

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Hong Kong Proposes Amendments to Sweeteners in Food Regulations

Country: Hong Kong

Post: Hong Kong

Report Category: Policy and Program Announcements, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety, WTO Notifications, Trade Policy Monitoring, FAIRS Subject Report

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Report Highlights:

On September 4, 2026 the Hong Kong government (HKG) released a public consultation document and notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) (G/SPS/N/HKG/51) of proposed amendments to its Sweeteners in Food Regulations (Cap. 132U). This report provides an overview of the proposed amendments. U.S. stakeholders are encouraged to carefully review the proposed changes and to submit comments before December 4, 2026.

Summary

On September 4, 2026, the Hong Kong government (HKG) notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) ([G/SPS/N/HKG/51](#)) of its first substantive update to the Sweeteners in Food Regulations (Cap. 132U) since 2010. There is no indicated timeframe for proposed adoption, however, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) has indicated that a transition period of 18 months will be provided upon adoption to allow for industry adjustment. Comments should be submitted to CFS on or before December 4, 2026, at sweetener_consultation@fehd.gov.hk. U.S. exporters submitting comments are encouraged to copy ATO Hong Kong at atohongkong@usda.gov in their submissions.

Hong Kong’s control of sweeteners in food is currently regulated by the [Sweeteners in Food Regulations \(Cap. 132U\)](#), which was first enacted in 1970 and last amended in 2010. The proposed amendments are intended to strengthen public health protection and harmonize Hong Kong's standards with international norms, primarily the Codex Alimentarius Commission's General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA, last revised July 2026) and supplemented by mainland China's GB 2760-2024 standard.

Key provisions of the amendment to the regulation include:

- **Polyhydric alcohols (sugar alcohols) added.** Substances such as xylitol and sorbitol are currently excluded from the definition of sweetener under the current regulation. The amendment removes this exclusion and brings 10 types of polyhydric alcohols under regulatory scope,
- **Two new sweeteners were added.** Advantame and monk fruit extract would be permitted for use as sweeteners,
- **One substance removed.** Potassium cyclamate would be dropped from the cyclamates sweetener group, aligning Hong Kong with Codex.

The amendment also proposes setting maximum permitted levels (MPLs) for sweeteners, a feature that does not currently exist in the regulation. This would cover more than 900 specific sweetener food combinations. 10 of the 22 proposed sweeteners would be regulated entirely through fixed MPLs. The remaining 12 (the 10 polyhydric alcohols, thaumatin, and monk fruit extract) would generally follow Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) principles instead, meaning no fixed numeric limit, except in certain specified food categories, listed in Annex V of the consultation document, where a fixed MPL (if applicable) would still apply.

Table 1. Comparison of Codex-Based and Mainland-Based MPLs

	Codex-Based MPLs	Mainland-Based MPLs
Share of total MPLs	~80%	~20%
Source standard	Codex Alimentarius Commission (GSFA)	Mainland China (GB 2760-2024)
When used	Default basis for most sweetener-food pairings	Used where Codex has not set an applicable limit
Example product	Most general food categories	Candied fruit prepared in the Chinese style

The document also proposes adopting the Codex carry-over principle, allowing a sweetener permitted in a raw ingredient to appear on a pro rata basis in a finished food. Carry-over would not apply to infant and young children's food, except for mannitol used as a nutrient carrier. Ingredients used exclusively for one stated purpose, such as a coffee-only whitener, may also carry sweeteners into that food, provided the final product stays within its MPL. The same applies to flavorings and other additives used as ingredients, so long as the total sweetener content in the finished food does not exceed the applicable MPL.

Separately, the document proposes exempting sweeteners that occur naturally in food, such as sorbitol in peaches or mannitol in mushrooms, from the regulation, consistent with Codex.

Detailed information on the proposed amendments is contained in the HKG's [consultation paper](#). Additional details can be found in the [press release](#) and on the CFS [website](#).

Attachments:

No Attachments.