



## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEx COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

#### Twenty-seventh Session

Cairns, Australia

16 - 20 September 2024

### MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

#### MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 46th SESSIONS OF THE CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (CAC46) AND ITS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CCEXEC85 AND CCEXEC86)

#### MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

##### Standards and Related Texts adopted by the Commission<sup>1</sup>

1. CAC46 (2023) adopted at Step 5/8 the:
  - i. *Guidelines on Recognition and Maintenance of Equivalence of National Food Control Systems* (NFCS) (CXG 101-2023), noting that any further comments should be made in the context of the ongoing work on consolidating the Codex guidelines relating to equivalence; and
  - ii. *Principles and Guidelines on the Use of Remote Audit and Inspection in Regulatory Frameworks* (CXG 102-2023), noting that any proposed amendments or revision should be submitted to the next session of CCFICS for consideration.

##### Approval of new work

2. CAC46 approved new work on the revision and updating of the *Principles for Traceability/Product Tracing as a Tool within a Food Inspection and Certification System* (CXG 60-2006).

##### Other issues

3. CAC46:
  - i. applauded the pace and responsiveness CCFICS had demonstrated regarding the work on the *Principles and Guidelines on the Use of Remote Audit and Inspection in Regulatory Frameworks* (CXG 102-2023).
  - ii. requested CCFICS to prioritize completion of the work on consolidation of the Codex guidelines related to equivalence.

##### Application of the Statements of Principle concerning the role of science in the Codex decision-making process and the extent to which other factors are taken into account (SoP)<sup>2</sup>

4. CAC46 (2023) reiterated its previous conclusion that the draft guidance on SoP remained serviceable and available as practical guidance for Chairpersons of CAC and its subsidiary bodies and for Members in situations when there is agreement on science but differing views on other factors/considerations. CAC46 also agreed on the need to gain more experience on application of the draft guidance, and to revisit the draft guidance in the light of experience gained.

##### New Food Sources and Production Systems (NFPS)<sup>3</sup>

5. CAC46 (2023) highlighted the importance of addressing challenges posed by NFPS and the important role Codex could play in this; noted that the current working mechanisms were adequate to address any new work on NFPS that Members might propose; and encouraged Members to submit discussion papers or

<sup>1</sup> REP23/CAC paragraph 78 – 80 & 87

<sup>2</sup> REP23/CAC paragraph 194 (ii, vi, vii)

<sup>3</sup> REP23/CAC paragraph 206 (i, ii & iii); REP24/EXEC1 paragraph 105 (ii)

new work proposals, either to active Codex committees or to the Executive Committee through the Codex Secretariat.

6. CCEXEC86 (2024) requested that any Members submitting proposals for new work, carefully consider existing Codex texts and to ensure clarity on the purpose of the work in preparing their proposals.

#### Future of Codex<sup>4</sup>

7. CCEXEC85 (2023) agreed to use the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031 to guide the future direction of Codex.
8. CCEXEC86 (2024):
  - encouraged more Members to take leadership roles in committee working groups to ensure their sustainability and inclusiveness, while recognizing the challenges these Members may face and further encouraged the Codex Secretariat and experienced working group chairs to proactively seek engagement of other Members and provide guidance and support.
  - reminded Codex committees of the importance of good work management practices and prioritization of work to avoid the establishment of too many EWGs and the related burden on all concerned and ensure that agenda items can be adequately discussed within the available plenary session time.

#### Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031<sup>5</sup>

9. CCEXEC85 (2023) considered the first draft of the elements to be included in the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031, in particular, the vision; mission; core values; drivers for change; the role of Codex; and a high-level description on Codex ways of working of the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031.
10. CCEXEC86 (2024) continued discussions on the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031 and agreed:
  - i) on the following three strategic goals and one functional goal:

##### Strategic goals

- Respond to Members' needs for protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade in an evolving global environment by developing science-based standards
- Strengthen relationships with relevant international organisations, promoting an integrated approach to address global challenges
- Maximize the impact of Codex by increasing the visibility and use of standards

##### Functional goal

- Enhance work management systems and practices that support the efficient and effective achievement of all strategic plan goals
- ii) to request the Codex Secretariat to issue a Circular Letter in September 2024 requesting comments on the agreed draft strategic goals and outcomes from all Codex Members and Observers.

## **MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

### **33rd Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP33)<sup>6</sup>**

11. CCGP33 (2023) agreed to inform other Codex committees of the ongoing work to update to the Guide to the procedures for the amendment and revision of Codex standards and related texts in the Codex Procedural Manual (Part 7), to better align with current practices in Codex and international publishing standards.

## **MATTERS FOR ACTION**

### **MATTERS FROM THE CODEX SECRETARIAT**

12. The terms of reference for CCFICS as stated in the Codex Procedural Manual<sup>7</sup>, include the following footnote under (c) "quality assurance systems:

<sup>4</sup> REP23/EXEC2 paragraph38 (i); REP24/EXEC1 paragraph 61 (iii), (v).

<sup>5</sup> REP23/EXEC2 paragraph 54 (i)a; REP24/EXEC1, paragraph 77 and 79 (i) (iv)

<sup>6</sup> REP23/GP, paragraph 69

<sup>7</sup> 28th Edition, Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual, Page 164

“Quality assurance means all those planned and systematic actions necessary to provide adequate confidence that a product or service will satisfy given requirements for quality (ISO-8402 Quality - Vocabulary)” (Appendix)

13. However, the standard ISO 8402 has been withdrawn and replaced with ISO 9000:2015 with the following revised definition for the term “quality assurance”.

**3.3.6 Quality assurance** - part of quality management (3.3.4) focused on providing confidence that quality requirements (3.6.5) will be fulfilled.

14. Currently the standard ISO 9000:2015 is also under revision, with an expected publication date of November 2025.

## Recommendations

15. CCFICS27 is invited to:
- i. note the matters for information provided above.
  - ii. encourage Members and Observers to actively engage in opportunities to contribute to the discussions on the development of Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031 by providing replies to relevant CLs.
  - iii. note that in light of the withdrawal of ISO 8402 (referenced in the Codex Procedural Manual), and the ongoing revision to ISO 9000:2015 that has replaced ISO 8402, the Codex Secretariat will, as soon as the ongoing revision to ISO 9000 is completed, propose an editorial amendment to the footnote on “quality assurance” associated with the terms of reference for CCFICS, which will be forwarded to CAC for approval.

## APPENDIX

Table of committees, document references and terms of reference

Acronym	Codex Committee on	Id	Document reference	Host country
CCFICS	Food Import and Export Certification and Inspection Systems	CX-733	CX/FICS	Australia
<p>(a) to develop principles and guidelines for food import and export inspection and certification systems with a view to harmonizing methods and procedures which protect the health of consumers, ensure fair practices in the food trade and facilitate international trade in foodstuffs;</p> <p>(b) to develop principles and guidelines for the application of measures by the competent authorities of exporting and importing countries to provide assurance, where necessary, that foodstuffs comply with requirements, especially statutory health requirements;</p> <p>(c) to develop guidelines for the utilization, as and when appropriate, of quality assurance systems* to ensure that foodstuffs conform with requirements and to promote the recognition of these systems in facilitating trade in food products under bilateral/multilateral arrangements by countries;</p> <p>(d) to develop guidelines and criteria with respect to format, declarations and language of such official certificates as countries may require with a view towards international harmonization;</p> <p>(e) to make recommendations for information exchange in relation to food import/export control;</p> <p>(f) to consult as necessary with other international groups working on matters related to food inspection and certification systems; and (g) to consider other matters assigned to it by the Commission in relation to food inspection and certification systems</p> <p>* <b>Quality assurance</b> means all those planned and systematic actions necessary to provide adequate confidence that a product or service will satisfy given requirements for quality (ISO-8402 Quality - Vocabulary)</p>				