

**PROJECT DOCUMENT**  
**for New Work to revise *the Guidelines on Sampling* (CXG 50 – 2004)**  
**(For approval by CAC)**

**THE PURPOSES AND THE SCOPE OF THE STANDARD**

The purpose of this proposed new work is to produce a revision of the General Guidelines on Sampling (CXG 50-2004) (GL 50) and to improve user friendliness.

**RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS**

The purpose of GL 50 is to help those responsible for sampling to select sampling plans that are appropriate for statistical inspections under specifications laid down by Codex standards.

The Guidelines are primarily aimed at Codex committees which select from the plans recommended. The Guidelines can also be used, if applicable, by governments in case of international trade disputes. The current Guidelines (69 pages) cover, firstly, general concepts of food sampling, applicable in any situations, and later sections cover certain situations of statistical food control, for which certain sampling plans have been selected. The Guidelines were adopted by the Commission in 2004 and there have been no subsequent amendments.

Some commodity committees and some members of CCMAS have expressed the view that the current Guidelines were difficult to understand and apply. The aim of the revision is to provide a simpler more understandable guidance.

**MAIN ASPECTS TO BE COVERED IN THE PROPOSED REVISION**

The proposed approach will result in a shorter document containing understandable and educational guidance, along with links to sampling plan apps. The proposed sections will cover:

- Introduction
- Concepts of sampling
- Guidance on specification of sampling plans for foods
- Sampling plan tools (containing links to apps of sampling plans tools, rather than the larger document full of tables, plots and formulae)
- Other identified technical information e.g. measurement error<sup>1</sup>, sampling of bulk materials, sampling of non-homogeneous lots
- Links to other sources of scientifically valid sampling plans.

The revised GL 50 will align with established Codex principles for sampling plans as set out in the *Codex Procedural Manual*, and in *Principles for the Use of Sampling and Testing in International Food Trade* (CXG 83-2013) (GL 83).

**AN ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORK PRIORITIES***General criterion*

*Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries.*

The revision of the Guidelines is intended to give effect to the principles of sampling expressed in GL 83, in particular:

- fairness towards both the consumers and the producers, as well as importing and exporting countries;

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<sup>1</sup> Measurement error is not the same as measurement uncertainty referred to in CXG54-2004

- scientifically based, taking into account the existing Codex standards, appropriate to the commodity and lot or consignment to be sampled, and fit for intended purposes and applied consistently;
- commensurate with the potential loss posed to consumers from inappropriate acceptance of poor quality product and the potential loss posed to producers from inappropriate rejection of good quality product.

Clearer guidance, along with access to sampling plan apps and educational resources, will make the Guidelines more usable by all countries.

*Criteria applicable to general subjects*

- (a) *Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.*

Countries take various approaches to sampling according to national circumstances. The improved Guidelines will enable development of more suitable sampling plans for Codex commodity standards, and assist national authorities to select appropriate sampling plans.

- (b) *Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work.*

This project envisages a comprehensive revision of a major document. Accordingly the work will be conducted in stages with priorities as described below.

- (c) *Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body (ies).*

Substantial work on sampling has been undertaken by other international organizations over many years. The revised Guidelines will make full use of this work, and will provide references and links to it.

- (d) *Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization.*

The situations in which food must be sampled are very diverse. Nevertheless general guidance is needed to assist those responsible for selecting sampling plans to make an informed decision.

- (e) *Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue.*

Sampling plans are needed for any inspections that may be conducted against specifications laid down by Codex standards. Similarly national authorities need sampling plans for inspection of foods against national specifications.

## **RELEVANCE TO THE CODEX STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

This proposal for new work is within the scope of the Codex Strategic Vision Statement 'To be the pre-eminent international food standards-setting body to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade'.

The specific nature of this proposed new work aligns with the Codex 2014–2019 Strategic Plan:

Strategic goal 1:	Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues
Objective 1.1:	Establish new and review existing Codex standards, based on priorities of the CAC.
Activities 1.1.1:	Consistently apply decision-making and priority setting criteria across Committees to ensure that the standards and work areas of highest priority are progressed in a timely manner.

Activities 1.1.2: Strengthen the critical review process to improve standards monitoring.

## **INFORMATION ON THE RELATION BETWEEN THE PROPOSAL AND OTHER EXISTING CODEX DOCUMENTS AS WELL AS OTHER ONGOING WORK**

A list of issued Codex documents that relate to this proposal are:

1. Principles for the Use of Sampling and Testing in International Food Trade (CXG 83-2013)
2. Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems (CXG 47-2003)

3. Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Food Safety for Application by Governments (CXG 62-2007).
4. Recommended Methods of Sampling for the Determination of Pesticide Residues for Compliance with MRLs (CXG 33-1999)
5. Guidelines for the Design and Implementation of National Regulatory Food Safety Assurance Programme Associated with the Use of Veterinary Drugs in Food Producing Animals (CXG 71-2009)
6. General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (GSCTFF, CXS 193-1995)
7. Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods (CXG 21 – 1997)
8. Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems (CXG 47-2003)
9. Guidelines for Settling Disputes over Analytical (test) Results (CXG 70-2009)
10. Information Document on Practical Examples on the selection of appropriate sampling plans.
11. Guidelines on Measurement Uncertainty (CXG 54-2004).

There is no other ongoing work in this area in Codex.

#### **IDENTIFICATION OF ANY REQUIREMENT FOR AND AVAILABILITY OF EXPERT SCIENTIFIC ADVICE**

Expert scientific advice will be needed to review the new sections (e.g. plans for inspection of bulk consignments) and the sampling plan apps that will be developed. CCMAS representatives may be asked to seek such advice from consultation with statistical experts in their own country.

In addition, the work developing apps consists of two parts, translating published material into apps and doing the research to develop and publish theory to fill identified gaps.

Some statistical expertise is needed for the first activity and a lot for the second. Work on these sections will be undertaken by the eWG. There will still however, be a need for involvement of experts who may be external to CCMAS, for some of these work items.

New Zealand is actively working on some of these items, including the introduction, the general guidance, sampling plan tools etc.

#### **IDENTIFICATION OF ANY NEED FOR TECHNICAL INPUT TO THE STANDARD FROM EXTERNAL BODIES SO THAT THIS CAN BE PLANNED FOR**

It is not envisaged that technical input will be sought from external bodies.

#### **THE PROPOSED TIMEFRAME**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>
CCMAS 39 (2018)	Agree to start new work
CAC 2018	Approval of the new work
CAC 2020	Adoption at Step 5
CAC 2021	Adoption at Step 8