



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA**

Eighteenth Session

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**ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX
ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION RELEVANT TO THE REGION**

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper describes FAO/WHO activities in the areas of capacity building and the provision of scientific advice implemented since the 17th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA) which are complementary to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

TECHNICAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

2. Under their respective mandates, goals and work plans, FAO and WHO are engaged in a range of food safety and quality capacity development activities at national and regional levels. These capacity development activities directly support the Codex Strategic Plan 2008–2013; in particular, activities 1.7, 2.6 and 5.4. Furthermore, FAO and WHO capacity development activities also contribute to the Strategic plan for the CCASIA, especially objective 3 (development and enhancement of the capacities of national Codex Contact Points), Objective 4 (the exchange of scientific and technical expertise in the region) and Objective 5 (promote procedures to review Codex codes, standards, guidelines and recommendations to facilitate their use as the basis for national standards).

3. FAO and WHO capacity development activities are generally aimed at:

- Upgrading the capacity of developing member countries in food safety, quality control and quality assurance and supporting their effective participation in the work of Codex;
- Enhancing the respective roles of the agriculture and health sectors and trade and industry in ensuring the safety and quality of the food supply; and
- Strengthening cooperation and collaboration between FAO and WHO and partner organizations, in the field of food safety and quality.

4. Since the last session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia, FAO and WHO (either jointly or together with partner organizations and donors) have commenced or are continuing to work with countries of the region on a range of activities (including direct technical assistance projects on food safety and quality, regional projects and events addressing food safety issues). Detailed information is provided below in tables shown in paragraph 8 below. More background on FAO and WHO technical capacity development activities is available at <http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/home-page/en/>, www.fao.org/ag/againfo/home/en/index.htm, <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/en/>, <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/capacity/en/> and <http://www.wpro.who.int/foodsafety/en/index.html>.

5. Important information on capacity building activities and initiatives of global relevance was provided to the 35th Session of CAC and is available in CX/CAC 12/35/14 Add.1 (ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/Meetings/CAC/cac35/cac35_14_add1e.pdf). The working paper provides information of relevance to the all regions and describes the range of supporting materials (e.g. guidelines, manuals and online resources), key initiatives, international events and global projects which have been delivered or initiated since the last session. Issues of relevance include ongoing work on dealing with food safety emergencies, risk-based food inspection including imported food control, undertaking of country case studies

to support the WHO Initiative to Estimate the Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases (FERG), adoption of safe food practices by food chain operators, science based food safety systems, improved guidance on evidence based food safety policy making, assessment and planning for national food safety programmes and consumer education.

Specific focus on regional initiatives

6. Joint FAO and WHO capacity-building activities organized by the Codex Trust Fund in collaboration with Codex partners for the period in question appear in the annual reports and progress reports of the Codex Trust Fund which are submitted to the 67th Session of the CCEXEC and the 35th Session of the CAC (ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/Meetings/CAC/cac35/cac35_13e.pdf).

Specific to the forthcoming 18th Session of CCASIA, FAO and WHO with funding from the CTF are holding a pre-CCASIA training workshop on “Understanding regional standards” in Tokyo, Japan on 4th November 2012. The expected outcomes of the workshop will have enabled participants to have a better understanding of Codex regional standards procedures, scope, and the rationale behind them and on how to prepare sound proposals, which are adequately supported/ justified and address regional priority issues.

7. On a regional level, in the thirty first FAO Regional Conference for the Asia and the Pacific held from 12-16 March 2012 (Hanoi, Vietnam) in relation to food safety, FAO was requested to assist member countries to enhance capacity for participation in the design of animal health and food-safety standards; harmonize food safety and quality standards in value chain development and strengthen legal and institutional frameworks that govern food safety and quality in value chain development (<http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/rap/regional-conference/31st-aprc-2012/en/>).

8. In October 2011 the WHO Western Pacific Regional Committee meeting endorsed the WHO Western Pacific Regional Food Safety Strategy 2011-2015 and urged Member States to use the Strategy as a framework for the strengthening of national food control systems to effectively protect public health, prevent fraud, avoid food adulteration and facilitate safe and healthy food (<http://www.wpro.who.int/foodsafety/en/index.html>).

9. FAO has also developed the Country Programming Framework (CPF) for certain countries in Asia region while for others the same is currently under development. This determines the programme focal areas (including for food safety) for FAO assistance during the period 2013- 2017 in alignment with the UNDAF.

10. FAO and WHO are conducting a series of activities to strengthen food safety and veterinary community capacities to address the issues related to food borne pathogen contamination, the emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the associated human public health concerns. These activities include FAO/WHO collaboration in field projects to strengthen national/regional capacities and systems for the detection, monitoring, and management of food-borne pathogen contamination and AMR along the food chain. Specific Asia region activities include an FAO/WHO joint study in Cambodia to assess and manage in an integrated manner, the public health risks associated with foodborne pathogens and AMR risks along the poultry value chain.

FAO and WHO are committed to work with key international partners, member governments, and food chain operators to ensure the microbiological safety of food and combat AMR.

11. Activities completed or ongoing in terms of Regional/ National events organized in the Region since the seventeenth Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia are detailed in the following table.

REGIONAL EVENTS/ ACTIVITIES

Activity	Organizers	Dates	Venue
Technical Consultation on a Western Pacific Regional Food Safety Strategy 2011-2015	WHO	4-5 May 2011	Selangor, Malaysia
Regional consultation on Safe Street Foods	WHO/FAO/IN MU	20-23 June 2011	Bangkok, Thailand
Regional training workshops on pesticide MRLs – for Asia region, 33 participants representing 13 countries (Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam).	FAO , in partnership with the USDA	8-10 August 2011	Bangkok, Thailand

Activity	Organizers	Dates	Venue
The objective of the workshop was to strengthen the capabilities of scientists from developing countries in the techniques of pesticide evaluation for the establishment of MRLs and to update their knowledge of the assessment of risks associated with dietary intake of pesticide residues.			
Enhancing Food Safety Information Exchange and Emergency Response Capacity to support participation in INFOSAN	WHO/KFDA	27-29 September 2011	Republic of Korea
ISO/FAO/Codex/OIE Regional workshop on fisheries safety, quality, productivity and sustainability	ISO/FAO/COD EX/OIE	13-16 September 2011	Bali, Indonesia
Regulatory Monitoring of Salt and Flour Fortification Programmes in Asia	WPRO/UNICEF /FFI/ GAIN/Micronutrient Initiative/WB	27-29 September 2011	Manila, Philippines
Sub Regional Consultation Workshop on “Equivalence & Mutual Recognition Agreements to Facilitate Trade of Safe and Quality Food” for Countries of South Asia	FAO	28-29 September 2011	Bangkok, Thailand,
Regional Workshop in Asia and the Pacific: Food for the Cities “Ensuring Resilient Food Systems in Asian Cities”	FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with the FAO “Food for the Cities” multi-disciplinary initiatives.	17-18 November 2011	Bangkok, Thailand
Food Safety Cooperation Working Group for Asia Pacific Region - Inaugural Meeting	FAO, WHO, OIE, APEC, ASEAN	12-13 April 2012	Canberra, Australia
Regional Meeting on "Developing National Food Safety Emergency Response Plans - Sharing Experiences and Lessons Learnt	FAO in collaboration with FSO, MoH, Thailand	27-28 June 2012	Bangkok, Thailand
Regional study/workshop on promoting the use of aquaculture assessment tools in Asia-Pacific	FAO/APFIC, NACA 10 countries in Asia-Pacific	February-July 2012	Rayong, Thailand
Regional Training Workshop on Implementing GAP in Fruit and Vegetable Sector, its Certification and Accreditation	FAO with ADB support	3-7 September 2012	Bangkok, Thailand
Regional consultation/forum on sustainable aquaculture intensification	FAO/APFIC, NACA	September 2012	Bangkok, Thailand
Regional workshop on Principles and further activities for CODEX implementation-Support to Capacity Building and Implementation of International Food Safety Standards in ASEAN Countries	FAO	17-19 September 2012	Bangkok
Investigation of <i>Vibrio cholerae</i> through whole genome sequencing	WHO	Ongoing	NA
Guideline development on data requirements for evidence based policy	WHO	Ongoing	NA
Laboratory and foodborne disease surveillance assessment tool development and implementation	WHO	Ongoing	NA
National food safety profile development	WHO	Ongoing	NA
Pre-CCASIA training workshop on “Understanding regional standards”	FAO/WHO with support of Codex Trust Fund	4 November 2012	Tokyo, Japan
Meeting on Enhancing INFOSAN in Asia and Implementation of Regional Strategies	WHO with FAO and KFDA	27-30 November 2012	Seoul, Republic of Korea

Activity	Organizers	Dates	Venue
Meeting on Enhancing INFOSAN in Asia and Implementation of Regional Strategies	WHO with FAO and KFDA	27-30 November 2012	Seoul, Republic of Korea
Regional Consultation Workshop on Guidelines for Development of Food Safety Policy for countries in Asia	FAO with support of FSOC, MoH, Thailand	17-19 December 2012	Bangkok, Thailand

12. FAO /WHO continued their technical assistance activities in the region: enhancing food safety by strengthening national food control systems. Components of activities include; technical support to enhancing food safety policy, management and regulatory framework; strengthening of national Codex committees, strengthening of foodborne disease and food contamination surveillance/ monitoring; strengthening laboratories, training for food inspectors, development of food safety emergency response plans, responding to food safety emergencies, supporting in coordination of food safety within departments in countries, food safety concerns during disasters, managing the food safety aspects of mass gatherings and consumer food safety education projects.

Projects/Direct Assistance to Countries

Title	FAO/WHO	City/Country	Status
Enhancing Food Safety by Strengthening Food Inspection Systems in ASEAN Countries (GCP/RAS/222/JPN)	FAO	ASEAN countries	Completed
Support to Capacity Building and Implementation of International Food Safety Standards in ASEAN Countries (GCP/RAS/280/JPN)	FAO	ASEAN countries	Ongoing
Accelerating the Implementation of the Core Agriculture Support Program (CASP), Component 1 Biotechnology and Biosafety Initiative:	FAO	GMS countries	Ongoing
Strengthen capacity building on geographical indications at national and regional levels (GCP/RAS/281/FRA)	FAO	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Thailand	Ongoing
Assessment of foodborne disease surveillance, response and laboratory capacities and development of a plan of action.	WHO	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam	Completed
Assistance with food safety incidents and emergencies	WHO	As required	Ongoing
		Afghanistan	
National workshop in Bangladesh National food safety emergency response planning	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed
Workshop on Food Inspection Arrangements in Bangladesh	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh Rajshahi, Bangladesh	
Consultative meeting on improvements of curriculum for Diploma in Medical Technology (Sanitary Inspectorship Training) course	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed
3 Workshops on Improvements of the curriculum for Diploma in Medical Technology (Sanitary Inspectorship Training) course	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed
Consultative meeting on strengthening food inspection in Bangladesh	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed
Seminar on Quality assurance in Food Testing Laboratories of Bangladesh	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed
Refresher training course for analysts (chemist & microbiologists)	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed
Training course on advance instrumental methods of food analysis	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed
Training course on drug residues analysis	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed
Training course on microbiological examination of food and food products	FAO,	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed

Title	FAO/WHO	City/Country	Status
Training on food microbiology	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed
Seminar on Quality assurance in Food Testing Laboratories of Bangladesh	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed
Workshop on the Food Safety Management System in Food Industry Sector	FAO	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Completed
Improving Food Safety, Quality and Food Control in Bangladesh (GCP/BGD/038/EC)	FAO	Bangladesh	Completed
Improving Food Safety in Bangladesh (GCP/BGD/047/NET)	FAO	Bangladesh	Ongoing
Strengthening of Food Safety and Standards in Bhutan (TCP/BHU/3401)	FAO	Bhutan	Ongoing
Stakeholders' workshop on Strengthening of Food Safety & Standards in Bhutan	FAO	Thimpu, Bhutan	Completed
Consultation on the Western Pacific Regional Food Safety Strategy 2011-2015	WHO	Cambodia	Completed
Capacity building to enhance fish quality control and standardisation services and contribute to poverty alleviation (TCP/CMB/3204)	FAO	Cambodia	Completed
Control of microbiological and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) hazards along the poultry chain in Cambodia	FAO/WHO	Cambodia	Ongoing
Basic food safety and foodborne disease outbreak response training for provincial health officers responsible for food inspection.	WHO	Cambodia	Completed
Provision of food inspection equipment	WHO	Cambodia	Completed
Study on strengthening foodborne disease surveillance in Qingdao	WHO	China	Completed
Study on food chemical risk in Guangxi	WHO	China	Completed
Implementation of healthy food market projects	WHO	China	Completed
Capacity building in food inspection and food safety training for food businesses	WHO	China	Ongoing
Food safety IEC activities targeting at rural women and children	WHO	China	Ongoing
Strengthening on food safety emergency response systems and food complaint systems at county level in selected provinces	WHO	China	Ongoing
Development of food safety profiles for selected provinces	WHO	China	Ongoing
GFN enhanced <i>Salmonella</i> Surveillance	WHO	China	Ongoing
		Democratic People's Republic of Korea	
Workshop and training on Chemical and microbiological analysis of foods	FAO	Kochi, Kerala, India	Completed
Workshop on strengthening safety and quality in the food retail chain	FAO	Mumbai, India	Completed
		Indonesia	
Technical Assistance for the development of the SPS related legal framework in the Lao PDR (UTF/LAO/018/LAO)	FAO	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Ongoing
Consultation on the Western Pacific Regional Food Safety Strategy 2011-2015	WHO	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Completed
Capacity building in risk-based food inspection	WHO	Lao Peoples Democratic Republic	Ongoing
Provision of food inspection equipment	WHO	Lao Peoples Democratic Republic	Ongoing
Assistance in the development of food law	WHO	Lao Peoples Democratic Republic	Ongoing

Title	FAO/WHO	City/Country	Status
Dissemination of food safety consumer education materials	WHO	Lao Peoples Democratic Republic	Ongoing
Review and update of the national Food Safety Emergency Responses Plan	WHO	Lao Peoples Democratic Republic	Ongoing
Assistance in preparation for undertaking burden of foodborne disease study	WHO/Japan	Malaysia	Ongoing
Assistance in strengthening laboratory capacities in isolating pathogens associated with powdered infant formula	WHO/ University College Dublin (WHO CC)	Malaysia	Ongoing
Strengthening Capacity of Mongolia to Implement Codex (TCP/MON/3401)	FAO	Mongolia	Ongoing
Consultation on the Western Pacific Regional Food Safety Strategy 2011-2015	WHO	Mongolia	Completed
Capacity building in risk-based food inspection	WHO	Mongolia	Completed
Stakeholder workshop on Strengthening Capacity of Mongolia to Implement Codex	FAO	Ulanbaatar, Mongolia	Completed
Assistance in the development of food law	WHO	Mongolia	Completed
Support for development of the National Strategy for Food Safety for 2012-2016	WHO	Mongolia	Completed
Development of a national Food Safety Emergency Response plan	WHO	Mongolia	Completed
Strengthening capacity of the National CODEX committee, development of associated strategy and action plan, and support for translation and harmonization of CODEX standards	WHO	Mongolia	Ongoing
Support for defining of core capacity of food safety inspectors and develop postgraduate training programme on food safety	WHO	Mongolia	Ongoing
Revision of regulation on surveillance of food borne diseases and support for associated national training	WHO	Mongolia	Completed
Capacity building for INFOSAN in Mongolia	WHO	Mongolia	Ongoing
Food safety integrated into Environmental Health Training for primary health care providers (5 day training programme developed and training provided in selected rural provinces)	WHO	Mongolia	Ongoing
Support for study of training needs of food handlers and processors and development of mandatory training program	WHO	Mongolia	Ongoing
Guidelines On "Training And Development Of IEC Materials On Food Safety And Food Hygiene Of School Lunch Program In Secondary Schools	WHO	Mongolia	Ongoing
Awareness raising on food safety and public education (5 keys to Safer Food)	WHO	Mongolia	Ongoing
Capacity building to improve market access for fish and fishery products (TCP/MYA/3401)	FAO	Myanmar	Ongoing
Assistance in strengthening laboratory capacities in isolating pathogens associated with powdered infant formula	WHO/ University College Dublin (WHO CC)	Philippines	Ongoing
Assistance in developing food law	WHO	Philippines	Completed
National Workshop in Thailand: "National Food Safety Emergency Response Planning"	FAO	Bangkok, Thailand	Completed
Enhancement of Laboratory Capacity on Food Safety in Primary Production (TCP/THA/3305)	FAO	Thailand	Ongoing
Stakeholders' final workshop on Capacity Building for the Food Inspection System in Vietnam	FAO	Hanoi, Viet Nam	Completed
Capacity Building for the Food Inspection System in Vietnam (UNJP/VIE/042/UNJ)	FAO	Viet Nam	Completed
Strengthening Vietnamese SPS capacity for trade 'Improvement of safety and quality of fresh vegetables through the value chain approach' (MTF/VIE/046/STF)	FAO	Viet Nam	Completed

Title	FAO/WHO	City/Country	Status
Piloting Surveillance For Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) In Aquaculture Sector in Viet Nam	FAO/WHO	Viet Nam	Ongoing
Consultation on the Western Pacific Regional Food Safety Strategy 2011-2015	WHO	Viet Nam	Completed
Knowledge, Awareness and Practices of food-handlers and managers of food safety at large canteens in Southern Vietnam	WHO	Viet Nam	Ongoing
Support for 3 dissemination workshops to introduce the new law on Food Safety and Hygiene and associated legislation/directives.	WHO	Viet Nam	Completed
Development of the Decree detailing the implementation of the new law on food safety	WHO	Viet Nam	Completed
Microbiological Risk Assessment guidance development and support for the establishment of the task force on food safety risk assessment	WHO	Viet Nam	Completed
Laboratory capacity building at provincial and national levels	WHO	Viet Nam	Ongoing
Facilitation of participation in foodborne disease related external quality assurance programmes (EQAS) and support for the development of a national PT programme	WHO	Viet Nam	Ongoing
Assistance in food recall, rapid alert system, horizon scanning and in-country INFOSAN membership	WHO	Viet Nam	Ongoing
Assistance in imported food control	WHO	Viet Nam	Ongoing
Development of IEC materials to prevent food poisoning	WHO	Viet Nam	Ongoing

13. The challenges identified during capacity building include;

- Most Asian countries involve multiple agencies to manage the food control system, but there is still a lack of role clarity and the issue of coordination between agencies needs to be addressed to make food safety effective.
- Food safety policy in most countries is either non-existent or needs strengthening
- A whole of food chain approach is yet to be developed. Linkages and integration of food safety and quality into the agriculture sector needs to be facilitated. Implementation of Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) and traceability need specific focus. Enhancing partnerships between government and industry will also facilitate an improved whole of sector approach to food safety and quality.
- Many countries still do not have well developed systems of standards development including use of Codex standards. The role between voluntary standards and technical regulations also needs to be resolved.
- Steps towards better utilizing national food control systems to contribute to the prevention of dietary related non-communicable diseases and micronutrient deficiencies have been undertaken, but need to be expanded.
- Limited data on foodborne disease, food contaminants, status of antimicrobial resistance in the food supply and linkage of food contamination to foodborne diseases.
- Limited capacity and resource in food inspection and certification services prevents effective implementation of food legislation. Risk-based inspection approaches are yet to be adopted.
- The capacity of small and medium size food manufacturers to meet international food safety requirements is limited and certified HACCP systems generally confined to a few larger processors operating in export-oriented markets.
- Test facilities to test as per international standards are lacking. In many case the equipment is available through one time donors funding but tests cannot be sustained.
- Food handler training and consumer education is an area which requires renewed attention, including utilizing other education programmes.
- Food safety emergency response systems vary between country to country, although there is a widespread interest to further develop such systems.

14. Looking ahead, priorities for the coming year in the region, which may be implemented jointly by FAO and WHO, or in association with other partner organizations, aim at strengthening national food control systems in Asian countries, including:

- Providing expertise in the drafting of SPS compliant laws, regulations, standards and facilitating regional harmonization and understanding;
 - Supporting national Codex programmes (including setting up/ developing Codex Contact Points, National Codex Committees, National Codex operating manuals) to not only facilitate effective participation in Codex but also provide data for Codex standards setting to further enhance participation in Codex activities at regional and national levels
 - Support in developing food safety policies which will provide a focused approach to addressing food safety as well as improve coordination at a national level through the development of and enhancing linkages between the health, agriculture, industries and trade sectors.
 - Developing tools and training materials to assist food safety and quality control activities.
 - Advocating the importance of foodborne disease surveillance information, including antibiotic resistance, to public health officials and promoting the importance of integrated surveillance to relevant agencies and support in establishing such programmes.
 - Supporting countries in establishment of risk-based food inspection systems, including risk-based import control systems.
 - Targeted training for food safety officials and technical staff (food safety managers, food inspectors, and food analysts) in carrying out their respective duties
 - Support to countries in developing Food Safety Emergency Response systems or plans and linking these to food recall and rapid alert systems.
 - Support in establishment of food safety controls and assurance systems across the food chain including GAPs/ GHP/ HACCP, etc covering food operators right from production till consumer including the retail sector.
 - Improving food safety consumer education through sharing best practices and integrating with other education activities.
 - Strengthening regional and international food control information exchange and cooperation activities.
15. Capacity development activities at national and regional levels are implemented according to organization-wide strategic planning, as well as in response to direct requests from member countries. FAO and WHO have been generally collaborating and coordination in the implementation of food safety related activities.
16. ***The membership of CCASIA is invited to engage with FAO and WHO*** to provide feedback on:
- Ongoing FAO and WHO activities to strengthen food safety and quality in the region.
 - Priority needs at national and regional levels which require further support from FAO and WHO.