



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

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CODEX COMMUNICATIONS WORK PLAN

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Codex Alimentarius Commission reports often exceed 10 000 words, but how many of those words tell the stories to a wider audience of the value of Codex food safety work? How many bring to life the standards development and capacity building activities linked to Codex that are undertaken globally every year? How can the role and value of food safety and the Codex food standard setting work be brought to the attention of key decision makers at national and regional level and prioritized in the context of the competing challenges and demands for resources? How can we demonstrate the relevance of food safety and Codex work to national priorities such as achieving their targets under the Sustainable Development Goals? A human interest story in a Codex magazine, 250 words on the web or an image on social media can provide an interesting and at times inspiring support to the detailed and technical normative work on which Codex is built.

We need to increase our use of first-person stories and multimedia and further break away from the institutional voice. We need to think of our stories, images and videos as products where creativity meets art, advertising and advocacy. And most importantly, we need to think of our audience and platform first¹.

1.2. Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 aims to increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards, mindful that “communications that drive greater awareness, understanding, and recognition of available, harmonized standards are essential to the effectiveness of Codex”².

1.3. This paper recalls the background and status of communication planning and delivery operated by the Codex Secretariat and outlines a work plan to involve the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees (hereafter RCCs) in contributing directly to advocacy initiatives and effective communication at national and regional levels on matters pertaining to Codex and related activities.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. CCEXEC74 (Rome, 2017) noted “the need for members to contribute [to the] development and implementation” of the current Codex communications work plan and “the potential for greater engagement and impact through tailored collaboration with the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees”³. With this in mind CCEXEC74 recommended that the Codex communications work plan be included on the agenda of the RCCs⁴.

2.2. Subsequently, CCEXEC76, commenting on the implementation status of the 2017-2019 communications work plan “recognized the importance of the communications work developed by the Codex Secretariat” and noted “that such activities supported the delivery of the Strategic Plan objective that Codex standards be used globally and therefore required adequate resources”⁵.

2.3. These, therefore are the two drivers of a basic communications work plan: content and resources.

3. COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS IN CODEX

3.1. The Codex Secretariat has placed great emphasis on developing the Codex website as the primary location for all news, articles, multimedia and social media activities. Other initiatives comprise a range of

¹ Telling the #ZeroHunger story FAO's Digital Storytelling Guide

² Strategic Plan 2020-2025

³ REP18/EXEC1 para 9

⁴ REP18/EXEC1 para 16

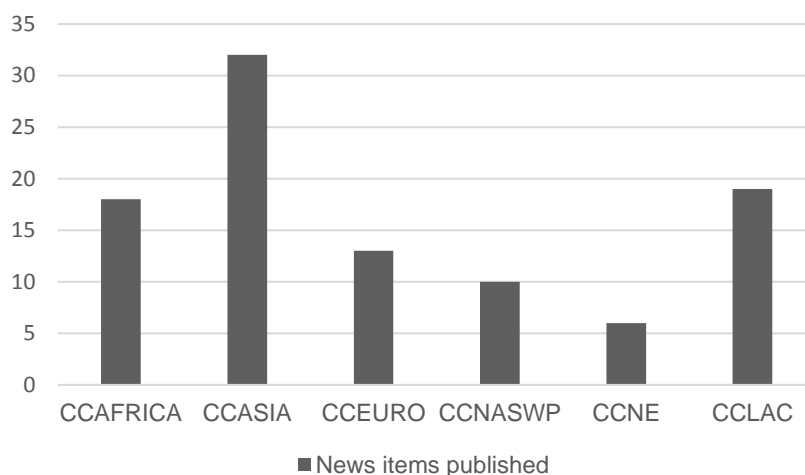
⁵ REP19/EXEC1 para 8

publications including the annual report called CODEX, and more specific publications linked to individual committees or themes⁶. Events are another opportunity to raise awareness about the value of Codex and the Codex Secretariat also took the lead in planning and delivering communications regarding the first [World Food Safety Day](#) in 2019⁷.

In December 2017, the new regional pages were launched on the Codex website. A key objective was to provide a permanent home for news of activities in the six Codex regions.

3.2. Figure 1 indicates the number of regional stories published on the website since its relaunch.

Figure 1: News items published by Codex region



4. THE REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS WORK PLAN

4.1. Appendix I outlines a draft work plan for communications suitable for a Codex region including objectives, activities, targets and indicators.

5. CONCLUSIONS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

5.1. Many stakeholders can play a role in supporting communications efforts from the regions. These include the communications team in the Codex Secretariat, FAO/WHO regional Food Safety Officers and communications focal points, the Regional Coordinators and their teams, as well as resources within individual Codex Contact Points. Many Codex Members and Observers have also lent their experience and resources to supporting communications activities. This was especially evident in the contributions from the region for the first World Food Safety Day⁸.

5.2. One challenge is providing information in both English and French across the region and if resources or in-kind support are not available locally then the communications team in the Codex Secretariat will assist where possible. Having multiple languages in a region should be viewed as an opportunity to communicate and not a barrier. It should be noticed however, that unless communications are prioritised, planned and resources allocated, telling the Codex story will remain a challenge.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. CCNASWP is invited to:

- i. Acknowledge the importance of prioritising regional Codex communications;
- ii. Adopt a Regional Work plan (Appendix I);
- iii. Agree to identify through the Regional Coordinator (RC) a communications focal point; and
- iv. Liaise with the Codex Secretariat primarily through the RC to execute the communications work plan for the period September 2019 – June 2020.

⁶ See [publications](#) and [video](#) links on Codex website

⁷ See World food Safety Day: <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/world-food-safety-day/about/en/>

⁸ See Codex web news: <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/news-and-events/news-details/en/c/1197349/>

Appendix I – Draft regional communications work plan 2020-2025

The table shows the proposed objectives, activities, targets and indicators for the CCNASWP Regional Communications Work plan. These elements derive from Strategic Goal 3 in the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 “Increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards”, in particular objective 3.1 “Raise the awareness of Codex standards”.

Objective	Activities	Targets	Indicators
1. Establish clear, communication channels	1.1. Consolidate and improve information flow and exchange between countries and Codex Secretariat (CS) 1.2. Establish simple and rapid communications methods (e.g. WhatsApp communications group, or discussion group on Codex EWG forum)	By CCNASWP16 (2021) 75% of Members/Observers surveyed indicate timeliness, accessibility and quality of Codex regional communications “excellent” or “good”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of survey responses rating regional communications “excellent” or “good”
2. Communicate the value of Codex standards in the region	2.1. Provide CS with monthly drafts of web stories capturing food safety, standards work or capacity building initiatives in the region 2.2. Promote regional success stories and initiatives in conjunction with CS and FAO/WHO 2.3. Liaise with Codex Trust Fund beneficiary countries in the region to communicate on every phase of CTF projects	By CAC43 10 news items from countries in the region published By CCNASWP16 10 news items from countries in the region By CCNASWP16 50% of countries in the region have made a contribution to codex news on the regional webpage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of CCNASWP news stories published Number of countries who have made a published contribution