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The Situation of Quality Standards and Future Development in the Horticultural Sector of Kosovo

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Implemented by:



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Abbreviations

BMCL	Benchmarking Cross Reference Checklist
CL	Checklists
CPCC	Control Points and Compliance Criteria
GAP	Good Agriculture Practice
GlobalGAP	Global Good Agriculture Practice
GR	General Regulations
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
HPK	Horticultural Promotion in Kosovo
IP	Integrated Production
ISO	International Standard Organisation
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Rural Development
MAP	Medicinal and aromatic plants
NGO	Non governmental organisation
TÜV	Technischer Ueberwachungs-Verein (German)
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
EULEX	European Union rule of law mission
USAID	United States Aid

Executive Summary

The consultant spent eight days in May 2009 undertaking a short evaluation of the potential chances and challenges to establish a private Quality Standard System for horticultural products in Kosovo on behalf of the Swiss-Danish-funded Horticultural Promotion in Kosovo (HPK) Project.

The two main objectives of the work were:

- To understand the present situation of quality standards development in the horticultural sector in Kosovo;
- To attempt to describe the elements/mechanisms of a potential strategy to establish a quality standards system in horticulture in Kosovo.

HPK's operations cover field vegetables, greenhouse production, soft fruit (such as strawberries), top fruit (such as apples), and medicinal and aromatic plants.

It works with:

- Producers, nurseries, processors, and traders;
- Representative bodies such as producer associations;
- Service providers – such as input suppliers, advisers and banks;
- Government and other national bodies.

Kosovo's agricultural sector is primarily composed by small farmers operating with weak technologies and inefficient input supply and marketing systems. Most farms are family enterprises, so the produce first serves to feed the family running the farm and any surplus is sold to rural or urban markets.

In order to study the existing situation of horticultural produce and marketing, four (4) farmers were visited and interviewed. The most important findings were:

- Limited access to wholesalers and supermarkets caused by small supply quantities and limited harvesting period;
- Kosovo growers are still not aware of the importance of the quality of fresh vegetable products for successful marketing; the attention is on the production side. Much less attention is being paid to the quality of fruits in terms of uniformity of size, shape, colour, ripening stage, and shelf life;
- Local storage facilities which grade, package, and label local products (collection centres) are planned;
- Greenhouse production is increasing and is sometimes coupled with integrated production, promoted by HPK;
- Supply contracts are always based on oral agreements; special quality demands are missing;
- Difficulties to get a higher price for better quality such as crops produced through Integrated Production (IP) system.

Following the supply chain, four (4) supermarkets were visited and the purchasing procedures are summarized below:

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- The purchasing procedures (local and imported products) are not based on written contracts;
- The evaluation of the quality is made by the purchaser and is based on experience and influenced by price conditions;
- The labeling of fruits and vegetables in the markets is only focused on the origin.
- The supermarkets are interested in using objective standards for purchasing and promoting high quality local Kosovar products;
- The problem with purchasing and promoting local products is the lack of availability from local producers and their inability to deliver local products in the demanded quantity and on time;
- Many Kosovar consumers will accept higher prices for higher quality;
- The supermarkets are ready to perform sales tests of local products grown with IP production at higher prices.

Additional meetings with the Sanitary Inspectorate of the Ministry of Health and the Kosovo Institute of Agriculture of Peja took place. Because of new Kosovar food laws, the structure of the agricultural institutions is completely under reconstruction. Therefore, the information obtained at the institutions was not helpful for the mission. But it should be highlighted that the laboratories at the Peja Institute are well equipped and ready for residue analysis in fruits and vegetables.

An informal meeting with the head of the Kosovo Consumers' Association presented a varied picture of its activities and problems. Till now they were not able to publish any consumer information. MAFRD does not fulfil their legal obligation to support such an association by providing information and an acceptable financial budget. But it is part of the overall policy for the Agricultural Sector to ensure that consumers are not disadvantaged (food is the main component of household budgets in Kosovo) and to improve consumer acceptance of Kosovo produce vis-à-vis imported produce.

Finally, in a meeting with a representative of a certification body (TÜV Nord Croatia), we received more information about how implement a HACCP system for Kosovo food processing. In the next years, the new food law requires the implementation of HACCP in all processing areas. That means that the suppliers of raw materials must be able to document that delivered products are safe in terms of human health.

Summarizing the received information, a potential strategy to establish a quality standards system in horticulture in Kosovo is focused on a step-by-step introduction of product standards. These standards should act as a "trading language" between producers and traders and must meet the interests of both. It is proposed to use the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) standards of fruit and vegetables because these standards are well known in neighbouring countries and are used in the countries where Kosovo imports the most products (Turkey, Italy, and Spain).

The establishment of a Standards Board for Fruits and Vegetables is proposed. This board should:

- Follow-up the development of production standards for Integrated Production by increasing the involvement of farmers and the number of products;

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- Create trading standards based on the examples of UNECE standards;
- Provide monitoring of all necessary procedures and steps, including public relations.

An action plan is proposed and additional recommendations regarding the organisation, involved institutions, and training needs is provided. The introduction of GlobalGAP standards is not recommended in the inception phase.

Establishing collection centres for storage, grading, packaging, and labeling of regional products is directly linked to the development of trading standards of fruit and vegetables. Therefore, one or two regional collection centres are a precondition for good trading standards. Another component is the creation of regional brands/labels to promote the successful sale of Kosovo fruits and vegetables in the supply chain.

1. Present situation

The present situation of quality standards will be discussed related to:

- General situation
- Production
- Distribution
- Processing
- Public sector

1.1 General situation

As a consequence of the war in 1999, rural populations were displaced, crops and machinery were either destroyed or seriously damaged, and the rural economy sank to near subsistence levels, dependent on families farming small units. Current priorities include: improving productivity, food security and safety, assisting farmers in rebuilding their capital assets, enabling the private sector to resume its primary role in agricultural production and supply, and ensuring the start-up of rural financial services for small farms, households and other micro-enterprises. The issue is how to move away from the subsistence level by producing more at lower costs and fully meeting consumer demands regarding quality. Kosovo's agricultural sector is primarily composed of small farmers operating with weak technologies and inefficient input supply and marketing systems. Most farms are family enterprises, so the produce first serves to feed the family running the farm and any surplus is sold to rural or urban markets.

Along with other international projects ***Horticultural Promotion in Kosovo (HPK)*** has been assisting the development of the horticultural industry in Kosovo since 2001 and will continue its operations to 2012. It was implemented by a Swiss organisation for development and cooperation (Intercooperation) and is financed by the Swiss and Danish governments. The general aim is that the agribusiness sector will generate sustainable and broad-based employment and income for Kosovo producers and contribute to economic growth in Kosovo. The project works in the following levels of each value chain:

- micro-level (nursery owners, producers, traders);
- meso-level (service providers, input dealers, financial institutions, and actors associations);
- macro-level (national issues such as strategic planning and institutional strengthening).

One of the most important tasks of the project is the implementation of ***Integrated Production*** systems with minimum inputs of pesticides. For indoor tomatoes, IP was introduced in 2006. By 2007, 10 producers had attained provisional IP status. Future planning requires consideration of market requirements, site factors, and preparation of specification documents like **production and product standards**. This involves the search for, and the evaluation of ways to continuously review and improve the supply and distribution of products and services. It also focuses on maintaining the continuity of supply so that the inventory can meet requirements for production, sales, distribution, and service commitments to traders or directly to the end customer. In the supply chain, agreed product

standards are the basis for creating trade relations with comprehensible and transparent price-quality basis.

1.2 Production

The current situation of farmers producing fruits and vegetables in Kosovo is described in different reports^{1 2 3 4}.

In the value chain, HPK focused on

- **Field vegetables** (Onions, Carrots, Watermelon)
- **Soft fruit** (Field strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries)
- **Top fruit** (Apples, Plums)
- **Medicinal and Aromatic Plants**

The horticultural sector in Kosovo is still at a developing stage. Small land holdings and high input costs do not lend themselves to sufficiently high family incomes. Data from different projects indicate that the potential exists for increasing incomes by improving quantity and quality of produce outputs. Supported by the HPK project, farmers improved their competitiveness in the production of some fruits and vegetables and are in the process of recapturing the local market. HPK supports improving yields, quality, and packaging of selected fruits and vegetables, but it also introduces “Integrated Production” (IP) starting with tomatoes. The objectives of IP are an important part of Good Agriculture Practices (GlobalGAP⁵). In Kosovo, two cooperatives have introduced **GlobalGAP** for potatoes, supported by **USAID** and certified by TÜV Nord Croatia.

In the Kosovo horticultural market chain, farmers deal mostly with

- Traders (wholesale and rural markets)
- Supermarkets
- Restaurants, Hospitals, Catering
- Processors

Written conditions of delivery including quality aspects are not in place. It depends on the buyer whether the quality is accepted or not and what will be paid. That also means that until now, there was no economic advantage for Kosovar farmers to produce in line with IP or GAP. There was little or no motivation for farmers to improve quality and safety of their products.

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¹ Annual Report 2008, HPK

² Strategic Planning for the Horticultural sector in Kosovo, 2007, 1st and 2nd report, MDF Training & Consultancy BV

³ Import – Export of fresh fruit & vegetables 2007, HPK

⁴ Fruit and Vegetable Market Structure Study, Kosovo, HPK

⁵ Till 2007 EurepGAP is a private sector body that sets voluntary standards for the certification of agricultural products around the globe; <http://www.globalgap.org>

1.3 Distribution (wholesale, retail)

In Kosovo, wholesaler and retailers, especially supermarkets, are not key drivers in establishing quality standards for fruit and vegetables. Summarizing interviews with four Kosovo supermarkets, there is no activity which coordinates demands from the consumer with the offer from the local farmers in terms of quality. Purchasing departments act individually in both international and local markets. International standards, related to quality of production and quality of products, are unknown and therefore are not used.

Visiting the wholesale market in Pristina, it was seen that tomatoes imported from Turkey were labelled with

- Reference to ISO 22000:2005 (food quality management system in place)
- Index label for quality parameters of tomatoes (not filled out)



The trader who imported these tomatoes had no idea what they meant. It was unknown that different standards regarding to food quality exist worldwide. In Kosovo, these standards exist outside the national legislation and are “voluntary”.⁶ It was also not known that international private product standards for fruits and vegetables are in place (**UNECE Standards**^{7 8}).

⁶ The former EurepGAP started an initiative of big retailers in 1996 and the aim was to agree on the development of harmonized Good Agricultural Practices and their verification for all sources of supply.

⁷ United Nations - Economic Commission for Europe, Committee on Trade, Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards, Section Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

⁸ <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm>

In this context, it is a point of interest to know that the following countries are members of UNECE:

Country	Member since
Albania	1955
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1992
Croatia	1992
Greece	1947
Montenegro	2006
Serbia	2000
FYR of Macedonia	1993
Turkey	1947
Slovenia	1992

These countries are the most important trading partners (import, export) of Kosovo in the field of fruits and vegetables. In contrast to these countries, the Kosovo market is free of any standards for fruit and vegetables. Kosovo is not self-sufficient in food production and relies on imports. However, the absence of systematic controls at the border raises issues of the quality of imported food goods. Therefore, there is the possibility that imports from these countries are of a low quality level (products may not fulfil UNECE standard requirements).

All of the supermarkets interviewed were confident that when in season, local products have a better quality than imported fruits and vegetables and that about 60-70% of Kosovo consumers are willing to pay more for better quality. On the other hand, it was criticized that most of the local farmers and farmer groups are not able to organize collection centres needed to offer graded and well-packaged quantities of fruit and vegetables. The supermarkets and big wholesalers have a potential interest in using product quality standards.

1.4 Processing

The fruit and vegetable processing industry is also a partner of local farmers. Normally, processors have more or less a quality system in place. However, in the near future, there will be a legal requirement to implement a documented HACCP system in Kosovo. This includes the necessary control of all incoming products based on agreed standards. Considering that Kosovo processing units are operating at far below capacity, they are using expensive imported packaging materials and ingredients, they have poor sanitary conditions which contribute to quality and food safety issues, the future role of local processors as a farmer clients would possibly not increase⁹.

1.5 Public sector

1.5.1 National Food Legislation

The **new** national food law (since April 2009) is based on the “EU food law”. The law has more effect on the whole food chain than the previous one. The **new Approach** is designed

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⁹ Fruit and Vegetable Processing in Kosovo, April 2009, HPK

to harmonize the health, safety, and environmental requirements. The regulation is limited to the “Essential Health and Safety Requirements”. It regulates families of products rather than single products.

The **most important changes** are briefly:

- **Producer primary responsibility and liability**
It transfers the primary responsibility as part of the integrated strategy to the producer who knows best how to ensure the quality and safety of his own products.
- **Risk Analysis**
Risk analysis must form the foundation on which food safety policy is based. The EU food policy is based on the application of three components of risk analysis.
- **Risk Assessment** (scientific advice and information analysis)
The objective of risk assessment is the provision of scientific advice. Extensive information gathering and analysis is a pre-requisite for sound and up-to-date scientific advice.
- **Risk Management** (regulation and control)
Legislation comprises primary legislation and implementing legislation. In Kosovo, in the future, the control function (auditing) will be carried out by the new **Food Safety and Veterinary Agency**, which is directly under the control of the Prime Minister’s Office. In practice, it is a fusion of the former veterinary inspectorate (MAFRD) and sanitary inspectorate (MoH).
- **Risk Communication**
Risk communication is a key element in ensuring that consumers have access to the same scientific advice as the risk managers, such as lawmakers and law enforcement opinions, but also to wider issues which touch on consumer health protection.
- **Traceability**
Companies in the food and feed sector are responsible for ensuring that food or feed complies with the traceability provision of the national food law. These provisions are complimented with official controls and activities like public communication on food and feed safety and risk, which covers all stages of production.
- **HACCP**
The new legislation has introduced this system as a compulsory food safety management procedure “based on the application of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles”.
Under the regulation, however, farmers (“primary producers”) are not obliged to implement the HACCP system themselves and become certified, although they are encouraged to do so.

1.5.2 Private Consumers

Based on the “Study on Consumer Behaviour”¹⁰ which was carried out by using a quantitative and a qualitative consumer survey in Kosovo in 2004, the following results are directly linked with quality issues:

- When buying fruits and vegetables, the priorities are price and freshness, followed by quality. An important factor for buyers is also the packaging and the origin of the product.
- Most of the buyers/sellers associate branding with the origin of the product. A big percentage of the respondents stated that brand represents quality of the products. Although it is important to note that more than 50% of the respondents stated that Branding has no meaning for them.

This is typical consumer behaviour and not directly linked with Quality Standards. As an overall summary, the study suggests that new labels should be completed with standards and control mechanisms. It is also crucial that participants in this label are those who believe and are willing to implement standards focused on Quality, Freshness, and Origin.

During a discussion with the president of the Kosovo Consumer Protection Organisation (a NGO), he believed that consumers are not informed about the possible content and the role of Food Quality Standards in the overall supply chain. There are considerable discussions and misunderstandings about quality standards.

It seems that the lack of information is caused by

- Poor information transfer by the Government to the consumer;
- Absence of correct labelling of fruit and vegetables;
- Ignorance of existing international standards (producer, wholesaler, retailer).

It furthermore ensures that the public be well informed on existing and emerging new risks, and thereby, reducing the risk of undue food safety concerns arising. In addition, consumers need to be provided with easily accessible and understandable information relating not only to these opinions, but also to wider issues touching upon consumer health protection.

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¹⁰ Study on the Consumer Behaviour, April 2004. UBO Creations

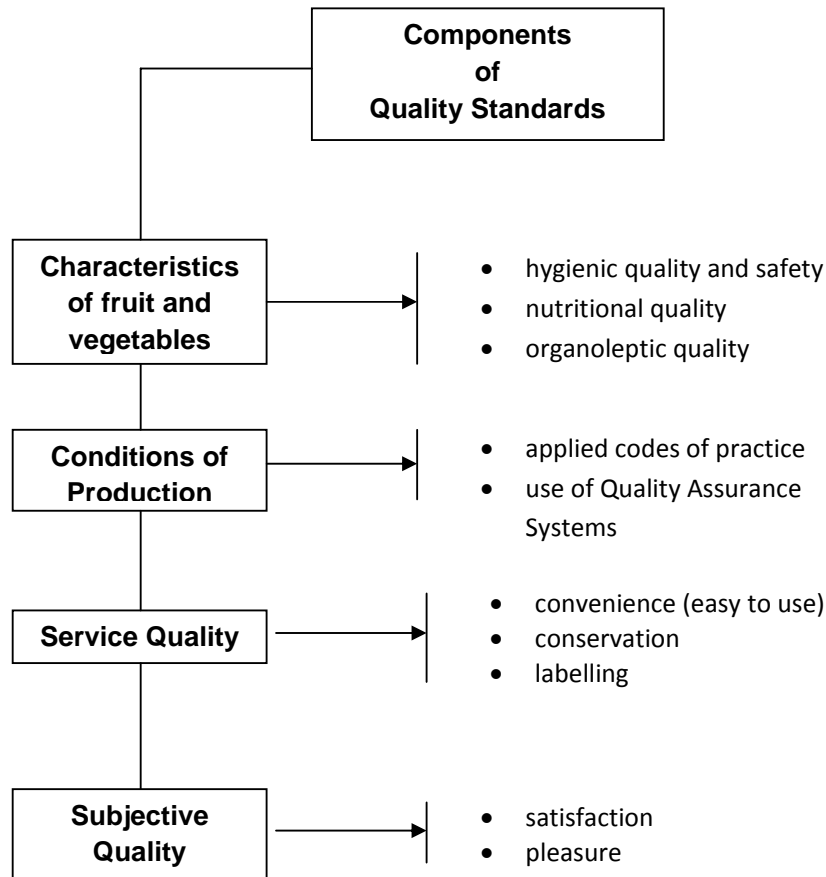
2. Potential quality standards strategy

2.1 Resultant Theses for a Quality Standard Strategy

- The absence of any quality standards in the Kosovo local market (local and imported fruits and vegetables) is a handicap for all stakeholders in the food chain because quality standards increase the reliability and credibility of the producer and trader and thus increases their profit;
- The minimal requirements of a marketing system should include written contracts, quality parameters, and guaranteed timely supplies;
- Producers have to start to develop standards for their produce since they have to sell their produce. They need standards at least when they leave the local market. Additionally, their produce needs to be graded to different quality levels to serve the clients expectations best and to get better prices for better produce;
- Standards, originally developed by single producers, become more important and valuable when they are developed and implemented by all of the producers of a region, based on agreements with traders;
- Medicinal and aromatic plants (**MAP**) cannot be included in quality standards for fruit and vegetables. With respect to their legal status, these products are either medicines or food, depending on their use and the legal situation in each country;
- Producers and traders have to bring down their interests to a common denominator, recognizing existing conflicts of interests. With this in mind, a quality standard has to act as a “trading language” as well. The HPK project has to work with traders (preferably supermarkets) for better understanding what their objectives are and to try and help them purchase better quality local produce and give them assistance which will have a positive impact on local farmers;
- Quality standards of production like IP and GlobalGAP are not able to act as a product standard. Other stakeholders in the value chain are only interested in the results of production standards;
- New product standards for fruits and vegetables should be in line with international experiences and existing standards like UNECE standards;
- The general principle of development/adoption of product quality standards is that it is based on private initiative and the standards are private and voluntary. The responsibility of the government, based on the new Kosovo food law, is only focused on food safety;
- There is confusion about the need for private standards and where they are necessary. It should be reasonably easy to modify IP into a broader system of GAP. Therefore, positive results in using IP and partly GlobalGAP in the production area should be promoted for wider adoption, as well as the cooperation amongst producers to facilitate market access.

2.2 Definition of Quality Standards for Fruits and Vegetables

Before defining the objectives of quality standards, its components have to be defined.



Based on these components the development/adoption of 2 (two) different standards are recommended:

- (1) Follow-up implementation of production standards, based on the results of the HPK project regarding to Integrated Production and further improvement of GlobalGAP (first steps).
- (2) Adopt and establish product standards as trading standards based on UNECE standards.

2.3 Good Agriculture Practice (GAP)

Some of the benefits of GAP are:

- The use of good agricultural practices during production, harvesting, sorting, packaging, and storage operations as a key to preventing any contamination.
- Producers and marketers will increase the chance of their market power by documenting the quality and safety of their products.
- Retailers will be confident in the quality and safety of the products placed on their shelves.
- Consumers can buy (certificated) products without worrying about any environmental damage and residue problems in the production and products.

GAP (fruits and vegetables) deals with **Control Points** and **Compliance Criteria** in the areas of:

- Propagation material
- Soil and substrate management
- Irrigation
- Harvesting
- Produce handling

If Integrated Production is in place, most of the compliance criteria are fulfilled. It is necessary to promote a clear understanding for implementing Good Agricultural Practices in the framework of integrated production with a food chain approach to assure the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables. GlobalGap serves as a practical manual for Good Agricultural Practices and as a global reference system for other existing standards.

The comprehensive documentation of the system is organised into five major blocks, each with a set of complementary elements. This selection gives direction to all relevant stages of the GLOBALGAP certification process¹¹, including:

- System rules, referred to as General Regulations (**GR**),
- Global G.A.P. requirements, referred to as Control Points and Compliance Criteria (**CPCC**),
- Inspection documents referred to as **Checklists (CL)**,
- National G.A.P. requirements, referred to as Approved National Interpretation Guidelines,
- Harmonisation tools, referred to a Benchmarking Cross Reference Checklist (**BMCL**) and other guidelines.

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¹¹ http://www.globalgap.org/cms/front_content.php?idart=147&idcat=48&lang=1&client=1

Certification

Certification is based on standards and reference materials such as codes of practice, check lists, and standards. In general, each certification is voluntary if the implementation of standard/codes is also voluntary. A producer can declare that he worked in accordance to IP or GlobalGap, without any external certificate issued by an accredited certification body. But in case of an audit ordered by a trader or by the government, the producer must have in place all of the required documents.

2.4 Product (trading) standards for fruit and vegetables

The main reasons to develop and implement quality standards of products are:

- Fruits and vegetables grow naturally; the quality is influenced by cultivation, harvest, storage, handling, and transport conditions
- The trading volume and the price are influenced by quality
- Producers and traders grade their produce to best serve the market
- Standards serve as a trading language

Probable positive effects of such standards are:

- Technical definition of quality parameters (understandable for all stakeholders in the supply chain)
- Labelling as a reference (address, country of origin, quality class)
- Increased reliability, credibility, and profitability
- Contract without personal inspection by the buyer
- Transparency in the market

To apply internationally used standards is strongly recommended because it:

- Is developed and agreed by exporting and importing countries
- Avoids technical barriers to trade
- Increases market transparency
- Creates competition based on uniform minimum standards

Main content of UNECEC standards for fruits and vegetables

I. Definition of produce

The standard applies the fruit/vegetable of varieties (cultivars) and their intended use. If possible it sets out the classification of commercial types.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements the product at the control stage, after preparation and packaging (minimum requirements, classification).

III. Provisions concerning sizing

If possible size is mostly determined by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section. The minimum size and the sizing scale (based on grading) is documented.

IV. Provisions concerning tolerances

Tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each package for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated (quality and size tolerances).

V. Provisions concerning presentation

Uniformity, Packaging, Presentation

VI. Provisions concerning marking

Identification, Nature of produce, Origin of produce, Commercial specifications, Official control mark (optional)

In Annex 1 a detailed example for tomatoes is attached.

2.5 Steps to go for further development of quality systems (IP, GlobalGAP) and quality standards in the Kosovar horticulture sector

Preliminary note

The future development of quality standards is not a standalone task. Among others, it is strong connected with:

- The motivation of the actors to work in line with agreed standards in order to earn more money for better products;
- The acceptance that successful production and marketing of horticulture products requires powerful farmer associations to meet the probable market development;
- Conclusive arguments to work together with both representatives of the market and of the supplier in order to establish product standards as a trading language;
- An open dialogue with the main stakeholders in the supply chain to detect commonalities and differences in marketing;
- Dissemination of information about quality issues (e.g. advisory services including training in theory and practice, guidelines on food quality, plain information for consumers) to increase the awareness of all stakeholders;
- Support by the public sector (government, donors).

Further development of quality systems (IP, GlobalGAP)

Based on the experiences of the HPK project, IP production will increase in both number of fruit and number of farmers/cooperatives. HPK should act as a promoter, supporting an open dialogue between producers and traders, and assist the development with special trainings. In addition to the establishment of an IP Producers Association, the establishment of a standard setting body (standard board) is recommended. It should be a separate organization which deals with both development and monitoring of IP and product standards.

The promotion of IP's approach to horticultural producers is fundamental. Consequently, the following actions could be taken:

- First, examples of close cooperation with (one) supermarket to show that farmers can earn more money for higher quality products;
- Release information about common production systems and IP by using word-of-mouth advertising prepared by the project staff and involve experienced farmers;
- Wholesale markets and supermarkets could also serve as a venue for farmers to learn more about the packaging and preparation of vegetables and fruits for different types of consumers.

It is not a priority to become completely in accordance with GlobalGap. It will be more essential to promote collection centres in selected areas for better market access in terms of quantity and quality. The possibilities of co-financing such necessary investments should be researched.

The results of IP should also be documented by a residue analysis (agrochemicals) and published.

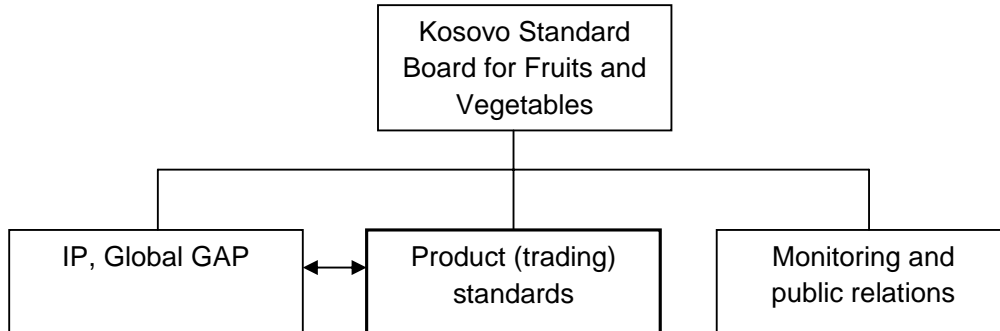
It also makes sense to include products which were not produced by IP to demonstrate the current situation (endangering the health of farmers and the consumer) to prove the needs of IP. Analysis must be carried out by responsible state laboratories. If the laboratories are not yet ready for such analysis (equipment is available), the new Food Safety and Veterinary Agency should be put under pressure.

Further development of product (trading) standards

As explained in 3.3, it is essential to develop and establish trading standards for fruits and vegetables. It would be an advantage if the Kosovo Government agrees to get a member of UNECEC in line with all neighbouring countries. The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX-Kosovo) can support this. But first, it is a private initiative to bring together the interests of producers and traders regarding to quality and price.

Establishment of a Standard Board

Both standards, IP/GlobalGap and product standards are linked. Therefore, the proposed standard board could have the following structure:



The basic idea is to bring together the most important stakeholders in the fruit and vegetable supply chain on a least common denominator level. Both producers and traders are interested in making a profit by selling good products with a fair price. The most important link between them would be agreed quality standards.

The section of IP, Global GAP deals with:

- Improvement and development of implementation of IP with selected fruits and vegetables;
- Support establishing IP farmer associations, including collection points;
- Prepare trainings and brief information about the progress achieved;
- Propose drafts of private Kosovo fruit and vegetable quality standards based on IP, (at the beginning, lower levels are possible).

The section of Product Standards plays a key role (represented by supermarkets) and deals with:

- Adaptation of UNECEC standards for selected fruits and vegetables;
- Test of selected standards in a pilot project, supported by farmers and supermarket(s);
- Information exchange with foreign wholesalers and traders (neighbouring countries);
- Prepare and discuss short and long term supply contracts between producers and traders;
- Prepare brief progress information.

The section of Monitoring and Public Relations could also be called an “inspection body”.

Its tasks are:

- Monitoring of standard implementation;
- Evaluation of the results and proposals for necessary changes;
- Training needs assessment.
- Provide information to stakeholders (farmers need to be informed on prices, standards, and packaging, to improve their market position, especially in comparison with imported produce);

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- Monitor marketing to ensure that barriers to entry are reduced;
- Maintain a “hot line” to the Food Safety and Veterinary Agency;
- Coordinate selected activities with the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD).

The following first steps/activities are proposed:

	Step/Activity	Content/Background	Main Actors
1	Create a library of selected UNECEC standards (maybe tomatoes, apples, potatoes first), and translate into Albanian	Get an understanding of the practical consequences in production and marketing	HPK
2	Make compressed material about IP production (examples tomatoes and apples) available	To increase the awareness of IP and quality issues	HPK
3	Evaluate the production and product standards	What parts can be fulfilled immediately and what needs more time? Set lower levels for the first period if necessary	HPK, selected farmers
4	Discuss quality standard objectives with selected representatives of supermarkets	Information about the procedure in neighbouring countries and the future needs to meet UNECEC standards; Focus on standards as a trading language with advantages for all stakeholders in the supply chain; Give brief information about IP and GlobalGAP objectives and the practical results in Kosovo	HPK, selected supermarkets
5	Prepare a brief information material with regards to quality standards for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected supermarkets • Wholesalers • Selected farmers/farmer groups • Local service providers • Selected processors • MAFR • Food Safety and Veterinary Agency 	The material is focused on the background of UNECEC standards and the intension of HPK to implement such private quality standards in Kosovo, additional information about the new food laws in relation to fruits and vegetables; Explain the idea of establishing a board for F&V (why, who, how, when);	HPK
6	Dissemination of the material	Plus an invitation for a round table discussion	HPK
7	Round table discussion with selected actors in the food chain	Fiscuss the advantages of using international product standards; support an open dialogue about	HPK and all participants

		risks, disadvantages and prerequisites; What/who are the key drivers in establishing such standards? What could be a preferred structure of a private organization to lead these activities? A clear commitment and a willingness to co-finance a Quality Standard Board is given. What training needs are seen?	
6	Interpretation of the results	The strategy of HPK is agreed upon or not. Need to give more information to some stakeholders. Discuss risks and assumptions.	HPK
7	Create an action plan for the next steps in establishing a private Quality Standard Board including financial needs	The proposal should include the establishment of an inspection body for monitoring the success of the implementation of the quality standards (within the standard setting organization)	HPK, producers, trader
8	Setting up the Quality Standard Board and start implementing the quality standards	It makes sense to start with selected supermarkets and perform tests in two ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control the incoming quality, based on the standards with all procedures and documentation required • Promote the product(s) in a special area and explain to consumers the special quality of such local products 	HPK, producers, trader

It is estimate that these first steps will take time about 6 – 8 months. It is not possible to set up more detailed activities. It is strongly recommended that HPK works with the supermarkets to try to understand what their objectives are, and to try and help them purchase better quality local produce, and give them assistance which will have a positive impact on local farmers.

The basics are:

- To transmit more responsibilities to local specialists;
- The role of HKP as a promoter of the Quality Standard Board is accompanied by facilitating the dialogue between key stakeholders and providing trainings;

The situation of quality standards and future development in the horticultural sector of Kosovo

- To increase investments in the introduction of IP in both the number of producers and the number of products;
- To increase investments in setting up collection points as a precondition in order to grade products in line with the product standards and to fulfil reasonable demands of retailers regarding guaranteed quantities.

2.6 Outlook

The establishment of a local or nation wide brand for the proposed Quality Standard System is possible, but after establishing a functioning pilot project, using trading standards between selected producers and traders.

For instance in Germany and France, it is a common procedure to create protected local trade names and labels for special products and/or all agriculture products produced in a region. Mostly, it is not related to "Organic Products", but focused on special agreements in using pesticides, harvesting, storage (freshness), and special grades.

These labels are promoted at each point of sale (mostly retailers and farmer markets) and the consumers get all the information about these labels if they want it.

The consumers can also harvest/collect the fruits directly from the field by purchasing them at a lower price. Favourite products are strawberries, tomatoes, cucumbers, cherries, and apples.

This often will be used to support the awareness between farmers and private consumers. It could be possible that a comparable procedure can establish in Kosovo. The current situation (small farms, missing collection points) is ready for this.

2.7 Abstract of a Training Guideline (recommendation)

The following is a sample training package for IP/GlobalGAP production:
(In Annex 4, more details are explained)

Title: Improving the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables

Objectives

- Analyse the growing international importance of the horticultural sector in Kosovo by identifying challenges and future opportunities;
- Present an integrated approach to the quality and safety concepts as applied to the production and trade of fresh fruits and vegetables;
- Clearly present the standards and regulations, both voluntary and mandatory, applicable to quality and safety issues;
- "Train the trainers" in the principles and practices of quality and safety issues throughout the food chain (emphasizing IP, GlobalGAP);
- Identify country opportunities and difficulties in order to implement quality and food safety programs and suggest ways to overcome the problems.

Training Sections

- Importance of the horticultural sector in Kosovo
 - Quality maintenance and enhancement throughout the fresh fruits and vegetables chain
 - Applying food safety principles to the fresh fruits and vegetables chain
 - The importance of certifications and other quality schemes for the horticultural sector
-

Annex 1

UNECE STANDARD FFV-36 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of TOMATOES

I. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This standard applies to tomatoes of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Lycopersicum esculentum* Mill. to be supplied fresh to the consumer, tomatoes for industrial processing being excluded.

Tomatoes may be classified into four commercial types:

- "round"
- "ribbed"
- "oblong" or "elongated"
- "cherry" tomatoes (including "cocktail" tomatoes)

II. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements of tomatoes at the export control stage, after preparation and packaging.

A. Minimum requirements

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the tomatoes must be:

- intact
sound, produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter
- fresh in appearance
- practically free from pests
- practically free from damage caused by pests
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

In the case of trusses of tomatoes, the stalks must be fresh, healthy, clean and free from all leaves and any visible foreign matter.

The development and condition of the tomatoes must be such as to enable them:
to withstand transport and handling, and
to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

B. Classification

Tomatoes are classified in three classes defined below:

(i) Extra Class

Tomatoes in this class must be of superior quality. They must have firm flesh and must be characteristic of the variety as regards shape, appearance and development.

Their colouring, according to their state of ripeness, must be such as to satisfy the requirements set out in the last sub-paragraph of paragraph A above.

They must be free from greenbacks and other defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package.

(ii) Class I

Tomatoes in this class must be of good quality. They must be reasonably firm and characteristic of the variety.

They must be free of cracks and visible greenback. The following slight defects, however, may be allowed provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package:

- a slight defect in shape and development
- a slight defect in colouring
- slight skin defects
- very slight bruises.

Furthermore, "ribbed" tomatoes may show:

- healed cracks not more than 1 cm long
- no excessive protuberances
- small umbilicus, but no suberization
- suberization of the stigma up to 1 cm²
- fine blossom scar in elongated form (like a seam), but not longer than two-thirds of the greatest diameter of the fruit.

(iii) Class II

This class includes tomatoes which do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes, but satisfy the minimum requirements specified above.

They must be reasonably firm (but may be slightly less firm than in Class I) and must not show unhealed cracks.

The following defects may be allowed provided the tomatoes retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

- defects in shape, development and colouring
- skin defects or bruises, provided the fruit is not seriously affected
- healed cracks not more than 3 cm in length for round, ribbed or oblong tomatoes.

Furthermore, "ribbed" tomatoes may show:

- more pronounced protuberances than allowed under Class I, but without being misshapen
- an umbilicus
- suberization of the stigma up to 2 cm²
- fine blossom scar in elongated form (like a seam).

III. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

Size is determined by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section. The following provisions shall not apply to "cherry" tomatoes.

A. Minimum size

For tomatoes classified in the "Extra" Class and Classes I and II, the minimum size is set at:

- 35 mm for "round" and "ribbed" tomatoes
- 30 mm for "oblong" tomatoes.

B. Sizing scale

The tomatoes are graded according to the following sizing scale:

30 mm and over but under	35 mm ¹²
35 mm " " " "	40 mm
40 mm " " " "	47 mm
47 mm " " " "	57 mm
57 mm " " " "	67 mm
67 mm " " " "	82 mm
82 mm " " " "	102 mm
102 mm and over	

Observance of the sizing scale is compulsory for "Extra" Class and Class I tomatoes. This sizing scale shall not apply to trusses of tomatoes.

IV. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

Tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each package for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated.

A. Quality tolerances

(i) "Extra" Class

5 per cent by number or weight of tomatoes not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class I or, exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

(ii) Class I

10 per cent by number or weight of tomatoes not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class II or, exceptionally, coming within the

• ¹² Only for "oblong" tomatoes.

tolerances of that class. In the case of trusses of tomatoes, 5% by number or weight of tomatoes detached from the stalk.

(iii) Class II

10 per cent by number or weight of tomatoes satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements, with the exception of produce affected by rotting, marked bruising or any other deterioration rendering it unfit for consumption. In the case of trusses of tomatoes, 10% by number or weight of tomatoes detached from the stalk.

B. Size tolerances

For all classes: 10 per cent by number or weight of tomatoes conforming to the size immediately above or below that specified, with a minimum of 33 mm for "round" and "ribbed" tomatoes, and 28 mm for "oblong" tomatoes.

V. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only tomatoes of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality and size (if sized).

The ripeness and colouring of tomatoes in "Extra" Class and Class I must be practically uniform. In addition, the length of "oblong" tomatoes must be sufficiently uniform.

The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

B. Packaging

The tomatoes must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly.

The materials used inside the package must be new, clean and of a quality such as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly paper or stamps bearing trade specifications is allowed provided the printing or labelling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter.

C. Presentation

The tomatoes may be presented as follows:

- (i) As individual tomatoes, with or without calyx and short stalk;
- (ii) As trusses of tomatoes, in other words, in entire inflorescences or parts of inflorescences, where each inflorescence or part of each inflorescence should comprise at least the following number of tomatoes:
 - 3 (2 if pre-packaged) or
 - in the case of trusses of 'cherry' tomatoes, 6 (4 if pre-packaged).

VI. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING

Each package¹³ must bear the following particulars in letters grouped on the same side,

¹³ Package units of produce prepacked for direct sale to the consumer shall not be subject to these marking provisions but shall conform to the national requirements. However, the markings referred to shall in any event be shown on the transport packaging containing such package units.

legibly and indelibly marked and visible from the outside:

A. Identification

Packer) Name and address or
and/or) officially issued or
Dispatcher) accepted code mark.¹⁴

B. Nature of produce

- "Tomatoes" or "trusses of tomatoes" and the commercial type if the contents are not visible from the outside. These details must always be provided for "cherry" (or "cocktail") tomatoes whether in trusses or not.
- Name of the variety (optional).

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Size expressed as minimum and maximum diameters (if sized), or the word "unsized" where appropriate.

E. Official control mark (optional)

Published 1961
Revised 1997, 2000
The UNECE Standard for Tomatoes
has led to an explanatory brochure published by the OECD Scheme

●
¹⁴ _____
The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in the case where a code mark is used, the reference "packer and/or dispatcher (or equivalent abbreviations)" has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark.

Annex 2

Terms of Reference

Horticulture Promotion in Kosovo **Terms of reference for consultancy**

Quality standards situation and future development **in the horticulture sector of Kosovo**

1- Introduction

'Horticultural Promotion in Kosovo' (HPK) – financed by the Swiss and Danish governments - is working towards the development of the horticulture sector. It aims to help make local production competitive with imports within the local market, and facilitate exports of fresh and processed products.

HPK's operations cover field vegetables, greenhouse production, soft fruit (such as strawberries), top fruit (such as apples) and medicinal and aromatic plants.

It works with (i) producers, nurseries, processors and traders; (ii) representative bodies such as producer associations; (iii) service providers – such as input suppliers, advisers and banks; and (iv) Government and other national bodies.

More information about HPK can be found in its website (www.intercoopkos.org).

Context

Consumer concerns about food-related hazards, food safety risks and the impact of food consumption on human health have received increasing attention during the last decade, and the Kosovo consumer is becoming more aware. HPK has noticed that there is a need to provide a basis for consumers to make informed choices in relation to the fruits and vegetables they consume.

On the other hand, the horticulture sector in Kosovo is still at a developing stage, with many issues and problems still to be solved, however in the latter years Kosovo farmers have improved their competitiveness in the production of some fruits and vegetables and are in the process of recapturing the local market. A very modest processing industry is slowly being established so as to channel a small share of the fruit and vegetable production.

However, Kosovo is way behind regarding quality standards development in the horticulture sector compared to some of the other Balkan countries. Certainly standards implementation can only function in a common system that involve the government (regulator), the private sector (different associations, companies), and institutions (monitoring and certification). A clearly defined quality standards system is clearly needed now as a step forward in the development of the horticulture sector.

The two Kosovar ministries that have primary responsibility for ensuring that official controls on food are implemented and carried out effectively are the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD).

Establishment and enforcement of a national legislation involving principles of food safety is important in achieving the general objective of a high level of protection of human health. In this context the Food Law that would regulate issues related to the quality of food is very important. The Ministry of Agriculture (assisted by donor projects) has taken a very long time in working to complete and pass the missing Food law, one of the priorities of the Ministry for 2009. Once the Food Law has been passed by the Kosovar Assembly, a new Food Safety and Veterinary Agency should be created, bringing together the existing phytosanitary, sanitary and veterinary services in a food chain control service. The Ministry of Agriculture in an effort to make the harmonisation of national legislation to the EU legislation started an initiative to introduce organic standards in Kosovo, however this initiative is likely to have little effect on fruit and vegetable production.

As to the private sector Kosovar horticulture producers and processors (with the support of donor organizations) have sporadically started to develop and implement food safety management systems based on HACCP principles. Issues with the private sector in horticulture production are lack of organization on the farmer level. There are few functional farmer associations, which could be part of the system to promote the development of quality standards.

Donor projects that have worked on issues related to quality standards in the Kosovo agriculture sector during the recent years include Food Safety Project (European Agency for Reconstruction EAR - ended in 2007), Marketing Support Project (EAR - ended in 2007), Kosovo Cluster and Business Support (a USAID project - ended in 2008). Institutional Support to Ministry of Agriculture (ISMAFRD) is an ongoing project under the European Commission that has taken the lead in the continuation of some of the initiatives on quality standards development by the past EAR projects.

A partnership between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD), CABI Bioscience, Switzerland and HPK has been working since 2005 on introducing the concept of Integrated Production (IP) as well as on legislation banning the import and use of dangerous chemicals. The IP of indoor tomatoes has been introduced since three years in three localities with 20 clients and has produced encouraging results, albeit on a small scale. IP is now to be mainstreamed in all project involvement in the greenhouse sector and in apple production. HPK would also help implement key actions identified by such a strategy. Some of these would relate to legislation, others to national action programmes, still others to the introduction of improved practices in the production and marketing of produce.

2- Objectives

The main objectives of the consultant's mission will be:

- a) to understand the present situation of quality standards development in the horticulture sector in Kosovo
- b) attempt to describe the elements/mechanisms of a potential strategy to establish a quality standards system in horticulture in Kosovo.

a) Present situation

Quality standards development is complex and requires the involvement of a number of actors in the chain starting from the farmer and ending with the consumer. There is a need to understand the main reasons why the situation with quality standards in Kosovo horticulture is in the present state and what are the obstacles for its development. Kosovo is still importing big quantities of fruits and vegetables therefore Kosovo farmers have to respond to the demand in the internal market. In the past years there have been indications that the consumer generally sacrifices quality for a cheaper price, but is this true at the present moment? Is consumer awareness on quality standards at an appropriate level now? What could be the role of consumer interest organizations?

What is behind the general lack of private sector organization which would influence a necessary development of quality standards in fresh f & v products?

Retailers (particularly supermarkets) should play an intermediary role in coordinating demand from the consumer with the offer from the local farmers. Are supermarkets in Kosovo acting as promoters of quality standards for the local production of fresh fruits and vegetables? If not, why not?

The Ministry of Agriculture claims to be encouraging quality standards developments in horticulture, but is its role appropriate in the present situation? What is the role of institutions of laboratory analysis and research to the development of quality standards?

Interesting hypothesis: If this situation continues, there a risk that Kosovo horticulture will find it difficult to compete in its internal market keeping in mind that quality standards are becoming more and more important for the consumers...

A short description of the stage of implementation of organic standards in wild fruits and herbs and processing standards such as HACCP is also of interest.

b) Potential quality standards strategy

The recommendations of the study should provide useful guidance on a potential strategy with the elements/mechanisms necessary for a quality standards system in horticulture in Kosovo.

How could consumer associations, supermarkets and the private sector be involved in the establishment of such a system? What could be the role of supermarkets? In many countries the process of introducing quality standards has been initiated by supermarkets; how feasible is this for Kosovo? What could be the most appropriate marketing strategy in this context?

In countries of the region (Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia) the government has played an important role in stimulating the development of quality standards, such as HACCP in food handling. Could there be any similar approaches that the government of Kosovo may undertake to promote the development of quality standards in Kosovo? What is the necessary legislation and policies to support a quality standards system? How essential is Government intervention at a time when it has so many other priorities? GlobalGAP is an advanced standard based on many principles and Kosovo may not be ready for it. Is this true? Is it better that a complicated and costly private standard such as GlobalGAP remains a standard which will be implemented only by companies or farmer organizations interested in export markets that request this standard? How could Integrated Production (supported up to now by HPK) accompanied by traceability and good hygiene practices be a part of a future quality standards system for horticulture in Kosovo?

What are the management issues that a Kosovo-specific quality standard in horticulture will need to address? What should be the possible mechanisms to manage it and who should participate? What could be the project's role in this aspect? What would be the necessary time period needed to achieve certain steps in the strategy?

How could the project contribute in the promotion or facilitation of a quality standard system development?

Are there specific steps to be taken for organic standard certification of wild fruit products and medicinal and aromatic plants?

3- Expected outputs

A final report not exceeding 25 pages (plus annexes) in English to be delivered no later than April 11th.

Instructive materials on quality standards such as GlobalGAP, HACCP and Organic standards.

4- Suggested timelines

Items	Dates
Signature of Contract	Up to April 24 th
Consultancy	11 th to 19 th of May
Delivery of the first draft	Up to May 29 th
Comments by the project	First week of June
Final report	No later than June 12 th

5- Summary of allocated days (to be invoiced by the consultant)

The following table presents the foreseen allocation of days:

Items	Number of days
Review of relevant documents ¹⁵ prior to the mission	0,5 day
Travel from consultant's home to Kosovo	0,5 day
Consultancy in the field ¹⁶	7,5 days
Travel from Kosovo to consultant home	0,5 day
First draft preparation (consultant's home office)	2 days
Final report (consultant's home office)	1 day
Total	12 days

6- Methodology

The methodology of the study will consist of the following main elements

- Suggested readings and references (reference to article 9)
- Direct interaction with different actors in the horticulture sector, consultation with HPK and other international projects' staff
- Debriefing with relevant stakeholders and project officers

7- Personnel

The mission will be led by an international consultant with extensive experience in horticulture sector quality standards development and issues.

In order to facilitate the work of the consultant, HPK will provide a focal point person (a staff member – Agribusiness Project Officer), who will play the role of facilitator for the consultant.

The HPK focal point will:

- Play the role of interface for the logistical issues (accommodation, local transportation, etc.);
- Organize the schedule of meetings with actors;
- Accompany the consultant in all meetings;
- Permanently interact with the consultant during the strategy elaboration;
- Help the consultant in finding additional information before, during and after the consultancy field visits.

8- International consultant qualifications

¹⁵ Reference to article 9

¹⁶ Including discussions with project staff and final debriefing (presentation of findings and of the anticipated strategy)

Degree or equivalent qualification in agro economy, marketing, agribusiness or related field;

Minimum of 10 years of practical experience in fruit and/or vegetable quality standards establishment, management, and development;

Relevant experience in developing and emerging countries, experience in the Balkan Region preferred;

Significant experience in similar assignments, i.e. conduct of an assessment including strong writing skills;

Fluent in English.

9- Relevant documentation

HPK studies of interest:

[Balkan market overview for fresh fruits and vegetables](#) 2007

[Consumption habits study](#) 2001

[Study on consumer behaviour](#) 2004

[CABI studies](#)

Market Structure Study 2008

Other Links:

[Ministry of Agriculture Kosovo](#) website

[EAR Food Safety Project](#) website

[EC ISMAFRD Project](#) website

[EAR MSP Project](#) website

[Consumer Protection Law](#)

[Swissgap](#) website

[Food safety strategy - Macedonia](#)

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Annex 3 Schedule, List of people interviewed

Sun May 10	Arrival at Pristina Airport – accommodation at the Hotel Pristina
Mon May 11	Briefing and introduction to HPK - office
	Meeting with the consumer association – Mr. Selatin Kacaniku
Tue May 12	Visit to supermarkets
	Meeting with the Sanitary Inspectorate – Mrs. Ilirjana Zymberaj
Wed May 13	Meeting with Peja Institute – Bakir Kelmendi, Defrime Berisha
	Qyshk cooperative - Mr. Selmon Shala
Thur May 14	Neperbisht Prizren – farmers Fehmi Shala, Sadik Shala
	Visit to Radoste Agrobiznesi cooperative – Ali Lushi
Fri May 15	Meeting with supermarket Elkos Trade Center Pristina – Naim Aliqkaj
	Meeting with supermarket Era/Maxi Pristina – Ramadan ...
	Benaf supermarket meeting Ferizaj – Naim Kuqi
Sat May 16	Meeting with Muhamed Disha TUEV Nord representative in Pristina
Mon May 18	Visit to the wholesale market and green market
	Final consultations on the debriefing and report
Tue May 19	Debriefing with HPK project staff members
	Leave for Airport

Annex 4

Abstracts of a Training Guideline

Title: Improving the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables

Objectives

- Analyse the growing international importance of the horticultural sector in Kosovo identifying challenges and future opportunities.
- Present an integrated approach to the quality and safety concepts as applied to production and trade of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Clearly present the standards and regulations both voluntary and mandatory applicable to quality and safety issues.
- "Train the trainers" in the principles and practices of quality and safety issues throughout the food chain (emphasizing IP, GlobalGAP).
- Identify country opportunities and difficulties in order to implement quality and food safety programs and suggest ways to overcome the problems.

Training sections

Importance of the horticultural sector in Kosovo

Objectives

- Analyse the growing economic and social importance of horticulture in Kosovo
- Single out market opportunities for producing and exporting fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Stress the importance of implementing quality and safety assurance programs to support these opportunities.

Content

- Social and economic significance of horticulture
- Opportunities and challenges for horticulture in Kosovo

Expected results

- identify the economic and social importance of the horticultural sector in each country and its potential to modernize;
- reference the trends and opportunities in fresh fruits and vegetables markets and identify challenges to overcome them for successfully channeling these opportunities;
- define the importance of implementing quality and safety programmes as tools to profit from market openings.

Quality maintenance and enhancement throughout the fresh fruits and vegetables chain

Objectives

- To provide a clear understanding of the quality concept supporting the implementation of quality and safety assurance programs in the horticultural sector.
- To provide practical guidance on applying the principles of appropriate fresh fruit and vegetables post-harvest management, to maintain and optimize product quality, assure its safety and secure an efficient chain.

Content

- The concept of quality as applied to fresh fruits and vegetables (integrated concept of quality, standards and regulatory documents)
- Quality determination procedures
- Applying principles of post-harvest management to maintain the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables

Expected results

- A clear understanding of the components of quality and the procedures involved to determine produce quality;
- Identify opportunities provided by post-harvest technologies to profit from market openings, reduce inefficiencies in the chain and improve competitiveness.
- Identify critical procedures to maintain quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables, throughout the post-harvest handling chain; available post-harvest technologies that reduce risks associated with quality losses and safety of horticultural produce.

Applying food safety principles to the fresh fruits and vegetables chain

Objectives

- Provide a clear understanding of the safety concept as applied to production and trade of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Provide practical guidance to assure safety of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the production and post-harvest chain.

Content

- Concept and importance of safety in horticulture;
- Chemical, physical and biological hazard identification;
- Legislation in food safety;
- Prerequisite programs: concepts, examples (GAP, GHP, etc.);
- the HACCP approach applied to the post-harvest handling chain of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Expected results

- Have a clear understanding of the concept and relevance of safety in horticulture and the risks for produce safety throughout the production and post-harvest chain;
- Identify the relevance of applying the general principles of food hygiene, Codex standards of practice and other relevant documents relating to safety of fresh fruits and vegetables;
- Have clear guidelines to apply safety assurance programs in horticulture.

The importance of certifications and other quality schemes for the horticultural sector

Objectives

- Promote a clear understanding for implementing Good Agricultural Practices in the framework of integrated production with a food chain approach to assure quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Analyse the scope of private certifications to facilitate access of exports to high-value markets.
- Identify opportunities and difficulties in the horticultural sector to meet the quality and safety requirements of import markets.

Content

The situation of quality standards and future development in the horticultural sector of Kosovo

- Safety and quality requirements by exporting countries for fresh fruits and vegetables: certification, challenges and opportunities for exporting countries.
- A clear explanation of the contents of certifications.
- Importance of implementing national programs, comments and recommendations for application.

Expected results

- have a clear understanding of the scope of private certifications for fresh fruits and vegetables;
- become aware of the importance of national codes of practice harmonized to Codex standards and to market requirements;