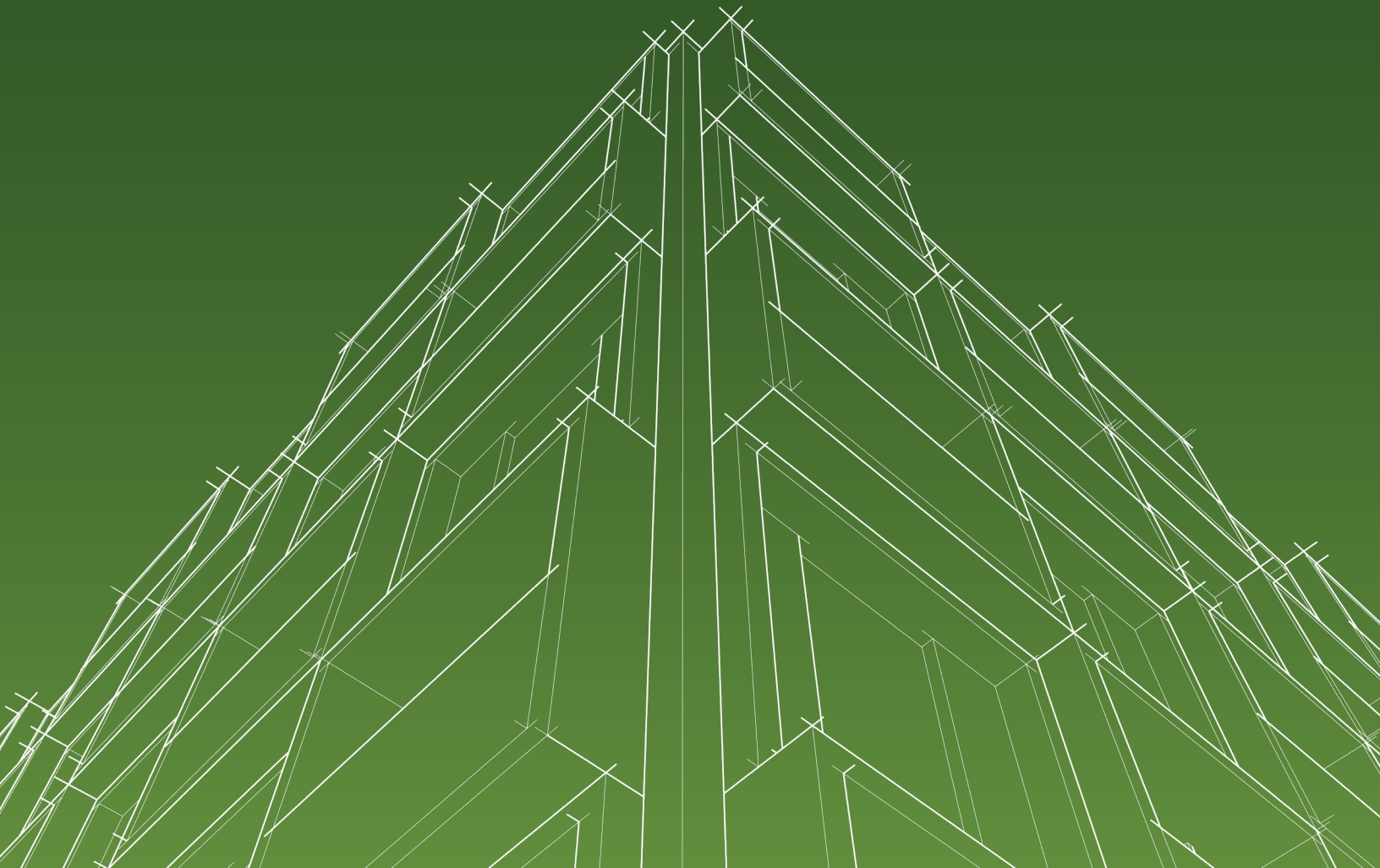


AN ABAC CANADA PROJECT

The Future of Food Security in the Asia Pacific:

Insights from
Business Leaders



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Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed throughout the report are those of the author and interview participants and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of ABAC or APEC. As a report published by ABAC Canada, the report is only available in English, the official working language of APEC.



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ABOUT ABAC

The APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) was created by the APEC Economic Leaders in November 1995 to provide business perspectives on specific areas of cooperation to APEC Leaders, Ministers, and Senior Officials. ABAC comprises of up to three members of the private sector from each economy who are appointed by their respective Leaders.

For more information, please visit:

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ABOUT THE ASIA PACIFIC FOUNDATION OF CANADA

The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF Canada) is an independent not-for-profit organization focused on Canada's relations with Asia. APF Canada is dedicated to strengthening ties between Canada and Asia through its research, education, and convening activities. APF Canada is the Canadian Secretariat for several APEC networks, including the APEC Business Advisory Council, Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, and serves as one of Canada's designated APEC Study Centres.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With its members collectively accounting for [48% of global trade and home to 38% of the world's population](#), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has an important role in facilitating economic growth to realize global food security. As a consensus-based forum, APEC is uniquely placed to incorporate and integrate the voices of the private sector, who act as the farmers, producers, manufacturers, innovators, traders, and sellers along the ever-complex global food value chain.

Acknowledging the integral role of the private sector in trade, the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) was established in 1995, tasked with providing business perspectives for APEC policymakers. Over the past three decades, ABAC has been actively involved in APEC food security efforts and in 2024, the ABAC Food Security Work Plan (FSWP) introduced an interview series to capture the perspectives of businesses involved along the APEC food value chain.

Under Peru's chairmanship in 2024, the theme of "[Empower. Include. Grow.](#)" identified the promotion of food security as a priority area to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth for resilient development. In 2024, ABAC's FSWP was established to complement and parallel the work pursued by the APEC Policy Partnership on Food Security (PPFS), which furthered

the discussions on section 18 b) of the Implementation Plan for the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030; the "review of the functioning of the terms of reference of the PPFS to ensure a meaningful partnership with ABAC and the broader private sector."

With the PPFS terms of reference review slated for completion in 2025, this report aims to meaningfully contribute to the discussions by exemplifying the broad perspectives of the private sector that drives innovation, investment, and trade in the APEC food system to further regional economic growth. Insights were collected through a series of interviews with 10 private sector stakeholders — from startups to large conglomerates — that have operations in more than 16 APEC economies, to understand private sector perspectives on priorities, challenges, and opportunities to achieve regional food security.

This report identifies the key insights of private sector stakeholders to provide a set of recommendations to be considered by APEC policymakers, committees, and working groups for future activities and initiatives on food security. With growing challenges to secure a sustainable food system, the involvement of diverse private sector stakeholders at the forefront of the APEC food industry will be crucial.

Five key insights gleaned from interviews with private sector stakeholders active in the food industry include:

- There is an imperative to use new technologies and innovation during this time of global uncertainty;
- Partnerships based on communication and transparency will become more salient;
- Modern frameworks to navigate regulatory diversity are needed;
- There is an important role for government financing and support; and
- APEC must work towards building greater public awareness of non-trade activities.

Drawing from the private sector insights on how APEC efforts may contribute to positively impact businesses active in the food industry, this report makes the following three recommendations for future APEC food security initiatives:

1. Foster sustainable and inclusive innovation to modernize the food value chain.

- **Modernize regulatory regimes** to ensure the efficient and timely adoption of new technologies, such as through the development of sandboxes to enhance flexibility while maintaining consumer protections.
- **Prioritize investment in food innovation and infrastructure** to meet the growing regional demand for food.
- **Ensure the integration and inclusion of groups with untapped economic potential** in existing supply chains by capitalizing on innovative technologies.

2. Create harmonized frameworks, standards, and principles to streamline trade.

- **Lead global standards-setting for niche and innovative areas** such as future or novel foods.
- **Adequately consider the potential effects of trade-distorting subsidies**, which may significantly impact competition.
- **Continue advocacy for free trade agreements** to reduce trade barriers and ensure food affordability and diversity throughout the region.

3. Establish multistakeholder dialogues to align food security priorities.

- **Create dialogues where stakeholders can openly and candidly exchange information** to build stronger partnerships.
- **Ensure meaningful co-operation** by including less economically-powerful actors, including consumers, MSMEs, and marginalized communities.
- **Establish stronger frameworks** to align food security policies, share best practices, and address challenges, to help raise the visibility of APEC as a leader in global food security.

Food insecurity currently affects the day-to-day lives of more than 194 million people throughout the APEC region. Amidst increasing demand for sufficient, safe, and nutritious food, mitigating shared challenges to reach global zero-hunger goals requires a whole-of-society approach.

INTRODUCTION

At the 1996 World Food Summit, food security was [defined](#) as “when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy lifestyle.” This definition encompasses the four main dimensions of addressing food insecurity, namely, the availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability of food.

Despite global efforts to tackle global food insecurity, in 2023, it was estimated that between [713 and 757 million people globally were undernourished](#) — an increase of approximately 152 million people compared to 2019 levels. Further compounded by global uncertainties including the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and environmental challenges, global zero-hunger goals requires a whole-of-society approach.

As the largest economic forum in the Asia Pacific, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has an important role to play. It has a combined population of more than three billion people, accounts for [almost half of all global trade](#), and is home to major food producers, manufacturers, exporters, and importers. As such, APEC is well-placed to facilitate economic growth and co-operation to realize global food security.



Acknowledging the increasing food insecurity and malnutrition challenges globally, we recall The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024 Report, which found that between 713 and 757 million people, or around one in eleven, may have faced hunger in 2023, and that global prevalence of undernourishment has persisted at nearly the same level for three consecutive years. Therefore, we reaffirm our intention to support and improve access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food to ensure food security in the region.”

- [9TH APEC FOOD SECURITY MINISTERIAL MEETING STATEMENT](#) (AUGUST 18, 2024)



In the 2023 APEC Perceptions Survey, public respondents identified, “ensuring food security and safety” as one of the top priorities to be addressed by multilateral organizations, including APEC. As an issue affecting the day-to-day lives of more than 194 million people in the APEC region, policymakers in APEC economies are making great progress with strategic directions and visions, recognizing the importance of meaningful private sector participation in formulating and implementing projects and initiatives affecting the APEC food value chain.

	Number of moderately or severely food-insecure people (millions)		Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the total population (%)		
	2014-2016	2021-2023	2014-2016	2021-2023	
AUSTRALIA	2.6	3.4	10.8%	12.9%	▲
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
CANADA	N/A	3.3	N/A	8.5%	
CHILE	1.9	3.4	10.8%	17.6%	▲
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA	NR	NR	NR	NR	
HONG KONG, CHINA	NR	NR	NR	NR	
INDONESIA	15.5	13.6	6%	4.9%	▼
JAPAN	3.3	6.8	2.6%	5.5%	▲
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	2.4	3	4.8%	5.7%	▲
MALAYSIA	5.4	5.7	17.4%	16.7%	▼
MEXICO	30	26.4	24.9%	20.7%	▼
NEW ZEALAND	0.5	0.6	10%	16.4%	▲
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	N/A	5.8	N/A	57.3%	
PERU	11.4	17.6	37.2%	51.7%	▲
THE PHILIPPINES	N/A	51	N/A	44.1%	
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION	11.9	6.7	8.2%	4.6%	▼
SINGAPORE	0.2	0.5	2.8%	7.7%	▲
CHINESE TAIPEI	NR	NR	NR	NR	
THAILAND	N/A	5.2	N/A	7.2%	
USA	34	30.7	10.5%	9.1%	▼
VIET NAM	N/A	10.6	N/A	10.8%	

N/A = Not Applicable

NR = Not Reported

Source: The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024, UN FAO

To formalize private sector participation within APEC fora, the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) was established in 1995 and tasked with providing business perspectives and recommendations to advise APEC officials. Since its creation, ABAC has been involved in APEC food security efforts; in 2024, the ABAC Food Security Work Plan introduced an interview series with the aim of capturing the perspectives of food producers, innovators, and exporters involved in the APEC food value chain on how to better achieve food security in the region.

For the current report, such insights were collected through interviews with 10 private sector stakeholders that are active in more than 16 APEC economies. The report presents the key findings from those interviews and highlights priority areas, challenges, and opportunities, in hopes of informing the future priorities of food-related initiatives within APEC fora.

Initial Findings: Stakeholder Profiles

5 Headquarters 16+ Business Markets



10 Organisations and enterprises

- Sustainable food cultivators
- Agri-commodity and food solutions provider
- Agri-food conglomerate
- Global innovation cluster
- Global consulting firm

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The private sector is an integral part of the APEC food system, as food producers, transporters, innovators, investors, retailers, and businesses, they are all crucial to achieving global zero-hunger goals. While profitability is necessary for commercial viability and long-term operability, for all the agri-food stakeholders interviewed for this report, contributing to food security and sustainability is also increasingly central to their business operations, especially in a region highly vulnerable to growing climate and geopolitical challenges.

Each of the following subsections focuses on a key insight that emerged through the interviews:

1. The imperative of new technologies and innovation in a time of global uncertainty;
2. The salience of partnerships based on communication and transparency;
3. The need for modern frameworks to navigate regulatory diversity;
4. The demand for government financing and support; and
5. Working towards building greater APEC awareness.

1. THE IMPERATIVE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION IN A TIME OF GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY

While the global food system has been relatively stable over the past two decades, in recent years, traditional food industries have suffered from increased volatility due to climate change, environmental degradation, and shifting geopolitical contexts. Changes in weather patterns have reduced crop yields, and fishing has seen a similar decline in stocks due to destructive and unsustainable practices, among other issues. While some companies have incorporated new methods such as fish farming, the problems of monocropping, disease management, and genetic issues persist in both traditional agriculture and fish farming. According to one Singapore-based startup focused on cultivated seafood, this has made “zero-return years a norm in the industry.”

At the heart of the problem is the need to meet growing consumer demand while navigating the increased volatility in climate and supply chains, both of which impact food production and trade. This challenge, however, has opened doors for new and innovative technologies that can increase productivity, provide solutions to existing issues, and elevate alternative sources of food products.

Innovation is at the forefront of creating efficiencies in traditional food industries, with many industry leaders incorporating new technologies to achieve global sustainability goals. The utilization of technologies can be seen throughout the food value chain, as noted by the stakeholders interviewed for this report, who specifically mentioned precision crop management systems, disease monitoring robots, waste-reduction software, and machine learning technologies for biodiversity valorization and mapping.

Technology is equally important for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), as it fosters inclusive and sustainable growth. In Peru, for example, where the informality rate — defined by the [International Monetary Fund](#) as activities that have market value but are not formally registered — is estimated to be [over 75 per cent](#), many people are suffering from poverty, high rates of anemia, and nutritional deficiency, especially in rural areas and marginal spaces of cities. With approximately 25 per cent of that country’s active labour force working in agriculture, the use of technology is viewed as one solution to alleviate poverty. According to a Peruvian agricultural business association, introducing MSMEs and other small-scale actors to technologies and modern agricultural practices could increase their productivity and better integrate them into existing supply chains, thereby bringing them to the “next level of [the] economy.”

In addition to the positive impact technology may have on traditional industries and MSMEs, new and innovative ideas are also emerging rapidly to respond to shared global challenges. One area that has garnered attention from both traditional food companies and governments is future foods, which include novel foods or alternative proteins such as cultivated meats.



Despite hesitancy from traditional industries, an element of realism is kicking in with climate change and population growth. These are issues that must be addressed in the future and economies have to start looking for alternative sourcing.”

– U.S.-BASED BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

By using innovative technologies, future food products can be a sustainable alternative that can help fill the growing gaps in demand by providing stable supplies as they are mostly unaffected by environmental challenges. “New technologies can be geography-agnostic and climate-agnostic,” observed one U.S.-based alternative protein startup.



Existing production is going to be increasingly more volatile and unstable because of climate change and a handful of other things. We should build resilience into the system by diversifying production.”

– SINGAPORE-BASED CULTIVATED SEAFOOD STARTUP

These technologies can also be scaled internationally, giving economies the opportunity to expand their domestic food production. Current patterns of relying heavily on food imports can have significant environmental effects and make the importers vulnerable to disruption, as was exemplified during the COVID-19 pandemic. The diversification of food supply chains, using innovative methods like alternative proteins, can strengthen supply chains and stabilize supplies while facilitating the creation of a next-generation food system.

With their rapidly growing populations, the demand for food products in several APEC economies is expected to grow significantly, making increased productivity vital to feeding the region. As one stakeholder from a Canada-based protein consortium stated, the next 10 years will be critical to laying the groundwork to meet this demand for the next 40–50 years.



2. THE SALIENCE OF PARTNERSHIPS BASED ON COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

To provide nutritious, sufficient, and accessible food for all, collaboration along the entire value chain is essential. From small-scale farmers to food exporters and retailers, partnerships among different players can enhance communication, leading to greater food security.

Throughout the private sector, the creation of business groupings — consortiums, advisory councils, or chambers — exemplifies the demand for organizational structures that can represent a broad array of voices, especially from business.

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The public sector can better engage with private companies not by targeting the individual company but through trade organizations that can facilitate the dialogue."

– U.S.-BASED ALTERNATIVE PROTEIN STARTUP

These groups often work hand in hand with governments, providing on-the-ground knowledge to ensure that new policies reflect the realities of day-to-day business activities.

In the case of innovative companies that use new technologies to produce goods and services, several stakeholders reiterated the importance of fostering greater understanding with governments.

Because new technologies and products can be difficult to understand, sharing information with policymakers and regulators can raise the sense of comfort and reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation, helping to make risk assessment more efficient and enable the creation of new frameworks.

The stakeholders interviewed for this report expressed the need for governments to be more open and proactive, especially in novel areas that may require conversations beyond traditional public consultations to build understanding. One Canada-based global consultancy highlighted the need for greater “openness and candour” — that is, the creation of a space for candid conversations in which policymakers can learn from their private sector counterparts. While acknowledging governments’ role as rule-makers, stakeholders also called on government to view the private sector as a partner rather than a vendor or ‘interested party’.

At the same time, communication can foster collaboration and trust, especially with existing bodies, lobbies, and traditional industries, to allow for traditional and innovative businesses to co-exist.

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Currently, there is insufficient information sharing between the government and private companies, especially as technologies used become even more complex."

– SINGAPORE-BASED CULTIVATED SEAFOOD STARTUP



In many cases, business consortiums or innovation incubators facilitate such cross-industry collaboration and act as facilitators of cross-border partnerships, helping domestic companies expand overseas. In the interviews, stakeholders also identified the importance of establishing partnerships with local partners, who can help accelerate regulatory acceptance in foreign markets while providing insights that help exporters fine-tune their products or technologies to meet local market challenges and tailor their product to specific demographics.

This is especially important for expansion into areas with marginalized groups such as Indigenous Peoples or informal workers, which requires businesses to understand cultural nuances and social issues, and to conduct business by building meaningful relationships based on transparency.

Building trust with consumers through the communication of safety and tangible benefits is also



Local partners will understand the geography and have existing relationships, which helps in gaining regulatory approval.”

– U.S.-BASED ALTERNATIVE PROTEINS STARTUP

important in creating widespread acceptance and the commercialization of new products. In this way, partnerships are key to advancing innovation, and public-private partnerships must consider the multitude of actors along the value chain when establishing inter-industry collaboration and integration to create a more resilient future food system.

3. THE NEED FOR MODERN FRAMEWORKS TO NAVIGATE REGULATORY DIVERSITY



The Asian or APEC market is important given the significant growth in the region. The large population will have a big impact."

– U.S.-BASED ALTERNATIVE PROTEINS STARTUP

For many businesses, the APEC region offers an attractive market for expansion. However, given the diversity of regulations across its 21 economies, businesses must establish collaborative working relationships with countless regulators and adapt their market strategies accordingly. Businesses that operate in various economies are therefore constantly impacted by changes in domestic and local policies. This is especially the case for innovative companies, as existing regulatory regimes for new technologies are often at different stages of maturity and operating along different timelines.

Nevertheless, for many stakeholders this diversity in regulatory regimes is viewed simply as a core feature of trade rather than as an insurmountable challenge.

International businesses are aware of policymakers' priorities and the need to be flexible. While such companies understand that their ability to influence government policies is limited, the stakeholders that contributed insights to this report expressed a desire to participate in conversations that facilitate efficient policy change.

Efficient and expedient policymaking, especially with the adoption of new frameworks, will be a plus for many businesses that require swift and timely regulatory acceptance to remain competitive in new markets. The interviewees recounted the difficulties their businesses have faced in obtaining a licence to operate — a process that can take years — and called for the adoption of more modern models with new technologies to fast-track the process.



The success of our business is to be nimble enough to deal with these changing situations... governments change and when governments change, policies change. Ultimately governments are beholden to the electorate, and the electorate also changes what they want and don't want — so it's the nature of the industry."

– SINGAPORE-BASED SUPPLY CHAIN COMPANY

Without sufficient regulatory regimes, many companies also struggle to enter new markets, even when those markets are well-suited for their products, and instead focus on entering markets where regulations move more rapidly. Because the development and implementation of new policies can take many years, stakeholders emphasized the benefits of harmonized standards or frameworks which may help late adopters implement policies, while simplifying the learning curve for businesses.

Other solutions proposed in the interviews include the adoption of regulatory sandboxes for food innovation to help regulators work hand in hand with companies.

Sandboxes can provide regulators with greater security while also allowing producers to quickly bring products to market and give consumers more choices.

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If we can get to harmonized standards quickly for cultivated foods then we can have many of the countries that are choosing to be later adopters — waiting to see how things pan out in the first few markets — not decide to reinvent the wheel.”

– SINGAPORE-BASED CULTIVATED SEAFOOD STARTUP

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The only way to get answers is to put things in the world and see what happens. It’s impossible to see what would happen and do long-term safety studies pre-market for most products... It would also put regulators out of the position of having to solve every problem upfront.”

– SINGAPORE-BASED CULTIVATED SEAFOOD STARTUP

4. THE DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT FINANCING AND SUPPORT

To set the stage for a sustainable future food system for the next 50 years, businesses say government financing is essential to ensuring food security. According to one estimate, in Canada, there will be a [C\\$25 billion market potential](#) in the proteins industry by 2035. However, capturing this opportunity requires high levels of investment in industrial plant construction to raise processing capacity to meet projected growth.



As we go forward, policy support to assist in the scaling, and the increase in productivity, is pretty key."

– CANADA-BASED PROTEIN CONSORTIUM

Similarly, many economies have large, untapped potential for food production but lack the capacity to deliver on this opportunity. The initial costs to build the infrastructure to support commercialization requires prioritizing the food manufacturing sector in government policy, much like the support that was given to the solar energy sector in the late 2000s and electronic vehicles sector more recently.

For emerging technologies, access to debt financing, low-interest loans, subsidies, or grants is necessary to scale businesses. To date, government financing for innovation has kick-started many new technologies for which capital is often more available. But many companies continue to face challenges in later-stage manufacturing and commercialization, failing to clear the final hurdle of return on capital, especially as costs rise significantly due to the need for infrastructure for large-scale manufacturing or production. For businesses

to contribute to a more sustainable food system, such investments are necessary.

Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of free trade agreements in expanding international market access. While there was an understanding that economies must protect their domestic producers and manufacturers, the affordability and availability of food products can be severely impacted by import taxes or licensing requirements, ultimately affecting people's access to healthy food choices. Assessing the protections of businesses and the wellbeing of domestic consumers is therefore essential.



There is a lot of barriers on trade when you are not part of a free trade agreement... We understand why certain countries would need to have this barrier, because they need to protect their local farmers and manufacturers. But I think the policymakers need to see two sides. The first side is to protect your home market. On the flip side, if you're looking at protecting your home market...your consumer has to pay more when compared to allowing imports from another country, which is less and very competitive in terms of cost..."

– THAI FOOD CONGLOMERATE



Another factor that impacts competition is trade-distorting subsidization, which allows otherwise commercially irrelevant and unprofitable companies to continue dominating markets.

These practices are also often environmentally unsustainable and could hinder innovative businesses from achieving commercialization. Balancing the desire to protect traditional industries with the need to facilitate the growth of innovation and cross-sector collaboration is an area that governments will need to focus on to build a more coherent future food system.



As we make more production capacity, we have to make sure that those incentives are attracting that investment as well and providing incentives in the right way. We cannot overly subsidize because it may cause trouble a few years down the road. But we need to recognize the value in what these sectors can bring into the local economy and implement that cost into the incentive package in order to enhance the investment."

– CANADA-BASED PROTEIN CONSORTIUM

◉ WORKING TOWARDS BUILDING GREATER APEC AWARENESS

As the oldest economic forum in the region, APEC is associated first and foremost with trade, even though it has engaged with other salient issues such as food security.

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As we go forward, policy support to assist in the scaling, and the increase in productivity, is pretty key."

– CANADA-BASED PROTEIN CONSORTIUM

Of the 10 interview respondents, eight said they were unaware of APEC's food security efforts. For many industry actors in the food sector, there is more robust engagement with other international organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank, or World Trade Organization, among others.

However, APEC, with its history, structure, unique membership, and economic focus, may have an important opportunity to lead the food security agenda. While some of

the interviewees raised concerns about the potentially limiting nature of APEC's consensus-based decision-making, they also suggested that the organization could be harnessed to create a more open forum for discussion and standard-setting.

The stakeholders interviewed for this report, all of whom were from leading private sector organizations involved in global supply chains, expressed strong interest in better engaging with APEC food-related initiatives. However, the onus falls on the APEC economies and relevant working groups to effectively and consistently communicate with the broader private sector and public to further the shared APEC food security agenda.

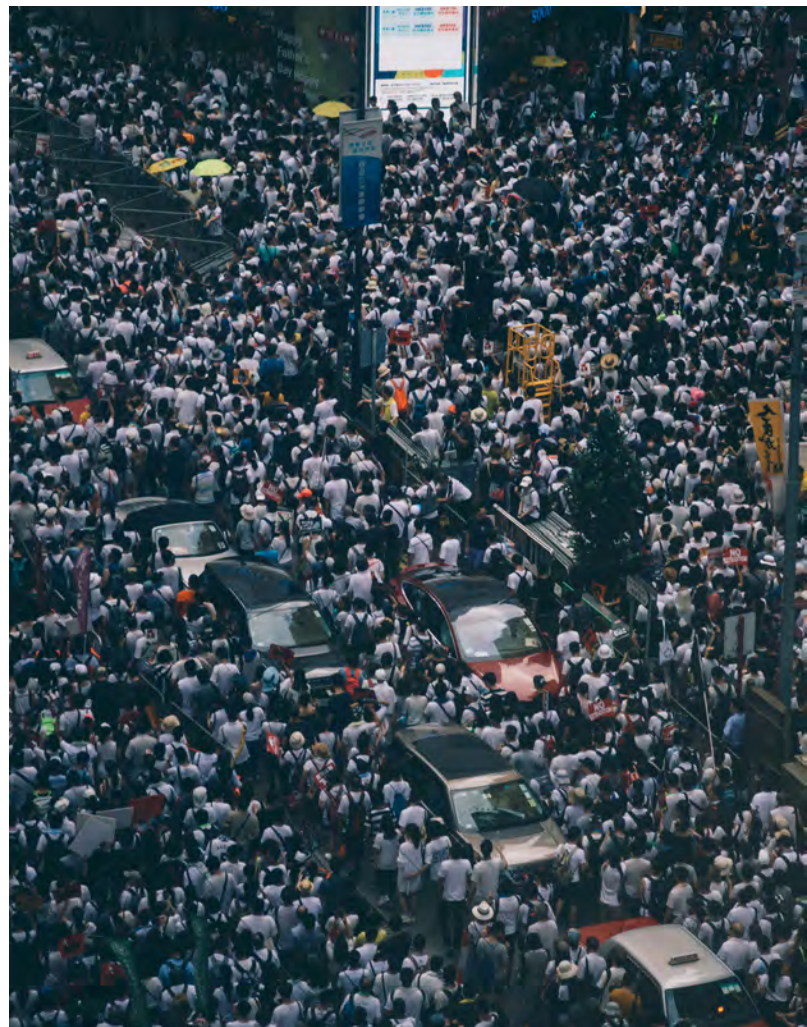
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One of the reasons [for businesses] to engage in an international forum would be if they perceived that significant contributions [could be made to] advance solutions in difficult problems of interest. [Second], if the forums are able to provide an opportunity to learn or contribute to the knowledge of our [stakeholders]...and the ability to help shape thinking."

– CANADA-BASED GLOBAL CONSULTING FIRM

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

With the global population projected to reach 9.7 billion in 2050, providing sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for all will require concerted efforts on many fronts. As a prominent regional trade forum, APEC is well-placed to lead in global food security initiatives. The three recommendations that follow were derived from the insights provided by food industry stakeholders, with the aim of supporting policy makers in advancing the APEC food agenda.



1. FOSTER SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE INNOVATION TO MODERNIZE THE FOOD VALUE CHAIN

Over the past decade, innovative tools such as artificial intelligence, smart technologies, and other digital tools have helped to modernize the food value chain, resulting in greater efficiency and food diversity throughout the APEC region. Yet, policies often lag the fast-paced development of new and innovative products or services. It is therefore essential to modernize the APEC food system by fostering an environment conducive to innovation to help businesses remain competitive, while also providing sufficient safeguards for consumers and marginalized communities. The proposed actionable

items include: **modernizing regulatory regimes** to ensure the efficient and timely adoption of new technologies, such as through the development of sandboxes to enhance flexibility while maintaining consumer protections; **prioritizing investment in food innovation and infrastructure** to meet the growing regional demand for food; and **ensuring the integration and inclusion of groups with untapped economic potential** in existing supply chains by capitalizing on innovative technologies.

2. CREATE HARMONIZED FRAMEWORKS, STANDARDS, AND PRINCIPLES TO STREAMLINE TRADE

While businesses are at the forefront of innovation, policy support to scale operations is necessary for products and services to become more available globally. Businesses recognize the need for governments to respond to various emerging challenges but have called for greater support and understanding to conduct operations and ensure long-term stability. As the largest regional economic forum, APEC can **lead the way in setting global standards for niche and innovative areas** such as

future or novel foods. This will help reduce the burden for companies operating in multiple economies. At the same time, businesses call for **careful consideration of the potential effects of trade-distorting subsidies**, which may significantly impact competition. APEC should also continue **advocating for free trade agreements** to reduce trade barriers and ensure food affordability and diversity throughout the region.

3. ESTABLISH MULTISTAKEHOLDER DIALOGUES TO ALIGN FOOD SECURITY PRIORITIES

As economies continue to pursue global zero-hunger goals, it is important to pursue a whole-of-society approach to food security. From small farmers to large conglomerates, the private sector is involved in all aspects of the food value chain — as producers, transporters, retailers, and innovators. Given their day-to-day interactions and experience, involving the private sector is essential to implementing effective policies in pursuit of food security. The creation of dialogues where stakeholders can **openly and candidly**

exchange information is the first step to building stronger partnerships. Furthermore, to ensure that co-operation is meaningful, the dialogues must **include less economically powerful actors**, including consumers, MSMEs, and marginalized communities. **The establishment of a stronger framework** to align food security policies, share best practices, and address challenges, will help raise the visibility of APEC as a leader in global food security and will be integral to fostering a sustainable and resilient future food system.



ANNEX

ABAC AND FOOD SECURITY

For APEC, food security issues have been pertinent since the forum's establishment in 1989. In 1999, ABAC called for the creation of a [unified APEC Food System](#), that is, a robust regional food system that would more closely link food production, processing, and consumption to meet the region's needs. While the proposed APEC Food System was endorsed at the 1999 APEC Ministerial Meeting, the system failed to gain momentum in the subsequent decade.

However, ABAC's continued engagement on the issue was later acknowledged in the 2010 Niigata Declaration, during the first meeting of APEC ministers responsible for agriculture and food. Recognizing the private sector's central role in food-related issues, the [APEC Policy Partnership on Food Security](#) (PPFS) was established the following year.

To strengthen public-private partnerships, the PPFS, whose membership includes actors from both the public and private sectors, has been heavily involved in APEC's food-related initiatives. In 2021, the PPFS developed the [Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030](#) (Roadmap 2030) in partnership with ministers and other working groups in APEC fora, providing the forum a new mandate for achieving food security in line with APEC's Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the Aotearoa Plan of Action. This was followed, in 2022, by the [Implementation Plan](#) for Roadmap 2030, which utilizes

a holistic approach to food security and emphasizes private sector participation in developing and implementing the workstreams.

In the two years since then, APEC economies have been pursuing, both individually and collectively, initiatives and projects guided by the Roadmap 2030. In 2024, the PPFS, alongside key deliverables, including the [Trujillo Principles for Preventing and Reducing Food Loss and Waste](#), emphasized section 18b) of the Implementation Plan, which calls for the "review of the functioning of the terms of reference of the PPFS to ensure a meaningful partnership with ABAC and the broader private sector."

With a review of the PPFS Terms of Reference slated for late 2025, discussions on how best to engage the private sector are ongoing. While this paper does not directly address the functioning of PPFS's private sector membership, it seeks to highlight a potential pathway for broader private sector participation in shaping policy priorities at APEC.



We promote and support the private sector's role in PPFS, including through ABAC, and emphasize the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors in addressing current and future challenges, with a particular focus on strengthening food security across the region."

– 9TH APEC FOOD SECURITY MINISTERIAL MEETING STATEMENT (AUGUST 18, 2024)

INTERVIEW METHODS AND STAKEHOLDER PROFILES

Between June and August 2024, online interviews were conducted with 10 agri-food stakeholders, most of whom work in the agri-food technologies (ag-tech) sector, to inform discussions on private sector priorities and experiences with public-private partnerships. The average interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and followed a semi-structured interview format, with general guidelines for questions that were amended according to the sector, size, and activity of the interviewee's organization or enterprise.

The 10 organizations and enterprises were headquartered in five APEC economies — Canada, Peru, Singapore, Thailand, and the U.S. — but have business operations, including overseas offices, in 16 of the 21 APEC economies. The size of their companies varied significantly, from small-scale startups and business consortiums to global consulting firms and national conglomerates. The type of business conducted by these organizations and enterprises was also diverse and included sustainable food cultivators, future food products, agri-commodity suppliers, and innovation incubators, among others.

While the sample is not representative of the entire agri-food industry in the APEC region, the respondents' operations covered a majority of the APEC economies and were able to provide unique perspectives that can contribute to global food security efforts. The insights they provided, including related to challenges and opportunities, contain important lessons learned from agri-food organizations and enterprises operating in the APEC region that can inform activities within APEC fora.



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