



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

Eleventh session

Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 28 September - 1 October 2010

**COMMENTS ON STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO BE FOLLOWED FOR THE FUTURE WORK  
OF THE CODEX TRUST FUND (CTF)**

(replies to CL 2010/41-NASWP of Australia, Canada and New Zealand)

***Question 1: Should there be a shift in emphasis from Objective 1 to Objectives 2 and 3?***

- *Members are asked to clarify their expectations and advise on where the emphasis should be placed for their region. Should the amount of support apportioned to each objective be equal? What eligibility criteria should be used to give support to Codex members on activities related to Objectives 2 and 3? Any relevant considerations for FAO and WHO to consider in developing the process to give increased emphasis to Objectives 2 and 3 are invited.*

**AUSTRALIA**

Australia generally agrees with the observations made by the Commission that the Trust Fund has benefited developing countries to increase their participation in Codex, and that objective 1 has been largely met and that there should be a move towards a focus on objectives 2 and 3, but in particular objective 2. In this shift of emphasis, there will be a need to be support that contributes to effective participation in Codex and this may require consideration of how to provide alternative support to 'graduating' countries.

In a shift of emphasis from objective 1 to objectives 2 & 3 the Trust Fund should ensure that there is no duplication with the capacity building work of FAO and WHO rather focus on filling the gaps to enhance the technical and scientific input into Codex by developing countries based on their national priorities.

**CANADA**

Canada agrees that the focus of the Codex Trust Fund should now shift to achieving objectives 2 and 3 but that in doing so funds should still continue to be available to address objective 1. We are of the view that emphasis should be placed on enhancing the scientific capacity of the developing countries in the region which would contribute to the effectiveness of their participation and would subsequently facilitate the identification of regional issues where there is a need for scientific advice. This in turn would contribute to the achievement of objectives 2 and 3.

**NEW ZEALAND**

New Zealand generally supports the recommendation of the Trust Fund review that greater emphasis should be given to Objectives 2 and 3 focussing on improving the quality of participation. Over the first six years, the Trust Fund has made a significant impact in facilitating the participation of developing countries at Codex meetings.

As we move to the second phase of the Trust Fund it is timely and appropriate for the Trust Fund to focus on activities aimed at improving the quality of participation and support training and capacity building at the national level to enable members to prepare and participate effectively in Codex meetings. We believe that the Trust Fund has already made a beginning in this area through its support of various regional workshops (held in conjunction with meetings of regional coordinating committee meetings). The Codex related training workshop for the Asia Pacific region held in Bali in November 2008 is a case in point.

We also see merit in assisting members in scientific analysis and provision of scientific data in support of standards development in areas of particular interest. One means by which the Trust Fund can advance this objective is through support of science related activities in the various regional strategic plans such as those included in the Strategic Plan developed by the NASWP region.

As regards the allocation of resources between the three output areas (in support of objectives 1, 2 and 3) there is the prospect that as more countries graduate out of the fund it should be possible to increase funding allocation for activities related to Objectives 2 and 3. Initially New Zealand would favour activities related to Objective 2 as these are directly related to improving the quality of participation such as national/regional training workshops on Codex.

As regards improving scientific capacity and facilitating the development of scientific data for standards development, it would clearly be desirable to focus on issues that have wide interest from regional perspectives and support pragmatic initiatives such as regional networking and scientific workshops related to standards development. Close cooperation with the parent bodies will be essential to avoid duplication and maximise use of limited resources. As previously mentioned the regional strategic plans should provide a framework for specific activities.

### **Question 2: If yes, what is the "niche" for the Codex Trust Fund?**

- *Members are requested to advise on their vision and priorities for the scope of CTF funded capacity development activities (e.g. negotiation skills, strengthening Codex structures, developing national positions etc.) and what would be suitable mechanisms for delivery of the capacity-building activities? –networks of excellence, South-South cooperation, research studies etc.*
- *When advising FAO and WHO on the niche/scope, the Committee is requested to clearly suggest possible activities based on past experience and successful approaches in the region. It may include identifying regional or national institutions who could partner with the CTF in future activities.*
- *Members are also requested to consider how CTF supported activities to build capacity in Codex are integrated (rather than separate activities) to overall development of food safety and food control systems at country and regional level. Consideration could be given to other ongoing activities in the region to strengthen effective participation in Codex, such as FAO/WHO activities in the region, or other bilateral activities.*

### **AUSTRALIA**

As mentioned above, Australia considers that the Trust Fund should focus on building capacity of national structures that support effective and continuous participation in Codex; this should include exploring possible options for supporting continued participation by 'graduating' countries.

### **CANADA**

In Canada's view the Codex Trust Fund should continue to support the participation of countries in the work of Codex in the context of the three objectives. We believe it is important that any capacity building associated with the Trust Fund should be focused on achieving the three identified objectives. While the priority should remain on enhancing the participation of developing countries, the Trust Fund should now start to put some emphasis on Codex related training that will enhance the scientific capacity of these countries.

### **NEW ZEALAND**

The niche for the Codex Trust fund is in focussing and supporting activities and programmes that are directly related to its three objectives. Broader capacity building activities should be left to other multilateral programmes and institutions.

New Zealand believes that considerable support is still needed in many countries to strengthen national codex structures, training on developing national positions and participate effectively in Codex standards development processes. Workshops held in conjunction with specific Codex meetings and support of various activities in regional strategic plans in support of strengthening participation in Codex would be pragmatic ways of advancing Objectives 2 and 3 and establishing a clear niche for the Trust Fund.

***Question 3: Should there be a mechanism to continue support for physical participation for those who need it most (including graduates who cannot sustain participation)?***

- *What is the opinion of the Committee on the need for a mechanism to address the issue of reduced physical participation of graduate countries (most in need), who have demonstrated effective participation in decision making in Codex, but are unable to identify funds to support continued participation.*

**AUSTRALIA**

Australia supports the notion that there are a number of developing countries that still require support from the CTF even though they have graduated and no longer meet the criteria for eligibility. All countries recognise that effective participation in Codex requires consistent and sustained representation; in this regard possible options could include partial CTF support to ‘graduating’ countries that have demonstrated a strong commitment to effective participation and are able to demonstrate that identified priorities support the ongoing development of their national infrastructure. The ability of the CTF Secretariat to apply flexibility to the application of the criteria, in the case of graduating countries should be supported.

**CANADA**

It is Canada’s view that the focus of the CTF should continue to be to assist least developed countries to participate in Codex work. However, Canada agrees there should be a mechanism to support physical participation for those countries that have graduated but are challenged to sustain that participation. Such support should extend beyond attendance at a Committee session but should include participation in working groups. We would also note that effective participation does not necessarily mean physical attendance at meetings. Furthermore, if Codex in its review of its working procedures develops mechanisms to be more efficient, such mechanisms might impact on the manner in which countries participate and related costs.

**NEW ZEALAND**

New Zealand agrees with the views of the Executive Committee that it will be important to monitor the participation of countries after they have ‘graduated’ from the Fund so as to sustain the gains made through initial support. Realistically though, continued participation of countries (once they have graduated from the Fund) will depend on a number of factors including budgetary constraints at the national level and competing priorities.

New Zealand believes that the Trust Fund should carefully monitor post graduation participation and have some flexibility to assist countries in greatest need (such as the least developed countries and small island states with small populations and low GDP).

***Question 4: Should there be re-consideration of the criteria for allocation of support?***

- *What additional criteria might be used to guide the CTF in allocating support across the 3 different objectives?*

**AUSTRALIA**

Australia notes that the mid-term review found that the current criteria are based on well-established sources and that they are followed by the CTF Secretariat in a transparent manner. While we sympathise with the comments made in recent meetings and to the reviewers regarding dissatisfaction with country groupings and problems faced by ‘graduating’ countries we would be supportive of identifying additional criteria that could address these concerns.

**CANADA**

Canada is of the view that the criteria used to determine eligibility for support from the Codex Trust Fund are still valid. We would note that there is now a variation amongst developing countries as to the status/effectiveness of their Codex programs. Some countries are still at a rudimentary level while others have more advanced programs in place. Canada believes that additional criteria may need to be developed to determine appropriate eligibility for countries relative to objectives 2 and 3.

**NEW ZEALAND**

New Zealand agrees with the Executive Committee view that there does not seem to be a need to move away from the UN/World Bank criteria for determining eligibility but supports the development of additional criteria to address the needs of particular countries. Flexible criteria should be developed to address the needs

of particular countries or groups of countries as suggested under Question 3.

***Question 5: Should the lifespan of the Codex Trust Fund be extended?***

- *What are the views of the Committee on this issue? and what are the issues to be measured in your region to evaluate the impact of the CTF?*

**AUSTRALIA**

Australia supports the views expressed by the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Executive committee in this regard. In order for further consideration to be given to the lifespan of the CTF a more in depth analysis of participation of countries is required.

**CANADA**

It should be recalled that the Codex Trust Fund, when it was originally established, was intended to be a time-limited fund that would provide support to enable developing countries to participate in Codex work until their national Codex programs were developed to the level that such assistance was no longer necessary. At some point, food safety and the corresponding participation in Codex work would need to be a high enough priority for the government so that such participation would be included in a national budget. Extending the lifespan of the CTF could result in a dependency by some countries on the trust fund. This might ultimately impede rather than enhance the development of sustainable food safety control systems in those countries. Nevertheless, there will likely be a need for some form of continued support until such time as the economies of beneficiary countries have sufficiently matured to a level where they can sustain their involvement without support.

**NEW ZEALAND**

The Trust Fund was established with specific objectives and has another six years to run. It is premature to make any specific recommendation about the future of the fund. It is reasonable to assume that there will be a continuing need for support in all of the areas covered by the Trust Fund but how these needs might be will need to be made after careful assessment of progress made in achieving the current objectives.

However, it is not premature to clearly identify a review date when any extension to the lifespan might be considered. We suggest this be in advance of the last 3 three years of the current lifespan.