



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 5

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

75th Session

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CODEX COMMUNICATIONS WORKPLAN 2017–2019: IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat)

1. BACKGROUND

CCEXEC74 (September 2017):

- i. noted and supported the Codex Communications Workplan 2017-2019 and encouraged all relevant parties to work to ensure its successful implementation; and
- ii. encouraged the Secretariat to stress that the scientific advice programme is integral to the work of Codex and to evaluate how to target consumers with information on food safety and the relevance of Codex.

2. UPDATE

CCEXEC members are invited to comment on the update after the first year of the two-year workplan (Appendix I).

3. RECOMMENDATION

CCEXEC is invited to:

- i. note the Codex Communications Workplan Update and encourage all parties concerned to work to continue to ensure successful implementation of all communications initiatives; and
- ii. encourage the Secretariat to manage and coordinate the activities connected to the establishment of a World Food Safety Day (WFSD) and, should the United Nations General Assembly pass the resolution, establish a Steering Committee to organise the possible first celebration of the WFSD on June 7th, 2019.

INTRODUCTION

This implementation status update report will provide data and analysis on the indicators chosen to monitor the activities under the workplan and commentary on initiatives and projects of particular importance.

This update is focussed on the period September 2017 to May 2018 following adoption of the workplan by CCEXEC74.

HIGHLIGHTS

- New Codex website launch
- World Food Safety Day promotional activities
- Codex Tools Regional Workshops

The Codex communications “mission” is *to provide all stakeholders with the tools and means to participate effectively in, and assist them in fostering understanding at the national level regarding, the work of Codex.*

New website launch

The main communications tool in Codex is the Codex website, which was finally launched in December 2017 simultaneously in six languages. The site currently welcomes over 3 000 users per day (approx. 33% in English; 25% in Spanish; 4% French¹) with the standards, especially pesticides, some of the most popular pages.

The clear layout and user-focused language style of the texts, together with new thematic pages and dedicated regional web pages are the main new features. The Secretariat continues to receive and welcomes user feedback on the web site. Development is ongoing and solutions regarding the visibility, reliability (uptime²) and accessibility of the site will be explored both within the hosting environment of FAO and with external specialist web services providers.

World Food Safety Day promotional activities

Further to FAO Conference Resolution 11/2017 (July 2017) and support of the WHO Director General, the Mission of Costa Rica in New York is planning to launch the draft resolution on the World Food Safety Day (WFSD) during the 73rd Session of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

In promotion of WFSD Costa Rica has requested a side event during the 2018 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HPLF³) in July 2018 in New York, under the title "*Safe food for sustainable and resilient societies*", in connection with SDG 12. Both FAO and WHO are indicated as co-organizers of the event and the Codex Secretariat is providing logistic and communications support to Costa Rica.

Should the UNGA adopt the draft resolution on WFSD then the Secretariat recommends that CCEXEC establish a Steering Committee to oversee all aspects leading up to the first celebration of WFSD which would be on June 7th, 2019.

Codex Tools Regional Workshops

Effective participation in the standard setting process requires Codex members to be fluent in the communication tools that have been implemented regarding Electronic Working Groups (EWG) and Online Commenting. The series of regional Codex Tools Workshops that began in February 2018 and will conclude in October 2018 are hands-on, practical sessions that are building core-skills; enhancing knowledge and strengthening participants' ability to contribute to standard setting.

Through this experience, the Secretariat notes the importance of capacity building initiatives being planned centrally through FAO/WHO and acknowledges the support received both through Headquarters and regionally from the parent organizations.

¹ Google analytics data based on the language of the browser of the user.

² Website uptime is the time that a website or web service is available to users over a given period. The industry considers 99.999% uptime as high availability.

³ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018>

DATA AND ANALYSIS ON MONITORING INDICATORS

Objective 1: Establish clear and transparent communication channels (internal and external) for the Codex Secretariat.

Activities

- 1.1. Consolidate and improve document management, workflow and distribution policies and system;
- 1.2. Maintain an active and updated website
- 1.3. Maintain social media output

Indicators

- Publication of working documents and committee reports

Detailed reporting on this indicator is provided in the document *Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019: Implementation Status* (CX/EXEC 18/75/3, Activities 4.1.4, page 15).

- Website traffic

With an average of 75 000 users per month from 181 countries spending on average four minutes on the website, data is being generated through Google Analytics which will enable the Codex Secretariat to focus on the right user-centred functions, themes, content, tools and languages to serve the Codex community.

- Social media statistics

Between September 2017 and 11/5/2018, Codex tweeted 3 549 times. In total, Codex tweets were seen over 3 478 000 times (impressions), and the @FAOWHOCodex profile received 56 203 visits, with a total of over 2 000 new followers. (7 000 total, +30% increase in 10 months)⁴.

Overall, analysis of the findings showed an increasing level of participation of Codex stakeholders (Members, e.g. Ministry accounts, Food Standard Organizations, Observers), UN organizations (FAO, WHO, ONU info, UN News, IAEA) and general public with a total of plus 43 percent engagement rate compared to the previous year and over 1 700 mentions.

Conclusion

The Codex website is the main communications tool currently available to the Codex Secretariat incorporating normative texts, working documents and logistics, data sharing and information systems (Databases, Circular Letters, EWG lists etc.⁵). It is accessed globally and investment in its reliability, usability and content should be a high priority also to ensure that historical archives are preserved and that Codex texts benefit from the most useful technology available.

Objective 2: Ensure that Codex Members receive regular, consistent, reliable, relevant and useful communications to strengthen their knowledge, build their capacity and promote their active participation in the work of setting international standards.

Activities

- 2.1. Provide Codex Contact Points (CCPs) with effective and timely communications tools and support for reaching national stakeholders
- 2.2. Work with CCPs on all communications initiatives
- 2.3. Engage with FAO/WHO on their communications initiatives for members (including e-learning and Codex Trust Fund)

⁴ Among the top tweets: messages on how Codex develops standards <https://twitter.com/FAOWHOCodex/status/900276447138467841>, specific Codex works e.g. Arsenic in rice <https://twitter.com/FAOWHOCodex/status/918017532082229249>, AMR <https://twitter.com/FAOWHOCodex/status/930344535443591168>, Food Safety topics <https://twitter.com/FAOWHOCodex/status/966572036352077824> catch viewers attention with over 150.000 impressions.

⁵ The EWG platform and OCS system are hosted externally and although this does require users to maintain separate passwords, the uptime has maintained the highest industry standards.

Indicators

- Percentage of Electronic Working Groups (EWGs) online

Currently 92 percent of EWGs are run over the platform which has over 2 200 members.

- Percentage of Codex texts requesting comments using online tool

The Online Commenting System (OCS) has managed 52 percent of the requests for comments in the period September 2017 – May 2018, which is expected to increase by the end of 2018. The number of active users is currently 80 (of which 52 members and 28 observers).

- Number of publications

The CAC40 publication “[The Science of Food Standards](#)” was published in additional languages (French and Spanish in November 2017).

The Joint FAO/WTO publication “[Trade and Food Standards](#)” was published in additional languages (French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian) in March 2018.

“*Understanding Codex (Revised 4th Edition)*” will be available in all languages in June/July 2018.

CAC41 publication “Codex” will be published in English, French and Spanish in June/July 2018.

- Searchable version of Procedural Manual online

With the publications unit in FAO the Codex Secretariat is experimenting with e-book versions of the Procedural Manual including a six-language version. Currently available on Amazon [Kindle Store](#) and [Smashwords](#).

Conclusion

Codex adopts approximately 40 new or revised texts each year. These are published on the Codex website. There is scope for enhancing the visual identity and digital distribution of these normative texts and the Codex Secretariat is currently working on this. The Codex Secretariat will also publish the first in a series of spin-off publications to the “*Understanding Codex*” line and this will be entitled “*Understanding Codex: Nutrient Reference Values*”, due for publication ahead of CCNFSDU40 in November 2018.

The more general texts are welcomed by the Codex community as useful advocacy tools for a wide audience and the Codex Secretariat is committed to continuing to develop both these and the *Understanding Codex* series aligned with the thematic areas on the Codex website.

The Codex Secretariat communications team is keen to continue to engage with FAO and WHO on Food Safety issues pertinent to its mandate and welcomes opportunities to lend communications expertise and support on all initiatives and especially Codex Trust Fund projects.

Objective 3: Enable Codex Committee Chairpersons and Codex host Governments to receive relevant and useful guidance to strengthen their knowledge, to streamline and harmonize the way committees function and to support their effective role in the work of setting international standards.

Activities

- 3.1. Hold workshops for Chairpersons and Host Secretariats
- 3.2. Regular communication with Host Secretariats to discuss common issues and identify best practices
- 3.3. Develop a mini-communications workplan for each Codex meeting
- 3.4. Pilot online webinar technology
- 3.5. Publish guidelines for use of FAO/WHO logos and Codex visual identity
- 3.6. Adopt a visual identity for each Codex meeting/event cycle

Indicators

- Number of workshops held

The first Codex Host Secretariats’ Workshop was held in Paris 23-25 February 2018 and the EWG platform is being used as a follow up communications tool for this group.

The first Handbook for Chairs of Codex Committees has now been published.

- Number of pilot webinars held and degree of satisfaction expressed by users

Over 20 group or individual EWG and OCS training sessions have been held via webinar technology or on the FAO Skype for Business platform. Users such as Codex Contact Points or Chairs of EWGs express strong satisfaction with the service.

CCFICS is the only Codex committee so far to use webinar technology for real time virtual participation. This and other uses of webinar or web conferencing is currently subject of a survey amongst host secretariats with a view to webcasting future Codex meetings besides CAC.

- Number of meetings held in accordance with guidelines on use of logos and visual identity

All Codex committee host secretariats are briefed and aware of the importance of a consistent visual identity that also follows the rules on the use of FAO/WHO logos. Meeting icons developed by the Codex Secretariat are used by all committees. Draft Guidelines for the use of the Codex visual identity and the logos of the parent organizations are provided in **Appendix II**.

- Number of news items linked to Codex meetings published, volume of social media output, etc.

The output on the Codex website is consistently linked to Codex meetings as is social media output (see objective 1 above for data).

Conclusion

Communication with host secretariats and chairs of committees is a strength. The Secretariat welcomes opportunities to enhance interaction, capacity development and engagement, and will continue to plan and deliver in this area. The experience of the regional workshops on Codex web tools has also underlined the importance of direct contact between the Codex Secretariat and the end users of all communications systems.

Objective 4: Assist the parent Organizations, FAO and WHO, in advocacy and effective communication with Member States on matters pertaining to Codex and related activities.

Activities

- 4.1. Liaise with FAO/WHO officers and communications departments to best promote Codex work at the national level
- 4.2. Ensure Codex communications promote alignment with key objectives of parent Organizations (Sustainable Development Goals, antimicrobial resistance, international commemorative days, etc.), the Codex mandate and the Codex Strategic Plan

Indicators

- Number of joint communications initiatives

The 2018 Codex calendar was distributed through all partner channels and Codex continues to liaise with FAO and WHO on issues ranging from web news; WHO World Health Day; the Codex Trust Fund; SDGs; FAO Governing Bodies e.g. Committee on Agriculture (COAG); visits in FAO from governments; publications, videos⁶ and briefings. All CAC41 communications initiatives have been designed in conjunction with the Office of Corporate Communication and in collaboration with WHO.

- Event held at high-level meeting

On 7 December 2017, Codex organised with Costa Rica a side event at the FAO Council in support of WFSD. Ms Geannina Dinarte Romero, Minister for Economy, Industry and Commerce of Costa Rica gave the keynote address.

Conclusion

The FAO Council side event and the upcoming HLPF proposed side event and HLPF SDG update (provided by the Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in conjunction with FAO and WHO) are good examples of how collaboration and planning can assist Codex in reaching this communications objective. New initiatives include a podcast/publication pilot on science in Codex in conjunction with the FAO/WHO expert scientific advice bodies for a wide audience.

⁶ FAO 10 Greatest achievements video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYxMwaTB_AQ

Objective 5: Engage Observers to support collaboration and cooperation in the development of Codex standards.Activities

- 5.1. Contact all Observers to assess opportunities for collaboration on communications
- 5.2. Develop meeting, workshop and panel discussion projects with Observers at Codex and third-party events

Indicators

- Number (and surveyed usefulness) of joint communications initiatives with Observers

Contact with observers is constant and several opportunities have been organised through Codex meetings; the “Codex” CAC41 publication and engagement on the EWG and OCS platforms.

Conclusion

Further to the recommendations of the *Regular review of Codex work management: report 2017-2018* (CX/CAC 18/41/13), the Codex Secretariat will continue to enhance collaboration with this large group. At CAC41 Codex observer organizations will again participate in dedicated panel discussions, a further example of providing high level visibility to these groups.

Objective 6: Work with FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committees (RCCs) to identify, develop and implement effective communications initiatives.Activities

- 6.1. Develop a specific communications workplan with each RCC for each four-month regional focus
- 6.2. In conjunction with FAO/WHO regions, highlight regional Codex work
- 6.3. Promote regional success stories and initiatives through all Codex communications channels in conjunction with FAO/WHO

Indicators

- Number (and surveyed usefulness) of regional communications activities.

Each region has contributed to the regional web pages⁷ and with the cycle of regional Codex web tools workshops the close collaboration will continue.

Conclusion

The Codex Secretariat acknowledges the contributions received through the RCCs, welcomes support for enhancing regional communications and will continue to explore with Regional Coordinators the most effective means to ensure that news from the region reaches the widest possible audience.

BUDGET AND RESOURCES

The Codex Secretariat continues to operate with a small communications team and it is expected that the current levels of funding of two consultants will be maintained for 2018-2019⁸.

CONCLUSION

The Codex Communications Workplan 2017–2019 is delivering access to information on Codex that is understandable, compelling and actionable. With a new website in place the communications team in the Codex Secretariat expects to continue to be able to make improvements in content and delivery. The workplan has proved to be a realistic tool to guide and measure Codex communications initiatives. However, improvements will need to be made in medium/long term planning to meet the demands of a WFSD as well as to enhance regional communications and to respond to the needs of the whole Codex community.

⁷ <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/committees/codex-regions/en/>

⁸ Current arrangements include cost sharing with the FAO AG Department for communications and in-house graphic design.

Draft Guidelines for use of Codex visual identity and FAO/WHO logos

Purpose

These guidelines provide countries and host secretariats with guidelines on the use of the Codex visual identity and the logos of the parent organizations at Codex meetings.

Scope

These guidelines cover all uses of the Codex visual identity and the use of the logos of FAO/WHO at Codex meetings and events.

Guidelines

1. The FAO/WHO websites are the official websites for official meetings of statutory or governing bodies. They are the only locations where official documents information should be presented, as well as any information on the formal arrangements for meetings. Links to documents on these websites can be made without permission.
2. Host countries may create web pages providing information on other aspects of Codex meetings, such as information about the host country, visa arrangements, hotel accommodation, tourism, etc. They may also include information on relevant national projects. These websites should not, however, be used for obviously commercial purposes, such as the promotion of national businesses. (Tangentially, it is also noted that there must be no sponsorship arrangements or offers of “sponsorship packages” that imply preferential access to the official sessions through payment). It must also be quite clear that these do not constitute the official websites of the governing or statutory bodies concerned.
3. In many cases, logos are specially developed for individual meetings which incorporate the official logo or emblem of the organization concerned. Use of the standard official logo, or a session-specific logo, on the host country website would be authorised on the basis of adherence to certain conditions. These conditions would include the strict application of the FAO/WHO rules and policies; in particular, that the FAO/WHO names and logos are not used for any commercial purpose and that they are not placed close to those of any private sector entities. It is also recommended that the content of all such websites be made available to FAO and WHO for review and clearance, through the Codex Secretariat, before they are published.
4. As Codex host Secretariats represent national authorities, there is normally no barrier to the logo/emblem/symbol of the relevant Government ministry or agency appearing on the meeting web pages or meeting room banners, stationary etc. where the FAO/WHO logos are present.
5. The information provided in the links below form and integral part of these guidelines:
 - a. FAO terms and conditions: <http://www.fao.org/contact-us/terms/en/>
 - b. WHO linking policy: <http://www.who.int/about/licensing/linking/en/>
 - c. WHO emblem page <http://www.who.int/about/licensing/emblem/en/>
 - d. WHO copyright notice <http://www.who.int/about/copyright/en/>
6. For clarification on the use and application of these guidelines contact codex@fao.org.