



Joint Finnish/Swedish declaration of intent on collaboration for increased food and drink exports

Purpose

The aim of this *declaration of intent* is to lay a basis for the collaboration of Finland and Sweden for increased food and drink exports. The collaboration covers both cooperation between the public administrations and efforts linked to export promotion. This declaration aims to identify fields and forms of cooperation and mutual activities benefitting both countries. These identified synergies will serve as the basis for a plan of collaboration activities.

All activities covered by this declaration will be carried out in line with EU legislation and within the limits of EU state aid rules. This declaration is not a legally binding document and has no financial consequences.

Background

The first step on collaboration between the public administrations was taken in January 2016 when the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland and the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation of Sweden collectively approached the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa in order to draw attention to and speed up the market access procedure of Finnish and Swedish pork and pork products. This collective approach was grounded on the similar animal health situation, low Salmonella

prevalence and strict policy on the use of antibiotics in the respective countries.

Next steps regarding collaboration in food and drink exports were taken in June 2016, when the Ministers of Agriculture from all Nordic countries met in Turku in Finland. In the meeting, Food from Finland – program activities were introduced and possible cooperation in food and drink export was discussed.

The dialogue on how Finland and Sweden may work together on food and drink exports and export promotion continued in 2017. In a bilateral meeting on 26 October 2017, Finland’s Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Jari Leppä and Sweden’s Minister for Rural Affairs Sven-Erik Bucht decided that Finland and Sweden should collaborate closer and establish a joint plan.

In order to facilitate this collaboration, the Finnish export promotion organization Finpro invited the Swedish delegation of government officials and industry representatives to a meeting in Helsinki on 27 November 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to learn more about how the public administrations are working in relation to exports and export promotion in the food and drink sector. A follow-up meeting took place in Stockholm on 19 December 2017 to discuss a plan with achievable joint actions.

Finland launched its concept “Food From Finland” in 2014 and Sweden has been working under the concept “Food From Sweden” (today “Try Swedish!”) for more than twenty years. Both countries are working, bilaterally and within the EU, to secure export protocols to third countries for agricultural and food products.

Declaration

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland and the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation of Sweden see great potential in the collaboration of the respective countries for increasing food and drink exports. Finland and Sweden have a very similar and good animal and plant health situation as well as high level of food safety. Finland and Sweden also share the same values in relation to animal welfare and prudent use of antibiotics for the

food producing animals. Both Finland and Sweden are Nordic countries with clean soil, water and air.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland and the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation of Sweden are confident that collaboration of the respective countries will lead to easier and more effective access to foreign markets and thus increase of export. Sharing experience, learning from each other and combining strengths and forces where it is benefitting both countries can only take us forward.

To facilitate the collaboration between Finland and Sweden a working group will be established consisting of representatives of the Ministries, involved competent authorities, Business Finland, Business Sweden and the industry. The working group will meet annually to collaborate and share information and experience. Also, strategical plans and priorities of export may be shared.

Based on identified synergies a plan of collaboration activities has been drawn up:

- Study visits will be organized to get to know each other's, organizations, working methods, policies, strategies and priorities. Comparison between the systems and their effectiveness to increase trade will serve as a good basis to improve the export facilitation and promotion work in both countries.
- Common market access activities will be carried out where this is benefitting both countries. These common activities may include cooperation related to market access processes, information exchange on export requirements and other forms of export facilitation. Specified information will be exchanged to learn from each other, receive information facilitating export and supporting market access.
- Collaboration on export promotion activities shall take place e.g. in the form of joint pavilions at fairs where there is value added to be gained by highlighting the Nordic values. Today both Finland and Sweden are working at major food fairs around the world under their national concepts. We have identified cooperation under a joint concept as an opportunity to create a greater interest and networks.

Cooperation can also take place in some mutually selected trade fairs inside the European Union.

- Collaboration shall take place to find joint eCommerce solutions and digital platforms on growth markets. Working with eCommerce solutions offers great potential to food exports. The aim is to jointly explore the possibility to have as shared eCommerce website to attract buyers for Nordic food products.
- Possibility to collaborate in logistics and how we can in practice offer opportunities for companies to cooperate in logistics solutions.

An annual action plan will be drawn up by the working group to update the plan of collaboration activities and to list the concrete actions to be taken each year

Annex

Action plan 2018

Working group (all relevant parties)

- The working group to facilitate the collaboration between Finland and Sweden will be established consisting of representatives of the involved competent authorities, Business Finland, Business Sweden and the industry.
- The working group will be hosted and chaired at the Ministry/Department level in rotation by Finland and Sweden.

Exchange of specified information (all relevant parties)

- Information of contact points will be collected and shared

Joint pavilion at trade fairs (Business Finland and Business Sweden)

- Possible pilot at the NOPA, Natural & Organic Products Expo Asia, a trade fair for organic products to be held in Hong Kong starting on 29 August 2018
- Expanding the good cooperation practices also to other East-Asian countries (China, Japan and South-Korea), UK and USA
- Cooperation can take place also in some mutually selected trade fairs taking place inside European Union.

Other export promotion activities (Business Finland and Business Sweden)

- Collaboration at Nordic Food Business Days in Hong Kong. Nordic Food Business Days is an event where Nordic food gets highlighted with different activities.
- A joint US action, for example arranging Nordic Food seminars with the purpose of creating network opportunities for Swedish and Finnish food businesses trying to reach the US market.

Activities related to E-commerce and logistics (Business Finland and Business Sweden)

- Studying possibilities for cooperation on how to work with digital platforms to find new markets.
- Finding new markets with e-commerce. Surveying for possibilities how solutions for e-commerce can be created for both Swedish and Finnish companies. The most feasible cooperation model to be analyzed together.
- Exploring the possibility in supporting companies in reaching the Chinese market through Alibaba/T-Mall, or other relevant eCommerce partners in China.
- Cooperation in other countries to be evaluated and started as well, for example with Ocado in UK.
- Exploring the possibility in finding logistical solutions, like co-sharing shipping containers to long-distance markets.

Market access activities (Competent authorities)

- Cooperation related to the facilitation of export of bilberry and lingonberry products to China.
- Cooperation related to the facilitation of export of pork products to South Africa.

Study visits (Competent authorities)

- Planned study visit of Sweden's National Food Agency (Livsmedelsverket) and Sweden's Board of Agriculture (Jordbruksverket) to the Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira in September 2018.