



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

Thirty-second Session

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

(Prepared by the Coordinator for Europe)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) at its forty-second session (CAC42, 2019) adopted the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

1.2. CAC44 noted that the 32nd session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP32) had forwarded to CAC44 its considerations on monitoring the use of Codex standards and monitoring Codex results in the context of the UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs).

1.3. The achievement of the SDGs depends on countries implementing integrated policies and programmes tailored towards the key targets identified for each SDG. In this light, the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is in line with the interests and aspirations of the Member countries of the region.

1.4. The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit recognized the need to transform food systems to achieve the SDGs. CAC can support this transition, in line with the ambition to proactively address emerging issues as set out in the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and taking into account the new FAO and WHO respective food safety strategies (to be adopted in 2022).

1.5. The Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is to be reviewed every two years through the work plan for its implementation. Such an approach provides an opportunity to adjust the work plan in accordance with the results already achieved, current circumstances, and other relevant factors. Regional work plans express the contribution of the Region to the achievement of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and are also reviewed every two years.

1.6. This document aims to facilitate discussions on the regional work plan to support implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025, and in particular the identification of activities to be implemented over the next two years by CCEURO, as the biggest and a most heterogeneous region of CAC.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. The Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 includes five goals, with a series of objectives established under each goal. The approach for implementation at the regional level takes into account regional priorities and provides an opportunity for Members of the region to contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025, as encouraged by CAC42 upon adoption of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

2.2. The 77th session of the Executive Committee of CAC (CCEXEC77) established a strategic planning sub-committee to inform and support further discussion of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025, in particular its implementation by FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committees (RCCs), other subsidiary bodies, and Members and Observers; and to lead the development of the implementation workplan.

2.3. CCEURO31 expressed their commitment to support the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and agreed that they would focus on the implementation of activities aimed at achieving goals 1 and 2. In this context, CCEURO31 agreed on activities to be implemented in the region in 2020-2021 to support achievement of these goals¹.

2.4. CCEXEC78² noted the work plan developed by CCEURO and welcomed the focus on priority activities to be undertaken in 2020 and 2021. CCEXEC78 further noted the responsibility of the Regional Coordinators

¹ REP20/EURO Appendix II

² REP20/EXEC1

in leading and coordinating these activities, some of which may benefit from inter-regional collaboration. CCEXEC80³ considered an update on the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 which emphasized the great challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the need for the Strategic Plan to remain a living document that, in the words of the Procedural Manual, is to be renewed on a biennial basis to ensure its continuing relevance. CCEXEC81⁴ considered a report of the Sub-committee on the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025⁵ on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including reports from the Regional Coordinators. CCEXEC81 commended the report for consideration by CAC44 and recommended that the agendas of the FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committees, due to meet in 2022/23, should include: the review of the relevant regional implementation plan for 2020 and 2021; and the development of regional implementation plans focusing on priority activities to be undertaken in 2022 and 2023.

2.5. CAC44 noted the progress on the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025, welcomed the preparation of a review of the first biennium of implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 for discussion at the CAC45, and endorsed the monitoring framework for the Strategic Plan, with the modifications recommended by CCEXEC81.

3. REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE EUROPEAN REGION, 2020 AND 2021

3.1. The activities planned in the European region in 2020-2021 to support the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 addressed two of its five goals⁶, goals 1 and 2. The Regional Coordinator oversaw the implementation of activities, but a number of challenges arose, primarily in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic affected the pace of implementation of some regional activities and led to delays. It also affected the scheduling of Codex Committees with sessions of all committees, including CCEURO, delayed. However, on the positive side the implementation of the Codex Trust Fund projects in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, and Turkmenistan made/is making a significant contribution to the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025⁷.

Priority Goal 1 Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner

Priority objective 1.1. Identify needs and emerging issues

Activity 1.1.1. Collect information on country's current, emerging and critical issues using and refining existing mechanisms

3.2. Due to the pandemic that posed organizational challenges, no survey could be conducted. Information related to current and emerging issues are discussed under CCEURO32 agenda Item 4 "Food safety and quality in the region including current and emerging issues – country updates"

3.3. At the Codex level, CAC 44 agreed to undertake a preliminary assessment on how to address new food sources (microalgae, insects, cell-based meat, etc.). Codex Members in the European region participated actively to this initial discussion and work will continue in the upcoming years.

Activity 1.2.1. Create a repository of available information on food fraud, including contact details and explanatory guidelines on submission of information.

3.4. A repository of contact persons for food fraud (hereinafter CPFF) in Codex Members in the European region, as well as the links to the authorities where CPFF are located was created in 2020 and is accessible via the CCEURO regional webpages on the Codex Alimentarius website⁸.

3.5. Recently (April 2022), FAO and the University of California, Los Angeles, Resnick Center for Food Law and Policy released a publication entitled "International and national regulatory strategies to counter food fraud"⁹, that provides relevant information for national authorities on the management of food fraud.

Priority Goal 2- Develop standards based on science and Codex risk-based principles.

Priority objective 2.2. Promote the submission and use of globally representative data in developing and reviewing Codex standards.

Activity 2.2.1. To select from FAO and WHO scientific expert bodies calls for data a topic for a pilot of a co-ordinated approach by the European region.

3.6. The Regional Coordinator issued a questionnaire on the collection and submission of scientific data for the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committees by Codex Members in the European region. More than 80% of the

³ REP21/EXEC1

⁴ REP21/EXEC2

⁵ CX/EXEC 21/81/5

⁶ REP20/EURO paragraph 86-100 and Appendix II

⁷ Capacity building, exchange of experience and knowledge, establishment of National Codex Alimentarius Committees

⁸ Available at: <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/committees/codex-regions/cceuro/about/food-fraud/en/>

⁹ Available at: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb9035en/>

Members in the region participated in the survey. Some of the key findings of the survey were as follows:

- Regular data submissions from EU Member states originate from EFSA, including data from some non-EU countries.
- Gaps were identified in the collection and receipt of various types of data from industry, as they are data holders, in particular in areas such as pesticide residues.
- In several countries in the region, the main reason for not providing data was a lack of understanding of the necessary requirements for generating data in response to a specific request. Often there is a discrepancy between methodological approaches and/or the availability of or access to the modern equipment necessary to determine certain indicators of food safety as well as in some cases a lack of qualified personnel.

3.7. Thus, the analysis of the data received indicated some of the difficulties that may arise in the identification of a data-based pilot topic for subsequent agreed regional submission to the joint FAO/WHO expert committees. Further discussion will be needed at CCEURO32 to agree on how to address this issue.

Priority objective 2.3. Promote sufficient and sustainable funding for expert bodies that deliver scientific advice.

Activities 2.3.1. To contribute to the drafting of a World Health Assembly Resolution in 2020 on food safety, as proposed in the letter from the Member states of the EU and others to DG WHO, and **2.3.2.** To communicate within countries and to Geneva-based missions to ensure adoption of a World Health Assembly Resolution in 2020 on food safety

3.8. The letter from the Member states of the EU and others to the WHO Director-General and further communication to the Geneva-based missions contributed to the adoption of a World Health Assembly Resolution in 2020 on sufficient and sustainable funding for science.

3.9. In the framework of the EU Better Training for Safer Food Programme, a virtual Workshop formally hosted by Kazakhstan on supporting effective “Participation in CODEX Activities for CCEURO Countries” took place on 29 November - 3 December 2021. This workshop contributed to Goal 4 “Facilitate the participation of all Codex Members throughout the standard setting process”. It was attended by 37 participants from the following countries: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, and Serbia.

Regional Communications workplan

3.10. CCEURO31 also adopted a Regional Communications Work Plan 2020-2025, which contributes to Goal 3 of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025. The Regional Coordinator created CCEURO chats on social networks to support exchange of information and for communication between countries on Codex issues. The Regional Coordinator also organized different activities ahead of most Codex committees and CAC meetings to raise awareness on the main issues at stake and facilitate an exchange of views among members from the region. More than 50 success stories have been published by member countries on the CCEURO page on the Codex website¹⁰.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS FOCUSING ON PRIORITY ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN 2022 AND 2023

4.1. The Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is the basis for the development of a regional work plan for the biennium 2022-2023. This regional plan should reflect the priorities of the region while providing sufficient flexibility to members in the region, and detail the regional contribution to the achievement of the Strategic Plan Goals.

4.2. Since goals 1 and 2 of the Strategic Plan were considered and partially implemented in 2020-2021, and activities to achieve goal 5 are being primarily led by the Codex Secretariat, it is proposed that the regional plan for 2022 -2023 considers goals 3 and 4 of the Strategic Plan. To implement activities to support the achievement of goals 3 and 4, it is necessary to advocate for both effective engagement with Codex and uptake of Codex standards. This will require coordinated support to strengthen sustainable food systems in the region through the development of cross-sectoral approaches, political commitment from Member States, capacity building and mentorship, knowledge sharing, emergency preparedness and rapid response to food system challenges caused by natural disasters and other challenges (including COVID -19).

4.3. Appendix I proposes possible activities to be implemented in the European region in the 2022-2023 biennium for consideration by the Codex Members in the European region at CCEURO32.

¹⁰ Available at: <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/committees/codex-regions/cceuro/about/en>

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. CCEURO is invited to:

- i. identify the priority goals/objectives on which the region will focus its contributions to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 for the biennium 2022-2023;
- ii. identify the activities to be implemented to support achievement of the prioritized goals and objectives by CCEURO and Codex Members in the region;
- iii. articulate how these activities will contribute to the achievement of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025;
- iv. provide comments, if any, on the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 for consideration by CCEXEC.

APPENDIX I

TABLE 1: POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE EUROPEAN REGION IN 2022-2023 UNDER THE CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

Priority goal	Priority objective	Activities for the period 2022-2023	Rationale for proposed activities	Responsible or lead party	Expected output by 2023	Reporting mechanism/
1. Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner	1.2 Prioritize needs and emerging issues	1.1.2. Organize a regional mechanism to monitor developments in relation to "new food sources"	The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit called each government to take action towards resilient and sustainable food systems.	Regional coordinator, Member countries	Food safety and the implementation of Codex standards are included in the national pathways for sustainable food systems CCEURO members participate actively in the work related to new food sources	Report at CCEURO33
2. Develop standards based on science and Codex risk based principles.	2.2 Promote the submission and use of globally representative data in developing and reviewing Codex standards.	2.2.1. Identify a data-based pilot topic for subsequent agreed regional submission to the joint FAO/WHO expert committees	To assist members in the region to respond to Calls for data in support of the development of the scientific advice that underpins Codex work, particularly on issues of priority for the members and/or region	Regional coordinator, Member countries	Pilot topic identified and roll-out plan developed	Report at CCEURO33
3. Increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards	3.1. Raise the awareness of Codex standards	3.1.1. Conduct a communication campaign 3.1.2. Make CCEURO page (www.codexalimentarius.org) a reference page for all Members in the region 3.1.3 Organize multi-stakeholder seminars related to Codex (food business operators, politicians, civil society, scientists, academic & research) to promote use of Codex standards	To raise the awareness of Codex standards for increasing their use	Members countries, Codex Observers, Codex Secretariat, Regional Coordinator, FAO, and WHO Member countries	The level of activity of member countries in Codex	Number of stories/events/videos posted on the CCEURO page of the Codex website)
	3.2 Support initiatives to enable the understanding and implementation/application of Codex standards	3.2.1. Organize annual events dedicated to the World Food Safety Day, in particular in 2023, the 60 th anniversary year of Codex 3.2.2. Conduct a regional event dedicated to 60 th Anniversary of CAC and encourage national events 3.2.3 Promote implementation of the Code of Practice to Minimize and Contain Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance and Guidelines on Integrated	To enhance understanding about benefits of applying Codex standards. The fight against AMR is a regional and global priority	Members countries, Codex Observers, Codex Secretariat, Regional Coordinator, FAO, and WHO	Increased recognition of Codex Texts. Enhancement of the national action plans against AMR, taking benefit of the revision of the Code of Practice to Minimize and Contain Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance and Guidelines on Integrated Monitoring and	National and regional events held to celebrate WFSD (as posted on the Codex webpage) National Action Plans on AMR and Report at CCEURO33

Priority goal	Priority objective	Activities for the period 2022-2023	Rationale for proposed activities	Responsible or lead party	Expected output by 2023	Reporting mechanism/
		Monitoring and Surveillance of Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance			Surveillance of Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance	
	3.3. Recognize and promote the impact of Codex standards	3.3.1. Conduct a regional workshop to support participation in the new Global survey on use and impact of Codex standards 3.3.2 Undertake a case study, at the national and/or regional level, on a selected standard(s) (pilot studies)	Supporting Global survey on use and impact of Codex standards	Members countries, Codex Observers, Regional Coordinator, Codex Secretariat FAO, and WHO	Active participation of Countries members in the Global Survey on use and impact of Codex standards	Report on the regional workshop related to participation in the Global survey on use and impact of Codex standards Case study
	3.4 Identify needs and emerging issues	3.4.1. Include food safety as well as the most recent Codex standards in the national actions on the transformation of food systems.	The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit called each government to take action towards resilient and sustainable food systems.	Member countries	Food safety and the implementation of Codex standards are included in the national pathways for sustainable food systems CCEURO members participate actively in the work related to new food sources	Report at CCEURO33
4. Facilitate the participation of all Codex Members throughout the standard setting process	4.1. Enable sustainable national Codex structures in all Codex Member countries	4.1.1. Activate participation of eligible countries in CTF project.	Enhancing capacity building on Codex in developing countries	Members countries, Regional Coordinator, FAO, and WHO	Sustained involvement of National Structures of Codex Members will further strengthening regional position	Number of applications from eligible countries of the region to CTF The number of member countries participating in the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies as identified in the lists of participants
		4.1.2. Promote Establishment of National Steering Committee in Codex member countries as required	Establishing National Steering Committee will strengthen cross-sectoral coordination on Codex issues at national level			
		4.1.3. Support efforts to increase recognition of Codex work in national food strategy	Strengthening the status of Codex in member countries			
4.2 Increase sustainable and active participation of all Codex Members	4.2.1. Provide capacity building via trainings, webinars.	4.2.3. Develop opportunities for mentorship, and for sharing experience and knowledge among countries of the region	High level support and /or recognition of Codex standards	Members countries, Regional Coordinator, FAO, and WHO	Increase sustainable and active participation of all Codex Members	The number of middle-income country Members participating in the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies as identified in the lists of participants
4.3 Reduce barriers to active participation by developing countries.						