

Background – Global Food Safety Partnership

On November 12, 2011, government and industry are joining together to create the first-of-its-kind fund focused on expanding global food safety capacity building. The fund will be managed by the World Bank, building on the landmark MOU between the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Food Safety Cooperation Forum and the World Bank signed in May 2011. This proposed fund will work to expand knowledge and understanding for effective food safety management across the world.

This innovative public-private partnership has secured \$1 million in generous seed money from Mars Incorporated and Waters Corporation, as well as from U.S. Agency for International Development. These initial pledges allow for the fund to be established and provide the platform for additional contributions as the training programs get underway. The World Bank Group and industry participants are currently exploring appropriate financing mechanisms. The goal is to raise \$15-20 million over the next 10 years.

Why it is Needed

Food supplies are growing ever more global and food safety systems are under-resourced. Strengthening food safety capacity is critical to safeguard public health while also promoting food security, global food trade and economic development. Food and waterborne diseases are leading causes of illness and death in developing countries, with a mortality rate of some 2.2 million each year, mostly children.¹ Even one food safety incident has significant economic impact and can force small suppliers out of business.

The fund will help expand the effective participation of small-scale farmers, handlers, processors and marketers in more profitable food supply chains, offering an enormous opportunity to lift the world's farmers out of poverty.

Improved competencies, protocols, laboratory proficiency, and risk-based management systems and regulations will lead to better health and nutritional outcomes, reduced risk of food-borne hazards, expanded participation of farmers and producers into higher value and global food supply chains, and improved food security.

How it will Work

Based on the tripartite partnership pioneered by the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum, the fund will leverage the World Bank's global reach to improve public health, including in developing countries in Africa, South Asia, East Asia and Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, and the Middle East. It will encourage local stakeholders to invest in food safety capacity building through three pillars:

1. **Developing, testing and validating pilot programs in APEC** that will result in reproducible training modules which can be customized and rolled out across the globe. These programs would focus on issues including: supply chain management, food safety incident management, laboratory competency, risk analysis and food safety regulatory systems.
2. **Addressing high priority food hazards**, such as the highly poisonous and cancer-causing fungal aflatoxins in grain (25% of all agricultural production is affected); contaminants and pathogens such as *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, and toxic strains of *E. coli*, on meats, fruits, and vegetables; and viral and bacterial pathogens in seafood.
3. **Strengthening Analytics and Metrics**, including laboratory competency and the evaluation of the performance of food safety systems.

¹ WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety, World Health Organisation, 2002.