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codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Twenty-ninth Session

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FAO/WHO PROJECT AND FUND FOR ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN CODEX

FIRST BIENNIAL REVIEW - 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prepared by the Trust Fund Secretariat

1. The FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex (the Project) became operational in March 2004. Its aims are to support broader and more effective participation in the implementation of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), its committees, working groups and task forces. The main focus of the Project is to support participation by Least Developed and Low Income Countries, and Lower Middle Income Countries; although Upper Middle Income Countries are also eligible for some support¹.

2. The first biennial review² of the 12-year Project, drawing on information from records of the Project Administration and CAC offices and from two questionnaires completed by eligible countries, clearly shows considerable progress towards the Project's three Immediate Objectives and Outputs. There is strong evidence that Project activities have directly contributed to this progress. Improvements to the *widening participation* output have been greatest, followed by the *strengthening overall participation* output. Improvements to the *enhancing scientific/technical participation* output can be expected to increase as countries further develop their capacity.

¹ According to the World Bank classification these are 60 Least Developed and Low Income Countries, 45 Lower Middle Income Countries and 33 Upper Middle Income Countries.

² FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex. First Biennial Review - 2006. Available from <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/codex/trustfund/en/index4.html>

3. Building capacity within countries is not within the direct scope of the Project, other than through Codex training. However, it is clear from many reports received from eligible countries that Project support for their increased participation in international Codex meetings has had a beneficial flow-on effect to Codex capacity and food safety development at the country level.

4. The Project aim is directly in line with Goal 5 of the draft new Strategic Plan for Codex. The achievements made by the Project in its first two years are very positive and, with continued support from donors, signal continued success for the remainder of the Project's 12-year lifespan.

Highlights of the review

- Overall participation by eligible countries has clearly increased since the introduction of Project support in 2004;
- In 2004-2005, 338 participants from 104 different countries received support to participate in 30 Codex meetings;
- Between 2004 and 2005, the number of supported participants increased by 273%, and there was a 23% increase in the number of countries supported;
- 60% of the supported participants in 2004-2005 were from Least Developed and Low Income countries;
- 2005 participants' reports clearly show a very high level of active participation at meetings, as well as significant activities in-country after meetings. Pre-meeting sessions for new delegates have been popular and should be encouraged for all Codex meetings;
- In 2005, 75% of participants were the only delegates from their country and 94% were in delegations of four or less;
- Project expenditure 2004-2005 totalled US\$ 2,320,569;
- 58% of 2004-2005 meeting support expenditure was on Least Developed and Low Income countries' participants;
- Between 2004 and 2005, the practice of some eligible countries to fully self-fund their participation at Codex meetings increased;
- In 2005, 90% of eligible countries participated in Codex meetings, 70% fully or partly funded by the project and 20% fully self-funded. 57% of Upper Middle Income countries are at the matched funding stage;
- Eight eligible countries attended no Codex meetings in 2004-2005. For some other eligible countries participation was not continuous from 2004 to 2005. Small Island Developing States face particular challenges, and extra support to them is warranted;
- A number of eligible countries who rank high in the list of food import and export countries (in US\$ value) have not been particularly active in past Codex activities at the international level;
- From 2003 to 2005, donations received totalled US\$ 2,915,984. 12 donors made a total of 24 donations ranging in size from \$US 28,000 to \$US 715,000;
- The Codex Training Package and Codex training courses are valued by eligible countries;
- The relevance of Codex would be enhanced for some member countries if they had a greater influence on its work agenda; and
- Political commitment; a national food safety policy and administration; food safety legislation; and stakeholder involvement all seem to be critical components of food safety progress. Countries have expressed a strong need for further international assistance in these areas.

Recommendations to strengthen the Project and Codex development generally:

1. The status of Small Island Developing States be reflected by slight improvements to the Project conditions;
2. Strategies be implemented to encourage greater participation in Codex by less active eligible countries who are high value importers and exporters of food;
3. Ongoing, year to year, participation in Codex meetings by all eligible countries be encouraged, with increased self-funded participation encouraged particularly for Group 2 and Group 3 countries;

4. Codex meeting organizers be encouraged to arrange pre-meeting orientation sessions and less experienced delegates be encouraged to participate;
 5. Training using the Codex Training Package be strongly encouraged and be further supported by the Project;
 6. Codex training should include how to influence the Codex agenda, how to facilitate/propose the initiation of new work within Codex and other FAO/WHO bodies etc, so that the Codex Alimentarius remains relevant to all members;
 7. Encourage countries to identify and actively pursue opportunities for international help to achieve defined national food safety and control priorities; encourage donor agencies cooperation and avoidance of interdependency with recipients; and
 8. Investigations be routinely undertaken to monitor the activities and impact of the Project and to identify the ongoing support needs of the eligible countries.
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