



Twinning Fiche

Project title: Support Israel Alignment with Union Acquis Regulations on issues related to Food Safety

Beneficiary administration: National Food Service, Ministry of Health, Israel

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EU funded project

TWINNING TOOL

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

BIPs - Boarder Inspection Ports

BTSF - Better Training for Safer Food

EU - European Union

FBOs - Food Business Operators

GMP - Good Manufacturing Practice

HACCP - Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points

MOH - Ministry of Health

NFS - National Food Service

PL - Project Leader

RTA - Resident Twinning Advisor

VD - Veterinary department

SO - Specific objective

1. Basic Information

For UK applicants: Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement¹ on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6), 137 and 138, the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union and to goods originating from an eligible country, as defined under Regulation (EU) No 236/2014² and Annex IV of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement³, are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in, and to goods originating from, the United Kingdom⁴. Those persons and goods are therefore eligible under this call.

All cooperation between the EU and Israel is subject to the requirements set out in the "Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards", publication reference 2013/C-205/05, published on the OJEU C-205 dated 19.07.2013.

1.1 Program

ENI/2018/042-315 - "Support to ENP Action Plan 2018 Israel" – Direct Management

The ENP applies to Israel although the country receives limited funding from the ENI, as it is a member of the OECD. There is no Single Support Framework for Israel. While formal decision on the identification and adoption of new EU-Israel Partnership Priorities (PPs) in line with the revised European Neighbourhood Policy is pending, the EU-Israel ENP Action Plan has been extended until January 2025 and constitutes the basis of the EU-Israel cooperation.

On 3 October 2022, the 12th meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council will take/has taken place in Brussels – the first since 2012. Cooperation actions and policy dialogue in several areas continued actively throughout that period.

The Israeli economy has showed strong resilience during the global economic downturn of last decade and has maintained high Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates. Like many other countries, the Corona crisis has affected also Israel, but since it reached the crisis in a relatively strong and stable economic situation, after a 2.2% GDP decrease in 2020, its GDP has increased in 2021 by 8.1%, higher than the OECD level of 2.1% growth⁵.

The EU is, and for the near future will remain, Israel's largest trading partner, currently representing 30% of Israel's total trade. Institutional Twinning and Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument (TAIEX) are the modalities used in ENI co-operation with Israel. Israel made use of TAIEX and Twinning instruments to increase legislative approximation in areas such as market regulation, statistics, agriculture policy, welfare services and, most recently, environment.

¹ Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

² Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action.

³ Annex IV to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, as revised by Decision 1/2014 of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers (OJ L196/40, 3.7.2014).

⁴ Including the Overseas Countries and Territories having special relations with the United Kingdom, as laid down in Part Four and Annex II of the TFEU.

⁵ OECD data refers to the period between the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2021

Actions financed by the EU have to reflect Israel's interest and capacity to implement the jointly agreed priorities and have to follow the rules set for institutional Twinning instrument on the “acquis communautaire”.

1.2 Twinning Sector

Health and Consumer Protection.

1.3 EU funded budget

EUR 1,500,000

1.4 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

The Twinning project will pursue the following SDGs:

Goal 2 “Zero hunger”

Target 2.B: Prevent agricultural trade restrictions, market distortions and export subsidies

Target 2.C: Ensure stable food commodity markets and timely access to information

Goal 3 “Good health and well-being”

Target 3.9: Substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination

Goal 17 “Partnerships for the goals”

Target 17.10: Promote a universal trading system under the WTO

2. Objectives

2.1 Impact / Overall Objective(s):

The overall objective of the action is to increase the agri-food trade between the EU and Israel.

2.2 Outcome / Specific objective:

The overall objective will be achieved by means of four specific objectives:

Specific objective 1: To increase the alignment of Israeli Food legislation with the EU acquis.

Specific objective 2: To support the implementation of HACCP systems by local Israeli food manufacturers aligned with EU practices

Specific objective 3: To support the adoption of EU sampling, monitoring and enforcement practices on food contaminants and pesticide residues by the NFS.

Specific objective 4: To promote open and continuous communication and data exchange on food safety and quality with relevant services in Europe.

2.3 The elements targeted in strategic documents i.e. National Development Plan/Cooperation agreement/Association Agreement/Sector reform strategy and related Action Plans

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) applies to Israel. There is no Single Support Framework for Israel and cooperation is based on the EU-Israel ENP Action Plan.

This project is in line with the methods and modalities foreseen in Article 43 of the Association Agreement between the EU and Israel, and builds on the political, economic, and social priorities jointly developed in the Action Plan and supports the ever-growing relationship between the EU and Israel based on shared values.

More specifically, this Twinning intervention answers to common objective described under point 2.3. “Trade-related issues, market and regulatory reform” of the Action Plan, and in particular to the sectors covered in point 2.3.1: “Sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues”:

- Improve co-operation on sanitary and phyto-sanitary matters as well as on food safety
- Explore possible areas of co-operation between Israel and the European Commission in the field of sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues (e.g. legislation, implementing practices), while taking into account of the different conditions prevailing on both sides
- Exchange of information on and, as appropriate, explore the possibility to increase convergence, of Israeli legislation with EU legislation on sanitary (live animals and animal products) and of phyto-sanitary issues (plant hygiene, plant variety and quality),
- Identify the scope for increased convergence, as appropriate, of food legislation in compliance with EU food safety principles. Exchange of views regarding foodstuff labelling requirements in order to assess the possibility of adapting Israeli legislation
- Exchange of views on the setting-up of an animal and plant identification and traceability system
- Exchange of information regarding the placing on the market of substances dangerous to human health, including plant protection products and the ensuring of monitoring of residues of these substances in live animals, animal products and plant products for food and feed.

3. Description

3.1 Background and justification:

The National Food Service

The NFS is a subdivision of the Ministry of Health (MOH) of Israel. The NFS mandate is to assure the safety, quality and authenticity of food for consumers. The NFS is the regulatory agency responsible for the development of food standards and regulations dealing with foods sold in Israel. The agency is also in charge of imported food licensing. NFS deals with all aspects of food designated for human consumption, and enacts standards, regulations and laws that are to be implemented throughout the different districts nationwide. The NFS also regulates imported and exported food worldwide, supervises various aspects of food production, marketing, vending and is in charge of food distribution nationwide. The NFS conducts the risk management process in all aspects of food consumption. The NFS is the headquarters to all inquiries regarding safe food consumption by the public or the professional employees posted in the districts and at the BIPs (Border inspections posts).

The headquarters of the NFS are currently situated in Tel Aviv and house roughly 40 employees in charge of various expert topics. The divisions within the headquarters of the NFS include: Risk assessment; Risk management; Pesticides and chemical contaminations; Microbiological contaminations; Novel food; Food additives; Food

supplements; Labelling; Import; Surveillance Coordination; Alcoholic beverages; Food quality; GMP; and a Veterinary department (VD).

The VD in the NFS, is the competent authority regarding food of animal origin. The VD is in charge of issuing legislations, guidelines and instructions for implementation on various aspects of public health issues, regarding food of animal origin consumed by the public in Israel. Our department is in charge of all raw fish, fish products and processed meat products imported to Israel, and in accordance with the Food law 2015, is in charge of all processed food of animal origin exported from Israel worldwide. Israel does not export raw food of animal origin.

In addition, ongoing surveillance inspections and monitoring of food manufacturers and other FBOs, and of food items placed on the market are carried out by the district offices of the NFS or by the department of environmental health within the MOH. The MOH divides Israel into 7 districts: Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Haifa, Ashkelon, Centre, South and North. Overall, roughly 200 district inspectors are employed by the NFS in the 7 districts. These inspectors are in charge of the field operations of the NFS including boarder control and market surveillance. The NFS headquarters coordinates these surveillance activities. The department of environmental health supervises among others sanitation in eateries, grocery stores, reception halls, medical institutions hostels and guest houses.

Environmental Health department

The NFS is a sub-division within the public health services of the MOH. An additional sub-division relevant to the topic is the department of Environmental Health within the public health services of the MOH and representatives of this sub-division will participate in some of the activities covered here.

The department of Environmental Health deals with human health aspects (including quality of life), which are impacted by sanitary and environmental, physical, chemical, biological, social and psycho-social factors. The department assesses the sanitary and environmental factors that may constitute a potential hazard and cause health damage to the current generation and of the future generations and takes action to remedy and prevent them. The Department determines the Ministry's policy concerning issues of environmental health, institutes regulations, participates in regional planning activities and engages in ongoing sanitation supervision and in the monitoring of various organizations.

Nutrition Division

The Nutrition Division focuses on the aspects relating both to the nutrition of the healthy public and to the nutrition of that portion of the public which suffers from various diseases, necessitating special nutrition. The Division's activities are carried out in cooperation with additional parties, both within and outside of the MOH, taking the broad view that nutrition is a compounding health risk for multiple morbidities.

The objectives of the nutritional division are: Nutritional assurance of healthy and at risk populations; Ensuring food safety for the health of the general population; Protecting the authenticity and standards of food and food provision services; Ensuring the nutritional health of the general population; Conducting nutritional and dietary surveys to evaluate the nutritional status of the Israeli population and identify at-risk populations.

Consumer Protection and Fair Trade Authority

The Consumer Protection and Fair Trade Authority is an independent, governmental authority, established by the Consumer Protection Law, 1981. The authority is responsible for: monitoring the implementation of the provisions of the Law; investigating violations and bringing offenders to justice; initiating procedures of administrative enforcement; handling complaints; conducting surveys and research; handling other consumer protection issues that are not the responsibility of other authorities.

Public health laboratories

The MOH operates five public health laboratories. Four of them serve seven districts. The laboratories perform various analytical tests including for microbiological and chemical food contaminants.

The Israeli Public Health Protection Law (Food)

The Israeli Public Health Protection Law (Food) 2015-5776 has introduced a comprehensive and coherent system of official controls by public bodies in charge of public health surveillance regarding food intended for human consumption. The official controls vertically cover the entirety of the food chain once the food products exit the primary production site and are destined to processing and to market-places up to final consumers. The Law lists both safety and quality criteria as well as the organizational and administrative structure of controls. There are various institutions in charge of official controls with distinct roles.

The current demands, set out in the Public Health Protection Law (Food) 2015-5776, require small and large food manufacturers in Israel to obtain a manufacturer's license before they start manufacturing. This license is obtained from local municipal authorities along with an authorization of the sanitary plan by the Ministry of Health food inspectors located in the facility's district. The regulatory demands for food production are set in the law and there are specific procedures and food standards (set out by the Standards Institution of Israel - SII) for each food category.

The "Arrangements Law" (2021)

The latest "Arrangements Law" (2021) includes amendment and inclusion of several articles in the Israeli Public Health Protection Law (Food) 2015-5776 (see 3.2 Ongoing reforms).

Current sampling and surveying methodologies of foods places on the market

Current sampling and surveying methodology of various food contaminants are based first and foremost, on the limited amount of samples approved for analysis by the NFS (depending on the budget, logistical means and capabilities of the laboratories). This means that there is a limited and predetermined number of samples sent for analysis.

The samples themselves are collected throughout the year, with sampling of various commodities depending mostly on their seasonal variability (especially true for seasonal fresh fruits). The yearlong sampling program is then carried out by the district inspectors of the NFS.

Commodities are sampled each week and represent a mixture of the most popular commodities (with a higher demand compared to others) and of the most consumed commodities. An additional class of commodities are items that based on previous observations, pose a high risk of contamination. Lastly, about 10% of the commodities sampled represent "niche items" that may be underrepresented in surveys.

Traceability of food items in the Israeli market

Currently, traceability of agro-food products in the Israeli market is limited and labelling of the origin of agri-food products voluntary. As such, traceability of domestic produce is, in many cases, limited and limits tracking down sources of contaminants and pesticide residues.

The Israeli food supplement sector

The Israeli food supplement sector is regulated according to the Israeli regulation on food supplements, implemented in 1997 and not formally updated since. The NFS is the competent authority in matters related to the regulation of food supplements.

The current regulation has many guidelines and procedures that evolved during the years. The regulation is the legislative basis for the local production industry and for importers of food supplements to Israel. Imported supplements are being authorized by the NFS and receive an importing permit before entering Israel. Local manufacturers are obligated to be GMP certified.

The evolved procedures include different demands, for example: Compliance with the "Herbal positive list"; Compliance with the "Vitamins and Minerals positive list" adopted from Directive 2002/46/EC and (EC) No 1170/2009 referring to vitamins and minerals that may be added to food supplements and their sources; Compliance with additional substances such as the "Amino Acids positive list", which is a summary of safety committee decisions concerning food supplement ingredients. There are many additional procedures and requests from food supplement operators, and EU legislative and EFSA's decisions are mostly followed.

The Israeli food improvement agents sector

Currently there are only guidelines based on Codex Alimentarius and additional internationally recognized standards.

3.2 Ongoing reforms

Several reforms have been included in the latest "Arrangements Law" (2021). The first are amendment and inclusion of several articles in the Israeli Public Health Protection Law (Food) 2015-5776. The relevant ones include:

- 1) Alignment with European legislation concerning chemical and biological contaminants as well as pesticide residues and the implementation of international standards regarding the quality, safety and authenticity of food.
- 2) Implementation of risk management mechanisms, such as self-assessment HACCP based safety strategy, that are in accordance with the safety and quality procedures that are listed in internationally accepted standards. The updated amendment requires all food manufacturers to maintain a HACCP based system according to the facility's activity and layout. Other FBOs are still excluded from mandatory HACCP implementation passed in the new legislation, but their future inclusion is planned. Currently, a draft of guidelines for HACCP implementation is being written for small businesses. The main challenge foreseen is applying a flexibility principal for small and medium sized businesses and training food manufacturers and inspectors on HACCP principals, planning, approval and on-going monitoring.
- 3) Establishment of a "European Food Importing Track" that stipulates that foods which comply with the legislation of the EU and are legally placed on the market in one of the member states, may be imported and placed on the Israeli market without border

control. Several foods are excluded from import in the "European Track" including: Foods for special medical purposes as defined by the Israeli Food law; Food supplements; Meat and poultry products; Fish and fishery products; Eggs and egg products; Alcoholic beverages; Unpasteurized milk products; Khat (*Catha Edulis*) leaves.

In line with the alignment to European legislation concerning pesticide residues in food products, a revision of approved pesticides in Israel is underway to address the current gaps in pesticide use.

3.3 Linked activities:

The National Food service has participated in several seminars and training sessions related to food safety in general including:

- 1) Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) on EU regulations and guidelines applicable to the control of contaminants held in June 2021
- 2) TAIEX workshop on Food Contaminants held in August 2021
- 3) In addition, the veterinary department of the national food service has applied for a twinning project titled "The Art of Organoleptic Checks of Fish and other Animal origin products, Guidelines, Practice and Challenges." This twinning project aims to improve aspects of fish and meat product safety and quality and strengthen the capabilities of the border control inspectors who perform organoleptic examinations of imported goods.

3.4 List of applicable *Union acquis*/standards/norms:

The following regulations (or any regulations that will replace these) are regulations concerning various broad aspects of food safety and authenticity, that are to be covered within the scope of the gap analysis and result in a legislative draft proposal:

EU Legislation	Equivalent Israeli Legislation / Guideline / Standard covering aspects of said EU legislation	Specific Focus to be addressed
Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 on general food law	The Public Health Protection Law (Food) 2015	Regulations concerning food imported into the Community; The development of international technical standards; FBOs responsibilities; Implantation of traceability principals.
Regulation (EU) No 2017/625 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products.	The Public Health Protection Law (Food) 2015	Performance of official controls and other official activities by the competent authorities of the Member States; Performance of controls by the Commission in Member States and in third countries; Adoption of conditions to be fulfilled with respect to animals and goods entering the Union from a third country; Establishment of a computerized information system to manage information and data in relation to official controls.
<u>Directive 2002/46/EC</u> on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to food supplements	Food Supplements regulation 1997 including its demands published on NFS website	
<u>Regulation No 1924/2006</u> on nutrition and health claims made on foods	Nutritional and health claims are currently partitioned under Israeli legislation. Nutritional claims are regulated under Israeli Standard 1145 for labelling of pre-packaged foods. Health claims are currently restricted with paragraph 13 of the	Health claims on foods are currently restricted in Israel and regulations on labelling of health claims unresolved. With continued future alignment, support in alignment of Israeli legislation with 1924/2006, taking local labelling requirement of

	Public Health Protection Act (Food) granting the regulator the authority to create legislation for claims. Currently, the intention is to unite nutritional and health claims together, as is the custom in competent authorities of developed countries. Given that the nutritional content is the basis for health claims. New regulations are to be drafted by 2024	nutritional values and placement of red warning labels in front of package, into account. Overall, conditions and restrictions for the use of nutritional and health claims, the procedures for the establishment of the list of authorized health claims, and the monitoring program following published health claims.
<u>Regulation No 1925/2006</u> on the addition of vitamins and minerals and of certain other substances to foods	Annex 2 and 3 effectively implemented with regards to food supplements but are not enacted by legislation. There are no Israeli regulation covering the scope in Israeli	
<u>Regulation No 1169/2011</u> on the provision of food information to consumers	Specific labelling provisions for pre-packaged food appear in Israeli Standard IS1145. 1169/2011 is currently a candidate for alignment in a joint committee with the standards institution of Israel. New regulations are to be drafted by 2024	
<u>Regulation No 2015/2283</u> on novel foods Commission <u>Implementing Regulation 2017/2470</u> establishing the Union list of novel foods	Novel Food Regulation	Novel food regulation is not applied in food supplements, all new ingredients in food supplements are being authorized by a food safety committee.
<u>Regulation No 1332/2008</u> on food enzymes	General guidelines along Codex Alimentarius guidelines	
<u>Regulation No 1333/2008</u> on food additives	Food additives regulation	

<u>Regulation No 1334/2008</u> on flavourings and certain food ingredients with flavouring properties for use in and on foods	Adopted along with Codex Alimentarius and FDA (CFR21) guidelines	
<u>Directive 2009/32/EC</u> on extraction solvents	General guidelines along Codex Alimentarius guidelines	

The following regulations (or any regulations that will replace these) concern various aspects of food contaminants. **These regulations have been adopted in Israel during 2021 and are in the process of implementation. They will come into force at the end of 2022.**

EU Legislation	Israeli Legislation covering aspects of adopted EU regulation	Specific Focus to be addressed
Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on food hygiene	The Public Health Protection Law (GMP) 1993 sets a local standard of GMP for specific FBOs. The latest reform within the "Arrangements Law" (2021) requires implementation of risk management mechanisms, such as self-assessment HACCP based safety strategy for local FBOs.	Implementation of risk management mechanisms, such as self-assessment HACCP based safety strategy; Application of a flexibility principal with regards to HACPP implementation. Approval of HACCP plans and on-going inspections and monitoring of implementation. Enforcement.
EC No. 1881/2006 Setting Maximum Levels of certain contaminants in foodstuffs. Sections 7 through 9 are not to apply; The provisions of these regulations shall not apply to raw meat and poultry, raw milk, honey and fresh eggs in their shells.	Public Health protection regulations (Food) (Food mycotoxins) 1996-5756 Guidelines for the maximal levels of heavy metals and tin in food - 2016 Guidelines for the maximal levels of Dioxins, Dioxin-like and PCB compounds in food - 2016 Guidelines for the maximal levels of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in food - 2016 Guidelines for the maximal levels of melamine in food – 2016	Planning methodology of surveys and interpretation of results following laboratory reporting as presented in Commission Regulations (EC) No 1882/2006, No 401/2006, No 1883/2006, No 2017/644, No 333/2007 and Commission Directives 2001/22/EC, 2004/16/EC and 2005/10/EC. Implantation of traceability principals with regards to contaminants.
EC No. 73/2018 Amending Annexes II and III to Regulation 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards maximum residue levels for mercury compounds in or on certain products. The provisions of these regulations	Guidelines for the maximal levels of heavy metals and tin in food – 2016	This regulation has been adopted fully. A focus is to be placed on technical gaps between Israel and the European union in implementation of sampling for official controls, and the planning methodology of surveys along with result interpretation following laboratory reporting.

<p>shall not apply to raw meat and poultry, raw milk, honey and fresh eggs in their shells.</p>		
<p>EC No. 2073/2005 on Microbiological Criteria for Foodstuffs. EC No. 2073/2005. Chapter 2 and 3 fully adopted. The provisions of these regulations shall not apply to raw meat and poultry, raw milk, honey and fresh eggs in their shells.</p>	<p>No single Legislation, disseminated in various guidelines and standards.</p>	<p>This regulation has been adopted fully. A focus is to be placed on technical gaps between Israel and the European union in implementation of sampling for official controls, and the planning methodology of surveys along with result interpretation following laboratory reporting.</p>
<p>EC No. 396/2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending council directive 91/414/EEC Sections 18, 19, and 20, and annexes II on Maximum Residue Levels, annexes III on Maximum Residue Levels permitted temporally, annexes V on Maximum Residue Levels permitted for residues for which a default value was not set. The provisions of these regulations shall not apply to raw meat and poultry, raw milk, honey and fresh eggs in their shells.</p>	<p>Public Health protection regulations (Food) (Pesticide Residues) 1991-5751</p>	<p>This regulation has been adopted fully. A focus is to be placed on technical gaps between Israel and the European union in implementation of sampling for official controls, and the planning methodology of surveys along with result interpretation following laboratory reporting, as presented in Commission Directive 2002/63/EC</p>

3.5 Components and outputs / results per component

Component 1 (SO1)

To increase the alignment of Israeli legislation with the EU acquis along the food value chain.

SO1 Outcome “Increased alignment of Israeli Food legislation with the EU acquis”, is to be achieved by the realization of the following results/outputs:

- Output 1.1** A comprehensive gap analysis is available comparing prevailing national legislation on selected food safety and food quality issues with provisions of relevant EU regulations regarding the same topics.
- Output 1.2** Alignment of Israeli legislation on labelling of nutrition and health claims to the EU framework
- Output 1.3** Alignment of Israeli regulation on food improvement agents to the EU acquis
- Output 1.4** Alignment of Israeli legislation on traceability of domestic, imported and exported Agri-food products to EU acquis

Component 2 (SO2)

To support the implementation of HACCP systems by local Israeli food manufacturers aligned with EU practices

SO2 Outcome “Israeli food manufacturers implement the HACCP systems in line with EU practices”, is to be achieved by the realization of the following results/outputs:

- Output 2.1** A core staff of the NFS understands and implements HACPP principles
- Output 2.2** Written guidelines, manuals and training tools, are available for relevant food manufacturers
- Output 2.3** Written guidelines, manuals and training tools on how to implement a HACCP authorization and inspection system in line with EU standards are available

Component 3 (SO3)

To support the adoption by the NFS of EU sampling, monitoring and enforcement practices on food contaminants and pesticide residues

SO3 Outcome “Increased Israel alignment to EU regulatory and implementation frameworks on food contaminants and pesticide residues”, is to be achieved through the realization of the following results/outputs:

- Output 3.1** A core staff of the NFS understands and is trained on EU practices/standards on food contaminants in FBOs and on foods placed on the market
- Output 3.2** Guidelines on monitoring, sampling and enforcement of regulations on food contaminants and pesticide residue towards the Israeli food manufacturers are available

Output 3.3 Guidelines on environmental sampling and enforcement of regulations on microbiological contaminants in food manufacturers are available

Output 3.4 Guidelines on monitoring and sampling of foods placed on the market in line with EU standards are available

Component 4 (SO4)

To enhance open and continuous communication and data exchange on food safety and quality between Israel and relevant services in Europe

SO4 Outcome “Increased capacity of the NFS to maintain sustainable coordination with the EU and Member States on food safety, quality and authenticity issues”, is to be achieved through the realization of the following results/outputs:

Output 4.1 NFS team has access to and uses the various information management system for official controls, such as RASFF, ADIS, TRACES

Output 4.2 A user guide on these information management systems is available for further transfer of knowledge by the NFS staff

Output 4.3 The NFS team is aware of the different ways through which coordination with the EU on food safety can be strengthened

Output 4.4 NFS staff regularly participate in a wide selection of conferences, workshops, and seminar, such as BTSF, related to food safety quality and authenticity issues

3.6 Means/input from the EU Member State Partner Administration:

The project will be implemented in the form of a Twinning contract between the EU, represented by the EU Delegation to the State of Israel and EU Member State(s). The implementation of the project requires a Project Leader (PL) with responsibility for the overall coordination of project activities and delivery of results, and one Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA) to manage the implementation of project activities. The RTA will be posted in Israel and will function as a focal point for communication with all relevant EU MS partners.

The interested Member State(s) shall include in their proposal the CVs of the designated PL and the Resident Twinning Advisor, as well as the CVs of the pre-identified short-term experts.

3.6.1 Profile and tasks of the PL:

The Project Leader will be based in the Member State and will be responsible for the overall management of the project and the coordination of activities performed, ensuring the overall quality of the services provided on site. He/she will have the overall responsibility for the implementation of all Twinning activities.

Requirements:

- Proven contractual relation to a public administration or mandated body as per Twinning Manual;
- University degree in relevant agricultural, veterinary and biological sciences or equivalent experience in a related field of minimum 8 years;
- The Member State Project Leader (PL) is expected to be an official or assimilated agent with a sufficient rank to ensure an operational dialogue at political level;

- At least 3 years of professional experience in EU MS administration/assimilated dealing with relevant issues related to implementation of food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary policy;
- Proven experience in development of legislation to comply with EU acquis related to food safety and veterinary issues;
- Good leadership, communication and interpersonal skills;
- Good written and oral command of English;

Assets:

- Experience in international cooperation projects in neighbouring and/or candidate countries as regards to food safety would be an asset

Tasks:

- Directing, coordinating and monitoring Twinning project performance;
- Leading operational dialogue, advocating the Twinning project at political level;
- Ensuring implementation of project activities and achievement of expected results;
- Producing progress reports as required by the Twinning Contract;
- Co-Chairing project steering committees;
- Provision of legal and technical advice and analysis whenever needed.

3.6.2 Profile and tasks of the RTA:

The relevant institution of MS will appoint a long-term Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA).

(S)he will reside for the entire implementation period in Tel Aviv Israel (though the offices may move to Jerusalem during the implementation period) and work full-time for the project. The RTA is expected to be actively involved in the implementation of all project activities.

Requirements:

- University degree in disciplines relevant to food safety and/or related subject or equivalent professional experience of at least 8 years;
- Minimum of 3 years of working experience in EU MS administration responsible for the implementation of food safety and/or phyto-sanitary policy;
- Very good spoken and written English (at least level 2 on a scale of 1 [excellent] to 5 [basic]).

Assets:

- Civil servant in a MS CA for food safety structured in form of Agency/Authority;
- Experience in capacity building and ideally Twinning projects;
- Experience in organization of food inspection and control services, and residue monitoring;
- Experience in monitoring progress of project against indicators.

Tasks:

- Setting up of monitoring systems for the regular and ongoing gathering of data to assess achievement of results against clear and relevant indicators;
- Day to day management of the project in the beneficiary institution;
- Assist with organization of visibility events (kick-off and final event);
- Assist with organization and participation to Steering Committee meetings;

- Providing technical advice on EU policies and best practices;
- Preparation of ToRs for the Short-Term Experts and assist with their missions;
- Assist with planning of study visits to MS-countries administrations;
- Liaising with the BC Project Leader and RTA Counterpart on regular basis;
- Reporting to the MS-Project Leader.

3.7.2. Profile and tasks of other short-term experts:

There should be a pool of STEs to ensure smooth implementation of the project during the overall implementation period. STEs should be identified by the Project Leader and have to be agreed with the beneficiary administration in the course of the project. Team of short-term experts should be mobilized according to agreed work plan. Some detailed profiles and tasks of possible short-term experts will be provided by the MS candidates in their offers.

The proposed short term experts team should cover the following range of experience of food safety controls:

Experts with an extensive practical experience and theoretical knowledge of HACCP legislation and principals, with at least 5 years' experience in successful and effective ab initio implementation HACCP systems in the food sector and 5 years' experience in monitoring and controlling established HACCP systems. Preferably, experts that have written guidelines, both generic and specific for each product sector, and have an extensive understanding of HACCP principals and of the relevant legislation. Preferably experts that have in addition to the above listed experience, experience as regulators in competent bodies of member states.

Experts in matters related to risk assessment, risk management and risk communication concerning various food contaminants.

Experts on food law, including issues such as regulations concerning food labelling nutrition and health claims, food improvement agents, food supplements, and traceability principals and implementation of traceability systems.

Experts in the European Green Deal and specifically the Farm to Fork strategy and its implications on legislations covered within the scope of this twinning fiche.

STEs tasks:

STEs will provide specialized know-how for the individual tasks in this project. Therefore, the experts should have a relevant professional experience in MS administration and minimum qualifications required, as well as specific skills needed for individual task. As a general approach, the STEs will take the responsibility for the implementation of the project and the achievement of the results (each for his/her individual mission and tasks) and prepare the required reports.

Minimum indicative requirements for STEs are:

- Proven contractual relation to a public administration or mandated body as per Twinning Manual;
- University degree in relevant food technology, agricultural, veterinary and/or biological sciences or equivalent experience in a related field of minimum 8 years;
- At least 3 years of professional working experience in Member State public administration or mandated body covering, at least one of the following areas of

expertise: food safety controls, processing establishments, marketplaces, warehouses, food safety police, laboratory analysis.

Assets:

- Civil servant in a competent Agency/Authority responsible for food safety and security;
- Experience on the relevant EU regulatory framework;
- Experience in capacity building and ideally in twinning projects;
- Ideally; familiarity with the "Farm to Fork strategy" of the EU and its implications on the relevant legislations covered within the scope of this fiche.

4. Budget

The total budget for this project is EUR 1 500 000.

5. Implementation Arrangements

5.1 Implementing Agency responsible for tendering, contracting and accounting (AO/CFCU/PAO/European Union Delegation/Office):

The Implementing Agency which will be responsible for the tendering, contracting, and accounting of this Twinning project is the Delegation of the European Union to the State of Israel.

Contact Person: Estelle Kadouch,
Programme Officer

Address: EU Delegation to the State of Israel
5-7 Shoham Street – Paz Tower, 16th fl.
Ramat Gan 5213603, Israel

E.mails: DELEGATION-ISRAEL-TWINNING@eeas.europa.eu
Estelle.kadouch@eeas.europa.eu

Phone: +972 3 600 0913

5.2 Institutional framework

The Beneficiary institution is the Israeli Ministry of Health, in particular the division directly involved is: The National Food Services (NFS), subdivision of the Ministry of Health of Israel. NFS deals with all aspects of food designated for human consumption, starting with setting up standards, regulations and laws that are to be implemented throughout the different districts nationwide. The NFS also regulates imported and exported food worldwide, supervises various aspects of food production, marketing, vending and in charge of food distribution nationwide. The NFS is dealing with risk management in all aspects of food consumption. The NFS is the headquarters to all inquiries regarding safe food consumption by the public or the professional employees posted in the districts and at the BIPs (Border inspections posts).

The headquarters of the NFS are currently situated in Tel Aviv and house roughly 40 employees in charge of various topics. The divisions within the headquarters of the NFS include: Risk assessment; Risk management; Pesticides and chemical contaminations;

Microbiological contaminations; Novel food; Food additives; Food supplements; Labelling; Import; Alcoholic beverages; Inspection and Surveillance; Food quality; GMP; and a Veterinary unit.

Ongoing surveillance and inspections are carried out by the district offices of the NFS. The ministry of Health divides Israel into 7 districts: Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Haifa, Ashkelon, Centre, South, North. Overall, roughly 200 district inspectors are employed by the NFS in the 7 districts. These inspectors are in charge of the field operations of the NFS including FBOs, boarder control and market surveillance.

The specific department involved in the various components of this twinning project include Risk assessment; Risk management; Pesticides and chemical contaminations; Microbiological contaminations; Food additives; Food supplements; Labelling; Import; Surveillance Coordination; Food quality and GMP.

In addition to the heads of these departments and related staff from the NFS headquarters, Inspectors and district managers from the 7 districts of the MOH will participate in the relevant parts of the twinning activities. The total number of employees in the district offices of the NFS is roughly 200. 2-3 selected representative of each district are expected to participate in various activities and to transfer the acquired knowledge to their colleagues alongside staff working at the headquarters.

An additional relevant division of the MOH is the department of Environmental Health that deals with human health aspects which are impacted by sanitary and environmental, physical, chemical, biological, social and psycho-social factors, and the plant protection and inspection services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Selected staff from these offices are also expected to take part in relevant twinning activities.

5.3 Counterparts in the Beneficiary administration:

5.3.1 Contact person:

Pnina Oren – General Manager of the National Food Service
National Food Service
Ministry of Health,
P.O.Box 2301 Tel Aviv 61203
Pnina.Oren@MOH.GOV.IL

5.3.2 PL counterpart

Pnina Oren – General Manager of the National Food Service
National Food Service
Ministry of Health,
P.O.Box 2301 Tel Aviv 61203
Pnina.Oren@MOH.GOV.IL

5.3.3 RTA counterpart

Dr. Jonatan Darr - Regulatory Consultant
National Food Service, Ministry of Health, P.O.Box 2301 Tel Aviv 61203
Jonatan.darr@MOH.GOV.IL

Component Leader counterpart 1

Anat Chabia - Head of Food Quality Department

Dr. Ziva Hamama - Head of Food Risk Management Department

National Food Service, Ministry of Health, P.O.Box 2301 Tel Aviv 61203

Ziva.hamama@MOH.GOV.IL

Anat.chavia@MOH.GOV.IL

Component Leader counterpart 2

Shay Chen - Deputy Head of the National Food Service

Dikla Reuven - Head of Alcoholic Beverages Production

National Food Service, Ministry of Health, P.O.Box 2301 Tel Aviv 61203

Shay.chen@MOH.GOV.IL

Dikla.reuven@MOH.GOV.IL

Component Leader counterpart 3

Dr. Joseph Heskin- Head of Food Contaminants

Dr. Dana Shakh – Head of Microbiological Contaminants

National Food Service, Ministry of Health, P.O.Box 2301 Tel Aviv 61203

Joseph.haskin@MOH.GOV.IL

Dana.shakh@MOH.GOV.IL

Component Leader counterpart 4

Dr. Shai Reicher - Head of Risk Assessment Department

Martine Siner – Head of Import Department

Martine.siner@MOH.GOV.IL

Shay.reicher@MOH.GOV.IL

6. Duration of the project

24 months

7. Management and reporting

7.1 Language

The official language of the project is the one used as contract language under the instrument (English). All formal communications regarding the project, including interim and final reports, shall be produced in the language of the contract.

7.2 Project Steering Committee

A project steering committee (PSC) shall oversee the implementation of the project. The main duties of the PSC include verification of the progress and achievements vis-à-vis the mandatory results/outputs chain (from mandatory results/outputs per component to impact), ensuring good coordination among the actors, finalizing the interim reports and discuss the updated work plan. Other details concerning the establishment and functioning of the PSC are described in the Twinning Manual.

7.3 Reporting

All reports shall have a narrative section and a financial section. They shall include as a minimum the information detailed in section 5.5.2 (interim reports) and 5.5.3 (final report) of the Twinning Manual. Reports need to go beyond activities and inputs. Two types of reports are foreseen in the framework of Twinning: interim quarterly reports and final report. An interim quarterly report shall be presented for discussion at each meeting of the PSC. The narrative part shall primarily take stock of the progress and achievements *via-à-vis* the mandatory results and provide precise recommendations and corrective measures to be decided by in order to ensure the further progress.

8. Sustainability

The achievements of the Twinning project (mandatory results) shall be maintained as a permanent asset to the beneficiary (NFS) even after the completion of the project implementation.

The results achieved by this project will form the basis of a firm fully operational enhancement of the public food control system and of the competent authority (NFS) that will improve food safety in Israel and facilitate agro-food trade integration with the EU.

The results of the three components of the project will deliver as immediate output:

- A gap analysis review comparing Israeli legislation with EU Acquis on various aspects of food safety and recommendation concerning the approximation to EU Acquis on these issues.
- User manuals and access to RASFF, ADIS, TRACES IMSOC and any other system that is identified as relevant to the field of food safety boarder control.
- Guides and training tools, such as an interactive training program, to be used by Israeli FBOs and the NFS staff, for the implementation and monitoring of HACCP programs.
- Guidelines for sampling, monitoring and reporting methodologies concerning various food contaminants that are aligned with EU regulations, standards and norms.
- Policy recommendations for increased traceability of agro-food products in Israel.

Critically, the project is also structured to produce realistic post-project effects, as it is already planned that the knowledge acquired through project trainings will be further transferred to all other staff throughout the respective organizational structure of the beneficiary and the system for monitoring and updating the harmonization with EU food safety policy will be made available to all relevant stakeholders.

Furthermore, it is expected that the project will promote open and continuous communication and data exchange with relevant services in Europe, which would allows data exchange on various food safety issues and a long-lasting process of approximation with the Union Acquis.

Mostly it could be concluded that all of the results of the project will be permanent to the beneficiary.

9. Crosscutting issues (*equal opportunity, environment, climate etc...*)

Equal opportunity

Equal opportunity principles and practices in ensuring equitable gender participation in the project and information will be provided in the regular reports of the Twinning Partner regarding gender participation rates in the different events, workshops and seminars.

Based on the fundamental principles of promoting equality and combating discrimination, participation in the project will be guaranteed on the basis of equal access, regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Environmental considerations

No adverse environmental effects are foreseeable from this project. Moreover, an important aspect linked to the project is that continued alignment with EU Acquis in issues related to food safety, including but not limited to, pesticide use, will lead to a reduction in pesticide use and of the number of registered chemical preparations in Israel, which will in-turn reduce environmental contamination of soil and water and help preserve the environment. Greater traceability of agro-food products will help reduce consumer illness and mortality resulting from foodborne pathogens and contaminants. Lastly, the effect of the project will gain more environmental concern and this will also apply in the long run. Any and all ecologically friendly initiatives which can be taken, must be implemented.

10. Conditionality and sequencing

When designing Twinning projects particular attention should be given to actions/activities/events planned under the TAIEX tool and under other EU initiatives.

There are no special conditions that need to be met in order for the project implementation to commence.

However, the following steps are expected to be fulfilled:

- Appointment of counterpart personnel by the beneficiary before the launch of the call and guaranteeing the continuity of the appointed and trained staff;
- Allocation of working space and facilities by the final beneficiary within their premises upon contract signature;
- Organization, selection and appointment of members of working groups, steering committee, participants' seminars by the beneficiaries;
- Use and application of project outputs once the project is completed.

Stakeholders' involvement is expected to take place late in the project once the guidelines are fully defined.

Overall, this project is embedded in an enabling government sector strategy and within a legal approximation plan that is already underway. Its implementation is not contingent on outputs of other projects or other events out of scope.

11. Indicators for performance measurement

The Mandatory Results targets are detailed in Annex C1a - Logical framework adapted.

During the implementation process, the project will issue quarterly reports according to the format provided for in the Twinning Manual and will report against the

Mandatory Results targets and also related activity benchmarks / deliverables in accordance with the Work Plan. Each Quarterly Report produced jointly by the Twinning partners will include a brief analysis of the background, changes in the policy, legal and institutional environment and the assumptions formulated in the Logical Framework Matrix. In the last implementing quarter, the project will assess the level of contribution to the Outcome (Specific Objective).

Outcome 1 Increased alignment of Israeli food legislation with the EU acquis

Indicator: Number of revisions to the Israeli regulatory framework on food safety and quality in line with EU acquis

Output 1.1 A comprehensive gap analysis is available comparing prevailing national legislation on selected food safety and food quality issues with provisions of relevant EU regulations regarding the same topics.

Indicator: Number of Israeli regulations in need for alignment to EU framework

Output 1.2 Alignment of Israeli legislation on labelling of nutrition and health claims to the EU framework

Indicator: A draft of legislation on labelling of nutrition and health claims is available

Output 1.3 Alignment of Israeli regulation on food improvement agents to the EU acquis

Indicator: A draft regulation with of food improvement agents is available

Output 1.4 Alignment of Israeli legislation on traceability of domestic, imported and exported Agri-food products to EU acquis

Indicator: A draft legislation on increased traceability of domestic, imported and exported Agri-food products aligned with EU principles is available.

Outcome 2 Israeli food manufacturers implement the HACCP systems in line with EU practices

Indicator: Number of inspectors capable of implementing HACCP systems in line with EU practices

Output 2.1 A core staff of the NFS understands and implements HACPP principles

Indicator: Number of data analysis and reporting formats consistent with EU reporting practices adopted by the NFS

Output 2.2 Written guidelines, manuals and training tools, are available for relevant food manufacturers

Indicator: Number of food manufacturers with self-control mechanisms in place

Output 2.3 Written guidelines, manuals and training tools on how to implement a HACCP authorization and inspection system in line with EU standards are available

Indicator: Number of districts staff trained on the HACCP authorization and inspection system

Outcome 3 Increased Israel alignment to EU regulatory and implementation frameworks on food contaminants and pesticide residues

Indicator: Number of mechanisms adopted by the NFS to enforce controls in line with EU practices

Output 3.1 A core staff of the NFS understand and is trained on EU practices/standards on food contaminants in food manufacturers and in foods placed on the market

Indicator: Number of NFS staff implementing regulations on food contaminants and pesticide residues in line with EU practice

Output 3.2 Guidelines on monitoring, sampling and enforcement of regulations on food contaminants and pesticide residue towards the Israeli food manufacturers are available

Indicator: Number of implementing tools adopted by the NFS

Output 3.3 Guidelines on environmental sampling and enforcement of regulations on microbiological contaminants in food manufacturers are available

Indicator: Number of NFS inspectors carrying out sampling in lines with EU practices

Output 3.4 Guidelines on monitoring and sampling of foods placed on the market in line with EU standards are available

Indicator: Number of yearly surveys and monitoring plans that are conducted in line with EU practices

Outcome 4 Increased capacity of the NFS to maintain sustainable coordination with the EU and Member States on food safety, quality, and authenticity issues

Indicator: Number of yearly NFS participation to EU fora on food safety, quality, and authenticity

Output 4.1 The NFS team has access to and uses the various information management system for official controls, such as RASFF, ADIS, TRACES.

Indicator: Number of yearly exchanges through the various information management systems

Output 4.2 A user guide on these information management systems is available for further transfer of knowledge by the NFS staff

Indicator: Number of relevant colleagues trained on the various information management systems

Output 4.3 The NFS team is aware of the different ways through which coordination with the EU on food safety can be strengthened

Indicator: A report with recommendations for improved coordination on food safety between the Israeli NFS and pertinent European institutions is available

Output 4.4 NFS staff regularly participate in a wide selection of conferences, workshops, and seminar (such as BTSF) related to food safety, quality, and authenticity issues

Indicator: Number of yearly NFS participation to EU/Member states activities

12. Facilities available

The beneficiary will provide the following facilities to the project team:

1. Office space equipped with PC and internet for at least 3 people working together
2. Conference room in our offices in Tel Aviv and/or Jerusalem.
3. Class rooms in a MOH learning centre.

Open access to district offices around the country and BIPs in: Ashdod, Haifa, Ben-Gurion Airport.

ANNEXES TO PROJECT FICHE

1. Logical framework matrix

ANNEX 1

Logical framework matrix

	Results chain	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baseline (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of verification	Risks	Assumptions (external to project)
Impact (OO)	Increased Agri-food trade between the EU and Israel	Volume of yearly Agri-food trade between Israel and EU increased.	2022 figures of import – export of Agri-food goods EU - Israel	2027 figures of import – export of Agri-food goods EU – Israel up 10%	Trade statistics	Market turbulences and trade difficulties	Trade routes remain viable
Outcome 1 (SO1)	Increased alignment of Israeli Food legislation with the EU acquis	Number of revisions to the Israeli regulatory framework on food safety in line with EU acquis	List of EU regulations on food safety not reflected in Israeli standards and regulations. 2022	Several Israeli standards and regulations on food safety aligned with EU acquis. 2025	Ad hoc gap analysis comparing EU and Israeli legislation on food safety	Lack of policy support to approximate EU policy in food safety	Continuous commitment by Israel to approximate EU policy in food safety
Outcome 2 (SO2)	Israeli food manufacturers implement the HACCP systems in line with EU practices”	Number of inspectors capable of implementing HACCP systems in line with EU practices	0 inspectors in 2022 0 food manufacturers with established HACCP systems based on EU principals	21 inspectors in 2022 6 food manufacturers participate in implementation of HACCP based on published guidelines	Project reports and NFS publications	lack of commitment from the part of the NFS staff	Israeli Food manufacturers comply to changes in regulation
Outcome 3 (SO3)	Increased alignment to EU regulatory and implementation frameworks on food contaminants and pesticide residues	Number of mechanisms adopted by the NFS to enforce controls in line with EU practices	0 mechanisms in place in 2022	2 mechanisms in place in 2025	Project reports and NFS publications	lack of adequate staff in the NFS to carry out additional tasks	Steady policy support assigning importance to approximation in the food safety sector
Outcome 4 (SO4)	Increased capacity of the NFS to maintain sustainable coordination with the EU on food safety issues	Number of yearly NFS participation to EU forums on food safety Published recommendations on improved coordination	1 participation in 2022	6 participations in 2022	Project reports, NFS publications and number of NFS staff attending food safety fora	EU counterparts not responding adequately	Steady policy support assigning importance to approximation in the food safety sector