

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

# E

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)

**CL 2022/06/OCS-CCEXEC**  
**March 2022**

**TO:** Codex Contact Points  
Contact Points of international organizations having observer status with Codex

**FROM:** Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission,  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme

**SUBJECT:** **Request for Information on New Food Sources and production systems; Need for Codex guidance and attention to inform the CCEXEC sub-committee on working on this topic**

**DEADLINE:** **30 APRIL 2022**

## BACKGROUND

1. The 81st Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC81) noted with appreciation the FAO/WHO paper on emerging issues affecting agri-food systems with relevance to food safety and quality, including new food sources and production systems (NFPS); and agreed to establish a sub-committee to investigate potential mechanisms to address crosscutting, overarching and emerging issues in Codex.
2. This was confirmed by the 44th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC44) and in moving forward with this work CAC44 requested that:
  - The Codex Secretariat issue a Circular Letter (CL) to collect information from Members and observers on ongoing developments related to new food sources and production systems (e.g., regulatory initiatives to address safety and fair trade practices);
  - A CCEXEC subcommittee consider the information received through the CL and provide an assessment of the range and suitability of Codex tools that could be used to progress work on safety, quality, labelling, nutrition and/or fair trade practices related to new food sources and production systems; and
  - The CCEXEC sub-committee work in an inclusive manner, ensuring an approach that engaged with all Members and observers that wish to contribute, possibly through the regional coordinators, and prepare a report for consideration by CCEXEC83 recommending a way forward to CAC45.
3. CAC44 noted that CAC45 would further discuss the issue based on the information collected through the CL, the work of the CCEXEC sub-committee, and the recommendations of CCEXEC83, and determine the next steps.

## PURPOSE AND CONTEXT OF THE REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

4. There is an increasing recognition of the challenges related to feeding a growing global population, and at the same time producing food more sustainably, which is spurring on food system innovations, which are shaping our future agri-food landscape.
5. These 'game-changing' innovations are at different stages of development across the world, making it critical to objectively assess not only benefits they might bring but also any risks associated with them - including food safety and quality concerns.
6. To facilitate future discussions around this topic, "new foods" denote those that have not been widely consumed either because they have recently emerged into the global retail space thanks to technological innovations, or because their consumption has been historically restricted to specific populations or regions in the world. Such foods are also considered 'new' within the framework of existing Codex standards. New food production systems reflect innovations or advancements in pre-existing food technologies that help to produce some of the new foods under discussion.
7. Recognizing the need to be prepared to address this cross-cutting, overarching and emerging issue, the Codex Alimentarius Commission decided as a first step to send this Circular Letter seeking input of Members and Observers on the topic.

**REQUEST FOR COMMENTS**

8. Codex Members and Observers are requested to provide comments on and a response to the following topics and questions through the Codex Online Commenting System (OCS): <https://ocs.codexalimentarius.org/>, as per the guidance below.

**Range of potential issues that Codex needs to be able to address in the future**

- a. Please identify the innovations, new technologies or new/emerging<sup>1</sup> food sources or production systems that are currently in use, in development, or for which regulatory approaches have been or are being developed in the jurisdictions in which you operate.

Cultivated meat, seafood, and dairy	
Fermentation-derived ingredients	
Plant-based protein alternatives	
Seaweed	
Edible insects	
3-D printed foods	
Microalgae	
Other (please specify)	

What are the main issues/concerns on trade and/or safety of any of the innovations, new technologies or new/emerging food sources or production systems you have identified that could productively be addressed by Codex? Please provide information/data if available for each of the types of innovations, new technologies or new/emerging<sup>2</sup> food sources or production systems on the following aspects: regulatory matters; labelling aspects; nutritional aspects; fair trade practices; quality aspects; environmental or sustainability aspects and any other relevant matters in the tables below.

**Regulatory matters**

Cultivated meat, seafood, and dairy	
Fermentation-derived ingredients	
Plant-based protein alternatives	
Seaweed	
Edible insects	
3-D printed foods	
Microalgae	
Other (please specify)	

**Labelling aspects relevant to consumer protection and fair-trade practices**

Cultivated meat, seafood, and dairy	
-------------------------------------	--

<sup>1</sup> Some food sources and production systems may not be new to all jurisdictions but may be expanding to new geographical areas that have not managed such food sources/systems previously

<sup>2</sup> Some food sources and production systems may not be new to all jurisdictions but may be expanding to new geographical areas that have not managed such food sources/systems previously

Fermentation-derived ingredients	
Plant-based protein alternatives	
Seaweed	
Edible insects	
3-D printed foods	
Microalgae	
Other (please specify)	

### Nutritional aspects

Cultivated meat, seafood, and dairy	
Fermentation-derived ingredients	
Plant-based protein alternatives	
Seaweed	
Edible insects	
3-D printed foods	
Microalgae	
Other (please specify)	

### Food safety aspects (e.g. physical, chemical and/or microbiological risks)

Cultivated meat, seafood, and dairy	
Fermentation-derived ingredients	
Plant-based protein alternatives	
Seaweed	
Edible insects	
3-D printed foods	
Microalgae	
Other (please specify)	

**Quality aspects (e.g. essential composition and quality factors, weights and measures, methods of analysis and sampling)**

Cultivated meat, seafood, and dairy	
Fermentation-derived ingredients	
Plant-based protein alternatives	
Seaweed	
Edible insects	
3-D printed foods	
Microalgae	
Other (please specify)	

**Any other matters relevant to the mission of Codex to protect the health of consumers, ensure fair practices in the food trade and promote co-ordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organization**

Cultivated meat, seafood, and dairy	
Fermentation-derived ingredients	
Plant-based protein alternatives	
Seaweed	
Edible insects	
3-D printed foods	
Microalgae	
Other (please specify)	

- b. Do existing Codex standards cover the issues(s) identified?
- c. If not, what would be the need for and benefit of a Codex Standard in the areas you have identified?
- d. How would you recommend the issues you have identified as needing a Codex Standard be prioritized?
- e. What is your assessment of the scientific basis needed to work on the issues identified?
- f. What additional information, evidence or analysis would be required for new work proposals to be developed for any of the issues you have identified in your answer to question a.?

**Approaches to developing Codex standards**

- g. In instances where the need for and benefit of a Codex standard or other text is identified, Codex could use different approaches depending on the issue. Please give examples of what you think should be addressed: (1) vertically (i.e., commodity standard or text); (2) horizontally (i.e., general standard or text); (3) a combination of both. Please indicate how each of the issues you have identified above might be addressed by one or more of these means

**Use of Codex working mechanisms**

- h. Codex already has a range of working mechanisms (e.g., committees (some adjourned sine die with potential to reactivate), task forces, working groups, matters referred, cross-committee working groups).
- i. Do these mechanisms provide Codex with sufficient tools to address the issues you have identified?
  - ii. If so, how can they be best used to do that? (e.g., if there is no obvious committee entry point for a new work proposal, how could this be considered within the current structure?)
  - iii. Do you think existing Codex tools need to be adapted to ensure they are sufficiently flexible to address these issues and if so how (e.g., broadening/revising Terms of Reference of Committees) or do we need to consider any new/additional working mechanisms?

**GUIDANCE ON THE PROVISION OF COMMENTS**

9. Comments should be submitted through the Codex Contact Points of Codex members and observers using the OCS.
10. Contact Points of Codex members and observers may login to the OCS and access the document open for comments by selecting “Enter” in the “My reviews” page, available after login to the system.
11. Contact Points of Codex members and observers organizations are requested to provide proposed changes and relevant comments/justifications on a specific paragraph (under the categories: editorial, substantive, technical and translation) and/or at the document level (general comments or summary comments). Additional guidance on the OCS comment categories and types can be found in the OCS [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#).
12. Other OCS resources, including the user manual and short guide, can be found at the following link: <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/resources/ocs/en/>.
13. For questions on the OCS, please contact [Codex-OCS@fao.org](mailto:Codex-OCS@fao.org).