



中華人民共和國
香港特別行政區政府
環境及生態局



《食物內甜味劑規例》(第132U章)的修訂建議

Proposed Amendments to the Sweeteners in Food Regulations (Cap. 132U)

Consultation Forum



Review on the Sweeteners in Food Regulations

Objectives

- Better protect public health
- Harmonise with international standards



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Current Regulatory Control of Sweeteners in Hong Kong

- **Food additives**

- Impart a sweet taste to food in place of sugars

- **Sweeteners in Food Regulations (Cap. 132U)**

- Regulates through a “positive list” approach
 - A total of 10 permitted sweeteners listed in the Schedule
 - No person shall sell, consign, deliver or import any food containing other sweeteners



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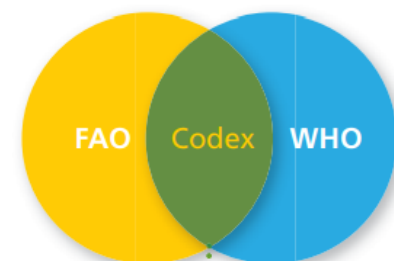
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Codex Alimentarius Commission

- Established by FAO and WHO in 1960s
 - International food standard, code of practice etc.
 - ✓ Protect consumer health
 - ✓ Ensure fair international food trade
 - ✓ Recognised by the WTO as the standard-setting body for food safety

➤ The most important international reference

The **Codex Alimentarius**



Codex
mandate



PROTECT
the health
of consumers.



ENSURE
fair practices
in the food trade.



PROMOTE COORDINATION
of all food standards work
undertaken by international
governmental and
non-governmental
organizations.



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Codex General Standards for Food Additives (GSFA)

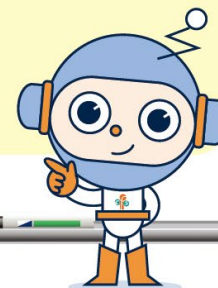
JECFA

Conducts stringent evaluation for food additives including sweeteners



Codex

Only food additives determined to be safe by JECFA are included in the GSFA



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Proposed Amendments

- Having regard to the international standards established by Codex (i.e. GSFA) and the Mainland standards, the dietary habits and intake of local population as well as the practices of other major food trading partners of Hong Kong, we consider there is a case for amending Cap. 132U
- Major areas of the proposed amendments :
 - Bringing polyhydric alcohols under the regulatory scope
 - Expanding the list of permitted sweeteners
 - Specifying the maximum permitted levels for individual “sweetener-food” pairs

To Bring Polyhydric Alcohols under the Regulatory Scope (I)

- **Definition under the existing Cap. 132U**

sweetener (甜味劑) means any chemical compound which is sweet to the taste, but does not include any sugars or other carbohydrates or polyhydric alcohols. (L.N. 225 of 2003; L.N. 61 of 2010)

- **Polyhydric alcohols (also known as sugar alcohols)**

- Have been widely used

- E.g. Xylitol and sorbitol are commonly used in chewing gums and sugar-reduced food

- Some also occur naturally in food

- **GSFA, the Mainland and a number of food trading partners of Hong Kong have covered polyhydric alcohols in their standards**



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To Bring Polyhydric Alcohols under the Regulatory Scope (II)

- **Proposal: To bring polyhydric alcohols under the regulatory scope**
 - **To amend the definition of “sweeteners” in Cap. 132U by removing the current exclusion of polyhydric alcohols**
 - **To refine the definition of sweetener**

Proposed definition: Any food additive that is capable of imparting a sweet taste to a food but does not include any sugars or other carbohydrates



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To Expand the List of Permitted Sweeteners

	No. of permitted sweeteners
Existing Cap. 132U	10
Not covered under the regulatory scope of Cap. 132U	10
Newly adopted from Codex	1
Monk fruit extract	1
Total	22

Advantame

- A new generation of sweetener, with high sweetness intensity of ~20000 times sweeter than sucrose; adding trace amount can already provide sweetness
- Food with advantame can be sold in Hong Kong after the amendment; would offer the food trade an additional choice of permitted sweetener

10 polyhydric alcohols (sugar alcohols) with sweetener function

- Have been widely used in food and will bring under the proposed regulatory scope

- Long history of safe consumption by humans, recently assigned with an INS no. 970 as sweetener
- Its use in food as a sweetener is permitted in many places



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Proposed Permitted Sweeteners

Currently permitted sweeteners	Proposed additional sweeteners	
1. Acesulfame potassium*	1. Erythritol	Polyhydric alcohols (also known as sugar alcohols)
2. Alitame*	2. Isomalt (Hydrogenated isomaltulose)	
3. Aspartame*	3. Lactitol	
4. Aspartame-acesulfame salt*	4. Maltitol	
5. Cyclamates	5. Maltitol syrup	
6. Neotame	6. Mannitol	
7. Saccharins	7. Polyglycitol syrup	
8. Steviol glycosides*	8. Sorbitol	
9. Sucralose* (Trichlorogalactosucrose)	9. Sorbitol syrup	
10. Thaumatin	10. Xylitol	
	11. Advantame (Newly adopted from Codex)	
	12. Monk fruit extract	

* The Chinese names of acesulfame potassium, alitame, aspartame, aspartame-acesulfame salt, steviol glycosides and sucralose will be amended as 「乙酰磺胺酸鉀」, 「阿力甜」, 「阿斯巴甜」, 「阿斯巴甜-乙酰磺胺酸鹽」, 「甜菊糖苷」 and 「三氯蔗糖」 respectively



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To Specify the Maximum Permitted Levels for Individual “Sweetener-food” Pairs

- Cap. 132U currently only specifies a list of permitted sweeteners
- Drawing reference from international practices, we propose to stipulate maximum permitted levels (MPLs) of permitted sweeteners for specified food under a food category system based on the GSFA
 - MPLs for over 900 “sweetener-food” pairs (e.g. “neotame-frozen fruit” and “neotame-candied fruit”) will be established
 - About 80% are based on Codex standards
 - The remainder of about 20% are based on the Mainland standards (e.g. Candied fruits)



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Multi-functional Food Additives

- Some permitted sweeteners are multi-functional food additives

NEOTAME

INS 961

Neotame



Functional Class: Flavour enhancer, Sweetener

- When applying these additives in food, no matter if they are used as sweetener or not, their levels shall not exceed the corresponding MPLs stipulated in the amended Cap. 132U
 - In line with that of Codex as well as the practice of our major food trading partners



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Sweeteners Permitted for Use in Foods in Accordance with “GMP Principles”

- **Propose permitting the use of 12 sweeteners in food accordance with “Good Manufacturing Practice” principles (“GMP principles”)**
 - 10 polyhydric alcohols and thaumatin: GMP additives under the GSFA
 - Monk fruit extract: Can be used in accordance with GMP principles as sweetener among our major food trading partners including the Mainland, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and the US
- **Making reference to GSFA and the Mainland standards, it is proposed to specify a list of “inapplicable food categories” in the amended Cap. 132U**
 - The use of GMP additives in such inapplicable food categories would be regulated through the MPLs (if available)



Other Technical Amendments – To Adopt “Carry-over principle” (I)

- A food may contain all the sweeteners permitted for use in its ingredients on a pro rata basis as a result of carry-over

Example :

- The MPLs for sucralose in flavoured yoghurt (food category 1.7) and breakfast cereals (food category 6.3) are 400 mg/kg and 1000 mg/kg respectively
- A cereal yoghurt may contain sucralose carry-over from its ingredients on a pro rata basis
- If flavoured yoghurt and breakfast cereal each account for half that product's total weight, the MPL for sucralose in that product would be calculated as: $400 \times 50\% + 1000 \times 50\% = 700\text{mg/kg}$



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Other Technical Amendments – To Adopt “Carry-over principle” (II)

- Carry-over of any sweetener from an ingredient would not be permitted for foods belonging to the food category “Infant formulae, follow-up formulae, formulae for special medical purposes for infants and complementary foods for infants and young children”
 - Mannitol that serves as a nutrient carrier in raw material or other ingredient carried over to this food category would be permitted

Example :

- Steviol glycosides is permitted in strawberry puree (food category 4.1.2.8), with an MPL at 330 mg/kg
- However, it is **not permitted** that a strawberry puree containing yoghurt for infants and young children to contain steviol glycosides as a result of carry-over from its ingredients



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Other Amendments – To Adopt “Carry-over Principle” (III)

- An ingredient that is used exclusively in the preparation of a relevant food may contain any sweeteners permitted in that food, and the prepared food shall comply with the amended Cap. 132U, including that the MPLs of the sweeteners specified in relation to its scheduled food category are not exceeded

Example:

- Steviol glycosides is not permitted in food category “1.3.2 Beverage whiteners”
- Steviol glycosides is permitted in food category “14.1.5 Coffee, coffee substitutes, tea, herbal infusions, and other hot cereal and grain beverages” with an MPL at 200 mg/kg
- That type of whitener explicitly described for use solely in the preparation of coffee may contain steviol glycosides, provided that the level of steviol glycosides in the coffee prepared with that whitener would not exceed 200 mg/kg



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Other Technical Amendments

- **To exempt any naturally present sweetener component**
 - If a sweetener (e.g. sorbitol) is a naturally present component in a food (e.g. fresh peach), such natural content will be exempted
 - Sweeteners that are intentionally added to that food are still subject to Cap. 132U
- **To update the Chinese names of certain currently permitted sweeteners to align with those in the GSFA and Mainland standards**

Flavourings* and Other Food Additives Used as Ingredients in the Preparation of Food

- Taking into account international practice, we propose to allow flavourings used as ingredients in the preparation of food to contain permitted sweeteners (as is the case under the existing Cap. 132U)
- The types and amount of permitted sweeteners present in the prepared food containing flavourings shall comply with the amended Cap. 132U
 - The amount of permitted sweeteners shall not exceed the MPLs specified in relation to its food category
- The above principle also applies to other food additives used as ingredients in the preparation of food (e.g. a bulking agent may contain / mix with permitted sweetener in a food additive preparation)

* Products that are added to food to impart, modify, or enhance the flavour of food (with the exception of flavour enhancers) and do not include substances that have an exclusively sweet, sour, or salty taste.



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Reality Check

- **The CFS has collected food samples on the local market for testing of sweeteners**
 - About 98% of the analytical results can meet the proposed MPLs
 - Samples that were unable to meet the proposed MPLs primarily include Chinese-style preserved fruits (such as dried tangerine peel and plum candy), pickled vegetables, drinks, cakes, and cookies etc.
 - The sweeteners involved mainly include cyclamates, acesulfame potassium, steviol glycosides, and saccharins



Transitional Period

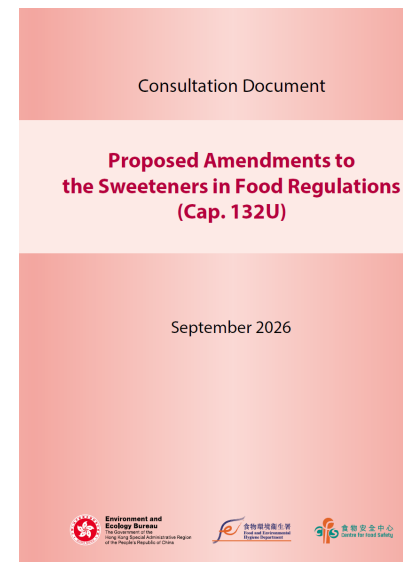
- **Propose to provide an 18-month transitional period following completion of the legislative procedure to facilitate preparation by the food trade and other stakeholders for compliance**
 - During the transitional period, full compliance with the requirements of either Cap. 132U before amendment or the amended Cap. 132U shall fulfil the statutory requirements
- **Will conduct technical meetings and issue user guidelines**
 - To facilitate the trade in understanding and complying with the new requirements

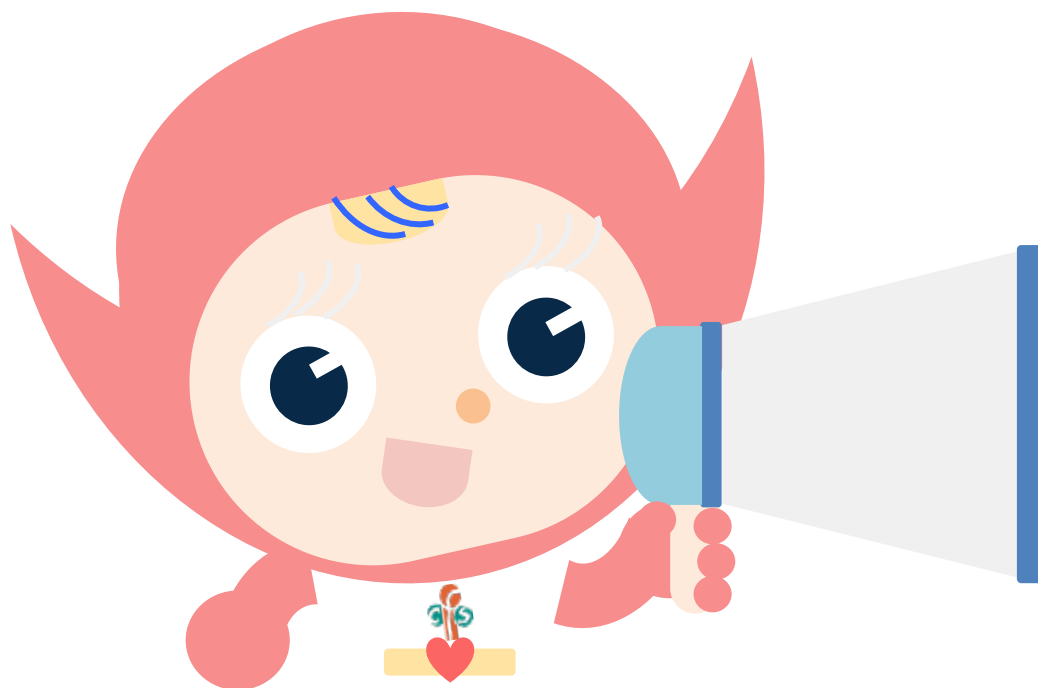
Work Progress

- **Proposed amendments are supported by the CFS' Expert Committee on Food Safety**
 - Member comprises local, Mainland and overseas academics / experts as well as local trade stakeholders and representatives from Government departments
- **Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene was briefed on 9 June 2026 on the proposed amendments**

Public Consultation

- 3-month public consultation from 4 September to 4 December 2026
- Consultation document can be downloaded from EEB and CFS websites
 - Views are welcome from members of the public on the proposed amendments by post, facsimile or e-mail (sweetener_consultation@fehd.gov.hk) within the consultation period
- Will consider the feedback received in detail, and prepare the subsidiary legislation to amend Cap. 132U for tabling at the Legislative Council for scrutiny





~Thank you~



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