وزارة الصناعة والتكنولوجيا المتقدمة
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY & ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

وزارة الاقتصاد والسياحة
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY & TOURISM

MOIAT WORKSHOP

CODEX FOOD STANDARDS AND UAE COMPLIANCE

Post Event Report



EIGHTH ANNUAL FUTURE FOOD 2026

تجمّع الإمارات للغذاء UAE Food Cluster

F&B UAE FOOD & BEVERAGE BUSINESS GROUP Inspiring Sustainable Wellbeing

REPORT OVERVIEW

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REPORT PURPOSE

This report records how the MOIAT workshop explained the Codex system, the UAE regulatory pathway and the practical role of food manufacturers in standards development and implementation.

It distinguishes information presented during the workshop from follow-up recommendations prepared after the session. Where brief explanatory context is included to support reader understanding, it should be treated as background information rather than as a workshop outcome, decision or formal commitment.

SECTION 01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The workshop connected international Codex texts with the practical decisions that shape food standards, technical regulations and industry compliance in the UAE.

MoIAT explained that Codex Alimentarius provides international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice across areas such as hygiene, additives, contaminants, labelling, pesticides, analysis and sampling. Codex texts inform national systems, but the UAE reviews each text against national priorities before deciding whether to adopt it as a voluntary standard, translate it into a mandatory technical regulation or develop additional national requirements.

The presentation then traced how the UAE Codex contact point and National Codex Committee coordinate comments, technical review and the final national position. For manufacturers, this process affects formulations, labels, quality controls, conformity assessment, market access and the time required to implement new rules.

MAIN OUTCOMES FROM THE SESSION

01
Codex alignment supports food safety, consumer confidence and international market access, while national review preserves the UAE ability to address local priorities.

02
Industry input is most useful before a national position or requirement is finalised, particularly when comments include technical evidence, product data and a clear account of implementation effects.

03
Manufacturers need sufficient transition periods because new requirements can trigger reformulation, packaging changes, testing, certification and supply-chain adjustments.

04
Private-sector participation will take place through the National Codex Committee, providing an established channel through which industry perspectives and technical input can be considered as part of the UAE Codex process.

05
MoIAT indicated that the National Codex Committee mechanism is being strengthened, with broader participation and further awareness activity planned.

06
The UAE-led work on a proposed Codex standard for pasteurised liquid camel milk illustrated how national technical priorities can advance through international standard setting.

PRACTICAL DIRECTION

Private-sector participation will be channelled through the National Codex Committee, which provides the established route for industry perspectives and technical input to be heard and considered. Companies and industry representatives can contribute by reviewing relevant Codex consultations and submitting timely, evidence-based comments through the Committee's established processes.

SECTION 02

SESSION CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

The one-hour workshop combined a technical presentation with an open discussion on how industry can participate more effectively in the UAE Codex process.

Session	MOIAT Workshop on Codex Food Standards and Compliance
Date	Sept 29, 2026
Time	12:00 to 13:00
Venue	Le Meridien Dubai Hotel and Conference Centre
Organiser	Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology
Presenter	Jawaher Saeed Al Dhuhoori, MoIAT
Format	Technical presentation followed by audience questions and discussion



WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

01 Explain the purpose and scope of Codex Alimentarius.

02 Describe how Codex work is coordinated within the UAE.

03 Show how Codex texts support national standards and regulatory alignment.

04 Clarify the implications of new requirements for food manufacturers.

05 Discuss how industry can contribute technical feedback before and after implementation.

The discussion was especially relevant to manufacturers, regulatory and quality teams, industry associations and other organisations that need to anticipate changes in food composition, labelling, testing and conformity requirements.

SECTION 03

SESSION PROCEEDINGS

The session moved from an introduction to Codex, through the UAE coordination and adoption process, to manufacturer impacts and a detailed discussion on how the private sector should engage.

01

Opening and objectives

The presenter introduced the session as a practical explanation of the relationship between Codex and UAE compliance. She outlined five objectives covering Codex fundamentals, national coordination, regulatory alignment, implications for manufacturers and industry feedback.

02

Codex scope and committee system

The presentation described Codex as the FAO and WHO collection of international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice. It distinguished general subject committees from commodity committees and located the UAE within the Coordinating Committee for the Near East.

03

National coordination in the UAE

MoIAT was identified as the UAE Codex contact point and secretariat of the National Codex Committee. The presenter explained how circular letters and working documents are distributed, comments are collected and reviewed, and a final national position is approved and submitted.

04

Adoption into UAE requirements

The session explained that the standards function reviews relevant Codex texts and determines the appropriate national response. A standard is generally voluntary, while a technical regulation is mandatory. UAE requirements may also combine Codex, GSO, other international references and national priorities.

05

Compliance and conformity controls

Examples covered food additives, contaminants, pesticides, hygiene and labelling. The presenter also referred to conformity control schemes for honey, juices and beverages, and milk, supported by certification and market surveillance.

06

Manufacturer implications

The presentation linked regulatory changes to reformulation, updates to labels and composition, quality and safety improvements, market access, consumer confidence and public health. It stressed the value of gradual implementation and suitable grace periods.

07

Industry participation

Manufacturers were asked to review draft texts, compare proposed provisions against products and processes, and submit technical feasibility comments, industry data and implementation evidence.

SECTION 04

FROM CODEX TO UAE COMPLIANCE

Codex does not move automatically into UAE law. International texts pass through national review, stakeholder consultation and a decision on the appropriate UAE instrument.

NATIONAL POSITION PROCESS DESCRIBED IN THE WORKSHOP

1 RECEIVE

The MoIAT Codex contact point receives Codex circular letters and working documents.

2 DISTRIBUTE

The secretariat directs material to the relevant committee members and technical specialists.

3 COLLECT

Government entities, industry and other stakeholders submit comments within the consultation period.

4 REVIEW

The secretariat and technical members assess clarity, feasibility and the supporting scientific evidence.

5 CONSOLIDATE

A final UAE position is prepared, including only points that can be technically supported.

6 APPROVE AND SUBMIT

The committee chair approves the position and the contact point submits it to Codex.

NATIONAL ADOPTION CHOICES

The Ministry may adopt a Codex text as a UAE standard, translate relevant provisions into a mandatory technical regulation or develop additional requirements where national conditions justify them. The presenter cited food additives, contaminants, pesticides, hygiene and labelling as areas where UAE or GSO requirements may draw on more than one international or national source.

FIGURES CITED DURING THE PRESENTATION

92%

alignment with international standards across sectors

150+

Codex standards and technical regulations adopted

MoIAT reported 92 percent alignment with international standards across sectors and the adoption of more than 150 Codex standards and technical regulations. These figures were presented in the session and are recorded here as workshop statements.

SECTION 05

IMPLICATIONS FOR MANUFACTURERS

Regulatory alignment can improve safety and market access, but it also creates concrete operational work for manufacturers. The operational examples below are provided as practical background and should not be read as separately agreed workshop outcomes.

AREA	OPERATIONAL IMPLICATION
Regulatory compliance	New limits or provisions may affect additives, composition, contaminants, pesticides, hygiene controls, labels and analytical methods.
Product reformulation	A manufacturer may need to change ingredients or formulations, validate performance and repeat quality or shelf-life work.
Packaging and labelling	Revised declarations, warnings or claims can require artwork changes, stock management and coordinated market transition.
Conformity assessment	Sensitive product categories may require certification, testing, surveillance and evidence that technical requirements are applied.
Market access	Alignment with international norms can reduce avoidable trade friction and help UAE products meet the expectations of export markets.
Consumer and public health	Updated science-based requirements can strengthen safety, quality and trust, particularly when they address emerging risks.
Transition planning	Grace periods matter because regulatory change can affect procurement, production, packaging, testing and distribution at the same time.

CONTROL SCHEMES REFERENCED

The workshop referred to conformity control schemes for honey, juices and beverages, and milk. These schemes apply relevant technical requirements through conformity certification and market surveillance. Manufacturers therefore need to treat standards monitoring as an operational process rather than a legal review performed only after publication.

HONEY

JUICES AND BEVERAGES

MILK

SECTION 06

INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK

The session repeatedly emphasised that effective national positions depend on manufacturers contributing practical evidence before deadlines close. The structured guidance below summarises this theme for practical reference.

WHAT USEFUL INDUSTRY INPUT SHOULD CONTAIN

- The specific Codex provision or draft text being addressed.
- The product category, process or supply chain affected.
- A clear explanation of the technical or implementation issue.
- Scientific evidence, test results, market data or relevant international references.
- The expected effect on formulation, safety, quality, labelling, testing, certification, trade or cost.
- A workable alternative or transition proposal where a change is requested.
- The time required for implementation and the reason that period is necessary.

WHEN INDUSTRY SHOULD ENGAGE

Before national positions are finalised

Review circular letters and draft texts early, compare them with products and processes, and submit evidence-backed comments.

During national adoption

Explain practical feasibility, identify implementation dependencies and help assess an appropriate transition period.

After publication

Report implementation problems, unintended effects or ambiguities with evidence that allows MoIAT to evaluate corrective action.

During continuous review

Share new technical data and sector experience so standards remain relevant, practical and aligned with scientific developments.

The presenter noted that several Codex consultation documents had received no private-sector comments. The session therefore framed participation as a standing responsibility, not an occasional response when a published requirement creates difficulty.

SECTION 07

AUDIENCE DISCUSSION AND RESPONSES

The question period concentrated on the mechanism for submitting a coherent industry position and ensuring that comments are strong enough to support the UAE response.

Q01 What is the best platform for industry input

MoIAT identified the National Codex Committee as the appropriate platform for coordinated stakeholder participation. The Committee provides the formal mechanism through which relevant private-sector perspectives and technical expertise can be heard and considered.

Q02 Can the food and beverage sector submit a unified view

The discussion recognised that industry associations can help circulate relevant consultations and consolidate technical perspectives from their members. Any coordinated private-sector input should be submitted through the National Codex Committee's established consultation process.

Q03 What happens when comments lack evidence

MoIAT explained that the review period is often short and that points without adequate scientific support may not be included in the UAE position. Early submission gives the secretariat more time to assess and strengthen comments.

Q04 Can industry request a technical meeting

The presenter confirmed that organisations may request a meeting with the committee to discuss a specific consultation document or technical concern.

Q05 How are comments submitted now

The current route is email within the consultation period, normally against an earlier internal deadline that leaves MoIAT time to review and consolidate the national response.

Q06 How does GSO coordination operate

The response described current GSO engagement as including information exchange, meeting updates and discussion of emerging issues. The presenter noted that participation is important because technical developments can be missed when organisations are not represented.

Q07 What example shows stronger UAE participation

The proposed Codex standard for pasteurised liquid camel milk was highlighted as UAE-initiated work then under international discussion and comment.

AREAS OF AGREEMENT

- Private-sector participation should become more systematic and begin earlier.
- Industry associations can reduce fragmentation by consolidating comments before submission.
- Technical opinions need scientific evidence and a clear explanation of practical impact.
- Complex or high-impact consultation documents benefit from early, technically supported input submitted through the appropriate National Codex Committee process.
- Awareness and capacity building are needed so more UAE specialists can participate in Codex work.

SECTION 08

KEY FINDINGS

The workshop showed that regulatory readiness depends on understanding both the formal Codex process and the evidence needed to influence it.

01

Codex informs but does not replace national decision making

The UAE assesses international texts against national priorities and decides whether to use a standard, a mandatory regulation or an additional national provision.

02

The consultation stage is the main opportunity to influence outcomes

Comments submitted after implementation can identify problems, but early engagement provides more scope to shape the national position and transition approach.

03

Evidence determines whether a comment can become a UAE position

A statement of commercial difficulty is rarely sufficient on its own. The review process needs science, technical data and a clear explanation of feasibility or risk.

04

Regulatory change reaches beyond the legal function

Formulation, procurement, quality, laboratories, packaging, operations, exports and commercial teams may all be affected.

05

A coordinated industry channel can improve the quality of feedback

Industry associations can support participation by circulating relevant consultations, bringing together technical perspectives and helping companies prepare clear, evidence-based input for consideration through the National Codex Committee.

06

Grace periods are a material compliance tool

Appropriate transition periods help businesses implement safety and quality requirements without avoidable disruption or waste.

07

UAE participation can shape international standards

The camel milk work demonstrates how a national priority can enter the Codex programme when technical evidence and international engagement are sustained.

SECTION 09

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION

The following points summarise how private-sector stakeholders can contribute through the National Codex Committee and its established consultation processes.

01 Review relevant Codex consultations

Companies should monitor consultations relevant to their products, operations and markets.

02 Prepare evidence-based input

Technical comments should clearly identify the provision concerned, its practical implications and the scientific or operational evidence supporting the industry's position.

03 Coordinate sector perspectives

Industry associations may support their members by circulating relevant consultations and consolidating technical views where appropriate.

04 Participate through the National Codex Committee

Private-sector perspectives should be communicated through the National Codex Committee and its established consultation processes.

05 Contribute within consultation timelines

Early participation provides sufficient time for technical comments to be reviewed and considered as part of the UAE position.

SECTION 10

CONCLUSION AND REPORT BASIS

The workshop clarified that compliance begins before a regulation is published, when international texts are reviewed and the UAE position is still being formed.



MoIAT presented Codex as both a food-safety framework and a channel through which the UAE can strengthen international alignment, protect national priorities and support fair trade. The discussion made the private sector role equally clear. Manufacturers hold the operational data and product knowledge needed to test whether a proposed requirement is feasible, scientifically sound and capable of being implemented without avoidable disruption.

The immediate opportunity is to strengthen private-sector participation through the National Codex Committee. Timely, coordinated and evidence-based contributions from manufacturers can support the development of well-informed UAE positions while helping businesses anticipate the practical implications of evolving food standards.

FROM THE PROGRAMME

PHOTO GALLERY











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