

Technical Specification – Food Safety (HP 21)

Food safety is a critical component of public health and health security. In the ASEAN region, where food is a major driver of trade, tourism, and livelihoods, ensuring the safety of food from production to consumption is essential to protect populations from foodborne diseases, support nutrition, and maintain public trust in health and regulatory systems. Health Priority 21 (HP 21) focuses on strengthening food safety systems across ASEAN through improved risk management, surveillance, laboratory capacity, and regulatory coordination. A safe food supply not only prevents illness but also supports broader goals in economic development, trade, and regional integration.

As food systems become more complex and globalised, the risks of contamination, emerging foodborne pathogens, and antimicrobial resistance in the food chain continue to grow. Strengthening food safety requires coordinated action across sectors, in line with the One Health approach, as well as strong governance and investment in food safety infrastructure and workforce.

Projects intending to contribute to HP 21 should demonstrate that they have taken into account the following general, global, regional and national considerations:

General

Overarching Themes / Technical Priorities (HP 21)

Applicants should consider alignment with the following key themes:

- Enhancing foodborne disease surveillance, outbreak detection, and response.
- Strengthening integrated food safety systems across the farm-to-fork continuum.
- Improving food safety risk assessment, management, and communication capacities.
- Supporting laboratory capacity for detection of foodborne pathogens and contaminants.
- Strengthening multisectoral coordination (e.g., Health, Agriculture, Trade, Environment sectors) for food safety governance under the One Health approach.

Global

Applicants are encouraged to align with the following global frameworks and tools:

- WHO [“Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022–2030”](#)
- [FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission](#) (Codex standards and guidelines)
- [International Food Safety Authorities Network \(INFOSAN\)](#)

- WHO *"Five Keys to Safer Food Manual"* (Food safety education and behaviour change)
- [FAO/WHO guidance on foodborne disease surveillance and response](#)
- [WHO Risk Assessment Tools for Foodborne Pathogens](#)
- FAO/WHO [guidance on food safety emergency response](#)
- [Codex Guidelines for Foodborne Outbreak Response and Investigation \(CXG 75-2010\)](#)

Regional:

- *"ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework and Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security (2021-2025)"*
- ASEAN Health Cluster 4 (Ensuring Food Safety) - Refer to the AHC 4 Work Plan (2021–2025) as part of the [ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda](#)
- *"ASEAN Food Safety Policy"* which includes the mandate for risk assessment and introduces the ASEAN Risk Assessment Centre for Food Safety (ARAC), guiding Member States to conduct food safety risk assessments focused on hazard identification, exposure, and characterisation
- ARAC Standard Operating Procedures, endorsed in 2025, outline the four-step risk assessment process (hazard identification, hazard characterisation, exposure assessment, risk characterisation) ([https://www.arac-asean.org/images/ARAC SOP 1 - Endorsed by AHC 4 and SOMHD.pdf](https://www.arac-asean.org/images/ARAC_SOP_1_-_Endorsed_by_AHC_4_and_SOMHD.pdf))
- For AMR-specific risk analysis in aquaculture, refer to the *"Regional Guideline on Performing Risk Analysis for Antimicrobial Resistance Arising from the Use of Antimicrobial Agents in Aquaculture (2017)"* providing a structured framework
- *"ASEAN Principles for Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification"*
- Access the [ASEAN Food Safety Network \(AFSN\)](#) to learn about their activities, access guidelines and information, and participate in events
- [ASEAN Public Health Emergency Coordination System \(APHECS\)](#) where relevant for regional foodborne outbreak response coordination and information

National

- National Food Safety Policy/Strategy or Food Safety Master Plan
- National Codex Contact Point policies and adaptations of Codex standards.
- National Integrated Foodborne Disease Surveillance Plans
- National Food Safety Emergency Response Plans
- National Risk Communication Frameworks for food safety
- National Laboratory Standards for Food Microbiology and Contaminant Testing
- National Reporting Systems for foodborne disease outbreaks (linked to IHR or INFOSAN reporting)
- National One Health or Multisectoral Platforms relevant to food safety risk management

