CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION **E**

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 4   **CX/EXEC 16/72/4**
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

72nd Session

WHO Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland, 30 August – 1 September 2016

CODEX WORK MANAGEMENT – REGULAR REVIEW

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat)

Introduction

1.   The 39th Session of the Commission agreed to discontinue discussion on the Terms of Reference of an internal Secretariat-led review of Codex work management practices and functioning of the Executive Committee and instead requested the Secretariat to regularly review Codex work management as part of the monitoring of the Codex Strategic Plan. The Commission further requested the Secretariat to regularly inform both CCEXEC and CAC on the findings and recommended actions deriving from such a regular review.[1]

2.   This paper outlines operational work management activities contained in the current Strategic Plan 2014-19 and presents the focus of the 2016/17 regular review entrusted to the Secretariat by CAC39.

Analysis and review focus

3.   The implementation status of the Strategic Plan 2014-19 with its four goals, ten objectives and 32 activities continues to be presented to CCEXEC on an annual basis. Against the background of the decisions of CAC39 (para.1), the Secretariat reviewed the activities contained in the current Strategic Plan and identified 14 activities that cover operational work management aspects. As shown in **Table 1**, the majority of work management activities can be found in the dedicated Strategic Goal 4 (SG4).

Table 1: Operational work management activities in the Strategic Plan 2014-19

Strategic Goal (SG)	Activity
SG1: international food standards that address current and emerging food issues	1.1.2. strengthen <u>critical review</u> process to improve standards monitoring[2]
	1.2.1 develop systematic approach to promote identification of <u>emerging issues</u> related to food safety, nutrition, and fair practices in food trade
	1.3.1+2 promote <u>collaboration</u> in standards development with OIE, IPPC and <u>cooperation</u> with other international IGOs and NGOs
SG2: application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards	None
SG3: effective participation of all Codex Members	3.1.2 encourage the use of <u>partnership initiatives</u> to increase effectiveness of participation of developing countries (e.g. through co-hosting)
	3.1.5 promote the use of the official <u>languages</u> of the Commission in Committees and Working Groups
	3.2.3 use Codex meetings as a forum to effectively conduct <u>educational and technical capacity building</u> activities
SG4: effective and efficient work management systems and practices	4.1.1 periodically <u>review the work processes and procedures</u> used by the Commission and its subsidiary bodies to ensure impediments to standard-setting work are identified and addressed, if necessary

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[1] [REP/16 CAC](#) para. 134
[2] This is partially address in CX/EXEC 16/72/2

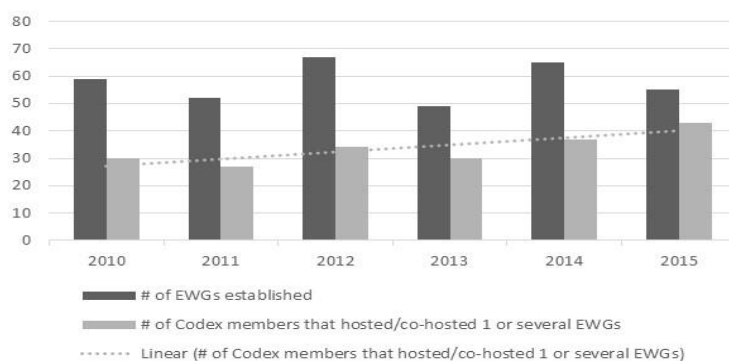| Strategic Goal (SG)	Activity
	4.1.2+3 assess benefits and, where costs effective, implement new technologies to improve (i) Codex communication, (ii) work flow, (iii) management of activities, and (iv) Member participation in Committees and Working Groups
	4.1.4 enhance timely distribution of working documents in the working languages of the Committees/Commission
	4.1.5 increase the scheduling of Working Group meetings in conjunction with Committee meetings
	4.2.1+2 improve understanding of Codex Members and delegates of the importance of consensus building and seek to improve the skill set of chairpersons of Working Groups and Committees to achieve consensus (networking, training, workshops)

4.   Following this analysis, the Secretariat has decided to review in more detail the work processes and procedures used by Electronic Working Groups (EWGs) to explore how successful (effective and efficient) they are in advancing Codex work.

5.   At CCGP29 (2015) India presented a discussion paper (Annex I to CX/GP 15/29/6-Add. 2). The paper also stressed the need for a closer examination of EWGs since the adoption of the Guidelines on EWGs[3] in 2005 and highlighted constraints in participation of developing countries. India's initiative was supported by several Members.[4]

6.   In line with the Guidelines on EWGs, Committees should give first priority to the establishment of EWGs when deciding to undertake work between sessions. Currently 83 percent of all Codex subsidiary bodies are using EWGs to facilitate their work (as of July 2016, there are 57 active EWGs related to 19 Committees).[5] Although data in relation to EWGs is regularly monitored by the Secretariat, no integrated analysis has ever been performed.

7.   Committees choose EWGs as this method of operation not only allows for broader participation of Codex Members including developing countries (SG3), but also entails a significant reduction in cost. In addition, an increasing number of countries are playing a more active role as hosts or co-hosts of EWGs (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Number of EWGs and country hosts/co-hosts 2010-2015

# of EWGs established
# of Codex members that hosted/co-hosted 1 or several EWGs
Linear (# of Codex members that hosted/co-hosted 1 or several EWGs)

8.   Given their increasing use, diversification of host countries and linkage to a number of objectives and activities covered by the current Strategic Plan, EWGs provide a logical context in which to explore operational work management issues (see **Table 1**).

Planning

9.   The Secretariat will work in consultation with the FAO and WHO evaluation units and will report its findings and recommendations to CCEXC73 in 2017.

Recommendation

10.   The Executive Committee is invited to note the presented focus of the 2016/17 regular review of Codex work management and provide any additional elements that could assist the Secretariat in the review.

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[3] Section III of the Procedural Manual
[4] REP15/GP para.98-100
[5] The following subsidiary bodies currently do not have active EWGs: (i) CCGP, (i) CCEURO, (iii) CCMMP* and (iv) CCS* (* working by correspondence).