



Development of a Codex Communication Strategy

Introduction and purpose

Codex is a knowledge organization setting international standards to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade. Standards need to be known and applied to fulfill their function. Codex needs to communicate with a variety of stakeholders to set the standards and promote their use including: FAO, WHO, Codex members, international governmental and intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and the general public.

Codex already communicates in many ways. The process of defining a communication strategy needs to look at how the present situation can be improved, which audiences need to be targeted and how or which additional audiences should be included.

One of the communication challenges is to showcase the impact and effectiveness of Codex standards. Codex standards are voluntarily observed and there is no system for notification (a notification obligation existed but was removed from the procedure as it was rarely used). A communication strategy could motivate further application of Codex standards and build networks and partners with a wider range of organizations, groups, or other relevant bodies to provide more solid evidence to prove Codex impact.

Inclusiveness, openness and transparency are key to Codex's success and furthermore, as Codex calls on its Members to achieve this inclusiveness on the national level additional communications strategies, channels, and messages should be designed and implemented targeting end-users of food products.

Context of the strategy

Because Codex is an executive organ of the FAO/WHO Joint Food Standards Programme and operates in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations of its parent organizations (FAO and WHO), its Communications strategy should be supported by and totally compatible with the communication strategies of FAO and WHO. Therefore, the Codex Secretariat should develop and manage the strategy in close collaboration with the relevant units (technical, legal, and communication) of the parent organizations.

Contents of the Strategy

The Codex communication strategy will guide the Codex Secretariat in how to best use communication in implementing its strategic plan. The strategy will prioritize goals/objectives and audiences to be addressed for major impact. The strategy will define messages, tools and activities and a work plan for implementation and periodic review based on the available budget and other resources.

Next Steps

To develop and implement a Communication strategy in full consultation with FAO and WHO, the following steps are deemed necessary:

- (1) Assess how Codex is known and perceived by different stakeholders (governments, other organizations, industry, universities, farmers, general public) in different countries and how effective its present communications goals/objectives/tools and activities are;
- (2) Based on the assessments above, develop goals/objectives and prioritize audiences to be targeted;
- (3) Identify a range of components/elements to be part of the strategy: messages/slogans (e.g. safe, good food for everyone), tools (e.g. logo, visual identity, videos, website, newsletter) and activities (e.g. participation in meetings, media campaign);
- (4) Review financial and legal implications of proposed elements as well as compatibility with the communications strategies of FAO and WHO;
- (5) Define a budget and work plan for implementation of the strategy including any required legal steps (e.g. registration of a logo); clearance by FAO and WHO and
- (6) Implementation and periodic review.

Timeframe

When?	What?	Who?
7/2013	Finalize the roadmap and identify the budget for steps (1)-(3)	FAO, WHO, Codex Secretariat
8/2013	Develop terms of reference for a tender for consultants/company to implement (1)-(3);	FAO, WHO, Codex Secretariat
10/2013	STEP1: Assessment	Consultant, Codex Secretariat
11/2013	STEP2: Review assessment and identify goals/objectives	Consultant, Codex Secretariat, FAO, WHO
12/2013	STEP3: Identify elements	Consultant, Codex Secretariat
02/2014	STEP4: Review feasibility	Consultant, Codex Secretariat, FAO, WHO
04/2014	STEP5: Budget and workplan	Consultant, Codex Secretariat, FAO, WHO
06/07/2014	Presentation of the strategy to the CCEXEC and the Commission	Consultant, Codex Secretariat, FAO, WHO
08/2014	STEP6: Implementation/periodic review	Codex Secretariat, FAO and WHO