Codex Working group on Development of Guidance for Paperless Certification

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Topics

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INTRODUCTION

• 2014 Head of delegation for the Netherlands in the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS)

• 2015 discussion paper on the use of electronic certificates by competent authorities and migration to paperless certification (codex website CCFICS22: CX/FICS 16/22/8)

• 2016 the Netherlands Chair of the CCFICS electronic Working Group on Development of Guidance for Paperless Certification

• Australia is Co-chair (codex website CCFICS22: REP16/FICS)
CCFICS

• CODEX ALIMENTARIS is about safe, good food for everyone - everywhere.

• CODEX has 10 General Subject Committees

• Terms of Reference (7)
  • harmonising methods and procedures which protect the health of consumers, ensure fair trading practices and facilitate international trade in foodstuffs
  • to develop guidelines and criteria with respect to format, declarations and language of such official certificates as countries may require with a view towards international harmonization
  • to make recommendations for information exchange in relation to food import/export control
CODEX GUIDANCE

Codex guideline CAC/GL 38-2001: Guideline for design, production, issuance and use of generic official certificates

• Sections 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9

• Certificates
  • Are defined as paper or electronic documents
  • Are applicable regardless the mode of transmission e.g. paper or electronic
  • Should meet the requirements of the importing country
CODEX GUIDANCE

• CAC/GL 38-2001:
  
  • Issuance of official certificates
    
    • the competent authority of the exporting country is ultimately responsible for any certificate it issues or authorizes to be issued.
  
  • Use of electronic certificates
HORIZON

• Identification of additional Codex guidance for paperless certification
  • Common understanding and adequate definition of paperless certification at the international level
  • Broadening participation, promoting consistancy and simplifying the process

• Committee agreed in Melbourne on the following
  • Revision of the discussion paper
  • Gap analyse with current Codex texts
  • Technology review and resource requirements of procedural concepts for paperless electronic certification
POINT OF DEPARTURE

• An increasing number of countries are developing or have introduced electronic certification solutions

• A number of countries already practice paperless certification, using electronic certificates

• Realised after considerable investments of time and money to achieve consistency

• Paper certificates do not automatically disappear
QUESTIONS

• Why do electronic data not naturally replace paper certificates?

• Is there another doorstep that we have to cross?

• Who ultimately facilitates paperless?
  • Producer: issuing party
  • Recipient: accepting party
Who’s talking?

- Codex Members 31
  - Africa 2
  - Asia 7
  - Europe 10
  - Latin America and the Caribbean 7
  - North America and South West Pacific 5
- Codex observers 2 (LAC and Euro)
- IPPC
- OIE
- UN-CEFACT
- WTO 37
First step in the discussion

• Questionnaire on key areas identified by the Committee
  • The need to develop a definition of electronic certificates
  • The use of defined data elements
  • Aid to determine a suitable concept of electronic certification solution
  • The need to protect authenticity and integrity of exchanged certificates
  • different circumstances of Codex Members
Deliverables

• Revised discussion paper

• Project document to propose additional Codex guidance

• To be discussed on the 23rd session of CCFICS in 2017