

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 11, 13

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ORIGINAL LANGUAGE ONLY

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Forty-sixth Session

Virtual

27 September - October 1 and 7, 2021

Comments from European Union

Agenda Item 11

Labelling of Prepackaged Foods in Joint Presentation and in Multipack Formats

**Mixed Competence
European Union Vote**

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) would like to thank Colombia for the preparation of the *Discussion paper on the labelling of prepackaged foods in joint presentation and prepackaged multi-packaged foods* (CX/FL 21/46/11) together with the corresponding project document.

The EUMS consider that the *Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985) provides labelling requirements that apply to all prepackaged foods to be offered as such to the consumer or for catering purposes, whether offered in individual packages or in joint presentations or multipack formats.

The EUMS would like to highlight in particular following parts of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (GSLPF) which could be of interest for foods offered in joint presentations or multipack formats:

"2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

[...]

"Container" means any packaging of food for delivery as a single item, whether by completely or partially enclosing the food and includes wrappers. A container may enclose several units or types of packages when such is offered to the consumer.

[...]

"Prepackaged" means packaged or made up in advance in a container, ready for offer to the consumer, or for catering purposes."

"8. PRESENTATION OF MANDATORY INFORMATION

8.1 General

[...]

8.1.2 *Statements required to appear on the label by virtue of this standard or any other Codex standards shall be clear, prominent, indelible and readily legible by the consumer under normal conditions of purchase and use.*

8.1.3 *Where the container is covered by a wrapper, the wrapper shall carry the necessary information or the label on the container shall be readily legible through the outer wrapper or not obscured by it.”*

The EUMS therefore do not consider appropriate to create a specific Codex text (standard or guideline) for foods offered in joint presentations and multipack formats. They would nevertheless not be opposed to verify whether the GSLPF needs to be further specified or complemented in order to clarify the requirements for prepackaged foods offered in joint presentations or multipack formats.

The EUMS are however of the opinion that this work does not constitute a priority considering the other topics under discussion in the Committee.

Agenda Item 13

Approach and criteria for evaluation and prioritization of the work of CCFL

Mixed Competence Member States Vote

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) would like to thank the Canadian Secretariat of the Codex Committee on Food labelling (CCFL) for the analysis of the comments in reply to the circular letter CL 2020/09/OCS-FL and the proposed modifications of the draft *Approach and criteria for evaluation and prioritization of the work of CCFL*.

General comments

The EUMS note that, until now, the criteria for the establishment of work priorities applicable to general subjects specified in the Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, together with the inventory of CCFL's potential future work has been sufficient to manage the workload of the Committee and that a formalised prioritisation process hasn't been necessary.

The EUMS consider therefore that there is a limited need for a formalised prioritisation process.

If the Committee confirms the establishment of a prioritization process, the latter should only be applied in the case of multiple new work proposals, which are all in line with the priorities established in the Strategic Plan of the Codex Alimentarius and the above criteria specified in the Procedural Manual, and which cannot be tackled all together at the same time by the Committee.

In these cases, the EUMS would favour a flexible approach. This approach would entail a prioritisation guidance that is neither too detailed nor too prescriptive and, if needed, the establishment of an *ad hoc* working group, which would be tasked with assessing and prioritising the new work proposals in line with the guidance and making recommendations to the Committee. The Committee would then, on the basis of the self-assessments in the new work proposals and/or the recommendations *ad hoc* working group, prioritize the work.

The EUMS welcome therefore the changes suggested by the Canadian Secretariat of the CCFL and propose to further clarify the text and specify the above aspects by introducing following modifications in the draft *Approach and criteria for evaluation and prioritization of the work of CCFL* (Annex I of CX/FL 21/46/13 Add.1):

- Point 1:
“1. The following guidelines are established to assist the CCFL to identify, prioritize and efficiently carry out its work, as needed, when there are multiple new work proposals to consider **which are all in line with the priorities established in the Strategic Plan and the “Criteria for the establishment of work priorities” applicable to general subjects specified in the Procedural Manual, and which cannot be tackled at the same time by the Committee.**
- Point 2:
“2. These guidelines apply, ~~as needed,~~ to new work proposed to the CCFL **when there are multiple new work proposals which are all in line with the priorities established in the Strategic Plan and the**

“Criteria for the establishment of work priorities” applicable to general subjects specified in the Procedural Manual, and which cannot be tackled at the same time by the Committee.

2a. These guidelines and lays down criteria and a process procedures for evaluating the priority of considering priorities for proposed new work proposals, including the revision of current texts. Additional criteria, such as feasibility of the proposed new work, may be necessary and developed later for application while considering two or more items of similar priority¹.”

- Point 3:
“3. The prioritization approach has been developed in recognition of addition of the criteria for new work as outlined in the Procedural Manual. ~~The C~~criteria relevant to the work of the CCFL and ~~the a~~ rating scheme have been developed taking into account the mandate of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and the general principles of food labelling included in the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (GSLPF).”
- Point 4:
“4. In addition to the priorities established by the Commission in the Strategic Plan, and the criteria applicable to general subjects specified in the Procedural Manual, following additional criteria may be used are required for the assessing of the new work proposed relevant to the CCFL. ~~Following are the criteria against which the new work to be undertaken in CCFL may be assessed:~~
- In the table specifying the criteria and their ratings:
 - “Potential of the proposed new work to ~~resolve, mitigate,~~ prevent, ~~or significantly~~ reduce or resolve a consumer health risk”,
 - “Potential of the proposed new work to ~~resolve, mitigate,~~ prevent, ~~or significantly~~ reduce or resolve false, misleading or deceptive labelling practices”,
 - “Potential of the proposed new work to assist the consumer in making an informed choice”,
 - “Positive impact ~~(positive)~~ on international trade”;
- Points 5 and 6:
 5. New ~~w~~Work ~~P~~proposals should be presented to CCFL in the format of a project document addressing the criteria given under the “Criteria for establishment of work priorities” for general subjects in the Procedural Manual and should preferably also include a self-assessment that takes into account the additional criteria outlined in this document.
 6. ~~The n~~New work proposals should also indicate that the work, if approved to commence, would likely lead to preparation of a new Codex text or revision of an existing Codex text.
- Points 7 to 11 (new order):
 10. ~~The N~~New ~~proposed~~ work ~~proposals should~~ may be assessed against the criteria as per the ratings given for each criterion by an ad hoc working group established by the Committee and receive an. ~~New work proposals should ultimately be prioritized as per the~~ overall rating ~~received through this prioritization process. Additional criteria, such as feasibility of the proposed new work, may be necessary and developed later for application while considering two or more items of similar priority.~~
 7. As necessary, the CCFL ~~will~~ may prioritize new work proposals, including revision of existing texts, taking into account the self-assessments in the new work proposals and/or the assessments by the ad hoc working group in order of merit based upon decisions made by CCFL after assessing the new work against the criteria (as defined above) for evaluating and prioritizing work.”

¹ Former last sentence of point 10

8. The Committee may reassess the priority of each item if new information becomes available relating to an item. Such **data information** may be submitted for consideration and the priority for the new work proposal reconsidered.

9. The criteria **should will** be applied in a stepwise manner, in the order set out in the criteria above. If the Committee decides that a proposed work does not fall under the terms of reference of CCFL, then the remaining criteria do not need to be **assessed applied**.

11. The CCFL will maintain the inventory of future work and emerging issues **discussion paper** that will include all potential work items relevant to CCFL. The inventory paper work will be kept current at every session with a different Codex member taking on responsibility each time. ~~It may be appropriate for CCFL to establish an ad hoc working group, as necessary, to evaluate and prioritize new work proposals.~~