



Codex Roundtable for the South West Pacific

Proposed Activities for 2023-24

The first meeting of Southwest Pacific Codex Contact Points, organized as part of the South-West Pacific Codex Initiative, and held in Auckland, New-Zealand **from 7-9 November 2022**, resulted in a series of observations and recommendations as to future areas of investment to strengthen Codex capacities in the region, including the underpinning food regulatory capacity of countries of the region.

Some of the recommendations of future codex capacity building interventions reached by the meeting participants included:

- ❖ Structuring participation in Codex committees between countries of the region, such that the charge to contribute to a given priority committee would be covered by one or two countries on behalf of all others, while ensuring sufficient coordination and information exchange,
- ❖ The creation of pools of experts in various areas of food risk analysis, which could be called upon to support competent authorities in the region to prepare for Codex technical discussions,
- ❖ The creation of a network of food laboratories in the region, to stimulate experience-sharing and collaborative efforts of data generation. This network could be connected to the AOAC INTERNATIONAL, the reference organization in food analytical standardization,

- ❖ The adoption of alternative approaches for data collection, including data mining of published information in the peer reviewed scientific literature,
- ❖ The development of a sustainable repository for data which could be in the form of individual / shared databases where such data would be stored and analyzed / used,
- ❖ The development of a collaborative initiative amongst the food analytical and the risk assessment community in the region to support the generation of data pertaining to the determination of Scopolotin in Noni juice,
- ❖ The prioritization of traditional / indigenous foods that can be candidates for the development of regional standards, with the identification of a pipeline for such products,
- ❖ The development of synergies with other capacity building programs funded through other initiatives, including by the FAO and WHO, and in particular the Codex Trust Fund.

These recommendations were further discussed and endorsed at the last meeting of CCNASWP (CCNASWP16) in Fiji, in Jan/Feb 2023.

The following are proposed activities that would enable to address some these recommendations for the period 2023-24:

1. Establish a Compendium of food regulatory authorities in the South-West Pacific:

The compendium will help map the division of food (safety) regulatory responsibilities and the identification of key players of food regulatory functions in the SWP.

The compendium will also include key contact points for each competent authority in charge of these regulatory functions.

The compendium should be maintained on a regular basis to consider changes in food regulatory functions and decisions.

This compendium would reside in an on-line Platform accessible to all members of the SWP food regulatory community and beyond.

2. Develop and deliver tailored Codex training and capacity building activities using both on-line and in Person training:

This program will leverage training material developed by FAO/WHO and the Codex Secretariat and will result in publicly available and accessible Codex training material, supported with audio-visual tools (video capsules, documents, readings and self-assessments). The program will focus on Codex structure and operations and will aim to enable a more informed participation of SWP Codex delegations in priority Codex meetings.

This material can serve as on-boarding material for new members of the Codex community in the SWP.

The training will also aim to create a roster of trainers, enabling to apply the Train the Trainer Approach (ToT).

3. Promote participation to key codex committees with shared resources:

This activity will aim to implement the recommendation of sharing resources between SWP codex programs/delegations for the preparation and the designation of delegates to priority codex committees amongst SWP Codex teams.

This approach will also aim to create more specialized competencies in the designated country/ countries to support the contribution and participation to given Codex committees.

4. Map food laboratory activities and create a network under the AOAC banner:

This activity will be linked to Activity 1 and aims to identify the food laboratory capacity in the SWP supporting food regulatory programs.

This activity will also aim to create a SWP food laboratory network that can be further structured in the form of a section of AOAC INTERNATIONAL.

A gap analysis will be carried out to identify priorities of investment in food laboratory capacity and competencies in the region.

5. Organize a Food Regulatory Science / Food Risk Analysis training workshop:

This activity will contribute to the continued investment in enhancing the underlying food regulatory capacity in the SWP that supports more effective participation to Codex activities.

A workshop, planned on the margin of a meeting of SWP codex contact points and food competent authorities could be organized in a hybrid format, to review the foundations of food regulatory programs and stimulate a discussion on the identification and prioritization of areas of investment in food regulatory science capacity in the region.

This discussion may also further support efforts of food regulatory harmonization.

In addition to the 5 activities identified above, some targeted activities will be carried out in relation with the recommendations and follow-up actions stemming from CCNASWP16.

These activities include:

- A. Review of methods and adoption of standardized analytical protocols for active substances in Noni juice e.g., Scopolotin to support the finalization of the regional codex standard,
- B. Support generation and review of data related to occurrence levels of Scopolotin, to enable submission to JECFA.