

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 7

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME FAO/WHO REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

29th Session

The Hague, the Netherlands, 30 September – 3 October 2014

DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CCEURO

Introduction

1. During the FAO Regional Consultation on Strengthening Capacities for Food Safety Risk Analysis and enhancing participation in Codex work on 18 September 2013 in Pulawy, Poland an informal document containing a draft Strategic Plan for CCEURO (see Annex I) was presented by the Coordinator for Europe. This draft was informally discussed at the Pulawy meeting and on request by the Coordinator written comments on the draft were provided by the CCEURO members (see Annex II).

Goal

2. The goal of this Strategic Plan is to enhance the effectiveness of the FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Europe in achieving its responsibilities towards its Member countries and to enhance the Region's contribution to the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Expected outcome

3. The objective and expected outcome of the discussion is consensus amongst the CCEURO members on the content and the adoption of the Strategic Plan by the 29th CCEURO.

Back ground

4. The Codex Region of Europe entails in 2014 the greatest number of members – 51, including 50 countries and one member organization, European Union. The majority of countries with economies in transition have been actively pursuing WTO accession after early 90s, most of them becoming members, while others being still in the process of negotiating their accession. Due to the increasingly globalized food and feed supply, both WTO members and candidate countries are interested in Codex standards and work for protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.

5. The particularity of the Codex Region of Europe is the heterogeneity of countries in terms of socio-economic level, capacity to comply with Codex requirements in the food safety area and experience in participating in Codex work. 23 out of 50 Codex member countries (about 50%) have 10 years or less of Codex membership, including one country joining Codex in 2012, one country in 2011 and two countries in 2009. This fact supports the great need in capacity development to increase the level of participation and the technical quality of contributions to Codex work, as well as to raise capacity for the utilization of Codex standards, recommendations and codes of practice for strengthening food safety control systems and ensuring efficient protection of consumers of both domestic food markets and those of importing countries.

6. The Strategic Plan for CCEURO responds with basic actions to the need of ensuring more even technical inputs and participation of CCEURO countries to Codex work, fostering the collection and provision of regional data for standard setting purposes taking into account production practices used throughout the food chain in CCEURO countries, increasing regional cohesion for more efficient control of food safety hazards and competitiveness on international market. The Strategic Plan for CCEURO builds on and is aligned with the global Codex Strategic Plan for 2014-2019. It seeks to achieve better coordination and interaction among member countries in order to strengthen national food control systems, promote harmonization of standards and equivalence of practices in ensuring food safety and fair practices in food trade.

ANNEX I

Strategic Objectives

Objective 1: To develop and strengthen Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees

Actions

- 1.1 Identify the capacity development needs of the Codex structures at the national level;
- 1.2 Conduct national and or regional workshops on Codex for Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committee members;
- 1.3 Develop a mentoring program between experienced and less experienced countries of the region to enhance the knowledge of Codex issues, structures and processes.

Objective 2: To strengthen communication and coordination amongst CCEURO members, with other regions and the Codex Secretariat

Actions

- 2.1 Hold pre-session meetings with all CCEURO members at relevant Codex Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups;
- 2.2 Focus the CCEURO agenda on Codex issues of particular interest to the region;
- 2.3 Develop a regional strategy on issues of mutual interest arising from regional discussions.
- 2.3 Develop a communication platform for CCEURO members.

Objective 3: To strengthen the exchange of scientific and technical expertise amongst experienced and less experienced countries in the region

Actions:

- 3.1 Identify and prioritize regional issues where there is a need for scientific research/analysis;
- 3.2 Develop a list of specialists and institutions which can provide scientific/technical expertise;
- 3.3 Establish scientific and technical networks amongst the experts and institutions.

Objective 4: To promote use of Codex standards as a basis for national legislation and regulations

Actions:

- 4.1 Train technical personnel and policy makers on the need to consider Codex standards;
- 4.2 Increase awareness on the importance of Codex amongst relevant stakeholders;
- 4.3 Assist member countries to harmonize national legislation with Codex standards.

Objective 5: To develop and/or review Codex standards taking into account regional interests

Actions:

- 5.1 Identify specific food products of interest to the region that require standards to be developed;
- 5.2 Establish national mechanisms for the standard development process;
- 5.3 Submit all proposals for new standards for products of interest to the region to the CCEURO for consideration prior to submission to the Commission.

ANNEX II**Written comments on the Strategic Plan for the Coordinating Committee for Europe (CCEURO) 2014-2019 provided by the CCEURO Members****Comments provided by the European Commission****Strategic Objectives****Objective 1: To develop and strengthen Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees****Actions**

- 1.1 Identify the capacity development needs of the Codex structures at the national level;
- 1.2 Conduct national and or regional workshops on Codex for Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committee members;
- 1.3 Develop a mentoring program between experienced and less experienced countries of the region to enhance the knowledge ~~of in~~ Codex issues, structures and **processes procedures**.

Objective 2: To strengthen communication and coordination amongst CCEURO members, with other regions and the Codex Secretariat**Actions**

- 2.1 Hold pre-session meetings with all CCEURO members at relevant Codex Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups;
- 2.2 Focus the CCEURO agenda on Codex issues of particular interest to the region;
- 2.3 Develop a regional strategy on issues of mutual interest arising from regional discussions.
- 2.3 Develop a communication platform for CCEURO members.

2.4 Participate as an observer in the meetings of other regional committees.**Objective 3: To strengthen the exchange of scientific and technical expertise amongst ~~experienced and less experienced countries in the region~~ CCEURO Members****Actions:**

- 3.1 Identify and prioritize regional issues where there is a need for scientific research/analysis;
- 3.2 Develop a list of specialists and institutions which can provide scientific/technical expertise;
- 3.3 Establish scientific and technical networks amongst the experts and institutions.

3.4. Enhance and promote the participation of scientific and technical experts to the joint FAO/WHO risk assessment bodies**Objective 4: To promote the use of Codex standards as a basis for national legislation and regulations****Actions:**

- 4.1 Train technical personnel and policy makers on the need to consider Codex standards;
- 4.2 Increase awareness on the importance of Codex amongst relevant stakeholders;
- 4.3 Assist member countries ~~to in harmonize~~ **harmonizing** national legislation with Codex standards.

Objective 5: To develop and/or review Codex standards taking into account regional interests**Actions:**

- 5.1 Identify specific food products of interest to the region that require standards to be developed;
- 5.2 Establish national mechanisms for the standard development process;
- 5.3 Submit all proposals for new standards for products of interest to the region to the CCEURO for consideration prior to submission to the Commission.

Comments provided by Norway

Objective 1 and 2

We are positive to these objectives and we are looking forward to discussing them, but at the same time we have some concerns. These concerns are in regard to the level of ambition/amount of work, as this seems quite comprehensive for the period. However as mentioned, we are looking forward hearing from others on this and also to discuss how we in practice can plan for and can carry out the work. We have also discussed who should be the responsible party/ies for all these actions. We suppose that WHO and FAO would have something they would like to comment upon here, in regards to their training programs etc., and countries like Norway would be interested in discussing how f.ex. training and mentoring could be done in cooperation with WHO/FAO.

Objective 3

We think that 3.1 is very interesting and that we should discuss how this can be done. This with the intent to cooperate when collecting data from different member countries. However 3.2 and 3.3 might be too ambitious at this point, and could maybe be put on an "idea list" for later? This also because we have some questions in regards to what is the purpose of this list and we would believe that scientific networks already exist?

Objective 4

We are positive, however we consider that this objective might be under the area of responsibility of WHO and FAO in the region and that therefore we could discuss both how the CCEURO committee and members could contribute under the chairmanship of WHO/FAO.

Objective 5

We are positive and this is very clearly an issue for the CCEURO meeting agenda.

Comments provided by Poland

Strategic Objectives

Objective 2: To strengthen communication and coordination amongst CCEURO members, and with other regions and the Codex Secretariat

Rationale: Priority should be given to communication between CCEURO Members and with other regions. Communication with Codex Secretariat does not seem to need serious strengthening. Moreover, no activity related to Codex Secretariat is mentioned in the actions of Objective 2.

Numbering of Actions in Objective 2 needs ordering (Action 2.3 is doubled).

Objective 4:

~~4.1 Train technical personnel and policy makers on the need to consider Codex standards;~~

Rationale: Detailed provisions of action 4.1 seem to be included in more general provisions of action 4.2. Thus action 4.1 is redundant.

~~4.3 Assist member countries to harmonize in benefitting from Codex attainments while developing and/or revising national legislation with Codex standards.~~

Rationale: Codex texts are not mandatory for Member Countries. They are supposed to be a guide for Member Countries. There is no formal obligation for implementation or harmonisation.

Objective 5:

~~5.2 Establish~~ Strengthen national mechanisms for the standard development process;

Rationale: In most cases such mechanisms are in place, but they may need to be strengthened.

5.3 Submit all proposals for new Codex Standards for products of interest to the region to the CCEURO for consideration prior to submission to the Commission.

Comments provided by Russia

Strategic Objectives

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4.1 Train technical personnel and policy makers on the need to consider Codex standards;

4.2 Increase awareness on the importance of Codex amongst relevant stakeholders;

4.3 Assist member countries to harmonize national legislation with Codex standards.

Objective 5: To develop and/or review Codex standards taking into account regional interests

Actions:

5.1 Identify specific food products of interest to the region that require standards to be developed;

5.2 Establish national mechanisms for the standard development process;

5.3 Submit all proposals for new standards for products of interest to the region to the CCEURO for consideration prior to submission to the Commission.

5.4 Seek to submit the draft Codex standards and working documents in the Russian language.