



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

29<sup>th</sup> Session

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USE OF 'TWINNING' APPROACH IN CCEURO

## BACKGROUND

1. The FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, in cooperation with Poland and the Netherlands (former and current CCEURO Coordinators), arranged a one-day Regional Consultation<sup>1</sup> on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to bring together national Codex contact points and senior government representatives from agriculture and health sectors to discuss possibilities of strengthening capacities for food safety risk analysis and enhancing participation in Codex work for countries with transition economies by providing a platform for discussion among more experienced countries in Codex within the Region and less experienced ones. The Consultation provided an opportunity to discuss specific country and regional food safety issues, to consider capacity development within potential partnership and mentorship schemes, to discuss the concept and elements of a regional project on strengthening regional capacities for risk analysis and effective participation in Codex work. The Consultation considered the draft Strategic Plan for CCEURO as a framework to provide synergies and enhance capacity development in food safety risk analysis and Codex work.

2. Expected outputs of the Regional Consultation included:

- Identified risk analysis aspects and Codex-related work of interest to be addressed through establishing potential partnership and mentorship schemes between countries in the region;
- A draft plan for a regional platform for knowledge, experience and resources sharing on Codex - host, functions, responsibility and resources for content update and maintenance;
- An outline for a project on strengthening regional capacities for risk analysis and effective participation in Codex work;
- A reviewed CCEURO Draft Strategic Plan for strengthening collaboration in food safety; and Codex across the region.

3. Six working groups were established to discuss a number of topics, one of them being “*partnership and mentorship among countries in the region with the aim of increasing capacity to produce country positions, participate effectively in Codex work and use the Codex documentation*” where the focus was to search mechanisms for constructive partnerships and mentoring in view of effective collaboration across the region in Codex work, involving both experienced and less experienced countries.

4. The general impression was that most of countries were positive about the idea of partnership for strengthening Codex work but that many questions remained. The Consultation found that there was real potential for partnership and mentoring on increasing capacities for Codex related work. Capacity development required support and assistance from experienced countries. Countries with ample experience were also interested in partnerships but needed to be clear about what could and what could not be delivered. It was suggested that Codex be included/involved in existing projects in food safety and in cooperation projects. Mentorships should last for a certain period but they should be flexible (e.g. not necessarily limited to two countries and not all of a set duration) and pragmatic (focus on relevant issues). The mentorship could include short missions from less advanced to more advanced countries. This scheme could easily be implemented prior to Codex meetings. Visits could be arranged during a few days preceding a Codex committee meeting to prepare specific topics on the agenda. Partnerships could also be linked to specific topics on the CCEURO agenda. Mentorship could be a tool to improve communication between countries on a concrete, confined issue. It was also suggested that Codex issues, where possible, should also be included in the existing cooperation projects under implementation or planned activities between countries.

5. Based on the above, the Consultation conclude that the CCEURO Coordinator will stimulate twinning activities after making an inventory of actual needs and available mentors and will start an informal electronic working group on the subject.

## INTRODUCTION

6. Following the conclusion and recommended action on twinning activities, an informal electronic working group was established under the chairmanship of the CCEURO Coordinator. A questionnaire was sent to countries of the Region to seek information on a number of points as indicated in the outline prepared for this purpose. The replies from member countries are reproduced in the Annex.

<sup>1</sup> The report of the FAO-CCEURO Regional Consultation on Strengthening Capacities for Food Safety Risk Analysis and Enhancing Participation in Codex Work is available at: <http://www.cceuro.pl/conference-on-food-safety-risk-analysis-fifty-years-with-codex-alimentarius-in-the-european-region.html>

**CCEURO Twinning activities; rough outline**

This is a first attempt to describe the overall framework in which projects should preferably fit.

The basis is: keep things flexible and simple, keep it practical to adapt easily. It would be advisable to use mentorship as a tool to get to know each other better, as a communication tool, and to learn from each other experience (capacity building).

Before starting a project, the following aspects should be described:

**Subject:** (Codex procedures, standards development, legislation, risk assessment etc.)

**Duration:** (6 months? 2 years? Kick-off and closure formalities)

**Outcome:** (when is the project a success?)

**Number of participants:** (2, 3, more countries?)

**Language used:** (?)

**Checkpoints:** (evaluation moments and consequences: changes or termination)

**Finances:** (who pays for what)

**Report:** (*open to all CCEURO members*)

**CONCLUSION**

7. This document will be used to structure the discussion during the 29<sup>th</sup> CCEURO on possible twinning activities among member countries of CCEURO.

8. The expected outcome is the identification of twinning activities to increase capacity for an effective participation in Codex work, so that CCEURO member countries can improve their understanding on the Codex standard-setting process and strengthen their capacities for a more effective participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

**ANNEX****REPLIES FROM CCEURO MEMBER COUNTRIES****Armenia**

**Subject:** (Codex procedures, standards development, legislation, risk assessment etc.)

**Duration:** (6 months? 2 years? Kick-off and closure formalities)

Depends on the format of Twinning activities. If the format of EC similar initiative lasting for 2 years is kept, then it will take a long time for designing, approval, and will require a lot of money, which is not probably appropriate in this case.

Thus, duration of 6 months seems to be more suitable.

**Outcome:** (when is the project a success?)

**Number of participants:** (2, 3, more countries?)

Up to 2-3 beneficiaries

**Language used:** (?)

Depends on countries involved.

**Checkpoints:** (evaluation moments and consequences: changes or termination)

**Finances:** (who pays for what)

The most difficult question, especially, taking in mind that some countries in transition don't even participate at Codex meetings anymore after graduating from CTF.

**Report:** (open to all CCEURO members)

P.S. We have Codex National Committee meeting at the end of April and I will propose to discuss possibilities of Twinning activities, probably can get some opinions.

One idea just flashed into my mind, can we think also about E-Twinning activities, less costly but not less effective?

**Georgia**

**Subject:** (Codex procedures, standards development, legislation, risk assessment etc.)

A - Standard development (standards for national food)

B - Methodology of microbiological and chemical risk assessment

**Duration:** (6 months? 2 years? Kick-off and closure formalities)

A - 2 years

B - 6 months

**Outcome:** (when is the project a success?)

A - There will be elaborated draft standard for the National fermented milk product "Matsoni" and cheese "Sulguni"

B - Methodology, technical specifications and recommendations are developed for the Assessment of microbiological and chemical risks

**Number of participants:** (2, 3, more countries?)

A - 2 countries

B - 3 or more countries

**Language used:** (?)

Russian and English or one of them

**Checkpoints:** (evaluation moments and consequences: changes or termination)

A - Once a year

B - After three months from the project start

**Finances:** (who pays for what)

- The issue regarding the financing is not decided

**Report:** (open to all CCEURO members)

- To be available for all CCEURO members

## **Greece**

Twinning projects can also include remote cooperation, i.e. activities where the involved parties remain in their normal work locations but coordinate and monitor their activities towards the agreed objectives using remote cooperation tools (e.g., e-mail, teleconferences, web platforms, webinars, etc.). It is up to the involved parties to agree on the percentage of remote cooperation within their twinning project, taking into account all relevant factors, such as personnel availability, space requirements, project objectives, suitability and effectiveness of the remote cooperation tools available, total costs, etc.

Before starting a project, the following aspects should be described:

**Subject:** (Codex procedures, standards development, legislation, risk assessment etc.)

In general, the project should have well described objectives and activities expected outcomes and measurable progress indicators. A provisional timetable for each activity should be set (Gantt chart or similar).

**Duration:** (6 months? 2 years? Kick-off and closure formalities)

The project should have a determined duration which is pragmatic for the scope of the project. The possibility to extend (or, in general, amend the project duration should be available.

A kick off meeting (preferably but not necessarily physical meeting) is usually helpful to fine tune the views of the implementation objectives and activities of the project.

**Outcome:** (when is the project a success?)

The project should have a finite (and preferably small) number of main objectives. It should be possible for those objective to be monitored via a number of measurable (and meaningful) progress indicators, in order to have an overview of the project. Key milestones should also be defined.

**Number of participants:** (2, 3, more countries?)

The criterion for the number of participants should depend on the objectives of the project and the available budget. Projects that could be of wide interest should be open to more countries.

**Language used:** (?)

**Checkpoints:** Evaluation moments and consequences: changes or termination – based on the evaluation of the progress indicators and the achievement of the originally identified milestones. A brief contingency analysis would also be needed for long-term projects (>18 months) or very resource-intensive.

**Finances:**

Approximate project budget or equivalent plan with references on resources committed per partner, including both cash contributions and contributions in kind. Depending on the complexity of the project, for simple projects it may only be necessary to indicate which partner implements what activity (e.g., for projects involving exchange of views through events).

**Report:** (open to all CCEURO members)

It is highly recommended that all involved partners agree in writing for a given project, having taken into account the headings above. A project monitoring team should also be nominated (from within the people involved in the project's activities).

## **The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

**Subject:** (Codex procedures, standards development, legislation, risk assessment etc.)

The objective of the project (twinning) is to improve the capacities of the less advanced countries members of Codex alimentarius for active participation in Codex work

**Duration:** (6 months? 2 years? Kick-off and closure formalities)

Macedonia proposes duration of 6 -8 months for implementation of the project (+ additional time for inception and closure activities)

**Outcome:** (when is the project a success?)

Expected activities in the project:

- Assistance in establishment of functional national Codex structures
- Assist the National Codex committees in the work of standards setting procedures
- Preparation of relevant procedures/protocols/guidelines for the national Codex work
- Sharing on the job knowledge of the activities related to Codex
- Development of a database for collection, dissemination of Codex documents and feedback by the relevant stakeholders

- Training exercise on the preparation of country position/opinion on Codex standards or other Codex documents, participation in Codex working groups
- Trainings/workshops for all relevant stakeholders on the Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius, selected Codex standards...etc.
- Promotion of Codex activities in the country

**Number of participants:** (2, 3, more countries?)

The number of participants should be decided after the agreed required results by the interested countries (if there is a possibility, the twinning project may be divided by countries/expected results/language)

**Language used:** (?)

English is acceptable for Macedonia

**Checkpoints:** (evaluation moments and consequences: changes or termination)

**Finances:** (who pays for what)

Macedonia as a beneficiary country may cover the costs for the expert's office, telecommunication, internet, meeting and training venues. If necessary, travel costs for beneficiary country's staff may be discussed

**Report:** (open to all CCEURO members)

### **Moldova**

If I understand you correctly, the material sent by you can be considered in a way as a structure and at the same time as an algorithm of our further joint activities.

In my opinion, the first draft of any material should be made by a person who has **experience with Codex work**, and should afterwards be sent to the representatives of 5 – 7 countries to submit their proposals. The author of the draft document will make a summary of the received proposals and will draw up the final version.

**The final version of the draft document can probably be considered a success** if the representatives of the other 5 – 7 countries will agree with it or at least if they will submit some minor proposals which do not affect the project as a whole.

**The duration of the work** on the document depends on its complexity. On average it will possibly take 6 months.

The **working languages** are English and Russian.

**As for monitoring the effectiveness of the document**, at the end of the document should be a footnote indicating any shortcomings which are revealed during the work, possible changes and others, to be sent to the author, who can propose certain measures for further improvement or termination (most probably after some consultation).

When it comes to a complex project, only its author should probably be **paid** (apparently from some Codex reserves).

The report should preferably be sent in two languages to all the members of the informal working groups.

### **Poland**

We would like to thank you for your e-mail with initial proposals for the discussion on twinning activities and present some of our first thoughts.

In general, we assume that as a principle it is up to countries planning to apply for a support to precise their specific needs. It would be interesting to see countries' expectations and discuss possibilities of meeting them in our eWG.

In order to facilitate further discussion we propose taking into account additional aspects:

- venue of training (in „donor” or „beneficiary” country).
- type of training (theoretical or more practical – workshops, study visits);

Regarding your detailed proposals we have the following remarks:

**Subject** – We propose adding as a subject functioning of Codex Contact Points/National Committees;

**Duration** – Short-term activities should be also recognized as an option;

**Outcome** – Should be designed and vary depending on specific subject of the project;

**Number of participants** – We may consider 2 options:

- Option 1 – one donor and one beneficiary
- Option 2 – one donor and more beneficiaries

of interested parties applying for the same or similar scope of support;

**Language used** – English is the easiest option; potential translation/interpretation strictly depends on resources;

**Checkpoints** – In case of long-term activities, an initial or step evaluation should be envisaged; adjustments as an effect of evaluation will be probably necessary, however especially in case of using public resources, assuming possibility of project termination should be reconsidered;

**Finances** – Support from the FAO Regional Office would be welcome

**Report** – Should be published as a rule in order to share experiences and good practices along CCEURO region.

Additionally, at the later stage, we propose to consider preparing a draft application form for twinning projects basing on the considered aspects.

## **Sweden**

**Subject:** (Codex procedures, standards development, legislation, risk assessment etc.)

**Goals:** goals to be achieved by involved parts ("new" Codex MS and for the experienced/old Codex MS)

**Duration:** (6 months? 2 years? Kick-off and closure formalities)

**Outcome:** (when is the project a success?- to be judged in relation to goals)

**Number of participants:** (2, 3, more countries?)

**Language used:** (?)

**Checkpoints and Follow-up activities** in order to continue the cooperation in the future (suggestions for further improvement of the programme)

(evaluation moments and consequences: changes or termination)

**Finances:** (who pays for what)

**Report:** an executive summary report (open to all CCEURO members) the summary should be translated from English to the country's language to the benefit of the participants