



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
CODEx COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION  
AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS**

**Twenty-fourth Session**

**Comments of Australia**

**Agenda Item 5**

**PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDANCE ON PAPERLESS USE OF ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATES (REVISION OF THE *GUIDELINES FOR DESIGN, PRODUCTION, ISSUANCE and USE of GENERIC OFFICIAL CERTIFICATES – CXG 38-2001*)**

Australia thanks the working group chaired by the Netherlands, for preparing the Proposed Draft Guidance on paperless use of electronic certificates. Australia has participated and co-chaired in the development of this guidance material, and appreciates the contribution of all participants in the working group.

Australia has experience in the use of paperless electronic certificates, and supports the use of this in agriculture trade. Australia therefore supports developing of this guidance material.

Australia believes that the Electronic Working Group (EWG) has provided guidance material that is a good representation on the feedback and input provided by EWG participants. Australia feels that the guidance material would be enhanced with further editing.

Australia also believe that it is important to ensure that the guidance material does not become too technical in nature.

**Agenda Item 6**

**PROPOSED DRAFT PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND USE OF VOLUNTARY THIRD-PARTY ASSURANCE PROGRAMMES**

Australia would like to thank the United Kingdom, Canada and Mexico for preparing the proposed draft Principles and Guidelines for the Assessment and Use of Voluntary Third-party Assurance Programmes. Australia appreciates the good work of the electronic working group (EWG) and the two physical working groups (PWG) held in Chile and Scotland.

Australia supports this work to guide regulatory approaches to third party assurance schemes in food safety and fair practices in food trade.

Australia considers that the document CX/FICS 18/24/6 Annex 1 is representative of the discussions held at the PWG sessions and is in agreement with the intent of the paper.

Australia notes that the document is flexible, providing a framework and criteria for countries when considering regulatory approaches to use of third party assurance schemes in National Food Control Systems. This allows competent authorities to choose approaches.

Australia consider that in section F: CRITERIA TO ASSESS THE CREDIBILITY AND INTEGRITY OF vTPA PROGRAMMES, the list of questions to assist in assessing the credibility and integrity of vTPA programs are not criteria but are guidance. Australia suggests clarifying this by making the following amendments to section F (13):

**F: ~~CRITERIA TO~~ ASSESSING THE CREDIBILITY AND INTEGRITY OF vTPA PROGRAMMES**

13. Competent authorities that choose to take account of vTPA programmes in their NFCS should satisfy themselves that the private information/data can be trusted and is fit for purpose. In order to do this they may carry out a full or partial assessment of the credibility and integrity of the vTPA programme, commensurate with their intended use of the private information/data. When carrying out such an assessment, competent authorities should ~~ask-select~~ the ~~questions~~ ~~criteria~~ below that are appropriate to the extent of their intended use of the vTPA programme.