

Trade and Agriculture Directorate  
Committee for Agriculture

**OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables**

**GUIDELINES ON TRAINING OF INSPECTORS ON QUALITY INSPECTION**

*These Guidelines on Training of Inspectors on Quality Inspection were adopted at the 69th Plenary Meeting of the Fruit and Vegetables Scheme on 7-8 December 2010.*

*All modifications made by the 69th Plenary Meeting are included in this revised document.*

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## **REVISED DRAFT GUIDELINES ON TRAINING OF INSPECTORS ON QUALITY INSPECTION**

### **Justification and purpose of the training**

1. Marketing standards are a trade tool assuring market transparency and facilitating national and international trade, provided they are applied in a professional and harmonised way.
2. Inspection services – governmental or private – must employ inspectors that are highly qualified. The performance of inspectors must be professional and harmonised within a team. The inspector must have knowledge, at least as complete as that of his/her counterparts – employed in of the fruit and vegetables trade.
3. The purpose of the training is to keep the inspector well informed and updated with the current national legislation, the national marketing standards, eventually the international marketing standards, aid in their interpretation, inspection procedures as well as the latest developments in the market and product range.
4. In general, all training is aimed to create professional harmonisation within the inspection service or within the inspection services of a country.

### **Professional background of inspectors**

5. The qualification of the inspector must be such that the inspection service is recognised as competent and leading in the application of marketing standards and inspection of fruit and vegetables.
6. Preferably, an inspector should have a professional education in horticulture or agriculture or adequate professional skills and expertise (e.g. food technology or human nutrition).
7. It is required that inspections are carried out only by inspectors who have successfully passed/ graduated with adequate professional training and have been approved by the competent authority.

### **Training goals**

8. It has to be acknowledged that a professional inspector is a specialist and that this specialisation requires special and professional training. In general all training is to create professional harmonisation within the inspection service (at the country level there should be the same system in marketing quality control). There are 2 different types of training; initial for new inspectors, and annual training programme for authorized inspectors.

### **Initial training**

9. Initial training is intended for new recruited inspectors without any experience in quality control. Initial training duration depends on its intensity and should be accomplished within 1 year. Training

courses in theoretical knowledge must be followed by on-the job training under the supervision of a senior inspector.

10. An inspector may only be authorised for inspection provided he/she has received initial training. It is recommended that initial training could focus on:

- Inspection procedures ( methods of conformity checking operations – sampling methods, physical inspection, risk analysis application, accompanying documents and records checks, internal quality checks),
- national and international legislation in fruit and vegetables sector,
- export and import conditions and requirements in the field of fruit and vegetables quality,
- marketing standard requirements and their interpretation,
- export and import certification procedures (including conformity certificate issue),
- legal procedures (fines and prosecution),
- psychological training (acting in challenging situations).

11. The Initial training may consists of 2 parts:

- Theoretical part
- Practical part

12. After the theoretical part of the initial training, new inspectors start with a period of practical inspection under the supervision of a senior inspector.

13. Initial training of new inspectors is completed by undertaking final exam and authorisation.

14. Examination helps to verify the knowledge received during the training. Inspectors must prove that he/she attended a full training programme.

15. For legal clarity, it is recommended to set up national provisions on inspector's authorization procedure.

### **Annual training programme**

16. Annual training is the most efficient tool for permanent education of inspectors. Inspection services set up the annual training programme.

17. To keep inspectors well informed with all relevant subjects of their daily work, advanced training is needed. This advanced training is performed by trainers and it is based on the annual training programme. The annual training programme consists of at least one training session during the year. Training should be obligatory for all inspectors.

18. The annual training programme can cover the following subjects:

- New standards and amended standards in force.
- Changes in legislation.
- Special produce training – based on related problems and/ or new produce standards introduced.
- Information from international training courses and work of the international standardisation organisations.
- Field visits – technical up grade on produce/growing technologies, new post harvest technologies etc.
- Assessment of the samples – standards interpretation, specific produce problems

### **Trainers**

19. Trainers should be very experienced inspectors with a special interest and capability in training. They must be very well informed about the latest developments in the sector and have a large knowledge of horticulture, ideally with a higher degree in horticulture and experience in marketing quality control. The number of trainers should be sufficient to perform the training as planned.

### **Training tools**

20. For inspectors, training is recommended to explore all international standards, explanatory materials and guidelines, in particular:

- OECD explanatory brochures (translating explanatory text into the national language is an advantage).
- OECD guidelines on inspection procedures.
- OECD guidelines on objective tests to determine quality of fruit and vegetables and dry and dried produce.
- OECD colour gauges.
- OECD Power Point presentations on produces.
- OECD Guidelines on Risk Analysis.

21. In addition to the above, there can be lectures on different topics (plants, physiology, storage technologies, quality keeping, growing methods and technics, varieties and commercial types description, etc).

22. By implementing an annual training programme it is recommended to keep a balance between theoretical and practical parts of the programme, both of which are essential for having professional inspectors.