

Attendance at Codex sessions

Contents:

- Who can attend Codex sessions?
- Submitting Comments
- Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated 20 March 2024

New Zealand is a member country of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. We are therefore bound by the rules and procedures as set down by Codex in their procedural manual, which can be located on their website. For more information see the [Codex Procedural Manual](#).

Any questions regarding more detailed information should be directed to info@mpi.govt.nz

Who can attend Codex sessions?

People who attend Codex sessions may be grouped as follows:

Delegates/Delegations - official representatives of member countries (with voting rights)

Observers - representatives of countries or international organisations granted observer status (without voting rights)

Public - members of the public (without voting/speaking rights)

1 Delegates/Delegations

Delegate - government officials are given the title of "delegate" when attending official meetings.

Head of Delegation (HOD) - the chief delegate, who is the only delegate with the right to speak and vote. They may authorise other members of their delegation to speak or vote on their behalf.

Advisor – non-governmental participant in a delegation.

Delegation - a group of people representing a country. Includes delegates and observers (non-government representatives).

Delegates develop New Zealand positions on Codex session agenda items. All interested parties are invited to provide information and comments on the issues that will be considered at the meeting.

As the HOD prepares for a Codex session, they form a delegation comprised of both officials (government staff) and advisors (non-governmental individuals). New Zealand Heads of Delegation will strive to form a delegation that:

- has relevant expertise to the items on the agenda of, or likely to be discussed at, the particular Codex session;
- can assist with items on the agenda of, or likely to be discussed at, the particular Codex session;
- is representative of the individuals, groups and organisations that have an interest in the items on the agenda of, or likely to be discussed at, the particular Codex session; and
- is representative of the individuals, groups, and organisations that could be affected by standards to be considered at the Codex session.

All members of the New Zealand delegation (both delegates and advisors) have:

- a duty to act in good faith;
- a duty to promote New Zealand interests at the Codex session; and
- where there are international obligations, a duty not to disrupt or harm these relations where it may be detrimental to New Zealand.

Advisors in New Zealand delegations

Representatives of interested organisations (e.g. consumer or industry) may join the New Zealand delegation as advisors. They may sit with the New Zealand delegates at Codex sessions, and have most of the same obligations as delegates. However, observers may not speak to the meeting assembly unless requested to do so by the HOD, and may not vote. Advisors' participation is at their own expense.

Cabinet has standardised procedures for including non-official representatives in official New Zealand delegations to international meetings. The New Zealand Codex Contact Point will act in accordance with this direction.

Selection as part of the New Zealand delegation

In selecting non-government members to join the New Zealand delegation as advisors, the New Zealand HOD will consider the following:

- the necessity of obtaining the informed views of non-government individuals during the Codex session;
- whether consultations or opportunities to provide written comments prior to the Codex session would be an adequate alternative to including non-government members on the New Zealand delegation; and

- the number of non-government individuals that would be required on the New Zealand delegation to provide balanced representation of the individuals, groups and organisations that have an interest in the items on the agenda or, or likely to be discussed at, a particular Codex session and could be affected by standards to be considered at the Codex session.

Anyone interested in attending a Codex session as an observer should contact the New Zealand Codex Contact Point for further information. They will be asked to apply, providing information on themselves and their interests. Their application will be assessed, and successful applicants must sign a statement acknowledging the conditions that apply to them as members of the New Zealand delegation.

2 Observers

The term "observer" refers to international organisations that are not Members of Codex, but are formally recognised by Codex as having a relevant interest.

Observer organisations may participate fully in discussions at Codex sessions, but they may not vote.

3 Public

Codex sessions are normally open to the public. Anyone can attend a meeting where it is being held in a public forum. In New Zealand, members of the public are welcome to attend preparatory and debriefing meetings, which are organised and facilitated by the New Zealand Codex Contact Point at the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Where Codex sessions are conducted, an area will be available for public seating. Members of the public have no speaking or voting rights and may not approach or sit with members of delegations unless requested to do so.

For further information, please contact info@mpi.govt.nz.

Submitting Comments

Only comments submitted by member countries and accredited non-governmental organisations will be considered by Codex. No other comments are discussed or considered.

Anyone in New Zealand can make submissions on Codex documents to the New Zealand Codex Contact Point. These comments will be taken into account in development of the official New Zealand position where they promote the overall interests of New Zealand and address the issues being discussed at the Codex session. Those comments that may not be included as Government comments can be discussed at the relevant preparatory meeting. Comments that are of a substantive nature and relevant to the issues under consideration will be of most value.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who can attend Codex meetings?

A: Codex meetings are open to delegates, observers, and (usually) members of the public. Meetings held by MPI are open to the public; check the meetings section of the website for details.

Q: Who is eligible to receive Codex papers?

A: Anyone is eligible to receive Codex papers. Papers can be downloaded from the [Codex Website](#).

Q: Can I attend a Codex meeting as a delegate?

A: Only government officials can attend as official delegates. Non-governmental people can attend as observers in situations where expertise is best achieved through the presence of the observer.

Q: Can I attend a Codex meeting as an observer?

A: The New Zealand Codex Contact Point and the Head of Delegation for the particular committee will decide who can attend as an observer and what expertise the observer can offer on relevant agenda items to be discussed at the Codex session. Observers' participation is at their own expense.

Q: Can anyone submit written comments on Codex documents?

A: Anyone in New Zealand can submit comments on Codex papers to the New Zealand Codex Contact Point for consideration. If further clarification is required of a particular point made in the submission, the New Zealand Codex Contact Point will contact you for further information.