



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

[1 September 2023]

BACKGROUND

Motivated by a desire for increased food security, sustainability, bio-restoration, and zoonotic-disease mitigation, cellular agriculture has been undertaking a transition from small-scale R&D to global commercialisation over the past decade. At present, more than 150 companies are focused on the production of cultivated food products around the world, ranging from beef, chicken, seafood, and pork to more specialised entries such as foie gras and caviar. The industry holds the potential to not only contribute to sustainable global food systems, but also to provide consumers with a wider range of delicious and climate-resilient foods.

With the rapid advancements in cultivated food technology over the past 10 years, many companies have, or will soon possess, the capacity to go to market. Demonstrating that this process can be executed safely and efficiently is now a primary consideration for the industry. Yet, unlike the United States or European Union, regulations in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region are not harmonised under one umbrella association or entity comparable to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) or the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)/United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

As such, this MOU serves as a commitment by the signatories to establish an industry forum that will bring together key stakeholders (i.e., governmental agencies in different jurisdictions, industry associations, think tanks, and companies) to support the coordination of regulatory developments across the APAC region.

PURPOSE

To effectively bring cultivated food products to market, stakeholders need to work as a group through cross-border coordination and robust dialogue to understand our neighbours' needs and support regional regulatory developments. From an industry perspective, coordination will improve the efficiency and transparency of regulatory processes, which will in turn drive growth and commercialisation efforts.

The creation of this new forum will aim to support the following efforts:

- Facilitate the coordination of regulatory efforts within APAC to build an effective cultivated food regulatory environment, minimising hurdles and bottlenecks.
- Establish a formal mechanism for continuous and systematic cross-border dialogue between companies, industry associations, think tanks, and governmental agencies in different APAC jurisdictions. Our aim is to transparently share information, collaborate on inputs such as data or safety assessments, and provide open discussions and viewpoints between partners across the region where we can.
- Mutual recognition of coordinated regulatory frameworks in APAC (i.e., alignment on criteria for safety testing, labelling, and inspections), which would significantly reduce the time and resources needed for regulatory approval, while minimising trade barriers and cost to consumers. These efforts could potentially culminate in the development of trust between authorities to create “fast lanes” for approval of companies already authorised for sale in another regional country.
- Ensure that cultivated foods have the ability to adhere to religious rulings and standards (i.e., halal and kosher), where coordinated efforts are needed to build consensus on this topic across the region.
- Standardise regulatory approaches on novel topics that have yet to be addressed, such as hybrid product definitions and novel cell cultivation technologies.
- Coordinate information across borders to all participants transparently, bringing each participating member up to date with current developments and trends.

COORDINATION OF OPERATIONALISATION OF ACTIVITIES

In addition to the initial signatories of this MOU, more companies, organisations, and other entities may be added to the MOU at a future date provided that they are approved by both the Good Food Institute APAC (GFI APAC) and APAC Society for Cellular Agriculture (APAC-SCA). All participating stakeholders will also be informed of any new signatories upon their approval.

COMMUNICATION

Signatories of this MOU agree that any activities and decisions of the industry forum will be publicly communicated through GFI APAC and APAC-SCA as the coordinating organisations, to ensure it is done in a manner consistent with all forum stakeholder inputs. Other MOU signatories will not speak publicly on behalf of the industry forum. The industry forum will be conducted under ‘Chatham House’ rules, and individual stakeholders will not be identified in relation to publicly communicated outcomes without their prior approval.

For the purposes of facilitating cooperation, if there are changes in a company's structure or other updates that make revisions to this MOU necessary, stakeholders should contact the primary representatives from APAC-SCA and GFI APAC, as identified below:

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DURATION

This at-will MOU was developed and facilitated by GFI APAC and APAC-SCA and announced publicly during the 2023 Singapore International Agri-Food Week. Nothing in this MOU is intended to create legally binding rights or obligations. Rather, its language is understood to set the stage for future collaboration and coordination by the signatories involved. The cooperation under this MOU will commence on the date of signature and shall remain in effect unless modified or terminated by both facilitating parties.

SIGNATORIES



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