



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

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**CODEx STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025: FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2020-2025**

(Prepared by the Codex Secretariat in collaboration with FAO and WHO)

**1. DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION OF THE CODEx STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025**

1. The process to develop the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 was led by the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC), consistent with Rule V (2) of the Rules of Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) which provides for CCEXEC to “make proposals to the Commission regarding... strategic planning”. CCEXEC74 noted that “the process for finalizing [the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025] would involve broad consultation with the entire Codex membership, including through the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees and the Commission”.<sup>1</sup> The consultation processes delivered valuable inputs to the development of the Plan, including comments from Members and Observers in response to drafts of the Plan in three circular letters<sup>2</sup>, oral reports from Coordinators of informal meetings held in five of the six Codex regions and informal meetings held in the margins of the 31st Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP), which led delegations to express their appreciation of the “exemplary process in transparency and inclusiveness, in line with the core values of Codex” when adopting the Plan.

2. CAC42 adopted the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 as proposed by CCEXEC77.<sup>3</sup> In the Plan, CAC recommitted itself to the Codex values, which remained unchanged; using its predecessor, the Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019,<sup>4</sup> as its starting point, carried forward its four long-term strategic goals, while also adding a new focus on delivering impact through the recognition and use of Codex texts (Strategic Goal 3). It also included significant new elements, including a new statement of the Codex vision and mission, and a linkage between the work of CAC and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>5</sup>

3. The monitoring framework of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 was developed and then revised with a view to providing complete, objective, and reliable information to the Membership, with the final monitoring framework approved by CAC46.<sup>6</sup> The Codex Secretariat has reported every two years on the implementation status of the Plan.<sup>7</sup> This report summarizes the complete six-year period. The body provides narrative highlights of progress, challenges and achievements against each of the five Strategic Goals, while Appendix I reports against the monitoring framework for the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025.<sup>8</sup>

**2. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODEx STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025**

**2.1 Standards in the spotlight: achieving Strategic Goal 1 “Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner”**

4. This section provides an overview of some of the needs and emerging issues which Codex identified and prioritized during 2020-2025, underlining its capacity to respond to a changing global environment shaped by challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), changes in weather patterns and climate, technological innovation, changing trends in trade and consumption, and the continuing needs of developing countries and vulnerable populations. The Codex texts developed and adopted during this period illustrate not only the breadth of issues addressed by CAC, but also its ability to deliver timely,

<sup>1</sup> REP18/EXEC1, paragraph 7

<sup>2</sup> CL 2017/50/OCS-EXEC; CL 2018/67/OCS-CAC and CL 2019/21/OCS-CAC

<sup>3</sup> REP19/CAC

<sup>4</sup> [openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/7cb5e8b5-a34c-407b-85e8-fc5845cc8798/content](https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/7cb5e8b5-a34c-407b-85e8-fc5845cc8798/content)

<sup>5</sup> [openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/68380dae-b812-4f73-ab9a-dcd7aa7e3d5c/content](https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/68380dae-b812-4f73-ab9a-dcd7aa7e3d5c/content)

<sup>6</sup> CX/EXEC 23/84/4, Annex; REP23/CAC, paragraph 16

<sup>7</sup> CX/CAC 22/45/14; CX/CAC 24/47/20

<sup>8</sup> CX/EXEC 23/84/4, Annex

science-based and globally relevant guidance in response to emerging risks and priorities.

5. Between 2020 and 2025, CAC adopted around 3 500 new or revised standards (including numerical standards), guidelines, codes of practice and other provisions, of which on average 80 percent were adopted within 5 years (Appendix I, Table 2). Surveys of Members over the last 4 years showed that on average 88 percent of Codex Members considered Codex texts to be mostly or extremely useful in meeting their priority food safety and quality needs (see Appendix I, Table 1).

6. The following sections highlight some of the key critical and emerging issues which the CAC has addressed over the past six years.

### 2.1.1 Codex responds to global public health priorities

6. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) was not a new issue for CAC, but following the call to regularly review and update the Codex AMR texts in the 2015 Global Action Plan on AMR, CAC39 had agreed on new work to revise the *Code of practice to minimize and contain foodborne antimicrobial resistance* (CXC 61-2005) and develop new guidance on integrated surveillance of antimicrobial resistance, and the establishment of a task force to undertake the work (TFAMR). This work was completed in four sessions of TFAMR (2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021), overcoming the challenge of completing the texts on a range of critical and at times contentious technical issues in a virtual session during the COVID-19 pandemic. CAC44 (2021) adopted the revised *Code of practice to minimize and contain foodborne antimicrobial resistance* (CXC 61-2005) and new *Guidelines on integrated monitoring and surveillance of foodborne antimicrobial resistance* (CXG 94-2021), which were brought together in a single compendium in 2023.<sup>9</sup>

7. The importance of this work was recognised by the Muscat Ministerial Manifesto on AMR, adopted by 47 countries in 2022, and in the UN General Assembly political declaration in 2024, in which global leaders “commit to ensure that the use of antimicrobials in animals and agriculture is done in a prudent and responsible manner in line with the Codex Alimentarius Antimicrobial Resistance Standards”.<sup>10</sup> The importance of Codex texts on AMR was also recognised subsequently in the resolution on AMR in agrifood systems adopted by the 44th FAO Conference in 2025.

8. There have also been efforts on the ground to support implementation of the Codex texts on AMR, such as through the five year FAO project on *Action to support implementation of Codex AMR Texts (ACT)* funded by the Republic of Korea, which provided direct support to six countries in Asia and Latin America to improve containment and reduction of foodborne AMR.<sup>11</sup> The project has also supported the development of the International FAO Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring (InFARM) system,<sup>12</sup> a global platform that helps countries generate, analyse, and share reliable data on AMR in animals and food, and on antimicrobial use (AMU) in plant production and protection. This work reiterated the importance of Codex texts implementation to achieve their intended impact.

### 2.1.2 Codex responds to the effects of changing climate on food safety risks

9. Changing weather patterns and climate can lead to changes in behaviour and distribution of food safety hazards and the efficacy of control measures as was highlighted in a FAO report in 2020.<sup>13</sup> Effective adaptation requires an enabling environment, including appropriate international standards.

10. Ciguatera poisoning is an illness resulting from consumption of marine organisms containing harmful levels of ciguatera toxins. Globally, ciguatera poisoning is increasing in prevalence due to factors such as warmer ocean temperatures. Coastal communities that rely on local fishing for food and income are particularly at risk. Codex responded by developing and adopting the *Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of ciguatera poisoning* (CXC 83-2024) as a matter of urgency. In adopting it in 2024, CAC47 “congratulated CCCF on the expeditious work on this text, noting that the work was finalized ahead of schedule”, becoming one of only six Codex texts to have been adopted only a year after CAC approved the new work.

11. Water is key to all stages of food production but is a dwindling resource. The availability and microbiological quality of water are different in each country, region, context, setting and food establishment, yet water should always be fit for use for each specific purpose, and it should be managed in a way that the safety of food is ensured while simultaneously avoiding unnecessary consumption and waste. Recognising this complexity, Codex developed and adopted *Guidelines for the safe use and reuse of water in food production and processing* (CXG 100-

<sup>9</sup> FAO and WHO. 2023. *Foodborne antimicrobial resistance – Compendium of Codex standards*. First revision. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb8554en>

<sup>10</sup> digitallibrary.un.org/record/4064023

<sup>11</sup> Bolivia, Cambodia, Colombia, Mongolia, Nepal and Pakistan

<sup>12</sup> [InFARM System | Antimicrobial Resistance | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#)

<sup>13</sup> FAO. 2020. Climate change: Unpacking the burden on food safety. Food safety and quality series No. 8. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca8185en>

2023). The guidelines promote the application of a risk-based approach for the use and reuse of water so as to ensure it is fit-for-purpose, that is not compromising the safety of food in the context of its use.

### 2.1.3 Codex responds to technological innovation

12. Food e-commerce allows consumers to browse and order food online for delivery to their home and is growing rapidly. The value of the global food e-commerce market is USD 467 billion in 2026 and is forecast to grow steadily to USD 2 228 billion by 2035.<sup>14</sup> Recognising that consumers should enjoy the same protection when buying food through e-commerce that they do when buying food from traditional food outlets, Codex has developed and adopted *Guidelines on the provision of food information for pre-packaged foods to be offered via E-commerce* (CXG 104-2024).

13. The use of technology, for example QR codes on labels or at point of purchase, is allowing consumers to access more information on the food they buy, other than that which is required to appear on the labels of pre-packaged food. Codex developed and adopted *Guidelines on the use of technology to provide food information in food labelling* (CXG 105-2024) to reiterate the principles that should be applied when food information is provided to consumers using technology and also provide safeguards for consumers, particularly around no cost access to information provided using technology.

14. Technology also has the potential to provide new enabled solutions to improve the delivery of official controls as part of national food control plans. The shared and common experiences of national regulatory authorities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic was the inspiration for the subsequent work to develop *Principles and guidelines the use of remote audit and inspection in regulatory frameworks* (CXG 102-2023), adopted by CAC46.<sup>15</sup> The revised *Guidelines for design, production, issuance and use of generic official certificates* (CXG 38-2001) were adopted to address electronic certification and paperless exchange of certificate were also an important step in supporting digital advances.

### 2.1.4 Codex responds to the needs of developing countries

15. Traditional markets for food are dedicated spaces for food wholesalers, retailers and consumers to sell and purchase food. They are the places where a large proportion of the world's population purchase a significant proportion of their food. Codex developed and adopted *Guidelines for food hygiene control measures in traditional markets* (CXG 103-2024) to provide competent authorities, FBOs and consumers with the necessary knowledge to strengthen food hygiene capacities in these markets. The guidelines were recognized by Members as having "huge potential to improve global food safety outcomes".<sup>16</sup> This work was also notable for being the first Codex text whose development was led exclusively by low- and middle-income countries (LMICs); Kenya, Bolivia and Nigeria.

16. Delivery of official controls on residues of the 1 200 pesticides which are available globally to control pests on agricultural crops and food commodities requires the analysis of residues in the food chain. Accurate determination of residues requires the use of specific Reference Materials (RMs) of known chemical purity. Limited shelf life, diminishing purity, and high recurring cost of RMs are major impediments to performing regular pesticide residue analysis. The *Guidelines for monitoring the stability and purity of reference materials and related stock solutions of pesticides during prolonged storage*, which were adopted by CAC48,<sup>17</sup> represent an important development enabling laboratories to monitor the stability and purity of the pesticide RMs and their stock solutions during prolonged storage in a harmonized manner, thereby supporting official control.

17. Codex also recognises changing patterns of global food trade and is responsive to the emergence of new structures that promote intra-regional trade between, and support economic development of, LMICs. African governments are committed to promoting and boosting intraregional trade in agricultural commodities. To support harmonization of food safety policies, standards and legislation towards this goal, CCAFRICA developed and CAC45 adopted *Guidelines for developing harmonized food safety legislation for the CCAFRICA region* (CXG 98-2022).

18. Indigenous peoples make up 6.2 percent of the global population,<sup>18</sup> but they safeguard much of the world's remaining biodiversity. Their food and knowledge systems are amongst the oldest, most resilient, and most sustainable on earth. Indigenous peoples around the world are finding new ways to engage with the market, with labelling and certification schemes being some of the approaches for a more intercultural and systemic market access. Regional and international standards also have a role in facilitating market access. CCNASWP developed and CAC43 (2020) adopted the *Regional standard for kava products for use as a*

<sup>14</sup> [www.businessresearchinsights.com/market-reports/food-e-commerce-market-100031](https://www.businessresearchinsights.com/market-reports/food-e-commerce-market-100031)

<sup>15</sup> REP23/CAC, paragraphs 78-79

<sup>16</sup> REP 24/FH, paragraph 135

<sup>17</sup> REP25/CAC, paragraph 57(i)

<sup>18</sup> ILO, *Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169: Towards an Inclusive, Sustainable and Just Future*, Geneva, 2019, p. 14.

*beverage when mixed with water (North America and the South West Pacific)* (CXS 336R-2020), kava being an indigenous food, to promote harmonisation and facilitate trade in the region.

### 2.1.5 Codex standards protect vulnerable populations

19. As has long been recognized by Codex, “infant feeding represents a problem of prime importance and the value of breast-milk as an ideal food for the infant during the first six months of its life cannot be too strongly stressed”.<sup>19</sup> Follow-up formula for older infants is a product, manufactured for use as a breastmilk-substitute, as a liquid part of a diet for older infants when progressively diversified complementary feeding is introduced. Following over a decade of technical discussion in the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU), a revised *Standard for follow-up formula for older infants and product for young children* (CXS 156-1987) was adopted by CAC46. The *General standard for contaminants in food and feed* (CXS 193-1995) also addresses maximum levels for contaminants to protect infants and young children. For example, between 2022 and 2023 CAC developed and adopted MLs for lead in a range of foods intended for vulnerable population group. To strengthen the management of food additives used in infant formula, a framework for assessing technological need established by CCNFSDU at its 41st session (2019) was used to evaluate 11 food additives for use in infant formula between 2020 and 2025: six were confirmed to have technological justification, while five were determined to lack such justification.

20. The right to adequate food, including freedom from hunger, is enshrined in international law. Every day, tens of millions of people around the world, including children, rely on humanitarian food assistance. Children affected by severe acute malnutrition need efficacious and timely intervention including safe, palatable foods with a high-energy content and adequate amounts of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients within an appropriately designed programme that promotes continuation of breastfeeding, appropriate transition to nutritious family food and provides psycho-social support for recovery. Food safety and quality programmes used by distributors of humanitarian food assistance are grounded in Codex standards. Codex added to these standards by adopting *Guidelines for ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF)* (CXG 95-2022) at CAC45 (2022), providing guidance on technical and nutritional aspects of the production of these foods for children from the age of 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition. CAC45 also adopted maximum levels for aflatoxins in cereal-based food for infants and young children for food aid programs.<sup>20</sup>

21. Food allergies, an immune-mediated food hypersensitivity, represent an increasing food safety issue globally. With this increasing health burden comes the expectation that food business operators (FBOs) take steps to accurately declare the presence of allergenic ingredients and prevent or minimize the risk from unintended allergen presence. CAC43 (2020) adopted the *Code of practice on food allergen management for food business operators* (CXC 80-2020), which provides guidance on allergen management in food production, including controls to prevent cross-contact where an allergen is inadvertently transferred from a food containing an allergen to a food that does not contain the allergen. CAC48 (2025) adopted a revision to the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985), updating the list of foods or ingredients that shall always be labelled as allergenic foods. The issue of cross-contact remains on the agenda of Codex Committee of Food Labelling (CCFL), which is developing guidelines on precautionary allergen labelling.

## 2.2 Standards based on science: heeding Strategic Goal 2 “Develop standards based on science and Codex risk analysis principles”

### 2.2.1 “Develop standards based on science...”

22. Of the 3 500 new or revised standards adopted by Codex between 2020 and 2025, the vast majority were numerical standards, with food additive provisions (around 1 450) and pesticide maximum residue limits (MRLs) (about 1 900) predominating. In addition, maximum levels for contaminants in food and feed and maximum residue limits for veterinary drugs in foods were also adopted between 2020-2025 and contributed to this overall figure. Each of these limits and provisions was based on Codex risk analysis principles, including assessment of relevant science and the elaboration of health-based reference values by the relevant FAO/WHO Joint Expert Advisory Committees – JECFA for additives and JMPR for pesticide residues.

23. Food additives for which provisions were adopted included jagua (genipin-glycine) blue (INS 183), notable as it is the first ever acid stable natural blue colour – a “holy grail” for food chemistry, adopted by CAC47 (2024). Jagua is a natural dyestuff extracted from the unripe fruit of the *Genipa americana* Linne tree, native to Central and South America.

24. Before being considered for inclusion in the *General standard for food additives* (CXS 192-1995) (GSFA), the safety of jagua (genipin-glycine) blue as a food additive needed to be prioritized and then evaluated by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), the technological justification for the additive had to be submitted, and all criteria outlined in the GSFA had to be met. Data were submitted in 2015

<sup>19</sup> Statement on Infant Feeding. CAC/MISC 2-1976

<sup>20</sup> REP22/CAC, paragraph 71(vii)

and assessments finalized in 2021. The FAO/WHO JECFA Secretariat reflected that “jagua blue exemplifies how the collective actions from all stakeholders can ensure that all necessary data are made available so that JECFA can successfully evaluate the safety of food additives that are complex in their composition, yet important for food producers”. This process also highlighted the extent of engagement and effort that is required to develop science-based standards.

25. The results of this effort are positive. Colombia has highlighted the significant benefits of the inclusion of jagua (genipin-glycine) blue in the GSFA for indigenous communities in their country and the Latin American region, opening up new markets and commercial opportunities for these fruits, produced in compliance with the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Nagoya Protocol.

## **2.2.2 “...and Codex risk-analysis principles”**

26. Strategic Goal 2 in the Plan focuses not just on science as the foundation for Codex standards, but also on adherence to risk analysis principles.

27. The clear functional separation between risk assessment and risk management, which is a key element of Codex risk analysis principles, was demonstrated in discussions of proposed MRLs for zilpaterol hydrochloride in cattle tissues at CAC45 and CAC46. In each of these sessions, Members agreed that the JECFA risk assessment provided a robust basis for the elaboration for MRLs.<sup>21</sup> Notwithstanding a continuing consensus on the risk assessment as a basis for establishment of MRLs, Members at Codex could not reach a consensus at either meeting on whether to establish MRLs for zilpaterol hydrochloride, with MRLs being advanced and adopted by vote.

### **2.2.3 Support for expert bodies that deliver scientific advice – demand vs capacity**

28. The management of the pipeline of scientific evaluations to support development and/or revisions of Codex standards and related texts is a significant task. Meetings of the Codex committees and the FAO/WHO Joint Expert Committees that support and advise them, need to be coordinated so that risk assessments can be undertaken, made available and used in a timely manner. This careful coordination was significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with for example the risk assessments agreed by the regular session of JMPR in 2019 not considered by CCPR until July 2021. To minimise further disruption to the pipeline, a virtual procedure was used for submission of the priority list for new work to CCEXEC for critical review and to CAC for approval.<sup>22</sup>

29. Delays on the availability of the necessary scientific advice impacts the pace of standards setting. Delays might be caused by availability of reports, lack of data or data sponsors, or lack of resources or the necessary capacity to meet the demand for scientific advice. CAC48 (2025) had an extensive discussion on these issues and highlighted the importance of a well-resourced and sustainable scientific advice programme. While FAO and WHO continue to deliver high quality scientific advice, further discussions and work are needed to ensure that the programme for the development of the scientific advice that underpins Codex standards is sustainable, efficient and continues to deliver high quality and timely advice.

30. One area that has already received particular attention is the continuing backlog of pesticide assessments, with Members and Observers proposing additional measures for consideration.<sup>23</sup> This informed the establishment of an EWG to consider and recommend enhancements to operation procedures of CCPR and JMPR.<sup>24</sup> The EWG identified short- and long-term measures to enhance current procedures with particular focus on improving JMPR process. CCPR56 (2025) noted that a reduction in the backlog of assessments for JMPR had been observed, but that demand remained strong and continued to grow while the capacity and operational procedures of JMPR remains basically unchanged, and agreed actions to enhance efficiency and maximize use of existing resources, while noting no mechanism had been identified to provide funding or human resource to implement short-term measures to further improve efficiency.<sup>25</sup> CAC48 (2025) requested a costed workplan for JMPR to better understand the shortfalls to be addressed.

31. As challenges are not limited to JMPR, CAC has continued to highlight the importance of sustainable resources for all scientific advice bodies and requested Members to bring this to the attention of FAO and WHO governing bodies. Similar approaches to that of CCPR may be also appropriate for other scientific bodies such as JECFA which provides scientific advice to three Codex committees on a regular basis and others on an ad hoc basis, and hence is essential to the ongoing standard setting work of Codex. This situation demonstrates the continuing relevance of the chapeau to Strategic Goal 2: “Members and those engaged in the food trade who use Codex standards value the strong scientific basis of Codex, which is currently

<sup>21</sup> REP22/CAC paragraph 110; REP23/CAC paragraph 122

<sup>22</sup> REP21/PR, paragraph 9

<sup>23</sup> CRD11 to CCPR52; CX/PR 22/53/20

<sup>24</sup> REP22/PR53, paragraphs 257 to 259

<sup>25</sup> REP25/PR, paragraphs 287, 291, 292

threatened by unsustainable resourcing”.



## 2.2.4 Data representativeness - an ongoing challenge, but light on the horizon

32. While FAO and WHO have continued their efforts to support capacity for data generation and submission to Codex standard setting work (Appendix I, Indicator 2.2.1), the availability of representative data to support Codex standards remained a challenge. Examples include the discussions around MLs for contaminants in spices or mycotoxins in cereals, where Members have expressed concerns, yet has not been solved by extended or multiple calls for data.<sup>26</sup> This has led in some cases to the adoption of MLs with the understanding that they will be reviewed within 3–5 years, as additional data become available to support more geographically representative limits. Discussions on MLs for cereal based products intended for international aid, also highlighted the relevance of data and the need for more local data to reconsider these issues.<sup>27</sup> Yet this data is not easily forthcoming. One of the aims of codes of practice (CoPs) is to support implementation of good practices in different contexts and the collection of monitoring data. Such data is essential to support informed discussions and facilitate consensus on the establishment of lower MLs for contaminants, particularly in the case of staple foods, foods for vulnerable populations, or foods that are highly traded in international markets.

33. This is not an issue the CAC can solve directly. It has to be tackled in an integrated and collaborative manner. There are however some positive developments with regard to data collection such as ongoing work supported by different entities to collect data on pesticide residues on okra, a minor use crop for which data has not been readily available<sup>28</sup> as well as regional initiatives such as one in Latin America to address data needs related to veterinary drugs residues.<sup>29</sup> In addition, CCRVDF has been looking at new risk-based approaches such as extrapolation as a means of developing MRLs for veterinary drug residues in tissues for which there is not sufficient data for a full risk assessment and CAC47 adopted new procedures in this regard which were included in *Codex Procedural Manual*.<sup>30</sup>

34. These highlight that addressing data representativeness requires a multipronged approach with support both Members and Observers as well as international organizations. Innovation in the way standards are developed can also be part of the approach to address standard setting needs in the absence of complete data.

## 2.3. A focus on impact: Strategic Goal 3 “Increase impact through recognition and use of Codex standards”

35. This Plan introduced a new strategic goal relating to impact, recognizing that it is the use and implementation of standards that delivers the Codex vision of being “where the world comes together to create food safety and quality standards to protect everyone everywhere.”

### 2.3.1 Raising awareness

36. Building awareness, understanding and recognition of Codex and its standards is a responsibility that is shared between the Codex Secretariat and Members and Observers. Between 2020 and 2025, the number of country contributions to Codex communication activities rose significantly, driven by Members from all Codex regions actively sharing news on national and regional Codex-related work. In total, the Codex Secretariat published more than 1 300 web news stories over this period covering Codex meetings and standard-setting work, as well as capacity-building activities, trainings, webinars, and other events held worldwide.

37. In terms of dissemination of Codex standards from Members to stakeholders, survey replies from Members have indicated variability in this regard (Appendix I, Table 4) but there seems to be a slightly positive trend in Members’ perspectives on the knowledge gained from Codex texts. This is an important precursor to their use and achieving impact, with LMICs generally responding more positively in terms of knowledge gained from standards (Appendix I, Table 5). But there is still opportunity for improvements in this area. For example, a document providing a visual presentation of the how Codex texts can be used to address AMR<sup>31</sup> was developed in response to feedback from countries under the ACT project and was considered valuable in raising awareness among high level policy makers. Such products may also be useful for other codex texts.

38. The Codex Secretariat manages a strong multi-channel presence. The official Codex X account (@FAOWHOCodex) has grown its audience to over 30 500 followers (as of March 2026), serving as a key

<sup>26</sup> REP25/CAC, paragraphs 47 - 51

<sup>27</sup> REP22/CAC paragraphs 66 - 70

<sup>28</sup> REP25/PR, paragraph 224

<sup>29</sup> REP24/RVDF27, paragraph 141 -145

<sup>30</sup> *Codex Procedural Manual*, 31st edition, Section 4.7 Risk assessment policy for residues of veterinary drugs in foods Annex C – Approach for the extrapolation of MRLs for veterinary drugs to one or more species of the Risk Analysis Principles applied by CCRVDF

<sup>31</sup> How can Codex standards help tackle foodborne antimicrobial resistance (AMR)? Available at: [How can Codex standards help tackle foodborne antimicrobial resistance \(AMR\)?](#)

platform for real-time engagement with Members, stakeholders and the global food safety community. The annual CODEX magazine continues to be a key publication, and the annual celebration of World Food Safety Day on 7 June has grown significantly over the period of the Plan and is now a powerful platform for simultaneously raising awareness of food safety and the role of Codex standards. New Codex e-learning material is available as a course on “Effective participation in Codex work”, accessible through the FAO e-learning Academy.

39. While channels such as the Codex webpage, social media, and the Codex magazine have been cornerstones raise the visibility of Codex, moving beyond the traditional channels was also important to raise the profile of Codex. The reference to Codex AMR texts in high level declarations and commitments such as mentioned in paragraph 7, was an important milestone in promoting the active use of Codex texts. Bringing the attention of Codex work to the wider global community a publication on Codex and the SDGs was issued in 2020.<sup>32</sup> The Codex Secretariat has also been providing annual updates to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.<sup>33</sup>

40. A key awareness-raising lesson was the value of practical examples on the use of Codex texts, especially for policymakers. They help show how Codex standards support food control systems, trade and health. With support from some Members, a Codex in Action series published examples of how Codex standards and related texts have been implemented nationally and regionally, highlighting benefits for food safety, food quality, nutrition and trade.<sup>34, 35</sup>

41. During the period of the Plan, there was a special emphasis on the celebration of Codex 60th birthday (Codex@60), a programme of events and digital resources around the interlinked key themes of: still essential at 60; the future of Codex; and the people of Codex.<sup>36</sup> This landmark anniversary was celebrated at each Codex committee meeting held during 2023, from CCNASWP16 which opened on 30 January 2023 through to CAC46 which opened on 27 November 2023 with a special ceremony to celebrate this milestone.<sup>37</sup>

### 2.3.2 Supporting the use of Codex texts

42. One of the challenges in monitoring this objective was the lack of a tool to measure the use of Codex standards. Hence the work to measure use and impact described in Section 2.3.3 provides a perspective from Members of how they use Codex texts and also gives a sense of their importance for accessing markets.

43. Capacity development initiatives were not specifically monitored under the monitoring framework for the Codex Strategic Plan. Nevertheless, the FAO and WHO led initiatives were captured in annual information documents to the CAC and highlighting the breath and extent of capacity development. The Coordinating committees also provided an opportunity to share information on capacity development initiatives at a regional level (see outcome 3.1 in Appendix I) and CAC48 also agreed to include a new agenda item in coordinating committees to allow observers to also share information in these fora and can include capacity development initiatives. Side events at the margins of Codex committees have continued to provide an important opportunity to share information and resources to support implementation of standards. As resources will unlikely become more plentiful, using the opportunities of Codex meetings, virtual and digital tools and collaborating to the extent possible on capacity development initiatives will be important.

### 2.3.3 Measuring use and impact of Codex texts

44. To support efforts towards achieving goal 3, Members tasked the Codex Secretariat with the development of a mechanism to monitor the use and impact of Codex texts (Objective 3.3). A logic model which identified potential intermediate outcomes in relation to the reach, usefulness and use of Codex texts was developed and a monitoring mechanism which included the development of an annual survey, case studies and collaboration with WTO to gather and analyse data on the use and impact of Codex texts was endorsed by CCEXEC82.<sup>38</sup> The survey was piloted in 2022, after which CAC45 recognized the potential of the survey as an important tool for Codex.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>32</sup> FAO and WHO. 2020. *Codex and the SDGs – How participation in Codex Alimentarius supports the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb0222en>

<sup>33</sup> Inputs available through [Inputs to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development | High-Level Political Forum](#)

<sup>34</sup> FAO and WHO (2022) *Hygienic food, healthy sales: HACCP implementation*. [openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb8770en](https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb8770en)

<sup>35</sup> FAO and WHO (2024). *How Honduras handled the unexpected*. [openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd1005en](https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd1005en)

<sup>36</sup> CX/EXEC 22/82/9

<sup>37</sup> REP23/CAC, paragraph 3

<sup>38</sup> CX/EXEC 22/82/8

<sup>39</sup> REP22/CAC, paragraphs 184, 187(iii); CX/CAC 22/45/14



45. Four surveys on the use and impact of Codex texts have been implemented, which collect Member views on the Codex Alimentarius overall, as well as on 15 specific Codex standards, guidelines and codes of practice and four regional Codex texts. The survey reports provide information on the outreach, relevance, recognition and use of Codex texts, and ultimately on their impact. The response rate rose from 52 percent in 2022 to 69 percent in 2023 and 71 percent in 2024. In 2025, it stood at 61 percent, remaining above the rate recorded when the exercise began in 2022 and continuing to provide a representative picture of the impact of Codex texts and a valuable longitudinal data series.<sup>40</sup>

46. Survey findings consistently show that Codex texts are especially important for LMICs. These countries report high levels of satisfaction with Codex texts and rely heavily on them to guide food safety and quality legislation, national food control systems, training, stakeholder awareness and trade facilitation. Although high-income countries rely on Codex texts less directly, they also report high levels of satisfaction

47. These results have been especially valuable in providing high-level information to policymakers and decision-makers in both international fora and bilateral communications. Revisiting standards previously covered in the surveys, such as those on AMR and the *General principles of food hygiene*, could provide further insight into the continuing relevance and value of the Codex Alimentarius, particularly now that additional information and resources are available to support their use.

48. The second component of the mechanism was the development of case studies and a case study on the role of the *Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of mycotoxin contamination of cereals* (CXC 51-2003) in a multi-pronged approach to reducing fumonisin contamination on Brazilian maize was published in 2025. This approach has successfully reduced fumonisin levels in Brazilian maize over the past thirty years, improving food safety for the Brazilian population and securing greater exports.<sup>41</sup> While such case studies take time and resources to implement, they can provide valuable insights into how members can successfully use Codex texts to tackle issues of importance to them.

49. In 2024, the Codex Secretariat in collaboration with the WTO Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary Committee (SPS) started to gather and analyse data from their notification system on the use and impact of Codex texts on facilitating trade, which was the third component of the monitoring mechanism identified. This analysis is ongoing and in parallel, together with IPPC and WOAHS secretariats, the Codex secretariat is engaging in the transparency discussions in WTO to see if the notification system can be further optimised to provide improved information on use of international standards. This is continuing in 2026.

## **2.4. An inclusive Codex: delivering Strategic Goal 4 “Facilitate participation of all Codex members throughout the standard setting process”**

### **2.4.1 Inclusion and participation**

50. The number of Codex Members remained unchanged, with 188 Member Countries and one Member Organization (the European Union). CCEXEC recommended to the Directors-General of FAO and WHO that the applications from 15 international non-governmental organisations for Observer status in Codex should be granted. This more than offset the nine organizations whose status as Observer was revoked by the Directors-General of FAO and WHO on the recommendation of CCEXEC following a scheduled review of international non-governmental organizations with Observer status, completed in 2022.<sup>42</sup> The new Observers provide, inter alia, expertise on issues being discussed by Codex during the period, such as new food sources and production systems.

51. An overview of participation trends is provided in Appendix I (Goal 4). In general meetings organized in a virtual or hybrid modality had a higher attendance rate when compared to in person meetings.

### **2.4.2 Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on participation**

52. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted Codex operations and led the Secretariat to adopt new working modalities. With Members' agreement, CAC43 was held online via Zoom in October 2020, attracting 905

<sup>40</sup> FAO and WHO. 2023. *Use and impact of Codex texts – Report of the Codex Survey 2022*. Rome.

<https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8056en>; FAO and WHO. 2024. *Use and impact of Codex texts – Report of the Codex Survey 2023*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/CD2618en>; FAO and WHO. 2025. *Use and impact of Codex texts – Report of the Codex Survey 2024*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd6677en>; FAO and WHO. 2026. *Use and impact of Codex texts – Report of the Codex Survey 2025*. Rome. (in preparation)

<sup>41</sup> Liliana de Oliveira Rocha, Marta Hiromi Taniwaki, Michael Ennis, Ligia Lindner Schreiner, Farid El Haffar (2024). *Reducing fumonisin contamination in Brazilian maize: The impact of Codex standards and regulatory frameworks*. Food Research International 197(2): 115280. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodres.2024.115280>; FAO and WHO (2025) *Use and impact of the Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of mycotoxin contamination in cereals (CXC 51–2003) in Brazil – Case study report*. Rome.

<https://doi.org/10.4060/cd5586en>

<sup>42</sup> CX/EXEC 22/82/7; REP22/EXEC1, paragraphs 107-113

registrants from 133 Member Countries, one Member Organization, and 54 Observer Organizations and UN agencies. Feedback showed that online participation increased attendance, supported more inclusive discussion, and allowed wider access to proceedings, contributing to objectives 4.2 and 5.1 (see Table 9 of Appendix I). Virtual participation in CAC43 and CAC44 also increased Member registration and inclusivity, and subsequent in-person CAC sessions have continued to offer remote participation.

53. CAC43 concluded that the postponement of physical meetings of subsidiary bodies in 2020 could not continue in 2021, and supported the use of modern tools and approaches by Codex subsidiary bodies, in line with the Codex core values, to ensure Codex work progressed in a timely and effective manner.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, CAC43 was followed by a full programme of nineteen committee and task force meetings (including FAO/WHO Regional Co-ordination Committee meetings for five of the six Codex regions), all held online in the following twelve months. CAC44 then opened the way for subsidiary bodies to continue to hold online meetings, by interpreting the rules of CAC in a manner that permits sessions of those bodies to be held virtually.<sup>44</sup> This has been used on several occasions since then, when it was not possible to convene an in-person meeting e.g. CCMAS or to ensure access of all interested members to specific committees e.g. CCFICS, CCFA, CCFH, thereby actively supporting a reduction in barriers to active participation in Codex committee meetings, in particular for LMICs.

54. The Codex family also learnt that not all work can be progressed through virtual meetings. In-person secret ballots are needed to elect officers, and so arrangements for CAC44 included voting in person by appointment in Geneva for chairperson and vice-chairpersons of CAC, while the top table met physically in Rome, and delegates again joined the meeting online.<sup>45</sup>

55. Voting by show of hand or roll call vote, for which there were no online mechanisms agreed by FAO Council, may also be needed in Codex to resolve issues when all attempts to reach consensus have been unsuccessful. Discussions on MRLs for the veterinary drug zilpaterol hydrochloride could not reach consensus at CAC44 despite extensive discussion and the efforts of the chairperson.<sup>46</sup> The part of rule XII of the rules of procedures of the CAC, which provided that decisions to adopt or amend standards may be taken by voting, had been suspended for CAC44 due to its online modality. CAC44 acknowledged that, even with informal consultation mechanisms, consensus might not be forthcoming and requested the Codex Secretariat to ensure that all tools, including voting, were at the disposal of CAC45 which allowed the issue of MRLs for zilpaterol hydrochloride to be settled.

56. While in February 2020, CCEXEC78<sup>47</sup> had begun consideration of how to respond to exceptional disruptions to Codex meetings the extent of the disruption which occurred between 2020 and 2025 had not been anticipated, Codex adapted as indicated above and resumed its work within a relatively short period. This not only allowed work to continue but familiarized participants with a new set of tools that continue to be used.

### 2.4.3 The Codex Trust Fund

57. Throughout the period of the Plan, the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) continued its work as a development partnership, supported by a small but active donor base, to support developing and transition economy countries to participate more effectively in the work of CAC and its committees" (see indicator 4.1.2, Appendix I).

58. The country reports from successful applicants to CTF<sup>48</sup> demonstrate the wide range of outputs delivered by these projects, including revitalized national Codex infrastructure, raised awareness of Codex among political and technical stakeholders, and improved national food control systems. CTF has built lasting Codex capacity in participating countries and underscores how investments in standards, capacity, and governance directly translate into trade gains, food safety, and socioeconomic development —especially for marginalized groups such as women.

59. It was therefore with considerable regret that CAC48 learnt that, due to recurrent financial challenges, FAO and WHO would phase out CTF in 2026.<sup>49</sup> CAC48 highlighted the excellent progress that had been achieved under CTF and encouraged FAO and WHO to identify alternative mechanisms that enable the continuation of the much-needed capacity development, noting its significant contribution in progress towards the objectives of Strategic Goal 4.

<sup>43</sup> REP20/CAC, paragraphs 10-14 and 20(i) and (ii); CAC/43 CRD37

<sup>44</sup> REP21/CAC, paragraph 12(iii)

<sup>45</sup> REP21/CAC, paragraphs 130-131

<sup>46</sup> REP21/CAC, paragraphs 15-29

<sup>47</sup> CX/EXEC 20/78/9; REP20/EXEC1

<sup>48</sup> See [www.who.int/initiatives/codex-trust-fund/projects-and-impact](http://www.who.int/initiatives/codex-trust-fund/projects-and-impact)

<sup>49</sup> REP25/CAC, paragraphs 166-168 and 174(iii)

#### 2.4.4 Sustainable and active participation

60. While virtual modalities presented the opportunity for greater attendance at Codex meetings, the question of whether that also translated into active engagement arose. Data collected on registration in EWGs show some fluctuation related to the pandemic but then stabilising in the 50 percent range (Appendix I, Table 10). Responses to CL have also been relatively stable after 2020 (36-43 percent) (Appendix I, Table 11). However, it was noted that leadership of EWGs lies with about 5 percent of the membership and is a concern for sustainability of Codex work modalities.<sup>50</sup> There have been recommendations intended to promote more Members to take on leadership roles, and the Codex Secretariat has developed a handbook to support leadership of and participation in EWGs.<sup>51</sup> The Codex Secretariat has also provided on an ongoing basis, and in line with demand, online training on the basics of Codex work, including the step procedure for standard development, participation in EWGs and use of the online commenting system. These are generally provided on a regional or sub-regional basis and often done in collaboration with the regional coordinators or FAO and WHO. The level of engagement from participants has been consistently high and the appetite for these trainings remained very strong. The Codex Secretariat has also, availability permitting, supported training events organized by Members. There is consistent feedback, especially from LMICs on the importance of these training opportunities either as refresher courses or when new staff come on board at national Codex contact points. Continuing to avail of partnership opportunities, and development of more online resources, together with existing trainings will be important to meet this demand and to support sustainable and active participation.

### 2.5. Learning and improving implementing Strategic Goal 5 “Enhance work management systems and practices that support the efficient and effective achievement of all strategic goal plans”

#### 2.5.1 Work management practices and systems – role of virtual tools

61. From 2020 to 2025, Codex working methods changed significantly, with virtual modalities introduced almost overnight. Discussions at CCEXEC79-84 and CAC43-46 confirmed that virtual meetings and in-person meetings with remote participation had become essential tools for Codex, and practices continued to evolve. All Codex meetings are now webcast in listening mode, further enhancing transparency and inclusiveness. CCEXEC also developed a living model to capture experience and development in the practices of CAC and Codex committees. These discussions highlighted further opportunities to support Members’ meeting preparation, including webinars on meeting etiquette and key committee issues.

62. The Codex meeting schedule was significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and is only gradually stabilizing. This uncertainty has affected the efficiency and effectiveness of work management systems and practices. Although efforts to stabilize the schedule are showing progress, the reactivation of several commodity committees is adding further pressure to an already demanding calendar. This places strain not only on the Codex Secretariat, but also on Members and their ability to participate effectively.

63. Monitoring shows that the timely publication of working documents remains below target, particularly for translations (Appendix I, Table 14). An in-depth review of interpretation and translation in 2025 helped identify challenges and possible solutions.<sup>52</sup> While technology may play a role in future improvements, it is not yet sufficient. The timeliness of publication of working documents is linked to several factors that were outlined in a paper to CCEXEC78, and were made harder to address systematically by the unexpected disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, some progress has been made through gradual changes to the critical review structure, including moves towards document word limits and improved communication with Members through weekly “Week in Codex” updates.

#### 2.5.2 Digital Codex

64. CCEXEC noted that technology has enabled Codex to work in ways that have promoted its core values of inclusiveness and transparency and are more accessible to Members and Observers and discussed the extent to which Codex should consider adopting new technologies in the digital space where they respected core values.<sup>54</sup>

65. It has become clear that the digital infrastructure at the heart of Codex work is becoming frail. The Codex Secretariat has undertaken preliminary work to enhance the digital infrastructure of Codex to be more resilient to cybersecurity threats, following FAO policies in this regard. Upgrading the technology behind the Codex databases, has been identified as critical with work underpinning the *General standard for food additives* (CXS 192-1995), already started using savings from the Codex Regular Programme and extra-

<sup>50</sup> EXEC86/CRD01

<sup>51</sup> FAO and WHO. 2024. *The Codex electronic working groups handbook*. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd3481en>

<sup>52</sup> CX/EXEC 25/88/4

<sup>53</sup> CX/EXEC 20/78/8 and REP20/EXEC1, paragraphs 102–109

<sup>54</sup> CX/EXEC 23/85/3

budgetary funding, in the most recent biennia. Funding has been secured to continue this in the 2026-2027 biennium. There is an ongoing project to move all Codex standards to the FAO knowledge repository as part of the Codex digital system upgrade. While this period served to highlight weaknesses, work to address these will mainly be implemented under the period of the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031.

### 2.5.3 Building the capacities of Codex leaders

66. Post-meeting surveys were undertaken throughout the period. In general, highly positive feedback was received across Codex sessions. There were not much opportunity or resources to support specific training of chairs, coordinators or host country secretariats. Meetings in the margins of CAC with committee chairpersons and coordinators highlight the need for further resources to support their role. While the new EWG handbook was published in the period and is being made available in all languages, work on resources will continue in the future starting with a revision of the Chairpersons handbook and completion of guidelines on new work proposals. The development of more digital resources has also been recommended in informal meetings with chairpersons.

## 3. CONCLUSION

67. The monitoring of the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020–2025 demonstrates solid progress across all strategic goals and reaffirms the continued relevance of Codex in addressing evolving global food safety and quality challenges. A substantial body of standards was developed and adopted, with the majority delivered within expected timelines and widely recognized by Members as meeting their priority needs. Evidence from surveys and other sources indicates that Codex texts continue to play a foundational role in national food safety systems, regulatory frameworks and international trade, with particularly strong reliance among LMICs.

68. The period was also characterized by a high degree of adaptability. Codex maintained the continuity of its standard-setting work under unprecedented circumstances, notably the COVID-19 pandemic, through the rapid deployment of virtual and hybrid working modalities. These arrangements supported broad participation and have subsequently been integrated into regular practice, contributing to enhanced inclusivity, transparency and flexibility. At the same time, Codex continued to demonstrate its capacity to respond to emerging issues thereby continuing to strengthen its responsiveness and relevance.

69. A number of lessons have been identified over the course of implementation. First, achieving impact depends not only on the development of standards, but increasingly on their effective communication, uptake and use, underscoring the importance of strengthened efforts to support implementation and to measure impact. Second, the sustainability of the scientific advice underpinning Codex standards is critical, with pressures on resources, data availability and capacity requiring continued attention from FAO, WHO and Members. Third, while participation has increased, particularly through virtual modalities, persistent barriers to active engagement and implementation, especially for LMICs, highlight the need for sustained and coordinated capacity development efforts. Fourth, for the Codex Secretariat, the period has been one of unprecedented change, underscoring the need to consolidate gains in new ways of working while addressing structural challenges. In particular, there is a need to continue to address document management processes to improve the timeliness of documents, strengthen digital tools and infrastructure. and enhance support to Members for participation and engagement within a context of increasing workload and complexity.

70. Overall, the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020–2025 reflects both continuity and change. Codex has maintained its core strength as a science-based, member-driven standard-setting body, while adapting its working methods and broadening its focus towards impact and inclusiveness. These developments provide a solid foundation for the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031, which builds on these achievements and seeks to further strengthen the contribution of Codex to global food safety, trade facilitation and sustainable food systems.

## 4. AFTERWORD: THE CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2031

71. CAC47 adopted the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031,<sup>55</sup> which continues the steady process of evolution of Codex Strategic Plans from the turn of the millennium. There is a strong sense of continuity, building on the preceding Plan, with the Codex vision, mission and values being carried forward.

72. There are also signs that Codex is changing. The Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031 foresees a future Codex which is more outward facing and more inquiring. Outward-facing as it will be open to working collaboratively and seeking to understand and then take action to address what Codex might do – within its focus on consumer health protection and fair practices in food trade – to address broader global challenges including the transition to resilient food systems. Inquiring as it will more actively use scientific foresight and horizon scanning to set priorities, and even to anticipate issues that might cause trade disruption, rather than

<sup>55</sup> REP24/CAC, paragraphs 213-216

just reacting to those issues once disruption has materialised.

73. Many of these broader food system challenges sit outside the Codex remit of safe food and trade facilitation. Here, the UN Food Systems Summit, together with its two-yearly stocktake moments, will continue to set the broader global agenda for change.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

74. CAC49 is invited to:

- i. note the information provided; and
- ii. consider the breadth and width of the results achieved through the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025, and how these can inform the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031.

## APPENDIX I

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

**Goal 1. Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner****Objective 1.1 Identify needs and emerging issues****Outcome 1.1.1 Improved ability of Codex to develop standards relevant to the needs of its Members****Indicator 1.1.1 Extent that Codex Members recognize Codex texts as meeting Members' priority food safety and quality needs**

1. CCEXEC84 agreed to draw the information on indicator 1.1.1 (Extent that Codex Members recognize Codex texts as meeting Members' priority food safety and quality needs) from the related questions in the Codex survey on the use and impact of Codex texts. As shown in Table 1, between 2022 and 2025, the share of Members which considered Codex texts "extremely" or "mostly" useful in meeting their priority food safety and quality needs remained consistently over 85 percent. The indicator was introduced in 2022.

**Table 1: Extent that Codex Members recognize Codex texts as meeting Members' priority food safety and quality needs**

	2022-2023 biennium		2024-2025 biennium	
	2022 survey	2023 survey	2024 survey	2025 survey
Extremely useful	21.2%	14.3%	18.3%	18.6%
Mostly useful	67.1%	71.4%	69.0%	71.7%
Somewhat useful	8.2%	12.5%	11.1%	9.7%
Marginally useful	3.5%	1.8%	1.6%	0%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Objective 1.2 Prioritize needs and emerging issues****Outcome 1.2.1 Timely Codex response to emerging issues and the needs of Members****Indicator 1.2.1 Time taken from the identification of new issues to the submission of proposals for new work to CCEXEC**

2. Table 2 shows the percentage of new work approved within 2 years from identification of new issue:
- All new work proposals met the target for CAC43 (2020) and CAC45 (2022);
  - CAC44 (2021) was held virtually, and time dedicated to new work was limited.
  - The three new work proposals that were approved at CAC46 (2023) took more than 2 years after their identification because they were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - CAC47 (2024) and CAC48 (2025) approved the highest number of new work proposals during the 2020-2025 period.
  - Considering the entire period covered by the Codex strategic Plan 2020-2025, seven out of ten new work proposals were approved within 2 years from identification of new issue.
3. It is important to note the valuable role of discussion papers in scoping work from the point of first identification to presentation of a project proposal, particularly on complex issues, which facilitates the following work on developing or revising the proposed Codex text.



**Table 2: Time taken from the identification of new issues to the submission of proposals for new work to CCEXEC**

Year	CAC Session	Number of new work approved within 1 year from identification of new issue	Number of new work approved within 2 years from identification of new issue	Number of new work approved in more than 2 years from identification of new issue	% of new work approved within 2 years from identification of new issue
2020	CAC43	1	1	0	100%
2021	CAC44	1	0	3	25%
2022	CAC45	2	0	0	100%
2023	CAC46	2	2	3	57%
2024	CAC47	13	1	4	78%
2025	CAC48	3	4	3	70%

**Indicator 1.2.2 Time taken for prioritized emerging issues to result in revised or new Codex texts**

4. Table 3 below shows the percentage of non-numerical standards and revisions adopted between 2020 and 2025 within 5 years' time.<sup>56</sup> On average, 80 percent of final texts were adopted within 5 years during this period.

**Table 3: Time taken for prioritized emerging issues to result in revised or new Codex texts**

Year	CAC session adopting new texts	Percentage of Codex texts adopted within 5 years
2020	CAC43	76%
2021	CAC44	94%
2022	CAC45	79%
2023	CAC46	70%
2024	CAC47	87%
2025	CAC48	75%

5. Table 3 does not capture extensive work ongoing in some committees to revise and/or restructure existing standards e.g. Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) and Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA). Given the differences in the standard setting mechanism, the numbers of standards set and their complexity, it is therefore not possible to give a complete picture of the rate of standards development with a single methodology.

**Goal 2. Develop standards based on science and Codex risk-analysis principles****Objective 2.1 Use scientific advice consistently in line with Codex risk analysis principles****Outcome 2.1.1 Scientific advice is taken into account consistently and in line with Codex risk analysis principles by all relevant committees during the standard setting process****Indicator 2.1.1 Proportion of texts considered by CCEXEC, as part of its work to monitor the progress of standards development, for which reports by subsidiary body Chairs indicate how scientific advice was used and any other legitimate factors were considered in developing Codex texts**

6. The critical review process includes comments by the Codex Secretariat and the Committee Chairpersons on the use of or need for scientific advice for the different topics under consideration by the various committees. For the CCFA and the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF) there is a well-defined and well-established mechanism in place for obtaining scientific advice, as need be, from the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA); for the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) from the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR); for the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) from the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk (JEMRA); and for the

<sup>56</sup> This is based on Codex texts that were adopted following submission and approval of new work proposals. Standards without a job number such as ongoing work and amendments were excluded from the scope of this study. Numerical standards such as maximum residue limits (MRLs), food additive provisions and maximum levels for contaminants that are developed following approval of priority lists for scientific advice were also excluded.

Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) from the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Nutrition (JEMNU).

7. In CCFH, a dynamic communication mechanism with JEMRA has been established, and new Codex food hygiene texts were developed, and existing texts were updated, as appropriate, based on the latest scientific advice provided by JEMRA. CCFH54 (March 2024) concluded the development of the Guidelines for the control of Shiga Toxin-Producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC). CCFH55 (December 2025) completed the development or revision of several texts, including the Guidelines for the safe use and re-use of water in food production and processing; the Guidelines for the control of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* in chicken meat; and the Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in foods. CCFH55 also requested FAO and WHO to provide scientific advice through JEMRA, including undertaking a risk assessment on spore-forming pathogens such as *Clostridium botulinum* and *Bacillus cereus* in powdered infant formula, and developing a risk assessment tool to support the revision of the Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food, as well as advice on the holding frozen temperature threshold to guarantee food safety across a range of different food commodities.

8. CCPR establishes maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticides in food and feed based on the scientific advice provided by JMPR. This work relies on the reports provided annually by the regular meetings of JMPR, based on the priority list of pesticides for evaluation agreed by CCPR and approved by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). The importance of the timely provision of JMPR advice was illustrated by the delay in the publication of the JMPR 2024 report, which affected the scheduling of CCPR56 (September 2025 as opposed to the first half of the year). Subject to the availability of resources, JMPR has organized extraordinary meetings to consider additional MRLs for existing compounds. Although no such meetings were held in 2024 nor 2025, they are intended to help reduce the JMPR backlog of pesticide evaluations and increase the availability of Codex MRLs for international trade. Codex MRLs adopted by CAC are available in the database for residues of pesticides in food and feed.

9. CCRVDF establishes maximum residue limits (MRLs) for veterinary drugs in foods and other risk management recommendations based on the scientific advice provided by JECFA. This work relies on the report provided by JECFA meetings dedicated to veterinary drugs based on the priority list of veterinary drugs for evaluation agreed by CCRVDF and approved by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). In addition, CCRVDF conducts extrapolation of existing MRLs for veterinary drugs in foods to one or more species. Although these MRLs are recommended by CCRVDF, this can only be done on the basis of the outcomes of JECFA evaluations. The criteria and procedure for CCRVDF to extrapolate MRLs is described in Annex C to the Risk Analysis Principles applied by CCRVDF in the *Procedural Manual*, and it does not allow extrapolation of MRLs for veterinary drugs to one or more species if the compound has not been previously assessed by JECFA. CCRVDF also establishes action levels for veterinary drugs due to unavoidable and unintentional carryover in feed in accordance with the criteria and procedures established in Annex D of the Risk Analysis Principles applied by CCRVDF. CCRVDF also recommends risk management recommendations provided by JECFA as a risk management option when it is not possible to establish MRLs. All these risk management outputs are available in the database for residues of veterinary drugs in foods.

10. In CCFA, the priority list of substances proposed for evaluation by JECFA is an important pillar of its work and JECFA's advice constituted the primary scientific basis for CCFA's deliberations and related risk management decisions. An increasing number of substances have been included in the priority list, reflecting the evolving needs of the Committee's work. While only a limited proportion of these substances can be evaluated by JECFA, the establishment and regular endorsement of the priority lists continue to provide a transparent and structured framework to support the progressive development of Codex standard for food additives. In this regard, CAC47 (November 2024) and CAC48 (November 2025) approved the priority lists of substances proposed for evaluation by JECFA as forwarded by CCFA54 (April 2024) and CCFA55 (March 2025), respectively.

11. CCCF establishes maximum levels for contaminants in food and feed based on the scientific advice provided by JECFA. This work relies on the report provided by JECFA meetings dedicated to contaminants based on the priority list of veterinary drugs for evaluation agreed by CCCF. In addition, FAO and WHO may provide scientific advice through ad hoc expert meetings or consultations that can assist CCCF in the establishment of MLs or the development of further other complementary guidance such as codes of practice. For the period 2024–2025, CAC47 (November 2024), among others, adopted MLs for lead in several food categories based on JECFA risk assessments. CAC47 also adopted the Code of practice for the prevention or reduction of ciguatera poisoning, based on scientific advice provided through the FAO/WHO Report of the Expert Meeting on Ciguatera Poisoning published in 2020. CAC48 (November 2025) adopted the revised Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of aflatoxin contamination in peanuts based on JECFA evaluations of aflatoxins.

12. CCNFSDU44 (October 2024) completed the work on the General principles for establishing nutrient reference values – requirement (NRVs-R) for persons aged 6 to 36 months as well as some NRVs for older infants and products for young children. Work on additional NRVs will continue in 2025/2026. This work took into account and will continue to consider the FAO scientific report on Review of derivation methods for dietary intake reference values for older infants and young children as well as the more recent Joint FAO/WHO scientific advice on the update of nutrient intake values (NIVs) for infants and young children from birth through three years of age. CCNFSDU44 also agreed to request FAO and WHO to conduct a review of the documents “Health and Nutrition Properties of Probiotics in Food including Powder Milk with Live Lactic Acid Bacteria” (2001) and “Guidelines for the Evaluation of Probiotics in Food” (2002), incorporating a literature review of scientific evidence on probiotics.

13. CCFL, at its 45th session in 2019, requested scientific advice from FAO and WHO to support its work on the development of allergen labelling provisions. However, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in delays in convening expert meetings and in the publication of the final reports of the ad hoc Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Risk Assessment of Food Allergens, which impacted the progress of the work on food allergen labelling. Following the gradual completion of this work, the ad hoc Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation issued a series of reports, with a total of five reports published by February 2024. The availability of these reports enabled the Committee to take into account the full set of scientific advice from the Expert Consultation in advancing its work. CAC47 (November 2024) adopted the revision of allergen provisions in the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985) forwarded by CCFL48 (October 2024). In addition, the proposed draft annex to CXS 1-1985 — Guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling — was advanced to Step 5.

## **Objective 2.2 Promote the submission and use of globally representative data in developing and reviewing Codex standards**

### **Outcome 2.2.1 Codex standards are developed with reference to globally representative data**

#### **Indicator 2.2.1 Proportion and regional distribution of Codex Members who contribute to calls for data from working groups and Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committees/Meetings**

14. FAO continues to develop Members’ capacity to participate in and submit data to FAO/WHO Expert Committees. In 2025 FAO has finalized and launched the JECFA Toolbox for Veterinary Drug Residues Risk Assessment (<https://www.fao.org/jefca-toolbox-veterinary-drugs-assessment>). The Toolbox provides a step-by-step overview of the process used by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) to assess the risks of veterinary drug residues in animal-derived foods. It also explains how these assessments lead to the derivation of maximum residue limits (MRLs), which JECFA recommends to CCRVDF to protect consumers’ health and support fair international trade. Structured into six interactive sections and available in three languages (EN, FR and SP), the Toolbox covers key concepts of the risk assessment process, data requirements, real-world case studies and practical guidance. Short quiz questions help reinforce learning, while tips throughout the modules direct users to further reading for deeper exploration of specific topics. The JECFA Toolbox is designed for use by prospective JECFA experts, national or regional regulatory agencies responsible for veterinary drug approval or food quality standards, the pharmaceutical industry, producers in animal agriculture or veterinary associations. The Toolbox aims to support capacity building worldwide, helping stakeholders strengthen food safety systems, enhance engagement in Codex processes, and reaffirming FAO’s commitment to evidence-based food safety and global harmonization of residue standards.

15. FAO continued to support countries on the use of individual-level quantitative dietary data shared through the FAO/WHO Global Individual Food Consumption Data Tool (FAO/WHO GIFT) to improve the consistency and reliability of dietary exposure assessments, a critical step in establishing suitably protective limits for microbiological or chemical agents in food. Promoting dietary data and its importance for food safety continued as a part of regular capacity building and advocacy activities carried out by FAO. For example, technical inputs and capacity development are being provided for dietary data collection in Azerbaijan which lacks food consumption data to perform accurate dietary intake and exposure assessments. A capacity development training composed of two sessions was delivered in November 2025 for staff of the Azerbaijan Food Safety Agency (AFSA) and Azerbaijan Food Safety Institute (AFSI), to support design, choice of data collection tools and design/planning of a pilot survey. Following this, support is being provided on the preparation, development of materials, and implementation of the survey through online and in person trainings in 2026.

16. A series of Codex e-learning courses, comprising of 18 lessons of self-paced learning, is available on the FAO e-Learning academy, in English, French and Spanish. The courses offer an introduction to Codex, functioning of national Codex programmes, explaining the role of science and risk analysis in Codex and providing guidance on how to engage effectively in Codex at regional and international levels. A fifth course offering a deep dive into Risk Assessment in the framework of Codex was developed in 2025 in English. The new course explains how Codex Members can request, contribute to and use the outcomes of FAO/WHO risk

assessment activities with thematic sub lessons on food additives, contaminants and toxins, residues of veterinary drugs, pesticide residues, and microbiological hazards. All courses are offered free of charge as a public good. A digital badge certificate is issued upon successful completion of a final test at the end of each course.

17. WHO facilitated submissions received by the Global Environment Monitoring System - Food Contamination Monitoring and Assessment Programme (GEMS/Food) in response to calls for data by CCCF to support the setting of MLs. WHO conducted a series of training workshops on generating and submitting data for Codex work, including exposure assessments for JECFA and the establishment of maximum limits (MLs). This included a regional workshop in the African region, held together with the African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) in Morocco in 2024. WHO also jointly conducted with the Korean Ministry of Food and Drug Safety the First regional Asia Pacific Workshop on Total Diet Studies in 2025, including an online tutorial on different aspects of the data generation process, as well as a hybrid experience sharing conference. Additional training sessions on exposure assessment for chemical hazards is scheduled for 2026 to specifically support India.

### **Objective 2.3 Promote sufficient and sustainable funding for expert bodies that deliver scientific advice**

**Outcome 2.3.1 FAO and WHO expert bodies are providing scientific advice within timeframes agreed between committees and FAO/WHO, and these timeframes allow standard development to progress in a timely manner**

#### **Indicator 2.3.1 Extent of and any changes in core funding for scientific advice within FAO and WHO**

18. FAO and WHO continued to assign high importance to the scientific advice programme, providing a strong scientific foundation for all Codex standards.

19. While Codex remained the primary beneficiary of the joint FAO/WHO scientific advice programme, other UN agencies (for example, the World Food Programme) also requested scientific advice, and outputs of the programme were also used directly by FAO and WHO members to strengthen their science-based decision making on food safety and nutrition issues at national and regional levels.

20. In FAO, the funds supporting activities and staff costs related to the provision of scientific advice originated from FAOs regular budget and through extra-budgetary resources. Key scientific advice meetings and consultations that supported the standard setting work of Codex (such as JECFA, JEMRA, JMPR) were recognized as Corporate Technical Activities in FAOs Programme of Work and Budget which has ensured budgetary security for these activities in the 2022-2023 biennium. The delivery of scientific advice was made possible through the highly appreciated contributions of Canada, the European Union, France, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand and the United States of America.

21. In WHO, the programme for Scientific Advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission through the expert committees of JECFA, JMPR, JEMRA, and JEMNU was mainly funded by voluntary contributions from European Union; Canada; Japan; Republic of Korea.

#### **Indicator 2.3.2 Proportion of scientific advice provided within established timeframes**

22. For several general subject committees, there are well-defined and well-established mechanisms in place for obtaining scientific advice from FAO/WHO expert bodies: for CCFA, CCCF, and CCRVDF from JECFA; for CCPR from JMPR; for CCFH from JEMRA; and for CCNFSU from JEMNU.

23. The collaboration between the expert bodies and the relevant Codex committees is well coordinated, and the respective meetings are scheduled to take into account the workflow between them. However, in some cases, requests for scientific advice may be beyond the scope of the established scientific bodies and these are addressed through ad hoc expert consultations, for example on allergens for CCFL.

24. The delivery of scientific advice is impacted by a number of factors including the number of requests, the availability of resource, expertise and relevant data. Other aspects such as review and update of methodology can also impact progress. Scientific advice was delivered to CCFA, CCCF, CCFH, CCFL, CCPR. This has contributed to great progress in the GFSA, food hygiene, precautionary allergen labelling and more. However, challenges in areas such as methodology for the assessment of pesticide residues, led to a delay in the availability of scientific advice and disrupted the Codex meeting's schedule. While CCPR was still able to meet before CAC in 2025, it will take a couple of years to be fully back on track. A backlog also remains but it is gradually decreasing. The lack of data from certain geographic areas on contaminants, despite multiple data calls, has made progress more challenging, even though eventually most of the issues were resolved.

25. Organizational changes in WHO impacted their work in 2025. Their commitment to the scientific advice to Codex remained intact but the impact of some related delays to JECFA work will continue to be felt in 2026, such as the postponement of the JECFA session on residues of veterinary drugs in food and the reduction in the agenda of the JECFA meeting on contaminants.

26. The challenges encountered highlight the delicate balance between scientific advice and standard setting, and shone a spotlight on this relationship during discussions in several Codex meetings. These discussions emphasized the importance of timely scientific advice to ensure timely development and adoption of science-based Codex standards; the importance of adequate resources for all scientific advice bodies; and the need adequate information on priorities and related costs to support Members in their efforts to secure resources for scientific advice. The efforts that took place in CCPR to try and find means of addressing the backlog of requests is also noteworthy. While challenges cannot be resolved overnight, and new technologies and more resources can facilitate progress, engagement from Members, Observers, FAO and WHO together with the Codex Secretariat indicate a concerted and critical commitment which is necessary to address delays and other challenges that can impact standard setting.

27. Despite the challenges encountered for the delivery of scientific advice from FAO/WHO expert bodies during 2024-2025, it did not cause a major disruption to the work of the respective committees which overall progressed well.

28. Additional and more detailed information on the provision of scientific advice can be found in the documents for CCEXEC's critical review during 2024-2025.<sup>57</sup>

### **Goal 3. Increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards**

#### **Objective 3.1 Raise the awareness of Codex standards**

##### **Outcome 3.1 Codex Members are proactively promoting the use of Codex standards**

29. Coordinators report regularly on the implementation of regional work plans. All related performance indicators are therefore presented in the dedicated progress reports on regional work plans and regional communication plans. Reports from the six Codex regions demonstrate the strong commitment of Members to sharing news and events at national and regional level, under the coordination of the respective Coordinators, thereby meeting or, in some cases like CCAFRICA, exceeding the contribution targets set for each region.

30. Between 2020 and 2025, the number of country contributions to Codex communication activities rose significantly. This growth was driven primarily by Members from all Codex regions actively sharing news on national and regional Codex-related work, as well as by the annual celebration of World Food Safety Day (7 June), which has become a powerful platform for simultaneously raising awareness of food safety and the role of Codex standards. Codex work on raising awareness is strategically assessed across three interconnected pillars:

- Enhancing the visibility of Codex;
- Improving the accessibility and visibility of Codex texts; and
- Measuring and demonstrating the use and impact of Codex texts.

31. Several high-profile publications released during the period have further strengthened Codex visibility. These include new case studies on the practical application and benefits of Codex texts, notably:

- Use and impact of the *Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of mycotoxin contamination in cereals* (CXC 51-2003) in Brazil (published 2025). This study documents how Brazil's adoption of the Codex code reduced fumonisin levels in maize over the past 15+ years, leading to major improvements in public health, export quality, and market value.
- The new flagship series Codex in Action, which presents concrete examples of how Codex standards and related texts are implemented at national and regional levels, highlighting tangible benefits for food safety, trade, and consumer protection.

32. The Codex Secretariat has maintained a strong multi-channel presence through its annual magazine, website news, videos, podcasts, and social media:

- The Codex Secretariat published more than 1 300 web news stories covering Codex meetings and standard-setting work, as well as capacity-building activities, trainings, webinars, and events held worldwide.
- The Codex podcasts feature in-depth conversations with international experts on the science, trade,

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/committees/executive-committee/meetings/en/>

and policy dimensions of food safety and quality standard setting.

- The official Codex X account (@FAOWHOCodex) has grown its audience to over 30 500 followers (as of March 2026), serving as a key platform for real-time engagement with Members, stakeholders, and the global food-safety community.
- In addition, the annual CODEX magazine continues to be a flagship publication, with a new digital version set to be published as the annual report of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission as of December 2026.

#### **Indicator 3.1.1 Extent that Codex texts are disseminated to stakeholders by Members**

33. As shown in Table 4, the share of Members which responded that Codex texts are disseminated to stakeholders by Members in a “fair” to “very well” way follows an increasing trend, exceeding 90 percent. The indicator was introduced in 2022.

**Table 4: Extent that Codex texts are disseminated to stakeholders by Members**

	2022 survey	2023 survey	2024 survey	2025 survey
Very well	6%	7%	10%	14%
Well	33%	29%	28%	35%
Fair	50%	55%	56%	44%
Poor	10%	7%	6%	7%
Very poor	1%	2%	0%	0%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

#### **Indicator 3.1.2 Degree that new knowledge from Codex texts has been gained by Members**

34. The share of Members responding that they had gained “somewhat” to “a great deal” of knowledge from Codex texts, followed an increasing trend from 2022 to 2025, exceeding 90 percent. On the other hand, the share of Members responding that they had gained “very little” knowledge from Codex texts decreased from 8 percent in 2022 to none in 2025.

35. More detailed responses show that LMICs gained more knowledge from Codex texts than HICs. For instance, in 2025, more than 85 percent of LMICs respondents found that they gained “a great deal” of knowledge or “quite a bit” of knowledge from Codex texts. This may be due to the additional reliance of LMICs on Codex texts, compared to HICs that may have more capacities to carry-out their own risk assessment and standard setting work. The indicator was introduced in 2022.

**Table 5: Degree that new knowledge from Codex texts has been gained by Members**

	2022 survey	2023 survey	2024 survey	2025 survey
A great deal	18%	30%	11%	11%
Quite a bit	33%	28%	53%	50%
Somewhat	41%	38%	33%	39%
Very little	8%	4%	2%	0%
Not at all	0%	0%	1%	0%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

### **Objective 3.2 Support initiatives to enable the understanding and implementation/application of Codex standards**

#### **Outcome 3.2.1 Increased use of Codex standards in the development of national food standards and regulations**

##### **Indicator 3.2.1 Extent that Codex texts have been used as a baseline to inform Members' newly developed or revised food legislation, policies, regulations, programs and/or practices**

36. As shown in Table 6, from 2022 to 2025, over 90 percent of Members relied on Codex texts to inform newly developed legislation, policies and/or regulations.



37. Further analysis of HICs and LMICs responses, clearly indicated that LMICs used Codex texts as a baseline more than HICs. In 2025, approximately 83 percent of LMICs respondents expressed that they use Codex texts, “mostly” to “completely”, as a baseline to inform food legislation, policies and/or regulations. This was in line with evidence and experience of the Codex Secretariat, where due to the available capacity and resources in LMICs, it is more efficient to directly adopt or adapt Codex texts to build their own food safety legislation and policies. The indicator was introduced in 2022.

**Table 6: The extent to which Codex texts have been used as a baseline to inform Member's newly developed or revised food legislation, policies, regulations, programs and/or practices**

	2022 survey	2023 survey	2024 survey	2025 survey
A great deal	24%	35%	14%	13%
Quite a bit	31%	23%	46%	51%
Somewhat	41%	34%	33%	35%
Very little	5%	6%	6%	0%
Not at all	0%	1%	2%	0%
Grand total	100%	100%	100%	100%

### Outcome 3.2.2 Increased use of Codex standards by the food trade

**Indicator 3.2.2 Degree that Codex texts are used by Members: i) to strengthen national food control systems; ii) increase stakeholder awareness of food safety and quality issues and evidence-based interventions and recommendations; iii) inform and to update food safety and quality training and educational programmes and related tools; and iv) help improve member state commodity trade**

38. Responses on the extent to which Codex texts are used to support the first three dimensions have broadly consistent from 2022 to 2025. Further analysis shows that LMICs reported a higher use of Codex texts than HICs. In 2022, around 75 percent of LMICs respondents expressed that they used Codex texts “completely” or “mostly”, increasing to around 85 percent in 2025.<sup>58</sup> This difference may reflect the greater availability of resources and technical expertise in HICs, while LMICs rely more directly on Codex texts. The indicator was introduced in 2022.

**Table 7: Degree that Codex texts are used by Members**

	Degree that Codex texts are used by Members to strengthen national food control systems				Degree that Codex texts are used by Members to increase stakeholder awareness of food safety and quality issues and evidence-based interventions and recommendations				Degree that Codex texts are used by Members to inform and to update food safety and quality training and educational programmes and related tools			
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025
Completely	22%	24%	16%	21%	18%	20%	13%	16%	18%	19%	14%	18%
Mostly	40%	36%	49%	46%	39%	37%	48%	40%	33%	39%	42%	39%
Somewhat	32%	34%	29%	32%	32%	41%	34%	41%	38%	37%	37%	38%
To a minor extent	5%	3%	6%	1%	9%	2%	5%	3%	7%	4%	6%	5%
Not at all	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Do not know	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

39. Following comments from Members on the 2022 survey, the trade dimension (iv. help improve member state commodity trade) was separated from the previous indicator and asked as a separate question from the 2023 survey. The new and more specific question, which substituted the previous question on trade dimension, aimed to assess in greater depth the extent that Codex texts in general are used to improve Member State commodity trade and covered five areas as indicated in Table 8a and Table 8b.

<sup>58</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd2618en> and 2025 survey data (to be published)



### Objective 3.3 Recognise and promote the impact of Codex standards

#### Outcome 3.3.1 Having a mechanism/tool to measure the impact of Codex standards developed and piloted

##### Indicator 3.3.1 Progress on the development of a mechanism to measure impact of Codex standards

43. The survey on the use and impact of Codex texts was carried out from 2022 to 2025 and the related reports were published.<sup>59</sup>

44. A first case study was carried out in 2024 to showcase a successful use and impact of the *Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of mycotoxin contamination in cereals* (CXC 51-2003) in Brazil. Brazil was particularly successful in leading the revision of the CoP in CCCF and later on using the updated CoP to support the adoption of MLs on aflatoxins in maize and consequentially increase its exports. This case study yielded several lessons learned and good practices on the application of the CoP and of Codex texts in general that can be replicated by other countries.<sup>60</sup>

45. Collaboration among the three sisters (the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the International Plant Protection Convention and the World Organisation for Animal Health) is ongoing. An article was published in 2025, which highlighted the synergies of the three sisters in monitoring the impact of their work, with more than 2 000 downloads (as of March 2026).<sup>61</sup> The three sisters are also collaborating as Observers for the SPS Committee,<sup>62</sup> providing their expertise and inputs during the meetings.

46. In 2025, the Codex Secretariat began preparatory work with the WTO to revise the platforms for SPS notifications and Specific Trade Concerns, with the aim of gathering more meaningful information and data on the use and impact of Codex texts on the international trade of safe food.

### **Goal 4. All Codex Members have the capacity to participate at all stages of the Standard setting process**

#### Objective 4.1 Enable sustainable national Codex structures in all Codex Member countries

##### Outcome 4.1.1 Participation by all Codex Member countries in the work of Codex Committees and working groups

##### Indicator 4.1.1 Number of Members registering to CAC and the active general subject committees

47. The Codex Secretariat is monitoring trends in Member Countries' registration in Codex meetings, comparing data over the last two biennia. Registration to Codex meetings must be done by the Codex Contact Point, hence such registration reflects the presence of an active contact point and a degree of management of Codex work at the national level. As shown in the table below, the majority of Members attend CAC, while a smaller part attends general subject committees. Meetings organized in a virtual modality have higher attendance rates. Hybrid meetings seem to marginally affect registration rates.

**Table 9: Number of Members registering to CAC and the active general subject committees**

Codex Committee	Place	Year	Number of Members registered	% of total Membership (189)
CAC43	Virtual	2020	131	69%
CAC44	Virtual	2021	160	85%
CAC45	Rome/hybrid	2022	164	87%
CAC46	Rome/hybrid	2023	160	85%
CAC48	Rome/hybrid	2025	132	70%
CCCF18	Bangkok/hybrid	2025	73	39%
CCCF14	Virtual	2021	90	48%
CCCF15	Virtual	2022	84	44%
CCCF16	Utrecht	2023	53	28%
CCFA55	Seoul	2025	54	29%

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/resources/monitoring/en/>

<sup>60</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/CD5586EN>

<sup>61</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/d93faf09-2ecd-4ee5-89e7-d39412baaf7c>

<sup>62</sup> Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

CCFH55	Nashville/hybrid	2025	61	32%
CCFA52	Virtual	2021	88	47%
CCFA53	Hong Kong	2023	37	20%
CCGP34	Lille	2025	77	41%
CCMAS44	Virtual	2025	87	46%
CCFH52	Virtual	2022	99	52%
CCFH53	San Diego	2022	52	28%
CCPR56	Santiago	2025	63	33%
CAC47	Rome/hybrid	2024	160	85%
CCFICS25	Virtual	2021	87	46%
CCFICS26	Hobart/hybrid	2023	70	37%
CCCF17	Panama City	2024	71	38%
CCFL46	Virtual	2021	91	48%
CCFL47	Gatineau	2023	50	26%
CCFA54	Chengdu	2024	53	28%
CCGP32	Virtual	2021	88	47%
CCGP33	Bordeaux	2023	51	27%
CCFH54	Nairobi	2024	59	31%
CCMAS41	Virtual	2021	83	44%
CCMAS42	Budapest/hybrid	2022	50	26%
CCFICS27	Cairns/hybrid	2024	83	44%
CCFL48	Quebec City	2024	68	36%
CCNFSDU42	Virtual	2021	99	52%
CCNFSDU43	Duesseldorf	2023	61	32%
CCMAS43	Budapest/hybrid	2024	61	32%
CCPR52	Virtual	2021	81	43%
CCPR53	Virtual	2022	75	40%
CCPR54	Beijing	2023	46	24%
CCNFSDU44	Dresden	2024	62	33%
CCPR55	Chengdu	2024	60	32%
CCRVDF25	Virtual	2021	80	42%
CCRVDF26	Portland	2023	49	26%
CCRVDF27	Omaha	2024	51	27%
<b>Average</b>			<b>80</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Average CAC</b>			<b>149</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>Average general subject committees</b>			<b>71</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Average virtual</b>			<b>95</b>	<b>50%</b>

<b>Average physical</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Average physical/hybrid</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>54%</b>

**Indicator 4.1.2 Additional indicator for CTF recipient countries: Proportion of CTF2 recipient countries sustaining national Codex systems and related activities once the funding ends**

48. The FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund-2 (CTF2) has been supporting countries in building strong, solid, and sustainable national capacity to engage in Codex work since 2016. By the end of 2024, eight rounds of applications and selections had been completed, resulting in 69 CTF2 beneficiary countries and those approved for CTF2 support. Of these 69 countries, 20 have completed their projects, 31 are in various stages of implementation, and eight are awaiting implementation. A further 10 countries received technical approval but insufficient funding prohibited full approval and progress to an implementation phase. Between 2020 and 2025, the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund 2 (CTF2) enabled developing and transition-economy countries to significantly strengthen their national Codex systems despite global disruptions, political instability, and, towards the end of the period, a severe funding contraction.

49. By the end of 2025, the portfolio comprised 33 active countries (including two group projects), 17 completed (including one group), nine fully approved and awaiting a start to activities, and 10 technically approved in 2024, pending funding.

- **Strengthened national Codex structures across regions**

CTF2 investments supported countries to establish or revitalize Codex Contact Points (CCPs), National Codex Committees (NCCs), consultation mechanisms, and procedures for managing Codex work. These institutional foundations—reflected in country stories from Azerbaijan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Samoa, Senegal, and the Bhutan–India–Nepal group—demonstrate clear improvements in governance, coordination, and participation. Examples include:

- Azerbaijan – established a sustainable and well-organized National Codex System.<sup>63</sup>
- Bhutan–India–Nepal (Group Project) – used mock-drill simulations to train national delegations; strengthened Codex procedures and intercountry coordination.<sup>64</sup>
- Burkina Faso – developed draft national standards aligned with Codex; strengthened CCP/NCC procedures and stakeholder outreach.<sup>65</sup>
- Ghana – strengthened data generation systems for methylmercury and arsenic, supporting evidence-based contributions to standards.<sup>66</sup>
- Honduras – strengthened NCC governance, updated food safety policy, delivered Codex training, and built expert databases.<sup>67</sup>
- Maldives – developed capacity to advocate for food safety at a policy level, including the development of a Food Safety Act; strengthened Codex structures and participation.<sup>68</sup>
- Senegal – institutionalized a national budget line for Codex; strengthened engagement in priority committees.<sup>69</sup>

- **Deepened technical capacity and participation**

Beneficiary countries undertook over 150 activities under Rounds 1–4 and continued expanding technical capacities through national workshops, risk analysis training, mock drills, and twinning mechanisms.

From 2022 to 2024, global “Good Codex Practices” trainings—organized with the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety of the Republic of Korea—equipped experts from beneficiary countries with hands-on skills in preparing country positions, using the Online Commenting System, and navigating Codex procedures. These were complemented by CCASIA subregional workshops led by India, emphasizing sustained skill transfer.

<sup>63</sup> Azerbaijan Country story: [https://youtu.be/T\\_1w5VhTooQ?si=6dlO52qPl38GpBwh](https://youtu.be/T_1w5VhTooQ?si=6dlO52qPl38GpBwh)

<sup>64</sup> Bhutan–India–Nepal Country story: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd8704en> and <https://youtu.be/TE1u2JfcmwY?si=JYuFsBy2Wc1ema6T>

<sup>65</sup> Burkina Faso Country story: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd4752en>

<sup>66</sup> Ghana Country story: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd8703en>

<sup>67</sup> Honduras Country story: <https://youtu.be/7p3koOemQVc?si=Za4JRP4G3TOb356V>

<sup>68</sup> Maldives Country story: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd8582en>

<sup>69</sup> Senegal Country story: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd8706en>

## Policy and regulatory impacts

Countries increasingly used Codex texts in national food standards, updated legislation, and improved their risk-based decision-making.

Examples include:

- Kazakhstan – established national Codex coordination unit, trained experts in risk analysis, published Codex communication policy.
- Mauritius – harmonized more than 20 priority standards with Codex; created a national Codex web platform.
- Côte d'Ivoire – introduced Codex aligned standards for fruits and spices and secured a national budget line to support Codex participation.

- **Sustained gains and long-term ownership**

The Repository of Project Outputs demonstrates the lasting institutionalization of Codex work: countries have developed procedural manuals, standard operating procedures (SOPs), risk analysis guidelines, strategic plans, and awareness materials, now publicly available for reuse by other Members.<sup>70</sup>

Many countries continue activities independently after project closure, including Benin, Ghana, Mauritius, Samoa and Senegal—indicating strong national ownership and sustainability.

- **Challenges and transition (2023–2025)**

From 2023 onward, the CTF2 faced increasing financial pressure as donor contributions declined and implementation costs rose; by 2024–2025, expenditures exceeded contributions for multiple consecutive years, forcing:

- Suspension of the 2024 Round 9 call for applications,
- Prioritization of late-stage projects,
- Postponement of Round 8 activities.

In 2025, after communication with donors, the CTF Steering Committee agreed to close CTF activities. The communication was made to CAC49.

## Objective 4.2 Increase sustainable and active participation of all Codex Members

### Outcome 4.2.1 Sustained, active participation in the work of Codex Committees and working groups

#### 4.2.1 – Number of Member countries who participated in EWGs during the biennium (participation is defined as registration to at least in one EWG during the biennium).

50. The average number of Members participating in EWGs remained consistent between 2020 and 2025, at around 40 percent. The only exception was the 2020–21 biennium, when the disruption caused by the pandemic in 2020 and subsequent efforts to catch up in 2021 affected participation levels.<sup>71</sup>

**Table 10: Number of Member countries who participated in EWGs (2020-2025)**

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
N.º of Member Countries	0	113	77	86	94	91
% of total Membership (189)	0% <sup>72</sup>	60%	41%	46%	50%	48%

#### 4.2.2 - Number of Member countries that replied to CLs in the biennium (a member will be counted if they replied to at least two CLs during the biennium)

51. As shown in Table 11, the proportion of Members submitting comments to at least two circular letters (CLs) either via the Online Commenting System (OCS) or via email directly to the Codex Secretariat and/or to the Chairpersons of Codex Committees, remained stable at around 40 percent from 2021 to 2025. The year 2020 stands as an exception due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>70</sup> Repository: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/codex-trust-fund/repository-of-project-outputs>

<sup>71</sup> Indicators 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 make reference to biennial measurements, for the purpose of this report which covers the whole Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 period, the data is presented by year.

<sup>72</sup> No Member registered to an EWG during 2020 due to the Covid Pandemic.



**Table 11: Number of Member countries that replied to CLs (2020-2025)**

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
N. <sup>o</sup> of Member Countries	41	68	71	70	81	72
% of total Membership (189)	22%	36%	38%	37%	43%	38%

**Objective 4.3 Reduce barriers to active participation by developing countries****Outcome 4.3.1 Capacity building, partnering, and knowledge sharing activities are effective in building active participation by developing countries**

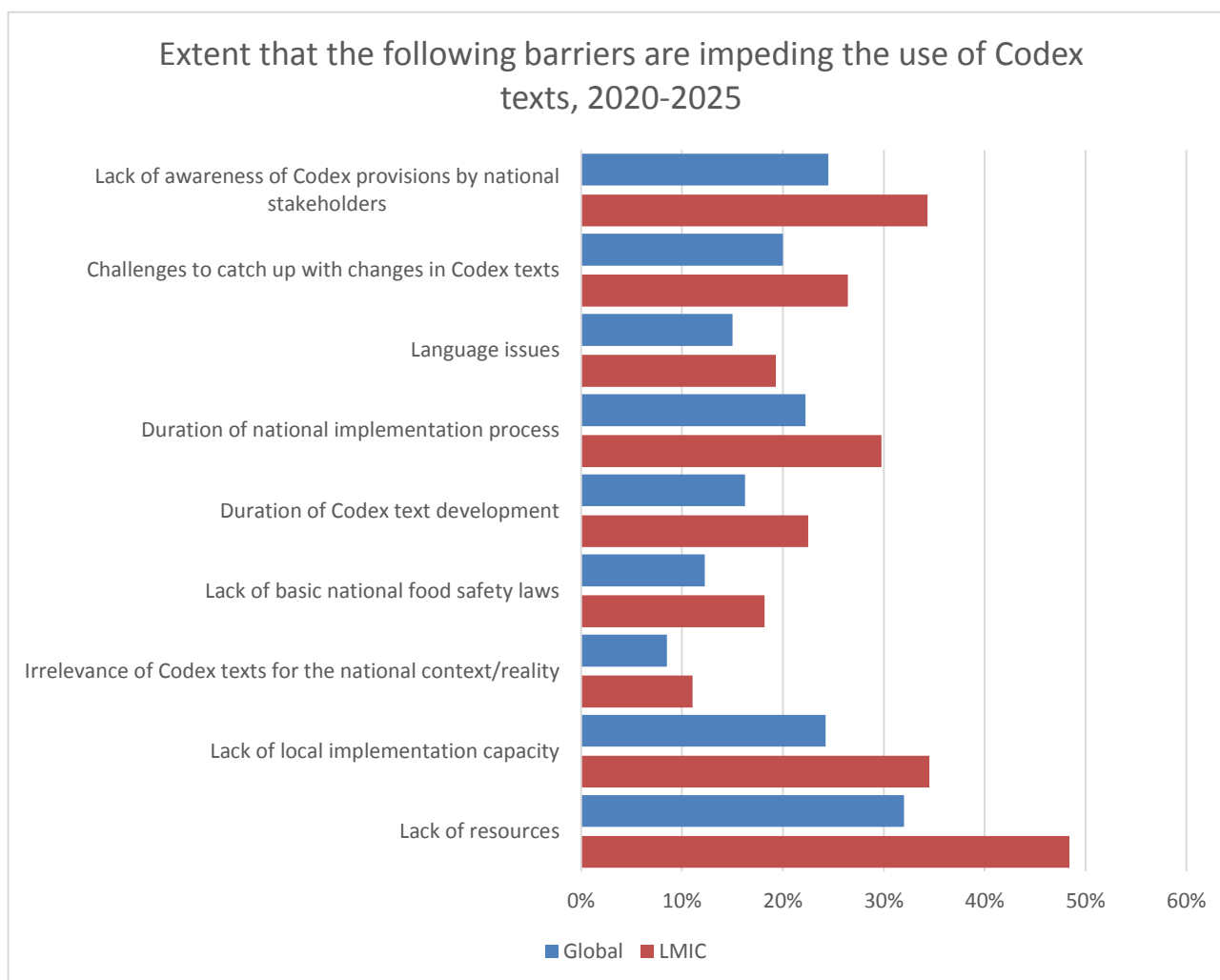
**Indicator 4.3.1 Extent that the following barriers are impeding the use of Codex texts: Lack of resources; Lack of local implementation capacity; Irrelevance of Codex texts for the national context/reality; Lack of basic national food safety laws; Duration of Codex text development; Lack of local implementation capacity; Duration of national implementation process; Language issues; Challenges to catch up with changes in Codex texts; Lack of awareness of Codex provisions by national stakeholders**

52. Between 2020 and 2025, on average the three main barriers to the use of Codex texts were the same, with different degrees, both globally and for LMICs respondents. They were “lack of resources”, “lack of local implementation capacity”, and “lack of awareness of Codex provisions by national stakeholders”.

**Table 12: Barriers impeding the use of Codex texts, average values of Members responding “completely” to “mostly” impeding trade, 2020-2025**

2020-2025	Global	LMIC
i) Lack of resources;	32%	48%
ii) Lack of local implementation capacity;	24%	35%
iii) Irrelevance of Codex texts for the national context/reality;	9%	11%
iv) Lack of basic national food safety laws;	12%	18%
v) Duration of Codex text development;	16%	23%
vi) Duration of national implementation process;	22%	30%
vii) Language issues;	15%	19%
viii) Challenges to catch up with changes in Codex texts;	20%	26%
ix) Lack of awareness of Codex provisions by national stakeholders	25%	34%

**Figure 1: Barriers impeding the use of Codex texts, average values of Members responding completely” to “mostly” impeding trade 2020-2025**



**Goal 5. Enhance work management systems and practices that support the efficient and effective achievement of all strategic plan goals**

**Objective 5.1 Develop and maintain efficient and effective work management practices and systems**

**Outcome 5.1.1 Codex work processes and procedures support the effective and efficient operation of Codex standard setting bodies**

**Indicator 5.1.1 Delivery of the Codex budget during the biennium**

53. In the 2020-2021 biennium, the delivery was 98%. In the 2022-2023 biennium, the delivery, compared to the original budget, was 107 percent, considering the additional allocation from FAO of USD 0.5 million in 2023. In the 2024-2025 biennium, the delivery, compared to the original budget, was 101,7 percent, taking into consideration extra-budgetary contributions to the Codex Regular Programme.

**Table 13: Budget delivery over the 2020-2025 Codex Strategic Plan period**

	Biennium 2020-2021	Biennium 2022-2023	Biennium 2024-2025
Budget delivery	98%	107%	102%

**Outcome 5.1.2 The efficient design of agendas and use of time in meetings of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, its Executive Committee and subsidiary bodies maximise the time allocated to the development of Codex texts**

**Indicator 5.1.2 Proportion of meeting documents distributed in a timely manner consistent with the Codex Procedural Manual or timeframes established by committees**

54. Table 14 presents the distribution of working documents (WDs) in English, French, and Spanish prepared for the Commission and Committees from 2020 to 2025. The analysis excludes invitation letters, provisional agendas, circular letters, addendum papers, other comments papers including the replies to circular letters, and information documents. The table shows both the number of WDs circulated at least two months before the start of each committee session and their share of total WDs. Between 2021 and 2024, the number of WDs issued within the set deadlines remained substantially stable. The share was higher than average in 2020 due to the limited number of WDs. In 2025 the share was lower than usual as there was a higher number of meetings closer to the Commission, which reduced the available time for translation.

55. The Codex Secretariat continues to make efforts to deliver more documents on time, considering issues such as resources availability, contingencies due to the work of EWGs, and rules and regulations of FAO regarding translation of documents.

**Table 14: Working documents distributed on time by language, 2020-2025**

	English		French		Spanish	
Year	N. of WDs on time	% of Total N. of WDs	N. of WDs on time	% of Total N. of WDs	N. of WDs on time	% of Total N. of WDs
2020	20	59%	18	53%	18	53%
2021	67	42%	45	29%	45	29%
2022	49	42%	21	23%	18	20%
2023	64	36%	31	20%	31	21%
2024	84	47%	41	23%	39	22%
2025	37	24%	15	10%	14	9%

**Objective 5.2 Enhance the capacities of committee and working group chairpersons, regional coordinators and host country secretariats to manage the work of Codex**

**Outcome 5.2.1 Subsidiary body meetings and working groups are effectively and efficiently chaired and conducted**

**Indicator 5.2.1 Satisfaction ratings on meeting efficiency, role of chairs and host and Codex secretariats**

56. Throughout 2020 and 2025, CAC satisfaction surveys reflected highly positive feedback across all Codex committee sessions during this period.

- Platform Accessibility and Technical Performance:
  - The registration process received high satisfaction ratings across committees, with most respondents (consistently over 90 percent) expressing ease in accessing platforms like Zoom and ORS.
  - Over 90 percent of participants largely agreed that the Zoom or YouTube platform was easy to access and navigate.
- Support from Codex Secretariats and Interpretation Quality:
  - Interpretation services received positive feedback, with around 90 percent satisfaction.
- Meeting Structure and Agenda Management:
  - Agenda Appropriateness: Respondents generally agreed that agenda items were well-timed, with 75 percent-85 percent indicating satisfaction with the length and clarity of sessions across all CACs.
  - Adjustments in session timing have helped accommodate a global audience, improving inclusivity in the virtual setting.
- Overall Impact and Contributions of Chairs:

- The role of chairs was rated positively, with an average of more than 90 percent of respondents acknowledging their effectiveness in managing discussions, guiding participants through complex topics and ensuring a range of views and perspectives were adequately heard. Participants expressed appreciation for the chairs' adaptability in navigating the challenges of virtual and hybrid formats, which fostered constructive and inclusive dialogues.

57. In conclusion, feedback for the quinquennium 2020-2025 reflected broad satisfaction with CACs meetings, including registration processes, technical support, and the responsiveness of chairs and secretariats.