



Module 2.6



FAO/WHO CODEX TRAINING PACKAGE

SECTION TWO UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANIZATION OF CODEX

Module 2.6 How does Codex elaborate standards?




How does Codex elaborate standards?

- Origin of a request
- Criteria to develop a standard
- Elaboration procedures – five-step, eight-step
- Revision of Codex standards

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Considerations when proposing a new standard

A Codex subsidiary body (i.e. a committee or a task force) should consider the following before proposing to elaborate a standard, code of practice or related text:

- the subsidiary body's terms of reference
- relationship of the work to the Strategic Plan
- any specific relevant strategic project currently being undertaken by the Commission
- feasibility of completing the work within a reasonable time frame

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Project documentation – first step


When a subsidiary body of the Commission is considering elaborating a standard or related text, it will prepare project documentation.

This project documentation should consist of the following:

- purpose of the proposed standard
- indication of its relevance to the Codex strategic objectives
- scope of the proposed standard
- assessment against the criteria for the establishment of work priorities

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Project documentation (cont.)

- Proposed time line for completion of the work
- Identification of expert advice requirements
- Identification of issues related to the needs of developing countries

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Criteria for general subjects


Proposals for general subjects should be assessed against the following criteria:

- Contribution to the protection of consumers' health and prevention of fraudulent practices
- Diversification of national legislation and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade
- Scope of the work undertaken and the establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work
- Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field

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Module 2.6 (cont.)




Criteria for commodity standards

Proposals for commodity standards should be assessed against the following criteria:

- the contribution to the protection of consumer's health and prevention of fraudulent practices
- the volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries
- the diversification of national legislation and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade

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Criteria for commodity standards (cont.)

Proposals for commodity standards should be assessed against the following criteria:

- international or regional market potential
- amenability of the commodity to standardization
- coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards
- number of commodities that would need separate standards indicating whether raw, semi-processed or processed products are to be included in the standard

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Important principles of the Codex elaboration procedures

- Inclusiveness
- Transparency

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Elaboration procedures (eight-step normal)

Step 1: The Commission decides to elaborate a standard and assigns the work to a committee. A decision to elaborate a standard may also be taken by a committee.


Step 2: The Secretariat arranges preparation of a proposed draft standard.

Step 3: The proposed draft standard is sent to governments and international organizations for comment.

Step 4: The Secretariat forwards comments to the committee.

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Elaboration procedures (eight-step normal) (cont.)

Step 5: The proposed draft standard is sent to the Commission through the Secretariat for adoption as a draft standard.


Step 6: The draft standard is sent to governments and international organizations for comment.

Step 7: The Secretariat forwards comments to the committee.

Step 8: The draft standard is submitted to the Commission through the Secretariat for adoption as a Codex standard.

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Elaboration procedures (five-step accelerated)

Step 1: The Commission decides to elaborate a standard on the basis of consensus or a two-thirds majority of votes cast using the accelerated procedure and assigns the work to a committee.


Step 2: The Secretariat arranges preparation of a proposed draft standard.

Step 3: The proposed draft standard is sent to governments and international organizations for comment. When standards are subject to the accelerated procedure, Members of the Commission and the interested international organizations are notified.

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Module 2.6 (cont.)




Elaboration procedures (five-step accelerated) (cont.)

Step 4: The Codex Secretariat forwards comments to the committee for consideration and amendments to the proposed draft standard.

Step 5: The proposed draft standard subject to the accelerated elaboration procedures is sent to the Commission through the Secretariat, together with any written proposals from Members and interested international organizations, for adoption as a Codex standard

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In conclusion...

- Set procedures – *Codex Procedural Manual*
- On occasion a new committee is formed, ad hoc
- The Commission or the Executive Committee decides on the elaboration of a new standard and which Committee should undertake the new work

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SECTION TWO
UNDERSTANDING THE
ORGANIZATION OF CODEX

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Understanding
Codex documentation




Understanding Codex documentation

- Clearly established numbering system for different types of Codex documents
- Often includes reference to the year of origin and relevant subsidiary body

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Codex documentation is separated into six main categories

- *Codex Procedural Manual*
- ALINORMS
- Committee working papers (CXs)
- Conference room documents (CRDs)
- Circular letters (CLs)
- Adopted texts

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ALINORMS


- Reports of the Commission, committees and task forces and working documents for Commission sessions

Example: **ALINORM 03/26/xx**

03 = year of the Commission session
26 = Twenty-sixth Session of the Commission
xx = consecutive number, not necessarily agenda number

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Example of an ALINORM


ALINORM 04/22

04 = year of the Commission session at which the report will be presented

22 = committee identifier, which in this case is Food Labelling

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Committee working papers


Referencing system

- "CX" appears first
- committee code (e.g. FH, FAC)
- year (2 digit abbreviation)
- consecutive number

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Module 2.7 (cont.)




Example of a working paper reference

CX/FH 04/7

CX = Codex
FH = Food Hygiene
04 = 2004 (calendar year in which the meeting is being held)
7 = consecutive number (The consecutive number does not necessarily indicate the agenda number since some agenda items may have more than one document.)

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Codex document reference system for working papers

Executive Committee	CX/EXEC
General Principles	CX/GP
Food Additives and Contaminants	CX/FAC
Food Hygiene	CX/FH
Food Labelling	CX/FL
Methods of Analysis and Sampling	CX/MAS
Pesticide Residues	CX/PR
Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods	CX/RVDF
Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems	CX/FICS

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Codex document reference system for working papers

Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses	CX/NFSDU
Cereals, Pulses and Legumes	CX/CPL
Cocoa Products and Chocolate	CX/CPC
Fats and Oils	CX/FO
Fish and Fishery Products	CX/FFP
Milk and Milk Products	CX/MMP
Meat Hygiene	CX/MH
Natural Mineral Waters	CX/NMW
Processed Fruits and Vegetables	CX/PFV
Sugars	CX/S
Vegetable Proteins	CX/VP
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	CX/FFV

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Codex document reference system for working papers

FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa	CX/AFRICA
FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia	CX/ASIA
FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe	CX/EURO
FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean	CX/LAC
FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East	CX/NEA
FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the Southwest Pacific	CX/NASWP
Ad hoc Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology	CX/FBT
Ad hoc Task Force on Fruit and Vegetable Juices	CX/FJ

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Circular letters

- Letters sent from the Codex Secretariat in Rome to member countries and organizations with observer status in the Commission
- Circular letters are numbered consecutively, also indicating the calendar year and committee to which they pertain:
Example: **CL2001/24 – GP**
2001 = calendar year in which the CL was issued
24 = 24th consecutive letter
GP = General Principles

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Conference room documents

- Documents that are circulated at a Codex session only and are not circulated more broadly to all Codex Members and observers.
- Examples of CRDs include written comments received too late for distribution to all Members and reports of ad hoc working groups established to meet during the session.
- If a country is using a CRD to present its position, it may be more difficult to obtain support.

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Module 2.7 (cont.)




Adopted texts

A standard would be identified as CODEX STAN or CX STAN, followed by a letter (for selected standards) and number, then the year the standard was adopted and, if applicable, the year it was revised. For example, the *Codex standard for named vegetable oils* is identified as CX STAN 210–1999.

Recommended codes of practice and guidelines follow a similar identification system, except that the abbreviations RCP or GL are used. For example, the *Code of hygienic practice for aseptically processed and packaged low-acid foods* is identified as CAC/RCP 40–1993. The *Codex general guideline on claims* is identified as CAC/GL 1–1979 (Rev. 1–1991).

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Documents are available from...

- Member country Codex Contact Points
- Codex Web site
- FAO worldwide sales agents
- FAO Sales and Marketing Group

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Module 2.8



FAO/WHO CODEX TRAINING PACKAGE

SECTION TWO UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANIZATION OF CODEX

Module 2.8
Is there a format
for Codex standards?




Is there a format for Codex standards?

- Standard format for commodity standards allows uniform presentation
- Does not apply to codes of practice, guidelines or recommendations

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Why should a standard format be used?

- Guides subsidiary bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in presenting their commodity standards in a uniform manner
- Facilitates a structured approach to standards development
- Structured approach aids in ensuring all elements essential to protect the consumer are identified and described
- Format can also be used as a model by national governments

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Components of a commodity standard

1. Name
2. Scope
3. Description
4. Essential composition and quality factors
5. Food additives
6. Contaminants
7. Hygiene
8. Weights and measures
9. Labelling
10. Methods of analysis and sampling

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1. Name of the standard

- As clear and concise as possible
- Normally the common name by which the food covered by the standard is known
- If the standard covers more than one food then a generic name covering them all may be used
- Avoid long titles – use subtitles if necessary

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2. Scope

- A clear, concise statement as to the food or foods to which the standard is applicable
- In the case of a general standard covering more than one specific product, the specific products to which the standard applies should be made clear

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Module 2.8 (cont.)



3. Description

- Definition of the product or products with an indication, where appropriate, of the raw materials from which it is derived and any necessary references to processes of manufacture

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4. Essential composition and quality factors

Should contain all quantitative and other requirements, including:

- Identity characteristics
- Provisions on packing media
- Requirements as to compulsory and optional ingredients
- Quality factors that are essential for the designation, definition or composition of the product

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4. Essential composition and quality factors (cont.)

- Essential quality factors that may have an impact on the health of consumer, e.g. criteria of the raw material
- Quality criteria for the finished products, with the object of preventing fraud
- Non-essential factors are attached as an appendix, e.g. blemishes

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5. Food additives

- Section contains the names of additives permitted and, where appropriate, the maximum amount
- Only those additives that have an ADI assigned by JECFA and have been considered by CCFAC are permitted
- Should be presented in a tabular format: Name of additive; maximum level (in percentage or mg/kg)

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6. Contaminants

Pesticide residues


- Should include, by reference, levels for pesticide residues that have been established by Codex for the product concerned

Other contaminants

- Other contaminants (e.g. heavy metals) and, where appropriate, the maximum level permitted in the food.
- Should also be in a tabular form: Name of contaminant; maximum level (in percentage or mg/kg)

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7. Hygiene

- Any specific mandatory hygiene provisions considered necessary should be included in this section
- Reference should also be made to applicable codes of hygienic practice
- The following statement should also appear:
"The following provisions in respect of the food hygiene of this product are subject to endorsement [have been endorsed] by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene."

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Module 2.8 (cont.)




8. Weights and measures

- This section includes all provisions, other than labelling provisions, relating to weights and measures
- Weights and measures should be expressed in standard international (SI) units

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9. Labelling

- Includes all the labelling provisions contained in the standard
- Provisions should be included by reference to the *General standard for the labelling of prepackaged foods*
- The following statement should also appear:
The following provisions in respect of the labelling of this product are subject to endorsement [have been endorsed] by the Codex Committee on Food Labelling.

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10. Methods of analysis and sampling

- Include, either specifically or by reference, all methods of analysis and sampling considered necessary
- If two or more methods have been proved to be equivalent by the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling, these could be regarded as alternative and included in this section either specifically or by reference

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10. Methods of analysis and sampling (cont.)

- The following statement should also appear:
The methods of analysis and sampling described hereunder are to be endorsed [have been endorsed] by the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling.

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This is the format of commodity standards as they are elaborated through the eight-step process

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Module 2.9



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**SECTION TWO
UNDERSTANDING THE
ORGANIZATION OF CODEX**

Module 2.9
**What is the difference
between the Codex
Alimentarius Commission and
the Codex Alimentarius?**




Is there a difference between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Alimentarius?

Codex Alimentarius Commission
= body mandated to develop Codex texts

Codex Alimentarius
= the collection of standards, guidelines and related texts


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Purpose of Codex Alimentarius

- The Codex Alimentarius is a collection of internationally adopted food standards and other provisions of an advisory nature that are presented in a uniform manner to assist in protecting consumers' health and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.
- The Codex Alimentarius is intended to guide and promote the elaboration and establishment of definitions and requirements for foods to promote harmonization, and in so doing to facilitate international trade.


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Scope of Codex Alimentarius

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food hygiene • Pesticide residues • Labelling and presentation • Methods of analysis and sampling • Inspection and certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food additives • Contaminants • Veterinary drug residues
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Scope of Codex Alimentarius (cont.)

The Codex Alimentarius also includes provisions of an advisory nature in the form of:

- codes of practice
- guidelines
- other recommended measures

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Organization of Codex Alimentarius

The Codex Alimentarius is organized in thirteen volumes. Each volume contains the standards relevant to the volume, which have been adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission:

- Volume 1A – General requirements
- Volume 1B – General requirements (food hygiene)
- Volume 2A – Pesticide residues in foods (general texts)
- Volume 2B – Pesticide residues in foods (maximum residue limits)
- Volume 3 – Residues of veterinary drugs in foods
- Volume 4 – Foods for special dietary uses (including foods for infants and children)

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Module 2.9 (cont.)




Organization of Codex Alimentarius (cont.)

- Volume 5A – Processed and quick-frozen fruits and vegetables
- Volume 5B – Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Volume 6 – Fruit juices
- Volume 7 – Cereals, pulses (legumes) and derived products and vegetable proteins
- Volume 8 – Fats and oils and related products

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Organization of Codex Alimentarius (cont.)

- Volume 9 – Fish and fishery products
- Volume 10 – Meat and meat products; soups and broths
- Volume 11 – Sugars, cocoa products and chocolate and miscellaneous products
- Volume 12 – Milk and milk products
- Volume 13 – Methods of analysis and sampling

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Where can the standards be found?

All the adopted Codex standards, guidelines, codes of practice and recommendations can be found on the Codex Web site:
http://www.codexalimentarius.net/standard_list.asp

Pesticide and veterinary drug maximum residue limits are also available on the Codex Web site:
www.codexalimentarius.net

All Codex texts are available from the Codex Contact Point

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Where can the standards be found? (cont.)


Printed copies of the publications can also be ordered from:

Sales and Marketing Group
Publishing Management Service
FAO Information Division
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome, Italy
E-mail: Publications-Sales@fao.org
Fax: (+ 39) 06 57053360

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FAO/WHO CODEX TRAINING PACKAGE

**SECTION TWO
UNDERSTANDING THE
ORGANIZATION OF CODEX**


Module 2.10
**What is the relationship
between Codex standards
and WTO?**



Relationship between Codex standards and WTO

- Overview of the WTO Agreements governing international food trade
- Member country obligations
- Implications for the Codex Alimentarius Commission


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WTO Agreements of most significance to Codex

- The Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement)
- The Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement)


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Scope of the Agreements

- SPS Agreement is concerned with measures to protect human, animal and plant health
- TBT Agreement refers to technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures for all commodities, not just food

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Rights of Members under the SPS Agreement

Members shall ensure that any sanitary or phytosanitary measure is applied only to the extent necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health.

Members shall ensure that their sanitary and phytosanitary measures do not arbitrarily or unjustifiably discriminate between Members where identical or similar conditions prevail... Sanitary and phytosanitary measures shall not be applied in a manner which would constitute a disguised restriction on international trade.

(Article 2, SPS Agreement 1995)

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Obligations of Members under the SPS Agreement

Members are required to:

- base their measures on international standards
- base their measures on an assessment of risk
- ensure the measures are necessary to protect health
- ensure there is no unjustifiable discrimination against foreign sources of supply
- promote the review and development of international standards

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Module 2.10 (cont.)




Obligations of Member under the SPS Agreement (cont.)

- Accept SPS measures of other Members as equivalent even if such measures differ from their own provided they achieve the same appropriate level of protection
- Participate in the relevant international standards organizations

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Examples of SPS measures

- Inspection of products for microbiological contaminants
- Fumigation treatments for products
- Maximum residue limits for pesticide residues in foods

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Linkages between Codex and the SPS Agreement

The SPS Agreement states:

- food safety measures necessary to protect public health should conform to Codex standards
- national regulations consistent with Codex standards are presumed to meet the requirements of the SPS Agreement
- member countries should base their food safety standards on the standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

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Linkages between Codex and the SPS Agreement (cont.)

- Codex is the reference point for standards pertaining to food safety
- Codex is the reference point for harmonizing national food safety standards

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SPS Agreement recognizes...

The Codex standards, guidelines and recommendations relating to:

- food additives
- veterinary drug and pesticide residues
- contaminants
- methods of analysis and sampling
- codes and guidelines of hygienic practice

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Rights and obligations under the TBT Agreement



These are similar to their rights and obligations of Members under the SPS Agreement. Some of these common elements include:

- the right to establish their own appropriate level of protection
- basic obligations for non-discrimination
- national treatment
- use of international standards
- notification of proposed measures and the creation of "enquiry points"

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Module 2.10 (cont.)

Differences between the SPS and TBT Agreements

- Under the SPS Agreement, the only justification for not using Codex food safety standards is scientific argument.
- Under the TBT Agreement, governments may decide that international standards are not appropriate for other reasons, including fundamental technological problems or geographical factors.
- SPS measures are only imposed to the extent necessary to protect human, animal or plant health, on the basis of scientific information.
- TBT regulations may be introduced when necessary to meet a number of objectives, such as national security or the prevention of deceptive practices.



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Linkage between Codex and the TBT Agreement

- Unlike the SPS Agreement, Codex is not specifically referenced in the TBT Agreement.
- However, it does reference, more broadly, "standards developed by appropriate international bodies".
- For food, this would be standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
- A critical non-SPS area relates to prevention of "deceptive practices", which gives particular prominence to labelling and non-health-related quality standards developed by Codex.



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Why does WTO refer to Codex standards as benchmarks for food safety?

- The requirement in the SPS Agreement for measures to be science-based.
- Codex has adopted a statement of principle concerning the role of science in the Codex decision-making process:
The food standards, guidelines and other recommendations of Codex Alimentarius shall be based on the principle of sound scientific analysis and evidence, involving a thorough review of all relevant information, in order that the standards assure the quality and safety of the food supply.

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Why does WTO refer to Codex standards as benchmarks for food safety? (cont.)

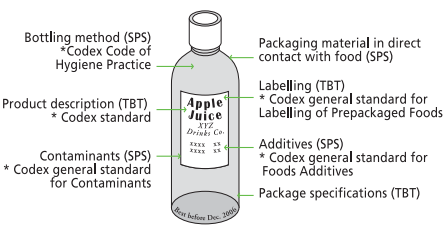
Codex has also adopted statements of principle regarding the role of food safety risk assessment in Codex standard setting:

- Health and safety aspects of Codex decisions and recommendations should be based on a risk assessment, as appropriate to the circumstances
- Food safety risk assessment should incorporate the four steps of the risk assessment process, and should be documented in a transparent manner

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SPS Agreement recognizes...



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Further information on the WTO SPS/TBT Agreements is available from:

FAO and WHO
WTO Web site (Seminars and tools)
http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/thewto_e.htm

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