



# DEVELOPING NATIONAL POSITIONS

# Steps to Develop a National Position

Many countries have a policy for the head delegate to coordinate the development of the national position relevant to the Committee.

There are **five common basic steps** in the development of a national position:

- ✓ 1. Circulate working documents.
- ✓ 2. Solicit input from stakeholders.
- ✓ 3. Draft a position.
- ✓ 4. Obtain national endorsement of the position.
- ✓ 5. Where appropriate, submit written comments.



# 1. Circulate Working Documents

The **Codex Contact Point (CCP)** is the focal point for all Codex documentation upon which a national position will be based.

The CCP may proceed as follows:

1. **Receives working documents from the Codex Secretariat in Rome;**
2. **Determines whether written comments are being requested;**
3. **Circulates working documents for review and comment;**
4. **Refers comments received to the individual responsible for drafting the position.**



## 2. Solicit Stakeholder Input

**Consultation is a core activity of the CCP**

✓ **In order to facilitate consultation and avoid overwhelming stakeholders with unwanted documentation, it is the responsibility of the CCP:**

- to identify which groups are interested in what issues; and
- to determine the mechanism for consultation.

## 2. Solicit Stakeholder Input – A Coordination Mechanism

Countries are free to choose their own national coordination mechanism.

**To facilitate the consultation process and to ease some of the workload of the Codex Contact Point, many countries have established a National Codex Committee (NCC) or an equivalent structure.**



# 3. Draft Position – Why?

**Preparing a national position is a collaborative effort. The first step is to prepare an initial draft.**

National positions are prepared for **two main purposes**:

- 1. To enable the country delegation to present the position of their country during the relevant Codex meeting;**
  - 2. To form the basis of written comments that will be provided to the Codex Secretariat (or host country secretariat) in response to a request for written comments.**
- Usually written comments submitted to Codex are in response to a specific **Circular letter** which highlights a standard or ongoing discussions.

# 3. Draft Position – How?

The following are some **general criteria** that should be taken into account when developing a country position on Codex issues:

**Drafting a position is not done in isolation – it should be done in consultation with all interested parties.**

**Attempts should be made to understand the history of an agenda item so developing a position can be done within that context.**

**When preparing national positions, make sure they are scientifically sound, and if available and relevant, supported by risk assessment data.**

**Positions promoted internationally should be consistent with a country's national policies.**

# 4. Obtain National Endorsement

- ✓ **The draft may then be shared again with other interested parties (e.g. other members of the country's delegation if applicable), who provide their final input.**
- ✓ The final version should receive a **final review** at an appropriate level of government, so that it can be **endorsed as an official country position.**
- ✓ **In some countries,** the National Codex Committee can perform this function.





# 5. Establish Regional Liaison / Networking

**It is the function of the CCP to submit any written comments to the Codex Secretariat in Rome or the applicable host country secretariat.**

As a general rule, it is important that a country consider submitting written comments on issues identified as priority issues during the development of the national position.



**Written comments should be prepared and sent only when necessary and useful.**

# Written Comments and National Position – Format

When preparing **national positions**, there are some **basic components** that need to be incorporated:

- Name of the committee and identification of the session;
- Identification of the agenda item, number and reference documents;
- Background information to enable the reader to put the position in context;
- Issues and discussion;
- A statement of the national position;
- A rationale for the national position.

**A country usually needs to submit written comments on a limited number of items, only when necessary and if comments are solicited.**

# Written Comments and National Position – Format

## **It is important to make a distinction between:**

- National positions that are intended to be used by the head delegate attending a committee session and not intended to be shared;
- Written comments intended for submission to the Codex Secretariat in Rome for consideration of a committee.



**Countries are strongly encouraged to send the written comments from the National CCP.**

# Importance of Developing A National Strategy

## National Codex activities can range from:

- Ensuring your country's effective representation at Codex meetings;
- Ensuring effective national consultation and communication; and
- Preparing national positions and written comments.

An approach being followed by some countries is to develop a national strategy to focus attention on priority matters and facilitate the preparation of a consistent position on different matters.



# Codex Contact Point – Core Functions

It is useful to have a **checklist for the preparation and promotion of national positions at Codex sessions.**

**The checklist provides guidance to facilitate the use of a structured approach by countries in the preparation and promotion of national positions.**



