



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Twenty-third Session

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Use and impact of codex standards in the region

I. Introduction

1. The Codex Secretariat, in collaboration with FAO and WHO evaluation offices, started work in 2021 on developing a mechanism to measure the use and impact of Codex standards. A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to provide data about the use and impact of Codex texts was developed with a view to obtaining information that can help Members and Observers better understand the impact, or potential for impact, of Codex texts.

2. CCEXEC81 and CAC44 endorsed the proposed approach¹ to building the mechanism, and one recommendation was to undertake a pilot of a revamped Member survey in 2022 with the preliminary results being reported to CCEXEC83 and CAC45.

II. Codex surveys 2022 and 2023

3. The purpose of the Codex Survey 2022 was to examine the reach, usefulness, and use of a sample of Codex texts as estimates for their impact. The survey targeted Codex Members and its scope included a selection of Codex texts adopted (including revisions or amendments) by CAC from 2015 to 2020.

4. The Codex Member survey on the use and impact of Codex texts has been developed with the intent to implement it on an annual basis. The survey is comprised of questions related to Codex texts in general, and questions related to specific Codex texts to facilitate a more in-depth analysis and identification of trends over time. The envisaged three-year cycle of standards to be surveyed will allow the use and impact of the same Codex texts to be measured over time.

5. The Codex texts selected in 2022 were:

- *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995);
- *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CXC 1-1969);
- *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985); and
- *General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods* (CXG 9-1987).

6. The Codex Secretariat informed CCEXEC84² that a detailed report of the pilot survey on the use and impact of Codex texts, that had been undertaken in 2022 in line with Strategic Goal 3, was now available.³

7. CCEXEC84 noted the report of the pilot survey on the use and impact of Codex texts and its recommendations to the Codex Secretariat; Codex Members; and FAO and WHO; and confirmed that the survey approach, piloted in 2022, should be used as part of the mechanism to monitor the use and impact of Codex texts, considering the lessons learnt to date.⁴

¹ CX/EXEC 22/82/8

² REP23/EXEC1, paragraph 103

³ EXEC84/INF1

⁴ REP23/EXEC1, paragraph 115(iii, iv)

8. In 2023, the four Codex texts selected were:
 - *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995);
 - *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* (CXG 2-1985);
 - *Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling* (CXS 234-1999); and
 - *Guidelines on Performance Criteria for Methods of Analysis for the Determination of Pesticide Residues in Food and Feed* (CXG 90-2017).
9. At the time of preparation of this document, detailed results were available for the 2022 survey and preliminary results were available for the 2023 survey.
10. The 2024 survey will include the following four Codex texts:
 - CXG 82-2013: *Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems*;
 - CXG 62-2007: *Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Food Safety for Application by Governments*;
 - CXM 2: *Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) and Risk Management Recommendations (RMRs) for Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods*; and
 - CXC 61-2005: *Code of Practice to Minimize and Contain Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance*.
11. For additional information on the survey methodology, approach and definitions please refer to the 2022 report.⁵

III. Responses to the Codex surveys 2022 and 2023 from Members in the Latin America and the Caribbean

12. Of the 33 CCLAC Members, 13 (39%) responded to the 2022 survey and 22 (67%) to the 2023 survey. Of the 2023 CCLAC respondents, eight are High-Income Countries (HICs) and 14 are Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). A sharp increase in responses was noted in 2023, thanks to the efforts of the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Regional Coordinator, to raise awareness on the survey.
13. Based on an analysis of Codex Survey 2022, it is evident that Codex texts play a significant role in ensuring food safety and quality worldwide. The survey results show that the large majority of Codex Members (that replied to the survey) are satisfied with the reach, usefulness, and use of Codex texts. There were no significant regional differences related to satisfaction.
15. The survey also indicates that in LMICs, Codex texts have a greater use and impact, and are used more frequently to support legislation, policies, national food control systems (NFCS), university curricula, training, awareness raising, compared to HICs. In contrast, HICs generally have more established food control systems, greater resources, and advanced technical expertise. They often have the capacity to develop and enforce their own food safety regulations, tailored to their specific contexts. While they may still reference international standards, HICs have more autonomy and flexibility in designing and implementing their NFCS.
16. The survey also sought to quantify the extent that nine pre-selected barriers are impeding the use of Codex texts in each country. Below is a summary of identified barriers in CCLAC.

⁵ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc8056en>

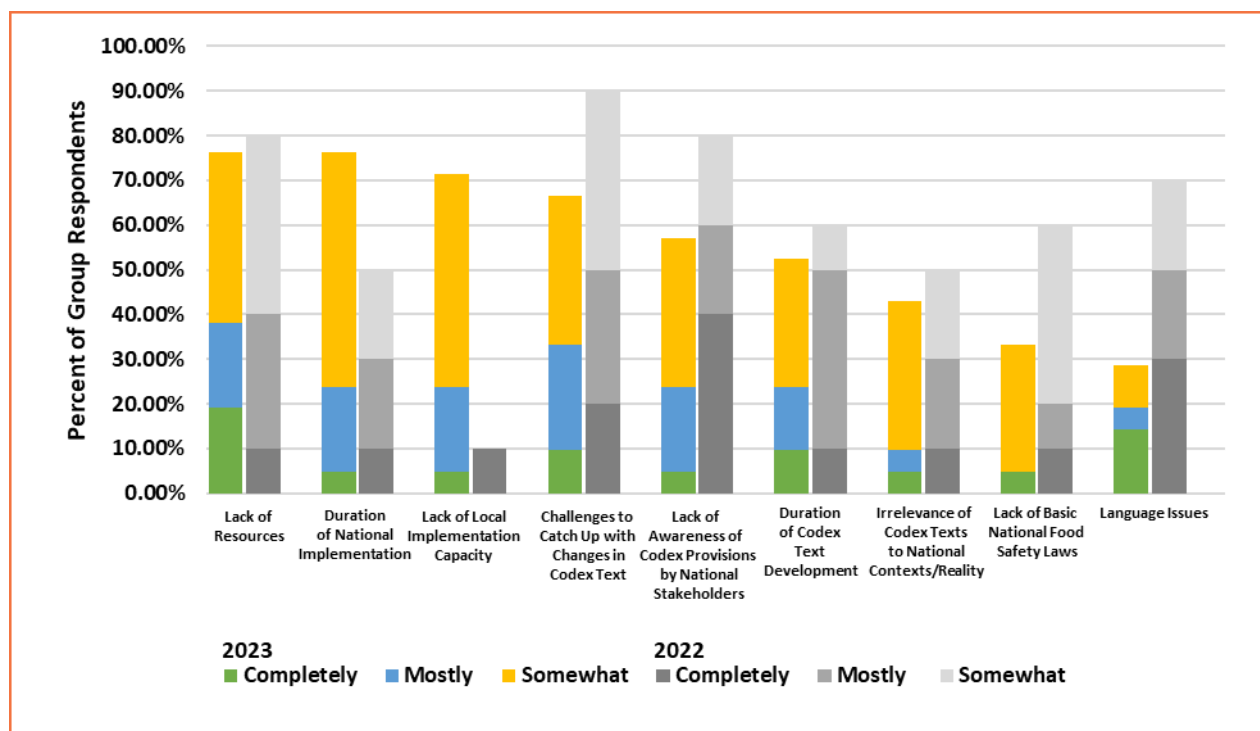


Figure 1 – 2022 and 2023 barriers comparison table based upon responses from Members in the Latin America and the Caribbean

17. In 2022, responses from Members in the LAC region were in line with global trends identified in the survey. Many respondents indicated use being ‘mostly’ or ‘completely’ impeded by lack of awareness of Codex provisions by national stakeholders (60 percent), duration of Codex text development, language issues challenges to catch up with changes in Codex texts, and lack of resources. Respondents appear to be affected more strongly (more ‘completely’ and ‘mostly’ replies) by the identified barriers, with higher levels of consensus, compared to global responses.

18. Compared to the 2022 Survey, lack of local implementation capacity increased substantially, and language issues decreased as reported barriers impeding the use of Codex texts. On the other hand, lack of resources remained a major barrier for the region, which together with duration of national implementation, challenges to catch up with changes in Codex texts and lack of local implementation capacity were identified as the main barriers.

19. The changes between 2022 and 2023 may be due to several factors, including increased number of replies (from 13 to 22) and increased familiarity and understanding of the survey. General conclusions can only be drawn after a few years the survey is administered, so that trends can be identified. At the same time, insights on the difficulties faced by Members in the region in implementing Codex texts can be gained.

IV. Survey recommendations

20. In light of the 2022 survey findings, the below recommendations were proposed. The 2023 report is still to be published, however the 2022 recommendations remain valid for the barriers identified in 2023 as well.

- **Increase efforts to raise awareness of Codex texts by National Stakeholders:** Lack of awareness of Codex provisions by national stakeholders was the first barrier in 2022 to the use of Codex texts identified at global level, by LMIC, LAC, NASWL, NE and the second for AFRICA. Members, with the support of the Codex Secretariat, FAO and WHO, should increase efforts to raise awareness of Codex texts by national stakeholders and advocate for their use. This would improve the use and impact of Codex texts at the national level. This can be done through the provision of capacity development opportunities, communication activities, improved dissemination of Codex texts. This is also in line with Goal 3 of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-25 (Increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex texts). FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees are a key venue in this regard and should reflect these efforts in the regional work plans.
- **Prioritize the provision of capacity building and training:** Members are encouraged to request FAO and WHO to provide training and capacity building programmes to assist Codex Members,

particularly LMICs, in the implementation and utilization of Codex texts, with support of the Codex Secretariat. This should include mobilizing more resources, including financial, technical, and human resources, to support the development of national Codex structures through mechanisms such as the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund, and rolling out capacity development programmes aiming at the implementation and enforcement of Codex texts at national levels.

- **Improve dissemination of Codex texts:** The Secretariat should continue its efforts in improving the dissemination of Codex texts, in particular through the digitalization project currently underway.
- **Continue communication and collaboration:** The Codex Secretariat should continue to facilitate communication and collaboration among Codex Members and other stakeholders to ensure that Codex texts are being utilized effectively and efficiently. This could include the development of news stories, videos, lessons learned and case studies for Codex Members to share experiences and best practices. WHO, FAO and the Codex Secretariat should continue to prioritize awareness-raising initiatives about Codex and Codex texts to relevant stakeholders at national and regional levels.
- **Increase resources:** Members should increase resources either at national level or at the international level to support FAO and WHO to provide timely scientific advice through the appropriate joint expert committees in order to decrease the response time; and Codex to address barriers such as language issues, lack of resources, and duration of Codex text development.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

21. CCLAC23 is invited to:

- i. Note the results of the survey on the use and impact of Codex text, in particular those relevant to the region;
- ii. Comment on the recommendations made and possible actions that could be undertaken to address them; and
- iii. Invite the region to share some additional information on barriers to the use of standards.