

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**  
**CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS**

**Twenty-Seventh Session**

Cairns, Australia

**16 – 20 September 2024**

**REVIEW AND UPDATE OF APPENDIX A – THE LIST OF EMERGING GLOBAL ISSUES**

Prepared by the United Kingdom (UK)

**Executive Summary**

CCFICS has for many years provided a space on its agenda for the consideration of emerging issues with a view to identifying and prioritising potential new work. The approach in CCFICS continues to evolve and the discussion at the 26<sup>th</sup> Session focussed on amending and endorsing the list of emerging issues contained in Appendix A of CX/FICS 23/26/9. The UK volunteered to be the next custodian of this agenda item and to prepare a revised and updated list of emerging issues for consideration at the 27<sup>th</sup> Session. Revisions to Appendix A would take account of comments solicited through a CL and the outcomes from a planned intersessional workshop.

Responses to CL 2023/66-FICS confirmed the importance of the issues identified in Appendix A and further noted the possibility of improving the drafting to avoid duplication and aid clarity. Norway, Australia and the UK identified three new emerging issues: increased use of establishment listings to support trade; a trend towards digitalisation of parts of countries' national food control systems; and increased use of digital tools including artificial intelligence (AI). The virtual intersessional workshop held on 21 May 2024 explored the existing list and the three newly identified emerging issues in more depth.

The key outcomes from the workshop were: i) Norway to work with interested parties to develop a discussion paper on establishment listings; ii) Australia to work with interested parties to develop a discussion paper on digitalisation of NFCS incorporating the use of digital tools including AI; iii) for the UK, with assistance from Australia, to organise a side event for CCFICS27 to raise awareness on the use by regulators and industry of AI.

CCFICS27 is invited to:

- discuss the updated list of emerging issues contained in **APPENDIX A**
- note the **ANNEX** providing a brief overview and key points from the intersessional meeting
- consider the discussion papers and new work proposals prepared by:
  - Norway CX/FICS 24/27/9.2
  - Australia CX/FICS 24/27/9.3
- note the plans for a side event during CCFICS27 on the use of AI (see tentative CCFICS27 timetable)

**Introduction**

A common theme across committees is the need to ensure the responsiveness of Codex to new and emerging issues. CCFICS identified this as a topic for discussion some 11 years ago and has since provided space on its agenda as a standing item. The purpose of the emerging issues discussion is to provide an opportunity for members to identify and prioritise potential new work falling within the mandate of CCFICS. The approach in CCFICS to this standing agenda item continues to evolve over time with the responsibility for revising and updating the list of emerging issues between sessions falling to a volunteer custodian. During CCFICS26 the

UK volunteered to be the custodian and agreed to submit a revised document that took account of responses to the CL and a planned intersessional workshop to be held in advance of CCFICS27.

### **Approach**

A Circular Letter was issued in December 2023 (CL 2023/66-FICS) requesting comments on Appendix A and for any new work proposals linked to existing or newly identified emerging issues. The deadline for comment was 30 April 2024. Responses to the CL were emailed to all Codex members and observers on 16 May 2024 by the Codex Secretariat.

As directed by CCFICS26, the Codex Secretariat facilitated an intersessional workshop on 21 May 2024 to further discuss the emerging issues identified in Appendix A alongside the responses elicited from CL 2023/66-FICS. The workshop was co-chaired by the United Kingdom and Australia, a brief overview and the next steps agreed at the workshop are **attached as an ANNEX to this report**.

### **Discussion and key outcomes**

CL 2023/66-FICS elicited a total of ten responses from nine member countries and one member organisation (EU). In general, members continued to support the five emerging issues identified in Appendix A and several drafting suggestions were put forward to improve the overall clarity of the issues. Some members completed the prioritisation template (Appendix B to CX/FICS 23/26/9) and rated most issues as medium to high priorities, however there were no new work proposals submitted for the five issues identified in Appendix A. However, three new emerging issues were identified in the responses to CL 2023/66-FICS submitted by Norway, Australia and the UK.

The intersessional workshop, co-chaired by the UK and Australia on 21 May examined the list in Appendix A of CX/FICS 23/26/9 and three newly identified emerging issues. The workshop was held to provide additional time for members to consider and prioritize potential new work in advance of the discussions at CCFICS27.

The Chair of the workshop noted that the *appeals mechanism* issue would be the subject of a standalone discussion paper and suggested deletion from the list. Regarding the *evolving food systems and technologies* issue, it was agreed to continue monitoring the situation whilst noting that no new work proposals had been submitted for this issue.

Other issues listed that were discussed included *improved analytics, testing technologies, and surveillance*, where members supported rewording the text for clarity. The workshop also addressed *new practices for food safety*, with some participants suggesting an amalgamation with the previous issue due to the overlapping scopes. The *evolving role of competent authorities and their interaction with government entities* issue was highlighted as a high priority, with discussions also mentioning AI and trends toward digitalisation. The Chair acknowledged the complexity and synergies of this issue with the three newly identified issues.

The workshop had a more detailed consideration of the following three new identified emerging issues:

- a. Norway presented a proposal on *establishment listings*, highlighting the growing trend and demand for such listings to support trade, during and post-pandemic. There was broad support for developing standardized guidance and principles, though concerns were raised about the need to clearly define the purpose and necessity of listing requests. Norway agreed to collaborate with interested parties to develop a discussion paper and new work proposal for CCFICS27.
- b. Australia proposed *digitalisation of national food control systems*, noting the lack of existing multilateral guidance and potential benefits of digital systems and tools. There was broad support for developing high-level principles, though concerns were raised about the scope and rapid technological advancements in this area in comparison to the time it often takes for Codex to complete work.
- c. The UK introduced the *increasing use of AI* to support food control systems, emphasizing its wide potential, including for proactive risk identification. This proposal was viewed as complementary to digitalisation and it was agreed that the AI component should be integrated into Australia's planned discussion paper and new work proposal.

During the second part of the workshop Brazil and India presented on their work to update the discussions papers and new work proposals related to standardisation of sanitary requirements and appeals mechanisms for rejections of imported food, respectively. These would be considered at CCFIC27 under separate agenda items. These are not considered in the **ANNEX**.

### **Recommendations**

CCFICS27 is invited to:

- discuss the updated list of emerging issues contained in Appendix A

- note the **ANNEX** providing a brief overview and key points from the intersessional meeting
- consider the discussion papers and new work proposals prepared by:
  - Norway CX/FICS 24/27/9.2
  - Australia CX/FICS 24/27/9.3
- note the plans for a side event during CCFICS27 on the use of AI (see tentative CCFICS27 timetable)

### **Background**

The 26<sup>th</sup> Session of CCFICS in its consideration of the list of emerging global issues contained in Appendix A of CX/FICS 23/26/9 reached the following conclusions:

- a) Acknowledged the current list of emerging issues
- b) Agreed for the list of emerging issues to continue as a standing Agenda Item for future CCFICS meetings, and that custodianship would continue to be rotated through Members on a meeting-by-meeting basis and noted that as a result of consultations with the CCFICS Chairperson, the UK had agreed to be the next custodian for Appendix A of the Emerging issues paper (for CCFICS27), and that Australia was prepared to support the next custodian.
- c) Agreed to request the Codex Secretariat to issue a CL requesting inputs from members on emerging global issues to be included in Appendix A.
- d) Agreed that the responsibility of the Custodian would remain to prepare an updated document taking into account discussions at the current session, as well as the comments solicited through the CL; and submitting a report, including an updated and prioritised list of emerging issues, to CCFICS27 for consideration.
- e) Agreed to hold an intersessional workshop ahead of CCFICS27 to further discuss the emerging issues under Appendix A; and
- f) Agreed to retain Appendix B (Prioritisation - as amended) as an internal document for CCFICS that may be updated based on experience gained from its use.

## POTENTIAL NEW WORK FOR CCFICS: LIST OF NEW EMERGING GLOBAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

### Introduction

1. The table below identifies significant emerging global issues that may impact the work of CCFICS and recognises any existing texts or new work proposals relevant to each issue. These items have been drawn from previous discussions at CCFICS sessions and other available material, including multilateral food safety and trade discussions. Suggested amendments and other updates resulting from responses to CL 2023/66-FICS and views expressed during the intersessional workshop held on 21 May 2024 are shown in [blue text and underlined](#) and presented below for discussion and amendment at CCFICS27.
2. It may be the case that existing CCFICS texts touch on, but do not fully address, an identified global issue. In this case, additional or clarifying guidance may be warranted. This may present an opportunity for CCFICS to consider the appropriateness and priority of potential new work, using the framework that was presented in Appendix B of **CX/FICS 23/26/9 and agreed by CCFICS26**. It may also present an opportunity to review existing text in light of new data, or new trading environments.

### New emerging global issues for consideration

| Issue No. | Potential Emerging Global Issue for consideration<br>(not in priority order) | Related Impact on CCFICS / Codex   | Related CCFICS text | Comment / Status / Reason for priority   |
|-----------|--|--|---------------------|--|
| 4         | Appeals mechanism in the context of rejections.                              | Develop guidance on an appeals mechanism in the context of rejections of imported foods. | ● CXG 25-1997       | <p><b>Comment:</b> <a href="#">This issue was first raised in 2015 and will now be considered under Agenda Item 7 with India presenting a discussion paper CX/FICS 24/27/7</a></p> <p><b>Status:</b> <a href="#">A new proposal is appended to CX/FICS 24/27/7 for consideration at the CCFICS27.</a></p> <p><b>Priority:</b> <a href="#">To be decided by members at CCFICS27 during the discussion on Agenda item 7.</a></p> |

| Issue No. | Potential Emerging Global Issue for consideration<br>(not in priority order)  | Related Impact on CCFICS / Codex  | Related CCFICS text   | Comment / Status / Reason for priority   |
|-----------|---|---|---|--|
| 2         | New and evolving food production, processing, transport and distributing systems and technologies.  | <p>Impact on the Competent Authority with regard to national food control systems (e.g., effectiveness, traceability, recalls) related to new food sources and production systems.</p> <p>Impact on trade through equivalence and systems recognitions.</p> <p>Potential need to update existing Codex text to address production of new foods subject to new regulation <a href="#">and established differentiation from existing sources.</a></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CXG 19-1995</li> <li>• CXG 20-1995</li> <li>• CXG 25-1997</li> <li>• CXG 26-1997</li> <li>• CXG 34-1999</li> <li>• CXG 38-2001</li> <li>• CXG 47-2003</li> <li>• CXG 53-2003</li> <li>• CXG 60-2006</li> <li>• CXG 82-2013</li> <li>• CXG 89-2016</li> <li>• CXG 91-2017</li> <li>• Proposed Guidance on Recognition and Maintenance of Equivalence of NFCS</li> </ul> | <p><a href="#">Comment: This issue is for active monitoring.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Status: To date no new work proposals have been submitted on this issue.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Priority: Rated high with estimated medium impact on food safety and trade by some members in their responses to CL 2023/66-FICS).</a></p>   |
| 3         | <p><del>Improved analytics, testing technologies, and surveillance.</del></p> <p><a href="#">Impact of new technologies and tools on training, development and monitoring of food control systems, information sharing and approach to government regulation and compliance activities.</a></p> | <p><del>The tools and methods used to measure performance of food control systems and how and when they are applied.</del></p> <p><a href="#">Emerging use and application of digital and analytic tools, e.g. continuous/real-time monitoring. New approaches to manage food safety, including preventative and outcome-based approaches.</a></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CXG 47-2003</li> <li>• CXG 53-2003</li> <li>• CXG 25-1997</li> <li>• CXG 34-1999</li> <li>• CXG 82-2013</li> <li>• CXG 89-2016</li> <li>• CXG 91-2017</li> </ul>   | <p><a href="#">Comment: Two related issues were identified in the responses to CL 2023/66-FICS and during the intersessional workshop held on 21 May 2024. Both will be considered under the emerging issues agenda item (CX/FICS 24/27/9.2 and 9.3)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Status: Contingent on the outcome of the discussions mentioned above the Committee may move forward and consider</a></p> |

| Issue No.   | Potential Emerging Global Issue for consideration<br>(not in priority order)                        | Related Impact on CCFICS / Codex  | Related CCFICS text  | Comment / Status / Reason for priority   |
|-------------|---|---|--|--|
| 3 continued |   | <p><u>Interoperability through increasing digitalization and use of artificial intelligence (AI) in regulatory modernisation programmes to better target finite resource. Additional impacts include changes to the way some authorities regulate, train staff, conduct compliance activities (e.g. food safety culture focus) and monitor the performance of their food control system to identify and manage risks proactively.</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">CXG 93-2021</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CXG 101-2023</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CXG 102-2023</a></li> </ul>  | <p><u>the associated new work proposals:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Establishment listing (Norway)</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Digitalisation of control systems and use of AI (Australia)</a></li> </ol> <p><b>Priority:</b> <u>Rated high with estimated high to medium impact on food safety and trade by some members in their responses to CL 2023/66-FICS).</u></p> |
| 4           | <p><del>New approaches to food safety, including preventative and outcomes-based systems.</del></p> | <p><del>Current and anticipated changes to the suite of tools used to provide assurances, and how and when they are applied.</del></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>CXG 20-1995</del></li> <li>• <del>CXG 19-1995</del></li> <li>• <del>CXG 25-1997</del></li> <li>• <del>CXG 26-1997</del></li> <li>• <del>CXG 34-1999</del></li> <li>• <del>CXG 38-2001</del></li> <li>• <del>CXG 53-2003</del></li> <li>• <del>CXG 47-2003</del></li> <li>• <del>CXG 60-2006</del></li> <li>• <del>CXG 82-2013</del></li> <li>• <del>CXG 89-2016</del></li> <li>• <del>CXG 91-2017</del></li> <li>• <del>Proposed Guidance on Recognition and</del></li> <li>• <del>Maintenance of Equivalence of NFCS</del></li> </ul> | <p><b>Comment:</b> <u>This issue has been merged with issue 3 to avoid duplication.</u></p> <p><b>Status:</b> <u>Refer to issue 3</u></p> <p><b>Priority:</b> <u>Refer to issue 3</u></p>  |

| Issue No. | Potential Emerging Global Issue for consideration<br>(not in priority order)               | Related Impact on CCFICS / Codex   | Related CCFICS text   | Comment / Status / Reason for priority   |
|-----------|--|--|---|--|
| 5         | Evolving role of competent authority and interactions between various government entities. | Interaction among various governmental entities involved in food trade, in particular between food control authorities and customs/border protection agencies, and the ability to better leverage information from these interactions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CXG19-1995</li> <li>• CXG 34-1999</li> <li>• CXG 47-2003</li> <li>• CXG 82-2013</li> <li>• CXG 89-2016</li> <li>• CXG 91-2017</li> <li>• CXG 101-2023</li> </ul> | <p><b>Comment:</b> <a href="#">It was noted that there are some synergies and similarities between issues 3 and 4 (now combined), for example some authorities are using digital tools including AI to enhance their control systems at the border and use data from outside sources.</a></p> <p><b>Status:</b> <a href="#">There are currently no associated new work proposals.</a></p> <p><b>Priority:</b> <a href="#">Rated high with estimated high impact on food safety and trade by some members in their responses to CL 2023/66-FICS).</a></p> |

## ANNEX

**BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE KEY POINTS AND NEXT STEPS FROM THE INTERSESSIONAL WORKSHOP HELD ON 21 MAY****Introduction**

This report provides a brief overview of the key points and next steps from intersessional workshop, co-chaired by the UK and Australia, held on 21 May. Participants in the workshop considered and reviewed the list of emerging issues contained in Appendix A of CX/FICS 23/26/9 alongside three newly identified emerging issues. The purpose of the meeting was to address the evolving landscape of food production, processing, transport, distribution systems with a view to identifying and prioritising potential new work for CCFICS.

**Issue 1: Appeals Mechanism**

Revisiting the 2015 discussion on an appeals mechanism, the Chair noted that India's proposal from the previous year had not been thoroughly considered due to time constraints. More information had since been provided for a separate and more in-depth discussion at CCFIC27

**Outcome:** No comments were forthcoming, and it was noted that the issue would be subject to a detailed discussion as a standalone item (CX/FICS 24/27/7) so could be deleted from Appendix A.

**Issue 2: New and Evolving Food Production, Processing, Transport, and Distribution Systems and Technologies**

The Chair noted that the discussion on this issue at CCFICS26 recommended waiting for the outcome of the Executive Committee's discussions on NFPS before deciding if any new work was appropriate for CCFICS.

**Key Points**

- CCEXEC had concluded that no new structures were necessary and encouraged members to submit substantive new work proposals to the relevant Codex subsidiary bodies.

**Outcome:** No new work proposals were submitted in response to CL 2023/66-FICS, however the Chair emphasized that for CCFICS the issues were much broader than NFPS so recommended retaining issue two for continued monitoring.

**Issue 3: Improved Analytics, Testing Technologies, and Surveillance**

The Chair noted the need for more details to be provided as members had commented that they had found the drafting quite vague which had made it difficult to determine whether new work was needed.

**Key Points:**

- Proposals to clarify the impact of new technologies on food control systems was discussed, with members proposing some new wording to help clarify the intent of this emerging issue.

**Outcome:** Members supported a broad rewording of the text. It was also suggested that this issue could be merged with some of the proposals to be considered later, e.g. digitalisation of NFCS.

**Issue 4: New Practices for Food Safety, Including Preventative and Outcome-Based Systems**

The Chair noted that members in their response to the CL had again suggested that more detail was needed to help determine whether new work was needed. Some members rated the issue as a medium to high priority while others felt it was duplicative of issue three and suggested it could be combined.

**Key Points:**

- Discussion revolved around revising or deleting this issue since it seemed to also fall within the scope of issue three, more so with the suggested drafting changes elicited through the CL.

**Outcome:** The suggestion to delete this issue and amalgamate it with issue three was generally accepted with no dissenting views expressed.

**Issue 5: Evolving Role of Competent Authorities and Interaction Between Government Entities**

The Chair highlighted the complexity and rated high priority of this issue for some members. The Chair noted that new CCFICS texts often included a section on the roles and responsibilities, but older texts did not.

**Key Points:**

- The discussion focused on the need for concrete suggestions for addressing the evolving role of competent authorities. There was mention of AI and digitalisation as a related emerging trend which should be further considered.



**Outcome:** The Chair acknowledged members' interest in this issue and that there were some synergies with some of the newly identified emerging issues.

### **Newly Identified Emerging Issues**

#### **Issue 6 (new): Establishment Listings**

##### **Presentation of the proposal**

Norway presented a detailed proposal regarding the growing trend and increasing demand for establishment listings to support trade and noted the increased frequency of such requests during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

##### **Discussion and Comments:**

- **General Support:** Broad support for developing guidance and principles to standardize establishment listing processes, recognizing the increasing complexity and resource demands that were burdensome.
- **Challenges and Concerns:** Need to clearly define the purpose and necessity of listing requests and better understand the drivers behind increasing requests. Concerns were raised that the work should not lead to increased burdens through a further increase in requests for such lists.
- **Potential Synergies:** Suggested synergies with other initiatives like the standardization of SPS requirements (Brazil proposal) and digitalisation of NFCS.

##### **Next Steps:**

- **Norway** to work with interested parties to develop a discussion paper and new work proposal for consideration under the emerging issues agenda item at CCFICS27

#### **Issue 7 (new): Digitalisation of National Food Control Systems**

##### **Presentation of the Proposal**

Australia noted that many countries were considering digitalising parts of their national food control system despite the apparent lack of existing multilateral guidance. It was evident that there may be added benefits from digitalisation for some CCFICS texts, e.g. guidance on electronic certification, remote audit, traceability, and food fraud.

##### **Discussion and Comments**

- **General Support:** Broad support for developing high-level principles to guide digitalization efforts, recognizing potential benefits of standardizing digital tools and processes.
- **Link to Other Proposals:** Noted similarities with the establishment listings proposal, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive framework.
- **Challenges and Considerations:** Concerns about the broad scope and the fast pace of technological advancements compared to the time it often takes for Codex to complete work. Need to be careful and manage ambitions and expectations of any work.

##### **Next Steps**

- **Australia** to work with interested parties to develop a discussion paper and new work proposal for consideration under the emerging issues agenda item at CCFICS27

#### **Issue 8 (new): Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

##### **Presentation of the Proposal:**

The UK noted that both regulators and industry were increasingly using AI tools for a variety of purposes including for proactive risk identification in food and feed commodities. The UK had developed and was using a range of AI tools. One such tool scrapes information from open sources to inform UK border inspection services of potential trade anomalies, e.g. port/BIP shopping. Many countries are considering how they can ensure that the use of AI is lawful, ethical, and controlled.

##### **Discussion and Comments:**

- **General Support:** Acknowledgement of increasing use and the potential value of AI in food control systems, e.g. recognizing AI's potential to improve risk identification and resource allocation.
- **Link to Digitalisation Proposal:** Clear synergies and seen as complementary to the digitalization proposal, with overlapping themes of data interoperability and information sharing.

- **Challenges and Considerations:** Concerns about the rapid pace of AI advancements and the need for Codex to keep pace with technological developments.

#### Next Steps:

- **UK** to collaborate with Australia to integrate AI into the broader discussion paper on digitalisation of NFCS with a view to incorporating AI considerations into the proposed high-level principles.

## Workshop Timetable

| ITEM | TOPIC  | ALLOCATION | TIME (CEST) |
|------|--|------------|-------------|
| 1    | Welcome and introductions  | 10 mins    | 12 noon     |
| 2    | Review of previously identified emerging issues on the list in Appendix A.<br><br>Discussion of newly identified emerging issues via CL 2023/66-FICS   | 60 mins    | 12.10pm     |
| 3    | Break  | 10 mins    | 1.10pm      |
| 4    | New work proposal invited by CCFICS26 – guidance on standardisation of sanitary requirements.<br><br>New work proposal invited by CCFICS26 – guidance on an appeals mechanism for rejection of imported food | 50 mins    | 1.20pm      |
| 4    | Conclusion and next steps  | 20 mins    | 2.10pm      |
| 5    | Finish   |            | 2.30pm      |

