



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



# FAO GM Foods Platform

**Scope, objectives and collaboration with CBD-BCH**

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# FAO GM Foods Platform

- An online platform sharing official safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA plants authorized in accordance with the Codex Guidelines.
- It also facilitates the use of food safety assessment results in situations of Low Level Presence (LLP) of r-DNA plant materials in food trade.

<http://fao.org/gm-platform>



A screenshot of the FAO GM Foods Platform website. The header includes the FAO logo and the text 'Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for a world without hunger'. The main heading is 'FAO GM Foods Platform' with a DNA helix graphic. Below the heading, it says 'Welcome to the FAO GM Foods Platform'. The content area is titled 'A platform for all' and describes the platform's purpose: 'The FAO GM Foods Platform is a simple online platform to share information on safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA plants authorized in accordance with the Codex Guideline for the conduct of food safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA plants (CAC/GL 45-2003, annex III adopted in 2006). This Platform also facilitates the effective utilization of food safety assessment in situations of Low Level Presence (LLP) of r-DNA plant materials in food.' It also includes a 'How it works' section and a 'Contact us' section. A 'Start browsing' button is visible at the bottom right. The footer contains 'Contact us | Terms and Conditions | Scam Alert' and '© FAO, 2022'.



# What is the purpose?

“It is essential that **Codex Members** have access to requisite data and information. Codex Members should make available to a publicly accessible central database to be maintained by FAO **information** on recombinant-DNA plants authorized in accordance with the Codex Plant Guideline”.

Codex Plant Guidelines Annex 3 (LLP), Section 3

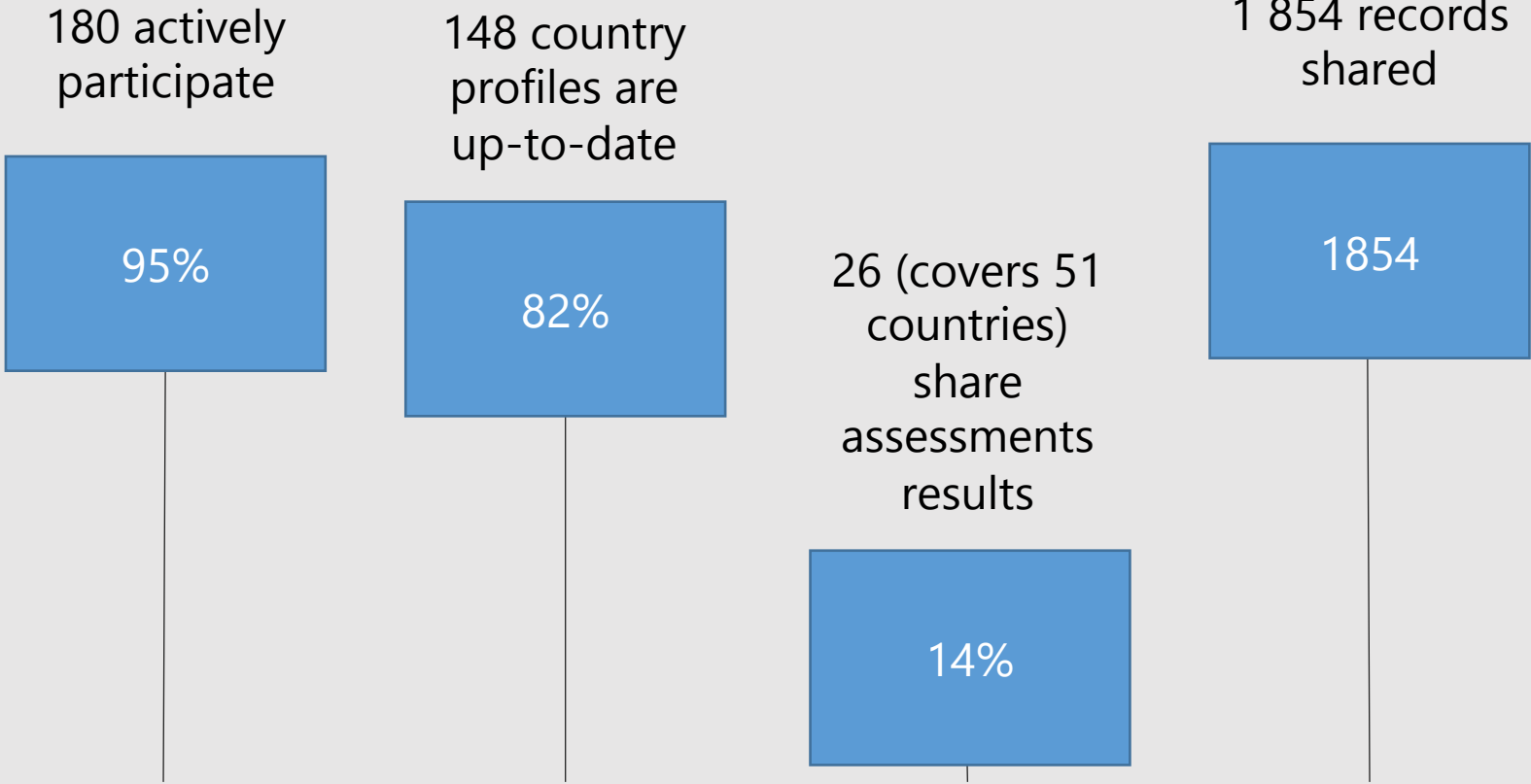
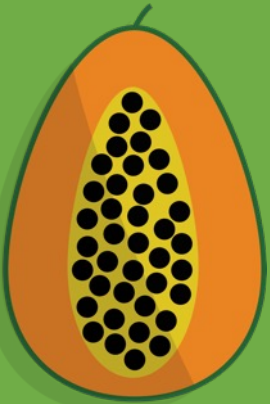
<https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/thematic-areas/biotechnology/>

# Scope

- ✓ **Food/feed safety assessment results** conducted in accordance with the Codex guidelines
- X Environmental risk assessment
  
- ✓ **Official** information (only Focal Points, nominated by respective Codex Contact Points, can upload the information)
- X Research or reference information
  
- ✓ Information useful for the **LLP** situations
- X Authorization information



# Current status of 189 Codex Members



# Global community meeting (2019)

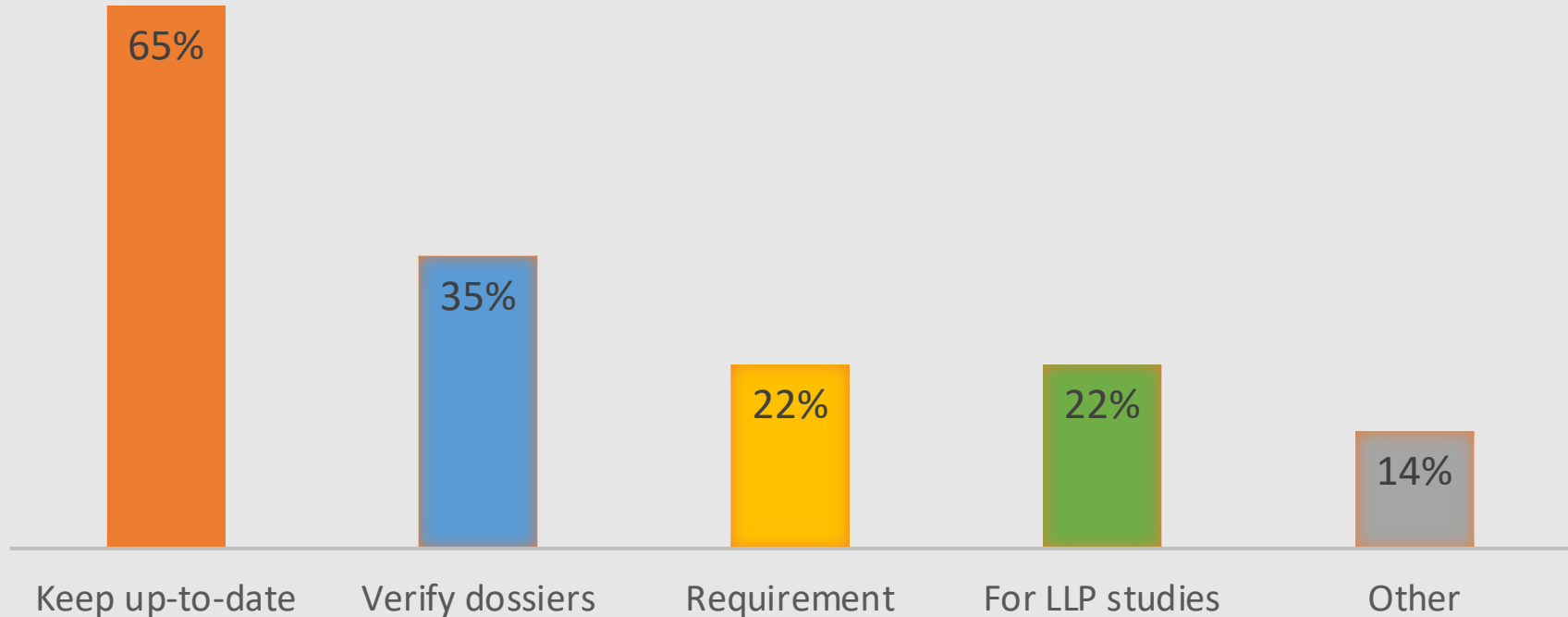
*“We don’t have a trade problem now because the Platform exists”*







Dr Hiroshi Yoshikura, former Chairperson of the Codex ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods derived from Biotechnology (TFFBT)

The meeting also highlighted a need for materials to support national authorities to communicate with the public.

# Use of the Platform



-  To understand what other countries are doing and what have been assessed.
-  Other countries' risk assessment results are useful to verify some of the data in the dossiers.
-  It is a requirement to check other countries results when initiating the safety assessment of the same GM event.
-  To prepare for, or to respond to any potential LLP situations, studying the Platform data is essential.

# Linkage / collaboration with CBD and OECD

## 2014 & 2015 Collaborative webinar series

- Co-existing international databases – scopes and objectives
- Training series on how to use three databases

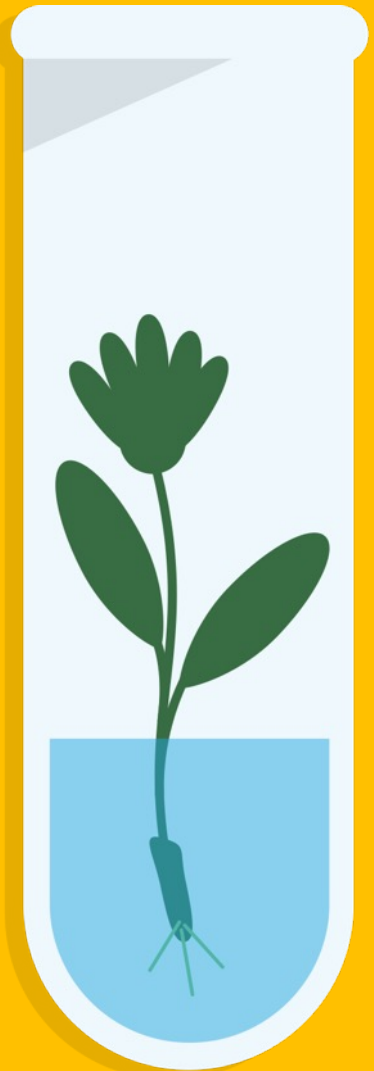
## FAO & CBD mutual links on country profiles

Additional information for the country profile

Link to this country's profile under the FAO GM Foods Platform: <http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/gm-foods-platform/browse-information-by/country/country-page/en/?cty=>

[Link to this country's profile under the Biosafety Clearing House \(BCH\)](#)

## Ongoing joint activity planning





# Questions FAO receives

- Are GMOs safe?
- Do we need GMOs?
- What is FAO's position on GMOs?
- What GM commodities do we have?
- Can GMOs be accumulated in the body and cause cancer?
- Does FAO have a similar database for gene-editing?
- How do we assess the safety of GM animals?
- Should we assess the safety of cell-based food in a similar way?

# Addressing the request

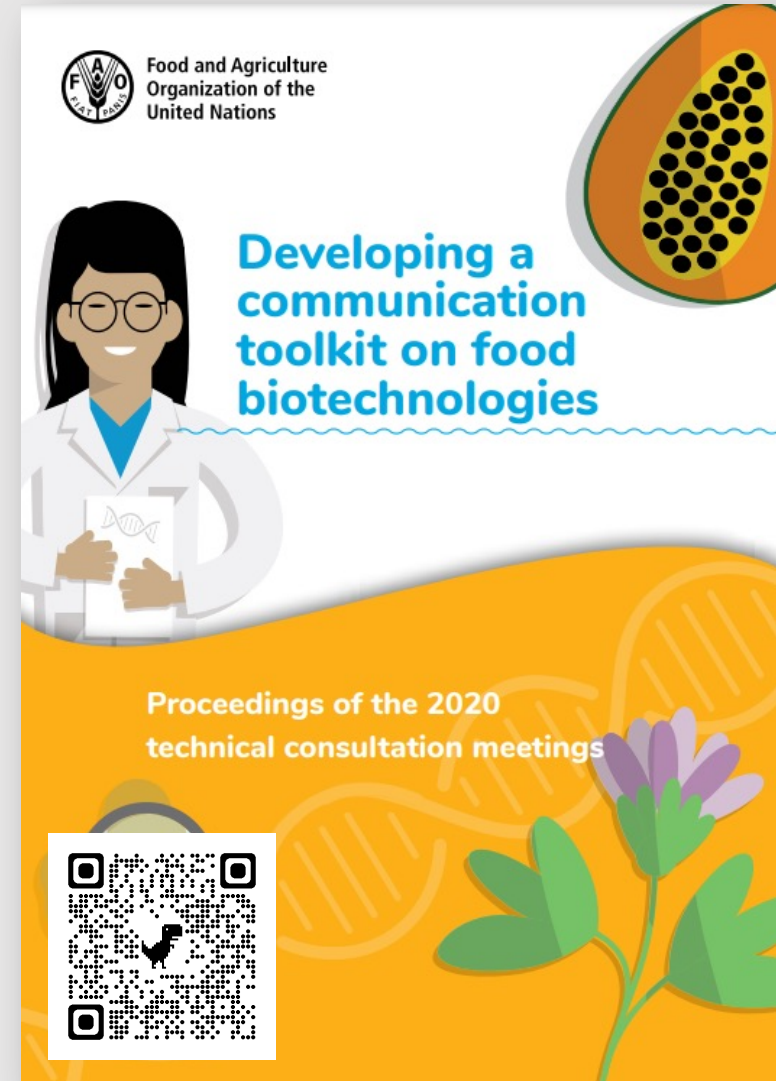



 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

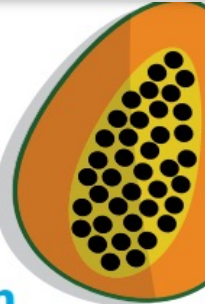


  
  


**Stock-taking report:  
food biotechnology  
communication  
materials in the world**

Background paper for the 2020 technical consultation meetings on developing a communication toolkit about food biotechnologies



 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

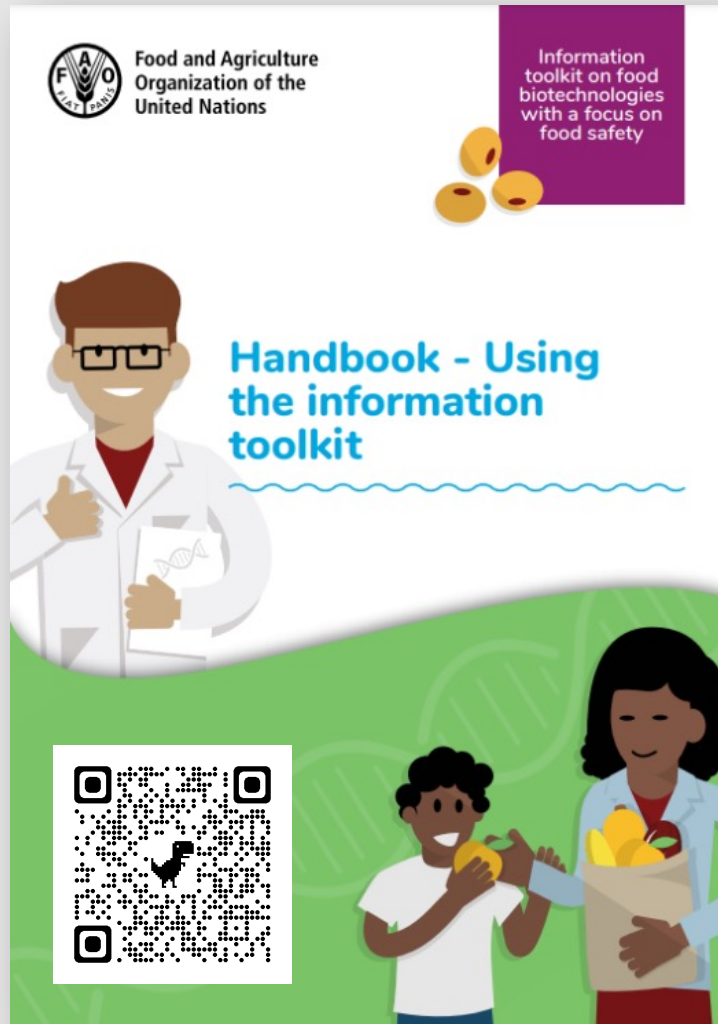
**Developing a  
communication  
toolkit on food  
biotechnologies**

Proceedings of the 2020 technical consultation meetings



# FAO Information Toolkit

for food biotechnologies with a focus on food safety



# Example information cards

## What is the main difference between genetic modification and conventional breeding?

In genetic modification, genes can come from sources with which the organism cannot breed. Conventional breeding is generally limited to genetic material which is already present within a species or closely related species.



## Why do we need to assess GM foods?

All foods have to be safe to eat, and GM foods are not an exception. All GM foods need to be as safe as their non-GM counterparts in order to go to the market.

To ensure safety, all GM foods have to pass a rigorous GM food safety assessment. GM foods have a history of safe use spanning more than 20 years.



## You can have a say in the approval process of GM foods.

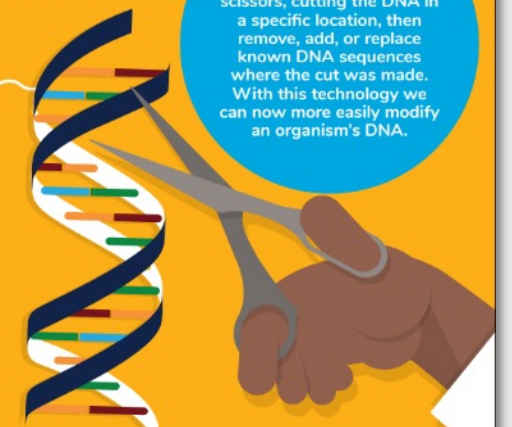
Your government invites public comments or questions on results of the GM food safety assessment which are reflected in final regulatory decisions.



## What is genome editing?

Genome editing refers to the latest set of techniques that allow scientists to improve the characteristics of living organisms, including plants, animals and microorganisms.

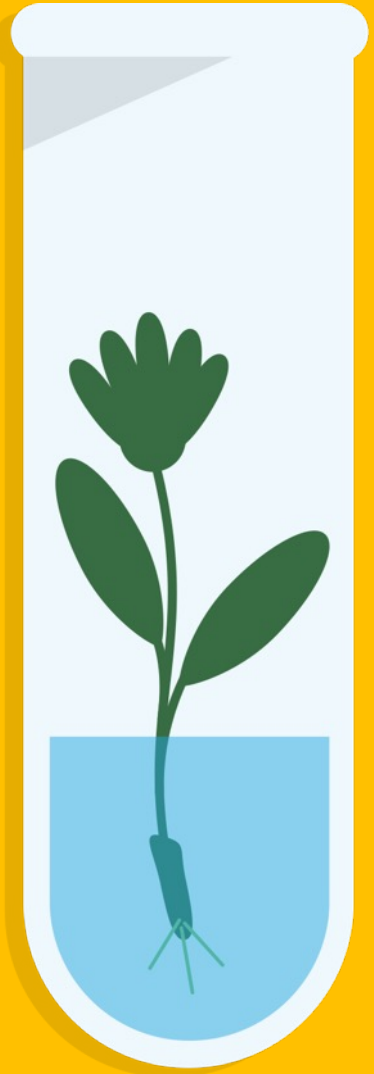
The technologies used for genome editing work like scissors, cutting the DNA in a specific location, then remove, add, or replace known DNA sequences where the cut was made. With this technology we can now more easily modify an organism's DNA.



# Finding answers

## **FAO Information toolkit for food biotechnologies with a focus on food safety**

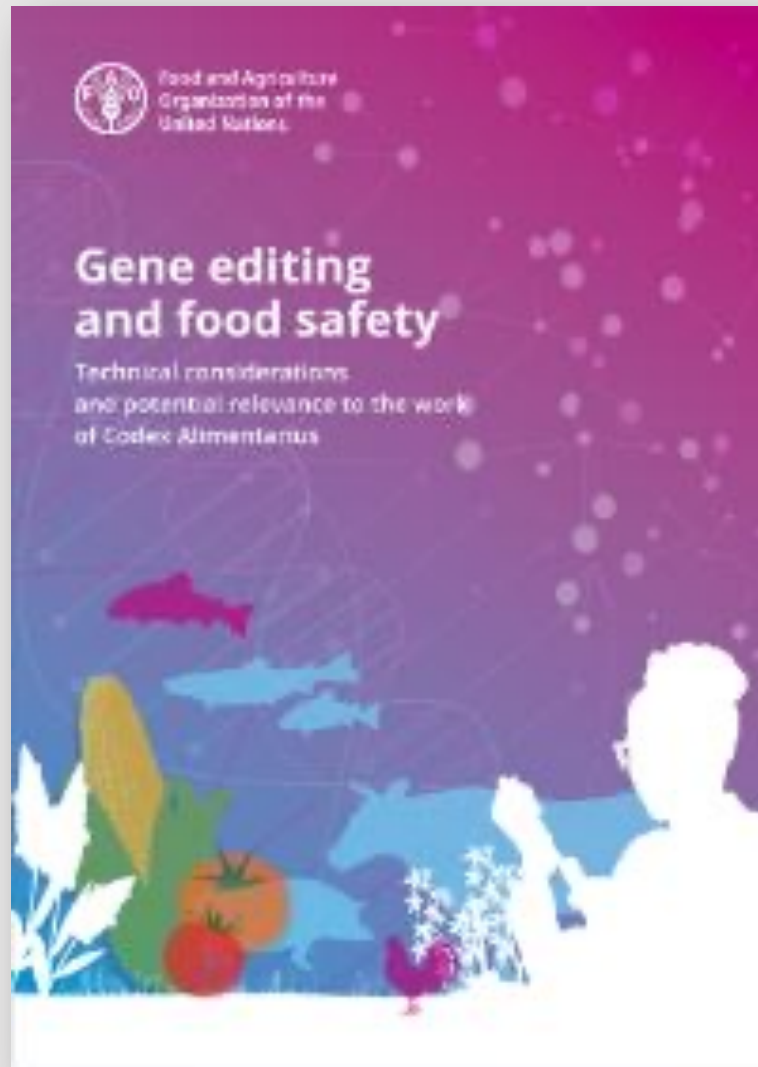
- [Handbook](#)
- [Tool 1: Background and guidance](#)
- [Tool 2: Fundamentals](#)
- [Tool 3: Rationale for potential benefits](#)
- [Tool 4: GM food safety assessments](#)
- [Tool 5: Regulations](#)
- [Tool 6: Human Health](#)
- [Tool 7: The environment](#)
- [Tool 8: Practical uses and applications](#)
- [Tool 9: Current innovations](#)
- [Tool 10: Public engagement](#)





# Future directions

- The Platform is **FAO's responsibility**, according to Codex guidelines, FAO will keep mitigating the LLP issues, by maintaining the Platform to be up-to-date.
- **Dialogue is key** for the next generation technologies.
- Institutional level of **collaboration** is critical among FAO, CBD and OECD
- **Community of practice**: members directly share experiences and answer questions. FAO's role is to facilitate such collaborations among members.
- The **community** is a treasure: the Platform community is the group of people who are tasked to handle **food safety issues** of various food technologies including emerging/future ones.



<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc5136en>



<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc3579en>



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FOOD SAFETY ASPECTS OF  
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SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS



# Questions?

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