



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

40th Session

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COMMUNICATION FROM FAO¹

Introduction of the FAO GM Foods Platform

1. The FAO GM Foods Platform (<http://fao.org/gm-platform/>) is an online platform to share information on safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA plants authorized in accordance with the Codex "Guideline for the conduct of food safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA plants" (CAC/GL 45-2003, annex III adopted in 2008).
2. The FAO GM Foods Platform is open to the public. Countries officially nominate one Focal Point each to the platform through their Codex Contact Point. Only nominated Focal Points are allowed to register and upload information.
3. Each country is responsible for the accuracy of the information submitted to the Platform. FAO is responsible for management of the Platform including checking the format of the submitted records.

Current status of the Platform

4. In addressing needs raised by the Codex Members, FAO further improved the Platform and as of 1 June 2017, a total of 173 Members have nominated Focal Points for the Platform. 155 Members have completed their country profile, and the Platform hosts 1,003 national records of the results of GM food safety assessment.
5. If your country has not yet nominated a Focal Point to the Platform², you are requested to submit a nomination form through your national Codex Contact Point. Contact gm-platform@fao.org to initiate the process.

Maintenance and sustainability of the FAO GM Foods Platform

6. FAO continues its efforts in 1) promoting the active participation of the Focal Points in the Platform activities; 2) improving the usability of the Platform; and 3) improving the visibility of the Platform community at the global level.
7. However, the success and completeness of the Platform largely depend on Members' efforts to share relevant data and information on the Platform. FAO encourage all Codex Members to be part of the FAO GM Foods Platform community.
8. It should also be noted that FAO has already made a significant investment in developing, populating and maintaining the FAO GM Foods Platform over the past 5 years in terms of staff time and relevant activities and material development.
9. Maintaining the current infrastructure of the Platform (e.g. server cost, IT related maintenance cost) and providing basic support to users require approximately 30% of one staff member's time, leading to a total of approximately 80,000 USD financial resource requirement annually. This is just to cover the basic requirement to maintain the Platform active and functional.
10. Thus in order to maintain an active and high-quality Platform in line with the request of CAC/GL 45-2003/08 and Codex Members' expressed preferences, Members' sustained commitment to share data and information as well as both in-kind and financial support is essential. If your country is interested in contributing resources to the Platform, contact FAO at GM-Platform@fao.org.

¹ Document prepared by and under the responsibility of FAO.

² As of 1 June 2017, 13 Countries that have not yet nominated a Focal Point to the Platform include: Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, Libya, Namibia, Nauru, Nicaragua, Oman, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Vanuatu.

Future direction of the Platform

11. As requested by the participating Members at the side event held during the Commission in 2015, FAO plans to conduct an assessment of the Platform usage and reports at the occasion of the 41st session of the Commission in 2018. Prior to the session, FAO will send out questionnaires to the Platform Focal Points as well as the Codex Contact Points to discuss the future direction of the Platform. It can also be an opportunity to flag challenges that countries are facing in the area of GM food safety and FAO's technical assistance on relevant capacity development can be considered. If your country is interested in joining the discussion, contact FAO at GM-Platform@fao.org.

Contact

12. For further information about the FAO GM Foods Platform (<http://fao.org/gm-platform/>), contact Dr Masami Takeuchi, Food Safety Officer of FAO, at masami.takeuchi@fao.org.