

APEC *SELF-FUNDED* PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Synopsis – maximum 2 pages

Project Objectives: An APEC Export Certificate Roundtable was held on February 25-26, 2010, in Surfer's Paradise, Australia, immediately preceding the Eighteenth session of the CODEX Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). The Roundtable was sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Twenty APEC Member Economies participated in the Roundtable. The purpose of the Roundtable was to provide a forum for both government and industry representatives from APEC Member Economies to discuss common issues and concerns related to export certificates. The discussion led participants to a common understanding that additional work regarding the issuance and usage of official certificates was needed. The initial Round Table developed a common understanding of "best practices" for appropriate use of export certificates. In addition, the APEC Member Economies identified several options to streamline the certificate process across the APEC region. As a next step, the United States plans to convene a Working Group of experts to: 1) provide technical assistance on avoiding unnecessary certificate requirements; 2) how to use the Codex Generic Model Official Certificate Annex to the Codex Guidelines for Design, Production, Issuance and Use of Generic Official Certificates (CAC/GL 38-2001) when developing or modifying certificate requirements; and 3) discuss the benefits of electronic certification.

The Working Group will bring together experts from the 21 member economies to consider developing new food and agricultural export certificate requirements.

The Working Group will:

1. Develop criteria for determining when a food or agricultural certificate should be required. This criterion could result in a document for submission to CCFICS, which may include a proposal for new work on export certificate attestations.
2. Continue dialogue on using innovative options to improve communication between APEC regulatory agencies, including e-certification.

Performance Measures: It is difficult to estimate the costs related to export certificate barriers such as lost market share, additional bureaucratic hurdles which cause lengthy delays, and rejected shipments for non-compliance. However, industry in a variety of product/commodity sectors has continually stated that certificate issues remain a priority and that the adoption of standardized certificate procedures around the globe will have an enormous impact on facilitating and expanding agricultural exports. Expected outcomes from this project would be:

- 1) Development of a guidance document for food and agricultural products that demonstrates a consensus of ideas pertaining to export certificates, for submission to CCFICS;
- 2) Strong participation by a majority of APEC Economies in the development of guidance documents/materials during upcoming CCFICS meetings and other working groups on issues related to food and agricultural export certificates with the goal of positively impacting the trade of safe, wholesome, and properly labeled products;
- 3) Commitment to use existing international guidance when developing or modifying certificate requirements, including electronic certification (World Customs Organization, UN/CEFACT, etc.);

Relevance: How does the project meet the priorities of your forum and APEC as a whole? Why should APEC undertake this project?

The initial Roundtable discussion identified the issues disrupting efficient use of export certificates in the APEC region. These included: translation issues, inappropriate, unnecessary, duplicative or burdensome attestations, lack of communication between the regulatory officials and industry, legislative requirements for export certificates within APEC member countries, as well as fraudulent certificate issues that exist for numerous commodities shipped across the APEC region. Because of the possible trade disruptions caused and the questionable linkages to product safety, all of the above mentioned certificate issues are priority issues for food and agricultural regulatory agencies. As identified in the initial roundtable, streamlining and harmonizing, where possible, certificate requirements across APEC member countries can be accomplished through various options, including the implementation of the recently agreed CCFICS Generic Model Certificate. Alternatively, a proposal for new work within CCFICS may be considered. However, challenges exist, including variations in the certification regimes of APEC Member Economies. Although the original project proposal resulted in a best practices document for submission to CCFICS, attending regulatory officials from the 20 member economies began discussing the option of proposing work to CCFICS on attestations that would help to streamline certificate requirements across all member countries.

Methodology: How do you plan to implement the project?

Food Control System regulators from the 21 APEC countries, including 11 emerging market economies, will be invited to participate in a working group discussion on export certificate issues.

APEC member countries account for 60 percent of world trade. The Working Group discussion will take place under the auspices of the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum, which has a primary objective to facilitate trade in agricultural goods. The regulators, delegates to CCFICS, industry and academia will be asked to participate and lead discussions on export certificate issues. Discussion facilitators and participants will draw on historic case studies and existing issues in an effort to build a consensus among the group on how to resolve the existing issues affecting exports and propose strategies to minimize trade disputes and market access issues from occurring in the future.

The participants will be selected based on participation in the February 2010 Roundtable and the March 2010 CCFICS meeting. The Working Group will strive to develop a document, based on international guidance, that outlines when and how to require export certificate in a manner that facilitates trade rather than adds costs or restricts exports. The working group will make recommendations on how to carry this work forward including the appropriate forum (e.g. APEC or Codex) to accomplish these goals. The event will be held in late summer 2011 in Washington, D.C.

Timeline:

Dates are projected; targeted dates of implementation may change as projects, expert availability, and political situations develop during programming.

Project	Projected Dates
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Identify co-sponsors for the Working Group	March 2011
Contact Key Participants	April 2011
Finalize Agenda	June 2011
APEC Export Certificate Working Group	August 2011