



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**  
**CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION**  
**AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS**

**Twenty-Fifth Session**

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**INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCFICS**

(Prepared by FAO, WHO and IPPC)

The present document is a report on the tools produced and made available to Member States and the relevant activities carried out since the last meeting of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export and Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS).

**A. ACTIVITIES OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO) and  
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)**

**FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool**

1. The FAO/WHO food control system assessment tool has been published in English and Spanish language and is available at:
  - English: <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca5334en/>
  - Spanish: <http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA5334ES>
2. The tool was also translated into Arabic, French and Russian and these language versions will be uploaded very soon on the FAO and WHO websites.
3. This tool allows Member Countries to assess, in structured, transparent and measurable ways, the performance of their food control system throughout the entire food chain, identify priority areas for capacity development, and measure and evaluate progress over time.
4. FAO has successfully concluded assessments in Malawi, Sudan and Tunisia in 2019, and further assessments have been initiated, or will be initiated in a very near future in The Emirate of Abu Dhabi (UAE), Azerbaijan, Belarus and Burkina Faso.
5. To facilitate widespread use of the FAO/WHO Assessment Tool, training is envisaged in order to develop a pool of reliable facilitators.

**Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)**

6. In order to provide scientific advice, joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting was held in 2018 in collaboration with OIE on Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance: Role of the Environment, Crops and Biocides, and meeting report (MRA 34) was published in 2019 <http://www.fao.org/3/ca6724en/ca6724en.pdf>.
7. The United Nations Interagency Coordination Group on AMR (IACG) was convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations after the UN High-Level Meeting on AMR. The IACG brought together partners across the UN, international organizations and individuals with expertise across human, animal and plant health, as well as the food, animal feed, trade, development and environment sectors, to formulate a blueprint for the fight against AMR. The Secretariat for the IACG was provided by WHO, with contributions from FAO and OIE. The IACG completed its mandate on 29 April 2019 upon the handover of its report to the UN Secretary-General. <https://www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/interagency-coordination-group/final-report/en/>
8. Specific recommendations were made for the Tripartite. The Secretary-General provided a follow-up report to the UN High-Level Meeting on AMR, which was published in May 2019. The report highlights progress made by Member States and the Tripartite Organizations in addressing antimicrobial resistance, noting that urgent support and investments are required to scale up responses at the national, regional, and global levels. <https://undocs.org/en/A/73/869>

9. Further to a two-year consultation, the Tripartite has developed a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Global Action Plan (GAP) with a harmonized list of indicators for monitoring at the national and global levels. The Tripartite is currently developing guidance to countries on developing national monitoring frameworks for NAPs through in country and country desk assessments. <https://www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/global-action-plan/monitoring-evaluation/tripartite-framework/en>

10. Given the transnational and multisectoral nature of AMR and the support requested from countries and other stakeholders, the Tripartite organizations are scaling up existing efforts to support countries to urgently counter this immediate threat through a One Health Approach and has launched the AMR-Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). The AMR-MPTF is a strategic, inter-sectoral, multi-stakeholder initiative inviting partnership and financing to leverage the Tripartite convening and coordinating power as well as mandates and technical expertise to mitigate the risk of AMR and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by catalyzing the implementation of One Health NAPs on AMR.

11. The FAO/OIE/WHO Tripartite organizations are establishing a standing Tripartite Joint Secretariat (TJS) to lead and coordinate the global response to AMR in close collaboration across and beyond the UN organizations. The TJS consolidates cooperation between FAO, OIE, and WHO drawing on their respective core mandates and comparative advantages to address needs of the global response across the One Health spectrum.

12. After consensus on the vision of a shared AMR data portal, the vision of The Tripartite Integrated Surveillance System (TISSA) has been reached at all levels by the Tripartite organizations and approved by Tripartite Executive meetings in 2017 and 2018, a feasibility study has been developed with technical details discussed and agreed by the Tripartite staff from the 3 organizations working on AMR surveillance-related issues on 30 April 2019. The TISSA platform represents an initial step towards an integrated system for surveillance on AMR and Antimicrobial Use (AMU), but there is flexibility in the current proposed IT structure to be broader and host other types of data, links and documents. The TISSA platform represents an opportunity to showcase the success of Tripartite collaboration. It will likely have great impact globally but also at country level by stimulating efforts to build up national databases on AMR/AMU.

#### **Early warning/alert and response to food safety emergencies**

13. The Secretariat of the joint FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), continues to develop and strengthen the Network. The INFOSAN Secretariat responds to more than 80 food safety emergencies each year, facilitating rapid communication among INFOSAN members across all regions. During such food safety incidents, the INFOSAN Secretariat relies on the swift action of national INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points to respond to information requests. Information shared through INFOSAN enables members around the world to implement appropriate risk management measures to prevent illness.

14. Membership to INFOSAN has continued to grow during the 2018/2019 biennium, increasing by 8%percentage points with notable growth in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and in the African Region; 89% of all WHO Member States now have an active INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point.

15. Efforts to strengthen partnerships with regional authorities and networks have continued with PulseNet International, the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN), the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) Emerging Risks Exchange Network (EREN), the European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Arab Food Safety Initiative for Trade Facilitation (Arab SAFE).

16. INFOSAN members' knowledge and capabilities to participate actively in the Network and respond effectively to food safety emergencies has been further developed through the delivery of several webinars, conducted by the INFOSAN Secretariat in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese as well as several national training workshops.

17. In 2018 and 2019, online emergency simulation exercises were run in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese for countries in the Americas, Africa and Asia, targeting INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points and National IHR Focal Points. Participation in such exercises tests national and international coordination mechanisms and bolsters preparedness for food safety emergency response.

18. In 2018, the INFOSAN Activity Report 2016/2017 (<http://www.fao.org/3/CA2714EN/ca2714en.pdf>) was published. During the 2016/2017 biennium, the INFOSAN Secretariat responded to 84 international food safety events, facilitating communication and sharing important food safety information among Network members. Membership has continued to grow; as of the end of 2017, 160 (82%) of 194 Member States have an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point registered, representing a 9-point increase during the 2016/2017 biennium. The largest gains have been observed in Africa and the Americas as a result of targeted efforts by INFOSAN in those regions. National capacities for food safety emergency management strengthened through a series of webinars and simulation exercises in multiple languages.

19. The INFOSAN Secretariat, in collaboration with the Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA), organized the Second Global INFOSAN Meeting from 9-11 December 2019 in the United Arab Emirates, with participation of more than 250 attendees from 130 countries. The objectives of the meeting were to bring members together to discuss recent network developments, strengthen relationships, exchange experiences and inspire INFOSAN's actions in the future. The meeting resulted in strengthening the sense of INFOSAN as a trusted community whereby to share information and collaborate during food safety emergencies. The report of the meeting is currently under finalization and will soon be available.

20. The new INFOSAN Secretariat Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca6988en/ca6988en.pdf>) was published in autumn 2019 and presented during the Second Global Meeting of INFOSAN. The document describes the objectives and methodology of the strategic thinking process, provides an overview of the history, current status and contextual factors influencing INFOSAN operations, and concludes with a description of six strategic objectives by outlining the key challenges as well as actions to be taken by the INFOSAN Secretariat to achieve these objectives.

21. The new INFOSAN Members' Guide "Version 2019" was also presented during the Second Global Meeting of INFOSAN. The document will serve as a functional reference guide for the members, as it covers a general overview of the INFOSAN operational aspects around the communication of international food safety incidents. The document is currently under finalization.

### **Food Fraud**

22. FAO organized an informal workshop in November 2019 to reflect on different perspectives about food fraud (regulatory frameworks; inter-institutional cooperation; analytical considerations; information and intelligence sharing; approaches for the food chain operators; country/regional approaches) as a way to inform FAO further activities in that area. A summary report is being developed and can be made available on request to FAO after its finalization (planned for April 2020).

23. Following up to the keynote address on food fraud at CCEURO31 (2019), and agreement on the need for enhanced action and increased cooperation across sectors and countries to address food fraud, a regional study and a meeting on food fraud is being organized for the last quarter of 2020 in collaboration with National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority of Romania.

24. Results from a WHO survey of INFOSAN members provided global perspectives on food fraud and were published in 2019. The survey covered food fraud prevention, management, education, and information sharing and 175 responses were received. Many respondents engage in food fraud prevention (70%) or are responsible for food fraud incident response (74%). Nearly all respondents acknowledged a desire for more guidance and information on best practices in managing the full range of "food safety events involving food fraud" (97%), but also for prevention of such events (97%), indicating a need to provide technical support beyond acute incident response. The scope of food fraud covered in the survey comprised the full range of fraudulent activities, including the addition of adulterant-substances, tampering (including mislabeling), theft, smuggling, gray market/diversion, and counterfeiting (intellectual property rights). Key needs identified include capacity-building/education, a platform for information sharing and utilization of INFOSAN as an interagency/intergovernmental collaboration point.

### **High-level advocacy activities for food safety**

#### **International FAO/WHO/AU Food Safety Conference and International Forum on Food Safety and Trade**

25. FAO and WHO in collaboration with African Union convened the First FAO/WHO/AU International Food Safety Conference (Addis Ababa, 12 and 13 February 2019), and co-organized the International Forum on Food Safety and Trade (Geneva, 23 and 24 April 2019), in collaboration with the World Trade Organization (WTO). The participants in these events discussed how to align food safety strategies and approaches across sectors and borders to tackle emerging food safety challenges resulting from ongoing changes in climate as well as in global food production and supply systems and discussed more in-depth trade related issues of food safety.

#### **World Food Safety Day**

26. This first UN World Food Safety Day (WFSD) was celebrated on 7 June 2019, while the next campaign will on 7 June 2020. FAO and WHO facilitate Member States' efforts to celebrate the WFSD and alternate the lead. FAO led the preparation of the first celebration in 2019, and WHO will lead the 2020 WFSD.

27. Following the success of the 2019 campaign, the 2020 WFSD will reinforce the call made by the Addis Ababa Conference and the Geneva Forum in 2019 to strengthen commitment to food safety. Under the theme "Food safety, everyone's business", the action-oriented campaign will promote global food safety awareness and call upon countries and decision makers, the private sector, civil society, UN organizations and the general public to take action to prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks and decrease the burden of foodborne diseases.

## **WHO Governing body**

28. Following the conferences held in Addis Ababa and Geneva, Member States have requested WHO to prepare a report on food safety for discussion at the 146th Session of the Executive Board (EB). The report has highlighted the substantial burden of foodborne disease and the WHO's response, together with emerging challenges due to changes in food systems. At the EB Member States noted the report and agreed on a resolution named "Strengthening Efforts on Food Safety", requesting WHO, among other things (a) to update, in coordination with FAO and in consultation with Member States and OIE, the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety to address current and emerging challenges, incorporating new technologies and including innovative strategies for strengthening food safety systems and provide a report to the 75th World Health Assembly (WHA) (May 2022); (b) to explore with the FAO, a method to coordinate their strategic efforts on food safety and provide a report on this proposed method to the 75th WHA, and through the FAO Director General to the FAO governing bodies, as appropriate.

29. WHO in close collaboration with FAO is currently working on a road map for the development of the Global Food Safety Strategy.

### **FAO guidance on risk-based inspection**

30. FAO continues its update of existing and the production of new guidance on risk-based inspection, as part of the Food Safety and Quality series. The most recent issue in the series is "Principles for risk-based meat inspection" which has recently been published in English and is available at <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5465en/ca5465en.pdf>. Its translation into French is ongoing and publication is expected very soon. Moreover, drafting of new guidance is ongoing with regard to:

- Risk categorization of food businesses as the basis for improved inspection planning,
- Risk based fish inspection (update of an earlier publication)

### **Regional and national activities**

31. During the past year, FAO and WHO have continued to implement a large number of capacity development activities covering a wide range of food safety topics in countries around the globe.

32. In the Africa region, FAO conducted more than 20 training workshops on a range of subjects including risk analysis principles, risk profiling, microbiological criteria, and food safety emergency response. FAO supports 10 countries to strengthen their capacity in participating in the work of Codex Alimentarius through the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund. A regional project, funded by the European Union and implemented in partnership with COMESA is currently implemented to strengthen capacities in COMESA member states in the area of science based standard setting and risk-based inspection processes.

33. In the Near East region, FAO activities were focusing at strengthening food control systems, in order to facilitate regional trade in food, while increasing protection of public health from foodborne diseases. As a response to countries requests, FAO designed and implemented activities related to:

- i) Use of a common approach for assessing national food control systems (FAO/WHO food control system assessment tool) to measure performance, identify needs and inform strategic activities for improvement at system level (assessments in Sudan and Tunisia were funded by a SIDA/UNIDO project);
- ii) development and use of regional Codex guides to promote knowledge, strengthen national Codex infrastructures and operations to improve participation in this international standards setting process (activities funded by a SIDA/UNIDO project),
- iii) support regulatory authorities to develop a risk-based food import framework according to the principles and guidance in the FAO Risk-Based Imported Food Control Manual (2016).

34. In the Asia and Pacific region, FAO is piloting the development and adoption of food safety indicators for domestic and imported food. Specific indicators have been validated in four countries and a regional guidance document is under preparation. Three regional and more than ten national workshops on Codex-related topics including risk-based categorization and inspection of imported food using a One Health approach, formulation of relevant standards and SOPs, risk-analysis frameworks and meaningful participation at Codex meetings were held. Food safety activities or projects were implemented with ASEAN member states, China, Cook Islands, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka.

35. In the Europe region, FAO conducted a series national and regional activities addressing a range of issues, including improved operation of the national food control system focusing on inspection, monitoring and laboratory components as well as strengthening the capacities of national food control authorities and food producing enterprises for the implementation of risk analysis framework. In Tajikistan, a National Food Safety

Strategy has been developed and a training on imported food border control procedures was conducted. Food control system capacity of Azerbaijan was improved with trainings and expert advice in particular on annual control plans, risk communication and national Codex capacities. Moldovan national food control authorities and food producing enterprises strengthened their capacities for the implementation of risk analysis framework. With the support of FAO, Belarus is assessing their capacities by FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool, building capacities on risk-based inspection, and facilitating market access of food products by improving the national Codex Capacities and compliance with WTO SPS TBT agreement. Ongoing work in Armenia is supporting the competent authorities to establish risk categorization and risk-based inspection trainings for the competent authorities, in particular to meat sector. The AMR project in the region is ongoing (ATLASS implementation, trainings), and a regional AMR and Food Safety conference was organized in December 2019 in Russia.

36. In the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, several activities were implemented by FAO in relation to AMR to collect relevant information and assist countries in the implementation of their national action plans. To date, 8 countries have applied a FAO RLC qualitative risk assessment methodology to address AMR and identify gaps in the terrestrial and aquatic animal production sectors. This methodology will be applied in 2 African countries in 2020. The EU-funded Tripartite project “Working together to fight AMR” will initiate activities in 7 South American countries shortly. The regional Tripartite (OIE, PAHO/WHO and FAO) will get together in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 3-5 March 2020 for a project coordination and management meeting before the project kickoff meeting in Brussels on April 2-3, 2020. FAO and PAHO (PANAFTOSA) will convene a meeting of the Food Safety Risk Analysis Network (FSRisk) during May 2020, in Santiago, Chile. This meeting is funded by STDF and has the objective to develop a South-South capacity building project in risk analysis for 9 countries in Latin America.

37. In the WHO African Region, capacities of laboratory scientists from 11 countries (Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Eswatini, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) were further strengthened on integrated surveillance of antimicrobial resistance of foodborne bacteria using a “One Health approach”. In addition, a pool of national trainers in Zambia and Zimbabwe were trained in the implementation of the Global protocol for Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase surveillance concurrently in the food chain, humans and the environment. Implementation of AGISAR supported projects on integrated surveillance of foodborne antimicrobial resistance in Ghana, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The capacity of regulatory officers from Ghana were enhanced for conducting risk profiling related to food safety and a food safety situation analysis was conducted in Lesotho.

38. In the WHO South East Asia Region, in-country training for capacity building on standard setting procedures and process was conducted to review and provide feedback on specific subject of Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems in Bhutan and Nepal under a Codex Trust Funds (CTF) project. This workshop was facilitated by experts and resource persons from WHO, Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Export council of India. The project will be facilitating joint position and intervention during discussion on draft Codex standards on National Food Control System. The project will support participation of Bhutan and Nepal in the 2020 CCFICS meeting.

<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/news-and-events/news-details/en/c/1205017/>

39. In the WHO European Region, progress was made in Kyrgyzstan towards strengthening the policy and legal framework for food safety and quality in line with Codex Alimentarius. This included adoption of 35 Codex standards into the national food legislation. Turkmenistan is in the process of harmonizing national food standards with Codex Alimentarius standards and recommendations as a means to protect public health and improve food exports.

40. In the WHO Region of Americas, PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO conducted trainings on Risk-based Food Inspection for government representatives from Suriname, Saba(NL), Belize, Bermuda, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, a manual on risk-based food inspection for the Caribbean has been published and is being adapted/adopted by the countries to improve their current inspection systems (the manual does not target imports or exports explicitly but mention some requirements) in the Caribbean, <http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/handle/123456789/51775>. In Latin America, PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO convened a meeting with country representatives from Latin America and Central America (Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Uruguay and Comité Veterinario Permanente del Conosur (CVP)) to agree on the development of a risk-based food inspection manual aligned to Latin America country needs. It was agreed to develop a series of guidelines to facilitate the implementation of risk-based inspection at different levels: establishments, restaurants, imports, exports etc. This activity is currently ongoing. In Central America, OIRSA (Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria) developed a generic manual on risk analysis and a manual on risk-based food inspection. OIRSA has also trained inspectors in Central America through virtual trainings.

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**B. ACTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC)****Electronic certification**

41. The International Plant Protection Convention's ePhyto Solution is fully operational; this includes both the Hub, which countries with their own national electronic certification system can connect to directly, and the Generic National System (GeNS) which is a web-based system developed by the IPPC's IT partner, the United Nations International Computing Centre, for countries without their own national system. At the present time, more than eighty countries are either using the system "live" (i.e., exchanging phytosanitary certificates in digital form as a normal part of doing business), or in the process of getting ready to do so this year. Entities exchanging as a part of normal business include the United States, Argentina, South Africa, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Samoa, Fiji, and the European Commission. At present, the system is handling approximately 11,000 certificates per month effortlessly, with the capacity to handle (in the current configuration) up to 100,000 certificates per day. The system was built with initial resources provided by the Standards and Trade Development Facility specifically to facilitate the digital exchange of certificates, initially phytosanitary certificates, but any certificate once coded in XML can be exchanged. For additional information, please visit: [www.ephytoexchange.org](http://www.ephytoexchange.org)