GFORSS | GLOBAL FOOD REGULATORY SCIENCE SOCIETY

AFIRS
ASIA FOOD INNOVATION-READY REGULATORY SYSTEMS INITIATIVE

Asia Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory Systems Initiative

Second Working Meeting

Advancing Collaborative Assessments, Regulatory Guidance and Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory Systems

Convened by GFoRSS, in collaboration with

Venue	DoubleTree by Hilton Zhangzhou No.18-1 Jianyuan Road East, Longwen District, Zhangzhou, 363005, China **3F Jiulong Conference Room**
Dates	14–15 September 2026
Duration	Two working days

Proposed Agenda

Day 1 (14 September 2026) — Regional Landscape, Health Claims, Goji Pilot and Capacity Building

Time	Session
08:30–09:00	**Registration and Welcome**
09:00–10:00	**Opening Ceremony** *Prof. Junshi Chen — Chairman, Shanghai JS Life Sciences Institute; Senior Science Advisor, China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment (CFSA)* *Dr. Yongxiang Fan — Deputy Director General, China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment (CFSA)* *Prof. Pingfan Rao — Chief Innovation Officer, Damin Foods* *Prof. Pavinee Chinachoti — Chair, Food Innovation Regulation Network (FIRN)* *Prof. Tee E-Siong — Former President, Nutrition Society of Malaysia; Representative, ILSI Southeast Asia* *Prof. Samuel Godefroy — President & COO, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)*

Time	Session
	Annie Jiang, representative of Jiang Group and Damin Food, Sponsor of the meeting **Introduction of Participants**
10:00–10:45	**From Hong Kong to Zhangzhou: Agenda, Pathway and Expected Outcomes** Review and adoption of the meeting agenda Review of the pathway from the Hong Kong Regional Think Tank to the Zhangzhou Working Meeting Discussion and confirmation of the expected outcomes and deliverables of the meeting Review of the evolution of the food innovation regulatory landscape in Asia Progress since CCASIA23 and emerging priorities toward CCASIA24 Positioning of the Asia Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory Systems Initiative and the contribution it can make to regional regulatory cooperation and innovation **Session Moderated by Prof. Samuel Godefroy**
10:45–11:15	**Health Break**
11:15–12:30	**Session 1 — Non-Nutrient Health Claims in Asia: Current Situation, Regulatory Challenges and Opportunities** Overview of the current situation for non-nutrient health/function claims in Asia — **introductory presentation by Prof. Tee E-Siong** Moderated interventions from CFSA, BPOM and other participating authorities and partners on current regulatory approaches and experience Unlocking Access to non-nutrient claims associated with ingredients derived from traditional knowledge How the GABA and goji berry pilots can inform evolution of health-claims regulatory systems in Asia What is on the Codex Agenda and how we can learn from it – The Probiotics / Prebiotics Case Study in Codex: **Ms. Claire DING, CFSA** Identification of areas where greater convergence, information sharing or common guidance may be feasible **Session Moderated by Prof. Pavinee Chinachoti**
12:30–13:30	**Lunch**
13:30–15:45	**Session 2 — Goji Berry Pilot: From Available Evidence to a Working Regulatory Assessment** - Introduction to the pilot and review of studies and assessment material developed to date: **Session Chair / Moderator - Prof. Junshi Chen, Senior Science Advisor, CFSA, China** **Interventions from:** - **Prof. WANG Ying, South China Botanical Garden, Chinese Academy of Sciences - Goqi berry in TCM,**

Time	Session
	中国科学院华南植物园王瑛老师讲枸杞历史应用 - **Prof. WEN Quan, Guangzhou TCM University - Specifications and safety of Goji polysaccharides and polysaccharide-proteins** 广州中医药大学温泉老师讲枸杞多糖、枸杞糖肽质量标准与安全性 - **Prof. LIN Xiaoming, Jinan University, Guangzhou - Health functions (scientific evidence) of Goji polysaccharide-proteins** 暨南大学林晓敏博士讲枸杞糖肽功效 Collective Discussion Points: - Regulatory status of goji berry-derived ingredients and extracts across participating jurisdictions - Regulatory status and acceptability of associated health/function claims Assessment of the current level of scientific knowledge and identification of remaining gaps - Potential extrapolation of the available evidence toward guidance for substantiation of health/function claims **Working session: what do we have, what is missing, and what can the pilot teach us?**
15:45–16:00	**Health Break**
16:00–16:45	**Session 3 — Foundations of Food Regulatory Innovation: Capacity Building and Training from Asia to the World** - Identify existing training, technical and regulatory-science resources that can be leveraged - Identify resources and competencies that need to be developed or strengthened - Consider materials and approaches that can be adapted or extrapolated across jurisdictions and regions - Define opportunities to support competency development for regulators and the food industry - Consider how the Asian initiative can contribute to a broader platform for food regulatory innovation capacity building - Creation of Knowledge Hubs – Learning from the Singapore Experience : **Prof. William Chen, Nanyang Technical University, Singapore**. **Session Moderated by Prof. Samuel Godefroy**
16:45–17:30	**Day 1 Plenary — Consolidation of Findings and Priorities for Day 2** Summary of areas of convergence, outstanding questions and information needs Confirmation of issues requiring further work on Day 2 Identification of preliminary action items and contributions expected from participants

Working approach: The two pilot cases — goji berry-derived ingredients and GABA — will be used as practical regulatory-science test cases to move from jurisdiction-specific experience toward shared requirements, information exchange and consensus regional guidance.

Day 2 (15 September 2026) — GABA Assessment and Development of Regional Guidance

Time	Session
08:30–09:00	**Review of Day 1 Outputs and Orientation for Day 2** Recap of key findings, areas of convergence, evidence gaps and action items from Day 1 Confirmation of the objectives and working approach for Day 2
09:00–11:00	**Session 4 — GABA Pilot: Safety, Claims and Regulatory Acceptability** - Review of the current level of knowledge on the safety assessment and acceptability of GABA in food formulations - Review of regulatory status, conditions of use and market experience across selected jurisdictions - Review of the evidence and regulatory status for health/function claims associated with GABA **Moderated discussion**: what is documented, what are the current gaps, and where are the principal challenges and opportunities? **Lessons from the GABA example for dossier requirements supporting safety assessment and claims substantiation** - Identification of action items and opportunities for information sharing with jurisdictions whose experience may support possible regulatory change
11:00–11:15	**Health Break**
11:15–12:30	**Session 5 — From the Pilots to Guidance on Safety Assessment of Ingredients Derived from Traditional Knowledge** - What can be learned from GABA and goji berry for ingredients with a history of traditional use that may have the potential to be considered novel? **Discussion of triggers of novelty:** including processing, extraction, concentration, composition, exposure and intended use **Approaches for substantiating non-novelty and documenting a relevant history of safe use** **When novelty is confirmed**: data requirements for a clear, proportionate and predictable safety-assessment pathway Consideration of the regulatory and food categories under which products containing these ingredients may be placed on the market **Potential structure of consensus regional guidance on safety assessment and novelty determination**
12:30–13:30	**Lunch**
13:30–15:00	**Session 6 — From the Pilots to Regional Guidance on Substantiation of Non-Nutrient Health Claims** Extrapolation of lessons from GABA and goji berry to identify **common evidence requirements for claims substantiation** **Review of relevant guidance and regulatory approaches from CFSA, EFSA and other leading regulatory authorities and international organizations**

Time	Session
	Consideration of study design, endpoints, target populations, dose, totality and quality of evidence, and relevance to proposed conditions of use Path forward for the Development of a compendium of requirements and approaches for substantiation of **non-nutrient health/function claims** **Pathway toward consensus guidance for consideration and possible use by Asian regulators as regional guidance**
15:00–15:15	**Health Break**
15:15–16:00	**Session 7 — Review and Summary of the Working Discussions** Consolidation of findings from the GABA and goji berry pilots Agreement on proposed elements for safety-assessment and claims-substantiation guidance Identification of information-sharing needs, technical follow-up and responsibilities Confirmation of proposed outputs and timelines
16:00–16:45	**Closing Session — Conclusions, Recommendations and the Two-Year Work Plan** Key conclusions and recommendations from the Second Working Meeting Priority deliverables and action items Path forward for the Asia Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory Systems Initiative Discussion of Governance Structure, Priorities and milestones for the two-year work plan Closing remarks

Expected Outputs

The Second Working Meeting is expected to advance a defined set of practical outputs:

- **GABA Consensus Assessment.** A consolidated scientific and regulatory summary covering regulatory status, safety assessment, evidence supporting health/function claims, areas of convergence and remaining issues requiring further consideration.
- **Goji Berry Pilot Assessment.** Agreement on the preliminary safety and claims assessment and on additional work required for goji berry-derived ingredients and extracts.
- **Safety Assessment Framework.** Identification of a common set of requirements for assessing innovative functional ingredients, including ingredients originating from traditional sources and the circumstances under which changes in extraction, processing, concentration, exposure or intended use may require additional evidence.
- **Claims Substantiation Framework.** Identification of common principles and evidence requirements supporting non-nutrient health/function claims.
- **Capacity-Building Framework.** Identification of priority training materials, case studies and technical modules supporting regulatory transformation and implementation.
- **GFIRN / GFoRII Development Framework.** Further definition of the mandate, governance and operating approach of the Global Food Innovation Regulation Network and its contribution to broader regional and global regulatory innovation collaboration.

Annex

Background and Strategic Context

The **Asia Innovation-Ready Food Regulatory Systems Initiative** was established to support the development of more predictable, science-based and innovation-ready approaches for the regulation of functional food ingredients and associated non-nutrient health claims across Asia.

The initiative responds particularly to the rapid transformation of ingredients rooted in Asian traditional knowledge and traditional medicine systems into standardized functional ingredients incorporated into modern food products. While this development creates important opportunities for innovation, health and economic development, it also exposes differences among jurisdictions in determining novelty, assessing safety, substantiating claims and providing pathways for market access.

The **first Regional Think Tank, held in Hong Kong in April 2026**, established a collaborative implementation framework built around three mutually reinforcing areas of work: consensus regulatory guidance, collaborative scientific assessments, and information sharing and knowledge exchange.

The meeting also identified **gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) and goji berry-derived ingredients**, particularly extracts, as the first pilot ingredients through which practical approaches to safety assessment and claims substantiation could be examined.

The Second Working Meeting will **advance this work from initial scoping and pilot selection** toward **substantive scientific assessment, identification of common regulatory requirements, and development of practical guidance**. It will also provide an opportunity to examine recent regulatory transformations in Asia and internationally and consider how their lessons may contribute to more agile and innovation-ready food regulatory systems.

The meeting will further advance discussion on the development of the **Global Food Innovation Regulation Network** (**GFIRN**) and its contribution to a broader Global Food Regulatory Innovation Initiative (GFoRII), while maintaining the Asian initiative as an important regional foundation and source of practical experience.

Objectives of the Second Working Meeting

The meeting will seek to:

- Review progress since the April 2026 Regional Think Tank and recent developments affecting the regulation of innovative functional ingredients and associated health claims.
- Examine the principal engines of regulatory change influencing the modernization of food regulatory systems.
- Review examples of regulatory frameworks that have recently evolved toward more innovation-ready approaches and identify lessons potentially applicable across Asia and globally.
- Conduct an in-depth review of the GABA pilot assessment, including regulatory status across selected Asian jurisdictions, safety evidence, exposure considerations and evidence supporting health/function claims.
- Develop a consensus summary of the scientific and regulatory assessment of GABA.
- Review progress and available assessment outputs for goji berry and goji berry-derived extracts, including safety considerations and possible health/function claims.
- Use the GABA and goji pilots to identify common requirements and principles applicable to the safety assessment of novel and functional ingredients, particularly ingredients originating from traditional sources.
- Identify common scientific requirements and principles for the substantiation of non-nutrient health/function claims associated with these ingredients.

- Examine how history of traditional use, modern scientific evidence, changes in processing, concentration, exposure and intended use can be incorporated into proportionate regulatory assessment approaches, as contemplated in the initiative's existing assessment framework.
- Review available material and identify priorities for capacity building and training to support regulators in transforming food regulatory systems toward greater innovation readiness.
- Determine how lessons generated through individual pilot assessments can be generalized into practical regulatory guidance and tools applicable to a broader range of innovative ingredients.
- Advance the structure, priorities and governance of GFIRN, including its role in supporting the Asian initiative and its potential contribution to GFoRII.
- Explore opportunities for sharing the Asian experience with other regions, particularly the Middle East, and support the development of related regional approaches to food regulatory innovation.