



Agenda Item 14 a)

CAC/33 CRD/03

## Codex Trust Fund Mid-Term Review

Executive Summary  
of the Final Report

30 April 2010

**Andante - tools for thinking AB**

Kim Forss, team leader

Jens Andersson

Eve Kasirye-Alemu

## Executive Summary

### *Background*

The Codex Trust Fund (CTF) was launched in 2003 to help developing countries and those with economies in transition to enhance their participation in the Codex Alimentarius Commission. It was planned to operate for a period of 12 years. Its three objectives can be summarised to; (1) increase participation, (2) strengthen participation, and (3) enhance scientific/technical participation in Codex.

### *Purpose of Review*

This mid-term review was commissioned in 2009 in order to identify and learn lessons from the first six years of CTF in operation, with special emphasis on impact at national and regional levels. The review should provide recommendations for the remaining project duration, and with regards to continuing or discontinuing the project beyond its 12 year lifespan.

### *Review Process*

The review has been undertaken by a team of three evaluators. The analysis and conclusions are based on visits to 12 countries selected to be a representative sample of CTF beneficiary countries, interviews with stakeholders at WHO, FAO and in donor countries, and global surveys to Codex Contact Points and beneficiaries of the project. The review started in December 2009 and was completed in March 2010.

### *Impact*

There have been significant changes in Codex work at country and regional levels. The food safety and health arena is dynamic. The national institutions are developing and there are now National Codex Committees (NCCs) in most of the countries visited. The policy frameworks have been developed and most countries have clear policies for Codex work and for food safety. In all countries visited during the review, the Codex standards are either used in their existing form or developed and adapted to become national standards. The Codex Contact Points (CCPs) are increasingly visible and have a significant role to play. However, these changes are caused by many factors, not least the political and commercial interests of the countries concerned. Foreign assistance, be it bilateral or multilateral, plays a small role compared to the national efforts. Participation in meetings has been a useful supplement to other activities. The changes observed by the review team have not been caused by the CTF, but it contributed to these changes in a meaningful and worthwhile way.

### *Regional coordination*

One of the important changes concerns the level of regional coordination. There has been an increase in the number of networks in regions and there are more activities in joint training activities, developing

joint positions on technical as well political issues, and also joint research to propose standards. The participation that the CTF has enabled appears to have been a strong contributing factor to these developments.

### *Sustainability*

The changes in the institutional framework around food safety and health were in most parts found to be sustainable. The development of policies is, for example an ongoing process. There is no need to suspect that a policy will be revoked, unless it does not serve its purpose any longer. The institutional framework of NCC commissions and CCPs can be sustained if there is a political and administrative will to sustain them. These institutions are to date financed via government budgets or they rely on people doing the work as part of their salaried posts elsewhere (in government, in research, or in industry). The CTF has not been part of developing structures or processes that cannot be sustained when the project comes to an end.

### *Reaching Objectives*

The CTF has reached its first objective. It funded 1.129 participants from 126 countries between 2004 and 2009. The total number of eligible countries was originally 146, so 20 countries had not applied for funding by 2009. 246 people from 80 countries were sponsored in 2009. It is thus a considerable achievement and a very clear contribution to the objective of "increasing participation". This is partly explained by the focus on this objective; 90% of the funds and about as much of the administrative resources have been used to make this happen and that is also how the majority of donors and other stakeholders have wished that the funds be spent. An obvious consequence is that the second and third outputs have not really been produced and the related objectives are thus not reached. Some 10% of the CTF funds have been spent on producing training materials and delivering training programmes to improve the quality of participation in Codex Committees. While it is relatively clear what to do in respect of the second objective, the activities that could produce the third category of outputs (enhance technical/scientific participation in Codex) remain to be defined. Effectiveness is commonly defined as whether a project reaches its objectives. At present CTF does not reach its objectives and hence it cannot be called effective. It reaches one out of three objectives. The decision not to work on the other objectives rests with donors and other stakeholders.

### *Efficiency*

The efficiency of the operations has been high and the results in terms of reaching the first objective

were accomplished with very few staff resources. Instead, the CTF built on systems of global indicators for country selection and graduation from the system. These are transparent and have strong support from donors, but are also contested, particularly from countries that have graduated from the system. The indicators that lead to grouping of countries and the system of graduation are not perceived as fair and valid by the countries that have graduated from the CTF assistance, but it is widely supported by donor countries and those countries that continue to benefit from the system.

#### *Recommendations*

The key recommendations are:

1. Focus on the second and third objectives. If these objectives are to be reached during the remaining six years there is a need to quickly expand activities that will produce the outputs and lead to the desired impact. None of the 189 interviews indicated that the objectives were not relevant or suggested that they be cut back. Hence there is a need to quickly make up for the relative neglect of these two objectives during the past 6 years.
2. Focus on countries most in need, follow-up the participation of countries that graduate in 2010 and 2011 and be prepared to respond if participation declines sharply. Focus on countries most in need is priority of donor organisations.
3. Find ways of engaging other countries. Countries that have graduated from the direct support to participation in Codex meetings can have other important roles to fill in the programme, for example in contributing to capacity development through regional coordination, mentorship and twinning activities.
4. Continue to apply and develop further stringent application procedures. There is a need to assess real country needs further and the selection process needs to make increasingly strict qualitative assessment of

the applications to participate. Such procedures also force the applicants to develop their institutional capacities and the process is thus an end in itself.

5. Stay focused on participation in Codex. There are many and diverse needs of capacity development but the particular niche and role of the CTF lies in participation in Codex. Hence whatever is done in relation outputs 2 and 3, it should be centered on participation; that is, capacities to participate effectively and development of means to support technical and research inputs in relation to participation in Codex.
6. Increase collaboration with other actors. The development of activities outlined above will mean that there are more capacity building and more opportunities to obtain synergy on operations, and also higher risks of duplicating efforts.
7. Monitoring and evaluation systems can be further developed. Monitoring and evaluation systems need to discern the right opportunities, and should plan for the external evaluation activities well in time. The Mid-term review suggests an overall approach which focuses on three critical areas of needs, qualitative information and selective use of indicators.

The review concludes by weighing the pros and cons of a continued life for the project after the first 12 years of operation. A project is a time bound activity with clear objectives that should come to an end. Still, there is likely to be a need for further assistance. International cooperation to meet needs for technical assistance in the field of food safety and quality should build on a comprehensive and comparative evaluation of all activities in this field. It is recommended that such an evaluation be organized at the end of the CTF programme to provide a basis for decisions on the future activities of WHO, FAO, WTO and other stakeholders.