

## Press Release

# CII and FDA jointly launch a Capacity Building Program of State Food Laboratories to Enhance Maharashtra's Food Safety Index

**Date: 13th Feb 2023, Mumbai:**

With an aim to ensure safe and nutritious food for consumers, CII's Food and Agriculture Centre of Excellence (FACE) in partnership with Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) Maharashtra launched an initiative on "Enhancing Maharashtra's Food Safety Index through Capacity building of its Food Testing Laboratories" on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2023 in Mumbai. The Capacity building training program is intended to support eight Food Testing Laboratories across the state, helping them to enhance skills and knowledge required to ensure safe food and compliance to food safety standards. The initiative is being supported by Cargill India

The State Food Safety Index (SFSI) was initiated by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in 2018-19 as a benchmarking framework to evaluate the food safety ecosystem in India. This Index measures the performance of States and UTs on five significant parameters of Food Safety namely, Human Resources and Institutional Data, Compliance, Food Testing – Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training & Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment.

Maharashtra took the third position on the State Food Safety Index released by FSSAI in June 2022. The program will cover eight laboratories across Maharashtra including Navi Mumbai, Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara, Nagpur, Ahmednagar, Aurangabad and Nashik. The following initiatives would be undertaken as a part of this program:

1. Training laboratory management and technical staff on ISO 17025: 2017 requirements
2. Strengthening skills and knowledge of technical staff on microbiological testing
3. Facilitation on System Design and Documentation of the Labs on the requirements and pre-requisites to apply for NABL accreditation and ISO 17025:2017 and assisting them to apply for the same
4. Identifying gaps in the existing infrastructure of the Identified Labs and preparing them to be eligible for obtaining NABL accreditation
5. Developing a pool of certified internal auditors on ISO 17025:2017 to conduct internal audits at regular intervals to ensure compliance
6. Training on implementation of INFoLNET in State Public Health laboratories

**Shri Abhimanyu Kale, Commissioner, Food & Drugs Administration, Maharashtra in his keynote address** stated "FDA Maharashtra is committed to food safety for its citizens. For this correct sampling, appropriate and timely testing of food products coupled with early reporting is crucial. It is important to have a strict and detailed gap analysis of our laboratories and provide them guidance on institutionalizing a road map for continual improvements and in the process, also obtain NABL accreditation."

**Dr. Krishna Methekar, Deputy Director, Food Safety and Standard Authority of India in his Special address** mentioned "Fair trade practices revolve around appropriate sampling and testing of food products. Food safety officers and food analyst are the backbone of our

Food Safety Standard Acts – Rules & Regulation - Surveillance & Infrastructure. Hence empowerment and training of food safety officers and analyst are essential. We look forward to Maharashtra enhancing its food safety index score significantly through this CII-FDA Maharashtra partnership program”

The event was attended by FDA Maharashtra officials, Maharashtra State Food Laboratory Representatives and CII-FACE representatives, besides other Industry and Training partners.



(Left to Right : Ms Ratih Neumann-APAC Regulatory and Scientific Affairs Leader, Cargill India, Dr. Krishna Methekar - Deputy Director, Food Safety and Standard Authority of India, Shri Abhimanyu Kale - Commissioner, Food & Drugs Administration, Maharashtra, Ms Jane Karkada - Senior Director, Confederation of Indian Industry, Dr Indrani Ghose - Strategic Advisor – FSQ,CII’s Food & Agriculture Centre of Excellence (FACE), Mr Vijay R - Operations Director, Cargill India)



Participants at Launch Ceremony of Capacity Building Program of State Food Laboratories to Enhance Maharashtra’s Food Safety Index at Mumbai