



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

19th Session

San José, Costa Rica, 10 – 14 November 2014

INFORMATION NOTE ON THE SUCCESSOR INITIATIVE TO THE CODEX TRUST FUND

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

Process to date

1. In July 2013, the Directors-General of FAO and WHO agreed to develop concepts for a successor initiative to the current FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex (Codex Trust Fund), which will come to an end in December 2015. FAO/WHO initiated an “information-gathering” phase to elicit ideas, suggestions, comments and feedback from key stakeholder groups.
2. As a result of discussions and input to date, FAO/WHO are tabling some preliminary ideas on possible focus and function of a successor initiative at the 37th CAC to elicit additional feedback from Codex Members. Further input will come from the final project evaluation and the FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committees meeting in the second half of 2014 and the first half of 2015. Final proposal(s) for the successor initiative will be tabled for discussion and endorsement at the 70th CCEXEC and 38th CAC in June/July 2015.

Outcomes of the “information-gathering” phase to date

3. In discussions with different stakeholders to date, a number of “common threads” in the thinking on the successor initiative can be highlighted.
 - The successor initiative needs to be positioned to respond to rapid changes in the world, in technology, the way countries interact and the evolving needs of countries in the period 2016-2027.
 - The focus of the successor initiative should be on moving from supporting quantity of participation in Codex to supporting effective participation by addressing the major barriers to full and effective participation in Codex. This will likely entail shifting from “one size fits all” to tailored approaches, taking account of each beneficiary sub-region/country’s profile and needs.
 - The successor initiative should continue to give strong emphasis to strengthening countries’ ability to effectively participate in Codex through raising political awareness and support, strengthening national structures, among others.
 - Capacity-building activities supported under a successor initiative should support a continuous pathway for improved participation in Codex and should complement and create synergies with related FAO/WHO Codex capacity-building activities, as well as the work of other actors. At the same time a successor initiative needs to remain distinctive in regard to other capacity building activities.
 - Good governance and accountability on the part of beneficiaries should be important elements of a successor initiative.
 - The successor initiative will need to show concrete and measurable results and emphasize outcomes rather than outputs.

First ideas for possible focus areas of a successor initiative

4. Some first preliminary ideas for possible pillars of a successor initiative, as depicted below, are meant to stimulate further discussions and may well change as new inputs become available, including the results of the final project evaluation which will be available in the first trimester of 2015.

5. A first pillar of the successor initiative might follow an approach tailored to individual beneficiary countries so that a best mix of support is offered to meet countries' specific needs. Support could be provided as a pluri-annual package, rather than being subjected to year-by-year request and approval, provided that beneficiaries meet a set of conditions. A set number of "packages of support" that would be aimed at addressing typical needs profiles at country level might be developed. Beneficiary countries would then select from amongst the support packages offered to choose the one targeting their specific needs.

6. A second pillar of the successor initiative might be built around providing capacity development support to groups of countries in a region or sub-region, in such a manner as to address their common needs, and to complement what FAO/WHO and other actors provide and/or will provide from 2016 onwards in the Codex capacity development domain.

7. The successor initiative may include a pillar that continues to address the need to enhance the scientific/technical input to Codex. How this should be approached will depend on the results of the final project evaluation, and noting that the Trust Fund has so far only one example of this kind of activity, with a second currently under discussion.

8. How all three pillars integrate and complement each other needs to be determined as we move forward.

9. During the Side Event held during the 36th CAC on the 17 July 2014, there was general support for the three pillar approach and participants welcomed the concept of multi-year packages tailored to the specific needs of countries and regions. Beneficiary countries noted the progress achieved through the current Codex Trust Fund, and identified needs for further support through a successor initiative which included: strengthening Codex capacity and systems at country level (skills and sustainable structures); raising awareness around the importance of Codex, including among policy/decision-makers; strengthening capacities for data generation and evidence as a basis for Codex standards; more and better use of on-line learning opportunities to build capacity for effective participation in Codex; greater regional focus to enhance Codex skills through the use of regional networks; partnerships between less experienced and more experienced countries in a region; alignment of regional workshops to address issues in Codex of priority interest for the region.

10. Participants further highlighted that support in the successor initiative should be based on a clear knowledge of country needs and expectations and that transparent, well-defined criteria would be needed for the package approach to be effective. Pluri-annual packages have the additional advantage of facilitating planning at the country level, including ensuring that countries provide for the appropriation of funds at national level to finance Codex activities and participation in Codex meetings. Emphasis was given to the need for accountability by countries to demonstrate results and impact from use of the successor initiative. In this regard, guidance on milestones and indicators, such as the functionality of national Codex programmes, would be useful for countries to track their own progress, and to measure the impact of support from the successor initiative.

11. In order to concretise the design of the successor initiative, FAO/WHO will reflect on the following operational questions as well as other questions as they arise:

- How to establish criteria for beneficiary country eligibility.
- Whether and how to categorise beneficiary countries, and whether to apply preferential treatment to certain groups (e.g. Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States).
- Whether to include a "graduation" scheme and/or incentive schemes.
- How to build tailor-made packages linking with country needs and impact pathways.
- Whether to apply transition measures between the current Codex Trust Fund and the successor initiative.