

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 6 (b)

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

*Fifty-fifth Session, FAO Headquarters*

*Rome (Italy), 9 – 11 February 2005*

#### OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO

#### PRIORITY SETTING OF REQUESTS FOR SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

1. The standard setting process in Codex heavily depends on the timely provision of scientific advice by FAO and WHO. Over the last several years, there has been a vast increase in the requests for scientific advice from Codex to the parent organizations. This is mainly due to the broadening of the scope of issues for which advice is sought and which nowadays includes chemical and microbiological hazards and associated risks, genetically modified foods and a vast range of *ad hoc* issues such as, the use of antimicrobials in aquaculture and upper limits for vitamins and minerals. It is to be expected that in future the need for scientific advice will further increase. Codex, FAO and WHO have recognized the need to prioritize these requests for scientific advice and to properly manage this process given the resources available.
2. The 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Codex Executive Committee (February 2004) considered a set of preliminary criteria for the prioritization of requests for scientific advice, prepared by FAO and WHO<sup>1</sup>. The Committee could not reach a conclusion on the proposed criteria and deferred further consideration to a future Session.
3. The preliminary criteria included the following:
  - Relevance in relation to the strategic objectives and priorities as defined in the Strategic Framework;
  - Significance and urgency to the work for Codex and for 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.

<sup>1</sup> ALINORM 04/27/3, paras 76-83

4. Initial discussion by members of the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the Executive Committee suggested that the criteria could include some of the following - requests originating from developing countries; decisions of the Commission or the Executive Committee; requests that had already been prioritised at the Committee level; adherence to the Working Principles for Risk Analysis and the relevance of the advice to accelerate the finalization of a standard under development. Other views shared included that priorities should be established also on a regional basis, to achieve geographical equity and to take into account the specific needs of developing countries. Some members expressed the view that overall priority should be given to issues directly related to food safety and that the relevance to the advancement of Codex texts should also be considered in setting of priorities.
5. The 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (July 2004) made a number of observations regarding the criteria for establishing priorities for the provision of scientific advice<sup>2</sup>. The Commission agreed that priority for the provision of scientific advice should be given to requests coming from Codex subsidiary bodies rather than from Member governments and that the work plan of Codex shall take into account the availability of relevant scientific advice. The Commission noted the view that priority should also be given to the concerns of developing countries, the decisions of the Commission and prioritised requests by Codex subsidiary bodies.
6. The Commission noted that in the absence of Codex criteria for setting priorities for the provision of scientific advice, FAO and WHO would continue planning expert meetings and consultations considering the following criteria: a) clear scope of the advice requested; b) urgency of the advice requested; c) availability of required data or commitment of countries to provide such data; and d) availability of financial resources.
7. The FAO/WHO secretariats have updated the requests from Codex on scientific advice until November 2004 (Annex I).
8. It is proposed that FAO and WHO will proceed with the final prioritization using the preliminary set of criteria as indicated above on an *ad interim* basis, taking into account the observations made by the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. At this stage, the **Executive Committee** may wish to resume the discussion on the criteria, initiated at its 53<sup>rd</sup> session, in order to arrive at a conclusion and agree on a set of criteria which FAO/WHO will use as part of their management of the provision of scientific advice. It should be recognized that FAO and WHO have also an obligation to their respective member states to take into account requests coming from them directly.
9. Additional discussion took place at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Executive Committee suggests that Codex Committees should establish their priorities at their level as this would facilitate the consideration of overall priorities by the Executive Committee.
10. As follow-up to the above discussion, FAO and WHO would propose, for consideration, that Codex subsidiary bodies, when making requests for scientific advice should provide a clear description of the purpose and scope of the advice requested. In establishing priorities, Codex Committees should consider the availability of sufficient scientific knowledge and data to conduct the risk assessment or to elaborate the scientific advice and clearly identify the purpose for which the risk assessment/scientific advice is being sought and how it will be considered or used in the (risk) management decision-making process relevant to elaborating Codex standards. No request should be forwarded to FAO and WHO without clear consideration of the above points.
11. The **Executive Committee** is invited to consider this proposal further.

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<sup>2</sup> ALINORM 04/27/41, paras 207 and 208

*Table 1: Codex Requests to FAO and WHO on Scientific Advice (until November 2004)*

	<b>Request for Advice</b>	<b>Originator</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Required Action by FAO/WHO</b>	<b>Status of Planning/Implementation</b>	<b>Estimated Cost (US\$)<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Advice to be Used by Codex for</b>
1	Safety evaluation of eight contaminants (e.g. acrylamide, arsenic, ethyl carbamate)	CCFAC	35 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/12A para. 183 ff  36 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 04/27/12, para. 210, App. XXVII	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	64 <sup>th</sup> JECFA (9 – 17 February 2005)	250,000	Maximum levels  Report to 37 <sup>th</sup> CCFAC (April 2005)
<u>2</u>	Safety evaluation of food additives and flavouring agents	CCFAC	35 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/12A, para. 190, App. XV  36 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 04/27/12, para. 210, App. XXVII	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	65 <sup>th</sup> JECFA (7 – 16 June 2005)	250,000	GSFA  Report to 38 <sup>th</sup> CCFAC, 2006
<u>3</u>	Safety evaluation of residues for four new and three existing veterinary drugs	CCRVDF	14 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/31A para. 110 ff  15 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 05/28/31 FAO/WHO Technical Workshop on residues without ADI/MRL	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	66 <sup>th</sup> JECFA (2006)	<u>250,000</u>	Maximum residue limits  New JECFA approach for vdr without ADI/MRL  <u>Report to CCRVDF 2006</u>
<u>4</u>	Safety evaluation of food additives and flavouring agents Insert JECFA 67 <sup>th</sup> (2006)	CCFAC	36 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 04/27/12	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	67 <sup>th</sup> JECFA (2006)	250,000	Report to the CCFAC

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<u>5</u>	Safety and regulatory problems related to functional foods	CCASIA (Korea)	14 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 05/28/15, paras 53-55	Expert Consultation pending	FAO/WHO Workshop held on 6.9.04 for information exchange. Expert consultation requested by one member countries at CCASIA. Awaiting direction from CCEXEC before taking further action	80,000	Identification of needs and elaboration of guidelines for member countries on evaluating safety and effectiveness <sup>1</sup> .	
<u>6</u>	Safety of active chlorine used in and on foods	CCFAC  CCFH	35 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/12A para. 65; 36 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 04/27/12, para. 93 36 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 04/27/13, para. 158	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. Expert Consultation should follow TOR specified by 37 <sup>th</sup> CCFAC and 28 <sup>th</sup> CCFH.	WHO has started planning for Expert Consultation	300,000	Proposed Draft Code of Practice for the Use of Active Chlorine (Step 2/3)  Proposed TOR to be discussed at 56 <sup>th</sup> CCEXEC, 30 June – 2 July 2005, and 28 <sup>th</sup> CAC, 4 – 9 July 2005.	
<u>7</u>	Completed [antimicrobial resistance]	On hold until 55 <sup>th</sup> CCEXEC and 28 <sup>th</sup> CAC decide on further action						
<u>8</u>	FAO/WHO to extend their current work on Reference recommended nutrient intakes to include ULs for vitamins and minerals	CCNFSDU	23 <sup>rd</sup> Session ALINORM 03/26 para. 138ff	Technical Workshop  May 2005	Joint FAO/WHO Project (ESNA, IPCS) Initiated August 2004	170,000	Proposed Draft Guidelines for Upper Limits for Vitamins and Minerals	

	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Action by FAO/WHO	Status of Planning/Implementation	Estimated Cost (US\$) <sup>11</sup>	Advice to be Used by Codex for
9	The risk associated with <i>Enterobacter</i> genus, including <i>E. sakazakii</i> , and <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> in powdered infant formula	CCFH	35 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/13A para. 169  36 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 04/27/13 para. 154	Follow-up activities to elaborate the risk assessment	FAO/WHO workshop implemented in Geneva on 2-5 February 2004.  Follow up activities initiated May 2004.  Development of tool underway	15,000	Risk management options/guidance in the revision of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Foods for Infants and Children  Labelling provisions in standard on infant formula (CCNFSDU)
10	Final risk assessments on <i>Vibrio</i> & <i>Campylobacter</i>	CCFH	34 <sup>th</sup> & 35 <sup>th</sup> Sessions ALINORM 03/13 & 03/13A	Completion of the risk assessments –peer review	Salmonella and Listeria risk assessments published;  Finalization of others through consultation with the drafting groups  Translation/publication	50,000	Risk management options in the revision of relevant Codes of Practice  Report to 37 <sup>th</sup> CCFH (March 2005); 27 <sup>th</sup> CCFFP (28 February – 4 March 2005)
11	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 2005  2 more planned for 2005	Clearer definition of risk management questions pending from 37 <sup>th</sup> CCFH	450,000	Risk management options in the revision of relevant Codes of Practice

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<u>12</u>	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  CAC	18 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/17, para. 78-79  27 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 04/27/41 para. 206	Proposed at 26 <sup>th</sup> CAC to convene a FAO/WHO Expert Consultation	Discussion pending  Request ratified	140,000	Criteria for the elaboration and revision of the positive list by February 2005.
<u>13</u>	Evaluation of residues and toxicology of pesticides for the establishment of MRLs	CCPR	36 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 04/24	Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues	Next JMPR Meeting in preparation for 19 – 28 September 2005	350,000	Proposed Draft Maximum Residues for Pesticides  Report to 38 <sup>th</sup> CCPR, 2006
<u>14</u>	York recommendations and Zoning Report on minimum data requirements for establishing MRLs and Import Tolerances	CCPR		Follow up to these meetings	A Survey is being implemented to see if countries are following the recommendations of the York meeting on minimum data requirements for establishing MRLs, and the Zoning meeting.	10,000	Report to 37 <sup>th</sup> CCPR, April 2005 and OECD
<u>15</u>	Establishment of MRLs for spices	CCPR	35 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/24A, paras 187 – 200  36 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 04/24	Work began at JMPR , September 2004, work will continue in future sessions of JMPR	Ongoing	10,000 per meeting	37 <sup>th</sup> CCPR, April 2005

	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Action by FAO/WHO	Status of Planning/Implementation	Estimated Cost (US\$) <sup>11</sup>	Advice to be Used by Codex for
16	Use of lactoperoxidase system for milk and milk products	CCFH CAC	27 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 04/27/41 para. 45	FAO/WHO Expert Consultation or technical meeting on the use of lactoperoxidase system for milk and milk products in international trade	Discussion between ESNS and AGA (FAO) and WHO to consider need for planning such a Consultation in 2005	100,000	Code of Practice for milk and milk products  Outcome to be reviewed by CCFH in 2006.
17	Guidance document for the application of HACCP in small and/or less developed businesses	CCFH	35 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/13	Develop a guidance document based on CX/FH 03/4 and recent experience from FAO/WHO Member Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic discussion group implemented</li> <li>• First draft in preparation</li> <li>• Technical meeting, 13 – 15 December, 2004</li> </ul>	80,000	Codex and FAO/WHO Member Countries (to improve food production) and food safety programs  Report to 37 <sup>th</sup> CCFH, March 2005
18	Joint JECFA/JMPR Project  Updating the principles and methods of risk assessment: MRLs/tolerances of chemicals	Melbourne Conference  CCPR	35 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/24A paras 20 - 31	<p>Develop and update FAO guidelines on the submission and evaluation of residues of chemicals for the establishment of MRLs/tolerances</p> <p>Improving the methodology for point estimates on dietary exposure assessment in relation to MRL setting</p> <p>Specifications of food additives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> </ul> <p>Workshop planned for 11- 15 April 2005</p> <p>June 2005</p>	150,000  30,000  80,000	<p>General guidance on data submission and evaluation for the establishment of Codex MRLs</p> <p>Improvement in MRL setting</p>

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<u>19</u>	Provide advice on the use of antimicrobials in aquaculture	CCRVDF	15 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 05/28/31	Joint FAO/WHO/OIE Expert Meeting on the use of antimicrobials in aquaculture	In process (FAO/FIU and FAO/ESN)	130,000	CCRVDF Code of Conduct for Aquaculture
<u>20</u>	Develop practical guidance for the application of microbiological risk management strategies based on risk assessment outputs.	FAO/WHO	The need for guidance in this area has been identified through FAO/WHO activities in member countries and participation in Codex working group meetings	FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on practical risk management strategies	Initial planning stage, for meeting in June 2005?	80,000	National Governments and Codex

<sup>[1]</sup> Total costs for FAO/WHO, including publication of reports, but excluding staffing costs.

<sup>[2]</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> CCNFSU. ALINORM 04/25 stated that the issue of functional foods could be also addressed in the framework of health claims rather than as a separate category of foods. At the 14<sup>th</sup> CCASIA (ALINORM 05/28/15) there was no clear request from the Committee, rather a request from one or two countries.



*Table 2: Other initiatives undertaken by FAO/WHO in relation to the Provision of Scientific Advice*

	<b>Request</b>	<b>Originator</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Required Action by FAO/WHO</b>	<b>Status of Planning/Implementation</b>	<b>Estimated Cost (US\$)<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Advice to be Used by Codex for</b>
1	Request to convene a consultation to review the status and procedures of the expert bodies and advice on additional ways to improve the quality, quantity and timeliness of scientific advice to the Commission	CAC  CAC  CCEXEC  CAC	24 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 01/41 para. 61  25 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/25/5 para. 23  53 <sup>rd</sup> Session ALINORM 04/27/3 paras 55-85  27 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 04/27/41 paras 197 - 208	Identify additional resources to implement the activity. Conclude organization of workshop and final expert consultation.	FAO/WHO workshop with stakeholders implemented from 27 to 29 January 2004  Following up recommendations.  Establishment of internal FAO/WHO task force pending  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of framework/procedure manual on ProScAd ongoing</li> <li>In depth analysis for selection of experts, openness of meetings: use of data, etc pending</li> <li>Workshop on enhancing developing countries capabilities/participation - initiated</li> <li>FAO/WHO intergovernmental meeting to be organized if resources available</li> </ul>	300,000	Report to 28 <sup>th</sup> CAC, July 2005
2	Work sharing of pesticide residue and toxicology evaluation at national and international level	CCPR	35 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/24A para. 19	Joint FAO/WHO pilot project in collaboration with OECD countries	First meeting on 9 June 2003 (ongoing – results to be updated)  Report in preparation for CCPR and other interested bodies.		Decreased workload for JMPR Experience to be used by JECFA  Report to 37 <sup>th</sup> CCPR, April 2005