



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
CODEX COMMITTEE ON SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS**

**First Session**

**Kochi, India, 11-14 February 2014**

**MECHANISMS FOR PRIORITIZATION OF THE WORK**

**(Prepared by India)**

Governments and international organizations in Observer status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission wishing to submit comments on this document are invited to do so no later than **15 January 2014** as follows: CCSCH Secretariat, Spices Board (Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India), "Sugandha Bhavan", N.H. By Pass, Palarivattom.P.O, Kochi – 682025, Kerala, India (Email: [ccsch@indianspices.com](mailto:ccsch@indianspices.com)), with a copy to the Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy (e-mail: [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org)) and to National Codex Contact Point of India, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi – 110001, India (Email: [codex-india@nic.in](mailto:codex-india@nic.in)).

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission agreed to establish a Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH), to be hosted by India. The Commission did not consider the proposals for new work and agreed that the first session of the Committee would consider its work management modalities (discussed under Agenda Item 4), programme of work, including prioritizing criteria (discussed in this document) and new work proposals from Members (discussed under Agenda Item 6) (ref. REP13/CAC para 155-156). This document presents a proposal for the prioritization mechanism for discussion by the Committee.

**SCOPE**

2. The Committee has to formulate standards on various spices and culinary herbs. As it is not possible for the Committee to initiate work on all standards at the same time. There is a need to prioritize the work taking into consideration factors such as trade pattern; fraudulent practices in international trade and consumer protection. The main purpose of this document is to define criteria for ranking and prioritising the spices and culinary herbs. The criteria can be summarized as: i) Volume of production and trade; ii) Consumer Protection; iii) Intended use of the commodity; iv) Existing standards that are already in place; v) International or regional market potential of the commodity; and vi) Need for scientific advice. In order to effectively utilise these criteria in ranking and prioritising the work, a multicriteria ranking tool for spices and culinary herbs is proposed.

**CRITERIA WEIGHTS USED FOR SCORING**

3. The criteria used for ranking the commodities include six main parameters: i) Volume of production and trade; ii) Consumer Protection; iii) Intended use of the commodity; iv) Existing standards that are already in place; v) International or regional market potential of the commodity; and vi) Need for scientific advice. These criteria are based on the criteria mentioned in the Codex Procedural Manual for the establishment of work priorities. Additional parameters such as need for scientific advice have been added to the criteria.

4. Each of the six parameters (A to F mentioned in Table 1 below) has been given a weightage as a fraction of the total score, with all the weights summing to 100%. Each parameter has been weighted in terms of its importance. Highest weightage has been given to parameter A "Volume of production and trade" as it is important to have a Codex Standard for a commodity that is produced and traded the most. Similarly the weightage has been given to other five parameters (B to F).

5. Each parameter has been further divided into sub - parameters which have been given a numeric score of 10 each. Each commodity has to score on a scale of 1 - 10 for that particular sub - parameter. Then the weightage of the resulting aggregate score of 1 parameter has to be calculated. Sum of the weightage of 6 main parameters will give the final score for a commodity.

Table 1: Criteria to score and rank the commodities

SNO.	CRITERIA WEIGHT	AVERAGE WEIGHTING	SCORE GIVEN TO EACH COMMODITY
A.	<b>Volume of production &amp; trade</b>	<b>40%</b>	
1.	Volume of production	10	A1
2.	Volume and pattern of trade between countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in intra-regional trade, i.e., between or among countries of a region,</li> <li>• in inter-regional trade, i.e., between or among Countries of different regions.</li> </ul>	10 10	A2 A3
B.	<b>Consumer Protection</b>	<b>25%</b>	
1.	Extent of impact on consumer health	10	B1
2.	Extent of prevalent fraudulent practices	10	B2
C.	<b>Intended Use of the commodity</b>	<b>10%</b>	
1.	Utility of the Commodity in either whole, ground, cracked or crushed form	10	C1
D.	<b>Existing Standards already in place</b>	<b>10%</b>	
1.	Existing standard set by an international organization	10	D1
2.	Diverse national legislations	10	D2
3.	Rejections in the International market due to lack of standards	10	D3
E.	<b>International or regional market potential</b>	<b>10%</b>	
1.	Potential of the Commodity in the regional and international market	10	E1
2.	Potential of a regional product to enter international market	10	E2
F.	<b>Need for scientific advice</b>	<b>5%</b>	
1.	Requirement for risk analysis	10	F1
2.	Requirement of scientific advice from other Committees or International Organizations	10	F2

EQUATION TO CALCULATE THE FINAL SCORE FOR A COMMODITY =

$$\frac{(A1 + A2 + A3) * 40}{30} + \frac{(B1 + B2) * 25}{20} + \frac{C1 * 10}{10} + \frac{(D1 + D2 + D3) * 10}{30} + \frac{(E1 + E2) * 10}{20} + \frac{(F1 + F2) * 5}{20}$$

6. A physical working group can be constituted by the Committee to prioritize the new work proposals as per the criteria given above in Table 1. The Working Group will be open to all members and observers and will comprise of experts working in the field of spices and herbs. The working group will rank the proposals for new work taking into account the Criteria. The Committee will prioritize its proposals for new work at each CCSCCH meeting based on the recommendations from the Working Group.
7. The proposed multicriteria based ranking process will include the following activities:
  - Collect the published information from the peer reviewed literature
  - Collect information on volume of production and trade data from reliable sources
8. The activities mentioned in point 7 above will be carried out by the Physical working group.

## **CONCLUSION**

9. To effectively strategize the work of CCSCCH and to identify the major commodities of spices and culinary herbs, it is important to follow the above prioritization system which is based on a multicriteria approach. Using available data, commodities will be scored and work will be initiated on the commodity with the highest score, followed by others subsequently.
10. It is therefore recommended that the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs may consider this proposal to follow this prioritization system in its 1<sup>st</sup> Session to critically rank the new work proposals to formulate standards on spices and culinary herbs.