

ARAB CODEX INITIATIVE

Progress Report

Implementation of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027

Reporting Period: September 2025 – July 2026

Prepared jointly by

Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFRSS)

FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near-East (CCNE) Secretariat

Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO)

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Executive Summary

This report presents the progress achieved under the Arab Codex Initiative during the implementation period from September 2025 to July 2026. During this period, the Initiative was implemented in support of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027, through collaboration between the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE) Secretariat, the Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS), and the Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO). Its objective is to strengthen regional coordination, enhance scientific and technical engagement, and improve the effectiveness of Member Countries' participation in the Codex Alimentarius process.

During the reporting period, a structured regional coordination and technical support mechanism was operationalized, combining systematic monitoring of Codex activities, quantitative priority setting, scientific assessment of priority agenda items, expert mobilization, and coordinated engagement before, during, and after Codex sessions.

A harmonized quantitative prioritization methodology was applied across the 2026 Codex work program, leading to the identification of five priority Codex committees: the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO), the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS), the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF), the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA), and the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL).

This process led to the establishment of dedicated Regional Expert Working Groups involving 80 experts from 14 Member Countries, providing the scientific and technical foundation for coordinated regional engagement on priority Codex issues. Across the five committees, 31 priority agenda items were identified and supported through technical analyses and presentations, regional positions, Conference Room Documents (CRDs), discussion papers, and other supporting materials. These activities were complemented by regional coordination meetings, bilateral consultations, technical support during Codex sessions, and follow-up on committee outcomes, contributing to more coordinated and evidence-based regional participation in the Codex standard-setting process.

Overall, the activities undertaken demonstrate substantive progress towards the objectives and expected outputs of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027, particularly in strengthening science-based regional contributions, expert participation, technical capacity, information exchange, and coordination among Member Countries. The appendices provide detailed information on the Regional Expert Working Groups, participating experts, priority agenda items, technical outputs, and supporting resources developed throughout the reporting period.

The implementation experience presented in this report demonstrates the value of a structured, priority-driven mechanism that links regional needs with technical expertise and coordinated Codex engagement and establishes a foundation for the continued implementation of the Arab Codex Initiative in support of future sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

1. Background

The effective participation of Arab and Near East countries in the Codex Alimentarius Commission is essential to ensure that regional priorities, scientific expertise, and regulatory perspectives are appropriately reflected in the development, revision and implementation of international food standards. However, meaningful participation in Codex requires more than attendance at committee meetings, but also sustained scientific and technical preparation, timely engagement in Codex work, effective mobilization of national expertise, and coordination positions among Member Countries on issues of common regional interest. It further requires strengthening communication and collaboration between competent authorities and scientific institutions, as well as ensuring that countries have the necessary capacities to analyze technical documents, assess scientific information, and develop evidence-based contributions to the Codex standard-setting process.

Recognizing this need, the Secretariat of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE), the Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO), and the Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GForSS) have established a close and complementary partnership to strengthen regional coordination, build technical capacity, and support more effective and coordinated engagement throughout the Codex standard-setting process. Within this framework, the Arab Codex Initiative serves as the operational platform for translating shared regional priorities into coordinated action within the Codex system.

1.1. The Arab Codex Initiative

The Arab Codex Initiative was launched jointly by the Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO) and the Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GForSS), as a regional initiative to enhance capacity building and technical cooperation among Arab countries. The Initiative is implemented by GForSS in partnership with AIDSMO and aims to strengthen the capacity of Arab countries to participate effectively in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies, while promoting regional coordination, scientific contributions, and the use of Codex standards. Through technical assistance, capacity building, expert mobilization, and regional coordination, the Initiative translates shared regional priorities into coordinated action within the Codex system.

The Initiative operates in close collaboration with the Secretariat of the CCNE, the National Codex Contact Points and technical experts from Member Countries, as well as relevant regional and international partners, including the GCC Standardization Organization (GSO). Its implementation model combines scientific assessment and regulatory expertise with operational coordination, enabling Member Countries to identify issues of common regional interest, develop scientifically informed technical contributions, and participate more effectively throughout the Codex standard-setting process.

Following the twelfth session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE12), the Initiative provided an operational mechanism for supporting implementation of relevant priorities and activities identified in the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027 ([REP25/NE Appendix VII](#)). To translate these priorities into coordinated action, a dedicated Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan for 2026 was developed. The [2026 Action Plan](#) established a structured, priority-based framework for monitoring Codex activities, preparing for priority committee sessions, coordinating Regional Expert Working Groups, delivering capacity-building activities, and supporting reporting and follow-up.

Through this framework, the Arab Codex Initiative serves as a practical bridge between the strategic objectives of the CCNE Regional Work Plan and their implementation through coordinated regional activities, while supporting sustained scientific engagement and more effective participation of Member Countries in the Codex standard-setting process.

1.2. Purpose and Scope of the Report

This report presents progress in implementing the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan during the period from September 2025 to July 2026. It documents the technical, scientific, coordination and capacity-building activities undertaken and their contribution to strengthening regional participation in Codex and implementing the priorities of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027.

More specifically, the report:

- Documents the implementation of activities included in the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan;
- Describes the mechanisms used to identify regional priorities, mobilize scientific and technical expertise, and coordinate regional engagement;
- Summarizes technical preparation, consultation, coordination, and follow-up undertaken before, during, and after priority Codex committee sessions;
- Highlights the principal scientific and technical outputs, regional coordination results, and capacity-building activities, and other deliverables produced during the reporting period;
- Assesses progress against the relevant objectives and outputs of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026-2027;
- Highlights key achievements, implementation experience, remaining needs, and opportunities for strengthening future regional activities; and
- Identifies priorities and areas for follow-up during the next implementation cycle.

The report also serves as an implementation update for the Electronic Working Group (EWG) established by the CCNE12 to monitor progress in the implementation of the Regional Work Plan ([REP25/NE para. 85, ii](#)). It is intended to support the EWG's follow-up mandate, facilitate reporting to the CCNE Secretariat and Member Countries, and inform the continued prioritization and refinement of regional activities.

The scope of the report extends beyond the activities associated with individual Codex committees. It also covers cross-cutting technical initiatives, support to regional and international EWGs, interregional collaboration, expert consultations, data-related activities, and other actions contributing to the broader objectives of regional coordination and effective participation.

1.3. Reporting Period

This report covers the period from September 2025 to July 2026, beginning with the conclusion of CCNE12 and extending through the Forty-ninth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC49).

The reporting period includes two interconnected implementation phases. The first followed CCNE12 and focused on translating the newly adopted CCNE Regional Work Plan (2026-2027) into operational priorities and implementation mechanisms. The second, covering January to July 2026, focused on the operational implementation of the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan, including preparation for five priority Codex committees (CCFO29, CCMAS45, CCRVDF28, CCFA56, and CCFL49), followed by regional preparation for CCEXEC90 and CAC49.

2. From CCNE12 to Implementation

The Twelfth Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE12), held in Muscat, Oman, marked an important milestone in strengthening regional collaboration on Codex matters through the adoption of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027. Following CCNE12, the Arab Codex Initiative, in close collaboration with the CCNE Secretariat, National Codex Contact Points, and regional partners, translated the strategic priorities and recommendations of the Regional Work Plan 2026 - 2027 into a structured Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan. The Action Plan established a coordinated framework for addressing Member Countries' priorities, implementation mechanisms, expected outputs, and responsibilities to support the effective delivery of the Regional Work Plan.

To promote regional ownership and ensure alignment with the priorities expressed by Member Countries, the draft Action Plan was presented to stakeholders during the [44th Coordination Meeting](#) of the Arab Codex Initiative. The proposed activities and implementation approach were reviewed and discussed with participating countries and partners, and the Action Plan was subsequently refined, and formally endorsed as the operational roadmap for the January-July 2026 implementation cycle.

The endorsed Action Plan subsequently guided the planning, coordination, and implementation of all activities undertaken during the reporting period, while providing a common framework for monitoring progress and reporting on the Initiative's contribution to the implementation of the CCNE Regional Work Plan.

3. Implementation Approach

The Action Plan adopted an integrated implementation approach (**figure 1**) structured around four complementary components: (i) systematic monitoring of Codex activities to identify regional priorities and emerging issues; (ii) evidence-based prioritization of topics requiring coordinated regional engagement; (iii) mobilization of Regional Expert Working Groups to develop scientific and technical inputs and facilitate consensus-building; and (iv) continuous coordination and operational support to Member Countries throughout the Codex standard-setting process.

3.1. Priority-setting Methodology

The implementation of the Action Plan was guided by a structured and participatory priority-setting methodology designed to ensure that regional technical and coordination efforts were directed toward Codex issues of greatest relevance to Member Countries. The prioritization process began with an online questionnaire distributed to National Codex Contact Points from Arab and Near East countries. The list of Member Countries is provided in ([Annex I](#)). The questionnaire was designed to identify priority Codex committees and agenda items considered most relevant for coordinated regional engagement for 2026.

Responses received from Member Countries were subsequently analyzed using a quantitative scoring methodology based on predefined criteria. These criteria included public health significance, food safety impact, regional relevance, potential trade implications, implementation feasibility, and alignment with the objectives of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027. The application of a harmonized scoring framework enabled committees and individual agenda items to be assessed and ranked systematically, thereby providing a transparent and evidence-informed basis for determining where regional scientific, technical, and coordination support should be concentrated.

3.2. Regional Expert Working Groups

To operationalize the priorities identified through the regional prioritization process, Regional Expert Working Groups were established for each priority Codex committee, bringing together experts nominated by Codex Contact Points across the Arab and Near East Regions, providing a structured mechanism for mobilizing regional expertise and supporting coordinated engagement on issues of shared interest.

These groups served as the principal scientific and technical platform for analyzing agenda items, preparing technical briefs and regional positions, supporting responses to Circular Letters, and facilitating consensus-building among Member Countries ahead of Codex meetings.

The groups also played an important role in facilitating technical exchange and consensus-building among Member Countries. Through expert consultations and regional coordination

meetings, differing national perspectives could be discussed, areas of convergence identified, and technically substantiated regional positions developed where appropriate.

Through this mechanism, the Initiative created a practical link between national expertise, regional priorities, and Codex technical discussions, while broadening the participation of specialized experts in the development of science-based regional contributions.

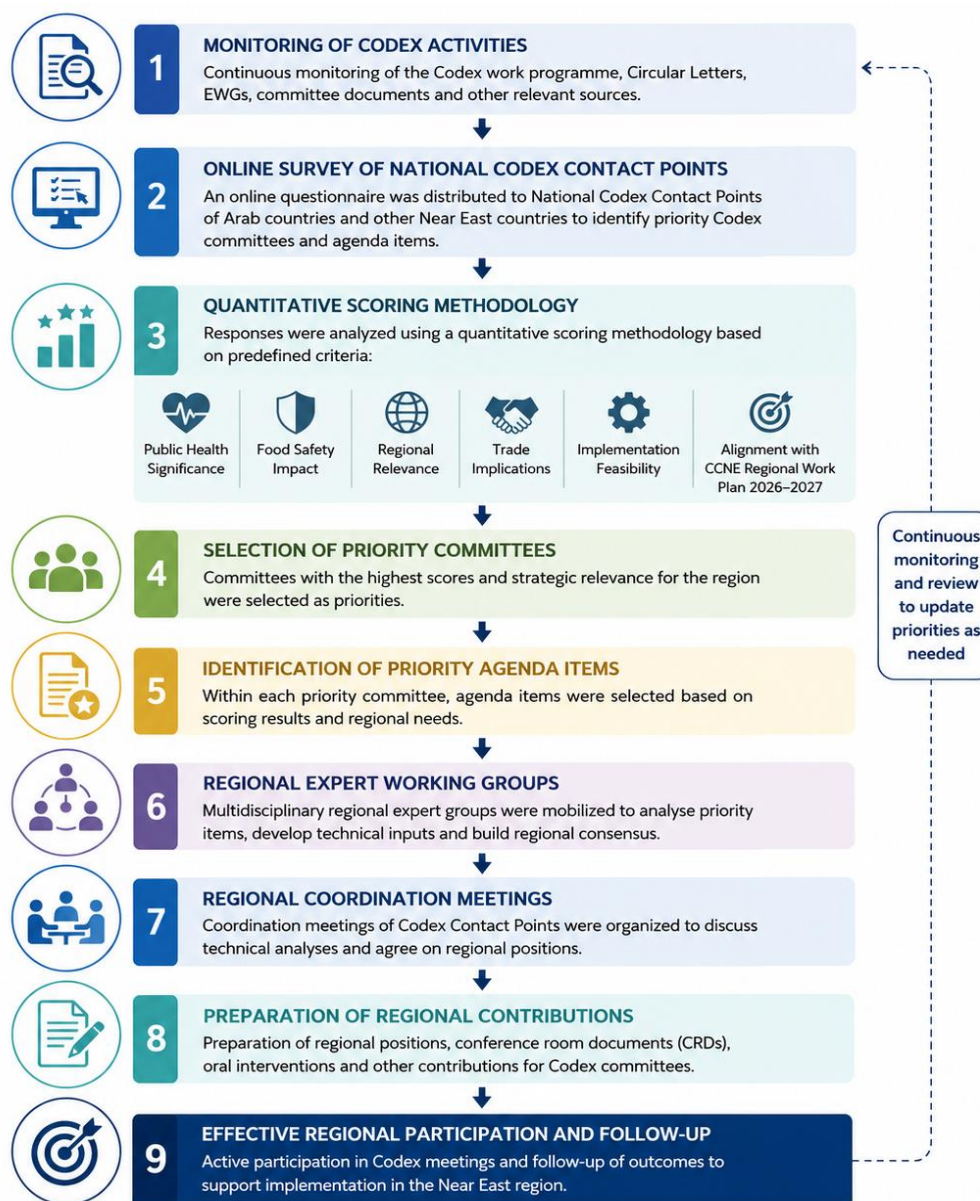


Figure 1: Priority-setting methodology and implementation flow.

3.3. Coordination and Operational Support Mechanism

The implementation of the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan was carried out through a collaborative partnership involving the CCNE Secretariat and Regional Coordinator, the scientific and operational teams of the Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS), and the Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO), through its Standards and Metrology Center (SMC). Working in close coordination throughout the Codex cycle, the three partners jointly planned, organized, implemented, and monitored the Initiative's activities, ensuring an integrated and coordinated approach to supporting the implementation of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027.

This collaborative implementation model combined strategic coordination, scientific and technical expertise, and operational support to deliver the Initiative's program of work. Activities included the continuous monitoring of Codex developments; the preparation of technical analyses, briefing documents, presentations, and background papers; the coordination of Regional Expert Working Groups; the organization and facilitation of regional coordination meetings and capacity-building activities; the preparation of regional positions, Conference Room Documents (CRDs), interventions, and follow-up reports; as well as the dissemination of technical information and the coordination of communication with National Codex Contact Points, Codex committee Chairs, the Codex Secretariat, and other regional and international partners.

The partnership also ensured the effective operational management of all regional activities, including meeting planning and logistics, participant coordination, preparation of supporting documentation, interpretation arrangements where required, and systematic follow-up of agreed actions before, during, and after Codex committee sessions. This integrated approach strengthened regional coordination, facilitated consensus-building among Member Countries, and enhanced the region's effective participation in the Codex Alimentarius process.

3.4. Methodology for Scientific Analysis and Assessment of Priority Codex Documents

Following the identification of priority Codex agenda items, the Regional Expert Working Groups, with the technical support of the Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS) and the coordination of the CCNE Secretariat, applied a structured analytical methodology to support the review of committee working documents and the development of evidence-based regional positions. This common analytical framework ensured that technical discussions and recommendations were scientifically robust, transparent, and consistently aligned with the food safety, public health, trade, and regulatory priorities of the Arab and Near East regions.

The analytical process began with a comprehensive review of the relevant Codex working document to identify its objectives, scientific basis, key issues for discussion, proposed standards or guidance, and supporting evidence from relevant international expert bodies, including FAO, WHO, JECFA, and JMPR. The Regional Expert Working Groups then assessed the

regional relevance of each proposal by considering food safety priorities, dietary practices, existing regulatory frameworks, implementation capacity, food security considerations, and the needs of Member Countries. Scientific and technical assessments were complemented by an evaluation of implementation feasibility and potential regional and international trade implications, including alignment with existing international standards. The outcomes of these analyses formed the basis for developing regional recommendations, supporting consensus-building among Member Countries, and informing interventions during Codex committee sessions.

4. Implementation of the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan

Building on the implementation approach described in **Section 3**, the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan was operationalized through a coordinated program of scientific, technical, capacity-building, and regional coordination activities. These activities were implemented across the priority Codex committees and thematic areas identified through the regional priority-setting process, with a focus on addressing the needs and priorities of Member Countries while strengthening their effective participation throughout the Codex standard-setting process.

The following sections present the principal activities undertaken and the key outputs and outcomes achieved during the reporting period. Together they illustrate how the Arab Codex Initiative fostered regional collaboration, strengthened scientific and technical engagement, supported consensus-building among Member Countries, and contributed to the implementation of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027.

4.1. Monitoring and Priority Setting

The implementation of the Action Plan started with the identification of the priority Codex committees requiring coordinated regional engagement during the 2026 Codex cycle. An initial list was developed through systematic monitoring of the Codex work program and was subsequently discussed and endorsed by National Codex Contact Points and stakeholders during the 44th regional coordination meeting, reflecting a regional consensus on the committees requiring coordinated technical support. The rationale underpinning the selection of each priority committee is summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Priority Codex committees selected for regional coordination.

Codex Committee	Rationale for Prioritization
CCFO29	Revision of the Standard for Olive Oil and Olive Pomace Oils of strategic importance to the Region (REP25/NE, para. 70).
CCMAS45	Development and endorsement of methods of analysis supporting regional commodity standards and allergen analysis (REP25/NE, para. 23).
CCRVDF28	Continued work on veterinary drug residues of particular relevance to camelids and regional livestock production.
CCFA56	Consideration of food additive provisions relevant to regional products (e.g. Doogh - CXS 332R-2018) and ongoing Codex work.
CCFL49	Finalization of guidance on Precautionary Allergen Labelling (PAL) and discussions on Country of Origin/Country of Harvest labelling.
CCEXEC90	Strategic planning, governance, budgetary matters, and new work proposals requiring regional coordination.
CAC49	Final consideration and adoption of committee recommendations and regional interventions.

Following the identification of the priority committees, a structured prioritization exercise was undertaken to identify the agenda items requiring focused regional engagement. As described in **Section 3**, this exercise combined the results of an online survey of National Codex Contact Points with a quantitative scoring methodology based on predefined prioritization criteria.

The resulting priority agenda items (**Table 2**) formed the basis for the technical analyses, regional coordination activities, and scientific support implemented under the Action Plan. The complete scoring matrices, including the detailed scoring and prioritization results for all agenda items across the five priority Codex committees, are available online for reference ([detailed scoring matrices](#)).

Table 2: Results of the regional prioritization exercise for the 2026 Codex cycle.

Priority Codex Committee	Member Countries Participating in the Survey	No. of Priority Agenda Items Identified/Total Technical Agenda Items	Highest-Priority Agenda Item(s)
CCFO29	11	5/12	- Revision of the standard on trans-fatty acid (TFA) intake - Revision of the standard for Olive Oil and Olive Pomace Oils - Adjustment of stearic acid content for high oleic acid sunflower seed oil
CCMAS45	11	8/11	- Methods of Analysis for Commodity Standards - Sampling Plans and Sampling Methodologies - Food Allergen Analytical Methods (PAL) - Harmonization and Updating of CXS 234 (Methods of Analysis and Sampling)
CCRVDF28	7	7/11	- Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) and Extrapolation Principles - Management of Veterinary Drug Residues in Animal Feed - Coordination and Harmonization of Codex Risk Management (CCRVDF-CCPR) - Priority Setting for JECFA Evaluation of Veterinary Drugs
CCFA56	11	6/11	- Specifications for food additives (JECFA) - Endorsement and revision of maximum levels for food additives - Alignment of food additive provisions with the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA) - Guidelines for the food safety assessment of cell-based foods
CCFL49	8	5/8	- Precautionary Allergen Labelling (PAL) - Country of Origin/Country of Harvest Labelling - Endorsement of Labelling Provisions in Draft Codex Standards - Food Labelling in Emergencies - General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985) Amendments

4.2. Preparation for Codex Committees

Preparation for the priority Codex committees followed a structured and coordinated process (**Figure 2**) designed to support effective regional engagement throughout the different stages of the Codex standard-setting process. For each priority committee and following the prioritization of agenda items, technical preparation began well in advance of the session through the establishment of Regional Expert Working Groups ([Annex II](#)), followed by the development of technical analyses, organization of regional coordination meetings, preparation of briefing materials and regional positions, support to Member Countries during committee sessions, and systematic follow-up of decisions and subsequent actions. This coordinated approach ensured that the Arab and Near East Regions were well prepared to contribute more effectively to technical discussions during committee proceedings.

Throughout the reporting period, the CCNE Secretariat, in close collaboration with GForSS and AIDSMO, implemented a range of regional coordination activities to strengthen Member Countries' engagement in priority Codex work. These activities included maintaining regular communication with National Codex Contact Points through dedicated coordination channels and targeted follow-up, facilitating regional consultations before and during Codex committee sessions, and organizing bilateral coordination meetings with other Codex regions to support dialogue, exchange of views, and the development of common positions on issues of mutual interest.



Figure 2: Regional coordination process for priority Codex committees.

Annex III provides a detailed breakdown of the scientific, technical and coordination activities undertaken in preparation for the priority Codex committee sessions. It summarizes key implementation indicators, including expert participation, technical analyses and presentations, regional coordination meetings, preparation of regional positions and Conference Room Documents (CRDs), and post-session follow-up. Collectively, these indicators illustrate the scale of the regional support provided under the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan, encompassing expert engagement, technical preparation, regional coordination, and committee follow-up.

Beyond these implementation outputs, the coordinated efforts of the Arab Codex Initiative also contributed to several significant regional outcomes and achievements across the priority Codex committees, further strengthening coordinated scientific engagement and regional participation in the Codex standard-setting process. A summary of these key outcomes is presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Key regional outcomes achieved through the Arab Codex Initiative.

Codex Committee	Key Regional Outcome	Contribution of the Arab Codex Initiative	Reference
CCFO29	Establishment of an EWG chaired by Syria and co-chaired by Australia, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and IOC to collect scientific data supporting the review of footnote b of section 3.2.3 of the Olive Oil Standard.	Coordinated regional discussions following CCNE12, supported the development of the regional proposal, and facilitated the operationalization of the EWG through scientific and technical support.	CCNE12 Report REP26/NE, para. 70 CCFO29 CRD13 and Report REP26/FO, para. 131
CCMAS45	Regional update presented to the Committee on the ongoing work to review and update regional commodity standards.	Preparation and submission of a CRD informing Members of the regional initiative and progress achieved.	CCMAS45 CRD20
CCFA56	Agreement to postpone endorsement of additives in the Regional Standard for Doogh, allowing further consideration by CCNE13.	Regional coordination and technical follow-up supported Iran's request, resulting in endorsement being deferred until the next CCNE session.	CCFA56 CRD36 and Report REP26/FA, para. 58
CCRVDF28	Adoption of MRLs for veterinary drugs in camelids.	Coordinated regional review and consensus-building supporting adoption of standards of particular importance to the Arab/Near East regions.	CAC49 Report REP26/CAC, para. 41
CCFL49	Consensus achieved on the Country of Origin/Country of Harvest provisions.	Extensive regional consultations enabled the development of a common regional position that contributed to consensus during CCFL and subsequent endorsement by CAC.	CCFL49 Report and CAC49 Report REP26/CAC, para. 127

4.3. Cross-cutting Activities: Support to EWGs of Regional Interest

As part of the implementation of the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan, dedicated scientific, technical and operational support was provided to Electronic Working Groups (EWGs) of regional interest (**Table 4**) to strengthen regional collaboration on priority technical issues extending beyond individual Codex committee sessions. Through close coordination between the CCNE Secretariat, GForSS, AIDSMO, and Member Countries, these activities facilitated the operation of the EWGs and contributed to the implementation of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027.

Table 4: Technical support provided to Electronic Working Groups (EWGs).

Working Group	Objective	Technical and Operational Support Provided	Key Outputs
EWG (CCNE12) on the Implementation of the Regional Work Plan (Lebanon/Libya)	Monitor implementation of the CCNE Regional Work Plan	Documentation and reporting of activities implemented under the Arab Codex Initiative and in support of the CCNE Secretariat to facilitate monitoring of the Regional Work Plan	First implementation progress report (September 2025–July 2026) to be shared with the EWG
EWG (CCNE12) on the review of completeness of the section on methods of analysis and sampling in regional commodity standards (Oman/Qatar)	Review and complete the sections on methods of analysis and sampling referenced in Codex CCNE standards	Technical facilitation to Oman as Chair of the EWG; preparation of background documents (EWG invitation, workplan); outreach and engagement to support expert registration.	Successful launch and operationalization of the EWG
EWG (CCFO29) on Olive Oil (Syria/Tunisia/Saudi Arabia)	Revision of the Standard for Olive Oil and Olive Pomace Oils	Technical support for establishment; preparation of welcome package; development of workplan; coordination with Codex Secretariat; support for member registration; drafting of correspondence; facilitation of meetings	Successful launch and operationalization of the EWG

5. Contribution to the Implementation of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027

The Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan was developed to operationalize and support the implementation of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027. Accordingly, the activities undertaken during the reporting period were designed to contribute directly to the strategic objectives, expected outputs, and priority actions identified in the Regional Work Plan. **Table 5** presents the alignment between the activities implemented under the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan and the corresponding priorities of the CCNE Regional Work Plan, together with the principal achievements and outputs delivered during the reporting period. This alignment demonstrates how the Initiative has contributed to advancing the implementation of the Regional Work Plan through coordinated scientific, technical, and regional cooperation activities.

Table 5: Alignment of the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan with the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027.

Strategic Objectives	Regional Goals	Outputs	Main activities	Relevant activities of the Arab Codex Initiative	Key achievements for the reporting period
Strategic Goal 1: Respond to Members' needs for protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade in an evolving global landscape by developing science-based standards and related texts	1. Reflecting Near East priorities in Codex texts through science-based contributions	1.1. Approved mechanism for priority setting	Conduct annual regional surveys to identify national and shared priorities, guided by regional standards and relevant references	Apply a quantitative assessment framework to set priorities	Quantitative priority-setting framework developed and applied: - 5 surveys shared with National Codex Contact Points - 5 priority Codex committees - 31 priority items
			Identify priority list for 2026–2027		
		1.2 Regular and effective data exchange/collection on food safety issues	Encourage Member Countries to collect data through capacity-building programs and workshops	Follow-up calls for data, support regional response and organize workshops to this end	- Regional mechanism for coordinated responses to Codex calls for data established; - Capacity-building workshops scheduled for the next reporting period
			Encourage Member Countries to establish specialized national expert networks	Forming regional working groups and urging countries to participate in their work by nominating specialized national experts	- 5 Regional Expert Working Groups established. - 80 experts nominated by 14 Member Countries and 3 observers (AIDSMO, GSO).

		1.3 Enhanced capacity of Member Countries to submit Codex proposals	Support countries in submitting proposals to Codex Secretariat via training workshops for Codex contact points and national committees	Support new work proposals by providing necessary technical advice	Technical support provided for the development of two major Codex initiatives: - EWG on olive oil data collection under CCFO - Advancement of the new work on the Standard for Liquid Pasteurized Camel Milk under CCMMP
Strategic Goal 2: Enhance Codex work management systems and practices that support the effective and efficient development of standards and related texts	2. Strengthen participation and inclusiveness of Near East countries in Codex activities	2.1 Strengthened national Codex structures	Complete establishment of national Codex structures where needed	#	#
			Exchange of experiences among national Codex committees	Organizing coordination meetings, preparing harmonized positions and facilitating the exchange of experiences through the organization of regional forums	8 coordination meetings organized during the 2026 Codex cycle
		2.2 New delegates and participants trained and guided	Develop and implement a regional training/guidance program	Development of Electronic Courses (E-Course)	An e-learning course on the Codex standard-setting process (developed by GForSS) was made available to regional experts, with continuous technical

					training and mentoring provided throughout the work of the Regional Expert Working Groups
			Promote the regional Codex guidance manual	#	#
		2.3 Notable increase in participation in electronic working groups and Codex committees	Encourage all members to join at least one working group	Objective of the regional working groups	Regional participation in Codex EWG strengthened through the mobilization of experts to contribute to priority international work, (e.g. CCFO29 EWG on olive oil data collection, CAC49 EWG on New Food Sources and Production Systems (NFPS), CCFA56 EWG on Cell-Based Cultured Media, etc.)
			Link committee participation to national priorities and involve national experts in working groups	Apply a quantitative assessment framework to set priorities	A quantitative prioritization framework linked committee participation to national and regional priorities, guiding the establishment of 5 Regional Expert Working Groups and the mobilization of relevant national experts

		2.4 Resources needed for participation in Codex activities are facilitated	Find ways to secure donor support	Support provided through the Arab Codex Initiative	The Arab Codex Initiative mobilized technical and financial resources to facilitate the participation of experts and Member Countries in priority Codex activities
		2.5 Digital tools for regional coordination adopted	Establish a regional online forum in collaboration with Codex Secretariat	Making available and exchanging all documents, working papers and reports through the Arab Codex Initiative	Digital information-sharing platform operationalized to provide Member Countries with timely access to Codex documents, technical analyses, coordination materials, and meeting recordings and reports.
Strategic Goal 4: Maximize the impact of Codex by increasing the visibility and use of standards	4. Increase alignment of Codex texts in Near East countries	4.1 Degree of alignment with Codex texts in the region measured	Conduct a survey on alignment of national standards and technical regulations with Codex texts	#	#
			Organize regional workshops in collaboration with Codex Secretariat to present results and identify possible actions	#	#
			Organize meetings with relevant organizations in the League of Arab States	The implementation of the activities of the Arab Codex Initiative	Implementation of all activities under the Arab Codex Initiative was

			Determine the extent to which Arab standards rely on Codex texts	is coordinated and supervised by the Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO)	closely coordinated with AIDSMO and GSO, ensuring strategic alignment, effective regional coordination, and engagement with relevant regional organizations (3 follow-up meetings)
			Develop a timeline and geographic plan for forums, seminars, and awareness activities	Proposed activities within the action plan of the Arab Codex Initiative	- Implementation was adapted to regional circumstances, with priority given to virtual activities - Regional forums remain a priority for the next implementation cycle
			Support regional initiatives to develop regional and international standards	Support new work proposals by providing necessary technical advice	Technical support provided for the development of two major Codex initiatives: - EWG on olive oil data collection under CCFO - Advancement of the new work on the Standard for Liquid Pasteurized Camel Milk under CCMMP

		4.2 Regional countries' capacity to understand and apply new Codex texts built	Organize a seminar before and after each priority Codex committee meeting to review outcomes and identify topics of interest for follow-up	Hold regional coordination meetings in preparation for the meetings, review their results, identify issues of concern for follow-up and coordinate subsequent steps	8 regional coordination meetings were conducted for all 5 priority Codex committees, supporting regional position development, review of committee outcomes, and coordination of follow-up actions
		4.3 Codex standards integrated through a "One Health" approach	Conduct joint national workshops with trade/agriculture/health/environment sectors on Codex texts	#	#
	Assessing the progress made in the implementation of the action plan	Follow-up Working Group – A working group for monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan has been established.	Preparation of progress reports on the implementation of the action plan Reporting to the meetings of the near East region Committee CCNE	Preparing post-meeting reports, making recommendations, coordinating with the EWG established for this purpose and providing it with updates and outputs	- 8 post-meeting reports prepared - 1 consolidated implementation report developed - Reports submitted to support the CCNE EWG on implementation of the Regional Work Plan

Overall, the implementation of the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan demonstrates a high level of alignment with the priorities established under the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027. While several activities represent ongoing, multi-year efforts extending beyond the present reporting period, the achievements documented in this report illustrate substantial progress in strengthening regional coordination, scientific engagement, capacity development, and effective participation of Member Countries in the Codex Alimentarius process.

6. Priorities for the Next Reporting Period

Building on the foundations established during the 2025–2026 reporting period, the next implementation cycle will focus on consolidating the coordination mechanisms, technical networks, and regional partnerships developed under the Arab Codex Initiative. Particular attention will be placed on continuing to support the implementation of the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027 and assisting the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE), under the leadership of Oman as Regional Coordinator, in addressing emerging regional priorities and preparing for the next Codex work cycle.

Priority activities will include continued coordination of Regional Expert Working Groups and participation in Codex Electronic Working Groups (EWGs), preparation for priority Codex committee sessions, implementation of targeted capacity-building activities, follow-up of regional calls for data, and the development of scientific analyses, discussion papers, regional positions, and technical submissions on issues of strategic importance to the region.

A particular focus will be placed on supporting preparations for the Thirteenth Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE13), including the identification of regional priorities, development of new work proposals and discussion papers, monitoring progress in implementing the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027, and strengthening coordination among Member Countries. Through these activities, the Arab Codex Initiative will continue to provide an operational platform for regional cooperation, enhancing the scientific contribution of Member Countries and reinforcing the Arab/Near East Region's coordinated and effective participation in the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Annex I. List of CCNE and Arab Countries

Country	Entity
❖ People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	Algerian Center for Quality Control and Packaging
❖ Arab Republic of Egypt	Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality (EOS)
❖ Federal Republic of Somalia	Somali Bureau of Standards (SBS)
❖ Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization
❖ Islamic Republic of Iran	Iran National Standards Organization (INSO)
❖ Islamic Republic of Mauritania	National Institute of Public Health Research (INRSP)
❖ Kingdom of Bahrain	Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC)
❖ Kingdom of Morocco	National Office of Food Safety (ONSSA)
❖ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA)
❖ Republic of the Sudan	Sudanese Standards and Metrology Organization (SSMO)
❖ Republic of Djibouti	Djibouti Agency for Standardization and Quality
❖ Republic of Iraq	Central Organization for Standardization and Quality Control (COSQC)
❖ Republic of Lebanon	Lebanese Standards Institution (LIBNOR)
❖ Republic of Tunisia	Technical Center for the Food Industry (CTAA)
❖ Republic of Yemen	Yemen Standardization, Metrology and Quality Control Organization (YSMO)
❖ State of Kuwait	Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN)
❖ State of Libya	Libyan National Center for Standardization and Metrology (LNCSM)
❖ State of Palestine	Palestinian Standards Institution (PSI)
❖ State of Qatar	Qatar General Organization for Standardization
❖ Sultanate of Oman	Food Safety and Quality Center
❖ Syrian Arab Republic	Syrian Arab Organization for Standardization and Metrology (SASMO)
❖ United Arab Emirates	Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology (MoIAT)

Annex II. Regional Expert Working Groups and Participating Experts.

CCFO29 Regional Expert Working Group		
Technical Facilitators	Countries	Experts (Name and Affiliation)
GFoRSS Team - Dr. Ruba Goussous - Ms. Nayra Elsherief (Operational Coordinator) CCNE Team - Eng. Asmaa Alhashmi	Egypt	- Reda Mohamed (EOS) - Esraa Mousa (NFSA) - Reda Ibrahim (CFI) - Mohamed Abdelmoneim (Industry) - Ibrahim Abdelhamed (Industry)
	Iraq	Usama Saleh (Private Sector)
	Jordan	- Hula Assem (JSMO) - Lana Ghafari (JFDA) - Jawhar Saleh (Ministry of Agriculture)
	Lebanon	Mariam Eid (Ministry of Agriculture)
	Libya	Ramdan Mokhtar (LNCSM)
	Qatar	- Mahmoud Abdelkhabier (Ministry of Health) - Amera Jobran (Ministry of Health) - Zeina Abdelhalem (Ministry of Health)
	Sudan	Amal Ziada (Industrial Research and Consultancy Center (IRCC))
	Syria	- Abeer Jawhr (Ministry of Agriculture) - Balsam Jreikous (Tishreen University) - Mohamed Alshehabi (General Commission for Scientific Agriculture Research)
	Tunisia	- Issam Krid (CTAA) - Sana Jaballah (CTAA) - Melika Hermassi (CTAA)
	Yemen	- Majed Mahyoob (YSMO) - Abdullah Ahmed (Industry)

CCMAS45 Regional Expert Working Group

Technical Facilitators	Countries	Experts (Name and Affiliation)
GForSS Team - Dr. Amine Kassouf - Ms. Nayra Elsherief (Operational Coordinator) CCNE Team - Eng. Asma Alhashmi - Eng. Hilal Khamis	Bahrain	- Mariam Sanad (Ministry of Health) - Heba Mohamed (Ministry of Health)
	Egypt	- Yasser Mustafa (QCAP) - Ahmed Hamed (Industry) - Mariam Onsy (EOS)
	Iraq	Rawya Mahmood Yousif (Ministry of trade)
	Libya	Hadi Elalem (LNCSM)
	Oman	Tahani Alkhadhuri (Food Safety and Quality Center)
	Qatar	Mahmoud Abdelkhabier (Ministry of Health)
	Syria	Yahya Alkhaled (SASMO)
	Tunisia	- Sana Jaballah (CTAA) - Narjes Mhajib (CTAA)
	UAE	Hanan Fouad (MOAIT)
	Yemen	Qasem Saleh Farhan (YSMO)

CCRVDF28 Regional Expert Working Group

Technical Facilitators	Countries	Experts (Name and Affiliation)
GForSS Team - Dr. Karima Zouine - Ms. Nayra Elsherief (Operational Coordinator) CCNE Team - Eng. Asmaa Alhashmi	Bahrain	- Qasim Merza (Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture) - Batool Abd-alnaby Naser (Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture)
	Egypt	- Lamia Riyad (QCAP) - Radwa Mohamed (National Nutrition Institute) - Reda Mohamed (EOS)
	Iraq	Rawya Mahmood (Ministry of trade)
	Jordan	Tamador Maayah (JFDA)
	Libya	Hadi Elalem (LNCSM)

	Morocco	▪ Karima Zouine (ONSA)
	Oman	▪ Omar Alfarsi (Food Safety and Quality Center) ▪ Hossam Saleh (Food Safety and Quality Center)
	Qatar	▪ Aymen Mamlouk (Ministry of Health) ▪ David Nagi Iskander Awad (Ministry of Health)
	Syria	▪ Abeer Haddad (Ministry of Agriculture)
	Tunisia	▪ Issam Krid (CTAA) ▪ Malika Hermassi (CTAA)
	UAE	▪ Mohamed Abdelwahed (ADAFSA)
	Yemen	▪ Majed Mahyoob (YSMO)
CCFA56 Regional Expert Working Group		
Technical Facilitators	Counties	Experts (Name and Affiliation)
GForSS Team ▪ Dr. Wiem Guissouma ▪ Ms. Nayra Elsherief (Operational Coordinator) CCNE Team ▪ Eng. Rajaa Alrhabi ▪ Eng. Naela Alhinai	Bahrain	▪ Heba Mohamed (Ministry of Health) ▪ Nujood Almuqahwi (Ministry of Health)
	Egypt	▪ Basma Soliman (NFSA) ▪ Ahmed Hamed (Industry) ▪ Noha Mohamed Attia (EOS)
	Iraq	▪ Rawya Mahmood (Ministry of Trade)
	Jordan	▪ Najlaa Ahmad (JSMO) ▪ Tamador Maayah (JFDA)
	Libya	▪ Hadi ELALEM (LNCSM)
	Oman	▪ Mahmood Albalushi (Food Safety and quality Center) ▪ Abeer Hamad (Food Safety and quality Center) ▪ Fatma Arymei (Food Safety and quality Center)
	Qatar	▪ Khaled Qaddoura (Ministry of Health) ▪ Ousama Abubaker (Ministry of Health)
	Syria	▪ Adnan Odeh (Al-Qalamoun University) ▪ Balsam Jreikous (Tishreen University)

	Tunisia	- Narjess Mhajbi (CTAA) - Melika Hermassi (CTAA)
	Yemen	Munya Mohammed (YSMO)
CCFL49 Regional Expert Working Group		
Technical Facilitators	Country	Experts (Name and Affiliation)
GForSS Team - Dr. Mustafa Sultan - Ms. Nayra Elsherief (Operational Coordinator) CCNE Team - Eng. Naela Alhinai	Bahrain	- Sara Saad Helal (Ministry of Health) - Sara Alsafar (Ministry of Health)
	Egypt	- Sausan Galal (National Nutrition institute) - Marwa Nabil (EOS) - Zeinab Abdelrazik (EOS)
	Iraq	Rawya Mahmood (Ministry of Trade)
	Jordan	Joumana Abdal-jabar (JFDA)
	Libya	- Hadi Elalem (LNCSM) - Mohamed Shanbesha (LNCSM)
	Oman	- Amal alhumaimi (Food Safety and Quality Center) - Afrah Alghelani (Food Safety and Quality Center) - Fatma Alaremi (Food Safety and Quality Center)
	Qatar	- Nessma Shannak (Ministry of Health) - Mahdy Altureka (Ministry of Health)
	Syria	Waseem Albalkh (Ministry of Industry and Economy)
	Tunisia	Issam Krid (CTAA)
	UAE	Jehad AlBayari (ADAFSA)
	Yemen	Hassan Saeed Salem (YSMO)

Annex III. Summary of Regional Coordination and Technical Support Activities by Priority Codex Committee

Codex Committee	Priority Agenda Items	Regional Expert Working Group	Key Deliverables	Supporting Resources
CCFO29	• Item 3: Activities of international organizations relevant to the work of CCFO • Item 5: Proposed draft revisions to Codex standards on fats and oils to reduce trans-fatty acid (TFA) intake • Item 8.1: Update on the progress for the collection of scientific data and information in relation to PPP and 1,2-DAG • Item 8.2: Development of a framework for data collection on Section 3.2.3 footnote (c) (decision tree) – Follow up on the CAC47 directive • Item 9.3: Discussion paper - revision to the Standard for named vegetable oils (CXS 210-1999) to adjust stearic acid content for high oleic acid sunflower seed oil	❖ Meetings Conducted: (3) - 1st January 27, 2026 - 2nd January 29, 2026 - 3rd February 2, 2026 ❖ Member Countries: (10) ❖ Experts Participated: (23)	✓ (5) Technical analysis ✓ (5) Presentations ✓ Regional position ✓ Conference Room Document (CRD) ✓ Discussion Paper	Analysis of Agenda Items: CCFO - Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS) Codex webpage (Discussion Paper): CCFO29/CRD13 (CRD): CCFO29/CRD33 YouTube: CCNE_45th_Coordination_Meeting_Youtube Coordination Meeting report: AR-45-Meeting_Report_VF.pdf
CCMAS45	• Item 3.1: Methods of analysis and sampling submitted by Codex subsidiary bodies • Item 4.1: Review of methods of analysis in commodity standards (fish and fishery products, fats and	❖ Meetings Conducted: (3) - 1st February 23, 2026 - 2nd February 26, 2026 - 3rd March 3, 2026 ❖ Member Countries: (10)	✓ (8) Technical analysis ✓ (8) Presentations ✓ Regional position ✓ Conference Room Document (CRD)	Analysis of Agenda Items: CCMAS - Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS) Codex webpage (CRD):

	oils, cereals, pulses and legumes and derived products) • Item 5.1: Fruit juices workable package • Item 5.3: Sugars and honey workable package • Item 6: Methods of analysis for precautionary allergen labelling • Item 7.1: Review of sampling plans in CXS 234-1999 • Item 7.2: Sampling plans for bulk materials/heterogenous lots including mycotoxins • Item 8: Harmonization of names and format for principles identified in CXS 234	❖ Experts Participated: (14)		CCMAS45/CRD30 YouTube: CCNE 46th Coordination Meeting YouTube Coordination Meeting report: AR-46th-Meeting-Report.pdf
CCRVDF28	• Item 6: MRLs for veterinary drugs arising from JECFA98 (2024) MRLs for fumagillin dicyclohexylamine (DCH) in fish (fillet) and honey (at Step 7) • Item 7.1: Extrapolated MRLs for different combinations of compounds/tissues (at Step 4) • Item 7.2: Other matters related to the extrapolation of maximum residue limits of veterinary drugs in foods to one or more species. Extrapolation of MRLs for veterinary drugs to edible offal tissues other than liver and kidney.	❖ Meetings Conducted: (6) - 1st March 5, 2026 - 2nd March 10, 2026 (one to one) - 3rd March 11, 2026 - 4th March 13, 2026 (one to one) - 5th March 16, 2026 - 6th April 30, 2026 (Follow up) ❖ Member Countries: (12) ❖ Experts Participated: (18)	✓ (7) Technical analysis ✓ (7) Presentations ✓ Regional position ✓ Conference Room Document (CRD) ✓ Summary of decisions	Analysis of Agenda Items: CCRVDF - Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GForSS) Codex webpage (CRD): CCRVDF28/CRD17 YouTube recording: CCNE 47th Coordination Meeting YouTube Coordination Meeting report: AR 47th Meeting Report.pdf

	• Item 8.1: Guidance for actions that competent authorities could take upon detection of residues of veterinary drugs in food of animal origin caused by the unavoidable and unintentional carryover of veterinary drugs in animal feed (at Step 4) • Item 8.2: Action levels for different combinations of compounds/tissues (at Step 4) • Item 9: Coordination of work between CCPR and CCRVDF • Item 10: Priority list of veterinary drugs for evaluation or re-evaluation by JECFA			Summary of Decisions REWG-Summary of Decisions Report
CCFA56	• Item 3.(b): Draft specifications for additives (JECFA) • Item 4.(a): Endorsement/revision of maximum levels • Item 4.(b): Alignment of food additive provisions • Item 5.(b): GSFA proposals (new/revisions) • Item 8: Standard for baker's yeast • Item 10: Cell-based food safety assessment guideline	❖ Meetings Conducted: (3) - 1st March 24, 2026 - 2nd March 26, 2026 - 3rd April 5, 2026 ❖ Member Countries: (10) ❖ Experts Participated: (19)	✓ (6) Technical analysis ✓ (6) Presentations ✓ Regional position ✓ Conference Room Document (CRD) ✓ Bilateral technical consultation with Singapore on the proposed new work for cell-based food safety assessment guidelines	Analysis of Agenda Items: CCFA - Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GForSS) Codex webpage (CRD): CCFA56/CRD37 YouTube recording: CCNE_48th_Coordination_Meeting_YouTube Coordination Meeting report: AR-48th-Meeting-Report.pdf

CCFL49	• Item 2.1: The use of “country of harvest” in addition to the mandatory declaration of country of origin in food labelling of spices • Item 4: Consideration of labelling provisions in draft Codex standards (endorsement) • Item 5: Annex to the General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods (CXS 1-1985): Guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling (PAL) (Step 7) • Item 6: Amendments to the General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods (CXS 1-1985): Provisions relevant to joint presentation and multipack formats (Step 4) • Item 7: Guidelines on application of food labelling provisions in emergencies (Step 4)	❖ Meetings Conducted: (3) - 1st April 9, 2026 - 2nd April 27, 2026 - 3rd April 30, 2026 ❖ Member Countries: (11) ❖ Experts Participated: (18)	✓ (5) Technical analysis ✓ (5) Presentations ✓ Regional position	Analysis of Agenda Items: Agenda Item 2.1 Agenda Item 4 Agenda Item 5 Agenda Item 6 Agenda Item 7 YouTube recording: CCNE 49th Coordination Meeting YouTube Coordination Meeting report: AR-49th-Meeting-Report-vf.pdf
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