An introduction to Codex and basic principles of standards development (Code of Good Practice for standards development)

at

National Training Workshop: “Strengthening Food Standard Setting and participation in Codex activities in Cambodia

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Coverage

• Introducing Codex
• Procedures and principles for elaboration of Codex texts
• Vision, strategic goals and core values of Codex strategic plan 2014-19
• TBT Code of good practice for standards development
• Some recommendations for standards development in countries
Codex Alimentarius Commission

• An Intergovernmental body
• Founded in 1962 to implement the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme – jointly hosted by FAO & WHO (1st session 1963)
• Programme Objectives
  ➢ protect the health of consumers
  ➢ ensure fair practices in international food trade
  ➢ coordinate all food standards work at the international level
• Membership - 186 countries + 1 member org (EU) – representing 99% of world population
• Observers: 220 international organizations:- 50 IGOs, 154 NGOs, 16 UN (representing scientific, industry, trade, consumers)
• Currently meets annually
• Work through subsidiary bodies (Committees and Task Forces)
Functions of Codex

• Develops harmonised international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice (for consumers health and fair trade practices)

• Promotes coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

• Determinates the priorities, initiates the preparation of standards, once finalized after consultation with the national Governments, it publishes them. Also amends standards in the light of latest developments.
The Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Alimentarius

- **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** = body mandated to develop Codex standards, guidelines & other recommendations

- **Codex alimentarius** in Latin means food code

- It is a collection of food standards, guidelines and related texts ie the documentation developed by the CAC

To obtain Codex texts, visit Codex homepage at: [http://www.codexalimentarius.org/standards/en/](http://www.codexalimentarius.org/standards/en/)
Codex Documentation

• Standards – relate to product characteristics
• Codes of Practice – hygiene codes (define practices)
• Guidelines – 2 categories
  ➢ Principles that set out policies in certain key areas
  ➢ Guidelines for interpretation of these principles
Procedural manual (21st edition)

- is intended to help Member Governments participate effectively in the work of the joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.
- Contains
  - Statues of CAC
  - Rules of Procedure
  - Additional procedures for the elaboration of Codex standards & related texts, basic definitions and guidelines for the operation of CAC & its subsidiary bodies (Codex committees).
Principles of Codex elaboration
Procedure

• Inclusiveness
  ➢ Step by step (8-step)
  ➢ Broad participation by all members interested
  ➢ Consensus - every member included - every members concerns considered before decision taken

• Transparency- Open discussion and communication, Free to all interested

• Science-based & timely available scientific advice

• Collaboration

• Objectives of consumer health protection and fair trade practice

• Standards applicable globally
Standards Development Procedure

• **Strategic planning** based on criteria for establishing work priorities

• **Proposal submitted** by Committee or Member (format)

• **Critical review** of proposal (EC & subsidiary body)

• **8-step** or accelerated **5-step** process

• **Scientific advice**, as needed
Elaboration procedures (8-step normal)

- Step 1: Commission decides to elaborate a standard & assigns work to a committee.
- Step 2: Secretariat arranges preparation of proposed draft standard.
- Step 3: Proposed draft standard sent to governments & Int orgs for comments.
- Step 4: Secretariat forwards comments to committee.
- Step 5: Proposed draft standard is send to commission for adoption as a draft standard.
- Step 6: Draft standard send to government & international organization for comments.
- Step 7: Secretariat forwards comments to committee.
- Step 8: Draft standard is submitted through commission for adoption as a Codex Standard.
Scientific basis for Codex work - Risk Assessment Bodies

- Codex committees, when developing standards, rely on independent scientific advice provided by expert bodies organized by FAO/WHO.

Countries can request, access and contribute data to this process.
Scientific Advice for Standard Setting

Based on the Core Principles

The Core principles

- **Soundness** – scientific excellence (expert/process)
- **Responsibility** – efficiency & accountability
- **Objectivity** – neutrality & independence of advice (expert/advice)
- **Fairness** – ethical conduct (minority views, selection of experts)
- **Transparency** – broad access to information – comprehensive, understandable, timely – effective communication with risk managers & external stakeholders
- **Inclusiveness** – a multidisciplinary & global approach, participation of different stakeholders
Selection of Experts

**Membership**

- **Transparent** process, depends on subject matter, based on **scientific credentials** of the candidates, roster

  - Open call for experts – **Declaration of interests** required

**Independent experts are selected according to following criteria:**

- relevant scientific and technical excellence
- diversity and complementarity of scientific backgrounds
- geographical and gender balance
• **Vision:** The CAC should be the **pre-eminent international food standards –setting body** to protect the health of the consumers & ensure fair practices in the food trade

• **Core values:** collaboration, inclusiveness, consensus, transparency

• **Strategic goals:** 4
  1) Establish international food standards - current & emerging food issues
  2) Ensure application of RA principles in development of Codex standards
  3) Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex members
  4) Implement effective & efficient work management systems/ practices

• **Objectives & work plans**- activities, milestones, measurable indicators
Open to acceptance by any standardizing body, whether a government body (central/ local), or a non-governmental body; to any regional standardizing body - governmental (one or more members of which are Members of the WTO) and non-governmental.

NSBs to follow principles & rules similar for mandatory standards ie base on & participate in international standards formulation, apply on a MFN basis, National Treatment Principle, Least Trade Restrictive
Code of Good Practice for Standards Development – Substantive provisions (TBT)

• Harmonization
  - use **international standards as a basis** for the standards it develops
  - **play a full part**, within the limits of its resources, **in the preparation of international standards** by relevant international standardizing bodies for subject matter for which it either has adopted, or expects to adopt, standards.
  - **Single delegation** to represent all standardization bodies of country in a particular international standardization activity

• Avoidance of duplication or overlap
  - between standardizing bodies in a country
  - every effort to achieve a **national consensus** on the standards they develop.
  - **regional standardizing body** to make every effort to avoid duplication/ overlap with the work of relevant international standardizing bodies.
Code of Good Practice for Standards Development - Substantive provisions (TBT)

- Specify requirements in terms of performance rather than design or descriptive characteristics
- 6-monthly programme of work published
  - containing its name and address, the standards it is currently preparing (decision has been taken to develop a standard until that standard has been adopted) and the standards adopted in preceding period
- 60 days for comments - may be shortened in cases where urgent problems of safety, health or environment.
- Provide copy to interested party - Any fees charged shall be the same for foreign and domestic parties (plus delivery cost)
- Take comments into account respond and explain deviation
- Promptly published (once adopted)
Codex outputs

• Standards - 212
• Codes of Practice - 49
• Guidelines - 70
• Maximum limits, maximum levels - 1
• Miscellaneous – 4

Total - 336

All published in Codex Alimentarius

Website: http://www.codexalimentarius.org/standards/en/
Codex Outputs - Documentation

- Commodity standards – 186
- Commodity related texts – 46
- Food labeling – 9
- Food Hygiene – 5
- Food safety risk assessments – 3
- Sampling and analysis – 15
- Inspection and Certification procedures – 8
- Animal food production – 6
- Contaminants in foods (max levels, detection & prevention) – 12
- Max limit for pesticide residues – 2930; covering 218 pesticides
- Limits of veterinary drug residues – 441, covering 49 vet drugs
- Food additives provisions – 1112, covering 292 food additives
- Food additives related texts – 7
- Regional Guidelines - 3

 ✓ All Codex texts are available from the List of standards of Codex website
 ✓ The numerical Codex standards for food additives, veterinary drugs maximum residue levels & pesticide maximum residue levels, can also be accessed via databases that facilitate their use.
Countries link to Codex - National Codex Contact Points

- Act as a link between the Codex Secretariat and the member country
- Coordinate all Codex work in their own country
- Receive all Codex texts, working documents for meetings and ensure their circulation within country
- Send comments on Codex documents to the Secretariat
- Work in close cooperation with NCCs
- Act as liaison point between food industry, consumers, traders and all concerned to ensure that comments based on appropriate balance of policy and technical advice
In a nutshell – Principles/ Good Practice for Standards Development

• Harmonization
• Applicable nationally - country-wide
• Avoid duplication/ overlap
• Establish a programme of work – for each organization (6 monthly)
• Consensus
• Science-based
• Collaborative – membership to represent varied stakeholders
• Transparency – 60 days for comments, emergency standards may be less
• Take comments into account – explain if cannot
• Specify requirements in terms of safety rather than compositional or descriptive characteristics
• provide copy to interested party - Any fees charged shall be the same for foreign and domestic parties (plus delivery cost)
• promptly publish (once adopted)
THANK YOU

Welcome Questions!