

APEC and Food Security

The economies of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) are working together to improve food security -- the availability of sufficient and affordable supplies of food needed for the region's population to enjoy productive lives. APEC members are deeply concerned about the continuing impact of volatile food prices on the well-being of citizens across the Asia-Pacific region, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.

APEC has been an active venue for cooperation on food and agriculture issues and is well-positioned to help address current and emerging food security challenges in the region. Reflecting their commitment to market-led growth and economic openness, APEC members are working to foster the development and growth of the agricultural sector, increase food and agriculture trade, and promote the development and adoption of new technologies. Through technical cooperation and knowledge sharing, APEC helps economies to reach their full potential by building the capacity of people and governments.

APEC Promotes Agricultural Sector Growth and Productivity

APEC works to promote the growth and productivity of the agricultural sector in the Asia-Pacific. This includes initiatives that:

- Foster investment and finance in the agricultural sector, including rural microfinance.
- Raise awareness of environmentally sustainable agricultural methods, including improved land management, organic farming, and use of advanced technologies.
- Help economies to learn food storage, processing, and management methods that will allow more food to reach people without spoiling.
- Help APEC members build well-functioning markets and regulatory frameworks for sustaining robust agricultural sectors.
- Improve surveillance and control of pests and diseases that harm agricultural production.
- Foster improvements in worker health and safety, agricultural inspection, and agricultural education and training.

APEC Promotes Food Trade

APEC is committed to expanding regional food trade as an important means for providing food for the people of the Asia-Pacific region and for promoting prosperity in rural areas.

- APEC has given consistent and valuable support for the successful conclusion of WTO Doha Development Agenda negotiations.
- At the 2008 meeting of the Ministers Responsible for Trade, APEC members recognized the importance of avoiding export restrictions on food, as they may prolong and deepen the severity of the food crisis by putting further pressure on global food prices and discouraging the agricultural investment needed to increase further production.
- APEC is examining the impact of economic liberalisation on agriculture, with the goal of helping regional economies to better adapt to and thrive in the global marketplace for food. APEC economies seek to learn from the experiences of other APEC members to develop better policies for fostering healthy agricultural sectors.
- APEC is also working actively to help ensure that food products traded in the region are safe for consumption. This includes initiatives to enhance regulatory, inspection and certification systems; strengthen technical and human resource capacity; foster adoption of international food safety standards; and promote regional communication on food safety.

APEC Promotes the Development and Adoption of New Agricultural Technologies

APEC is a valuable venue for fostering dialogue and cooperation on agricultural technology, which is critical to meeting short and long-term food security challenges. This includes efforts to:

- Improve farmers' income and productive capacities through agricultural technology transfer and training. Past APEC seminars have focused on sharing experiences, identifying strategies to improve production and return on agricultural products, and strengthening systems for improving agricultural best practices.
- Create an overall environment that fosters agricultural research and development, as well as investment and trade in technology.

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- Foster development of agricultural biotechnology, including developing regulatory frameworks, sharing technology, encouraging investment, and strengthening public confidence in biotechnology.

APEC: A Forum for Cooperation

APEC advances regional dialogue and cooperation on a host of food and agriculture related issues through several groups and initiatives within the APEC structure, including:

Agriculture Technical Cooperation Working Group (ATCWG): The ATCWG facilitates cooperation to enhance agriculture's contribution to the region's economic growth and social well-being. This includes activities to foster sharing of technical expertise and experience, finance and investment, environmental sustainability, agricultural technology, and pest and disease control.

High-Level Policy Dialogue on Agricultural Biotechnology (HLPDAB): The HLPDAB brings together high-level representatives from the public and private sectors to discuss biotechnology policy issues and to promote the use of crops developed using biotechnology.

Subcommittee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC): A subgroup of the Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI), the SCSC is the focal point for efforts to harmonise regional standards regarding the safety of food and consumer products. The SCSC oversees the Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF) which manages food safety work among various APEC groups.

Fisheries Working Group (FWG): APEC economies account for 70 percent of global consumption of fish products and 90 percent of global aquaculture production. The FWG facilitates cooperation to promote the sustainability and vitality of the fishing and aquaculture industries, including the implementation of best practices and the expansion of the seafood trade.

APEC Food System (AFS): Proposed in 1998 by the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), the AFS sought to establish a strategic framework for comprehensively addressing food issues in APEC based on the principles of fostering the development and growth of the rural sector, increasing agriculture trade, and promoting the development and dissemination of technological advances. APEC has carried out a variety of activities consistent with AFS recommendations over the last decade.

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