

ANALYSIS OF AGENDA ITEMS AND PREPARATION FOR THE 46th SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Rome - 27 November - 2 December 2023

Objectives

This document offers a review and analysis of the agenda items planned for discussion at the 46th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, scheduled to take place physically in Rome, Italy from 27 November to 2 December 2023.

The document is intended for possible use by the Codex communities of practice promoted by the Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFORSS) as part of their contribution to enhancing awareness and supporting effective participation in international standard setting meetings (Codex meetings) by representatives from members and observers.

The analysis provided in this document offers a factual review of a specific Agenda Item:

Agenda item 9: New Food Sources and Production Systems

The analysis offers a background on the item and a discussion of some considerations that may support the development of national / regional positions.

This analysis is indicative in nature and does not represent an official position of the organization, its membership or its management.

Overall Background on the Agenda Item

Document Number: CX/CAC46XXXX

At the time of development of this document (3 November 2023), the documents associated with this agenda item have not been published.

- ❖ CAC45 (REP22/CAC, paragraphs 23-31) considered the report of the CCEXEC subcommittee on new food sources and production systems (NFPS) (CX/EXEC 22/83/4).
- ❖ The topic was discussed at CAC44, CCEXEC82 and CCEXEC83 and the following considerations emerged:
 - The existing mechanisms within Codex **are sufficient** to address any new work proposals on NFPS. Codex Members should submit new work proposals providing Codex with concrete subjects on which working mechanisms could be further considered.
 - Given the complexity and diversity of NFPS and to be proactive in preparing for the future of Codex, further discussions on NFPS could be facilitated in an **electronic working group (EWG)** to be established under the Commission;

While CAC45 recognized the importance of Codex working in a flexible and timely manner to consider NFPS as an important topic in the development of international standards aimed at protecting consumer health and ensuring fair practices in the food trade **there was no agreement on the best way forward or the need for a new cross-cutting coordination mechanism to address codex work on NFPS.**

Further input was sought from Members and Observers to identify possible issues related to NFPS that the current structure and procedures could not address and options to address them for discussion at CAC46.

The questions posed included:

- ❖ The possible identification of specific NFPS topics that require the development of a Codex standard, guideline or code of practice, but cannot be developed using the current Codex standard-setting structure and procedures,
- ❖ The possible outline of the challenges/inadequacies that may hamper the current system from addressing the identified specific NFPS topics, and possible approaches to address these.
- ❖ The possible identification of any topics related to NFPS for consideration by Codex in short to medium term

Considerations

- ❖ It is difficult to consider a single mechanism for standardizing new technologies, or new food applications, many of which are still in the research and development stage and where there is limited experience of food regulators with regards to the regulatory approaches to be pursued to manage them,
- ❖ Experience needs to be further developed to understand the impact of specific NFPS in relation with potential food safety, regulatory, labelling, nutritional, and quality issues.
- ❖ Many of issues related to NFPS may still be addressed by the standing general subject committees, to respond to identified food safety or fair-trade issues pertaining to some applications of NFPS, consistent with their terms of reference. Some examples to mention, the development of a discussion paper under CCCF in relation with the management of migration of substances from packaging material and another discussion paper submitted by Canada and the United States related to the development of Guidelines including General Principles for the nutritional composition of Foods and Beverages made from Plant-based and other alternative Protein Sources. (The paper was discussed at the 43rd Session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Food for Special Dietary Uses, CCNFSU43, in March 2023)
- ❖ In some specific situations, it may be advised to solicit from the Commission the creation of a dedicated Working Group that could address proposals which are deemed outside of the terms of reference of existing Codex structures e.g.,
 - The development of guidance on Novel Food Regulatory Frameworks for consideration by National Regulators.
 - Development of standards for cultivated meats.
 - Shelf Life Extension applications for perishable foods.

In these situations, it may be advised to create working groups (WGs) reporting to the CAC, which would be given the mandate to advise on the best approach to handle the development of some Codex provisions related to these innovations, including possible collaborative work between committees.

Development of Positions

General Considerations that may support the Development of Positions

- ❖ Considering the continued development of experience in the way Codex standards and guidelines related to NFPS ought to be developed, it may be more relevant to treat these topics on a case-by-case manner.
- ❖ It is important to note that any new work should proceed when it is supported by sufficient science and there is significant international trade, consistent with the Codex *Working Principles for Risk Analysis* and an evaluation according to the Codex *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities*.