

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 4

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Fifty-third Session, WHO Headquarters, Geneva, 4-6 February 2004

Other Matters Arising from FAO and WHO

Paper Prepared By FAO and WHO

Part I: Requests for Scientific Advice from Codex Subsidiary Bodies

Introduction

1. The timely provision of scientific advice by FAO and WHO is of key importance to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Codex Evaluation¹ recognized the view that the value of the expert scientific advice often is reduced by the inability of Codex to adequately set priorities. The Evaluation recommended that Codex should have much more responsibility for setting priorities and budget allocations for its scientific advice within an overall budget agreed by FAO/WHO.
2. The recommendations resulting from the Codex Evaluation on the provision of scientific advice to Codex and Member States, will be among the issues to be considered in the FAO/WHO Consultative Process as described in Part II of this document.
3. The 26th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (June/July 2003) acknowledged the large amount of requests for scientific advice raised through the Codex system². It recognized the need for Codex to prioritize its requests in co-ordination with the Secretariats of the FAO/WHO Scientific Committees and of *ad hoc* Expert Consultations, considering also the needs of scientific advice of developing countries.

¹ Report of the Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and other FAO and WHO Food Standards Work, Rome 2002; ALINORM 03/25/3

² ALINORM 03/41, paras. 194-195.

4. The Commission noted the need for Member Countries to provide appropriate data, experts and other necessary resources to facilitate the timely provision of advice requested.

Requests received from Codex until December 2003

5. A summary of the Codex requests to FAO and WHO on scientific advice until December 2003 is shown in Annex I. It includes an initial estimate of cost of each of these activities. In addition to these requests from Codex, it should be borne in mind that FAO and WHO frequently receive requests for scientific advice from other parties, and at times have to respond to emerging issues in a shorter timeframe than normal. An indication of the total budgets available in FAO and WHO for scientific advice on food safety matters for the 2004-2005 biennium is provided in Annex II.³

Prioritization

6. Codex should carefully set priorities regarding requests for scientific advice from FAO and WHO, both at the level of the Codex subsidiary bodies and the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The following preliminary criteria, proposed by FAO/WHO Secretariats, may be used to manage these requests for advice:

- Relevance in relation to the strategic objectives and priorities as defined in the Strategic Framework;
- Significance and urgency to the work of Codex and to member countries in terms of public health and international trade;
- Clear definition of the scope and objective of the request ;
- Nature of the data required and assurance of the availability of the data;
- Clear indication of the way in which the advice will be used in the work of Codex;
- Indication of the availability of necessary resources (budget or in kind) from sources, including FAO/WHO and countries interested in the subject.

7. There is a need to further elaborate these criteria and to identify a mechanism for setting priorities within the whole Codex system. In addition, better interaction between Codex Committees and the parent Organizations, providing the scientific advice, would improve the overall process.

Action requested from the Executive Committee

8. The Executive Committee is requested to:

- (i) indicate priorities among the requests for the provision of scientific advice for the 2004-2005 biennium, taking into account the above mentioned preliminary criteria and the availability of the funds;
- (ii) make proposals to further address the elaboration of a more finite set of criteria for prioritization of requests for scientific advice in close collaboration with FAO and WHO Secretariats and the relevant Codex Committees.

³ Annex II will be circulated separately as CX/EXEC 04/53/4 Addendum 1.

Part II: FAO/WHO Consultative Process on Provision of Scientific Advice to Codex and Member States

9. The Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 24th Session in 2001 requested FAO and WHO to review the procedures to provide scientific advice to Codex and Member States with a view to improve the quality, quantity, transparency and timeliness of that advice⁴. The Codex Evaluation in 2002 identified a review of the provision of scientific advice as a matter of urgency. It recommended that a process of consultation be organized to develop proposals to improve the processes involved. Information was presented at the 26th Session of the CAC on the strategy to be taken by FAO/WHO in undertaking the process of consultation. This document outlines the progress made since then and the main achievements.

10. The consultative process, coordinated jointly by FAO and WHO, is now in progress. The steps involved were identified at a planning meeting held at FAO, in May 2003 and a detailed plan of work was developed. The consultative process considers all steps in the provision of scientific advice including the working arrangements of expert bodies, transparency of the processes such as selection of experts, and management issues.

11. The consultative process involves three main steps: (1) an electronic discussion forum open to all interested parties, 1 October-14 November 2003, (2) an international workshop, 27-29 January 2004, and (3) an expert consultation to be arranged in May/June 2004.

12. The e-forum was successful in obtaining input from a broad range of interested parties. After soliciting interest via the relevant mailing lists of FAO, WHO and Codex, over 200 participants from more than 50 countries joined the forum. Participants were invited to comment on issues presented in 10 discussion papers which are available on an FAO/WHO webpage (http://www.fao.org/es/esn/proscad/index_en.stm). A summary report on the participation and output of the e-forum is available on the webpage. A more comprehensive report is being prepared for the workshop.

13. The international workshop will take place at WHO, Geneva on 27-29 January 2004. Experts from the different subject areas and representatives of stakeholder organizations have been invited. The workshop will consider the 10 discussion papers and the comments received through the e-forum. The main objective will be to identify the key issues to be modified and strengthened and to recommend options to best address them in order to improve the provision of scientific advice.

14. The expert consultation, to be held in Rome in May/June 2004, will consider the conclusions of the workshop and develop the final recommendations for submission to FAO and WHO.

15. The estimated cost of the consultative process totals USD 425,000, to be shared equally by FAO and WHO. Resources have been identified to cover the e-forum and workshop. However, funds to support the expert consultation are not yet available. Fund-raising efforts are in progress.

Action requested from the Executive Committee

16. The Executive Committee is invited to consider any questions or issues to be addressed by the FAO/WHO consultative review which could assist the Organizations in their tasks as set out in this paper, and to define any strategies for identification of additional sources of funding to complete the review process on the provision of scientific advice.

⁴ ALINORM 01/41, para.61.

Annex I***Codex Requests to FAO and WHO on Scientific Advice (until December 2003)***

#	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Activity by FAO/WHO	Status of Planning	Estimated Cost (US\$)	Advice to be Used by Codex for
1	Safety evaluation of 14 food additives and 173 flavouring agents	CCFAC	35th Session ALINORM 03/12A Para. 183 ff	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	63rd JECFA meeting (June 2004), and 65th JECFA (2005)	200, 000	GSFA
2	Safety evaluation of eight contaminants (e.g. acrylamide, arsenic, ethyl carbamate)	CCFAC	35th Session ALINORM 03/12A Para. 183 ff	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	64th JECFA (2005)	100, 000	Maximum levels
3	Safety evaluation of residues for four new and three existing veterinary drugs	CCRVDF	14th Session ALINORM 03/31A Para. 110 ff	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	62nd JECFA (4-12 February 2004)	100, 000	Maximum residue limits
4	What to do with veterinary drugs with no ADI and/or MRL	CCRVDF (Delegation of Thailand) CAC	14th Session ALINORM 03/31A Para. 90 26 th Session ALINORM 03/41 Paras. 245 – 249	FAO/WHO Ad Hoc Expert Consultation	Expert consultation scheduled for 2nd half of 2004. Visiting Scientist from Thailand to join FAO on January 15 for implementation of this activity and some limited funds from this country.	140, 000	Risk management policy guidance

#	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Activity by FAO/WHO	Status of Planning	Estimated Cost (US\$)	Advice to be Used by Codex for
5	To provide scientific advice on biotoxins, especially as it related to their levels in bivalve molluscs	CCFFP	25th Session ALINORM 03/18 Para. 92	FAO/WHO Ad Hoc Expert Consultation	WHO/SDE and FAO/FIU have initiated organization of Expert Consultation	100, 000	Risk management options for inclusion in the Proposed Draft Standard on Bivalve Molluscs (including limits) and the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products
6	Safety and regulatory problems related to functional food	CCASIA	13 th Session ALINORM 03/15 Para. 93	FAO/WHO Ad Hoc Expert Consultation	First discussion and draft terms of reference at ESNS	100, 000	Identification of the need for future work
7	Safety of active chlorine used in and on foods	CCFAC	35th Session ALINORM 03/12A Para. 65	WHO to consider and evaluate the risk and health benefits of the use of active chlorine in food processing when reviewing the WHO Guidelines on Drinking Water Quality.	WHO has started planning for Expert Consultation	80, 000	Proposed Draft Code of Practice for the Use of Active Chlorine (Step 2/3)
8	Antimicrobial resistance: FAO/WHO to advise the Commission on possible directions to be taken including the establishment of a new task force if necessary	CCEXEC	48 th Session ALINORM 01/4 Para. 37	A multidisciplinary expert consultation in cooperation with OIE and if required the IPPC, that should consider all uses of antimicrobials in agriculture and veterinary use (including aquaculture) and take into account the role played by antimicrobials as essential human and veterinary medicines.	First FAO/OIE/WHO Expert Workshop was held 1 - 5 December, 2003 Second FAO/OIE/WHO Expert Workshop on Non-Human Antimicrobial Usage and Antimicrobial Resistance, Oslo, 16-18 March, 2004	200, 000	Risk management options for antimicrobials to be considered by different Codex Committees (CCPR, CCFH, CCRVDF, CTAF)

#	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Activity by FAO/WHO	Status of Planning	Estimated Cost (US\$)	Advice to be Used by Codex for
9	FAO/WHO to extend their current work on Reference recommended nutrient intakes to include ULs for vitamins and minerals	CCNFSDU	23 rd Session ALINORM 03/26 Para. 138ff		Not started; first discussion between ESNS, ESNA, IPCS	160, 000	Proposed Draft Guidelines for Vitamins and Mineral Supplements (Step 5)
10	The risk associated with <i>Enterobacter</i> genus, including <i>E. sakazakii</i> , and <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> in powdered infant formula	CCFH	35 th Session ALINORM03/13 A Para. 169	FAO/WHO expert workshop	Call for data issued. FAO/WHO workshop scheduled to take place in Geneva on 2-5 February 2004	160, 000	Risk management options/guidance in the revision of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Foods for Infants and Children
11	Evaluation of pre-harvest control measures, post-harvest treatment technologies, how <i>Vibrio parahaemolyticus</i> causes illness and methods for analysis of toxin producing gene	CCFFP	25 th Session ALINORM 03/18 Para. 91	Consideration of these issues in the ongoing risk assessment of <i>Vibrio</i> spp in seafoods and in an expert consultation on <i>Vibrio</i>	Considered at an expert consultation in Bangkok in August 2002 Being incorporated into the Vibrio RA	Done	Risk management measures for inclusion in the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (bivalve molluscs, aquaculture) and possibly in the Proposed Draft Standard for Bivalve Molluscs
12	Final risk assessments on Listeria, Vibrio & Campylobacter	CCFH	34 th & 35 th Sessions ALINORM 03/13 & 03/13A	Completion of the risk assessments	Salmonella published; Listeria in print. Finalisation of others through consultation with the drafting groups Translation/publication	185, 000	Risk management options in the revision of relevant Codes of Practice

#	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Activity by FAO/WHO	Status of Planning	Estimated Cost (US\$)	Advice to be Used by Codex for
13	Expert consultation to assist the committee integrate risk assessment results in the development of standards and related text	CCFH	34 th Session ALINORM 03/13 Para. 83	Finalisation of the draft guidelines that were already developed at a consultation held in Kiel Germany in 2003	Peer review not started	150, 000	General guidance on how to integrate risk assessment results into risk management decisions
14	Risk assessment based advice on a range of 32 pathogen-commodity combinations	CCFH	32nd Session ALINORM 01/13 Paras. 12 – 20	<i>E.coli</i> in 2004 2 more planned for 2005	Discussions between FAO/ WHO	480, 000	Risk management options in the revision of relevant Codes of Practice
15	Request to convene a consultation to review the status and procedures of the expert bodies on additional ways to improve the quality, quantity and timeliness of scientific advice to the Commission	CAC CCEXEC	24 th Session ALINORM 01/41 Para. 61 25 th Session ALINORM 03/25/5 Para. 23	Identify additional resources to implement the activity. Conclude organization of workshop and final expert consultation.	First planning meeting of FAO/WHO held on 29/30 May 2003 Electronic Forum held from 1 October to 14 November 2003 FAO/WHO workshop with stakeholders to be implemented from 27 to 29 January 2004 FAO/WHO Final Expert Consultation to be organised if resources available	425, 000	See Part II of this document
16	Establishment of criteria for the evaluation of safety of acceptable previous cargoes (transport of fats and oils in bulk) and evaluation of specific substances on that basis	CCFO	18 th Session ALINORM 03/17, Para. 78-79	Proposed at 26 th CAC to convene a FAO/WHO Expert Consultation	Discussion pending	160,000	Criteria for the elaboration and revision of the list

#	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Activity by FAO/WHO	Status of Planning	Estimated Cost (US\$)	Advice to be Used by Codex for
17	Food Safety Risk Assessment of GM Animals, including fish	CTFBT	3 rd and 4 th Sessions	FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on GM animals	Implemented in November 2003.	Done	Risk assessment policy guidance (guidelines for food safety assessment)
18	Evaluation of residues and toxicology of 19 pesticides for the establishment of MRLs	CCPR	35 th Session ALINORM 03/24A	Joint FAO/WHO Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues	Meeting of the FAO Panel of Experts on Pesticide Residues in Food and the Environment and the Core Assessment Group- 15-24 Sept 2003 with pre-meeting on 10-14 Sept 2003	Done	Proposed Draft Maximum Residues Limits for Pesticides
19	Work sharing of pesticide residue and toxicology evaluation at national and international level	CCPR	35 th Session ALINORM 03/24 A Para. 19	Joint FAO/WHO pilot project in collaboration with OECD countries	First meeting on 9 June 2003	Done	Decreased workload for JMPR
20	Improving the methodology for point estimates on dietary exposure assessment in relation to MRL setting	CCPR	35 th Session ALINORM 03/24 A Paras. 20-31	Working Group	In preparation for the 36 th Session of CCPR Training courses for developing country participants planned	50, 000	Improvement in MRL setting
21	York meeting and Zoning Report on minimum data requirements for establishing MRLs and Import Tolerances	CCPR	35 th Session ALINORM 03/24 A Para. 11	Expert Consultation	Proposal stage	150, 000	Better coordination and decreased workload of JMPR