

Technical Committee

TC/55/INF/3

**Fifty-Fifth Session
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VARIETY DESCRIPTION DATABASES

Document prepared by the Office of the Union

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this document is to report on developments concerning variety description databases since the 2018 session of the Technical Committee (TC).

2. The following abbreviations are used in this document:

- TC: Technical Committee
- TC-EDC: Enlarged Editorial Committee
- TWA: Technical Working Party for Agricultural Crops
- TWC: Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs
- TWF: Technical Working Party for Fruit Crops
- TWO: Technical Working Party for Ornamental Plants and Forest Trees
- TWV: Technical Working Party for Vegetables
- TWPs: Technical Working Parties

3. The structure of this document is as follows:

BACKGROUND	1
DEVELOPMENTS AT THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE IN 2018	2
DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE 2018 SESSION OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE	2
Technical Working Parties	2

BACKGROUND

4. At its forty-fifth session, held in Geneva from March 30 to April 1, 2009, the TC noted from the developments reported in document TC/45/9 “Publication of Variety Descriptions” that members of the Union were developing databases containing morphological and/or molecular data and, where considered appropriate, were collaborating in the development of databases for the management of variety collections, particularly on a regional basis. The TC agreed that it could be beneficial to offer the possibility for members of the Union to report on that work in a coherent way to the TC, the TWPs and the BMT. On that basis, the TC agreed to replace the agenda item “Publication of variety descriptions” with an item for “Variety description databases” on the agendas of the forthcoming sessions of the TC, TWPs and the BMT. In that respect, it recalled the importance of the list of criteria for consideration for the use of descriptions obtained from different locations and sources as set out in document TC/45/9, paragraph 3. The TC also agreed that the information presented would not need to be related to the publication of descriptions (see document TC/45/16 “Report”, paragraph 173).

5. Developments prior to the 2018 session of the TC are presented in document TC/54/9 “Variety description databases”.

DEVELOPMENTS AT THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE IN 2018

6. The TC considered document TC/54/9 “Varieties description databases” (see document TC/54/31 “Report”, paragraphs 317 to 322).
7. The TC noted the reports by Austria (Durum wheat), the European Union (Potato), France (Peach) and the Netherlands (Rose) on the existence of databases containing morphological and/or molecular data.
8. The TC considered the type of information that should be collected on existing databases containing morphological and/or molecular data for inclusion in the GENIE database, according to available resources for the modification of the GENIE database
9. The TC agreed with the TWF that that the initial step before building any database should be to agree on the information to be shared, the format to exchange and store the information.
10. The TC agreed with the proposal by the BMT that, as a first step, discussions on databases should address the issues of how to overcome ownership matters, confidentiality, access to data and material, authorization for work to be performed and availability of results and information to partners, as reported in document TC/54/9, paragraph 19.
11. The TC recalled that the Office of the Union had been requested collect information on the type of information that should be collected on existing databases containing morphological and/or molecular data for inclusion in the GENIE database, according to available resources for the modification of the GENIE database. The TC agreed that this would not be a priority until further clarification had been received on the situation concerning confidentiality and accessibility of information in such databases.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE 2018 SESSION OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Technical Working Parties

12. In 2018, the TWF held its session after the session of the Technical Committee. The TWF considered document TWP/2/2 “Variety description databases” and noted the developments reported in the document (see document TWF/49/12 “Report”, paragraph 94).
13. At their sessions in 2019, the TWO, TWV, TWF and TWA, considered document TWP/3/2 “Variety description databases” (see documents TWO/51/12 “Report”, paragraphs 90 to 92; TWV/53/14 Rev. “Revised Report”, paragraphs 110 to 112; TWF/50/13 “Report”, paragraphs 116 to 118; and TWA/48/9 “Report”, paragraphs 101 to 103).
14. The TWO, TWV, TWF and TWA noted that the TC, at its fifty-fourth session, had agreed with the TWF that the initial step before building any database should be to agree on the information to be shared and the format to exchange and store the information.
15. The TWO, TWV, TWF and TWA noted that the TC, at its fifty-fourth session, had agreed with the proposal by the BMT that, as a first step, discussions on databases should address the issues of how to overcome ownership matters, confidentiality, access to data and material, authorization for work to be performed and availability of results and information to partners.
16. Developments at the thirty-seventh session of the TWC, to be held in Hangzhou, China, from October 14 to 16, 2019, and at the eighteenth session of the BMT, to be held in Hangzhou, China, from October 16 to 18, 2019, will be reported as an Addendum to this document.

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