

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

Agenda Item 18

CX/CF 18/12/18

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS

12th Session

Utrecht, The Netherlands, 12 – 16 March 2018

FORWARD WORKPLAN FOR THE COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat with the assistance of the Host Country Secretariat)

Background

1. At CCCF11, the Codex Secretariat recalled the new and ongoing work commitments made by the Committee and the increasing challenges of having a manageable agenda to have sufficient time to discuss all matters scheduled for consideration and to complete work in a timely manner. The Secretariat underlined the importance of operating strategically in order to establish or prioritize items within this workload. In response, the Committee agreed that the Codex Secretariat with the Host Country Secretariat would develop a plan to address this issue and report back at the next session.¹
2. CCEXEC²73 noted that all the ongoing work of CCCF could not be completed by the target year. CCEXEC73 requested that CCCF provide a reasonable deadline for the completion of the ongoing work.³ With regard to overall workload of the Committee, CCEXEC73 further noted that the CCCF agenda reflected the high level of interest among Codex members in the work of the Committee and that Committee had already acknowledged its heavy workload, and would develop a forward work plan to manage its increasing workload.
3. This paper presents a proposal on a scoring system to assist the Committee to develop a forward work plan to have a more manageable agenda in future.

Discussion

4. Over the years, CCCF has had by times heavy workload and at times have sent for approval 5 – 7 items of new work to CAC⁴, while having a considerable agenda. While CCCF has always managed to discuss all items of the agenda during scheduled meetings, CCCF has on several occasions needed to extend deadlines for ongoing work or to discontinue work soon after approval or to re-scope the work (usually to limit the original scope of work) or to suspend work. This has been due to lack of data or the need for further provision of scientific advice (e.g. perform a health impact assessment of a range of MLs in view of the difficulties to agree on a ML).
5. CCEXEC67⁵ (2012), when considering new work proposals from CCCF, had discussed whether there was a need for specific recommendations related to the overall workload and the possibility to manage it in CCCF. After discussion, CCEXEC noted the importance of the work carried out by CCCF, but encouraged CCCF to continue managing its heavy workload in an efficient manner.⁶
6. CCCF07⁷ (2013) noted the recommendation of CCEXEC67 on the need to manage its heavy workload relating to the uptake of new work and finalization of ongoing work within the allocated timeframe in an efficient manner.
7. Also CCEXEC70⁸ (2015), recommended that all Committees consider the need to develop an approach for the management of their work similar to that used by CCFH⁹, while recognizing the differences in topics, working procedures, etc.

¹ REP17/CF, para. 156

² Executive Committee

³ REP17/EXEC2, para. 57 - 58

⁴ Codex Alimentarius Commission

⁵ REP12/EXEC2, paras 18 - 20

⁶ REP17/EXEC2, para. 61

⁷ REP13/CF, para. 10

⁸ REP15/EXEC, para. 22

⁹ Committee on Food Hygiene

8. CCCF10¹⁰ (2016) reconfirmed its previous decision that guidance provided in the Procedural Manual and in the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995) were sufficient to ensure transparent and efficient work management and therefore no additional guidance was needed.

9. Tools for the management of work:

- CCCF does consider the Criteria for the establishment of work priorities (general criterion and criteria applicable to general subjects) in the Procedural Manual and the relevant goals of the Codex Strategic Plan when deciding on new work;
- The Committee also considers the guidance and principles provided in the Preamble and relevant annexes of the GSCTFF as well as in the Policy for exposure assessment of contaminants and toxins in foods and group of foods; Moreover, the Committee has further good practices in place to manage its work such as the establishment of an in-session working group to follow-up on the outcome of JECFA¹¹ evaluations which complements work of the in-session working group on the priority lists of contaminants and toxins for evaluation by JECFA;
- In addition, CCCF uses discussion papers efficiently by including a preliminary proposed draft to show feasibility of developing of a new standard. The Committee assesses the discussion papers, and not all topics from the discussion papers are started as new work;

10. The Committee has shown to use the above management tools well to agree on new work, but there is to some extent a lack of coordination between these mechanisms with regard to the overall work of the Committee

11. The Committee might benefit further from applying an approach that looks at the overall workload of the Committee, including the ability of the Committee to complete the work within a reasonable timeframe, taking into account the data needs, data gaps, availability of missing data in a reasonable timeframe, and the need for scientific advice (JECFA priorities). In this way, the Committee will be able to keep a balance between ongoing work and proposals for new work within the time available for plenary sessions and to strategize the agenda for future meetings. The plan is not intended to leave out work, but to prioritize work so that all work has the same opportunity for discussion and completion with a reasonable timeframe.

Conclusion

12. In view of the CCEXEC recommendations, it is proposed that the Committee reconsider an approach such as that followed by CCFH, whereby the Committee develops a process to undertake new work using a rating/scoring system to prioritize work and to keep a forward work plan so that the Committee is aware of work on the horizon. This could contribute to better planning of provision of scientific advice by JECFA (and subsequent follow-up by CCCF) and for countries to be better prepared to identify, generate and submit relevant data.

13. As to the process on how the forward work can be elaborated and be kept updated, CCCF could consider having a single (electronic) and/or physical working group to meet at each session of the Committee to look at the overall work of the Committee, including proposals for the priority list for JECFA and the possible follow-up actions following JECFA assessments. This WG would prepare proposals for a new priority list for CCCF, and prepare a forward work plan for the work of the Committee. In order to prepare this work plan, the WG could use on a trial-basis a rating/scoring system as proposed in Annex to this document.

14. The Annex contains the criteria used for rating or scoring work in CCFH and a proposal that was discussed by CCRVDF¹². These criteria consider relevant data/information for these committees to develop and update their forward work plan such as availability of information (data), impact on public health and impact on trade.

15. The process for keeping a forward work plan in CCFH is explained in an information document¹³ and the forward work plan¹⁴ is updated at each session and appended to the report of CCFH. The process proposed to CCRVDF is considered in a working document¹⁵ submitted to CCRVDF23.

Recommendation

16. The Committee is invited to consider the conclusions and the approaches in Annex to determine whether a work plan is necessary and if so, whether the proposed rating/scoring system could meet this need and could eventually be used as the basis to further improve a forward work plan for a manageable agenda and work of CCCF including the process to keep the work plan updated.

¹⁰ REP16/CF, para. 6

¹¹ Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives

¹² Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods

¹³ Information document on process by which CCFH will undertake its work:

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/codexalimentarius/committee/docs/INF_CCFH_e.pdf

¹⁴ REP18/FH, Appendix IV

¹⁵ [CX/RVDF 16/23/8](#), Discussion paper on the establishment of a rating system to establish priority for CCRVDF work.

CCFH SCORING SYSTEM FOR PRIORITIZATION OF WORK

NOTE: This rating/scoring system addresses the whole spectrum of work of CCFH (including the need to periodically revise existing texts).

Criteria for Evaluating and Prioritizing New Work

In addition to the provisions applying to the proposals for new work contained in the *Codex Procedural Manual*, the following criteria and associated weighting factors will be used in evaluating new work priorities to assist in determining the priority for new work to be undertaken by CCFH. Standards older than five years or those with duplication or inconsistency with existing codes should also be assessed by the criteria below to determine their need for revision.

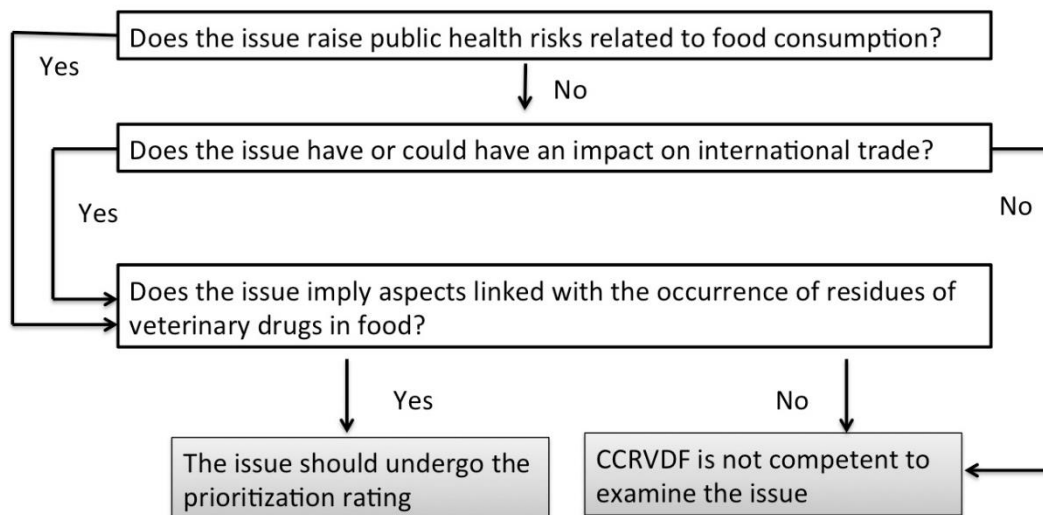
Criterion	Rating
Currency of Information – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there new information/data that would justify the need to review the existing code(s) or establish a new one? • Are there new technologies that would justify the need to review existing codes or establish a new one? • Is there duplication or inconsistency with existing codes that should be addressed? 	Yes/No
Positive impact of new work on public health – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would new work result in a document that could have a positive impact on public health? • How significant is the impact to public health, e.g. foodborne risk to public health? 	High 20 Medium 14 Low 8
Impact of trade due to the public health risk*	Global Trade Impact, High Consumption: 10 Regional Trade Impact, High Consumption: 5 Global Trade Impact, Low Consumption: 4 Regional Trade Impact, Low Consumption: 2 No trade impact: 0

CCRVDF PROPOSED SCORING SYSTEM FOR PRIORITIZATION OF WORK

NOTE: This scoring system is mainly focus on prioritization of work on MRLs. The mandate of CCRVDF is not limited to the development of MRLs.

Step one: qualitative quick-evaluation

Issue raised:.....
 Short presentation of the issue:.....
 Context of submission:.....



Step two: submission of a project document as described in the Procedural Manual, 23rd version, Section II, p. 27

Step three: quantitative rating following the matrix below

Proposed quantitative matrix for Step 2

i) Proposed matrix

Criterion	Rating	
New information/data/technology Is there new information/data/technology that would justify the need to review the existing code(s), standard(s) or establish a new one?	Yes 20 Intermediate 10 No 0	
Positive impact of new work on public health - Whether new work would result in a document/recommendation that could have a positive impact on public health	Yes 20 Intermediate 10 No 0	
Public health risk ¹⁶ raised by the emerging issue	High 20 Medium 14 Low 8	
Impact on international trade raised by the emerging issue	High 20 Medium 14 Low 8	

¹⁶ The evaluation of the public health risk, according to the *Definitions of Risk Analysis Terms Related to Food Safety* (Procedural Manual, 23rd version, Section IV – Risk analysis, Definition of risk analysis terms related to food safety, p. 116), will have to encompass both the evaluation of the health effect severity of its probability of occurrence.

ii) Additional criteria

If several emerging issues happen to total the same score, or if further consideration is needed before adding an emerging issue to the CCRVDF agenda, attention should be paid to the following factors:

- (a) The need for WHO/FAO assistance in providing science-based guidelines to help the management of the emerging issue in question and the insurance that this prospective assistance will not cause undue delay to the new work in consideration;
- (b) The need for coordination with other international bodies (including for instance the OIE or the VICH) to correctly manage the issue, avoiding both useless duplication of work and regulation gaps;
- (c) When necessary, advice from the JECFA or other relevant international expertise providers should be gathered to evaluate the feasibility of providing a prospective additional expertise on the matter;
- (d) Finally, in an attempt to promote consensus among CCRVDF members, a qualitative evaluation of the support of undertaking new work should be performed.