

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

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Agenda Item 12

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## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

43rd Session  
Budapest, Hungary

13 – 18 May 2024

(Comments of FAO)

### Agenda Item 12: Other business and future work

#### **The importance of harmonization of sampling and testing methods for the determination of microplastics in foods**

*Information for consideration by CCMAS, submitted by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division*

FAO documents such as the FAO report on Microplastics in Food Commodities<sup>1</sup> or the FAO Report on Microplastics in Fisheries and Aquaculture<sup>2</sup> have highlighted the need for having standard reference material for the identification and quantification of microplastics, as well as for the evaluation of their composition. The 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Subcommittee on Fish Trade<sup>3</sup> requested FAO to play a role in the recognition of standards for testing microplastics in food commodities. This will be critical to ensure that comparison or correlation of results is possible. Having appropriate testing methods is key for determining the exact number, size, and shape of the particles, as well as the type of polymers and additives present in microplastics. This is important to understand the exposure and critical for toxicological studies and assessments.

FAO considers that there is value in having Codex recommending sampling and testing methods for microplastics in foods. The recently published “ISO Standard 24187:2023 on Principles for the analysis of microplastics present in the environment” could support this exercise.

The ISO Standard 24187:2023 includes biota within the scope and specifies minimum requirements for sampling and testing microplastics until specific standards for the different case situations are available. It provides general requirements for all analytical steps and guidance for the identification of appropriate detection methods. Nanoplastics are outside of the scope of the standard, but recommendations for analytical techniques are also necessary from the food safety point of view.

<sup>1</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/14b07c0a-3b3e-42e6-b34d-44e990700a2f>

<sup>2</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/98cc7c65-f933-4c37-9118-09bad76e087b>

<sup>3</sup> [Report of the 19th Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, Bergen, Norway, 11–15 September 2023 / Rapport de la 19e session du Sous-Comité du commerce du poisson Bergen \(Norvège\), 11-15 septembre 2023 / Informe de la 19.ª reunión del Subcomité de comercio pesquero. Bergen \(Noruega\), 11-15 de septiembre de 2023 \(fao.org\)](#)