



**SGProtein:  
Leveraging FTAs for Growth in Plant-  
Based Meat**



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## Introduction

Founded in 2020, SGProtein is a Singapore-based company that has made significant strides in the development and production of palatable and sustainable plant-based meat substitutes. Their establishment in Singapore was a strategic move that aligns with their mission to provide healthy and environmentally-friendly food options across Asia.

SGProtein's focus on plant-based meat alternatives addresses several critical global issues. These include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting health consciousness, and utilizing less agricultural land to feed the world's growing population. This response to market demands showcases their commitment to tackling these global challenges.

With a diverse portfolio that includes both proprietary products and private label offerings, SGProtein caters to a wide spectrum of businesses. From Multi-National Corporations (MNC) to Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), as well as startups within the region, they are able to meet various needs. Their core mission is centered around delivering nutritious and eco-friendly food choices throughout Asia.

SGProtein possesses the manufacturing know-how as well as the research and development (R&D) knowledge to create customized plant-based meats. Their choice to set up their business in Singapore was influenced by its central location in Asia, which is their main market target. Additionally, Singapore's extensive network of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and the pool of skilled employees from local Polytechnics and Universities further supported this decision.



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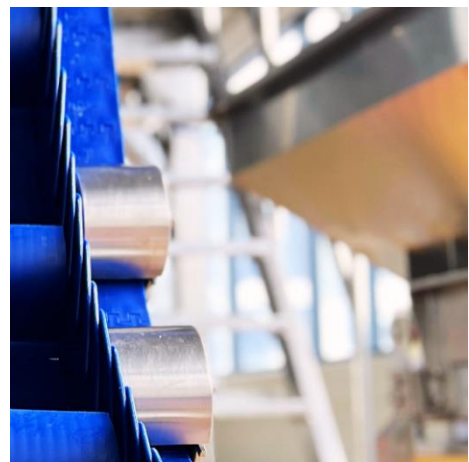
*This caselet is a publication of the International Policy Engagement Department, Advocacy & Policy Division. This caselet does not reflect the views of the sponsoring organisation nor is it intended to suggest correct or incorrect handling of the situation depicted. The case study is not intended to be a primary source of data. The company featured has consented to the publication of the study. References and sources are duly cited in footnotes. Many thanks to Mr. Dominic Kull (Co-founder and CEO) for making this publication possible and for providing the images in this case study. For more information, kindly contact [FTA@sbf.org.sg](mailto:FTA@sbf.org.sg)*

## Business Model



SGProtein's business model is a testament to their innovative approach in the burgeoning industry of plant-based meat alternatives. Utilizing cutting-edge technology, they have established an industrial platform capable of **mass-producing these alternatives with high efficiency**. Their offerings are diverse and tailored to meet various market needs:

- **Standardized white-label products** are ideal for companies seeking to enter the market with smaller volumes, providing them with a low-barrier entry point.
- **Private-label offerings** involve close collaboration with companies to develop and manufacture bespoke products, reflecting the unique brand identity of each client.
- **Contract manufacturing** caters to international brands looking to produce locally for the Asian market, ensuring products are made closer to the point of consumption.



This flexibility and variety are crucial for companies venturing into plant-based alternatives. Whether it is a traditional meat-based sauce manufacturer aiming to expand their product line with plant-based options or a Ready-To-Eat meal producer looking to offer a plant-based rendition of their signature dish, SGProtein stands ready to support their journey.

Moreover, SGProtein's strategic use of Singapore's extensive network of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), with support from the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), has likely played a significant role in their success. These FTAs have possibly enabled them to navigate international trade more smoothly, reduce costs, and leverage Singapore's strategic position as a hub for innovation and commerce in Asia. Their case illustrates the potential for sustainable business practices to thrive in a supportive economic environment.

## Early Recognition of FTAs

Mr Dominique Kull, co-founder of SGProtein, emphasized the significance of Singapore's robust network of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in their decision to establish the company's headquarters there. This choice was not merely about geographic convenience; it was a calculated decision to leverage Singapore's trade strengths to their advantage.

## FTAs Facilitating Market Expansion and Integral to Growth Strategy

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) played a pivotal role in SGProtein's strategy to expand their reach beyond Singapore. The company's reliance on FTAs is evident in their ability to scale up production and maintain a competitive edge in the regional market. Without these agreements, SGProtein would face significant limitations:

- **Domestic Market Constraints:** The Singaporean market alone may not provide sufficient demand to justify the scale of SGProtein's industrial plant.
- **Job Creation:** The employment opportunities created by SGProtein are, to a considerable extent, a result of the trade facilitation provided by FTAs.

The **Asean-India FTA (AIFTA)** serves as a prime example of how SGProtein leverages such agreements to their advantage. By reducing or eliminating tariffs, AIFTA allows SGProtein to offer their premium plant-based meat products in India at competitive prices, thus staying ahead in a market that might otherwise be challenging due to cost constraints.

Looking to the future, SGProtein recognizes the necessity of FTAs for their ongoing growth and ability to compete internationally. In markets without FTAs, high tariffs can render SGProtein's products less competitive compared to locally subsidized animal protein.

SGProtein's acknowledgment of the importance of FTAs underscores their strategic approach to international trade and their commitment to making plant-based meat alternatives more accessible and affordable in the Asian market. It also highlights the broader impact of trade policies on the success and expansion of businesses dedicated to sustainability and health.



## Navigating Market Expansion and FTA Complexities with SBF's Help

SGProtein faced initial difficulties when trying to identify the correct HS code for their plant-based meat products, which is essential for benefiting from the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in place. The discrepancies in HS code classification across different countries, especially within the context of FTAs, can lead to confusion and potential trade barriers.

The **Singapore Business Federation (SBF) FTA team** played a critical role in assisting SGProtein to overcome these hurdles. Our expertise in trade regulations and FTAs introduced SGProtein to advance ruling to address the varying interpretations of HS codes, particularly in the Indian market, which is known for its complexity.



This support not only helped SGProtein in ensuring compliance with trade regulations but also in maintaining their competitive edge in the market by making the most of the FTAs. The collaboration between SGProtein and the SBF FTA team exemplifies the importance of having knowledgeable partners to navigate the intricate landscape of international trade, ensuring that businesses can thrive in global markets.

### **Key Learnings for the Business Community**

SGProtein's experience indeed provides insightful lessons for other businesses in Singapore looking to expand regionally or globally:

- **Proactive Research:** It's crucial for businesses to dedicate time and resources to thoroughly understand the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) relevant to their industry and target markets. This knowledge can uncover opportunities for market entry, tariff reductions, and competitive advantages.
- **Seek Expert Guidance:** Navigating FTAs can be complex, and seeking the expertise of industry specialists, such as the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), can be invaluable. These experts can provide clarity on regulations, help with compliance, and offer strategic advice to maximize the benefits of FTAs.

By following these practices, businesses can position themselves to capitalize on international trade opportunities and drive their growth strategy forward with confidence.

### **Appreciation for SBF's Support**

The caselet concludes with a quote expressing SGProtein's appreciation for the SBF FTA team's expertise and dedication in assisting them with FTAs. The exceptional service is acknowledged as a significant factor in SGProtein's success.

*"We greatly appreciate the SBF FTA Team's expertise and dedication in clarifying our concerns about FTAs. Their exceptional service and invaluable guidance have made a significant difference as we navigate the complexities of FTAs. Thank you for your outstanding support."*

**Mr Dominique Kull**  
Co-founder and CEO  
SGProtein Pte Ltd

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