



CODEX CAPSULE 9

Develop codex standard

In this session we will review once again how Codex Standards are initiated.

New work may be proposed by any member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, preferably within the Committee where that new Codex text, Standard, guideline or Code of Practice is to be developed.

Generally new work get analyzed through the development of a discussion paper that includes a review of the relevance of that new work against the criteria for the establishment of work priorities.

This would lead to the development of a Project Document,

The Project Document is the basis of the discussion that generally takes place at Codex Committees first, suggesting to start the work, then at the Codex Executive Committee or CCEXEC, to envisage such new work. The discussion that takes place at the Executive Committee is what we call the critical review

Once the critical review is carried out and a favorable recommendation is obtained from the Executive Committee then supported by an agreement at the commission level, the step process may start.

Let us discuss again the criteria to establish work priorities.

The criteria against which the justification of new work is made includes:

- First, the consideration that the new text is very much in line with the Codex Mandate, meaning: the protection of consumer's health and enabling fair practices in the food trade.
- Second, whether the new work is really trying to address an issue of importance at the Global or regional level (for regional standards or texts). The idea is not to start new work in the form of a proposed solution, where the problem is not considered important.
- Third, to ensure that this work does not duplicate work done under other forums, or if there is overlap, to consider leveraging the work done by other international standardization forums. The rationale: sometimes a codex standard is needed, even if other standardization bodies at the international level worked on the same issue because of the nature of Codex and its inclusive character. If this was in fact the case, it is important to consider taking stock of the work already done and leverage its results.
- Fourth, it is important to consider that the new work will be addressing food commodities that are important to international trade, meaning that the volume of products traded is considered of importance, and therefore the standard or the Codex text will be useful.
- Fifth: It is important to analyze the trade problems that the proposed text would address and the possible trade barriers it would help alleviate.

This Project Document is the basis of the analysis of the relevance and importance of any new work under Codex, under the process called the “Critical Review”.

The project document must contain information that presents the new work and offer all the justifications needed for its importance.

The project document must contain paragraphs that speak to:

- the purpose and the scope of the standard.
- the relevance of the standard and its timeliness – meaning that this is right time for its development.
- the main aspects that the standard intends to cover.
- then follows an attempt to assess the proposal in the document itself against the criteria of the Critical Review – meaning the criteria to establish new work priorities.
- We also need to have information on the possible relationship between the new work or the new codex texts and others that have already been developed and adopted.
- the document needs to identify whether scientific advice is needed and whether it has been made available through the advisory bodies of Codex.
- The document also should mention if any additional support may be needed from external bodies, such as ISO, AOAC or any other organization.
- the way this new work would help serve the objectives of Codex and align with the Strategic plan of Codex under way, needs also to be addressed in the document.
- Finally, a proposed timeline needs to be offered as to the way Codex and its subsidiary body or bodies intends to complete the work – with a proposed date for the possible adoption of the standard or text by the Commission.

- The Critical Review is an important task conducted by the Codex Executive Committee on behalf of Codex and where advice is developed for the Commission.
- It is through this Critical Review that new work gets proposed and examined. The revision of standards also gets considered here.
- One of the important criteria to be considered for this phase is whether the proposed work addresses the priorities of developing countries.
- The Critical Review also examines whether a new subsidiary body needs to be convened, in particular an Adhoc Intergovernmental Taskforce, or even a new committee, their creation, their adjournment and their possible dissolution, if required.
- The reliance on scientific advice also gets discussed and is generally prioritized as part of this process

Conclusion

Once the critical review is complete and favorable, the Commission would review the recommendation made by CCEXEC and would support the start of the new work under the leadership of the Committee that proposed it.

New work would then be undertaken following the step process