

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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REP24/FICS

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

**Forty-seventh Session
25 - 30 November 2024**

**REPORT OF THE 27TH SESSION OF
THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION
SYSTEMS**

Cairns, Australia, 16 – 20 September 2024

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SUMMARY AND STATUS OF WORK

Responsible Party	Purpose	Text/Topic	Code	Step	Para(s)
Members CCEXEC87 CAC47	Adoption	Draft Guidelines on prevention and control of food fraud	N25-2017	5	61 and App. II
CCEXEC87 CAC47	Approval	Project document on guidance on appeals mechanism in the context of rejection of imported food		1/2/3	86 and App. III
		Project document on the standardization of the representation of sanitary requirements		1/2/3	91 and App. IV
		Project document on establishment listings		1/2/3	100 and App. V
		Project document on digitalisation of national food control systems		1/2/3	103 and App. VI
EWGs CCFICS28 Member(s)/ Observers	Drafting, Discussion, and/or comments	Draft consolidated guidelines related to equivalence		2/3/4	35
		Draft guidelines on Prevention and Control of food fraud		6/7	61
		Draft <i>Principles and guidelines on traceability/product tracing as a tool within a Food Inspection and Certification System (CXG 60-2006)</i>		2/3/4	79
		Draft guidance on appeals mechanism in the context of rejection of imported food		2/3/4	86
		Draft guidance on the standardization of sanitary requirements		2/3/4	91
		Draft guidance on establishment listings		2/3/4	100
		Draft principles on digitalisation of national food control systems		2/3/3	103
EU CCFICS28	Comments Drafting Discussion	Review and update, Appendix A - the list of emerging global issues			96

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALOP	Appropriate level of sanitary protection
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCEXEC	Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCFICS	Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems
CL	Circular Letter
CRD	Conference Room Document
CXG	Codex Guidelines
EU	European Union
EWG	Electronic Working Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBOs	Food Business Operators
GIs	Geographical Indications
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
INFOSAN	FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network
IP	Intellectual Property
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
NFCS	National Food Control System
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
STDF	Standards and Trade Development Facility
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
PWG	Physical Working Group
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
vTPA	Voluntary Third-Party Assurance
WCO	World Customs Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
WOAH	World Organization for Animal Health
WTO	World Trade Organization

INTRODUCTION

1. The Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems held its twenty-seventh session (CCFICS27), from 16 to 20 September 2024, in hybrid format, at the kind invitation of the Government of Australia. Mr Tom Black, First Assistant Secretary, Exports and Veterinary Services, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Australian Government, chaired CCFICS27. The session was attended by 70 Member Countries, one Member Organization and 11 Observers organisations and United Nations agencies. The list of participants is contained in Appendix I.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. Mr Gavin Singleton from the Yirrganydji Traditional Custodians provided a welcome to Country.
3. The Honourable Julie Collins, Australian Government Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, opened the meeting and welcomed participants to CCFICS27. The Minister highlighted the important role of CCFICS in effectively responding to the global challenges in food production and food trade that will support consumer confidence in the food supply and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Minister confirmed Australia's commitment to hosting CCFICS.
4. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Mr Adam Fennessy, also addressed the delegates and highlighted CCFICS's contributions to the strengthening of national food control systems and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.
5. Ms Catherine Bessy, Senior Food Safety Officer, Food Systems and Food Safety Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Dr Akio Hasegawa, Technical Officer of the World Health Organization (WHO) delivered opening speeches on behalf of FAO and WHO, respectively.
6. The meeting was also addressed by Mr Raj Rajasekar, Vice-Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), and Ms Sarah Cahill, Codex Secretary.
7. Ms Sharon Winsor, Weilwan woman and founder of Indigiearth, gave a talk about the important role of indigenous foods and indigenous culture as part of agrifood systems.

Division of competence¹

8. CCFICS27 noted the division of competence between the European Union (EU) and its Member States, according to paragraph 5, Rule II, of the Rules of Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)²

9. CCFICS27 adopted the provisional agenda as the agenda for the Session and agreed to consider a proposed amendment to the *Principles and Guidelines on the Use of Remote Audit and Inspection in Regulatory Frameworks* (CXG 102-2023) (CRD05) under Agenda item 10 (Other business), subject to availability of time.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda item 2)³

10. The Codex Secretariat introduced the item.
11. CCFICS27 noted the matters for information as well as the matter highlighted for action (related to the withdrawal of ISO 8402 and associated amendments to the CCFICS Terms of Reference (TORs) in the Codex Procedural Manual.
12. The delegation of Norway drew the attention of CCFICS27 to their comments contained in CRD05 on the proposal to amend CXS 102-2023, Section 6 paragraph 3, which CCFICS27 had already agreed to consider under Agenda Item 10, Other business.

Conclusion

13. CCFICS27:
 - i. noted the matters for information from the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) and its subsidiary bodies;
 - ii. encouraged Members to take on leadership roles in the electronic working groups (EWGs) and the updating of the emerging issues paper; and respond to the circular letter (CL) on the Codex strategic plan 2026-2031; and

¹ Division of competence between the European Union and its Member States (CRD1).

² CX/FICS 24/27/1; CRD4 (Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, East African Community); CRD5 (Norway)

³ CX/FICS 24/27/2; CRD5 (Kenya, Norway, Rwanda, Singapore, United Republic of Tanzania, East African Community)

- iii. noted that in light of the withdrawal of ISO 8402 “Quality Vocabulary”, referenced in the CCFICS terms of reference in the Codex Procedural Manual – and the ongoing revision to ISO 9000:2015 “Quality management systems – Fundamentals and vocabulary”, that has replaced ISO 8402, the Codex Secretariat would, as soon as the ongoing revision to ISO 9000 was completed, propose an editorial amendment to the footnote on “quality assurance” associated with the terms of reference for CCFICS, which would be forwarded to CAC for approval.

INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCFICS (Agenda item 3)⁴

14. The Representatives of FAO and WHO provided information on their activities
15. The Representative of FAO introduced document CX/FICS 24/27/3, highlighting the rapid development and success of the national food control system assessment programme, using the FAO/WHO tool, currently implemented by the two agencies. The Representative also reported on the work ongoing on food fraud, including the joint activities with the FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture on food authenticity. The Representative illustrated the close interconnections of FAO’s food safety capacity development programme with Codex, and more specifically CCFICS texts, to assist countries strengthen their food safety legislation, as well as their risk-based inspection programmes. The Representative also indicated that FAO and WHO had developed a framework for coordination for food safety, paving the way for implementation of their respective food safety work with a common vision -food safety at all times.
16. The Representative of WHO reported on the recent and ongoing activities related to the FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), World Food Safety Day, and Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF). The Representative also highlighted the WHO initiatives including the activities for promoting INFOSAN and strengthening food safety emergency response capacity of Members.
17. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) shared information about their activities relevant to CCFICS, including on voluntary third-party assurance (vTPA) programs.
18. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) provided an update on recent OECD work on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) digital tools including on costs, benefits and effectiveness of remote audit and the current use of SPS e-certificates.
19. Concerning SPS e-certificates, a Member informed that the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) had started data modeling of WOAH certificates, and that the result of this work was expected to be published towards the end of 2024.

Conclusion

20. CCFICS27:
 - i. thanked the FAO and WHO and other international organisations for their updates.
 - ii. noted the information provided and their technical support towards capacity development in developing countries; and
 - iii. noted the important work of the food control system assessment program using the FAO/WHO tool that drew heavily on CCFICS guidance.

DRAFT CONSOLIDATED CODEX GUIDELINES RELATED TO EQUIVALENCE (Agenda item 4)⁵

21. New Zealand, as Chair of both the EWG and the Physical Working Group (PWG), introduced the EWG and the PWG report and highlighted that a broad agreement was reached on the structure of the consolidated guideline.
22. CCFICS27 noted the importance of the consolidation work along with the following general comments as expressed by delegations:
 - The language in the draft consolidated guidelines related to equivalence should closely align with that used in the *Guidelines on Recognition and Maintenance of National Food Control Systems* (CXG 101-2023), and it should be clear and easy to understand.
 - There was a need to ensure that once finalised, the consolidated document would appropriately reflect

⁴ CX/FICS 24/27/3; CX/FICS 24/27/3 Add. 1; CRD6 (Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, and East African Community); CRD17 (African Union)

⁵ CX/FICS 24/26/4; CX/FICS 24/27/4 Add.1, CRD2 (Report of Physical Working Group), CRD7 (Ghana, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, and East African Community), CRD14 (Chair and co-Chair of the Electronic Working Group on consolidated guidelines related to equivalence); CRD16 (Egypt); CRD17 (African Union); CRD18 (Panama); CRD19 (India); CRD20 (Burundi); CRD21 (Indonesia); CRD22 (Senegal); CRD23 (Malaysia)

the concepts laid down in the *Guidelines on Recognition and Maintenance of Equivalence of National Food Control Systems* (CXG 101-2023), the *Guidelines for the Development of Equivalence Agreements Regarding Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems* (CXG 34-1999), the *Guidelines on the Judgment of Equivalence of Sanitary Measures Associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems* (CXG 53-2003), and sections of the *Guidelines for the Design, Operation, Assessment and Accreditation of Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems* (CXG 26-1997).

- There was a need to clarify the status of the above mentioned three documents after the consolidation exercise had been completed.
- As some of the texts in CXG 101-2023 had not been fully transferred, a further analysis of each of the three Codex guidance documents being consolidated had to be undertaken to identify whether the concepts in relevant paragraphs were reflected in the draft consolidated document. The analysis would facilitate the progress of the consolidation and decision making by CCFICS regarding the status of existing Codex equivalence texts. The importance of ensuring that all the key concepts of the existing equivalence texts are appropriately reflected in the guideline was reiterated.
- Consolidation of the existing texts should not create unnecessary burden for competent authorities to establish and maintain equivalence agreements.

23. There was a need to ensure that the terms used in the guidelines were harmonised to ensure clarity and avoid confusion. A number of terms were used in the text when referring to the term “measures”, some examples such terms include: “conditions of trade”, “requirements”, “requirements for trade”, “specified measures” and “specific measures”. There was discussion about which terms to include for sanitary measures and technical regulations from the World Trade Organization (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreements. It was noted that this could be possible but should be done in a transparent manner. To that end, a suggestion was made that the terms ‘sanitary measure’ and ‘technical regulations’ be used throughout the document, along with the language referring to the National Food Control Systems (NFCS) or relevant parts of an NFCS, appropriate to which were being discussed.

24. CCFICS27 considered the draft document section by section and made the following specific comments:

Title of the principles and guidelines

25. CCFICS27 exchanged views on the use and/or the meaning of the term “specified measure” as included in the title of the consolidated Codex text. It was observed that the term covered both sanitary measures and technical requirements. To ensure clarity, it was agreed to amend the title to “Principles and guidelines for the recognition of equivalence of sanitary measures, technical regulations or the whole or a part of national food control systems”.

Section 1: Preamble

26. CCFICS27 considered the preamble and made the following suggested amendments to the text:

Paragraph 1

- The paragraph was redrafted to reflect the purpose of equivalence agreements.

Paragraph 2

- The paragraph was amended to replace the term “specified measures” with “sanitary measures and technical regulations, as appropriate”, and the following explanatory note was inserted to clarify the meaning of the term “technical regulations”.

“Explanatory note: Technical regulations can include technical regulations, conformity assessment procedures or standards”

Paragraph 3

- The paragraph was amended to clarify that the recognition of equivalence may result in the more efficient and effective use of resources in both importing and exporting countries.

Paragraph 4

- The following new paragraph from the preamble, paragraph 3 of CXG 101-2023, was included:

“The consideration, assessment, recognition, and maintenance of the equivalence of one country’s NFCS in whole or the relevant part is independent of any reciprocal process occurring. Reciprocal considerations, where requested, may have different scopes and durations, and may also arrive at different conclusions.”

Section 2: Purpose

27. The following amendments were made:

- Paragraph 1 from CXG 34-1999 was included to provide for other less formal agreements:

“This document provides practical guidance for governments desiring to enter into bilateral or multilateral equivalence agreements concerning sanitary measure(s) or technical regulations or the whole or a part of a NFCS. Such agreements may be binding instruments taking the form of “international agreements” under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, or they may be other less formal arrangements such as exchange of letters or memoranda of understanding.”
- The footnote was consequentially deleted as a result of the above-added new paragraph, to avoid repetition of information.

Section 3: Scope

28. CCFICS27 edited the paragraph to ensure linguistic consistency and harmonisation.

Section 4: Definitions

29. CCFICS27 made the following amendments:

- Inserted a definition for the term “Appropriate Level of Protection” (as contained in CXG 53-2003) and placed the definition in square brackets for further consideration:

“[Appropriate level of sanitary protection (ALOP): The level of protection deemed appropriate by the country establishing a sanitary measure to protect human life or health within its territory. (This concept may otherwise be referred to as the “acceptable level of risk”.)]”
- Edited the definition for the term “requirements” as follows:

“Requirements: are the criteria set down by the competent authorities relating to trade in food covering the protection of the health consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.”
- Deleted the definitions for the terms: “measure”; “NFCS objective”; “Sanitary measure” and “Technical measure”.

Section 4: Principles

30. CCFICS27 made the following amendments:

C: Scope of the request and assessment

- Edited the explanatory text for the principle by inserting the following sentence at the end of the paragraph: “and should be agreed between importing and exporting countries”.

F: Demonstration of Equivalence

- Edited the title of the principle to include the word “recognition” i.e. “*Demonstration and Recognition of Equivalence*” and included a new first sentence of the explanatory text of the principle:

“The exporting country should objectively demonstrate that its measures, technical regulations, NFCS or relevant part, achieve the importing country’s objectives”.

Section 6: Initial Discussions

31. CCFICS27 noted that the concepts outlined in paragraphs 10 and 11 were similar to those in paragraphs 9 and 12, respectively, and agreed to delete paragraphs 10 and 11 replacing the language of paragraph 11 with the text from the second sentence of the opening paragraph of CXG 101-2023 section 5.1.1.

Appropriateness of an equivalence process***Paragraph 12***

32. CCFICS27 amended:

- Bullet point 1 by deleting the words “for trade” and “unnecessarily”; and
- Bullet point 2 by inserting the term “exporting country”.
- Bullet point 3 by it replacing with “which of the importing country’s measures would be met by compliance and for which measures would the exporting country seek equivalence”.

33. The following two new bullet points were inserted and square bracketed for further consideration:

- [As agreed by the parties, an equivalence agreement covering control and certification systems may relate

to any aspect of food safety or other relevant requirement for food. Such agreements may be limited to specific areas of trade or specific products. Such agreements may be entered into where equivalence has been established in respect of some or all requirements] (source is CXG 34-1999, paragraph 5)

- [Equivalence agreements may include provisions for certificates or other forms of certification of particular traded products or may provide for dispensing with certificates and other forms of certification] (source is CXG 34-1999, paragraph 5)

34. Following extensive discussion and noting that the availability of time could not allow consideration of sections beyond paragraph 12, bullet point 5, the Chairperson of CCFICS closed the CCFICS27 plenary discussion on this matter with further consideration of the text to be undertaken in the EWG.

Conclusion

35. CCFICS27, in light of the extensive discussions and comments made and the need for outstanding issues to be resolved, agreed:

- to return the draft consolidated guidelines related to equivalence at Step 2, for redrafting and circulation for comments at Step 3;
- to establish an EWG, chaired by New Zealand, and co-chaired by Kenya, and open to all Members and Observers, working in English, to consider the outstanding issues, taking into account the comments and drafting changes made during the plenary discussions, the written comments contained in CX/FICS 24/27/4 Add.1, and the relevant CRDs;
- to encourage the EWG to seek multiple rounds of comments as necessary with a view to resolve all the outstanding issues;
- that the report of the EWG would be submitted at least three months prior to CCFICS28; and
- to keep open the possibility of virtual or physical WG meetings, open to all Members and Observers, between sessions, and a PWG immediately prior to CCFICS28 if required.

36. CCFICS27 requested the EWG to consider the *Guidelines on Recognition and Maintenance of Equivalence of National Food Control Systems (NFCS)* (CXG 101-2023) as the basis for the continued drafting of the process steps in the guideline, to also ensure all of the key concepts of the existing documents were appropriately captured, and any newly introduced concepts were identified.

DRAFT GUIDELINES ON PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF FOOD FRAUD (Agenda item 5)⁶

37. The United States of America as Chair of the EWG introduced this item.

38. The Chairperson of CCFICS invited general comments before opening a discussion of the document paragraph by paragraph.

39. CCFICS27 noted the following general views:

- There was general agreement on the importance of progressing this work.
- The guidelines would support the establishment of measures, where justified by risk, for prevention and mitigation of food fraud and the protection of food integrity, especially in developing countries.
- Concerns were expressed about the lack of clarity on the scope of the guidelines.

Discussion

Section 1: Preamble/Introduction

Paragraph 3

40. It was agreed to add the words “Regulatory frameworks” at the beginning of the sentence and to simplify the end of the sentence by deleting the words “safety, authenticity, integrity, suitability and quality of food”.

Paragraph 6bis

41. Different views were expressed on the usefulness of this paragraph, especially since the term “anti-food fraud culture” was not a defined term and therefore could cause confusion. There was also some potential overlap

⁶ CX/FICS 24/27/5; CX/FICS 24/27/5 Add.1; CRD8 (Ghana, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Thailand and East African Community), CRD15 (Brazil, supported by Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, México, Paraguay and Uruguay); CRD16 (Egypt); CRD17 (African Union); CRD18 (Panama); CRD19 (India); CRD20 (Burundi); CRD21 (Indonesia); CRD22 (Senegal); CRD23 (Malaysia)

with paragraph 5. Those in support of applying the term explained that the main focus of an “anti-food fraud culture” was to cause change in human behaviour, for example through awareness raising.

42. Following a constructive discussion on whether or not to include the term “anti-food fraud culture”, it was agreed to delete it from the paragraph. The paragraph was edited to emphasize the importance of preventative measures and collaboration of the stakeholders.

Section 2: Purpose/Scope

Paragraph 7

43. A Member referenced CRD15, which proposed new language for the scope of the document, as in this Member's view, the original version in the document was broader than the Codex mandate. However, the CCFICS Chairperson reminded CCFICS27 that only CAC could define the mandate of Codex.
44. There was discussion on whether to include reference to feed for food producing animals in the scope. It was agreed to delete the statement “may impact human food safety” and end the first sentence with “including, as appropriate, feed for food producing animals”. It was proposed that the EWG give further consideration to how feed for food producing animals was reflected and referenced throughout the guideline, taking into account other relevant Codex guidance.
45. CCFICS27 considered footnote 3 that referred to the exclusion of intellectual property (IP) issues, specifically geographical indications (GIs).
46. Following a constructive discussion, and in the spirit of compromise CCFICS27 agreed to: i) delete footnote 3; ii) add at the end of paragraph 3 the phrase “Issues related to intellectual property are not included in this document”; and iii) exclude mentioning GIs as they are a type of IP.
47. The EU acknowledged that a compromise had been reached that excluded issues related to IP from the scope of this guideline, and noted that IP issues, including GI, may be considered as food fraud by national authorities and were subject to applicable national legislation.

Paragraph 7bis

48. CCFICS27 agreed that as the investigation and prosecution of food fraud offenses were outside the scope of this guideline, paragraph 7bis was unnecessary and was deleted.

Section 3: Definitions

49. Responding to a question, the EWG Chair clarified that there was no intended difference between the terms: ‘food’ and ‘food products’ and that it was better to refer to or use the term ‘food’ only throughout the guideline.

Food fraud

50. Following a discussion on whether to refer to prescribed specifications or not, and what “expected” characteristics meant, it was agreed to keep this definition in square brackets and revisit it at a later stage.

Food integrity and Food authenticity

51. There were divergent views on whether to keep these definitions or not. It was argued that they should be deleted as they were not used in the draft guideline and since these concepts were broader than food fraud. It was also argued to keep them since these concerns were relevant to food fraud.
52. It was agreed to keep these two definitions in square brackets and revisit them at a later stage.

Section 4: Types of food fraud

53. It was clarified that the descriptions had to be read in conjunction with the chapeau that was referring to intentional act for economic gain.
54. Substitution: This description was reworded to read “Replacing a food or a food ingredient, in whole or in part, with another ingredient, in whole or in part (most often of lower value) without declaring it”. The bracket was included to indicate that usually the substitution was of lower value than the original food/food ingredient, but not always.

Section 5: Principles

55. To avoid repetition and ensure clarity around the principles, CCFICS27 simplified the section by rewording the chapeau and making each principle a single sentence without a narrative.
56. The section was reworded to read as follows:

“Competent authorities and FBOs should be guided by the following principles to prevent, detect, mitigate, and control food fraud:

Principle 1: The occurrence of food fraud can be reduced by having measures in place, proportionate to the level of risk.

Principle 2: Cooperation among competent authorities, within or between countries, as well as with FBOs, can help reduce food fraud.”

Section 6: Roles and responsibilities

Paragraph 9

57. Due to overlapping content, CCFICS27 agreed to merge subparagraphs (c) and (d) to read:

“Communicate, coordinate and collaborate with other competent authorities within and between countries, industry, academia and stakeholders as needed”.

Paragraph 10

58. It was suggested to delete subparagraph a., and CCFICS27 accepted the proposal.

59. Following a constructive discussion, CCFICS27 agreed to retain subparagraph “(b) Bis” in square brackets for further consideration due to its potential overlap with subparagraph (e).

Sections 7 and 8:

60. It was proposed to merge sections 6, 7 and 8 and to create two sections: “responsibilities and activities of competent authorities”, and “responsibilities and activities of FBOs”. The CCFICS Chairperson supported this proposal and encouraged the EWG to consider reshuffling of the text.

Conclusion

61. Considering that CCFICS27 had made significant progress in building consensus on sections 1, 2, 4, and 5 and resolved the substantial issues, CCFICS27 agreed to:

- i. forward the draft guidelines on the prevention and control of food fraud to CAC47 for adoption at Step 5 (Appendix II);
- ii. establish an EWG, open to all Members and Observers, chaired by the United States of America, and co-chaired by China, EU, Iran, Panama, and UK, working in English and Spanish, with the following terms of reference:
 - a. To consider comments received at Step 6, and all outstanding issues, including text in square brackets and comments made at CCFICS27 on sections 3, 6, 7 and 8.
 - b. To consider how feed for food producing animals was reflected and referenced throughout the guideline, taking into account other relevant Codex guidance.
 - c. To undertake multiple rounds of comments as necessary.
 - d. To submit the report of the EWG at least three months before CCFICS28; and
- iii. to keep open the possibility to hold virtual intersessional meetings, to address any outstanding issues, and if needed, a physical working group immediately prior to CCFICS28.

DRAFT REVISION AND UPDATING OF THE PRINCIPLES FOR TRACEABILITY/PRODUCT TRACING AS A TOOL WITHIN A FOOD INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEM (CXG 60-2006) (Agenda item 6)⁷

62. The United States of America, as Chair of the EWG, introduced the item.

63. The CCFICS Chairperson opened the discussion on this item, inviting first, general comments on the document.

64. The following general comments were noted:

- There was general support for the work done by the EWG to update CXG 60-2006.
- The title should refer to principles and guidelines.
- Traceability/Product tracing was one of a number of tools that can be utilized by Competent Authorities (CAs) within their NFCSs.
- Whether to refer to the concept as ‘traceability’ rather than ‘traceability/product tracing’ throughout the document.

⁷ CX/FICS 24/27/6; CX/FICS 24/27/6 Add.1; CRD9 (Australia, Ghana, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, and East African Community); CRD17 (African Union); CRD18 (Panama); CRD20 (Burundi); CRD21 (Indonesia); CRD23 (Malaysia)

- The original text relating to the Context (paras 4 – 6) and Rationale (paras 7 – 10) for Traceability/Product Tracing should be reflected in the guidelines.
 - Traceability/Product Tracing when used as a tool within an NFCS, did not by itself identify food safety risks nor fraudulent/deceptive practices, nor provide confidence in the safety and suitability of imported food. The text should therefore be redrafted to avoid overstating what Traceability/Product Tracing could achieve.
 - The term “Risk and proportionality” was used throughout the text, but it was not clear if, when and how it should be considered or should be taken into account when establishing the requirements for Traceability/Product Tracing that go beyond the specified minimum of “one step forward/one step back”.
 - The use of digital systems and/or technology for Traceability/Product Tracing should be optional to provide flexibility to CAs and FBOs. Interoperability between digital systems, and between digital and manual systems, should be considered.
 - The guidelines should allow flexible implementation of Traceability/Product Tracing. In this regard, sections such as “Responsibility”; “Legal requirements” etc. should be further considered.
 - The guidelines should not legitimise transboundary regulation from one country to another, as suggested in paragraph 18 and 19.
 - The revised guidance should capture all important concepts in CXG 60-2006.
65. CCFICS27 further considered the draft document section by section, agreed to number each section, and made the following recommendations:
- 1 PREAMBLE**
66. CCFICS27 considered the preamble paragraph by paragraph, as follows:
- Paragraph 1
67. The statement in square brackets was deleted as it could be construed to be an alternative definition to the existing Codex definition for traceability. The remaining text was aligned to reflect the dual mandate of Codex, i.e. “protecting the health of consumers” and “ensuring fair practices in the food trade”.
- Paragraph 2
68. This paragraph was transferred from the Preamble to the Scope and reworded as indicated in paragraph 72 below.
- Paragraph 3 and 4
69. These paragraphs were simplified to ensure that the concepts stated therein were clear and the language was not instructive.
- Paragraph 5 and 6
70. These two paragraphs were deleted from the preamble since they duplicated the information on the role of Traceability/Product Tracing towards food safety and fair practices in food trade, which was already covered in the preceding paragraphs.
71. Due to time constraint, paragraphs 7 and 7bis were not discussed.
- 2 PURPOSE/SCOPE**
72. The section was revised as follows:
- The title of the section was amended to include the word “purpose” to ensure that the section embraced broad concepts and provided the desired flexibility for including other aspects.
 - The section was redrafted to clarify that the guidelines do not prescribe specific ways to conduct traceability/product tracing.
- 3 DEFINITIONS**
73. CCFICS27 noted a proposal to transfer the definitions in Annex I to this section, and to further consider which definitions were necessary.

4 PRINCIPLES

74. CCFICS27 agreed to include an edited version of paragraph 8 of CXG60-2006. The new paragraph reflected that Traceability/Product Tracing was a tool that might be used by competent authorities within its NFCS, and when combined with appropriate measures can contribute to product safety outcomes or contribute to the protection of consumers against deceptive practices.
75. CCFICS27 agreed that the concept of “one step back” and “one step forward” in paragraph 13 under the section for legal requirements was a principle and thus should be moved to this section.
76. To make use of the limited time available, the CCFICS Chairperson concluded the paragraph-by-paragraph consideration of the guideline and invited CCFICS27 to provide general comments on the remaining sections (Responsibilities, Legal Requirements, and Good Practice).
77. CCFICS27 provided the following additional comments that would assist in the further development of the guideline:

Nature of guidelines

- The guidelines should be general in nature to ensure greater flexibility in implementation.

Legal requirements

- The language in the Section on legal requirements should recognise the existence of national legislative frameworks or structures.

Use of Technology

- The guidelines should be technology neutral and allow for both paper-based systems and electronic systems. The diverse capabilities between countries should be taken into account.

Principles

- The principles should have a single detailed statement or description that was factual and was consistent with current Codex language. Furthermore, the definitions should not be repeated in the principles.

78. While recognising the significant interest and engagement in the revision of CXG 60-2006, the CCFICS Chairperson concluded that the guideline was not ready to advance in the Codex Step process.

Conclusion

79. CCFICS27 agreed:
- to return the draft principles and guidelines on traceability/product tracing as a tool within a NFCS to Step 2 for redrafting, using the edited text from CCFICS27 as a basis, and for circulation at Step 3 for comments; and
 - to establish an EWG, open to all Members and Observers, chaired by the United States and co-chaired by Australia, Ecuador, Honduras, and the United Kingdom, working in English and Spanish, with the following terms of reference:
 - To continue the revision of the guidelines, taking into account the discussions and comments made during CCFICS27.
 - To keep open the option to hold an intersessional hybrid or virtual working group meeting, to address any outstanding issues.
 - To submit the report of the EWG at least three months in advance of CCFICS28.

DISCUSSION PAPER ON GUIDANCE ON APPEALS MECHANISM IN THE CONTEXT OF REJECTION OF IMPORTED FOOD (Agenda item 7)⁸

80. India introduced the item proposing new work on developing guidance on appeals mechanism in the context of rejection of imported food, highlighting the need for a uniform appeal mechanism to ensure fair practices in the food trade.

Discussion

81. CCFICS27 noted a general support for this new work proposal with the following comments:

⁸ CX/FICS 24/27/7; CRD10 (Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, United Republic of Tanzania, and East African Community); CRD17 (African Union); CRD18 (Panama); CRD20 (Burundi)

- The work should not be a stand-alone document but rather an annex to either the *Guidelines for the Exchange of Information between Countries on Rejections of Imported Foods* (CXG 25-1997) or *Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems* (CXG 47-2003).
 - There are many appeals related to laboratory and sampling protocols and these may need to be taken into account.
 - The work should also focus on preventive actions and mechanisms for dealing with information from Competent Authorities to prevent consignments from being rejected for similar reasons, rather than dealing with consignments currently rejected.
 - The work should be in the form of guidelines rather than requirements to avoid conflict with existing national regulations.
82. It was agreed that the work would be an amendment and/or an annex to either the existing *Guidelines for the Exchange of Information between Countries on Rejections of Imported Foods* (CXG 25-1997) or the *Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems* (CXG 47-2003).
83. Based on the discussion where different views were expressed, the scope of the new work proposal was amended to include the “exporting country” as one of the stakeholders that may file an appeal against the rejection.
84. It was proposed that the new work not only addresses an appeals mechanism, but also the opportunity for review of official decisions on consignments as mentioned in CXG 47-2003.
85. A Member suggested concentrating on prevention of rejection rather than the process after rejection.

Conclusion

86. CCFICS27 agreed:
- i. to forward the new work proposal on developing guidance on appeals mechanism in the context of rejection of imported food to CAC47 for approval (Appendix III);
 - ii. to establish an EWG, working in English, chaired by India and co-chaired by Nigeria, Australia, Chile, and Kenya, subject to approval of new work by CAC, with the following terms of reference:
 - a. to prepare draft guidance on appeals mechanism in the context of rejection of imported food, for consideration by CCFICS28.
 - b. submit the report of the EWG at least three months prior to CCFICS28; and
 - iii. to keep open the option to hold virtual meetings of the EWG and/or a PWG meeting immediately prior to the next CCFICS session.

DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF SANITARY REQUIREMENTS (Agenda item 8)⁹

87. Brazil introduced the new work proposal, which was based on the identification of issues with electronic certification, including non-unique requirements, repetitive information, and lack of consistency and transparency in communication. The proposed new work would define criteria and methods to evaluate existing attestations and enable the creation of a harmonized way to represent attestations. The proposal aimed to develop guidance to continue with the simplification and the use of electronic certification. This would in turn expedite clearance processes, thus contributing to improved food safety. The guidance would maintain the flexibility for countries to define specific requirements.
88. This new work would require cooperation within CCFICS and with other international organisations.

Discussion

89. Members expressed support for this new work proposal noting that it would help countries transition to the use of electronic certificates, which can simplify clearance processes and thereby promote food safety. Support was also expressed by some Members for bridging between the general guidance and specific standards and thereby helping countries to reduce the number of certificates.
90. CCFICS27 amended the title to read “Guidance on the standardization of the representation of sanitary requirements” to better reflect the content of the new work proposal.

⁹ CX/FICS 24/27/8; CRD11 (European Union, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, and East African Community); CRD13 (Brazil); CRD17 (African Union); CRD18 (Panama); CRD20 (Burundi)

Conclusion

91. CCFICS27 agreed:
- i. to forward the new work proposal on developing guidance on the standardisation of the representation of sanitary requirements to CAC47 for approval as new work (Appendix IV);
 - ii. to establish an EWG working in English, chaired by Brazil and co-chaired by Australia, India, Kenya, Spain, and Uganda, subject to approval of new work by CAC, to prepare draft guidance on the standardisation of sanitary requirements, for consideration by CCFICS28;
 - iii. that the report of the EWG should be submitted at least three months prior to CCFICS28; and
 - iv. to keep open the option to hold virtual meetings of the EWG between CCFICS27 and CCFICS28 and if required, a physical working group meeting immediately prior to CCFICS28.

REVIEW AND UPDATE OF APPENDIX A - THE LIST OF EMERGING GLOBAL ISSUES (Agenda item 9)¹⁰

92. The United Kingdom introduced the item highlighting that emerging global issues continued to be important for CCFICS to consider, particularly in relation to new approaches and technologies concerning NFCs.
93. It was noted that the responses to CL 2023/66-FICS confirmed the importance of the issues identified in Appendix A (List of new emerging global issues), which had been updated to take into account the developments.
94. Three new emerging issues had been identified: 1) increased use of establishment listings to support trade; 2) a trend towards digitalisation of NFCs; and 3) increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) to support NFCs.
95. Following responses to the CL and the virtual intersessional workshop held in May 2024, which explored the existing list of emerging global issues and the three newly identified emerging issues, two new work proposals were developed for consideration by CCFICS27 (CX/FICS 24/27/9 Add.1 and CX/FICS 24/27/9 Add.2).

Conclusion

96. CCFICS27 agreed:
- i. to the list of emerging issues as identified in Appendix A of CX/FICS 24/27/9.
 - ii. that the list of emerging issues continues to be a standing agenda item for future CCFICS sessions, and that the custodianship should continue to be rotated among Members on a meeting-by-meeting basis.
 - iii. to request the Codex Secretariat to issue a CL requesting inputs from Members and Observers on emerging global issues to be included in Appendix A to be developed for CCFICS28.
 - iv. that EU with the support of Australia be the next custodian of Appendix A to be prepared for CCFICS28; and
 - v. to hold a virtual intersessional workshop prior to CCFICS28 to discuss the emerging issues under Appendix A.

Discussion paper and new work proposal on establishment listings

97. Norway introduced the discussion paper and new work proposal, as contained in CX/FICS 24/27/9 Add, 1, on revising the *Principles and guidelines for the exchange of information between importing and exporting countries to support the trade in food* (CXG 89-2016) to develop principles and guidelines to harmonize the use (the drivers), development (content and format) and implementation (mechanisms including digitalization) of establishment listings, which could be annexed to CXG 89-2016. It was emphasised that this work should not result in increased requirements for such lists. Rather, the work should simplify and lessen the burden of establishment lists in order to decrease the requirements for data gathering.

Discussion

98. Members expressed support for the new work proposal as they considered that it addressed a need for NFCs and that the work was timely. They supported the work to be an annex to CXG 89-2016 as this would avoid opening up the existing guidelines for a more extensive review on other issues. It was also proposed that aspects such as prelisting, list of products and establishments, and necessity of lists could be taken into account.

¹⁰ CX/FICS 24/27/9; CX/FICS 24/27/9 Add.1; CX/FICS 24/27/9 Add.2; FICS/27 INF/02; CRD12 (European Union, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, United Republic of Tanzania, and East African Community); CRD18 (Panama); CRD20 (Burundi)

99. Norway proposed that, should the new work proposal be approved, an intersessional PWG could be hosted by Norway.

Conclusion

100. CCFICS27 agreed:
- i. to forward to CAC47 for approval the proposal for new work on revising the *Principles and guidelines for the exchange of information between importing and exporting countries to support the trade in food* (CXG 89-2016) to develop principles and guidelines to harmonize the use, development and implementation of establishment listings (Appendix V).
 - ii. to establish an EWG, working in English, chaired by Norway and co-chaired by Australia, India, Morocco, Saudia Arabia and Spain, subject to approval of the new work by CAC47, to prepare the draft revision to CXG 89-2016, to include principles and guidelines to harmonize the use, development and implementation of establishment listing, for consideration by CCFICS28.
 - iii. that the report of the EWG should be submitted at least three months prior to CCFICS28; and
 - iv. keep open the possibility of convening virtual meetings and/or a PWG.

Discussion paper and new work proposals on digitalisation of national food control systems

101. Australia introduced the discussion paper and the new work proposal on digitalisation of NFCSSs, as contained in CX/FICS 24/27/9 Add.2, explaining that the work was aimed at developing high-level flexible guiding principles by capturing relevant universal themes providing an overarching framework, identifying existing digital-related international standards and guidance, and establishing relevant digital-related definitions.

Discussion

102. Members expressed support for the new work proposal as it was timely and addressed both current and future needs of NFCSSs.

Conclusion

103. CCFICS27 agreed:
- i. to forward the project document on the development of high-level guiding principles for the digitalisation of NFCSSs to CAC47 for approval as new work (Appendix VI).
 - ii. to establish an EWG working in English, chaired by Australia and co-chaired by Canada, Jamaica, the Netherlands, and the UK, subject to approval of new work by CAC, to prepare draft principles for the digitalisation of NFCSSs for consideration by CCFICS28.
 - iii. that the report of the EWG should be submitted at least three months prior to CCFICS28; and
 - iv. to keep open the option to hold virtual meetings between CCFICS27 and CCFICS28 and a PWG meeting immediately prior to CCFICS28.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 10)¹¹

Proposed amendment to the *Principles and Guidelines on the Use of Remote Audit and Inspection in Regulatory Frameworks* (CXG 102-2023)

104. CCFICS27 recalled that during the adoption of the Agenda (Under Agenda item 1), it was agreed that the proposed amendment to the *Principles and Guidelines on the Use of Remote Audit and Inspection in Regulatory Frameworks* (CXG 102-2023), submitted by Norway (in CRD05), would be discussed under this item, time permitting.
105. Due to the time constraints, CCFICS27 could not discuss this issue.
106. The Chairperson of CCFICS committed to work with Norway to consider how best to address their concerns and proposed amendment.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda item 11)

107. CCFICS27 was informed that the CCFICS28 would be held in October 2026, subject to confirmation by Australia in consultation with the Codex Secretariat. The possibility of adding an extra day for plenary discussions would be considered.

¹¹ CRD5 (Norway); CRD18 (Panama)

APPENDIX I

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APPENDIX II**DRAFT GUIDELINES ON THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF FOOD FRAUD****(For adoption at Step 5)****1. PREAMBLE / INTRODUCTION**

1. The increasing complexity of food systems and global trade in food makes food supply chains more vulnerable to food fraud. Protecting the global food supply from intentional actions that undermine protection of public health and upholding fair practices in food trade are common goals for all stakeholders.
2. Food fraud incidents can present a risk to public health and can result in economic loss for consumers and other stakeholders, disruption in trade, reputational damage, and unfair economic advantages.
3. Regulatory frameworks, Government oversight and good manufacturing practices by food business operators (FBOs) are important to protect public health, to limit the opportunity for food fraud and to maintain consumer confidence.
4. Food fraud can be prevented or minimized using the existing controls and mitigation measures available to countries through their National Food Control Systems (NFCS) or by adopting new measures, if necessary.
5. The prevention and control of food fraud is a shared responsibility, with FBOs responsible for producing safe and suitable food, and for presenting it in a manner so as not to deceive consumers. Competent authorities provide regulatory oversight and have an important role in increasing awareness about food fraud by building partnerships and collaborating with relevant stakeholders to prevent, detect, mitigate, and control food fraud.
6. Work in the area of food fraud is widespread in a range of international organizations. Countries may wish to consider work from these and other organizations, as appropriate, when developing tools and strategies to prevent, detect, mitigate, and control food fraud.
7. Fundamental to the successful functioning of any food fraud combatting strategy is the collaboration of the stakeholders and establishment and maintenance of preventative measures.

2. PURPOSE / SCOPE

8. The purpose is to provide guidance to competent authorities and FBOs on the prevention, detection, mitigation, and control of food fraud to help protect the health of consumers, and to ensure fair practices in food trade, including, as appropriate, feed for food producing animals. Aspects related to food fraud are already addressed through many existing Codex texts; this guidance is intended to support or supplement existing Codex texts by providing additional guidance specific to food fraud that can be considered within NFCS. Issues related to intellectual property are not included in this document.

3. DEFINITIONS

9. For the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply:

[Food Fraud]: Any deliberate practice intended to deceive others in regard to the characteristics of food to gain an unfair economic advantage.]

[Food Integrity]: The status of food in which it is not altered or modified with respect to characteristics expected by the consumer, including food safety, quality, composition, nutritional properties and authenticity.]

[Food authenticity]: Conformity between the food product characteristics and the corresponding information provided through food product labelling or other information associated with food trade.]

4. TYPES OF FOOD FRAUD

10. The following section provides examples, when done intentionally for economic gain, of types of food fraud:

Addition: Adding an undeclared substance to a food product that would not ordinarily be present, or present in that quantity, in the food.

Substitution: Replacing a food or a food ingredient, in whole or in part with another ingredient, in whole or in part (most often of lower value) without declaring it.

Dilution: Adding a material to make another ingredient present at a lower concentration than represented.

Counterfeiting: Making an imitation of a food product with the intention to deceive or defraud.

Misrepresentation: Labelling or marketing a food product in a manner that is false, misleading, or deceptive.

Concealment: Hiding or not disclosing information on the safety, suitability, or quality of food ingredients or food products.

5. PRINCIPLES

Competent Authorities and FBOs should be guided by the following principles to prevent, detect, mitigate, and control food fraud:

11. **Principle 1:** The occurrence of food fraud can be reduced by having measures in place, proportionate to the level of risk.
12. **Principle 2:** Cooperation among Competent Authorities, within or between countries, as well as with FBOs, can help reduce food fraud.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

13. The relevant competent authorities have the role and responsibility to, as appropriate to the risk and the circumstances existing in their territories or associated with imports:
 - a. Establish or maintain controls in an NFCS' legal structures and requirements to prevent, detect, mitigate, and control food fraud.
 - b. Establish or maintain oversight programs to prevent, detect, mitigate, and control food fraud.
 - c. Communicate, coordinate and collaborate with other competent authorities within and between countries, industry, academia and stakeholders as needed.
 - d. Notify any countries thought to be impacted when incidents of food fraud are identified or suspected.
14. FBOs have the role and responsibility to, as appropriate:
 - a. Analyze and understand the vulnerabilities in their supply chain and products/ingredients/packaging that may be susceptible to food fraud.
[a. bis Have measures in place to prevent, detect, mitigate and control the risk that the food products and ingredients are not authentic and ensure that the nature, safety, quality, and substance are accurately represented. Have processes in place for rapid removal of affected product from the market.]
 - b. Represent food for sale in a manner that does not deceive or mislead consumers.
 - c. Inform the competent authority when they detect or suspect food fraud.
 - d. Take reasonable precautions to prevent, detect, mitigate, and control food fraud, including having processes in place for rapid removal of affected product from the market.
 - e. Create awareness and understanding of food fraud throughout the FBO [and build an anti-food fraud culture in all elements of the organization].

7. RELEVANT ACTIVITIES FOR COMPETENT AUTHORITIES

15. Measures to prevent, detect, mitigate, and control food fraud incorporate aspects of food safety and quality, consumer protection, and ensuring fair practices in food trade, and so may be addressed within the structure of a NFCS. Competent authorities should consider conducting a range of activities to mitigate risks of food fraud, as appropriate for the level of risk, including, for example:
 - a. Reviewing their NFCS and determine whether their system has an adequate regulatory and legislative framework (laws, regulations, guidance) and appropriate policies and procedures to monitor, prevent, detect, control, and respond to food fraud incidents and strengthen fair trade. Such policies could include legal requirements, including sanctions, and responsibilities of the FBOs related to food integrity and authenticity.
 - b. Establishing procedures to receive and evaluate reports of food fraud and determine appropriate follow-up, consistent with the food safety risk identified and national priorities.
 - c. Developing tools to protect persons acting as "whistle blowers" reporting such incidents.
 - d. Establishing surveillance activities to detect food fraud. These activities could be conducted on a routine basis or in response to specific risk that has been identified.
 - e. Providing practical guidance to FBOs and other stakeholders on how to address food fraud. Such guidance could include resources and access to tools on how to develop procedures to prevent, detect, mitigate, and control food fraud.

- f. Establishing appropriately secure communication channels with other governments, FBOs, academia, and other stakeholders to obtain information about situations involving food fraud and to share relevant knowledge, experience, and tools for combatting food fraud, such as food standards and analytical methods.
- g. Establishing communication mechanisms for timely reporting to stakeholders about incidents involving food fraud, as appropriate.

- 16. Policies, procedures, and regulatory requirements related to food fraud prevention and control should be transparent and risk-based.
- 17. If a food fraud incident might impact food safety and threaten public health, the competent authority should immediately alert all other relevant competent authorities.

8. COOPERATION, COLLABORATION AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN COMPETENT AUTHORITIES

- 18. Competent authorities should cooperate, collaborate and exchange information with the relevant competent authorities in situations where food fraud is suspected or identified, as appropriate and in accordance with national law and information sharing agreements. This exchange of information could be expanded when there is awareness that fraudulent product poses a food safety risk and has been distributed to other countries.
- 19. The exchange of information should be made as early and rapidly as possible, recognizing that the initial information may often be incomplete and more detailed information will be provided as it becomes available. Identification of key elements, including relevant information in *CXG 19-1995 Annex*, that contribute to international harmonization and collaboration on the prevention and control of food fraud are essential.
- 20. Information exchanged should be sufficient to allow competent authorities to evaluate the food fraud incident and mitigate its impact, especially with regard to risk to consumers, without jeopardizing ongoing investigations.
- 21. Enhance collaboration to better integrate neutral technologies and use of data mining and machine learning technologies in the food chain which can aid in more effectively preventing food fraud.
- 22. Competent authorities may benefit from establishing appropriate information exchange routes with relevant enforcement bodies and agencies, including those responsible for dealing with criminality. In establishing such routes, competent authorities should give due consideration to information security around personal data, operationally sensitive material and also have in place systems to assure the integrity of any evidence gathered and/or shared.

APPENDIX III**PROJECT DOCUMENT****GUIDANCE ON APPEAL MECHANISM IN THE CONTEXT OF REJECTION OF IMPORTED FOOD
(For Approval)****1. Purpose and Scope of Proposed guidance**

The purpose of the work is to provide guidance to competent authorities of importing and exporting countries and industry on the procedure and mechanism of appeal in the situation of rejection of the imported food in order to ensure food safety and fair practices in the food trade. It will be an amendment and/or annex to *Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems* (CXG 47-2003) (and possible amendment to *Guidelines for the Exchange of Information between Countries on Rejections of Imported Foods* (CXG 25-1997).

The scope of the guidance is to develop procedures that may be followed in case a food consignment is rejected by the importing country and the importer, or exporter, or exporting country wish to file appeal against the decision of rejection. This includes considerations on when it may be appropriate to appeal, the communication of decision of rejection, appeal to importing country, consideration of the appeal by importing country and communicating the decision on the appeal. This would also include the opportunity for review of official decisions on consignments, as per CXG 47-2003.

2. Relevance and Timeliness

The main objective of food control authorities is to protect public health and to prevent economic loss and trade disruption, thereby ensuring reliable global food supply chain. Border rejection of consignments is one of the critical issues faced by exporters and sometimes rejection could be due to reasons other than food safety. Destruction, Discarding or alternative (non-food) use of food that is safe and nutritious for human consumption, on account of rejection of consignment, may also fall in the category of food loss.

Although each individual case may represent a huge economic cost and food waste for the involved exporters, the main problem associated with border rejections is still the overall loss of trust and confidence by buyers in the safety and quality of the produce delivered by exporting country. Any final decision on the rejection of the food consignment by importing country need to be taken in a transparent manner by providing ample opportunity to relevant stakeholder.

The Codex *Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems* (CXG 47-2003) requires under paragraph 29 that there should be an appeal mechanism and/or opportunity for review of official decisions on consignments. The existing Codex text (CXG 25-1997) provide general guidance on exchange of information between countries during rejection of imported food, however, specific guidance on appeal mechanism during rejection is not available. The possibility of reducing food loss with the availability of such guidance also has the potential to contribute to other SDGs, including the Zero Hunger goal (SDG 2), which calls for an end to hunger, the achievement of food security and improved nutrition, and the promotion of sustainable agriculture. Therefore, the proposed work, on guidance on appeal mechanism in the context of rejection of imported food, is a timely endeavour.

3. The main aspects to be covered

The work will include development of guidance on appeal mechanism in the context of rejection of food consignment by importing country with a goal to provide opportunity to relevant stakeholders to present their case and decisions are taken in transparent manner without any compromise with food safety and fair trade. The guidance may include the following elements: Preamble, Purpose, Definition, Principles, Process Steps. The existing CCFICS text will be examined and reviewed to avoid the duplication of the text.

4. An assessment against the criteria for the establishment of Work Priorities General Criterion

The proposed work will facilitate trade of safe food while ensuring that decision on rejection of food consignment are taken in transparent manner by providing due opportunity to relevant parties to promote fair trade.

Criteria applicable to General Subjects**a) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade**

Some of the countries in their legislation have the provisions of appeal against the decision of rejection of imported food consignment. Development of Codex guidance in this area would help in achieving harmonization at global level.

b) Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of work

Refer to scope of work above.

- c) **Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body (ies)**

Not applicable

- d) **Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardisation**

Guidance on appeal mechanism will bring transparency and uniformity in decision making process of rejection of food consignment.

- e) **Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue**

Rejection of food consignment is a major socio-economic burden, particularly in developing countries and any wrong decision of rejection may lead to food loss.

5. **Relevance to Codex strategic objectives**

The proposed work is directly related to the purpose of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, according to its statutes, to protect the health of the consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade. Further, the work relates to the first Strategic Goal of the Codex Alimentarius Commission's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 to "address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner", and is consistent with Objective 1.1 "identify needs and emerging issues". This guidance is relevant to the needs of the Members and will improve the ability of Codex to develop standards relevant to the needs of its members. It is also consistent with Objective 4.2 "Increase sustainable and active participation of all Codex Members" through participation in the work of CCFICS and the related working groups.

6. **Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents**

Based on the review of existing Codex text it is observed that the *Codex Guidelines for the exchange of information between countries on rejection of imported food (CXG 25-1997 Revised in 2016)* contains guidance on basic information exchange between countries on rejections of imported food where the reason for the rejection is related to food safety and fair practices in food trade and specifies a standard format for such information exchange. The proposed guidance will specify the procedure for appeal by relevant parties & its consideration by importing country, once information exchange on rejection of imported food in terms of CXG 25-1997 has been done by the importing country to relevant parties. Therefore, the proposed guidance will elaborate on the appeal mechanism as specified in CXG 47-2003.

7. **Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice**

Not required.

8. **Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for:**

Not required at this stage.

9. **Completion of the new work and other conditions**

Subject to the Codex Alimentarius Commission approval at its 47th Session in 2024, it is expected that the new work can be completed within two or three sessions of CCFICS.

APPENDIX IV

PROJECT DOCUMENT

**GUIDANCE ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF THE REPRESENTATION OF SANITARY REQUIREMENTS
(For Approval)****1. Purpose of proposed Standard**

The purpose of the work is to develop a guidance document that will provide information and how countries can simplify and standardize the representation of sanitary requirements in attestations or statements included in official certificates, based on ontology methods. Harmonized syntax and semantics would turn the negotiation for a new certificate, and the update of an existing one, into a very objective activity. Also, it will turn the e-CERT implementation easier, because digital verifications can be implemented and automatized into processes and an accurate language is very important to avoid confusion on what is intended to achieve. The guidance would not be mandatory and are not specific for electronic documents.

The following activities are proposed:

- Assess and refine the pilot results: validate the theoretical and methodological foundations and results.
- Gather information: Identify and reference any existing and relevant documents, guidelines, and regulations related to the representation of sanitary requirements in attestations or statements in official certificates, including any existing standards or best practices.
- Explore new possibilities: understand how existing and future Codex guidelines can incorporate a section with an ontology-like structure to represent guidance knowledge in a structured format.
- Develop the guidance:
 - Use examples from the pilot results to demonstrate how to use the methodology and demonstrate the results of simplification and standardization.
 - Provide key direction on how to analyze and simplify an existing attestation/statement , and how to create a simple, accurate, and clear new attestation/statement when needed.
 - Provide key direction on creating ontologies and taxonomies to organize the representation of sanitary requirements in attestations or statements included in official certificates into a hierarchical classification system based on their characteristics, such as the type of requirement, the hazard, or the level of risk it represents.
 - Provide key direction on how to implement and maintain the taxonomy and ontology into the relevant systems, processes, or tools.

2. Relevance and Timeliness

Countries are facing challenges to implement electronic certification systems. The OECD paper entitled *Electronic Sanitary Certificates for Trade in Animal Products (2023)* identified that “*At present, there is no “one” international standardised sanitary certificate schema for all countries that can facilitate the standardised exchange and processing of e-sanitary certificates*”.

Creating an XML file for electronic certification embedded with information that is presented on paper is not difficult. The challenge, and the real watershed, is to create digital and automated processes that will improve safety at the same time that reduces unnecessary processes at borders.

Digital transformation seems a buzzword nowadays, but the truth is that it can only be achieved with new processes and new tools, designed with a digital mindset, using and reusing public and private data as appropriate and as needed throughout the supply chain.

The standardization proposed will support establishment of a more digital mindset among countries for the the attestations or statements included in sanitary certificates, making the journey to the electronic certification easier and faster. The lack of schema highlighted by OECD can be at least minimize, or even solved.

3. The main aspects to be covered

The proposed work is intended to provide guidance to countries in simplifying and standardizing attestations and statements, when required in official certificates. The proposed work will also use the results of the pilot project to demonstrate how this simplification and standardization could lead to a broader, structured taxonomy of statements/attestations that could facilitate greater eCert adoption and use.

The guidance will encompass definitions, methods, tools, and processes designed to simplify and harmonize representation in a manner accessible to non-experts in ontology and related techniques. This approach will enable easy adoption for those new to these concepts. It will also guide countries through a seamless transition

from the current (as-is) to the desired (to-be) scenario, remove ambiguities and establish univocal relationships between the natural language text of the requirement and its translation into triples.

Furthermore, the guidance will detail the use of attributes to represent variables of a requirement that may differ based on location, procedure, or any other variation, such as a fixed value or a temperature range.

4. Assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities

The proposal is consistent with the criteria as follows:

General Criterion: Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries.

The proposed new work will enable a more organized and systematized approach to sanitary requirements, that can be applied from production to certification of plant and animal products. This holistic structure will leverage controls allowing automated checks to be performed by autonomous systems. Better processes lead to better results, and in this case, deliver a safer product for consumption.

Criteria applicable to General Subjects

a) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade

The development of the proposed standard would assist in achieving harmonization at global level, facilitate the agreement of requirements and also the control of their compliance by the national authority.

b) Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work

Refer to scope of work above.

c) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies)

Similar work was performed for other areas, like WCO and WHO as explained in the Introduction above.

d) Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardisation

The deliverables of the working group will be proposed as a new standard.

e) Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue

Manage hundreds of certificate models may lead to errors and inefficient processes and controls. Countries are having difficulties to implement electronic certification systems mainly related to the incorporation of the e-CERT document into the existing processes. The standardization will enable that new processes may be designed and implemented based on data collection and reuse, private-public interoperability and track and trace strategies.

5. Relevance to Codex strategic objectives

The project proposal outlined above relates to the Codex Alimentarius Commission's Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 in several ways:

1. Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food safety and quality issues: The proposal aims to standardize representation of sanitary requirements in the attestations or statements included in official certificates, and develop a global standard for sanitary requirements that can be digitally processed, which would contribute to international food safety standards and facilitate trade.
2. Ensure the application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards: By creating a standardized, digitally processable set of sanitary requirements, the proposal would allow for improved risk analysis and data-driven decision-making.
3. Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex members, particularly developing countries, in the standard-setting process: The proposed standardization of sanitary requirements would simplify the process for all countries, making it easier for developing countries to participate in trade negotiations and comply with international food safety standards.
4. Implement effective and efficient work management systems and practices: The proposal focuses on creating a harmonized and semantic standard for sanitary requirements, which would lead to more efficient work management systems and practices in the context of sanitary certificates and e-CERT implementation.
5. Strengthen communication and promote the use and understanding of Codex standards and related texts: By standardizing the sanitary requirements, the proposal would make it easier for countries to

communicate, understand, and implement Codex standards in their trade agreements and certification processes.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other Codex documents

The proposed standard creation will help to address the objectives presented by the documents below.

1. *Guidelines for Design, Production, Issuance and Use of Generic Official Certificates* (CXG 38-2001)
2. *Principles for Traceability/Product Tracing as a Tool within a Food Inspection and Certification System* (CXG 60-2006)

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

Taxonomy and ontology experts are required to establish the base on what the project will be implemented. The project aims at standardising the representation of existing knowledge without adding any new knowledge and it demands a multidisciplinary team. Depending on the achievements, additional expert advice from the FAO or WHO, may be sought should need arise.

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

Technical input will be necessary from external consultants and domain experts in order achieve the best possible results.

9. Proposed timeline for completion of the new work, including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission; the timeframe for developing a standard should normally not exceed five years

Subject to the Codex Alimentarius Commission approval, it is expected that the new work can be completed within two or three sessions of CCFICS.

APPENDIX V

PROJECT DOCUMENT

PROPOSED REVISION TO THE *PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN IMPORTING AND EXPORTING COUNTRIES TO SUPPORT THE TRADE IN FOOD (CXG 89-2016)* – TO DEVELOP PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES TO HARMONISE THE USE, DEVELOPMENT, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ESTABLISHMENT LISTINGS**(For Approval)****1. Purpose and scope of the proposed standard**

The purpose and scope of the standard is to guide the Competent Authority(ies) (CA) of a National Food Control System (NFCS) in situations where the use of establishment listings are considered justified by risk for the exchange of information.

Guidelines and Principles should facilitate harmonized, streamlined, and timely information sharing when such lists are justified. This should ensure that information is required only once and decrease the requirement for burdensome data gathering, contribute to saving time and money, ensuring updated information is readily available for trading partners, and consequently facilitate trade in safe food.

The work is proposed to be an annex to the *Principles and guidelines for the exchange of information between importing and exporting countries to support the trade in food (CXG 89-2016)*, and may require minor consequential amendments. This work would aim at harmonising the use (the drivers), development (content and format) and implementation (mechanisms including digitalization) of establishment listings.

2. Relevance and Timeliness

Most trade in food occurs without countries requiring an exchange of information on their NFCS. However, in recent years, there has been an increase in the information demands to gain confidence in the trade of food and food stuffs. Competent Authorities (CA) gather this information using various tools, such as audits, import testing, questionnaires, certificates and establishment and product listings.

The listing requirements can be extensive, and are often resource demanding, entailing increased costs for CAs and food business operators (FBOs) in exporting countries. The information to be provided and the submission processes vary with the requesting CA and may include information requirements varying from regulatory oversight to production and processing information for individual products.

Additionally, there are difficulties in keeping government to government reporting lines intact and keeping lists up to date. Outdated listing information might lead to potential problems at the border, again leading to unnecessary barriers to trade. Different formatting of the lists (forms) also results in work intensive difficulties when providing information. The current situation is labour-intensive for both exporting and importing countries as many listing portals operate in isolation of exporting countries' systems.

Updating lists and delisting can also be challenging, resulting in outdated information which lead to potential problems at the border, again leading to unnecessary barriers to trade.

Developing Codex principles and guidelines for establishment listings, should not result in increased requirements for such lists. On the contrary, the purpose is to facilitate harmonized, streamlined, and timely information sharing when such lists are justified. This should decrease the requirement for burdensome data gathering, contribute to saving time and money, ensuring updated information is readily available for trading partners, and consequently facilitate trade in safe food.

Furthermore, it is good practice for Codex Committees to keep their documents under review to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. Taking into account the number of importing countries having implemented requirements for establishments lists and the number of countries considering implementation since CXG 89-2016, and the lack of guidance on this issue, the proposal is highly relevant and timely.

3. The main aspects to be covered

Taking into account existing guidance (remote audits, certificates, equivalence etc), and CXG 89-2016 develop principles and guidelines to harmonise the use (the drivers), development (content and format) and implementation (mechanisms including digitalization) of establishment listings, in order to support timely and meaningful information exchange to provide the necessary assurances to importing countries to confirm safe food is being produced and exported by an establishment. This would contribute to saving time and money, ensuring updated information is readily available for trading partners, and consequently facilitate trade.

4. Assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities

General criterion: Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries.

The proposed new work will support competent authorities when considering whether it is justified to require establishment lists for imports. It will also contribute to establish systems for exchanging information regarding safe food, thereby improving consumer protection. Furthermore, it will promote consistency and harmonization of establishments lists, thus facilitating fair practice in the food trade, while at the same time allowing sufficient flexibility to consider the different levels of risks and limiting requests to additional information in response to gaps or risks not addressed. Updating the global guidelines will also provide greater clarity and certainty for competent authorities and food businesses operators.

Criteria applicable to general subjects:

(a) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.

Lack of standardization or harmonization of establishment lists can hinder fair practice in food trade. This is especially challenging in situations where updating of lists take time.

(b) Scope of work and establishment of priorities between various sections of the work.

Refer to scope section above.

(c) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies)

We are not aware of any work being done in this area.

(d) Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization.

Codex currently has texts covering equivalence, exchange of information, import control system and National Food Control Systems, which all refer to establishment listing. The proposed work would consider revision of one of the existing documents to provide guidance in such lists.

(e) Consideration to global magnitude of the problem or issue.

Increases in global trade, the complexity of supply chains, and digitization of information along with technologies to facilitate the integrity and sharing of such information suggest it would be timely to revisit the existing guidelines, *Principles for the Exchange of Information between importing and exporting Countries to support the Trade in Food* (CXG 89-2016).

Standardization of establishment listing requirements will also help countries to use establishment lists in a more streamlined manner, allowing more timely transfer of information, ensuring updated information readily available for trading partners.

5. Relevance to Codex strategic objectives

The proposed work is directly related to the purposes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, namely, goals one of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025: "Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner", in particular Strategic Objective 1.2: "Prioritize needs and emerging issues". In addition, the work is relevant to goal five: "Enhance work management systems and practices that support the efficient and effective achievement of all strategic plan goals."

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other Codex documents

The proposal relates to establishing "Principles and guidelines for Establishment listing" a possible annex to CXG 89-2016. The proposed new work provides a link between elements of information to be exchanged, as described in several CCFICS texts:

- *Guidelines for the Design, Operation, Assessment and Accreditation of Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems* (CXG 26-1997)
- *Guidelines for the Development of Equivalence Agreements Regarding Food Imports and Export Inspection and Certification Systems* (CXG 34-1999)
- *Guidelines for Design, Production, Issuance and Use of Generic Official Certificates* (CXG 38-2001)
- *Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems* (CXG 47-2003)

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

N/A

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

None anticipated.

9. Proposed timeline for completion of the new work, including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission; the timeframe for developing a standard should normally not exceed five years

It is proposed that the work will extend over three (3) sessions of CCFICS.

PROJECT DOCUMENT**DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPLES FOR THE DIGITALISATION OF NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS****(For Approval)****1. Purpose and scope of the proposed new standard**

The purpose of the work is to develop high-level principles that guide authorities in their consideration and application of digital solutions to enhance existing food control systems. A principles-based approach would be light touch and provide the necessary flexibility for members looking at digital solutions as part of their regulatory modernisation programmes and help support and encourage a gradual shift away from manual/physical practices. The work would be broad in scope with the intention that the principles can be applied to any part of a national food control system that may be suitable and benefit from digitalisation and the use of digital tools, including artificial intelligence in a responsible and ethical way.

2. Relevance and timeliness

Regulatory modernisation and continuous improvement are a feature of many control systems as competent authorities strive to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their NFCS to better protect the health of consumers, food security and facilitate fair trade practices. Digital approaches are viewed by many as an enabler of data-driven decision making, transparency and robust evidence that allows authorities to better target their regulatory resource. The benefits of digitalisation include improved productivity, sustainability, resilience and the potential for real-time monitoring and rapid responses to issues and a step towards food system transformation. Digitalisation is broadly applicable to NFCS, or parts thereof, so work to develop high level principles would be timely to support its application by members.

Countries have identified these benefits and are at the point where they are either in the process of digitalising, or looking to digitalise, parts of their NFCS. Acknowledging this trend, and the enormous task competent authorities face, high-level principles will help guide countries refine and choose an approach that is tailored to their national settings and capacity, drawing on existing experiences that will help strengthen collaboration to overcome common challenges.

There is strong interest within the Committee to take a first step and begin by developing digital-related guidance in the form of high-level principles that would support some of the existing CCFICS texts, or those under development, noting the number of digital-related issues identified on the most recent emerging issues list (Appendix A, CX/FICS 24/27/9). Given this, it is also timely to prioritise the development of a framework within CCFICS which connects and organises this work across Codex Alimentarius committees and is coherent with work underway in other international organisations.

3. The main aspects to be covered

The work would result in the development of high-level principles to guide and support competent authorities in the consideration and uptake of digital solutions that could help transform and modernise their NFCS, or parts of these systems. The principles would capture key universal considerations for competent authorities, providing an overarching framework. The principles would serve as a foundation for future work and proposals for specific digital-related guidance that would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis when submitted.

The principles would be designed to acknowledge and draw from existing digital-related international standards and guidance that contain relevant information to the digitalisation of NFCS. This approach will ensure the future work of Codex Alimentarius in the digital space is connected, aligned and coherent with the work underway in other multilateral fora.

Noting the need for digital transformation processes to be user-driven, the principles will also capture and take account of available high level digital guidance specific to NFCS. Such principles have not been developed within the Codex Alimentarius or other food safety related multilateral fora. The guidance would be sufficiently flexible for different countries and systems at varying stages of development to assist competent authorities navigate the digital transformation process, for example directing authorities to consider cost/benefits.

The principles would include relevant definitions including existing digital-related definitions developed in other Codex texts and multilateral organisations. Similarly, they would reference the use of data standards to encourage and enable the ability to share data both within their NFCS and with trading partners.

The principles would be high-level and provide the necessary flexibility to authorities applying them to their national settings and capacity. They would also not include specific guidance on available technologies applicable to a specific component or part of the NFCS. Should specific guidance be required, it would likely first be captured as an emerging issue for potential new work using the high-level principles as a foundation.

4. Assessment against the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities*

a) *Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.*

In general, currently national legislations are being reviewed and/or amended to better consider how governments can facilitate the adoption of digital tools and technologies in the agriculture and food sectors.

This is occurring as policymakers consider the potential opportunities, costs, and risks of digital transformation, and it is likely that this trend will accelerate. Additional guidance developed by Codex Alimentarius might encourage and assist countries through this process to support the transition away from manual/physical and paper-based practices in food safety regulation. It may also assist avoid trade impediments arising from a widening digital divide, where countries less advanced in adopting digital ways of operating, or which have different digital systems, are excluded or unable to fairly participate in international trade.

b) *Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work.*

Development of an overarching framework for CCFICS, supported by high level principles which capture the key considerations for competent authorities considering, or in the process of digitalisation NFCS, would be the priority. This work would draw together common principles of digitalisation across different aspects of the NFCS, connect existing and future digital-related CCFICS work and ensure assimilation with the work of other international organizations. A critical component of this work will be to identify existing digital guidance that may have an application and relevance to the digitalisation of NFCS *whether from the food sector or others*.

Identifying and/or establishing definitions to assist consistency in interpretation and implementation of requirements for the digitisation of NFCS would be a secondary priority, as many of these definitions likely already exist.

Once the principles are completed, the review of existing CCFICS guidance would be conducted to remove repeated information and reference the principles to provide a transparent structure in which Codex texts would be required.

c) *Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies).*

Specific principles on the digitalisation of NFCS has not been developed, nor are they under development by other international organisations. This topic is of significant interest, with many international bodies, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), bringing countries together to discuss food safety and trade digitalisation topics and develop issue scanning reports and case studies to raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities it presents. Key insights and findings from these information gathering activities will be considered when developing the principles.

There is a significant amount of work that has, or is in the process of being undertaken, by international organisations in the digital related space, which may be applicable but not necessarily specific to the digitalisation of NFCS and food safety. Of note, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is exploring the use of digital tools to support decisions to prevent plant pest outbreaks. Both IPPC and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) have guidance of the application of electronic phytosanitary and veterinary certification. Further the work undertaken by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the World Customs Organisation (WCO), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the OECD, requires thorough review and consideration to identify linkages to the digitisation of NFCS. This review is included as a specific aspect of the scope of new work.

d) *Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization.*

Digitalisation is highly suitable for standardisation. The proponents believe that principles can be developed to address the issues identified in this proposal for new work.

e) *Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue.*

For countries to invest in the digitalisation of NFCS, clear, structured guidance within Codex Alimentarius that connects and aligns with guidance in other trade related international organisations is extremely important. This would simplify the development pathway for countries in the process of, or considering

digitalising their NFCS, encourage greater adoption of digital solutions and assist with avoiding the emergence of impediments to international trade as a result of digital divide.

5. Relevance to the Codex strategic objectives

The digital transformation of NFCS is a current issue within the food safety regulation and enforcement space. Developing principles would align with the Codex Alimentarius' strategic goal 1: Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner.

Digitalisation has the potential to support national and international controls making them more effective and streamlined. It could also facilitate more predictive and accurate modelling of risk as well as targeting of resources that makes better use of existing or diminishing resources. Remote audits/inspections, automated controls, improved traceability, and the like are examples where benefits can be achieved.

This work is also linked to several sustainable development goals, such as SDG 12 Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns and SDG 17 Revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development. The digitalisation of NFCS can assist governments to better develop, design and enforce food safety policies and regulations, become more efficient and reduce waste. By establishing a clear pathway for countries to adopt digital solutions and ways of operating, it can facilitate greater uptake and narrow the digital divide, which is important to continue to support a non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system. It is also widely recognised that digitalisation will play a role in food system transformation, to a more sustainable model.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents as well as other ongoing work

Several CCFICS texts reference using 'electronic means' or 'electronically' without further elaboration on what this entails. There are also several texts that also contain guidance on the collection, analysis and reporting of data from a scientific process rather than a digital perspective.

In other Codex Alimentarius texts, there is very little digital related content. Like CCFICS, several texts include guidance on the collection, analysis and reporting of data from a scientific process, but not from a digital perspective.

A summary of the preliminary gap analysis can be found in ANNEX 2 of document CX/FICS 24/27/9 Add.2.

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

None anticipated.

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

None anticipated.

9. Proposed timeline for completion of the new work, including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission; *the time frame for developing a standard should not normally exceed five years.*

Subject to the Codex Alimentarius Commission approval at its 47th Session in 2024, it is expected that the work can be completed in four to five years, depending on the future schedule of CCFICS meetings:

- Agreement to undertake new work at CCFICS 27: September 2024
- Approval as new work by CAC47: November 2024
- Proposed draft principles for consideration at Step 3 at CCFICS28: Oct 2026
- Proposed draft principles for consideration at Step 5 at CCFICS29: 2028
- Finalised for adoption at Step 8 at CCFICS30: 2029
- Adoption by CAC53: 2030