



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

36th Session, FAO Headquarters

Rome, Italy, 1-5 July 2013

FAO GM FOODS PLATFORM

Introduction and scope of the FAO GM Foods Platform

1. The FAO GM Foods Platform is a simple online platform for Codex Members to share information on safety assessments of foods derived from recombinant-DNA (r-DNA) plants authorized in accordance with the Codex “*Guideline for the conduct of food safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA plants (CAC/GL 45-2003)*”.
2. An Informal Network of international experts was established in 2012 to discuss the Platform scope, structure and functions. The FAO GM Foods Platform has undergone two full review cycles before being launched to ensure it meets the requirements agreed in the abovementioned Codex guideline as well as the diverse needs of all Codex Members.

Low Level Presence (LLP) of r-DNA plant materials in food

3. One important function of the FAO GM Foods Platform is to facilitate the utilization of food safety assessment information in situations of Low Level Presence (LLP) of r-DNA plant materials in food, as presented in accordance with the format provided in Section 3 of the abovementioned Codex text, “*Guidance on data and information sharing*” of Annex III (adopted in 2008) “*Food safety assessment in situations of low-level presence of recombinant-DNA plant materials in food*”.

Focal Points nomination process

4. In order to effectively meet the requirements described above, FAO has initiated the official Focal Points nomination process in April 2013. At least one Focal Point per Codex Member should be officially nominated by the respective country through its Codex Contact Point. The nominated Focal Points are then invited to register to become a Registered User of the Platform. A Registered User can upload relevant national data and information to the Platform. All the data and information published online are open to the public.
5. A country may also nominate an Alternate to the Focal Point to be a Registered User, however only one focal point account will be established per country. The nomination form has been distributed in an electronic mail by the Codex Secretariat on the 19th of April 2013. If you have a question about this nomination process, contact GM-Platform@fao.org for more information.

Current status of the Platform

6. As of May 2013, the FAO GM Foods Platform is fully functional and ready to host data and information to be uploaded by Codex Members. Each Codex Member is responsible for uploading the most up-to-date data and information as well as for the accuracy of the uploaded information. The FAO GM Foods Platform Content Administrator is responsible only for the format of the information and not for the individual contents.
7. The FAO GM Foods Platform has been developed with the support and technical assistance of the various national collaborators who participated in the Informal Network. All the texts and functions of the Platform have been discussed among the Informal Network members and decided largely on the basis of practicality,

as the participation to the Informal Network is completely voluntary and not necessarily designed to develop an official consensus.

8. In the light of above, FAO invites all Codex Members to carefully review the FAO GM Foods Platform, and should any Members have suggestions for changes, FAO invites the Member(s) to discuss the item(s) officially with all Codex Members to obtain the consensus (e.g., through electronic Working Group). Once FAO receives such official consensus to change items on the FAO GM Foods Platform, FAO will immediately implement the changes accordingly. This applies to all the texts, functions, labels, links and documents that appear on the Platform.

Strategy for maintaining a useful and up-to-date Platform

9. Following the agreement of all Codex Members at the 7th Session of the Codex ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology in 2007 and at the following Codex Alimentarius Commission in 2008, the major focus for 2013 is to establish a populated and up-to-date GM foods platform. Thus the throughout 2013 FAO will focus its efforts on having all Codex Members 1) nominate official Focal Points, 2) register to the Platform through their Focal Point and 3) upload relevant data and information to the Platform.
10. While FAO ensures an effective communication and exchange of information among Member States and promotes a fruitful use of the Platform, the Platform will only be useful when the data and information are shared by Members.
11. Evaluation of the Platform's usage by the Codex Members will be conducted by FAO one year after the launch of the Platform (June 2014). If a significant number of countries have uploaded relevant data and information, FAO's commitment to maintain the Platform will be assured and FAO will make the maximum efforts to secure funds for this activity. In a situation of low usage levels FAO may suggest that Codex Members discuss the Platform's future at the occasion of the Commission in 2014.

Invitation to the side event to launch the Platform

12. All delegates at the Thirty-sixth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission are invited to attend the side event on the presentation of FAO GM Foods Platform that will be held on **Monday, the 1st of July, 2013** at the **Philippines Room** (2nd floor, C-building), FAO headquarters. The side events start at **13.00 hrs** and lunch will be served.

Contact

13. FAO GM Foods Platform is maintained by FAO Food Safety and Codex Unit. For further information, please contact Dr Masami Takeuchi at Masami.Takeuchi@fao.org or GM-Platform@fao.org.