



## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

#### Forty-sixth Session

#### WORK FROM THE CODEx COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS (CCCF) FOR ADOPTION OR APPROVAL BY THE COMMISSION

1. The Commission is invited to adopt the standards and related texts submitted for final adoption (Step 8 or Step 5/8). The relevant texts from CCCF are listed in **Part 1** of this document.
2. Comments received regarding standards and related texts from CCCF are contained in CX/CAC 23/46/10 Add.1.
3. The Commission is furthermore invited to approve new work proposals from CCCF as listed in **Part 2** of this document, including the reference of the project document in the relevant report. The project document is also compiled in this document for ease of reference and to ensure availability in all six languages. The Commission is invited to consider this proposal in the light of its *Strategic Plan 2020-2025* and the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities* and *Criteria for the Establishment of Subsidiary Bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission*.
4. The Commission is invited to endorse discontinuation of work as proposed by CCCF as listed in **Part 3** of this document.
5. The critical review of these texts was undertaken by the 84th Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC84).
6. The Commission is invited to endorse the proposal from CCEXEC84 to extend the timelines to 2025 for completion of work on an ML for total aflatoxins in ready-to-eat peanuts and associated sampling plan, and MLs for lead in culinary herbs (fresh/dried) and spices (dried).

7.

**Part 1 – Standards and related texts submitted for final adoption**

<b>Codex body</b>	<b>Standards and related texts</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Job No.</b>	<b>Step</b>
	Code of Practice for prevention and reduction of mycotoxin contamination in cassava and cassava-based products	REP23/CF, Paragraph 36, Appendix III	N05-2021	8
	Maximum level (ML) for lead in ready-to-eat meals for infants and young children	REP23/CF, Paragraph 28(ii), Appendix II	N05-2019	8
CCCF	ML for lead in soft brown, raw and non-centrifugal sugars	REP23/CF, Paragraph 28(i), Appendix II	N05-2019	5/8
	ML for total aflatoxins in dried chilli and nutmeg, and ML for ochratoxin A in dried chilli, paprika, and nutmeg <sup>1</sup>	REP23/CF, Paragraph 69(i)(iv), Appendix V	N08-2019	5/8
	Sampling plans for total aflatoxins in certain cereals and cereal-based products including foods for infants and young children <sup>2</sup>	REP23/CF, Paragraph 41(ii), Appendix IV	N20-2017	5/8

**Part 2 – Proposals to undertake new work or revise a standard**

<b>Codex body</b>	<b>Standards and related texts</b>	<b>Reference and project document</b>
CCCF	CoP/Guidelines for the prevention or reduction of ciguatera poisoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REP23/CF, Appendix VI</li> <li>• Annex I of this document</li> </ul>

**Part 3 – Work proposed for discontinuation**

<b>Codex body</b>	<b>Standards and related texts</b>	<b>Reference</b>
CCCF	MLs for total aflatoxins in paprika, ginger, black and white pepper, and turmeric and MLs for ochratoxin A in ginger, black and white pepper, and turmeric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REP23/CF, Paragraph 69(iii)</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> CCEXEC84 noted that the ML for total aflatoxins in dried chilli and nutmeg and the ML for ochratoxin A in dried chilli, paprika, and nutmeg will be reviewed in three years' time subject to availability of data (REP23/EXEC1, paragraph 53)

<sup>2</sup> The revised sampling plan as endorsed by CCMAS42 is the one to be considered by CAC46 for adoption

**Proposal for a New Work on a  
Code of Practice/Guidelines for the prevention or reduction of ciguatera poisoning  
project document  
(for approval)**

### 1. Purpose and scope of the project

The purpose of the proposed new work is to develop a code of practice (COP) or guidelines to prevent or reduce ciguatera poisoning based upon work already undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO). Ciguatera poisoning (CP) has become a global health issue and is increasing in prevalence due to factors that include climate change. Coastal communities that rely on local fishing as a food supply and as a source of income are particularly at risk from increasing occurrences of ciguatera poisoning.

The scope of the work is to complete a CoP/guidelines to prevent or reduce ciguatera poisoning based on a discussion paper developed by an electronic Working Group (EWG) established in 2022.

### 2. Relevance and timeliness

In 2016, at the 32nd Session of the Codex Committee on Fisheries and Fishery Products, the Pacific Nations raised ciguatera poisoning as an issue that is increasingly affecting the tropical and subtropical regions of the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, and Caribbean Sea between the latitudes of 35°N and 35°S. The issue of CP was raised at the 11th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF11, 2017). CCCF agreed to request scientific advice from FAO/WHO to enable the development of appropriate risk management options, resulting in the *FAO/WHO Report of the Expert Meeting on Ciguatera Poisoning*, published in 2020. CCCF15 (2022) agreed to establish an EWG chaired by the United States and co-chaired by the European Union to prepare a discussion paper on the development of a code of practice or guidelines to prevent or reduce ciguatera poisoning. The EWG was asked to build upon the work already undertaken by the FAO in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO).

### 3. Main aspects to be covered

This work will address measures for prevention or reduction of ciguatera poisoning including surveillance and monitoring programs, food safety management systems, data sharing, and consumer advice directed at various stakeholders such as competent authorities, fish sector operators (harvesters and producers), healthcare professionals, and consumers.

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

(a) **Consumer protection from the point of view of health and fraudulent practices.** To protect consumer health, exposure to ciguatera poisoning through consumption of contaminated seafood (e.g., fish) should be avoided. A CoP/guidelines providing recommendations to governments, fish sector operators (harvesters and producers), healthcare professionals, and consumers will help prevent contaminated seafood from entering the marketplace and enable consumers to avoid contaminated products.

(b) **Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade. Currently, best practices and legislations.** Development of a CoP/guidelines is needed to ensure that information on recommended practices for preventing and reducing ciguatera exposure is available to all member countries. It also will provide the means to enable exporters to ensure reduced risk of ciguatera poisoning and to assist in compliance with any MLs that may be established in the future.

(c) **Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work.**

The CoP/guidelines will address environmental measures, harvesting practices, safe production principles, government guidance and oversight, and consumer advice.

(d) **Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field.** Work on ciguatera poisoning has been undertaken by several international organizations and public health agencies such as FAO, WHO, IOC-UNESCO, IAEA, EuroCigua, and the North Pacific Marine Science Organization ("PICES"), and who can be consulted in development of a CoP/guidelines. These organizations have made recommendations but have not offered a CoP/guidelines.

## 5. Relevance to Codex Strategic Goals

- (a) **Goal 1 Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner.** Establishing a CoP/guidelines for prevention or reduction of ciguatera poisoning will address the current need for guidance to ensure the health of consumers.
- (b) **Goal 2 Develop standards based on science and Codex risk-analysis principles.** This work will apply risk analysis principles in the development of a CoP/guidelines by using scientific data and recommendations from FAO/WHO and other recognized expert bodies to support a reduction in exposure of consumers to ciguatera poisoning.
- (c) **Goal 3 Increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards.** The proposed CoP/guidelines ensure that information on recommended practices to prevent and reduce ciguatera poisoning consist of current best practices and are available to all member countries, especially those with fewer resources to devote to this topic.
- (d) **Goal 4 Facilitate the participation of all Codex Members throughout the standard setting process.** Developing a CoP/guidelines through the Codex Step process will make information on recommended practices to prevent and reduce ciguatera poisoning available to all Codex members.
- (e) **Goal 5 Enhance work management systems and practices that support the efficient and effective achievement of all strategic plan goals.** A CoP/guidelines will help ensure development and implementation of effective and efficient work management systems and practices by providing basic guidance for countries and producers to keep ciguatoxin-contaminated seafood out of the marketplace.

## 6. Information on the relationship between the proposal and other existing Codex documents

The *Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products* (CXC 52-2003) provides comprehensive technical guidance on the harvesting, processing, transport and sale of fish and fishery products. It does not give specific guidance as to the reduction or avoidance of CP but serves as a useful reference for further work on a CoP/guidelines.

## 7. Identification of any requirement for any availability of expert scientific advice

The FAO has already provided needed expert scientific advice in the form of the *FAO/WHO Report of the Expert Meeting on Ciguatera Poisoning*, published in 2020. Additional scientific advice may be required as the work progresses.

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

Currently, there is no identified need for additional technical input from external bodies.

## 9. Timeline for completion of the new work

Work will commence following recommendation by CCCF and approval by CAC in 2023. Completion of work is expected by 2027 or earlier.