

Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

The Codex Alimentarius Commission(CAC)is an international food standards body established jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Codex Alimentarius Commission - A Brief Background

- The **Codex Alimentarius Commission was established in May 1963**
- It is jointly managed by the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization
- As of 2021, the Codex Alimentarius Commission has **189 Codex Members** made up of **188 Member Countries** and **1 Member Organization** (The European Union)
- **India became a member of Codex Alimentarius in 1964**
- Membership of the Commission is open to all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and WHO which are interested in international food standards
- The Commission meets in regular session once a year alternating between Geneva and Rome
- **CAC works in the six United Nations (UN) official languages**, which are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish
- All the budgetary matters are handled together by WHO and FAO

What is the Codex Alimentarius?

The Codex Alimentarius is a collection of international food standards that have been adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).

Codex Standards cover all the main foods, whether processed, semi-processed or raw. Codex provisions concern the hygienic and nutritional quality of food, including microbiological norms, food additives, pesticide and veterinary drug residues, contaminants, labelling and presentation, and methods of sampling and risk analysis.

CODEX Committees

The food standards development work of the Commission is assisted by its Executive Committee and its subsidiary bodies. This executive body is the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC).

India, as the Regional Coordinator for FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA) is a member of the CCEXEC.

Given below are the subsidiary bodies for the Commission:

- **Committees**, which prepare draft standards for submission to the Commission; may be either General Subject external link or Commodity specific
- **Coordinating Committees**, through which regions or groups of countries coordinate food standards activities in the region. Currently, there are six Codex regions:

- Kenya, Africa
- India, Asia
- Netherlands, Europe
- Chile, Latin America and South-West Pacific
- Vanuatu, North America and South-West Pacific
- Iran, Near East
- **Task Forces**, ad hoc Intergovernmental Taskforce with very limited terms of reference established for a fixed period of time

Codex Standards

Codex standards can be general or specific and are recognised by WTO Agreements as reference standards:

- **General Standards, Guidelines and Codes of Practice** - These core Codex texts, typically deal with hygienic practice, labelling, contaminants, additives, inspection & certification, nutrition and residues of veterinary drugs and pesticides and apply horizontally to products and product categories
- **Commodity standards** - Codex commodity standards refer to a specific product although increasingly Codex now develops standards for food groups
- **Regional standards** - Standards developed by the respective Regional Coordinating Committees, applicable to the respective regions