

المبادرة العربية للدستور الغذائي

REPORT OF THE FOURTH ARAB CODEX COLLOQUIUM



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Executive Summary

The Fourth Arab Codex Colloquium, held from 19–20 April 2025 in Muscat, Oman, marked a significant milestone in advancing regional coordination and capacity building among Arab Codex member countries. Organized under the high patronage of the Food Safety & Quality Center in Oman and by the Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GForSS) in collaboration with the Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO), the event gathered over 60 online and in-person participants from 14 Arab countries, including government officials, scientific experts, and industry representatives.

Structured as a series of interactive workshops, the Colloquium fostered in-depth discussions on key Codex committees and topics of regional importance. These included contaminants in food, pesticide residues, food additives, food fraud, and the strategic use of reservations in Codex standards. Notable outcomes included the formation of Arab Working Groups for CCCF and CCPR, with the aim to foster regional position development, and commitments to draft discussion papers on food fraud and reservations for upcoming Codex meetings.

The event also featured the 35th Joint Arab Codex Contact Points and CCNE Coordination Meeting, where participants aligned on key agenda items for the upcoming Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS44) and explored strategies to harmonize analytical methods and strengthen capacity building in the region. A round table emphasized the value of enhanced engagement with industry stakeholders, during which participants shared their ideas to support coordination and information exchange.

General recommendations from the Colloquium called for structured stakeholder engagement, stronger regional leadership in Codex initiatives, and focused efforts on priority committees (CCCF, CCFA, CCPR). The Colloquium concluded with a reaffirmation of the shared commitment to elevate Arab contributions to global food standards and improve food safety across the region.

Introduction

Under the high patronage of the Food Safety & Quality Center in the Sultanate of Oman, the [Fourth Arab Codex Colloquium](#) was organized by the Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GForSS) in cooperation with the Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO). The Colloquium was convened from 19-20 April 2025, at the Radisson Collection Muscat - Hormuz Grand Hotel, Oman.

A total of 46 in-person and more than 20 online participants attended the colloquium, including representatives from 14 Arab Codex member countries, regional standards organizations, the U.S. Codex Office, private sector stakeholders, and other supporting experts and entities (see Annex 1 for the list of participants).

The Fourth Colloquium marks a significant step towards strengthening regional cooperation and developing coordination mechanisms among Arab countries in the areas of food safety and Codex standards harmonization. This year, the novelty lies in its organization as a series of workshops, providing a more interactive platform for sharing experiences and best practices. This format aims to foster deeper engagement, contribute to improved food quality and safety in the region, and elevate the level of coordination among Arab countries on the regional and international stages.

Day 1: Saturday, April 19, 2025

Participant registration at 8:30 a.m. marked the beginning of the Fourth Colloquium.

Opening Ceremony

The opening session started with introductory remarks from:

- ❖ Pr. Samuel Godefroy, President and COO, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GForSS) and President of the International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST), and
- ❖ Eng. Ali Al-Ghafri, Regional Coordinator for the CCNE, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Oman

The official opening speeches were delivered by:

- ❖ Eng. Shadwa Saad, Supervisor, Standards and Metrology Center, Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO),
- ❖ Eng. Waleed Bin Khafan Al-Maamari, Oman Codex Contact Point, Food Safety and Quality Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Oman, and
- ❖ Dr. Hussein Samh Al-Masroori, General Director, Food Safety and Quality Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Oman.

Introductory Presentation: Achievements of the Arab Codex Initiative

Eng. Ahmed Eddouaicer, Coordinator of the Arab Codex Initiative/AIDSMO, delivered a presentation on the achievements of the Arab Codex initiative between June 2024, the date of the 3rd Colloquium, and April 2025, summarizing the coordination meetings that were organized during this period and emphasizing on key successful initiatives that were supported by the initiative, namely:

- ❖ The development of new work on a camel milk commodity standard (presented by the United Arab Emirates).
- ❖ Addressing the Syrian Arab Republic concerns regarding footnote (c) of the standard for olive oils and olive pomace oils (CXS 33-1981).
- ❖ Reaching consensus on removing the provision related to moisture content from the draft standard for fresh dates and its endorsement for final adoption at step 8.

Eng. Eddouaicer reiterated the organization's commitment to support similar initiatives that enhance Arab participation at regional and international levels. He noted that these achievements were made possible as a result of the support and close cooperation from the Regional Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE), Arab member countries and partner organizations.

Following Eng. Eddouaicer introductory presentation, Dr. Amine Kassouf, the Scientific Director of GForSS, introduced the agenda of the 2 days and invited all participants to introduce themselves and their affiliation (see Annex 1 for the list of participants).

Workshop 1-A: Review and Analysis of Agenda Items for the 18th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF18).

Moderator: Dr. Karima Zouine, ONSSA/GFoRSS Team

The first meeting of the Codex Arab Working Group on the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF), convened in preparation for the 18th Session of CCCF to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 23 to 27 June 2025, focused on a comprehensive review of the CCCF18 agenda to identify regional priorities related to food contaminants. The group carried out an in-depth analysis of selected agenda items, assessed related challenges and implications, and formulated evidence-based recommendations tailored to the region's specific needs. A clear roadmap and timeline were established to guide the development of draft technical inputs for the regional coordination meeting, along with plans to ensure effective collaboration and strong regional representation in the lead-up to CCCF18.

Key outcomes of the first meeting included:

- Reviewing the CCCF18 agenda and highlighting regional interests
- Agreeing to develop unified Arab positions on priority items
- Establishing a roadmap and timeline for drafting technical inputs
- Planning coordination activities ahead of CCCF18 in Bangkok

Next steps:

- Drafting the Arab position recommendations
- Scheduling a follow-up meeting prior to CCCF18
- Finalizing analysis documents and presentations for the regional meeting scheduled for 3 June 2025.

Workshop 1-B: Initiating the Arab Codex Working Group on the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR).

Moderator: Dr. Ruba Goussous, GFoRSS Team

The Kick-off Workshop of the CCPR Arab Working Group, held on 19 April 2025, focused on preparing for the 56th Session of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR56). Since the CCPR56 agenda was not published yet, participants reviewed the CCPR55 agenda, identified regional priority items, and applied

a scoring system to select key issues of interest. The workshop guided participants through a structured process to analyze Codex working documents, assess JMPR evaluations, and develop clear, evidence-based Arab positions on proposed MRLs. A roadmap for drafting analysis documents and coordinating regional efforts was established, ensuring effective preparation and alignment ahead of CCPR56, which will be held between 8 and 13 September 2025 in Santiago, Chile.

Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA)

Prof. Samuel Godefroy began the session on food additives with a discussion on the scientific risk analysis principles underpinning the work of the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) and the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), emphasizing the role of science in setting global standards. Participants then reviewed key outcomes from the 55th Session of CCFA, with a focus on priority areas for the region. The session also included a presentation on color additives, delivered by Mrs. Sarah Codrea, Director of the International Association of Color Manufacturers (IACM), an observer organization in Codex, highlighting the robust scientific evaluations conducted by JECFA and the importance of maintaining science-based decision-making amid political pressures. The main outcome of the session was a strong reaffirmation of the need to continue relying on sound scientific evidence in the evaluation and regulation of food additives.

The first day concluded with a renewed emphasis on the importance of strengthening the Arab region's preparation for future CCFA sessions by systematically engaging stakeholders from the industrial sector. Engaging industry representatives will help ensure that positions are grounded in both scientific evidence and practical experience, reflecting regional production realities and supporting innovation and trade.

Day 2: Sunday, April 20, 2025

Day 2 began at 8:30 a.m. with 2 parallel workshops.

Workshop 2-A: Guidelines to Prevent and Mitigate Food Fraud.

Moderator: Dr. Elie Bou Yazbeck, GForSS Team

On April 20, 2025, Parallel Workshop 2-A convened to address the pressing issue of food fraud within the global food supply chain. The workshop aimed to initiate the development of a discussion paper for

submission to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH), advocating for comprehensive guidelines to prevent and mitigate food fraud. Participants engaged in collaborative discussions, reviewing existing scientific literature and evaluating current tools and frameworks, such as the Vulnerability Assessment Critical Control Points (VACCP) system. The consensus underscored the need for Codex to provide detailed, globally harmonized guidance, building upon the foundational work of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). The proposed guidelines would serve as a reference for industry and regulators, aligning with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and enhancing food fraud management strategies. The workshop concluded with a commitment to develop a discussion paper for deliberations at CCNE on the importance of this issue and to aim for a discussion paper outlining the rationale and scope for the proposed guidelines, with the intent to present it at the upcoming CCFH meeting in December 2025.

Workshop 2-B: “Reservations” in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius.

Moderator: Dr. Mustafa Sultan, GForSS Team

The workshop on the role and use of "reservations" within the Codex Alimentarius framework aimed to sensitize participants to the strategic and procedural aspects of entering reservations, emphasizing their importance as formal, science-based objections to Codex provisions when national public health data or scientific assessments do not align with adopted standards. The workshop provided an overview of the Codex acceptance criteria, the role of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP), and common pitfalls to avoid when formulating reservations. It highlighted the critical role of internal coordination and timely, scientifically substantiated input. Drawing from examples, such as the European Union's use of reservations to safeguard internal consensus, participants agreed on the importance of strengthening national capacities to effectively engage in Codex processes. The workshop concluded with a commitment to develop a discussion paper for submission to the upcoming CCGP session scheduled for June 2, 2025, in France, aiming to ask for clarification as for the convenient use of “reservations” in the framework of Codex proceedings.

The 35th Joint Arab Codex Contact Points and CCNE Coordination Meeting

The 44th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS44) was discussed as part of the 35th Joint Arab Codex Contact Points and CCNE Coordination Meeting. Priority agenda items were presented by Dr. Hadi Elalem, Libya and Eng. Narjes Mhajib, Tunisia. The session provided an opportunity to review key agenda items of relevance to the region, facilitate alignment on technical positions, and ensure effective Arab participation in the upcoming Codex discussions. This collaborative exchange aimed to strengthen regional coordination and enhance the contribution of Arab countries to Codex standard-setting processes.

Following the coordination meeting, participants from member countries and stakeholders shared their views regarding the work of the Codex Committee, with a particular focus on the need for further capacity building related to sampling plan provisions. In response, it was suggested that GFORSS supported by the Arab Section of AOAC INTERNATIONAL could organize targeted webinars to address the specific requests of members. Additionally, the representative of Algeria highlighted the need for greater harmonization of methods provisions, a proposal that received broad support, with participants agreeing to assist in the preparation and submission of a Conference Room Document (CRD) related to the analytical methods mentioned in the standard for Wheat and Durum Wheat (CXS-199-1995). The discussion also brought attention to challenges in the interpretation of analytical results, leading to a proposal to develop harmonized guidelines for result interpretation within the region.

Round Table Discussion on Effective Engagement of Industry Stakeholders in Codex Proceedings by CCNE Members

A Round Table Discussion on the Effective Engagement of Industry Stakeholders in Codex Proceedings was held by CCNE members and industrial stakeholders, moderated by Eng. Ali Al-Ghafri, Regional Coordinator for the CCNE. The session, held from 14:30 to 15:15, focused on strategies to enhance industry involvement in the Codex process, highlighting best practices, challenges, and opportunities for stronger collaboration. Participants exchanged insights on how to foster transparent, inclusive, and constructive engagement with industry stakeholders to support the development of science-based international food standards. During the discussion, it was suggested by Morocco representatives that one possible way to facilitate seamless coordination among stakeholders could be through the use of an online platform to support information

exchange. In this context, AIDSMO introduced their website and highlighted the possibility that it might serve this purpose.

The Upcoming CCNE12 Session: Round Table Discussion on Priority Items to be Included in the Agenda

A Round Table Discussion on Priority Items for the Upcoming 12th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE12) was held from 15:15 to 16:00, moderated by Eng. Ali Al-Ghafri, Regional Coordinator for the CCNE. The session aimed to identify and deliberate on key topics of regional importance to be proposed for inclusion in the CCNE12 agenda. Participants shared perspectives on emerging food safety and trade issues, emphasizing the need for a focused and impactful agenda that reflects the priorities and interests of Near East countries within the Codex framework.

During the session, participants reviewed several key items. These included the follow-up on the implementation status of the Electronic Working Group on the Labelling of Non-retail Foods, the follow-up on the development of the Draft Standard for Maamoul, and actions taken regarding the Harissa standard updates and the International Standard for Olive Oil following the outcomes of CAC47. Updates were also provided on the Camel Milk Project and the importance of the collection of more representative data in this regard. In addition, a proposal was put forward to establish a working group to support the review and improvement of the Arabic translation of Codex standards. Further proposals were discussed, including a submission from Iran on developing a standard for rose water, from Tunisia on a standard for date powder, and from Iraq on Arabic traditional sweets.

Closing Ceremony

The Closing Session featured remarks by Prof. Samuel Godefroy, President of IUFoST and COO of GForSS, and Dr. Hussein Samh Al-Masroori, General Director of the Food Safety and Quality Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. The session provided an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of the colloquium, acknowledge the valuable contributions of participants, and reaffirm the collective commitment to advancing Codex work in the Arab region through strengthened collaboration and regional coordination.

General Recommendations

Recommendations were proposed during the Fourth Arab Codex Colloquium as follows:

- ❖ Identify projects that align with and support the objectives of the Arab Codex Initiative, based on the specific needs of countries in the region, and develop a structured plan for their implementation.
- ❖ It was recommended and agreed that CCNE members and participants in the Arab Codex Initiative assume a leadership role in identifying proposals for Codex proceedings and texts that advance the interests of the region, thereby demonstrating regional leadership within the international food standards-setting community.
- ❖ Establish a structured framework within the Arab Codex Initiative and among CCNE members to engage stakeholders — particularly food producers in the region and beyond — in ongoing consultations and discussions related to Codex proceedings, with a specific focus on the work of the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA).
- ❖ Reaffirm the importance of CCCF, CCFA, and CCPR as priority committees for the region, emphasizing their strategic relevance to regional interests and needs.
- ❖ There was broad concurrence on the importance of food fraud as a critical issue affecting multiple commodities in the region, and on the need to strengthen guidance provided to producers and importers to prevent its occurrence.
 - An agreement to develop a discussion paper for deliberations at CCNE on the importance of this issue and the development of additional resources to manage food fraud for stakeholders of the region and beyond.
 - Recommendation to aim for a discussion paper seeking further guidance on tools that can be applied for the prevention of food fraud incidence as per CCFH mandate.
- ❖ Participants agreed to submit a discussion paper to the CCGP analyzing the current use of reservations in Codex proceedings, examining their impact on the perception of the trustworthiness and robustness of Codex decisions and the scientific assessments conducted by international expert bodies. The aim is to consider the development of improved guidance on the use of reservations to ensure greater consistency with Codex principles and core values.

Interested in Knowing More?

Additional information on the Fourth Arab Codex Colloquium can be accessed online. Visit us!

- GForSS Website

[The Fourth Arab Codex Colloquium • 19-20 April 2025 • Muscat, Oman - Global Food Regulatory Science Society \(GForSS\)](#)

- GForSS YouTube Channel Videos Playlists

[The Fourth Arab Colloquium – Muscat, Oman - Global Food Regulatory Science Society \(GForSS\) - YouTube](#)

Annex 1: List of Participants

Name		Organization	Country
1	Adib M. I. Alqaimari	Technical Regulations Committee on Food Safety	State of Palestine
2	Ahmed Eddouaicer	Arab Industrial Development, Standardization & Mining Organization (ADISMO)	Morocco
3	Ahmed Nashed	Coca Cola	--
4	Aisha Al-Abriyah	Food Safety & Quality Center, Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries, and Water Resources	Oman
5	Akram Mohsen Haidarah	Yemen Standardization Metrology & Quality Control Organization	Yemen
6	Alexandra Ferraro	US Codex Office	USA
7	Ali Albadi	Food Safety & Quality Center, Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries, and Water Resources	Oman
8	Ali Alghafri	CCNE Coordinator	Oman
9	Ali Shehab Alfardan	MoH - Ministry of Health	Bahrain
10	Almahdi Ahmed Mohammed Sasi	Tripoli university-faculty of agriculture	Libya
11	Amal Alhumaimi	Food Safety & Quality Center, Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries, and Water Resources	Oman
12	Amir Ayadi	Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)	Tunisia
13	Amine Kassouf	Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)	Lebanon
14	Azza Al-Abri	Sultan Qaboos University	Oman
15	Bouchra Messaoudi	ONSSA	Morocco
16	Elie Bou Yazbeck	Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)	Lebanon

17	Fatema Ahmed Mohamed Isa	Ministry of Industry and Commerce	Bahrain
18	Haidy Mohy	Pepsi Co	--
19	Hadi Abdelati Hadi Elalem	Libyan National Center for Standardization and Metrology	Libya
20	Hussein Almasrori	Food Safety & Quality Center, Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries, and Water Resources	Oman
21	Intisar Algharibi	Food Safety & Quality Center, Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries, and Water Resources	Oman
22	Issam Krid	Agrifood Technical Center	Tunisia
23	Kamla Naser	Food Safety & Quality Center, Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries, and Water Resources	Oman
24	Mariam Mahmoud Mahmoud Riad	Egyptian Organization for Standardization & Quality	Egypt
25	Marwa Mahmoud	Food Safety & Quality Center, Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries, and Water Resources	Oman
26	Mansoorah Mazahery	Standard Research Institute	Iran
27	Mohammed Ali Saeed Ban Abbod	Yemen Standardization Metrology & Quality Control Organization (YSMO)	Yemen
28	Muna Alolan	Ministry of Public Health	Qatar
29	Mustafa Bater	Coca cola	--
30	Mustafa Sultan	Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)	Egypt
31	Najlaa Ahmed	Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization (JSMO)	Jordan
32	Narjes Mhajbi	Agrifood Technical Center	Tunisia
33	Nareman Odeh Abusoud	Ministry of agriculture	State of Palestine
34	Naser Alsarmi	Food Safety & Quality Center, Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries, and Water Resources	Oman

35	Nourreddine Haridi	Ministry of internal trade and regulation of the national market	Algeria
36	Noor Aldeen Aldebei	Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization (JSMO)	Jordan
37	Razna Al Maymaniyah	Food Safety & Quality Center, Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries, and Water Resources	Oman
38	Ruba Goussous	Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)	Jordan
39	Sahar Slieman	Lebanese Standards Institution (LIBNOR) Ministry of Industry	Lebanon
40	Samuel Godefroy	Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)	Canada
41	Shadwa Saad Mohamed Ali	Arab Industrial Development, Standardization & Mining Organization (AIDSMO)	Egypt
42	Sonia Baldi Gharbi	Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority	UAE
43	Suzanee Baaghil	Pepsi Co	--
44	Waleed Almamari	Food Safety & Quality Center, Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries, and Water Resources	Oman
45	Zeinab Musaad Abdul Raziq Abdul Rahman	Egyptian Organization for Standardization & Quality	Egypt
46	Karima Zouine	ONSSA / GFoRSS	Morocco