



FACILITATING EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN CODEX



The Codex Alimentarius is a collection of food standards, guidelines and codes of practice recognized by the World Trade Organization since 1995 as the “benchmark” standards for national food safety regulations and the basis for international food trade – they are science-based standards, adopted through global consensus. The legitimacy and universality of Codex standards depend on the effective participation of all Codex membership. FAO’s Food safety capacity development activities support the ability of developing countries and countries in transition to participate more effectively in Codex.

What are the Capacities required for effective participation in Codex?

ROBUST NATIONAL CODEX POSITIONS & EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN CODEX

“Codex-specific” Capacities

- › knowledge of Codex rules and procedures;
- › well-functioning national Codex Contact Point;
- › effective negotiation skills and strategic interventions.

National expertise in food safety and its regulation

- › understanding of and ability to apply the risk analysis framework;
- › experience of implementing food control activities within a well-managed food control system;
- › technical/scientific expertise in different food safety related disciplines;

- › access to adequate and reliable national food safety data;
- › mechanisms that assure effective communication with food industry and with consumers on food safety issues;
- › mechanisms that optimize the involvement of the academic and research communities in food safety.



Developing capacities

› FAO supports capacity development through a wide range of activities both upstream and downstream of standard-setting:

- › developing capacities of countries to contribute with data and expertise to the development of scientific opinions that underpin Codex discussions;

- › supporting improved national consultation on Codex issues;
- › supporting national capacities for implementing and enforcing food standards harmonized with Codex.





Impacts of recent Projects – Selected examples

- › **Strengthened national Codex Committees** – As a result of FAO support during 2010-2011, actions have been taken in Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Laos, Mongolia, Republic of Moldova and Partner States of the East African Community to improve the organization of Codex work at national level thus allowing them to better develop national positions on Codex issues and to effectively handle national standardization issues.
- › **National standards harmonized with Codex and enhanced national food safety standard-setting** – Through FAO assistance, over the period 2010-2011, national authorities in Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands have reviewed national food standards and harmonized with Codex.
- › **Evidence-based positions on food safety issues** – FAO and WHO are conducting a project to assess types and levels of mycotoxin contamination in sorghum in four major sorghum producing/exporting African countries (Ethiopia, Sudan, Mali and Burkina Faso). The project will inform ongoing discussions in the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF) on the need for a Codex maximum level for mycotoxins in sorghum.



Many training programmes have been implemented using FAO/WHO training packages to strengthen knowledge of Codex rules and procedures and improve national planning for Codex participation and preparedness of Codex delegations.



Essential References:

- › **FAO/WHO training package** in English, Spanish, French, and Russian.
- › **FAO/WHO e-learning course “Enhancing participation in Codex activities”**, a self-paced course available on line and in CD ROM in En, Fr, Sp.

The **FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund**, operational since March 2004, complements FAO’s capacity development efforts mainly by providing direct support to delegates’ attendance at Codex meetings and also providing some funding for FAO/WHO training aimed at enhancing the quality of participation.

“FAO food safety projects and training have been very important in helping build our national food control system. Our improved understanding of food safety and food regulation allows us to participate more fully in Codex and to benefit more from it”.

Ousmane Touré
Director General the ANSSA, Mali

