- ❑Project Anchored in Codex principles (science-based, risk analysis, transparency)
- ❑Builds on CRD14 introduced by China and IUFoST at CCASIA23
- ❑Important clarification:
  - Codex is not the sole or immediate endpoint
- ❑Regional work can:
  - Generate practical outputs first
  - Feed into future Codex discussions when mature and if deemed useful

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WHAT THIS MEETING MUST ACHIEVE (TWO-DAY FOCUS)

Day 1 Scoping and Prioritization

- Define and validate:
  - Scope of ingredients and claims
  - Priority substances and claims
- Identify:
  - Key regulatory barriers
  - Opportunities for convergence

Day 2 Structuring the Workplan

- Translate discussions into:
  - 3-pillar framework
  - Governance structure
  - Operational modalities
- Agree on:
  - Priority pilot activities
  - Roles and participation

Outputs What the Think Tank will accomplish:

- Refined scope of the initiative
- Prioritized list of ingredients and claims for pilot work
- Initial agreement on three-pillar approach
- Outline of governance and coordination mechanisms
- Contribution to a 2 year workplan

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CONCLUSION

This initiative represents a pragmatic, science-driven response to a fast-evolving innovation space aiming to:

✓Enable safe innovation

✓Reduce fragmentation

✓Strengthen regulatory confidence across Asia

Key success factors:

- ❑ Moving from discussion → structured collaboration → practical outputs
- ❑ Mobilization of the Food Science and Technology Community as the leading Catalyst for Implementation
- ❑ Broad Engagement with Regulators of the Region and their Buy in, into the initiative as a strategic objective, supporting national and regional food innovation agendas.


thank you
danke
謝謝
ngiyabonga
teşekkür ederim
gracias
merci
obrigado
obrigado
bedankt
dziękuję
go raibh maith agat
kop khun krap
sukriya
terima kasih
grazie
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спасибо
рахмат
Баярлалаа
faafetai lava
kiitos
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