

Workshop Issue 4: Planning Next Steps for the FSIA

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Discussion:

- The goal established by the workshop for the FSIA is to become a self-sustaining organization by obtaining sources of funding from governmental and non-governmental entities as well as exploring opportunities for non-monetary support.
- The workshop participants discussed what the FSIA should look like 5 years from now. For the future, workshop participants discussed their desire to see the FSIA become an educational outreach organization for food safety and biosecurity.
- It is expected that the FSIA could work towards harmonizing food-safety standards and requirements, as well as be viewed as a repository of information on food safety and biosecurity.
- In addition, it is expected that the FSIA will be used to locate food-safety assistance, coordination, information on scholarship or training opportunities and information about research being conducted.
- The scope of the FSIA would be to benefit consumers, industry and governments.
- A strategic plan will be proposed to the FSIA by June 2005, and by September 2005, the results of the needs assessment on the effectiveness of current programs will be completed.
- The University of Florida and Miami Dade College will perform the work necessary to what will be a strategic plan for the FSIA. The results of this work will demonstrate where potential food safety gaps exist and will therefore determine where the FSIA should focus its resources. The deliverable will be the identification of food-safety gaps and the methods by which the FSIA members will work to fill those gaps.
- Also during the first year or two, the FSIA, in collaboration with partnering countries, would begin to define and develop its “colleges,” as discussed within the concept paper. These colleges could be located throughout the Americas, which would respond to the workshop’s recommendations that the FSIA be viewed as a truly independent hemispheric organization.

Recommendations:

- **Inform other countries of the FSIA.**
 - This can be accomplished through presentations at meetings such as those held by Codex, IICA and PAHO.
 - Create an informational plan and documents to educate those interested. The strategic planning from this conference will be turned into an updated concept paper for educational purposes.
 - Use information from the 5-year goals in the informational materials.
- **FSIA should hold a kick-off event.**

- A seminar, meeting or conference on a specific topic that would be of interest to nearly all of the participating countries is a good idea. The topic could be determined at a later date.
 - The purpose of the meeting would be to provide a tangible deliverable and to promote the FSIA.
- **Secure outside funding so that the FSIA operates and makes decisions as a truly independent hemispheric organization.**
 - It is vital that the FSIA become self-sustaining, and this will be achieved through successful short- and long-term planning. While the initial funding for this effort comes from the U.S. government, other sources of support must be identified.
 - Alternative sources of funding could include, but are not limited to, non-governmental organizations, foundations, industry and trade association resources, cooperative agreements with international government entities and educational grants to the FSIA from universities.
- **Develop a plan on how to govern the FSIA. This may include:**
 - A Board of Directors to include a representative from each country/entity.
 - Individual working groups for specific issues or topics.
 - Transparency, methodology used to determine priorities.
 - Stakeholder views from industry and other participants.
 - Co-locating offices hemispherically in partnership with other regionally-based organizations.
- **Agricultural and public health agencies must work together.**
 - Other U.S. Federal agencies, particularly the FDA, should participate in the FSIA.
 - Partnering with industry and trade associations, academia and international organizations, such as INPPAZ, would be beneficial to both organizations.
- **Non-monetary sources of funding can be an effective use of resources. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, including:**
 - A technical assistance expert assigned to each “college” who could provide information to member organizations;
 - Information sharing and training via the Internet;
 - Cross-cultural training or job sharing; and
 - Exploring the technologies that permit meetings and communications in non-traditional ways, such as web conferencing and virtual meetings
- **Ongoing evaluations of the FSIA as an organization and the specific initiatives of the FSIA are necessary.**
 - The workgroup felt it important to continually assess the effectiveness of the organization and its initiatives and implement modifications when necessary.