



Council for Responsible Nutrition

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VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

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**Re: Discussion paper on a prioritization mechanism to better manage the work of CCNFSDU
(CX/NFSU 19/41/11) - Prepared by Germany (CX/NFSU 19/41/10)**

The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN)¹ is the leading trade association for the U.S. dietary supplement and nutritional products industry, representing manufacturers of dietary ingredients and of national brand name and private label dietary supplements, many of which

¹ The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), founded in 1973, is a Washington, D.C.-based trade association representing 150+ dietary supplement and functional food manufacturers, ingredient suppliers, and companies providing services to those manufacturers and suppliers. In addition to complying with a host of federal and state regulations governing dietary supplements and food in the areas of manufacturing, marketing, quality control and safety, our manufacturer and supplier members also agree to adhere to additional voluntary guidelines as well as to CRN's Code of Ethics. Visit www.crnusa.org. Follow us on Twitter [@CRN_Supplements](https://twitter.com/CRN_Supplements), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CRNUSA), and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/crnusa).

are multinational and already actively selling ingredients, finished products and services globally. CRN has been an active participant at Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) meetings and on relevant electronic Working Groups (eWGs) regarding a number of industry-specific issues and concerns. CRN has championed current scientific-thinking and organized and helped promote scientific conferences and symposia focused on public health objectives.

CRN appreciates the German host country for CCFNSDU and the work they have invested in preparing the discussion paper on a prioritization mechanism to better manage the work of CCFNSDU. We are pleased to provide our feedback on the draft proposal.

CRN agrees that the CCFNSDU Terms of Reference (ToR) should be the overarching yardstick (meter-stick) for developing a priority process for the committee's program of work; i.e., (a) the study of nutritional problems, (b) the drafting of general provisions concerning nutritional aspects, (c) the development of standards and guidelines for foods for special dietary uses; and (d) to endorse provisions on nutritional aspects for inclusion in Codex standards. Fundamental and prior to any further evaluation is the requirement that the work must advance the "nutrition" mission of the committee. One could formulate an endless list of possible projects for the Committee that potentially impact public health, food safety and fair trade practices, but are not properly before the CCFNSDU because they don't directly further the promotion of nutrition around the globe. Such topics are properly the province of other Codex committee. The CCFNSDU prioritization should make this assumption explicit as an a priori condition.

Further, CRN agrees that the identification of weighting/rating/ranking criteria that can be objectively, consistently, and transparently applied to new work proposals would be the best arbiter for inclusion onto a priority list of agenda items. An established and independent 'priorities working group' (PWG) should be formed and tasked with the weighting/rating/ranking of submitted proposals for new work in an objective, consistent and transparent fashion to establish on-going priorities.

CRN recommends that the use of subjective terms, such as 'high', 'medium', and 'low' should be correlated to objective criteria for making these designations, as seemingly every new work proposal submitted would be an automatic 'high' in the eyes of the submitter. Criteria for weighting/rating/ranking should validate the impact sufficiently for the PWG to justify objectively, consistently and transparently the inclusion of true 'new work' on the CCNFSDU agenda.

CRN suggests that, just as relevant and accurate data packages are needed by other Codex committees as they make decisions on accepting new work proposals, the PWG should also require supporting data packages that truly identify against the CCNFSDU ToR that the new work would have 'high' impact on public health, on food safety and on fair trade practices. Representations of potential harms from the failure to act and potential benefits from developing the proposed work should be supported by validated facts and scientific data, not just vague assertions of the possible risks of Codex's failure to pursue a proposal. Supposed risks to targeted populations or harms to trade practices should be not only well-supported by evidence but also be externally validated. New work should outline a problem, but not offer a

predetermined solution, that is the job of the CCFSDU physical and/or electronic Working Groups and the CCFSDU delegates.

CRN believes that true new work proposals should limit the CCFSDU's workload not irresponsible enlarge it; rationale for new work should contain an estimation of the resources and time frame needed to address the new work; justification as to why CCFSDU in particular (and/or Codex in general) is the best organization to undertake the new work; and that the likely outcome of embarking on new work does not unfairly or unnecessarily burden individual countries.

Lastly, all submissions to and the decisions of the PWG should be made public, so that opposing viewpoints can be considered and evaluated fairly. An opportunity to present opposing data to challenge new work proposals should be built into the public review of all submissions and the decisions by the PWG.

CRN respectfully requests that the Codex CCFSDU chair and secretariat consider our comments in the spirit in which they are being offered; to develop a prioritization mechanism that will truly work independently, objectively, consistently, and transparently in managing the workload at the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses.

CRN will also submit these comments directly to the US Codex delegation.

Respectfully submitted,



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