

APEC High Level Policy Dialogue on Agricultural Biotechnology (HLPDAB) STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2024

RATIONALE:

The APEC High Level Policy Dialogue on Agricultural Biotechnology (the Policy Dialogue) reports directly to the APEC Senior Officials. Accordingly, the Policy Dialogue needs Senior Official approval of a Work Plan. Senior Officials have previously approved five Strategic Plans [2004-2006, 2007-2009, 2010-2012, 2013-2015, 2016-2018 and 2019-2021]. The Strategic Plan for 2022-2024 is an extension of the strategic plan 2019-2021 approved by Senior Officials.

The Policy Dialogue has noted its achievements against the goals set forth in the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan. The Policy Dialogue has also realized the importance of developing policies that are responsive to global challenges, such as climate change, food security, and emerging diseases. The 2022-2024 Strategic Plan seeks to address these challenges, with an objective to align with the Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the Aotearoa Plan of Action, as well as with the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030 and its Implementation Plan.

Following the guidance of the Putrajaya Vision 2040 to foster “an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community by 2040, for the prosperity of all our people and the future generations” as well as the implementation plan of the Putrajaya Vision, Aotearoa Plan of Action, to “ensure lasting food security, food safety and improved nutrition for all, as well as reducing food waste and loss in the region by promoting agricultural and food trade, agricultural sustainability and innovation, and implementing the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030” , policymakers use the Policy Dialogue to promote the development of science-based regulatory frameworks, share information on innovative agriculture technologies, encourage investments and strengthen public confidence in biotechnology to increase agricultural productivity and protect the environment, facilitate trade, and enhance food security.

BACKGROUND:

In 2001, APEC Senior Officials affirmed the benefits of biotechnology and called for the establishment of a High-Level Policy Dialogue on Agricultural Biotechnology. The purpose of the Policy Dialogue is for policymakers in APEC’s 21-member economies to exchange information and promote public policy development to support the responsible use and informed adoption of agricultural biotechnology as one tool to increase agricultural productivity, protect the environment, facilitate trade, and promote food security. The Policy Dialogue is a forum for APEC member economies to discuss issues of common interest regarding agricultural biotechnology, including the safe introduction of biotechnology products and public acceptance of these products.

The Policy Dialogue meeting was hosted by Thailand in August 2022. APEC economy regulators and policymakers convened to support APEC member goals, including to enhance

scientific knowledge, and understanding of new innovations in plant breeding, as well as to share resources, experiences and lessons learned to facilitate science-based policies and regulatory decision-making and enhance public understanding, awareness, and confidence in the use of biotechnology. In 2022 through 2024, the Policy Dialogue will conduct a sequence of activities that aim to respond to APEC Leader’s Declarations, Ministerial and High-Level Statements, and decisions of Senior Officials that emphasize the importance of regional and global food security, sustainability, the advancement of science-based regulatory structures, and economic prosperity, and that respond to the goals set forth in the Aotearoa Plan of Action, the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030, and the Roadmap Implementation Plan. The Policy Dialogue will continue to implement these activities in order to enhancing food security, environmental sustainability, and economic prosperity in the APEC region.

OBJECTIVES:

Objective 1 Strengthen mechanisms to continue information exchange on economies’ experience with agricultural biotechnology to achieve food security, environmental sustainability, and economic prosperity.

Activities/Deliverables:

- a. The Policy Dialogue will serve as an expert group and source of knowledge on agricultural biotechnology for APEC economies. (Coordinator: APEC Secretariat)
- b. Update contact List of APEC economies focal points on the APEC Agricultural Biotechnology website. (Coordinator: APEC Secretariat)
- c. Update the APEC Agricultural Biotechnology Website. (Coordinator: APEC Secretariat, Member Economies) These updates should include information about national regulations, related policies and instruments, all activities and updates from APEC economies. APEC economies are invited to share information via the web board.
- d. Annual Meeting held at either the APEC Food Ministerial or a Senior Officials Meeting (Coordinator: Host APEC Economy Member) to include workshops and concept papers. Continue building relationships among Policy Dialogue members while exchanging information regarding the responsible use, development, and adoption of agricultural biotechnologies. These information exchanges will include how biotechnology applications in plants, animals, and microorganisms can help meet future resource challenges while improving farmers’ welfare. The Policy Dialogue will coordinate with other agricultural working groups (PPFS, ATCWG, OFWG) for information sharing and to avoid duplication of work.
- e) Technological Missions. Conduct visits to research facilities and institutions that would enable stakeholders and policymakers to better understand upcoming technologies and products under development that could help achieve agricultural goals. Enhancing awareness of upcoming innovations provides the information necessary to implement policies that best enable the safe use of agriculture biotechnology products.”

Objective 2 Continuously promote transparent, predictable, science-based, risk-proportionate, and functioning regulatory systems to support the development, application, and trade of innovative agricultural biotechnologies for the benefit of APEC member economies.

Activities/Deliverables:

a. Promote understanding, best practices, and confidence in APEC economy regulatory frameworks for agricultural biotechnology by sharing knowledge at Policy Dialogue meetings and workshops. (Coordinator: APEC Member Economies) (Coordinator: Sponsoring Economies and Host Economy)

b. Build upon best practices and the work of international fora to promote greater alignment of domestic policies and regulatory frameworks for agricultural biotechnology among APEC economies. If appropriate, at a Policy Dialogue meeting or workshop, hold a session on current work/findings/sharing platforms by other international fora or APEC member economies biotechnology. (Coordinator: Host Economy)

c. As appropriate, remind APEC member economies of relevant resources on approved agricultural biotechnology products and science-based regulatory policies and frameworks, which facilitate acceptance and trade. (Coordinator: APEC Member Economies, APEC secretariat)

Objective 3 Facilitate the management of regulatory differences by endeavoring to develop solutions to global challenges to innovative agricultural biotechnologies—including trade-related issues—and improve the ability of APEC economies to communicate effectively about these issues.

Activities/Deliverables:

a. Share information on production methods and products developed using agricultural biotechnology that can help address the challenges of making food and feed production systems more resilient to environmental challenges, emerging diseases, and a post-COVID-19 recovery. Use relevant Policy Dialogue resources to share this information. (Coordinator: Member Economies)

b. Promote mechanisms and discussions for collaboration and sharing information and experiences among member economies to address common challenges including low-level presence; asynchronous approvals; coexistence of different agricultural production systems; and risk and science communication. APEC members may share their experiences, including participation in other international fora, at Policy Dialogue meetings and workshops. (Coordinator: Member Economies)

c. Share information on the alignment of similarities and differences between APEC member economies' regulatory policies, frameworks, and guidelines for agricultural biotechnology. (Coordinator: Member Economies)

d. Collaboratively develop a shared set of principles for participating economies in enhancing regulatory alignment for evaluating and approving products of agricultural biotechnology. (Coordinator: Member Economies)