

Technical Committee**TC/58/12****Fifty-Eighth Session
Geneva, October 24 and 25, 2022****Original:** English
Date: October 6, 2022**VARIETY DESCRIPTION DATABASES***Document prepared by the Office of the Union**Disclaimer: this document does not represent UPOV policies or guidance***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The purpose of this document is to report on developments concerning variety description databases and invite members of the Union to report on work concerning the development of databases containing morphological and/or molecular data.

2. Matters concerning the development of a platform for UPOV member databases containing variety description information are presented in document TC/58/8 "Cooperation in Examination".

3. The TC is invited to:

(a) consider whether to invite the Office of the Union explore possibilities to make information about webpages with variety descriptions available on the UPOV website; and

(b) recall the invitation for members of the Union to report to the TC and TWPs on work concerning the development of databases containing morphological and/or molecular data.

4. The following abbreviations are used in this document:

BMT: Working Group on Biochemical and Molecular Techniques, and DNA-Profiling in Particular
 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
 TWM: Technical Working Party on Testing Methods and Techniques
 TWO: Technical Working Party for Ornamental Plants and Forest Trees
 TWV: Technical Working Party for Vegetables
 TWPs: Technical Working Parties

5. The structure of this document is as follows:

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BACKGROUND

6. At its forty-fifth session¹, 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, and reproduced below. 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).

“3. At its forty-third session, held in Geneva, from March 26 to 28, 2007, the Technical Committee (TC) agreed the list of criteria for consideration by the Technical Working Parties (TWPs) for the use of descriptions obtained from different locations and sources as follows:

- “(a) to consider the species for which they see a real interest in creating an international database with variety descriptions;
- “(b) to specify the aim and benefits expected;
- “(c) to select the characteristics for which descriptions should be published;
- “(d) to specify for each characteristic the degree of harmonization already achieved or aimed at (in the latter case, to specify if actions should be planned in order to improve the level of harmonization: ring tests, revision of the description of the way of observation in the guideline, ...);
- “(e) to study the pertinence of a “regional approach”, rather than an “international approach” (to consider groups of countries and to compare descriptions within those groups only);
- “(f) to propose minimum distances when making comparisons of data, for the relevant characteristics;
- “(g) to list the countries which would contribute to the publication;
- “(h) to consider the type of access (free or restricted to the contributors); and
- “(i) to consider the cost of any project.”

7. Following the decision by the TC, at its forty-fifth session, it is recalled that members of the Union are invited to report to TC and TWPs on work concerning the development of databases containing morphological and/or molecular data.

DEVELOPMENTS AT THE TECHNICAL WORKING PARTIES AT THEIR SESSIONS IN 2022

8. At their sessions in 2022, the TWV², TWA³, TWO⁴, TWF⁵ and TWM⁶ considered document TWP/6/2 “Variety description databases” (see documents TWV/56/22 “Report”, paragraphs 32 to 38; TWA/51/11 “Report”, paragraphs 48 to 50; TWO/54/6 “Report”, paragraphs 49 to 51; TWF/53/14 “Report”, paragraphs 38 to 41; and TWM/1/26 “Report”, paragraphs 70 to 80).

9. The TWPs noted the reports made at the TWPs in 2021 on databases containing morphological and/or molecular data. The TWPs noted the invitation for members of the Union to report to the TWPs on work concerning the development of databases containing morphological and/or molecular data.

¹ held in Geneva from March 30 to April 1, 2009

² at its fifty-sixth session, held via electronic means, from April 18 to 22, 2022

³ at its fifty-first session, hosted by the United Kingdom and held via electronic means, from May 23 to 27, 2022

⁴ at its fifty-fourth session, , hosted by Germany held via electronic means, from June 13 to 17, 2022

⁵ at its fifty-third session, held via electronic means, from July 11 to 15, 2022

⁶ at its first session, held via electronic means, from September 19 to 23, 2022

10. The TWV, at its fifty-sixth session, received a presentation on “The source of variety descriptions in the Netherlands” from an expert from the Netherlands. A copy of the presentation is provided in document TWV/56/11. The TWV noted that variety descriptions from the Netherlands were made publicly available on the following website: <https://nederlandsrassenregister.nl/>.

11. The TWV noted that the following UPOV members also published variety descriptions and/or provided information on protected varieties at the following directions:

- Australian PBR database: http://pericles.ipaustralia.gov.au/pbr_db/
- Brazil: https://sistemas.agricultura.gov.br/snpc/cultivarweb/cultivares_protegidas.php
- Canada: <https://inspection.canada.ca/plant-varieties/plant-breeders-rights/varieties/eng/1300463863953/1300463978655>
- European Union: <https://online.plantvarieties.eu/publicSearch>
- France: <https://www.geves.fr/catalogue-france/>

12. The TWV noted that Argentina and Germany provided variety descriptions upon request.

13. The TWV agreed with the TWF, at its fifty-second session, that the Office of the Union should be invited to check whether the information on webpages with variety descriptions could be made available on the UPOV website.

14. The TWF, at its fifty-third session, noted that Spain could provide variety descriptions upon request from members.

15. *The TC is invited to:*

(a) consider whether to invite the Office of the Union explore possibilities to make information about webpages with variety descriptions available on the UPOV website; and

(b) recall the invitation for members of the Union to report to the TC and TWPs on work concerning the development of databases containing morphological and/or molecular data.

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