



## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON CEREALS, PULSES AND LEGUMES

### Eleventh Session

### Working by correspondence

7-30 April 2025

### DEVELOPMENT OF A GROUP STANDARD FOR WHOLE MILLET GRAINS

(Prepared by the Codex and CCCPL Secretariats)

#### Background

1. At the 46th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC46) (2023), under the agenda item "Any other business", India, noting 2023 being the International Year of Millets, presented a proposal for new work ([CAC46/CRD33](#)) for development of a group standard for certain millets, which was accompanied by a project document.
2. CAC46 welcomed the proposal to develop a group standard for certain types of millets to reflect the growing international trade in these products and requested that the Codex Secretariat further assess the proposal for completeness and issue a Circular Letter (CL) to solicit comments from Members and Observers before possibly bringing it to the attention of CCEXEC for critical review and thereafter consideration by CAC47 for approval as new work ([REP23/CAC](#), paragraph 228).
3. Following CAC46, and a review of the initial proposal by the Codex Secretariat and the Host Secretariat of the Codex Committee on Cereals and Pulses (CCCPL), the project document was revised and a discussion paper prepared by India.
4. A CL requesting comments on the proposal was issued ([CL 2024/60-CAC](#)), inviting Members and Observers to submit general and specific comments. A total of 7 Members and 1 Member Organization replied to CL 2024/60-CAC ([CX/CAC 24/47/16 Add.1.](#))
5. The 87th session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC87)(2024) considered this matter, noted the need to refine the scope and invited the proposers to provide CAC47 with a revised proposal, taking into consideration the existing standards for millet and noting that a group standard for millet should include all millets and that different approaches to standardisation should not be taken for different millet grains. CCEXEC87 also recommended that CAC47 approve the new work proposal to develop a group standard for certain types of millets and reactivate CCCPL, to work by correspondence, with the flexibility to convene an Electronic Working Group (EWG) or work by virtual means as appropriate.
6. In response to the recommendations of CCEXEC87, India revised the discussion paper and project document, which was presented as [CAC47/CRD31 Rev.1](#). The key amendments included: i) changing the title to a group standard for whole millet grains; ii) clarifying that the standard did not apply to other products, including flour derived from whole grains; and incorporating and updating provisions from the *Standard for sorghum grains* (CXS 172-1989) and the *Standard for whole and decorticated pearl millet grains* (CXS 169-1989) in the group standard with the potential revocation of the two existing standards.
7. CAC47(2024) approved the new work proposal on the development of a group standard for whole millet grains and reactivated CCCPL to work by correspondence, with the flexibility to convene an EWG and/or work by virtual means as appropriate.

#### Proposed Way forward to develop the group standard

8. In alignment with the conclusions of CAC47, based on CAC47/CRD31 Rev.1, and taking into consideration the discussions at CAC47 (see REP24/CAC, paragraphs 164-169), CCCPL11 will need to consider how to advance the development of the group standard. As this will be the first group commodity standard to be developed by CCCPL, there is a need to consider the approach to be taken as well as the specificities of a group standard for millets including definition of characteristics and physical parameters of

whole millet grain. Such work requires technical expertise and input, and the optimal way in which to carry out such work may be through an EWG.

9. The EWG could be tasked with the following terms of reference (ToRs):

- to determine the structure of the group standard by identifying the most appropriate approach to accommodate the diversity of millets and address the specific needs of international markets, taking into account that the structure should also be potentially applicable to other cereals in the future;
- to set minimum quality and safety requirements that can serve as a single and consistent reference point for all types of millet grains, ensuring alignment with Codex principles and global trade practices.
- to determine the scope of the standard, including the types of millets to be included in the standard, whether and how to include existing millet standards, and whether or no pseudo-millets should be included ; and
- to prepare a comprehensive report summarizing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, along with a draft group standard for consideration by CCCPL12.

10. The EWG will start its work immediately following the conclusion of CCCPL11 and complete its activities by April 30, 2026.

11. If there is agreement on this proposed approach then discussions regarding the operational mechanism for the EWG, including the designation of chair and co-chairs, working language(s), and procedural details will be considered by CCCPL11.

### **Recommendations**

12. CCCPL11 is invited to consider the above proposal and establish an EWG to take forward the work on the development of a group standard for whole millet grains, agreeing on its terms of reference, chair and co-chairs, working language(s) and timelines.