



TC/38/12

ORIGINAL: English

DATE: January 21, 2002

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS
GENEVA

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Thirty-Eighth Session
Geneva, April 15 to 17, 2002

**PROPOSAL FOR PREPARATORY WORKSHOPS
FOR THE TECHNICAL WORKING PARTIES**

Document prepared by the Office of the Union

Introduction

1. As the membership of UPOV increases, its Technical Working Parties (hereinafter referred to as “the TWPs”) embrace participants with a wide range of experience of the UPOV system. In the case of new participants, it can be difficult to follow the discussions within the meeting and even more difficult to participate actively. This is sometimes exacerbated by the fact that their native language may not be one of the UPOV working languages.
2. The various training seminars, organized by UPOV and its members for new and prospective members of the Union, are intended to provide a good basis for understanding the UPOV principles in DUS testing. However, the level of discussion within the TWPs is often very advanced and cannot be easily followed by those without substantial experience in DUS testing and associated discussions within UPOV circles. An important purpose of the TWP meetings is to explore ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of DUS testing, but it is important to ensure that guidance and developments in DUS testing involve active contributions from new participants. Increasingly, for example, the development of new Test Guidelines may rely on UPOV’s newest members because of their technical experience in the relevant species.

3. One means of helping to improve the understanding of UPOV principles is to document the DUS testing procedures in a clear and comprehensive way. The new revised General Introduction and its associated TGP documents will help to improve the accessibility of the procedures. In particular, the development of document TGP/7 “Development of Test Guidelines” should help to provide clear guidance in the drafting of Test Guidelines. However, whilst this approach, together with the various training programs, can help to improve the understanding of the UPOV system, it does not necessarily help with participation at the TWP meetings.

Proposal for Preparatory Workshops

4. It is proposed that a preparatory workshop, to be held before the TWP meeting, might help some of the delegates to participate more actively at the meeting. Such a preparatory workshop could provide participants with an opportunity to seek clarification of matters on the agenda in a less formal situation and with more time to resolve any language difficulties. The preparatory workshop could also offer the possibility for participants to indicate certain topics where they would like to make a contribution, but would normally feel inhibited by the pace of discussions. There would then be the possibility for the Chairman to ensure that the participant is given a clear opportunity to speak on the issues at the appropriate time. Alternatively, if preferred, contributions to be made at the meeting might be done so through the Chairman or the Office of the Union (hereinafter referred to as “the Office”).

5. It is suggested that, for practical and economic reasons, the preparatory workshops would be organized for the Sunday immediately preceding the relevant TWP meeting. Invitations to this preparatory workshop would be sent with the invitation to the relevant TWP meeting. The session would be organized by the Office but, to ensure the session was most effective, the Chairman of the relevant TWP would always be encouraged to attend. In addition, other experienced participants would be encouraged to attend if they could provide particular help in linguistic or technical matters. It is proposed that the Office should seek to organize such workshops for all the TWP meetings in 2002 and report back to the Technical Committee at its thirty-ninth session in Spring 2003.

6. The Technical Committee is invited to comment on the proposal presented in this document.

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