

EVENT REPORT

Dr Ali Green

IFRA Global Fragrance Summit 2021

Due to the current COVID 19 situation, this was a virtual, online event held 2-4 March 2021 and was designed to be as inclusive as possible being free of charge to everyone interested in the safe use of fragrance.

The Conference was far-reaching in its scope so by necessity I will be selective in this report. Understandably, like the IFEAT Conference, there was a good deal of focus on how COVID has had an impact on the social, economic and political environment and their effects on the fragrance industry.

Each day there was a Knowledge Exchange that focused on regulations in different parts of the world (APAC, Europe and the Americas) and the specific concerns for each area. I have chosen to shine a spotlight on the Asia Pacific Region so as not to duplicate some of the information from the IFEAT report. The panellists for this session were Bronwyn Capanna (Executive Director, ACCORD – Australian hygiene, personal care and speciality products industry association), Gil

Perez (Cochair ASEAN Regulatory Co-operation Project; Workgroup Lead Emerging Regulations, Singapore Chemical Industry Council (SCIC), Bhashkar Mukerji (Givaudin, Chair IFRA APAC Technical Committee), Shelly Young (IFF, Chair, China Working Group), Alain Khaiot (President, CTFAS – Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association of Singapore), and was chaired by Rohaya Mamat (IFRA Asia-Pacific Regional Director).

The four areas the panel discussed were chemical legislation, biocide legislation, cosmetic regulation and halal. The region has a population of 2.2 billion and an economy worth \$26.2 trillion (the largest global economy and sourcing hub) so getting things right can be incredibly valuable whereas getting things wrong, an unmitigated disaster! One issue common to the region is the problem of communication and finding common ground in an area that is so diverse: there are numerous religions, languages, political systems and local customs to accommodate so finding consensus is a challenge.

Firstly, the new Chinese cosmetic regulations (CSAR) published in 2021 with modifications being continually drafted, has shifted things in many respects for the better. The framework is not only more scientific in its basis but also clearer so more easily applied. The general focus is on risk management with far less compulsory animal testing than previously and a more efficient testing regime that is more transparent. However, language barriers are still viewed as challenges with most relying on contacts and industry organisations like IFRA to disseminate information at grass roots levels. However, despite some improvements, there is no compulsion for complete harmonisation across the ASEAN region, with some countries wanting to do their own thing; this leads to an overall lack of clarity. European regulations are often translated to Asia, but there are differences in the region. The IFRA guidelines are largely accepted in Asia and New Zealand, but there are other issues with some confusion over specific ingredients. The general



feeling was that regulatory bodies need more input from the industry regarding toxicology, risk and hazard.

There was a general consensus across the panel that more transparency and collaboration was needed in order to get to grips with the complexity of the situation. There was also a need for better connection within regional players in order to lobby regulators and advise on best practice. However, this required more openness and culturally, this was not the natural approach for some players in the industry. It was also noted that the value chain as a whole needed to be more joined up, with a coordinated approach from farm to finished product rather than each stage acting in isolation. Local expertise, particularly for traditionally 'private' companies such as those in Korea and Japan, is invaluable and the industry needs more transparency and collaboration to facilitate regulatory conformance and lobbying. A key challenge is that the regulations are not all from the same governmental departments: packaging and

pollution are often regulated by the environment department whereas other safety areas are regulated by the health ministry. These issues make the production of shared toxicology indexes and skin care risk assessments more prudent for companies and knowledge sharing via best practice webinars and summits is seen to be a really vital step as the industry move forward.

Indonesia is among numerous communities that demand all products conform to halal standards (a set of religious rules that inform how food products must be prepared); this is often extended to topical products as well despite the fact they are not ingested. Since these regulations are not based on science but rather a traditional and religious code of practice, they can be difficult to manage and also to certify. The industry perspective is that more needs to be done in terms of outreach to government organisations and the need for a global standard was highlighted. Auditors vary in their approach and

there is no standardised requirement that applies globally wherever halal products are demanded thus making it very confusing for suppliers. It was suggested that larger companies appoint a single person within their organisation to deal with this issue across all product types to standardise protocols for manufacturing, storage and packaging. Eventually, the ideal would be that this expertise could be shared industry wide to produce a global code of conduct.

This session was wide-reaching as you can see from this taster and touched on numerous issues. I would thoroughly recommend anybody in the industry attend this excellent event in the future as the expertise and insight on regulation in the industry across the world is unparalleled.

The following link to IFRA will take you to the IFRA conference page and a full recording of the keynote address from Michael Carlos, IFRA Chairman Emeritus: - <https://ifrafragrance.org/priorities/dialogue>