

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
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World Health
Organization

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PROJECT DOCUMENT

PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON A CODEX STANDARD FOR DRIED SAFFRON

(Submitted by Iran)

1. Purpose and the scope of the standard

The scope of the work is to establish a worldwide standard for dried saffron obtained from portion of the pistils of *crocus sativus* L. in forms of filament, cut filament and powder.

The objective of the standard is to consider the essential quality characteristics of Saffron as a spice in many culinary products including for catering purposes or for repackaging, as required to aid international trade in this product.

2. Relevance and timeliness

Due to the growing trend of worldwide Saffron production and trade, it is necessary to establish a commodity standard covering the safety, quality, and hygiene and labeling in order to have a reference that has been internationally agreed by consensus between the main producing and trading countries. The Codex standard for saffron will help to protect consumers' health and to promote fair trade practices in accordance with the different international agreements.

The current and historical significance of Saffron shows, Saffron is the endemic herb which is a strategic product of Iran.

The main producers of saffron are Iran, India, Greece, Morocco, Afghanistan and main importers are Spain, UAE, France, Italy, Sweden, USA, Argentina, Germany, United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Japan, Canada, Australia, Belgium, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Netherland, Brazil, Morocco, India, Ireland, Japan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Yemen, Denmark, Norway, Romania based on ITC data during 2008-2014.

Saffron is a drought tolerant plant that grows in arid and semiarid climate. Economics of this valuable crop from different dimensions such as marketing, employment, household's income, globalization and nonoil export.

3. Main aspects to be covered

The standard will include characteristic relating to the size. Categories, quality, contaminants, labeling and packaging.

The most relevant items which may be considered are related to:

- Establishing the minimum requirements of saffron which shall be complied with, independently from the quality parameters and other requirements regardless of class.
- Defining the categories to classify saffron in accordance with its characteristics.
- Establishing the tolerance as regards quality, quantity and size that may be permitted in saffron contained in a package.
- Provisions to be considered relating to the uniformity of the packaged product and the packaging used.
- Provisions for the labeling and marking of the product in accordance with the General Standard for the labeling of Prepackaged Foods.

- Provisions for pesticides and contaminants with the reference to the General Standard for Contaminants and toxins in food.
- Provisions for hygiene and handling with the reference to the general principles of food hygiene and other relevant codes of hygiene practices.
- References to methods of analysis and sampling

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

General criterion

The proposal new standard will meet this criterion by:

- promoting consumer protection and preventing of fraudulent practices
- providing greater assurance of quality of the product to meet consumer needs and minimum requirements of food safety
- arriving at levels of standardization based on the properties of different varieties to meet industrial and consumer needs with exactness and credibility
- The drafting standard would be beneficial to many countries in general and more particular in the case of developing countries because they are major producers, exporters and consumers of dried saffron.

Criteria applicable to commodities:

(a) Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries

Saffron is one of the most important export products and plays significant role in income and employment of Saffron producers. Iran, India, Greece, Morocco, Spain and Afghanistan are among main countries dealing with Saffron production. There are as yet no exact figures but these will naturally become available as the project advances. Other criteria and data (e.g monetary value or fraud possibility) should be considered to prioritize work on saffron. Meanwhile, the trade data on saffron are not always commodity-specific. There is not always possibility update the data on trade, when there is not the certain sources.

Major importer countries of Saffron are United Kingdom, Ireland, The United Arab Emirates (UAE), Spain, Saudi Arabia, France and Italy.

Table 1 : Pattern of Export International Trade

Export	Value, US Dollar thousand
2010	409,886
2011	382,473
2012	160,746
2013	157,857
2014	169,940

Source: ITC, Geneva

Table 2 : Pattern of Import International Trade

Import	Value, US Dollar thousand	World (In Metric Tons)
2010	1312,154	806,68
2011	274,381	950,979
2012	166,432	1,003,220
2013	164,130	1,049,103
2014	167,515	996,796

Source: ITC, Geneva

(b) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to International trade:

As mentioned above, Saffron is traded according to purity, quality and forms. The form of Saffron varies filaments, cut filaments and powder. There are three national standards for Saffron. International organization like ISO has two standards for Saffron. Many conventions including those of the world Spice Congress and the World Spice Organization have addressed the issue of harmonization of grades and specification for Saffron. Saffron being produced in some developing countries and traded globally not only by the exporters but also through re-exports by importers is subject to various national legislations to overcome the resultant or potential impediment to international trade ,it is essential to incorporate all existing diverse standards in a single comprehensive standard acceptable across world internationally.

This would reduce possible barriers to trade and would provide a comprehensive framework setting out the minimum internationally acceptable requirements for Saffron.

This new work will provide a recommendation, which countries could use to develop their own quality and grading standards for Saffron and, when applied internationally, may assist in providing a harmonized approach.

(c) International or regional market potential

The quantity imported of saffron in 2014 has been reported 5491 tones and Annual growths quantity of imported Saffron in the world is 51% between 2010-2014 which shows international demand for saffron has been grown (ITC, Geneva 2014). The major exporters are Iran, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, India, , India , United Arab Emirates .according to ITC data,the international trade accounted to more than 2000 tones for about 165536 US \$ thousands in 2014.

Table 3 :List of Exporters of saffron in 2014

Exporters	Exported value in 2014(Us\$ Thousand)	Quantity Export in 2014(tones)	Annual Growth in quantity 2010-2014(%)
World	165536	2483	+20
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	70911	129	+10
Spain	47516	134	+2
Portugal	18284	22	+34
France	7100	14	0
Georgia	219	26	-
Italy	2509	18	+13
India	1850	62	+164
United Arab Emirates	1734	36	-
Greece	1440	2	-46
China	1415	69	-19
UK	1325	121	-10
Netherlands	1144	29	-8
Vietnam	887	403	+39
Indonesia	547	900	+55
USA	437	82	+28
Brazil	57	31	-
South Africa	212	48	+4
Mexico	171	13	-
Saudi Arabia	121	2	-
Hong kong,China	92	1	0
Singapore	371	1	0
Stonia	432	17	-
Sweden	374	8	+10
Belgium	784	21	+15
Morocco	264	1	-10
Ethiopia	222	212	+162
Czech Republic	78	14	+30
Denmark	60	5	+62

Source: ITC, Geneva (30 out of 63 countries)

Global demand for Saffron in all forms is expected to increase in future, mainly on account of increased culinary applications and functional foods. It can lead to increase Saffron trade .Due to importance the quality control of Saffron specifications, it's necessary to develop an international harmonized standard.

(d) Amenability of commodity to standardization The characteristics of Saffron from its cultivation to retail sale e.g. cultivar varieties, composition, quality characteristics, processing, packaging, etc. all lead to adequate parameters for the standardization of the product. Taking into account that technical information is

available and certain degree of harmonization at regional/international levels has already been achieved on certain aspects relevant to consumer's protection and trade facilitation as mentioned in point (b).

(e) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards

There is no general commodity standard covering saffron under Codex. The proposed standard will heighten consumer protection and facilitate saffron trade by establishing an internationally agreed quality standard.

(f) Number of commodities which would need separate standards including whether raw, semi-processed or processed

A single standard for saffron will cover all forms of saffron traded worldwide. The different forms of saffron like powder, filaments and cut filaments will be examined under this standard individually.

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

The existing standards which may be considered while developing a codex standard for saffron are:

- ISO international standard 3632-1:2011(Edition2): Specifications,
- :Test methods
- American Standard Trade Association (ASTA)
- European Standard Association(ESA)

5. Relevance to the Codex strategic objectives

The elaboration of a Codex standard for saffron is in line with the strategic objective to promote the maximum application of codex standards by countries in their national legislation and to facilitate international trade by protecting the health of the consumers.

Therefore this proposal is consistent with the Strategic Plan of the Codex Alimentarius Commission 2014-2019, in particular strategic objectives 1.1, 1.3, 2.3 and 3.1.

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

This is proposed as a new global standard and has no relation to any other existing Codex text on this item, except that this standard will make reference to relevant standards and related texts developed by General Subject Committees.

7. Identification of any need for any requirements for and availability of expert scientific advice

No expert scientific advice is foreseen at this stage. Published research documents by international bodies will be referred in the process of preparing the standard, if found necessary.

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

The technical inputs from other external bodies such as International Organization for Standardization (ISO), American Spice trade Association (ASTA) and European Spice Association (ESA) shall be welcomed for this work.

9. Proposed Time Schedule

DATE	The following is the proposed timetable for the completion of the standard, subject to the decisions taken during the Second Session of Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs. Proposed timeline for completion of the new work PROCETURES
2nd CCSC	Consideration by the 2nd CCSC
July 2016	Critical review of new work proposals by CCEXEC; Approval of new work proposal by the Commission
3rd CCSC	Consideration at Step 3 by the 3rd CCSC
July, 2017	Adoption at Step 5 by CAC
4th CCSC	Consideration of the draft Standard At Step6
July 2019	Adoption at Step 8 by the CAC