



**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of  
the United Nations**



**World Health  
Organization**

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**Agenda Item 9 (c)**

**CX/CAC 15/38/18-Add.2**

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

**CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION  
38<sup>th</sup> Session, CIG**

**Geneva, Switzerland, 6-11 July 2015**

**MATTERS ARISING FROM FAO and WHO  
FAO/WHO PROJECT AND FUND FOR ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN CODEX**

**FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION**

**Executive Summary**

This document contains the executive summary of the final project evaluation of the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund. (See CX/CAC 15/38/18-Add.3 for the full report).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A final project evaluation of the FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex (Codex Trust Fund) was carried out between June 2014 and February 2015. The Codex Trust Fund (CTF) was launched in 2003 by the Directors-General of FAO and WHO to help developing countries and countries with economies in transition to enhance their level of effective participation in the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The CTF aims to achieve this goal primarily by providing resources for eligible countries to participate in Codex meetings and training courses, and also enabling them to prepare scientific and technical data related to the Codex standard setting process.

The purpose of the final project evaluation was to evaluate the functioning and results of the CTF after ten and a half years of its twelve year lifespan. The results of the final project evaluation will be used, along with other sources of information, to inform discussions in FAO/WHO and among Codex Member States on possible future measures that may be necessary to enhance further effective participation in Codex by developing and transition economy countries.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were to:

- a. Evaluate the results of the CTF against the stated objectives and expected outputs in the founding project document.
- b. Identify and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the CTF from both strategic and operational perspectives.
- c. Identify lessons that could be learned from the operations and results of the CTF for similar projects in the future.

The evaluation Terms of Reference (see **Annex A**) identified the evaluation criteria questions and a full Evaluation Matrix (please see **Annex B**) was developed including a complete list of sub-questions for each evaluation criteria. Evidence to support evaluation findings was collected through multiple lines of inquiry, including document review, interviews (46 interviews completed), focus groups (12 participants), online survey (80 respondents) and country case studies (200 participants across 14 countries).

The findings from each line of inquiry were consolidated into a presentation and preliminary findings matrix, which was presented to the Consultative Group for the Trust Fund in January 2015. Based on the feedback provided by the CGTF, a draft report was developed for further consultation, and ultimately the development of the Final Evaluation Report. The evaluation has identified a series of conclusions and recommendations for consideration of the CGTF.

As at December 2013, the Fund had received over US \$18.7 million from 15 Codex Member States and the European Union as a Codex Member Organization, and expended US \$17,708,969.

## Conclusions

The CTF has been very successful at fulfilling its primary mandate. Widening participation of developing countries has been the primary focus of the CTF, and the principal area of activity every year since the Fund started. It addressed, and continues to address, a real need of developing countries and countries in transition, and has been an explicit area of focus for many donors. The CTF has supported 2,078 participations from 2004 to December 2013, or 14% out of a total of 14,800 CTF eligible country participations. The CTF has expended \$9,666,434 on this output during this same period, or on average \$4,654 per participation. The expenditure reflected 55% of total expenditure, or 80% of activity expenditure. A vast majority of participants (95-97%) are satisfied to very satisfied with their participation. A major achievement is that, presently, there are more developing countries self-funding their participation than there were before the start of the CTF.

The CTF was able to take note of the changing needs of countries and introduce more activities related to the second outcome of the CTF, "strengthening participation", principally through the provision of regional workshops. While initiated as early as 2005, the regional workshops took root in 2007 and continued. The CTF has supported 893 participations at 33 CTF capacity building events between 2004 and 2013 at a total expense of \$1,832,576 (or 10% of total expense, or 15% of activity expenditure), or approximately \$2,052 per participation. The events ranged in size and duration from

1 day (11 events), 2 days (4 events) or 3 days or more (20 events) for a total of 2,914 person days of training at a cost of approximately \$53 per person day of training.

The third CTF outcome relates to "increased availability of scientific evidence in Codex". There have been mixed results in this area, partially due to activities in this area starting as recently as 2012. This was due to a variety of reasons, including the intentional, continued focus on the primary outcome of widening participation and difficulty in defining appropriate interventions for this outcome. The principal activity has been the Mycotoxin in Sorghum Project, which has generated a significant amount of scientific data. The final results of that project, however, are not known as of the time of this report.

The report contains further conclusions regarding each of the evaluation criteria. In addition to the conclusions on effectiveness listed above, some of the more prominent conclusions are:

1. If the objective of widening participation is maintained, some developing and transition economy countries will require continued assistance for physical participation. Effective participation has become a greater focus for eligible countries, but needs to be supported on a more country-by-country basis.
2. Further needs identification and program design is required for "increased availability of scientific evidence in Codex", that will allow the CTF, if it decides to retain this outcome in the future, to design appropriate approaches and activities given the operational and financial realities of CTF.
3. The higher level development goal in the CTF results framework was set too high. While the contribution of standards to food safety is theoretically clear, in practice there are too many factors, and stakeholders, that influence a country's food safety system for it to be the basis on which to assess progress and results of an initiative such as CTF. The CTF results framework needs to be set more appropriately to the scope of the Fund, and reasonable sphere of influence. The CTF results framework should be more focused on effective participation and standard development, rather than standard implementation and impacts on food safety systems, international trade or safe and nutritious food.
4. Sustainability will be determined by the national context. The turnkey solution involves raising the priority of Codex participation at a national level with central ministries and political decision-makers. The project has never designed specific activities to address this root problem.
5. It is apparent that CTF has had a positive impact on the increased awareness and importance of Codex in eligible countries through exposing participants to the international food standard setting process that takes place in the Codex Alimentarius Commission and has provided valuable information on how to structure and establish Codex infrastructures at the national level.
6. The CTF program design, given its current form and expectations that range from enhancing effective participation to support for generation of scientific data, is not optimal. With a greater emphasis on capacity building, and the development and delivery of the Mycotoxins in Sorghum Project, there has been a reliance on WHO and FAO in-kind contribution of staff time that may not be sustainable in the long-term.
7. The CTF effectively assesses, evaluates and monitors its work. As a result, it has identified many lessons learned, but only a few have been taken further for action, and in some cases, only for very limited periods. As an example, mentoring was raised as an area for support in 2007 but a pilot was only conducted in 2012. By most accounts the pilot was well received and successful but never repeated.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are submitted to the CGTF for their consideration.

1. **Develop a Codex promotional and engagement strategy with the Codex Secretariat to advocate for national support for Codex programs.** This aligns with the Codex Strategic Plan Objective 3 and will help address the root cause of the factors that impact on the sustainability of developing country participation in Codex. There is also a need to raise the priority and profile of food safety within WHO and FAO itself. Conditions at national level are often a reflection of the international landscape and if food safety is not a priority item on WHO and FAO governance bodies it is hard to make a case for it at national level.

2. **Redefine program objectives in light of evolving needs of eligible countries.** A recurring theme throughout the findings of the evaluation is that the CTF was a 12-year program and that adjustments were made throughout the period based on ongoing assessments and monitoring. The changes, however, were limited by the original scope (project document) and were, in some cases, slow to be implemented. There is an opportunity, as the WHO and FAO consider a successor program, to ensure that an iterative planning process is established that will allow for timely adjustments to project scope and objectives to accommodate changes in the operating environment, as well as evolving eligible country needs and priorities.
3. **Improve financial reporting.** Year-by-year comparisons should be presented to permit comparisons. The costs of any Program Support Costs (overhead), in addition to Project Management and Administration costs, should be clearly indicated. WHO and FAO should make efforts to accurately collect and report on the level of in-kind contribution that is being expended on the CTF.
4. **Improve the cost analysis of the CTF.** There can be better definitions of costs (e.g., what costs are included in training workshops before a Codex meeting, what allowance is made for in-kind contributions) in order to be able to provide cost analysis of project activities.<sup>1</sup>
5. **For effective participation, an approach that assesses both the individual delegate and country conditions needs to be in place.**
  - For individuals, this may include:
    - First time, newer delegates have to be fully justified in application;
    - First time, newer delegates must complete online training course (tested);
    - First time, newer delegates be twinned with/mentored by with more experienced members, subject matter experts, or third parties; and
    - First time, newer delegates should be assessed by mentor/partner at end of meeting and report submitted to country.
  - For countries, this may include:
    - Change the application process: multi-year application available, based on engagement strategies demonstrating consistency and outlining proposed role of CTF support and flexible package of assistance;
    - For other countries unable to comply with requirements of multi-year funding, their support can be funded based on current application processes; and
    - Respect your own guidelines. Applications can be too late and not accepted. Applications can be refused for being incomplete or unsatisfactory.
6. **Undertake an analysis in regards to country needs regarding increasing availability of scientific evidence** and develop a clear range of project activities that can be supported by an initiative such as CTF. There is consensus across the project's stakeholders that the provision of scientific data to the Codex process is critically important. There is however, a wide range of opinions on possible areas of intervention for CTF to support this objective. This wide range of opinions indicates that further needs assessment and identification should be conducted in order to better target project activities that are appropriate to CTF. The activities should be realistic given that historically the CTF has over 130 eligible countries and has expended \$640,000 over 10 years (from 2004 to 2013) on the overall objective.
7. **Better align staffing to project scope.** The structure and staffing of a CTF Secretariat will need to take into consideration project goals, objectives and activities to ensure the right balance of capacity and technical competency to meet project objectives, without an unsustainable, over-reliance on in-kind contributions of WHO and FAO staff.
8. **Develop strategies and plans to increase predictability of funding.** In the future, if there are shifts of focus to effective participation, and a shift to more tailor-made capacity building

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<sup>1</sup> As an example, is a one-day training before a Regional Coordinating meeting cost effective, or is there greater value in a 2 or 3 day workshop? Does pooling Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) for workshops result in cost savings? The idea of "pooling the Daily Subsistence Allowance" is that the host or administrator of the event receives the participants' DSA instead of the individual. This allows the host/administrator a "pooled" fund from which they can negotiate discounts for block booking hotels, meals and transportation. Some percentage of the DSA can still be received by the individuals for incidentals.

approaches that intend to impact on institutional capacities, long-term activities and strategies need to be utilized which cannot be supported with current funding patterns. There is a need for longer-term, more predictable funding. The project has made some progress in this regard but more diverse sources of long-term funding are needed.

9. **Continue development of Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks.** The CTF has made commendable progress in developing and utilizing an M+E framework. The framework should continue to evolve and any new results frameworks should also include baselines and targets, with objectives that are SMART (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound).
10. **Lessons learned and new best practices should be integrated more quickly and with more consistency** into the regular project supported activities of the CTF, within the operational realities of the UN and Codex systems.