



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

SUSTAINABILITY OF SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT TO CODEX

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

Background

1. Sustainable funding of the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission and related activities of FAO and WHO in support of Codex has often been a serious concern of Codex Members. In particular, the funding for the provision of scientific advice by FAO/WHO expert committees in the area of food safety and nutrition has been extensively discussed at the Executive Committee of the Commission and at the Commission on a regular basis.
2. At the 37th Session of the Commission FAO and WHO presented a discussion paper on the sustainable funding for the provision of scientific advice to Codex and Member States (CX/CAC 14/37/12 Add.2), laying out basic concepts of budgetary processes and fundraising efforts. The paper proposed three future options that were briefly discussed by the Commission.
3. The Commission, in conclusion, noted that it was necessary to find a sustainable solution to address the chronic shortage of funds for scientific advice. To reduce precariousness of funding, it was critical to enlarge the donor base for the scientific advice, currently only a few countries, to several dozens of countries.
4. The Commission decided to pursue the examination of the three options at its 38th Session on the basis of the same document, to be complemented by an additional working document, to be prepared by FAO and WHO to address the observation and recommendations made by the Commission and its Executive Committee, including the analyses of lessons learnt from the operation of GIFSA as well as fund raising practices of comparable bodies or projects. The Commission also agreed to invite Codex Member Countries to study closely the three options and their feasibility and implications in advance of the next session of the Commission.

Options and Analysis:

Option 1:

5. This is the proposal to fund the whole scientific advice programme at FAO and WHO through regular budget funds, in the same way that Codex is funded. It was acknowledged that this can only be a long-term solution, requiring a high-level decision of FAO and WHO governing bodies. While this seems a difficult undertaking, it represents the most sustainable long-term solution, and the scientific advice program could be seen as an element of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program. Achieving this would require a concerted effort by FAO and WHO Member States, and discussions at the respective Governing Bodies.
6. Since the 37th CAC this issue of sustainable funding has been brought to the attention of and considered by the 24th Session of the FAO Committee on Agriculture¹ (October 2014) and the 39th Session of the FAO Conference (June 2015) where it has been recommended that FAO, its members and partners explore new sources of funding to be allocated in order to meet the challenge of the growing demands on FAO's food safety scientific advice programme. Thus, while the need is clearly acknowledged and recognized by the FAO governing bodies, explicit redirection of additional regular budget funds to this programme was not indicated and therefore the need to identify other funding sources remains.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ML895e.pdf>

7. At WHO, the relatively low proportion of the assessed contributions from Member States within the overall budget continues to constitute a challenge in the funding of WHO activities related to the provision of scientific advice to Codex. The 68th World Health Assembly (May 2015) did not agree to the Secretariat's proposal to increase the assessed contributions but to a zero growth for 2016-17 over 2014-15, at the level of at 929 million US\$, which will bring down the share of the assessed contribution from 23.4% (2014-15) to 21.2% (2016-17). The limited regular budget funds provided for the scientific advice programme only partially cover salary cost and no activity cost. A high level discussion on the overall funding of WHO is being pursued within the framework of WHO's Financing Dialogue².

Option 2:

8. This is the proposal to establish a multi-donor trust fund. As laid out in CX/CAC 14/37/12 Add.2 both FAO and WHO currently do not allow to accept private sector funding for standard setting, normative work.

9. FAO's policy for engagement with non-State actors, which was endorsed by Members in 2013, has not changed since last year. As was explained at the 2014 Session of the CAC, in line with the member country negotiated strategy on collaboration with the private sector, FAO does not consider it appropriate to establish mechanisms in FAO to receive funds from private sector actors in the norms and standard setting work of the organization. Nevertheless FAO has been pursuing collaboration with the private sector in other areas and as of November 2014 FAO is engaged in active partnerships with 21 private sector entities.

10. At the 68th Session of the World Health Assembly in May 2015, discussion on the 'Framework of engagement with non-State actors'³ continued, but was not concluded. Discussion between Member States will continue with a view to the adoption of the framework at the 69th World Health Assembly (May 2016). According to the current draft text of the framework, there would be a number of restrictions on WHO in accepting resources from the private sector depending on the nature of business, as well as on the areas in which WHO can accept private sector contributions. The discussion so far held indicates that the current policy of not accepting contributions from food industry for the normative work on food safety might remain.

Option 3:

11. This proposal suggests the establishment of a self-sufficient global fund to be supported by voluntary contributions of Member States based on volume of food export (or as was also suggest of food export and import). This proposal was recognized as innovative approach requiring further consideration and discussion in countries.

Fundraising for Scientific advice

Lessons learned

12. FAO and WHO established GIFSA a number of years ago as a means of establishing a more sustainable means of funding for scientific advice. However, limited funding was received through this mechanism and the donor base was made up of not more than a handful of countries. FAO and WHO have considered funding mechanisms of some other bodies within the organizations as a basis for developing a more effective resource mobilization mechanism. Some key findings are highlighted here:

- Multi-donor trust funds are a mechanism within both organizations for receipt of extra budgetary funding for key activities. While noting that with low levels of funding they are administratively burdensome for a small return, it may have the advantage for easier release of funds for certain donors and may facilitate the acceptance of funds by the Organization.
- There is a need for improved messaging to donors about the resources required for the scientific advice program, including about its impact. This has been particularly highlighted by the reporting requirements of some donors. There seems to be a mis-conception that financial resources are needed only for holding meetings: the continuous "invisible" work of the Secretariats needs to be better accounted for.
- Financial resources are important but in-kind support to the programme, particularly through the release of experts to participate in the scientific advice processes, are equally important. There is increasing difficulty in getting experts to participate in the process: this is a critical situation that needs to be addressed.

13. Taking these and other points into consideration FAO and WHO are in the process of developing a new vision for sustainability and scientific excellence for scientific advice. To facilitate this we need further

² http://www.who.int/about/resources_planning/financing_dialogue/en/

³ http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA68/A68_5-en.pdf

information from potential donors on the challenges they face in prioritizing the allocation of resources to the scientific advice programme.

Funding needs

14. As work on a 'vision for sustainability and scientific excellence in a changing world for the FAO/WHO scientific advice programme' is underway, preliminary information is presented here to give a perspective of what enhancements are being envisaged for the joint FAO/WHO Food Safety Scientific Advice programme. Focus in this paper is on food safety for illustrative purposes, as the work goes forward scientific advice on nutrition will also be considered.

15. Sound scientific advice needs to be the basis for informed policy development, and for prioritizing and implementing risk management measures to reduce and prevent foodborne diseases and facilitate trade and economic development. FAO, WHO and the Codex Alimentarius Commission need to lead the way in the development of science based food safety policy and risk management options, in particular through the elaboration of science based international standards. The number and complexity of requests for scientific advice from Codex Committees have increased, resulting in a substantial backlog in provision of scientific advice (currently there are 9 contaminants/groups of contaminants, 30 food additives and 63 flavourings pending evaluation by JECFA, and approximately 86 pesticides pending evaluation by JMPR) and it is important that scientific advice is provided in timely manner in support of international standards development.

16. The costs of what was delivered in terms of food safety scientific advice to Codex in the 2012-2013 biennium and what is expected to be delivered in the current biennium (2014-2015) are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Cost of Food Safety scientific advice to Codex (USD)

		2012-13	2014-15
		(Actual)	(Updated Estimates)
WHO			
	Activity	1,216,755	1,400,000
	Staff	2,618,000	2,817,000
FAO			
	Activity	1,350,932	1,877,100
	Staff	1,805,518	1,947,665
	Sub-total	6,991,205	8,041,765

17. As well as the direct costs indicated above, the FAO/WHO scientific advice programme is highly dependent on the in-kind support by experts, for preparation of working papers, attendance at expert meeting, and finalization of publication post-meeting.

Key elements of an enhanced FAO/WHO scientific advice programme for food safety

18. Moving from the current to an enhanced food safety advice programme would focus on improvements in both quality and quantity of outputs, increased efficiencies in the implementation of the programme and improved communication of the outputs. This would result in:

- Evaluation of more hazards per year to address requests from Codex Committees in a timely manner and address some of the existing backlog
- 'Between' session work for faster response to emerging and emergency issues ('fast-track' procedure)
- Timely update of principles and methodologies to take new scientific developments into account
- Improved data collection, analysis and sharing, including improvements to the supporting technology
- Improved dissemination and communication, including sufficient input in Codex preparatory work such as eWGs, development of discussion papers, improved communication of scientific advice to facilitate understanding and use by member countries etc.

- Regular/periodic monitoring and evaluation of the programme and its impact

19. In order to achieve this, structural changes are required and increased financial and staff resources are necessary. An overview of some of the resulting changes in terms of activities of an enhanced programme are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of programme capacity under the current situation and an enhanced scientific advice programme for Food Safety

1. Scientific Expert Meetings to Address Priority Requests		
Activity	Current Situation	Enhanced Programme
JECFA	3 meetings in 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 meetings and 1 preparatory working group per year; • strengthened scientific secretariat to support work of experts
JMPR	1 meeting per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 meetings and 1 preparatory working group per year; • strengthened scientific secretariat to support work of experts
JEMRA	1-2 meetings per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 meeting per year and 1 preparatory working group per year; • strengthened scientific secretariat to support work of experts
Ad hoc (cross cutting issues not explicitly within the mandate of JECFA/JMPR/JEMRA (e.g. histamine in fish, hazards in animal feed, and emergency issues (e.g. melamine))	1-2 meetings per biennium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 meeting per year to address cross-cutting or emergency issues • 1 meeting per year to advise Secretariat on emerging issues and programme direction (i.e. scientific advisory group)
2. Improvement and Harmonization of Risk Assessment Methodologies		
Activity	Current	Improved operation
Development of risk assessment methodology	1 working group per year to address specific topic identified by expert meetings (i.e. reactive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 expert meetings per year address specific risk assessment topic, as identified by advisory group <p>(possible topics include: how to deal with screening and high-through put data; application of TTC for veterinary drugs or process contaminants; guidance on quantitative risk assessment for different health outcomes; guidance on risk benefit assessments; dose response for microbial hazards)</p>
Harmonization of risk assessment approaches and methodologies	Ad hoc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize interaction with key regulatory agencies and risk assessment institutions to identify and address common areas of interest or areas of divergence
3. Data and information collection and sharing, strengthened communication		
Activity	Current	Improved operation
Improved data sources	GEMS/Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development and guidance for users • Promotion of use in other programs and organizations • Improved linkage to other relevant tools and databases

Improved accessibility of information	FOSCOLLAB for chemicals (contaminants, pesticides, and vet drugs in process)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of functionalities in the FOSCOLLAB platform; e.g. to include microbiological hazards; relevant external databases; further promotion and training for use of tool
Improved accessibility of data used in risk assessment	No system in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public database for improved transparency
Dissemination and communication of risk assessment outcomes	Standard publications in established FAO and WHO series, dissemination through Codex lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of short summaries of key risk assessment (for non-experts and 'non-standard' targets) Publication of outcome of meetings in peer-reviewed journals (after each meeting short publication in a journal) Regular outreach effort to stake holders

20. This represents approximately a 60% increase in activities as well as more substantive preparation and more consistent attention to continual improvement. An initial estimate of the increased staff required to implement the enhanced programme is provided in table 3.

Table 3. Staff requirements for the implementation of the enhanced programme for the provision of food safety scientific advice.

	Current	For Improved Operation
WHO	3 professionals, 0.8 admin staff	5 professionals 2 admin staff
FAO	3 professionals ⁴ 1.5 admin staff	5 professionals 2 admin staff

21. In addition to the staff of the scientific advice programs listed in the table, additional resources are required from other units within the organizations, such as IT and communication department.

22. Codex members are invited to provide feedback and comments on the above which will be taken into consideration as FAO and WHO further develop their "vision for sustainability and scientific excellence in a changing world" for the FOA/WHO Scientific advice programme .

⁴ On an ad hoc basis and according to the issues being addressed some additional support may be provided from other relevant units in the organization which would amount to 0.25 to 05 of a professional per year