



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

Hong Kong, China - 20-21 April 2026

Logistical Details Accessible at : <https://qforss.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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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, in alignment with the discussions held at CCASIA23 in support of actions taken nationally, regionally and in preparation for CCASIA24.

### 3. Expected Participants: In Person and Online (Hybrid Format)

- ❖ Scientific organizations: China Institute of Food Science and Technology (CIFST), the Malaysian Institute of Food Technology (MIFT), the Federation of Institutes of Food Science and Technology in ASEAN (FIFSTA), the Food Innovation Regulation Network (FIRN) hosted by the Food Science and Technology Association of Thailand (FoSTAT), the Philippine Association of Food Technologists (PAFT), and the Japan Society of Nutrition and Food Science (JSNFS)
- ❖ IUFoST and its Disciplinary Group for Food Regulatory Science: GForSS.
- ❖ Food regulatory partners from Asia.
- ❖ Targeted experts (safety assessment, nutrition, regulatory science).
- ❖ Representation from industry and academia (focused participation).

### 4. Structure of the Event (1.5 Days)

#### Session 1: Setting the Scene, Strategic Framing and Alignment

*Objective: To establish a shared understanding of the policy context and confirm the scope of the initiative.*

Content	Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overview of CCASIA23 outcomes: Presentation of the CRD introduced by China and IUFoST and discussion of the Key messages from the Asia Codex and Food Regulatory Forum.</li> <li>▪ Review of current practices related to food innovation management in Asia:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identification of best practices.</li> <li>○ <b>Identification of opportunities of food regulatory cooperation.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Discussion of a Proposed framework for implementation of the proposed action items:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Framing of the three-pillar approach:                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Guidance on food regulatory modernization to account for innovation – what exists in Asia and what do we need to create.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Collaborative assessments: what and how we need to assess the safety of novel ingredients and evaluate the claims that may be associated with their use in food form?</li> <li>○ Information platform: How can create an innovation-ready environment with accessible data / information ready to use by regulators to underpin decisions – fostering information-sharing platforms.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirmation of scope: Focus on functional ingredients - Inclusion of ingredients derived from traditional medicine systems.</li> <li>▪ Agreement on overall ambition and expected outcomes.</li> </ul>

#### Session 2: Priority Setting – Regulatory Challenges and Focus Areas

*Objective: To identify and agree on the key technical and regulatory priorities that will shape the workplan.*

Content	Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key regulatory challenges across Asia:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Novelty triggers.</li> <li>○ Safety assessment requirements.</li> <li>○ Claims substantiation.</li> <li>○ Access to data / information and its use by regulators.</li> <li>○ Existing Guidance documents and Gaps - Variability across jurisdictions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Discussion of Priority categories of ingredients (including TCM, Thai, ASEAN botanicals).</li> <li>▪ Discussion of Priority regulatory issues to be addressed.</li> </ul>	<p>Participants agree on an initial list of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Candidate pilot ingredients that would be subject to piloting as part of a consensus assessment, and/or that were subject to evaluation and approval from select jurisdictions in Asia and with potential to be propagated, upon confirmation of consensus approaches</li> <li>▪ Food regulatory modernization to account for food innovation: What could be subject to guidance to food regulators, including guidance to be developed from Codex</li> </ul>

### Session 3: Structuring the Three-Pillar Workplan – Discussing Governance and Operational Organization

*Objective: To translate priorities into a structured implementation plan.*

Content	Outputs
<p>Presentation of proposed roadmap structure with the three areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of regional guidance to food regulatory organization.</li> <li>▪ Development of Pilot scientific assessments on priority ingredients / Claims.</li> <li>▪ Information exchange platform: How can we make the outputs of consensus assessment and previously reviewed substances available and readily accessible.</li> </ul>	<p>Interactive Working Session where participants define:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Each pillar’s key deliverables.</li> <li>▪ Sequencing of activities (2026–2027).</li> <li>▪ Linkages between pillars.</li> <li>▪ Role of upcoming events (May workshop, September consultation, etc.).</li> <li>▪ Possible Development of Working groups - Guidance Drafting Group, Scientific Assessment Group, Platform Development Group.</li> <li>▪ Agreement on Roles and responsibilities: Participation and leadership and Coordination mechanisms.</li> <li>▪ Stakeholder engagement (regulators, science, industry, academia).</li> </ul>

### Session 4: Adoption of the Workplan and Next Steps

*Objective: To finalize and endorse the implementation roadmap.*

Content	Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentation of consolidated <b>two-year workplan</b>.</li> <li>▪ Confirmation of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Timeline.</li> <li>○ Milestones.</li> <li>○ Responsibilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agreement on:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Workplan.</li> <li>○ Governance structure.</li> <li>○ Pilot ingredient shortlist.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Confirmation of next steps:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ May/ June 2026 technical workshop.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Intersessional work.</li> </ul>

## 5. 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.