



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA

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FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY SITUATION IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION

**Use of the online platform for information sharing on food safety control systems;
status of information and future plans/prospects**

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The online platform for information sharing on food control systems was introduced during the last round of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees (RCCs) in 2016 to replace the Circular Letter, which had been used previously to share updated information on food control systems during the RCCs.

1.2 The platform provides a global source of information for Codex members on national food safety control systems and allows Codex Members to efficiently share information in a structured and systematic way. Especially for low income countries the platform aims to provide easy access to information about food safety control systems in other countries. This may be a source of inspiration and help facilitate market access.

1.2 The platform also serves as an opportunity for countries to assess their own national food safety control system and to collect and compile minimum information that Codex Contact Points (CCPs) should be aware of.

2. MANAGEMENT OF THE PLATFORM

2.1 The platform is currently supported, managed and maintained by a team of staff from FAO, WHO and Codex Secretariat. CCPs are responsible for gathering information about the national food safety control system in their country and post it on the online platform. Only CCPs are able to upload information for their country.

2.2 The information is uploaded and submitted by the CCPs in two stages: i) a draft version, which is not visible to anyone outside, and ii) a published version which is accessible to all, except for Part F (the self-assessment questions) which is kept confidential. CCPs have the possibility to access the platform all year round to update their profile, add and/or change information, and to decide when the information provided should be published (<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/survey/>).

3. STATUS OF RESPONSES BY MEMBERS OF THE REGION

3.1 In the Asian region, 42% of Member Countries (10 out of 24) have uploaded information on the platform. Out of these, 8 countries have published the information, while 2 countries have submitted information in draft form. Fourteen countries have never provided information on the online platform. Details on the countries that have submitted information on the online platform and related status can be found in the Annex 1.

4. OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES BY MEMBERS OF THE REGION

4.1 Four countries uploaded baseline information on the platform between 2016 and 2018 but only 50% of them published complete information and the remainder provided incomplete information in draft. It was encouraging that six more countries uploaded information and published it although only 50% of them provided complete information.

4.2 Members of the Asia region are at various stages of development and progress in strengthening of the national food control system, i.e. establishment of a functional National Codex Committee, national foodborne disease surveillance systems, risk assessment and generation and use of scientific data. Food exporting countries are in better position to provide the information requested. Members response to information requested through the online platform is presented in Annex 2.

4.3 Most Members have limited technical capacity for risk assessment and generation and use of scientific data. Although most Members have stated that they have national surveillance systems for foodborne diseases and monitoring of food contamination, the technical capacity, level of monitoring, functional status of existing national systems and use of data and information for policy decisions may vary from country to country. There is a growing importance of digital information in the international food trade. It is the primary responsibility of CCPs to make available transparent, reliable and complete baseline information on the online platform, and periodically update and improve the quality of information so that other Members will be benefitted.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Keeping in mind that the platform's success depends on Member Countries uploading baseline information and updating this as required, the Committee is invited to provide comments and feedback on the format and utility of the platform, in particular:

- a. Is the online platform considered fit for purpose?
- b. What issues prevent Member Countries from uploading information to the platform?
- c. For those countries that have submitted in draft format, what issues prevent them from making the information public (by proceeding to "publish" the information)?
- d. How can the online platform be improved to better serve its purpose?

Annex 1

LIST OF COUNTRIES THAT HAVE SUBMITTED INFORMATION ON THE ONLINE PLATFORM AND RELATED STATUS

Country	Year of last modification	Level of completeness	Information missing	Status
1) Thailand	2018	Complete		Published
2) Cambodia	2018	Incomplete	Part C, D, E	Draft
3) India	2019	Incomplete	Part D Q.7	Published
4) Bhutan	2019	Complete		Published
5) Singapore	2016	Incomplete	Part A Q.2, C, D, E, F	Draft
6) Malaysia	2016	Complete		Published
7) Republic of Korea	2019	Complete		Published
8) Sri Lanka	2019	Incomplete	Part D Q.7 – Q.8*	Published
9) Nepal	2019	Incomplete	Part D Q.7	Published
10) Indonesia	2019	Complete		Published

*not stated the official competence of the laboratories

LIST OF COUNTRIES THAT HAVE NEVER PROVIDED INFORMATION ON THE ONLINE PLATFORM**ASIA (14/24 total members)**

Afghanistan
Bangladesh
Brunei Darussalam
China
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Japan
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Maldives
Mongolia
Myanmar
Pakistan
Philippines
Timor-Leste
Viet Nam

Annex 2

MEMBERS' RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTED FOR CODEX ONLINE PLATFORM (N=8)

Part	Information requested	Members' response							
		Bhutan	India	Indonesia	Korea^	Malaysia	Nepal	Sri Lanka	Thailand
A.	National Codex Contact Point & Competent authorities	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Competent Authorities (CAs)								
	➤ List of CAs	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	➤ CAs' Mandates	X	√	√	√	√	X	√	√
	➤ INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point (ECP)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X
B.	Food safety and consumer protection – laws and regulations	Filled in with link to FAOLEX							
C.	National Codex programme								
	➤ National Codex Consultative Mechanisms	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	➤ Providers of scientific and technical input to national consultation on Codex	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
D.	Risk Assessment and Scientific Data								
	➤ National bodies providing RA and scientific data	NA	√	√	√	√	NA	√	√
	➤ Risk assessment, risk profiles, scientific opinions	NA	NA	NA	NA	√	NA	NA	NA
	➤ Official laboratory	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	➤ Official competence	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X
E.	Surveillance of foodborne diseases and monitoring of food contamination								
	➤ National surveillance systems – foodborne diseases in human	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	➤ National monitoring systems – foodborne hazards in the food chain	√	√	√	√	√	NA	√	√
F.	National capacity in food safety	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

^Republic of Korea √=Filled in X=Missing NA=Not available