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45th Meeting of the Codex Contact Points in the Arab Region

PREPARATION FOR THE 29TH SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FATS AND OILS (CCFO29)

CCFO

Presented by (Jordan – Tunisia – Lebanon)

Agenda Item 8.1

revision to the standard for olive oil and olive pomace oil (CXS 33-1981: collection and submission of scientific data

Background : Agenda Item 8.1

- **The EWG on scientific data and information on olive oil** was created to collect global scientific data and information on olive oil, focusing on free fatty acids, fatty acid ethyl esters (FFAE), acidity, peroxides, and sensory defects taking into account the influence of time, temperature, light exposure exposure, and oxygen exposure on the values of 1,2-diglycerides (DAGs) and Pyrophenophytin (PPPs).

- **At the 28th session of CCFO (2025),** Italy as chair, with Australia, Canada, Saudi Arabia and the USA as co-chairs, operate the EWG and is tasked both gathering data and critically evaluating its suitability for further analysis and standard-setting.

- **Arab countries participating in the EWG:** Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia.

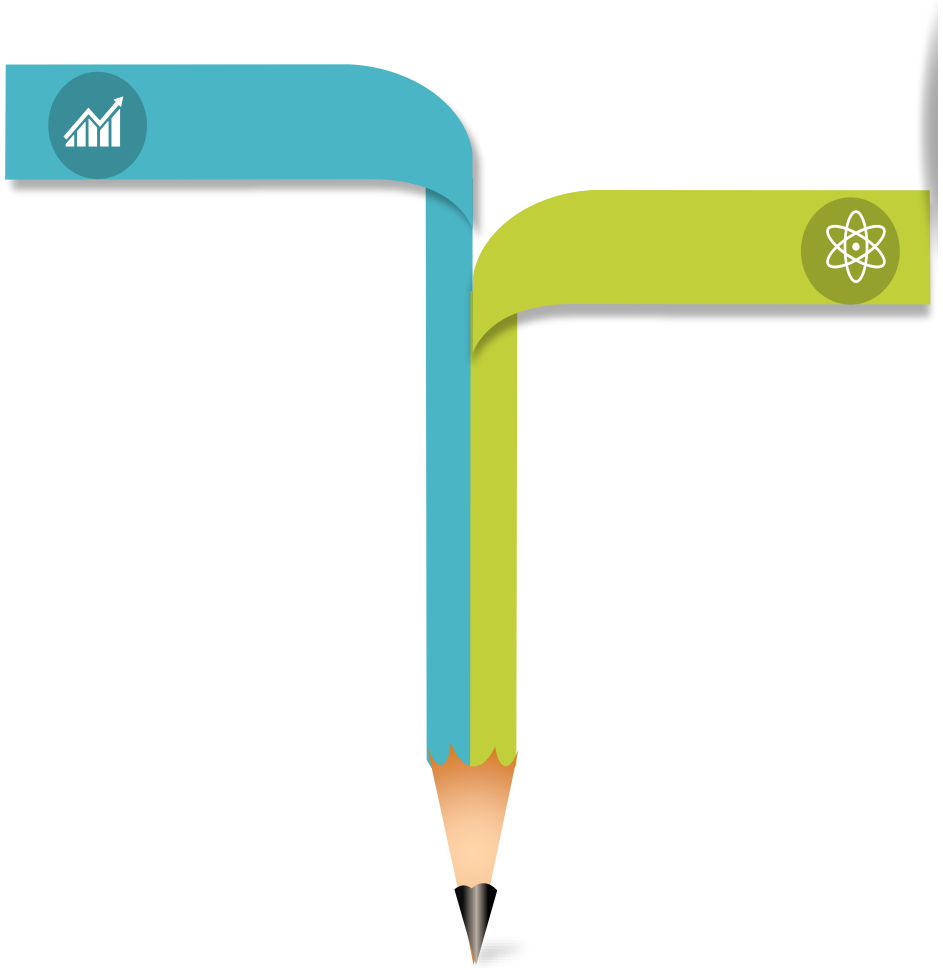
Analysis : Scope and Methodology

- A standardized data collection template was developed by the EWG and circulated through the Codex Online Commenting System via Circular Letter CL 2024/36-FO.
- The protocol required measurements at defined intervals from extraction or bottling up to 24 months, using internationally recognized analytical methods (IOC, ISO, and AOCS standards).
- In addition to analytical results, contributors were requested to provide contextual information on olive variety, maturity index, processing steps, storage conditions, packaging, and headspace management.
- This comprehensive framework was designed to enhance comparability, interpretability, and scientific validity of the datasets.

Work Element	Actions Taken & Details	Key Outputs & Results	Status & Observations
1. Methodology Development	EWG designed comprehensive data collection template (Appendix I) specifying: - Parameters: free fatty acids, FAEE, acidity, peroxide values, sensory defects - Analytical methods/protocols - Storage factors (time, temperature, light/UV, oxygen) affecting DAGs/PPPs Template uploaded to Codex Online Commenting System (OCS)	Standardized template enabling structured, comparable global data collection	Complete - Ready for analysis
2. Global Data Call	Circular Letter CL 2024/36-FO issued May 2024 with deadline 30 Sep 2025 Requested worldwide olive oil data from all Codex Members and Observers	Official global call launched successfully	Complete
3. Participation Achieved	8 Codex Members + 1 Observer submitted data: - Full protocol compliance: Australia, USA, Spain, Turkey - Partial submissions: Some missing FAEE/sensory analysis - IOC contribution: Scientific literature compilation	Full datasets compiled in Annex I (Zipper folder/Dropbox link) Appendix II: Participant list	Complete
4. Data Quality Assessment	Strengths: Major producers (Australia, USA, Spain, Turkey) followed protocol fully → high comparability Gaps: Some Members couldn't provide complete FAEE/sensory data Complementary: IOC literature strengthens dataset context	Appendix I of the EWG's report: summary table showing coverage by parameter Data gaps identified for follow-up	Mostly complete - Some gaps need attention
5. Next Phase Preparation	EWG ready to: a) Assess dataset suitability for statistical analysis b) Recommend analysis path (continue EWG vs FAO expert consultation) c) Prepare CCFO29 report	Work products prepared for CCFO29 consideration: - Data adequacy assessment - Analysis recommendations - EWG re-establishment proposal	Ready for CCFO29 decisions

Assessment of Data Quality and Suitability

The EWG concluded that a substantial volume of scientifically valuable data had been collected, particularly regarding the temporal evolution of PPP and 1,2-DAGs. Where protocols were followed in full, datasets allow for integrated analysis across chemical and sensory parameters, supporting a more nuanced understanding of quality changes during storage.

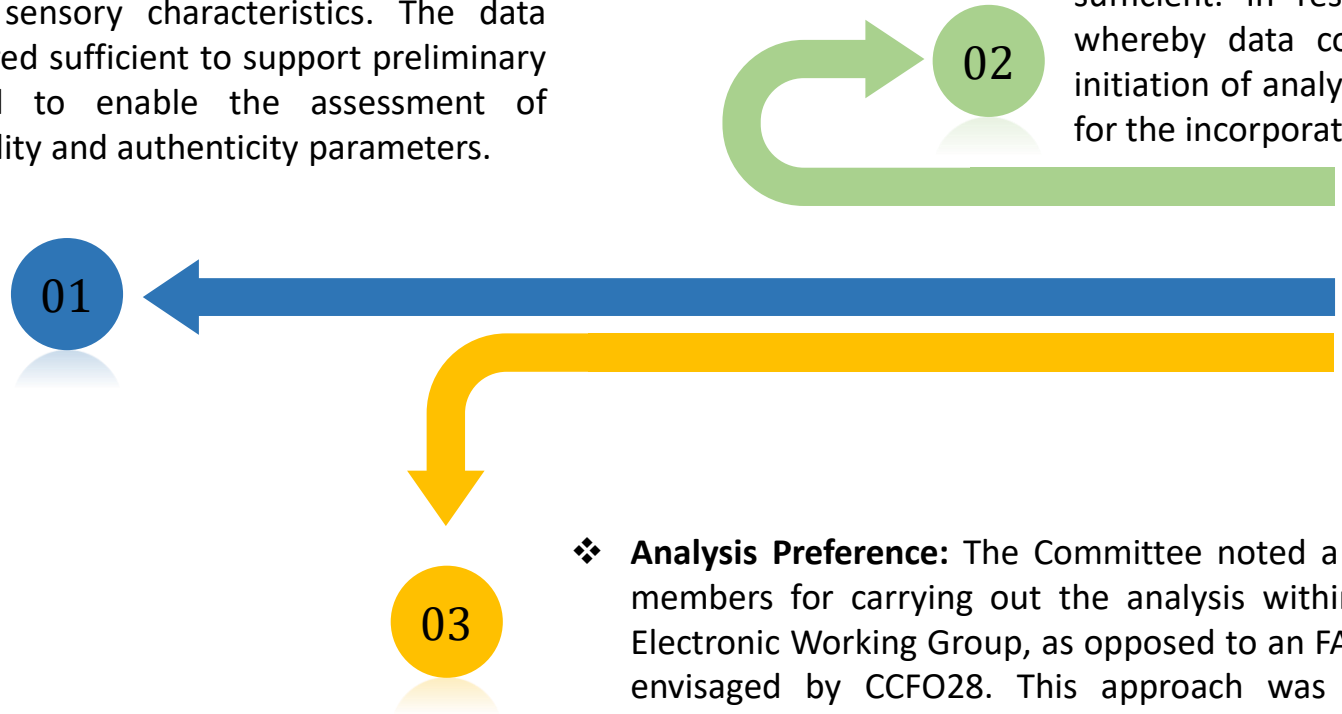


However, variability in adherence to the protocol limits the representativeness of the overall dataset. Gaps in FAEE and sensory data constrain the ability to draw holistic conclusions across all submissions. These limitations underpin divergent Member views on whether the dataset is sufficient to proceed directly to in-depth analysis.

Summary of discussion and commentary of EWG members

Data collected: The Committee noted that a substantial body of data has been collected on the evolution of PPP and 1,2-DAGs, together with key quality parameters defined under CXS 33-1981, including FAEE, acidity, peroxide values, and sensory characteristics. The data collected were considered sufficient to support preliminary shelf-life analysis and to enable the assessment of interactions among quality and authenticity parameters.

Extension Requests : The Committee noted divergent views among members regarding the need for an extension. While some members supported granting additional time to expand the dataset others considered the data currently available to be sufficient. In response, a dual-track approach was proposed, whereby data collection would continue in parallel with the initiation of analysis, in order to maintain progress while allowing for the incorporation of additional data as it becomes available



- **Analysis Preference:** The Committee noted a clear preference among members for carrying out the analysis within the framework of the Electronic Working Group, as opposed to an FAO expert consultation as envisaged by CCFO28. This approach was considered to enhance transparency, promote direct exchange among members, and allow flexible integration of additional data as it becomes available.

Evaluation of the Proposed Dual-Track Approach

In the absence of consensus, the EWG proposed a dual-track approach: continued data collection in parallel with the initiation of analysis of existing datasets. From an analytical standpoint, this approach offers several advantages:

- It avoids unnecessary delays in evaluating already available data.
- It allows new submissions to be integrated, progressively strengthening the evidence base.
- It maintains momentum while preserving inclusivity for Members requiring additional time.
- The proposal also raises governance considerations, particularly regarding whether analysis should be conducted within the EWG or through an FAO expert consultation, as previously envisaged by CCFO28.

Recommendations

01 Acknowledge the sufficiency of the collected data for preliminary analysis.

02 Decide on the most appropriate analytical mechanism (EWG-led versus FAO expert consultation).

03 Re-establish the EWG with a clear mandate to continue data collection and undertake structured analysis of both existing and new datasets

04 Optimizing Arab delegation participation in CCFO29 will further strengthen impact, with clear distribution of roles among countries based on experience and expertise.

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