



GLOBAL FOOD REGULATORY
SCIENCE SOCIETY



A r a b
C O D E X

Enhancing Participation in Codex Activities

Developing National Positions

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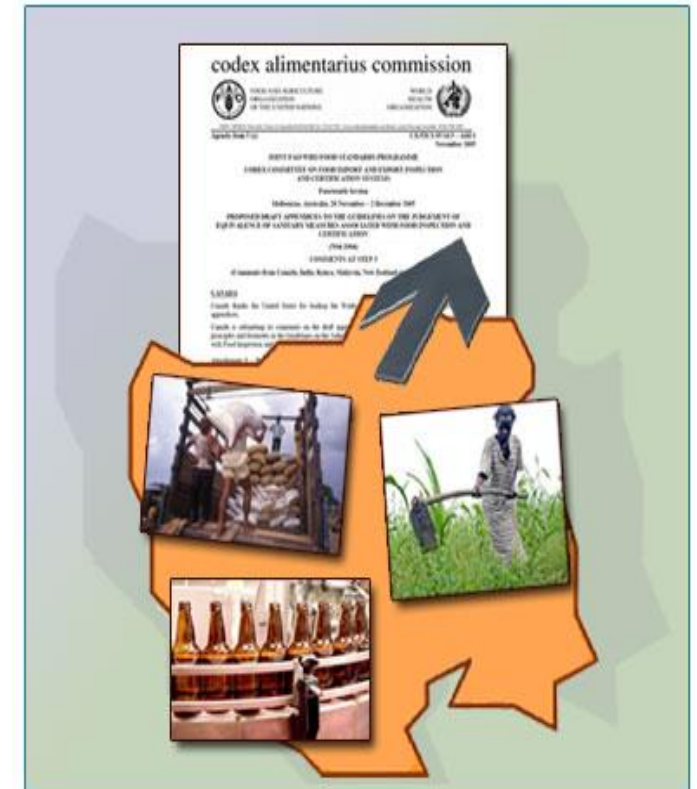
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Steps to Develop a National Position

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.



2. Solicit Stakeholder Input – A Coordination Mechanism

The national organizations with responsibility to develop the consultation mechanism may consult these **guidance documents** available online:

- Regional Guidelines for Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees (Near East Region)
www.codexalimentarius.net/download/standards/10304/cxg_058e.pdf
- African Regional Guidelines for Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees
www.codexalimentarius.net/download/standards/10289/cxg_043e.pdf
- Asian Regional Guidelines for National Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees
www.codexalimentarius.net/download/standards/10302/cxg_057e.pdf

Regardless of the mechanism established, there are various **stakeholder groups that should be consulted on Codex issues**, and included in the NCC, if the latter is the selected mechanism.



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.

Positions are developed accounting for:

•Whether the proposed Codex text fulfils the requirements of Elaboration of Codex texts:

- Was it supported by a Scientific Assessment from Codex Expert Bodies ?
- Was it developed with Due Process ?
- Did it account for the various positions / considerations (that are relevant to the Global / Regional context) ?

•What will be the impacts of the Standard on National Rules / Regulations ?



Opposition to a Codex Standard is not to based on differences with national standards

Positions Adopted During Deliberations... Codex Standard ¹⁶

- ❑ Ascertain a well motivated position is heard / considered
- ❑ Supporting the overall Standard Development Process : Dual Role
 - A representative for a country
 - A member of the Codex Community
- ❑ When Do we Record a Reservation ?
 - Generally – when an opinion is formed that the standard does not fulfil some requirements, yet there is interest in it by the broader codex community
 - Or as a result of a National Policy
- ❑ **Reservations should not be motivated by differences between the Proposed Standard and National Standards**
- ❑ Reservations have no values /impact of the validity of the Standard



Opening the Discussions



