



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Forty-fourth Session

ACTIVITIES OF THE CODEX TRUST FUND

1. Introduction

1.1 This document provides an update on the operations and activities of the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) at secretariat and country project level as of August 2021.

2. CTF secretariat updates

2.1 The CTF secretariat has seen a change in personnel with both positions of CTF Administrator and Administrative Assistant having been replaced by new staff in January and August 2021, respectively. Two months of overlap between the Administrators at the beginning of the year allowed for a comprehensive handover and the smooth continuation of CTF operations.

2.2 Building on preparations in 2020, the secretariat has continued the revision of the CTF website with the goal of establishing a more user-friendly and dynamic virtual presence. A multilingual website providing more comprehensive information to countries interested in CTF support and additional information on ongoing projects is in an advanced stage and will be released in successive phases in the second half of 2021.

3. Governance

3.1 FAO, WHO and the Codex Secretariat have continued their regular CTF Steering Committee meetings to provide strategic guidance and take decisions on the core activities of the CTF. As of August 2021, the Steering Committee has met six times in 2021. Decisions for Round 5 of CTF support were made in May 2021 (see further details below).

4. Support provided to countries

4.1. Continued disruptions through COVID-19

4.1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have an impact on the activities supported by the CTF in 2021. Beneficiary countries have continued to face challenges in implementing their projects, particularly concerning activities requiring travel, as well as in-person meetings and trainings.

4.1.2 The CTF Secretariat has been working with FAO and WHO regional focal points to mitigate challenges to the extent possible and support countries in the adjustment of their implementation plans, using virtual tools where feasible while revising or postponing activities that cannot be implemented under the current conditions, including local safety protocols.

4.1.3 Despite applied mitigation measures, implementation plans are continuing to face delays of several months, which has led several countries to request the extension of their approved project timelines. These requests have been granted by the CTF secretariat.

4.2. CTF support through project coordination and trainings

4.2.1 The CTF Secretariat, working closely with FAO and WHO regional focal points for the various Codex regions, continued providing support to countries both in the implementation of approved project and in applying for first time CTF support. FAO and WHO regional focal points have supported the coordination of project implementation and provided advice on various project components, including in the preparation of workshops and the selection of experts for training activities. FAO and WHO regional offices have further organized training and mentoring support for the preparation of project proposals, building on the experience of countries that have been successful in applying for CTF support.

4.3. Status of project implementation

4.3.1 Below a summary of project implementation status by funding cycle as of August 2021:

- Round 1: all projects are under implementation and expected to conclude by the end of 2021
- Round 2: all projects are under implementation
- Round 3: all but one project have started implementation
- Round 4: countries are in the process of completing contracting / starting project implementation
- Round 5: preparation of contracts is underway

4.4. Decisions on funding: applications for Round 5 of CTF support

4.4.1 15 applications were received for Round 5 of CTF support by the 15 December 2020 deadline. The Technical Review Group appraised the quality of applications and provided recommendations for funding to the CTF Steering Committee. In May 2021, the Steering Committee approved funding for the applications submitted by the following countries (the final decision on one additional application was still pending in August 2021):

- Ethiopia (CCAFRICA)
- Eritrea (CCAFRICA)
- Guinea-Bissau (CCAFRICA)
- Liberia (CCAFRICA)
- Maldives (CCASIA)
- Timor-Leste (CCASIA)

4.5. Preparations for CTF Round 6 of CTF support

4.5.1 54 countries are eligible to apply for first time CTF support in 2021 starting 1 September 2021. Application for Round 6 of CTF can be submitted to the CTF until 17 December 2021.

4.5.2 In June and July 2021, the CTF secretariat, in collaboration with FAO and WHO regional focal points, held regional webinars in the CCAFRICA, CCASIA, CCLAC and CCNASWP regions to prepare eligible and interested countries for their application for CTF support¹. The trainings included an introduction to the FAO/WHO Diagnostic Tool for assessing status of national Codex programmes and the presentation of key elements and resources to consider for the drafting of robust applications for CTF support. The webinars also included presentations from countries that were successful in applying for CTF support in earlier rounds. Country representatives shared lessons learned and good practices to ensure a successful self-diagnosis to inform a strong application.

5. Financial status and outlook

5.1 The financial planning of the CTF Fund is closely linked to the implementation plans of supported country projects, which is why delays in project implementation have also had an impact on the cashflow of the trust fund. The CTF secretariat has been working with donors to adjust the end date of ongoing project grants to ensure the continuation of country support for planned activities that needed to be put on hold temporarily.

5.2 The table below provides an overview of the financial status of the CTF as of 31 December 2020. With the ongoing uncertainties due to the severity of the impact of COVID-19 on individual country work plans, it is difficult to present an accurate forecast of 2021 expenditures. However, it is expected that 2021 expenditures will surpass the 2020 figures. From the perspective of August 2021, the CTF will be in a comfortable financial situation for 2022.

Table 1: CTF financial status 31.12.2020

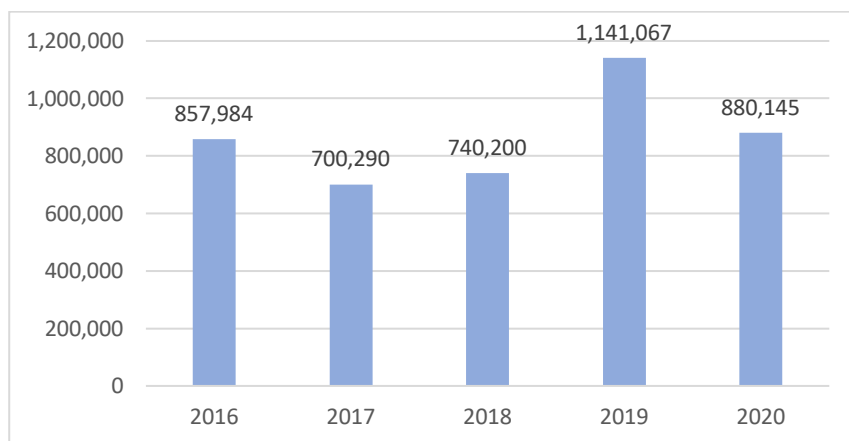
Balance, income, expenditure 2020	US\$
Balance carried over from 2019	2,567,222
Contributions received in 2020	274,988

¹ One training webinar on the drafting of robust CTF applications was still pending in August 2021 and scheduled for September 2021.

Expenditure in 2020, including PSC	880,145
Balance end 2020	1,962,065

The development of total expenditures of the CTF-2 from its inception in 2016 until 2020 is outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: CTF total expenditures 2016-2020 (US\$)



6. CTF donor meeting

6.1 A donor meeting was held in June 2020 to provide a status update of the CTF and to discuss how the CTF can best continue to support countries in engaging most effectively in Codex work. Donors expressed their continued support for the work of the CTF, discussed how to address current challenges and welcomed the opportunity of the upcoming mid-term evaluation to provide recommendations on how the operations and processes of the CTF can be best aligned with the needs of countries for the second half of the CTF-2 mandate.

7. CTF mid-term evaluation

7.1 The CTF project document foresees an independent external evaluation to be carried out mid-way through the CTF-2, which has a mandate from 2016 to 2027. The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the CTF2 in view of the Trust Fund's ability and effectiveness to deliver its mandate and best serve its beneficiaries, also considering new challenges arising from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the emerging new working environment. Recommendations deriving from the review will be used to consider potential changes to the operations and processes of the CTF to best serve its target countries.

7.2 The CTF secretariat has worked on the development of the terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation and aims to issue a request for expression of interest (EOI) to identify a suitable service provider to conduct the evaluation by Q4 2021. It is expected that the review be completed by mid-2022.