



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**  
**Seventy-seventh Session**

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**REGULAR REVIEW OF CODEx WORK MANAGEMENT: 2019-2020 THEME**

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to discuss the focus of the 2019-20 regular review of Codex work management.
- 1.2. Following the request of CAC39, the Codex Secretariat regularly review Codex work management as part of the monitoring of the Strategic Plan 2014-2019 and inform CCEXEC on the findings, which then makes recommendations on follow-up actions for consideration by the CAC<sup>1</sup>. To date three regular reviews of Codex work management have been undertaken, with a focus on *Electronic Working Groups (EWGs) (2016-2017)*; *Collaboration between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other International Standard-setting Organizations (2017-2018)*; and the *Critical Review Function of the Executive Committee (2018-2019)*.
- 1.3. CAC39 noted that Members could identify specific topics for improvement, which could be brought to the attention of CCEXEC and CAC<sup>2</sup>. This approach would also allow the Commission to explore alternative options for improving Codex work management and practices. A suggestion from Australia in 2018 was to analyse *Physical Working Groups - the advantages and disadvantages of holding them between the sessions of Committees*.
- 1.4. CCEXEC76 when selecting the *Critical Review Function of the Executive Committee* as the topic for the regular review of Codex work management for 2018-2019, recalled that critical review by CCEXEC facilitated the work of CAC, and noted that in subsequent meetings of CCEXEC, this agenda item could also include substantive discussion of other initiatives that might improve work management in Codex<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. REGULAR REVIEW TOPICS TO DATE AND STATUS OF FOLLOW-UP

### 2.1 Regular review 2016-17: Electronic working groups

- 2.1.1 A report<sup>4</sup> on the regular review on Electronic Working Groups (EWGs), was presented to CCEXEC73<sup>5</sup> and CAC40. Following discussion of the findings of the review, CAC40<sup>6</sup> requested the Secretariat to:
  - Develop practical guidance for EWGs as outlined in the working document CX/EXEC 17/73/3<sup>7</sup> and the report of CCEXEC73<sup>8</sup>;
  - Work with regional coordinators in examining barriers to active participation and identifying possible solutions and that the matter be included on the agenda of forthcoming RCC meetings; and to
  - Record actions taken as part of the report on the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2014–2019.

<sup>1</sup> REP16/CAC, para. 134(ii)

<sup>2</sup> REP16/CAC, para. 134(iii)

<sup>3</sup> REP19/EXEC1, para. 10(ii,iii)

<sup>4</sup> CX/EXEC 17/73/3

<sup>5</sup> REP19/EXEC2, para 85-91

<sup>6</sup> REP17/CAC, para. 116

<sup>7</sup> CX/EXEC 17/73/3, para. 40

<sup>8</sup> REP17/EXEC2, para. 88

2.1.2 The 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (2019) discussed the need to review the *Guidelines for Electronic Working Groups*<sup>9</sup>. The Codex Secretariat informed CCGP31 that following the regular review progress had been made in following-up on some of the recommendations (e.g. increased use of technology, training of Codex Contact points), while the implementation of other aspects of the recommendations on EWGs had not advanced as much as expected due to issues related to workload as well as the postponement of the Regional Coordinating Committees. The secretariat noted that further efforts would be made up to CAC43 (2020) to implement more of the tasks and, in line with the CAC decision, regular updates on the progress of the implementation would be provided to the CCEXEC in the framework of the strategic plan implementation. CCGP31 agreed that CCGP should await the completion of the implementation of the recommendations of the 2016/17 regular review by the Codex Secretariat before considering to propose new work to review the *Guidelines for Electronic Working Groups*<sup>10</sup>.

## **2.2 Regular Review 2017-2018: Collaboration between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other international standard-setting organizations**

2.2.1 The item<sup>11</sup> was presented to CCEXEC75, but due to time constraints it was not discussed. CAC41<sup>12</sup> however had a fruitful discussion on the Recommendations proposed by the Secretariat and requested that CCEXEC advise the Commission further on the need for setting up a more systematic approach to the review of Codex standards. CAC41 further noted that issues relating to making reference to standards/methods of other international organizations may merit further consideration and guidance by CCEXEC in the first instance and also agreed to refer the recommendation related to relations with other international organizations for further discussion to CCEXEC. CCEXEC76 noted the conclusions of CAC41 and requested that the Codex Secretariat prepare a paper on each of the the three topics (recommendations (ii), (iii) and (iv) of the 2017-2018 Regular Review of Codex Work Management) to support further discussion at CCEXEC77<sup>13</sup>.

## **2.3 Regular review 2018-2019: The critical review function of the Executive Committee**

2.3.1 This item will be discussed at CCEXEC77<sup>14</sup>. Given that the critical review is a fundamental and core function of the CCEXEC, it is anticipated that it will require more than one session to complete discussions and follow up on this topic.

## **3. FUTURE THEMES FOR THE REGULAR REVIEW**

3.1 To date the regular review of Codex work management has been very useful in providing important insights into certain aspects of Codex work and for each of the topics so far addressed, substantial follow-up actions have been identified. In order for such follow-up to be implemented in a timely and complete manner, the Codex secretariat considers that the time period for each focus area of the regular review of Codex work management be extended to two years so that in addition to the initial review period there is also a one year follow-up period before a new topic is considered.

3.2 In this context the Codex Secretariat is of the opinion that:

- i. For the period 2019-20 the focus would be the follow-up to the previous regular reviews of Codex work management and that no new regular review would be initiated;
- ii. New regular reviews would only be initiated on a biennial basis since such reviews require significant investment of time and human resources to be conducted and implemented thoroughly; and
- iii. Themes for regular reviews can be proposed and prioritized by the CCEXEC.

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

CCEXEC77 is invited to:

- i. Endorse the proposal that the focus for 2019-20 be on the follow-up to previous regular reviews of Codex work management rather than initiation of a review on a new theme.
- ii. Endorse the proposal that the regular review of Codex work management be initiated on a new topic on a biennial rather than annual basis.

<sup>9</sup> REP 19/GP, para. 58-63

<sup>10</sup> REP 19/GP, para. 63

<sup>11</sup> CX/CAC 18/41/13

<sup>12</sup> REP18/CAC, paras 107-121

<sup>13</sup> REP19/EXEC1, para 9

<sup>14</sup> CX/EXEC 19/77/5

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- iii. Encourage CCEXEC Members to propose by end of 2019 specific topics for the 2020-21 regular review for consideration and prioritization by CCEXEC78.