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Press release

# Asian biopesticide and pesticide regulation officers meet in Bangkok to strengthen their capacity in streamlining regulatory processes in their countries

**Bangkok, 3 April 2023**

A Regional Regulatory Workshop on Biopesticide and Pesticide Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) brought together twenty regulatory officers from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. The event that takes place from 3-5 April 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand, aims to build their expertise and skills in the development and harmonization of biopesticide and pesticide regulations, which will address international agricultural trade issues in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries and South Asia.

The workshop is organized in the context of the project on [Asia Pesticide Residue Mitigation through the Promotion of Biopesticides and Enhancement of Trade Opportunities](#) funded by the [Standards and Trade Development Facility](#) (STDF), and implemented by the [Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions](#) (APAARI), Bangkok, Thailand, in partnership with Ag Aligned Global, and [United States Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA).

The project is addressing the issues related to limited harmonization of requirements for the registration of biopesticides in Asia. The differences in regulatory landscapes across the region have made it challenging for companies to seek registration. In some cases, there is lack of harmonization and in others, biopesticides are not given a separate regulatory track and follow a more complex systems utilized for conventional chemistry.

The use of biopesticides, particularly for late-season pests, has the potential to minimise pesticide residue levels in harvested produce, thereby mitigating residue violations in export markets, and promoting trade.

*“Efforts need to be made to increase the rate of regulatory approval and commercialisation of this relatively nascent pest-control technology,” Jason Sandahl, Ag Aligned Global.*

The development of effective regulatory guidelines can facilitate increased biopesticide approval by regulators, and hence promote greater registration and commercial adoption of these products. Developing harmonized regulatory standards between Asian countries will enable them to benefit from reciprocal acceptance of generated registration data, or



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registrations concluded elsewhere. Furthermore, this would enhance biopesticide product registration and use, while mitigating chemical pesticide residues and promoting trade.

*“Expanding the use of safer and effective pest-control tools helps farmers protect their valuable crops, minimizes occupational risks, increases yields and quality, promotes international trade, and ensures a nutritious food supply,” Luis Suguiyama, International Consultant, USDA/Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS).*

By blending technical and functional (soft) capacity development of biopesticide and pesticide regulators, the workshop is also promoting innovation and collaboration in biopesticides commercialization and agricultural trade enhancement in the region. Development of public-private partnerships and South-South Cooperation of the country partners are particularly crucial for addressing how participating countries establish and adopt pesticide MRLs and implement national pesticide residue monitoring programmes. APAARI is committed to carry this forward for the benefit of its members even beyond the project period.

*“An effective registration process is a prerequisite to attract the private sector in biopesticide development,” Ravi Khetarpal, Executive Secretary, APAARI.*

The workshop is building on previous ASEAN regulatory initiatives, as well as ASEAN Guidelines on the Regulation, Use, and Trade of Biological Control Agents (BCA), STDF's Good Regulatory Practices (GRP), and the Regional BCA Expert Working Groups on Application and Regulation.

*“We need to ensure that SPS measures are developed and implemented under good regulatory practices (GRPs) to increase transparency and keep transaction costs as low as possible,” Marlynne Hopper, Deputy Head, STDF.*

The status of biopesticide regulatory development in the participating countries has been assessed and presented in the workshop in line with the East Asia Biopesticide Guidelines. The participants also shared some of the most important regulatory needs of their countries, seeking further support in this area from donors. Regulatory discussions were linked with their national Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programmes to ensure alignment and synergies.

*“USDA/FAS will continue its efforts to mitigate residues by coordinating MRL and SPS-related activities and strengthening institutional capacities of Asian countries and their governments,” Jessica Mudjitaba-Fernandez, Global Programs USDA/FAS. “These initiatives promote climate-resilient agricultural systems that address climate change adoption and mitigation”.*

As a way forward, the experts urged the participants to follow the common regional regulatory standards that can increase approval rate of biopesticides, support farmers, and enhance trade.