



SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

The 25th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Import And Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS25)

31 May – 8 June, 2021

*MENA Codex Colloquium
12-14 September 2021*

- ❑ CCFICS 25th session: 31st May – 8 June 2021 (virtual meeting).
- ❑ Several Key Agenda Items Progressed:
 - Principles and Guidelines for the Assessment and Use of Voluntary Third-Party Assurance Programs (vTPA) – Recommended for Adoption at step 8.
 - Guidance on Paperless Use of Electronic Certificates – Recommended for Adoption at Step 8.
- ❑ Codex text related to “Recognition and Maintenance of Equivalence” – did not progress enough and was returned to steps 2/3 - continued drafting.
- ❑ Agreement of new work related to Food Fraud – new eWG formed.
- ❑ New areas of interest for CCFICS discussed: Use of (Information Communication Tools) ICT in food inspection/import/export management, Traceability, etc.



Agenda Item 4

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Principles and Guidelines for the Assessment and Use of Voluntary Third-Party Assurance (vTPA) Programs – Recommended for Adoption at Step 8

*ADOPTED WITH A CLEAR CONSENSUS
SUPPORT BEING PROVIDED TO PILOT INITIATIVES*

Outputs and Relevance to the Region

- ❑ CCFICS24 (2018) recommended adoption of the proposed draft principles and guidelines for the assessment and use of voluntary Third Party Assurance (vTPA) programs to CAC42 (2019).
- ❑ Endorsed by CAC42, adopted text at Step 5; Electronic working group co-chaired by UK, Canada and Mexico addressed outstanding issues.
- ❑ Structured approach to assess and use information generated for vTPA programs by food competent authorities – **Possible integration in food regulatory systems of the Region.**
 - Advantages:
 - Access to vTPA data
 - Allows to “Risk profile” FBOs and Prioritize resources
 - Considerations:
 - Clear rules of engagement
 - Integrity and competency of vTPA system used
 - Not favoring a program versus another
 - Requirements of the vTPA to be used in the context of regulatory compliance may not “trump” the overall regulatory measures

Agenda Item 5

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Guidance on Paperless Use of Electronic Certificates (Revision of the Guidelines for Design, Production, Issuance and Use of Generic Official Certificates – CXG 38-2001) – Recommended for Adoption at Step 5/8

- ☐ *Some delegations expressed concern for such rapid advancement:*
 - *Kenya, Indonesia, Malaysia, Dominican Republic.*
- ☐ *Opportunity for the Region to Pilot such approaches as part of modernization of inspection systems (e-import/export control):*
 - *Experience may be gathered from similar pilots for plant health certificates (IPPC guidance).*
- ☐ *Consideration to be made in conjunction with efforts towards establishing single window approaches for food import/export control.*

Agenda Item 6

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Proposed Draft Guidelines on Recognition and Maintenance of Equivalence of National Food Control Systems (NFCS) –

Recommended to Return to Step 2 (Drafting) and 3 (Comments)

- ☐ *No Consensus was achieved on advancing the document further (i.e. to Step 5):*
 - *Articulation of WTO SPS / TBT provisions related to equivalence assessment.*
 - *Need to reflect a better balance between importing and exporting countries responsibilities.*
- ☐ *eWG to be re-initiated, chaired by NZ and co-chaired by the US and Kenya, working in English – to continue drafting.*
- ☐ *Expected completion CCFICS26 (more flexibility in timelines).*

Additional Analysis and Considerations for the Region⁷

- ❑ Expected text is meant to complement to relevant Codex texts on import, export, inspection and certification:
 - CXG 26-1997, CXG 34-1999, CXG 53-2003, CXG 82-2013 and CXG 89-2016.
- ❑ Work started in 2017 (CCFICS23/CAC40).
- ❑ Drafting process was carried out through a working group chaired by NZ, supported by the US and Chile with various rounds of comments 2018-2021.
- ❑ Opportunity for the Region to further contribute to the drafting process – and to consider adopting similar measures (recognition of equivalence) in national regulatory provisions.

New Areas of Work ... Opportunities

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- ❑ Area related to Food Fraud to move forward with a project document on the development of “guidance on the prevention and control of food fraud” - to be submitted to CAC44 for approval.
- ❑ eWG chaired by the USA, and co-chaired by China, the EU, Iran and the UK, working in English and Spanish.
- ❑ Other emerging issues (possible areas of new work:
 - Use of Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) tools in food regulatory measures and in particular in import/export control ring issues – India volunteered to develop discussion paper.
 - Traceability management and product tracing – eWG chaired by the US – co-chaired by the UK: Principles of Traceability / Product Tracing as a Tool within Food Inspection and Certification System (CXG60-2006).
 - “Use of Remote Audit and Verification in Regulatory Frameworks” – eWG chaired by Australia and co-chaired by Canada and Singapore.

