

# codex alimentarius commission E



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
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**Agenda Item 4**

**CX/NASWP 08/10/5 Add.1  
October 2008**

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA  
AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC**

Tenth session

Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 28-31 October 2008

**DRAFT NEW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CCNASWP**

(responses to the Australian Questionnaire to Facilitate Implementation of Objectives 3 & 4  
of the CCNASWP Strategic Plan)

## **Background**

At the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of CCNASWP (Samoa, 2006) the Committee accepted the offer of Australia to develop and circulate a questionnaire to identify activities that have been completed in respect of the implementation activities for Objectives 3 and 4 as identified in the NASWP Strategic Plan 2004 - 2008.

A questionnaire was circulated in March 2008, inviting Pacific Island Countries to provide information on activities undertaken at both the national and regional level relative to Objectives 3 and 4.

The compiled responses to the questionnaire are attached (Annex 1) for information and consideration, with a view to assisting in the review of the 2004 - 2008 Strategic Plan and development of the new Strategic Plan for 2008 - 2013 at the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of CCNASWP in Tonga, October 2008.

### ***Some key issues which have been identified from the questionnaire include:***

- Lack of funding and resources, including inconsistency of staff undertaking Codex work, are major issues for the PICs.
- Enhanced communication is required between members in the region. This has been assisted by the CCNASWP website developed by Tonga, however mechanisms need to be put into place to ensure ongoing improvements and maintenance.
- PICs require assistance with developing written comments - enhanced consultative mechanisms with stakeholders, more in-depth knowledge of Codex, and confidence building would assist with this.
- Awareness of Codex at the national level (government, producers, exporters, consumers) is quite limited - the importance of Codex needs to be raised to gain greater input to national positions.
- PICs have prioritised issues of national importance and the Trust Fund has enabled them to attend relevant Codex meetings.
- PICs require scientific and technical training/capacity building.
- There is a need to facilitate communication between scientific and technical experts in the region.
- Analytical laboratory capacity/capability is limited and expensive, PICs would benefit from data sharing among CCNASWP members.
- PICs would benefit from on-the-job training with Quads members and more formalised mentoring arrangements.

**Responses to the Australian Questionnaire to Facilitate Implementation of Objectives 3 & 4 of the CCNASWP Strategic Plan – Part 1  
(Responses of Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea and Samoa)**

	Cook Islands	Papua New Guinea	Samoa
<p><b>Q1. Has your country identified specific areas where capacity building is needed to assist the Codex Contact Point in fulfilling its core functions? If yes, please provide a summary of those areas, and identify where capacity building has been requested from donor countries/organisations and the outcome of those requests.</b></p>	<p>The Office of the Codex Contact Point is based in the Ministry of Agriculture and equipped with computers, etc. Since the establishment of the office in 2004 its responsibilities are pretty much on what has been specified in the manual however limited capacity building in some areas of the food industry. The training is mainly structured to work in partnership with other government agencies or to piggy back with other programmes as initiated by private sectors, WHO, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and FAO Food Security project in the Pacific. Although, previous requests for assistance from donor agencies for a coordinated training on Food Hygiene and Food labelling was not successful.</p>	<p>The national CCP for Papua New Guinea (PNG) would like to improve its capacity on the Codex library set up with coding or referencing system to enable easy access to information pull-out, especially when stakeholders are interested in particular information the CCP office to search the information, retrieve and send it in shortest time as possible. Examples: the standard for methyl mercury in fish or a particular chemical residue in vegetables, or rice standard. The developed infrastructure network with training, computer and software is required. The PNG CCP has planned to request QUADs or the Codex Trust Fund to sponsor a Secretariat staff member to be an on the job attachment in a developed country for two weeks to a month to study their library system and then return and set up the Codex library. Codex PNG would like to achieve a good set up of a Codex Library with networking infrastructure. Codex PNG also experiences the breakdown of internet; hence development of the hard copy arrangement for all the standards to be downloaded from the internet and bound as library with coding system would assist PNG.</p>	<p>Samoa anticipates creation of 2-additional new positions specifically for Codex work for funding in the 2009-2010 national budget. The new positions will allow focused commitment to the work of Codex and once filled, the immediate capacity building areas would include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in analytical skills for the preparation of country positions.</li> <li>• Training in food standard formulation.</li> </ul>

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<b>Q2. If the answer to Q1 is no, what areas would you need assistance in for example further assistance with setting up consultative processes in country, strengthened links with other NASWP members, further assistance in respect of learning how to develop country positions on Codex issues either for presentation at meetings or in submission of written comments.</b>	Capacity building is a priority in terms of strengthening of the National Food legislations, Food Safety issues, activities in Food industry, consumers, and traders, in particular Inspection of Food Export and Import, Pesticide residue in Foods, Food Processing, Food Hygiene and Food Labelling. There is also a need for assistance with setting up consultative processes in country, as well strengthen links with other NASWP members. The web site that has been set up in Tonga is a useful tool for Codex in the region as a means of improving communication between members. Therefore, the need to speed up the process of our Food legislations is an immediate urgency for the Cook Islands as it requires covering the protection of public health, the protection of consumers and conditions of fair trading.	It is noted that Question 1 has been answered; however the CCP and Codex PNG also need assistance in the following areas:  (i) Other countries including QUADs or FAO/WHO may assist in workshop on awareness of Codex and other technical issues to re-enforce the growing international importance of Codex work in food quality and safety; and food trade, especially to the high ranking government and policy officials, including further assistance in respect of learning to develop the country's position/view on Codex issues for presentation at meetings or in submission of written comments.  (ii) Technical assistance in new Codex standard development: Kava and Noni are current on CCNASWP agenda for standard development. Regional standard development for Taro (sp on export) is very important as taro is consumed in all PICs and international countries as well. Dried Vanilla and Cashew Nut may also be considered for standard development, if there are no other standard are available.	N/A
<b>Q3. How important/beneficial do you regard on-the-job training to be to your Codex Contact Point development? On the job training could be undertaken as a placement with a developed country Contact Point for a period of time or by having officers trained in your own country.</b>	It is considered highly important for us to further develop the capabilities of the current NCC, in particular in country training as well as attachments with developed countries.	On-the-job training is important for developing countries such as PICs and PNG would welcome that. Codex PNG suggests that on-the-job training should take place, which should enable the Codex Contact Points to be on the same level of understanding and wavelength to address the Codex issues and requirements, especially in the region and international level.	On-the-job-training is viewed highly important. This has been thrown around in preliminary discussions in the review of the Strategic Plan for the 2006 NASWP meeting. Recommend priority implementation with placement timeframe of at least 6-weeks per placement.
<b>Q4. Has your country identified relevant strategic priorities for Codex involvement and determined which committees it will participate in? If the answer is yes please provide a short summary of those areas that are of strategic priority e.g. food hygiene, food import and export,</b>	For the Cook Islands as well everyone else in the region I believe the main objective is providing 'safe food' for our people as well look healthy for the food industry as public demand for it. Well, we have been attending previous codex committee meetings under the goodwill of the Codex trust fund assistance and small islands economy like ourselves is very likely that government would support our attendance to committee meetings funded by the	Yes, PNG has identified our strategic priorities for our Codex activities. Our priorities are reflected in the international meetings that we request to attend, through Trust Fund sponsorship. The population growth is out-growing the food security development or food industry; hence it is vitally important to improve the standard of living through the hygienic practices. The following are PNGs	For the current Trust Fund year, Samoa participated in the Codex Committee on Food Labelling the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables; and the upcoming Codex meetings for CCNASWP and the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene. Areas of strategic priority include food hygiene, food labelling, food import and export inspection and certification including exports of fish and fishery products. These areas are of importance

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<p><b>fish and fish product and explain how these strategic priorities relate to your country's public health and trade priorities.</b></p>	<p>national budget. The government budget policy draws much attention towards the development of education, health and environment.</p>	<p>priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Food safety issues – participate in CCFH - food quality and safety issues are a concern to PNG consumers and this is probably reflected in the general health status of the population and the standard of living in PNG. Unhygienic practices may be clear evident in the markets, fast food outlets and supermarkets. The country need to make awareness on General Food Hygiene, Basic Food Hygiene Practices and Preparations, Risk Analysis, Assessment, Management and Communication including HACCP are the key areas for the growth of business, improving the health, consumers and enhance trade.</li> <li>(ii) Fisheries industry – participate in CCFFP - fisheries are of great importance to the socio-economic growth of this country. The country has plans to develop a Fisheries Industry Park in Madang to be a number one producer and processor of Tuna in the Pacific Region. PNG is already exporting to major international markets such as European Union and Japan.</li> <li>(iii) Imports and exports – participate in CCFICS - imports and exports are vital to the economical growth and improving the trade, quarantine and harmonization processes including traceability in the country.</li> <li>(iv) Regional activities – participate in CCNASWP - regional activities are important due to common interests amongst PICs and the need to support each other in pursuing regional and country goals and objectives at the international level. Thus PICs need to supported and strengthened in the participation of the food standard development.</li> <li>(v) Codex Alimentarius Commission - the National Codex Committee has agreed for the Heads of Department of Agriculture and Livestock; and Department of Health to participate in the Codex Alimentarius Commission Sessions on consecutive basis, which will be a good mechanism for the senior level departmental</li> </ul>	<p>not only for general public health safety but also for the promotion of import and export trade. A great range of imports are flooding in from Asian countries where labelling is mostly in foreign language. For some products, insufficient labelling does not allow for informed consumer choices. Work priorities for the current financial year include developing a hygiene standard (in the process), a labelling standard and a bottled water standard. Fish and fishery products are major components of the local diet as well as exports therefore its important that food safety requirements are adequately addressed to prevent hazard to public health.</p>

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		managers to understand the Food Quality and Safety issues and deliver the required information and discussions in the National Executive Council as well as in the Central Government Agency, which the Chief Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council is the Chairman. However, the Codex PNG Secretariat had to debrief and assist them on the technical codex aspects.	
<b>Q5. What current Codex issues are of significance to your government? Is assistance required for your government to better understand these issues to enable effective participation in Codex?</b>	The government is guided by the National Codex Committee as a statutory body mandated by Cabinet in July 2005 to carry out the responsibilities for the implementation of the Codex activities at the National level. We definitely need assistance for capacity building with regards the up skilling of personnel in codex activities at all levels of the food industry and including government agencies.	Export issues are very vital to maintain the relationship with other regional countries and PNG Government needs to understand the standard requirement in international and regional trade and to promote and support institutions and systems in the country for ensuring food and commodities produced are high quality for export. The government of PNG should be assisted on impact projects on traceability of product originality; harmonization and trade dispute including the codex involvement in the science-base decisions takes place in trade, health and for consumer protection.	Formulation of HACCP plans for various industry stakeholders would require technical assistance.
<b>Q6. In respect of national consultative mechanisms, other than the National Codex Committee, does your country use other means of formulating country positions on Codex draft standards (e.g. consultation with industry, consumers and the use of public meetings)?</b>	No. Country position on draft codex standards within the industry is poor. However, the noni industry has initiated in recent years some degree of consultations with regards to the noni juice from producers to market.	No, Codex PNG lacks funding under PNG government for a cohesive and coherence set up and linkages with relevant stakeholders within the public and private sectors. These linkages have to be set up after awareness and promotions are carried out to make people understand what Codex is doing, especially funding aspects. Codex PNG is now working on setting up a Codex Technical Committee, so that the circulated standards at different steps will be commented by the expert Technical Committee for country position/view to be developed for a country position/view. The concern had been raised in the NCC for this committee to be set up, which the Food Industry, consumers organisations, NGOs, Private and government sectors will be invited. Codex PNG also has prepared an information paper and sent out to all Heads of the National and Provincial Departments and Stakeholders including the District Local Level Governments (LLGs) as a mechanism consultative	Samoa held its first National Codex Industry Stakeholder Forum in March 2006. It was intended to be an annual event to promote awareness on Codex and gauge public views on Samoa's way forward with Codex. Otherwise industry, consumers, civil societies are represented in the National Codex Committee.

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		awareness process.	
<b>Q7. How effective are these mechanisms? What types of information or feedback do you receive through use of these consultative mechanisms, i.e., oral comments at public meetings; written comments submitted to the Codex Contact Point or other.</b>	Oral reporting is the common practice between line government ministries within the food industry on subject matters when dealing with food safety. Otherwise the only report system is for our participation in Codex Committee meetings which has to be submitted to the National Codex Committee as required by the Codex Trust fund.	PNG NCC had not been effective in responding to requests for comments on draft Codex Standards. We are hopeful that working on a body, Codex Technical Committee should be able to address the country position more effectively. This infrastructure should enable effective feedback and consultation.	Mechanisms are very effective. Verbal comments are recorded. Sometimes written comments are received. Reports are then compiled from these records. Industry and consumer groups are increasingly becoming assertive in codex matters and this is assessed from increased number of written complaints received on food safety issues and discussions at national meetings in particular, the Development Board; a forum where the government and private sector dialogues on issues of economic importance to the country.
<b>Q8. Are there items of new work in Codex that would be beneficial to your government or to the region; if so, what is the nature of such new work? Are there existing Codex standards that should be revised and/or amended to make them more useful to your government/region; if so, what are the standards and nature of the amendment?</b>	The Draft Food Regulations in the Cook Islands are a priority for now and as well it is important to the development of the Codex Standards. So we can not progress until the revised bill is through parliament as current legislation is outdated and does not conform to Codex standards.	(i) Taro Standard Development may be a possibility because of the regional trade - may be a possibility by the Technical Committee in liaison with PNG National Institute on Standard and Industrial Technology (NISIT) and Codex Secretariat.  Workshop/Seminar on Honey, Kava, Noni and Taro is important. Honey is a growing industry in Papua New Guinea and Honey Standard is available, however there must be a reason behind the vector transported pests/diseases bee mite – Varroa may not be covered in the Honey Standard, though Veterinary Drugs are covered with the residues of pesticides in the CONTAMINANTS section. PNG is aware from World Bank reports that there are numbers of honey bees carry pest/diseases possibly in this region. The expert coverage of Kava and Noni through workshops or seminar presentation may help the micro herbal business in the country or in the region. PNG also wishes to have informed coverage on taro development through the workshop so that the regional activities on taro.	Samoa is still in the learning process and it would be too early to comment on this aspect except perhaps the issue on labelling of organic products that is of interest to us.
<b>Q9. What is the level of awareness and understanding of Codex within your country's government? Please rank as High/Medium/Low/None for the following types of government officials:</b>	National Elected Official - <b>High/Medium</b> Ministerial-level appointed/elected Official - <b>High/Medium</b> Senior Civil Service Government Executive – <b>Medium</b> Middle-Management Government Official – <b>Medium</b> Technical Staff - <b>Medium</b>	National Elected Official – <b>Medium/Low</b> Ministerial-level appointed/elected Official – <b>Medium/Low</b> Senior Civil Service Government Executive – <b>Medium/Low</b> Middle-Management Government Official – <b>Medium</b> Technical Staff - <b>High/Medium</b>	National Elected Official – <b>Medium</b> Ministerial-level appointed/elected Official – <b>Low</b> Senior Civil Service Government Executive – <b>Medium/Low</b> Middle-Management Government Official – <b>Low</b> Technical Staff - <b>Medium</b> Policy Staff – <b>Medium</b>

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	Policy Staff - <b>Medium/Low</b>	Policy Staff – <b>High/Medium</b>	
<b>Q.10 What is the level of awareness and understanding of Codex within your country's industry sectors?</b>	The general perception of the community on what is Codex is low. As there is limited support available from the national budget for the NCC office to fulfil some of the obligations and therefore codex awareness programme is not widely promoted in the community except only at the level of inter-governmental agencies involved with the development of codex .i.e. Agriculture, Health, Marine Resources (Fisheries), Environment, Foreign Affairs and Chamber of Commerce.	The level of awareness is low to medium because of the funding constraints, though the understanding of the Codex within in the stakeholders of National Codex Committee set up is quite high. Codex PNG Secretariat cannot plan to present seminars or travel to other parts of the country to meet with the business groups and exporters to do awareness presentations due to funding constraints; however the Codex Contact Point is a member to the Consumer Product Consultative Committee under the Independent Consumer and Competition Commission. Hence, it is one of the avenues Codex Secretariat uses for the awareness, which the CCP did a power point presentation to the Consumer Product Consultative Committee in the PNG Independent Consumer Competition Commission. The Codex PNG also did the power point presentation to the Hospitality Training Students in Port Moresby. It is appropriate to travel to other parts of the country to make awareness. Awareness is also an organisational shared responsibility in PNG, which the NCC members are responsible to their organizations they represent.	For executive level, its medium otherwise assumed poor where the information is not being disseminated to within industry members.
<b>Q11. Have national workshops been conducted on Codex for stakeholders in your country? If yes, please give brief outline of activities undertaken.</b>	Yes, but not directly with Codex. According to our records there was one held on fish processing training for fishermen on the application of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) for food safety management system under the sponsorship of Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with Ministry of Marine Resources.	Yes, after the 2001 workshop to establish the Codex PNG, we had a workshop in 2005, which was attended by participants from PNG and the Solomon Islands. The theme of the workshop was "Enhanced Participation in the Codex System" and was supported by FAO. The consultant was Codex Canada Senior Advisor, Mr. Allan McCarville and Codex Technical Advisor, Mr. Dirk Schulz from FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific.	Below is the outline of presentations in the 2006 national codex industry & stakeholders forum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of Codex Processes &amp; Why Codex is Important</li> <li>• Codex Year in Review</li> <li>• Samoa Government Priorities: Strategic Priorities /Objectives for Samoa</li> <li>• Participation in Codex Processes &amp; How these are determined</li> <li>• Specific Codex Issues Affecting the Samoa Food Industry</li> <li>• Key issues Relating to Food Inspections and Certification Systems</li> <li>• Key Issues Relating to Food Labelling</li> <li>• Key Issues Relating to Bio-Safety; Genetically Modified Foods/Organisms</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Issues Relating to Food Hygiene</li> <li>• Open Forum Discussion</li> </ul>
<b>Q12. Do companies among your country's food sector employ any sort of coordination mechanism?</b>	<p>The Cook Islands is heavily dependent on its tourism industry as the main economic earnings of the country. As a result of tourism, accreditation scheme was introduced to maintain high quality standards within the Hospitality Industry. In recent years Hospitality School was established under UNDP project to cater hospitality training (chef, bar tenders, house keeping, etc) for people working in Hotels, Motels, Restaurants, Open market stalls and Fast food outlets. The fishing industry themselves was well coordinated in terms of negotiations in trading their catch to meet overseas market standards.</p>	<p>There are various authorities/companies in existence in the PNG food sector, which serve the interests of their members and public at large. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Chamber of Commerce;</li> <li>(ii) Manufacturers Council;</li> <li>(iii) Rural Industry Council;</li> <li>(iv) National Farmer's Association;</li> <li>(v) Small Corporative Associations;</li> <li>(vi) National Fisheries Authorities deals with various Fish Canneries;</li> <li>(vii) Livestock Development Corporation;</li> <li>(viii) Cattle Association; and</li> <li>(ix) Others.</li> </ul> <p>There is also the Government's Food Sanitation Council headed by Department of Health who is dealing with internal food sanitation issues also deal with some of the above organizations.</p>	<p>Yes, through membership in the Chamber of Commerce Association and the Samoa Association of Manufacturers and Exporters.</p>
<b>Q13. There have been a number of workshops for Codex Contact Points conducted over the last few years Do you feel that additional workshops would be useful to further improve knowledge and understanding of Codex among any or all types of stakeholders in your country? If yes, please suggest what specific types of workshops would be useful and for which stakeholders would they be useful.</b>	<p>With the limited resources that are available in our national budget for NCCP. Cook Islands support additional workshops for awareness and in country training to further improve knowledge and understanding of Codex among key stakeholders such as the politicians, government agencies, farmers, food handlers' and others. It is apparent that the responses from community sometime question what Codex is all about or how it relates to our welfare. So for us we need to sell Codex at the grass root level, as we all know there has been a lot of forums held in the region as well as internationally in which a lot was on Codex issues. With our food legislation currently in the process of passing through parliament and we register our interest in developing a combination of training on Food Export and Import, Food Processing, Hygiene and Food labelling as consumers are becoming conscious of health concerns. Plus the volume of Asian products arriving into the country in recent years has increased as well labelling on packages is a concern as current legislation has weakness.</p>	<p>Yes. PNG believes that additional workshops would be useful, especially for the food industries on how they should link and comment on draft Codex standards including seminars on trade disputes, harmonization and traceability. Codex PNG is hopeful that under the Government's National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP), which Codex Food Standard Development as one of the essential activities to support and strengthen Food Security, Health and Trade some assistance may be forthcoming for a national workshop and PNG four regional seminars should be planned for the Food Traders and Exporters including Honey, Taro, Noni and Kava Development.</p>	<p>Workshop targeting food industry to promote better understanding of Codex and industry obligations to ensure food safety is maintained throughout the supply chain to end consumer.</p>

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<p><b>Q14. Quad countries currently share their written comments and positions with PICs. PICs are also invited to attend Quad meetings at Codex meetings. The Regional Coordinator has a strong role to play in promoting regional networking among CCPs. In addition to the CCNASWP website (recently constructed by Tonga) are there other mechanisms that members could use to share information/experiences? If yes please indicate the type of activity.</b></p>	<p>Cook Islands supports the use of the Tonga website, as well probably need improvement in areas where it is required as well its sustainability.</p>	<p>List of experts and with the Network; Institutional networks; It is suggested that in this website country by country or subject by subject be of help for the CCPs to view or enter the country activities.</p>	<p>Exchange of experience through training and placements of PICs to Quad countries and vice versa.</p>
<p><b>Q15. Has your country identified and prioritised regional issues where there is a need for scientific research/analysis? If yes, please indicate the issues in priority order high/medium/low.</b></p>	<p>Testing of mercury in Export Fish, Tuna, Albacore, etc – <b>High</b>  Noni Juice testing of chemical contaminants – <b>High</b>  Cyanide content in Cassava – <b>High</b>  Contaminants in public water system; bacteria, etc – <b>High</b>  Contaminants in processed foods - <b>High</b></p>	<p>(i) <b>National Dietary Exposure Assessment</b> It is an important decision maker for the country's plan, which stimulates health, trade; inform consumer's nutritional diet, to reduce poverty and stunted growth. The Department of Health be given the task to plan the nationwide assessment, however if regional the NCC will plan the activity. Thus, PNG request assistance through the TCP or other arrangements through Codex on this research work should be welcomed. (<b>High</b>)</p> <p>(ii) <b>Development of a Food Registry</b> (Food Manufactured in country with proper HACCP applied and to be in the database or registry, imported and exported products). PNG also requests assistance. (<b>High</b>)</p> <p>(iii) <b>Quantitative testing of Histamine, nationwide in PNG</b> Periodical stage investigation of histamine from the time of catch until cooked, identifying the significance of the histamine accumulation. This should allow a cool room facility development in the strategic areas. National Fisheries Authority be given this task, however assistance through TCP is requested or other forms of assistance through Codex to kick-start this nationwide</p>	<p>Mercury in Fish – <b>High</b>  Cadmium in Taro – <b>High</b>  Cyanide in cassava – <b>High</b>  ML of Chemicals in local produce as in taro, bananas, cassava, fruits and vegetables - <b>High</b></p>

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		<p>research should also be welcomed. <b>(High)</b></p> <p><b>(iv) Training/Workshop on General Food Hygiene.</b> Basic Food Hygiene Practices and Preparation, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point. All sectors should be involved. <b>(High/Medium)</b></p> <p><b>(v) Risk Analysis on imported foods</b> to meet requirements of national or international standards including surveillance on irradiated imported food (canned and smoked). <b>(Medium)</b></p>	
<p><b>Q16. Does your country currently have access to specialists and institutions either in your country or in the region which may be able to provide the required scientific/technical expertise? Would your country be willing to or be able to share its expertise with other members in the NASWP region? It needs to be recognised that there may be legal implications for some countries in terms of their ability to share data or being able to utilise experts from another country.</b></p>	<p>Access to specialists and institutions is non-existent or very limited. We mostly seek overseas assistance and it is an expensive exercise. The way to go forward with this issue is to share expertise with members in the region. The Cook Islands current Intellectual Property Right Act may cause legal implications in terms of sharing data.</p>	<p>There are PNG food specialists and institutions that deal with food as part of their duties to advise the government through the various mechanisms that are available. Within the region there is the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and other economic and trade agreements (PAPGREN, PRAP, SPCRGC, SPREP, APEC, etc...) under which such technical cooperation may be available.</p> <p>It is very much that PNG is willing to share expertise with other members of the NASWP region. PNG is proactive to share the food expertise with other members of the NASWP region, though it could have legal implications as it is mentioned. This should be overcome through the regional formal dialogue system and various forums.</p>	<p>Samoa recently established its Research &amp; Development Institute of Samoa (RDIS) which should be able to provide basic analytical tests. The region has also access to University of South Pacific (Alafua for Samoa &amp; neighbouring islands &amp; Fiji for others within that vicinity of the region) laboratory. However, it is believed that these institutions have not been accredited to provide internationally acceptable assurance on product testing.</p>
<p><b>Q17. What workshops/training activities has your country participated in to develop its capacity in the areas of scientific and technical expertise? If no activities have been undertaken, what areas would be of a high priority for training or workshops? Please describe how these training needs relate to ongoing or proposed policy-making, enforcement, compliance, or other regulatory programs in your country.</b></p>	<p>To date, there was no country participation in developing capacity building in the areas of scientific and technical expertise. To advance the progress of Codex activities as mentioned earlier that we need to convince politicians in agreeing as well as adoption of the revised regulations.</p>	<p>Since 2001 and 2005 Codex Workshops, PNG has not participated in any workshop/training activities on scientific and technical expertise in the country, though we have participated in the international meetings and workshops.</p> <p>PNG believes that improving its technical capacity in risk identification and analysis; how standard is developed from the risk assessment is very important to strengthen trade, health and consumer protection within the region and internationally. Under the Biosecurity program pests and diseases are vitally important to improve and enhance the trade capacity, especially to policy development to support and strengthen the enforcement of</p>	<p>No activities have been undertaken. Priority training needs are in all three areas of microbiological, chemical and physical evaluation.</p>

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		compliance and conformance.	
<p><b>Q18. What mechanisms are currently in place to foster communication between scientific and technical experts in the region? Should the CCNASWP website be used to facilitate this communication?</b></p>	<p>There are regional organisations in the Pacific who respond directly to government agencies rather than NCC as their involvement could be for a development project within the country. Existing websites accessible are Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Website, University of the South Pacific in Fiji and others. The Cook Islands support the CCNASWP website to facilitate communication among members.</p>	<p><b>Expertise networks</b>                      PNG would like to see a mechanism established for a coherent expertise network developed for communication among professionals. Professional personnel may have linkages with other professionals in other PICs through regional collaborative projects, not necessary in the Codex work but such programmes as PGR regional programmes or nutrition</p> <p><b>Institutional networks</b>                      Institutional collaborative projects/research especially in the issues which are common in the region</p> <p><b>Collaborative regional projects</b>                      SPC programs or other regional activities</p> <p><b>Regional economic and trade agreements</b>                      Under these agreements PNG has its obligations which include exchange of information, etc.                      PNG believes that CCNSWP website is an appropriate mechanism to facilitate communication for scientific and technical experts in the region as per the discussion of NZFSA Pacific Islands Workshop on Codex and Food Regulation. It is a thought that country by country may be an approach for CCPs from PICs to enter their activities information or data for others to view.</p>	<p>Recently the Research &amp; Development Institute of Samoa (RDIS) became a member of the Samoa National Codex Committee (SNCC). Being a member provides access and involves them with all Codex matters nationally. The CCNASWP website is an excellent communication sharing tool.</p>

**Responses to the Australian Questionnaire to Facilitate Implementation of Objectives 3 & 4 of the CCNASWP Strategic Plan – Part 2  
(Responses of Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu)**

	Solomon Islands	Tonga	Vanuatu
<b>Q1. Has your country identified specific areas where capacity building is needed to assist the Codex Contact Point in fulfilling its core functions? If yes, please provide a summary of those areas, and identify where capacity building has been requested from donor countries/organisations and the outcome of those requests.</b>	<p>Yes, at least 80% of the core functions of the CCP need to be addressed. The CCP is already acting as a link, between the Codex Secretariat and the other member countries; it is also at present co-ordinating all relevant Codex activities within its country.</p> <p>Some failure areas that I'd like to address here which need building on are circulation of working docs to the right stakeholders. It has been done but not done effectively. Sending comments is one area where we have just started at the last CCFICS, and also to other committees which are of interest to us. These comments are done in close co-ordination with the National Codex Committee as well.</p> <p>Enhancing the chance of exchanging information and performing other activities with other Codex Members. Due to lack of office space, the job of maintaining a library is a problem area, however due to this lack of this essential resource I am also doing the best I can do. The Promotion of Codex work in the country is also still lacking.</p>	<p>The current CCP is only on a temporary basis (part time) due to unforeseen changes in the previous CCP, who has been trained and operated the responsibilities and function for the previous three years. In the meantime, a person is being slowly trained to take on the responsibilities at the end of this year or later. Other than that, the national committee is still functioning although at a medium pace and the office and equipment are all maintained at the previous CCP office at the food division.</p>	<p>Yes, the most important one is Codex awareness to the various stakeholders and public at large. Much emphasis is put into Awareness program and the National Codex Committee had requested funding from UNCTAD in 2007. This has been recently approved so we have scheduled a big Codex Awareness campaign in relation to Agriculture/Trade/Health/Quarantine to take place in Vila at the end of April, 2008.</p> <p>Another was a training workshop organized and funded by FAO (SAPA). This was a training course on the Management of Codex Contact Point and the National Codex System held in March, 2005. This training was very worthwhile but there is room for expansion especially on specific areas such as written comments/country positions/conference room doc Short Codex training specifically focused on how to develop a standard, all procedures involved and how to get assistance.</p>
<b>Q2. If the answer to Q1 is no, what areas would you need assistance in for example further assistance with setting up consultative processes in country, strengthened links with other NASWP members, further assistance in respect of learning how to develop country positions on Codex issues either for presentation at meetings or in submission of written comments.</b>		<p>That is still the weakness of the CCP is that how to develop and put forward a country position on issues of importance to the region and country. This might require a more in depth knowledge of the codex process, etc.</p>	<p>At present funding is a major concern and it will probably never end. But more training in Codex procedures can be of great assistance.</p>
<b>Q3. How important/beneficial do you regard on-the-job training to be to your Codex Contact Point development? On the job training could be undertaken as a placement with a developed</b>	<p>On the job training would be very beneficial to the Codex Contact Point, of developing nations, like for our countries in the Pacific Region. It should expose us to more advanced Codex work and we could gain a lot of experience from members in the developed countries. It also encourages sharing of information</p>	<p>This is the best training of all simply because it offers the full range of training for all the function and key responsibilities of a contact point. Not only that but speed and accuracy of distributing and collection of responses to issues are missing in the laid back environment of the islands. Local training</p>	<p>On – job training will be very beneficial. This can assist CCPs in becoming more familiar and confident in the work of Codex.</p>

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<b>country Contact Point for a period of time or by having officers trained in your own country.</b>	and learning from each other as well.	can be done of course but the quality and the reception will not be comparable to placement training in developed country.	
<b>Q4. Has your country identified relevant strategic priorities for Codex involvement and determined which committees it will participate in? If the answer is yes please provide a short summary of those areas that are of strategic priority e.g. food hygiene, food import and export, fish and fish product and explain how these strategic priorities relate to your country's public health and trade priorities.</b>	<p>Yes, last year during the Codex Training, we sat down and discussed our priority list of Committees. The list that we have come up with so far was:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fish and Fishery Products Committee</li> <li>2. Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems Committee.</li> <li>3. Food Hygiene Committee</li> <li>4. CAC</li> </ol> <p>Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Committee</p>	<p>First priority to Tonga if for food safety and food trade mainly in the area of food hygiene, fresh fruits and vegetables, food export and import, food labelling, etc.</p>	<p>Yes, The National Codex Committee has chosen committees that are relevant to our countries needs in relation to our Trade and Public health priorities. The following committees are our present prioritized ones; CCNASWP,CCFICS,CAC,CCFL,CCFH and CCMH.</p>
<b>Q5. What current Codex issues are of significance to your government? Is assistance required for your government to better understand these issues to enable effective participation in Codex?</b>	<p>The current issues which are of interest to our Government, is basically to have local standards established from the Codex standards, that can be used to assist the local industry and gain access to outside markets. And yes I would agree that as the CCP, there is a great need for assistance provided in this area, so as to enable effective participation in the Codex work.</p>	<p>The Tongan government is currently undergoing reform and so personnel are changing everywhere. So it needs time for the new replacement to adjust and learn the world of Codex in order for effective participation. The hosting of the CCNASWP meeting in October has resulted in a series of consultation even for cabinet ministers to approve the budget for the meeting.</p> <p>Therefore, we still await our national food bill to be passed and enacted for more participation. However, with Tonga's recent accession to WTO, somehow make it more acceptable for the public that Codex is as important.</p>	<p>The understanding of Codex in Vanuatu is still very low. Our government needs to be persuaded to see the importance of Codex. Assistance is very much needed especially funds to facilitate Codex Activities.</p>
<b>Q6. In respect of national consultative mechanisms, other than the National Codex Committee, does your country use other means of formulating country positions on Codex draft standards (e.g. consultation with industry, consumers and the use of public meetings)?</b>	<p>When it comes to making country positions on Codex, only the NCC can contribute comments on the country positions, so therefore the country's comments are done and the these comments are endorsed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, which is the designated Ministry under which the CCP is under. The members of the committee belong to other Ministry and also the private sector.</p>	<p>We have not really gone through the effective processing the country position on any issue, other than the national codex committee or further down to the technical working groups (for e.g. the kava issue) but have gone all the way down to the consumer or public.</p> <p>We did go through the media on some issues on a national consultation. Therefore, we need to upscale these capabilities on formulation country positions on Codex draft standards.</p>	<p>Yes, we have consultations with other stakeholders but not enough or the attendance is poor. Use of Public meetings is also a mechanism and sometimes the media.</p>
<b>Q7. How effective are these</b>	I have a lot of good feedback from the committee,	Mostly meeting reports on verbal responses during	Quite effective and feedback is received mainly

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<b>mechanisms? What types of information or feedback do you receive through use of these consultative mechanisms, i.e., oral comments at public meetings; written comments submitted to the Codex Contact Point or other.</b>	both oral and written comments. Mainly from the same people, it also depends on the understanding of the Codex texts by the members of the committee.	the meetings or a consultative session. Very few formal reports by the participants.	through oral comments at public meetings. But there is a little that is in written form submitted to the CCP via email.
<b>Q8. Are there items of new work in Codex that would be beneficial to your government or to the region; if so, what is the nature of such new work? Are there existing Codex standards that should be revised and/or amended to make them more useful to your government/region; if so, what are the standards and nature of the amendment?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some work have already been started, most are still in its premature stage, like the reviewed Food Hygiene Regulation, most of the reviewed amendments are all taken from the Codex standards.</li> <li>The premature ones would be others of regional interest like the cassava, kava and noni standards, including some other potential local commodities.</li> <li>However there is room for more improvement and work in setting food standards, especially when it comes processing value adding products and also a good surveillance control system imposed on the imported food products.</li> <li>A new Health Laboratory was recently built in Solomon Islands to undergo test on food standards. This marked a significant improvement of food testing to align to Codex standards</li> </ul>	The national food bill has not been processed despite the repeated lobbying to the PM, etc. but they started initiating the process. So only the Consumer Protection Act have sorted out a regulation.	Most of the work Codex is doing is beneficial to our government. However, the government must play its part to contribute to the work of Codex at a National/Regional/International level. No, there are no existing Codex standards that need to be revised at present.
<b>Q9. What is the level of awareness and understanding of Codex within your country's government? Please rank as High/Medium/Low/None for the following types of government officials</b>	National Elected Official – <b>Medium</b> Ministerial-level appointed/elected Official – <b>None</b> Senior Civil Service Government Executive – <b>Low</b> Middle-Management Government Official – <b>Medium</b> Technical Staff - <b>Medium</b> Policy Staff – <b>Medium</b>	National Elected Official – <b>High/ Medium</b> Ministerial-level appointed/elected Official – <b>High</b> Senior Civil Service Government Executive – <b>Medium</b> Middle-Management Government Official – <b>Low</b> Technical Staff - <b>Low</b> Policy Staff – <b>Low</b>	National Elected Official – <b>Low/None</b> Ministerial-level appointed/elected Official – <b>Low/None</b> Senior Civil Service Government Executive – <b>Low/None</b> Middle-Management Government Official – <b>Medium/Low</b> Technical Staff - <b>Medium/Low</b> Policy Staff – <b>Low/None</b>
<b>Q.10 What is the level of awareness and understanding of Codex within your country's industry sectors?</b>	The level of awareness and understanding of Codex within this country's sector is low, I would say, not enough awareness done to promote the work and the most importantly how codex has a role to play when it comes to trade.	The businesses exporting fresh, dried, frozen, processed food products know the requirement of other countries that they have to comply with. Locally it is mostly the hygiene part of Codex that they aware off every time the Health Inspection comes around.	Medium to low.

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<b>Q11. Have national workshops been conducted on Codex for stakeholders in your country? If yes, please give brief outline of activities undertaken.</b>	Yes we had actually one only so far on Training on Enhancing Participation in Codex Meetings for the National Codex Committee, delivered by Dirk Schulz.	Not directly but only when the national action plan was formulated and secondly when the food bill was processed.	No, we are in the process of doing so. There will be a 2 day training workshop held in Port Vila in April this year for the various Stakeholders focused specifically on Codex/SPS/WTO in relation to Agriculture, Health, Trade and Quarantine. This will be funded by UNCTAD through a proposal that was submitted to them last year by the National Codex Committee.  We also have scheduled an awareness Campaign in May this year during a formal press release of the food Regulations that was gazetted end of last year. As part of our Work program for 2008 we will also have internal ministerial presentations throughout the year.
<b>Q12. Do companies among your country's food sector employ any sort of coordination mechanism?</b>	No when it comes to complying to Food Standards, like Codex for instance.	Exporters of fresh frozen fish to Japan and U. S. do employ a coordination mechanism.	Yes, there are associations of the various sectors such as Hotel/Resorts, Chefs, Manufacturers, etc. They meet periodically according to their decisions. They have their own coordination mechanism.
<b>Q13. There have been a number of workshops for Codex Contact Points conducted over the last few years Do you feel that additional workshops would be useful to further improve knowledge and understanding of Codex among any or all types of stakeholders in your country? If yes, please suggest what specific types of workshops would be useful and for which stakeholders would they be useful.</b>	Yes, I would definitely recommend additional workshops for Codex Contact Points and other relevant national in country awareness and workshop programs to promote the work of codex.	With the establishment of the CCNASWP web site it is possible to train and encourage interested parties to access the information and participate in the online forum discussion.	Yes, Additional workshops would definitely be useful to all types of Stakeholders in Vanuatu. Mainly awareness on understanding Codex and how they can benefit or contribute to the work of Codex at a national level. Groups such as Private sector, NGOs, Consumer and Government.
<b>Q14. Quad countries currently share their written comments and positions with Pacific Island countries. PICs are also invited to attend Quad meetings at Codex meetings. The Regional Coordinator has a strong role to play in promoting regional networking among Codex Contact Points. In addition to the CCNASWP website (recently</b>	By having annual Regional workshops for the Codex Contact Points of each PICS, including the Quads. This one I feel would be more effective.	The website online forum discussion in addition to emails.	Yes, Organize Ad hoc sub-regional meetings for PICs on important issues concerning the region. Seek respective governments to contribute to this.

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constructed by Tonga) are there other mechanisms that members could use to share information/experiences? If yes please indicate the type of activity.			
<b>Q15. Has your country identified and prioritised regional issues where there is a need for scientific research/analysis? If yes, please indicate the issues in priority order high/medium/low.</b>	<p>Tuna Compliance analytical testing for export (High)</p> <p>Value adding on Agro Products with the compliance testing involved in certifying the products before they are exported (High)</p> <p>Surveillance compliance testing on Imported Food Products (High)</p> <p>Salmonella research into Poultry products (High)</p> <p>MRLs in Agricultural Products, both for the domestic market and international market as well (High)</p>	<p>Toxicity of kava, chemical profile of varieties, etc. (High)</p> <p>Cassava cyanide content, country's varieties, soil type, season. (High)</p> <p>Nonu varieties chemical profile, anti nutritive compounds, etc. (High)</p> <p>Regional Tuna, Marlin, etc. mercury content profile (Medium)</p> <p>Imported chicken meat (High)</p>	<p>Kava (High)</p> <p>Canarium Nut (Nangae) (High)</p> <p>Organic Foods (High)</p>
<b>Q16. Does your country currently have access to specialists and institutions either in your country or in the region which may be able to provide the required scientific/technical expertise? Would your country be willing to or be able to share its expertise with other members in the NASWP region? It needs to be recognised that there may be legal implications for some countries in terms of their ability to share data or being able to utilise experts from another country.</b>	<p>Yes, under the Environmental Health Division within the Ministry of Health and Medical Services we have engaged a T.A an expert in Sanitary Production of Fish and Fishery Products funded by the E.U. This project has assisted us with setting up our own Food Laboratory in terms of purchasing Fishery Products testing equipments, which was just opened by the Australian Prime Minister two weeks ago. This project also assisted in the regulatory training of the inspectors, according to EU standards, and I am pleased to say that I was also the Team Leader of this inspection team.</p> <p>I am sure we are more than ready to be of assistance to other countries in the CCNASWP, but it could only be done through submitting a request with our Foreign Affairs here. Note that I would also have to confirm this as well.</p>	<p>Not very accessible and only at very high cost. It would greatly benefits the region individual member countries for sharing of expertise at whatever possible level. I am sure the legal implications can be quickly amended if it is possible to cater for this very urgent needs.</p>	<p>No, IAC in Fiji is the regional laboratory which is used on a User Pay Service however they cannot meet all the necessary requirements.</p> <p>Yes, We are willing to share what information we have but there needs to be National Clearance/Agreement before hand.</p>

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<p><b>Q17. What workshops/training activities has your country participated in to develop its capacity in the areas of scientific and technical expertise? If no activities have been undertaken, what areas would be of a high priority for training or workshops? Please describe how these training needs relate to ongoing or proposed policy-making, enforcement, compliance, or other regulatory programs in your country.</b></p>	<p>I am sure the country has already participated in a lot of workshops and training activities to meet its capacity building requirements. Its technical and scientific expertise assistance that's lacking and its also the fact that the wrong people are the ones attending these workshops and trainings overseas. At the moment the country is in the process on having an Integrated Frame Work approach, there is a Steering committee which meets nearly every month to discuss and work on this approach. I am please to say that the CCP is also a member of this committee. Currently we are actually in the DTIS stage, of the process; this is part of a program under WTO, to assist least developing countries. The contact point of this work is with the Ministry of Foreign affairs and external Trade. For the DTIS stage to begin, a Team Leader was recruited and his due to start next month. The same T.L was also used in Vanuatu to assist them with their DTIS, and was said to produce very good results for them.</p> <p>In addition, being included in the Pacific Island Trade Facilitation Program, out of this program, would be the development of a Pacific Food Safety and Quality Legislation Expert Group. This team formed from the Regional meeting on Food Standards to Promote Health and Fair Trade in the Pacific. They have a total of four objectives which this team would like to achieve, all aimed at protecting human health and facilitating trade in safe and suitable food in the global food market by addressing this on a regional approach.</p>	<p>With the National Act still in process we have yet to fully apply the whole process, procedures, etc, on a national scale. But in due time it will be done, then it is of most importance to set everything and everybody involvement to be at a higher set level.</p>	<p>None. Our high priority areas are in; Analytical Laboratory Capacity / Capability Field Research/Data Collection These training needs relate to our present National Government Development Plan of 2006 to 2015 called "Priority Action Agenda"(PAA).</p>
<p><b>Q18. What mechanisms are currently in place to foster communication between scientific and technical experts in the region? Should the CCNASWP website be used to facilitate this communication?</b></p>	<p>Yes, I would very much recommend that the CCNASWP website be used to facilitate communication, especially when it comes to sharing scientific and technical advice within the regions and also experts.</p>	<p>It is left to individual countries to cater for it's own on a bilateral arrangement with institutions, laboratories, etc. although FAO has funded workshops and labs to cater for the needs of the small island pacific countries. I am quite the CCNASWP website should the vehicle to deliver this need.</p>	<p>No mechanisms are in place to foster communication between scientific and technical experts in the region. Yes, the CCNASWP website should be used to facilitate this communication.</p>