



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE**

**29<sup>th</sup> Session**

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**FAO/WHO ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO THE REGION, IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES AND CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS**

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

**INTRODUCTION**

1. This paper describes FAO/WHO activities in the areas of capacity building and the provision of scientific advice implemented since the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe (CCEURO), with particular attention to identifying priorities and capacity development needs.

**A REVIEW OF TECHNICAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION**

2. FAO and WHO are engaged in a range of food safety capacity building activities at national, regional and global levels, under their respective mandates, goals and work plans. These capacity building activities directly supported the Codex strategic plan 2008-2013, and are supporting its successor, the Codex strategic plan 2014-2019. The capacity building activities also contribute to the regional strategic plan for the FAO/WHO Coordinating CCEURO (2014 -2018), which will be addressed at its 29<sup>th</sup> Session.

3. FAO has developed over 2013 and 2014 Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) with transition economies in Europe and Central Asia region, which were adopted by the Ministers of Agriculture. The CPF determines the programmatic focal areas, including Food Safety, for FAO assistance during the period 2013- 2017 in alignment with the UNDAF. The CPFs define country-specific priorities and expected outcomes and outputs for FAO's cooperation and partnership with each member country, setting the framework for capacity development at national level. Key issues identified and prioritized by countries during the consultative process are being addressed through the projects under the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme. To assist the situation analysis to identify capacity development areas to strengthen, FAO uses the comprehensive approach considering the needs of all components of national food control systems, including policy, legislative and institutional frameworks, laboratory services, inspection, communication, education and training. Food safety is a specific area of work in WHO's biannual work-plans. In the WHO Twelfth General Programme of Work 2014-2019, "Food safety" is recognized as a specific area of work (5.4.) under Category 5 "Preparedness, surveillance and response". The aspiration outcome is that "All countries are adequately prepared to prevent and mitigate risks to food safety". The Food safety work-plan is aligned with the WHO "Strategic Plan for Food Safety including Foodborne Zoonoses 2013-2022, which provides a coherent framework for taking action on priority issues in the area of food safety and zoonoses. The overall mission is: *To lower the burden of foodborne disease, thereby strengthening the health security and ensuring sustainable development of Member States.*

4. The current food safety work of FAO and WHO is focused on achieving three major outcomes:

- I. Support the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to develop standards, and for countries - to participate in standards setting process and implement food safety standards, guidelines and recommendations
- II. Multisectoral collaboration to reduce foodborne public health risks, including those arising at the animal-human interface
- III. Adequate national capacity to establish and maintain risk-based regulatory frameworks to prevent, monitor, assess and manage foodborne and zoonotic diseases and hazards

5. Based on these strategic planning frameworks and tools, FAO and WHO are continuing to work with countries of the region to strengthen their capacity in the area of food safety, quality and related standards promoting the application of risk analysis framework and enhancing inter-sectoral food and agriculture/health collaboration.

6. A summary on capacity building activities and initiatives of global relevance was provided to the 37<sup>th</sup> Session of CAC and is available in CX/CAC 14/37/14-Add.1 ([ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/cac/cac37/cac37\\_14e\\_Add1.pdf](ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/cac/cac37/cac37_14e_Add1.pdf)) and CX/CAC 14/37/13 for FAO/WHO Codex capacity-building activities supported by the Codex Trust Fund ([ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/cac/cac37/cac37\\_13e.pdf](ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/cac/cac37/cac37_13e.pdf)). These papers provide information of relevance to all regions and describe the range of supporting materials (e.g. guidelines, manuals and online resources), key initiatives, international events and global activities which have been delivered or initiated since the last session. An updated review of activities carried out in CCEURO region is provided in the following tables.

**TABLE 1: TECHNICAL CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES AT THE REGIONAL, SUB-REGIONAL OR NATIONAL LEVEL**

Activity	Organizers	Dates	Venue
Developing Capacities of New Member Countries from Central Asia sub-region to Participate in Codex Activities	FAO/WHO	09-11 October 2012	Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
WHO sub-regional GFN Training Course for Central Asian Republics	WHO EURO	5-9 November 2012	Almaty, Kazakhstan
National meeting on antimicrobial resistance from a food safety perspective and “kick off” of AGISAR (WHO Advisory Group on Integrated Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance) project in Kosovo	WHO EURO	30 November 2012	Pristina, Kosovo
Regional food composition database development for South-East Balkan countries	FAO REU/ Network for Capacity Development in Nutrition in Central and Eastern Europe	21-23 January 2013	Belgrade, Serbia
Training course on strengthening capacities for effective participation in Codex work for Turkmenistan	FAO REU/WHO	24-25 January 2013	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
FAO/WHO Joint Regional Meeting in preparation for the FAO/WHO Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)	FAO/WHO	13 March 2013	Tel Aviv, Israel
National laboratory training course in Tajikistan under the framework of GFN	WHO EURO	20 -24 May 2013	Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Training workshop on strengthening capacities for effective participation in Codex work for the Balkan countries, supported by the Codex Trust Fund	FAO/WHO	04-06 June 2013	Zagreb, Croatia
FAO-CCEURO Regional Consultation on strengthening capacities for food safety risk analysis and enhancing participation in Codex work	FAO REU, Codex Poland and Netherlands (CCEURO Coordinators)	18 September 2013	Pulawy, Poland
National laboratory training course in Tajikistan under the framework of the Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN)	WHO EURO	23-27 September 2013	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
National Workshop on Risk/Crisis Communication with special emphasis on Food Safety	WHO EURO	30-31 October 2013	Bucharest, Romania
Regional Training Workshop for CIS countries WTO accession and agricultural policy	FAO	12-14 November 2013	Kiev, Ukraine

Activity	Organizers	Dates	Venue
National laboratory training course in Tajikistan under the framework of the Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN)	WHO EURO	25-29 November 2013	Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Training workshop on food safety hazards, prerequisite programs (GMP and GHP) and food safety systems based on hazard analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)	FAO	27-29 November 2013	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
National Intersectoral Workshop on Food Safety	WHO EURO	3-4 December 2013	Tirana, Albania
Public-private dialog on improving food safety and quality standards	FAO/EBRD	23 January 2014	Tbilisi, Georgia
Training workshop on food safety hazards, prerequisite programs (GMP and GHP) and food safety systems based on hazard analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)	FAO REU	19-21 February 2014	Dushanbe, Tajikistan
National meeting on antimicrobial resistance from a food safety perspective to close, present and discuss results from an AGISAR (WHO Advisory Group on Integrated Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance) project in Kosovo	WHO EURO	25 March 2014	Pristina, Kosovo
Food safety mission with special emphasis on antimicrobial resistance	WHO EURO	26-27 March 2014	Tirana, Albania
Study visit of experts from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to food processing enterprises in Turkey	FAO REU and MoFAL of Turkey	28 April – 02 May 2014	Ankara, Turkey
National Intersectoral Workshop on Food Safety	WHO EURO	14-15 May 2014	Belgrade, Serbia
Food safety mission	WHO EURO	29-30 May 2014	Ankara, Turkey
Regional FAO/WHO workshop on <i>Enhancing Risk Communication Capacity in Food Safety</i>	FAO/WHO	03-06 June 2014	Budapest, Hungary
Food safety mission	WHO EURO	03-06 June 2014	Tashkent, Uzbekistan
AGISAR/GFN training on surveillance and prevention of Salmonella and Campylobacter including related antimicrobial resistance	WHO	07-11 July 2014	Tirana, Albania
Food safety mission supporting the development of a national food safety strategy	WHO EURO	21-25 July 2014	Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Food safety mission	WHO EURO	12-14 August 2014	Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
Assessment of antimicrobial resistance from a food safety perspective	WHO EURO	08-11 September	Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Regional Workshop for Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus “WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures”	WTO/IPPC/OIE/Codex (with contributions from FAO)	08-11 September 2014	Vienna, Austria

**TABLE 2: PROJECTS/DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES**

Summary of activities	Organizers	Countries	Status
FAO/WHO continued their food safety capacity building activities in the region, in food safety capacity development – strengthening food safety systems in line with international and EU standards and requirements by addressing the following areas: adequacy of food law and harmonized food standards, surveillance of foodborne disease, monitoring of microbiological and chemical contamination in the food chain, implementation of GMP, GHP and HACCP in the food production chain, antibiotic resistance in a food safety perspective, alert and response to food safety emergencies	FAO/WHO	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Georgia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Ongoing
WHO and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Directorate General for Development Cooperation continued their implementation of a project strengthening the food safety infrastructure in Albania. The project began in April 2009 and was completed during May 2013. The overall aim of the project was to support the development of the Albanian food safety system in line with EU standards, specifically by the establishment of suitable food laboratory structures in order to safeguard public health and support the trade of Albanian food products.	WHO	Albania	Completed, 31 May 2013
FAO supported implementation of bivalve mollusc safety management programme. The training included implementation of sanitary surveys, biotoxin monitoring, Laboratory accreditation	FAO	Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, Turkey	Completed, December 2013
Strengthening food safety system in Moldova (TCP/MOL/3402)	FAO	Moldova	July 2014-December 2015
Development of open air food retail markets in Armenia	FAO	Armenia	Completed, March 2014
Strengthening of Food Safety Agency to meet the international market requirements for fish and fishery products	FAO	Georgia	May 2013-April 2015
Capacity development in food safety risk management of food processing enterprises and national authorities	FAO	Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Tajikistan	October 2013-February 2015
Capacity Development of Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock on Food Safety Risk Analysis Framework (TCP Facility Project)	FAO	Turkey	September – November 2014

Summary of activities	Organizers	Countries	Status
Improving capacities to eliminate and prevent recurrence of obsolete pesticides as a model for tackling unused hazardous chemicals in the former Soviet Union	FAO/EC	Regional: Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Georgia, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz republic, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Regional Europe Russian Federation, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan	January 2012 – December 2015
More attention to rye (GCP/RER/048/EST)	FAO	Estonia	September – December 2014
Improving Food Safety through Capacity Building and Assessment of the Legal and Market framework on Geographical Indications (GIs) in the Dairy Sector	FAO/EBRD	Georgia	In preparation
Sustainable Geographical Indications in Europe and Central Asia Region	FAO	Regional	In preparation
Strengthening food safety governance and capacity to contribute technically to Codex work in Eastern Europe and Central Asia countries	FAO	Regional	In preparation

### Challenges identified in the capacity building work

7. Most member countries in the CCEURO region are in the process of modernizing their national food safety systems applying the risk-analysis framework and the “whole-food-chain” approach and implementing Codex standards and guidelines. The capacity building activities and FAO/WHO publications is supporting these processes.
8. National food safety systems rarely embrace the integrated food chain approach from farm to fork. This requires improved coordination and linkages of food safety and quality issues up and downstream across both health and agriculture (including fisheries) sectors, as well as enhancing partnerships between government and private sector.
9. The risk analysis framework is being adopted by many countries with transition economies as an approach for a food safety institutional reform.
10. Most countries with transition economies are in the need for further capacity building and training, including in regard to the specific aspects of food safety risk analysis - risk assessment, risk management, risk communication.
11. Most countries with transition economies are in need for further strengthening of the surveillance systems for foodborne disease and strengthening of the monitoring systems for microbiological and chemical contamination in the food chain.
12. There is a need for countries to also address food safety aspects in their strategies and action plans related to antimicrobial resistance.
13. There is a need for strengthening food safety reference laboratories of countries with transition countries and train laboratory staff on relevant methods. The number of internationally accredited, laboratories in transition economies in the region are limited, that impede the acceptance of data by regional and international risk assessment bodies and trading partners.
14. There is a need for countries to establish mechanisms to ensure coordination, collaboration and information-sharing among the various sectors and authorities involved in food safety to ensure cost-efficient prevention and control of foodborne diseases.
15. Codex work still needs to receive better recognition by high level decision makers in many countries and hence resource allocation is often insufficient. Likewise food safety is often allocated limited funding and as a result actions are often focused on short term issues, rather than being of a strategic nature addressing both health and trade adequately.
16. Given that many countries have now graduated from the Codex Trust Fund, some graduate countries' ability to participate physically in Codex committees and contribute technically is constrained by lack of funds.

17. An evidence based policy development is constrained by lack of data on food consumption and exposure assessment, foodborne disease prevalence, chemical contamination of food, etc.
18. Small and medium size food enterprises (SMEs) struggle to meet international food safety requirements and certified HACCP systems are generally confined to a few larger processors operating in export-oriented markets.
19. Food safety information, training and education for producers and consumers, including better use of food labeling as a source of information for consumers is in high demand. Dedicated food handler training and consumer education materials are required.
20. Ways the food and agriculture sector and national food control systems can contribute to preventing and reducing non-communicable diseases need to be better addressed.
21. In many countries there is a need for better integration of food safety aspects into outbreak, emergency and response operations and strengthened inter-sectoral information-sharing and collaboration during food safety emergencies.
22. Active participation in INFOSAN and other international networks is challenged by limited human resource capacity, limited awareness and data provision by transition economies.

#### **Identifying Priorities and Capacity Building Needs**

23. Key capacity building issues for government food safety systems include continued support for the further development of risk-based national food safety systems that are harmonized with Codex texts, raising recognition of Codex among high level decision makers, improving coordination and information-sharing among the various sectors involved in food safety, improving capacities on risk analysis, strengthening evidence based policy development including the surveillance of foodborne disease and contamination in the food chain, and considering how national food safety systems can contribute towards the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.
24. CCEURO members are invited to consider the above issues and provide feedback on:
  - How to improve ongoing FAO and WHO capacity building activities to strengthen food safety in the region.
  - Ranking the above identified issues in terms of priority needs at national and regional levels which require further support from FAO and WHO.