



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Seventy-seventh Session

WHO Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland, 1 - 5 July 2019

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014–2019: IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat in collaboration with FAO and WHO)

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. CAC36 (2013) adopted the Strategic Plan of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for 2014–2019 (the Strategic Plan)¹. The Executive Committee has the responsibility to annually monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan. This report has been prepared for the fifth and penultimate calendar year of implementation (2018).

1.2. Following a request by CAC39 to regularly review Codex work management practices as part of the monitoring of the Strategic Plan, the third Secretariat-led review was implemented between September 2018 and February 2019 and focused on the critical review function of the Executive Committee (activity 1.1.2). Relevant findings and recommendations from this review are contained in CX/EXEC 19/77/5.

1.3. Follow-up action related to the first regular review (Electronic Working Groups) is reported in this paper (activity 4.1.3), while follow-up to the recommendations of the second regular review (cooperation between CAC and other international standard-setting organizations) is presented in documents CX/EXEC 18/77/6 – 8.

1.4. Details of the implementation status of the Strategic Plan for the calendar year 2018 are presented in Appendix I.

2. SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2014–2019

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

2.1. CAC41 (2018) adopted two new standards and related texts (the standards) as well as 18 changes² to existing standards.

2.2. Collaboration with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the International Plant Production Protocol (IPPC) continued to be close throughout 2018, which is reflected in the mutual attendance of representatives at major events and technical collaboration on Codex Committee work, e.g. electronic certification (IPPC and OIE in CCFICS) or antimicrobial resistance (OIE in TFAMR).

2.3. As regards coordination with other international standard-setting organizations, the Codex Secretariat identified areas for potential improvement, which are addressed in documents CX/EXEC 19/77/6-8.

Goal 2: Ensure the application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards

2.4. FAO continued its commitment to protect funding for scientific advice through ring-fencing allocated budgets for staff and activities. In the case of WHO, no changes occurred in 2018 regarding resource allocation to scientific advice on food safety.

2.5. In order to increase the scientific input from developing countries, FAO/WHO provided support through several activities including training and projects aimed at enhancing laboratory capacity and data surveillance and reporting. Currently no adequate indicator exists to measure the scientific data input from developing countries, but both quantity and quality of data provided by developing countries continue to remain insufficient throughout 2018.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/publications/en/>

² The word “changes” refers to both revisions and amendments made to Codex existing standards and related texts.

2.6. As in previous years, risk management recommendations were communicated through the publication of developed standards or related texts. News articles on the Codex website and Tweets also highlighted specific risk assessment issues related to adopted texts, the latter reaching over five million visualizations in 2018. The Codex Secretariat furthermore developed and disseminated two publications communicating the work of specific committees (CCFO and CCFH) to the general public.³

Goal 3: Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex Members

2.7. In 2018, nine sessions of CAC subsidiary bodies were held. The share of delegations from developing countries at physical Codex Committee meetings (including CAC) increased from 28 percent (in 2017) to 30 percent (in 2018).

2.8. Co-chairing of Electronic Working Groups (EWGs) has shown a clear upward trend since 2014 and increased from 75 percent (in 2017) to 86 percent (in 2018).

2.9. Differently from EWGs, there is no clear annual trend in percentages of co-hosted Committee and Physical Working Group (PWG) sessions. However, co-hosting physical meetings remains common practice.

Goal 4: Implement effective and efficient work management systems and practices

2.10. The technologies introduced between 2014 and 2017 (Online Registration System, EWG discussion forum, automated mailing, Online Commenting System, new Codex website) continued to be used and improved throughout the year, which is demonstrated by an overall increase in user numbers.

2.11. EWGs continue to play an important role in the Codex standard setting process. The Codex Secretariat in consultation with Codex Host Country Secretariats and members of the Executive Committee developed an EWG reporting template to focus reporting on the key issues that will facilitate discussion at Committee level. Furthermore, Codex Contact Points (CCPs) have been trained in the use and monitoring of the EWG online forum as part of six regional workshops held in 2018. Participants shared valuable lessons on barriers to more active participation, which will be further discussed at FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees meeting in 2019.

2.12. Host Country Secretariats gathered at a workshop in February 2018 (Paris, France) to exchange experiences in order to harmonize working procedures and improve collaboration amongst each other and with the Codex Secretariat covering the topics of co-hosting, Codex electronic tools, translations and interpretation services.

2.13. Six out of a total of seven PWGs were held in conjunction with the respective Committee sessions. The one intersessional PWG (established by CCFICS23) included a trial of a webinar to ensure more inclusiveness and was considered successful. CCFICS24 recommended that the future use of webinars or similar technologies could be considered by other Codex subsidiary bodies, on a case by case basis, when establishing PWGs.

2.14. With regards to the timely distribution of working documents, the overall percentage of documents on time decreased in 2018 from 33 to 26 percent.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1. The implementation of the Strategic Plan progressed well in 2018. The performance under most objective outcomes remained the same as in the previous year with some exceptions as follows.

3.2. The status improved with regards to:

- Participation of developing countries at physical Codex meetings (2.3.3);
- Co-hosting of EWGs and PWGs (3.1.2);
- Financial contributions to the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) (3.1.3);
- Uptake of ICT systems introduced by the Codex Secretariat to enhance communication and facilitate participation (4.1.8).

3.3. With regards to the submission of scientific data from developing countries (activity 2.3.1), the drafting team of the new Strategic Plan 2020-2025 has been informed that if maintained, a more adequate progress indicator will have to be developed so that information about the capacity of developing countries to participate in scientific advice activities can be provided. Also the extent to which developing country members show sustainable institutional arrangements (activity 3.1.1) requires development of more adequate progress indicators.

³ [Food Hygiene at 50](#) – A Codex Alimentarius journey from small beginnings to stories of success (2018); [A drop of oil, a tonne of value](#) – Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (2018).

3.4. The timely distribution of working documents (4.1.4) continues to be an issue that negatively impacts on work management efficiency.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. CCEXEC77 is recommended to:

- (1) Consider whether the results of the activities are evolving in the right direction and for activities not implemented satisfactorily, consider suggesting measures for how these can be improved during implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025;
- (2) Take note of the continuing difficulties concerning the monitoring of activities that include unclear or unmeasurable indicators and carefully consider the measurability of indicators when finalizing the Strategic Plan 2020–2025;
- (3) Request the Codex Secretariat, in collaboration with FAO and WHO, to present at CCEXEC79 the final implementation report for the full duration of the Strategic Plan 2014-2019.

Appendix I

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: ESTABLISH INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS THAT ADDRESS CURRENT AND EMERGING FOOD ISSUES

Objective 1.1: Establish new and review existing Codex standards, based on priorities of the CAC.

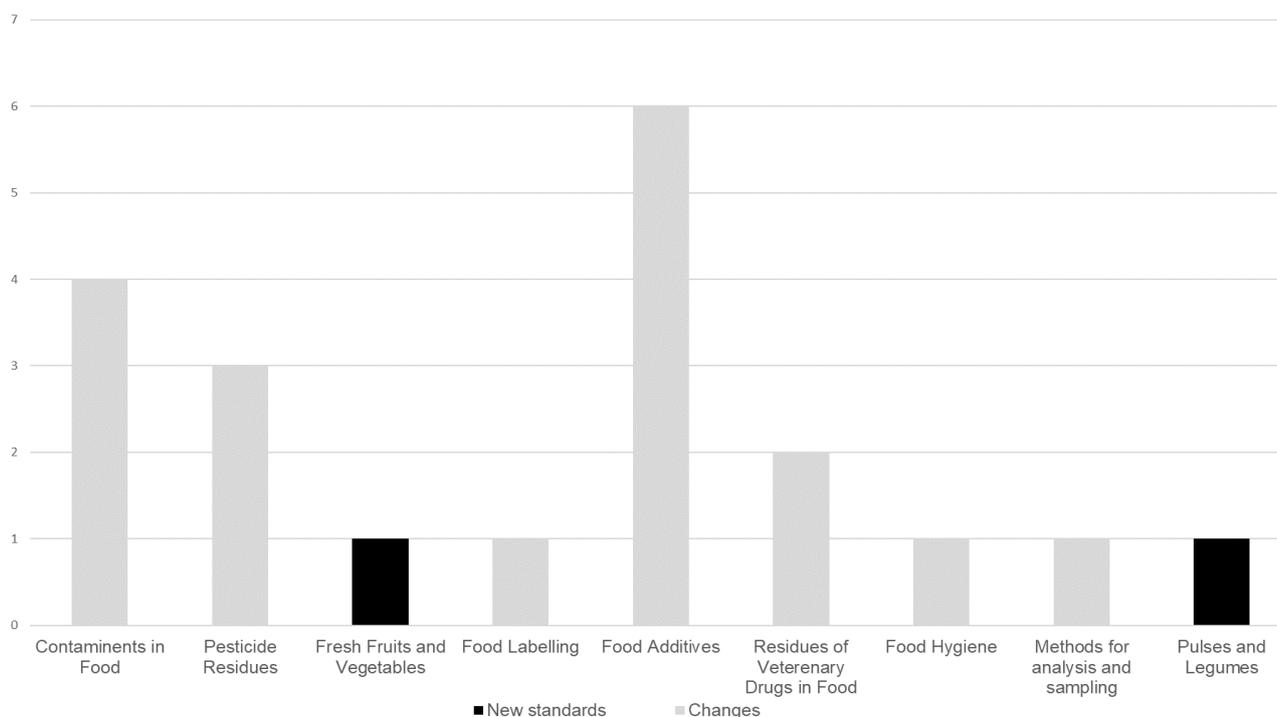
CAC41 adopted 2 new standards and 18 changes to existing standards. The two new standards adopted were in the area of fresh fruits and vegetables (aubergines) and pulses and legumes (quinoa).

No new information regarding committees using own systems for the prioritization of their work is available.

The critical review function of the Executive Committee is under review in line with activity 1.1.2 and results to date are presented in CX/EXEC 19/77/5.

Activity 1.1.1

Figure 1. New standards and changes to existing standards adopted in 2018 shown by committee



Objective 1.2: Proactively identify emerging issues⁴ and Member needs and, where appropriate, develop relevant food standards.

Based on the experience of the 2016/17 survey on emerging food safety and quality issues, a simplified version of the survey was developed in 2018 by the FAO Food Safety and Quality Unit. The content as well as the process for dissemination in 2019 was discussed in a meeting with all regional coordinators at FAO Headquarters (December 2018). The results of the survey will serve as a basis for discussions in the 6 FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees convening in 2019 on how Codex can proactively identify and address emerging issues

Objective 1.3: Strengthen coordination and cooperation with other international standards-setting organizations seeking to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize opportunities

There continues to be close collaboration between Codex and its sister organizations OIE and IPPC. OIE and IPPC speak at side events to Codex meetings, attend CAC sessions and are involved in the technical work of relevant subsidiary bodies. As regards, coordination with other international standard-setting organizations, the Codex Secretariat identified areas for potential improvement in its regular review of Codex work management 2017/18, which are addressed in documents CX/EXEC 77/6-8.

⁴ Emerging food safety and nutrition issues are interpreted to include scientific and technological innovations and emerging hazards, related to ongoing investigations or extra-ordinary events (e.g., natural disasters, external threats).

Activity 1.3.1

Technical cooperation between Codex Committees and OIE in 2018 is described in more detail in documents: CX/FICS 18/24/3 Add.2, CX/FH 18/50/4, CX/RVDF 18/24/4 and TFAMR6 CRD04.

In May 2017, the Codex Secretariat attended the 86th OIE General Assembly (World Assembly) and also participated in an OIE-led panel discussion on the topic of "*Establishing trust in the multilateral trade system through transparency and Standard's implementation monitoring*".

Technical cooperation between Codex Committees and IPPC in 2018 is described in more detail in CX/FICS 18/24/3 Add.1.

Codex has continued to liaise with the IPPC Secretariat on the implementation of the Online Commenting System (OCS). In 2018, both Codex and IPPC have expanded the use of the system to documents other than standards (e.g. commenting on the new Codex Strategic Plan).

The Codex Secretariat attended together with representatives of IPPC and OIE the Border Agency Cooperation Workshop for SADC countries in November 2018.

Activity 1.3.2

Following the review of cooperation with other international standard-setting organizations in 2017/18 the Codex Secretariat identified areas for potential improvement in work planning and management based on feedback from the reviewed organizations and a reflection on its own work management practices. The Commission tasked the Secretariat to provide further details on the review recommendations⁵ which are contained in documents CX/EXEC 77/6-8.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: ENSURE THE APPLICATION OF RISK ANALYSIS PRINCIPLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CODEX STANDARDS**Objective 2.1: Ensure consistent use of risk analysis principles and scientific advice.**

As mentioned in previous reports, CCCF, CCFA, CCFH, CCPR and CCRVDF regularly requested and used the scientific advice of the joint FAO/WHO expert bodies. These committees follow the Working Principles for Risk Analysis in the Procedural Manual, which guide them to ensure that all the relevant factors in exploring risk management options are considered. Other Committees, such as CCNFSDU, CCFFP, CCFO and CCNASWP have sought scientific advice from FAO/WHO as needed.

In addition to FAO/WHO expert body advice, members typically seek and engage national scientific and technical expertise from within their government and from those outside the government prior to developing and advancing a country's position.

Risk management recommendations are communicated through the publication of standards or related texts. In addition, news articles on the Codex website and Tweets highlighted specific risk assessment issues related to the adopted texts. In 2018, the Codex Secretariat furthermore developed and disseminated two publications communicating the work of two specific committees (CCFO and CCFH) to the general public.

Activity 2.1.4

In 2018, the Commission adopted 2 new standards and 18 changes to existing standards. Information on the adopted texts was published on the Codex Website as well as the FAO and WHO website news sections. In addition, news articles on the Codex website regularly highlight the content of specific standards and risk management information.

The Codex Secretariat used its Twitter account to link latest news on food trade and food safety with Codex standards. Around 5 300 tweets were published and the number of followers continued to increase (by 2 100) throughout 2018. While overall less tweets were published in this calendar year, the number of visualizations significantly augmented (5 million visualizations reached i.e. ca. 15% percent more than in 2017) due to more focussed messaging and more linkage to high profile accounts.

Objective 2.2: Achieve sustainable access to scientific advice.

FAO continued its commitment to protect funding for scientific advice through ring-fencing allocated budgets for staff and activities. In the case of WHO, resource allocation to scientific advice on food safety remained inadequate as resources continued to derive solely from extra-budgetary funding.

Activity 2.2.1

As reported previously, the FAO Council (158th session in December 2017) endorsed and approved that, with agreement from resource partners, a proportion of certain unspent FAO funds be allocated to the Blind Trust

⁵ See REP18/CAC paras. 107-121.

Fund. However, at the end of 2018 no unspent funds in excess of the triggering threshold were available, and therefore, no additional funds were made available to the scientific advice programme.

In the case of WHO, resource allocation to scientific advice on food safety remained inadequate as it is derived solely from extra-budgetary funding. In addition, food safety has not been on the agenda of WHO governing body meetings for a long time.

Activity 2.2.2

Since CAC41, FAO received extra-budgetary contributions of approximately USD 220 000 from one donor (Canada). These additional funds are to be used for selected projects in FAO's work on scientific advice.

Objective 2.3: Increase scientific input from developing countries.

Among the 188 Codex member countries 78 (i.e. 41%) were developing countries in 2018.⁶

In 2018, CAC41 and the sessions of 9 subsidiary bodies⁷ were held and attended by a total of 442 delegations and 1 457 delegates, including national technical and scientific experts. Out of the 442 delegations 189 (i.e. 43%) were from developing countries⁸. Out of the 1 457 delegates 618 (i.e. 42%) were from developing countries. This constitutes an overall increase compared to 2017.

In order to increase the scientific input from developing countries, FAO/WHO have provided support through several activities including training and projects aimed at enhancing laboratory capacity and data surveillance and reporting. Currently no adequate indicator exists to measure the scientific data input from developing countries, but both quantity and quality of data provided by developing countries continues to remain insufficient throughout 2018.

Activity 2.3.1

Publicly available data remain insufficient to complete safety assessments or recommend MRLs. CCRVDF24 will discuss this matter among others.

In order to address the issue regarding a paucity of data for the evaluation of residues of veterinary drugs that are critical to some areas, and yet lack the support of a sponsoring manufacturer, JECFA has piloted a novel process for the evaluation of certain veterinary drugs in response to the request of multiple Codex members. Through comprehensive and critical literature searches, JECFA attempted to use this process to complement data submissions and gather enough data to support the development of recommended MRLs in food. The first pilot in 2017 was successful with two, albeit closely related substances (one of which had been already evaluated previously by JECFA), but this process proved to be insufficient to gather enough data for a third compound. Hence, while, this approach may be a useful in specific cases, it is likely that it will not provide the desired solution in all cases. It is worth noting, that this approach causes considerable additional workload for the experts and the secretariat. In preparation for CCRVDF, JECFA88 is scheduled for the third quarter of 2019. While it is still early in the process, it appears that for the evaluation of certain compounds, there may be a repeat of the 2017 experience and limited sponsor's data cannot be easily and readily compensated through literature reviews.

Activity 2.3.2

Support was provided through a range of capacity development modalities:

- An STDF funded project co-managed by FAO/WHO has implemented a regional Total Diet Study (TDS) in Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon and Benin.
- Continued funding by the Fleming Fund of the United Kingdom Department of Health is supporting a joint FAO/OIE/WHO project to engage the food and agriculture sectors in sub-Saharan Africa and South and South-east Asia to combat antimicrobial resistance using a One Health approach, including integrated surveillance and reporting of data on antimicrobial resistance.
- FAO has implemented sub-regional or national training workshops on laboratory development (including infrastructure): a total of 30 laboratory development trainings activities included over 1 000 participants from 120 countries (of with 25 are Least Developed Countries).

Overall, there is a slight increase in countries that provide data in response to calls for data. Summary statistics are available through the GEMS/Food database. Technical support through WHO to ASEAN countries on food consumption data is on-going. In addition, data are increasingly provided through the FAO/WHO Global

⁶ Compared to 2017, 3 countries left the group of developing countries (i.e. WB classified Low and Lower Middle Income Countries), namely Armenia, Guatemala and Jordan, decreasing the group to a total of 81 countries.

⁷ The sessions of CCEXEC are excluded as they have restricted participation.

⁸ "Developing countries" are defined as Low Income Countries and Lower Middle Income Countries as classified annually by the World Bank (2018).

Individual Food consumption data Tool (FAO/WHO GIFT), an open-access online platform, hosted by FAO and supported by WHO, providing access to harmonised individual quantitative food consumption data, especially in low- and middle-income countries. The platform is a growing data repository; in 2018, FAO/WHO GIFT received a four-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to transform the platform into a robust global tool that will contain at least 50 datasets by 2022. FAO/WHO GIFT provides sex and age-disaggregated microdata, which are needed in the field of nutrition and dietary exposure. These data are being made available either as micro-data or as summary statistics to the work of the Codex Committees.

Activity 2.3.3

In 2018, 1 regular session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and 9 subsidiary body sessions were held. Compared to the previous year, the share of developing country member delegations increased by 2%. The subsidiary body sessions with the highest share of developing country delegations and delegates in 2018 were CCFA50 and CCCF12.

Figure 2. Total number of delegations and number of developing country delegations, 2014–18

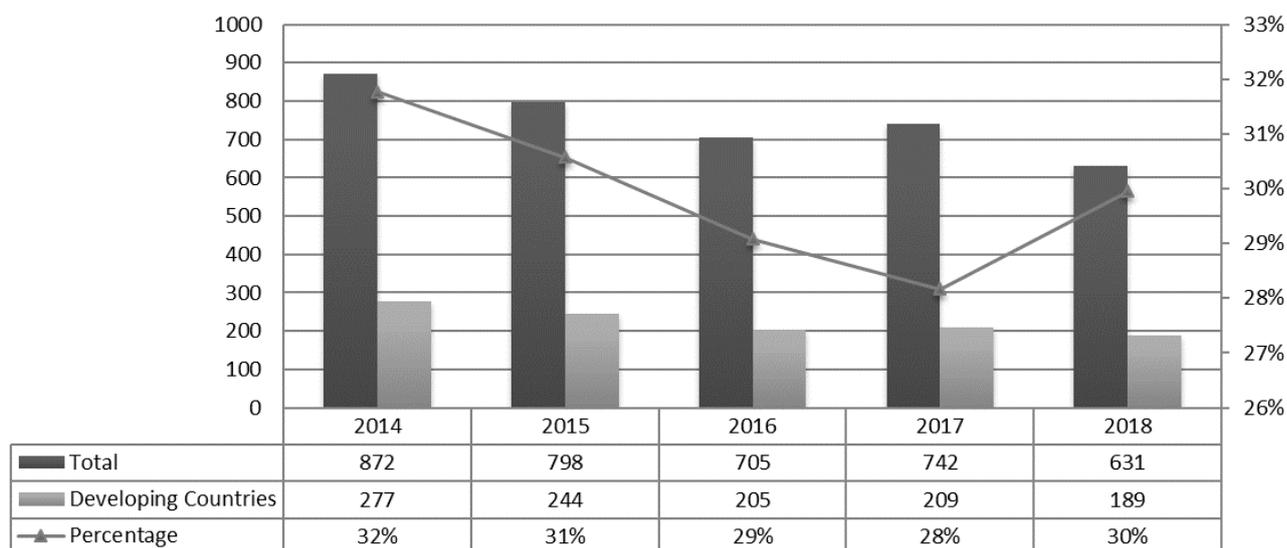


Figure 3. Total number of delegates and number of delegates from developing countries, 2014–18

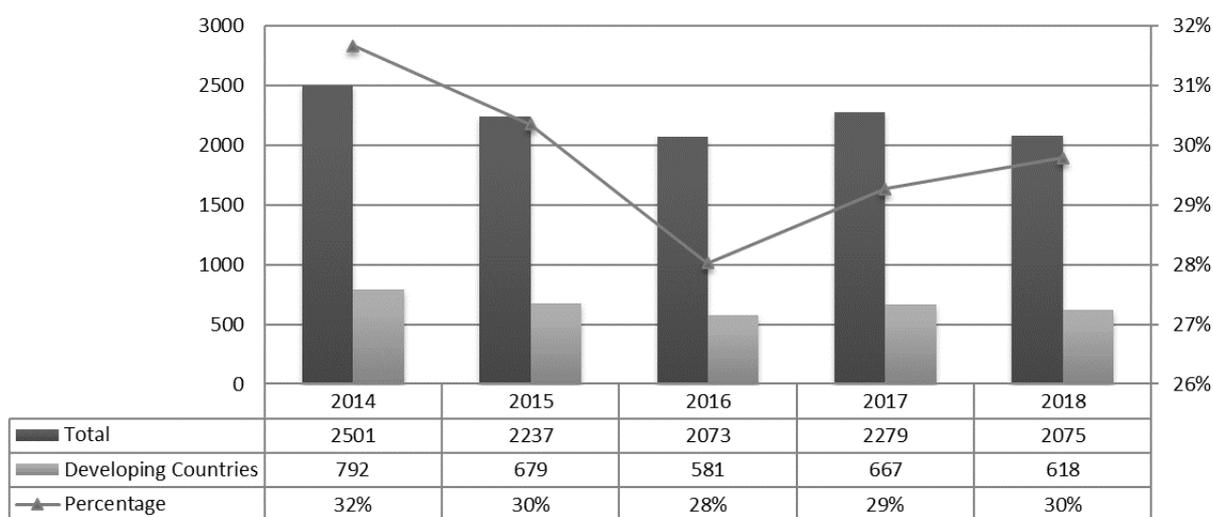


Figure 4. Total number of delegations and number of delegations from developing countries by session, 2018

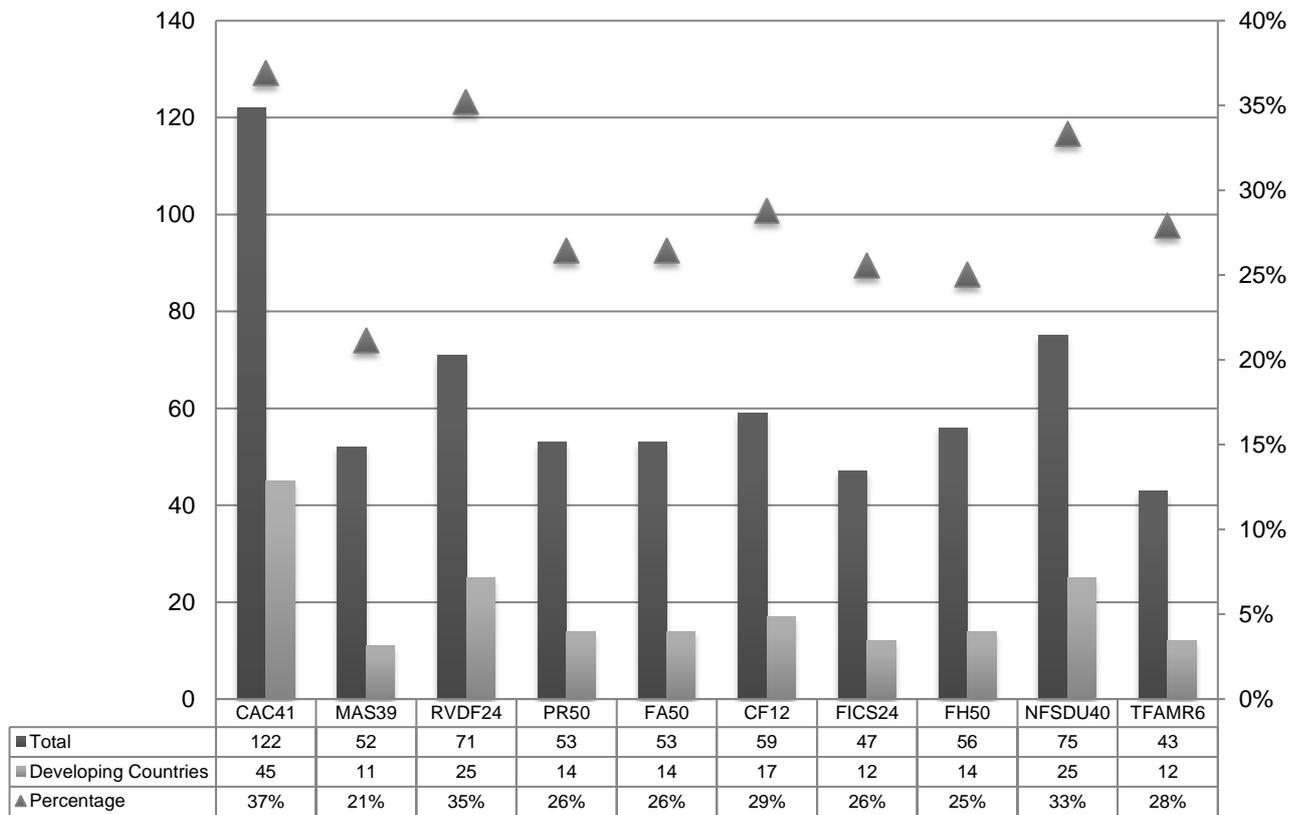
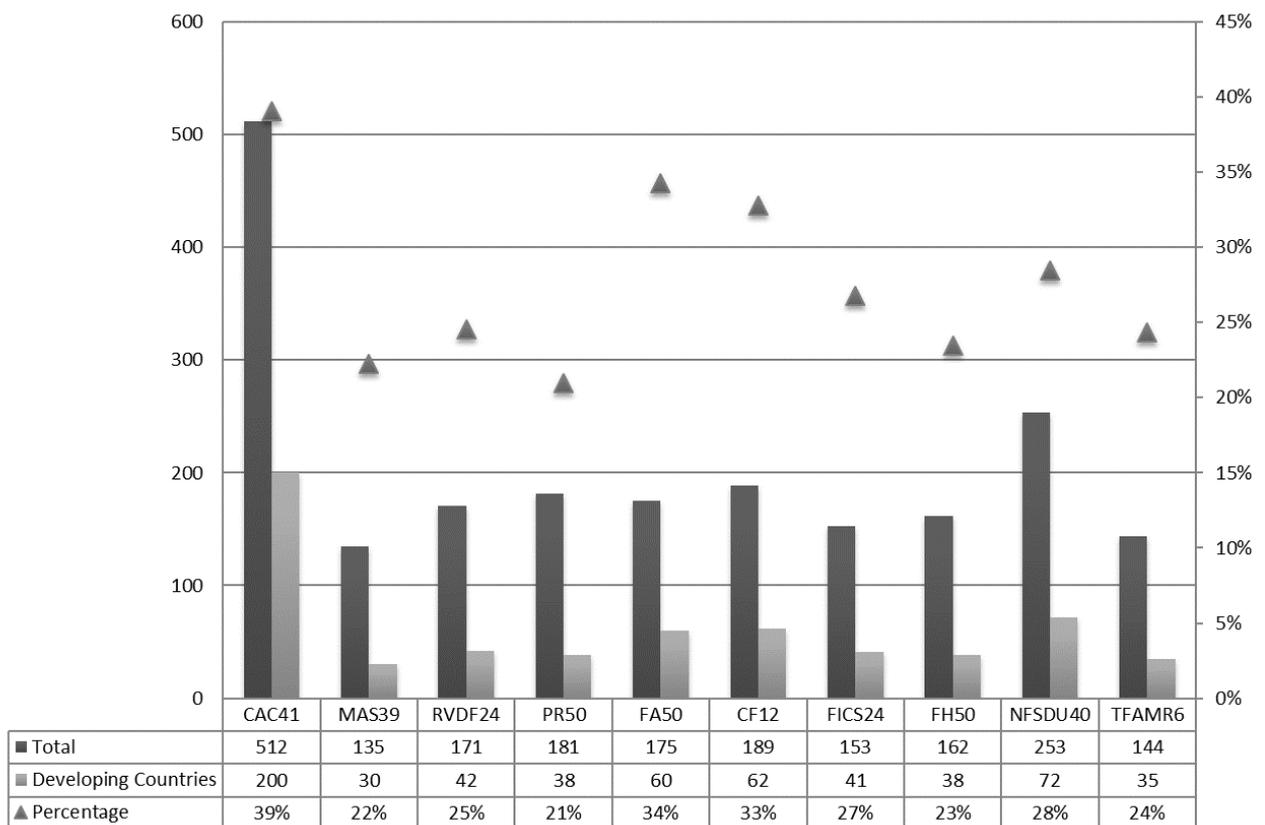


Figure 5. Total number of delegates and number of delegations from developing countries by session, 2018



STRATEGIC GOAL 3: FACILITATE THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF ALL CODEX MEMBERS.

Objective 3.1: Increase the effective participation of developing countries in Codex.

Support from the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) is being provided to 11 individual countries and one group project to build strong, solid and sustainable national capacity to engage in Codex (state: May 2019). The first four countries to be supported (Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar and Senegal) will finish their country projects by the end of 2019 or in the first quarter of 2020. All countries which apply to the CTF have carried out an assessment of Codex capacity using the FAO/WHO Diagnostic Tool for Assessing Status of National Codex Programmes (Codex Diagnostic Tool). Countries/groups of countries are supported for a maximum three-year period after which time the Codex Diagnostic Tool can be re-administered to assess progress made in strengthening national Codex structures. Total funding to the new Codex Trust Fund which was launched in 2016 is beginning to pick up. Contributions to the Codex Trust Fund in 2018 were USD 2 050 848 from 10 donors.

In 2018, 9 sessions of subsidiary bodies were held and one of them was co-hosted. As regards EWGs established in 2018, 37 out of a total of 43 EWGs were co-chaired, which corresponds to 86 percent.

Concerning Physical Working Groups (PWGs) held in 2018, four out of a total of seven were co-hosted, which corresponds to 57 percent. The percentages of co-hosted Committee and PWG sessions do not show a clear annual trend. However, in the case of EWGs the percentage has continued to increase.

With regards to both working documents and interpretation, all six official languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian) were used for CAC41 and all official languages except Chinese were used for CCEXEC75 and for CCEXEC76. All General Subject Committees and Commodity Committees used English, French and Spanish as their working languages. English was used in all EWGs established in 2018 while Spanish was used in 5 percent and French in 23 percent.

Activity 3.1.2

Figure 6. Co-hosted sessions of subsidiary bodies, 2014-18

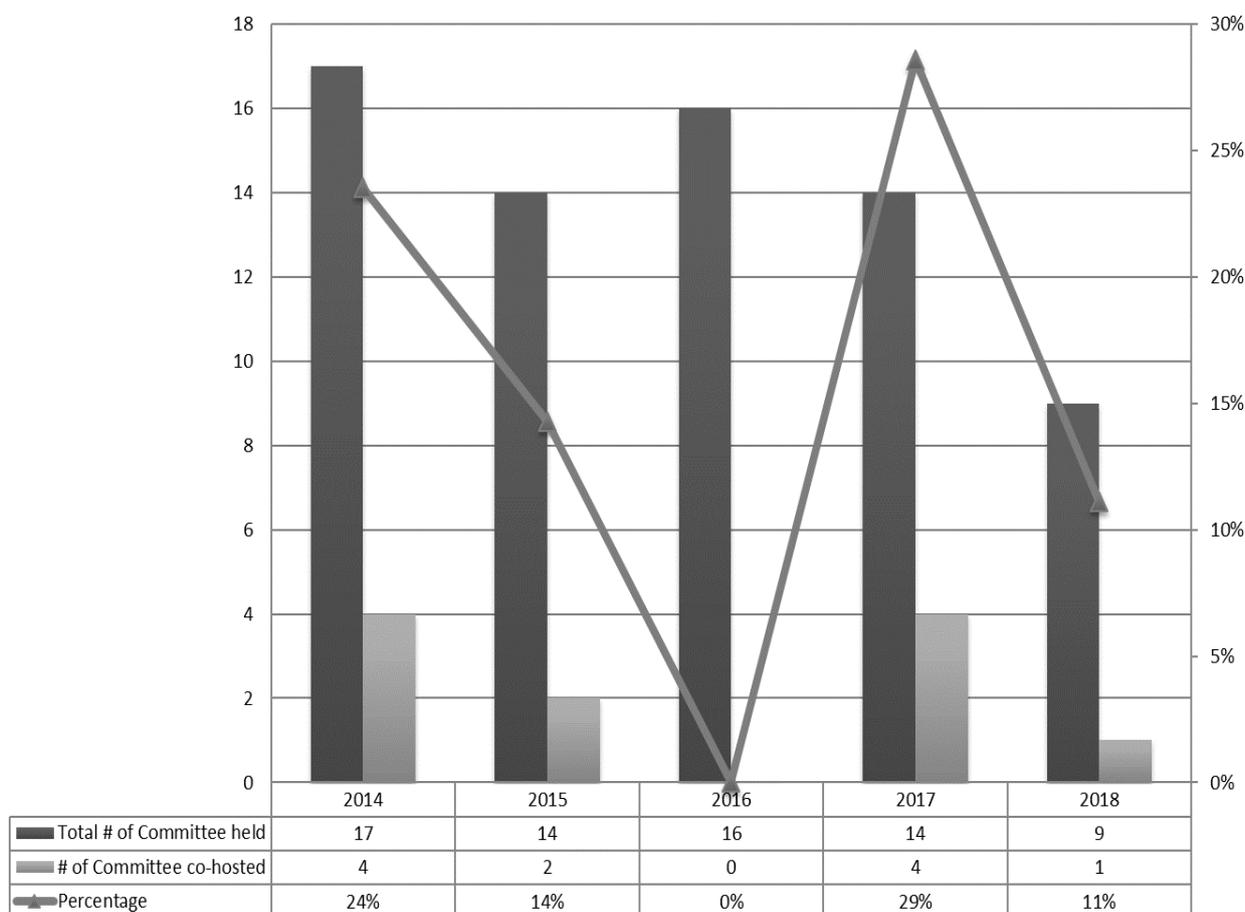


Figure 7. Co-chaired Electronic Working Groups, 2014-18

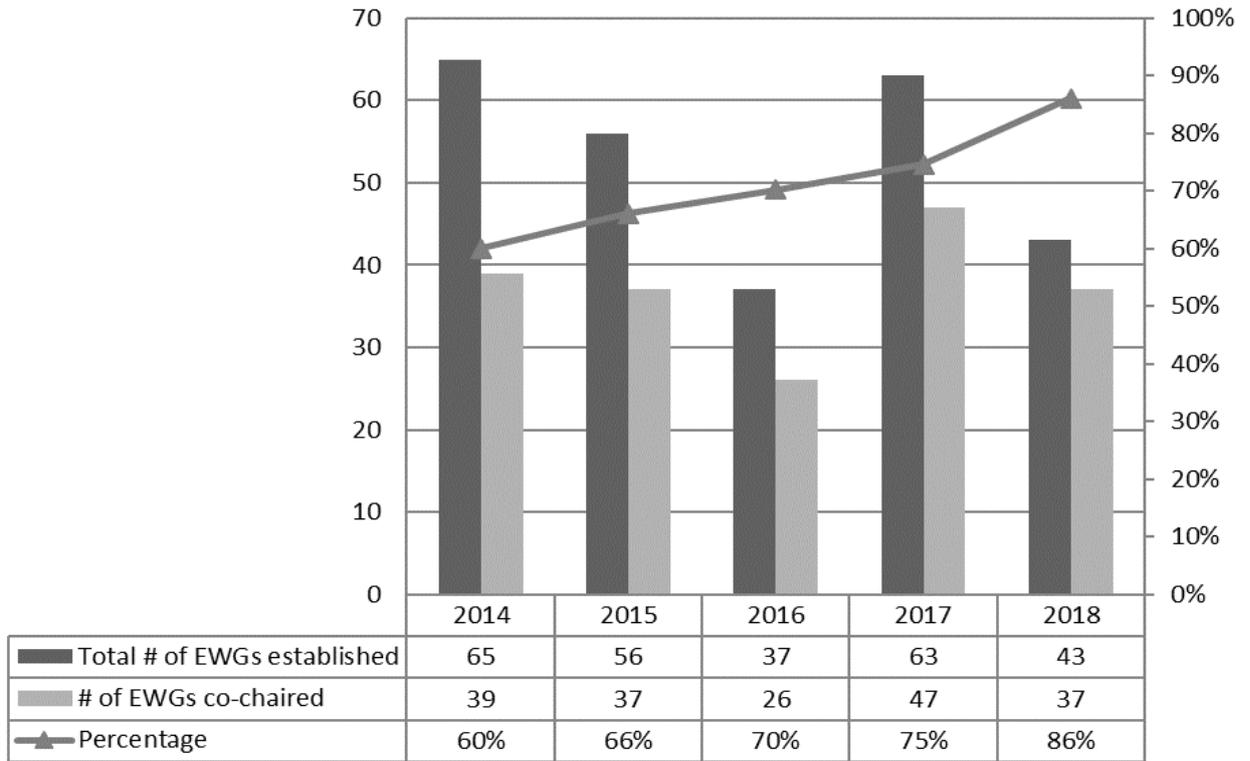
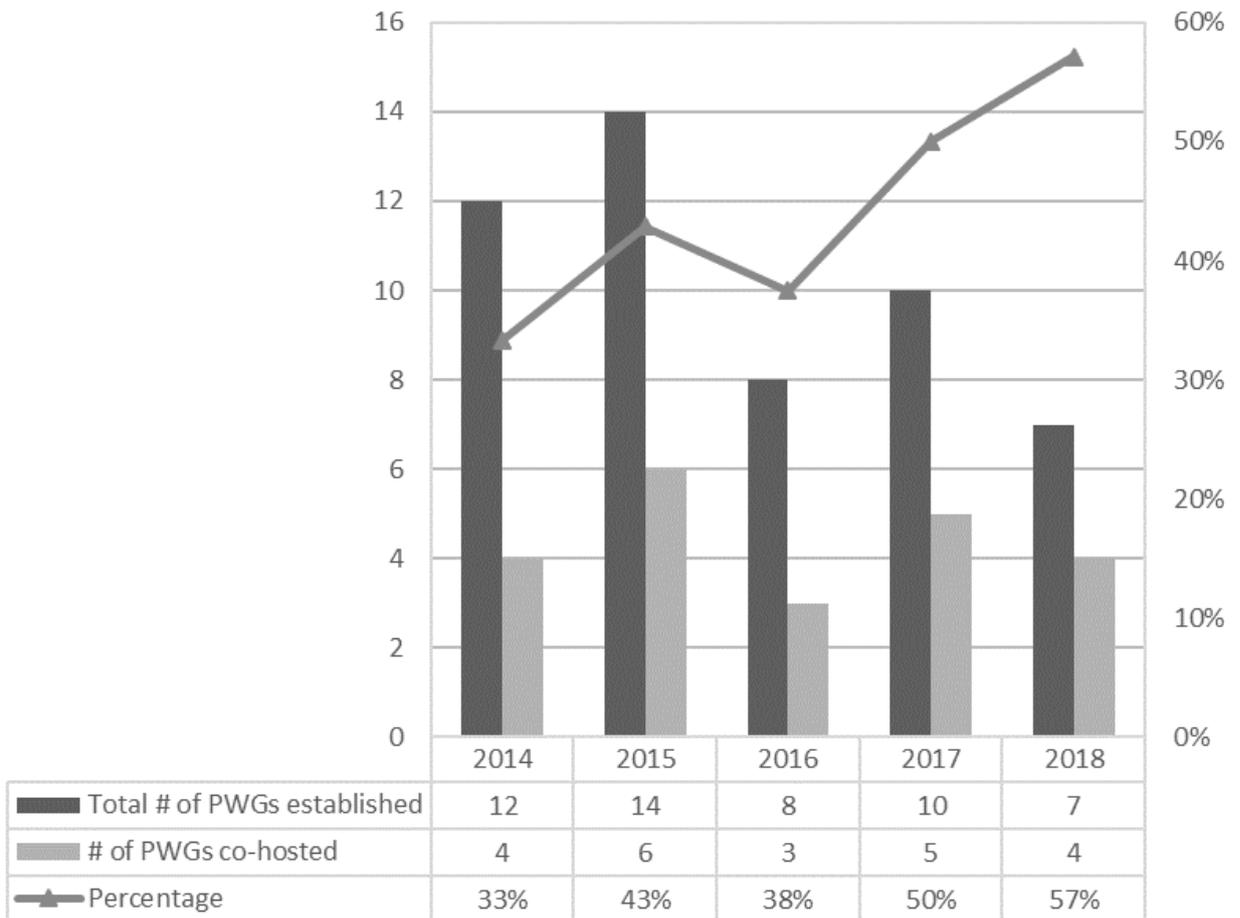
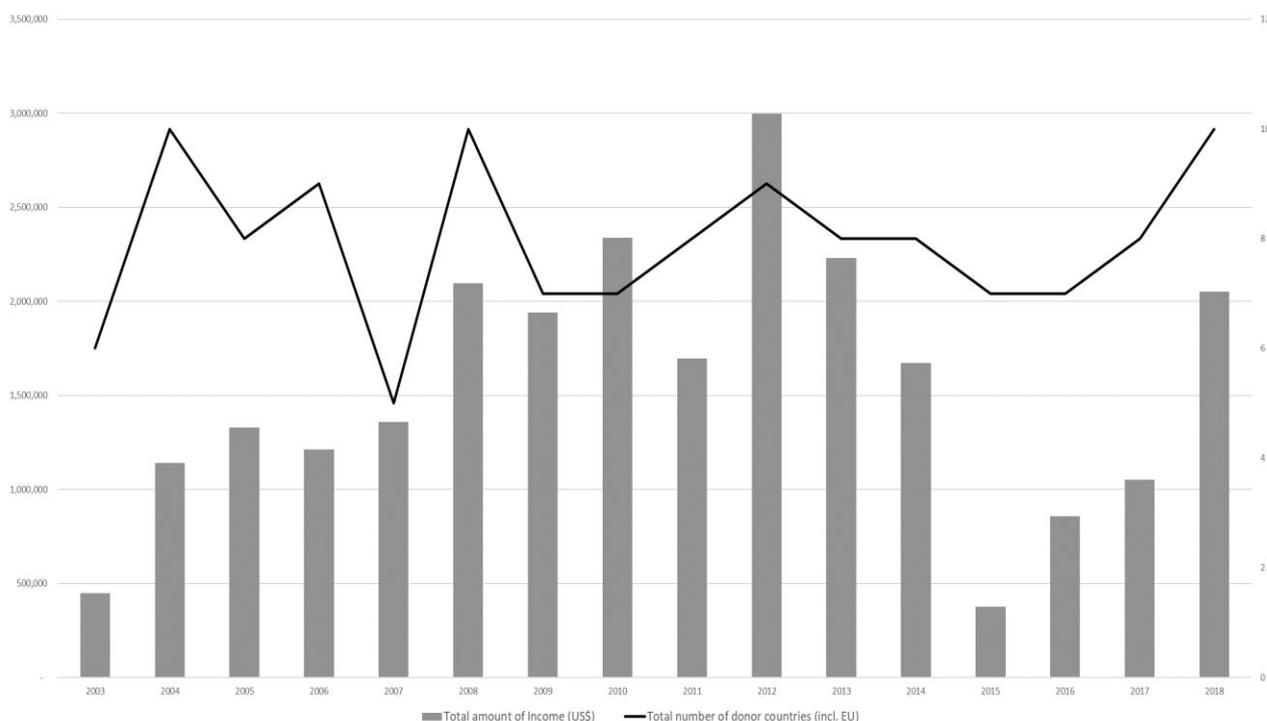


Figure 8. Co-hosted Physical Working Groups, 2014-18



Activity 3.1.3

Figure 9. Financial contributions to CTF, 2003–18



* 2004 – 2015: CTF1; 2016 – 2018: CTF2

Activity 3.1.5

Table 1. Languages used in Electronic Working Groups established 2014–18

	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
EWGs established	64		56		37		63		43	
EWGs used English	64	100	56	100	37	100	61	97	43	100
EWGs used French	1	2	5	9	2	5	6	9	10	23
EWGs used Spanish	8	13	8	14	6	16	13	21	2	5
EWGs used Russian	1	2	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
EWGs used Arabic	/	/	2	4	/	/	/	/	/	/

Objective 3.2: Promote capacity development programmes that assist countries in creating sustainable national Codex structures.

A range of Codex capacity development activities are being carried out as part of CTF support to 11 individual countries and one group project (see CX/CAC 19/42/17 and associated documents for details).

The number of side events held at the margins of CAC and subsidiary body sessions slightly decreased in 2018 (18 events at 8 meetings). The events held often served as forums to conduct educational or capacity building activities on topics related to the agenda of the respective meeting.

Activity 3.2.1

The Codex Trust Fund ran a highly interactive side event at CAC41 on “*Enhancing Engagement in Codex – Examples from Codex Trust Fund supported countries.*” Countries being supported from the first round of applications, countries partnering with project countries and Codex Members shared experiences of what can be done to enhance engagement in Codex.

FAO is implementing a large number of food safety capacity development programmes. Below are some selected global or regional projects that focused on strengthening national Codex structures or capacities:

- In the framework of the SAFE project (Arab Food Safety Initiative for Trade Facilitation) funded by the Government of Sweden and implemented by UNIDO in the member countries of the League of Arab States, FAO provided the technical expertise to implement the work programme of two key outcomes: (i) assessments of national food control systems and (ii) strengthening of regional and national Codex capacities. The new FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment tool was used to pilot an assessment in two countries in the region (Tunisia and Sudan) and validate an approach that is adapted to the region, as well as develop a common terminology regarding food safety, supporting better dialogue and mutual understanding. The development of regional guidance for improved participation in Codex (e.g. working procedures for national codex contact points and for national Codex committees; procedures to handle Codex documents; National Policy in Codex; Criteria and procedures for the selection of national delegation to Codex meetings; National position development to participate in Codex meetings- roles and responsibilities) was elaborated in a participatory manner and countries benefitted from a number of regional and sub-regional workshop to strengthen their capacities and stimulate regional dialogue.
- With the funding of the USA, authoritative and practical guidance materials has been developed to support strengthening of national and regional food safety programmes and directly support the progressive strengthening of food control systems in selected focus countries in Africa and Asia through the implementation of capacity development programmes and the monitoring of their impact. The activities aimed at (i) measurable improvements in selected national systems of food control, through the use of the new FAO/WHO food control assessment tool; (ii) guidance to support selected regions/countries in identifying and addressing emerging food safety risks; (iii) improved food safety management in priority food supply chains using Codex standards and codes of practice as appropriate; and (iv) increased up-take of risk analysis framework for evidence-informed food safety decision making.
- The project supporting the development and use of international food safety standards development in ASEAN countries, funded by Japan is ongoing and contributes to strengthening national Codex capacities.
- A regional project has just been approved with COMESA to, among other objectives, strengthen the regional and national (through pilot countries) capacities for risk analysis, in order to elaborate policies and agree on risk-based standards targeting key food safety risks, as well as developing risk-based import control procedures based on Codex Alimentarius guidance.

Activity 3.2.3

Table 2. Side events to Codex meetings held in 2017

Codex Session	Side event topic
CAC40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing Engagement in Codex – Examples from Codex Trust Fund (CTF2) supported countries • IGO Panel Discussion Food Integrity and Food Authenticity: a way forward • NGO Panel Discussion Food Integrity and Food Authenticity: a way forward • The burden of foodborne diseases: a need for national studies • Facilitating safe trade: Experiences and lessons from the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) work • ePing, the new SPS&TBT notification alert system • The International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) • The Scientific basis of Codex – linkage between the FAO/WHO Scientific Advice Programme and the development of Codex Standards
MAS39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling tool App
RVDF24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic Veterinary Drugs • Submitting Data to JECFA • Exposure assessment of compounds used as both veterinary drugs and pesticides
CCPR50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes from the Third Global Minor Use Summit, and considerations for JMPR
CCFICS24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic Certification • Third Party Assurance • Food Integrity and Food Authenticity
CCFH50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evolution from hazard-based to risk-based and beyond
TFAMR6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Nutrition and Feed Strategies and Options to Decrease Antimicrobials Use in Animal Production

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WORK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES.

Objective 4.1: Strive for an effective, efficient, transparent, and consensus-based standard setting process.

The technologies introduced in 2014 (Online Registration System, EWG discussion forum, automated mailing) and 2016 (OCS) continued to be used and improved throughout the year which is demonstrated by an overall increase in user numbers.

EWGs continue to play an important role the Codex standard setting process. The Codex Secretariat in consultation with Codex Host Country Secretariats and members of the Executive Committee has developed an EWG reporting template to serve as a guide in the preparation of an EWG report. This template is expected to guide reporting to focus on the key issues that will facilitate discussion at Committee level. Furthermore, CCPs have been trained in the use and monitoring of the EWG online forum as part of six regional workshops in 2018. Participants shared valuable lessons on barriers to more active participation.

In July 2018, an additional session of the Executive Committee (CCEXEC76) was held as follow-up to CAC41 enabling CCEXEC to fully exercise its strategic and advisory role and discuss matters deferred with the ultimate objective of striving to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CAC.

All other subsidiary bodies of the Commission continued to identify and address potential impediments to standard-setting work by making best use of Working Groups (i.e. EWG, PWG, in-session WG) and workshops. The Committees also made various effort to reach consensus, e.g. providing information well in advance of meetings, using a mentoring approach, training first-time delegates, holding discussion to establish clear direction and support prior to submitting proposals in the step process and scoping work towards areas where consensus exists.

Furthermore, the Codex Secretariat organized a workshop for Host Country Secretariats, which took place in February 2018 (Paris, France) to exchange experiences among the secretariats. The objective of this workshop was to harmonize working procedures and improve collaboration with the Codex Secretariat covering the topics of (i) co-hosting; (ii) Codex electronic tools and (iii) translation and interpretation services.

All Codex Committees strive to hold PWGs in conjunction with Committee meetings, unless doing otherwise is justifiable by specific needs. In 2018, all PWGs (7 in total) except one were held in conjunction with the respective Committee sessions. The one intersessional PWG (established by CCFICS23) included a trial of a webinar to ensure more inclusiveness and was considered successful. CCFICS24 recommended that the future use of webinar or similar technologies could be considered by other Codex subsidiary bodies, on a case by case basis, when establishing PWGs.

With regards to the timely distribution of working documents, the overall percentage of documents on time decreased in 2018. Out of a total of 460 working documents in three languages (E/F/S) issued in 2018, 136 working documents were distributed at least two months prior to the respective Committee session, which corresponds to only 30% (3 % less than in 2017).

As regards the timely elaboration and revision of standards, 84 percent of standards adopted between 2009 and 2018 were developed within a period of 5 years.

Activities 4.1.1

Timely Elaboration and Revision of the Codex Standards

The Secretariat annually monitors the time needed for the elaboration or revision of Codex standards to complement the monitoring of activity 4.1.1. This section presents the analysis of the time between the approval of a standard as new work and its final adoption. Given that Codex started using job numbers from 2004 (CAC27), the analysis is limited to the time between 2004 and 2018. Standards without a job number such as ongoing work⁹ and amendments were excluded from the scope of this study. Additional limitations to the analysis were outlined in CX/EXEC 16/71/5.

2018

At CAC41, nine items with a job number were adopted as final texts. Eight were adopted within a period of five years, which corresponds to 87 percent. The one document that took more than five years to finalize (i.e. 15 years) was the Revision of the Classification of Food and Feed CXM 4-1989 (Type 04: Nuts, seeds and saps, Type 05: Herbs and spices).

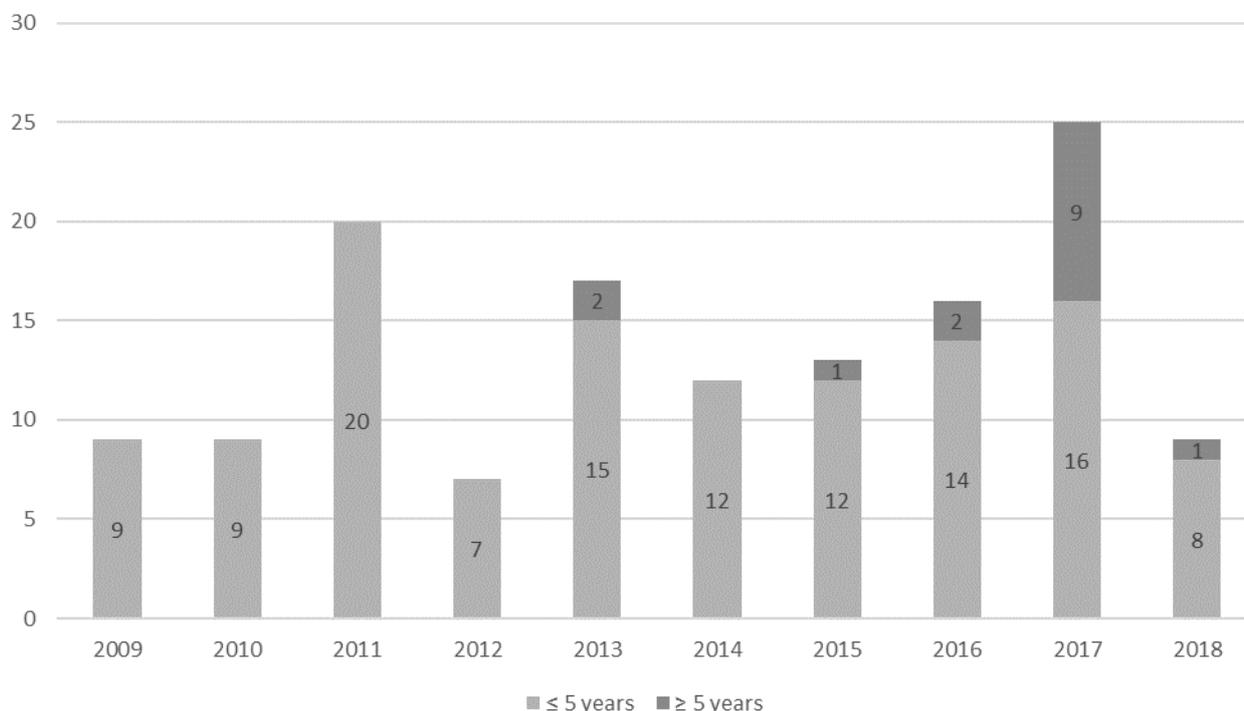
⁹ Ongoing work (including those transferred to ongoing work) was excluded from the study regardless of the job number given.

2004-2018

During the period 2004 to 2018 a total of 187 new work items with job numbers were approved. 159 out of 187 were adopted as final texts by 2018. The great majority of final texts (i.e.84%) was adopted within 5 years.

The figure below shows the number of standards and revisions adopted between 2009 and 2018 (Codex started giving job numbers in 2004; in this regard, those adopted before 2009 were all by definition concluded within 5 years) indicating the number of elaborations and revisions that took more than 5 years for adoption and those that were completed within 5 years or less time.

Figure 10: Duration of Codex standard elaboration/revision, 2009–18



Activities 4.1.3

At the beginning of 2019, the discussion forum for EWGs had about 3,400 registered users which constitutes an increase of over 1 400 users compared to 2017.

This increase partially derives from six workshops on Codex web tools held in 2018 (Kenya, Senegal, Paraguay, India, Vanuatu and Kazakhstan) as part of which Codex Contact Points (CCPs) were trained in the use and monitoring of the EWG online forum. Some workshop attendants never used the EWG forum before and signed up during the workshops. The below box highlights the key lessons learnt in relation to EWGs by participants of the workshops.

Box 1: EWG related lessons learnt by participants of the web tool workshops held in 2018

- ❖ There is a need for more awareness of the fact that participation in Codex work goes beyond preparation of and participation in physical meetings.
- ❖ After prioritization of national food safety and quality issues an inclusive discussion needs to take place to decide on whether or not to participate in an EWG as participation in all EWGs is unrealistic. This discussion needs to be informed by the respective national CCP and take into account the capacity at CCP level.
- ❖ The CCP is the single user in a member country that can authorize participation of any other national individual (i.e. expert, organizational representative) in the EWG discussion forum.
- ❖ Any user needs to dedicate a sufficient amount of time to be confident and competent to navigate the EWG discussion forum and provide contributions.
- ❖ Whenever there is a personnel change at CCP level, this needs to be communicated to the Codex Secretariat and an introduction to the EWG discussion forum needs to take place as part of the training of a new staff member.
- ❖ Internet connection remains a challenge, in particular in some areas of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The new online commenting system (OCS) was launched at CAC39 (2016). At the beginning of 2019, the system had 438 registered users, including all Codex Contact Points. 57 Circular Letters ran through the system in 2018. On average 33 percent of members that replied to requests for comments were from developing countries.

Activities 4.1.4

Timely Distribution of Working Documents

This section presents an analysis of the distribution of working documents (WDs) in English, French and Spanish¹⁰ prepared for the Commission and Committees held in 2014–18. The analysis does not consider invitation letters, provisional agendas, circular letters, addendum papers, other comments papers including the replies to circular letters, and information documents¹¹. In addition, WDs not issued were also excluded from the analysis.

Table 3 shows the number of WDs that were circulated at least two months prior to the respective committee session and the corresponding percentage of total WDs analysed.

Table 3: Working Documents distributed on time by language, 2014–18

Year	Total # of WDs on time (percentage of the total WDs)	English	French	Spanish
2014	101 (22%)	53 (32%)	22 (16%)	26 (17%)
2015	129 (30%)	59 (40%)	39 (26%)	31 (23%)
2016	119 (28%)	63 (39%)	27 (21%)	29 (21%)
2017	140 (33%)	63 (41%)	39 (28%)	38 (32%)
2018	88 (26%)	37 (33%)	25 (22%)	26 (23%)

In 2018, there was a 7% decrease in the overall timeliness of the distribution of working documents (WDs) compared to 2017.

Objective 4.2: Enhance capacity to arrive at consensus in standards setting process.

The Codex Secretariat disseminated a Chairperson's Handbook intended to serve as a living document and stimulate dialogue among chairpersons, secretariats and others involved in preparing for and conducting Codex sessions. The Handbook may also help promote good practices and consistent approaches for dealing with similar situations and issues when they occur across different committees.

¹⁰ Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Original Language Only are not considered (WDs prepared only for one language are counted as Original Language Only)

¹¹ Para. 5, CAC/37 CRD/5