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codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

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FAO/WHO PROJECT AND FUND FOR ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN CODEX

FIRST BIENNIAL REVIEW - 2006

Prepared by the Trust Fund Secretariat

Executive Summary

1. The FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex (the Project) became operational in March 2004. Its aims are to support broader and more effective participation in the implementation of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), its committees, working groups and task forces. The main focus of the Project is to support participation by Least Developed and Low Income Countries, and Lower Middle Income Countries; although Upper Middle Income Countries are also eligible for some support¹.

2. The first biennial review² of the 12-year Project, drawing on information from records of the Project Administration and CAC offices and from two questionnaires completed by eligible countries, clearly shows considerable progress towards the Project's three Immediate Objectives and Outputs. There is strong evidence that Project activities have directly contributed to this progress. Improvements to the *widening participation* output have been greatest, followed by the *strengthening overall participation* output. Improvements to the *enhancing scientific/technical participation* output can be expected to increase as countries further develop their capacity.

3. Building capacity within countries is not within the direct scope of the Project, other than through Codex training. However, it is clear from many reports received from eligible countries that Project support for their increased participation in international Codex meetings has had a beneficial flow-on effect to Codex capacity and food safety development at the country level.

¹ According to the World Bank classification these are 60 Least Developed and Low Income Countries, 45 Lower Middle Income Countries and 33 Upper Middle Income Countries.

² FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex. First Biennial Review - 2006. Available from <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/codex/trustfund/en/index4.html>

4. The Project aim is directly in line with Goal 5 of the draft new Strategic Plan for Codex. The achievements made by the Project in its first two years are very positive and, with continued support from donors, signal continued success for the remainder of the Project's 12-year lifespan.

Highlights of the review

- Overall participation by eligible countries has clearly increased since the introduction of Project support in 2004;
- In 2004-2005, 338 participants from 104 different countries received support to participate in 30 Codex meetings;
- Between 2004 and 2005, the number of supported participants increased by 273%, and there was a 23% increase in the number of countries supported;
- 60% of the supported participants in 2004-2005 were from Least Developed and Low Income countries;
- 2005 participants' reports clearly show a very high level of active participation at meetings, as well as significant activities in-country after meetings. Pre-meeting sessions for new delegates have been popular and should be encouraged for all Codex meetings;
- In 2005, 75% of participants were the only delegates from their country and 94% were in delegations of four or less;
- Project expenditure 2004-2005 totalled US\$ 2,320,569;
- 58% of 2004-2005 meeting support expenditure was on Least Developed and Low Income countries' participants;
- Between 2004 and 2005, the practice of some eligible countries to fully self-fund their participation at Codex meetings increased;
- In 2005, 90% of eligible countries participated in Codex meetings, 70% fully or partly funded by the project and 20% fully self-funded. 57% of Upper Middle Income countries are at the matched funding stage;
- Eight eligible countries attended no Codex meetings in 2004-2005. For some other eligible countries participation was not continuous from 2004 to 2005. Small Island Developing States face particular challenges, and extra support to them is warranted;
- A number of eligible countries who rank high in the list of food import and export countries (in US\$ value) have not been particularly active in past Codex activities at the international level;
- From 2003 to 2005, donations received totalled US\$ 2,915,984. 12 donors made a total of 24 donations ranging in size from \$US 28,000 to \$US 715,000;
- The Codex Training Package and Codex training courses are valued by eligible countries;
- The relevance of Codex would be enhanced for some member countries if they had a greater influence on its work agenda; and
- Political commitment; a national food safety policy and administration; food safety legislation; and stakeholder involvement all seem to be critical components of food safety progress. Countries have expressed a strong need for further international assistance in these areas.

Recommendations to strengthen the Project and Codex development generally:

1. The status of Small Island Developing States be reflected by slight improvements to the Project conditions;
2. Strategies be implemented to encourage greater participation in Codex by less active eligible countries who are high value importers and exporters of food;
3. Ongoing, year to year, participation in Codex meetings by all eligible countries be encouraged, with increased self-funded participation encouraged particularly for Group 2 and Group 3 countries;
4. Codex meeting organizers be encouraged to arrange pre-meeting orientation sessions and less experienced delegates be encouraged to participate;
5. Training using the Codex Training Package be strongly encouraged and be further supported by the Project;

6. Codex training should include how to influence the Codex agenda, how to facilitate/propose the initiation of new work within Codex and other FAO/WHO bodies etc, so that the Codex Alimentarius remains relevant to all members;
7. Encourage countries to identify and actively pursue opportunities for international help to achieve defined national food safety and control priorities; encourage donor agencies cooperation and avoidance of interdependency with recipients; and
8. Investigations be routinely undertaken to monitor the activities and impact of the Project and to identify the ongoing support needs of the eligible countries.

* * *

A. INTRODUCTION

The FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex (the Project) became operational in March 2004. After two years' operations, this report provides a brief review of the Project and its past activities and makes recommendations for its continued effective implementation.

B. BACKGROUND

Project Goal and Overview

The Project was launched in February 2003 with the goal of improving global public health and food security, by promoting the provision of safer and more nutritious food and contributing to a reduction in foodborne disease. The Project duration was set at 12 years with an estimated total funding need of US\$ 40 million and with a minimum funding threshold of US\$ 500,000 before Project operations would commence. This minimum threshold was reached in March 2004.

The Project aims to support broader and more effective participation in the implementation of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), its committees, working groups and task forces. The main focus of the Project is to support participation by Low Income and Lower Middle Income Countries, although Upper Middle Income Countries are also eligible for some support. Support to eligible countries is principally through the payment of air fares and per diem for participants to attend meetings, with a small proportion of Project funds being used to provide training and technical support directly related to participation in Codex activities.

Clear criteria have been formulated to take into account the varying interests and objectives of donors and eligible countries. The criteria are aimed at balancing the need to assist all eligible countries, with a particular focus on the Low Income Countries; encouraging the right people to be sent to the right meetings; and reinforcing collaborative national Codex structures and stakeholder participation.

Project Governance and Management

The Project is guided by the FAO/WHO Consultative Group for the Trust Fund (CGTF) consisting of senior FAO and WHO staff. The CGTF held eight meetings during the 2003-2005 period. Daily management of the Project is implemented by WHO following normal WHO procedures, and the daily administration is conducted by WHO in accordance with WHO's financial regulations.

Project Immediate Objectives and Outputs

The Project document³ outlines three Immediate Objectives and three Outputs for the Project. These are reproduced in *Figure 1*.

³ FAO/WHO Cooperative Programme. Multi Donor Project. Project Document 17 June 2003. Available at http://www.who.int/foodsafety/codex/en/proj_doc_e.pdf

Figure 1 - Immediate Objectives and Outputs***Immediate Objective 1***

Countries that are members of the CAC, but which are unable to effectively participate in the CAC and its committee/task force process because of the limited availability of government funds to support an ongoing presence in the continuing work of the Commission and its committees, will be assisted to initiate a program of participation in Commission meetings and in the work of those committees/task forces addressing issues of priority health and economic concern to them.

Output 1 – Widening participation in Codex

The number of countries routinely providing delegations to CAC sessions and to its committees/task forces, that address issues of priority health and economic concern for their specific countries, will have increased.

Immediate Objective 2

Countries that are members of the CAC, that have as yet to routinely develop and put forth national considerations in the Codex standard setting process, will be empowered to effectively prepare for and participate in the work of those committees addressing issues of priority health and economic concern to them.

Output 2 – Strengthening overall participation in Codex

The number of countries routinely developing and putting forth national considerations in the Codex standard setting process will have increased along with their participation in Codex committees/task forces.

Immediate Objective 3

Countries that are members of the CAC, that have as yet to participate actively in the provision of scientific/technical data in support of the standard setting process, will be assisted to initiate a programme of scientific/technical participation in committees addressing issues of priority health and economic concern to them.

Output 3 – Enhancing scientific/technical participation in Codex

The number of countries that are actively providing scientific/technical advice in support of the Codex standard setting process will have increased.

Other Matters of Interest

Apart from the formal Project objectives, a number of other matters of interest have been raised at CAC meetings and in discussions with donors. These largely relate to the development of Codex within the eligible countries. Building capacity within countries is not within the scope of the Project (other than through Codex training) but is addressed by FAO, WHO, Standards Development and Trade Facility and other agencies' country development programs. However, it has been clear from many reports received from eligible countries that Project support for their increased participation in Codex meetings at the international level has had a beneficial flow-on effect to Codex capacity at the country level.

C. ACTIVITIES 2004 AND 2005**Eligible Country Grouping**

To maintain a focus on countries with the most need, the Project uses lists from three independent sources to place eligible countries into three Groups. The three independent lists are the UN list of Least Developed Countries; the World Bank list of Low Income and Middle Income Countries and the UNDP list of Human Development. The Groups are reviewed annually by the CGTF using the latest available lists. *Figure 2* shows the components of the three Groups as at December 2005.

Figure 2 - Components of the Groups as at December 2005

Group 1	
1a	Least Developed Countries
1b	Low Income Countries with Low Human Development Low Income Countries with Medium Human Development
Group 2	
	Lower Middle Income Countries with Medium Human Development Lower Middle Income Countries with High Human Development
Group 3	
3a	Upper Middle Income Countries with Medium Human Development
3b	Upper Middle Income Countries with High Human Development

Matched Funding Requirements

The Project currently expects countries to cover all costs of their participation after a specified number of years:

Group 1	Low Income Countries	8 years
Group 2	Lower Middle Income Countries	6 years
Group 3	Upper Middle Income Countries	4 years

To achieve this expectation in stages, a matched funding scale is currently required as shown in *Figure 3*.

Figure 3 - Matched Funding Scale as at December 2005

Group	Year							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	100%
2	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	100%		
3	0%	50%	50%	100%				

It was envisaged that Group 3 countries would have the capacity to move to 50% funding in the second year. (Operationally, 50% funding means that for each meeting participant that the Project supports in the year, the country is required to self-fund another meeting participant). 57% of Group 3 countries are at the matched funding stage and a sample audit revealed that countries are honouring their matched funding obligations. A number of Group 3 countries however have had, or envisage having, difficulties in matching funding. This appears to be a particular problem for countries with small populations, especially small island nations.

In recognition of the problems facing Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) was established in 2001.

SIDS face a range of constraints including a narrow resource base that restricts economies of scale; small domestic markets and heavy dependence on a few external and remote markets; high costs for energy, infrastructure, transportation, communication and servicing; long distances from export markets and import resources; low and irregular international traffic volumes; little resilience to natural disasters; growing populations; high volatility of economic growth; limited opportunities for the private sector and a proportionately large reliance on their public sector; and fragile natural environments.

UN-OHRLLS lists 51 SIDS, of which 28 are countries currently eligible for support from the Project. (The remaining 23 SIDS are not yet members of Codex, except Bahamas and Singapore, whose High Income Status prevents them from receiving Project support).

Figure 4 - SIDS by Groups

	Total	Group 1a	Group 1b	Group 2	Group 3a	Group 3b
SIDS	28	7	1	9	6	5

In recognition of the additional problems faced by SIDS, it is proposed to reflect their status by including a new component in Group 3a. The proposed new component is shown *in italics* in Figure 5.

Figure 5 - Proposed Revised Components of the Groups

Group 1	
1a	Least Developed Countries
1b	Low Income Countries with Low Human Development Low Income Countries with Medium Human Development
Group 2	
	Lower Middle Income Countries with Medium Human Development Lower Middle Income Countries with High Human Development
Group 3	
3a	<i>Upper Middle Income Countries and Small Island Developing States</i> Upper Middle Income Countries with Medium Human Development
3b	Upper Middle Income Countries with High Human Development

A revised matched funding scale is also proposed. This allows Group 3a countries an extra year's support at 50% as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6 - Proposed Revised Matched Funding Scale

Group	Year							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	100%
2	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	100%		
3a	0%	50%	50%	50%	100%			
3b	0%	50%	50%	100%				

Recommendation 1

That the status of Small Island Developing States be reflected by slight improvements to the Project conditions.

Trade in Food

A number of countries have suggested that trade in food could be considered as a factor in determining support from the Project. A review has therefore been made of the countries' available statistics on the value of food imports and exports in US\$ as recorded by the World Trade Organization 2004. Of the 138 countries eligible for support from the Project, food import and export figures are only available for 62 countries (23% of Group 1, 62% of Group 2 and 47 % of Group 3, the low figure in Group 3 possibly reflecting the large proportion of SIDS in that group).

The results generally are not surprising. Most High Income Countries (who are not eligible for Project support) are high or very high value importers and exporters of food. Most Upper Middle Income Countries (Groups 3a and 3b) were ranked at the medium, high or very high value levels. Lower Middle Income Countries (Group 2) were spread throughout the rankings. For many of the Least Developed Countries and

Low Income Countries (Group 1a and Group 1b) there are no World Trade Organization food trade statistics available. Where statistics do exist, they show that the Least Developed Countries (Group 1a) and most of the Low Income Countries (Group 1b) were ranked at the low level or very low level of food import and export values.

Figure 7 provides some details of these results, with the names of those countries that are exceptions to the expected rankings.

Figure 7 - Group Rankings (Total food imports and exports value in 2004)

Group		Country values available	Very High Value	High Value	Medium Value	Low Value	Very Low Value
1a	Least Developed Countries	6/43				2	4
1b	Low Income Countries	8/17		Democratic People's Republic of Korea India	Pakistan	4	1
2	Lower Middle Income Countries	28/45	Brazil China Russian Federation	Indonesia Philippines South Africa Turkey Ukraine	7	6	7
3a	Upper Middle Income Countries with Medium Human Development	6/15	1			Mauritius Oman Panama Venezuela	Dominica
3b	Upper Middle Income Countries with High Human Development	14/18	1	4	Argentina Costa Rica Croatia Lithuania Slovak Republic	Estonia Latvia Uruguay	Barbados

The comparative food import and export rankings are simply based on total US\$ values and therefore give no indication of the importance of food trade to a country's individual economy, nor do they indicate countries that make a significant contribution to world supply of a single food or food group. Food aid consignments (which are required to comply with international standards) are also not reflected in the rankings.

The available food import and export figures generally confirm the current grouping of eligible countries. This, and the absence of complete data on eligible countries' food imports and exports indicates that there is little value at this stage in adding food import and export rankings to the Income and Human Development lists that are the current basis for the groupings.

The figures do however, give some indication of a country's contribution to overall world trade in food and highlight some medium to very high value food import and export countries (such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Russian Federation and Ukraine) who, based on Codex meeting

records, have not been particularly active in Codex and who could be strongly encouraged to become more involved.

Recommendation 2

That strategies be implemented to encourage greater participation in Codex by less active eligible countries who are high value importers and exporters of food.

Allocation of Support

The Project has a target of providing support to countries in the following proportions: Group 1 - 60%; Group 2 - 30%; Group 3 - 10%. The decision on the level of support to each Group in any one year is based on the number of applications received, the total available funds and the 60% - 30% - 10% targets. An initial proportional allocation of meetings across the Groups is made each year by the CGTF. It should be noted that the countries themselves choose which meeting(s) they wish to attend and also nominate the delegates. The Project only requires countries to make their choices in full consultation with all interested parties (including local FAO/WHO representatives) and submit choices through the National Codex Contact Point.

Initial proportional allocations in 2004 and 2005 are outlined in *Figure 8*.

Figure 8 - Initial Allocation of Meetings 2004 and 2005

Year	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
2004	2 meetings	1 meeting	1 meeting
2005	3 meetings	2 meetings	1 meeting

Participant Levels

There was a significant increase in Project activities between 2004 and 2005, even allowing for the fact that 2004 activities only commenced in March of that year. The annual number of participants supported by the Project to attend Codex meetings and training increased by 273% between 2004 and 2005. There was also a 23% increase in the number of countries supported. Not all countries that participated in 2004 continued participation in 2005. In the combined 2004 and 2005 period, 104 different countries received support to participate in 30 Codex meetings.

Figure 9 provides comparative details of actual participants, percentages across the three Groups, countries and meetings for 2004 and 2005.

Figure 9 - Participation 2004 and 2005

Year	Total number of participants	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Number of Countries	Number of meetings/courses
2004*	83	60%	29%	11%	75	14
2005	310	50%	34%	16%	92	17
2005 (excluding training)	255	60%	30%	10%	87	16

*March to December 2004 only

On participant numbers, the 2004 Group percentages of 60% - 29% - 11% were very close to the Project target of 60% - 30% - 10%. Although the total 2005 Group percentages of 50% - 34% - 16% were not as

close to the target, these were significantly affected by a number of countries' attendance at a Codex training course initiated by the Project in the Latin America and the Caribbean Codex region following specific requests for training from that region (which only has two Group 1 countries). The last line of *Figure 9* reflects 2005 participation by Groups excluding the training course and shows that the meeting-only support was on target for 2005.

Expenditure Levels

On expenditure for meeting support (excluding training) for the 2004-2005 period, the Group percentages are very close to the target as can be seen in *Figure 10*. (Note that Group expenditure is only recorded in two items, with Groups 2 and 3 being combined).

Figure 10 - Expenditure and Group percentages 2004-2005

	Least Developed Countries & Low Income Countries (Group 1)	Middle Income Countries (Group 2 and Group 3)
Total Meeting Support Costs 2004-2005 (excluding training)	US\$ 1,058,529	US\$ 767,882
Percentages	58%	42%

Total expenditure 2004-2005 totalled US\$ 2,320,569 (including Program Support Costs) and was made up as follows:

Support to eligible countries:	
Least Developed and Low Income Countries	US\$ 1,058,529
Middle Income Countries	US\$ 767,882
Training and technical support	US\$ 284,082
Project management and administration:	US\$ 210,076

Regional Activity

Figure 11 and *Figure 12* provide details of supported participation in 2004 and 2005 by Codex region. All Codex regions experienced an increase in the number of countries supported between 2004 and 2005 (with the exception of the Near East which remained the same at six countries in both years). Notably, the South West Pacific region achieved a 100% supported participation rate in 2005. The Latin America and the Caribbean region increased its supported participation by ten countries and its rate to 88% in 2005.

Figure 11 - 2004 Supported Participation Rate by Codex Region

Codex Region	Number of countries eligible	Number of countries supported	Supported participation rate
Africa	44	28	64%
Asia	17	10	59%
Europe	18	6	33%
Latin America & the Caribbean	31	18	58%
Near East	14	6	43%
South West Pacific	9	7	78%
Total for 2004	133	75	56%

Figure 12 - 2005 Supported Participation Rate by Codex Region

Codex Region	Number of countries eligible	Number of countries supported	Supported participation rate
Africa	44	30	68%
Asia	17	12	71%
Europe	21	7	33%
Latin America & the Caribbean	32	28	88%
Near East	15	6	40%
South West Pacific	9	9	100%
Total for 2005	138	92	67%

Participant Costs

Using standard WHO rates and procedures, the Project pays the necessary airfares and per diem for participants to attend Codex meetings. As meetings take place all over the world and participants originate from all over the world, individual costs vary significantly. This cost variation has no impact on the choice of meeting or the country's individual level of support. For planning purposes, the Project uses an historical average cost per participant calculated by dividing the total meeting support costs (excluding training) by the total number of participants supported. *Figure 13* provides this information for 2004 and 2005 including a split between Group 1 and Groups 2 & 3 for the combined two years.

Figure 13 - 2004 and 2005 Average Travel Costs (excluding training)

Year	Total	Group 1	Groups 2 & 3
2004	US\$ 5,558		
2005	US\$ 5,353		
2004-2005	US\$ 5,404	US\$ 5,319	US\$ 5,524

Continual efforts are made to keep Project costs down by using the most economical travel options and this, together with increased airline competitiveness and improvements in air routings as countries develop, are contributors to the reduction in average cost. The lower average cost of Group 1 travel is likely to be because most Group 1 countries are located closer to the majority of past meeting venues (i.e. in Africa and Europe).

Donation Numbers and Size

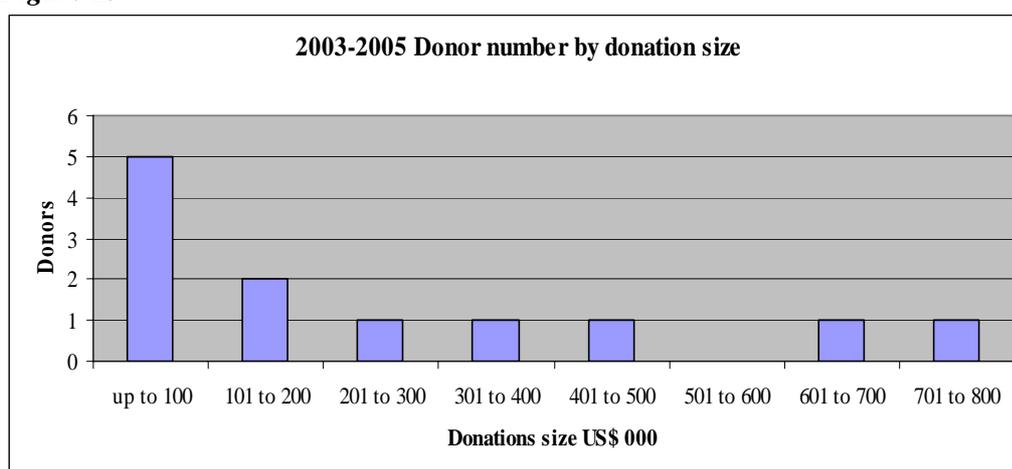
In 2003 after the Project was launched, six donors gave funds totaling US\$ 448,809. This sum was carried forward into 2004 awaiting further donations to reach the threshold level of US\$ 500,000 required for the Project to commence. From 2003 to 2005, 24 donations were received from 12 donors and totaled \$US 2,915,984. In addition, a number of donors made multi-year pledges running into 2006. The distribution of donation numbers per donor is shown in *Figure 14*.

Figure 14 - Donation Numbers per Donor

	1 donation	2 donations	3 donations	4 donations
2003 - 2005	4 donors	4 donors	4 donors	0 donors
2003 - 2005, plus 2006 donations pledged in 2005	4 donors	2 donors	4 donors	2 donors

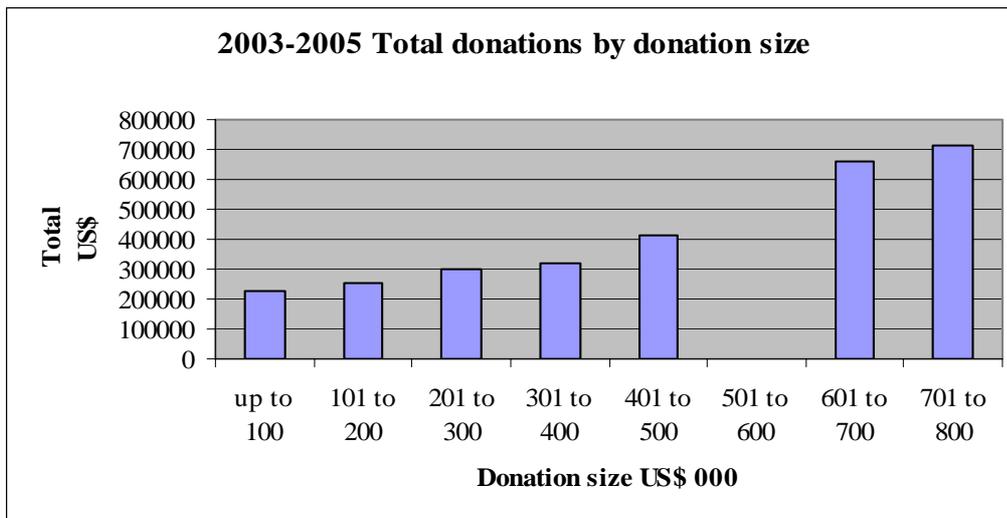
Donations received from 2003 to 2005 ranged in size from \$US 28,000 to \$US 715,000 with the majority being under \$US 200,000. *Figure 15* shows donor numbers by donation size.

Figure 15



Although there are fewer of the larger sized donations, their impact on the total level of donations was very significant as can be seen in *Figure 16*.

Figure 16



Donation Timing

Although donations are received at various times of the year, a significant number arrive in the November to January period as can be seen in *Figure 17* and make up a major part of the total donations received, shown in *Figure 18*. This timing, and the donations' size, may be influenced by countries' end of financial years.

Figure 17

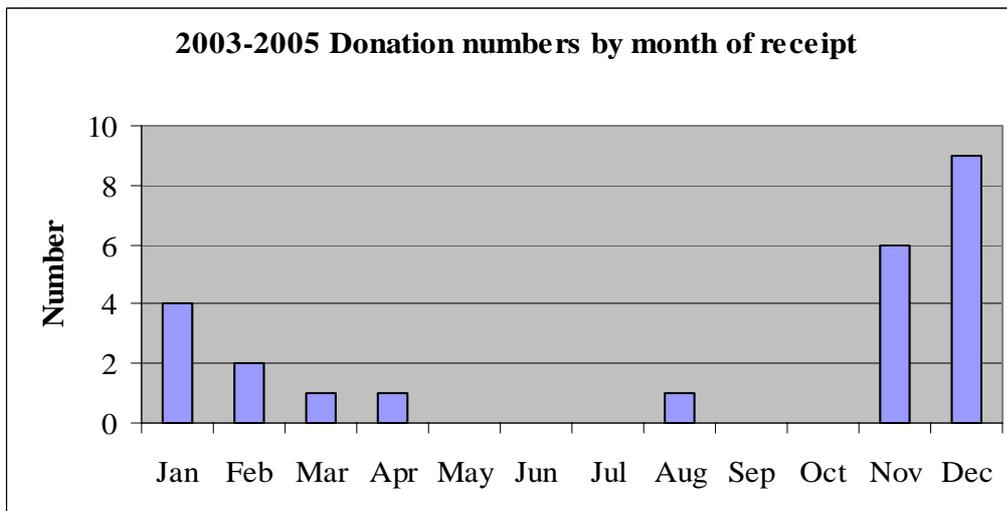
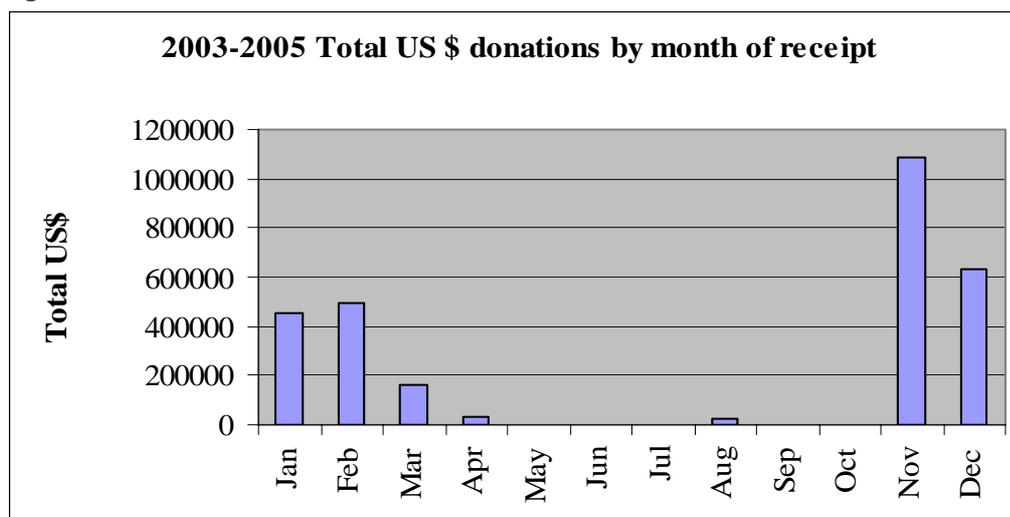


Figure 18



D. WIDENING PARTICIPATION IN CODEX

Immediate Objective 1 and Output 1 (*Figure 1*) refer to widening country participation in Codex meetings.

Supported Participation

Figure 9 indicated the significant overall increase between 2004 and 2005 in the numbers of participants and the numbers of countries supported by the Project. Only 8 eligible countries attended no Codex meetings (Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Moldova Republic, Pakistan, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). For a number of other eligible countries, participation was not continuous from 2004 to 2005. To understand more about participation in Codex meetings, information from countries and from past Codex meeting attendance records were examined in early 2006. Full results have been reported separately⁴ and a summary of the key points follows.

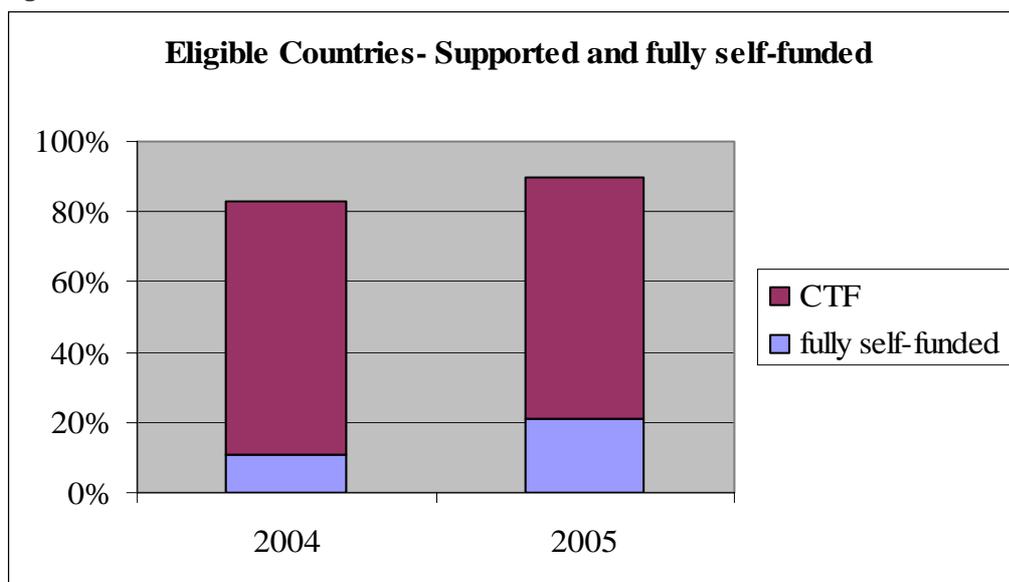
Eligible Countries - Supported and Self-funded

A number of eligible countries fully funded all their delegates to all meetings attended during 2004 and/or 2005, with no support at all from the Project. There was a pleasing increase in this practice of fully self-funding between 2004 and 2005 which is in line with the intended limited life of the Project. *Figure 19* illustrates this increase, showing that in 2005, 90% of eligible countries sent delegations to Codex meetings, 70% funded by the Project in whole or in part; and 20% fully self-funded.

For the majority of meetings in 2004 and 2005, the project-supported delegate was the only delegate from the country but for some meetings, countries also self-funded additional delegates. Note that in the figures below, these partially funded countries are included as "CTF" supported. "Fully self-funded" are where countries fully funded all of their delegations to all meetings attended in the year, with no support from the Project.

⁴ Kobelt E (2006) *Participation at Codex meetings since the introduction of the Codex Trust Fund*. WHO internal report

Figure 19



Information provided by countries reveals two main reasons for the fully self-funding. The majority of the countries belonging to Groups 2 and 3 reported that their Codex budgets did not need funding from the Project and the Group 1 countries reported that they self-funded as they were unaware of, or did not have enough information about, support available from the Project. This latter point is somewhat surprising, given past promotion of the Project to National Codex Contact Points. *Figures 20 to 23* provide a breakdown of the Project-supported and fully self-funded percentages for eligible countries for 2004 and 2005 by Groups and Codex Regions.

Figure 20

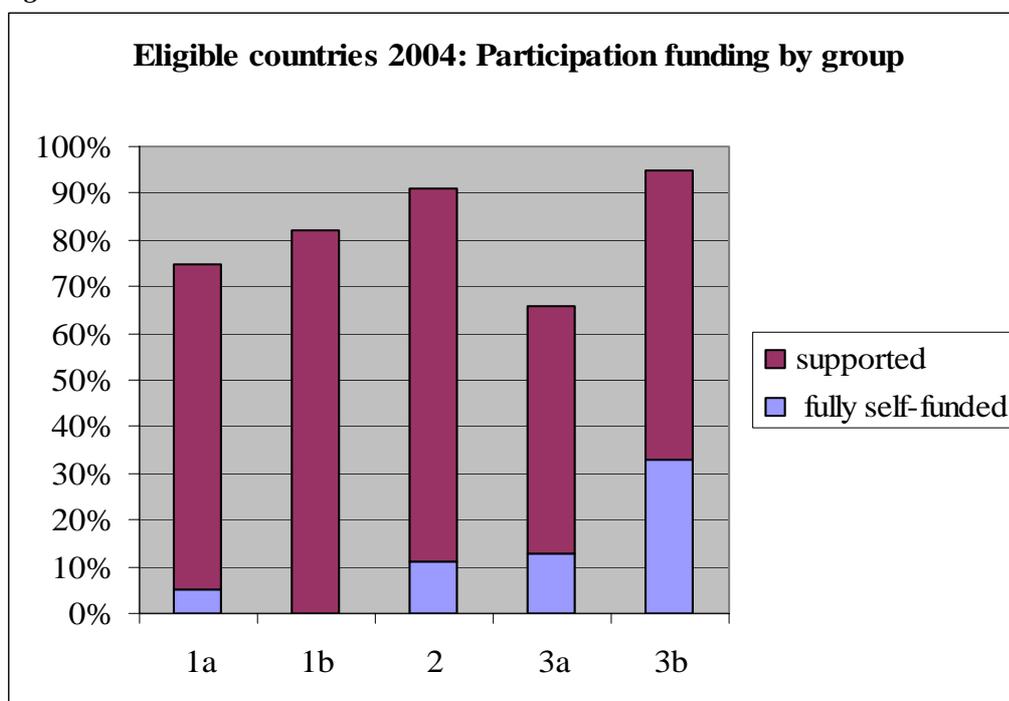


Figure 21

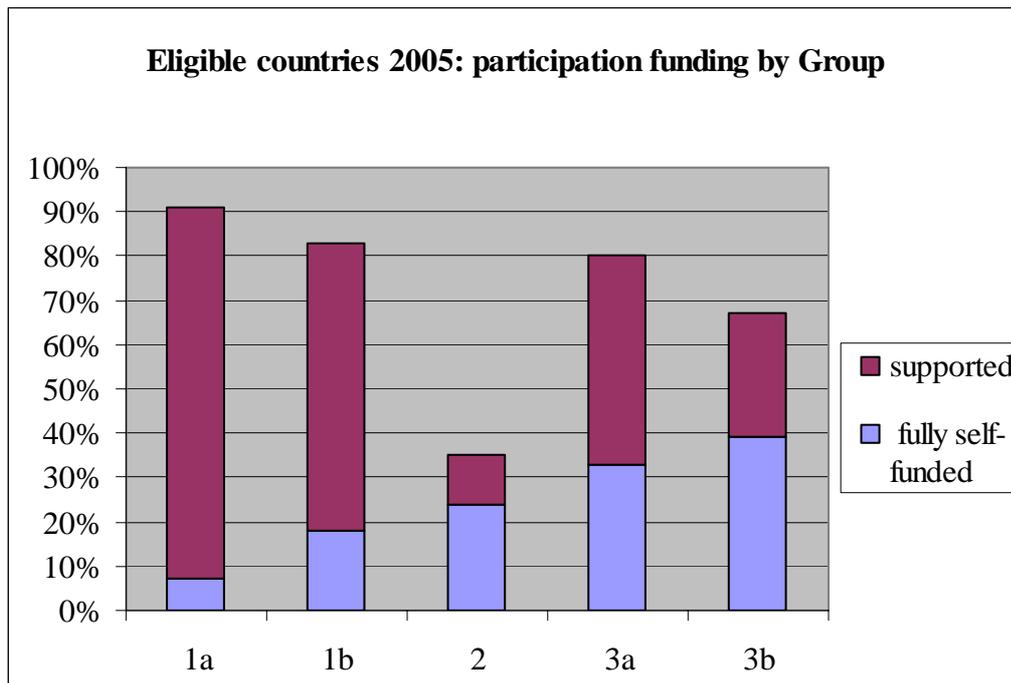


Figure 22

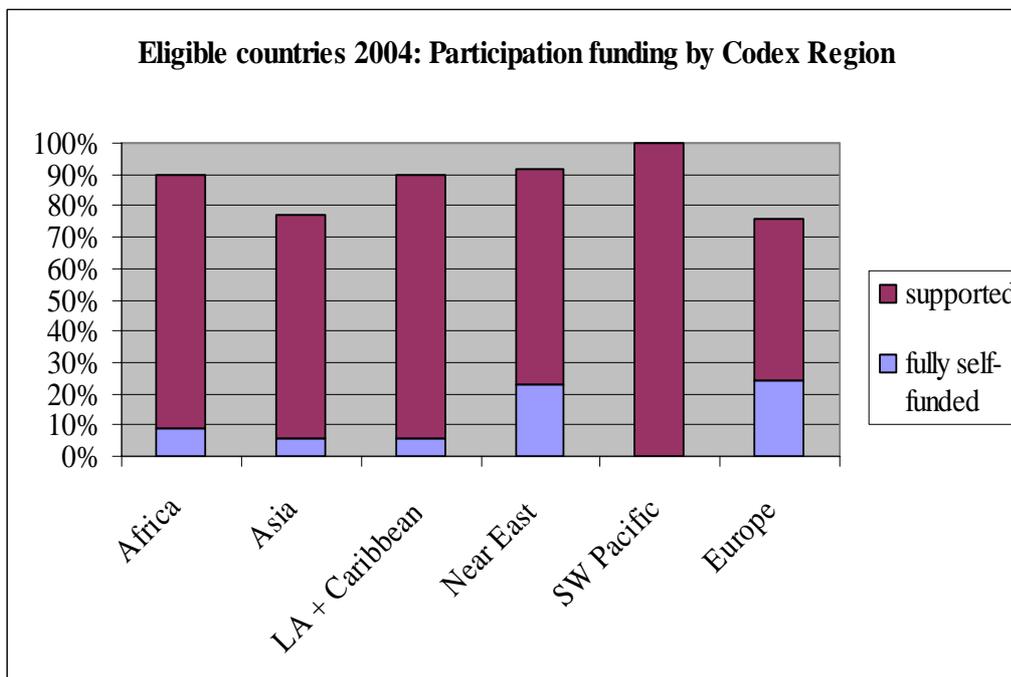
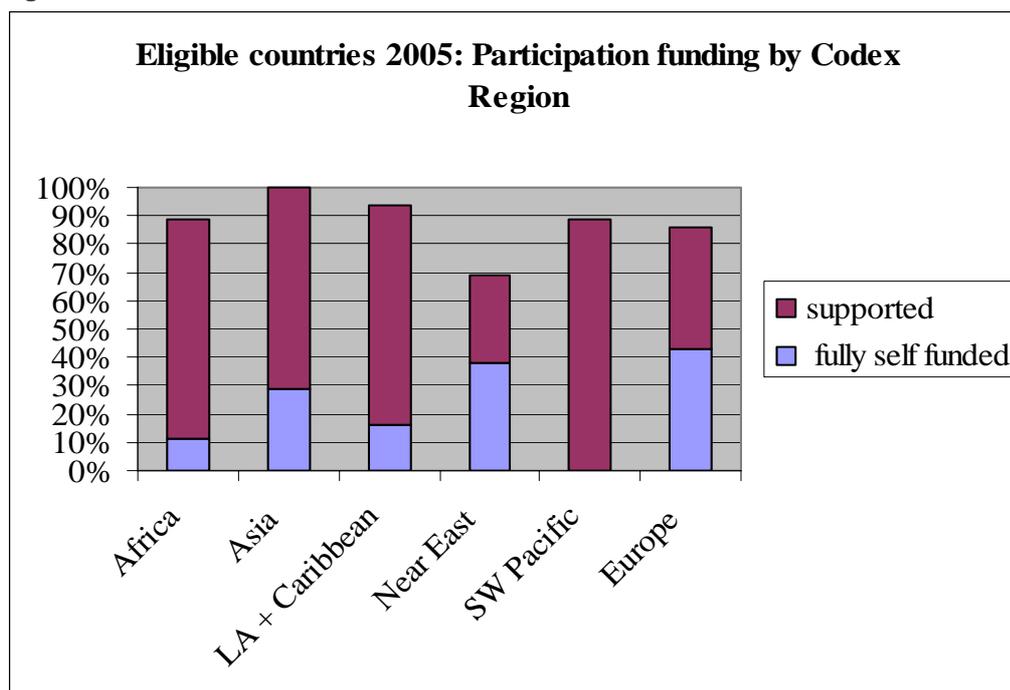


Figure 23



As some questions have been raised about the appropriateness of Project support to participants forming part of large delegations, a review of 2005 Codex meeting attendance records was undertaken. Of 255 delegates supported by the Project in 2005, 75% were the only delegates from their country, a further 12 % had one self-funded colleague (i.e. a total delegation of two), a further 7% had two or three self-funded colleagues (i.e. a total delegation of three or four). CAC was the meeting where the five countries had delegations of four.

Overall, 94% of supported delegates in 2005 were in delegations of four or less. The remaining 6% were seven countries with eight delegations of five or more people. One of these countries (two delegations) has not sought Project support in 2006. Amendments will be made to the Project guidelines, application and report forms to strongly discourage countries from seeking Project support for participants in large delegations.

Eligible Non-applicant Countries in 2006

40 eligible countries have not applied for Project support for 2006. Eight of these have never received Project support, 12 received from Project support in 2004 and/or 2005 and 21 participated in Codex meetings in the last two years through self-funding. It is vitally important for the Project Administration to encourage applications every year from those eligible countries who need funds while supporting their transition towards self-funding.

Recommendation 3

That ongoing, year to year, participation in Codex meetings by all eligible countries be encouraged, with increased self-funded participation particularly by Group 3 and Group 2 countries.

Types of Meetings Attended

Codex meetings can be classified into four types - CAC meetings; horizontal committee meetings (i.e. those on general subjects); vertical meetings (i.e. those on specific subjects); and task forces.

The distribution of the eligible countries' participation in the different types of Codex meetings in 2004 and 2005 was generally similar to that of non-eligible countries. The CAC was by far the most preferred meeting, followed by the horizontal meetings and then vertical meetings. Fewest countries participated in the task forces. *Figure 24* and *Figure 25* illustrate these preferences for 2004 and 2005.

Figure 24

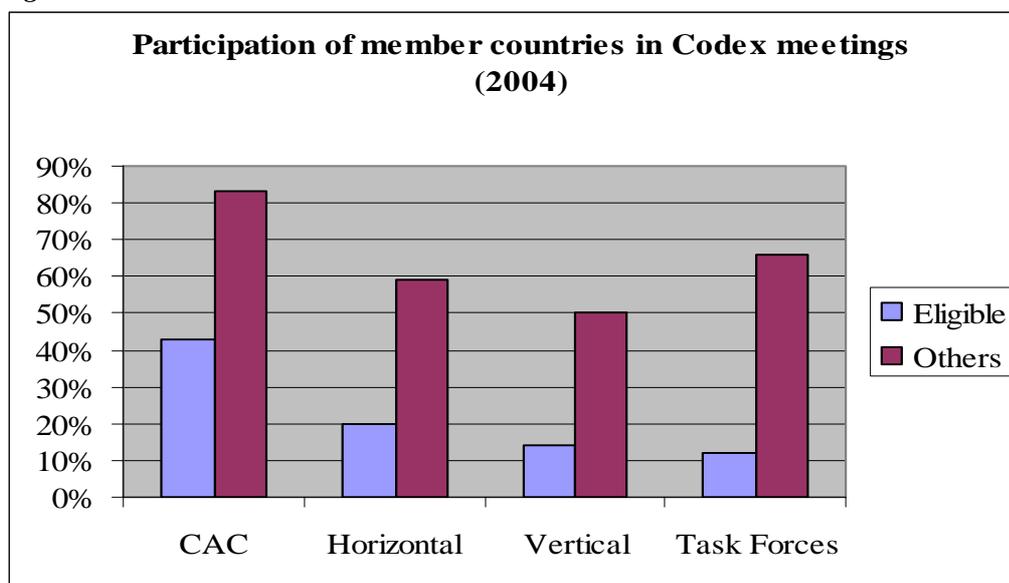
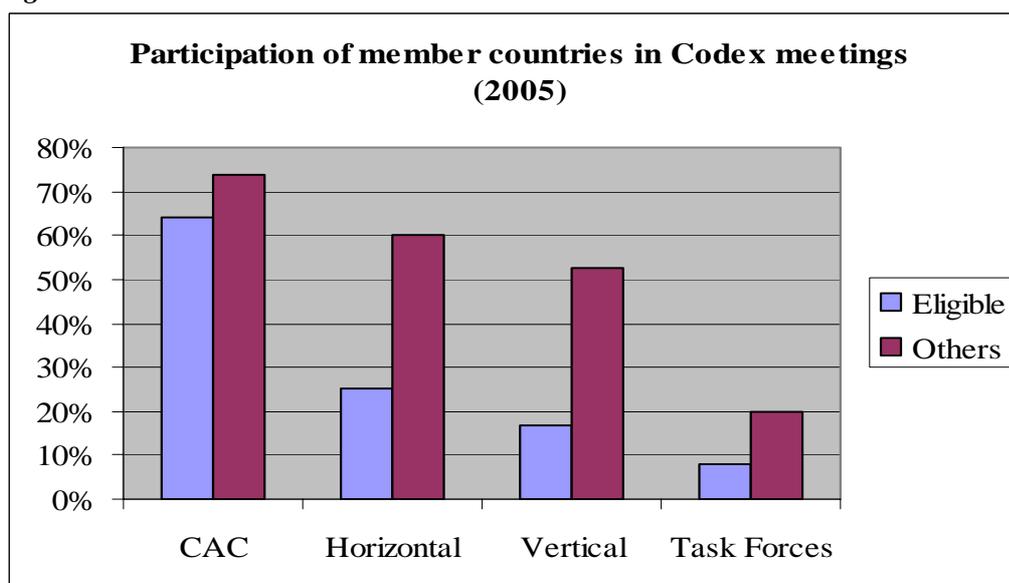


Figure 25



Types of Delegations

As can be seen in *Figure 26* and *Figure 27*, in 2005 eligible countries mostly sent delegates from government health and trade departments. It is perhaps surprising that the agriculture departments were not more widely represented, given that Project support is conditional on cooperation between health and agriculture departments; however non-eligible countries also mostly sent government health department delegates. Trade delegates were less common from non-eligible countries, who preferred to send other representatives such as from private companies and consumer organizations.

Figure 26

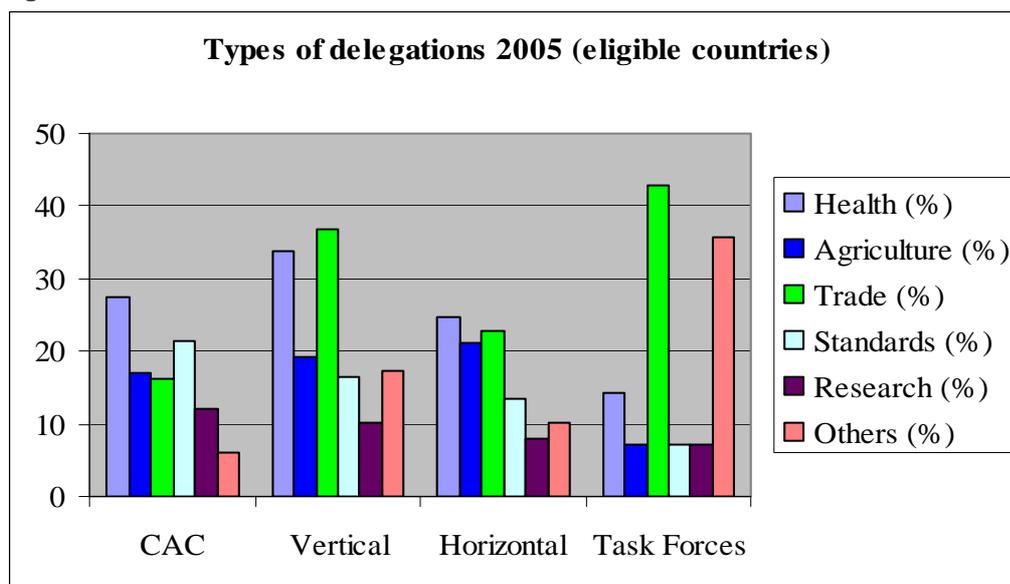
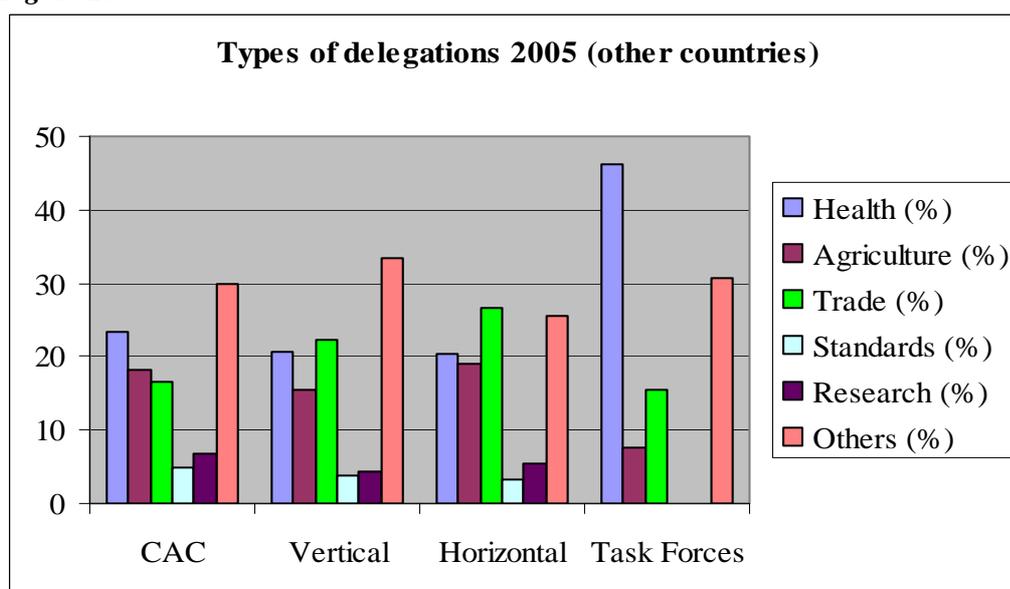


Figure 27



Trends in Participation

Overall participation by eligible countries has clearly increased since the introduction of Project support in 2004. Participation growth has been strongest for vertical and horizontal committee meetings. Contrastingly, overall participation by non-eligible countries has either decreased or has only very slightly increased in the same period. While data is only available for a short time frame, there is a strong argument that the better trend of eligible countries is directly due to Project support. *Figures 28 to 31* illustrate these trends and include 2003 participation i.e. before the Project support became available.

Figure 28

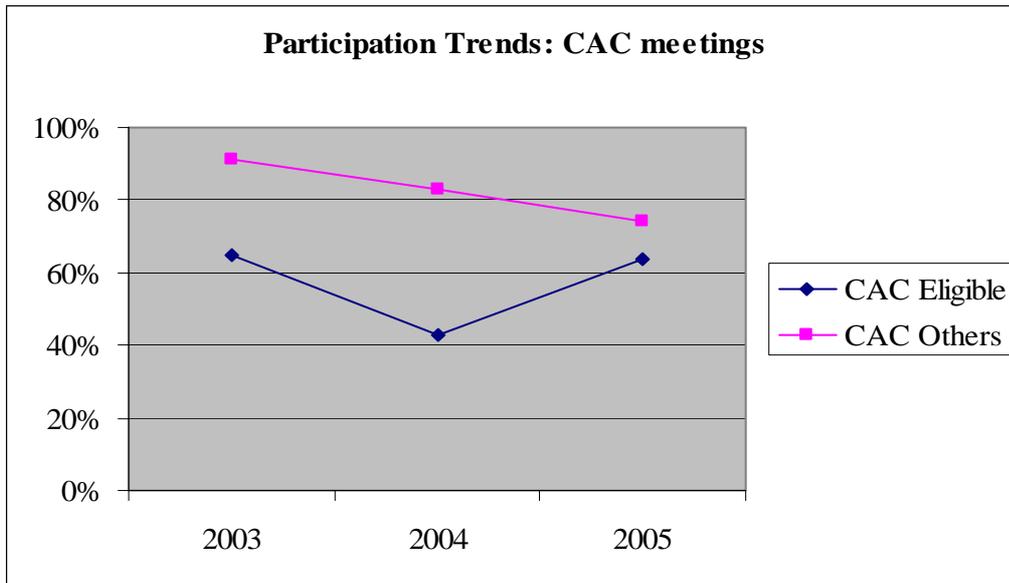


Figure 29

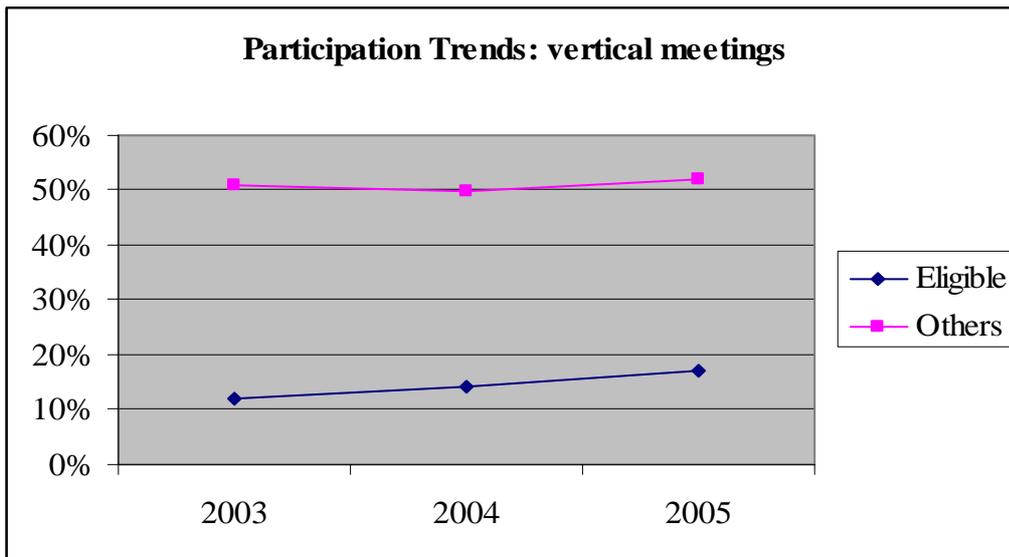


Figure 30

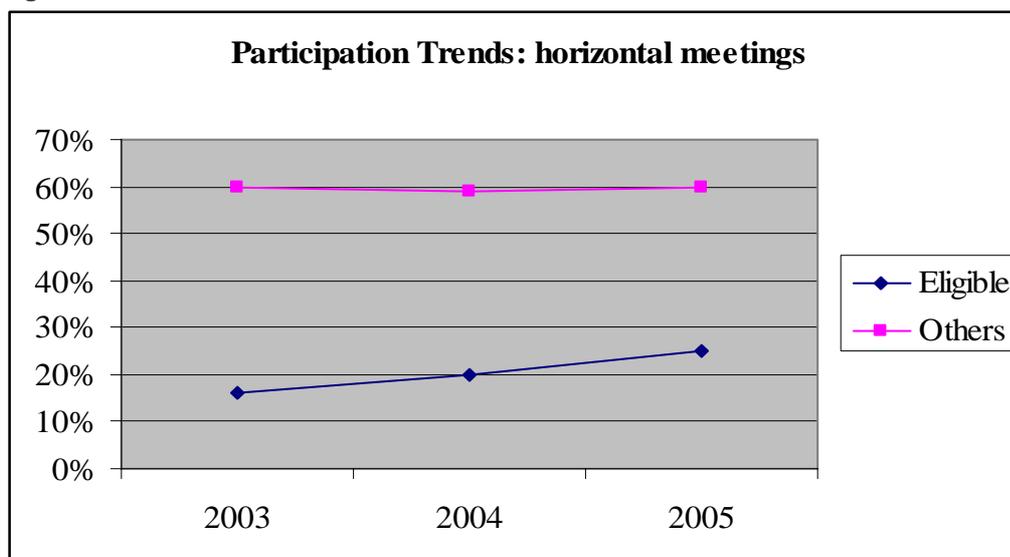
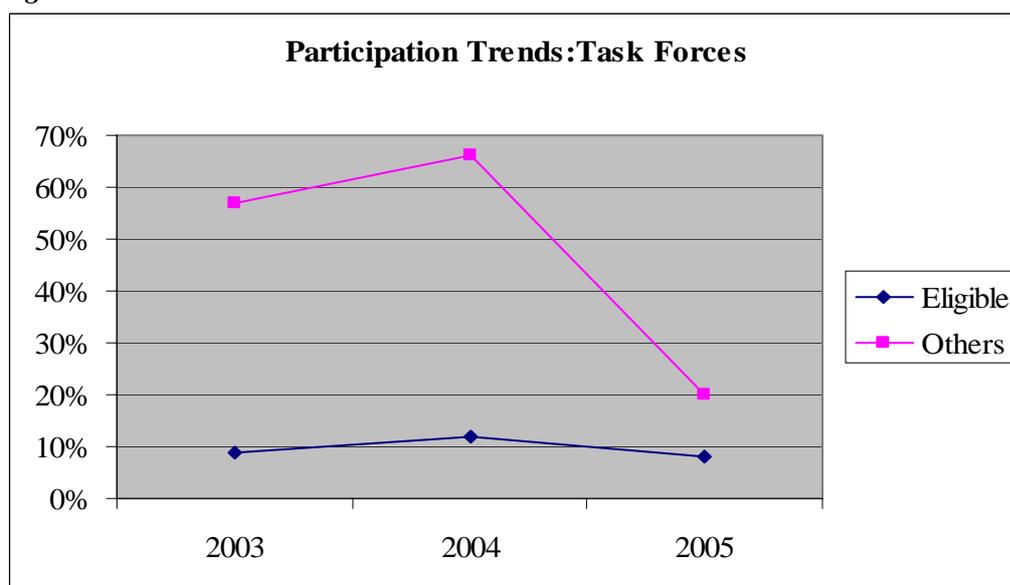


Figure 31



E. STRENGTHENING OVERALL PARTICIPATION IN CODEX

Immediate Objective 2 and Output 2 (*Figure 1*) refer to increasing countries' preparation for and participation in Codex meetings.

Activities at Codex Meetings

An examination of the 76 reports submitted by countries who received Project support in 2005 clearly showed a very high level of active participation by many of the delegates. Typical comments from the reports follow *in italics*.

"...we were asked to review a document the results of which will be of great value to our country...";

"...documents were prepared before the meeting, tabled and our delegate took the floor several times on topics of concern....";

"...various oral interventions were made on different subjects, endorsing positions of common interest to our region and defending matters of international interest in terms of safety and quality..."

For a number of country delegates, participation was a novel experience. While active participation in the formal meeting process may not have been a major outcome for these new participants, they reported the significant benefits from networking outside of the main meetings - exchanging ideas and establishing contacts with Codex colleagues with similar interests. The formal meetings also provided an excellent insight of the Codex processes *"...just sitting in the meeting was an eye-opener itself..."*

Pre-meeting Orientation

It is clear that the more knowledgeable and experienced participants play a greater role in formal meeting processes. Supported eligible countries are strongly advised to prepare for the meetings and a number of meeting organizers have arranged pre-meeting orientation sessions for new delegates. These pre-meeting sessions have been popular and should be encouraged for all Codex meetings. New participants should be encouraged to attend. On request, the Project will pay the extra per diem to allow supported delegates to attend these pre-meeting sessions.

Recommendation 4

That Codex meeting organizers be encouraged to arrange pre-meeting orientation sessions and less experienced delegates be encouraged to participate.

Training

Increased knowledge of Codex and its processes is also gained through formal training. The Project document envisaged that training would be offered to eligible countries. Specific donations to the Project from Switzerland and Canada for training and technical assistance have contributed towards the successful development and piloting of a Codex training package by FAO and WHO. In December 2005, a Project-initiated training course was held in Costa Rica for 58 participants from 22 countries from the Latin America and the Caribbean Codex Region. The course was a great success and further Project expenditure is planned in 2006 on further translation and distribution of the Codex training package and initiating additional training courses. The knowledge and skills gained by the training course participants will make them, and their countries, stronger participants at subsequent Codex meetings.

Recommendation 5

That training using the Codex Training Package be strongly encouraged and further supported by the Project.

F. ENHANCING SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL PARTICIPATION

Immediate Objective 3 and Output 3 (*Figure 1*) refer to increasing eligible countries' provision of scientific and technical advice in support of the Codex standard-setting process. Country input is provided principally through three channels - by formal written submissions; through active participation in working groups engaged on developing standards; and by oral input at meetings. Quantitative information is difficult to gather on eligible countries' provision of scientific and technical advice although there is evidence from country reports that their activities in these areas are increasing, particularly by the more developed eligible countries who have the necessary infrastructure. *"...we co jointly prepared a proposal for technical revision of a Codex standard that was discussed and later led to development work on a new and separate standard..."*

It is expected that achievements under Objective 3 and Output 3 will increase as eligible countries mature in their Codex development.

G. PROJECT IMPACT IN COUNTRIES

Although the Project aims to support broader and more effective participation in the work of the CAC at the international level, considerable donor interest has been expressed regarding progress in improving food safety at the country level.

Questionnaire-based Review

To assess food safety and food control progress in eligible countries supported by the Project, in late 2005/early 2006 information was collected by means of a written questionnaire completed by the countries' Codex Contact Points.

The questionnaire aimed to collect some concrete data about national activities related to Codex especially at the political, administrative and legislative levels. It also provided an opportunity for responding countries to suggest improvements in international help which would enhance national progress in the implementation of food safety and control, and thus strengthen countries' contributions to Codex at the international level.

Responses to the questionnaire were received from 46 countries (spread across the following Groups - Group 1 55%, Group 2 37% and Group 3 8%). A comprehensive analysis of the results is available separately in the complete report⁵ and a summary of the key findings follows. Direct quotes from country responses are shown *in italics*.

Progress and Problems in Food Safety and Food Control

All responding countries have made progress in their food safety and food control activities in recent years. Still, significant differences in progress often exist in a country at the political, administrative and legislative levels. Reported problems and difficulties regarding the establishment of a functional food safety policy may be a contributor to, or a result of, these differences.

"...The problems affecting the ensuring of food safety are simultaneously routed in the legislative framework, the administrative organization, the lack of coordination, the lack of facilities and resources and the insufficient political commitment. The deficiencies are perceived at almost all levels (production, control, quality assurance, information, certification, and distribution...)".

The low awareness in the food production sector of standardization/legislative activities concerning food safety and the lack of skilled personnel in food safety was seen to lead to *"...substandard food products from our industries and producers..."* that cannot be exported and can affect public health. These problems were mostly based on lack of finance *"...for the reason of political priority in other matters..."*.

National Food Safety Policy

59% of the responding countries stated explicitly that a national policy, strategy or program on food safety had been put in place, was a part of another policy program or was in the process of being developed. Political awareness of the importance of food safety has been raised mainly by incidences of unsafe food on the national or international market which represented health or economic threats to the nation.

Depending on the financial and technical resources available, responding countries undertook a range of actions. A number of countries have pushed for the establishment of a structured administration in order to advance food safety. It was reported that a National Food Safety Agency, Codex Committee or other intermediary National Institution as such demonstrated government commitment to food safety. This helped to raise public awareness for this issue. Such a body was able to facilitate the necessary coordination to set up or review food safety legislation or a food control system. Secondly, national legislation provided opportunities for responsible agencies to create technical committees and working groups cutting across all concerned sectors for the purposes of national coordination and communication on matters of food control. Thirdly, improvements to countries' national food control systems, or the development of relevant national

⁵ Krell Zbinden, Dr Karola. (2006) 'An outline of national progress and difficulties in food safety systems in countries supported by the FAO/WHO Project and Fund for enhanced participation in Codex - A questionnaire based report' WHO internal report.

standards, formed a basis for the protection of public health to comply with the requirements of the international market.

National Food Control

In the majority of the responding countries several ministries participate in the administration of food safety, while in 63% one or several specialized departments or agencies additionally exist which are responsible for food safety or for specific issues of food safety, e.g. standardization and technology; quality; inspection and certification; products of a certain origin; etc.

A number of countries observed that their administration is failing because of missing coordination, collaboration and communication among the different responsible ministries, departments, and agencies. Moreover, the lack of necessary infrastructure and personnel, legislation and standardization, and financial resources are seen to be the main factors that slow progress in more specific administrative actions such as risk analysis; food control on the different sectors of the food production system; and emergency response.

Nevertheless it is clear that the countries have realized that a functioning food control system has positive effects for the protection of public health and represents a prerequisite for access to the international market. It has become apparent to them that the food control process depends on an integrated organization to allow for the prevention of hazards and an emergency response. As food control concerns different sectors, many countries recognize the need to identify the different control steps and assign clear responsibility to relevant bodies.

Improvement has come with the elaboration of a national food safety policy or the establishment of an intermediary National Institution (e.g. a National Food Safety Agency or Standardization Office) that brought together all sectors and stakeholders involved in the national food chain. Progress has also been made if the goal to attain a safe food production system for the domestic as well as the export market was based on a regulatory framework that provides for clarification of the respective responsibilities.

Risk Analysis

58% of the responding countries reported on administrative competences in ministries for risk analysis. Nevertheless only a minority of the responding countries referred to risk analysis being composed of risk assessment, risk management and risk communication. From the information given it remains impossible to judge if, and how well, the risk analysis as such is functioning, and whether it is undertaken according to the international standards. It can be assumed that the few countries that have adopted the risk analysis from the *Codex Alimentarius* recognize the three mentioned elements, while even there their practical application may still be deficient.

Food Control

72% of the responding countries reported that they conduct food control on the different sectors of the food production system, but little information was given on the control type, organization and range. Thus it can be assumed that food control activities are fragmented and do not cover the whole food chain from farm to consumer. This is likely for a majority of the responding countries that did not refer to HACCP or integrated control systems.

Emergency Response

48% of the responding countries reported that responsible and competent administration authorities exist for emergencies. Even countries that have not been confronted with a food safety emergency on a national scale have started to prepare for specific incidences. However 39% of the responding countries state that a concrete and structured response system is still not, not yet, or only poorly functioning.

The fact that an effective emergency response relies on good collaboration and coordination has been recognized in some countries. Emergency response further depends on information sharing and reporting. A non-coordinated fragmented approach "*...and the lack of information sharing leads to duplication, wasted effort and wasted resources without achieving a satisfactory outcome...*".

Food Safety Legislation

In general, all countries considered the existence of food laws as a necessary basis to ensure food safety. Only 7% of the responding countries do not have applicable national food safety legislation. 24% of the countries reported on the existence of a 'Food Law'. Perhaps reflecting the various aspects, products and interests in relation to food safety, 44% of the countries have different laws and regulations on food safety. 24% have recently (in the course of the last two years) modernised their legislation, while 4% are in the process of updating the existing legislation. Countries whose legislation is not advanced often have regulations based on standardization. This can be besides or instead of horizontal food safety legislation. Consequently, in these countries single food products may be covered by a mandatory standard so that production, storage or distribution is only authorized upon approval and compliance with the standard. A general regulatory requirement of safe food on the market may be missing.

From the list of problems and difficulties provided by the responding countries, it appears that food safety legislation in the majority of the countries is still insufficient to ensure food safety at all levels of production. In the first place this is due to the fact that only a minority of the countries reported on modernized legislation or on a declared political intention to modernize the legislation in order to comply with international law requirements. Insufficient or missing institutional strength for the preparation, review and updating of legislation, and the lack of competent and trained personnel to undertake this work were identified as reasons for this failing.

Food safety legislation requires political initiative and a commitment to move the national policy forward. The lack of relevant food legislation and standards further hinders operational and administrative activities. Where food safety legislation exists, its impact can be hampered if countries have difficulties in application and enforcement due to a lack of inter-institutional coordination, overlapping competencies, and a lack of clear responsibilities.

Resolution strategies proposed by countries differ depending on the political will and their development status. As legislation requires special knowledge, countries explicitly requested technical support. Countries suggested that international organizations should "*...make available copies of similar legislation or a template that may be of use to develop initial draft...*"; provide "*...support in the contracting of consultants specialized in the subject for the development of standards...*"; "*...provide information related to international legislation...*"; and "*...distribute the latest developments on legislation, so that the possibility exists that these regulations can be implemented in the national law...*".

Involvement of Stakeholders

41% of the responding countries stated that their food industry or the respective sector participated or have been consulted in standardization, national codes of good practice and legislation processes. In 26% of the countries, representatives of the national food industry also play a role in the development of the food safety policy. In 30% of the countries the food industry is represented in the specialized agencies or committees (often the National Codex Committee) dealing with food safety or implementing food safety strategies.

Conversely 17% of the responding countries (mostly Group 1 countries) advised that their national food industry has not played a role. International food safety standards support, in the first instance, the larger food industries with their exporting and importing activities. Small and medium enterprises' activities, which represent a majority in less developed countries, are often hindered through an inability to fulfil the requirements of international standards.

It is obvious that the involvement of the food industry is more significant and increases depending on the development status of the countries and their food export and import activities. Involvement of industry in the determination of food safety policy or even in legislative procedures does not necessarily indicate that its role is dominant. Its impact depends on the importance of food imports and exports for the country as well as the food industries' rights to "voice and vote" in the process.

The role that consumers play in the national food safety activities, is principally twofold. Firstly, in 46% of the responding countries consumers are involved in official national food safety activities such as legislation, standardization or consultation in national agencies dealing with food safety issues. As with the industry,

their impact clearly depends on their formal rights. Secondly, in 17% of the countries consumers have the possibility of an indirect but meaningful influence on government through complaints and reports of law violations. This impact depends on the administrative and legislative framework that guarantees an adequate handling of these complaints. Overall, it appears that the influence of consumers is less significant than that of other stakeholders.

The involvement of some stakeholders in a country's food safety policy is made difficult by the lack of knowledge, education and awareness. Industry and consumers are often unaware of the significance of their role in the food safety system and of the importance of food standards to trade, which perhaps explains why they are not motivated to take responsibility. Furthermore, food control in the industry and consumer complaints can be ineffective because of a poorly functioning administrative infrastructure of the country or insufficient regulation.

Nevertheless the majority of the responding countries have realized that it is important to engage key stakeholders at different levels in preparation for a national dialogue on food safety and control. Even those who did not think that "...a policy for the industrialization of the country would be necessary..." have initiated activities to create awareness and training, especially for the private sector and consumers. The National Codex Committees are recognized as playing an effective role in introducing food safety to the stakeholders.

Benefits of Codex Activities

Many countries have seen supported participation at Codex meetings to be a driving factor for food safety and food control activities in-country. The questionnaire responses indicate that countries have begun to consider the enhancement of food safety and food control as a prerequisite for economic development, which can be the driving force for national activities in these areas. The importance of the health related side of the work of the CAC has been recognized during national and international food safety crises that affected, or could have affected, the public health of countries' populations.

Countries have constantly acknowledged that international efforts, such as the *Codex Alimentarius* have had a positive influence on their national food safety policy. Bilateral arrangements and international organizations have effectively helped to develop national policy programs for food safety. The local country presence and consultation advice of international organizations' representatives has been, and will be, of important assistance in strengthening and increasing national political commitment to food safety. It also supports national efforts regarding food safety legislation, the establishment of a food safety agency and a food control system as well as general commitment among the stakeholders.

All responding countries reported that the *Codex Alimentarius* is very useful and plays a role in their legislation activities concerning food safety. The *Codex Alimentarius* is either applied in national laws or executive regulations and/or used as a baseline (seldom as a reference) for the development of national standards/regulation. The *Codex Alimentarius* has been helpful during modernization of legislation and in those cases where national standards or regulative acts for certain areas were non-existent. This is especially the case following the *Codex Alimentarius* becoming the reference for Member States in relation to their obligation under the World Trade Organization Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade and the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

As a consequence, the responding countries stressed the importance of participating actively in international standard-setting in the framework of the CAC in order to have a direct influence on its work. Some developing countries mentioned, as a negative effect of non-participation, the impossibility of fulfilling the developed standards of the *Codex Alimentarius*. This was confirmed by the small island countries which remarked on the influence of their participation in the Codex meetings on the standard setting procedures.

As further benefits of their participation at Codex meeting, countries mentioned: a better collaboration between their ministries; a better understanding of the system, Codex documents and the importance of country positions; an increased national knowledge and awareness of the importance of food safety; and expected increased efforts at country level (e.g. improvement of the food safety system). As a strategy to increase the impact of the *Codex Alimentarius*, many countries stated that the involvement of all stakeholders

active in the food chain stimulated an overall national awareness of the importance of food safety and thus pushed food safety activities forward.

Countries reported on the process of the establishment of their National Codex Committees. These committees often assemble representatives from Ministries, National Services/Agencies/Standardization Bodies, from universities or other research institutions as well as from the existing organization of other stakeholders working in the area of food safety (e.g. industry, municipalities, universities, and national laboratories) and consumer protection. Thus a National Codex Committee has the advantage of a coordinating body that can be of great help in overcoming corresponding problems in food safety administration. Improvements to National Codex Committees have been achieved through the elaboration of "...guidelines for optimization..." or "...design of internal procedures..."; the inclusion of the corporate sector, universities, and consumers; or the creation of a National Codex Committee web page.

Difficulties with Codex

A number of countries have encountered difficulties with the implementation of *Codex Alimentarius* standards. The implementation of the *Codex Alimentarius* at national level is mainly hindered by a limited capacity to create public awareness of the importance of the *Codex Alimentarius*, especially for those engaged in the food chain.

Countries complained of a lack of financial resources as well as an inability to adequately participate at Codex meetings. These problems are compounded when a country faces a weak commitment to food safety by political and administrative players. To raise national awareness of the *Codex Alimentarius* countries have used FAO/WHO manuals/publications for education, extension, inspection and analysis purposes; diffusion programs to promote the importance of *Codex Alimentarius* especially for trade use; and international cooperation projects.

Countries mentioned as difficulties a fragmented approach to *Codex Alimentarius* activities and a lack of monitoring of its implementation. This can be due to poorly functioning administration or badly structured or absent National Codex Committees. The implementation process is also hampered by unratified or unmet International Treaties if countries do not ratify and meet the requirements of International Agreements in the area of food safety and control, such as the WTO SPS- and TBT-Agreements.

As far as the knowledge of *Codex Alimentarius* is concerned, the countries repeatedly mentioned a lack of timely distribution or publication of the versions of the Codex standards and other documents in the official languages of Codex. Others faced language and translation problems.

Countries also faced problems with the application of the *Codex Alimentarius*, when they found that it does not comprehensively cover all aspects of relevance to them, misses out some important areas, or differs from other national and regional standards. Even though these concerns might refer to the problem of finding the relevant standard in the *Codex Alimentarius*, they also reflect a need for the improvement of the relevance of the *Codex Alimentarius* for all Member States.

Recommendation 6

That Codex training should include how to influence the Codex agenda, how to facilitate/propose the initiation of new work within Codex and other FAO/WHO bodies etc, so that the *Codex Alimentarius* remains relevant for all members.

International Help

For further national progress in food safety activities the countries suggested specific international help in a number of areas.

Political commitment could be raised by international organizations and developed countries interacting with the political leadership at the highest level to raise awareness and emphasize the importance of food safety. External audits that guide the countries towards adequate policies for the improvement of food safety and provide courses and seminars for food safety policy makers could also be conducted.

National food safety administrations could be improved through international help in the following areas: training of food inspectors, laboratory personnel and the responsible entities; public education and awareness

activities; the establishment and improvement of laboratory equipment and infrastructural facilities; the establishment or reinforcement of the responsible national administrative institutions and Codex offices. Countries have acknowledged the leading responsibility of the international organizations in providing sound scientific assessments of hazards in food as a basis for managing risk at national level. There was an expressed need to strengthen these activities including food safety risk assessment and risk communication to improve efficiency and effectiveness in providing expert scientific advice.

National food safety legislation could be improved through technical support for setting up, analysis and review of food safety legislation and national food standards as well as in the administration and enforcement of food safety legislation. Participation at Codex meetings could be strengthened through the review and evaluation of the National Codex Committees' activities and through training workshops and consultancies for the responsible national officers concerned with the Codex process.

Food safety stakeholder involvement could be increased by the organization of workshops and training programmes providing information and orientation in Codex matters, raising awareness of its importance and giving technical guidance on the principal strategies for action in country.

Recommendation 7

That countries be encouraged to identify and actively pursue opportunities for international help to achieve defined national food safety and control priorities; encourage donor agencies cooperation and avoidance of interdependency with recipients.

H. CONCLUSIONS

This first biennial review of the Project, drawing on information from records of the Project Administration and CAC offices and from two questionnaires completed by eligible countries, clearly shows considerable progress towards the three Immediate Objectives and Outputs identified for the Project.

There is strong evidence that Project activities have directly contributed to this progress. Improvements to *widening participation* have been greatest, followed by *strengthening participation*. Improvements to *enhancing scientific/technical participation* can be expected as countries further develop their capacity.

During the review a number of matters were identified where the Project and Codex development generally could be strengthened. These have been formed into recommendations and are repeated in the Executive Summary.

When launched, the Project was given a 12 year life. Although the Project has been supporting countries for less than two years, there are already indications that some countries are increasing their capacity to self-fund their participation in Codex meetings.

Responses from countries have also shown that Codex and the Project activities have significantly contributed to progress in food safety development at the national level in many countries. The questionnaires have elicited valuable country-level information and have highlighted some previously unknown areas of need.

Recommendation 8

That investigations be routinely undertaken to monitor the activities and impact of the Project and to identify the ongoing support needs of the eligible countries.

The Codex Executive Committee has recently recommended a new Strategic Plan for Codex which is now at the consultation stage. The plan contains five goals to promote the maximum application of Codex standards and one of these - '**Promoting maximum membership participation**' confirms the currency and relevance of the Immediate Objectives and Outputs of the Project.

The achievements made by the Project in its two years are very positive and with continued support from donors signal continued success for the remainder of the Project's life.