



FSSAI decides to set up 10 new offices to establish Pan-India presence

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New Delhi, February 17, 2020: FSSAI has decided to set up 6 new branch offices, 4 new import offices and 2 new food laboratories in the country. With this, FSSAI will have 4 regional offices in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, 12 branch offices and 6 import offices. In addition, it will have 4 national food laboratories at Kolkata, Ghaziabad (Delhi NCR), Mumbai JNPT and Chennai and two food laboratories at Sanauli and Raxaul on Indo-Nepal border.

FSSAI's new branch offices will be in Bhopal, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad and the new import offices will be at Attari, Kandla, Raxaul and Krishnapatnam. FSSAI plans to set up two new food laboratories at Mumbai JNPT and Chennai. Built-up space for the purpose is being taken on long-term lease from Chennai and JNPT Mumbai port authorities.

FSSAI has recently upgraded its food laboratory at Ghaziabad. This is being successfully run on PPP-mode now. Work on upgradation of Kolkata food laboratory is in advanced stage and will soon be completed. FSSAI also plans to strengthen its laboratory extension centres at Sanauli and Raxaul on Indo-Nepal border to full-fledged food labs.

While inaugurating the north regional office of FSSAI at Ghaziabad, Chairperson, Rita Teotia said that the expansion of the network of FSSAI offices and laboratories is to ensure that FSSAI has a Pan-India presence. This would help FSSAI to strengthen its inspection and enforcement activities and have better control of imported food. Location of new offices has been decided after taking into account the workload of food imports and central licensing at various places. The work on identification of space for new offices has been initiated.

The Government has generously supported FSSAI in recent years. Its funding has been raised five times. About 500 new positions have been created. FSSAI has already initiated the process to fill up these posts. This is being done in two phases. Recruitments in the first phase is nearing completion. The process saw a huge interest from highly qualified people

including those from the corporate sector drawing salaries several times compared to what FSSAI offers.

In order to create a high performance culture in the organization, FSSAI has adopted a goal-driven performance management system. This system is designed to ensure that employees and teams realize their full potential and recognize their role in contributing towards the larger goals of the organization. The new system ensures individual accountability, rewards high performers and provides performance improvement plans to below average performers.

A major shift in the new system is the introduction of committee-based review as against appraisal by individuals. This is in line with high performing organisations. This would bring objectivity, transparency and avoid personal biases in performance assessment. All employees of the organization will be assessed on the basis of their work output, alignment with organizational culture and personnel attributes.

Over the past 4 years, FSSAI has embarked on an extraordinary journey to build a strong public institution from ground up with great ambitions. It has disrupted the conventional role of a regulator to enabler and adopted the food systems approach (much before the rest of the world found it out) through the 'Eat Right India' movement, putting citizens and consumers in the centre ("Consumer First"). The highpoint for FSSAI was when Prime Minister Narendra Modi recognized FSSAI's transformation in his Mann Ki Baat on 30th December, 2018.

While expressing satisfaction at the progress over the past 4 year, CEO, FSSAI, Pawan Agarwal said that a lot of work remains to be done. He pointed out "While all issues of food safety and nutrition in the country have not been addressed, there is now a correct diagnosis and a proper treatment regimen available to address all the safety issues in a comprehensive manner."

Commenting on the staff numbers, CEO, FSSAI pointed out that while FSSAI does not have as much manpower as its peer public bodies abroad, FSSAI today has a highly talented and passionate team, capable of delivering 'more with less'. FSSAI has changed many aspects of governance, dealing with businesses and consumer organizations, and earning their trust.

FSSAI has also built a beautiful office space with a modern day-care centre for a large number of young women on its staff, a well-equipped fitness centre and nice cafeteria. These facilities are not only available for FSSAI's own staff but also those in the neighbourhood. FSSAI's experience zone with a multi-media and virtual reality experience is a unique space in any government office anywhere in the world.

Pawan Agarwal, who is soon joining as Secretary, Consumer Affairs Department said that "Building a public institution like the food safety authority is not a sprint, it is like a marathon. At times we may appear slower than the others, but eventually we have to be ahead. To do that, FSSAI has built a solid culture of collaboration, inter-disciplinary

approach, diversity, excellence, empathy, social consciousness, transparency, integrity, and long term vision over short term rewards.”

Over the past 4 years, FSSAI has been under very intense scrutiny of the public, civil society, CAG and the parliamentary committees. At the same time, FSSAI has gained huge visibility. FSSAI has gained confidence of the consumers because they see in FSSAI an organization this is fully committed to its mission, a ‘listening and learning organization’, not averse to taking risks. In his final remarks, Pawan Agarwal pointed out that ‘intense scrutiny, greater visibility and full commitment has helped FSSAI to become a better public institution and a model regulator that other countries around the world could emulate.’