



REVISED DRAFT PROJECT DOCUMENT

DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDANCE ON USE OF SIMPLIFIED NUTRITION INFORMATION ON THE FRONT OF PACK

(REVISION OF THE GUIDELINES ON NUTRITION LABELLING (CAC/GL 2-1985))

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE NEW WORK

The scope and purpose of the work is to develop guidance on the use of simplified nutrition information on the front of pack. This guidance should be consistent with the requirements for supplementary nutrition information in the *Guidelines for Nutrition Labeling* (CAC / GL 2-1985). The work will include defining front of pack labelling. A decision on whether this guidance should be placed within the *Guidelines for Nutrition Labeling* (CAC / GL 2-1985) or in a separate document will be made after they have been developed.

2. RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS

This proposal relates to development of guidance to assist governments (or other stakeholders) in the development and implementation of simplified nutrition information (particularly on front of pack) which has been identified as a significant opportunity in a number of countries.

According to the stocktake undertaken by the eWG, there is an increasing number of Codex members where front of pack nutrition labelling systems is currently in use or being proposed for use.

The *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* (CAC/GL 2-1985) allow for the use of front of pack nutrition labelling, however they do not provide the necessary guidance to ensure front of pack labelling is applied in a way that ensures potential barriers to trade are minimized.

3. MAIN ASPECTS TO BE COVERED

The *Guidelines for Nutrition Labeling* (CAC / GL 2-1985) in Section 5 allow for the use of supplementary nutrition information; however, further clarification is required and the present project document seeks to establish additional guidance which may include general principles for development and implementation of front of pack nutrition labeling systems.

The proposal is to develop specific guidelines that may or may not be included within the *Guidelines for Nutrition Labeling* (CAC / GL 2-1985).

It is proposed that the guidance covers at least the following aspects:

- i. Purpose and Scope
- ii. Definition of FOPL
- iii. General principles
- iv. Steps to consider/other aspects in the development of FOPL systems

4. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW WORK PRIORITIES

General criterion

Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries.

Simplified nutrition information may have a role to play in facilitating greater understanding of the nutrition content of foods by consumers. This may also help guide consumers to healthier choices. Simplified nutrition information, particularly on front of pack, may also encourage food manufacturers to reformulate their food products to gain a more positive nutrient profile, thus improving the nutritional quality of the food supply available to consumers. Improved nutrition via either a healthier food supply or consciously made healthier choices would improve the risk profile for a number of non-communicable diseases globally.

Criteria applicable to general subjects

(a) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade

A number of countries have adopted or are planning simplified nutrition labelling systems either on a voluntary or mandatory basis. It is important that with a growing number of systems globally some consistency is maintained at a global level to ensure that impediments to trade that may arise from different approaches are minimised.

(b) Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work.

Conduct a revision of Codex texts including the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling (CAC/GL 2-1985)* is undertaken in order to formulate recommendations and guidance on the use of front of pack nutrition labelling.

(c) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies)

In November 2015 WHO held a technical meeting on Nutrition Labelling for Promoting Healthy Diets. The objectives of this meeting included reviewing the types of FOPL being implemented at that time, reviewing the evidence for effectiveness of different types of FOPL and reviewing case studies of countries with experience in implementing FOPL.

Subsequently, WHO initiated work on the development of Guiding Principles on FOPL which will be taken into account as soon as they are available to complement the work being done in the CCFL.

(d) Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization

Many countries are looking to Codex for clear and unambiguous guidance on areas such as nutrition labelling. The purpose of the new work proposal is the review and clarification of existing text to ensure it provides for the use of simplified nutrition labelling on the front of pack and the development of additional guidance to support its use, either in the current guidelines or in an independent document.

(e) Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue

Simplified front of pack nutrition information is a topic of interest in a number of countries around the World. Voluntary and mandatory systems are in place in a number of countries and at a global level this is a topic of discussion at the WHO. It has also been raised at WTO where inconsistency in labelling requirements has the potential to be a barrier to trade. Promotion healthier diets for consumers and encouraging manufacturers to improve the healthiness of the food supply are areas where strong guidance could have a significant impact globally.

5. RELEVANCE TO CODEX STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The proposed work is in line with the Commission's mandate for the development of international standards, guidelines and other recommendations for protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in food trade. The new work proposal will contribute to advancing Strategic Goals 1 and 3 as described below.

Strategic Goal 1: Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues

The use of simplified nutrition labelling on the front of pack is of increasing interest and activity in a number of countries globally. Currently there is no global guidance on best practice with regard to this form of labelling. Therefore, there is a risk that a proliferation of systems may result in confusion and barriers to trade.

Providing guidance for countries looking to implement front of pack nutrition labelling and principles that should be considered when implementing such a system would help ensure a degree of global harmonisation.

Strategic Goal 3: Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex members

Bringing this topic to CCFL will enable all members who have an interest in simplified nutrition labelling to participate in discussions.

6. RELATION BETWEEN THE PROPOSAL AND OTHER EXISTING CODEX DOCUMENTS

The proposal is to review the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling (CAC/GL 2-1985)* and these guidelines are applicable horizontally across all prepackaged foods.

7. REQUIREMENT FOR AND AVAILABILITY OF EXPERT SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

None identified at this stage. There will be opportunity to consult with relevant bodies if necessary throughout the process.

8. NEED FOR TECHNICAL INPUT TO THE STANDARD FROM EXTERNAL BODIES

WHO work on guiding principles and evidence reviews for front-of-pack nutrition labelling systems for promoting healthy diets will be considered in the development of guidance for Codex.

9. PROPOSED TIMELINE:

If approved by the Commission in 2018, the work is expected to take the Committee at least two sessions to complete.