Manual for Africa’s Codex Contact Points

Sponsored by the U.S. Codex Office, in consultation with the African Union-Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources

2013 EDITION
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Dear Friends:

The United States Codex Office is pleased to collaborate with the African Union- Interafrican Bureau of African Resources to develop this manual for Codex Contact Points in Africa.

The contents of the manual provide Codex officials with information to help them in their day-to-day Codex business as well as in preparing for Codex meetings. Effective participation in Codex activities is important for advancing the interests of your countries as well as for demonstrating the importance of Codex to senior government officials. Additionally, effective participation by a delegate from one country can serve as a model for delegates from other countries, and thus benefit Codex as a whole.

This manual is intended to be used in conjunction with the Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual. Effective participation in Codex includes understanding and supporting the risk-based foundation of Codex. The organization’s reliance on science is found in the principles in the Procedural Manual, which, together with this Manual for Codex Contact Points, provide important guidance for the members of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa.

Sincerely,

Karen Stuck
United States Codex Manager
FOREWORD

Food is important for the health of populations all over the globe. For thousands of years, agriculture and food production in particular has driven economic growth of African countries as a path out of poverty. With agriculture constituting 65 per cent of employment and 75 per cent of its domestic trade, food production will remain an important economic activity for Africa. The African Union Commission, through the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA), is committed to promoting agricultural development and food security in Africa, including safe trade in animal and plant based foods. The African Union Commission, through the African Union - Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), supports African countries to participate actively in the activities of Codex Alimentarius Commission.

For a long time, most systems for regulating food safety in Africa were based on legal definitions of unsafe food, enforcement programmes for the removal of unsafe food from the market, followed by penalties for the responsible parties. These traditional systems have not been effective because they cannot provide or stimulate a preventative approach in responding to existing and emerging challenges to food safety. This calls for adoption of modern methods of managing food hazards. Globally, there has been a transition to risk analysis based on better scientific knowledge of foodborne illness and its causes. This provides a preventive basis for regulatory measures for food safety at both national and international levels. The risk-based approach must be backed by information on the most appropriate and effective means to control foodborne hazards.

African countries have the opportunity not to drift back to the mistakes of the past if this information and experience is digested scientifically at International level and domesticated at national level. It is on this basis that the Manual for African Codex Contact Points has been developed. The Manual is a useful tool to help African countries to not only influence the standard setting process by providing science base inputs, but also to actively participate in global food safety agenda. Knowledge of the contents of this Manual is essential for African Codex members and observers to participate effectively in the work of the Codex in order to promote public health and trade by production and sale of safe food. It is also useful for decision-makers in order to understand the importance of food safety and the work being done by Codex for the life of humanity.

Professor Ahmed El-Sawalhy
Director of AU-IBAR
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Introduction
Increasingly African nations are making Codex standard-setting a national priority, wanting to understand, influence and use these standards, guidelines, and texts in their national legislation. Countries are mindful of the relationship of Codex standards and World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations under the SPS Agreement.\(^1\) This agreement requires WTO Members to base their measures on international standards, guidelines, and recommendations of the three international standard-setting bodies cited in the Agreement, of which Codex is one. Because of the African nations’ increased involvement in Codex, in 2003 CAC adopted AFRICAN REGIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CODEX CONTACT POINTS AND NATIONAL CODEX COMMITTEES (CAC/GL 43-2003). The document “outlines basic guidelines for the establishment, structure, functions and organisation of an effective Codex Contact Point and National Codex Committee.”\(^2\)

In recent years, many African nations have established CCPs and National Codex Committees. This Manual addresses the functions that FAO expects a Codex Contact Point (CCP) to fulfill, the considerations that should be taken into account when deciding about the appropriate governmental office to house the CCP, and the basic funding and equipment resources to allow the CCP’s office to carry out its duties. For countries just setting up a Codex office, the guidance document addresses the first several steps in establishing the office and enabling it to perform efficiently. The Codex Alimentarius Procedural Manual also contains a list of nine core functions of a CCP (see page 13).

Purpose and Audience
This manual was written with funding from the U.S. Codex Office and in conjunction with the African Union-Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), which participated in its development. The primary author of the manual is Dr. Catherine Carnevale, a consultant with extensive experience in Codex and in training countries on how to be more effective in carrying out Codex work.

The manual is directed at CCPs, but portions will also be useful for members of National Codex Committees, senior and political level stakeholders wishing to understand the value of Codex to achieve national goals, and other stakeholders in the national Codex community. The manual is dynamic in concept and, thus, may be revised periodically as needed. As country CCPs learn what techniques and practices work well in the region, the manual can be changed to reflect these practices. The title of the manual therefore has a date to demonstrate that it is a living and evolving document, intended to provide the best current advice and ideas for performing Codex work.

How to Make the Best Use of the Manual
The manual is deliberately short so that it can be easily printed and carried around by CCPs as they go about their daily Codex business. It contains the current directory of the African Codex Membership taken from CodexAlimentarius.org including the current email addresses for each CCP office. It is suggested that this directory be updated frequently by downloading from the Codex website and through updates provided by CCAFRICA email communications. The email addresses of African CCP colleagues, as well as other email addresses of importance to the individual CCP in her/his Codex work can be stapled to the back cover of this manual. Easy access to email addresses facilitates easy communications with African and other CCPs, the Rome Codex Secretariat, members of the National Codex Committee, and key

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\(^1\) The WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, which, in general, pertains to national measures of WTO members that are established or applied to protect the life or health of humans, animals or plants.

\(^2\) See Appendix 2.
government and NGO stakeholders in advancing Codex work, gaining support and intelligence on such work, and building relationships and trust.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual contains the official rules and procedures of Codex Alimentarius. Every CCP should be well versed on its contents and refer to it frequently in carrying out their Codex work. The Procedural Manual is available online at www.codexalimentarius.org with periodic updates.
I. HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WTO

1.1 How Codex Began
In the late 1800s and early 1900s, when international food trade and concerns about the food safety were growing, food trade associations recognized the need for harmonization of food standards to facilitate trade between countries and promote the safety of food. When the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) were founded in 1945 and 1948, respectively, both were given distinct responsibilities for food safety and food standards. By this time many countries had established food safety and identity standards for foods grown within their borders and/or imported foods. Regional attempts at harmonization of standards were only a partial solution as world-wide trade continued to rise. National food safety and quality regulations made international food trade increasingly difficult. At the prodding of Europe, FAO and WHO were asked to consider a jointly sponsored international food safety program and to create the Codex Alimentarius. In November 1961, the 11th Session of the FAO Conference passed a resolution to set up the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). In May 1963, the Sixteenth World Health Assembly approved the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program and adopted the statutes of the CAC.

The statutes of the CAC can be found in Article 1 of the Codex Procedural Manual. They present the objectives of the CAC, which reflect the intentions of the CAC’s founders. In short, these are to:

- Protect the health of consumers
- Ensure fair practices in food trade
- Promote coordination of all food standards work (whether by governmental or non-governmental organizations)
- Determine priorities for international standard-setting
- Initiate, finalize and amend regional or worldwide standards

A member of either FAO or WHO may join the CAC. CAC currently has 184 member nations and one regional governmental organization – the European Union.

1.2 Why is Codex Important to Countries?
Codex produces voluntary standards. That means that the standards are not automatically part of national regulatory systems, unless governments choose to adopt the standards, guidance or texts into national legislation. Thus, they become legally enforceable on a national basis as they apply to domestically produced and imported foods. When the WTO SPS Agreement came into effect in 1995, all WTO Members were obligated to utilize Codex standards as the basis for their national food safety measures under the terms of the SPS Agreement. The same could be said for food quality standards under the TBT Agreement, although Codex Alimentarius was not specifically named in that agreement. Thus, Codex standards could and have been used as the reference standards in both SPS- and TBT-related trade disputes. The national standard/measure did not have to be the same as the Codex standard but did need to take it into account, be based on scientific principles/risk assessment, be no more trade restrictive than necessary to achieve its objective, and conform with the other terms of the agreements (see next section). In the end, if an international trade dispute is brought under WTO SPS (and potentially the TBT) Agreement, the national measure would be judged against the Codex standard. Therefore, although Codex standards remain voluntary for national adoption there is a strong incentive for countries to harmonize with them.
The advantages of using Codex standards are:

- Adopting Codex standards as national standards is less resource intensive for governments than developing their own standards.
- Use of Codex standards presumes that a WTO member is complying with the terms of the SPS Agreement and, therefore, Codex standards protect countries against trade disputes.
- Countries that have established national standards in some SPS areas, can use Codex standards in the absence of a domestic standard.
- Because Codex standards are amended in light of new scientific findings, the science behind the standards may be considered current.
- Codex documents, such as guidance and other texts, are useful as frameworks for national systems.
- Use of Codex standards facilitates exports and imports.
- The scientific basis for Codex standards is transparent.
- Codex food safety standards are elaborated with the expressed purpose of protecting consumer health.
- Science-based standards build confidence in government food safety programs.
- Use of Codex standards brings predictability to the international trading system.

1.3 Codex Structure and Operations in Brief

Codex Alimentarius means Food Code, which is essentially the sum of all the products Codex produces. But who is Codex? How does it operate? How is it funded? Who is in charge? What are its products and how are they developed and finalized? What does it mean when its products are finalized? Do countries have to use them? Where does the science come from to develop the standards?

Although Codex has existed for 50 years, it has evolved considerably to meet the global food safety challenges the world has faced in international trade during that time. Codex is only as scientifically sound, and as strong and responsive to global needs, as the contributions of its Members allow.

1.3.1 Who is Codex?

Codex Alimentarius is an intergovernmental organization. Unlike some international bodies that develop international standards that industry may use to enable international trade and innovation (e.g., International Standards Organization, product-centered trade groups), Codex is comprised of governments that have applied for membership, expended their resources (e.g., people, monies, and scientific capital) to elaborate food safety and quality standards that are protective globally of consumers and unfair trade practices. So, although WHO and FAO co-sponsor, fund, and maintain the Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius IS its members. Each member, whether large or small, an industrialized or a developing economy, has the same standing in Codex. It is important to remember that Codex standards must be based on risk assessment and science, as appropriate or necessary for the particular type of standard or text. In practice, some countries are better able to contribute to the scientific underpinnings of standards or guidance. Still, all economies have the opportunity to learn from and participate in the elaboration and review of the Codex documents that matter to them to assure that their safety and trade issues can be taken into account.

1.3.2 The Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Commission (or CAC) meets annually to decide on adoption of standards that have been recommended by subsidiary bodies; new work to be undertaken by committees; movement of documents to the next step; election of officers; and establishment, adjournment, or dissolution of subsidiary bodies, in accord with work needs. The Commission meetings are held in Rome or Geneva (the location of FAO and WHO, respectively) and all Codex members are invited to attend. A quorum is needed to elect officers or take
a vote of any kind. The Codex Executive Committee acts as the executive board to the CAC and meets once or twice a year. It conducts a critical review of all Codex documents to assess progress and address difficulties. The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair and Vice-Chairs, the Regional Coordinators (the leads for each Regional Coordinating Committee) and one Member chosen on a geographical basis from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Near East, North America, and the South-West Pacific.

1.3.3 Rome Secretariat and Codex Officers
Codex operates under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, which is administered by FAO on behalf of FAO and WHO. FAO houses the Codex Secretariat in Rome. WHO manages the Codex Trust Fund, established in 2000 with donations from Codex member countries, to enable developing economies to participate in Codex meetings. Both organizations provide funding and personnel resources in support of Codex Alimentarius.

The Rome Secretariat establishes the calendar for all Codex sessions, maintains the Codex website, assures that rules of procedures are followed in all regards, and generally ensures efficiency, consistency, and fairness in all Codex operations. Members of the Secretariat sit at the head table next to the host country chair and host country secretariat at each Codex session.

The CAC elects a Chairperson and three Vice-Chairpersons from the Members. These officers preside at the annual Commission sessions and at the Executive Committee sessions, held once or twice annually. The Commission meeting, which all Members of Codex are invited to attend, can only elect officers if a quorum (2/3 of the Members) is present and is the only Codex venue where Codex standards and guidance can be adopted in final. The Commission also decides whether to take on new work or to advance documents in the Codex step procedure. The Executive Committee acts as an executive board for the Commission and its membership is limited but regionally balanced. It conducts a critical review of the progress and concerns on all Codex documents that are under discussion or currently in the Codex step procedure to address concerns.

1.3.4 Codex Subsidiary Bodies
Most Codex sessions are meetings of the subsidiary bodies, that is, the Codex committees and Ad Hoc Task Forces. These committees are established by the Commission and may be adjourned sine die (until needed later) or abolished. The committees have been established by the commodity or the subject/activity they engage in. For example, the Codex Committees on Cocoa Products and Chocolate; Cereals, Pulses, and Legumes; Meat Hygiene; Milk and Milk Products; Natural Mineral Waters; and Vegetable Proteins been adjourned sine die. Others, including Edible Ices; Meat; Meat and Poultry Products; Soups and Broths, were abolished by CAC when they were no longer needed.

Some of the reasons why committees have come and gone have to do with the evolution of Codex. At its outset in the 1960s much of the impetus for Codex was trade of certain products between countries. It was important to focus on those products, standardizing the identity of the product; and limiting contaminants, pesticide and drug residues in the product; defining safe use of food additives in the product. As time went by, however, and the numbers of standards grew, it made more sense from a standpoint of efficiency and scientific input for Codex to focus on what are known as “horizontal” or “general subject” committees dealing with additives, processing and hygiene, inspection/certification, labeling, contaminants, and residues in multiple products. Thus, very few commodity committees remain. Currently, the active Codex horizontal committees and their host countries are:
• Contaminants in Foods (Netherlands)
• Food Additives (China)
• Food Hygiene (USA)
• Food Import and Export Certification and Inspection Systems (Australia)
• Food Labelling (Canada)
• General Principles (France)
• Methods of Analysis and Sampling (Hungary)
• Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (Germany)
• Pesticide Residues (China)
• Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (USA)

The currently active Codex commodity committees are:
• Fats and Oils (Malaysia)
• Fish and Fishery Products (Norway)
• Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (Mexico)
• Processed Fruits and Vegetables (USA)

Host countries are responsible for the funding of committee sessions, and they sometimes collaborate with a developing country to co-host the committee meeting in the developing country.

Regional Coordinating Committees. FAO and WHO also have regional coordinating committees that focus on regional issues that fall under the Codex mission. Prior to the initiation of the Codex Trust Fund, some developing countries could not afford to attend meetings that were held outside their region. Thus, these meetings were critical to their Codex involvement. These meetings continue to be extremely important in discussing subjects in depth, developing standards for products traded within the region, learning from countries in the region, and leveraging interests. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees hold sessions every other year and are:
• North America and the Southwest Pacific
• Africa
• Latin America and the Caribbean
• Europe
• Asia
• Near East

Ad Hoc Task Forces. All Codex subsidiary bodies have Terms of Reference (See Codex Procedural Manual), which help determine which committee should handle a particular piece of work. In some cases, however, there may not be an appropriate body to address a new subject. This has occurred in a limited number of cases, e.g., Foods Derived from Biotechnology, Antimicrobial Resistance, and, currently, Animal Feeding. Codex can establish an Ad Hoc Task Forces for activities that can be accomplished within a limited time frame. Task Forces have a host country and are authorized to meet for a given number of sessions to complete their work.

1.3.5 The Step Process or How a Codex Standard/Text is Elaborated
Suggestions for new work or revision of a standard may originate from Members, groups of Members (e.g., a regional group), NGOs, or simply arise from discussions at a Codex committee session. Nevertheless, the Commission requires that such suggestions be formalized by the Committee or Member proposing the new work or standard revision through a project document that has a set format, which includes the
purpose and scope of the standard, the need for expert scientific advice, and a time-line for completion, among other things (See Section II, Codex Procedural Manual, Procedures for Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts). Sometimes a Committee feels that more discussion is needed before making a recommendation for new work. In these situations, the committee may ask a Member to prepare a discussion paper to clarify and explore further the purpose, benefits, or scope of the recommended text or standard before the Committee submits a formal project document to recommend new work.

Because Codex has a Strategic Plan that sets priorities for a 6-year period, the project document should also describe relevance to the current Strategic Plan, which is available on the Codex website. Once the Executive Committee evaluates the recommendation for new work under its Critical Review, taking many factors into account, the Commission takes a decision on the new work. If approved, the normal “Uniform Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts” has begun. This procedure consists of eight steps found in the Codex Procedural Manual (See Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual, Section II, Procedures for Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts).

- Step 1 – CAC approves new work, decides which subsidiary body should do the work.
- Step 2 – A proposed draft standard or text is prepared, taking into account scientific advice from the WHO/FAO joint scientific committees, if applicable.
- Step 3 – The proposed draft standard is sent to Members and interested international organizations for comment.
- Step 4 – The comments are compiled and considered at the next session of the subsidiary body and the proposed draft standard/text is revised accordingly. The subsidiary body can decide that the document is ready to progress to Step 5 or decide to hold it for another round of Step 3 comments. The Committee can also decide that consensus has been reached on the standard/text and recommend that it proceed to Steps 5/8, which means that Steps 6 and 7 may be skipped.
- Step 5 – The proposed draft standard goes to the Executive Committee for critical review and to the Commission for adoption as a “draft standard”.
- Step 6 – A second opportunity is given to Members and interested international organizations to comment.
- Step 7 – The comments are compiled and considered by the subsidiary body charged with elaborating the standard/text.
- Step 8 – If consensus is reached by the subsidiary body on the standard/text, it is sent to the Executive Committee and then to the Commission for adoption at the next annual Commission session. Adoption of a Codex standard/text means that the standard/text is final.

Accelerated Procedure: Codex also has an accelerated procedure that eliminates two of these steps. In circumstances where a subsidiary body reaches consensus on a standard or text after one round of country comments this procedure can be used. Where a subsidiary body achieves general agreement by Step 5, it may recommend to the CAC that the standard or text be adopted as a final standard at Steps 5/8, thus eliminating another round of country comments.

1.3.6 Physical and Electronic Working Groups

It is not uncommon for subsidiary bodies to establish a working group to focus on a particular aspect of a Codex document (i.e., standard or text) or the entire document itself in order to achieve progress that might not be achievable in a plenary session. The working group might meet before or during a Codex session, or it may take place between Committee sessions, i.e., during the year in between. Likewise, instead of scheduling a physical working group, which requires travel, Committees are encouraged to
establish electronic working groups so that as many countries as possible can participate. A notice will be sent from the Secretariat seeking volunteers for the work group. It is useful to volunteer for a working group if a Member is interested in the particular document, to learn the views of other Members and to help determine a successful path to an optimal standard or text. Work groups are considering documents in the early stages of development, and it is much easier to influence the content in a work group than it will be at later stages.

1.3.7 Management and Members – Respective Roles
The Codex Secretariat is responsible for administration of the Codex calendar, preparing and distributing documents, organizing the CAC and Executive Committee, and ensuring that Codex Rules of Procedure are followed. The host country Secretariat is responsible for assuring a well arranged and managed committee session and providing the Committee Chair. The Codex Commission Chair and Rome Codex Secretariat, as well as the host country Chair, must maintain objectivity at meeting sessions to ensure that all member countries’ views and information are heard within the rules of procedures. Thus, the Chairs of the meeting run the meeting, but the members and international NGOs participating in the session, along with those who may not be present at the committee session, but who have contributed comments, are responsible for the outcome of the meeting.

Participants may comment, agree or disagree with other members, call for a working group on a topic, or ask to lead or partner with another member in leading a working group to determine a path forward on a Codex document. Members should volunteer to work on a working group if the document/standard is of interest to their country. Members may also develop proposals/discussion papers/project documents for new work; recommend pesticides/veterinary drugs/food additives/ chemical contaminants for review by the appropriate, independent expert scientific bodies and development of the scientific basis for the Codex standard. Every Codex Member has an equal standing and role, if it chooses to exercise it, in influencing how Codex proceeds in its work.

1.3.8 Consensus and Voting
Codex works by consensus. Voting generally is reserved for contentious situations where consensus has not been reached. Voting has generally occurred in those situations where science is battling with cultural/societal values and, thus, consensus on a global standard is difficult to reach. Voting should be a tool of last resort. Instead, members should use every alternative means to reach a decision on a global standard by consensus.

Consensus has eluded definition in Codex, but is understood to mean that members may not agree wholeheartedly on the final product, but they can accept it.

1.3.9 What Are the Products of Codex?
Codex generally produces standards, e.g., Maximum Residue Levels for intentionally used pesticides or veterinary drugs in foods, or Maximum Levels for other contaminants in food. Codex commonly refers to “Codex Standards and Related Texts” by which they mean that “texts”, such as Principles and Guidance, Codes of Practice, and other documents, are related to application of Codex standards and are products of the same Codex process of consensus. Although all Codex standards and texts are “voluntary” in that Members may choose to adopt or not adopt them into their national legislation, the World Trade Organization requires that its Members “base” their sanitary and phytosanitary measures on international standards, guidelines, and recommendations. And the WTO SPS Agreement specifically recognizes the Codex Alimentarius Commission as the international standards setting organization that elaborates
science-based standards to protect human life and health.

1.4 The Relationship of Codex and WTO

WTO had its origins in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT 1947) that was negotiated after World War II. The GATT set rules to lessen tariffs and quotas in international trade. It did not focus on other types of trade barriers for many years, and, in fact, protected countries’ rights to establish laws/policies/regulations to protect the health of humans, animals and environment (GATT Section XX(b)). Non-tariff trade barriers were, however, addressed in the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations that ended in 1994. That Round led to the establishment of the World Trade Organization in 1995 and to binding trade agreements that placed obligations on countries in setting non-tariff trade barriers. Countries that choose to be Members of WTO must abide by the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement), as well as the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement), both of which favor the use of international standards.

Of course, Codex preceded WTO, having been established in 1963. In drafting the SPS Agreement during the Uruguay Round, the negotiating countries recognized that Codex elaborated food safety and quality standards based on science. Thus, the drafters specified Codex as the international standard setting body for the sanitary standards falling under the terms of the SPS Agreement and obligated WTO members to play an active role in Codex and to base national measures on Codex standards if they exist. The SPS Agreement also recognizes that countries have the right to establish their own standards, if the standards are based on scientific principles/risk assessment, as appropriate to the circumstances, and the country’s chosen national level of protection. If countries chose to adopt the Codex standards, guidance and other texts as national legislation, the SPS Agreement stated that those national SPS measures would be seen as complying with the terms of the SPS Agreement. Thus, if WTO Members entered into a dispute under the WTO, the dispute settlement panel would use the Codex standards and related texts as their reference points.

The WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, while not mentioning the Codex Alimentarius Commission by name, still strongly encourages use of international standards, which would include Codex quality or identity standards that do not fall under the terms of the SPS Agreement.

Thus, countries that are Members of WTO have strong encouragement to adopt Codex standards and related texts. If they choose to adopt alternative measures, the country should document transparently how these measures are based on Codex standards and texts, in accord with their WTO obligations.

Specific references to the relationship between WTO Agreements and Codex are provided for easy reference below:

SPS Agreement

Article 3.1 “To harmonize sanitary and phytosanitary measures on as wide a basis as possible, Members shall base their sanitary or phytosanitary measures on international standards, guidelines or recommendations, where they exist, except as otherwise provided for in this Agreement, and in particular in paragraph 3.”

Article 3.2 “Sanitary or phytosanitary measures which conform to international standards, guidelines or recommendations shall be deemed to be necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health, and presumed to be consistent with the relevant provisions of this Agreement and of GATT 1994.”
Article 3.3 “Members may introduce or maintain sanitary or phytosanitary measures which result in a higher level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection than would be achieved by measures based on the relevant international standards, guidelines or recommendations, if there is a scientific justification, or as a consequence of the level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection a Member determines to be appropriate…”

Article 3.4 “Members shall play a full part, within the limits of their resources, in the relevant international organizations and their subsidiary bodies, in particular the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the International Office of Epizootics, and… the International Plant Protection Convention…”

TBT Agreement
Article 1.3 “All products, including industrial and agricultural products, shall be subject to the provisions of this Agreement.”

Article 1.5 “The provisions of this Agreement do not apply to sanitary and phytosanitary measures as defined in Annex A of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.”

Article 2.4 “Where technical regulations are required and relevant international standards exist or their completion is imminent, Members shall use them, or the relevant parts of them, as a basis for their technical regulations except when such international standards or relevant parts would be an ineffective or inappropriate means for the fulfillment of the legitimate objectives pursued, for instance because of fundamental climatic or geographical factors or fundamental technological problems.”
2. GUIDANCE FOR CODEX CONTACT POINTS

2.1 The Value of Codex Contact Points

The FAO/WHO E-learning course entitled “Enhancing participation in Codex activities”, Version 2.0 states that “The success of a country’s Codex activities depends on the effective functioning of the Codex Contact Point”. Why is the CCP so important to a Member country’s success? What are some of the ways this success may best be achieved? These are the questions we will answer in this section.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual, Section VI, Membership, contains a section entitled “CORE FUNCTIONS OF CODEX CONTACT POINTS”. This section states:

“The operation of Codex Contact Points will differ in each country depending on national legislation, government structures and practices.

Codex Contact Points:
1. Act as the link between the Codex Secretariat and Member countries;
2. Coordinate all relevant Codex activities within their own countries;
3. Receive all Codex final texts (standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other advisory texts) and working documents of Codex sessions and ensure that they are circulated to those concerned within their own countries;
4. Send comments on Codex documents or proposals to the Codex Alimentarius Commission or its subsidiary bodies and/or the Codex Secretariat;
5. Work in close cooperation with the national Codex committee, where such a committee has been established. The Codex Contact Point acts as the liaison point with the food industry, consumers, traders and all other concerned to ensure that the government is provided with an appropriate balance of policy and technical advice upon which to base decisions relating to issues raised in the context of the Codex work;
6. Act as a channel for the exchange of information and coordination of activities with other Codex Members;
7. Receive the invitation to Codex sessions and inform the relevant chairpersons and the Codex Secretariat of the names of participants from their own countries;
8. Maintain a library of Codex final texts; and
9. Promote Codex activities throughout their own countries.”

These core functions are important. In order for the CCP to carry out these functions, he or she needs the cooperation of many people, plus the time, authority, funding, and staff to establish an efficient operation. This section offers guidance, ideas and suggestions drawn from the operations of countries that have mature and successful Codex programs. These ideas may be helpful in guiding a country that wishes to strengthen and streamline its Codex program and expand in its ability to influence the development of Codex standards and related texts.

2.2 Best Practices for Codex Contact Points

2.2.1 Managing work and establishing SOPs

The CCP should be the chief management officer for the Member country’s Codex activities. At any moment in time, Codex is working on as many as 100 documents, some technically very complex. The CCP must
assure that these documents receive the appropriate level of attention based on the Member’s interest in
the particular document. This interest depends on the input from interested government ministries, the
food and food related industries, consumer groups, and potentially other interested stakeholders. The
CCP, then, needs to establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure timeliness of document
review by interested stakeholders, prioritization of the standard/text for the country, appropriate outreach
and representation at Codex sessions, and interaction with the National Codex Committee, among other
things. The CCP is not just a conduit for document review and a point person for a Member’s Codex
activities, but a senior level manager who understands Codex practices, what is needed to enable efficient,
effective day-to-day Codex operations within the country, and able to work with government and non-
government stakeholders to establish workable SOPs for all parties to follow. These SOPs should be
reviewed on a regular basis to see if they can be improved.

2.2.2 Distribution of Codex documents
The Codex Rome Secretariat depends on the Member CCPs to distribute documents to the appropriate
in-country reviewers. For that reason, many countries have found that it is efficient to establish a permanent
general Codex Office e-mailbox that is not addressed to a specific person, such as the current CCP. This
mailbox can be used for all Codex correspondence.

Some countries also have a practice of rotating the CCP among ministries every one or two years, wanting
to give more persons a leadership role and chance to understand Codex, its scope and importance. This,
however, has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of the Member in Codex. Generally, it is more
important to maintain a Codex CCP in place, so long as that person is effective in carrying out the many
roles of the CCP in managing Codex activities. This builds expertise and continuity.

Some countries designate a “permanent” delegate to a particular Codex subsidiary body. Certainly this
practice helps ensure more effective Codex participation. The CCP’s role, then, as manager is to distribute
the documents the CCP receives, to the appropriate subsidiary body delegate, who in turn decides who
will review and prepare country technical comments on the document. Comments should then go back
to the CCP, who has oversight on all Codex work and can work with the National Codex Committee,
the delegate, and other stakeholders in further reviewing the comments and deciding on appropriate
outreach with other delegations. (Note: Having a designated delegate for each Codex subsidiary body
is a management practice to ensure that work on all Codex documents is addressed, as the delegate is
responsible for the review of each document pertaining to that subsidiary body. The country may or may
not attend meetings of each subsidiary body; however, in such cases where the country chooses to attend,
the permanent delegate would ordinarily lead the country delegation.)

Another very useful approach, in addition to the basic SOP for document review, is to ask government
and non-government bodies whether they are interested in receiving documents from a particular Codex
committee. The CCP’s office will then automatically send that subsidiary body’s documents (e.g., all
documents for the Codex Committee on Food Labelling) to the entire list of “interested parties”. The
CCP will request that parties interested in submitting comments send them by email to a specified address
by a specified date. Maintaining these interested party lists for each committee assures that there is
optimal transparency in the review of Codex documents within a country.

2.2.3 Setting Priorities and WHO Trust Fund communications
The CCP should establish a periodic process for establishing priorities. Most countries do not have
the monetary or personnel resources to cover all Codex documents and subsidiary bodies. Therefore,
the CCP should establish a process engaging key senior government officials and other stakeholders to
determine which committees and/or current documents are of greatest importance to the country. There
are advantages to selecting a few committees that a member country considers most important and
devoting available resources to those committees, especially if the member country’s delegate is able to
build continuing relationships with other delegates and delegations and to serve on workgroups between
meetings. Another approach, however, is to select the highest priority standards and related texts that
are currently before Codex and focus attention on them until they are completed. These document
priorities may or may not require attending the Codex session, but it certainly is important for the CCP
and National Codex Committee to develop an appropriate strategy to ensure that the Member’s interests
will be represented at the next subsidiary body session, whether or not a delegate is sent.

WHO Trust Fund communications must also go through the CCP, recognizing the nexus between the
Member’s priority setting, establishing the optimal strategy for the assuring that your country's interests
are met, and your country's optimal representation at specific Codex sessions. Although your country
may have considered a particular Codex Committee to be a priority committee in the past and utilized
Trust Fund monies to attend that committee, it may be that a particular document of major importance
to your country and region will dictate a different approach for the future. Further, if the document is of
major importance, the National Codex Committee may wish to identify country resources for attending
the Codex session.

2.2.4 Liaison with political level, with other country CCPs, and with Codex Secretariat
As the manager of a member country’s Codex activities, the CCP must have the ability to liaise with
many different groups. Chief among these is liaison with the political level of government. Without
understanding and support from the political level, the CCP will not have the resources (time, funding,
staff, and authority) necessary to do his/her job as CCP. Some CCPs are able to carry out their Codex
functions in concert with their other government functions, but this is rarely done successfully without
adequate support. It is helpful to prepare brief outreach papers on Codex for the political level and then
to keep key persons informed on Codex activities throughout the year, especially on Member success
stories. Some countries’ industry officials, who see the importance of Codex standards, may also be
instrumental in advocating support from the political level. Consider what mechanisms might work best
in your country, but definitely keep the political level appraised of Codex activities.

It is also important for the CCP to liaise with other CCPs both within the same region and outside. The
advantages of doing this are to 1) gain other points of view on documents or how to handle Codex functions,
among others; 2) to use as a sounding board when struggling with a Codex issue; 3) to solicit support for
your country’s positions on Codex documents; and 4) to learn. Conversations with other CCPs, whether
by email, phone or in person, provide a wealth of information that cannot be obtained elsewhere.

For authoritative answers on Codex procedures, however, it is very helpful to maintain relationships with
members of the Codex Secretariat in Rome. These experts usually have long experience in training new
CCPs and beyond the basics, they can add insights and more holistic views on the work of individual
committees.

2.2.5 Communication with government and non-government stakeholders
Because the CCP is positioned in one ministry and multiple ministries are commonly engaged in the
work of Codex, communication with government stakeholders can be quite challenging. Often ministries
for health, agriculture, environment, commerce, foreign affairs, and others wish to be informed. Even
more challenging is the need to assure that the appropriate non-government stakeholders are adequately
informed on issues in which they may have an interest, whether these NGOs represent the food or food related industries, experts at universities, consumer groups, or another interested party. For effective outreach, some CCPs:

• rely on regular meetings of their National Codex Committees, on which there may be representatives from all involved ministries and some NGOs.
• maintain lists of interested parties for each Codex committee/ad hoc task force. The CCP’s office or country delegate to that subsidiary body makes sure these interested parties receive all documents, requests for comments and progress reports pertaining to the particular subsidiary body.
• send out Codex newsletters or have a website stating what they are working on.
• hold public meetings to inform and take comments before finalizing positions for a Codex Committee.

One or more of these mechanisms may work for your country. It should be noted that some of the outreach suggested above is best accomplished by the CCP, as the manager for the country’s Codex program. However, the CCP is urged to delegate most communication on individual subsidiary bodies to the country’s lead delegate (i.e., permanent delegate) for that body, so the CCP is not overburdened with work, does not delay communication and maintains his/her position as manager for the country’s overall Codex program. It bears mentioning that some African countries have set up groups of experts with responsibilities for documents from multiple Codex committees, in which case a specific person would need to be designated for carrying out the outreach.

In setting up SOPs for Codex operations, effective communications must be taken into account in considering how the Member’s Codex processes can be as transparent as possible.

2.2.6 Delegating work to the designated Delegates to Codex Committees or technical groups and defining their responsibilities

Some CCPs try to read and consider all Codex documents. These same CCPs may attend Codex sessions as they may be the most informed person in their governments on the purpose of Codex Alimentarius, its functions, and processes, and thus may have the greatest expertise in operating effectively in a Codex meeting. There is no question that a Codex meeting can be somewhat daunting the first time one attends a session. It is also important for the CCP to attend enough Codex meetings so he/she understands the Committees and how they operate, as the CCP has a training function also. Nevertheless, Codex is a scientifically based standard setting organization, and most of a Member’s work on Codex documents is accomplished during the year. Country comments are prepared long before the Codex session is to take place and country positions are drafted sufficiently in advance of the meeting. The Codex Contact Point cannot be an expert in all areas with which Codex deals. Therefore, the CCP must delegate most of the Codex work to persons or technical committees with expertise. Most effective countries in Codex generally send technical experts to the technical subsidiary bodies and try to send the same country delegate(s) so they can know what happened on particular documents at previous meetings, build relationships, serve on working groups, and feel knowledgeable enough on the subject matter to take an active role in development of the global standard or text.

2.2.7 Assuring appropriate and timely review of country positions and comments on Codex documents

Many CCPs place their greatest emphasis on their country’s attendance at those Codex Committee sessions that the Member considers of high priority to the country and on obtaining funding and agreement from senior management to send a delegate. However, CCPs should not neglect the importance of concentrating their country’s efforts on contributing to the shaping of the Codex standard or related text.
Countries that do not write and submit comments on documents by the comment deadline will not have their comments translated and printed along with other countries’ comments in comment compilations. Writing comments at the last minute means that your country’s comments will go into a Conference Room Document that will be in only the language in which it was submitted. Further, it will not be considered in advance of the meeting by countries preparing to go to the Codex meeting. Therefore, it is critical to prepare comments and positions by the announced deadlines, if you wish to effectively influence the document. In addition, even in situations where your country is unable to attend a meeting, comments prepared by the deadline and translated can be referenced by others, for example, other African countries who are able to attend the meeting. You can tell the Codex Secretariat and the Committee Chair that your country cannot attend the meeting but that you wish your comments to be taken into account. Thus, it is critical to prepare and submit comments on time for those documents your country considers to be important whether or not your country is able to send a delegate to the meeting.

One other point in this regard is the importance of commenting on a standard or related text in its early stages, e.g., when it is a discussion paper or a proposed draft standard. Comments made early when the document is still being shaped are more likely to be taken, than those provided after several Codex sessions when much discussion and revision has already taken place making it more difficult to change sections. Thus, CCPs should stress to stakeholders the importance of commenting on documents in their early stages and getting comments in on time to have the strongest country influence on the shape a document will take. If a country can send a delegate to the meeting, all the better, as they can make an intervention to draw the room’s attention to the comments.

2.2.8 Training the Codex workforce in country

It has already been said that CCPs must be great communicators with stakeholders, but they also must be trainers of persons who will be involved in Codex work. In this context, Codex work can be anything from preparing comments on a Codex document, preparing positions and interventions for the actual Codex session, attending a Codex meeting as a country delegate, working as staff in the CCP’s Codex Office, participating as a member of the National Codex Committee, or supporting Codex activities in another way. If the Member country’s Codex work force does not understand the value, processes, and country priorities for Codex, then they are not going to operate as a team. Thus, the CCP must either obtain training, provide training him/herself, require training (e.g., FAO/WTO E-learning course, available from the Codex website), or a combination of these to assure common understanding of the Codex basics and the country’s areas of emphasis. It is also valuable to offer training to interested non-government participants in Codex, as their input will prove invaluable. Training at regular intervals will assist in development of a sense of camaraderie among the Member’s many divergent stakeholders that put their energies into Codex work on the country’s behalf.

2.3 The CCP Office and Staff

Many CCP offices may consist of one person, who may not have 100% of their time available for Codex work, may have little to no staff available for Codex work, and no alternate or backup when ill or out of office. This section offers suggestions that can improve the functioning of a CCP office.

2.3.1 Placement of the CCP position at high level

The CCP is a manager of the Member’s Codex activities, which require interface with senior level officials both within and outside the government, plus the ability to oversee and direct work on a broad scope of activities and management of people’s work across ministry lines without line authority. The position requires wisdom, tact, and experience to foster a collegial environment for accomplishing the work.
2.3.2 Authority and funding for CCP office
Member Codex Offices, where the CCP and staff are housed, should be formally recognized by the Member within a ministry organizational chart, with functions of the office formally set forth in the description of the office. Funding for the Codex Office should be specifically designated and separate from other functions that the CCP may carry out. Funding should be available for supplies and equipment, travel to priority Codex meetings, training costs, and staff salaries.

2.3.3 Backup or alternate CCP
The work of a CCP never stops. Codex activities are constant throughout the year. Because of the multitude of documents and persons in many ministries working on those documents, the CCP and the office must be available to answer questions, oversee the work, ensure that deadlines are met, and continuously provide outreach to the many stakeholders interested in Codex work. Office staff can fulfill most of these functions as a matter of routine when the CCP is not available. However, it is useful to designate an alternate CCP or backup, who is generally aware of the high level issues and policy decisions and who can step in when the CCP is absent for long periods or when the CCP designates. This person may not need to work on Codex full time and may be located in a different ministry, but should hold a position of authority sufficient to carry out the CCP responsibilities when necessary.

2.3.4 Percentage of CCP time spent on Codex
Optimally, a CCP should be authorized to spend 100% of his/her time on Codex activities, so that their entire focus is on improving the country’s involvement in setting global food safety standards.

2.3.5 Office staff
The CCP should focus on management of work, policy interface with the National Codex Committee, problem solving, outreach, communications, and training, rather than routine office matters. For this reason, it is helpful for the CCP to have designated staff to handle administrative and other tasks. In some countries, these positions are handled as training positions or internships and are positions highly sought to learn about Codex and how international UN organizations operate in practice.

2.3.6 Importance of Codex e-mail mailbox
A designated Codex e-mailbox can be beneficial for operation of the Codex Office. A general mailbox address will allow access by multiple people, so distribution of documents can be delegated to staff given access to the mailbox, rather than relying on the CCP to read the email. Further, all Codex files and correspondence can be organized by committee and tagged for follow up. If the office maintains mailing lists for sending documents to all parties interested in a particular committee, staff can routinely send documents to all persons on those lists with the click of a button. Only authorized users of the Codex mailbox should be granted access.

2.3.7 Permanent or long term designation of CCP, rather than rotation of CCP and Codex Office among ministries
The importance of continuity in the CCP and Codex Office cannot be overstated. It can take a long while to gain support for the Codex Office, to establish SOPs, and to learn the Codex processes and duties of the CCP.
2.4 Relationship of the CCP to the National Codex Committee

2.4.1 FAO and WHO view the National Codex Committee as a body that can increase communications/collaboration among interested stakeholders.
The National Codex Committee can be used for whatever purposes the country decides, however. The FAO/WHO E-Learning Course states that “NCCs can provide a forum for discussions, deciding on a country’s level of involvement in Codex, formulation of the national positions and responses to Codex proposals or policy. Often the Codex Contact Point serves as the secretariat for the National Codex Committee, although it is up to the country to determine the organizational structure best suited to its needs.”

The National Codex Committee is effective as a communication forum. Nevertheless, it is useful to assure that the roles and duties of the National Codex Committee and the CCP are clearly delineated for maximum efficiency in carrying out Codex work.

2.4.2 In some countries there is too much dependency on the National Codex Committee for day to day decisions, and no clear separation of day to day operations from policy.
The National Codex Committee seems to work best as a sounding board for high level decisions and oversight. The CCP should carry out the day to day operations and decisions, while notifying the National Codex Committee of significant work that is underway. Generally, technical decisions need to be handled at the technical level. However, when problems are encountered of either a technical or policy nature, the National Codex Committee can be asked to deliberate on options (as necessary, technical experts can be invited to meetings to present the issue). The National Codex Committee can also be useful in guiding the country’s strategy on Codex activities.

2.4.3 The National Codex Committee should be comprised of senior level managers from all involved ministries.
Many successful National Codex Committees also have representatives from non-government stakeholder groups, e.g., industry trade groups, consumers, academia.

2.5 The Importance of Communication – Who are the Players in Codex?

2.5.1 Who are the stakeholders within and outside government?
For the purposes of this guidance, stakeholders are any person or group having an interest or role in the development of the Codex standard or related text. They may be the laboratory scientist in the Ministry of Health tasked with writing comments on a Codex document pertaining to methods of pesticide analyses. They may be an exporter of canned fruit who is concerned about a Codex labeling issue. They may be a consumer group wondering whether a Codex standard may restrict their access to vitamin supplements. They can also be legislators or very senior level management, who may not understand the importance of Codex to their country and may question the need for funding. All these stakeholders need to be given attention by the CCP.

2.5.2 Consideration of the roles of the government and non-government stakeholders in building interest in Codex
In order to get anything done, the CCP must consider communication with stakeholders as a continuing priority. Stakeholders need to understand the purpose and value of Codex, how a Member participates in Codex, and the importance of having its country’s interests reflected in the eventual shape of the global
standard or related text. Because Codex is an intergovernmental organization, government stakeholders are responsible for preparing documents, comments and positions. Still, the non-government stakeholders may be the ones with the major concerns about a standard or the desire for a global standard. Further, they may have the critical knowledge, science, or business knowhow that is needed to formulate the country’s comments on a Codex standard or text. Despite their different roles, both government and non-government stakeholders need to collaborate in order to participate fully in international standard setting. Therefore, communication, transparency, and opportunity for input are vital. Interested party email lists, Codex newsletters, public meetings, open portions of National Codex Committee meetings, and Codex trainings are all useful in assuring good communications.

2.5.3 The merits of a Codex newsletter for all stakeholders
A CCP should consider preparing a short weekly or biweekly newsletter to be distributed by email. These newsletters can contain the names and status of the Codex documents received during that period, meetings that were held, decisions that were made, and other information to keep stakeholders informed. A newsletter keeps Codex issues in front of stakeholders’ faces, whether or not a particular newsletter contains items of interest to the particular stakeholder. Nevertheless, when something does peak their interest, the newsletter will let them know what is happening.

2.5.4 The value of country delegate reports after attending a Codex meeting
Country delegate reports are invaluable for communicating with stakeholders. Unlike the official Codex reports on meetings, Delegate reports give the who, what, where, when and why from the country’s standpoint. Such reports state how the meeting went from the Delegate’s view; what the Delegate learned about the issues and Codex processes; how the country may wish to prepare differently for the next meeting; what workgroups have been formed and joined. Delegate reports should be reviewed by the CCP and then sent to all involved stakeholders. They should capture the highlights and not be more than 2-4 pages long or they will not be read. They should be sent out within a couple of days after the Codex session ends, to be timely.

2.5.5 Whose job is it to communicate?
One of the CCPs jobs is to communicate well enough to stakeholders that they become more actively engaged in and committed to Codex work. All persons engaged in the country’s Codex program have a role in communications. The CCP should specify and delineate those roles in the SOPs so there will be no confusion and assignments are clear. For example, the CCP as the country’s Codex Contact Point, regularly communicates with the Rome Secretariat, has overall responsibilities for communicating with the National Codex Committee, and managing stakeholder communications. The lead person for a particular Codex subsidiary body might, however, handle routine communications with stakeholders interested in that particular committee, with the Chair of that committee, and other delegates to that committee. As the CCP delegates his/her authority for Codex work, communication channels should be designated, but not too rigidly constricted, as Codex work thrives on open communication.

2.6 Empowerment of the Country Codex Workforce

2.6.1 How to obtain commitment from technical staff to do Codex work, in conjunction with their regular duties
Because several ministries are usually involved in Codex work and even those experts within the same ministry as the CCP are commonly not supervised by the CCP, it may be difficult to assure that employees handle Codex work in a timely way. This is an enormous problem, especially in countries just beginning
work in Codex. All countries have experienced this difficulty. Employees that have the expertise to lend to a particular Codex subject have regular jobs that require their attention. Further, Codex activities may require significant review time and collaboration. Global standard setting is often intensive work and may not be work that is valued or rewarded by the expert employee’s supervisor, and, thus, may be done after regular work is accomplished.

This issue is a big challenge for the Member’s CCP. It is another reason why it is important to communicate with senior government officials and to prioritize Committee work that is most important to the country, in order to gain support for Codex activities. Suggestions are to discuss this problem and its remedies with the National Codex Committee to come up with concrete methods to correct. Some countries routinely place Codex work into the job description of the government employee or supervisor, often with a percentage of his/her time that can be spent on Codex work. In this way, Codex becomes an integral part of the job. Countries also place Codex into the formal functions of an office, so that any official that directs the office now and in the future is aware that Codex activities are work that must be done.

2.6.2 The benefits of permanent assignments for work on Codex committees and task forces (whether or not country attendance is possible)

The importance of continuity in Codex representation at committee sessions has already been discussed from a standpoint of familiarity with progress on standards and documents, the building of relationships, and involvement in workgroups. This cannot be over-emphasized. Many countries that change delegates from year to year, sometimes simply to give several persons involved in a Codex paper a chance to travel and see a Codex meeting in progress, may not be aware that new delegates rarely speak at a Codex session as they are too busy trying to keep up with the documents before them and understand what is going on. While it is beneficial to give a number of persons the chance to experience a Codex meeting to learn the procedures and build their comfort in operating within the Codex context, delegates in training should be just that – trainees, not delegates. A country that changes delegates from year to year loses the experience and expertise that the delegate gained at the previous session. Not only is it impossible for the former delegate to pass on to the next all that occurred at the previous session, but a delegate’s job is not to just attend a Codex session. Rather, their job is to work on the products of that Committee throughout the year. Countries that change delegates from year to year rarely achieve the same success with their Codex programs as those who maintain continuity in their delegates. [Countries that have delegations comprised of a number of persons have more flexibility in changing the lead delegate from year to year, if there is general continuity in the members of the delegation.]

The other point that should be made here is that even if the country cannot go to a particular committee from year to year, it is still useful to designate a person(s) as lead for that committee. That person will know it is his/her job to follow the documents, conduct outreach with stakeholders on the importance or non-importance of the standard/text for the country, and prepare timely comments on the documents for submission through the CCP. Permanent assignment of persons to individual committees creates a sense of ownership of the job and responsibility for the Codex work on that committee whether or not the Member considers the committee to be a priority to attend.

2.6.3 Are SOPs or written duties necessary (e.g., who is allowed to communicate with delegates from other countries, the Committee Chair, the Rome Secretariat for the committee)?

Yes, as mentioned in the previous section, SOPs on communications are important, so that roles are clear, but it is also important that communications not be too constrained.
2.6.4 Codex responsibilities should be reflected in personnel job descriptions.
This sends a clear signal to all levels of management and to the employees themselves that Codex work has a high standing in each involved ministry’s program. Additionally, if the Codex Member is also a Member of the WTO, putting Codex functions into personnel job descriptions and into official Organizational functions demonstrates that the country is trying to take an active role in Codex as required by the SPS Agreement.

2.6.5 The relationship between the CCP and Delegates to a Codex committee
The CCP is the contact point and manager for Codex activities, subject to additional oversight a country may give to its National Codex Committee. The actual “delegate” that a country designates for a particular Codex committee must understand the roles they have been delegated to fulfill and how they must interface with the CCP, who has oversight over all Codex activities. Some countries that do not have regular and effective communications between delegates and the CCP or do not use their National Codex Committees effectively, or who change delegates from meeting to meeting, have found it difficult to maintain consistency among various Committee delegates. Member positions should generally be consistent, or at least not conflict, across committee lines. Hence, CCP/Codex Office/National Codex Committee oversight is important and must be covered in SOPs.

2.6.6 Qualifications for the Country Delegate to a Codex Committee and for members of the country delegation
These should also be covered in country SOPs. Generally, a delegate should be selected by the appropriate ministry for the particular committee. The ministry might be suggested by the CCP and confirmed by the National Codex Committee. The person should be selected based on his/her ability to get the work on that committee accomplished, knowledge of the subject matter of that committee, and perhaps the ministry’s support for that person to attend committee sessions (if the CCP and the National Codex Committee consider that committee to be a priority). Generally country delegates to Codex meetings are mid- to senior-level officials, very well informed on Codex and the work of the particular committee, and have attended previous meetings of the committee.

2.6.7 Duties of Country Delegate to a Codex Committee – before the Committee, at the Committee, and upon return home
The duties are simple:
• To represent the country at Committee sessions and lead the delegation, if more than one person attends.
• To prepare for Committee meetings by seeking input from government and non-government stakeholders on issues before the Committee, preparing position papers on topics that will be discussed at the meeting, and preparing draft positions to present at the meeting. All comments and positions must be cleared/sent through the CCP and, if the CCP deems necessary, approved by the National Codex Committee.
• To make sure that he/she is adequately trained on the procedures and character of a Codex meeting, so that they can operate most effectively at the meeting. If this is the first time attending a Codex meeting, take the on-line “Enhancing participation in Codex activities” E-learning training, available at CodexAlimentarius.org. The CCP can describe how to address the Chair, write interventions, and provide other helpful hints, beyond the training.
• To promote the country’s positions on each agenda item at the Committee meeting, by meeting with other delegations (e.g., regional and other groups) and within the session itself. To engage in electronic and physical working groups if the subject is of interest to the Member.
• To ensure a Codex standard/text that is science-based, internationally workable and applicable, and consistent with Members’ needs.
• To provide a delegate’s report of the meeting to the CCP promptly on return from the meeting.

The CCP of a country, in concert with the National Codex Committee, may develop different duties and incorporate them in the country SOPs. The duties presented here are generally those performed by a mature Codex program.

2.7 The Need for High Level Government Support for Codex Activities

2.7.1 “Support” means building understanding of the value of Codex activities to the country at the political level

It is difficult to build support for Codex resources without first having the time and resources to build such support. Nevertheless, the CCP position would not have been established without some level of political support, nor would the country be a Codex Member, a member of FAO or WHO, or perhaps a member of WTO or trying to accede to WTO membership, without political interest in these bodies. Codex was born out of the desires from certain industries and certain governments to trade food fairly and safely. It started from small beginnings. Most governments’ Codex programs have started with a minimalist approach and grown as information on the benefits of Codex involvement are more readily apparent to government, industry and other groups. The CCP can build support through information flow, a positive approach to Codex activities, training efforts, transparency in setting SOPs, and delegation of work.

2.7.2 The CCP does not need to do most of this work to garner support, but must start the ball rolling

By training and delegating work to others, establishing committees, working on strategies with the National Codex Committee, the CCP can begin to build support from the foundation up. Building support, however, cannot be seen as a singular activity. It actually should be integral to all Codex work.

2.7.3 Authority and resources for Codex country activities

The CCP’s position, whether it is a full time position or part of an official’s existing position, should be formalized to include at least the duties contained in the Codex Alimentarius Procedural Manual, the authority provided to carry out those duties, and an understanding of the resources to be supplied by the CCP’s ministry or shared by several ministries.

2.7.4 The connection between Codex and WTO

The CCP should fully understand this connection and capitalize on the relationship between Codex and WTO in justifying resources for the Codex Office and Codex work. Codex is not only food safety but also food trade. Both export and import interests are supported by active involvement in Codex.

2.7.5 Easy methods to gain and build support at senior/political levels

A number of countries have strong Codex programs because their food and agriculture industries have done the work to gain the resources and standing for the Codex functions in government. Some fairly easy methods: 1) Involve industry, consumers and other groups in Codex work and ask for their suggestions on the work itself, how they wish to be involved, and how the Codex program can be improved. 2) Organize outreach meetings with your legislative branch of government, inviting key legislators, to explain what Codex does, its importance to the safety of food in your country, its importance to your country’s exports, its connection to your country’s WTO obligations. 3) Assure a well-trained and senior level National
Codex Committee and, ask them to develop a strategy to build support for Codex. Ask them to help the CCP implement this strategy.

Gaining support and maintaining that support means the Member’s Codex network must reinforce the positive messages about Codex work on a regular basis, and demonstrate that the political support Codex receives is bringing benefits. Complaining about insufficient resources rarely does as much good in building support as indicating what has been done with little and what could be done with a little more.

2.8 The CCP Network in Africa and Beyond

2.8.1 Use of the CCP Network to cover Codex work important to African countries
CCPs should build up their networks with other African CCPs. Despite language differences, differences in priorities, and sheer numbers of Members in the region, it is useful to have contacts with several CCPs to utilize as sounding boards to discuss Codex topics or to mobilize support for positions/changes in Codex documents. CCAFRICA meets every two years. The CCP should make it their business to know the CCPs from key countries and/or African countries.

2.8.2 Strategic planning and leveraging the African workload on Codex documents
The CCP, in consultation with the National Codex Committee, should develop a multiyear (often a 3 year plan) for its Codex activities. The CCAFRICA Strategic Plan should be consulted for its priorities; however, the country Strategic Plan is intended to define specific actions that the CCP and the National Codex Committee want to take to improve their Codex program over the period of time. The plan should not be too lengthy, and it should contain only those items that the country believes are possible to do within the given timeframe. For example, a country 3-year plan might appear as follows:

1. Send 3 representatives to 3 Codex meetings in 2012 (plus the CCP and 2 others to 2012 Regional Coordinating Committee Meeting); 4 representatives to 4 meetings in 2013; and 5 representatives to 5 meetings in 2014 (plus the CCP and one other to 2014 Regional Coordinating Committee Meeting).
3. Conduct outreach meetings with legislature, National Codex Committee and CCP to explain what Codex does. Hold question and answer sessions. Provide for follow up with staffs and individual meetings upon request.
4. Establish list of interested parties for 3 committees in 2012; 1 more in 2013 and 1 more in 2014. Send all documents received from Codex pertaining to these committees to interested party list.
5. Develop draft Codex operational SOPs pertaining to all aspects of Codex operations in concert with the National Codex Committee. Send draft to each ministry lead for comments. Do this before holding training sessions. Once finalized, establish a date two years later to review for changes.
6. Hold meeting(s) of National Codex Committee to discuss importance of continuity of delegates. Determine appropriate mechanisms to designate delegates and assure continuity.

The Strategic Plan should also include at least one element on leveraging country resources with other African countries. If a country cannot attend all Codex meetings, they may still want to send comments on particular documents and ask other countries that are attending and agree with their position to call attention to it to the full Committee. Similarly, your country may be called on to do the same thing. Therefore, it is useful to use the regional coordinating mechanism to call attention to those countries that plan to attend a committee meeting so that regional leveraging of Codex workloads can take place by email in advance of the Committee meeting. A meeting of African Committee attendees should also take place at the meeting site before the Codex session begins to coordinate views, lessen regional conflicts, and enhance support.
2.8.3 Regional representation at Codex sessions – assuring that African countries are heard

CCPs and others at the Regional Coordinating Committee for Africa should emphasize the reasons why regional meetings held before a Codex session begins are so important. CCPs need to assure that its country delegates arrive at all Codex meetings in plenty of time to attend these meetings. At the pre-session regional meetings, each country shares its positions on each agenda item and others can voice their support and concerns. This meeting allows countries to explain the background on their positions, especially if there are controversies, and to plan strategies to ensure that regional views are clearly elucidated and supported by regional members at the actual Codex session. It is also useful to meet with other key delegations before the session begins, and the Regional Coordinator should be encouraged to meet with as many other regions as possible to share information and possibly coordinate strategy. While interventions during the meeting are important, discussion and negotiations prior to the start of the meeting will also shape the outcome.
3. CODEX PROGRAMS IN COUNTRIES

Codex Alimentarius began in 1963 as a somewhat limited activity focused on setting those scientifically-based international food standards that were of most importance to countries and the food industry at the time. The number of countries participating in Codex activities was few and Codex programs in those countries were usually run by a small group(s) of dedicated experts who believed in the value of the Codex mission. As Codex work has expanded to cover a vast array of international standards, guidance and other texts to assist countries in managing food safety and trade, it is ever more important for countries to establish efficient Codex operations and to set their country’s Codex priorities.

The formation of an effective Codex program is not dependent on having substantial funding, recognition and support, although all of these are valuable in strengthening Codex programs. Few country programs began with adequate resources. In general Codex country programs start small and build over time as governments come to understand and see the benefits of Codex work.

The three models that are presented in this section are intended as examples of effective country Codex management programs. The models represent 1) a small, young or developing program – The Foundation Program; 2) a mature, cohesive program – The Network Program; and 3) an advanced, progressive program – The Activist Program. It must be stressed that all these models are examples of effective Codex programs, although budget and human resource levels may differ substantially. Many of the elements of these programs are similar, but the enthusiasm, knowledge, and sense of purpose in implementing the elements are important. Countries should examine these examples, not from the standpoint of copying them verbatim, but to better understand why such systems – whether small or large – are effective in allowing the country a strong role in influencing Codex outcomes.

The Foundation Program

This program is an example of where many countries began their Codex operations on a minimal budget with minimal support and understanding from the senior ministerial level of the value of Codex work to the country, its industry and consumers. Many countries with advanced programs today, stayed at this level for many years.

Elements for an effective program:

- **Codex Manager** (i.e., CCP) – senior level; Codex responsibilities expected to take 50% of his/her time; Codex responsibilities clearly written into his/her job description.
- **Alternate Codex Manager** – also senior level; named as backup to the Codex Manager to work in concert with the CCP and serve as his/her surrogate when necessary; duties take up a smaller percentage of time, but are written into job description.
- **Codex Office and Staff** – equipment and staff adequate to assure efficient operations; electronic distribution of documents, copying, meeting preparations
- **Interministerial Committee** (i.e., NCC) composed of designated representatives from each of the ministries with a stake in Codex activities, e.g., Health, Agriculture, Environment, Commerce, Industry, External Affairs, Consumer Protection, to meet regularly to decide and counsel on important or controversial organizational, technical, and policy matters pertaining to Codex work; day to day work is overseen by the Codex Manager.
- **Assigning permanent delegates for each Codex subsidiary body** – even when a country has decided to concentrate on a handful of Codex subsidiary bodies as high priority committees/task forces that the country wishes to attend, it is advantageous to have the continuity of permanent delegates for all
Codex bodies. The advantages of permanent delegates are many, e.g.,

» Delegation of work, so that the CCP is not responsible for assigning and tracking the review of all Codex documents.

» The delegate knows that he/she is accountable for the timely review of documents for that subsidiary body (even though that delegate may involve many others in the review).

» Delegates enable a ready source of knowledge on the progress of the documents in each subsidiary body and familiarity with the changes that occur as the documents go through the step procedure. Thus, the delegates are valuable to the CCP in deciding the priority of each document to the country and whether the country should comment on it. In other words, although the subsidiary body may not be considered high priority, one of its documents may be of great interest to the country.

» Permanent delegates who attend Codex sessions provide continuity on subject matter and can build relationships with the committee chair and other country delegates, which can make an enormous difference in getting country views understood.

Permanent delegates should 1) have appropriate position and training for the pertinent Codex body, and 2) have their Codex responsibilities imbedded in their job descriptions.

• SOPs – Standard Operating Procedures may be fairly basic, e.g., describing the respective roles of the CCP, National Codex Committee, and Delegates throughout the year, including the importance of outreach and timely comments on documents.

• Outreach to stakeholders and senior government officials – industry, consumer groups and academe may be interested parties with regard to particular documents and want to contribute comments, so it is important to involve them. This can be done committee by committee (by the permanent delegate) and also more generally by the CCP/Codex Manager. Legislators and ministerial officials need to understand the value of the country’s participation in Codex. Some newsletters or briefings should be organized to advertise the benefits of the work the country has accomplished in Codex. This can be done on a small scale as time permits, but is necessary if the Codex program is to get the support it needs. The non-government stakeholders can also be invaluable in working with legislators to build interest in Codex work.

• A written strategic plan – when the country is in the early stages of building its Codex program, these are the most important years for having a strategic plan for growth. Nevertheless, highly advanced Codex programs usually develop such plans, as well, as they set priorities for action and, thus, can be used as touchstones as work progresses.

The Network Program

In smaller or younger Codex programs, as exemplified by The Foundation Program above, the country is learning how its country can establish Codex operations to be most effective. This next example, The Network Program, assumes that the country has

• established the foundational program and it is running smoothly,

• educated a Codex workforce and refined its SOPs so that all components of the program understand their functions,

• assured that stakeholders routinely have input to Codex standards and texts and consider themselves to be part of the Codex standard-setting process,

• conducted sufficient outreach to senior ministerial officials and legislators so they are aware of the purpose and value of Codex standards and the relationship between Codex and WTO, and

• designated a permanent CCP and Codex office, and at least permanent delegates to the Codex subsidiary bodies the country considers to be of high priority.
This example focuses on the importance of networking, which requires continuing working relationships and takes Codex programmatic expertise to the next level.

The CCP should develop close relationships with CCPs from other countries in the region or even outside that share the same language and perhaps similar goals. This group of CCPs can serve as a network to contact individually for views on confusing or controversial Codex activities. This network can be invaluable in saving time, learning from each other on tips to improve Codex operations and simply commiserating on mutual difficulties. These relationships build trust. Further, the CCP network will be useful in helping individual country delegates establish relationships with delegates from the same countries. The CCP should also have a relationship with the Codex Rome Secretariat to the extent that the CCP knows some of the members and feels comfortable sending the occasional email or phone call to ask a question. The CCP should strongly encourage the country delegates to the subsidiary bodies to also set up networks.

The country delegates to each subsidiary body (or at least each body considered as high priority to the country) should be in contact with lead delegates to the subsidiary body from other countries. It may be that delegates feel most comfortable to establish relationships with 2-3 countries in the region, but to be most effective, it is useful to have delegate contacts from several regions around the world. A country's Codex program cannot thrive in a vacuum of information regarding how other countries may view a particular Codex issue/document. Thus, a delegate should learn other countries' viewpoints and thinking on document changes. These contacts can take place throughout the year as documents and physical and electronic workgroups progress. It is also useful to discuss all the documents of a subsidiary body with another country delegate or delegation prior to attending a Codex session to determine whether the other country may wish to support your country's position at the session or you support theirs. These discussions can be conducted with individual countries or in a regional setting in advance of the session, and are very useful when arranged at the Codex meeting venue immediately preceding the start of the Codex session. At this point, countries have read other countries comments and can refine their approaches for prioritizing their points and getting their most important comments heard.

Networking within countries, regions, and globally on Codex matters makes the difference between a country that is somewhat insular in its approach to Codex standard setting to a country that is cooperating with the global community in setting a global standard or text.

**The Activist Program**

This example combines the elements of the programs exemplified above and emphasizes several additional elements.

First, the CCP, the members of the National Codex Committee, and all designated delegates should be working for the same goals, learning from each other’s experience in Codex, and, generally, working as efficiently as possible as members of the country’s Codex team. For this reason, it is a hallmark of advanced Codex programs that its players come together to educate each other on improving their performance in Codex. This can include problem solving exercises in developing comments on Codex documents, suggestions for dealing with difficult situations in a Codex session, cultural training to understand cultural differences and approaches, and updates on cross-cutting Codex issues. In advanced Codex programs, the persons involved in Codex and their bosses accept the importance of Codex and the need to give it the attention it deserves, although the majority of the players have regular jobs, too. The CCP may, and probably should, be full-time, but, in any case, the CCP is a true manager with most of the work pushed down to the delegate level. The CCP focuses on the higher level issues such as reporting to senior ministerial officials.
An Activist Program is forward-looking. For example, the country may be considering what new work Codex should take on, what kind of problems might be expected with their country position and what options might be acceptable as an alternative position, should the country consider chairing a physical or electronic working group to advance a document. These countries may also consider hosting a Codex subsidiary body.
APPENDIX I

This list of Codex Contact Point was taken from the Codex Alimentarius website and should be downloaded periodically by users of this manual to obtain updates of CCP email addresses. It may be found at http://www.codexalimentarius.org/members-observers/members/en/?no_cache=1

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