

# FACILITATING EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN CODEX

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# What is Codex Alimentarius

- Established by FAO and WHO and operational since 1963
- 186 Codex Members - 185 Member Countries and EU
- 225 Codex Observers - 52 IGOs, 157 NGOs, 16 UN
- A collection of food standards, guidelines and codes of practice
- Voluntary reference standard (not mandatory)
- Recognized by WTO as the 'benchmark' standards for national food safety regulations and the basis for int'l trade
- Science-based standards, adopted through global consensus

# Scientific basis for Codex work

- Codex applies risk analysis in developing standards and rely on the independent scientific advice by 3 expert bodies
  - ▣ Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)
  - ▣ Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR)
  - ▣ Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA)
- FAO/WHO Expert Consultations provide advice on various specific topics to the Codex
- Expert bodies and consultations also give direct advice to Member Governments
- Countries can access and contribute data

## Codex institutional structure

- Codex Alimentarius Commission
- Executive Committee
- General Subject Committees
  - ▣ Contaminants, food additives, food hygiene, import/export certification and inspections, general principles, methods of analysis and sampling, nutrition and special dietary uses, pesticide residues, residues of veterinary drugs, food labelling
- Commodity Committees
  - ▣ Fish and fishery products, fats and oils, fresh fruits and vegetables, milk and milk products, processed fruits and vegetables
- FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees
  - ▣ Africa, Asia, Europe, LA& Caribbean, Near East, N America&SW Pacific

# Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019

## 4 Goals:

- Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues
  - Ensure the application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards
  - Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex Members
  - Implement effective and efficient work management systems and practices
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- ▣ Objectives, activities, outcomes, outputs, responsible parties, timeline, and indicators are spelled out under each goal

# Effective participation of Members

- Legitimacy and universality of Codex standards depend on the 'effective participation' of codex members.
  - ▣ proactively participating in the meetings
  - ▣ contributing to standard settings process
  - ▣ maximizing the benefit of being Codex Member

# Capacities required for effective participation

- Codex-specific capacities
  - ▣ Knowledge of codex rules and procedures
  - ▣ Well-functioning national Codex Contact Point
  - ▣ Skills for negotiation and strategic interventions at Codex meetings
- National expertise in food safety and its regulation

# National expertise in food safety and its regulation

- Application of risk analysis framework
- Implementation of food control activities within a well-managed food control system
- Technical/scientific expertise in key food safety related disciplines
- Access to reliable national food safety data
- Mechanisms for effective communication with food producers and with consumers on food safety issues
- Mechanisms for working with research communities



# Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (22<sup>nd</sup> version)

- Sets out the basic Rules of Procedure
  - ▣ (technical) procedures for the elaboration of Codex standards and related texts; risk analysis
  - ▣ (operational) basic definitions and guidelines for the operation of Codex committees
- 200-page document with step-by-step guide with examples
- Clarifying how to participation in the Codex process
- Facilitate harmonization of standards and assessment methods

# Training package and e-learning course

- FAO/WHO training package (En, Sp, Fr, Ru)
- FAO/WHO e-learning course 'Enhancing participation in Codex Activities' (En, Fr, Sp)
  
- to strengthen knowledge of Codex rules and procedures
- to improve national planning for Codex participation
- to build the capacity of Codex delegations

# FAO/WHO Trust Fund for Participation in Codex

- Operational since 2004
- To enhance the level and quality of participation by developing countries in the vital work of Codex
  - ▣ Financial support to delegates' attendance at Codex meetings
  - ▣ Capacity building support directly related to such participation

# Capacity development projects

- Strengthening national codex committees
  - ▣ Institutional capacity development
- Enhanced national food safety standard setting
  - ▣ Review of national standards
  - ▣ Harmonization with Codex standards
- Evidence-based positions on food safety-issues
  - ▣ Studies
  - ▣ Policy analyses

# Main messages

- Becoming the Codex member, and benefitting from Codex, are two different things.
- Member countries need to build a specific set of capacities to effectively participate in the Codex process, in order to optimize the benefit from the membership.
- ‘Effective participation’ means pro-actively attending the meetings, and providing critical and strategic inputs to the vital work in the institutional process.
- Member countries are advised to internalize capacity development activities in the workplan and TOR at a national level and allocate sufficient resources.



Please find more on:

<http://www.codexalimentarius.org/codex-home/en/>