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Experts: work with us

SOCIEUX allows our partner countries to access the extensive social protection experience accumulated by the EU, through short-term peer-to-peer exchanges. Moreover, sharing the experiences of other developing countries is enabled through triangular cooperation. SOCIEUX interventions provide a rewarding experience for experts, who are exposed to innovative social protection practices in other countries. We are currently looking for social protection practitioners to collaborate with SOCIEUX as potential experts. Interested social protection experts from EU Member States or partner countries, public administrations or mandated bodies are invited to send their application. Please download the Guide for Experts and Application Form from our website.

ec.europa.eu/europeaid/socieux

Social Protection for persons with disabilities: sharing European experiences

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) clearly outlines what is required by States to address the Human Rights of People with Disabilities. thus ensuring that the citizenship of people with disabilities is fully respected. Article 28 of the CRPD recognises the right of persons with disabilities to social protection, without discrimination on the basis of disability, and proposes numerous measures to promote the realisation of this right. The Convention also recognises that most countries have a significant journey ahead of them to achieve these ambitious goals and that different countries are at varying stages in this journey.

Development co-operation can, and should, play a very important role in addressing the implementation of the Convention. This can take a number of forms. Firstly, as the overall approach is to avoid segregation of persons with disabilities and promote inclusion, all development aid should ensure that the disability issue is addressed as part of any development programme in all public policy sectors like education, health care, social services, housing, transportation, etc. In many countries it may be the case that support services for persons with disabilities are at a very basic stage and they therefore lack expertise in understanding the social model of disability and what good support services could and should look like.

Income security against poverty for persons with disabilities remains a concern for most EU Member States. European countries have a long and diversified experience in designing and testing measures that provide a safety net to prevent persons with disabilities from falling into the poverty trap and enable them to lead dignified lives. The objective of integrating persons with disabilities into the labour market, combining disability benefits with earnings from work or employment training, has been addressed in recent reforms in most EU Member States. European countries have implemented a number of policies to improve independent living, like the promotion of de-institutionalization and the provision of direct payment schemes.

The provision of EU Member States' expertise in this area is fundamental in two aspects: (1) Helping partner countries to understand the possibilities for persons with disabilities, once adequate supports are provided in an inclusive way. (2) Sharing the European experiences so that mistakes that may have been made over the years are not repeated elsewhere.

SOCIEUX in Action showcases two recent activities supporting measures to improve the social protection of persons with disabilities in partner countries.

> Christy Lynch. **Director of KARE Ireland**

SOCIEUX is governed by a Programme Steering Committee composed of members of the European Commission and a Consortium of partners from the EU Member States working in social protection and international cooperation.

SOCIEUX is implemented by the following Consortium:











The view of the Ministry

"The SOCIEUX training programme was very useful for both civil servants from the Ministry and from other agencies who work in the field of social security agreements. The information and experience acquired will help us to advance and direct our future work in the negotiation, drafting and application of social security agreements between Peru and other countries. In the short term, it will be put into practice in the ongoing negotiations with Venezuela, Japan and Korea. Moreover, the workshop served as a forum for networking, exchanging experiences and exchanging ideas between the different institutions, which was particularly useful for future collaboration in the field."

Ms. Jimena Rodriguez Moscoso, Consultant from the Office of Cooperation and International Affairs of the Ministry



Participants in the training programme

Technical capacity-building on international social security norms in Peru

Lima, Peru, 27th to 31st October 2014. - In Peru, SOCIEUX provided training to the Peruvian Ministry of Labour and Promotion of Employment (MTPE) and other institutions involved in the drafting and implementation of international social security norms.

As part of the Multi-annual programming for 2017 of Negotiating Migration Agreements, the Ministry of Labour and Promotion of Employment (MTPE) of Peru has a mandate to widen its range of bilateral social security agreements. However, in the course of drafting these types of agreements, the Ministry identified a range of areas for improvement for the civil servants from the institutions involved. With the aim of addressing these shortcomings, the MTPE requested that SOCIEUX provide personalised training in the areas of negotiating and implementing international social security norms.

The training workshop organised by SOCIEUX focused on what social protection of migrant workers means and the role played in this area by the different legal levels of social security; national, bilateral and multinational, and how they should be coordinated. Emphasis was put on the guidelines which must be followed in the negotiation and implementation of bilateral social security agreements, using as examples both the principles covered by European Union regulation and experience gained from agreements currently in force in the country.

The event, spearheaded by the General Office for Cooperation and International Affairs of the Ministry of Labour and Promotion of Employment, was attended by around 35 staff from the aforementioned ministry as well as others from the Ministries of Health, Foreign Affairs, Economy and Finance, in addition to the Social Security Office and other institutions involved in the drafting and implementation of social security agreements.

The effective development of these types of agreements is without doubt an issue of great importance in Peru, which today is both a country of origin of migrants and a country of destination for migrants. In 2014, the number of people entering and departing the country was estimated at 13 million.

Experts deployed

- Ms. Margarita Martin-Serrano, Head of the Department of International Conventions and Agreements, Institute of Social Security in the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Security
- Ms. Maria Teresa López, International Technical Advisor from the Benefits Subdirectorate General of the Institute of Social Security in the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Security

In the words of the experts

"The programme gave participants the opportunity to gain awareness of the importance of the protection of migrant workers and the different possibilities that exist for this, from national regulation itself, establishing the protection of its nationals abroad, to international regulation. As practical experience, agreements in force were analysed, such as the bilateral agreement between Spain and Peru, which served as a basis for identifying possible difficulties, regarding both negotiation and implementation. One of the difficulties identified is that a large number of organisations are involved. Our recommendation focuses on developing improved relations between the institutions, establishing a more specific definition of their competences, and ensuring that the coordination and management of these processes, although under the leadership of the Ministry for International Affairs, remains in the hands of the Ministry of Labour given its eminently technical nature."

Ms. Margarita Martin-Serrano and Ms. Maria Teresa López



Expert Carlos Rodriguez Ariza (1st row) with representatives of the PIOJ and other participants

The view of the PIOJ

"The SOCIEUX training in M&E and round table discussion served to increase awareness and build capacity among participants. We gained knowledge on the M&E processes as a whole, including stakeholder analysis, how to develop SMART objectives and indicators, and how to develop a communication plan. The knowledge gained will assist us as we focus on establishing a new institutional framework for Social Protection, develop a new National Poverty Reduction Programme, and monitor various projects. As facilitators of the process, the PIOJ greatly appreciates the capacity-building afforded to the Institute and other government partners".

> Ms. Collette Robinson, Manager of the Social Protection and Gender Unit at the PIOJ

Results-based monitoring and evaluation of social protection programmes in Jamaica

Kingston, Jamaica, 10th to 14th November 2014. - SOCIEUX supported the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) in developing its capacities on result-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for social protection programmes.

One of Jamaica's Social Protection Strategy requirements is the establishment of appropriate information and data management systems to support Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of social protection programmes. The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), the main planning agency of the Jamaican Government, is now working on an M&E framework for the Social Protection Strategy. The activity, a four-day training workshop followed by a round table discussion on the M&E framework for the Social Protection Strategy is the second technical assistance provided by SOCIEUX to support the PIOJ.

The training session highlighted some of the critical requirements when crafting evaluation questions, making an effective assessment of resources needed, barriers to be anticipated and data and information flows, amongst other issues. It highlighted the idea that M&E is not only a tool to measure programme effectiveness, but a process, a way of planning and a road map that helps to communicate with personnel and other stakeholders.

The technical training course was attended by officials from several Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the Government. Key stakeholders also took part in a one-day round table discussion on the framework policy of M&E for Social Protection, which provides the structure through which the Social Protection Strategy can be assessed at a national level. The debates helped to emphasise that a credible system of measurement must be in place to monitor achievements and that evidence-based decisions lead to improved social protection outcomes.

Experts deployed:

Mr. Carlos Rodriguez Ariza, international expert and former advisor at the Evaluation and Knowledge Management Division of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

In the words of the experts

"Monitoring and evaluation is a technical and political instrument subject to continuous improvement and adjustment. In this case, a social protection strategy involves both political and technical decisions, and therefore it requires prior joint discussion between technical civil servants and politicians which will aid understanding of the strategy itself before measuring it. It is vital that monitoring and evaluation be directed towards decision making and the application of these decisions. Future collaboration with the PIOJ could well support the implementation of its policy and strategy monitoring and evaluation framework, which is more complex than evaluating projects or programmes. Moreover, we must grasp the window of opportunity provided by the fact that 2015 is the International Year of Evaluation."

Mr. Carlos Rodriguez Ariza



Dr. Pilar Gaitan Pavía, Secretary of Cooperation and Institutional Link for the Government of Cundinamarca, welcomes expert Mercedes Jaraba at the beginning of the mission

Social protection of persons with disabilities in Colombia

Colombia, which ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Act 1346 of 2009), published a National Public Policy on Disability and Social Inclusion (CONPES 166) in 2013. It defines the lineaments, strategies and recommendations which, with the participation of State institutions. an organised civil society and its citizens, enable progress to be made in terms of ensuring all human rights and fundamental liberties for all persons with disabilities, on the basis of equality. The Disability Policy of the Region of Cundinamarca represents the first in the country to adopt this commitment. Persons with disabilities represent approximately 6% of the region's total population.

Supporting the Colombian Region of **Cundinamarca in formulating a disability policy**

Bogotá, Colombia, 1st to 5th December 2014. - SOCIEUX has begun a technical collaboration which will be carried out over several months for the formulation of a disability policy in the Region of Cundinamarca in Colombia. Following an initial evaluation mission, a work plan for the coming months is now available.

The Government of the Region of Cundinamarca, through its Secretariat of Health, is immersed in the development of a policy to guarantee the social inclusion of persons with disabilities. At the beginning of this process, the Secretariat identified a set of areas for improvement concerning the need to approach inclusion in a transversal manner in all public services and policies and to create a road map for the implementation of the policy. It is to this end that technical assistance from the SOCIEUX programme has been mapped out, which will conclude with an official presentation of the text, likely to be in June 2015.

The objective of the recent mission was to verify the data provided on the situation of persons with disabilities in the region, the existing assistance programmes, as well as the institutional network that will participate in formulating the policy. To do this, meetings were held at national level with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the National Council on Disability, and also at regional and municipal levels with the leadership of the Regional Committee on Disability, recently formed within the Secretariat of Health.

The experts were also able to discuss best practices carried out both across the region and in EU countries. This experience, combined with the leadership of the Government of Cundinamarca, will without doubt contribute to the development of a regional policy which is considerably more innovative, which will create more rights for disabled Colombians, and which could serve as an example of development for other surrounding countries and regions.

Experts deployed

- Ms. Mercedes Jaraba, from the Directorate-General for Policies to Support Disability of the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality
- Mr. Ignacio Velo, Director of International Programmes and Projects of the ONCE Foundation, Spain

In the words of the experts

"SOCIEUX's work has facilitated understanding of the difficulties faced by persons with disabilities in this region, which revolve around discrimination, inadequate healthcare and barriers to educational, occupational and physical inclusion. The absence of a strong and organised civil society is also significant, since it does not stimulate administrative activity, nor does it maintain a common stance for the benefit of all types of disabilities. With regard to the policy's development, our first recommendations focus on working on the form of implementation of the regulation in parallel to designing it, and establishing a budget base for its execution. Likewise, it is necessary to transfer the transversal aspect to all administrative sectors, so that all of them internalise the idea that actions aimed at disability are not isolated and individualized actions in themselves, but rather that they must be present in the day-to-day work of any Administration."

Ms. Mercedes Jaraba and Mr. Ignacio Velo



The view of the State **Secretariat of National** Solidarity (SESN)

"The SESN has benefited from the SOCIEUX tool via the expertise which was mobilised to assess and reinforce the SESN to implement the Social Protection Strategy. Analysis of the sector of social protection is relevant and has enabled other institutions to understand social protection and social safety-nets."

Ms. Amina Ahmet Warsana, Director of the SESN Solidarity Department

Social protection in Djibouti

In June 2013, the Djiboutian council of ministers approved a safety-net-based National Social Protection Strategy aimed at granting the means to escape the inter-generational poverty spiral. This strategy foresees both cash and in-kind transfers and a system of public works and is aimed at three main groups: households with issues of food insecurity, people who are either temporarily or permanently unable to work and those able to work but who have no qualifications.



Mr. Francois Durin in a meeting with stakeholders involved in social protection

Institutional assessment of the State Secretariat of National Solidarity in Djibouti

Djibouti, 1st to 5th December 2014. - *SOCIEUX undertook an institutional assessment* of the State Secretariat of National Solidarity (Secrétariat d'État à la Solidarité Nationale, SESN) on the capacities required to implement the country's recently approved Social Protection Strategy.

Djibouti recently adopted a safety-net-based Social Protection Strategy aimed at strengthening the coordination and harmonisation of social programmes and policies with a view to improving their effectiveness. In order to institutionalise this coordination at national level, the SESN was tasked with implementing the Permanent Technical Secretariat of the Intersectoral Committee for Social Protection (Secrétariat technique permanent du Comité intersectoriel de la protection sociale, STP-CI/PS). The aim of this organisation is to coordinate all of the initiatives of governmental institutions, NGOs and donors.

The assessment performed by the SOCIEUX experts focused on the capacities that the SESN would require in order to establish the Permanent Technical Secretariat of the Intersectoral Committee for Social Protection (Secrétariat technique permanent du Comité intersectoriel de la protection sociale, STP-CI/PS), to ensure that this new body has the skills necessary in order to perform its duties. The experts reported that the main difficulty encountered was the fact that a significant number of SESN staff have been recruited recently and that key directive positions still remain uncovered. Their main recommendation is that the SESN strengthen its recruitment policy and ensure a budget for it. Future SOCIEUX actions could be aimed at developing a solid training plan.

The findings were based on discussions with senior managers and administrators from the various boards of the SESN and stakeholders and development partners involved in social protection from the United Nations system and NGOs. The experts were also able to identify and determine each of the stakeholders' expectations regarding social protection in Djibouti and the role and mandate of the Technical Secretariat.

Experts deployed

- Mr. François Durin, formerly a civil servant in the Ministry for Social Protection, then director of French Pension Funds
- Mr. Pierre Fallavier, consultant in the field of social protection

In the words of the experts

"Although the SESN is a young institution – its current mandate was only approved in 2012 – it has already laid down solid foundations for the design, the impetus and the coordination of poverty reduction and social development policies in Djibouti. It is now the responsibility of the SESN to gradually reinforce its team from a technical point of view, in order to be able to properly fulfil all of the roles to which it is committed, including monitoring and evaluation and development of strategic lines and studies, and for which it will have to appoint directors. Lastly, it will have to appoint a secretary-general with extensive work experience within government and a tireless capacity to emphasise the importance of social protection among his or her colleagues and other institutions."

Mr. François Durin



Christian Peters, Janet Mortoo, Audrius Bitinas, Michel Laroque and Ignacio Burrull

Social Protection and the **MGCSP**

Ghana's National Development Plan: Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda 2010-13 notes that 'while Ghana has a number of policies on social protection, these have not been harmonized and are not coordinated within a comprehensive guiding vision'. Its 2012 draft Social Protection Strategy already aimed at bringing the multitude of social protection programmes under a common umbrella. In this regard, the plan states that 'key policy measures to be implemented to ensure social protection and inclusion include, amongst other, the preparation of a comprehensive national social policy framework to provide social safety nets, especially for the poor, vulnerable and excluded'.

EU Delegation to Ghana

"The mission with the three SOCIEUX experts was interesting and enlightening in providing a comprehensive background on Social Protection in general and in particular to learn about different best practices developed in Europe. Their contributions have widened the social protection in Ghana and opened new areas for further consideration like the link between existing social security agencies and other social protection programmes but also confirmed important aspects like the need for a legal framework. All in all, the mission was very successful and it is hoped that the subsequent missions will be as fruitful."

SOCIEUX supports Social Protection Policy Development in Ghana

Accra, Ghana, 9th to 20th February 2015. - SOCIEUX is supporting the Ghanaian Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in the process of developing a National Social Protection Policy.

The Ghanaian Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection is in the process of developing a National Social Protection Policy. To drive the process, the ministry has set up a Technical Working Group with a team of consultants, to which this first SOCIEUX mission contributed with three key experts. The team supported the assessment of the current situation concerning the provision of social protection in the country, promoted a holistic view of social protection to be integrated in the future policy and provided recommendations on future collaboration.

To this end, the SOCIEUX experts met with a myriad of stakeholders, such as municipal entities, Social Security Agencies, the National Health Insurance Authority, various key international partners (ILO, UNDP, DFID, UNICEF) and Ministry staff at different levels, which facilitated a better understanding of the Ghanaian Social Protection system. In this sense, one of the shortcomings detected was the limited focus on coordination mechanisms in the provision of social protection services between the State, Local Authorities and Social Security Agencies; technical inputs were provided regarding organisational issues, in terms of coordination and decentralization or deconcentration in providing social protection services.

Discussions on general management of social protection at different levels also took place. From these, recommendations were made to develop a better information management system, including a unified social registration system which would include pension funds and the Health Insurance Authority's data, a strong evaluation system and the creation of a statistical Social Protection Account.

During their mission, SOCIEUX experts facilitated a capacity building workshop for high-ranking civil servants and representatives of NGOs. Additionally, the experts participated in a High Level Working Group meeting to share experiences relevant to social protection policy development in the European Union. Attendees to the workshop included participants from collaborating public agencies and sector ministries, civil society organisations and development partners.

Experts deployed

- Mr. Michel Laroque, former General Inspector of Social Affairs in France
- Mr. Audrius Bitinas, professor, former Vice-minister in the Lithuanian Ministry of Social Protection and Labour
- Mr. Volker Schmitt, Advisor of the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social **Affairs**

In the words of the experts

"The results of the mission are very positive. The exchanges and consultations will contribute to the drafting of a social protection policy for Ghana and further capacity building for the management of Social Protection. The analysis, the examples and the suggestions were appreciated and modified peoples' perception of Social Protection owing to their holistic perspective and alternative Social Protection implementation methods using the European tools. The mission has fully achieved its objective of starting to enhance the effectiveness and coordination of social protection in Ghana."

Mr. Michel Laroque, Mr. Audrius Bitinas and Mr. Volker Schmitt



Social protection of persons with disabilities in Moldova

Moldova's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities marked a significant change: the transition towards an approach to disability based on human rights, social inclusion, human value and equal opportunities. The 2010 Social Inclusion Strategy for Persons with Disabilities is the first step towards its implementation. In this respect, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family plays an important role and is strongly committed to developing an efficient mechanism for providing vocational guidance, training and professional rehabilitation to persons with disabilities, which is one of its main objectives. According to the Ministry of Labour, in 2014 there were around 183,416 people with disabilities in Moldova (about 5% of the country's total population) who often face discrimination, social exclusion, poverty, unemployment and limited access to public services.



Mr. Christy Lynch with Ms. Danielle Keulen, Deputy Head of Operations, the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova

Vocational rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities in Moldova

Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 2nd to 6th February 2015. - SOCIEUX is supporting the efforts of the Moldovan Ministry of Labour to set up a vocational rehabilitation services department for persons with disabilities, a first step of which entailed a study visit on vocational rehabilitation services to Ireland in September. The experts then reviewed the current challenges and assessed the needs for setting up this unit in order to deliver quality vocational rehabilitation services.

The Moldovan Ministry of Labour is in the process of setting up a rehabilitation services department within the Experimental Prosthetic, Orthopedics and Rehabilitation Centre (CREPOR) primarily for persons with severe disabilities. The action aims to improve understanding of the type of services required and how to ensure the provision of high quality services. The SOCIEUX assessment reviewed the current state of the vocational rehabilitation department, analysed the means to make it functional in the coming months and provided specific recommendations.

The experts reported that some of the difficulties encountered in the department originate, on the one hand, from a very medical approach to disability and, on the other, from the fact that focus is limited to locomotor disabilities. This perspective risks neglecting the true meaning of a vocational rehabilitation service: a process to enable persons with functional, psychological, developmental, cognitive and emotional impairments or health conditions to overcome barriers to accessing, maintaining or returning to employment. A key recommendation was to embrace a more comprehensive social and human rights approach, which would include all types of disabilities and broaden the focus on vocational rehabilitation to include vocational training and employment supports.

The findings were based on discussions with key actors in the field of services for persons with disabilities, such as the Directorate of Social Protection for People with Disabilities of the Ministry of Labour, the National Employment Office, the CREPOR and civil society organisations.

Experts deployed

- Ms. Edita Satiene, Director of the Lithuanian Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre
- Mr. Christy Lynch, Director of KARE Ireland

In the words of the experts

"Recommendations to the Ministry of Labour include the development of a comprehensive national disability policy which embraces the social model of disability and includes an implementation strategy; in this sense, capacitybuilding in the social model as well as in how to address all types of disabilities can be envisaged for future actions. Additionally, it would be interesting to strengthen cooperation with NGOs as there is a lot to be learned from some of the projects being run by them. Demonstration projects on supported employment and appropriate training for job coaches could be provided by the civil society to the Ministry".

Mr. Christy Lynch

Ongoing and upcoming actions

In the coming months, SOCIEUX will provide support to:

Latin-America and the Caribbean

- The Department of Health in Colombian Region of Cundinamarca in finalising its public policy for persons with disabilities
- The National Agency for Overcoming Extreme Poverty in Colombia in targeting, monitoring and evaluation within the framework of the UNIDOS Strategy
- The pension institutions of the Mexican states of Zacatecas, Tamaulipas and Guanajuato in pension funds management

Africa

- The Tunisian Centre for Research and Social Studies in upgrading its information system and improving data management and reporting procedures
- The Zanzibar Ministry of Empowerment, Social Welfare, Youth, Women and Children in the area of Universal Social Pension Programme for the elderly
- The Social Cash Transfers Secretariat of the Ministry of Gender and Development, Liberia, in the scalingup of social cash transfers

Asia

 The Vietnam Social Security Institution in its efforts to improve their human resource development plan

On Social Protection

Social Protection at the core of the Post-2015 Agenda

Social protection is an effective strategy for governments to promote the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals: to leave no-one behind, to eradicate poverty, to reduce inequalities, and to promote gender equality, universal health coverage, decent work and climate adaptation. As such it is mentioned in the synthesis report of the UN Secretary General: The Road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet, which was presented last December and which will be basis for intergovernmental negotiations.

International agencies coordinating support to requests by governments

The Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) was set up at the request of the G20 to coordinate the efforts of the ILO, other UN-agencies, World Bank, EU, bilaterals and major CSOs in support of low and middle income countries' efforts to build national systems of social protection.

International cooperation partners are committed to respecting country ownership and recognising country specificities. *The Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessments (ISPA)* is one of the important SPIAC-B work streams where the partners are harmonising the approaches governments can use to assess the strengths, weaknesses and further extension and development options of their SP-systems, programmes and implementation modalities.

In a recent meeting of the SPIAC-B and ISPA on 2-3 Feb 2015, the EU announced the launch of a new EU Social Protection Systems Programme, to be implemented with national expert institutions in 10 LICs and LMICs between 2015 and 2018. The Programme is co-financed and managed by the OECD and the Government of Finland (THL).

About SOCIEUX

The EuropeAid funded project "SOCIEUX - Social Protection EU Expertise in Development Cooperation", is a technical assistance facility to support the efforts of partner countries to better design and manage social protection systems by means of short-term peer-to-peer inputs to be delivered by experts drawn primarily from the European Union Member States' public administrations and mandated bodies. Practitioners from partner countries' administrations can also be mobilised as experts to bring added value in a South-South and triangular cooperation.

Submit your request

Interested partners are invited to send their requests by email, letter or fax. Requests should specify the name, position and contact details of the applicant and the government body or institution they represent, together with a brief outline of the area of assistance, needs and estimated timing. Please download the Guide for Partner Countries and Request Form from our website.