



## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD ADDITIVES

#### Fifty-First Session

#### GENERAL STANDARD FOR FOOD ADDITIVES (GSFA): REPORT OF THE EWG ON THE GSFA

(Comments of IOFI)

#### IOFI

#### Propylene Glycol and the Codex General Standard for Food Additives

##### 1. Background

At the 50<sup>th</sup> Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) meeting, Propylene Glycol (INS 1520) was proposed for use as a carrier in water-based beverages (Codex General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA), food category 14.1.4.) at 1000 mg/kg in a finished beverage as consumed. The 51<sup>st</sup> CCFA GSFA electronic working group (e-WG) proposed to discontinue the Propylene Glycol beverage provisions in its 2nd circular which was supported by a majority of the e-WG members, yet the 3rd circular recommendation and final e-WG report proposed adoption at 3000 mg/kg for carrier use only.

##### 2. Propylene Glycol use according to the Guidelines for the Use of Flavourings

The Codex Guidelines for the Use of Flavourings (CAC/GL 66-2008) provide principles for the safe use of the components of flavourings evaluated by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) and determined to present no safety concern at estimated levels of intake, or that have established JECFA acceptable daily intakes (ADIs), and for which corresponding specifications of identity and purity have been established and adopted by Codex.

The Guidelines also provide specific provisions for the use of 'non-flavouring food ingredients' in flavourings as follows:

- Section 2.3: Non-flavouring food ingredients are food ingredients, such as food additives and foodstuffs that can be added to flavourings and are necessary for dissolving, dispersing, or diluting flavourings, or are necessary for the production, storage, handling and use of flavourings.
- Section 3.5: Flavourings may contain non-flavouring food ingredients, including food additives and foodstuffs, necessary for their production, storage, handling, and use. Such ingredients may also be used to facilitate the dilution, dissolution, or dispersion of flavourings in food. Non-flavouring food ingredients should be:
  - a) Limited to the lowest level required to ensure the safety and quality of the flavourings, and to facilitate their storage and ease of use;
  - b) Reduced to the lowest level reasonably possible when not intended to accomplish a technological function in the food itself; and,
  - c) Used in accordance with the provisions of the Codex General

Standard for Food Additives (CODEX STAN 192) whenever they are intended to provide a technological function in the finished food.

##### 3. The use of Propylene Glycol in the food and flavour industry

Propylene Glycol is broadly used as a carrier in flavourings added to a large variety of finished food and beverage products.

When used as a carrier in flavourings, Propylene Glycol is neither added directly to nor provides any technological function in the finished food or beverage product. In water-based beverages Propylene Glycol is incorporated only as a carrier in the flavouring and has no other technical use or function in the finished water-based beverages.

Propylene Glycol is an effective carrier in flavourings, especially citrus-based flavourings, for which there may be limited alternative carrier options, for instance in certain countries and cultural-communities, where observance of Halal prohibits the use of ethyl alcohol.

Additional technological benefits of Propylene Glycol include lesser volatility than ethyl alcohol, which is particularly useful for flavourings added to products undergoing thermal processes such as baked goods, meat products and gravies. Moreover, when Propylene Glycol is used as the only carrier solvent at higher concentrations (> 30 % in the flavouring), the water activity is significantly reduced and hence provides increased microbial stability of certain flavourings. Finally, the use of Propylene Glycol is also addressing issues in the workplace related to higher ethyl alcohol flammability.

#### **4. Conclusion**

There is no requirement for Propylene Glycol to be incorporated into the General Standard on Food Additives (GSFA), because it is not a 'direct addition' additive for the final food/beverage product as consumed.

The use of Propylene Glycol as a carrier is appropriately addressed in the Codex Guidelines for the Use of Flavourings (section 3.5 in the CAC/GL 66-2008).

GSFA provisions for the use of Propylene Glycol as a carrier for flavourings are unnecessary and in conflict with the Codex Guidelines.

**Therefore, IOFI supports discontinuation of the draft PG provisions in food categories 14.1.4.1, 14.1.4.2 and 14.1.4.3.**