

CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 17

CX/CAC/41 CRD/26
Original language only

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

41st Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 2 - 6 July 2018

SUMMARY REPORT OF 5th MEETING OF THE CODEx TRUST FUND ADVISORY GROUP

The fifth meeting of the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund (CTF) Advisory Group (AG)¹ was held at the Headquarters of FAO on 28 June 2018. The agenda for the fifth meeting is attached in Annex 1 and the list of participants is attached in Annex 2. The meeting was chaired by the Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Dr Guilherme Antonio Costa Jr.

In Session 1, the CTF Secretariat gave an overview of the role of AG members, terms of reference, membership and frequency of meetings for the benefit of new members.

In Session 2, the CTF Secretariat gave an overview of the results of Round 2 “Call for Applications”. These results can be found in the 3rd Progress Report of the Codex Trust Fund. The following three challenges from Round 2 that had been identified by the CTF Steering Committee were highlighted for discussion:

- Continuing issues around understanding how to prepare a strong application to increase the number of robust applications from some regions;
- Mix of activities being proposed in projects;
- The future of application rounds in light of funding limitations

Advisory Group members highlighted the following in the discussions:

- One regional coordinator called attention to challenges faced in trying to get countries to work on applications well in advance and submit on time. The goal is that all countries should be able to access CTF support through the application process. Some countries may need more assistance with this process than others.
- Challenges around highlighting the importance of Codex in countries and getting support for Codex activities. This environment is important to the success of CTF supported projects.
- The perception in some countries that the use of the Codex Diagnostic Tool is “auditing” them.
- Continuing issues in some countries around dialogue and consultation between different ministries and agencies around Codex issues, the application process and control of funding when a country is supported. These issues would be even more pronounced in group projects. The importance and benefits of consultation and collaboration need to be highlighted.

AG members agreed that Codex Contact Points and Regional Coordinators need to be very active in raising Codex on the political agenda and getting support for Codex activities in countries. Regional coordinators will continue to look at ways to assist countries in preparing and submitting robust applications, including trying to improve information flows and sharing of good practices between countries. Countries which have been successful in Rounds 1 and 2 can also be called on to provide “peer to peer” support and examples were given of where this is already taking place. The CTF Secretariat outlined ways that FAO, WHO and the CTF Secretariat could continue to support countries in the application process such as running “clinics” on preparing good applications at the CAC and Regional Coordinating Committees, and using virtual means so all countries can have access to information to help build their capacities to get CTF support.

Session 3 was introduced by the Codex Secretariat. The opportunity of the Advisory Group was being used to have a first discussion on how the positive impacts of Codex standards might be communicated. This is important in securing political and economic support for Codex in countries, but also for making the case for support to the Codex Trust Fund.

Some examples and ideas were shared including a recent video produced by the Codex Secretariat on the margins of a workshop in Africa. A representative from Canada joined the meeting to share their experiences with drafting up “Codex case studies” that aimed to highlight the quantitative and qualitative impacts of Codex standards in countries. These drew on material from the 2017 WTO/FAO publication on *Trade and Food Standards*.

Participants agreed on the importance of having three key ingredients in communication material on the impact of Codex standards: evidence; credibility; human interest. It was noted that more work was needed to ensure a balance between these three aspects in Codex communication materials.

The challenges identified in moving forward are: 1) clearly identifying the key target audience and what kind of information they need for what purposes; 2) getting the information on Codex standards where there might be data and information on a “story to tell”; 3) identifying from these where there is a qualitative element to make the story “worth telling”.

For the Codex Trust Fund it was suggested that this approach to communicating on the results/impacts of Codex work could be “hard wired” into CTF-supported projects that will be starting implementation. The approach can also be used to develop communications on countries currently implementing.

All of these efforts to communicate on impacts should link to the indicators in the new Codex Strategic Plan as well as to the Monitoring and Evaluation framework of the Codex Trust Fund.

The Codex Secretariat expressed the hope that both Advisory Group members as well as the wider Codex community would be willing to continue to discuss this and work together to develop a set of case studies to demonstrate the positive impacts of Codex standards.

Session 5 was a standing agenda item to update members on fundraising and obtain feedback. The CTF Secretariat called attention to the projected expenditures for 2018 that appeared in the 3rd Progress Report. The ratio of staff and admin costs to the costs of supporting project in countries is high at the moment. WHO called attention to the fact that staff costs in the Secretariat are fixed costs and cannot be cut in these first years when only a few countries are being supported. However, the staff devoted to CTF has not been increased as planned due to the low funding levels. This has meant that FAO and WHO staff have to devote more time to CTF in addition to other activities.

While the Codex Trust Fund is currently projecting a positive balance at the end of 2018, the funding gaps of over \$200,000 for 2019 and over \$2 million for 2020 were highlighted. It was emphasized that CTF needs clear visibility on funding for several years to ensure that additional rounds can be launched and that countries can continue to be supported.

In response to a query, it was also emphasized that CTF cannot continue to run on current levels of contributions of between \$1.5 million and \$1.7 million. The founding project document estimated the resource needs to fully implement the programme and support projects aimed at covering all eligible countries in all Codex regions at \$3.3 million.

Session 5 was a standing agenda item that allows CTF to get updates on recently conducted and planned Codex capacity building activities. This is important to ensure that CTF continues to position its activities and support in a way that builds on other initiatives, seeks synergies and avoids duplication or unnecessary overlap. This will maximize efforts and reduce costs for all.

The regional coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean called attention to the numerous activities that were taking place in the region and expressed concern over the lack of coordination between these to ensure the best results. The Codex vice-chair from Lebanon outlined activities that had taken place in the country to establish a National Codex Committee, develop a Codex website and review national standards for consistency with Codex standards. She also referred to the initiative underway with funding from Sweden and support from UNIDO aimed at increasing the participation of Arab countries in Codex.

ANNEX I

**FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund Advisory Group
Fifth meeting
Thursday, 28 June 2018, 14h00-17h00
German Room
FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy**

**Chairperson:
Dr Guilherme Antonio Costa Jr, Chairperson, Codex Alimentarius Commission**

Agenda

Welcoming remarks FAO/WHO**Session 1 – Information for new members**

- Modus operandi of the Advisory Group - Presentation by the CTF Secretariat
 - a. Role, terms of reference and membership of the Advisory Group;
 - b. Meeting frequency and reporting
 - c. Highlights of past meetings
- Questions/discussion

Session 2 – Presentation of Round 2 results

- Presentation by FAO/WHO on Round 2 applications - process, outcomes and challenges faced.
- Regional coordinators should be prepared to provide input on challenges faced by countries
- Discussion

Session 3 – Case studies on where Codex work has made a difference in countries (introduced by the Codex Secretariat)

- Background
- Benefits of having a set of case studies demonstrating the value of Codex standards and how this can contribute to advocacy
- How it could be done and inputs needed
- Discussion
- Next steps in taking this work forward

Session 4 – Updates on fundraising and feedback from AG members

- Results of scenario planning and decisions of the Steering Committee on 2018 budget
- Status report on current funding situation
- New input on other funding options and/or follow-up to previous discussions in the AG.

Session 5 - Updates on recently conducted and planned Codex capacity building (30 mins)

- Regional coordinators are requested to prepare and present updates for Codex capacity building activities in their regions
- Updates from other AG members
- Discussion

Other business**Conclusion**

- **Summary of key points**
- **Next meeting**

ANNEX II**Provisional List of participants****Brazil (Codex Chair)**

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