



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEx COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS (CCFICS)

Twenty-eighth Session

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12 - 17 October 2026

REVIEW AND UPDATE OF APPENDIX A – THE LIST OF EMERGING GLOBAL ISSUES

Prepared by the European Union and Australia

Executive Summary

The consideration of emerging issues is a standing item on the CCFICS agenda, which provides an opportunity to identify and prioritise potential new work.

CCFICS27 refined and consolidated the list of emerging issues and updated Appendix A accordingly. The committee also considered four new work proposals under this agenda item, which were all supported by the committee and approved at CAC47.

The European Union volunteered to be the custodian of this agenda item and to prepare a revised and updated list of emerging issues for consideration at CCFICS28. Revisions to Appendix A would take into account comments solicited through a circular letter (CL) and the outcomes from a planned intersessional workshop.

Responses to CL 2024/85-FICS (provided in CX/FICS 26/28/11 Add.1) confirmed the importance of the issues identified in Appendix A. The comments provided detailed updates to expand upon these issues and to advance understanding of their influence upon the work of the committee.

The virtual intersessional workshop held on 22 June 2026 explored the existing issues listed in Appendix A and three newly identified emerging issues brought up by Australia, Spain and Uganda in more depth, namely:

- Impact and implementation of CCFICS guidance.
- Challenge for national food control systems (NFCS) to manage food safety hazards caused by emerging risks (e.g. antimicrobial resistance (AMR), new/expanding pests and disease, pandemics).
- Potential new work for CCFICS to develop principles and guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced analytical tools in food import and export inspection and certification systems.

The key outcomes from the workshop were elaboration on the already identified emerging issues in Appendix A, and consideration of the newly identified issues to be considered at CCFICS28. This will likely include a discussion paper from Spain on potential new work to provide guidance on the use of AI in food import and export inspection and certification systems.

CCFICS28 is invited to:

- note the annex providing a brief overview and key points from the intersessional meeting; and
- discuss the updated list of emerging issues contained in Appendix A.

Introduction

1. A common theme across committees has been the need to ensure the responsiveness of Codex to new and emerging issues. CCFICS established this discussion of emerging issues and future direction of CCFICS as a standing item at CCFICS21 (2014).

2. The purpose of this standing agenda item is to facilitate a strategic, outward-looking discussion by the committee, by routinely undertaking a global scan, identifying potential future issues, challenges and advancements. It provides an opportunity for members to identify and prioritise potential new work falling within the mandate of CCFICS.
3. The approach in CCFICS to this standing agenda item continues to evolve over time. Recently, the process has been to gather input from Members and Observers via a circular letter (CL). The leadership of this item rotates with each session of the committee to a Member who volunteers. At CCFICS27, the European Union agreed to be the custodian of this item with support from Australia, and to hold a virtual intersessional workshop.
4. A CL was issued in December 2024 (CL 2024/85-FICS) requesting comments on Appendix A and for any new work proposals linked to existing or newly identified emerging issues. The deadline for comments was 8 February 2026. Responses to the CL have been provided in CX/FICS 26/28/11 Add.1.
5. The intersessional workshop was held on 22 June 2026 to further discuss the emerging issues identified in Appendix A alongside the responses elicited from CL 2024/85-FICS. The workshop was chaired by the European Union. A summary of the discussion and the next steps agreed to at the workshop have been attached as an annex to this report.

Discussion and key outcomes

6. CL 2024/85-FICS elicited comments from 14 Member Countries and four Observer organisations. In general, Members continued to support the three emerging issues identified in Appendix A and several suggestions were put forward to improve the overall clarity of the issues. Some Members indicated their assessment of the priority of certain issues, in accordance with Appendix B to [CL 2024/85-FICS](#) and rated the issues as medium to high priorities for CCFICS to consider.
7. Responses to the CL covered certain overlapping themes - demonstrating the complexity and interconnected nature of the CCFICS emerging issues.
8. New food sources and production systems (NFPS) was an important issue that raised comments and questions from Members, and with continued developments remained an issue that could impact national food control systems (NFCS), as described in the first issue listed in Appendix A.
9. Technology, and how it has been affecting NFCS and international trade, generated significant interest:
 - Comments expanded upon the effect of new technologies on how food business operators (FBOs) and governments perform food safety assurance and oversight.
 - There were also extensive comments from an Observer on how technological advancements may improve the traceability systems for FBOs and regulators.
 - Adding to this discussion of technological developments in general, many Members specifically focused on the emerging applications for artificial intelligence (AI) in NFCS and trade.
10. The theme of risk-based regulation was apparent in several comments:
 - Some Observers highlighted the need for risk-based regulation and increased oversight of products that they consider to be very high risk.
 - Some comments highlighted that although CCFICS guidelines emphasised the need for measures in NFCS and trade to be risk-based, implementation in this respect may be challenging, particularly with proliferation of new digital systems for managing information.
11. The intersessional workshop, chaired by the European Union examined the list of emerging issues that was presented in the CL and provided an opportunity to discuss each issue, and how it was evolving over time in greater depth.
12. Australia, Spain and Uganda identified three new emerging issues which were added to Appendix A and discussed:
 - Impact and implementation of CCFICS guidance (Issue 4).
 - Challenge for NFCS to manage food safety hazards caused by emerging risks (e.g. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR), new/expanding pests and disease, pandemics) (Issue 5).
 - Potential new work for CCFICS to develop principles and guidelines for the use of AI and advanced analytical tools in food import and export inspection and certification systems (Issue 6).
13. Responses to the CL and outcomes from the workshop provided further input to the previously identified emerging issues in Appendix A, and confirmation of the committee's support for their ongoing consideration.

Further, the workshop provided a valuable opportunity to discuss and consider three newly identified issues and their addition to Appendix A, as presented below.

Background

14. In its consideration of the list of emerging global issues contained in Appendix A of CX/FICS 23/27/9, CCFICS27 agreed:
- i to the list of emerging issues as identified in Appendix A of CX/FICS 24/27/9;
 - ii that the list of emerging issues would continue to be a standing agenda Item for future CCFICS sessions, and that the custodianship should continue to be rotated among Members on a meeting-by-meeting basis;
 - iii to request the Codex Secretariat to issue a CL requesting inputs from Members and Observers on emerging global issues to be included in Appendix A to be developed for CCFICS28;
 - iv that EU with the support of Australia be the next custodian of Appendix A to be prepared for CCFICS28; and
 - v to hold a virtual intersessional workshop prior to CCFICS28 to discuss the emerging issues under Appendix A.

Recommendations

15. CCFICS28 is invited to:
- note the annex which provides a brief overview and key points from the intersessional workshop; and
 - discuss the updated list of emerging issues contained in Appendix A.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF EMERGING GLOBAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Introduction

1. The table below identifies significant emerging global issues that may impact the work of CCFICS and recognises any existing texts or new work proposals relevant to each issue. These items have been drawn from previous discussions at CCFICS sessions and other available material, including multilateral food safety and trade discussions. Suggested amendments and other updates resulting from responses to CL 2024/85-FICS and views expressed during the intersessional workshop held on 22 June 2026 are shown in the underlined text and presented below for discussion and amendment at CCFICS28.
2. It may be the case that existing CCFICS texts touch on, but do not fully address, an identified global issue. In this case, additional or clarifying guidance may be warranted. This may present an opportunity for CCFICS to consider the appropriateness and priority of potential new work, using the framework presented in Appendix B of **CL 2024/85-FICS**. It may also present an opportunity to review existing text in light of new data, or new trading environments.

Emerging global issues for consideration

Issue No.	Potential Emerging Global Issue for consideration (<i>not in priority order</i>)	Related Impact on CCFICS / Codex	Related CCFICS text	Comment / Status / Reason for priority
1	New and evolving food production, processing, transport and distributing systems and technologies.	Impact on the competent authority with regard to national food control systems (e.g., effectiveness, traceability, recalls) related to new food sources and production systems. Impact on trade through equivalence and systems recognitions. Potential need to update existing Codex text to address production of new foods subject to new regulation and established differentiation from existing sources.	• CXG 19-1995 • CXG 20-1995 • CXG 25-1997 • CXG 26-1997 • CXG 34-1999 • CXG 38-2001 • CXG 47-2003 • CXG 53-2003 • CXG 60-2006 • CXG 82-2013 • CXG 89-2016 • CXG 91-2017 • <u>CXG 101-2023</u> • <u>Draft consolidated Codex guidelines related to equivalence</u>	Priority: Rated high with estimated medium impact on food safety and trade.

Issue No.	Potential Emerging Global Issue for consideration (not in priority order)	Related Impact on CCFICS / Codex	Related CCFICS text	Comment / Status / Reason for priority
2	Impact of new technologies and tools on training, development and monitoring of food control systems, information sharing and approach to government regulation and compliance activities.	Emerging use and application of digital and analytic tools, e.g. continuous/real-time monitoring. New approaches to manage food safety, including preventative and outcome-based approaches. Interoperability through increasing digitalization and use of artificial intelligence (AI) in regulatory modernisation programmes to better target finite resource. Additional impacts include changes to the way some authorities regulate, train staff, conduct compliance activities (e.g. food safety culture focus) and monitor the performance of their food control system to identify and manage risks proactively. <u>The following points should be considered:</u> <u>(a) AI governance, data integrity and transparency requirements.</u> <u>(b) regulatory-assurance frameworks for algorithmic decision-making.</u> <u>(c) interoperability and data-exchange standards; and</u> <u>(d) cybersecurity and data-assurance frameworks that underpin digital NFCS functions.</u> <u>Flexible and hybrid approaches alongside capacity building should be considered to mitigate the risk of excluding countries with limited connectivity or digital infrastructure.</u>	• CXG 47-2003 • CXG 53-2003 • CXG 25-1997 • CXG 34-1999 • CXG 82-2013 • CXG 89-2016 • CXG 91-2017 • CXG 93-2021 • CXG 101-2023 • CXG 102-2023 • <u>Draft guidelines on the prevention and control of food fraud</u> • <u>Draft consolidated Codex guidelines related to equivalence</u> • <u>Draft revised principles for traceability/product tracing as a tool within a food inspection and certification system (CXG 60-2006)</u> • <u>Draft guidance on establishment listings (Annex to CXG 89-2016)</u> • <u>Draft guidance on the standardization of sanitary requirements</u> • <u>Draft principles on digitalisation of national food control systems</u>	Priority: Rated high with estimated high to medium impact on food safety and trade.

Issue No.	Potential Emerging Global Issue for consideration (<i>not in priority order</i>)	Related Impact on CCFICS / Codex	Related CCFICS text	Comment / Status / Reason for priority
3	Evolving role of competent authority and interactions between various government entities.	Interaction among and between various governmental entities involved in food trade, in particular between food control authorities and customs/border protection agencies, <u>including opportunities to better leverage information through border-modernisation initiatives, multi-agency digital risk systems, enhanced data-sharing, and common surveillance-intelligence frameworks.</u>	• CXG 19-1995 • CXG 34-1999 • CXG 47-2003 • CXG 60-2006 • CXG 82-2013 • CXG 89-2016 • CXG 91-2017 • CXG 101-2023	Priority: Rated high with estimated high impact on food safety and trade
4	Impact and implementation of CCFICS guidance	CCFICS should consider the broader issue of how its suite of texts can best support practical implementation and modernisation of risk-based food import and export inspection and certification systems, particularly as technologies are implemented. This includes examining whether: a) CCFICS texts require a programme of review b) there are sufficient practical guidance/tools for how to implement CCFICS texts c) there is a need for awareness raising of CCFICS standards d) or a combination of these and/or other options.	The issue may relate to many CCFICS texts. A current example is the update to the <i>Principles and guidelines for the exchange of information between importing and exporting countries to support the trade in food</i> (CXG 89-2016) to include further guidance promoting a risk-basis for the use of establishment listing processes.	Rated high priority with estimated high impact on food safety and trade.

Issue No.	Potential Emerging Global Issue for consideration (<i>not in priority order</i>)	Related Impact on CCFICS / Codex	Related CCFICS text	Comment / Status / Reason for priority
5	Challenge for national food control systems to manage food safety hazards caused by emerging risks (eg AMR, new/expanding pests and disease, pandemics).	Under challenging conditions, does CCFICS guidance assist developing countries to: • Implement controls and achieve the level of assurance required to export safe food and maintain markets. • Facilitate harmonisation of requirements.	• CXG 19-1995 • CXG 34-1999 • CXG 47-2003 • CXG 82-2013 • CXG 91-2017	This emerging issue could be combined with issue four above, which raises the question of whether CCFICS guidance is fit for purpose, or whether further work is required to support the implementation or awareness of the texts.
6	Principles and guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence and advanced analytical tools in food import and export inspection and certification systems	AI is now widely used, so it is important to ensure it is used appropriately. Key priorities are: • Transparency to understand how AI supports decisions. • Clear human oversight and accountability for official decisions. • Validation to ensure tools are fit for purpose and perform consistently. • Trust and equivalence between trading partners, and avoiding unnecessary barriers to trade through consistent, principled use of technology.	• CXG 20-1995 • CXG 47-2003 • CXG 82-2013 • CXG 102-2023 • Draft principles on digitalisation of national food control systems	Decision to be made as to whether a work proposal, and subsequent standard, devoted to AI should be developed.

ANNEX

Intersessional workshop - Emerging issues affecting food safety and international food trade.

1. The virtual workshop, held at 12pm (CEST) on 22 June 2026, was attended by 63 participants from over 26 Codex Member Countries, one Member Organisation and two Observer organisations.
2. The opening remarks highlighted the value of sharing national experiences, foresight, and horizon scanning on the subject matter. It was also mentioned that this standing agenda item aimed to support Codex Members in addressing new work proposals before they were presented to CCFICS.
3. The European Union, acting as custodian of Appendix A for this session, pointed out that the discussions of this workshop along with the replies to CL 2024/85-FICS would inform the paper on emerging issues to be presented in CCFICS28.
4. The replies to the CL had three points as a common denominator: new technologies, AI and risk-based regulation.
5. The workshop was divided in two main parts:

Issues identified in CCFICS27 and listed in Appendix A (published in the CL):

- 1. New and evolving food production, processing, transport and distributing systems and technologies.**
6. Members mentioned the EU proposal on New Foods and Production Systems that would be discussed in CAC49. The interventions alluded to how CCFICS' work on emerging issues was closely connected to wider Codex debates about how to respond to innovation and new production methods in food systems.
- 2. Impact of new technologies and tools on training, development and monitoring of food control systems, information sharing and approach to government regulation and compliance activities.**
7. A Member raised the concern that risk-based approaches were a horizontal issue and asked how they could be more systematically generalised across all CCFICS texts.
8. An Observer commented on traceability under both the current framework and future needs, with particular emphasis on improving data standardization and interoperability. It was stressed that the need for clear requirements defining what data each stakeholder must collect and when, as consistent, standardized data, was essential for maintaining traceability and enabling technologies such as AI. The importance of establishing interoperability was also highlighted.
9. Online certification management was specifically highlighted as an example, and emphasis was made on retaining flexibility to accommodate the varying resources and capacity of less developed countries.
10. The Chair of the EWG on the draft revised *Principles for traceability/product tracing as a tool within a food inspection and certification system* (CXG 60-2006) confirmed the importance of data standardization and interoperability and reminded the workshop that these have already been reflected in the current work proposal and draft guidelines. The Chair explained that the current draft traceability guidance has been intentionally designed to be flexible rather than prescriptive, in response to Member countries' requests to tailor traceability systems to their NFCS rather than follow mandatory data elements or standards.
- 3. Evolving role of competent authority and interactions between various government entities.**
11. A Member mentioned that this issue was highly relevant internationally and referred to related work on single window interoperability and alignment of data standards.
12. Overall, Members supported the retention of these items in Appendix A.

New issues identified:**4. Impact and implementation of CCFICS guidance**

13. Australia raised the issue that regulators may face difficulties in using Codex guidance in practice to support risk-based approaches, despite CCFICS having already developed or updated multiple texts in areas such as traceability, establishment listings, equivalence, and appeals mechanisms. Australia suggested that CCFICS take a more strategic and proactive review of its body of guidance to identify where additional detail, or modernization may be needed to better support consistent, risk-based implementation across NFCS. The intervention proposed initiating discussions on whether existing CCFICS texts remain current, coherent, and fit for purpose in light of changing technologies, trade practices, and the evolution of NFCS. It was also questioned whether challenges and repeated updates to CCFICS texts may partly stem from a lack of awareness of existing standards and practical guidance tools.

14. A Member agreed with the above and mentioned that many existing CCFICS documents overlap, often covering the same concepts in different ways, and suggested that they could benefit from consolidation and updating. Overall, there was support to undertake a strategic review of the guidance while stressing that, when properly implemented, existing Codex texts provide a strong foundation for facilitating international trade.
15. Australia also raised questions about whether challenges in implementing CCFICS texts stemmed from their high-level nature and whether there was enough practical guidance and tools to support their application. It was noted that other Codex committees have also discussed similar concerns and suggested possible solutions such as developing practical toolkits, ancillary guidance, or application-focused materials. Further discussion was encouraged on whether additional support or new instruments are needed and where such work should be developed.

5. Challenge for national food control systems to manage food safety hazards caused by emerging risks (e.g. AMR, new/expanding pests and disease, pandemics).

16. In their response to CL 2024/85-FICS, Uganda raised an emerging issue highlighting challenges for NFCS in managing food safety hazards linked to new and evolving risks such as AMR, pesticide resistance, pests, and disease pandemics. These risks were framed as a particular concern for developing exporting countries whose systems may need strengthening to meet both domestic needs and trading partner requirements.
17. It was noted that this item might fit within the issue previously raised by Australia.

6. Principles and guidelines for the trustworthy use of artificial intelligence and advanced analytical tools in food import and export inspection and certification systems

18. Spain proposed a new issue on developing principles and guidelines for the trustworthy use of AI and advanced analytical tools in food import and export inspection and certification systems. The discussion highlighted that AI was increasingly being used in national food control activities such as risk profiling, inspection planning, document verification, and system monitoring, building on broader digitization efforts already underway within CCFICS.
19. It was noted that AI systems differ significantly from traditional digital tools because they relied on unstructured data, generate less transparent and more autonomous outputs, and may therefore raise concerns around transparency, human oversight, and regulatory equivalence between trading partners.
20. Spain suggested that CCFICS should consider whether existing principles were sufficient to maintain trust and consistency in an AI-driven environment or whether additional guidance may eventually be needed.
21. There was discussion as to whether Spain's proposal on principles for the trustworthy use of AI in food import and export systems should be integrated into Australia's broader high-level work on digitalization of NFCS or addressed separately as a more operational guideline. Participants generally agreed that the two areas were closely connected but highlighted that a decision was needed on how best to structure the work within existing CCFICS priorities, with further clarification expected at CCFICS28.
22. There was broad support to continue discussion of these new issues, and Spain indicated that they planned to present a discussion paper on the matter of AI and trust for further consideration at CCFICS28.