

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 9

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**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION
AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS**

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**DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
A GENERIC TEMPLATE FOR HEALTH CERTIFICATES**

(Prepared by the European Community)

Background

1. The Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted during its 30th Session a revised version of the "*Guidelines for Design, Production, Issuance and Use of Generic Official Certificates*". This revision was initiated with the objective of clarifying the use of export certificates and simplifying their use by eliminating those attestations which were identified as redundant, unnecessarily burdensome or discriminatory.
2. The Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products has developed a "*Model Certificate for Fish and Fishery Products*" (CAC/GL 48-2004).
3. The Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products is developing a "*Model Export Certificate for Milk and Milk Products*", currently at Step 5 of the Codex Procedure. This document is presented to the 16th Session of CCFICS for endorsement.

Rationale

4. The health certificate, when required, constitutes the first element of contact between the competent health authorities of the importing and exporting countries to allow the import of goods. However, many of the difficulties faced by the competent authorities at the place of origin for the drafting of the certificate and by the competent authorities at the place of destination for the interpretation of it are due not to the health requirements but to administrative details connected to the dispatch of the goods. Therefore, a standardization of the presentation of these administrative details on a paper format on the one hand and of the explanation of the required components on the other hand would simplify the administrative procedures, cut the administrative costs and limit interpretation mistakes.
5. It is therefore proposed to develop an Annex to the "*Guidelines for Design, Production, Issuance and Use of Generic Official Certificates*" which would contain a generic template of health certificate applicable to all types of commodities.

Harmonization at international level

6. The harmonization of the presentation would be in line with a logic already adopted by the two other reference international intergovernmental organizations recognised by the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement.

7. The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) has defined standards as regards the content of the certificates in its ISPM No. 12. A large number of countries have gone further by standardizing the presentation of this content.

8. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is currently reviewing its standards on certification with a view to updating them and is very supportive of close cooperation with the Codex Alimentarius Commission in order to produce combined certificates that address the food continuum from farm to plate. The OIE will propose to its International Committee in May 2008 an amendment of its Terrestrial Animal Health Code by integrating a standardized presentation of health certificates for live animals (including bees), semen and embryos and also for products of animal origin. Harmonisation and avoidance of contradictory standards should remain a key priority.

Harmonization at Codex Alimentarius level

9. This harmonisation is even more justified as within Codex itself the recommended health certificates are not presented in a harmonized way. The presentation of model certificate for fish and fishery products is different from that of model certificate for milk and milk products under development. A standardization of the presentation of all health certificates included in Codex Standards and related texts currently in force would be highly beneficial.

10. This harmonization for the presentation of certificates at an international level would allow a reinforced cooperation and a better understanding between competent health authorities. Standardization would make the reading of certificates easier, would standardize the interpretation of administrative information regarding the certificates and would facilitate the creation of a comprehensive data processing interface for electronic exchanges and therefore cut the costs for printing certificates in a paper format and possibly also improve the security of certificates against fraud and counterfeiting.

Presentation and content

11. The proposed template is divided in two parts. The first part exclusively includes details on the goods and their dispatch. The second part called "attestation" includes the health requirements. The first part integrates content requirements defined in previous recommendations from the Codex Alimentarius with the addition of other possible requirements. This allows to comprehensively define all possible requests from Codex Members and thus facilitate paper print outs and final data processing transposition within the context of electronic notification and certification.

12. Each required item has a precise location and is numbered in order to make understanding and communication easier in case of difficulties as regards the interpretation of a detail. An information note explains each item specifying their compulsory or optional nature, the possibilities to modify them after the certificate is printed out and the responsibility of the competent authority signing the certificate. As an example, the place of destination may or may not be required according to the country of destination but would not engage the responsibility of the health authority. The point of entry in the country is required but modifiable until the batch itself has reached this point of entry in the country of destination.

13. As far as the paper presentation of the certificates is concerned, it is proposed that each country can include its national emblem superimposed and printed on secured paper.

ANNEX 1

Part I

COUNTRY:

Sanitary certificate

Part I : Details of dispatched consignment	I.1. Consignor Name		I.2. Certificate reference number		I.2.a			
	Address		I.3. Central Competent Authority					
	Tel.N°		I.4. Local Competent Authority					
	I.5. Consignee Name		I.6. Person responsible for the consignment Name					
	Address		Address					
	Postal code		Postal code					
	Tel.N°		Tel.N°					
	I.7. Country of origin	ISO code	I.8. Region of origin	Code	I.9. Country of destination	ISO code	I.10. Region of destination	Code
	I.11. Place of origin		I.12. Place of destination					
	Name		Approval number		Custom warehouse <input type="checkbox"/>		Ship supplier <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Address				Name		Approval number	
					Address			
					Postal code			
	I.13. Place of loading				I.14. Date of departure			
I.15. Means of transport Aeroplane <input type="checkbox"/> Ship <input type="checkbox"/> Railway wagon <input type="checkbox"/> Road vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>				I.16. Expected Border post				
Identification: Documentary references:				I.17.N°(s) CITES or Export licence				
I.18. Description of commodity				I.19. Commodity code (HS code)				
						I.20. Quantity		
I.21 Temperature of product Ambient <input type="checkbox"/> Chilled <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen <input type="checkbox"/>				I.22. Number of packages				
I.23. Identification of container/Seal number				I.24. Type of packaging				
I.25. Commodities certified for: Human consumption <input type="checkbox"/> Animal feedingstuff <input type="checkbox"/> Further process <input type="checkbox"/> Technical use <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>								
I.26. For transit <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd country ISO code				I.27. For import <input type="checkbox"/>				
I.28. Identification of the commodities Species Nature treatment type Abattoir manufacturing plant Store Net weight Batch N° N° packages								

Part II

COUNTRY:

Sanitary certificate

Partie II: Sanitary attestation	II. Health information *	II.a. Certificat reference number	II.b.
Responsible body for signature			
Name (in Capital):		Qualification and title	
Date:		Signature:	
Stamp			

* Specific sanitary requirement to be completed

Explanatory notes on the sanitary certificate for the export products of animal origin

General: Please complete the certificate in capitals. To positively indicate any option, please tick or insert an X.

Where mentioned, the ISO codes use the two-letter country code in compliance with the international standard ISO 3166 alpha-2. Optional.

Part I Information on the consignment shipped

Country: Please indicate the name of the country issuing the certificate

Box I.1:

Consignor: Please give the name and address (street, town and region/province/state, as applicable) of the physical or legal person who sends the consignment. It is recommended that telephone and fax numbers or the email address be given.

Box I.2:

The certificate reference number is the number that the competent authority of the exporting country must assign in accordance with its own classification.

Box I.2.a:

Case dedicated to the electronic certification numbering

Box I.3:

Competent Central Authority: The name of the Central Authority of the country of dispatch which is responsible for certification.

Box I.4:

Competent Local Authority: If applicable, the name of the local authority responsible at the place of origin or place of dispatch in the country which is responsible for certification.

Box I.5:

Consignee: Please give the name and address (street, town and post code) of the physical or legal person to whom the consignment is shipped in the country of destination.
This information is not compulsory for goods in transit.

Box I.6

Person responsible for the load:

- 1: for products in transit: Please give the name and address (street, town and post code). It is recommended that the telephone and fax numbers or the email address be given. This person is responsible for the consignment when it is presented at the border inspection post and makes the necessary declarations to the competent authorities on behalf of the importer.
- 2: for products imported: Optional. Please give the name and address (street, town and post code). It is recommended that the telephone and fax numbers or the email address be given.

This information can be amended until the importation or transit permit is granted.

Box I.7:

Country of origin: Please give the name of the country in which the finished products were produced, manufactured or packaged.

Box I.8:

Region of origin: If applicable: This is only for products affected by regionalisation measures or by the setting up of approved zones.

Code: as indicated in the relevant regulations.

Box I.9:

Country of destination: Please give the name of the country of destination of the products. If the products are in transit, please give the name of the country of destination.

Box I.10:

Region of destination: cf. Box I.8.

Box I.11:

Place of origin: Place from which the products come, any unit of a company in the food sector or animal feed sector. Only the establishment shipping the products is to be named and the country of dispatch if different from the country of origin.

Please give the name, address (street, town and region/province/state, as applicable) and the approval or registration number of these structures, if the latter is required by the regulation.

Box I.12:

Place of destination: for storage of products in transit: Please give the name, address (street/town and postcode) and the approval or registration number of the warehouse in a free zone, customs warehouse or ship chandler.

Place of destination: for import: Optional. The place where products are sent for final unloading.

Please give the name, address (street, town and post code) and the approval or registration number of the structures of the place of destination if applicable. It is recommended that telephone and fax numbers or the email address be given.

Box I.13:

Place of loading: please indicate the place of loading or the port of embarkation.

Box I.14:

Date of departure

Box I.15:

Means of transport: Please give all the details on the means of transport.

The type of transport: air, ship, rail, road, other.

Identification of the means of transport: by air, the flight number, by ship, the name of the ship, by rail, the number of the train and the rail car and by road the number plate of the road vehicle and the number of the trailer if applicable. If the means of transport is changed after the certificate has been issued, the consignor must inform the border inspection post of entry.

Documentary reference: optional: please indicate the number of the airway bill, bill of lading, or the commercial number of the train or road vehicle.

Box I.16:

Expected border post: Please give the name of the expected border inspection post of entry and if available it's UN/LOCODE (refer to the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations).

Box I.17:

CITES authorisation or export licence number: this is relevant only for products listed in the Washington Convention on protected species or when export licences are requested.

Box I.18:

Description of goods: Give a sanitary description of the goods or use the titles as they appear in the World Customs Organisation's Harmonised System.

Box I.19:

Commodity code (HS code): Heading or subheading of the Harmonised system set up by the World Customs Organisation.

Box I.20:

Quantity

Give the total gross and net weights in kg.

Box I.21:

Temperature of the product: please tick the appropriate temperature for transport/storage of the product.

Box I.22:

Number of packages: Please indicate the total number of packages for products.

Box I.23:

Number of seals and number of containers: The seal numbers may be required by the regulations of the imported country. If applicable, please indicate all the identification numbers of the seals and containers. If there is no regulatory requirement, this information is optional.

Box I.24:

Type of packaging:

Box I.25:

Goods certified for the purposes of: Please indicate the intended use of the products (only the available options feature in each specific certificate).

Human consumption: only for products for human consumption and for which a health certificate is required by the regulations.

Animal feed: only for products for animal feed.

Processing: only for products which are to be processed before they are marketed.

Technical use: products not fit for human and animal consumption.

Others: for purposes not indicated in this classification.

Box I.26:

Transit: Please give the name or the ISO code of the country of destination.

Box I.27:

For import

Box I.28:

Identification of goods: Please give the requirements specific to the types of products. The information required, which is listed exhaustively below, is set out in each specific certificate.

For products: Species (by its scientific name), type of goods, type of processing, approval number of establishments (slaughterhouse, production plant, store (cold store or not)), consignment number, package number, net weight.

Part II Sanitary attestation

Box II.

Health information: Please give the information in compliance with the relevant regulation.

Box II.a.

Reference number: cf. Box 1.2. If several pages are necessary for the description of all the attestation this case must be reproduced on every page.

Box II.b.

Cf case 1.2.a

Signing body: Please give name, qualification and title and the date of signature. In cases covered by the relevant legislation, the sanitary inspector may be replaced by an official inspector.

PROJECT DOCUMENT**Proposal for the development of a generic template for health certificates**

Prepared by: CCFICS

1. Purpose and scope of the proposed standard

The objective of the project is to develop an Annex to the "*Guidelines for Design, Production, Issuance and Use of Generic Official Certificates*" which would contain a generic template of health certificate applicable to all types of commodities.

2. Relevance and timelines

The Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted during its 30th Session a revised version of the "*Guidelines for Design, Production, Issuance and Use of Generic Official Certificates*". This revision was initiated with the objective of clarifying the use of export certificates and simplifying their use by eliminating those attestations which were identified as redundant, unnecessarily burdensome or discriminatory. The logical complement to these Guidelines would be a generic template for health certificate applicable to all food commodities. In addition, the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products has developed a "*Model Certificate for Fish and Fishery Products*" (CAC/GL 48-2004) and the Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products is currently developing a "*Model Export Certificate for Milk and Milk Products*", currently at Step 5 of the Codex Procedure. These model certificates currently only cover fishery and milk products and have not a harmonised approach and presentation. There would therefore be some merit in harmonising further these model certificates and extending their scope.

This harmonization for the presentation of certificates at an international level would allow a reinforced cooperation and a better understanding between competent health authorities. It would make the reading of certificates easier, would standardize the interpretation of administrative information regarding the certificates and would facilitate the creation of a comprehensive data processing interface for electronic exchanges and therefore cut the costs for printing certificates in a paper format and possibly also improve the security of certificates against fraud and counterfeiting.

3. The main aspects to be covered

The proposed template is divided in two parts. The first part exclusively includes details on the goods and their dispatch. The second part called "attestation" includes the health requirements. Explanatory notes are provided to clarify details on information required for each field.

4. An assessment against the criteria for the establishment of work priorities

Developing a generic template for health certificates falls under the general criterion of consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade. It is also a project which could improve protection against fraudulent practices. It also falls under the criteria applicable to general subjects in regard to work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies). In that regard, close cooperation with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is of utmost importance to avoid contradictions, gaps and duplications.

This new work also falls under criteria in regard to diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.

5. Relevance to Codex strategic objectives

This proposal is congruent with the strategy of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in regard to the periodic review and harmonisation of standards, taking into account the horizontal nature of the provisions foreseen, which would provide consistency across a wide range of products.

This proposal also complies with the following strategic goals:

- Goal 1: Promoting Sound Regulatory Frameworks.

- Goal 4: Promoting cooperation between Codex and relevant intergovernmental organisations. It is proposed to closely cooperate with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) which has initiated work on this issue. Such cooperation is of utmost importance to cover the food chain from farm to table in a coherent and seamless manner.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents

This new work is proposed to be an Annex to the "*Guidelines for Design, Production, Issuance and Use of Generic Official Certificates*". When finally adopted it would supersede the "*Model Certificate for Fish and Fishery Products*" (CAC/GL 48-2004) and the "*Model Export Certificate for Milk and Milk Products*".

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

NIL

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies

NIL

9. The proposed time-line for completion the new work

- Consideration of the draft proposal at step 3 by CCFICS17.
- Consideration of the proposal at step 5 by CCFICS18.
- Adoption of the standard by the CAC at step 8: July 2010 (on the condition that the interval between CCFICS sessions is not modified).