



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
Eighty-second Session
Virtual**

Codex Strategic Plan 2020-25 - Update

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat)

1. Introduction

1.1 The 42nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC42) adopted the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 as proposed by the 77th Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC77). Goal 3 “Increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards” has three objectives, of which objective 3.3 “Recognise and promote the impact of Codex standards” includes as an outcome “Having a mechanism/tool to measure the impact of Codex standards developed and piloted”.

1.2 The Secretariat, in collaboration with FAO and WHO evaluation offices, started work on developing a mechanism to measure the use and impact of Codex standards in 2021. A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to provide data about the use and impact of Codex texts was developed with a view to obtain information that can help Members and Observers better understand the impact, or potential for impact, of Codex texts. The term “Codex texts” was used rather than “Codex standards” as an encompassing term for all Codex standards, Guidelines and Codes of Practice.

1.3 The first phase of the development of the mechanism focused on data gathering and analysis. A series of interviews and a focus group were conducted with key stakeholders, and a theory of change was drafted and validated by the stakeholders consulted to form a basis for the M&E framework. Of note is the fact that no existing data set was found to be readily available as an information source on the use and impact of Codex texts.

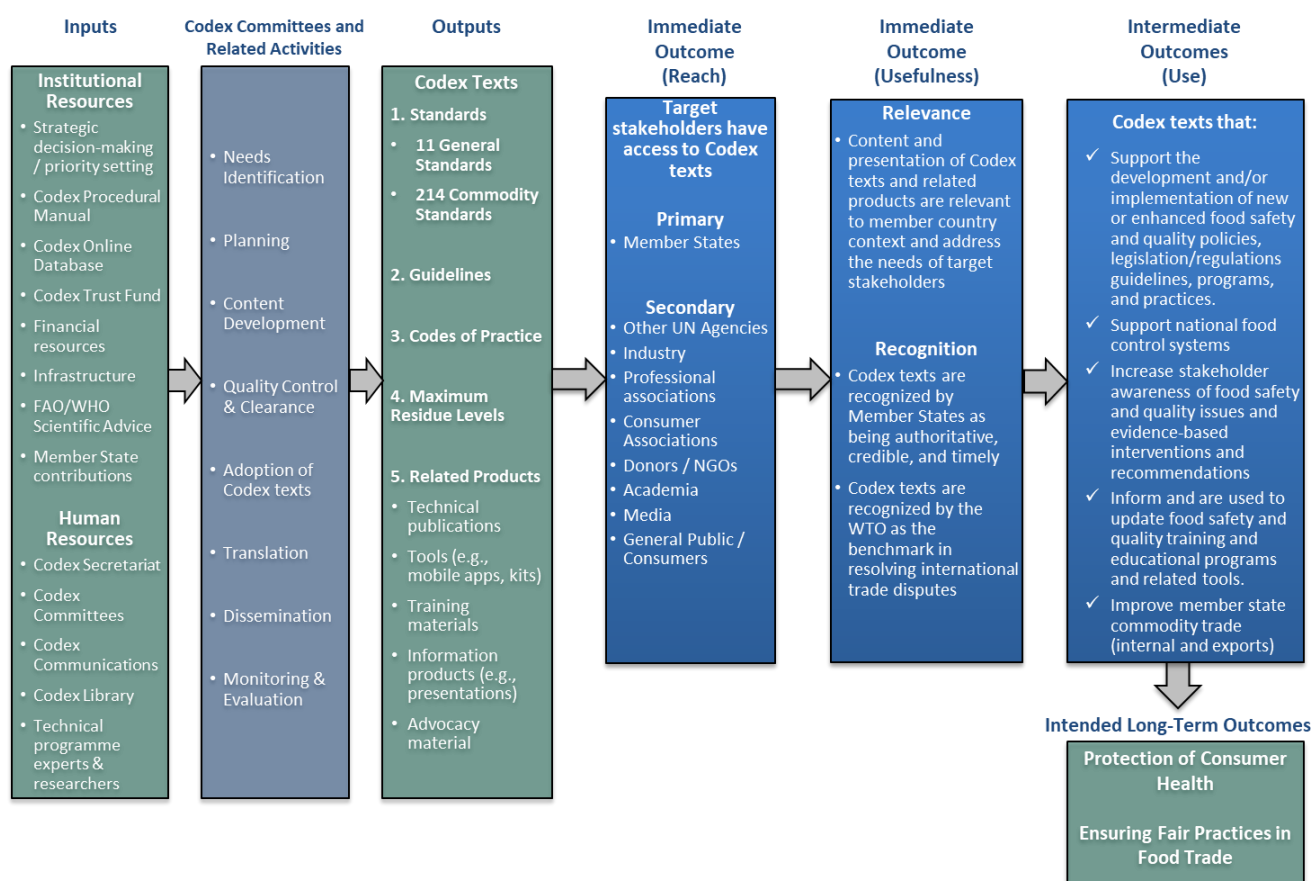
1.4 Following the data gathering and analysis step, several options to build the mechanism were analysed and the M&E framework was further refined. Based on the results of the analysis of the options, recommendations were made on the way forward to build the mechanism.

1.5 Below is a summary of the work undertaken during the first phase, including the proposed way forward for the second phase.

2. Theory of Change – Codex M&E Framework

2.1 The theory of change for the Codex M&E Framework is summarized in the Logic Model below (Figure 1) and identifies five broad measurement areas (i.e., Outputs (Codex texts), Reach, Usefulness, Use and Contribution to Intended Long-Term Outcomes) that are intended to serve as the basis of performance planning, monitoring, and reporting.

Figure 1: Logic Model - Use and Impact of Codex Texts



2.2 The result for reach is "target stakeholders have access to Codex texts". The M&E Framework assesses the policies and procedures that are in place to develop dissemination strategies, distribution information (i.e., push and pull), as well as factors such as language.

2.3 There are two result statements for usefulness, one related to relevance and the other is related to recognition. Regarding relevance, the result statement is, "the content and presentation of Codex texts and related products are relevant to member country context and address the needs of target stakeholders". The second result statement is related to recognition, and is, "Codex texts are recognized by Member States as being authoritative, credible, and timely" and "Codex texts are recognized by the WTO as the benchmark in resolving international trade disputes".

2.4 The result statement for use is related to the application of knowledge gained by Target Stakeholders in the use and impact of Codex texts. From the use of Codex texts in these varied areas, the theory of change assumes that in the long-term, there will be improved consumer health and fair practices in food trade.

3. Analysis of Options for the Codex M&E Framework

3.1 Options were analysed, based on a review of existing M&E frameworks for similar normative work within the UN system. These had to be sustainable and not excessively demanding on either the Secretariat or the Members. In consultation with the project Advisory Group, it was determined that six potential approaches be examined for supporting the Codex M&E Framework as follows:

1) **Extension of Surveys** – replacing existing regional or Codex Committees surveys;

- 2) **External Trade Support** – working with the WTO Secretariat to identify trade matters where Codex texts were used to solve disputes or prevent them;
- 3) **Country Assessment Capability** – establishing and supporting a decentralized, targeted assessment of use of Codex standards;
- 4) **Establishment of an Oversight Organisation** – creating an oversight organisation for following up on implementation of Codex texts and identification of best practices;
- 5) **Big Data Analytics** – developing artificial intelligence-based resources to support need to conduct big data analytics to identify use of Codex texts; and
- 6) **Comprehensive Well-Funded M&E Mechanism** – establishing a structured monitoring of implementation of the standards, at global level.

3.2 It should be noted that the options above are not mutually exclusive. The options were analysed in consultation with the advisory group, using the criteria below to ascertain that they were fit for purpose, and fulfilled the conditions above:

- Level of complexity/difficulty to implement
- Degree of utility to the Members
- Likely cost implications to implement and maintain
- Degree of impact on confidence in Codex processes
- Ability to leverage best practices
- Degree of alignment with the Codex Strategic Plan
- Likelihood of continued sustainability
- Extent of data provided for M&E purposes

3.3 The analysis identified that implementing and sustaining options (3) Country Assessment Capability, (4) Establishment of an Oversight Organisation and (5) Big Data Analytics was likely to be difficult and resource intensive to implement and sustain over time, whereas options (1) Extension of surveys, and (2) External trade support, would require lower input and resources and therefore could be more sustainable while still providing reliable data to feed into the M&E framework. The potential cost of Option (6) Comprehensive well-funded M&E mechanism at a global level was found to be high. However, the review also considered smaller scale approaches under this option e.g. tailored case studies, which were found to allow a more flexible management of size and scope.

3.4 The case study approach would also provide a route through which observer organisation data sources might be harnessed and used. A possible collaboration between Members and Observers on case studies could also contribute to the objective 3.2 outcomes “Increased use of Codex standards in the development of national food standards and regulations” and “Increased use of Codex standards by the food trade”. Observers may also offer in-kind support (e.g. through provision of data and analytical resource) where they have access to data that demonstrates the impact of Codex standards through their deployment in food trade.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Based on the review and analysis undertaken it is proposed that the development of the M & E framework as a means of assessing the use and impact of Codex Standards progress in three directions:

- A survey on the use of selected Codex texts and their impact to all Codex members be developed and issued annually
- Work with the WTO Secretariat to explore a collaborative monitoring and reporting framework in which Codex Texts have been highlighted in trade negotiations, SPS, TBT notifications, specific trade concerns, and disputes, but also for disputes that were prevented thanks to Codex texts.
- Tailored case studies to assess the use and impact of specific Codex texts within the context of a Member Country or observer.

4.2 Additional resources will be required to support this work, in particular the pursuit of case studies.

5. Recommendations:

5.1 CCEXEC82 is invited to:

- a. Note the information provided;
- b. Endorse the proposed approach for building the Codex M&E Framework; and
- c. Encourage Members and Observers to identify potential resources to support this work.