

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

Agenda Item 4

CX/GP 23/33/4

August 2023

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Thirty-third Session

Bordeaux, France

2 – 6 October 2023

Codex Procedural Manual: presentation of new format and observations on consistency and superseded content

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat)

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The 32nd session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP32)¹ considered a document from the Codex Secretariat on the Format and Structure of the Codex Procedural Manual² and agreed that the Codex Secretariat proceed with the development of a digital version of the Codex Procedural Manual (PM), which would be made available for testing and review by Members before being published online.

1.2 In the meantime, CAC44 adopted:³

- the Criteria and Procedural Guidelines for Codex Committees and ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces Working by Correspondence as contained in CRD02 to CAC44 to be included in the PM, Section III, Guidelines for subsidiary bodies; and
- the addition to Section 4 of the PM, Risk Analysis, sub section Risk analysis principles applied by the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods, of an Approach for the extrapolation of MRLs for veterinary drugs to one or more species, as Annex C.

1.3 Therefore, there was also a need to update the PM with new content and issue a next edition.

1.4 In this process, the Codex Secretariat noted several editorial and formatting inconsistencies which should be addressed before undertaking any work on digitalization.

1.5 This document presents an overview of the work since CCGP32 and identifies other areas for improvement that should also be addressed before proceeding with the development of a digital version of the PM.

2. REVIEW OF THE CODEX PROCEDURAL MANUAL

2.1 The review of the PM was undertaken in the context of the rebranding of Codex standards⁴, also ensuring that Codex publications were in line with international publishing standards. The editorial review focused on the application of the FAO editorial guidelines⁵, ensuring clarity and consistency across the sections, and layout, without any substantive editing of the text.

2.2 The English version of the PM has been edited to address inconsistencies with spelling, list formats, punctuation, section and paragraph numbering, capitalization, and referencing. A description of the changes made to the PM is provided in Appendix 1.

¹ REP21/GP

² CCGP 21/32/6

³ REP21/CAC, paragraphs 30-36

⁴ CX/CAC 22/45/20, paragraph 9

⁵ [FAO Style 2023](#)

2.3 In line with FAO publishing guidance, the changes made to the 28th edition have been summarized in the foreword. The inclusion of such a foreword will be applied to all future editions. In addition, the design and layout have been updated with the aim of facilitating ease of use of the pdf/print version.

2.4 The 28th edition of the PM is currently available in English on the Codex webpage⁶. The French and Spanish versions have been edited to align with the English version as appropriate while also taking into account the FAO Style guidance for those languages and they are currently in the final layout stage. Other language versions are under review. While some printed copies of the 28th edition will be made available to Members, it should be noted that the policies of FAO and WHO are to move towards electronic only versions of all publications.

2.5 To address requests from Members, work is also underway to make all previous editions of the PM available on the Codex webpage. An update on progress on this will be provided at CCGP33.

3. CONSIDERATION OF FURTHER CHANGES TO THE CODEX PROCEDURAL MANUAL IN ADVANCE OF DIGITALIZATION

3.1 The review of the PM identified other opportunities for improvement but as these went beyond editorial changes, they have not yet been made in the PM, but are included below for review by CCGP:

- The use of redundant terms such as telex and facsimile.
- Any reference to the distribution of a specific number of copies of working documents/reports.
- Inconsistent reference to the Codex Secretariat – in some places reference is made to the Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat while in others reference is made to the Codex Secretariat.
- The need to reflect current practices with regard to availability of working documents and reports, i.e. their publication on the Codex webpage, and the delinking of circular letters from meeting reports.
- Simplification of language in the English version, i.e. “having responsibility for” to “responsible for”, and “take into consideration” to “to consider”.
- Codex text titles and Codex meeting titles could be spelled out in sentence case.

3.2 Appendix II contains examples showing how these aspects could be addressed.

3.3 In addition, sections of the PM which are likely to change such as List of Members and List of Codex Committees but do not directly impact the procedures as such, could be housed directly on the Codex website. Links to these lists could be provided in the PM, ensuring that the lists can be updated without issuing new editions of the PM.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 While the move towards digitization of the PM will continue, the preparatory work of the past year showed the importance of reviewing the content of the PM to ensure consistency of language and format, and with current practices, many of which have evolved with advances in technology and new communication tools.

4.2 A further review of the substance of the PM would be appropriate before investing in its digitization to ensure it is as up to date as possible. Such work could be mandated to the Codex secretariat, with CCGP33 already providing guidance on potential changes identified in Appendix 2 and all further changes to be submitted for consideration of future sessions of CCGP. CCGP33 may also wish to consider other means of reviewing the PM to identify areas of superseded content.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CCGP33 is invited to:

- consider the new format of the 28th edition of the PM and provide feedback on its usability and make suggestions for further improvement to the layout;
- note that in line with the policies of FAO and WHO, future editions of the PM will only be available electronically;
- note that with changes in technology, the move to paperless meetings, and the evolution of processes to ensure efficiency, some aspects of the PM no longer reflect current practice and accordingly:
 - advise the Codex secretariat how to proceed with changes identified in Appendix II; and

⁶ <https://www.fao.org/3/cc5042en/cc5042en.pdf>

-
- determine how to identify and consider further updates to ensure that the PM is in line with current practice; and
 - note that investment in digitization of the PM would only proceed once all issues of inconsistent and superseded text have been addressed.

Overview of editorial changes made to the 28th edition of the Codex Procedural Manual

Examples of **spelling** changes made to the English version include:

- change from prepackaged to pre-packaged;
- change from food borne to foodborne; and
- change from sulfite to sulphite.

Capitalization has been applied for terms such as Members, Observers, Member Organizations.

Acronyms have been added and/or spelled out where needed.

Gender-specific terminology adjusted to gender-neutral in English i.e. he/she changed to they with adjustments in other languages being made as appropriate to each specific language.

Formatting changes include ensuring all headings and subheadings are in sentence case.

Consistent paragraph **numbering** has been applied throughout the PM. The numbering restarts for each section of the PM (exceptions are: Articles, Steps, Rules, Principles and Definitions as they have their own numbering). Section numbers changed from Roman numerals to Arabic numerals (Section 1, Section 2, etc.).

List **punctuation** has been standardized throughout, and list **numbering** hierarchy applied: 1; a; i;

Referencing changes include updating Codex Alimentarius text identifier codes to CXC, CXG and CXS for Codex Alimentarius codes of practice, guidelines, and standards, respectively.

References were previously included as footnotes and have now been converted to endnotes, and references have been added for all texts cited. Footnotes are numbered in Roman numerals, whereas endnotes are numbered in Arabic numerals. Where a footnote is referred to multiple times, a footnote text has been added "See note x above".

Codex text references have been updated to reflect the series title, as below:

1. FAO and WHO. 2022. *Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Lead Contamination in Foods*. Codex Alimentarius Code of Practice, No. CXC 56-2004. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0579en>

To enhance reader experience for the electronic version of the PM, hyperlinks have been added to cross-reference relevant sections of the PM.

Layout changes include the addition of a list of acronyms, a list of figures, and a list of tables at the beginning of the PM as well as a full list of references in the NOTES section at the end of the PM.

APPENDIX II

Examples of additional changes that could be made to the Codex Procedural Manual to align with modern technology and current practice (page numbers refer to the English version of the 28th edition)

Section	Sub-section	Page number	Para graph	Current text	Proposed change	Notes
Section 2. Elaboration of Codex Standards and related texts	Relations between commodity committees and general subject committees	37	54	Codex committees may ask the advice and guidance of general subject committees having responsibility for matters applicable to all foods on any points coming within their province, in accordance with their terms of reference. In particular, due referral should take place between commodity committees (in this document "commodity committees" are meant to include coordinating committees and other subsidiary bodies of the Commission insofar as they elaborate commodity standards) and general subject committees during the elaboration of Codex commodity standards.	Codex committees may ask the advice and guidance of general subject committees having responsibility responsible for matters applicable to all foods on any points coming within their province, in accordance with their terms of reference. In particular, due referral should take place between commodity committees (in this document "commodity committees" are meant to include coordinating committees and other subsidiary bodies of the Commission insofar as they elaborate commodity standards) and general subject committees during the elaboration of Codex commodity standards.	Example of simplification of language.
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines to host governments of Codex Committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces	76	7	7. A Member Nation to which a Codex committee has been assigned is responsible for providing all conference services including the secretariat. The secretariat should have adequate administrative support staff able to work easily in the languages used at the session and should have at its disposal adequate word processing and document reproducing equipment. Interpretation, preferably simultaneous, should be provided from and into all languages used at the session, and if the report of the session is to be adopted in more than one of the working languages of the committee, then the services of a translator should be available. The	7. A Member Nation to which a Codex committee has been assigned is responsible for providing all conference services including the secretariat. The secretariat should have adequate administrative support staff able to work easily in the languages used at the session and should have at its disposal adequate information technology word processing and document reproducing equipment. Interpretation, preferably simultaneous, should be provided from and into all languages used at the session, and if the report of the session is to be adopted in more than one of the working languages of the committee, then the services of a	Better reflect the nature of technology required for meetings and the paperless status of meetings

				committee secretariat and the Joint FAO/WHO (Codex) Secretariat are charged with the preparation of the draft report in consultation with the rapporteurs, if any	translator should be available. The committee secretariat and the Joint FAO/WHO (Codex) Secretariat are charged with the preparation of the draft report in consultation with the rapporteurs, if any	
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines to host governments of Codex Committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces	77	16	Replies to invitations will normally be requested to be sent to reach the chairperson as early as possible and in any case not less than 30 days before the session. A copy should be sent also to the Secretary, CAC, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Rome. It is of the utmost importance that by the date requested a reply to invitations should be sent by all those governments and international organizations which intend to participate. The reply should specify the number of copies and the language of the documents required.	Replies to invitations will normally be requested to be sent to reach the chairperson as early as possible and in any case not less than 30 days before the session. A copy should be sent also to the Secretary, CAC, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Rome. It is of the utmost importance that by the date requested a reply to invitations should be sent by all those governments and international organizations which intend to participate. The reply should specify the number of copies and the language of the documents required.	With documents provided electronically reference to copies is no longer needed.
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines to host governments of Codex Committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces	78	22	Papers for a session should be sent by the chairperson of the Codex committee concerned at least two months before the opening of the session to the following: a) all Codex contact points; b) chief delegates of Member Nations, of Observer countries and of international organizations; and c) other participants on the basis of replies received. Twenty copies of all papers in each of the languages used in the committee concerned should be sent to the Secretary, CAC, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Rome.	Papers for a session should be sent by the chairperson of the Codex committee concerned at least two months before the opening of the session to the following: a) all Codex contact points; b) chief delegates of Member Nations, of Observer countries and of international organizations; and c) other participants on the basis of replies received. Twenty copies of all papers in each of the languages used in the committee concerned should be sent to the Secretary, CAC, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Rome.	Reference to copy number is no longer relevant.
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines to host governments of Codex Committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces	79	27	Members of Codex committees should advise the committee chairperson through their Codex contact point of the number of copies of documents normally required.	Members of Codex committees should advise the committee chairperson through their Codex contact point of the number of copies of documents normally required.	With documents available online, this is no longer necessary
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines to host governments of Codex	79	28	Working papers of Codex committees may be circulated freely to all those	Working papers of Codex committees may be circulated freely to can be	All Codex working documents are

	Committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces			assisting a delegation in preparing for the business of the committee; they should not, however, be published. There is, however, no objection to the publication of reports of the meetings of committees or of completed draft standards.	made available to all those assisting a delegation in preparing for the business of the committee through the Codex webpage ; they should not, however, be published. There is, however, no objection to the publication of reports of the meetings of committees or of completed draft standards.	made available on the Codex webpage. They do not go through a formal publication process, hence are not published as such but are freely available to all who need them in preparation for the meeting
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines on the conduct of meetings of Codex Committees and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces	80	37	The Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat should ensure that, as soon as possible and in any event not later than one month after the end of the session, copies of the final report, as adopted in the languages of the committee, are sent to all Members and Observers of the Commission.	The Joint FAO/WHO Codex Secretariat should ensure that, as soon as possible and in any event not later than one month after the end of the session, copies of the final report, as adopted in the languages of the committee, are sent is made available to all Members and Observers of the Commission on the Codex webpage .	Propose to consistently refer to the Codex Secretariat or Joint FAO/WHO Codex Secretariat for clarity There are also 16 references to "Codex Secretariat" in the PM so an alternate could be to use "Codex Secretariat" throughout i.e. delete Joint FAO/WHO or simply after the first reference to Joint FAO/WHO Codex Secretariat, indicate that it would be thereafter referred to as Codex Secretariat.
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines on the conduct of meetings of Codex Committees	81	38	Circular letters should be attached to the report, as required, requesting comments on proposed draft or draft standards or	Circular letters should be attached to the report, should be issued as required following publication of the	CL are no longer attached to meeting reports

	and ad hoc intergovernmental task forces			related texts at Steps 5, 8 or Step 5 (accelerated), with the indication of the date by which comments or proposed amendments must be received in writing, so as to allow such comments to be considered by the Commission.	meeting report requesting comments on proposed draft or draft standards or related texts at Steps 5, 8 or Step 5 (accelerated), with the indication of the date by which comments or proposed amendments must be received in writing, so as to allow such comments to be considered by the Commission.	but rather issued as needed after publication of meeting reports.
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines on physical working groups	91	117	The secretariat of the host should, as soon as possible after the end of the session of a working group, send a copy of the final conclusions, in the form of either a discussion paper or a working document, and the list of participants, to the Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat and to the host country secretariat of the committee.	The secretariat of the host should, as soon as possible after the end of the session of a working group, send a copy of the final conclusions, in the form of either a discussion paper or a working document, and the list of participants, to the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Secretariat and to the host country secretariat of the committee.	Change to have consistent manner of referencing the Codex Secretariat
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines on physical working groups	91	118	Conclusions of a working group shall be distributed to all CCPs and Observers by the Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat in time to allow full consideration of the working group's recommendations.	Conclusions of a working group shall be distributed to all CCPs and Observers by the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Secretariat in time to allow full consideration of the working group's recommendations.	Change to have consistent manner of referencing the Codex Secretariat
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines on physical working groups	91	119	The Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat should ensure that these conclusions are included in the distribution of papers for the next session of the Codex committee.	The Joint FAO/WHO Codex Secretariat should ensure that these conclusions are included in the distribution of papers for the next session of the Codex committee	Change to have consistent manner of referencing the Codex Secretariat
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines on electronic working groups	94	142	An update on the progress of its work shall be presented by the host at each session of the Codex committee which has established it, indicating the number of countries having sent contributions by <u>mail</u> . A compilation of these contributions should be made available.	An update on the progress of its work shall be presented by the host at each session of the Codex committee which has established it, indicating the number of countries having sent contributions by email . A compilation of these contributions should be made available.	Use the term email for consistency with other text in the section
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines on electronic working groups	94	146	As soon as possible after the end of the business of an EWG, the secretariat of the host should send a copy of the final conclusions, in the form of either a discussion paper or a working document and of the list of participants to the Joint	As soon as possible after the end of the business of an EWG, the secretariat of the host should send a copy of the final conclusions, in the form of either a discussion paper or a working document and of the list of participants to the Joint FAO/WHO Codex	Change to have consistent manner of referencing the Codex Secretariat

				FAO/WHO Secretariat and to the host country secretariat of the committee.	Secretariat and to the host country secretariat of the committee.	Clarify might also be needed to clarify the role of the Chair of the EWG in sending the final report. Such clarity might also be needed in other paragraphs in this sub section viz a viz responsibilities of committee host vs EWG chair
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines on electronic working groups	94	147	The conclusions of an EWG and the list of participants shall be distributed to CCPs and Observers by the Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat in time to allow full consideration of the EWG's recommendations.	The conclusions of an EWG and the list of participants shall be distributed to CCPs and Observers by the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Secretariat in time to allow full consideration of the EWG's recommendations.	Change to have consistent manner of referencing the Codex Secretariat
Section 3: Guidelines for subsidiary bodies	Guidelines on electronic working groups	94	148	The Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat should ensure that these conclusions are included in the distribution of papers for the next session of the Codex committee, which has established the EWG.	The Joint FAO/WHO Codex Secretariat should ensure that these conclusions are included in the distribution of papers for the next session of the Codex committee, which has established the EWG.	Change to have consistent manner of referencing the Codex Secretariat
Section 7: Relations with other organizations	Annex: Information required of international non-governmental organizations requesting observer status	191	2	Full postal address, telephone, facsimile and email, as well as telex and website addresses as appropriate.	2. Full postal address, telephone, facsimile and email, as well as telex and website addresses as appropriate.	Facsimile and telex are no longer used as means of communication by the Codex Secretary