



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

AD HOC CODEX INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

Eighth Session (Virtual)

4 - 9 and 13 October 2021

MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat)

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

Codex Alimentarius Commission

43rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC43, 2020)

Adoption of standards and related texts: Revision of the *Code of practice to minimize and contain foodborne antimicrobial resistance (COP) (CXC 61-2005)*

1. CAC43 (2020) **adopted**¹ the COP at Step 5 and advanced it to Step 6 for further comments and consideration by TFAMR08 (see also paragraph 12).

Procedural aspects

2. CAC43 (2020)²:
 - (i) recognized the challenges facing the Codex Alimentarius Commission in fulfilling its duties as the pre-eminent international food standards setting body due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - (ii) recognized that while many Codex Committee meetings had to be postponed in 2020 this could not continue in 2021; and
 - (iii) supported the use of modern tools and approaches by Codex subsidiary bodies in line with the Codex core values to ensure Codex work progressed in a timely and effective manner.
 - (iv) **agreed**, on an exceptional basis, in view of the circumstances surrounding the pandemic that, with respect to meetings and sessions of the Codex Subsidiary Bodies to be held in 2021, Rule XI (7) and (8) may be interpreted in a manner that includes a virtual setting;
 - (v) **agreed** on this basis, that Codex Subsidiary Bodies may be held virtually in 2021, if determined appropriate by FAO and WHO, in consultation with the host governments concerned and the Codex Secretariat.

Ongoing work of subsidiary bodies

3. CAC43 **recommended** to all subsidiary bodies and Members and Observers to make full use of existing remote working mechanisms such as Electronic Working Groups (EWGs) and Circular Letters (CLs) and to plan their virtual committee meetings in such a manner as to optimize the possibility to complete their agendas.³

Executive Committee

Implementation of CAC42: Feedback on Changes and Proposals for Further Improvements

4. CCEXEC78 (2020) **requested** that Chairpersons of subsidiary bodies and CAC together with the Secretariat⁴:

¹ REP19/CAC, paras 46-48, Appendix II

² REP20/CAC, paras 10 and 20

³ REP20/CAC, para 31

⁴ REP20/EXEC1, para. 30

- (i) develop strategies to prevent or mitigate technical discussions at CAC on topics for which there was no consensus and communicate these strategies to Members. Such strategies may include short adjournments of the session for informal discussions or suspension of discussions on items that overrun the planned time limit; and
- (ii) ensure that, at CAC meetings, written comments received were given due consideration and the technical basis of reservations were included in meeting reports.

Regular Review of Codex Work Management 2018-2019: Critical Review Process

- 5. CCEXEC78 concluded that the Critical Review was overall an efficient and effective work management tool and that there was no urgent need to revise it substantively while recognizing that improvements could be further discussed.
- 6. In this regard, CCEXEC78 also recognized that CCEXEC could provide guidance and advice to subsidiary bodies and that subsidiary bodies could also seek advice from CCEXEC and that such exchange could take place outside of the Critical Review process.⁵

Regular Review of Codex Work Management 2017-2018: Periodic Review of Codex Standards

- 7. CCEXEC78 concluded that the current approaches to standards review were working for active subsidiary bodies, and encouraged these bodies to continuously enhance their work management processes to consider the need for reviewing existing Codex standards.⁶

Regular Review of Codex Work Management 2017-2018: Use of References in Codex Texts

- 8. CCEXEC78 emphasized that while there may on occasion be merit in including references to standards of another standard setting organization, these should be kept to a minimum since they become an integral part of a Codex text and require life-long monitoring.⁷

Regular Review of Codex Work Management 2018-2019: Critical Review Process

Codex virtual meetings in 2021

- 9. CCEXEC80 (2021) recognized that CAC43 had agreed on the possibility of holding virtual meetings in 2021 and endorsed the proposals from the sub-committee on Codex and the pandemic to operationalize this decision, noting that this did not at present require any change to formal Codex procedures.⁸

Including Delegate Contact Information in Codex Reports

- 10. At CCEXEC78 (2020), the Codex Secretariat confirmed that the change removing such data had been introduced initially at CAC42 in Geneva in line with current WHO practice. The Secretariat agreed to seek a solution to make personal information available. Possible options to be explored included an opt-in preference for sharing contact details to be expressed by individual delegates during meeting registration or a solution where such data would be available behind a login.⁹
- 11. CCEXEC80 (2021) The Codex Secretariat confirmed that it would work with the FAO Legal office to seek a solution to make contact information available and would inform the CAC membership accordingly. The Legal Representative of FAO stated that FAO was elaborating principles on personal data protection and that any determination regarding sharing personal information should be formulated accordingly.¹⁰

Codex work on foodborne antimicrobial resistance

Revision of the Code of practice to minimize and contain foodborne antimicrobial resistance (CXC 61-2005)

- 12. CCEXEC79 recommended that CAC43 adopt the revision of COP at Step 5; and that TFAMR08 focus its discussion on the issues that had not been extensively discussed to date and avoid reopening provisions to the extent possible. Further details on the discussions can be found in the report of the session.¹¹

⁵ REP20/EXEC1, paras. 46 and 51

⁶ REP 20/EXEC1, para. 57

⁷ REP20/EXEC1, para. 64

⁸ REP21/EXEC1, para 35-36

⁹ REP20/EXEC1, para. 125

¹⁰ REP21/EXEC1, paras. 72-74

¹¹ REP20/EXEC2, paras. 42-43

Development of Guidelines for integrated monitoring and surveillance of foodborne antimicrobial resistance

13. CCEXEC79 reaffirmed the mandate of TFAMR and reiterated that the guidelines should focus on providing high level principles and guidance on the design and implementation of integrated monitoring and surveillance of foodborne AMR along the food chain, giving a framework under which every country could build their own specific monitoring and surveillance according to their capacity and needs.
14. Furthermore CCEXEC79 recommended that the EWG and TFAMR08 do not reopen, to the extent possible, provisions common to both the code of practice and the guidelines, which have already been agreed by TFAMR during the consideration of the code of practice, recognizing that as the work progresses the guidelines may need to elaborate concepts not included in the code of practice text.
15. CCEXEC79 also encouraged; all Members to participate actively in the work of the EWG; the EWG Chairperson to consider the range of available tools, including virtual meetings, to progress the work; and TFAMR to do all in its power to complete its mandate at TFAMR08. Further details of the discussions can be found in the report of the session.¹²

MATTERS FOR ACTION

Timeliness of Codex working documents

16. CCEXEC78 requested that the Codex Secretariat bring the information¹³ on the timeliness of Codex working documents, reports and the availability of adopted standards to the attention of subsidiary bodies for their review and suggestions.¹⁴

CONCLUSION

Recommendations for TFAMR

17. TFAMR is invited to:
 - (i) **note** the information referred by CAC and CCEXEC (paragraphs 1-11);
 - (ii) **refer** to the advice of CCEXEC79 (paragraphs 12-15) when considering the COP and GLIS as necessary; and
 - (iii) **note** that the Codex Secretariat would continue to work closely with the Chair of TFAMR, Chairs of EWGs and the Host Country Secretariat on ways to improve work management of the Task Force (paragraph 16).

¹² REP20/EXEC2, paras. 44-46

¹³ CX/EXEC 20/78/8

¹⁴ REP20/EXEC1, para. 111