



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org) - [www.codexalimentarius.org](http://www.codexalimentarius.org)

Agenda Item 6

CX/CAC 16/39/7

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

39<sup>th</sup> Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 27 June – 1 July 2016

#### PROPOSALS FOR NEW WORK<sup>1</sup>

A list of proposals to elaborate new standards and related texts is presented below, including the reference of the project document in the relevant report. Projects document which were not included in the report and were finalised after the session of the relevant Committee are attached to the present document as **Annexes**. The Commission is invited to decide whether or not to undertake new work in each case, taking into account the critical review conducted by the Executive Committee, and to decide which subsidiary body or other body should undertake the work. The Commission is invited to consider these proposals in the light of its *Strategic Plan 2014-2019* and the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities and for the Establishment of Subsidiary Bodies*.

Codex Body	Text	Reference and project document
CCFFV	Codex Standard for Fresh Dates	REP 16/FFV Para 95, See <b>Annex I</b> of this document
CCFFP	New work on guidance for histamine control in the <i>Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products</i> (CAC/RCP 52-2003) and sampling plans for histamine in standards for fish and fishery products	REP 16/FFP Paras 72 and 80 See <b>Annex II</b> of this document
CCFH	Revision of the <i>General Principles of Food Hygiene</i> (CAC/RCP 1-1969) and its HACCP Annex	REP 16/FH Para. 45(c), Appendix V
CCFH	Revision of the <i>Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables</i> (CAC/RCP 53-2003)	Para. 46(b) and Appendix VI
CCNFSDU	Proposed guideline for ready to use therapeutic foods (RUTF)	REP 16/NFSDU paras 88, Appendix IV

<sup>1</sup> Codex meetings held after March 2016, Proposals for elaboration of new standards and related texts will be issued as Add. 1 to this document

**PROJECT DOCUMENT****PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON A CODEX STANDARD FOR FRESH DATES****1. Purpose and the scope of the standard**

The scope of the work is to establish a worldwide standard for fresh date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera* L. from *Arecaceae* family), which must be supplied fresh to the consumer after proper preparation and packaging. It does not apply to other forms such as pieces or mashed dates or dried or dates intended for industrial purposes.

The objective of the standard is to consider the essential quality characteristics of date palm for fresh consumption to aid international trade.

**2. Relevance and timelines**

Due to the growing trend of worldwide date palm production and trade, it is necessary to establish a standard covering the safety, quality and labelling in order to have a reference that has been internationally agreed by consensus between the main producing and trading countries. The Codex Standard for date palm will help to protect consumers' health and to promote fair trade practices in accordance with the different international agreements.

Date palm is a staple food/fruit adapted to hot arid regions and can be produced easily under unfavourable natural and economic conditions. It is a perennial crop.

**3. Main aspects to be covered**

The standard will include characteristics relating to the size, categories, quality, contaminants, labelling and packaging. The most relevant items, which may be considered are related to:

- a. Establish the minimum requirements of dates, which shall be complied with, independently from the quality class.
- b. Define the quality categories to classify dates in accordance with its characteristics.
- c. Consider the sizing classes to commercialize dates depending on its weight, width, length and shape.
- d. Establish the tolerance as regards quality and size that may be permitted in dates contained in a package.
- e. Include the provisions relating to uniformity of the packaged product and the package used.
- f. Include provisions for the labeling and marking in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labeling of Prepackaged Foods*.
- g. Include provisions for contaminants with reference to the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed*.
- h. Include provisions for hygiene and handling with reference to the General Principles of Food Hygiene and other relevant codes of hygiene practice.

**4. Assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities****General criterion:**

Dates come in different varieties, shape and size. Therefore, trading of dates done according to its quality (fruit size, shape, colour and texture), varieties and size. Developing an international standard for dates will protect consumers from fraudulent practices while facilitating international trade. The drafting of a standard would thus benefit consumers and the major producing / exporting countries.

**Criteria applicable to commodities:****(a) Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries**

The main producer countries are Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and Algeria. There is a considerable export of Dates to European Community, India, North America, Australia and Russia etc, as these countries consume significantly. Most of the commercially important varieties are from the Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and Egypt.

According to the FAOSTAT, the world production of dates is reported to be 7460195.00 Tonnes during the year 2012. It is grown mainly in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Algeria and Pakistan etc. Largest area and production is in Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan followed by Morocco, UAE, and Egypt.

According to FAOSTAT in 2013, worldwide production of dates totalled 7627624.40 Tonnes, with Egypt accounting for 19.7% (or 1501799 Tonnes), Iran 14.2% (1083720 Tonnes), Saudi Arabia 14% (1065032 Tonnes) and Algeria 11% (848199 Tonnes) of the total world production of dates.

<b>World Production of Dates (Tonnes)</b>				
<b>Top ten Countries/Regions</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Egypt	1352954.00	1373570.00	1470000.00	1501799.00
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1023126.00	1053870.00	1066000.00	1083720.00
Saudi Arabia	991546.00	1008105.00	1050000.00	1065032.00
Algeria	644741.00	724894.00	789357.00	848199.00
Iraq	567668.00	619182.00	655450.00	676111.00
Pakistan	524041.00	557279.00	524612.00	526749.00
Sudan (former)	431000.00	432100.00	433500.00	437835.00
Oman	276405.00	268011.00	270000.00	269000.00
United Arab Emirates	825300.00	239164.00	250000.00	245000.00
Tunisia	174000.00	180000.00	193000.00	195000.00
Others	746772.00	753984.00	758276.00	779179.00
<b>World</b>	<b>7557553.00</b>	<b>7210159.00</b>	<b>7460195.00</b>	<b>7627624.40</b>
<b>Africa</b>	<b>2961753.00</b>	<b>3053267.00</b>	<b>3233535.00</b>	<b>3342322.00</b>
East Africa	14238.00	13867.00	14186.00	14186.00
Middle Africa	19850.00	20059.00	20600.00	20630.00
<b>Northern Africa</b>	<b>2865046.00</b>	<b>2979473.00</b>	<b>3157719.00</b>	<b>3264484.00</b>
Southern Africa	675.00	700.00	730.00	691.00
Western Africa	61944.00	39168.00	40300.00	42331.00
America	30825.00	37248.00	34405.00	28838.40
Northern America	26308.00	30028.00	28213.00	21768.00
Central America	4150.00	6811.00	6012.00	6828.00
South America	367.00	409.00	180.00	242.00
<b>Asia</b>	<b>4550052.00</b>	<b>4104317.00</b>	<b>4175320.00</b>	<b>4241976.00</b>
Eastern Asia	140000.00	150000.00	140000.00	150000.00
<b>Southern Asia</b>	<b>1547167.00</b>	<b>1611149.00</b>	<b>1590612.00</b>	<b>1610469.00</b>
<b>Western Asia</b>	<b>2862885.00</b>	<b>2343168.00</b>	<b>2444708.00</b>	<b>2481507.00</b>
Europe	14923.00	15327.00	16935.00	14488.00
Southern Europe	14923.00	15327.00	16935.00	14488.00
European Union	4002.00	3741.00	4000.00	4000.00
Least Developed Countries	583215.00	559395.00	562067.00	567449.00
Land Locked Developing Countries	59384.00	36264.00	37330.00	42473.00
Low Income Food Deficit Countries	584881.00	561022.00	563767.00	569179.00
Net Food Importing Developing Countries	2749030.00	2786565.00	2863956.00	2912610.40

Source: As provided by FAOSTAT- 2015 (<http://faostat3.fao.org/download/Q/QC/E>)

International Trade Statistics						
HS Code : Dates, fresh/chilled'						
Qty In MT, Value in (1000 US\$)						
Top ten Exporting Countries /Regions	2009		2010		2011	
	Qty	Value	Qty	Value	Qty	Value
Tunisia	77254.00	176280.00	84282.00	200091.00	86910.00	211451.00
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	68837.00	55819.00	106760.00	134001.00	112030.00	160251.00
Saudi Arabia	1593.00	1650.00	73362.00	78126.00	77795.00	86293.00
Iraq	183701.00	46886.00	120123.00	35913.00	138437.00	46851.00
Pakistan	111715.00	42716.00	121681.00	48690.00	113358.00	64081.00
France	11310.00	27061.00	11514.00	32112.00	11322.00	33083.00
Egypt	14659.00	17535.00	19562.00	18529.00	23792.00	28211.00
United Arab Emirates	56240.00	32330.00	50068.00	33282.00	51214.00	31001.00
United States of America	3777.00	22304.00	4385.00	25339.00	5628.00	33436.00
Algeria	12000.00	12000.00	10393.00	16930.00	28143.00	25374.00
Others	57669.00	136762.00	58003.00	152583.00	61765.00	182169.00
<b>World</b>	<b>598755.00</b>	<b>571343.00</b>	<b>660133.00</b>	<b>775596.00</b>	<b>710394.00</b>	<b>902201.00</b>
<b>Africa</b>	106025.00	210391.00	122286.00	242400.00	145893.00	272532.00
Eastern Africa	203.00	88.00	212.00	100.00	97.00	286.00
Middle Africa	1.00	1.00	0	0	0	0
Northern Africa	103936.00	205881.00	114310.00	235634.00	138886.00	265231.00
Southern Africa	710.00	4173.00	963.00	5374.00	1174.00	5910.00
Western Africa	1175.00	248.00	6801.00	1292.00	5736.00	1105.00
<b>Americas</b>	14985.00	31882.00	6241.00	29257.00	7765.00	38598.00
Northern America	4045.00	22732.00	4477.00	25569.00	5889.00	33911.00
Central America	10927.00	9014.00	1749.00	3636.00	1870.00	4665.00
Caribbean	3.00	56.00	5.00	12.00	0	12.00
South America	10.00	80.00	10.00	40.00	6.00	10.00
<b>Asia</b>	455875.00	261816.00	507455.00	424099.00	532808.00	508889.00
Central Asia	2.00	0	0	0	719.00	684.00
Eastern Asia	520.00	1182.00	643.00	1456.00	868.00	2086.00
Southern Asia	182328.00	100338.00	231965.00	189193.00	226030.00	225481.00
South-Eastern Asia	3524.00	4456.00	4718.00	4772.00	4351.00	5187.00
Western Asia	269501.00	155840.00	270129.00	228678.00	300840.00	275451.00
<b>Europe</b>	21789.00	67051.00	24014.00	79483.00	23746.00	81774.00
Eastern Europe	465.00	1232.00	434.00	1100.00	548.00	1682.00
Northern Europe	1831.00	5512.00	1986.00	6264.00	2672.00	9530.00
Southern Europe	2299.00	10953.00	2758.00	14426.00	1825.00	9033.00
Western Europe	17194.00	49354.00	18836.00	57693.00	18701.00	61529.00
<b>Oceania</b>	81.00	203.00	137.00	357.00	182.00	408.00
Australia & New Zealand	81.00	203.00	137.00	357.00	182.00	408.00
European Union	21610.00	66661.00	23775.00	78976.00	23639.00	81624.00

Source: As provided by FAOSTAT- 2015 (<http://faostat3.fao.org/download/T/TP/E>)

International Trade Statistics						
HS Code : '070930 Dates fresh/chilled'						
Qty (Tonnes), Value (1000 US\$ )						
Top ten Importing Country/ Regions	2009		2010		2011	
	Qty	Value	Qty	Value	Qty	Value
EU(27)ex.int	67771.00	176264.00	71486.00	187779.00	73189.00	195497.00
India	298423.00	99059.00	193467.00	95042.00	256295.00	141713.00
Morocco	50479.00	64673.00	51449.00	77894.00	33140.00	75208.00
France	24129.00	63236.00	28171.00	72011.00	25934.00	69203.00
United Kingdom	12781.00	29480.00	12827.00	33248.00	13985.00	35553.00
Malaysia	15810.00	27105.00	17980.00	36120.00	16236.00	34408.00
Germany	10660.00	30412.00	9539.00	27438.00	11690.00	34047.00
United States of America	15835.00	18682.00	11811.00	18503.00	21398.00	30360.00
Russian Federation	16190.00	21271.00	20814.00	29166.00	19814.00	27596.00
Canada	7577.00	17732.00	9373.00	24392.00	9208.00	26578.00
Indonesia	16436.00	16263.00	16986.00	18097.00	20142.00	20546.00
Others	139153.00	71002.00	161986.00	158815.00	176754.00	105792.00
<b>World</b>	<b>675244.00</b>	<b>635179.00</b>	<b>605889.00</b>	<b>724947.00</b>	<b>677785.00</b>	<b>796501.00</b>
<b>Africa</b>	76112.00	83711.00	82896.00	98506.00	80045.00	98717.00
<b>Eastern Africa</b>	6214.00	4448.00	7638.00	3947.00	8058.00	6311.00
<b>Middle Africa</b>	117.00	178.00	143.00	406.00	170.00	562.00
<b>Northern Africa</b>	54278.00	70111.00	56217.00	84756.00	39674.00	80959.00
<b>Southern Africa</b>	1488.00	1680.00	1496.00	2582.00	1444.00	2445.00
<b>Western Africa</b>	14015.00	7294.00	17402.00	6815.00	30699.00	8440.00
<b>Americas</b>	24849.00	39427.00	22670.00	46057.00	32523.00	61748.00
<b>Northern America</b>	23412.00	36414.00	21184.00	42895.00	30606.00	56938.00
<b>Central America</b>	558.00	1045.00	430.00	709.00	764.00	1128.00
<b>South America</b>	792.00	1759.00	960.00	2186.00	1060.00	3129.00
<b>Asia</b>	464482.00	238683.00	378478.00	273824.00	440586.00	316918.00
<b>Central Asia</b>	2372.00	1449.00	2908.00	2673.00	3395.00	2972.00
<b>Eastern Asia</b>	12052.00	8527.00	16496.00	9652.00	28718.00	14068.00
<b>Southern Asia</b>	318265.00	106812.00	205635.00	99749.00	286681.00	159719.00
<b>South-Eastern Asia</b>	34380.00	48021.00	37193.00	59582.00	38161.00	59854.00
<b>Western Asia</b>	97413.00	73874.00	116246.00	102168.00	83631.00	80305.00
<b>Europe</b>	103712.00	262455.00	113843.00	290355.00	116220.00	299857.00
<b>Eastern Europe</b>	22111.00	28584.00	27530.00	38962.00	28162.00	40409.00
<b>Northern Europe</b>	19611.00	19611.00	20060.00	53925.00	22962.00	60478.00
<b>Southern Europe</b>	17465.00	54729.00	18199.00	57779.00	15930.00	50434.00
<b>Western Europe</b>	44525.00	131782.00	48054.00	139689.00	49166.00	148536.00
<b>Oceania</b>	6089.00	10903.00	8002.00	16205.00	8411.00	19261.00
<b>Australia &amp; New Zealand</b>	6000.00	10671.00	7907.00	15933.00	8294.00	18970.00

Source: As provided by FAOSTAT- 2015 (<http://faostat3.fao.org/download/T/TP/E>)

**(b) Diversification of national legislation and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade:**

As mentioned above, dates are traded according to varieties and size. The size of dates varies largely ranging from round, oval, oblong or cylindrical in shape, depending on cultivar. Dates may be designated as to size in accordance to unpitted and pitted dates. The standards for dates include three sizes based on the number of dates per 500 gm: small (>110 dates without seed or >90 dates with seed), medium (90-110 dates without seeds or 80-90 dates with seeds) and large (<90 dates without seeds or <80 dates with seeds). Currently no country have national legislations (quality and grading standards) for dates. ISO does not have standard for dates whereas the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) does. This new work will provide guidance, which countries could use to develop their own quality and grading standards for dates and, when applied internationally, may assist in providing a harmonized approach.

**(c) International or regional market potential**

The import of dates by most countries is increasing. There has been noticed 25% increase in quantity and also value wise in last 3 years, the international trade of dates has increased from 635 million US\$ (2009) to 796 million US\$ (2011). The trade can be further enhanced by developing quality and grading standards for dates.

**(d) Amenability of the commodity to standardization**

The characteristics of dates from its cultivation to harvest, cultivar varieties, composition, quality and packaging all lead to adequate parameters for the standardization of the product.

Taking into account that technical information is available and certain degree of harmonization at regional / international levels has already been achieved on certain aspects relevant to consumer's protection and trade facilitation as mentioned in point (b), complementary work to come up with an inclusive standard on this worldwide traded produce should be amenable.

**(e) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards**

*The Standard for Dates* (CODEX STAN 143-1985) applies to commercially prepared whole dates in pitted or un-pitted styles packed ready for direct consumption and *the Regional Standard for Date Paste* (Near East) (CODEX STAN 314R-2013) covers date paste. There is no commodity standard covering fresh dates. Therefore, the new work will enhance consumer protection and facilitate trade by establishing an internationally agreed quality standard covering minimum requirements, categories, size, colour, shape, uniformity, packaging and other relevant quality requires.

**(f) Number of commodities, which would need separate standards including whether raw, semi-processed or processed.**

A single standard for dates will cover all varieties of fresh dates traded worldwide.

**(g) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies)**

UNECE STANDARD FFV-05 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of dates. This new work will consider this standard in formulating the Codex Standard.

**5. Relevance to the Codex strategic objectives**

The elaboration of a Codex Standard for dates is in line with the strategic objective to promote the maximum application of codex standards by countries in their national legislation and to facilitate international trade by protecting the health of the consumers. This proposal is relevant to STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019, Objective 1.1: *Establish new and review existing Codex standards, based on priorities of the CAC.*

The new work will contribute to state the minimum quality requirements for dates for human consumption, different categories based on quality parameters and size with the purpose of protecting the consumer's health and achieving fair practices in the food trade.

**6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents**

This is proposed as a new global standard and has no relation to any other existing Codex text on this item, except that the standard will make references to relevant safety standards and related texts developed by general subject committees.

**7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice**

There is no need foreseen for expert scientific advice.

**8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies**

There is no need of technical input from external bodies.

**9. Proposed timeline for completion of the new work**

Subject to approval by the Commission in 2016, development of the standard would be expected to take three sessions of CCFFV or less, depending upon relevant inputs and agreement from members.

**PROJECT DOCUMENT FOR WORK ON HISTAMINE****1. Purpose and Scope of the new work**

The purpose of the work is to revise food safety control guidance for histamine in the *Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products* (CAC/RCP 52-2003), and to revise sampling plans in Standards for Fish and Fishery Products related to histamine food safety.

The revision of the Code will provide updated and more specific guidance on the control of histamine formation in fish and fishery products. The revised guidance will be based on current scientific knowledge and practical measures for controlling histamine in susceptible fish species using a HACCP framework. The revised guidance will cover the entire food chain (harvesting, storage, handling, processing and distribution.)

The revision of standards will provide the necessary alignment of sampling plans and related sampling guidance across relevant standards for fish and fishery products. Sampling plans will be developed for different purposes. The work will bear in mind that sampling plans should be practical and feasible while still ensuring food safety using a risk-based approach. The Standards for Fish and Fishery Products intended for revision include:

- *Standard for Quick Frozen Finfish, Uneviscerated and Eviscerated* (CODEX STAN 36-1981)
- *Standard for Canned Tuna and Bonito* (CODEX STAN 70-1981)
- *Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products* (CODEX STAN 94- 1981)
- *Standard for Canned Finfish* (CODEX STAN 119-1981)
- *Standard for Quick Frozen Blocks of Fish Fillet, Minced Fish Flesh and Mixtures of Fillets and Minced Fish Flesh* (CODEX STAN 165-1989)
- *Standard for Quick Frozen Fish Sticks (Fish Fingers), Fish Portions and Fish Fillets - Breaded or in Batter* (CODEX STAN 166-1989)
- *Standard for Quick Frozen Fish Fillets* (CODEX STAN 190-1995)
- *Standard for Boiled Dried Salted Anchovies* (CODEX STAN 236-2003)
- *Standard for Salted Atlantic Herring and Salted Sprat* (CODEX STAN 244-2004)
- *Standard for Fish Sauce* (CODEX STAN 302-2011)
- *Standard for Smoked Fish, Smoke-Flavoured Fish and Smoke-Dried Fish* (CODEX STAN 311-2013)

**2. Relevance and Timeliness**

Scombrototoxin/histamine fish poisoning is the one of the most commonly reported fish borne food poisoning in the world. For example, in the United States of America (USA), histamine fish poisoning accounted for 7.6% of all foodborne illness outbreaks and 38% of those specifically seafood-related based on USA foodborne illness outbreak data from the Center for Science in the Public Interest from 1990 to 2003.<sup>2</sup> There were 223 outbreaks of histamine poisoning, affecting 865 people in the USA between 2000 and 2007.<sup>3</sup> Combining this with USA poison control centre data from the National Poisoning Data System for 2005 to 2009, and using a model similar to Scallan et al.<sup>4</sup>, they estimated that there are 35,142 histamine fish poisoning cases annually in the USA. There are approximately 280 cases of histamine fish poisoning annually in Australia.<sup>5</sup>

FAO and WHO convened an expert meeting at the FAO headquarters in Rome from 23 – 27 July 2012<sup>6</sup> to address the public health risks of histamine and other biogenic amines from fish and fishery products. The outcomes of this meeting are available in support of the proposed new work.

---

<sup>2</sup> Smith Dewall C, Hicks G, Barlow K, Alderton L, Vegosen L. Foods Associated with Foodborne Illness Outbreaks from 1990 through 2003. *Food Protection Trends* 2006;26 (7):446–473.

<sup>3</sup> Pennotti R, Scallan E, Backer L, Thomas J, Angulo FJ. Ciguatera and scombroid fish poisoning in the United States. *Foodborne Pathog Dis* 2013;10 (12):1059–1066.

<sup>4</sup> Scallan E, Hoekstra RM, Angulo FJ, Tauxe RV, Widdowson MA, Roy SL, et al. Foodborne illness acquired in the United States—major pathogens. *Emerg Infect Dis* 2011;17(1):7–15.

<sup>5</sup> Hall G, Kirk M. Foodborne illness in Australia: annual incidence circa 2000. Canberra: Department of Health and Ageing; 2005

<sup>6</sup> FAO/WHO.2013. Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on the Public Health Risks of Histamine and Other Biogenic Amines from Fish and Fishery Products. Meeting report

The FAO/WHO Report covered the sampling considerations for histamine testing in considerable detail. In conjunction with this work, FAO/WHO developed the *Histamine Sampling Tool* for designing histamine sampling plans with sample sizes and decision thresholds based on practicality and the level of protection required. Use of the *Histamine Sampling Tool* was presented by FAO at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of CCFFP, and the tool was recently updated to be more useful prior to the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of CCFFP. It is anticipated that the revised sampling tool will assist with this work.

### 3. Main aspects to be covered

#### 3 a. Revision of the *Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products* (CAC/RCP 52-2003)

- Include science-based histamine control guidance for each step in the food chain (including harvest vessels) within a HACCP framework.
- Incorporate into the Code, Table 2.3 (Scientific names, free histidine levels and mean annual production levels for fish associated with SFP or high free histidine levels) from the FAO/WHO Expert Report<sup>5</sup>, revising the list where necessary to include relevant information (e.g. the proposed removal of salmon from the list.)

#### 3b. Revision of sampling plans

- Align histamine sampling guidance across the relevant Standards for Fish and Fishery product (see Section 1 above).
- Design risk based sampling plans for the Sampling Section of Standards for different purposes that are practical, feasible and not adding a burden to producers while still ensuring food safety.
- Include appropriate supplemental sampling guidance such as:
  - Which part of the fish to sample
  - The size of the sample unit
  - Proper handling of sample to prevent further histamine formation
  - What constitutes a “lot”
  - The procedure for “pooling” samples

### 4. Assessment against the Criteria for the establishment of work priorities

#### 4.1 *General criterion: Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries.*

Histamine is the marker and principle toxin responsible for scombrototoxin fish poisoning, which is a major health burden worldwide. This work is directed at the control and sampling of histamine. This work will provide guidance to all countries to prevent or minimize histamine fish poisoning. The sampling guideline is directed at the sampling procedures used to verify control of histamine in lots in international trade.

#### 4.2 *Criteria applicable to general subjects*

##### ***(a) Diversification of national legislation and apparent resultant or potential impediment to international trade***

Differing approaches to histamine control in national legislation may cause trade issues. The work will consider different approaches towards the same goal.

##### ***(b) Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work***

The sections of the proposed work have equal priority.

##### ***(c) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body***

The FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Histamine Report and the FAO/WHO Histamine Sampling Tool were undertaken in support of this work.

##### ***(d) Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization***

The work is a revision of adopted standards.



**(e) Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issues**

Scombrototoxin/Histamine Fish Poisoning is a world-wide food safety problem and is a common cause of fish poisoning that occurs in humans. The food poisoning is caused by heat-stable scombrototoxins, presumably arising from bacterial action in fish. Though detailed components of scombrototoxins have not been identified, it is generally accepted that biogenic amines, especially histamine, play an important role in the pathogenesis of SFP.

**5. Relevance to the Codex strategic objectives**

The proposed work directly relates to the following Codex Strategic Goals from the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan.

Goal 1: Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues.

This work addresses Objective 1.1: Establish new and review existing food standards, based on priorities of the CAC and Objective 1.2: Proactively identify emerging issues and member country needs and, where appropriate, develop relevant food standards.

Goal 5: Facilitate the Effective Participations of all Codex Members

The review of the Code should generate interest and participation from all country members. It is anticipated that the document would be developed by an electronic working group.

**6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents**

The revision of the *Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products* (CAC/RCP 52-2003) will complement the *General Principles for Food Hygiene* and its HACCP Annex (CAC/RCP 1-1969) with guidance for the control of histamine (the marker for scombrototoxin fish poisoning) that is specific for fish and fishery products. The revision of the sampling guidance in relevant Standards for Fish and Fishery Products will draw upon information within the *General Guidelines on Sampling* (CAC/GL 50-2004), the *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods* (CAC/GL 21 – 1997), *Principles for the Establishment or Selection of Codex Sampling Procedures*, and the *Use of Analytical Results: Sampling Plans, Relationship Between the Analytical Results, the Measurement Uncertainty, Recovery Factors and Provisions in Codex Standards in the Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual (24<sup>th</sup> edition)* and other relevant Codex texts, and FAO/WHO documents.

**7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice**

Scientific advice from FAO/WHO may be requested.

**8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for**

Not anticipated.

**9. The proposed time-line for completion of the new work, including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission.**

Proposed time line:

Approval of new work – 2016

Adoption at Step 5 – 2018

Adoption at Step 8 – 2020