

Founded in 2004 as a joint activity of the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) International Division and the European Federation of Food Science and Technology (EFFoST), the **Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI)** is a network of individual scientists and scientific organizations working together to promote harmonization of global food safety regulations and legislation through sound science.

## Our Mission

GHI's objective is to achieve consensus on the science that underlies food regulations and legislation to ensure the global availability of safe and wholesome food products for all consumers. GHI anticipates that the elimination of regulatory and legislative differences between countries will have a significant, positive impact on several fronts:

- **Global harmonization of food regulations and laws will eliminate trade barriers that masquerade as food safety protections.** World market interdependence has increasingly exposed widely varying, and sometimes conflicting, national and international food safety laws, regulations and standards that create trade barriers erected for political, not public health, reasons. Differing food safety policies, requirements or rules based on insufficient or contradictory science not only reduce the effectiveness of public health protection measures but can greatly reduce the availability of food that is actually safe to consume.
- **Global harmonization of food regulations and laws will help reduce world hunger and foodborne disease.** According to recent FAO estimates, more than 1 billion people are victims of hunger. Unfortunately, untold amounts of food are destroyed each day, barred from ports of entry based on unnecessary trade barriers. Harmonized international food regulations will help ensure that safe food is not destroyed for wrong reasons.
- **Global harmonization of food regulations and laws will help reduce the potential for pandemic foodborne illness outbreaks.** Rapid globalization of food trade has increased the potential of adulterated food to negatively affect greater numbers of people worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. As the international food supply chain becomes more interconnected, foodborne disease outbreaks that were once localized now have the potential to become massive in scope. Harmonized regulations will support the use of effective, scientifically sound food protection measures to better address this challenge.
- **Global harmonization of food regulations and laws will boost technological innovation.** National differences in food safety laws and rules can create an uncertain global regulatory environment that reduces investment in and adoption of new technologies designed to improve food safety and quality for consumers. Harmonization will make it more attractive for the private sector to invest in food safety and R&D, consequently strengthening the competitiveness of each nation's food industry and suppliers to the food sector. Harmonizing global regulations will aid in the uptake and application of new technologies to ensure the safety and quality of the food supply for consumers worldwide.

Ultimately, for governmental and public health agencies responsible for overseeing the safety of the international food supply, harmonization of food safety and quality standards and regulatory requirements will bring: 1) a higher level of confidence that risk-reduction strategies and food safety measures are effective; 2) assurance that decisions taken are based on science and not on political agendas that are in conflict with public health goals; and 3) the ability to allocate available resources where they have the highest impact on the most pressing foodborne disease challenges.

## Creating Connections, Building Consensus

In order to build consensus among scientists on global harmonization of food safety regulations, GHI organizes scientific working groups, member meetings, workshops and symposia to further its collaborative work and to provide educational outreach to key stakeholders. At the core of GHI's

### GHI BOARD

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## Global Framework, Global Change

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strategy are its **Working Groups (WGs)**, whose members are scientists and experts from industry, government and academia with expertise in food safety, nutrition, regulation and trade. The WGs continually collect and evaluate available data to produce white papers or position statements related to controversies and issues in food science, regulation and trade. With support and participation of its individual members and member organizations, GHI has formulated approaches to critically (re-)evaluate the scientific evidence used to support existing global regulations and legislation in the areas of product composition, processing operations, and technologies or measures designed to prevent foodborne illness.

Another priority for GHI is to collect and communicate the principles of food safety science to influencers and decision makers—from the general public and the press, to politicians, policymakers and regulatory authorities. The aim is to improve understanding and to better inform all stakeholders so that objective scientific concepts, not political expediency or media hype, become the basis of crafting meaningful, harmonized food safety legislation and regulation in all countries.

In addition to facilitating GHI Working Groups and their activities, GHI is dedicated to creating scientific communications that are concise, easy to understand, and that can be translated into local languages. With the help of member volunteers, GHI is working to develop a variety of educational and communications materials, resources and platforms that are accessible by all around the globe.

GHI members also contribute articles and interviews to national and international publications and media outlets on subjects related to global harmonization, as well as make presentations at international scientific and trade conferences and food safety meetings. Members who serve as official GHI Ambassadors to individual nations or regions regularly share and distribute information about GHI and harmonization at the local level.

### Financial & Organizational Structure

GHI has legal non-profit status, and its charter and constitution are registered in Vienna, Austria as the **GHI-Association** (ZVR: 453446383). To enable global participation without financial hurdles, individual scientist members do not pay membership fees.

In 2012, GHI was granted the ANBI status in The Netherlands. The ANBI abbreviation stands for 'Algemeen Nut Beoogende Instellingen,' or Institutions Aimed at the Common Good. With the ANBI status, gifts from private donors can be deducted against income tax in the European Union.

The organization is led and managed by the **GHI Board**, a group of highly respected food scientists, regulatory experts and industry professionals, with support from a leadership team of volunteer directors, coordinators and advisors. GHI's **Supervisory Board**, consisting of representatives of scientific organizations and stakeholders, ensures the impartiality of all GHI activities and guards the integrity of GHI's consensus process.



For more information about the [Global Harmonization Initiative](#) and its efforts to feed people and fuel innovation through harmonization of science-based global food safety regulations, please visit us online at [www.globalharmonization.net](http://www.globalharmonization.net).