

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

39th Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 27 June – 1 July 2016

SUMMARY REPORT OF 1ST MEETING OF THE CODEX TRUST FUND ADVISORY GROUP

The first meeting of the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund Advisory Group was held at the Headquarters of FAO on 22 June 2016. The Advisory Group was established as part of the governance structure of the new Codex Trust Fund (CTF2). The Advisory Group operates at a strategic level to ensure that the views of key stakeholders can be taken into consideration in the operations of CTF2 and has the following terms of reference:

- 1) Provide strategic advice on focus and implementation of CTF2;
- 2) Provide advice on the procedures and working methods of CTF2;
- 3) Share information on other relevant activities and evolving needs of Codex.

The Advisory Group consists of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), delegates representing Regional Coordinators at a CCEXEC session, and one representative from up to three CTF donor countries chosen by lottery. The Chairperson of the CAC acts as ex-officio Chairperson of the Advisory Group.

The agenda for the first meeting is attached in Annex 1. The list of participants at the first meeting is attached in Annex 2.

The first session was dedicated to apprising members of the modus operandi of the Advisory Group and exchanging views on expectations. Clarifications were given of the work of the Advisory Group and how they would interact with the Steering Committee¹.

The second session provided an overview of activities undertaken in the first six months of existence of the new Codex Trust Fund as per the first Progress Report (see CX/CAC 16/39/20).

Several members and FAO/WHO highlighted that CTF2 is fundamentally different from the first Codex Trust Fund. It is important that people understand this evolution and it may take some time to understand the essential shift in focus towards building sustained participation in Codex by strengthening national Codex programmes and capacities. Other feedback from members of the Advisory Group included the following:

- Some countries had experienced difficulty in using the application tools to prepare and submit applications. Many of these countries may also be countries with the weakest capacity to engage in Codex. The tools may need to be simplified, or more guidance and assistance given on their use and how to prepare robust project proposals.
- More guidance is needed on how to prepare group applications, which were recognized as having benefits and should be encouraged.
- More time may be needed for countries to prepare applications.
- Different channels and approaches need to be explored for sustainability of funding and some preliminary suggestions were made that could be examined further including region-specific mechanisms, and collaboration with cooperation agencies.

¹ The Steering Committee is comprised of two senior staff members each from FAO, WHO and the Codex Secretariat, serviced by the CTF Secretariat.

The third session was devoted to getting stakeholder feedback on the FAO/WHO “Diagnostic Tool for Assessing Status of National Codex Programmes” (also known as the “Codex Diagnostic Tool”). FAO/WHO highlighted the necessity of following good development practice to ensure that project proposals are based on solid and logical results frameworks. The Diagnostic Tool and application materials were developed to assist countries in meeting these expectations. The Diagnostic Tool can be used again once countries have completed their three years of support to document the achievements made. In this way it can both set a baseline, and be used to evaluate progress.

Members highlighted the following issues:

- The usefulness of the tool for countries was acknowledged. No specific recommendations to change the tool. Comments focused on the challenges that had been encountered in the use of the tool in countries/groups of countries.
- The use of the tool was seen as being quite complex for many countries to undertake and requiring significant time investment.
- The possibility of developing an interactive web-based tool or other mechanism to assist countries in using the Diagnostic Tool might be explored.
- Assistance might be given to help countries use the Diagnostic Tool through direct support in countries. Regional cooperation could be used for this, in addition to support from FAO/WHO regional food safety advisers.
- Side events planned at the 39th CAC and the upcoming FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committees to assist countries in understanding how to use the tool and prepare robust applications were welcomed.

The application process and results of the first round of applications were presented and discussed in Session 4. 41 applications had been received by the deadline of 3 May 2016. 38 applications were fully completed and were sent to the Technical Review Group for assessment: 24 from Africa; 4 from Asia (including one group application); 2 from Europe; 2 from Latin America and the Caribbean; 3 from the Near East; 3 from the South-west Pacific. Out of 38 completed applications: 4 were considered robust and could be supported with minor revision; 21 were considered strong but would need more substantial revision; 13 were considered weak and would need major revision. The TRG assessed all applications against an agreed set of objective criteria. The Steering Committee considered the findings of the TRG, and decided to support four applications from the first application round.

It was acknowledged that there had been a larger than expected demand in the first application round. While many applications had a number of strong points and were a very good starting point, they do require further work to attain the level of a robust application. Countries have 12 years in which to be supported. Not all countries can be supported in the first years.

Some clarifications were requested on the application process and members made the following comments:

- It will be important to pull out the learning from the first application round to understand where the major weaknesses are in applications and how countries can be assisted to prepare and submit truly robust applications.
- Information should be provided on the successful applications so these can be used as “models” for countries wishing to apply.
- Applicant countries will need a strong message on the type of support they can expect to receive to help them prepare better applications in subsequent rounds.
- Country expectations, especially those having submitted in the first application round, will need to be managed.
- The Codex Trust Fund is starting out modestly in the first year but it is clear that there will need to be an increase in resources to CTF in order to be able to support the expected increased numbers of robust applications in subsequent application rounds.

In the concluding session the key points that had been made were summarized. Advisory Group members were thanked for their engagement and the frank and open tone adopted. FAO/WHO hoped this would continue in subsequent meetings as the input and ideas given were extremely valuable and would help the Codex Trust Fund move forward. Time will be spent to consider and explore the feasibility of suggestions received from the Advisory Group, to determine how the Codex Trust Fund may be strengthened and enriched. The communication lines would be kept open and Advisory Group members would be apprised of the venue and timing for the next meeting in due course.

Formal minutes of the advisory group meeting will be prepared shortly and will be uploaded onto the CTF website.

Agenda

Welcoming remarks (FAO/WHO)

Introductions

Session 1 – Modus operandi of the Advisory Group

- Presentation by the CTF Secretariat
 - Role, terms of reference and membership of the Advisory Group;
 - Meeting frequency and reporting
- Discussion
 - Expectations from Advisory Group members
 - Expectations from the CTF Steering Committee

Session 2 – Overview of CTF2 in its first six months

- Presentation of CTF2 actions by the CTF Secretariat
- Discussion

Session 3 – Tools developed by FAO/WHO for use in Codex capacity development

- Presentation by FAO/WHO on the “Diagnostic Tool for Assessing Status of National Codex Programmes” (Codex Diagnostic Tool)
- Discussion/Feedback
 - Any suggestions on improvement in the next version of the tool
 - Possible wide use in Codex member countries

Session 4 - Learning from the first round of applications

- Presentation by FAO/WHO on the application process, outcomes and key learning
- Discussion/Feedback

Concluding Session

- Summary by the CTF Secretariat
- Next meeting

Annex 2**List of participants****Brazil**

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