

JAPAN AND THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

FOSTERING SUCCESS IN CODEX STANDARDS SETTING

Under the project

Support for Capacity Building for International Food Safety Standard
Development and Implementation in ASEAN Countries (GCP/RAS/295/JPN)

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ABSTRACT

The exponential increase of food trade has been accompanied by the emergence of food safety related incidences in both domestic and imported food products. Therefore, Codex Alimentarius was created to protect consumer health and ensure fair practices in food trade. Countries and regions have responded by establishing food-safety laws and regulations based on these Codex Alimentarius standards even though they are not mandatory.

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), a regional organization with ten country members, has recognized the importance of participation in Codex and the application of its standards at both the national and regional levels. However, the diverse development levels of the various countries are also reflected in the degree of implementation of food safety and quality standards at both national and regional levels.

To address this diversity, the region has set up interregional groups and task forces to establish its position on food safety, particularly regarding Codex issues. ASEAN also collaborates with other countries to get support in terms of funding and experience on how to improve and strengthen the capacities of each of member. One of the long-term partnerships established through the years is with the Government of Japan, which is actively involved with the region's Codex work through funding and providing expertise.

This document includes a compilation of endeavours conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Government of Japan through FAO in strengthening the capacity of ASEAN countries to participate in Codex Alimentarius activities. These have created a huge impact in the region in increasing awareness about the importance of Codex and their country's capacity to be involved in Codex work even with limited resources. Among the products resulting from these endeavours have been data, toolkits, infographics and protocols. These outputs would not have been possible without the collaboration and contribution of each of the country members.

ASEAN still needs to engage in further collaboration, as evidenced by the current needs of the region. Therefore, the FAO project, *Enhancing Capacity in Codex for Effective Participation and Contribution of Selected Countries in Asia* (GCP/RAS/278/JPN), will continue to implement activities on the enhancement of effective engagement in Codex work, building capacity to implement risk analysis frameworks, and provide technical support on data generation for establishment of food safety standards in selected ASEAN countries.

Keywords

FAORAP, Codex Alimentarius, ASEAN, Japan , GCP/RAS/295/JPN



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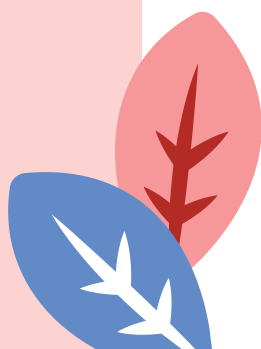
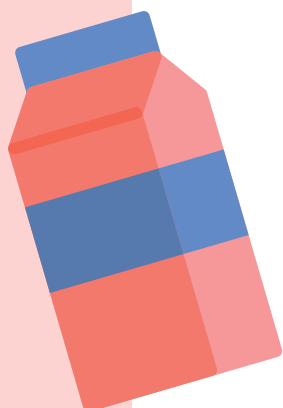
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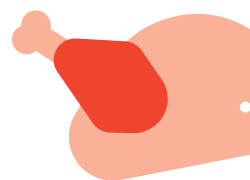
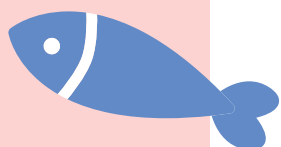


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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

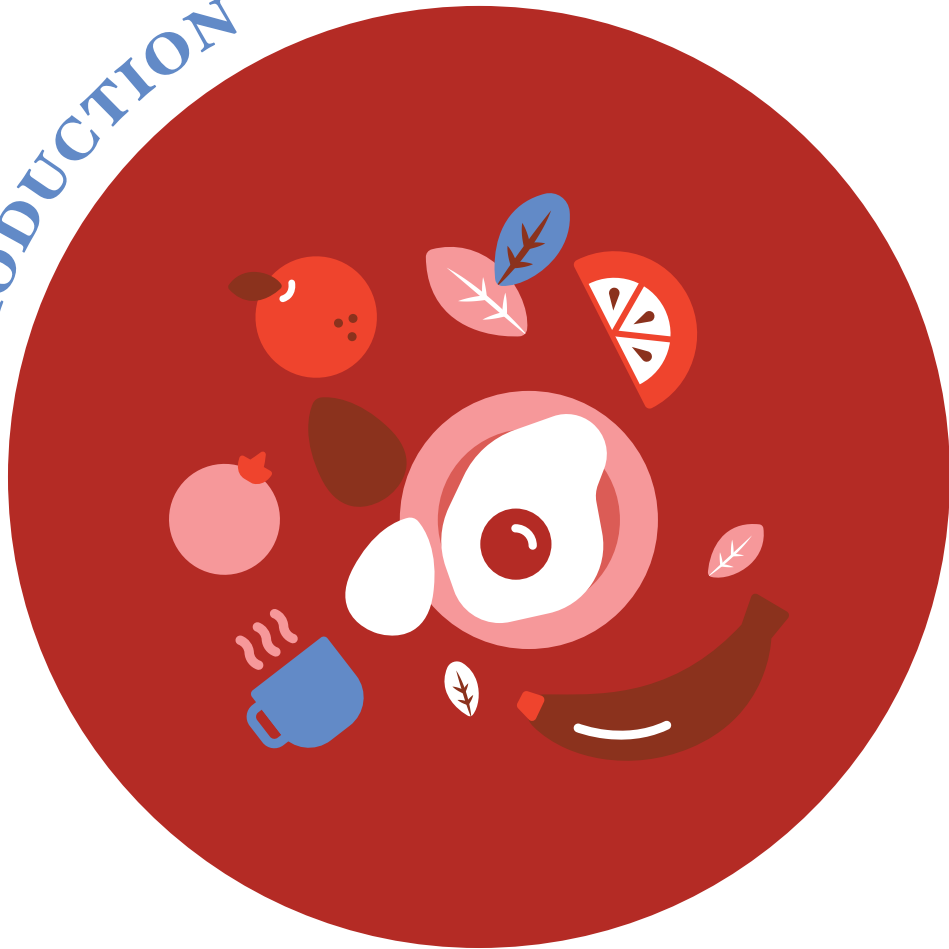
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AEGFS	ASEAN Expert Group on Food Safety
AHC4	ASEAN Health Cluster 4: Ensuring Food Safety
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASFN	ASEAN Food Safety Network
ATFC	ASEAN Task Force on Codex
ATIGA	ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCASIA	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia
CCP	Codex Contact Point
CTF	FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
JECFA	Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives
JEMRA	Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment
JMPR	Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, Japan
NCC	National Codex Committee
NTM	non tariff measures
SPS Agreement	Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
TBT	technical barriers to trade
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization



SAFE
FOOD
FOR ALL

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



Over the last century, international trade in food has grown exponentially (WTO, 2019). With globalization, food production and supply chains have expanded in volume and reach. However, that expansion has been accompanied by increases in food safety-related incidences. The World Trade Organization (WTO) has made addressing trade-related food safety a priority issue since it was founded in 1995.

Through the implementation of the WTO's Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures in 1999, consumers and governments are becoming aware of the importance of food safety and quality. Governments have become more selective of what they permit to be imported. They are heeding consumer demands to ensure safe food for all.

1.1 THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND ITS ESSENCE

In 1963, two United Nations agencies – the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) – jointly founded the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). The CAC was endowed with a strong mandate to establish international food standards that protect consumers' health and ensure fair practices in food trade. To achieve those goals, the CAC has compiled and developed a set of international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice, called Codex Alimentarius, which contributes to improving food safety and facilitating trade.

Although compliance is voluntary, Codex documents have become widely recognized in global trade since the implementation of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) in 1999. The SPS Agreement refers to Codex standards as the benchmark for member countries to establish food-safety related measures. The SPS Agreement also encourages member countries to participate as actively as possible in Codex and contribute to the further development of international standards. The Agreement aims to ensure that the member countries' needs are well addressed. As a result, the danger of food hazards to the global community has decreased, the importance of food quality has been introduced, the need for food standards has been recognized, and global trade has been facilitated. Those are major accomplishments.

Countries and regions have responded by establishing food-safety-related measures based on Codex standards. Some countries are already strengthening and validating compliance with such regulations. However, developing countries with limited resources and capabilities still find it a challenge to play their parts in the participation and implementation of the system.

1.2 ASEAN AND THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional grouping that promotes economic, political, and security cooperation among its ten members: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

ASEAN has envisioned developing its food and agriculture sector to be competitive, inclusive, resilient, and fully integrated with the global economy. Its goals are to ensure food security, food safety and better nutrition (ASEAN, 2016).

Several regional and national initiatives in ASEAN countries have already led to remarkable progress in enhancing food safety and increasing the competitiveness of food and agricultural products in the international market. The ASEAN Food Safety Network (ASFN) serves as a platform for coordinating and exchanging information on non-tariff barriers related to food safety. It coordinates a forum for information sharing on food safety. Within the platform, the ASEAN Expert Group on Food Safety (AEGFS) formulated a strategic plan to enhance food safety and quality, and to provide assistance to its member countries for the development of infrastructure and programmes to enhance food safety. Now, AEGFS had been restructured to be the ASEAN Health Cluster 4: Ensuring Food Safety (AHC4), one of several health clusters based on new governance and implementation mechanisms of the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda (2016 to 2020). AHC4 is responsible for promoting access to safe food in ASEAN through a five-year work programme. In addition, ASEAN established the Consultative Committee on Standards and Quality Product Working Group on Prepared Foodstuff to achieve transparency in the regulatory regime for prepared foodstuff among member countries and to enable food control authorities to discuss and propose measures to address issues related to the region's prepared foodstuff sector.

All ASEAN countries are Codex members. Thailand was the first to join in 1963, and Brunei Darussalam became the most recent member in 1997. ASEAN recognizes its need to participate in Codex. However, different member countries are at different stages of engagement in Codex work.

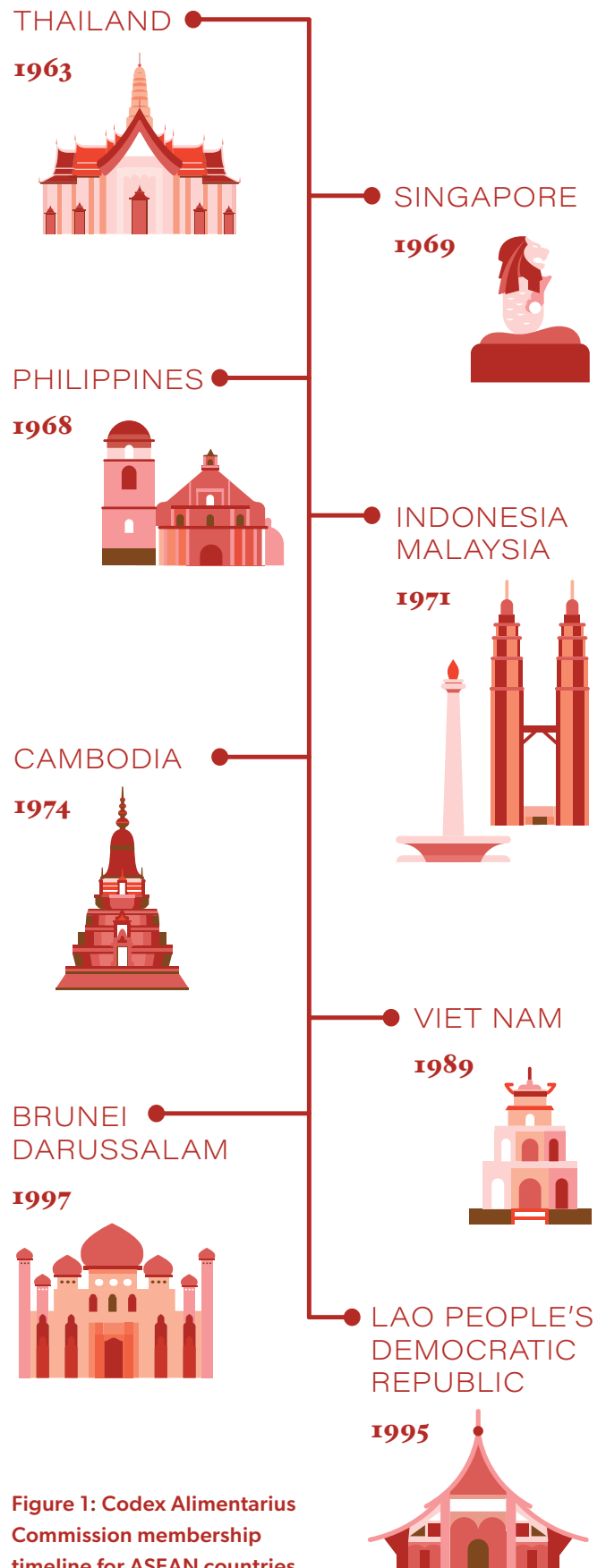


Figure 1: Codex Alimentarius Commission membership timeline for ASEAN countries

An ASEAN Task Force on Codex was created to establish ASEAN positions on Codex issues vital to the region and support all ASEAN positions to be presented effectively at the Codex forum.

The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint laid the foundation for realizing the goal of ASEAN as an integrated economic region by 2015. ASEAN leaders signed the Blueprint at the 13th ASEAN Summit in November 2007. The AEC is characterised by four pillars: a single market and production base, a highly competitive economic region, a region of equitable economic development, and a region that is fully integrated with the global economy. In each of the four pillars, various measures and initiatives are being implemented to achieve the goals of the AEC (ASEAN Secretariat, 2012). The implementation of the AEC Blueprint contains measures relating to tariff elimination in accordance with the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) and trade facilitation has contributed to a greater free flow of goods.

In the AEC Blueprint 2025, ASEAN will continue to reduce or eliminate border and behind-the-border regulatory barriers that impede trade, so as to achieve competitive, efficient, and seamless movement of goods within the region. The Blueprint says that minimizing “trade protection and compliance costs in dealing with Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs)” would be key to facilitating the seamless movement of goods. Addressing NTMs involves the following:

- 🎯 accelerating work towards full elimination of nontariff barriers;
- 🔴 standards and conformance measures, e.g. equivalence in technical regulations, standards harmonisation, alignment with international standards and mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs); and
- 📄 streamlining procedures and reducing requirements for certificates, permits and licenses to import or export.

ASEAN will “work towards facilitative standards and conformance.” This involves accelerating the harmonization of standards

Consequently, it could be implied that harmonization of food safety standards is recognized as a priority action within ASEAN. It is important for ASEAN member countries, therefore, to enhance their technical capacity to meaningfully contribute to international and regional food standards development and implementation. Participation, adaptation, and implementation of the Codex Alimentarius Standards require significant amounts of data, knowledge, expertise and resources for updates and emerging technologies that accompany the standards. These are essential to the harmonization of both national and international standards. This requires specific support for generation of evidence on food safety hazards and their translation into the level of risk for consumers.








To ensure that domestic and regional situations are reflected in Codex standards, member countries should provide their concerns as well as scientific data to the CAC and its subsidiary bodies for Codex standards setting. ASEAN member countries have a great need to understand the requirements of the Codex standards, and also to participate effectively in the Codex standards-setting process. Collecting scientific data and interpreting it accurately is also required by the various Codex Committees to support and strengthen the positions held by countries. Therefore, ASEAN needs to strengthen mechanisms for data generation and analysis. Sharing mechanisms between more-developed and less-developed member countries also needs to be promoted, facilitated or reinforced.

1.3 EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF JAPAN IN CODEX

The Government of Japan has been a crucial partner in building global food security since it joined FAO in 1951. Japan became Codex member in 1966. In the course of several decades, the country has effectively contributed to Codex work by providing comments, attending the physical and virtual meetings and sharing scientific data for setting Codex standards. Japan has made a massive contribution to Codex.

In terms of Codex expertise, Japan has also become an advanced country in the region. It was the host country for the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Food Derived from Biotechnology from 1999 to 2003 and from 2004 to 2008. Japan served twice as the coordinator for the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA): from 1995 to 1997 and from 2011 to 2014. Moreover, Dr Yayoi Tsujiyama, Japan's representative who served as Regional Coordinator, was elected as Vice-Chairperson of the CAC in 2014 and served until 2017 (FAO/WHO, 2021).

At the country level, Japan hosted annual Codex-related symposiums as following examples.

-  **2013:** A celebration of Codex's 50th anniversary, focusing on the achievements and challenges of the CAC.¹
-  **2014:** International Symposium "International Harmonization of Food Standards – the Role of Codex Alimentarius Commission"²
-  **2015:** International Symposium "How Codex activities in the European Union (EU) were developed."³
-  **2016:** International Symposium on Food Safety and Codex⁴
-  **2017:** Scientific advice for Codex and its importance, and how to strengthen Japan's contributions of scientific data.⁵
-  **2018:** International Symposium "Future challenges and Prospects in Codex Alimentarius"⁶
-  **2021:** International Symposium on HACCP⁷

The Government of Japan has recognized the importance of food safety at the global level and the increasing globalization of food. Japan has been continuously helping other countries, including ASEAN countries, to strengthen their capacity in food safety. Recently, Japan's MAFF has been partnering with FAO to strengthen ASEAN capacities on food safety and its effective participation in Codex through FAO regional projects. Those contributions and successes will be discussed in detail in later sections of this report.

¹ Hosted by the research group, the Policy Alternatives Research Institute of the University of Tokyo (PARI) and the Graduate School of Public Policy of the University of Tokyo (GraSPP), and supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)

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³ Hosted by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)

⁴ Hosted by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)

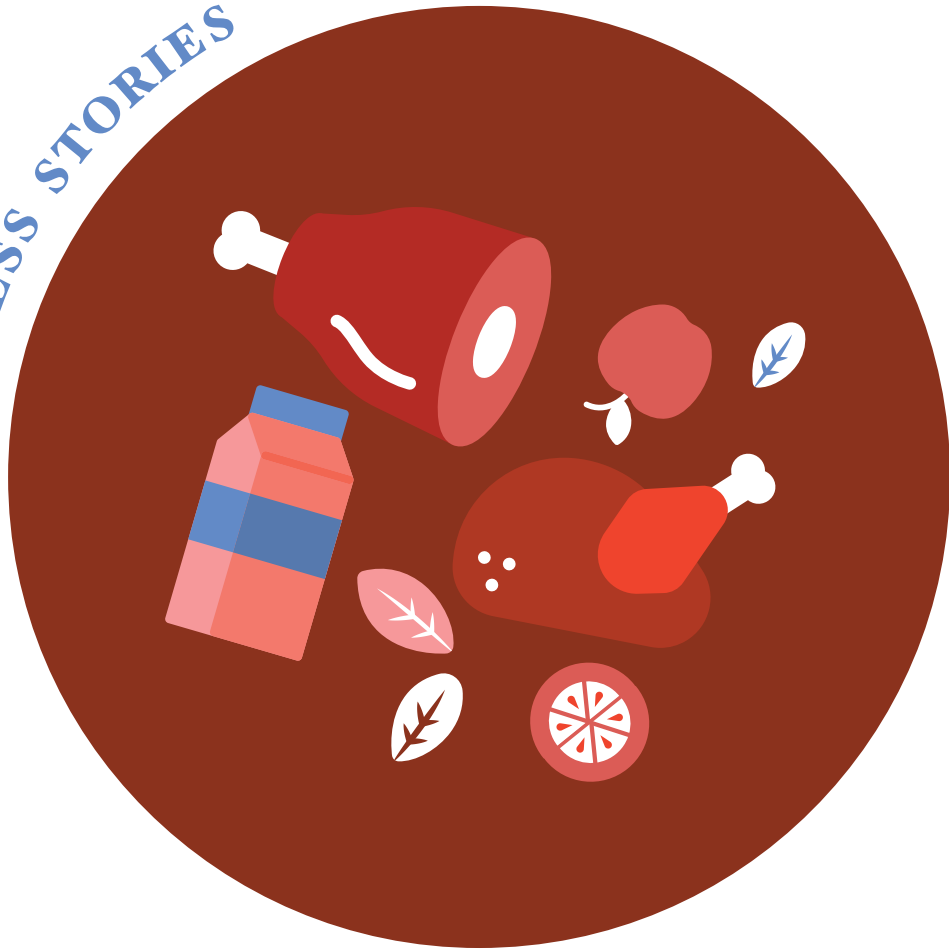
⁵ Hosted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), cohosted by the Food Safety Commission (FSC) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), sponsored by the research group, and cooperated by the Policy Alternatives Research Institute of the University of Tokyo (PARI)

⁶ Hosted by the research group, and cohosted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), the Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA), and the Policy Alternatives Research Institute of the University of Tokyo (PARI)

⁷ Hosted by the research group, cohosted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), and Institute for Future Initiatives of the University of Tokyo (IFI)

CHAPTER 2

SUCCESS STORIES



2.1 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Japan's MAFF has funded a series of FAO regional projects to enhance the capacity of food safety in ASEAN countries since 2002. In 2011, the MAFF-funded FAO regional project (GCP/RAS/280/JPN) sharpened its focus to Codex activities. Its goal was to protect consumer health and ensure fair practices in food trade within ASEAN countries and with other countries including Japan. The main project outcome was to strengthen the capacities of ASEAN countries to contribute to Codex standards setting and to implement adopted Codex standards.

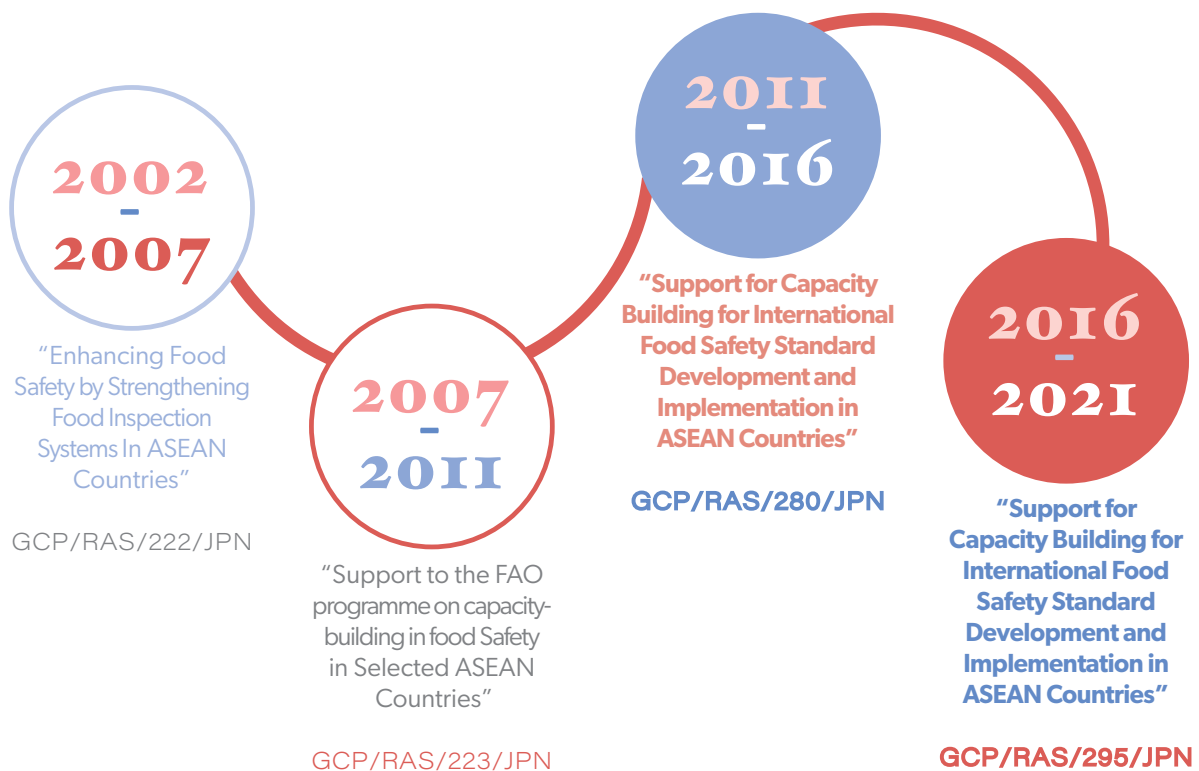


Figure 2 : FAO food safety related projects in ASEAN funded by MAFF, Japan

Over the last decade, the MAFF-funded projects have contributed greatly to enhancing the capacity of ASEAN by collaborating with its national focal points nominated by competent authorities in ASEAN and some ASEAN bodies. These have included the ASEAN Health Cluster 4: Ensuring of Food Safety (AHC4), and the ASEAN Task Force on Codex (ATFC).

To strengthen capacities to effectively engage in Codex work, the projects provided a unique opportunity to train technical government and agency officers involved in food standards in the following topics:

-  the effective participation in Codex;
-  national capacity/structure for effective engagement in Codex;
-  implementation of the Codex texts and the risk analysis framework at the national/regional level; and
-  data generation for supporting the establishment of food standards.

Other activities to strengthen food safety in the ASEAN region were also implemented under these projects based on requests from ASEAN countries.

Some highlights and achievements over the last decade include:

i ENHANCED EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN CODEX MEETINGS

Codex texts are science-based standards, guidelines and codes of practice compiled by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies taking into consideration advice provided by joint FAO/WHO expert bodies. Input from Codex members is part of the process of Codex work. To set Codex standards that are safe for people and applicable at the national level, Codex Members have to effectively participate in their development. It is fundamental for countries to have solid scientific knowledge on various topics covered by Codex Alimentarius. While this is basic for effective engagement in Codex, it is also important to note that various logistical barriers may exist for countries with less experience with the work of the Commission. Such barriers may include unfamiliarity with the Codex structure and its discussion; less understanding of Codex and how to establish the standards; limited resources for physical participation in Codex meetings, language barriers; and possible limitations in national structural capacity to develop national positions.

To strengthen regional and national capacities in these areas, and based on requests received from countries participating in these FAO projects, the projects have organized regional and national workshops and trainings to strengthen countries' capacities to effectively participate with limited resources. The workshops and training on this issue are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 : List of trainings and workshops with the aim to strengthen capacity in effective participation in Codex with limited resources

National training course	Place/Date
National training workshops on "Strengthening food safety standard setting and effective participation in Codex activities"*	Manila, The Philippines 30 August–1 September 2017
National training workshops on "Strengthening Food Safety Standard Setting and Effective Participation in Codex Activities"*	Hanoi, Viet Nam 21–23 November 2017
National training workshops on "Strengthening Food Safety Standard Setting and Effective Participation in Codex Activities"*	Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic 20–22 March 2018
National training workshop on "Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities in Cambodia: Codex simulation"	Phnom Penh, Cambodia 18–20 February 2020
Regional training workshops	Place/Date
Regional training workshop on "Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities in ASEAN Countries"	Tokyo, Japan 8–11 September 2015.
Regional training workshop on "Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities in ASEAN Countries"*	Bangkok, Thailand 9–11 January 2017
Regional training workshop on "Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities: developing science-based national positions and contributing scientific data to the Codex standard-setting activities"***	Tokyo, Japan 5–7 December 2018

Remark: * validated the training tool

** Trainers' training

The methodology of the above trainings and workshops consisted of lectures, case studies, simulation-based sessions (mock sessions) and group work. The case materials used for the mock sessions were developed under the project. Pre-test and post-test questionnaires were used to determine knowledge uptake. Based on comparative analysis on the pre- and post-training examinations, the results of every workshop and training have revealed significant improvement in the knowledge and understanding of the participants. Most participants appreciated the mock sessions as these provided them with the knowledge and experience on how to prepare before attending a Codex plenary session, present and promote national positions in Codex Committees, and how to develop negotiating skills through a simulation of a real Codex Committee session.

For sustainability, the project conducted a workshop in Tokyo in 2018 with the aim of training officials who have the potential to be trainers at the national level. To support the organization of this kind of training workshop at the regional and national levels, the project developed **the training tool: Simulation-based training for effective participation in Codex activities**. The tool provides a basic framework for developing and conducting a simulation-based training workshop aimed at enhancing effective participation in Codex activities. As mentioned above, a case study specific to ASEAN was developed. However, this training tool is not limited to only ASEAN colleagues. Other countries can also use this tool as a guide to organize this type of workshop. The publication can be download from the FAO website (forthcoming).

ii STRENGTHENED NATIONAL CAPACITY AND STRUCTURE FOR EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN CODEX WORK

The following national training workshops were organized to enhance knowledge on the CAC with the focus on the National Codex Committee (NCC), the Codex Contact Point (CCP) and their functions.

Table 2 : National training courses organized to strengthen national capacity/structure for effective engagement in Codex work

National training course	Place/Date
National training course "Strengthening Food Standard Setting and Participation in Codex Activities in Cambodia"	Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 19–21 February 2014
National training course "Strengthening Food Safety Standard Setting and Effective Participation in Codex activities in Lao People's Democratic Republic"	Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic 27–29 June 2016
Second national training course "Strengthening Food Safety Standard Setting and Effective Participation in Codex activities"	Yangon, Myanmar 20–21 December 2016

The outputs and information obtained from the above training courses were used for follow up activities. The outputs obtained from the Lao People's Democratic Republic workshop helped to establish the national Codex Committee for Lao People's Democratic Republic and its terms of reference. The information obtained from the Myanmar workshop was used to draft the national Codex Procedural Manual for the country's CCP.

iii IMPLEMENTATION OF CODEX TEXTS AND THE RISK ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK AT REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS

In the SPS Agreement, a WTO member has the right to establish measures as necessary, including food safety measures. The measures are required to be risk based. Therefore, risk-based evidence should be the foundation of establishing food-safety-related measures, adopted or in line with Codex standards. The SPS Agreement urges WTO members to harmonize national food safety standards with the Codex standards. This harmonization would not only protect consumer health, but also facilitate the food trade. The projects organized the following workshops to directly and indirectly support the implementation of Codex texts and the risk analysis framework.

FOOD SAFETY

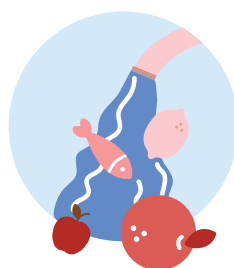


Table 3 : Regional workshops held for enhancing the implementation of Codex texts and the risk analysis framework

Regional workshops	Place/Date
"Regional workshop on Principle and further activities for Codex implementation"	Bangkok, Thailand 17–19 September 2012
"Regional workshop on Food recall and traceability – Application in national food safety control"	Chiang Mai, Thailand 15–17 February 2013
"Regional workshop on Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria"	Hanoi, Viet Nam 16 November 2013
"Regional workshop on Design and Evaluation of Mycotoxin Sampling Protocols"	Manila, the Philippines 11–12 September 2014
Regional consultation entitled "Food Safety Indicators in the Asia-Pacific"	Singapore 6–8 December 2017
Regional workshop on "the Development of a set of National Food Safety Indicators"	Bangkok, Thailand 19–21 November 2019
Regional workshop on " Capacity building on risk categorization for ranking risk of ASEAN food hazards for developing the risk-based monitoring protocol for food safety"	Bangkok, Thailand 23–25 April 2019

iv DATA GENERATION FOR THE ELABORATION OF FOOD STANDARDS

Scientific data is one of the key inputs for the establishment of food safety standards. An examination of Codex standards shows that there are few food-quality and food-safety international standards for some tropical fruits and vegetables, especially in ASEAN countries. The absence of these standards is caused by a lack of necessary scientific data. The project also recognized the importance of data generation. Some ASEAN countries have the capacity and capability to generate scientific data for developing food standards. Therefore, the project organized the following training workshops in order to strengthen capacity on data generation.

- 🍷 A regional workshop on “Strengthening Capacity in Data Collection and Generation for Food Safety Risk Analysis” was held from 10 to 13 June 2013, in Tokyo, Japan.
- 🍏 A national training on "strengthening capacity on data generation for pesticide residue for establishment of MRLs in Lao PDR" was held from 16 to 20 December 2019, in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic.

The pilot survey entitled **“House cricket farming and chain of distribution to consumers: Preliminary identification of the quality and safety and critical points of hazard of the produces”** was conducted by the Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University in Thailand from February to July 2014 under the project GCP/RAS/280/JPN. The Institute developed a tool (the methodology, sample size and questionnaire) for the survey in Thailand and other ASEAN countries such as Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia and Viet Nam. The survey's aim was to provide data for developing a regional Codex standard on edible insects.

The formative research (in-depth interviews) was conducted with 20 cricket farmers in the east of Thailand. The information from these in-depth interviews were used to developed the survey questionnaire (as part of the tool). Then, the tool (methodology, sample size and questionnaires) was employed to gather data from 70 cricket farmers and 10 cricket collectors in the northeast and the north of Thailand. A statistics programme to analyse the data produced the nine following topics:

1. basic characteristics of the cricket farmers, including family size and male-female ratio
2. farming inputs, including financial investments and farming spaces
3. farming practices
4. harvesting and yield
5. distributing of produce and return ratio
6. constraints on and needs of cricket farming
7. cricket collectors/distributors
8. risks to safe produce synthesized from research findings
9. analysis of production and trade.

v JOINT APPLICATION TO THE CODEX TRUST FUND (CTF)

During the side-event of the 21st session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA21), the representatives from Bhutan, India and Nepal shared their experience in preparing their successful joint application to the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund (CTF). Some ASEAN participants expressed a need to learn more about this process. A technical assistance workshop was organized to strengthen capacity for understanding and preparing a successful application to the Codex Trust Fund. The workshop was organized under the project GCP/RAS/295/JPN in October 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Representatives from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar attended the workshop. A representative from Thailand's office of the Codex Contact Point (CCP) also attended to share experiences and technical insights. The workshop concluded with a resolution by the participants to jointly submit a group application for Round 4 CTF II group application. Myanmar would be the lead country. The representatives of Codex Contact Points from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar jointly drafted the group application, based on the results obtained from the national consultation meetings. They jointly submitted the application and Round 4 CTF II granted them funding.

vi ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR THE ERA OF COVID-19

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in the first quarter of 2020 necessitated the cancellation of all physical trainings and workshops. In their place, alternative solutions have been planned.

The current MAFF-funded project (GCP/RAS/295/JPN), together with FAO headquarters, has developed an e-learning course on **Codex**. This e-learning can be accessed through the FAO website (forthcoming). The project also developed the e-learning course for the Codex Guideline **General Principles of Food Hygiene** (CXC 1-1969-2020 version). This e-learning focuses on good hygiene practices and HACCP for ASEAN countries to strengthen capacity for implementing this at national level. This e-learning can be accessed through the ASEAN Food Safety Network websites (forthcoming).

In addition, the FAO project team, together with the OIE, WFP and WHO, developed **Infographics of Food Safety Related to COVID-19** as a resource for risk communication. The material can be used to counter rumours and misinformation that have spread about COVID-19 transmission through food.

vii STATE OF CODEX ACTIVITIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL IN ASEAN

In the initial step of implementing the FAO regional project of GCP/RAS/280/JPN, the project consolidated the status of national Codex activities of ten ASEAN countries and published the report "Status of National Codex Activities" in 2012. The information provided in that publication was the baseline to enable and measure improvements over the project period. During the implementation of these two FAO regional projects, some countries have made significant advances since 2012. The publication "Safe Food for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – Engaging in Codex Standards setting" (2021) was created to supersede the above publication. This document highlighted the significant advances by ASEAN in engagement and support to its ten member countries in implementing their national Codex activities. The information will also serve as the new baseline for the success of further projects and improvements made by the countries and FAO in strengthening capacities for enhancing Codex Alimentarius activities.

It also provides information for food safety competent authorities in governments beyond the ASEAN region. Additionally, the document is intended to indirectly strengthen collaboration within the region through the discussion and benchmarking of good practices.

viii PUBLICATIONS FOR BROADENING KNOWLEDGE OF FOOD SAFETY TOPICS

Apart from strengthening capacity for the effective engagement of the Codex standards, the project received requests from ASEAN countries and ASEAN sectoral bodies for technical support on food safety issues. The projects outputs were:



- a set of infographics on foodborne parasites: fish liver flukes and tapeworms; and
- a guide to develop national programmes to monitor pesticide residues.

2.2 LESSONS LEARNED FROM PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Based on experiences from the implementation of these FAO regional projects in ASEAN countries, ASEAN member countries came to several realizations, learned lessons and identified needs while successfully implementing the projects.

- ASEAN member countries recognized the value of Codex standards as an international reference for food standards under SPS. This was evident through the significant improvement in national-level implementation as a result of increased understanding and awareness among the member countries.
- The projects developed a simulation-based training tool for effective participation in Codex activities. It provides trainers and trainees the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the proceedings at Codex meetings through mock sessions. This tool is in high demand and many countries have requested in-country simulation exercises.
- Based on participant evaluations, the national and regional workshops conducted under the projects have enhanced the meaningful contributions of countries in Codex meetings. Further capacity building to support this endeavour is required, especially for the less-developed member countries of ASEAN. In addition, countries have requested specialized trainings on topics such as electronic working groups.
- Significant gaps were identified in the trainings on capacity building for data generation/compilation for risk assessment and evidence collection, which is important to formulate country positions, as well as to support other countries, where applicable.
- ASEAN member countries recognized that more regional-based scientific data should be provided for the establishment of Codex standards to reflect domestic and regional contexts. The information should also meet Codex data quality requirements, an area in which ASEAN members need support for capacity development. This would also facilitate the regional standards activity, as there is no existing Codex standard for tropical agricultural commodities produced in the ASEAN region.

2.3 IMPACT OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

These projects mainly benefitted ASEAN competent authorities on food safety. The participants were trained on how to effectively engage in Codex work with limited resources. They obtained knowledge and understanding of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, its importance and how it works: fundamental information for strengthening the capacity to engage in Codex work. In addition, they were trained how to prioritize topics, and how to participate in the establishment of Codex standards even though they were not able to physically attend the meeting. Consequently, the comments from Codex Members can be expressed and taken into account during the elaboration of Codex standards. This would help make Codex standards feasible at the national level while also protecting the health of consumers. Indirectly, it supports national implementation of Codex standards.

The implementation of Codex standards ensures that the food produced according to those standards is safe for global consumption. Adhering to Codex standards leads to the improvement of food safety at the national, regional and global levels. Greater safety contributes to increased confidence in the international food trade. Furthermore, this harmonization of food standards can minimize non-tariff barriers to trade. It facilitates trade, which is beneficial to producers and farmers in countries in and outside the ASEAN region.

In the absence of Codex standards, the projects supported the countries with technical assistance in implementing a risk-based approach for the establishment of their own measures. Risk-based approaches ensure that all necessary measures are set for the appropriate level of protection and their implementation is feasible despite limited resources. Furthermore, the project also introduced some to the importance of selection and generation of qualified data. Data generated according to international requirements would be used for establishing the national, regional and international food safety standards.

The projects emphasized the importance of collaboration with all stakeholders at the national level on engagement in Codex work. Apart from the competent authorities, the project invited participation from other stakeholders such as academics and producers. This also provided a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to meet face-to-face and discuss national Codex work. This ensures that all stakeholders in the food chain recognize the importance of food safety, which is everyone's business. Successful collaboration among relevant stakeholders contributes to effective and sustainable engagement in Codex activities.

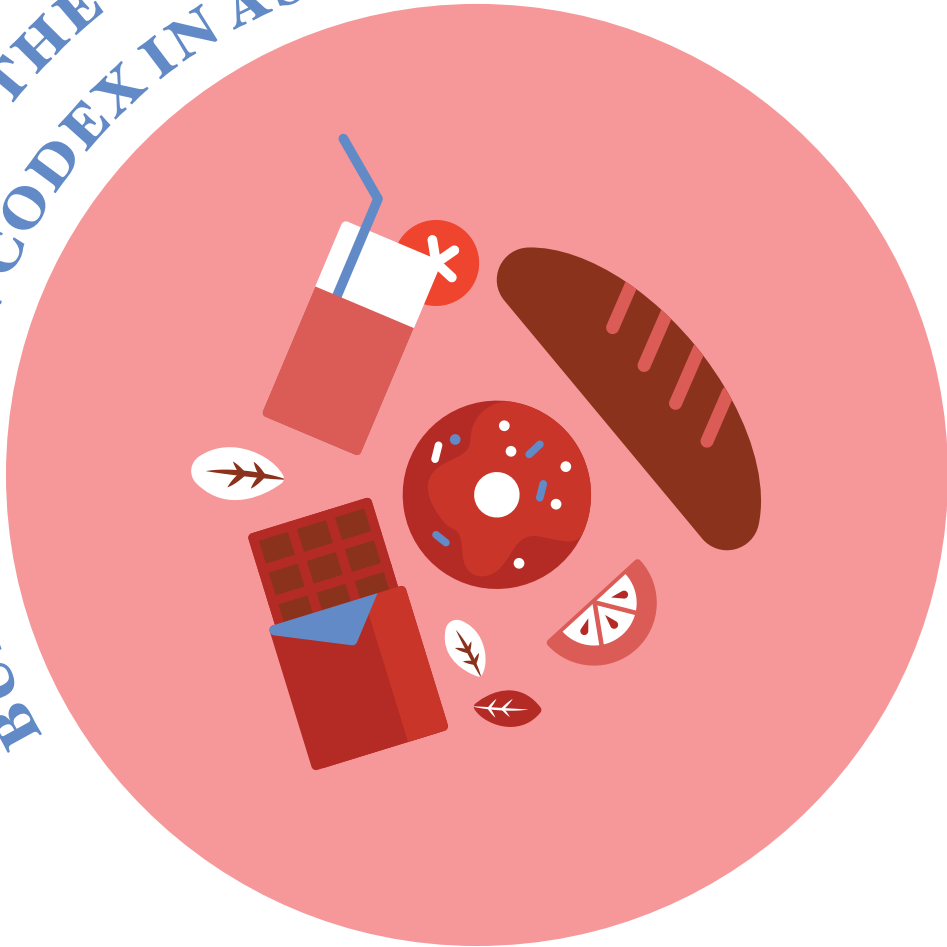
As ASEAN member countries have different levels of capacity and capability to engage in Codex work, the projects provided an opportunity for ASEAN member countries to be a positive example by for creating synergy among a diverse group of nations. The projects provided opportunities for sharing country experiences, which others can tailor to fit their national context.

Implementing the projects provided opportunities to make connections. Competent authorities responsible for food safety had chances to discuss and collaborate with counterparts in other countries, both within ASEAN and with the donor, Japan. These connections and relationships support collaboration in Codex work to achieve food safety and increased trade.

Quotes from the project participants appear in Appendix 2.

THE WAY FORWARD OF THE CAPACITY
BUILDING ON CODEX IN ASEAN

CHAPTER 3



THE WAY FORWARD OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING ON CODEX IN ASEAN

The partnership between the Government of Japan and the countries of ASEAN has already stood the test of time. As the countries in the region continuously adopt and contribute to the Codex standards, their needs for greater learning have been realized. In the document entitled “Safe Food for ASEAN: engaging in Codex standards setting (forthcoming),” the countries demonstrated their recent achievements in implementing Codex standards at the national level. Individual countries have also expressed their needs to build capacity for effective implementation of Codex standards. Some of these needs include:

Networks to enable increased participation in international and regional food standards work, especially in terms of Codex Alimentarius.

Capacity building, training, workshops on several topics including, but not limited to:

- capacity building of Codex Contact Points and Codex Technical Committees;
- capacity building to conduct data sampling and analysis for Codex standards setting;
- training on risk-based food safety standards and regulatory impact analysis;
- training on risk communications and promotion of Codex standards;
- training on different food-borne surveillance systems;
- training on the development of regional food standards in the ASEAN (based on Codex Alimentarius); and
- training on standards development based on Codex, which is applicable in the ASEAN context.

Creation of ASEAN-based case studies on:

- effectiveness of food safety alert systems;
- availability of technical services in ASEAN for food safety inspections; and
- maximum residue limits on pesticides and veterinary drug residues in food products.

Establishment of national and regional laboratory networking (technical and practical operations), which includes mechanisms for streamlining testing services provided by existing laboratories.

Based on the lessons learned from these projects, further support in capacity building is clearly required. The FAO project “Enhancing Capacity in Codex for Effective Participation and Contribution of Selected Countries in Asia” (GCP/RAS/278/JPN), funded by the MAFF, Government of Japan, will continue to implement activities on:

- enhancing effective engagement in Codex work;
- enhancing capacity on the implementation of risk analysis framework; and
- technical support on data generation for establishment of food safety standards in selected ASEAN counties.

The recipient countries will be expanded to cover Timor-Leste – a new applicant for ASEAN membership. South Asian and Southwest Pacific countries will be selected during the project implementation in consultation with the FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific (for Southwest Pacific country) and activities will be based on available budget and countries’ request.

This will contribute to achieving the overall goal of the project, which is to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade within the recipient countries and with other countries including Japan.

CHAPTER 4

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APPENDIX



APPENDIX 1: OUTPUTS FROM THE PROJECTS

Outputs	URL link
Meeting proceedings	
National training workshops on “Strengthening food safety standard setting and effective participation in Codex activities” in Manila, The Philippines (2017)	http://www.fao.org/3/I8391EN/i8391en.pdf
National training workshops on “Strengthening Food Safety Standard Setting and Effective Participation in Codex Activities” in Hanoi, Viet Nam (2017)	http://www.fao.org/3/I8775EN/i8775en.pdf
National training workshops on “Strengthening Food Safety Standard Setting and Effective Participation in Codex Activities” in Vientiane, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (2018)	http://www.fao.org/3/i9764en/I9764EN.pdf
National training workshop on “Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities in Cambodia: Codex simulation” in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (2020)	http://www.fao.org/3/ca8951en/CA8951EN.pdf
Regional workshop on “Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities in ASEAN Countries” in Tokyo, Japan (2015)	http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Report-of-Tokyo-workshop.pdf
Regional workshop on “Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities in ASEAN Countries” in Bangkok, Thailand (2016)	http://www.fao.org/3/I9765EN/i9765en.pdf
Regional workshop on “Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities: developing science-based national positions and contributing scientific data to the Codex standard-setting activities” in Tokyo, Japan (2018)	http://www.fao.org/3/ca4458en/ca4458en.pdf
National training course “Strengthening Food Standard Setting and Participation in Codex Activities in Cambodia” in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (2014)	http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Field%20Doc.%20No.%206-2014.pdf
National training course “Strengthening Food Safety Standard Setting and Effective Participation in Codex activities in Lao People’s Democratic Republic” Vientiane, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (2016)	http://www.fao.org/3/I9764EN/i9764en.pdf
The 2nd national training course “Strengthening Food Safety Standard Setting and Effective Participation in Codex activities” in Yangon, Myanmar (2016)	http://www.fao.org/3/I9763EN/i9763en.pdf

Outputs	URL link
Meeting proceedings	
Regional Inception Workshop on “Principle and further activities for Codex implementation” in Bangkok, Thailand (2012)	http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/GCP-RAS-280-JPN-Field-Document-No.-2-2013.pdf
Training workshop on “Food recall and traceability – Application in national food safety control” in Chiang Mai, Thailand (2013)	http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/GCP-RAS-280-JPN-Field-Document-No3.2014.pdf
Regional training course on “Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria” in Hanoi, Viet Nam (2013)	http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Field_Doc._No.5_2014.pdf
Regional training workshop on “Design and Evaluation of Mycotoxin Sampling Protocols” in Manila, the Philippines (2014)	http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Report-No.7-Philippines.pdf
Regional consultation entitled “Food Safety Indicators in the Asia-Pacific” in Singapore (2017)	http://www.fao.org/3/i9459EN/i9459en.pdf
Regional workshop on “the Development of a set of National Food Safety Indicators” in Bangkok, Thailand (2019)	http://www.fao.org/3/ca8949en/CA8949EN.pdf
Regional workshop on “Capacity building on risk categorization for ranking risk of ASEAN food hazards for developing the risk-based monitoring protocol for food safety” in Bangkok, Thailand (2019)	http://www.fao.org/3/ca5754en/CA5754EN.pdf
Regional workshop on “Strengthening Capacity in Data Collection and Generation for Food Safety Risk Analysis” in Tokyo, Japan (2013)	http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Text-FAO-regional-train.compressed.pdf
Research report on “House cricket farming and chain of distribution to consumers: Preliminary identification of the quality and safety and critical points of hazard of the produces	http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/FinalReport-Cricket-Reserach-in-Thailand-INMU-May2015.pdf
Training tool: Simulation-based training for effective participation in Codex activities	forthcoming

Outputs	URL link
Meeting proceedings	
Status of National Codex Activities	http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Status-of-National-book.pdf
Safe Food for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – Engaging in Codex Standards setting	forthcoming
Summary of the tripartite meeting to accelerate prevention and control of neglected foodborne parasitic zoonoses in selected Asian countries, in Laung Prabang, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (2018)	http://www.fao.org/3/ca6886en/ca6886en.pdf
Summary of the workshop to strengthen capacity on understanding and preparing a successful application for FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund, in Bangkok, Thailand 2019.	http://www.fao.org/3/ca6885en/ca6885en.pdf
Infographics	
Infographics of Food Safety Related to the COVID-19	http://www.fao.org/3/ca9174en/ca9174en.pdf http://www.fao.org/3/ca9175en/ca9175en.pdf http://www.fao.org/3/ca9178en/ca9178en.pdf http://www.fao.org/3/ca9179en/ca9179en.pdf http://www.fao.org/3/ca9180en/ca9180en.pdf
A set of infographics on foodborne parasites: fish liver flukes and tapeworms	http://www.fao.org/3/ca9100en/CA9100EN.pdf http://www.fao.org/3/ca9095en/CA9095EN.pdf
e-Learning course	
e-learning course on Codex.	forthcoming
e-learning course on Codex Guideline General Principles of Food Hygiene (CXC 1-1969) 2020 version (focus on Good Hygiene Practices)	forthcoming

APPENDIX 2: QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANTS IN PROJECTS' ACTIVITIES

CAMBODIA

"The workshop contents were useful and gave me broad knowledge on the Codex infrastructure and how to establish a National Position. The mock session was the most effective training method for a developing country with no experience in the Codex Committee Meeting. Therefore, during the three days working in Tokyo, I was very satisfied. I learned a lot and got a lot of experiences from resource persons, speakers, FAO, Japan and from participants from ASEAN. In conclusion, the mock-session approach provided good guidance for Cambodia's responses to future Codex Committee meetings."

Mr Sin Sideth

Director of Laboratory, Directorate-General (CAMCONTROL), Ministry of Commerce, Cambodia
Participant in the regional training workshop on "Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities: developing science-based national positions and contributing scientific data to the Codex standard-setting activities," 5-7 December 2018, Tokyo, Japan

"We highly recommend and very much appreciate this project, and we would like to express our gratitude to the Government of Japan for kindly providing financial support for this project as well as the previous food safety projects for ASEAN countries. We thank FAO management and technical teams at the Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (RAP) and national FAO teams for their valuable support in the project to achieve very successful implementation."

Mr Dim Theng

Codex Contact Point Cambodia, Deputy Director General of Cambodia Import Export Inspection and Fraud, Cambodia
National focal point of the GCP/RAS/295/JPN project

MALAYSIA

"Malaysia greatly appreciates the assistance and support that FAO had provided to ASEAN, including in strengthening capacity to effectively participate in Codex, whether through ASEAN subsidiary bodies or competent authorities in ASEAN Member States. We highly regard FAO assistance, especially as one of the Codex parent organizations, in terms of its funding and expert consultation, which definitely assists ASEAN Member States in our capacity development towards ensuring safe food."

Food Safety and Quality Division

Ministry of Health Malaysia,
National focal point of the GCP/RAS/295/JPN project

SINGAPORE

"While I have participated in Codex meetings before, the structured training in this workshop provided more in-depth background on things behind the scene and helped to 'connect the dots' on various Codex activities."

Ms Peik Ching Seah

Deputy Director, Regulatory Programmes Department, Regulatory Administration Group, Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority, Singapore
Participant in the regional training workshop on "Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities: developing science-based national positions and contributing scientific data to the Codex standard-setting activities," 5-7 December 2018, Tokyo, Japan

THAILAND

“Participating in the regional workshop on “Capacity building on risk categorization for ranking risk of ASEAN food hazards for developing the risk-based monitoring protocol for food safety,” held in Bangkok, Thailand (2019) was very beneficial for us as competent authority staff because we now have more understanding about the concept and methodology for risk categorization and risk ranking. This can help us in our work for better risk management and appropriate measures in our situation of limited resources. The workshop also provided a good opportunity for us to learn about and share the application of risk categorization in other countries that could be good examples for all participants to modify and adapt to their own national contexts.”

Ms Jiraratana Thesasilpa

Head of Food Standard Group, Food Division, Thai Food and Drug Administration, Ministry of Public Health.

Participant in the regional workshop on “Capacity building on risk categorization for ranking risk of ASEAN food hazards for developing the risk-based monitoring protocol for food safety,” 23–25 April 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

JAPAN

“It was very valuable for me to participate in the workshop. At the lecture, I learned systematically a lot about risk analysis in food safety and Codex. The mock session was also interesting because I learned how to make a position, what data is needed to support it, and how to negotiate with other countries through role-playing as if it was a real Codex meeting. I would like to contribute to the discussion by using what I’ve learned through the workshop when I participate in a Codex meeting next time.”

Ms Rieko Imabayashi

Technical Official, Food Safety Policy Division, Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Japan

Participant in the regional training workshop on “Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities: developing science-based national positions and contributing scientific data to the Codex standard-setting activities,” 5–7 December 2018, Tokyo, Japan

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