

FAQs on NCCP, India

Q.1 What is NCCP India?

Ans. NCCP India is the National Codex Contact Point of India. NCCP has been constituted by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India for keeping liaison with the Codex Alimentarius and to coordinate Codex activities in India. NCCP for India coordinates and promotes Codex activities in India in association with the National Codex Committee and facilitates India's input to the work of Codex through an established consultation process.

Q.2 Where is NCCP India located?

Ans. NCCP India is located at Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, FDA Bhawan, New Delhi, India.

Q.3 What are the objective of NCCP India?

Ans. The objectives of NCCP India are as follows:

- a) To lay down the guidelines for preparation of national response or national viewpoint to Codex matters and participation in Codex Meetings.
- b) To establish the procedure for formulation of national viewpoint/response
- c) To make the stakeholders understand Codex working procedures so that they are capable and competent to contribute collectively in a competent manner to the work of Codex at the national level.
- d) To propose new work on standards or code of practice or guidelines at the Committee Meetings.
- e) To coordinate and promote Codex activities in India in association with the National Codex Committee

Q.4 What is National Codex Committee and its functions?

Ans. The National Codex Committee has been constituted by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, chaired by the Chairperson, FSSAI for keeping liaison with the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Core Functions of NCC-INDIA are as follows:

- To advise government on the implications of various food standardization, food quality and safety issues which have arisen and related to the work undertaken by the CAC so that national economic interest is taken into account, or considered, when international standards are discussed;
- To provide important inputs to the government so as to assist in ensuring quality and safety of food to the consumers, while at the same time maximizing the opportunities for development of industry and expansion of international trade;

- To appoint Shadow Committees on subject matters related to the corresponding Codex Committees to assist in the study or consideration of technical matters; and
- To meet as and when necessary to formulate national position.

Q.5 What is a Shadow Committee?

Ans. For every Codex Committee, a parallel Shadow Committee has been constituted to work on subject matters corresponding to the Codex Committees to assist the NCC in the study or consideration of technical matters. Officers in the rank of Joint Secretary or above in the concerned Department/Ministry / Food Authority who handle the subject at the policy level and also serve as the members of the NCC may be nominated as the Chairpersons of these Shadow Committees. Specialized experts in the relevant field may be nominated as members of these Shadow Committees.

Q 6 What is the constitution of a Shadow Committee?

Ans: Composition of individual Codex Shadow Committee varies and depends upon the expertise in the relevant field. Each Shadow Committee is constituted by various stakeholders as follows:

- Representatives from different ministries viz, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Food Processing and Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairy Fisheries, concerned with food safety, food production and trade in food
- Representatives from Scientific organizations such as public universities and research institutions
- Representatives from Industry Associations,
- Experts/Scientists from concerned areas.

Q.7 What is the function of a Shadow Committee?

Ans. The functions of Shadow Committee are:

- (i) To advise the NCCP / NCC on the implications of various food standardization, food quality and safety issues which have arisen and related to the work undertaken by the relevant Subsidiary Body/Task Force so that national economic interest is taken into account or considered when international standards are deliberated by the relevant committee; and
- (ii) To follow the Codex agenda of the relevant Subsidiary Body and provide inputs to the government so as to assist in ensuring quality and safety of food to the consumers while at the same time safeguard national interests and maximize the opportunities for development of industry and expansion of international trade.
- (iii) To advise on the composition of the Indian Delegation;

(iv) To coordinate with the other Shadow committees and concerned Departments for seeking comments and finalize the India's view point on different agenda items under consideration of the respective Codex Committees;

Q.8 Which are the various Shadow Committees?

Ans. Currently, there are 16 Shadow Committees.

1. The Committees under the charge of FSSAI are:

- Codex Alimentarius Commission
- Regional Coordinating Committee (including Coordinating Committee for Asia)
- General Principles
- Food labelling
- Methods of Analysis and Sampling
- Food Hygiene
- Food Additives
- Contaminants in Foods
- Fats and Oils
- Processed Fruits and Vegetables
- Sugars

2. The Committees under the charge of other Ministries are:

- Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems – Ministry of Commerce
- Pesticide Residues – Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Plant Protection)
- Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods – Ministry of Agriculture (LH)
- Fresh Fruits and Vegetables – Ministry of Agriculture
- Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses – Ministry of Women and Child Development

Q.11 How is the national position formulated?

Ans. For the development of a national position five common basic steps may be followed:

- (i) Circulate working documents
- (ii) Solicit input from stakeholders
- (iii) Draft a position
- (iv) Obtain national endorsement of the position
- (v) Submit the position as written comments, where appropriate.

Q.12 When are the Shadow Committee Meetings conducted?

Ans. The meetings are conducted usually 3 months prior to the respective main Codex Meetings depending upon the availability of the agenda items under consideration in the

Q.13 How do the stakeholders contribute to the Shadow Committee Meetings?

Ans. The stakeholders after going through the various agenda items for a particular meeting can submit their meaningful comments to finalise the national position. The comments shall be specific and may be followed by scientific justification or rationale behind the opinion.

Q.14 What should be the characteristics of the Indian Delegates nominated to attend the Codex Meeting at the International Level?

Ans. The delegates should have the following characteristics:

- (i) Expertise in the respective subject matter.
- (ii) Abilities to carry nationally agreed positions based on the standard written, brief given by the NCCP on the basis of recommendations of the Shadow Committees or as the case may be. They may also be able to negotiate formally as well as informally with the delegates of other countries to seek their support on behalf of the country.
- (iii) Have the ability to respond to unannounced/unforeseen issues that may arise during Codex meetings, thereby protecting the Government of India's interest.
- (iv) In exceptional circumstances where no government representative may be spared for the meeting of the Codex Committee, non-government officials may be participating in the session/meeting and Indian Embassy/High Commission in the country hosting the session/meeting may be requested to depute an officer to attend the session/meeting to be the member of the Indian delegation.

Q.15 When and how to submit the Indian Delegation report?

Ans. The Indian Delegation report has to be submitted by the Indian Delegates who attended the Codex Committee Meetings within 30 days after the meeting. The report should comprise of brief about the various issues and the discussions held in the plenary, physical working groups and side meetings with other regions or countries. It should also include details of where interventions were made by the Indian delegation and what was the decision taken by the respective Codex Committee, especially where the interventions were not agreed to. A brief way forward for the work under the Committee for the next meeting should also be given in the report.

Q.16 What is an EWG and how is NCCP India engaged in this?

Ans. EWG is an electronic working group made by the Committee which is established when deciding to undertake work between sessions without meeting physically, in search for worldwide consensus and for greater acceptability of Codex Standards which requires the involvement of all the Members of Codex and the active participation of developing countries.

NCCP collaborates with other Shadow Committee Members regarding the concerned ewg and the experts from the concerned field are nominated to be a part of it.