CONTENTS

Summary ................................................................................................................................. 5

1. Background ......................................................................................................................... 6
   1.1 The Codex Trust Fund ................................................................................................. 6
   1.2 Participant reports ....................................................................................................... 6

2. Objectives .......................................................................................................................... 6

3. Methodology ....................................................................................................................... 7
   3.1 Tasks ........................................................................................................................... 7
   3.2 Overall methodology ................................................................................................. 7
   3.3 Scope .......................................................................................................................... 7
   3.4 Classification of reports ............................................................................................. 7
   3.5 A note on the data available ...................................................................................... 8

4. Results ............................................................................................................................... 8
   4.1 Quantity and provenance of reports ........................................................................... 8
   4.2 Experience attending meetings .................................................................................. 9
   4.3 Quality of reporting .................................................................................................... 10
   4.4 Before meetings ......................................................................................................... 11
   4.5 During meetings ......................................................................................................... 12
   4.6 After meetings ............................................................................................................ 15
   4.7 National challenges ................................................................................................... 17
   4.8 Participants’ recommendations ................................................................................. 18

5. Conclusions ......................................................................................................................... 19

6. Recommendations ............................................................................................................. 20

Annex 1. List of meetings

### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>Codex Alimentarius Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCP</td>
<td>Codex Contact Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTF</td>
<td>Codex Trust Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>Latin American and Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>Least developed countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCC</td>
<td>National Codex Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCCP</td>
<td>National Codex Contact Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWP</td>
<td>South West Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES AND BOXES

Figure 1. Reports classification
Figure 2. Availability of country reports by period
Figure 3. Provenance of reports received
Figure 4. Number of individual participations
Figure 5. Number of country participations
Figure 6. Overall quality of reports August 2007-December 2008
Figure 7. Quality of reporting by region
Figure 8. Type of preparation undertaken
Figure 9. Type of preparation by region
Figure 10. Proportion of active participants by region
Figure 11. Proportion of active participants according to meeting experience
Figure 12. Type of participation during Codex meetings
Figure 13. Contribution of scientific data by region
Figure 14. Benefits gained from participation in Codex meetings
Figure 15. Type of debriefing activities
Figure 16. Outcomes of Codex meeting participation at the national level
Figure 17. Challenges faced at the national level
Figure 18. Utility of quality country reports for stakeholders

Table 1. Principle challenge faced by region
Box 1. Proposal for modifications to DataCol questionnaire
SUMMARY

In this study, country reports submitted to the Codex Trust Fund by participants supported by the Fund to attend Codex meetings between August 2007 and December 2008 are analyzed. The study focuses on detecting regional trends as well as any links between participants’ years of experience attending the Codex meetings and the quality of report responses. The study finds that neither the quality nor the quantity of reports has improved significantly compared to the two previous reporting periods. This is likely due to a combination of factors, which include the lack of feedback provided to participants, the absence of sanctions for failing to meet reporting requirements, and the lack of awareness of the value of the reporting process for countries themselves. The study also finds that, while there is a lack of consistency in meeting participation, there is evidence to suggest that repeated participation leads to more effective participation. However, there was no evidence that greater experience with Codex has led to an enhanced ability to provide scientific or technical data to the Codex standard setting process. Overall regional trends are identified, with countries from the Southwest Pacific and Africa weakest in terms of producing quality reports, preparing for and participating effectively in meetings. In contrast, countries from the Latin American and Caribbean region were strongest at preparing and participating effectively in meetings, particularly in terms of providing scientific or technical data.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following actions to improve the reporting process:

- Strictly enforce sanctions for failure to respect the reporting deadline or to provide reports of acceptable quality.
- Provide feedback on reports submitted.
- Increase awareness on the value of the reporting process for member countries as a tool for assessing and monitoring national progress on food safety.

Specific proposals for modifying the new reporting format (‘DataCol online questionnaire’) are also included.

The following recommendations are made relating to the further development of the CTF monitoring and evaluation system, specifically in regards to information gathering:

- Develop a questionnaire for national CCPs in order to gather more information on Codex activities at the national level. This should include data on the frequency and contents of NCC meetings, NCC members, the process for selecting delegates, and procedures in place to ensure knowledge transfer.
- Using existing data as well as the above-mentioned reports, develop in-depth country profiles of a selected group of countries in order to identify capacity building needs and facilitate future peer review processes. A combination of ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ countries should be selected to be profiled.
- Foster greater involvement of WHO and FAO country offices in the monitoring of progress on Codex at the national level.
1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Codex Trust Fund

The FAO/WHO Project and Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex (Codex Trust Fund, CTF) was set up in 2003 with the objective of enhancing the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the setting of international food safety and quality standards by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). The CTF aims to realize this key objective by achieving three expected results:

1. Widening participation in Codex
2. Strengthening overall capacity to participate in Codex
3. Enhancing countries’ ability to provide scientific and technical data

Since its operation began in 2004, the CTF has supported the attendance of over 800 participants from 124 countries to Codex meetings, primarily from least developed countries (LDCs). The CTF also supports participation in training courses to enhance participation in Codex.

The CTF is currently in the process of developing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to allow for its performance to be tracked. Effective M&E is expected to facilitate planning of the Fund’s future activities and the assessment of its impact within beneficiary countries, as well as demonstrating the Fund’s benefits to donors. Country reports from beneficiaries constitute a key source of information for continuously measuring CTF performance, particularly in regards to the impact of Codex participation at the national level.

1.2 Participant reports

Following attendance to a Codex meeting, each participant supported by the CTF is required to submit a report to the CTF Secretariat which includes information on the participant’s activities before, during, and after the meeting. Reports are expected to be submitted within one month of attending a Codex meeting; continued support from the Trust Fund for a country is conditional on the receipt of all outstanding reports.

To date, participants have been provided with a reporting template to follow which consists of a series of broad, open-ended questions. In an effort to improve the quantity and quality of reports, a new online questionnaire (“DataCol”) consisting of a combination of open-ended and multiple choice questions is currently being piloted and will gradually replace the previous template by the end of 2009. The new reporting format was not yet in use for the reporting period covered in this study.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the present study are:

• To measure what CTF beneficiary countries gain from attending Codex meetings and the impact of attending at the national level.
• To assess the quality of participant reports provided by CTF beneficiaries.
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Tasks

The terms of reference of the study include the following tasks:

- Apply the methodology designed for previous reporting periods (August 2005 to July 2006; August 2006 – July 2007)\(^1\) to analyse reports received for the period August 2007 to December 2008.
- Build on previous analyses to identify any reporting trends by region and examine issues such as progress in meeting challenges at the national level and the link between quality of reporting and consistency of participation.

The completion of the assessment was expected to result in two main outcomes:

- Recommendations for consideration in monitoring and evaluation of the CTF.
- Recommendations on how the newly developed online reporting format could be further improved as a tool to analyze the effectiveness of CTF.

3.2 Overall methodology

The methodology of the study consists of three stages:

1. Data gathering: Participant reports collected from CTF Secretariat, assessment spreadsheet created, reports read, responses coded, data entered into spreadsheet.
2. Data analysis
3. Reporting and formulation of recommendations

In the Analysis phase, data from reports was compared with data from the CTF Secretariat’s participant database, which contains information on the meetings attended by participants since the Fund’s inception, in order to identify any trends linked to members’ experience in meetings, both at the individual and country level. Initial responses from the piloted DataCol questionnaire were also analyzed to identify any changes needed.

3.3 Scope

This study analyzes country reports from the 25 Codex meetings attended by CTF beneficiaries during the periods of August 2007 to July 2008 and August 2008 to December 2008. The list of meetings attended is available in Annex 1. Only reports submitted to the Codex Trust Fund Secretariat on or before March 31\(^{st}\), 2009 were included in the analysis.

3.4 Classification of reports

The reporting template provided to participants contains questions covering activities before, during and after the meeting, as well as general information on the participant and the functioning of the country’s National Codex Committee (see Annex 2).

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In order to be consistent with past country report analyses, the criteria developed to evaluate the quality of reports for past reporting periods were applied. Based on these criteria, reports were classified into one of four categories: Excellent, Good, Medium or Insufficient.

**Figure 1. Reports classification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>• More than 90% of the information requested is presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The participant provides the Codex Trust Fund Secretariat with a substantial report, clear, structured, detailed and with concrete inputs from the participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The report follows the template.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>• More than 60% of the information requested is presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The participant provides the Codex Trust Fund Secretariat with some relevant information regarding participation in the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The report follows the template.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>• More than 30% of the information requested is presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The participant provides the Codex Trust Fund Secretariat with little information regarding its participation in the meeting. The report is unclear and lacks facts/examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The report does not follow the template.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient</td>
<td>• Less than 30% of the information requested is presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The participant only copied and pasted the official report from the meeting without adding any comment on its participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The report does not follow the template.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gossner, 2008

### 3.5 A note on the data available

The qualitative nature of the participant report template, as well as the wide variety in the quality and structure of reports submitted to the CTF Secretariat, makes it difficult to draw clear conclusions based on the available data. Wherever possible, efforts have been made to define clear criteria for interpreting responses. The consistency of results over several reporting periods would suggest that they are reasonably objective.

In the analysis of regional trends, some regions were excluded from certain data sets due to the low number of responses available.
4. RESULTS

4.1 Quantity and provenance of reports

Of the 189 participants supported during the August 2007 to July 2008 period, 114 (60%) submitted reports to the CTF Secretariat. For the August 2007 to December 2008 period, 39 of the 96 participants (41%) have submitted reports. The relatively low percentage of reports received for the second period is likely due to the tendency observed by the CTF Secretariat of participants to neglect to submit reports within the one-month recommended deadline, choosing instead to submit all overdue reports at the time of application for CTF support for the following year.

![Figure 2. Availability of country reports by period](image)

The provenances of the reports received are summarized in Figure 3.

![Figure 3. Provenance of reports received by region](image)

4.2 Experience attending meetings

Seventy nine percent of participants were new to the Codex meeting they were attending, though they may have participated in Codex meetings on different subjects in the past.

Based on the data in the CTF database, which tracks attendance to meetings from 2004 to 2008, we see that at the country level, for 51% of the reports submitted, it was the country’s first time being represented at the meeting. If we disregard these ‘first time’ cases, we see that for 57% of the meetings, countries chose not to send the same representative as in the past year(s).
Considering that the majority of countries (82%) have been CTF beneficiaries since 2006 or earlier, the data suggests that there is little consistency regarding both the meetings attended by countries and the individual delegates sent to represent countries at the meetings.

### 4.3 Quality of reporting

The overall quality of reports for both reporting periods is summarized in Figure 6. These results are comparable to the results of the previous reporting period (August 2005-July 2007), in which slightly over half (55%) of the reports were classified as either ‘insufficient’ or ‘medium’ (Gossner, 2008).

The quality of reporting does not appear to be linked to the number of years of experience a country has in participating in a meeting. There is also no evidence that the quality of reporting improves according to an individual’s experience attending a meeting: 19% of first time participants’ reports were considered ‘insufficient,’ compared with 21% of repeat participants.

There are however, clear regional trends in reporting, with over half of reports from Asia, Europe, the Near East, and the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region classified as either ‘good’ or ‘excellent.’ In contrast, in both Africa and the South West Pacific regions, the majority of reports were either ‘insufficient’ or ‘medium’ quality.
4.4. Before the meetings

The majority of respondents (82%) affirmed having undertaken some form of preparation before attending the Codex meeting. Of the respondents who reported that they did not prepare for the meeting, 100% were first-time participants. The main reasons put forward for not having prepared were:

- The participant did not receive the working documents in time to prepare for the meeting.
- The participant had no prior experience in Codex meetings.
- The country does not have an operational National Coordinating Committee.

Bulgaria’s report from the 26th Coordinating Committee for Europe, its first Codex meeting attended with the Fund’s support, highlights some of the barriers it faced to preparing effectively:

“There is no established National Codex Committee in the country at this moment to represent the opinion and the interest of all stakeholders ...This is the main obstacle of establishing regular communication and receiving back-up data on Codex Alimentarius issues between all the parties involved and thus the preparation of national statements and positions is reflected when all opinions of the stakeholders must be taken into consideration.”
There appear to be some links between the type of preparation undertaken and the individual's experience attending meeting. In particular, a greater proportion of repeat participants affirmed having prepared a document or material (40% compared to 32% of first time participants) as well as undertaken technical consultation with partners (32% compared to 18% of first time participants).

At the country level, a higher proportion of repeat participants affirmed having prepared a national position compared to first time participants (48% of first time representations compared to 56% repeat representations).

With the exception of the South West Pacific region, for which only half of respondents affirmed having prepared, a majority of respondents from all of the regions affirmed having prepared for meetings. However, if we focus in on three key forms of preparation that could be considered essential for effective participation during the meeting, we see that there are clear regional differences (Fig. 9).

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**Figure 8. Type of preparation undertaken**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Preparation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intersectoral Communication</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access familiar with documents</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National position defined</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical consultation with partners</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Code MCC meeting</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material or document prepared</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted with other countries</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9. Type of preparation by region**

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2 Insufficient data from South West Pacific and Near East regions
4.5 During meetings

4.5.1 Participation in meetings

Overall, the majority of respondents (78%) indicated that they engaged in some form of active participation during the meetings. Respondents from the LAC region reported the highest proportion of active participation (89%), whereas respondents from the Southwest Pacific region reported the lowest (17%).

![Figure 10. Proportion of active participants by region](image)

Of the respondents who stated that they did not actively participate during the meeting, 83% had no previous experience attending the meeting.

As might be expected, there seems to be a link between the number of years of experience attending a meeting and active participation. A greater proportion of repeat participants indicated that they participated actively in meetings compared to first-time participants. Likewise, countries that had been represented in the past more often participated actively.

![Figure 11. Proportion of active participants according to meeting experience](image)
However, there is no clear indication that the type of participation that CTF beneficiaries engage in during meetings changes according to the number of years of experience participating in the meeting, either at the individual or the country level.

Overall, the majority of respondents participated by making interventions on their country’s position (Fig.12).

**Figure 12. Type of participation during Codex meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Participation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interventions or national position</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>React to other country’s statements or positions</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of scientific data</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking questions</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in informal networking or field sessions</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in regional or international committees</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relatively few respondents affirmed having contributed scientific data to the Codex meeting. Countries from the LAC region had the highest rate of contribution of scientific data, both in proportion to the total respondents from their region (24%) and in proportion to respondents from all regions – 40% of all respondents who confirmed having contributed scientific data were from a LAC country.

**Figure 13. Contribution of scientific data by region (as a % of respondents from the region)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW Pacific</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other countries noted that the weak national scientific capacity (lack of sufficiently equipped laboratories, weak data collection capacity, etc.) prevented them from contributing data to Codex.

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3 Insufficient data from the Near East.
According to a participant from the Cook Islands in the 2nd Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food:

"We have very little information of our populations' exposure to contaminants in food. This makes it difficult to participate in review/setting of standards as comments must be evidence based."

4.5.2 Benefits gained from participation
All of the respondents affirmed to have benefitted from participating in the Codex meeting. In particular, respondents appear to appreciate the value of networking that occurs during meetings. Several respondents from the LAC region noted that meetings provided them with an opportunity to formulate or strengthen common regional positions on issues. For example, Guatemala’s report for the 39th Coordinating Committee on Food Hygiene noted:

“The delegate took the opportunity of the meeting to establish links with technical colleagues in other countries; in addition to FAO and WHO personnel, many of the delegates had several years of experience in Codex-related subjects; there were several forms of interaction between countries and regional blocks, which contributed to settling on positions on issues of common interest.”

Figure 14. Benefits gained from participation in Codex meetings

Of the reports that mentioned that their country had benefitted from attending the meeting by gaining access to a leadership role, 60% were from the LAC region.

4.6 After the meetings
4.6.1 Evidence of debriefing
In 52% of the reports submitted, there was evidence of debriefing after participation in Codex meetings. No information was available from the remaining reports. The most frequent form of debriefing was through National Codex Committee Meetings (Fig. 13). In addition, 9% of

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4 Translated from Spanish.
respondents noted that they had circulated documents received during the Codex meeting to colleagues.

4.6.2 Outcomes at the national level

The main outcome at the national level reported from attending Codex meetings was the formulation of recommendations for follow-up actions (46%). Relatively few respondents reported any direct changes to national policy or food safety as a result of participation (Fig. 14).

According to Afghanistan’s report for the 31st CAC:

“Food safety systems in Afghanistan are slowly starting to be put in place. The information gathered by the representatives helped them advise their colleagues on their respective
ministries when designing food safety activities. In particular, the Ministry of Public Health started using the some Codex Alimentarius standards in its laboratories, as well as guidelines on export and import and certification.”

Only two countries, Ecuador and Iran, made specific reference to changes in the provision of scientific or technical advice to the Codex process.

Respondents who cited other types of actions as an outcome of participation mainly referred to approaching the WHO for additional Codex training. In addition, several countries reported that participation in the meeting led to general awareness raising on Codex processes. As the Gambia’s report from the 35th Codex Committee on Food Labelling notes:

“It has helped towards creating the momentum for the National Codex Committee to be fully aware of their responsibilities and roles for ensuring the monitoring food standards and safety at national level, and to be more vigorous in the implementation of the Food Act 2005 which is in line with Codex standards.”

4.7 Challenges faced by member countries

In 35% of the reports submitted, respondents noted the existence of challenges at the national level affecting their ability to participate effectively in Codex meetings or to apply Codex standards within the country. A lack of national coordination was the most frequently cited challenge, followed by the lack of facilities or resources. The facilities or resources referred to range from a lack of funding to enable additional participants to attend Codex meeting (mainly noted by countries from the LAC region) to a lack of basic amenities such as access to Internet or office space for Codex Contact Points in countries such as Benin and Bhutan. In addition, a lack of resources and facilities for scientific work was often cited. According to a report from Malawi from the 40th Commission on Food Hygiene:

“There is lack of microbiological criteria specifically set for the African region as it is with other regional committees. It is therefore being suggested here that the Coordinating Committee for Africa through the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene come up with strategy to generate data with technical assistance from FAO and WHO and financial assistance from the Trust Fund.”
While little information on national challenges was available from the reports, some trends are apparent when responses are disaggregated by region. In reports from Africa, Asia, and Europe, the lack of coordination was most frequently cited as a national challenge. Respondents from the LAC region most frequently cited the lack of facilities or resources, while respondents from the South West Pacific region cited the lack of legislative framework.

Table 1. Principle challenge faced by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Most frequently cited national challenge</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Lack of national coordination</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Lack of national coordination</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>Lack of national coordination</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>Lack of facilities or resources</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW Pacific</td>
<td>Lack of legislative framework</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No clear differences were found in the types of challenges cited according to the number of years that countries had been CTF beneficiaries: the lack of facilities or resources and lack of coordination were the most often cited responses regardless of how many years countries had received CTF support. A lack of general awareness about Codex or food safety was more frequently cited as a barrier by countries that had been beneficiaries since 2007 or later compared to those that were beneficiaries since at least 2006, but the small number of respondents makes it impossible to determine whether this result has any significance.

4.8 Participant recommendations

Based on their experience attending the Codex meeting, participants were asked to make suggestions to improve the Codex process or CTF procedures. Fifty two participants made recommendations, of which 38% requested more regional training on food safety or greater

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5 Insufficient data available from the Near East region.
assistance for building national capacity to implement Codex standards and/or participate effectively in Codex meetings.

Some participants also requested that the CTF send out relevant publications periodically in order to assist in building up national Codex libraries as well as provide more documents in the national language. It should be noted however, that the provision of publications is not within the scope of the CTF’s responsibilities.

Thirty eight percent of respondents referred to the need to improve administrative procedures. These mainly referred to the timely receipt of information prior to meetings, both in regards to travel arrangements and the distribution of relevant working documents in the national language to allow countries sufficient time to prepare a national position. In regards to this last point, delegates from Bolivia also requested that working documents be supplied in English as well as in the national language in order to avoid confusion due to errors in interpretation. The distribution of documentation is managed by the Codex Secretariat.

Nineteen percent of respondents suggested that the CTF review its criteria for funding participants. In particular, respondents requested that the CTF send more than one delegate per country to meetings. According to Zambia’s report for the the 29th Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling:

“Participation at codex meetings of more than one delegate adds a lot of value as no two persons of similar qualifications are ever at the same level of advancement. Food safety has various components ranging from agricultural to health issues and a delegation of two or more would be a complementary team.”

In addition, some participants made the suggestion that the CTF should systematically provide support to the same individuals for the same meetings each year to ensure capacity building. These comments would suggest that there is some confusion regarding the role of the CTF, as the number of delegates sent to a meeting by a country as well as which delegates are sent are decisions taken at the national level.

Reports from Argentina and Cuba included recommendations that the CTF continue to finance participants beyond the number of years initially allotted. In addition, in Argentina’s report from the 29th Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses, it was recommended that the CTF provide information in its annual report on which countries had applied for funding for each meeting and the order in which priorities were determined so as to improve transparency.

In regards to the functioning of Codex meetings, representatives from Ecuador and Jamaica suggested a need for greater private sector involvement in Codex sub-committee meetings.

5. CONCLUSIONS

There has not been any significant improvement in either the quantity or the quality of the reports received for the August 2007-December 2008 period compared to the past two reporting periods. The fact that a significant portion of repeat participants submit ‘insufficient’ reports also suggests that participants are not learning to write better reports. It would appear that many countries do not recognize the value of writing adequate reports.
This is explicable in part by the high workload and low staffing level of the CTF Secretariat, which prevents it from providing feedback and strictly enforcing quality standards or rules on timely reporting. As a result, CTF beneficiaries who consistently submit poor reports face no consequences regarding their eligibility for support in the future, and therefore have little incentive to improve. Furthermore, because they do not receive feedback on submitted reports, they may be unaware that they are not meeting basic quality standards.

Another factor that may be contributing to poor quality reporting is the perception that reporting is simply a formality to satisfy donor obligations. This idea is reinforced by the instructions provided on the reporting template by the CTF:

“Donors continuously appraise the benefits of the contributions and look for assurance of their effectiveness. As country reports provide valuable information to help ensure that the Trust Fund objectives are being realized, they should be concise but comprehensive.”

The message conveyed is that donors are the main stakeholder interested in reports, which as a side effect is likely to influence the way countries respond. Ideally, the reporting process should also encourage countries to reflect on national Codex processes and serve as a tool for countries to monitor their own progress and identify capacity building needs.

The lack of consistency in representation raises the question of whether this is a conscious strategy on the part of countries to expose a greater number of participants to Codex or whether other issues are at play. Given the vague data available on debriefing activities at the national level, it is impossible to conclude whether sufficient information sharing mechanisms are in place to minimize the loss of knowledge associated with inconsistent participation.

There is some evidence from the reports in support of the idea that repeated participation leads to more effective (“strengthened”) participation. In particular, the data indicates that compared to first time participants, repeat participants are more likely to:

- prepare for Codex meetings,
- undertake the types of preparations most conducive to active participation during meetings,
- participate actively during meetings.

However, the reports do not offer any evidence that CTF beneficiaries are increasing their ability to provide scientific or technical support to Codex. Progress in this area may be best measured through other sources of information, however.

Finally, the results disaggregated by region showed clear differences in reporting quality and responses. It would appear that, overall, countries from the Southwest Pacific and African regions are weakest in regards to producing quality country reports, preparing before meetings, and contributing scientific or technical data to meetings. In contrast, countries from the LAC region were clearly strongest in terms of effectively preparing for Codex meetings, contributing data to meetings and taking a leadership role during meetings.
6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Recommendations to improve the quality and quantity of reporting

The CTF Secretariat can provide stronger incentives for improving quality and timeliness in reporting through a combination of ‘sticks and carrots.’ The first two recommendations listed below were discussed in detail in the Country Report Analysis for the two previous reporting periods (Gossner, 2008) but have yet to be applied:

**Strictly enforce sanctions for failure to respect reporting deadlines or to provide reports of acceptable quality.** Participants who have not complied with the reporting obligations should not be permitted to participate in future meetings. The task of tracking compliance should be greatly facilitated with the implementation of the online DataCol questionnaire, which tracks the date of submission and requires the participant to provide responses to key questions before he or she can submit the report. Through the use of the automated alert system, the Secretariat can monitor which reports have been submitted and send reminders to participants who have not yet submitted reports 5 days before the one-month deadline.

**Provide feedback on submitted reports.** While the introduction of the online questionnaire is expected to lead to greater consistency and uniformity in reporting, particular attention should be paid to the quality of responses to open ended questions, which constitute about one third of the questionnaire’s questions. If responses do not offer sufficient detail or address the question clearly, participants should be asked to revise responses. If this is not done, there is a risk that participants will limit themselves to responding to multiple choice questions, which provided limited insight on specific country activities.

**Increase awareness on the value of the reporting process for member countries as a tool for assessing and monitoring national progress on food safety and effectiveness participating in Codex.** In communications with participants and CCPs, the CTF should emphasize that reporting is an exercise for participants to diagnose the quality of their participation and to assist them in identifying areas that require strengthening. CCPs in particular should be made ultimately responsible for the reporting process as part of their overall responsibilities to coordinate in-country Codex activities.

‘Country files’ containing all submitted country reports should be made available online through the WHO website and participants and CCPs should be encouraged to regularly access their file to prepare for future meetings and to monitor the effectiveness of delegates’ participation (for instance when choosing a delegate for the following year’s meeting).

The option of making country files accessible to all countries should also be explored, as this would facilitate learning from other countries’ experiences. In addition, knowing that reports are made public may incite respondents to write better quality reports.

Responses of particular interest could be selected from reports by the CTF Secretariat and regularly highlighted on the DataCol questionnaire homepage and the CTF website as a way to share country experiences or ‘good practices’, together with ‘story telling’ on progress made on Codex activities at the national level (see Box 1).
The upcoming annual CAC meeting provides an opportunity for raising awareness among beneficiary countries on the benefits they can draw from the reporting process and for introducing the new reporting system.

**Figure 18. Utility of quality country reports for stakeholders**

- **Donors**
  - Monitoring effectiveness of aid provided
  - Identifying other areas to support to build on current activities

- **CTF Secretariat**
  - Conducting continuous monitoring of progress towards expected results, objective
  - Comparing progress of countries
  - Identifying capacity building needs

- **CTF Beneficiaries**
  - Monitoring implementation of national strategy/progress at national level
  - Identifying weaknesses to formulate requests for capacity building
  - Sharing information with other countries

- **WHO/FAO country offices**
  - Identifying capacity building needs and developing targeted training
  - Monitoring progress at the national level
  - Increasing overall involvement in national Codex processes
6.2 Recommendations relating to information gathering for M&E

Improving country reporting is expected to facilitate the M&E process, as reports constitute a unique source of information for continuous monitoring of progress towards results. Furthermore, as outlined above, the reports can be used as a tool to involve beneficiaries in their own M&E at the national level.

Building on the above recommendations for improving country reports, the following recommendations are meant to further the process of collecting information as preliminary steps to conducting M&E of the Codex Trust Fund.

**Design and distribute a questionnaire to be completed by National Codex Contact Points.**

The main purpose of the questionnaire would be to obtain a clearer picture of Codex activities at the country level. Information on in-country activities and existing capacity is key to understanding

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**Box 1. Proposed modifications to the Datacol questionnaire.**

**Add instructions.** These should include a reminder of the 30 day deadline for submission of reports, that reporting is also meant as a tool for assessing and monitoring national progress on food safety, and that the responses should be formulated in consultation with CCPs and other relevant stakeholders. Respondents should also be informed that a copy of the report submitted will be sent to the national CCP and national WHO/FAO offices.

**Add a question(s) to assess challenges faced at the national level.** This can be included in the ‘General comments’ section. Proposed text: ‘Does your country face any particular challenges affecting its ability to participate effectively in the Codex process? If so, what are the main challenges?’ A space should be provided for an open ended response.

**Clarify the question on how delegates were chosen at the national level.** Based on initial feedback from the piloted questionnaire, it would appear that the question ‘How was the delegate supported by the Codex Trust Fund chosen at national level?’ (Question 2 in ‘Before the meeting’ section) is unclear. Proposed text to replace this question: ‘Describe the process and criteria used to select the delegate at the national level.’

**Modify the question on delegates’ involvement in the preparatory process to be more specific.** The question currently reads ‘Were you involved at all stages of the preparatory process?’ (follow up to Question 4 in ‘Before the meeting’ section). The Yes/No response format does not provide any detail and respondents are unlikely to respond ‘No’ if they are not given opportunity to justify their response. Proposed text to replace the question: ‘What was your specific role in the preparatory process?’ The response format should be open-ended.

**Add verification that the responses provided have been discussed with the CCP.** Obligate participants to affirm the statement ‘I certify that this report was written in consultation with the national Codex Contact Point’ by ticking a box. While there is no guarantee that this was in fact done, if respondents are aware that a copy of the report will be sent to the CCP, they may be more likely to do so.
progress on the CTF’s expected results of “strengthened overall participation” and “enhanced scientific/technical participation.” Currently, yearly applications for CTF support are the main source of information available on NCC activities and Codex processes. However, the information provided is often vague and based on intended future actions which are not measurable objectively.

The proposed questionnaire would focus on gathering data on the following issues, based on specific past actions (rather than intended actions):

- The functioning of the NCC: number of meetings held in the past year, members who attended these meetings (affiliation), presence or not of WHO/FAO representatives, evidence of reports or other written documentation produced.
- The procedures and criteria applied for selecting delegates. If different delegates were chosen from past years, the reasoning behind this choice, and whether there are mechanisms for preserving institutional memory in these cases.
- Whether there are standardized procedures in place for preparing before Codex meetings and debriefing after meetings.
- Whether the country currently engages in some form of M&E in relation to enhancing participation in Codex activities at national, regional, and international levels.

By using quantitative indicators wherever possible, progress will be easier to measure over the long term. It is recommended that the questionnaire be administered once at the mid-point of the CTF’s lifespan and again at the closing of the CTF to contribute to the final evaluation.

Foster greater involvement of FAO/WHO country offices in monitoring at the national level

FAO and WHO country offices can offer a different, possibly more objective, perspective on progress made at country level to complement information gathered from CCPs. This is in line with the assertion that M&E should be conducted jointly with stakeholders (“360 degree feedback”).

While the CTF has limited channels for contact with FAO/WHO country offices, a number of simple actions could be undertaken by the Secretariat to foster greater involvement:

- Country reports submitted by participants should be systematically sent to FAO/WHO country offices. The information from past reports should provide a basis for assisting in the selection of future participants and for identifying capacity building needs. If, for example, participants are consistently responding that they are not preparing, participating, or debriefing, the WHO/FAO office can follow up by encouraging the country to rethink its criteria for selecting delegates or by assisting in linking the country to Codex training and capacity building offered by the two organizations. Greater implication by FAO/WHO in the selection of participants may also lead to more consistency in participation.
- The questionnaire to be filled out by CCPs (see above) should be sent to WHO/FAO country offices for signed approval before being submitted to the CTF Secretariat.
- A second questionnaire should be designed and distributed to WHO/FAO country offices to gather information on:
  - WHO/FAO specific involvement in national Codex processes (training offered, support for preparing for meetings, applications, selecting delegates...)
  - Main national challenges from the standpoint of WHO/FAO representatives
- The country’s capacity to produce scientific data on food safety in order to establish a benchmark for progress on Result 3 “enhancing capacity to provide scientific/technical data.”

**Develop in-depth profiles of selected countries to better target NCC and CCP capacity building.**

The purpose of establishing profiles would be to pinpoint capacity building needs as well as explore how best practices can be transferred to other countries, for instance through the ‘buddy system’ proposed by Connor (2008). This is relevant to the monitoring of progress towards Result 2 “strengthening overall participation” output of the CTF project.

Approximately 20 countries should be selected to be profiled. The specific criteria for selection should be established with input from relevant stakeholders but it is recommended that the final selection contain countries considered most in need of capacity building as well as CTF beneficiary countries that have moved forward and established well-functioning Codex activities at national level and/or may have ‘good practices’ that would be useful to share with other CTF eligible countries. In addition, countries selected should show some indication that they are committed to improving Codex practices at the national level. Input from FAO/WHO country offices will be valuable in this regard.

Establishing country profiles should not require costly collection of new data. Instead, by crossing data from existing sources, a profile should emerge. Sources include:

- Official Codex meeting reports
- Country reports
- Results of questionnaires from CCPs and WHO/FAO country offices described above
- The CTF Secretariat’s participant database
# ANNEX 1: LIST OF CODEX MEETINGS ATTENDED BY CTF BENEFICIARIES

**August 2007-July 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17th CC Residues Veterinary Drugs in Food</td>
<td>3-7 sept 2007</td>
<td>Breckenridge CO, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>7th Ad-hoc Food derived from Biotechnology</td>
<td>24-28 sept 2007</td>
<td>Chiba Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Task force Ad-hoc Antimicrobial Resistance</td>
<td>23-26 oct 2007</td>
<td>Seoul, Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td>39th CC on Food Hygiene</td>
<td>30 oct-4 nov 2007</td>
<td>New Dehli, India</td>
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<tr>
<td>29th CC on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses</td>
<td>12-16 nov 2007</td>
<td>Bad Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>16th CC on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification System</td>
<td>26-30 nov 2007</td>
<td>Queensland Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th CC on Milk and Milk products</td>
<td>4-8 feb 2008</td>
<td>Queenstown New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th CC on Natural Mineral Waters</td>
<td>11-15 feb 2008</td>
<td>Lugano, Switzerland</td>
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<tr>
<td>29th CC on Fish and Fishery Products</td>
<td>18-23 feb 2008</td>
<td>Trondheim, Norway</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Ad-hoc Quick Frozen Foods</td>
<td>25-29 feb 2008</td>
<td>Bangkok, Thailand</td>
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<tr>
<td>29th CC on Methods of Analysis and Sampling</td>
<td>10-14 march 2008</td>
<td>Budapest, Hungary</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd CC on Contaminants in Food</td>
<td>31 march - 4 april</td>
<td>The Hague, Netherlands</td>
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<td>40th CC on Pesticide Residues</td>
<td>14-19 april 2008</td>
<td>Huangzou, China</td>
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<tr>
<td>40th CC on Food Additivities</td>
<td>21-25 april 2008</td>
<td>Beijing, China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36th CC on Food Labelling</td>
<td>28 april-2 may 2008</td>
<td>Ottawa, Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>14th CC on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables</td>
<td>12-17 may 2008</td>
<td>Mexico City, Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th CC for North America and SW Pacific</td>
<td>14-16 may 2008</td>
<td>Fiji Island</td>
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<tr>
<td>31st CAC</td>
<td>30 June-4 July 2008</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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**August 2008-December 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24th CC on Processed fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>15-20 sept 2008</td>
<td>Arlington, VA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th CC for Europe</td>
<td>7-10 oct 2008</td>
<td>Warsaw, Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Task force Antimicrobial resistance</td>
<td>20-24 Oct 2008</td>
<td>Seoul, Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th CC on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses</td>
<td>3-7 nov 2008</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th CC for Asia</td>
<td>17-21 nov 2008</td>
<td>Denpasar, Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th CC on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification System</td>
<td>24-28 nov 2008</td>
<td>Cebu, Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40th CC on Food Hygiene</td>
<td>1-5 dec 2008</td>
<td>Guatemala City, Guatemala</td>
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ANNEX 2: COUNTRY REPORT TEMPLATE

REPORT FORMAT

The Codex Trust Fund has been established through the generosity of a number of donors who are keen to enhance developing countries cooperative involvement in the establishment of international food standards. Donors continuously appraise the benefits of the contributions and look for assurance of their effectiveness. As country reports provide valuable information to help ensure that the Trust Fund objectives are being realized, they should be concise but comprehensive.

*The report is to be completed by the supported participant in consultation with the Codex Contact Point and all interested parties, and submitted on behalf of the country to the Trust Fund Secretariat by email at: codextrustfund@who.int or fax + 41 22 791 4807.*

Note that applications for support in subsequent years will not be considered unless outstanding reports have been submitted. It is strongly recommended that supported participants complete their reports one month after attending the meeting.

Please answer the following questions, which are divided to reflect activities before, during and after the meeting(s) attended.

**BEFORE THE MEETING(S)**

- Describe the situation which prevailed at the time with respect to the Codex infrastructure in the country, i.e. the Codex Contact Point, the organization of the Codex office, the National Codex Committee or other structure for coordination of the network of stakeholders, etc.

- Describe how the priority meetings and delegates were chosen, and the preparations made for the meeting(s) (e.g. discussions on country position).

**DURING THE MEETING(S)**

- Did the country prepare a paper; provide a response to a Circular Letter; make a statement or an intervention; or provide written or oral comments?

- Did the meeting correspond to expectations?

- For those countries where the delegation comprised several participants, what was the added value of an additional participant being supported by the Trust Fund?
• What did the delegates gain from participating in the meeting? Were they able to take full advantage of the opportunity to participate?

AFTER THE MEETING(S)

• How did the outcome of the meeting fit in with planned activities at national level?

• How were stakeholders informed of the outcome of the meeting? Please give details of those involved in this process.

• Did participation result in any changes at national level, either in the Codex infrastructure or in national policy? Did it have any impact on the implementation of Codex standards, and/or on food legislation and its enforcement?

GENERAL COMMENTS

• Does the country have any suggestions for improvement in the Codex process or improvement in the Trust Fund procedure?

• Please describe interaction at country level with the FAO and WHO representatives.