



Codex Capacity Enhancement Workshop Towards a National Codex Strategy for Bangladesh

(An Initiative funded by the United States Department of Agriculture)

Best Practices in Operating Codex Programs

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Discussing the Role of the Codex Contact Point

The success of a country's Codex activities depends on the effective functioning of the Codex Contact Point.

The location of the CCP varies from country to country. Preferably, since Codex is an intergovernmental body, the CCP should be located within an appropriate government entity.

*Key functions of the CCP include **Coordination** and **Communication**.*



Core Functions of a Codex Contact Point

1. Acts as the link between the Codex Secretariat and the member country.

2. Coordinates all relevant Codex activities within the country.

3. Receives all Codex final texts and working documents of Codex sessions and ensures that they are circulated to those concerned within the country.

4. Sends comments on Codex documents or proposals to the CAC, or its subsidiary bodies, and/or the Codex Secretariat.

5. Acts as a channel for the exchange of information and coordination of activities with other Codex Members.

6. Works in close cooperation with the National Codex Committee and acts as liaison point with all national stakeholders.

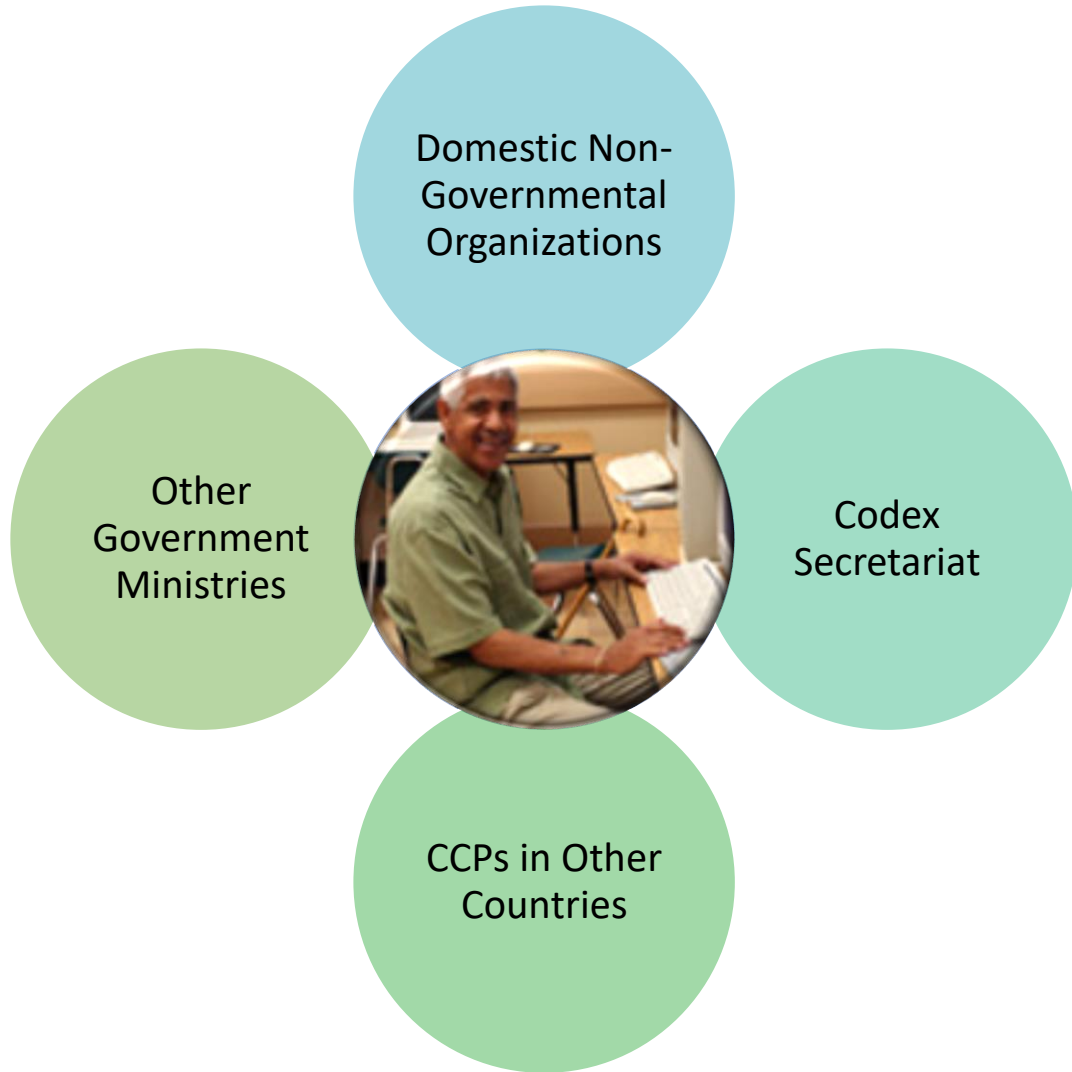
7. Receives the invitations to Codex sessions and informs the relevant chairpersons and the Codex Secretariat of the members of the national delegation to attend the meeting.

8. Maintains a library of Codex final texts.

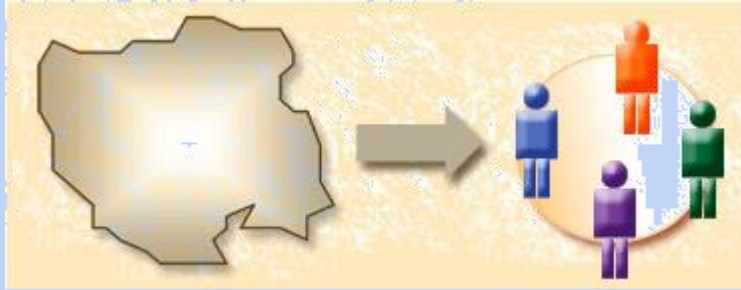
9. Promotes Codex activities throughout the country.



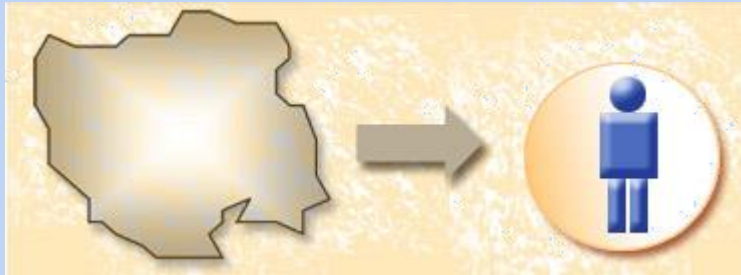
CCP Establishes Linkages



Establishing a Country Delegation



There are a number of factors that may affect the selection process of a **national delegation**.



When the **delegation consists of one person only**, the selection process become even more critical.

Formation of National Delegations – Criteria

Criteria to be applied during the selection process of national delegates:

- terms of reference of the Codex meeting for which the individual is being selected;
- position held within a ministry/department with primary responsibility for the specific Codex meeting;
- technical expertise of the individual in the subject matter of the relevant Codex meeting;
- degree of experience or involvement in previous Codex activities;
- other factors.



Participation of Non-Government Advisors

It's not unusual to have on a delegation **non-government representatives** (selected due to their **technical expertise within industry and academia**)

When deciding on such representatives, the following criteria, similar to those used to select government officials, should be applied:

- terms of reference of the Codex meeting for which the individual is being selected;
- technical expertise of the individual in the subject matter of the relevant Codex meeting;
- degree of experience or involvement in previous Codex activities;
- other factors.



Responsibilities and Obligations of Delegations

Members of a national delegation to attend Codex sessions have the following **responsibilities and obligations**:

1. Delegations participate in *Codex sessions in accordance with the Codex Procedural Manual, Guidelines for Codex committees and intergovernmental task forces, including Conduct of meetings*. It is the responsibility of all delegates to **become familiar with the contents of this Procedural Manual**.



Responsibilities and Obligations of Delegations (2)

...other **responsibilities and obligations of delegations:**

2. Delegates are expected to **attend all plenary sessions and any meetings convened by the head delegate.**

3. Generally, advisors **should not negotiate on behalf of their country's government**, and should only do so with the express permission of the head delegate.



An effective delegation should be well-managed and coordinated by the head delegate.



Head Delegate – Responsibilities

1. Strives to ensure the formation of a delegation of government officials and NGO representatives with an interest in, and expertise relevant to, the TOR of the committee, as well as the items on the provisional agenda.

2. Ensures that draft positions are prepared for each agenda item, in consultation with the National Codex Committee (or its equivalent).

3. Conducts a discussion of the draft positions on each agenda item with officials from other countries that may share common views.

4. Presents the draft positions for each agenda item to the National Codex Committee (or its equivalent) for review, amendment as necessary and endorsement.

5. Provides copies of the final draft positions to: (a) the CCP, (b) each member of the delegation, (c) all interested stakeholder organizations, (d) the designated contacts in other countries as appropriate.

6. Presents, defends and promotes the positions on each agenda item to the Codex committee, taking into account issues raised by other delegations while ensuring consistency with national policy.

7. On return to the country, prepares a report on the outcome of the session for the CCP and the NCC. All members of the delegation should endorse the final delegation report.

8. Continues to coordinate preparation of responses to circular letters issued with respect to the committee, with consultation on the draft positions, as appropriate. The reply should be submitted to the Codex Secretariat via the CCP, and presented to the NCC for information.

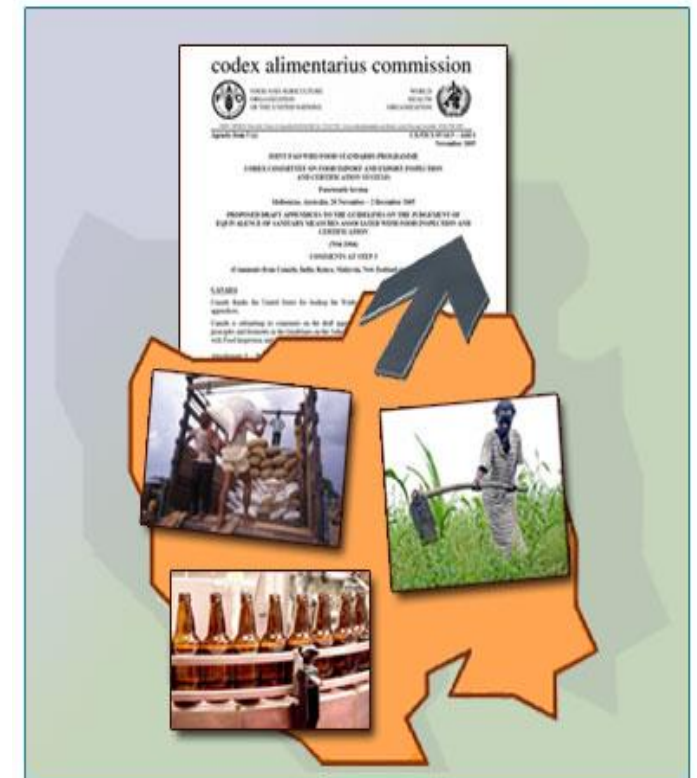


Steps to Develop a National Position

Many countries have a policy for the head delegate to coordinate the development of the national position relevant to the Committee.

There are **five common basic steps** in the development of a national position:

1. Circulate working documents.
2. Solicit input from stakeholders.
3. Draft a position.
4. Obtain national endorsement of the position.
5. Where appropriate, submit written comments.



1. Circulate Working Documents

The **Codex Contact Point** (CCP) is the focal point for all Codex documentation upon which a national position will be based.

The CCP may proceed as follows:

- 1. receives working documents** from the Codex Secretariat in Rome;
- 2. determines whether written comments** are being requested;
- 3. circulates working documents** for review and comment;
- 4. refers comments received** to the individual responsible for drafting the position.



2. Solicit Stakeholder Input

Consultation is a core activity of the CCP

In order to **facilitate consultation** and **avoid overwhelming stakeholders** with unwanted documentation, it is the **responsibility of the CCP**:



- to **identify which groups are interested in what** issues; and
- to **determine the mechanism for consultation.**

2. Solicit Stakeholder Input – A Coordination Mechanism

Countries are free to choose their own national coordination mechanism.

To facilitate the consultation process and to ease some of the workload of the Codex Contact Point, many countries have established a **National Codex Committee (NCC)** or an equivalent structure.



2. Solicit Stakeholder Input – A Coordination Mechanism

The national organizations with responsibility to develop the consultation mechanism may consult these **guidance documents** available online:

- Regional Guidelines for Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees (Near East Region) www.codexalimentarius.net/download/standards/10304/cxg_058e.pdf
- African Regional Guidelines for Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees www.codexalimentarius.net/download/standards/10289/cxg_043e.pdf
- Asian Regional Guidelines for National Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees www.codexalimentarius.net/download/standards/10302/cxg_057e.pdf

Regardless of the mechanism established, there are various **stakeholder groups that should be consulted on Codex issues**, and included in the NCC, if the latter is the selected mechanism.



3. Draft Position – Why?

Preparing a national position is a collaborative effort. The first step is to prepare an initial draft.

National positions are prepared for **two main purposes**:

1. to enable the country delegation to present the position of their country during the relevant Codex meeting;
2. to form the basis of written comments that will be provided to the Codex Secretariat (or host country secretariat) in response to a request for written comments.

Usually written comments submitted to Codex are in response to a specific **Circular letter** which highlights a standard or ongoing discussions.



3. Draft Position – How?

The following are some **general criteria** that should be taken into account when developing a country position on Codex issues:

- Drafting a position is not done in isolation – it should be done in consultation with all interested parties.
- Attempts should be made to understand the **history of an agenda item** so developing a position can be done within that context.
- When preparing national positions, make sure they are scientifically sound, and if available and relevant, supported by risk assessment data.
- Positions promoted internationally should be consistent with a **country's national policies**.



4. Obtain National Endorsement

The draft may then be shared again with other interested parties (e.g. other members of the country's delegation if applicable), who provide their final input.

The final version should receive a **final review** at an appropriate level of government, so that it can be **endorsed as an official country position**.



In some countries, the National Codex Committee can perform this function.



5. Establish Regional Liaison / Networking

It is the function of the CCP to submit any written comments to the Codex Secretariat in Rome or the applicable host country secretariat.

As a general rule, it is important that a country consider submitting written comments on issues identified as **priority issues** during the development of the national position.



Written comments should be prepared and sent only when necessary and useful.



Written Comments and National Position – Format

When preparing national positions, there are some basic components that need to be incorporated:

- name of the committee and identification of the session;
- identification of the agenda item, number and reference documents;
- background information to enable the reader to put the position in context;
- issues and discussion;
- a statement of the national position;
- a rationale for the national position.



A country usually needs to submit written comments on a limited number of items, **only when necessary and if comments are solicited.**

Written Comments and National Position – Format

It is important to make a distinction between:

- national positions** that are intended to be used by the head delegate attending a committee session and not intended to be shared;
- written comments** intended for submission to the Codex Secretariat in Rome for consideration of a committee.



Countries are strongly encouraged to **send the written comments** from the National CCP.

Importance of Developing A National Strategy

National Codex activities can range from:

- ❑ ensuring your country's effective representation at Codex meetings;
- ❑ ensuring effective national consultation and communication; and
- ❑ preparing national positions and written comments.

An approach being followed by some countries is to **develop a national strategy** to focus attention on priority matters and facilitate the preparation of a consistent position on different matters.



A word cloud featuring the phrase "thank you" in various languages and scripts. The central and largest text is "thank you" in blue. Other prominent words include "danke" (German), "謝謝" (Japanese), "ngiyabonga" (Tswana), "teşekkür ederim" (Turkish), "gracias" (Spanish), "tapadh leat" (Irish), "dziękuję" (Polish), "obrigado" (Portuguese), "merci" (French), "sukriya" (Hindi), "kop khun krap" (Thai), "arigatō" (Japanese), "tak" (Malay), "dank je" (Dutch), "misaotra" (Malagasy), "matondo" (Lingala), "paldies" (Latvian), "grazzi" (Italian), "hvala" (Slovene), "mauruuru" (Māori), "kösönöm" (Hungarian), "spas" (Czech), "welalin" (Yoruba), "barka" (Hausa), "mersi" (Arabic), "kia ora" (Māori), "vinaka" (Samoan), "spasibo" (Bulgarian), "Баярлалаа" (Mongolian), "faafetai lava" (Tongan), "kiitos" (Finnish), "dankie" (Afrikaans), "dhanyavad" (Gujarati), "nami" (Fijian), "nanori" (Hawaiian), "bayarlalaa" (Mongolian), "gracie" (Romanian), "enkosi" (Zulu), "chokrane" (Tamil), "murakoze" (Swahili), "tenki" (Vietnamese), "manana" (Hawaiian), "asante" (Swahili), "obrigada" (Portuguese), "mochchakkeram" (Bengali), "djiere dieuf" (Creole), "tau" (Tagalog), "mamnun" (Burmese), " дякую" (Ukrainian), "sulpáy" (Catalan), "go raibh maith agat" (Irish), "sagolun" (Hmong), "chnorakaloutioun" (Khmer), "gratias ago" (Latin), "gràcies" (Catalan), "sukriya" (Hindi), "kop khun krap" (Thai), "taiku" (Mandarin), "arigatō" (Japanese), "tak" (Malay), "dakujem" (Czech), "trugarez" (Breton), "najs tuke" (Sinhala), "merci" (French), "didi madloba" (Lingala), "kam sah hamnida" (Sinhala), "rahmat" (Arabic), "terima kasih" (Indonesian), "tanemirt" (Hindi), "rahmet" (Arabic), "dhanyavadagalu" (Kannada), "shukriya" (Arabic), "mercé" (Catalan), "merci" (French), "xièxie" (Mandarin), "감사합니다" (Korean), "ευχαριστώ" (Greek), "dialch" (Welsh), "merci" (French), "rahmata" (Arabic), "tomaके धन्यवाद" (Hindi), "merci" (French).

