

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

THE ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

And

THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)

On

THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE OECD EXPLORATORY TASK FORCE AND THE UNECE TASK FORCE ON COOPERATION WITH THE OECD ON EVALUATING THE FEASIBILITY OF TRANSFERRING TO THE UNECE THE OECD WORK ON THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SCHEME

This Memorandum of Understanding is made and entered into by and between the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) relating to the cooperation of the OECD Exploratory Task Force established by the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables (hereinafter called the "OECD Scheme") and the UNECE Task Force on Cooperation with the OECD established by the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (hereinafter called the "UNECE Working Party") on evaluating the feasibility of transferring the OECD current programme of work (see Annex) on the Fruit and Vegetables Scheme to the UNECE [C(2008)217/REV1].

WHEREAS the UNECE Working Party is responsible for developing, interpreting and promoting the practical application of standards for fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as for dry and dried produce, and that under its terms of reference (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2007/12)¹ it allows any member of the United Nations to participate in its work on an equal footing,

WHEREAS the OECD Scheme primary objective is to facilitate international trade in fruit and vegetables through the harmonisation and implementation/interpretation of international marketing standards. The OECD Scheme's core activity is to establish a framework for the OECD fruit and vegetables quality inspection system. Participation in the OECD Scheme is open to any member of the United Nations or one of its specialised agencies or the World Trade Organization [C(2006)95],

WHEREAS the feasibility of concentrating agricultural quality standards work in the UNECE was discussed at the 64th Plenary Meeting of the OECD Scheme. [AGR/CA/FVS(2006)17; AGR/CA/FVS/M(2006)1],

HAVING REGARD to the decision by the UNECE Working Party at its sixty-second session to establish a Task Force on Cooperation with the OECD,

HAVING REGARD to the recommendation of the UNECE member States, as part of an in-depth review of UNECE work, "Consultations shall be initiated with the OECD in order to concentrate the activities of the two organizations within the ECE" (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1),

¹ http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/info/ToR_eng.doc

HAVING REGARD to the decision by the OECD Scheme at its 65th Plenary Meeting to establish an Exploratory Task Force [AGR/CA/FVS/M(2007)1],

HAVING REGARD to the results and recommendations of the In-depth Evaluation of the OECD Codes and Schemes for International Trade [C(2008)95, C(2008)95/CORR1],

The OECD and UNECE hereby agree to recognise and organise the cooperation of the OECD Exploratory Task Force and the UNECE Task Force on Cooperation with the OECD (hereinafter called Task Force Teams).

1. General provisions

The Task Force Teams will work in close cooperation to explore the feasibility of transferring all the programme of work of the OECD Scheme to UNECE and report conclusions to the OECD Scheme and the UNECE Working Party. The cooperation of the Teams will not entail any supplementary costs for either organization.

2. Modes of cooperation

The Task Force Teams may hold joint meetings at the initiative of one of the respective Chairpersons who will chair the Meeting of the Task Forces. The meetings may be held in conjunction with official meetings in both organizations. The joint reports of the Task Force Team meetings should be presented to the Plenary Meeting of the OECD Scheme and submitted as an informal document to the annual Session of the UNECE Working Party.

The Task Force Teams may establish joint sub-working groups on the different aspects of a possible transition, which are the following:

- Legal aspects
- Financial aspects
- Development and quality of explanatory materials
- Other activities of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme (peer reviews, discussion of economic and market analysis of selected fruit and vegetables products, development of rules and interpretative materials on testing, sampling, inspection and certification, training and capacity building activities)
- Organization of meetings.

As a pilot test, the UNECE will prepare an explanatory brochure on a selected fruit or vegetable product, using the OECD Guidance Document for Drafting Explanatory Brochures. The result of the test will provide input into the evaluation report of the OECD Exploratory Task Force Team.

The OECD Exploratory Task Force will provide a final report to the 2009 Plenary Meeting of the OECD Scheme for discussion and recommendation. The result of this discussion will be presented to the OECD Committee for Agriculture, whose recommendation will be submitted for final approval to the OECD Council.

3. Composition of OECD and UNECE task forces

At its 65th Plenary Meeting, the OECD Scheme decided that the OECD Exploratory Task Force would be composed of representatives from:

- Netherlands (Chair)

- Germany
- Morocco
- New Zealand
- Switzerland
- OECD Secretariat

At its sixty-second session, the UNECE Working Party decided that the UNECE Task Force on Cooperation with the OECD would be composed of representatives of:

- Sweden (Chair)
- Slovak Republic
- United Kingdom
- United States of America
- European Commission
- UNECE secretariat

4. Intellectual property

The parties recognize the importance of protecting and respecting the intellectual property rights of each Organization.

5. Date of effect - Termination

This Memorandum of Understanding will come into effect upon the date of its signature and terminate once a decision has been taken by the OECD Council on the feasibility of transferring all the programme of work of the OECD Scheme to the UNECE.

Date of signature

November 2, 2009



For OECD
Deputy Secretary-General



For UNECE
Executive Secretary

ANNEX

Programme of Work of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables 2009/10

1. Review and improve the implementation of the Scheme

- Provide a framework to facilitate mutual recognition of inspections by countries
- Revise the quality control procedures and conformity certificate
- Implement peer reviews
- Enhance the participation in the Heads of National Inspection Services Meetings
- Provide economic and market analysis of the fruit and vegetables sector

2. Develop explanatory materials

- Develop at least two explanatory brochures per year
- Revise the general layout of the explanatory brochures
- Review the distribution and marketing of explanatory materials

3. Develop new and enhance existing training tools

- Develop a training programme, based on distance learning technology
- Develop guidelines for inspection and inspector training
- Provide capacity-building for potential and current members
- Strengthen the link of sponsored events with the Scheme's work

4. Promote the Scheme

- Review the marketing and communication strategy of the Scheme
- Identify interested parties and organise contacts
- Expand the Scheme by incorporate new countries
- Develop a promotional kit
- Reinforce communication through the Scheme's web site

5. Enhance cooperation with other international organisations

- Adopt international standards other than UNECE ones, including FAO/WHO Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables.
- Formalize cooperation with UNECE
- Develop new projects with FAO, FAO/WHO Codex Committee on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, European Commission, CLAM, COLEACP