CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION **E**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Health Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

Agenda Item 4   **CX/EXEC 18/75/3**
                                                                            April 2018

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

75th Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 26 – 29 June 2018

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014–2019: IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat in collaboration with FAO and WHO)

1. BACKGROUND

1.   CAC36 (2013) adopted the Strategic Plan of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for 2014–19 (the Strategic Plan)[1]. The Executive Committee has the responsibility to annually monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

2.   This report has been prepared for the fourth calendar year of implementation (2017) based on the following sources of information:

- existing data from monitoring tools (e.g. reports, working documents, commenting and registration systems);
- replies submitted by Codex Subsidiary Bodies to a standardised questionnaire[2];
- information provided from FAO and WHO.

3.   None or little information was collected for nine indicators that were identified as unmeasurable/unclear in previous reports to CCEXEC (under activities 2.1.2, 2.3.1, 2.3.4, 3.1.1, and 3.2.1).

4.   The Codex Secretariat encouraged members to insert their national information on the online platform embedded in the Codex Alimentarius website. However, only 22 percent of members completed their national profiles (as of March 2018). This information is insufficient to monitor certain activities such as the establishment and participation of members in networks (2.3.4), the use of partnership initiatives (3.1.2) or the identification and prioritization of Codex Committees/Task Forces by developing countries (3.2.2).

5.   Following a request by CAC39 to regularly review Codex work management practices as part of the monitoring of the Strategic Plan, the second Secretariat-led review was implemented between September 2017 and February 2018 and focused on the cooperation between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other international standard-setting organizations (activity 1.3.2). Relevant findings and recommendations from this review are contained in CX/EXEC 18/75/6.

6.   Details of the implementation status of the Strategic Plan for the calendar year 2017 are presented in Appendix I.

2. SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2014–19

Goal 1: Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues

7.   CAC40 (2017) adopted 14 new standards and related texts (the standards) as well as 28 changes[3] to existing standards (11 more than in 2016).

8.   Some Committees continue using their own scheme to discuss emerging issues in addition to the *Criteria for Establishment of Work Priorities* in the Procedural Manual. Following, the recommendation of CCEXEC74, FAO and WHO in cooperation with the Codex Secretariat will continue surveying critical and emerging issues in food safety and quality among all Codex members and discuss results in the frame of future RCC meetings.

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[1] www.codexalimentarius.org/procedures-strategies/strategic-planning/en/
[2] Replies were received in 2016 from all Codex Subsidiary Bodies, except for CCAFRICA, CCNASWP, CCLAC, CCNEA, CCEURO
[3] The word "changes" refers to both revisions and amendments made to Codex existing standards and related texts.

Goal 2: Ensure the application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards

9.   FAO continued its commitment to protect funding for scientific advice through ring-fencing allocated budgets for staff and activities. In addition, the FAO Council (December 2017) approved the establishment of a Blind Trust Fund and the allocation of certain unspent FAO funds to this Blind Trust Fund with agreement of the resource partners concerned. In the case of WHO, resource allocation to scientific advice on food safety remained inadequate.

10.   In order to increase the scientific input from developing countries, FAO/WHO have provided support through several activities including training and projects aimed at enhancing laboratory capacity and data surveillance and reporting. Currently no adequate indicator exists to measure the scientific data input from developing countries, but both quantity and quality of data provided by developing countries remained insufficient throughout 2017.

Goal 3: Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex Members

11.   Support from the new Codex Trust Fund (CTF) began in 2017 to four countries (Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, and Senegal) to assist them in strengthening their national Codex structures with the aim of building strong, solid and sustainable national capacity to engage in Codex. The total contribution to CTF2 increased by around USD 200 000 to a total of USD one million from eight donor countries.

12.   With the exception of CAC sessions, the share of delegations from developing countries at physical Codex Committee meetings decreased by two percent compared to the previous year.

13.   The use of partnership initiatives has become common practice in Codex standard development and more and more developing country members have taken on co-hosting or co-chairing roles over the past four years. In particular, the percentage of co-chaired Electronic Working Groups (EWGs) continued to increase over time and the highest percentage thus far was reached in 2017 (75%). While there is no yearly trend as regards subsidiary body sessions or their Physical Working Groups (PWGs), co-hosting is a frequent practice for physical meetings too.

14.   The number of side events held at the margins of CAC and subsidiary body sessions continued to increase in 2017 (33 events at 11 meetings). The events held often served as forums to conduct educational or technical capacity building activities and covered a range of topics such as CTF2, alcoholic beverages, and very low levels of chemicals in food.

Goal 4: Implement effective and efficient work management systems and practices

15.   Following the 2016 "*Regular Review of Codex work management: Electronic Working Groups*",[4] the Codex Secretariat in consultation with Codex Host Country Secretariats has developed a EWG reporting template, which will be rolled out in 2018. Furthermore, seven workshops on Codex web tools were organized for 2018 (Kenya, Senegal, Paraguay, India, Vanuatu, Kazakhstan and Iran) as part of which Codex Contact Points (CCPs) will be trained in the use and monitoring of the EWG online forum.

16.   The technological changes introduced in 2014 with the aim of increasing the efficiency and transparency in Codex work (Online Registration System/ORS; improved Codex website; online forum for EWGs) were continued to be promoted and used throughout 2017. At the end of the year, a new Codex Alimentarius website with a clean and clear user experience and a range of new features went online. In addition, the Online Commenting System (OCS), which was launched in July 2016, was rolled out throughout 2017 and 55 members (29%) as well 28 observers (12%) provided their comments on Codex draft texts via the OCS.

17.   The Secretariat continued activities to harmonise approaches and increase capacity of Committee chairs when facilitating consensus, most notably through the organization of a two day workshop for Committee chairs and the development of a Chair's Handbook, which seeks to promote good practices and consistent approaches for dealing with similar situations and issues across different committees

18.   The Secretariat continued working on improving the timeliness of the distribution of working documents by establishing clearer timelines for submission in consultation with lead of drafting groups or EWGs together with host secretariats. While the timeliness of distribution of working documents slightly improved compared to the previous year (5% more documents on time than in 2016), this parameter should not be considered in isolation as late distribution does not necessarily imply that work could not progress in committees.

3. CONCLUSIONS

19.   The implementation of the Strategic Plan was progressing well in 2017. The performance related to the objective outcomes remained the same as in previous year with some exceptions as follows.

20.   The status improved for:

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[4] CX/EXEC 17/73/3

- Activities related to communication tools (i.e. 4.1.8): The Codex Secretariat noted a positive uptake of the ICT systems introduced under the current Strategic Plan (ORS, OCS, EWG forum and the new Codex Website) to facilitate the communication among stakeholders;
- Co-hosting of EWGs (3.1.2), side events (3.2.3) and PWGs held in conjunction with plenary sessions (4.1.5);
- Timely distribution of working documents.

21.   The status of participation from developing countries activities (2.3.3) slightly deteriorated compared to the previous year.

22.   With regards to the submission of scientific data from developing countries (activity 2.3.1) a more adequate progress indicator will have to be developed under the new Strategic Plan so information about the capacity of developing countries to participate in scientific advice programs can be provided. Also the extent to which developing country members show sustainable institutional arrangements (activity 3.1.1) can currently not be measured. The member platform[5] embedded in the Codex website on which the Secretariat has started collecting information on national institutional arrangements has been populated with information by only 22 percent of Codex members.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

23.   It is recommended that the Executive Committee:

(1) Consider whether activities are evolving in the right direction and, where activities are not implemented satisfactorily, suggest measures to improve the outcome;

(2) Take note of the continuing difficulties concerning the monitoring of activities that include unclear or unmeasurable indicators and carefully consider the measurability of indicators when developing the Strategic Plan 2020–25;

(3) Request the Codex Secretariat, in collaboration with FAO and WHO, to present at CCEXEC77 a status report of the 2018 implementation of the Strategic Plan.

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[5] http://www.codexalimentarius.org/members-observers/members/en

Appendix I

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: ESTABLISH INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS THAT ADDRESS CURRENT AND EMERGING FOOD ISSUES

Objective 1.1: **Establish new and review existing Codex standards, based on priorities of the CAC.**

The objective has been met as CAC40 adopted 14 new standards and 28 changes to existing standards. New standards were adopted in the area of spices (3); contaminants in food (2); pesticide residues (1), fats and oils (1); food import and expert inspection and certification (1); milk and milk products (1). Several new regional standards were also adopted (2 for Asia, 1 for Africa, 1 for Latin America and the Caribbean, 1 for the Near East).

Committees continue to follow the *Criteria for Establishment of Work Priorities* outlined in the Procedural Manual. In addition, a few Committees continue to use supplementary criteria to help prioritise their work. Persistent and emerging food safety and quality issues were identified for all six Codex regions and discussed in the respective regional committee sessions in 2016 (CCNASWP, CCASIA, CCEURO, CCLAC) and in 2017 (CCAFRICA, CCNE). This practice will continue to be followed in the next round of RCCs.

Activity 1.1.1

All subsidiary bodies continue to follow the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities in the Procedural Manual (PM).

The Committees CCCF, CCFH, CCPR, CCRVDF and CCFICS continue to use additional criteria to prioritize their work. No Committee expressed any imminent plans for review or revision of the current criteria. However, CCLF44 agreed to consider a prioritisation process, which could include criteria and will discuss this further at its next session.

Considering that all new proposals were assessed using the criteria in the PM, the number of standards developed and changes made based on priority setting criteria equals the total number of new standards and changes to existing standards adopted at Step 8 or Step 5/8 at the CAC40, which is 42.

Figure 1: New standards and changes to existing standards adopted in 2017 shown by committee
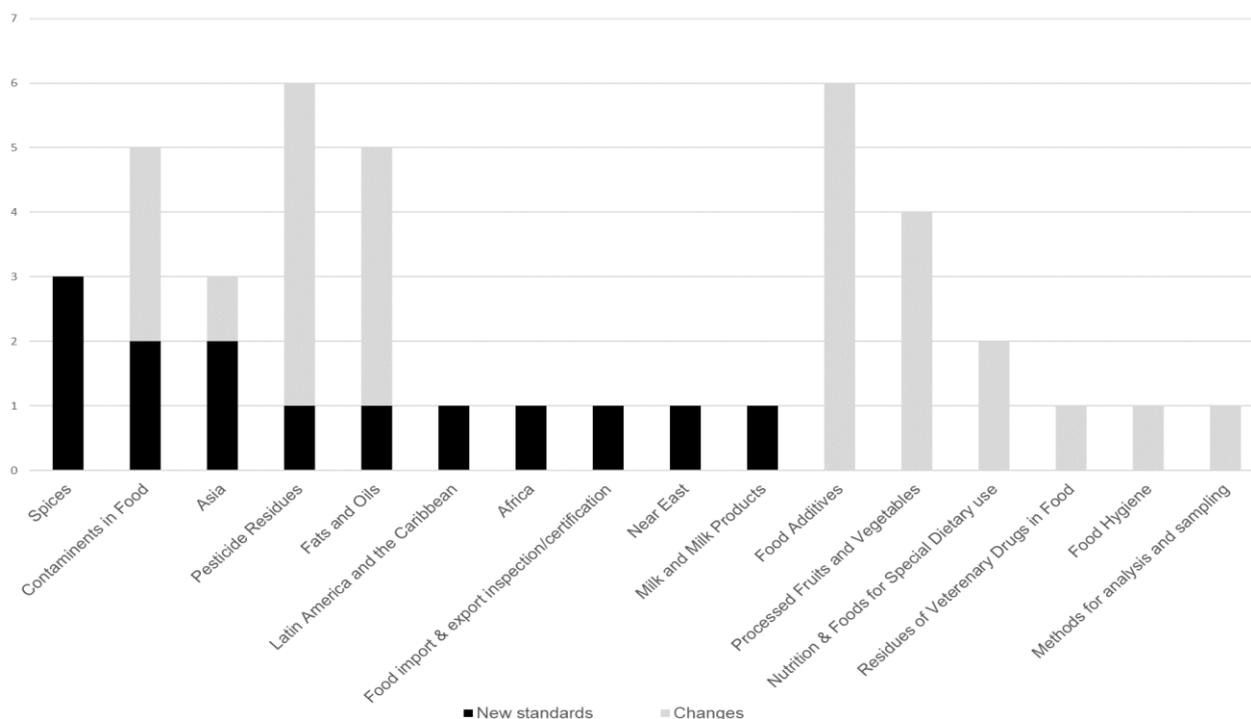
Objective 1.2: Proactively identify emerging issues [6] and Member needs and, where appropriate, develop relevant food standards.

As reported in previous years, subsidiary bodies do not use a common systematic approach to identify emerging issues. Some Committees such as CCFH, CCFL and CCFICS use their own scheme to discuss emerging issues that are relevant to their respective Terms of Reference. Members, other relevant Committees and the parent organisations flag and report emerging issues during or prior to Committee sessions to ensure that newly developed or revised standards meet user needs.

For all six RCCs, the item "*Food safety and quality situation in the countries of the region*" had been included in the agendas in order to identify and prioritize the needs in the regions, especially with regards to persistent and emerging food safety and quality issues. Following, the recommendation of CCEXEC74, FAO and WHO in cooperation with the Codex Secretariat will continue surveying critical and emerging issues in food safety and quality among all Codex members and discuss results in the frame of future RCC meetings.

Activity 1.2.1 and 1.2.2

CCEXEC74 agreed to continue surveying critical and emerging issues in food safety and quality among all Codex members and discuss results in the frame of RCCs. CCEXEC72 also encouraged all members to actively participate in any future rounds of surveys conducted in this regard.

Objective 1.3: Strengthen coordination and cooperation with other international standards-setting organizations seeking to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize opportunities

The Codex sister organisations OIE and IPPC attend sessions of the CAC and some subsidiary bodies on a regular basis. Information on recent activities from OIE is a standing item in several relevant Committees (i.e. CCFH and CCFICS). Codex has continued to liaise with the IPPC Secretariat on the implementation of the Online Comment System (OCS), an online tool providing a standardized platform for contact points to submit comments on draft standards, thus enhancing the transparency and inclusiveness of the respective standard setting processes. This tool has already been noted as a best practice by the SPS Committee and might also fit the needs of other organizations. In 2017, both Codex and IPPC have expanded the use of the system to documents other than standards. OIE and IPPC also took part in the CAC40 side event "*International Organizations and Codex: partnerships for sustainable development*" where they highlighted areas of mutual interest and existing and potential cooperation.

Other standard-setting organizations participated in the relevant Committees and provided information in standard development processes. A thorough review of collaboration with other standard-setting organizations can be found in CX/EXEC 18/75/6.

Activity 1.3.1

The cooperation between Codex Committees and the OIE is described in more detail in documents: CX/FICS 17/23/3 Add.1 ,CX/FH 17/49/4 , CX/AMR 17/5/4-Add. 1. In May 2017, the Codex Secretary attended the OIE General Assembly.

Activity 1.3.2

The Codex Secretariat implemented a review of cooperation with other international standard-setting organizations between October 2017 and February 2018. The full report can be found in CX/EXEC 18/75/6.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: ENSURE THE APPLICATION OF RISK ANALYSIS PRINCIPLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CODEX STANDARDS

Objective 2.1: Ensure consistent use of risk analysis principles and scientific advice.

As mentioned in previous reports, CCCF, CCFA, CCFH, CCPR and CCRVDF regularly requested and used the scientific advice of the joint FAO/WHO expert bodies. These committees follow the Working Principles for Risk Analysis in the PM, which guide them to ensure that all the relevant factors in exploring risk management options are considered. Other Committees, such as CCNFSDU, CCFFP, CCFO and CCNASWP have sought scientific advice from FAO/WHO as needed. CCNFSDU requested for the first time advice from the FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Nutrition (JEMNU) at its 39th session.

In addition to FAO/WHO expert body advice, members typically seek and engage national scientific and technical expertise from within their government and from those outside the government prior to developing and advancing a country's position.

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[6] Emerging food safety and nutrition issues are interpreted to include scientific and technological innovations and emerging hazards, related to ongoing investigations or extra-ordinary events (e.g., natural disasters, external threats).

Risk management recommendations are communicated through the publication of standards or related texts. In addition, news articles on the Codex website and Tweets highlighted specific risk assessment issues related to the adopted texts.

Activity 2.1.3

The Committees below continued to follow specific criteria in addition to the Working Principles for Risk Analysis:

- CCCF - Specific criteria for setting MLs for contaminants in the GSCTFF
- CCPR - Risk Analysis Principles applied by the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues
- CCRVDF - Risk Analysis Principles applied by the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods

Activity 2.1.4

In 2017, the Commission adopted 14 new standards and 28 changes to existing standards. Information on the adopted texts was published on the Codex Website as well as the FAO and WHO website news sections. In addition, news articles on the Codex website regularly highlight the content of specific standards and risk management information. Codex also used Twitter to link latest news on food trade and food safety with Codex standards. Around 5 500 tweets were published in 2017 and the number of followers increased by 2 900 (from 3 200 to 6 100), which constitutes an increase of 900 followers more than in 2016.

Objective 2.2: Achieve sustainable access to scientific advice.

FAO continued its commitment to protect funding for scientific advice through ring-fencing allocated budgets for staff and activities. In addition, the FAO Council (December 2017) approved the establishment of a Blind Trust Fund and the allocation of certain unspent FAO funds to this Blind Trust Fund with agreement of the resource partners concerned. In the case of WHO, resource allocation to scientific advice on food safety remained inadequate.

Activity 2.2.1

FAO members supported the establishment of a Blind Trust Fund at the Joint Meeting of the FAO Programme and Finance Committee (122nd session in November 2017). This fund is designed to enhance contributions from state and non-state actors, as proposed by the Informal Open Ended Working Group, as an innovative way to attract funding for FAO's work and activities related to scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius. The FAO Council (158th session in December 2017) endorsed the Report of the Joint Meeting, and approved relevant recommendations, that, with agreement from resource partners, a proportion of certain unspent FAO funds be allocated to the Blind Trust Fund.

In the case of WHO, resource allocation to scientific advice on food safety remained inadequate as it is derived solely from extra-budgetary funding. In addition, food safety has not been on the agenda of WHO governing body meetings for a long time and no Member interventions on the matter have been made.

Activity 2.2.2

Since CAC40, contributions to FAO totalling USD 406,112 have so far been received from one donor (Canada). These are to be used for selected work of JECFA, JEMRA, JEMNU and JMPR, as well as work on antimicrobial resistance in the food chain.

Objective 2.3: Increase scientific input from developing countries.

In 2017, CAC40 and the sessions of 12 subsidiary bodies[7] were held and attended by a total of 742 delegations and 2 279 delegates, including national technical and scientific experts. Out of the 742 delegations 209 were from developing countries[8], which corresponds to 28 percent of the total delegation numbers. Out of the 2 279 delegates 667 were from developing countries, which corresponds to 29 percent of the total delegate numbers. Both percentages constitute am increase of 1 percent (2% excluding CAC) compared to 2016.

Among the 188 Codex members, 80 were developing countries in 2017, which corresponds to 42 percent of the total membership. For sessions held in 2017, on average 26 percent of the delegations that attended were from developing countries.

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[7] The sessions of CCEXEC and RCCs are excluded as they have restricted participation.
[8] Developing Countries: Low-income economies and Lower-middle-income economies under classification provided by World Bank for each fiscal year (http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-and-lending-groups).

In order to increase the scientific input from developing countries, FAO/WHO have provided support through several activities including training and projects aimed at enhancing laboratory capacity and data surveillance and reporting. Currently no adequate indicator exists to measure the scientific data input from developing countries, but both quantity and quality of data provided by developing countries remained insufficient throughout 2017.

Activity 2.3.1

Publicly available data remain insufficient to complete a safety assessment or recommend MRLs. CCRVDF24 will discuss this matter among others.

In order to address the issue regarding a paucity of data for the evaluation of residues of veterinary drugs that are critical to some areas, yet lack the support of a sponsoring manufacturer, JECFA has piloted a novel process for the evaluation of certain veterinary drugs answering to the request of multiple Codex members. Through comprehensive and critical literature searches, JECFA attempted with this process to complement data submissions and gather enough data for recommending MRLs in food, The pilot phase involved three compounds and while it was successful with two, albeit closely related, substances (ampicillin, amoxicillin), this process proved to be insufficient to gather enough data for a third compound (ethion). Hence, while in specific cases, this may be a useful approach, it is likely that it will not provide the desired solution in all cases. It is worth noting, that this approach causes considerable additional workload for the experts and the secretariat.

Activity 2.3.2

Support was provided through a range of capacity development modalities:

- An STDF funded project co-managed by FAO/WHO is implementing a regional Total Diet Study (TDS) in Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon and Benin.
- Funding by the Fleming Fund of the United Kingdom Department of Health is supporting a joint FAO/OIE/WHO project to engage the food and agriculture sectors in sub-Saharan Africa and South and South-east Asia to combat antimicrobial resistance using a One Health approach, including integrated surveillance and reporting of data on antimicrobial resistance.
- FAO has implemented sub-regional or national training workshops on laboratory development (including infrastructure): a total of 47 laboratory development trainings activities in 44 countries (of with 12 are Least Developed Countries) were implemented.

Overall, there are few additional countries that provide data in response to calls for data, in particular in support of the work at CCCF. Almost all data is collected through the GEMS/Food database which compiled more than 4.5 million analytical results for chemicals in food in 2017. An e-learning tool was developed and posted on our website to facilitate data extraction and data analysis form the GEMS database. Technical support through WHO to ASEAN countries on food consumption data is on-going

Activity 2.3.3

Figure 2: Number of Delegations, 2014–17

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total	872	798	705	742
Developing Countries	277	244	205	209
Percentage	32%	31%	29%	28%
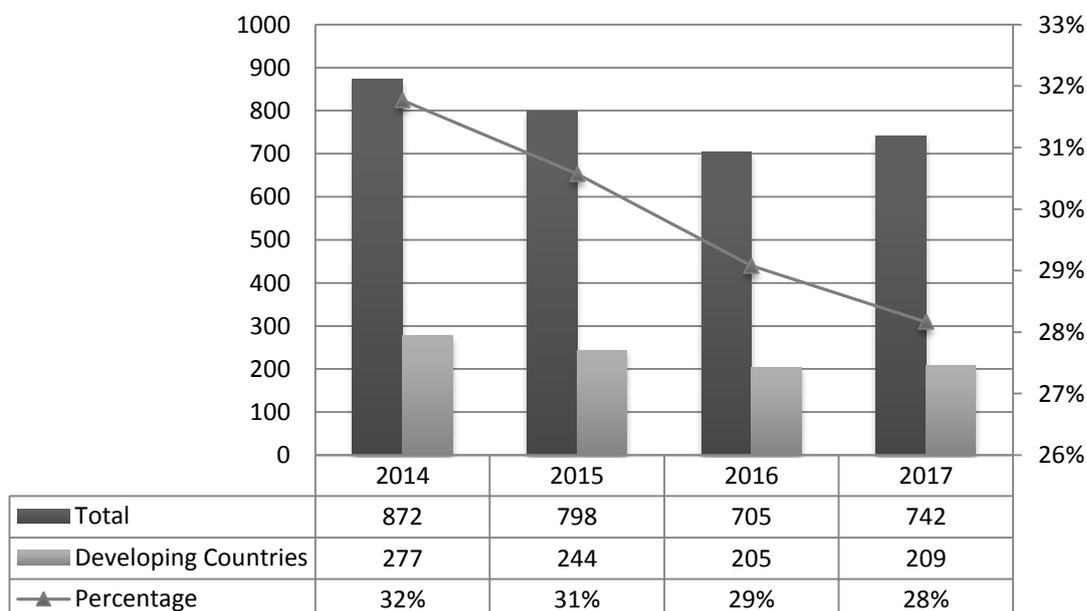
Figure 3: Number of Delegates, 2014–17

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total	2501	2237	2073	2279
Developing Countries	792	679	581	667
Percentage	32%	30%	28%	29%
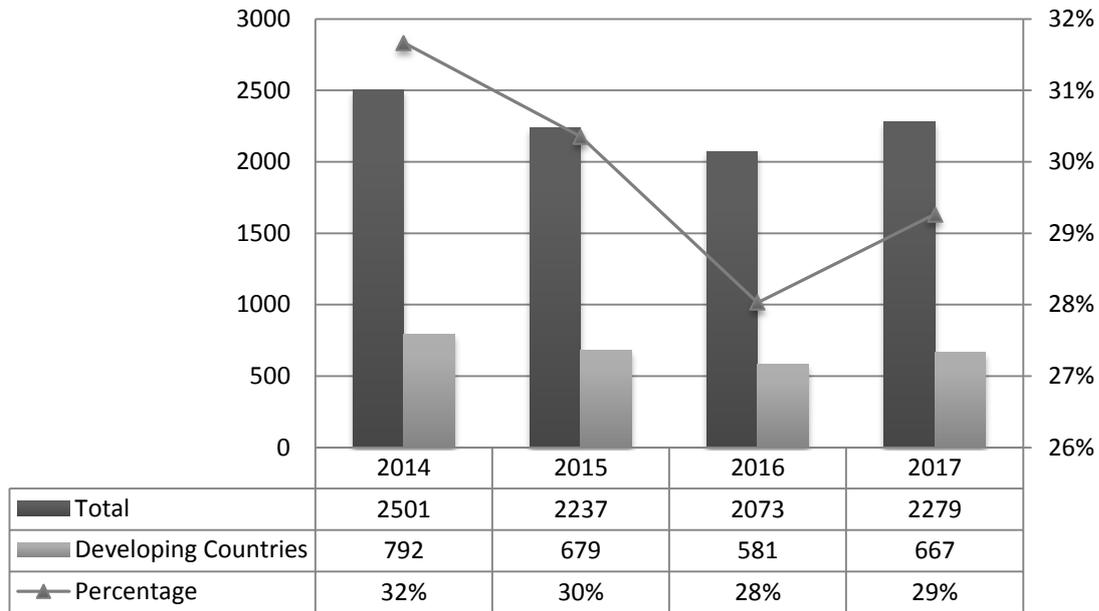
Figure 4: Number of delegations by meeting, 2017

	CAC40	SCH3	FO25	FA49	CF11	PR49	FICS23	MAS38	FFV20	FL44	FH49	AMR5	NFSDU39
Total	153	36	40	51	49	53	46	48	44	46	65	45	66
Developing Countries	60	13	10	9	11	14	8	9	18	9	19	9	20
Percentage	39%	36%	25%	18%	22%	26%	17%	19%	41%	20%	29%	20%	30%
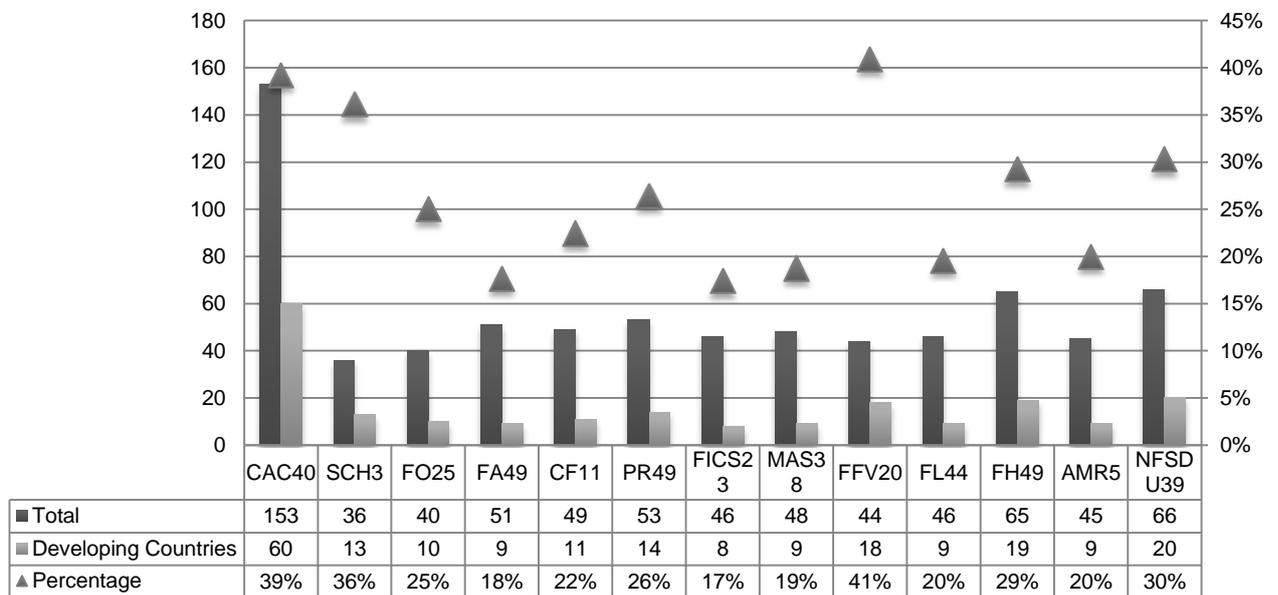
Figure 5: Number of delegates by meeting, 2017

	CAC40	SCH3	FO25	FA49	CF11	PR49	FICS23	MAS38	FFV20	FL44	FH49	AMR5	NFSD U39
■ Total	562	91	110	150	168	168	126	133	123	130	178	128	212
■ Developing Countries	210	52	30	25	38	40	21	29	82	16	48	21	55
▲ Percentage	37%	57%	27%	17%	23%	24%	17%	22%	67%	12%	27%	16%	26%
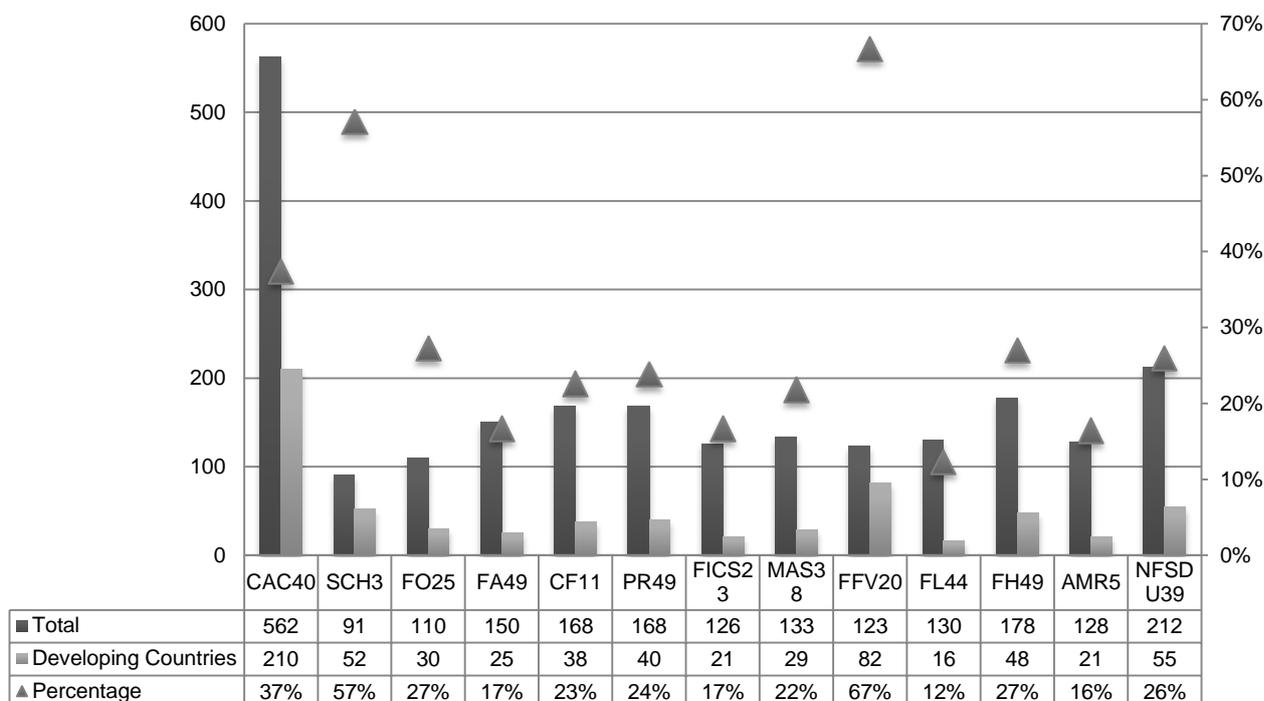
STRATEGIC GOAL 3: FACILITATE THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF ALL CODEX MEMBERS.

Objective 3.1: Increase the effective participation of developing countries in Codex.

Support from the new Codex Trust Fund began in 2017 to four countries (Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Senegal) to assist them in strengthening their national Codex structures with the aim of building strong, solid and sustainable national capacity to engage in Codex. The total contribution to CTF2 increased by around USD 200 000 to a total of USD one million from eight donor countries. Each of the beneficiary countries carried out a diagnosis of their Codex capacity prior to submitting their application using the FAO/WHO tool (Diagnostic Tool for Assessing Status of National Codex Programmes). They will be supported for a three year period after which time the Codex Diagnostic Tool can be re-administered to assess whether national Codex structures have been strengthened. Support to the following additional 10 countries will begin in 2018: Cabo Verde, Burkina Faso, FYR of Macedonia, Guinea, Honduras, Mali, Rwanda. Bhutan, India and Nepal.

In 2017, 14 sessions of subsidiary bodies were held and four of them were co-hosted. As regards EWGs established in 2017, 47 out of a total of 63 EWGs were co-chaired, which corresponds to 75 percent. Concerning Physical Working Groups (PWGs) held in 2017, five out of a total of nine PWGs were co-hosted, which corresponds to 56 percent. The percentages of co-hosted Committee and PWG sessions do not show a clear annual trend. However, in the case of EWGs the percentage has continued to increase.

With regards to both working documents and interpretation, all six official languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian) were used for CAC40; all official languages except Russian and Chinese were used for CCEXEC73 and for CCEXEC74 the languages were English, French, Spanish Arabic and Russian. All General Subject Committees and Commodity Committees used English, French and Spanish as their working languages. For RRCs held in 2017, the following UN official languages were used: CCAFRICA (English, French, Spanish), CCNE (English, French, Arabic). English was used in all EWGs established in 2017 while Spanish was used for 21 percent and French in 9 percent, which constitutes an increase compared to the previous year.

Activity 3.1.2

Figure 6: Co-hosted sessions of subsidiary bodies, 2014-17

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total # of Committee held	17	14	16	14
# of Committee co-hosted	4	2	0	4
Percentage	24%	14%	0%	29%
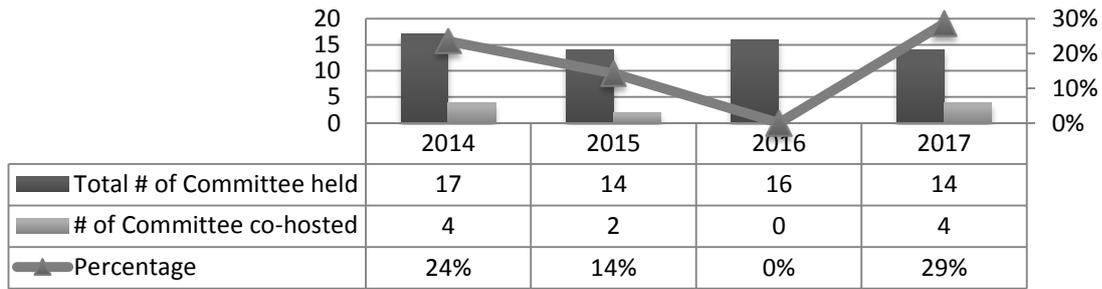
Figure 7: Co-chaired Electronic Working Groups, 2014-17

|	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total # of EWGs established	65	56	37	63
# of EWGs co-hosted	39	37	26	47
Percentage	60%	66%	70%	75%
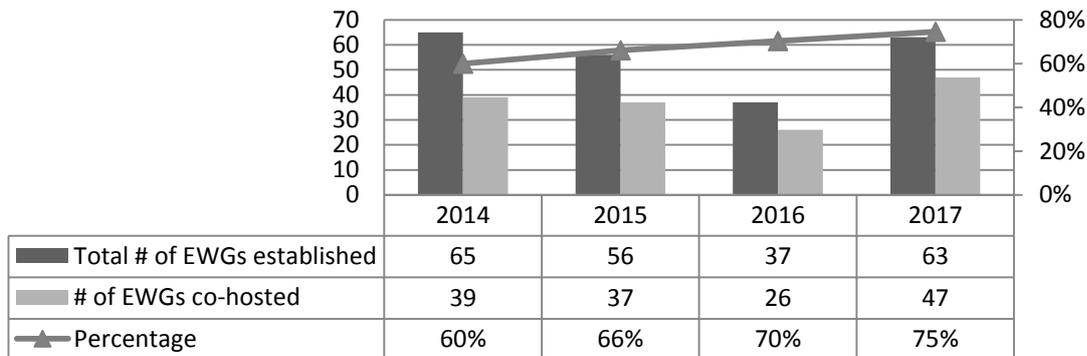
Figure 8: Number of Co-hosted Physical Working Groups, 2014-17

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total # of PWGs established	12	14	8	10
# of PWGs co-hosted	4	6	3	5
Percentage	33%	43%	38%	50%
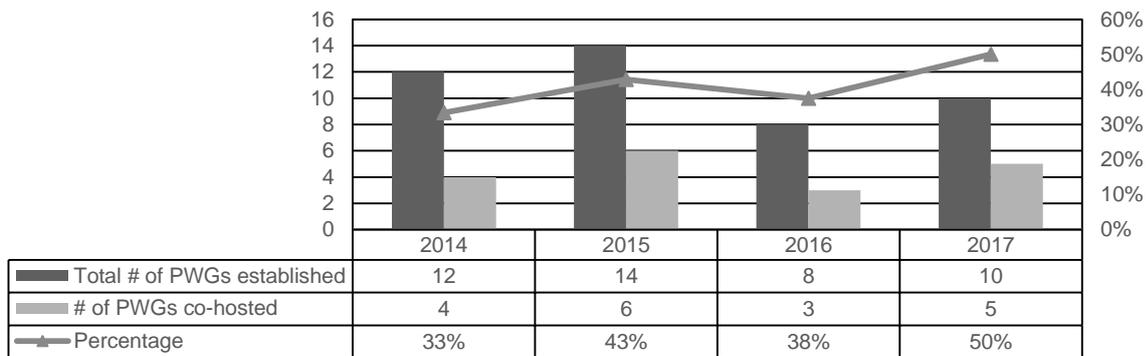
Activity 3.1.3

Figure 9: Financial contributions to CTF and CTF2, 2003–17

Total amount of Income (US$) ▬ Total number of donor countries (incl. EU)
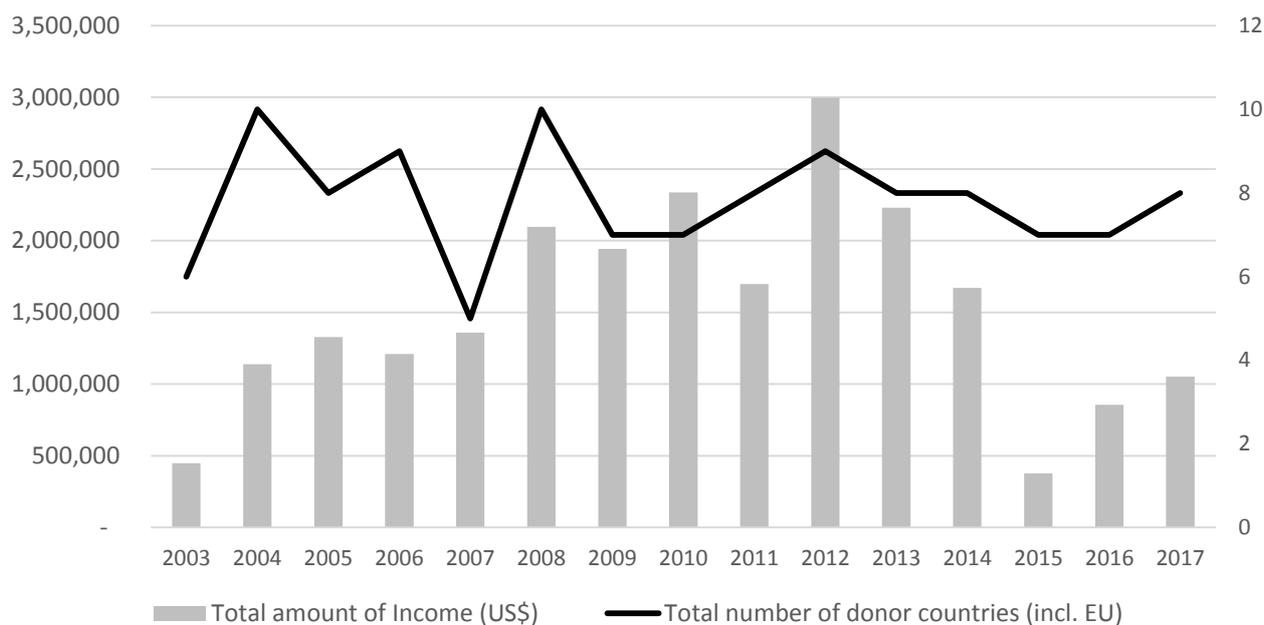
* 2004 – 2015: CTF1; 2016 – 2027: CTF2

Activity 3.1.5

Table 1: Languages used in Electronic Working Groups established 2014–17

	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage	Number	percentage
Total EWGs established	64		56		37		63	
EWGs used English	64	100%	56	100%	37	100%	61	97%
EWGs used French	1	2%	5	9%	2	5%	6	9%
EWGs used Spanish	8	13%	8	14%	6	16%	13	21%
EWGs used Russian	1	2%	/	/	/	/	/	/
EWGs used Arabic	/	/	2	4%	/	/	/	/

Objective 3.2: Promote capacity development programmes that assist countries in creating sustainable national Codex structures.

Two activities regarding CTF2 were implemented in 2017 and four countries were granted support in the first application round of CTF2. FAO furthermore held several capacity building workshops and implemented projects throughout the year 2017.

The number of side events held at the margins of CAC and subsidiary body sessions continued to increase in 2017 (33 events at 11 meetings). The events held often served as forums to conduct educational or capacity building activities.

Activity 3.2.1

The following activities regarding the second Codex Trust Fund (CTF2) were implemented:

- CCAFRICA22 side event - CTF2 information session (19 January 2017)
- CCNE9 informal information session on preparing robust applications for CTF eligible countries in the region.

A range of Codex capacity development activities are being carried out as part of CTF2 support to Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar and Senegal (see CX/CAC 18/41/19 and associated documents for details).

FAO has a large number of food safety capacity development programmes. Below selected projects are highlighted that explicitly focused on strengthening national Codex structures:

- Through funding from Switzerland, FAO is supporting countries of the LAC region in formulating their national food safety policies, developing risk based approaches for their national food safety systems and implementing the Codex Alimentarius standards.
- In Asia, through funding from Japan, FAO is implementing a project to (i) strengthen regional/national capacity for effective contribution to the Codex standard setting processes; (ii) strengthen manpower/institutional capacity for development of national/regional food safety standards; (iii) strength national capacity/structure for implementing international/national standards and (iv) enhance information sharing system for food safety standards.
- In Africa, Regional Codex workshops on EWGs – Harmonization of food safety regulation in Africa were held in Nairobi, Kenya (7-8 February 2017) and Dakar, Senegal 27-28 February 2017.

Activity 3.2.3

Side events on Codex online communication tools were held at the two RCCs which took place in 2017 as well as at CCCF11.

Side events on the new Codex Trust Fund were held at all RCCs (see activity 3.2.2). In addition, a meeting with Codex Trust Fund Donors and a side event entitled "Enhancing Engagement in Codex – Examples from Codex Trust Fund supported countries" was held at CAC40.

The full list of events held at the margins of Codex meetings in 2017 is stated in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Side events to Codex meetings held in 2017

Codex Session	Side event topic
CAC40	- WHO/FAO work on AMR in support of Codex and Member States - FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool - Enhancing Engagement in Codex – Examples from Codex Trust Fund supported countries - FAOLEX: facilitating access to food safety legislation globally - The Scientific basis of Codex – linkage between the FAO/WHO Scientific Advice Programme and the development of Codex Standards - The Global Health Benefit of Using Whole-Genome Sequencing on Foodborne Pathogens - Alcoholic beverages – no ordinary commodities - Country presentations on "Reaping the Benefits of Codex and Food Safety Awareness initiatives"
CCNE9	- Codex Communications: web tools - enhancing participation in Codex - Introduction to TRACES - TRAde Control and Expert System - Antimicrobial resistance and food safety – from global commitment to local actions - Making best use of the FAO/WHO Codex Diagnostic Tool
CCFICS23	Workshop on *Development of CODEX guidance for paperless certification*
CCPR49	- Increasing the capacity of the Joint Meeting of Pesticide Residues (JMPR) - New Pesticide Management Regulation in China - MetaPath, an international database on pesticide metabolism
CCCF11	- Workshop on very low levels of chemicals in food - Radionuclides in food: standards, new national guidance and recent developments - Codex Communications: web tools – enhancing participation in Codex - Ciguatera toxins – work of FAO and WHO to contain contamination
CCAFRICA22	- Codex Web and Communication Tools - The new FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund - WTO/STDF - IUFOST
CCFFV20	Standards setting for fresh fruits and vegetables and use by countries
CCFL44	- front-of-pack labelling - alcoholic beverages - Workshop on food labelling
CCFH49	- Management of (micro)biological foodborne outbreaks/ crises - Allergens
TFAMR5	- Current scientific knowledge on foodborne AMR - Current guidance on integrated surveillance in AMR
CCNFSDU39	Evidence reviews on n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids: background reviews conducted for the work of NUGAG

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WORK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES.

Objective 4.1: **Strive for an effective, efficient, transparent, and consensus based standard setting process.**

24.   Following the 2016 "*Regular Review of Codex work management: Electronic Working Groups*",[9] the Codex Secretariat in consultation with Codex Host Country Secretariats has developed a EWG reporting template, which will be rolled out in 2018. Furthermore, seven workshops on Codex web tools were organized for 2018 (Kenya, Senegal, Paraguay, India, Vanuatu, Kazakhstan and Iran) as part of which Codex Contact Points (CCPs) will be trained in the use and monitoring of the EWG online forum.

In September 2017, an additional session of the Executive Committee (CCEXEC74) was held in follow-up to CAC40 enabling CCEXEC to fully exercise its strategic and advisory role and discuss matters deferred with the ultimate objective of striving to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CAC. A workshop organized by the Codex Secretariat, took place prior to CCEXEC74 and focused on the role of the CCEXEC and strategic planning.

All other subsidiary bodies of the Commission continued to identify and address potential impediments to standard setting work by making best use of Working Groups (i.e. EWG, PWG, in-session WG) and workshops. The Committees also made various effort to reach consensus, e.g. providing information well in advance of meetings, using a mentoring approach, training first time delegates, holding discussion to establish clear direction and support prior to submitting proposals in the step process and scoping work towards areas where consensus exists.

The Secretariat also organized a workshop for chairs on consensus building that was held in May 2017.

The technologies introduced in 2014 (Sharepoint, phpBB discussion forum for EWGs, automated mailing) were continued to be used and improved throughout. Also the new Codex online commenting system (OCS) was rolled out, promoted and improved following its launch at CAC39.

All Codex Committees strive to hold PWGs in conjunction with Committee meetings, unless doing otherwise is justifiable by specific needs. In 2017, all PWGs (10 in total) except one were held in conjunction with the respective Committee sessions.

With regards to the timely distribution of working documents, the overall percentage of documents on time slightly increased. Out of a total of 413 working documents in three languages (E/F/S) issued in 2017, 140 working documents were distributed at least two months prior to their respective Committee session, which corresponds to 33 percent (5 % more than in 2016). However, challenges remain, depending on the complexity of the documents, and in particular where the development of documents relies on analysis of data and thereby data submission by members or in cases, where EWGs try to reach the best possible consensus solutions to help facilitate discussions in a committee. While every effort should be made to improve timely distribution of documents, it must be noted that the lateness of documents does not necessarily imply poor discussion in committees. In addition to criteria for timeliness (i.e. two months prior to a committee), the indicator should consider also the complexity as well as the quality and nature of the document.

As regards the timely elaboration and revision of standards, 84 percent of standards adopted between 2009 and 2017 were developed within a period of 5 years. However, 36 percent of the standards adopted only in 2017 exceed a total development period of 5 years.

Activities 4.1.1

Timely Elaboration and Revision of the Codex Standards

The Secretariat annually monitors the time needed for the elaboration or revision of Codex standards to complement the monitoring of activity 4.1.1. This section presents the analysis of the time between the approval of a standard as new work and its final adoption. Given that Codex started using job numbers from 2004 (CAC27), the analysis is limited to the time between 2004 and 2017. Standards without a job number such as ongoing work[10] and amendments were excluded from the scope of this study. In addition, around 16 items were excluded from this study as it was difficult to calculate the duration, and some items were counted more than once as they split into more than two items during the course of elaboration/revision (see CX/EXEC 16/71/5 for details).

2017

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[9] CX/EXEC 17/73/3
[10] Ongoing work (including those transferred to ongoing work) was excluded from the study regardless of the job number given.

At CAC40, 25 items with a job number were adopted as final texts. 16 were adopted within a period of five years, which corresponds to 64 percent. The following nine documents took more than five years to finalize (i.e. six and 12 years respectively):

6 years:

- Annex on Canned Pineapples (for inclusion in the Standard for Certain Canned Fruits (CODEX STAN 319-2015))

- Annexes for Certain Quick Frozen Vegetables (for inclusion in the Standard for Quick Frozen Vegetables (CODEX STAN 320-2015))

- Regional Standard for Laver Products

- Standard for Fish Oils

- Regional Standard for Doogh

12 years:

- Revision of the Classification of Food and Feed: Vegetable Commodity Groups, Appendix VIII Part A

- Revision of the Classification of Food and Feed: Grasses, Appendix XI Part A

- Table 2 on examples of representative commodities for vegetable commodity groups (for inclusion in the Principles and Guidance on the Selection of Representative Commodities for the Extrapolation of MRLs for Pesticides to Commodity Groups) (CAC/GL 84-2012), Appendix VIII Part B

- Table 3 on examples of representative commodities for grasses (for inclusion in the Principles and Guidance on the Selection of Representative Commodities for the Extrapolation of MRLs for Pesticides to Commodity Groups) (CAC/GL 84-2012) Part B

2004-2017

During 2004 and 2017 a total 178 new work items with job numbers were approved. 150 out of 178 were adopted as final texts by 2017 of which 84 percent were adopted within 5 years.

The figure below shows the number of standards and revisions adopted between 2009 and 2017 (Codex started giving job numbers from 2004; in this regard, those adopted within 2009 were all by definition developed within 5 years).The chart also indicates the number of elaborations and revisions that took more than 5 years for adoption and the number of those completed within 5 years.

Figure 10: Duration of Codex standard elaboration/revision, 2009–17
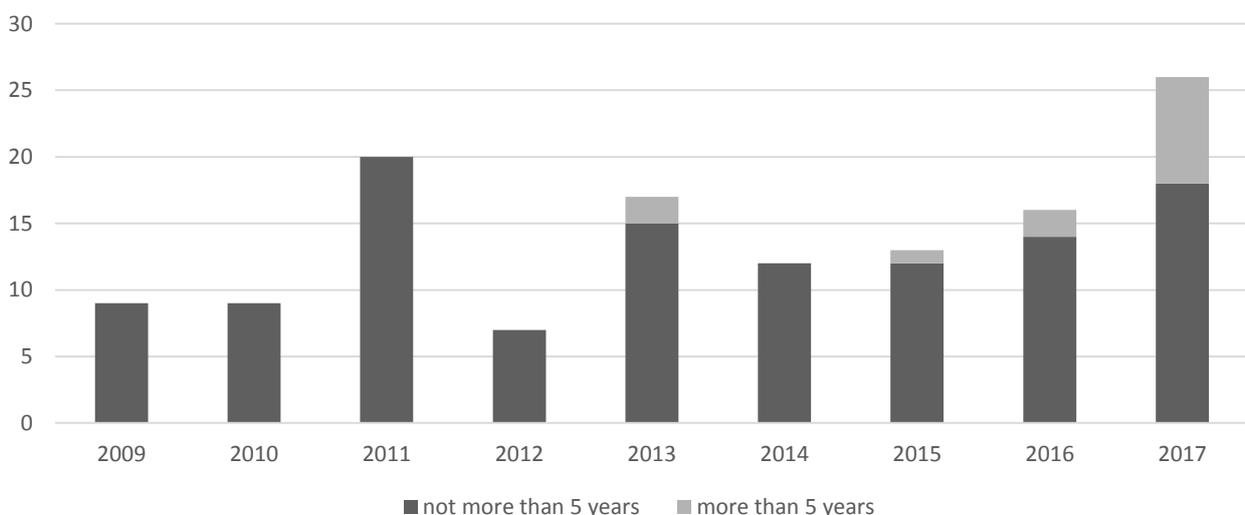
Activities 4.1.3

As of February 2018, the discussion forum for EWGs has about 2 000 registered users (over 1 700 more than in 2015) and is used by 15 Committees and 55 active EWGs (corresponding to 81% of EWGs established in 2017).

The new online commenting system (OCS) was launched at CAC39 (2016). By the end of 2017, the system had 400 registered users, including all Codex Contact Points. 52 Circular Letters run through the system and 55 members (29%), including 18 developing countries, provided comments.

Activities 4.1.4

Timely Distribution of Working Documents

This section presents an analysis of the distribution of working documents (WDs) in English, French and Spanish[11] prepared for the Commission and Committees held in 2014–17. The analysis does not consider invitation letters, provisional agendas, circular letters, addendum papers (mostly comment papers), other comments papers including the replies to circular letters, and information documents[12]. In addition, WDs not issued were excluded from the scope.

The following table shows the number of WDs falling under the scope mentioned above that were circulated at least two months before the respective committee session and those that were not.

Table 3: Timely distribution of Working Documents by language, 2014–17

	2014				2015				2016				2017			
	Total	E	F	S	Total	E	F	S	Total	E	F	S	Total	E	F	S
Total # of WDs considered	**458**	168	140	150	**430**	149	148	133	**429**	160	130	139	**413**	153	141	119
# of timely WDs	**101**	53	22	26	**129**	59	39	31	**119**	63	27	29	**140**	63	39	38
# of late WDs	**367**	115	118	124	**301**	90	109	102	**310**	97	103	339	**339**	90	102	81

Table 4: Percentage of Working Document distributed in time by language, 2014–17

Year	Total	English	French	Spanish
2014	22%	32%	16%	17%
2015	30%	40%	26%	23%
2016	28%	39%	21%	21%
2017	33%	41%	28%	32%

Overall, there was a slight increase in the timeliness of the distribution of WDs from 2016 to 2017.

Objective 4.2: Enhance capacity to arrive at consensus in standards setting process.

The Codex Secretariat organized a workshop for Chairs from 12-14 May 2017. Along with the Chairperson and three Vice Chairs of the Commission, the chairs of 18 Codex Committees participated and exchanged information on best practices and challenges faced in the past.

In addition, the Codex Secretariat started the development of a Chairperson's Handbook. This handbook is intended to serve as a living document and stimulate dialogue among chairpersons, secretariats and others involved in preparing for and conducting Codex sessions. The Handbook may also help promote good practices and consistent approaches for dealing with similar situations and issues when they occur across different committees.

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[11] Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Original Language Only are not considered (WDs prepared only for one language are counted as Original Language Only)
[12] Para. 5, CAC/37 CRD/5