

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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**Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations**



**World Health
Organization**

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CL 2010/17-ASIA

May 2010

TO: Codex Contact Points
Interested International Organizations

FROM: Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission

SUBJECT: **Request for comments and information on National food control systems and consumer participation in food standard setting** (for the 17th Session of the FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Asia)

DEADLINE: **1 September 2010**

COMMENTS: **To:** Secretary
Codex Alimentarius Commission
FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153Rome, Italy
Fax: +39 06 5705 4593
E-mail: codex@fao.org (*preferably*)

With a copy to: Mr. Suprpto
Head of Center for Standard Application
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The 16th Session of the FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA) agreed to establish an electronic working group, led by Indonesia to develop a new template that would facilitate the analysis of the information on food control systems and link it to the activities of the Strategic Plan for the CCASIA (2009-2014). The Coordinating Committee noted that the electronic working group would also start incorporating the information already submitted into the new template and request Members of the region to submit additional information to fill gaps, if necessary (ALINORM 09/32/15, paras 97-99).

The electronic working group has developed the attached template (Annex 1) to gather information on developments at the national level in various countries of the CCASIA region with a view to providing a more systematic framework for monitoring and implementation of the Regional Strategic Plan for the CCASIA (2009-2014) (Annex 2).

In preparation of the 17th FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA), members of the region (CCASIA) are requested, as directed above, to provide comment and submit additional information to fill gaps, as per the attached information, *preferably by e-mail*, not later than **1 September 2010**

Annex 1**Template for the submission of information on National food control systems and consumer participation in food standard setting of CCASIA countries*****Question 1: Strengthening National Food Regulatory Systems***

Objective 1 of the Regional Strategic Plan aims to develop and strengthen national food regulatory system and Codex Contact Points and/or National Codex Committee. Please describe any significant developments/actions taken in your country to improve national food regulatory systems and Codex Contact Points and/or National Codex Committee. These may include actions relating to:

- update of structure and organization of national food control system and consultative structures and processes on Codex matters including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders;
- identify capacity building needs in national food regulatory systems and identify the resources required including funding;

Question 2: Promotion of Codex standards and related texts

Objective 5 of the Regional Strategic Plan aims to promote use of Codex standards and related texts as a basis for national legislation. Please describe any significant actions that your country has taken to increase awareness on the importance of Codex amongst relevant stakeholders i.e. government, industries, consumers, academia and professional bodies, or to train technical personnel and policy makers responsible for the elaboration of food safety policy, as well as to promote more effective participation in Codex.

Question 3: Strengthen communication and coordination

Taking into account the actions listed in Objective 2, please describe any significant actions that your country has taken to optimize the use of electronic communication systems. These may include:

- Institutional internet infrastructure at the national level for reliable internet connection
- conducting e-discussions amongst member countries on issues of mutual interest;
- sharing of national position/written comments on issues of interest to the region;
- promoting regional networking among Codex Contact Points to improve communication and share experiences on Codex and related issues.

Question 4: Training and Capacity building

Has your country participated in or organized any regional training programmes in relation to any of the objectives listed in the Regional Strategic Plan (e.g. 1.4, 1.5, 4.6)? Please comment on the Training Programme and any follow up actions taken at the national level arising from such participation.

- organize technical exchange programmes amongst member countries of the region on a mutual basis; assist CCASIA Member Countries in developing and strengthening national food regulatory system and Codex Contact Point and/or National Codex Committee such as mentoring and training programme with the assistance of FAO/WHO and other international organizations
- assist member countries in terms of capacity building to harmonize national legislation with that of Codex with assistance of FAO/WHO and other international organizations

Question 5: Regional Strategic Plan- priority areas for implementation

Of the activities listed in the Regional Strategic plan to support its effective implementation what activity (ies) is/are most important to meet the needs of your country including demands regarding training and development? How effective are we in disseminating the Regional Strategic Plan? Was it disseminated to concerned stakeholders? Is there monitoring or feedback on information disseminated? Who is the identified focal person/agency responsible in disseminating and monitoring (include contact details, i.e. CCP)?

Question 6: Codex Standards-national priorities, interests and training needs

Taking into account several CCASIA Strategic Plan activities (1.7, 4.1, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1 and 6.2) what specific Codex standards and related texts, currently under development or already in existence, are of most importance and interest to your country and for which of these would additional information/training/mentoring/scientific advice be desired ?

Question 7: Any other matters

Are there any other comments you would like to make in any of the areas covered by the Regional Strategic Plan?

Annex 2**STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA (CCASIA) - 2009-2014****INTRODUCTION**

The importance of the Asian region in international food trade has long been recognized since more than half of the world population resides in the Asian region. The pace of economic development in these countries is undoubtedly amongst the highest in the world. There has been a significant increase in production of food from this region over the years. In line with this development, the need to produce safe and quality foods cannot be overemphasized. Towards this end, countries in the region have increasingly realized the importance of Codex in protecting the health of the consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade. In this regard, the participation of Asia countries in Codex forum has also increased significantly. However, the effectiveness of its member countries participation can still be further improved.

In order to maintain focus and properly coordinate the views of the countries in the region, the Strategic Plan for the CCASIA has been a long time felt need. The Strategic Plan for CCASIA has been formulated consistent with the goals, programme areas and the planned activities of the Strategic Plan being finalized by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The regional strategic plan aims to fulfil amongst others the need for strengthening the national food regulatory system and greater coordination, enable better interaction among member countries and promote harmonization. The Plan also addresses food safety issues that affect the region. Due to the diverse levels of development of countries within the Asian region, the socio-economic status of the population as well as the differences in the regulatory system, the strategic plan has also taken into account the need to extend technical assistance to members to enable them to implement and accomplish the measures as outlined in the Strategic Objectives.

GOAL

To strengthen the food safety infrastructure of all member countries of Asia and the region's contribution to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Objectives 1: To develop and strengthen national food regulatory system and Codex Contact Point and/or National Codex Committee		
Actions	Responsible party	Timeline
1.1 - To identify capacity-building needs in national food regulatory system and to identify the resources required including funding.	Member countries	2009-2010
1.2 - To organise technical exchange programmes amongst member countries of the region on a mutual basis.	Interested member countries	2009-2014
1.3 - To identify the capacity-building needs of the Codex Contact Points to facilitate and strengthen the implementation and participation in Codex work, and to identify the resources required including funding.	Member countries	2009-2010
1.4 - To assist CCASIA Member Countries in developing and strengthening national food regulatory system and Codex Contact Point and/or National Codex Committee such as mentoring and training programme with the assistance of FAO/WHO and other international organizations.	Member countries with the required capability	Initiate by 2010

1.5 - To organise on-the-job training at Codex Contact Points of member countries to observe structural work programme and implementation processes with the assistance of FAO/WHO and other international organizations.	Member countries with the required capability	Initiate by 2010
1.6 - To conduct national workshops on effective functioning of Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committee.	Interested member countries	2009-2014
1.7 - To conduct regional workshops on effective functioning of Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committee with the support of FAO, WHO and other international organizations.	Coordinator	Initiated by 2010
Objective 2. To strengthen communication & coordination amongst the CCASIA members, with other regions and Codex Secretariat as well as other relevant organizations		
Actions	Responsible party	Timeline
2.1 - To maintain an up-to-date directory of the National Codex Contact Points of the CCASIA member countries.	Coordinator	Initiate by 2009
2.2 - To optimize the use of electronic communication systems in countries of the region by i) conducting e-discussions amongst member countries on issues of mutual interest from time to time ii) sharing of national positions/written comments on issues of interest to the region on a regular basis iii) encouraging the development of a web page for each contact point iv) promoting regional networking among Codex Contact Points to improve communication and share experiences on Codex and related issues.	Coordinator and member countries	Initiate by 2009
2.3 - To update and maintain a virtual page for CCASIA and to encourage its use.	Interested member countries	Initiate by 2010
Objective 3. To achieve maximum and effective participation of member countries in the activities of CCASIA, Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies		
Actions	Responsible party	Timeline
3.1 - To organize informal meetings of CCASIA prior to Codex meetings to develop common position, where possible, on issues of interest as well as to update on national and regional activities.	Coordinator	2009-2014
3.2 - To discuss Codex issues of interest to the region including those issues arising from Commission and other Codex subsidiary bodies during CCASIA sessions.	Coordinator and Member countries	2009-2014
3.3 - To seek funding to participate in Codex Meetings and support other Codex activities from "FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhancing the Participation of Developing Countries in the Work of Codex", as well as other sources funded by WHO, FAO, UNDP, STDF and other international organizations.	Member countries	2009-2014

Objective 4. To strengthen scientific and technical capacities of member countries in the region		
Actions	Responsible party	Timeline
4.1 - To identify and prioritize food safety and Codex issues that affect the region and where appropriate seek the assistance of FAO/WHO for scientific advice.	Member countries	2009-2014
4.2 - To develop a list of experts and institutions available in the region which can provide the required scientific/technical expertise.	Coordinator	Complete by 2009
4.3 - To establish e-Working Groups to address prioritized regional issues.	Interested member countries	Initiate by 2010
4.4 - To collate and generate quality data on issues of interest to the region and submit to the Joint FAO/WHO expert bodies and consultation. FAO and WHO to assist countries in this activity in line with the Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.	Lead countries	Initiate by 2010
4.5 - To promote the consistent application of risk analysis principles at the national level.	Member countries	2009-2014
4.6 - To organize and conduct regional workshops/training courses with assistance of FAO/WHO and other international organizations to facilitate the development of the technical capacity of the members of the region including risk analysis.	Facilitating countries	Initiate by 2009
4.7 - To establish scientific and technical networks amongst the experts and institutions in the countries of the region.	Interested member countries	Initiate by 2010
Objective 5. To promote use of Codex standards and related texts as a basis for national legislation		
Actions	Responsible party	Timeline
5.1 - To train technical personnel and policy makers responsible for the elaboration of food safety policy (including regulations) on the significance of and need to consider Codex standards and related texts, with technical assistance from FAO/WHO.	Member countries	2009
5.2 - To increase awareness on the importance of Codex amongst relevant stakeholders i.e. government, industries, consumers, academia and professional bodies.	Member countries	2009-2014
5.3 - To assist member countries in terms of capacity building to harmonize national legislation with that of Codex with assistance of FAO/WHO and other international organizations.	Member countries	2009-2014
Objective 6. To develop and/or review Codex standards and related texts taking into account regional interests		
Actions	Responsible party	Timeline
6.1 - To convene informal meeting (physical or electronic) to address issues of common interest to the region as and when necessary.	Coordinator on the recommendation of interested member country	2009-2014
6.2 - To identify specific food products of interest to the region that requires standard to be developed in order to protect the health of the consumers and ensure fair practices in food trade	Interested member countries	2009-2014