

THE ARAB CODEX INITIATIVE

From Regional Coordination to Global Impact

Strengthening science-based participation of Arab and Near East
countries in the Codex Alimentarius



Regional
Cooperation



Scientific
Evidence



Stronger
Participation



International
Food Standards

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HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARAB CODEX INITIATIVE

1. FOUNDATIONAL PHASE

Foundatio **2018 - 2019** ex work – SAFE Project

2014 – 2019



Strengthen
Arab participation
in Codex



Guidance for
National Codex
Contact Points
and Committees



Prepare
national
positions



Support
selection of
national
delegations



2019

Regional and national workshops,
including a dedicated workshop for Libya in Tunisia.

2. 2021 – A TURNING POINT

Emergence of the modern form of the Initiative

September 2021



First Codex Colloquium

Dubai – Strengthening coordination
and enhancing the impact of Codex
activities in the Middle East and
North Africa region.

November 2021

Codex Initiative
for the Middle East
and North Africa



Renaming announced toward the
Arab Codex Initiative.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARAB CODEX INITIATIVE

3. 2022 – LAUNCH OF THE REGULAR COORDINATION MECHANISM

4 April 2022



**First official coordination meeting
of Arab National Codex Contact Points.**

The meeting introduced the Initiative,
its programme of activities and initiated
preparations for the work of CCFICS.



**Regular
coordination
meetings**

April, June,
August and
beyond



**Launch of an
electronic platform**

for information
sharing and
coordination



**Systematic
analysis of Codex
documents**

before committee
meetings



**Continued
engagement**

across all
Codex committees

4. 24 OCTOBER 2022

INSTITUTIONAL CONSOLIDATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP

24 October 2022

AIDSMO and GForSS signed a Memorandum of Understanding
to support the Arab Codex Initiative.



AIDSMO



GForSS
Global Food Regulatory Science Society



المبادرة العربية
للدستور الغذائي

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARAB CODEX INITIATIVE

5. 2023

Transition from Coordination
to Technical Studies and Positions

10–11 June 2023

Second Arab Codex Colloquium
Muscat



52

participants



17

Arab countries



Key recommendations

- Identify common Arab priorities
- Establish standing coordination meetings before Codex committee sessions
- Strengthen coordination before responding to Codex Circular Letters
- Build national Codex capacities
- Develop the concept of an Arab Food Standards Academy



Emerging technical workstreams

- Date-based products / fresh dates
- Aflatoxins in peanuts
- Camel milk standardization
- Scientific studies on veterinary drug residue extrapolation for camels

6. 2024

Major Expansion of Technical
and Regional Work

11–13 June 2024

Third Arab Codex Colloquium
Amman



72

Arab Codex Member
representatives
plus regional and international
organizations and experts



Interregional Codex Colloquia

- CCAFRICA
 - CCLAC
 - CCNE
 - U.S. Codex Office
- Held alongside the regular Arab coordination meetings.



GForSS progress report (November 2022 – August 2024)

20 Codex committee meetings
2 Arab Codex Colloquia
3 specialized working groups
7 interregional coordination meetings

Demonstrated a clear expansion in both
the technical scope and the international
reach of the Initiative.

7. 2025–2026

Alignment with the CCNE Regional
Work Plan 2026–2027



Following CCNE12, the Arab Codex Initiative Action Plan was aligned with the CCNE Regional Work Plan 2026–2027 and endorsed as a guiding framework for coordinated regional engagement and implementation of priority activities.



Priority-setting criteria

Priority Codex committees and technical issues identified based on:

- 1 Public health and food safety
- 2 Regional impact
(including regulatory and trade implications)
- 3 Feasibility and capacity-building



This represented an important
evolution of the Initiative — from
a coordination mechanism into a
structured regional platform
directly supporting the
implementation of Codex
regional priorities.

8. Status as of 23 September 2026



53

53rd Coordination
Meeting Reached



53rd meeting
23 September 2026

Focused on the outcomes
of CCPR57 and preparations
for CCMMP11, with particular
attention to the proposed
development of a Codex
Standard for Pasteurized
Liquid Camel Milk.



The Initiative remains active
and continues to expand
its role within the regional
Codex system.

THE INITIATIVE'S **ACTUAL ACHIEVEMENTS**

Distinguishing direct Initiative outputs from broader Codex outcomes



DIRECTLY DELIVERED BY THE INITIATIVE



Structured regional coordination mechanism



Coordination meetings for Arab/Near East Codex Contact Points and relevant stakeholders



Monitoring and analysis of priority Codex agenda items



Regional Expert Working Groups



Technical briefs and evidence-based regional positions



Conference Room Documents (CRDs), interventions and follow-up reports



Coordination before, during and after Codex sessions



CONTRIBUTED TO — NOT SOLELY DELIVERED



Codex standards, decisions and adopted outcomes are the result of the multilateral Codex process



The Initiative supports evidence-based regional participation and coordinated technical contributions



Do not attribute international Codex decisions solely to the Initiative



53rd Coordination Meeting — 23 September 2026

The Arab Codex coordination mechanism had reached its 53rd meeting by this date.



Sources: Arab Codex Initiative Progress Report (September 2025–July 2026); Arab Codex Initiative official network page.

REGIONAL EXPERT NETWORK — 2026 CYCLE

A structured scientific and technical platform for coordinated Codex engagement



5

Regional Expert
Working Groups
(RExWGs)



80

experts



14

Member
Countries



31

priority
agenda items

Priority Codex Committees



CCFO



CCMAS



CCRVDF



CCFA



CCFL

Key Activities of the Regional Expert Network

1



Analyze priority
agenda items



2



Prepare technical
briefs & regional
positions



3



Support responses
to Circular Letters



4



Facilitate consensus-
building before
Codex meetings

SELECTED TECHNICAL CONTRIBUTIONS & CODEX OUTCOMES

Examples of how the Arab Codex Initiative has contributed to Codex work

Codex decisions are multilateral outcomes; the Initiative's role is presented as contribution/support, not sole authorship.

3

FRESH DATES

ADOPTION OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARD



- Regional EWG, chaired by Morocco, mobilized experts from 13 Arab countries to collect and analyse scientific data on fresh-date moisture content.
- Regional data showed a broad moisture range of approximately 12–85% and were submitted to Codex.
- At CCFFV23, the minimum moisture requirement was removed, while a maximum level of 85% was retained.
- On 10 November 2025, CAC48 adopted the Codex Standard for Fresh Dates (CXS 363-2025).

4

VETERINARY DRUG RESIDUES IN CAMELIDS

ADOPTION OF MRLS AT CAC49 (2026)



- During 2022–2023, a regional expert group examined the use of scientific extrapolation approaches to develop MRLs for veterinary drugs in camelids based on data from other animal species.
- A technical document was submitted to CCRVDF26, and the work continued through the Codex process.
- At CAC49 (2026), MRLs for veterinary drugs in camelids were adopted, including:
 - Ivermectin in milk.
 - Tetracyclines in muscle, liver, kidney and milk.

5

OLIVE OIL

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EWG AT CCFO29



- Regional coordination supported a proposal that led to the establishment of an Electronic Working Group (EWG) at CCFO29 to collect scientific data relevant to the review of certain technical provisions of the Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils (CXS 33-1981).
- Chair: Syrian Arab Republic.
- Co-chairs: Australia, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the International Olive Council (IOC).
- This is recorded in the official Initiative report as a direct achievement of the 2026 work cycle.

6

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN / COUNTRY OF HARVEST

REGIONAL COORDINATION AND CONSENSUS



- Before CCFL49, the Initiative facilitated extensive regional consultations on country of origin and country of harvest labelling provisions.
- These consultations supported the preparation of a coordinated regional position.
- The regional work contributed to achieving consensus within CCFL and to the subsequent endorsement of the outcome at CAC49.

7

METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND REGIONAL STANDARDS

CONFERENCE ROOM DOCUMENT AT CCMA545



- A Conference Room Document (CRD) was prepared at CCMA545 to inform the Committee about ongoing regional work to review and update methods of analysis contained in regional commodity standards.
- This demonstrates the Initiative's progress from political and administrative coordination to the technical review of analytical methods, commodity standards, testing provisions and technical specifications.

8

FOOD ADDITIVES – DOUGH

POSTPONEMENT AT CCFA56



- Regional coordination supported Iran's request to postpone the adoption of certain food additive provisions in the regional standard for Dough until they could be reconsidered by CCNE13.
- This outcome is recorded in the official 2026 Initiative progress report.

9

PASTEURIZED LIQUID CAMEL MILK

ONGOING NEW WORK



- The development of a proposed international Codex standard for Pasteurized Liquid Camel Milk is ongoing and has not yet resulted in the adoption of a final standard.
- The Initiative continues to provide technical and operational support for the proposal.
- The subject featured in the 53rd Coordination Meeting (23 September 2026) in preparation for CCMM11.

WHY IS THE ARAB CODEX INITIATIVE BEING PRESENTED AT AFRAF?

A practical regional experience with direct value for African food regulatory authorities

1

SHARED CHALLENGES THAT REGIONAL COOPERATION CAN HELP ADDRESS



Limited availability
of scientific data



Fragmented
technical expertise



Need for stronger
coordination



Need for sustained
Codex engagement

2

A PRACTICAL REGIONAL APPROACH



Coordinated
expert networks



Regular
coordination meetings



Evidence-based
regional positions



Regional Expert
Working Groups

3

RELEVANCE FOR AFRICA



Builds scientific
capacity



Strengthens
regional cooperation



Supports joint use
of scientific data



Strengthens
coordinated Codex
engagement

4

DIRECT RELEVANCE TO AFRAF MEMBERS

5

AFRAF member countries
are also members of CCNE

Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Tunisia.

7

At least 7 AFRAF member
countries have documented
participation in Arab Codex
Initiative meetings

Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania,
Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia.

