

FAO/WHO CODEX TRUST FUND

KAZAKHSTAN

ACTIVITY 6.1.1

**NATIONAL POLICY ON CODEX
ALIMENTARIUS**

ASTANA

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ABBREVIATION

CAC	CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
CCEURO	COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE
CSEC MH RK	COMMITTEE FOR SANITARY AND EPIDEMIOLOGICAL CON OF HEALTH OF KAZAKHSTAN
FAO	FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
OECD	ORGANIZATION OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND AND E
OIE	WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH
SPS	SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES
TBT	TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE
WHO	WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WTO	WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Food safety plays a key role in maintaining and protecting public health. The work of Commission is based on scientific risk assessment, consistent with the health and safety requirements set by the World Trade Organization.

Despite the high importance of the Codex Alimentarius standards in the international arena, which ensure food safety, consumer health and trade transparency, unfortunately, little is known about them by the general population, including the producers of our country, with the exception of a narrow circle of specialists. But life constantly shows the need to develop such standards, again and again challenging food safety.

The National Policy on Codex Alimentarius has been prepared by the Kazakhstan Codex Alimentarius Group based on practical experience in the Codex Alimentarius.

This document will enable all concerned ministries and agencies, business operators and others to raise awareness of the role of Codex Alimentarius standards in food safety and fair - trade practices. The vast majority of foods that are traded internationally are covered by Codex standards. These standards contribute to the safety and development of international food trade.

The authors hope that the document will serve as an information tool not only for use within the country, but also for the countries of the post-Soviet space that intend to intensify the work of their countries in the Codex.

2. Goal of National Codex Policy

The purpose of this document is to help government agencies, the public, local food producers and business operators to realize the importance of working on the development, adoption and use of world Codex Alimentarius standards in order to increase their competitiveness in the international market, as well as improve food safety and, as a result, the health status of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan

3. What is Codex Alimentarius? Role of Codex Alimentarius standards in international food trade

International food trade and raw materials has grown enormously over the past two decades. Many countries, including the Republic of Kazakhstan, have a significant share of imported food products in the food market. In recent years, there has also been an increasing re-export of food raw materials and food products in many countries of the world. The current situation calls for the use of international standards and other documents developed on the basis of risk assessment and guaranteeing food safety and protecting public health.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) was formed in 1963 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) as part of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program. The purpose of this organization is to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair trade in food. The Codex Alimentarius Commission develops and approves international food standards, guidelines and instructions that govern their safety and quality in the world market. It is also realized that the use of Codex documents helps to ensure compliance with the conditions of “fair trade”.

Since the creation of the WTO in 1995, standards and other documents adopted by Codex have become international norms for food safety under the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement).

Thus, CAC plays a critical role in achieving the goals of the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement). These agreements complement each other and provide a solid basis of international rules for technical standards and regulations both at the national and

international levels. The Republic of Kazakhstan, as a member of the WTO, has signed both of these Agreements and, when making any decision regarding the safety and quality of food products, is obliged to consider the principles and provisions of these agreements.

The Codex is a joint independent intergovernmental body of FAO/WHO. 189 member countries and 1 EU member organization participate in its work. 235 so-called participants (observers) of the Codex also take part in the work of the Codex: 60 international government organizations (IGOs); 159 private (non-governmental) organizations (NGOs) representing international scientific organizations, international associations of producers, trade and consumers; 16 United Nations Organizations (UN). Participants/observers can express their opinion on any issues of the Codex, but cannot take part in decision-making. At this stage, to implement the mission of the Codex, there are 16 committees on general issues and individual goods or groups of goods. To address certain issues, temporary intergovernmental working groups may also be created.

The work is also carried out on a regional basis, so all participating countries, according to their preferences, are divided into 6 geographical regions of the world (Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and the Southwest Pacific Ocean). Regional work is led by FAO/WHO Regional Committees. The regional committees discuss mainly issues related to the implementation of standards and other Codex documents in a given region, including the development of regional standards, as well as other issues that are important for FAO or WHO in a given region.

To date, the CAC has developed a significant number of international standards for the quality of individual foodstuffs, established many MRLs for pesticide and medicines residues, as well as contaminants, and developed many other documents that form the basis of international food safety legislation.

Codex food standards are developed on the basis of the latest scientific research with the assistance of independent international risk assessment organizations and specialized advisory expert bodies convened by FAO and WHO. Where more stringent measures than Codex standards are proposed at the national level, they should be scientifically justified and based on a risk assessment. In this regard, taking into account the significant resource costs for risk assessment, the harmonization of standards is a profitable solution in ensuring food safety, especially for imported and exported products. Consumers can be confident in the quality and safety of the food they consume, and importers can be confident that the food they order will meet their specifications.

4. Participation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Codex Alimentarius Commission

Kazakhstan is a member of Codex Alimentarius Commission Казахстан since 2003.

In 2017, at the 30th session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (hereinafter referred to as CCEURO), the Republic of Kazakhstan was nominated, and at the 40th session of the CAC, Kazakhstan was approved as the country- coordinator of CCEURO. Our country has become the first of the post-Soviet countries, which was entrusted with the chairmanship and, accordingly, the coordination of the most numerous and heterogeneous region in terms of development. CCEURO has 52 members, including 51 country and member organizations - the European Union.

To perform the functional duties of the Chair and Secretariat of CCEURO, as well as the national structure of the Codex in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Codex Alimentarius Group was formed on the basis of the Committee for Public Health of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan (currently the Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Control of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan).

It should be noted that in accordance with the Order of the Ministry of Health No. 371 of 06/26/2013, the National Commission of the Codex Alimentarius was established.

On March 22, 2022, by Order of the Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Control of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the composition and regulations of the Interagency Steering Committee on Codex Alimentarius issues were updated. The RSE on REM “National Center of Expertise” of the CSEC of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan was appointed as the working body of the Committee.

The activities of the national Codex structure are carried out in the following areas:

- Participation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- Work to national experts within the Codex Alimentarius;
- Work to business operators;
- Ensuring the functioning of the Interagency Steering Committee on the issues of the Codex;

- Interaction with international organizations and partners to ensure food safety.

During the period of chairmanship of CCEURO and the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Kazakhstan has achieved some success: the country's importance at the world level in the field of food law has significantly increased, local producers have better understood the benefits of participating in the Codex Alimentarius program. There is a need to continue to contribute to the success of Codex and to make effective use of available resources and capacities at the country/region level.

Participation in the pre-session meetings hosted by the Regional Coordinator of the European Region is a key factor, allowing the country to discuss and find support for its position from other member countries. This is an opportunity to convince the region of the importance of the national position for the region and its use as part of the regional position, to coordinate actions to protect common interests and ensure success in achieving the set goals during the discussion within the Codex Alimentarius Commission. In addition, participation in the pre-session provides an opportunity to exchange information based on evidence-based data and risk analysis.

Of particular relevance are the tendency to consider food safety issues in conjunction with broader issues of public health, the well-being of flora and fauna, and environmental conservation. Of decisive importance in this direction will be efforts to collect information, research and monitor the work of other international organizations to assess the compliance of their work with the strategic goals of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan, like other members of the Codex, has limited resources in its work. In this regard, it is necessary to focus on the areas of Codex work that are most important for Kazakhstan in terms of food safety and fair trade. Evaluation of the agendas of the Codex events, involvement of national experts, coordinated interaction of the Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Control of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the functioning of the Interagency Steering Committee on Codex Alimentarius issues will ensure that the work of the Codex meets the interests and priorities of Kazakhstan.

4.1 Work to national experts within Codex Alimentarius

Work and participation in the Codex Alimentarius requires a comprehensive study of the issues under consideration and finding consensus options for their solution. The adopted international standards of the Codex Alimentarius should become a guide or a basis for further implementation in the national legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In the light of these events, the formation of the potential of national experts in the Republic of Kazakhstan is of particular importance.

It is necessary to carry out constant work on the formation of a pool of national experts to consider issues of the Codex Alimentarius. In order to increase their capacity and understanding of the Codex Alimentarius, it is necessary to carry out activities to explain and train how to work with the tools and documents of the Codex Alimentarius.

Formation of a pool of national experts

The pool of national experts must be formed from among all stakeholders involved in ensuring the safety and quality of food products, as well as participants in the production and sale of food products. Consideration of Codex Alimentarius issues in conjunction with broader issues (welfare of flora and fauna, ecology, etc.) may require the involvement of other experts.

Capacity building of national experts

Ensuring the effective functioning of the pool of national experts will require activities to clarify the rules of work and the consideration of standards and issues within the framework of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

4.2. Work to business operators within Codex Alimentarius

The international standards of the Codex Alimentarius open up opportunities for the transition to foreign markets and the export of food products. In this regard, one of the main stakeholders in the discussion of Codex Alimentarius standards should be food producers, represented by associations (unions). Based on the established requirements for food products, food producers will be able to further determine the requirements for their products, their sale, storage and supply to the consumer. This, in turn, will increase the export potential of Kazakhstan and the level of participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius.

Attracting experts from associations (unions) to the pool of national experts

Experts of industry associations (unions) have significant practical experience in applying standards of various levels in production and related issues (control, certification, etc.). Possession of the technological aspects of production and understanding of the possibilities of achieving the established requirements will make it possible to comprehensively study the draft standards of the Codex Alimentarius and form the position of Kazakhstan. For these purposes, close cooperation is necessary with the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan "Atameken", which represents the interests of business and is the negotiating force of entrepreneurs with the Government and state bodies.

Carrying out activities aimed at raising the level of awareness and involvement of producers in the work of the Codex Alimentarius

The emergence of new circumstances and issues in ensuring food safety and fair trade practices, as well as the development of science and technology, requires keeping up to date with the main implementers of international standards of the Codex Alimentarius – business operators. The development of the agro-industrial complex, entrepreneurship, trade and competition requires activities to increase the awareness and involvement of business operators in the work of the Codex Alimentarius.

4.3. Ensuring the functioning of the Interagency Steering Committee on the issues of the Codex Alimentarius

The Interagency Steering Committee for Codex Alimentarius is the coordinating body under the CSEC of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of regulation, regulation and standardization of food products in terms of their quality and safety for public health and the fulfillment of obligations arising from the membership of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the FAO/WHO Commission of the Codex Alimentarius. The Committee consists of the representatives:

- Committee for sanitary and epidemiological control, Ministry of health of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
- Committee for veterinary control and surveillance, Ministry of agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
- Committee of state inspection in agroindustry complex, Ministry of agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
- Committee for technical regulation and metrology, Ministry of trade and integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
- Republican state enterprise Республиканского государственного предприятия on the right to manage the economy «National Center for Expertise» CSEC MH RK,
- Department of agroindustry complex and food industry National Chamber of entrepreneurs «Atameken»,
- LTD «Kazakh Academy of Nutrition»,
- Institute of the regional nutrition problems Kazakh Academy of Nutrition, Chair of preventive medicine and nutrition NJ-SCo «Medical University Astana»,
- Eurasian national university named after N.Gumilev,
- Kazakh Agrotechnical university named after S.Seifullin
- Republican Public society «Association of organic husbandry»,
- Kazakhstan Codex Group.

As a consumer association or its equivalent is established in the Republic of Kazakhstan, its representative should be included in the interagency steering committee, since representatives of consumer associations in developed Western countries play an important role in discussing and adopting standards.

4.4. Interaction with international organizations and partners to ensure food safety

Codex's collaboration with other international standard-setting bodies is essential to advance the whole food chain approach. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), as parent organizations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, have a strong relationship in strategy and cooperation.

Moreover, given the close relationship between animal health and food safety, Codex works closely with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

Under the auspices of the One Health approach, strategic plans are being developed and various activities are being carried out, led by international organizations WHO, FAO OIE, the UN Environment Program with financial support from the World Bank.

5. Further actions to implement National Codex Policy

Implementation of National Codex Policy will be carried out via:

- Participation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- Work to national experts within Codex Alimentarius;
- Work to business operators;
- Ensuring the functioning of the Interagency Steering Committee on the issues of the Codex Alimentarius;
- Interaction with international organizations and partners to ensure food safety;
- Formation of annual and long-term action plans in accordance with the Work Plan of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and local priorities;
- Annual countdown to interested state structures on the work done;
- Identification of the needs and current issues of business in Kazakhstan in food safety and fair trade practices in order to consider the possibility of submitting them to the consideration of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;

- Timely publication and comprehensive coverage of Codex work through the national Codex website;
- Taking advantage of the opportunity to work with the European Community to advance our common interests in Codex and international food standards;
- Annual celebration of World food safety day - 7 June.

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