

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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**Agenda Item 10**

**CX/FFP 05/27/11**

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

**Twenty-seventh Session, Cape Town, South Africa**  
28 February – 4 March 2005

### DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE PROCEDURE FOR THE INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL SPECIES IN STANDARDS FOR FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

(Prepared by France, with the assistance of FAO, Germany, Morocco, Portugal, Spain,  
Switzerland, United Kingdom)

#### BACKGROUND

- 1) At its 26<sup>th</sup> Session, the Committee agreed to consider again at its next session the need for further review of the procedure for the inclusion of additional species.
- 2) The Committee agreed that the next stage was to identify how the current procedure should be actually amended, in order to take into account new technologies and methods of analysis as well as the evolution of the market<sup>1</sup>.
- 3) The Committee invited the Delegation of France, with the assistance of FAO and interested countries (Germany, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and United Kingdom), to prepare an outline of a proposed draft amendment to the current procedure for consideration at the next session.<sup>2</sup>
- 4) At the last session of the Committee, the Delegation of France<sup>3</sup> recalled the status and purpose of the procedure. It pointed out that the current criteria were not discriminating enough; that standards had been grouped and simplified when revised; and that the “essential quality factors” section did not include detailed provisions allowing to characterise the species or group of species concerned. This resulted in potential confusion for the consumer, especially as the same species could be covered by different standards, according to their mode of presentation.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCEDURE

- 5) The current procedure for the inclusion of additional species is set out in the circular letter CL 1995/30-FFP. A country wishing to propose the inclusion of new species should provide the Committee with:
  - an attestation from an appropriate recognised institution regarding the scientific name, and other relevant taxonomic information for the species in question;
  - data on existing and potential resources;
  - data on derived products;
  - the form in which the product will be marketed and the proposed processing technology for each form of presentation, including samples; and
  - reports from at least three laboratories from those to be nominated by the Committee, stating that the organoleptic properties of the new species after processing conform with those of the processed species currently included in the pertinent standard.
- 6) The first three points are statements of facts, unrelated to product quality. However, the fourth requirement implies a sensory evaluation that needs to be based on a prior defined sensory profile, grounded in quality criteria, specific for the species already covered by the standard, to be amended. The current

<sup>1</sup> ALINORM 04/27/18 - para. 186

<sup>2</sup> ALINORM 04/27/18 - para. 188

<sup>3</sup> CX/FFP 03/13

procedure does not describe the sensory evaluation method to be used by the laboratories. It is essential that the Committee address this issue.

## DISCUSSION

7) At the outcome of the revision process, there are currently two types of Codex standards for fish and fishery products<sup>4</sup>:

- general standards dealing with major groups of marine animals without distinction of species. The general characteristics of products are defined according to the nature of processing, e.g. quick frozen fish fillets, canned finfish.
- specific standards defining a combination of species (or limited group of species)/processing, e.g. canned sardines and sardine-type products, canned tuna and bonito, quick frozen shrimps or prawns, salted herrings and sprats.

As explained in document CX/FP 03/13, the risks of confusion lie basically in the specific standards that cover a limited number of species<sup>5</sup>. When evaluating the acceptability of an additional species in a Codex standard, there is a need to assess whether the product obtained from this new species has the characteristics established by the standard. The current standards have a low specificity in this regard. The risk of confusion is increased when the candidate species is already listed in other standards, probably under different names according to the type of product and across these standards.

### CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AN INCLUSION PROCEDURE:

8) The procedure to be revised has a limited purpose: It is designed to be implemented by the Committee when undertaking to update species lists in existing Codex standards. The following criteria should be considered, when assessing the effectiveness of a revised inclusion procedure:

- It is up to date, taking into account scientific, technical and methodological evolutions
- It is able to identify correctly the candidate species and all the relevant species used in the types of product covered by the standard.

The species proposed for the inclusion in a Codex standard should be identifiable. Recent molecular biology research allows, from the analysis of DNA nucleotide sequences, to identify species, and even subspecies, in the composition of processed products, independently of the processing technologies and the product presentation.

When permitted by the processed products, electrophoretic techniques (e.g. SDS-PAGE) may still be used for species identification purposes.

At the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee, the Representative of FAO presented an advance copy of a FAO Fisheries Technical Paper entitled “Application of modern analytical techniques to ensure seafood safety and authenticity” (Iciar Martinez et al.); FAO compiled common names of 1462 marine species used in Member countries. Such a list of common names could be useful for preparing and implementing a new inclusion procedure and, more generally, for further work on species identification and for preparation or revision of Codex standards.

- It considers relevant information about processing technologies.

The information required in the current procedure is adequate.

- It uses sensory evaluation techniques (including the sampling conditions, the general testing conditions, the testing procedure and the modalities of expression and interpretation of the results), in order to ensure that the product processed from the new species has a similar quality level and has the characteristics of the species already covered by the standard.
- It assesses whether the request is consistent with the criteria used by Codex to prioritise its work; it should recognise, as *prima facie* evidence for international or regional market potential<sup>6</sup>, the information on compliance with relevant “Principles for responsible fisheries and responsible

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<sup>4</sup> Hereinafter, when the word "fish" is used, it is intended to include "fish, crustaceans and molluscs", as all, either fresh, frozen (including quick frozen), or otherwise processed, fall within the remit of this Committee (cf. terms of reference of the CCFFP – Procedural Manual, 13<sup>th</sup> edition – p.123)

<sup>5</sup> CX/FP 03/13 - para 25-29.

<sup>6</sup> i.e. criterion (c) applicable to commodities (see CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORK PRIORITIES – ALINORM 05/28/33 – Appendix IV).

activities linked to fisheries”, as outlined by international instruments (e.g.: United Nations Convention on the law of the sea, Agenda 21, Code of Conduct For Responsible Fisheries – FAO).

9) Once the taxonomic information has been checked, the suitability of the fish stocks for exploitation and of the product or preparation and processing in conformity with the standard has been ascertained, and the laboratory sensory evaluation has been performed, the evidentiary dossier is ready for consideration by the Committee.

#### **CONTENTS OF THE EVIDENTIARY DOSSIER**

10) The Committee should consider the inclusion of a new species in an existing Codex standard on the basis of an evidentiary dossier provided by the member of Codex, requesting this addition. The contents of this dossier are found in the Appendix 1.

11) The dossier has two purposes: the information it would provide, should allow the CCFFP to decide (1), whether the request for inclusion of new species is consistent with the *Codex Criteria for the Establishment of work priorities*<sup>7</sup> and (2) whether the request satisfies the criteria the Committee has established for the inclusion of new species in existing Codex standards.

12) Information on taxonomy, on biological characteristics, on fish stocks, on processing, on trade and on quality of products are requested before a new species is included in a commodity standard, in order to ensure that:

- products on the market are clearly identified;
- a significant and sustainable levels of production and exports is involved;
- information on the processing methods in use and on the quality of the final products is available.

#### **NATURE AND ORIGIN OF THE SCIENTIFIC SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

13) The proposed definition for a "recognised" scientific institution as "a scientific institution, with which FAO has on-going working relations in the framework of its activities on fisheries" is consistent with the current practise: The Codex Alimentarius Commission "*does not undertake scientific evaluations per se but relies on the opinions of scientific expert Committees or Consultations convened by FAO and WHO on specific issues. (...) The mandates, functions, composition and agendas of these bodies are established by FAO and WHO. (...) The independence of the expert bodies is critical to the objectivity of their opinions (...). There is considerable synergy between the scientific panels of FAO and WHO and the intergovernmental bodies of the CAC in order to take decisions based on scientific evidence.*"<sup>8</sup>

14) If, in some cases, this definition of a recognised scientific institution is not applicable, the Committee should consider the issue on a case-by-case basis.

#### **IDENTIFICATION OF A CANDIDATE SPECIES**

15) This type of information would be needed, (1) by the Committee, in order to assess the taxonomic relatedness between the candidate species and those already listed in the Codex standard; and (2) by the country which had requested the inclusion, in order to ensure that candidate species would be properly identified in international trade, avoiding the risk of confusion with other competing species.

16) Currently, the identification of a species relies on a number of morphological, anatomical and taxonomical traits, such as, for instance for a fish, skin, shape and size of body and fins, eyes, size and shape of fillets and internal organs. These methods are not applicable to processed products, having undergone drastic treatments, which would defeat identification using classical methods.

17) It is suggested to add evidence provided by molecular engineering techniques, enabling the identification of the species in the processed product.<sup>i</sup>

18) Already, these identification methods have been tested successfully on a wide range of processed products using fish<sup>ii</sup> (tuna<sup>iii</sup>, salmon<sup>iv</sup>, sardine<sup>v</sup>, hake<sup>vi</sup>), crustacean (shrimp<sup>vii</sup>), bivalve mollusc (scallop (whole or muscle)<sup>viii</sup>, mussel<sup>ix</sup>, clam<sup>x</sup>), cephalopod (squid<sup>xi</sup>) and other derived products such fish roe<sup>xii</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Procedural Manual (13<sup>th</sup> edition) p.69

<sup>8</sup> see para. 5 "Decision-making based on scientific evidence" – Codex Alimentarius Commission's Strategic Framework (2003-2007)

19) A method of identification should be selected taking into account the candidate species, the preservation of the DNA in the sample and, when permitted by the processed products, that of the proteins as the use of electrophoretic techniques (e.g. SDS-PAGE) may be considered.

20) Furthermore, the reliability of species identification would be ensured by information on intraspecific (polymorphisms) and interspecific (diagnostic nucleotides) nucleotidic variations and a ready access to these data in public databases<sup>xiii</sup>.

#### **BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FISH STOCK**

21) This type of information is needed in order for the Committee to assess the potential of the candidate species as a food source.

#### **STOCKS/TRADE**

22) The request for information should be limited to the relevant socio-economic aspects, namely those pertaining to the processing industry and trade. This type of information is needed in order for the Committee to assess past and current international trade of the candidate species, together with the sustainability of the catch levels by the country requesting the inclusion and its significance for this country's fisheries and for its exports. Where relevant to future development of international or regional trade potential, information on local trade of the fish species may also be considered.

23) Information on processing method used is needed in order for the Committee to check whether the processed product conforms to the existing Codex standard. Furthermore, in order to ensure that the identification would be performed by the most efficient method, it would be used to assess the severity of the treatment undergone by the proteins and DNA.

24) At this stage, the drafting group has neither discussed thoroughly, nor agreed on the suggested timeframe of 3 years, for the information on fish stocks and trade.

#### **SENSORY EVALUATION**

25) Sensory evaluation of fish and fishery products is used to assess the sensory quality and the sensory equivalence of the products prepared from different species.

26) At this stage, the drafting group has neither discussed thoroughly, nor agreed on how many (3 or 5) laboratories should be involved in sensory analysis.

27) Sensory analysis is influenced by environmental factors. Experience shows that the conditions in which tests are organised (sample quality, style of presentation, duration, temperature, facilities...) have a large impact on the quality of the results. This is why these methods have to be clearly specified.

28) The use of ISO methods and conformity with the *Codex Guidelines for the sensory evaluation of fish and shellfish in laboratories*<sup>9</sup> are suggested in order to ensure sound sampling procedures, test organisation, operating mode, as well as presentation of results and their interpretation ensuring that the assessed products are similar for a whole range of organoleptic properties. However, the results obtained by the different methods can differ considerably. The process of selection among available methods should be elaborated further.

#### **CODEX PROCEDURAL MATTERS:**

29) As recalled in the circular letter CL 1995/30-FFP, the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee (1978) established a procedure for the incorporation of species, as an amendment to a previously adopted standard<sup>10</sup>, with the approval of the Commission<sup>11</sup>, at its 13<sup>th</sup> session (1979). When the accelerated procedure<sup>12</sup> was

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<sup>9</sup> CAC-GL 31-1999

<sup>10</sup> ALINORM 79/18 - para. 111

<sup>11</sup> ALINORM 79/18 - para 339

<sup>12</sup> *Procedures for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts - Part 2: Uniform Accelerated Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts - Steps 1, 2 and 3 - (1) The Commission or the Executive Committee between Commission sessions, on the basis of a two-thirds majority of votes cast, taking into account the "Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities", shall identify those standards which shall be the subject of an accelerated elaboration process. (Note 4 : Relevant considerations could include, but need not be limited to, matters concerning new scientific information; new technology(ies); urgent problems related to trade or public health; or the revision or up-dating of existing standards.)* The identification of such standards may also be made by subsidiary bodies of the Commission, **on the basis of a two-thirds majority of votes cast**, subject to confirmation at the earliest

introduced, the Commission agreed that it should be used for the inclusion of additional species<sup>13</sup>. The current requirements for technical information were retained unchanged.

30) The circular letter CL 1995/30-FFP summarised the process as follows: the Committee after having agreed to the incorporation of the species in question into the standard would submit its proposal to the Commission for immediate endorsement and incorporation into the existing standard. This is in effect a submission of the amendment at step 5 of the procedure, with the proposal to omit step 6, 7, and 8.

31) This description may not be entirely consistent with the current elaboration procedure as it is usually practised and/or as it has been recently revised by the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission (July 2004).

32) A direct submission to the CAC at step 5 is not part of the elaboration procedure, described in the latest edition of the Procedural Manual; it is unclear whether the requirement of a two-thirds majority (implied by the reference made to the accelerated procedure), should apply, when the Committee reaches an agreement on the inclusion of a new species, since the circular letter described a situation where all the steps before step 5 are skipped.

33) At its last (27<sup>th</sup>) session (July 2004), the Commission has substantially improved its process of standard management and has agreed that all proposal for developing new standards, or for revising existing ones should be accompanied by a project document outlining the reasons for undertaking this new task. All new works should have the prior approval of the Commission, after review of the proposal and advice by the Executive Committee. However, it recognised that, in some specific cases, listed in the Elaboration procedure, such a formal procedure may not be warranted. The inclusion of new fish species in existing standards are not listed among these exceptions.

34) The Committee should review the current inclusion procedure and advise on its consistency with the updated Codex elaboration process, taking into account that what could be viewed as minor editorial amendments to existing standards would often involve, in practice, difficult technical, labelling and trade issues, which should be thoroughly discussed by the Committee and the Commission before a decision is reached.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

35) The Committee may wish to consider, in its review of the need to revise the current inclusion procedure:

- The relevance of the criteria of effectiveness, outlined in para 8 above.
- The contents of the evidentiary dossier listed in the Appendix 1.
- The consistency of the revised inclusion procedure with the overall Codex process. On this topic, the Committee may wish to seek the opinion of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP).
- The need to revisit the lists of species in the current Codex standards, once the revised inclusion procedure has been adopted.

36) The Committee may wish to request the approval of the Codex Alimentarius Commission on this new work, at its 28<sup>th</sup> session (July 2005), based on the project document in Appendix 2 and, subject to this decision, advance this document and its Appendix 1 to step 3 of the Elaboration Procedure, for circulation and comments before the next session of this Committee.

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opportunity by the Commission or its Executive Committee by a two-thirds majority of votes cast. (Procedural Manual–13<sup>th</sup> Edition – p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> ALINORM 95/37 - para. 62

## EVIDENTIARY DOSSIER

**1. Identification of a candidate species<sup>14</sup>****1.1 nature and origin of the scientific supporting evidence**

To be valid, the taxonomical data provided in the dossier should have been reviewed by a scientific institution, with which FAO has on-going working relations in the framework of its activities on fisheries. Scientific data is gathered from published information:

- used and/or quoted in www.fishbase.org and/or in FAO publications (see FAO web site);
- in peer reviewed international scientific journals,

The supporting evidence shall comprise the zoological identification of the candidate species and all the relevant aspects in para. 1.2, 1.3, 1.4.

**1.2 species scientific name**

1.2.1 the valid scientific name compiled by FAO;

1.2.2 reference of database for species names used by FAO (FAO database or bibliographical reference), fulfilling the criteria under 1.1.

**1.3 taxonomical criteria**

1.3.1 morphological and anatomical criteria;

1.3.2 reference of the database used (FAO database or bibliographical reference), fulfilling the criteria under 1.1.

**1.4 taxonomical position of the candidate species in relation to the taxon(s) listed in the Codex standard or to all the species listed in the standard**

1.4.1 demonstration, using standard Linnaean taxonomy<sup>15</sup>, of the positions of candidate species and of the species (and/or taxons), listed in the Codex standard, and of their higher level taxons, up to the nearest common taxon, presented as a diagram or a list;

1.4.2 reference of database for taxonomic classification used (FAO database or bibliographical reference), fulfilling the criteria under 1.1.

**1.5 identification of the species in processed products**

1.5.1 molecular evidence, diagnostic for the species:

1.5.1.1 diagnostic DNA sequence (or electrophoretic profile, where appropriate), including intraspecific variation, in order to rule out intraspecific differences;

1.5.1.2 bibliography on the method used (equipment, procedure, results), fulfilling the criteria under 1.1.

**2. Biological characteristics of the fish stocks**

2.1 habitat: a map of its geographical range;

2.2 status of the candidate species vis-à-vis the UICN "red list" and the CITES;

2.3 summary biological cycle(egg→adult) and reproductive periods;

2.4 bibliography, fulfilling the criteria under 1.1.

<sup>14</sup> Hereinafter, when the word "fish" is used, it is intended to include "fish, crustaceans and molluscs", as all, either fresh, frozen (including quick frozen), or otherwise processed, fall within the remit of this Committee (cf. terms of reference of the CCFPP – Procedural Manual, 13th edition – p.123).

<sup>15</sup> Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species and/or super- or sub-groups of the former. E.g., Kingdom: *Animalia*, Phylum: *Chordata*, Subphylum: *Vertebrata*, Super-Class: *Gnathostomata*, Class: *Actinopterygii* (=Osteichthyes), Order: *Acipenseriformes*, Family: *Acipenseridae*, Subfamily: *Acipenserinae*, Genus: *Acipenser*, Species: *sturio* (Linnaeus, 1758).

### **3. Fish stocks/Trade**

The requested data are patterned as closely as possible on the content of FAO questionnaires and statistical publications on fisheries (FAO Yearbook, Fishery Statistics “*Capture production*”, “*Aquaculture production*” and “*Commodities*”)<sup>16</sup>. In some cases, the requested data is reckoned by aggregation of data or estimate from global data (in particular, where data represent a group of species).

#### **3.1 Fish stocks**

3.1.1 Fishing of the candidate species

3.1.1.1 directly, by the fleet under the flag of the country requesting the inclusion:

3.1.1.1.1 fishing grounds: localisation of the main grounds on the FAO map “*Major fishing area for statistical purposes*”;

3.1.1.1.2 yearly catches (during the last 3 years);

3.1.1.1.3 fishing gears used (according to the International standard statistical classification of fishing gear – ISSCFG<sup>17</sup>);

3.1.1.2 indirectly, by imports for the food processing industry of the country requesting the inclusion: yearly imports, by country of origin (during the last 3 years).

3.1.2 Aquaculture of the candidate species in the country requesting the inclusion

3.1.2.1 number of units engaged in aquaculture, producing fish of the candidate species, ready for human consumption, and yearly output sold during the last 3 years;

3.1.2.2 where relevant, fish catches used to supply these aquaculture units: yearly catches and yearly imports, by country of origin (during the last 3 years).

#### **3.2 Processing of the fish catches: types of products sold by the processing industry of the country requesting the inclusion**

3.2.1 yearly amount of all the processed products, during the last 3 years (with, if possible, the percentage of these products conforming with the relevant Codex standard;

3.2.2 processing techniques used for the types of products conforming with the relevant Codex standard.

#### **3.3 Exports of products processed by the industry of the country requesting the inclusion, using the candidate species**

3.3.1 yearly amount and value of all the products processed using the candidate species and exported by the country requesting the inclusion, by country of destination (during the last 3 years), if possible, with the percentage of these products conforming with the relevant Codex standard);

3.3.2 Trade denomination in use for export of each type of products conforming with the relevant Codex standard, for each importing country.

### **4. Sensory Evaluation**

#### **4.1 Report by [3/5] laboratories selected by the Committee**

The laboratories, carrying out the sensory analysis, should be proposed to the Committee by the Codex member, requesting the inclusion. Those laboratories are selected with regard to the consumers' markets for the processed products. Among the three laboratories, one laboratory in a country importing the products from the country, which has requested the inclusion, and one laboratory in a country where a similar product is processed (same processing technique and recipe) using one representative species currently listed in the standard should be selected.

The Committee shall designate one laboratory as the co-ordinator of the test; it shall report to the Committee.

#### **4.2 Scope of the comparison**

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<sup>16</sup> Available on the FAO website, “fisheries” & “statistics” tabs.

<sup>17</sup> See the FAO publication “Definition and classification of fishing gear categories”, FAO Fisheries Technical Papers n° 222, Rome 1999.

4.2.1 A comparison might be limited to processed products from the candidate species and from, at most, 3 species on the list appended to the current Codex standard, provided that these species are the most prevalent in the processed products consumed in the importing country(ies).

4.2.2 All the samples should have been processed following the relevant specifications. The type of products should be selected among the most widely traded and as the less likely to confound the recognition of species difference by sensory evaluation.

### **4.3 Implementation of the tests**

The tests should conform to the *Codex Guidelines for the sensory evaluation of fish and shellfish in laboratories* – CAC - GL 31-1999<sup>18</sup>.

### **4.4 Methods to be used**

4.4.1 Sensory analysis – Methodology – Triangle test- ISO 4120:2004:

ISO 4120:2004 describes a procedure for determining whether a perceptible sensory difference or similarity exists between samples of two products. The method is a forced-choice procedure. The method applies whether a difference can exist in a single sensory attribute or in several attributes.

The method is statistically more efficient than the duo-trio test, but has limited use with products that exhibit strong carryover and/or lingering flavours.

The method is applicable even when the nature of the difference is unknown (i.e. it determines neither the size nor the direction of difference between samples, nor is there any indication of the attributes responsible for the difference). The method is applicable only if the products are fairly homogeneous.

The method is effective for a) determining that either a perceptible difference results (triangle testing for difference), or a perceptible difference does not result (triangle testing for similarity) when, for example, a change is made in ingredients, processing, packaging, handling or storage; b) or for selecting, training and monitoring assessors.

4.4.2 Sensory analysis – Methodology – Paired comparison test- ISO 5495:1983:

Specification of a technique for detecting differences in the organoleptic attributes of two products. The principle consists in presentation of a pair of samples to assessors; one sample may be a control. Following testing, written response by the assessors, and interpretation of the replies obtained. Specimen answer forms are given in an annex A. An annex B shows practical examples of application.

4.4.3 Sensory analysis – Methodology – “A” - “not A” test- ISO 8588:1987:

The principle of the test consists in presentation to an assessor of a series of samples, some of which are composed of sample “A” while others are different from sample “A”; for each sample, the assessor has to determine whether or not it is identical to “A”. This test requires the assessor to have evaluated a known sample “A” prior to the exposure to test samples.

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<sup>18</sup> [http://www.codexalimentarius.net/download/standards/359/CXG\\_031e.pdf](http://www.codexalimentarius.net/download/standards/359/CXG_031e.pdf)



**Draft Project Document**  
**Revision of the inclusion procedure of new fish species in existing Codex standards**

**PREPARED BY**

Codex Committee for Fish & Fishery Products (CCFFP)

**THE PURPOSES AND THE SCOPE**

The revision of the existing Procedure for the inclusion new fish<sup>19</sup> species in existing Codex standards (hereinafter, the Procedure) for processed fishery products is long overdue, in view of: (1) the General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, inviting its subsidiary bodies "(...) *to revis[e] as necessary of Codex standards and related texts to ensure that they are consistent with and reflect current scientific knowledge and other relevant information*"<sup>20</sup>; (2) the availability of new analytical methods and (3) the recent amendments introduced by the Codex Alimentarius Commission in its Elaboration Procedure<sup>21</sup>.

The revision will improve the existing Procedure, by providing a sound framework for decisions based on "state of art" methods of fish species identification and of sensory evaluation methodology of processed products.

This work will also describe the evidentiary dossier to be used to support a request and the decision making-process to be followed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to amend the relevant standards.

**ITS RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission had requested that the Accelerated Procedure should generally be used for the inclusion of additional species in relevant standards. Recently, in some specific instances, this approach could not be applied due to a lack of consensus.

In order to resolve this issue, the Committee had initiated a review of its current procedure for inclusion of additional species in existing standards.

It has noted that current lists were based solely on the mode of preparation and could include species that were not taxonomically related and that this created considerable confusion for consumers as to the nature of the product, as the common names of species were not consistently based on taxonomic criteria. It has identified the need to apply scientific criteria in the process.

At its 27<sup>th</sup> session, the Codex Alimentarius Commission recommended that the Committee continue its work on the revision of the procedure for the inclusion of new species.<sup>22</sup>

**THE MAIN ASPECTS TO BE COVERED**

The revision will cover : Fish species identification methods; sensory evaluation methods; data availability and validation by recognised scientific bodies; contents of the evidentiary dossier; Codex procedural matters.

**AN ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORK PRIORITIES<sup>23</sup>**

Are specifically relevant for this work : The "**General criterion**" (i.e. "*...ensuring fair practises in the food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries*") and among the "**Criteria applicable to commodities**": criteria (a), (b), (c), (e)

**RELEVANCE TO THE CODEX STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

An updated Procedure is fully consonant with Codex Alimentarius Commission's *Strategic Vision Statement* to develop "*internationally agreed standards and related texts for use in domestic regulation and international trade in food that are based on scientific principles and fulfil the objectives of consumer health protection and fair practices in food trade*" : it will contribute mainly to the implementation of Objective n°

<sup>19</sup> Hereinafter, when the word "fish" is used, it is intended to include "fish, crustaceans and molluscs", as all, either fresh, frozen (including quick frozen), or otherwise processed, fall within the remit of this Committee (cf. terms of reference of the CCFFP – Procedural Manual, 13th edition – p.123)

<sup>20</sup> see Procedural Manual – 13<sup>th</sup> Edition –p. 34 : GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS (para. 8).

<sup>21</sup> See ALINORM 04/27/21 – Appendix 2.

<sup>22</sup> See ALINORM 03/41 – para 39.

<sup>23</sup> see ALINORM 05/28/33 – Appendix IV.

1 ("Promoting Sound Regulatory Framework"), Objective n° 2 ("Promoting Widest and Consistent Application of Scientific Principles."), Objective n° 6 ("Promoting Maximum Application of Codex Standards").

#### INFORMATION ON THE RELATION BETWEEN THE PROPOSAL AND OTHER EXISTING CODEX DOCUMENTS

The Procedure will be used in conjunction with all existing Codex standards on processed fishery products, including a limited list of fish species. It will assist in the revision of existing standards and the establishment of new ones.

It will take into account the *Codex Guidelines for the sensory evaluation of fish and shellfish in laboratories* – CAC - GL 31-1999.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF ANY REQUIREMENT FOR AND AVAILABILITY OF EXPERT SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

NIL

#### IDENTIFICATION OF ANY NEED FOR TECHNICAL INPUT TO THE STANDARD FROM EXTERNAL BODIES

NIL

#### THE PROPOSED TIME-LINE FOR COMPLETION THE NEW WORK

3 years : 1.5 years to reach step 5; 1.5 more years to reach step 8. The work could start at the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the CCFFP, subject to the approval by the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

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### REFERENCES

#### <sup>i</sup> **Authentication of Seafood Products by DNA Patterns**

Bossier P. - CLO-Gent, Departement voor Zeevisserij, Ankerstraat 1, B-8400 Oostende, Belgique - Journal of Food Science, 1999, 64 (2), p. 189-193.

#### <sup>ii</sup> **PCR-RFLP analysis of mitochondrial DNA : differentiation of fish species**

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