



APEC AND ITS LINK WITH FOOD SAFETY

On May 13, 2017, the 6th version of the Food Safety Cooperation Forum took place in Ha Noi, Vietnam, where follow-up work was conducted on the goals and objectives on food safety and the priorities were set for future work. In this opportunity, the Chilean Food Safety and Quality Agency (ACHIPIA) presented the progress achieved in the projects that is involved.

1. Background

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional economic forum whose objective is to generate greater prosperity for the region through the promotion of a balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and safe growth; accelerating the regional economic integration.

There are 21 member economies that participates in APEC, one of them is Chile. APEC is the world's most dynamic economic region, representing 40% of the world's population, 57% of world's gross domestic product (GDP) and 49% of global trade.

These 21 economies work in collaboration to promote free, open trade and the establishment of a great regional community to overcome together the social and economic challenges of development. APEC's work has three fundamental pillars:

- 1) Trade and Investment Liberalization and Facilitation Account (TILF).
- 2) Trade Facilitation.
- 3) Economic and Technical Cooperation (ECOTECH).

The APEC process is mainly conducted by the Leader's Meeting, that gathers every year the 21 leaders from the APEC economies. From this meeting, a declaration is enacted which guides APEC's annual work.

The activities and projects are managed by the Senior Official's Meeting – SOM through four Committees, which in turn holds subcommittees, expert consultation groups and working groups that conduct APEC's activities and projects. These committees are:

- Committee on ECOTECH.
- Economic Committee.
- Budget and Management Committee.
- **Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI).**

It is the CTI that has direct relationship to food safety, since it has the **Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC)** which contains the **Food Safety Cooperation Forum - FSCF**.

➤ **Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF)**

The FSCF is a regulators forum that was formally established in Australia, 2007. In that opportunity, member economies agreed to collaborate in the creation of solid food safety systems that allows reaching the objectives of international harmonization, improve public health and trade facilitation, in alignment with the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement, from the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The strategical goals of this forum are:

- Transparent information-sharing and communication networks that provide accurate and timely information to consumers and producers on food safety.
- Food safety regulatory systems within economies, including food inspection/assurance and certification systems that are consistent with members' rights and obligations under the SPS Measures and the TBT Agreements of the WTC; and are harmonized, to the extent possible, with international standards (such as Codex, OIE, IPPC).

- Enhanced skills and human resource capacities to enable the development of national food safety regulatory frameworks that are harmonized to the extent possible, with international standards.

2. Chilean food safety projects financed by APEC

a) **Facilitating Trade through Updates on Food Safety Regulatory Standards of APEC Economies**

In 2015, ACHIPIA executed this project which consisted in sharing the updates and new regulations related to food safety within the APEC region recently. Its objectives were:

- Enhance understanding of the updates on food safety regulatory standards of the APEC economies with the most transformative changes.
- Develop recommendations/best practice on how APEC economies should align their food safety standards and conformity assessment for mutual recognition of products and services to improve their food safety standards, facilitate trade and promote economic integration of the region.
- Share the manner in which APEC economies are dealing with emerging food safety challenges, in order to identify the similarities and differences on this matter in the region.

b) **Coordinated Research Initiative for the Implementation of Antimicrobial Resistance Control Strategies**

Also in 2015, ACHIPIA and the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences of Universidad de Chile (FAVET), developed this project that set the path forward to establish an of Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System in the short term for the APEC economies. The objectives of the project were:

- Enhance awareness, skills and knowledge in the field of AMR, with a multisectorial and comprehensive approach, considering the context of each participant APEC economy.
- Strengthen technical competence of scientific and government representatives working in areas related with AMR, in order to establish priorities, improve monitoring and establish surveillance systems based on harmonized and standardized methodologies.

- Increase understanding of the control strategies of emergence and spread of AMR in order to improve economies' control measures and regulatory oversight of this hazard and transfer these measures to the food producing industry, especially small and medium enterprises; reinforcing the need of counting with a harmonized criteria and methodologies among APEC economies.
- Build competency and capacity in AMR surveillance and encouraging the implementation of monitoring plans using the skills and knowledge acquired by each of the APEC economies that take part in the project.

c) **Facilitating Trade through the Strengthening of Food Safety Emergency Systems of APEC Economies**

Since 2016 Chile has been working on this project that wants to strengthen food safety emergency systems considering FSCF priorities and previous work. The main objectives of this project are:

- Improve the capacity in food safety emergency preparedness and response through enhancing understanding of the regulatory structure, protocols, international recommendations and experiences of APEC economies.
- Discuss and agree the development of principles for food safety emergency preparedness and response plans, taking into consideration international recommendations, food trade and the heterogeneity of APEC economies.
- Elaborate a set of recommendations for cooperation among APEC economies for the development, harmonization and strengthening of food safety emergency preparedness and response plans.

3. Information sources

- <http://www.apec.org/>
- <http://fscf-ptin.apec.org/>
- <https://www.direcon.gob.cl/apec/>