



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

**CODEX
ALIMENTARIUS**
INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2031





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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
World Health Organization
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Preface



The *Codex Alimentarius Commission strategic plan, 2026–2031*, together with its monitoring framework, is the culmination of work undertaken over several years by the Codex community through a structured and inclusive process initiated at the eighty-fourth session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC84), and carried through to the forty-seventh session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC47) and CAC48. Members and Observers contributed through written comments and regional consultations, ensuring that a broad range of perspectives informed the strategic plan's goals and outcomes.

The monitoring framework provides a solid foundation for tracking progress and may be adjusted as experience is gained during implementation.

The strategic plan offers Codex a coherent direction for the 2026–2031 period. Its four strategic goals establish a practical framework for the Commission's work over the next six years.

I am particularly pleased that in developing this strategic plan, Members and Observers sought to ensure that the work we do in the Codex Alimentarius Commission continues to adapt to an evolving environment. It recognizes that the global landscape is changing and standards that protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade need to evolve accordingly. In addressing this, we must continue to ensure we are underpinning our work with science and that we are also aware of future challenges which may impact food safety, quality and trade.

The strategic plan also gives particular attention to improving efficiency and effectiveness while remaining true to our core values.

We cannot work alone, and the strategic plan recognizes the importance of Codex within a wider international architecture that needs to address, collectively, shared global challenges. As reflected in the theme of CAC48, “together”, which resonated strongly with delegates: it is only through collaboration that we can fully realize our goals and ensure that Codex standards make the impact they were designed for.

The strategic plan reaffirms the commitment of Codex Members and Observers to a science-based and responsive standard-setting environment, and to working together – and with others outside the Codex family – in an inclusive and transparent manner, towards standards that meet the diverse needs of countries, protect consumer health, and foster fair and transparent food trade.

As we implement this plan, I encourage all who engage with Codex – delegates, experts, and partners across the international system – to make use of the direction the strategic plan provides, and to continue contributing to Codex work with commitment and purpose. This publication is intended to support that collective endeavour and to guide our efforts as Codex enters a new phase of its standard-setting mission of protecting everyone, everywhere.



Allan Azegele
Chairperson, Codex Alimentarius Commission

Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031



Vision

Where the world comes together to create food safety and quality standards to protect everyone everywhere.

Mission

Protect consumer health and promote fair practices in the food trade by setting international, science-based food safety and quality standards.

Core values

The Codex Alimentarius Commission re-commits itself to the following core values, which will guide its work to fulfil its strategic vision:

- Inclusiveness
- Collaboration
- Consensus buildingⁱ
- Transparency

Introduction

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) was established by FAO and WHO in 1963. Today it has 188 Member Countries and one Member Organization. In addition, 243 intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations are accredited as Observers.

The Commission's statutory purposeⁱⁱ is the development of international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade. With increased globalization and increases in the volumes of food traded internationally, the Commission must also be capable of responding in a timely manner to the impacts of emerging trends and challenges to consumer health protection and fair practices in the food trade, to the extent that steps to address those impacts are amenable to standardization.

In conducting its work, the Commission takes into account, where appropriate, the relevant policies, strategies and guidelines of FAO and WHO, and of other intergovernmental organizations consistent with fulfilling its unique purpose to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade through the development of international food standards. Codex works closely on matters of common interest with such organizations, as appropriate.

The objective of this strategic plan is to advance the statutory purpose of the Codex Alimentarius Commission during the period from 2026 to 2031. This document does not supersede, extend, or contradict the Codex statutory purpose or provisions of the *Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual*.

Drivers for change

The environment in which Codex operates continues to evolve. Both the FAO and WHO strategic directions on food safety acknowledge the importance of food control systems, based on scientific evidence, in achieving the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals. They also recognize the importance of agrifood systems in responding to major global drivers ranging from environmental changes and digital advances to emerging hazards in the food chain and the approaches to mitigating these challenges, such as food system transformation and promotion of the One Health approach.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ Consensus should be based on the "Measures to facilitate consensus", included in the *Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual*.

ⁱⁱ See the "Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission", Article 1(a) of the *Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual*.

ⁱⁱⁱ See the *FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031*, the *FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031*, and the *WHO global strategy for food safety 2022–2030*.

The One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022–2026) of the FAO, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), WHO and World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) quadripartite also highlights the importance of a One Health approach to food safety.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) acknowledges the centrality of Codex standard setting in the multilateral system in the context of emerging global challenges.

All these initiatives point to the important role food safety plays to support public health, food security and trade and the need to integrate foresight and preparedness for the emerging issues to come. They further highlight that food safety has a critical role in the successful transformation of the agrifood system in order to meet the needs of the world.

The role of Codex

The Commission must maintain a steady focus on its statutory purpose. It must be sufficiently capable of being proactive, flexible and responding in a timely manner to emerging issues that impact on food safety and quality^{iv} with the aim of protecting consumer health and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.

^{iv} The consideration of other factors in the Codex standard setting process is governed by the “Statements of principle concerning the role of science in the Codex decision-making process and the extent to which other factors are taken into account” in the *Codex Procedural Manual*. Consensus should be based on the “Measures to facilitate consensus” included in the *Codex Procedural Manual*.



The system for Codex standards elaboration has served well in the more than 60 years that Codex has been in existence. The system is anchored in the process described in its procedural manual with the product being Codex standards, guidelines and codes of practice, commonly referred to as Codex texts. The Commission, as risk manager, establishes that Codex texts, when incorporated into national legislation by Members, contribute to ensuring that food is safe and can be traded. The scientific basis that underpins Codex texts is fundamental to ensuring that Codex maintains its pre-eminence as the international reference for food safety and fair practices in food trade, as well as the primary source of science-based food standards for many countries and recognized by the WTO.

As we move into the future, Codex can strengthen the pivotal role it plays in supporting the advancement of global goals by developing international food standards. Collaboration across the multilateral system for trade and food offers Codex and its members numerous benefits, including enhanced food safety, strengthened partnerships, effective risk communication, regulatory harmonization, and the ability to address complex global challenges.

Codex texts can provide an enabling environment which facilitates the uptake and implementation of policies and programmes to address global challenges around areas such as climate change, environment, sustainability, and trade. In doing so, Codex recognizes that the inherent international diversity of food systems means that different values or solutions may be relevant in different national or regional situations or contexts.



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

- 1.1 Foresight and horizon-scanning activities are used to support the identification of issues likely to impact food safety, quality and trade.
- 1.2 Scientific advice that addresses the needs identified by CAC and subsidiary bodies is primarily provided by FAO and WHO and their joint scientific advisory bodies, informed by globally representative data and appropriate international expertise and methodology.
- 1.3 Scientific advice is used by CAC and subsidiary bodies in line with Codex risk analysis principles.
- 1.4 Codex standards and related texts are developed, reviewed and adopted in a timely, transparent and inclusive manner.

Strategic goal

2

Enhance Codex work management systems and practices that support the effective and efficient development of standards and related texts

- 2.1** Work management systems and practices are refined and enhanced, leveraging digital and other new technologies.
- 2.2** Mechanisms to prioritize proposals to develop new or revise existing standards and related texts are in place.

v. See “Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission”. Article 1 of the *Codex Procedural Manual*.



- 2.3 Chairpersons, coordinators, host secretariats, Codex contact points and delegates are supported in their respective roles and their capabilities are developed and enhanced.
- 2.4 Codex Members are enabled to participate actively and sustainably throughout the standard-setting process.

Strategic goal

3

Strengthen relationships with relevant international organizations, promoting a coordinated approach to address global challenges

- 3.1 The mutual understanding of the roles of CAC and relevant international organizations in relation to global challenges is improved and is supported by ongoing consultation between the parties.
- 3.2 Gaps in approaches to addressing global challenges that Codex could contribute to are identified through targeted engagement with relevant international organizations.
- 3.3 The contribution of CAC to the transition towards sustainable and resilient food systems, is identified and considered.
- 3.4 Contributions from relevant international organizations throughout the development of Codex texts are encouraged.

Strategic goal

4

Maximize the impact of Codex by increasing the visibility and use of standards

- 4.1 The profile and recognition of Codex as the international food standards setting body for protecting consumer health and ensuring fair practices in food trade is enhanced.
- 4.2 The use of Codex texts in the context of integrative approaches such as the One Health approach is promoted.
- 4.3 Harmonization through the increased use of Codex texts in establishing national food control systems and regulations is advocated for.



Monitoring framework for the Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031



 Strategic goal	 Outcome	 Indicator (Indicators carried over from the current M & E Framework are marked with*)	 Means of verification	 Baseline^{vi}
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	1.1 Foresight and horizon-scanning activities are used to support the identification of issues likely to impact food safety, quality and trade.	Indicator 1.1.1 Proportion of sessions in which Codex committees have used foresight and horizon scanning to inform work planning and prioritization.	References on the use of foresight and horizon-scanning reports in Codex committee (general subject and commodity) reports and related working documents including project documents, discussion papers, and written submissions to the committee. Foresight and horizon-scanning is considered to include future trends and emerging issues.	n/a
	1.2 Scientific advice that addresses the needs identified by CAC and subsidiary bodies is primarily provided by FAO and WHO and their joint scientific advisory bodies, informed by globally representative data and appropriate international expertise and methodology.	Narrative report	The Codex Secretariat will work in collaboration with FAO and WHO on a mechanism to track requests for scientific advice (reported upon after the first biennium). The narrative report will include how scientific advice was provided and issues hindering the timeliness of provision of scientific advice and include inputs from Codex committee chairpersons on availability of scientific advice.	n/a
	1.3 Scientific advice is used by CAC and subsidiary bodies in line with Codex risk analysis principles.	Indicator 1.3.1 Number of quantitative standards adopted or revoked by CAC.	CAC reports/scorecard - Total number of quantitative standards being adopted or revoked every year.	n/a ^{vii}
	1.4 Codex standards and related texts are developed, reviewed and adopted in a timely, transparent and inclusive manner.	*Indicator 1.4.1 Time taken for approved new work to result in revised or new Codex texts.	CAC reports - Percentage of non-numerical new and revised Codex texts adopted within 5 years.	2023: 70%
2 Enhance Codex work management systems and practices that support the effective and efficient development of standards and related texts	2.1 Work management systems and practices are refined and enhanced, leveraging digital and other new technologies.	Indicator 2.1.1 Percentage of standards published in English within one month following adoption by CAC.	Online repository of Codex documents	n/a ^{viii}
		Indicator 2.1.2 Percentage of standards published in all working languages within one year following adoption by CAC.	Online repository of Codex documents	n/a ^{viii}
		*Indicator 2.1.3 Proportion of working documents (WDs), including reports of joint FAO/WHO expert bodies, distributed at least two months before the meeting, consistent with the <i>Codex Procedural Manual</i>	Online repository of Codex documents - Percentage of WDs that were circulated at least two months prior to the start of the respective committee session in English, French and Spanish	2023: 36% English; 20% French; 21% Spanish.

vi Baseline data, where available, are provided for 2023, the last year for which data have been collated.

vii While this was not included in the monitoring of the *Codex Strategic Plan 2020–2025*, data on adoptions and revocations are available in the annual reports of CAC.

viii Data is being collected following CAC47 to serve as a baseline.

Strategic goal	Outcome	Indicator (Indicators carried over from the current M & E Framework are marked with*)	Means of verification	Baseline
	2.2 Mechanisms to prioritize proposals to develop new or revise existing standards and related texts are in place.	Narrative report	Narrative report on Codex committees (general subject and commodity) establishment and use of prioritization mechanisms in their reports, working documents, or information documents on prioritization process.	n/a
	2.3 Chairpersons, coordinators, host secretariats, Codex contact points (CCPs) and delegates are supported in their respective roles and their capabilities are developed and enhanced.	Indicator 2.3.1 Number of people trained by the Codex Secretariat every year in support of engagement in Codex work.	Track engagement in Codex work through records of attendance to webinars, the Codex Online Commenting System (OCS) trainings and EWG trainings organized by or in collaboration with the Codex Secretariat and disaggregated where possible.	n/a
		Indicator 2.3.2 Number of people who undertook the Codex e-learning course	FAO Academy records disaggregated where possible.	n/a
		*Indicator 2.3.3 Satisfaction ratings on meeting efficiency, role of chairs and host and Codex secretariats.	Satisfaction surveys following Codex committee meetings	2023: For the majority of questions, over 85 percent of respondents indicated "agree/strongly agree" or "satisfied/very satisfied" with the organization and implementation of the meetings
	2.4 Codex Members are enabled to participate actively and sustainably throughout the standard-setting process.	Indicator 2.4.1 Number of Members contributing to Codex work through: (a) replies to circular letters (CLs), (b) participation in EWGs, (c) participation in Codex meetings.	OCS/conference room documents (CRDs) (a Member will be counted if they replied to at least two CLs during the biennium). EWG records - participation is defined as registration to at least one EWG during the biennium, detailing the participation by Codex region. List of participants in Codex meeting reports, disaggregated by committee and income classification	CLs 2023: 70 (37%) EWGs 2023: 86 (46%) Participation: Average 2020–2023: CAC 154; General subject committees 71
		Indicator 2.4.2 Number of different Members who chaired or co-chaired EWGs during the biennium	EWG records - The Codex Secretariat will report on the number of Members who chaired or co-chaired at least one EWG during the biennium, disaggregated by region.	n/a

 Strategic goal	 Outcome	 Indicator (Indicators carried over from the current M & E Framework are marked with*)	 Means of verification	 Baseline
3 Strengthen relationships with relevant international organizations, promoting a coordinated approach to address global challenges	3.1 The mutual understanding of the roles of CAC and relevant international organizations in relation to global challenges is improved and is supported by ongoing consultation between the parties.	Indicator 3.1.1 Number of international organizations formally engaged by the Codex Secretariat through bilateral meetings, workshops, etc. during the biennium	Codex Secretariat records - A list of international organizations with whom the Codex Secretariat engaged and the nature of such engagement during the biennium (e.g. Participation in WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, and related meetings, meetings of other standard setting bodies e.g. International Organization for Standardization (ISO), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), etc.)	n/a
	3.2 Gaps in approaches to addressing global challenges that Codex could contribute to are identified through targeted engagement with relevant international organizations.	Indicator 3.2.1 Number of international organizations that have presented their work or provided inputs to codex committees, including through targeted consultations (which may include identification of gaps in approaches that Codex could contribute to)	Codex Committee (general subject and commodity) reports, working documents, and written submissions	n/a
	3.3 The contribution of CAC to the transition towards sustainable and resilient food systems, is identified and considered.	Narrative report	Such a report would be based on discussions captured in Codex committee (general subject and commodity) reports, working documents and new work proposals referencing sustainable and resilient food systems considerations - Noting the volume of work involved the Codex Secretariat is proposing to pilot the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to generate the narrative, and propose the indicator be further considered following the first round of reporting based on the pilot.	n/a
	3.4 Contributions from relevant international organizations throughout the development of Codex texts are encouraged.	Indicator 3.4.1 Number of relevant international organizations contributing to Codex work through: (a) replies to CLs, (b) participation in EWGs, (c) participation in Codex meetings.	OCS/CRDs (an Observer will be counted if they replied to at least two CLs during the biennium) EWG records - participation is defined as registration to at least one EWG during the biennium, detailing the participation by Codex region. List of participants in Codex meeting reports.	n/a
		Indicator 3.4.2 Number of Codex standards elaborated in cooperation with another international intergovernmental body or organization (as described in the <i>Procedural Manual</i> , Section 71, "Guidelines on cooperation between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and international intergovernmental organizations in the elaboration of standards and related texts").	CAC and Codex Committees reports	n/a

 Strategic goal	 Outcome	 Indicator (Indicators carried over from the current M & E Framework are marked with*)	 Means of verification	 Baseline
4 Maximize the impact of Codex by increasing the visibility and use of standards	4.1 The profile and recognition of Codex as the international food standards setting body for protecting consumer health and ensuring fair practices in food trade is enhanced.	*Indicator 4.1.1 Extent that Codex Members recognize Codex texts as meeting Members' priority food safety and quality needs.	Annual survey on the use and impact of Codex texts.	2023: 86% of Members considered Codex texts extremely or mostly useful in meeting their priority food safety and quality needs.
		Indicator 4.1.2 Codex' online presence.	Web analytics, including: visits to the Codex website, social media presence (likes, shares, followers, comments), AI generated reports on Codex online presence.	n/a
	4.2 The use of Codex texts in the context of integrative approaches such as the One Health approach is promoted.	Indicator 4.2.1 Number of references to the Codex Alimentarius in international policy instruments.	Due to the potential boundless scope of this indicator the Codex Secretariat proposes to pilot a monitoring approach which focuses on references to Codex in the annual high-level reports of the following international entities: FAO, WHO, WTO, WOA, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Quadripartite.	n/a
		Narrative report	A narrative report on references to and promotion of the Codex Alimentarius in international policy instruments, and Codex Secretariat participation in international entities' meetings, as a means of promoting use of Codex texts in integrative approaches.	n/a
	4.3 Harmonization through the increased use of Codex texts in establishing national food control systems and regulations is advocated for.	*Indicator 4.3.1 Degree that Codex texts are used by Members.	Annual survey on the use and impact of Codex texts; and a narrative report on the use of notifications and/or specific trade concerns (STCs) to better understand the relevance of Codex standards in international trade.	2023: 92% of Members used Codex texts as a baseline to inform Member's newly developed food legislation, policies and/or regulations



Notes

1 FAO and WHO. 2025.
*Codex Alimentarius Commission
Procedural Manual – Thirtieth edition*. Rome.
<https://doi.org/10.4060/cd4216en>







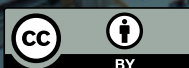
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FAO and WHO. 2026. *Codex Alimentarius Commission strategic plan, 2031-2026*.
Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.



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