

Technical Committee

TC/58/9

**Fifty-Eighth Session
Geneva, October 24 and 25, 2022**

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INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE AND THE TECHNICAL WORKING PARTIES

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 measures to increase participation in the work of the Technical Working Parties (TWPs) and Technical Committee (TC), including the use of meetings via electronic means.

2. The TC is invited to:

(a) note the satisfaction survey conducted with participants at the hybrid meeting of the TWA, as presented in Annex I to this document;

(b) note the participation at TWP sessions in 2022, as presented in Annex II to this document;

(c) review the measures implemented for the TWP sessions in 2022;

(d) review the Plans for 2023; and

(e) note that the outcome of the survey on the needs of members and observers in relation to TWPs is considered in document TC/58/18 “Improving the technical support provided by UPOV for DUS examination”.

3. The structure of this document is as follows:

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4. 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
- TWM: Technical Working Party on Testing Methods and Techniques
- TWO: Technical Working Party for Ornamental Plants and Forest Trees
- TWPs: Technical Working Parties
- TWV: Technical Working Party for Vegetables

PARTICIPATION AT TWP MEETINGS BY ELECTRONIC MEANS

5. As a part of the measures taken in response to the COVID 19 pandemic, the TWV, TWO and TWF sessions in 2022 were held by electronic means. The TWM session is scheduled to be held via electronic means in September 2022.

6. The TWA held its session in 2022 as a hybrid meeting in Cambridge, United Kingdom. A satisfaction survey was conducted with on-site and online participants. The results of the TWA participants satisfaction survey are presented in Annex I to this document.

7. An analysis of the level of participation at the TWP sessions in 2022 is presented as Annex II to this document.

8. *The TC is invited to note:*

(a) the satisfaction survey conducted with participants at the hybrid meeting of the TWA, as presented in Annex I to this document; and

(b) the participation at TWP sessions in 2022, as presented in Annex II to this document.

MEASURES AGREED BY THE TC FOR PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION AT TWP MEETINGS

9. The TC, at its fifty-seventh session, agreed a series of measures for physical and virtual participation at TWP meetings, as reproduced in Annex III to this document (see document TC/57/25 "Report", paragraphs 61 to 66).

10. The agreed measures were implemented for the TWP sessions in 2022 and are reported in the following paragraphs for information and for possible revision by the TC.

(a) Virtual preparatory workshops prior to the TWPs

11. Three preparatory webinars were held from April 12 to 14, 2022, with three parts: (1) short introductions of UPOV guidance presented by the Office of the Union and experts from members; (2) panel discussions on experiences from members about the topics covered; (3) questions and answers session.

12. The number of participants during the webinars and visualizations of the video recordings is provided below:

Webinar title:	Number of participants during live webinar:	Views of video recordings*:
How to organize DUS examination with information provided by the applicant	157	47
Disease resistance and physiological characteristics in DUS examination	125	27
Data processing techniques in DUS examination	117	46

* as of July 11, 2022

13. Further details on the preparatory webinars are provided in document TC/58/14 "Preparatory Workshops".

(b) Comments and questions on TWP meeting documents to be provided in advance of the sessions

14. Participants registered to TWP meetings were invited to provide comments on documents and Test Guidelines up to two weeks in advance of the respective meetings. The comments provided were compiled and distributed one week prior to meetings. The comments were addressed during the meetings, under the respective agenda items.

15. A large number of comments on Test Guidelines were provided in this procedure. They accounted for the majority of the comments provided in advance of the meetings. Few comments were submitted using the web-based TG template during the period of drafting of the Test Guidelines (three months prior to the meetings).

(c) Alternating one year of physical meeting with one year of virtual meeting

16. In 2022, the TWA held a physical (hybrid) meeting while the TWV, TWO and TWF held virtual meetings. The TWF and TWV have proposed to hold physical meetings in 2023. The TWA and TWO have proposed to meet virtually.

17. The TWM will hold its first meeting via electronic means and will assess the need for a physical meeting in future.

(d) Electronic participation at physical TWP sessions

18. The possibility of electronic participation was provided at the 2022 session of the TWA, held in Cambridge, United Kingdom. Online participants had the opportunity to attend the TWA session, except for the technical visit and the break-out groups organized during the discussion session on molecular techniques.

19. A satisfaction survey of online and on-site participants at the TWA session is provided as Annex I to this document.

20. For the TWP sessions to be held physically in 2023, the TWP host will coordinate with the Office of the Union to provide a meeting platform for electronic participation in at least the Test Guidelines subgroup meetings. This measure should enable participation of crop experts otherwise not attending TWP sessions.

(e) Technical Working Party on Testing Methods and Techniques (TWM)

21. The Technical Working Party on Testing Methods and Techniques (TWM) will hold its first meeting via virtual means from September 19 to 24, 2022. Comments from the TWM will be presented as an addendum to this document.

(f) Reporting and review of measures

22. This document provides a report on the measures adopted for review and consideration by the TC, at its fifty-eighth session (see document TC/57/25 "Report", paragraphs 65 and 66).

23. The TC, at its fifty-seventh session, agreed to request the Office of the Union to conduct a survey on the needs of members and observers in relation to TWPs and report to the TC at its fifty-eighth session. The outcome of the survey is considered in document TC/58/18 "Improving the technical support provided by UPOV for DUS examination".

24. *The TC is invited to:*

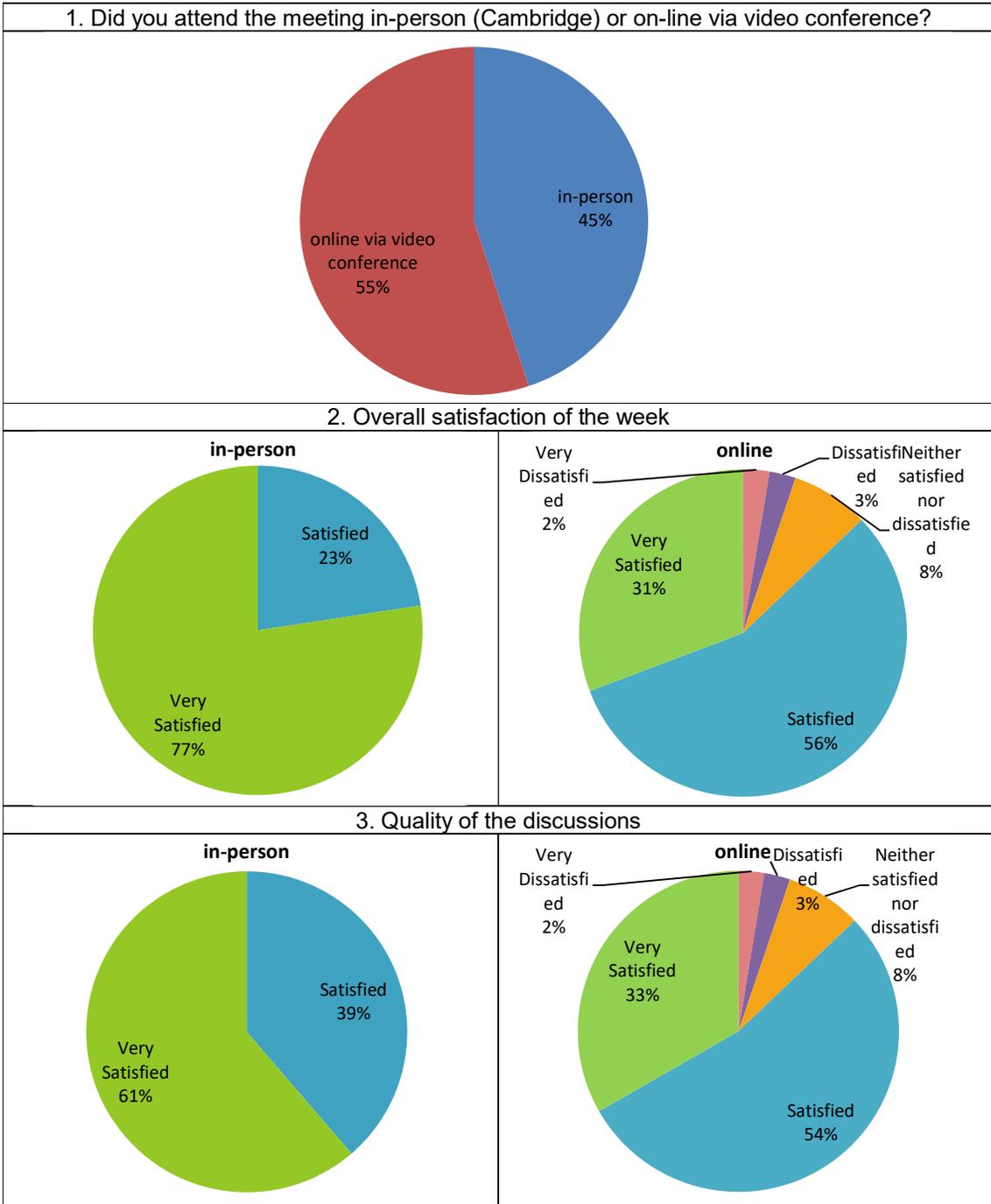
(a) review the measures implemented for the TWP sessions in 2022;

(b) review the Plans for 2023; and

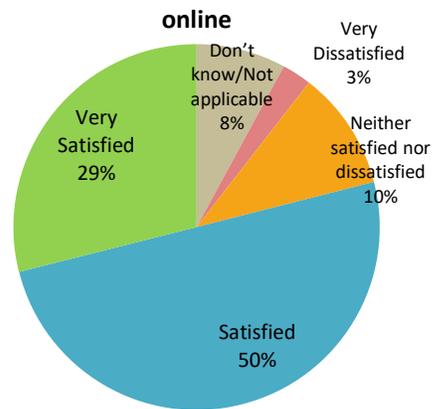
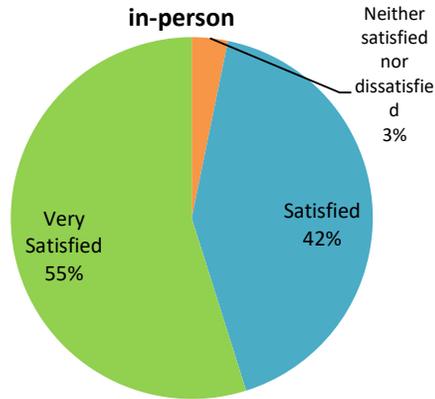
(c) note that the outcome of the survey on the needs of members and observers in relation to TWPs is considered in document TC/58/18 "Improving the technical support provided by UPOV for DUS examination".

[Annexes follow]

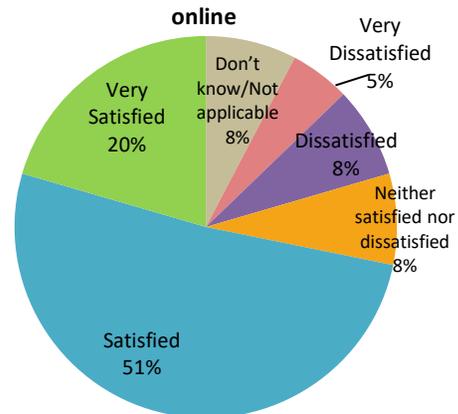
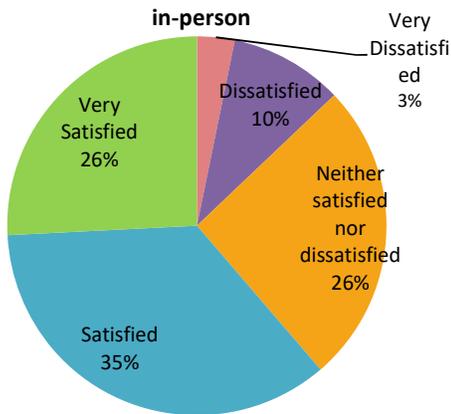
TWA HYBRID MEETING PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION SURVEY



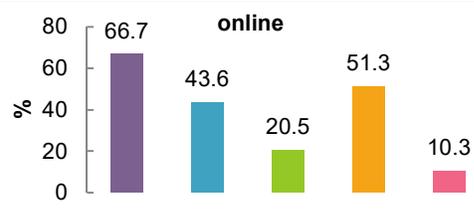
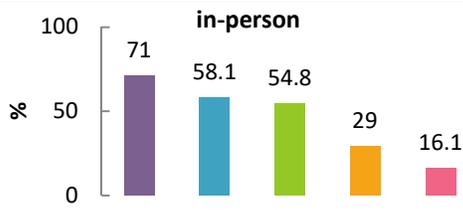
4. Quality of the Test Guidelines discussions



5. Quality of the interaction with online participants / other participants



6. What was the main purpose of your participation?

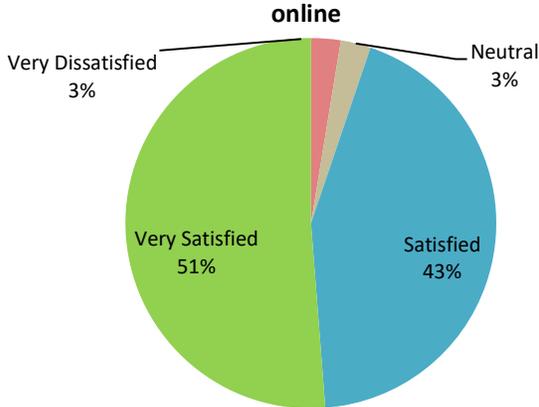


- discuss Test Guidelines
- discuss meeting documents
- discuss cooperation with other participants
- training
- other (please specify)

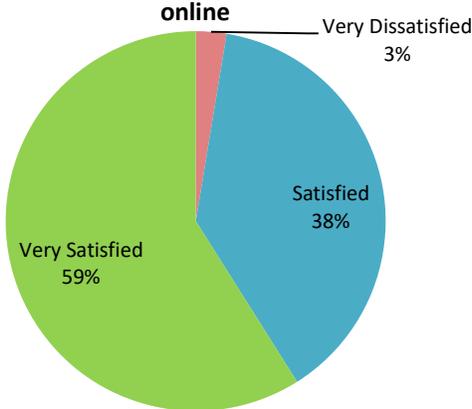
- Presentation
- as part of host delegation
- networking, building knowledge
- technical visit
- to gain experience of another working party - I normally attend TWO

- discuss Test Guidelines
- discuss meeting documents
- discuss cooperation with other participants
- training
- other (please specify)

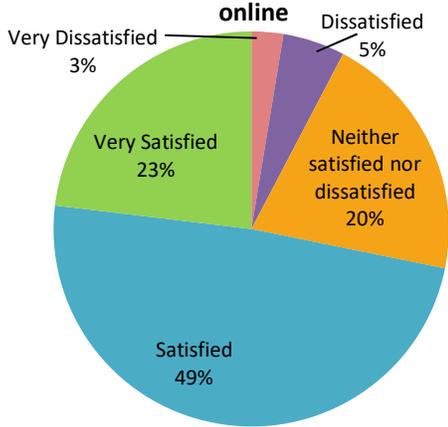
7. (online participants only) Quality of video conference tool (Zoom)



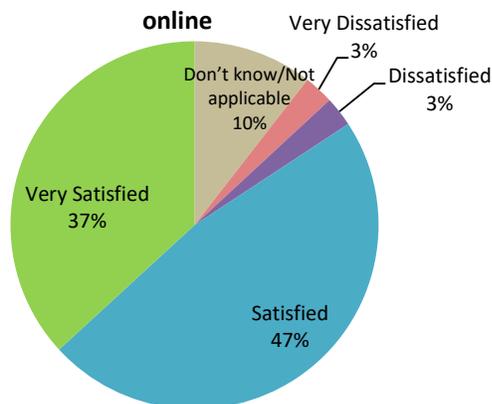
8. (online participants only) Access to the meetings on-line



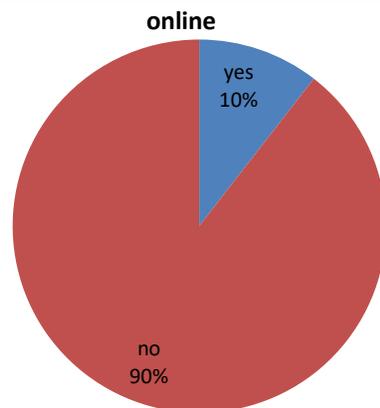
9. (online participants only) Schedule of sessions [time zones]



10. (online participants only) Facility to take the floor to make comments

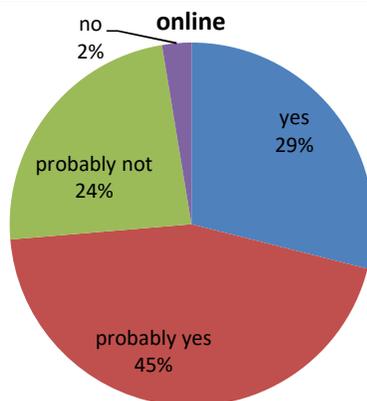


11. (online participants only) Did you encounter any technical problems?



- DUS Testing need theory, procedures, tools and database. But UPOV didn't provide.
- Internet problem
- At one point I could not see the presentation even though I could hear well. I exited the meeting and re-entered, after which the system worked well again.
- description database and minimum distance

12. (online participants only) Will you be able to attend TWP meetings in person in the future?



Do you have any additional comments?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person participation was key to finalize discussions for Soybean TG. Others factors also contributed like change of LE and greater cooperation amongst industry. Yet, there was still enough points of contention that only an in person coordination would have allowed for finalization of this TG. So, perhaps UPOV can find ways to convey to key participants for topics in discussion of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep two types of participation. Make more members participation. • Try to add more presentations. • Hybrid meeting much better than just a VC meeting as there was more discussion. Chair did a good job of making sure VC attendees included. • Considering the travel time and cost, I think online participation is desirable for me. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

<p>the most crucial importance of their in person participation. On line opportunity is still a good option for awareness of topics in discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Face-to-face discussions were very important in reaching agreement on Test Guidelines, meeting documents and sharing experiences.• On site facilitated engagement in discussions• It was really great to finally being able to meet in person with other participants. There were many corridor meetings, during breakfast, coffee breaks, lunch and dinners. We made more progress discussing the TG's and the meeting documents than if it had been done online only. I hope that all future TWP's can be organized in a hybrid fashion. It would be the best of both worlds: higher participation and more and better quality discussion.• great venue, well organised and conducted• Enjoyed meeting colleagues in person again• I thought the hybrid arrangements worked very well and the quality of the technology and arrangements were impressive• The physical meetings is more active and meaningful as participants get to have side meeting during break to see how to improve performance in their respective activities• That was very nice to have possibility to meet the other participant in reality. The advantage of being able to meet participants during the week allow us to go farer than visioconference. Few guidelines points could be settled by means of discussions outside the sessions...• The in-person interaction with participants during coffee/lunch breaks is extremely important. e.g. to clarify matters (e.g. with regard to hemp/cannabis guideline). We would not have been able to discuss this guideline as effectively without those additional discussions. I missed several (European) colleagues that usually are present in-person. We should be careful that managers do not allow colleagues to travel for financial reasons. (e.g. online attendance is cheaper and just as useful. Therefore, being present in person at working parties should have an additional value. On the other hand, it should be acknowledged that for other participants this may be the only way to attend these meetings. This year, the hybrid character of the meeting was technically dealt with perfectly. However, for other organising countries it might become a bit of a challenge. All in all, this meeting was VERY successful, and the importance of the in-person part cannot be overstressed. Personal contacts are essential for cooperation!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UPOV is doing a very good work for breeders and farmers• We had two participants in the meeting, the first was in person in Cambridge and I was online as the second participant. In my opinion, a hybrid meeting is the best solution for these kinds of meetings. The main participant is at the meeting in person (small talk during breaks is important not only for the meeting but also for further cooperation) and the others have the opportunity to watch everything online.• The hybrid meeting should be continue in the future to provide a room for those who fail to participate physically to enable them to participate fully.• I missed the opportunity to meet colleagues and discuss matters concerning co-operation etc. I really hope that I can attend next meeting in person.• If there was no possibility to attend the meeting virtually this year, I would not participate due to my agenda. This was a good opportunity to follow the meeting (2 days) and discover TWA meetings.• Thank you for this possibility. Our office is sparing money and it is difficult to get permission to travel abroad. Therefore it is valuable to have the possibility participate online, though as a long time member I know the fact that participating in person has it advantages with the talks in coffee breaks and also outside meeting room.• It would be nice if the lead expert was visible to the online participants while discussing their particular test guideline. Also, the audio system should be set up so that the live participants have to turn their microphone on if they wish to partake in the discussion as currently the on line participants can hear the personal discussions amongst the live participants.• keep the meetings in hybrid format• Thank you so much for my participation in the Fifty-First Session of the Technical Working Party• Virtue meeting is good but sometimes we use to encounter internet connectivity problem caused by existing network system in our premises. Anyway, hybrid meeting should be continued in future meetings. should be.• to develop more platforms for UPOV member to access freely.• Meeting well organized• All UPOV meetings should have the option of online participation.• We are grateful for the opportunity to participate! NW!
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ANNEX II

PARTICIPATION AT TWP SESSIONS IN 2022

Table 1: Total number of individual participants at TWPs from 2015 to 2022¹

	TWA	TWF	TWO	TWV	TWC	BMT
2015	56	44	63	62	18	no session
2016	68	49	53	45	34	107
2017	54	36	30	58	31	49
2018	64	40	no session	46	28	55
2019	42	60	28	58	44	65
Average 2015-2019	57	46	44	54	31	69
2020 (e-meeting)	96	101	59	81	44	119
2021 (e-meeting)	142	109	96	100	54	116
2022 (e-meeting)	127 ²	96	82	97	discontinued	discontinued
Change (%) ³	+124%	+110%	+89%	+80%	+74%	+68%

¹ The total number of participants from members of the Union and observers is considered.

² Hybrid meeting: participants on-site = 42; participants online = 85

³ TWA, TWF, TWO and TWV: Change (%) comparing 2022 against average 2015-2019;
TWC and BMT: Change (%) comparing 2021 against the average 2015-2019

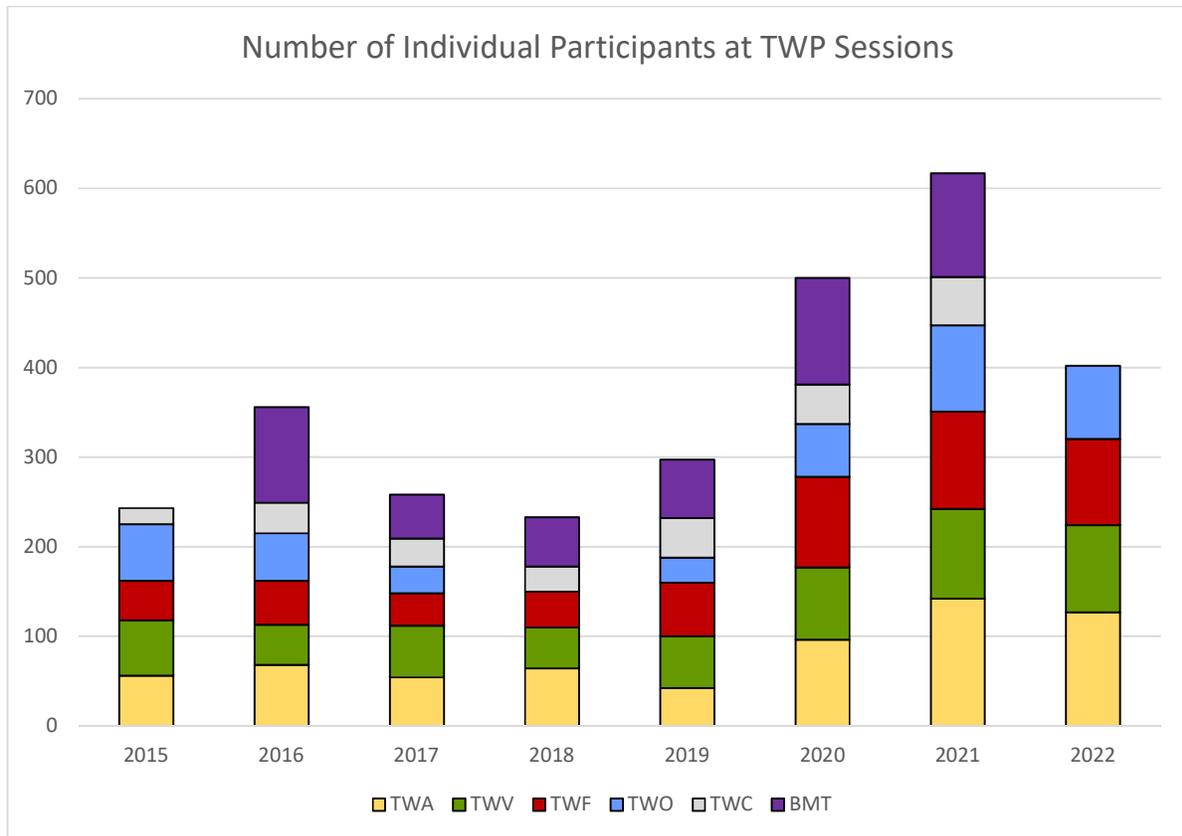
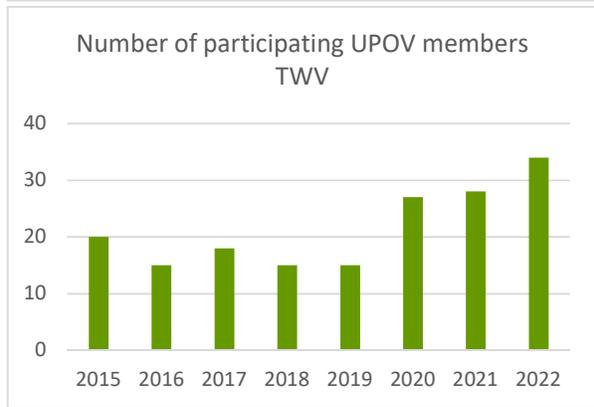
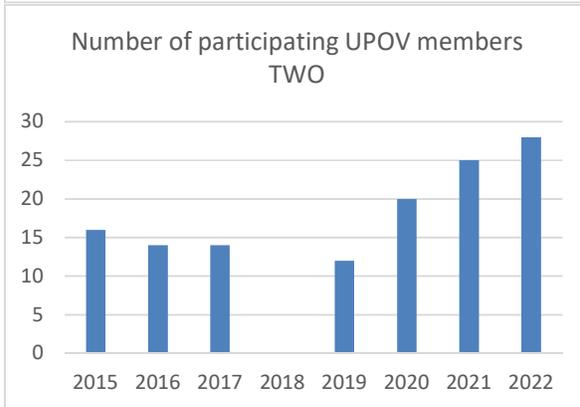
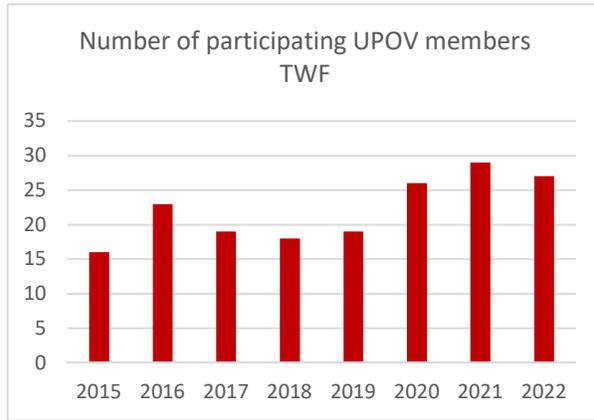
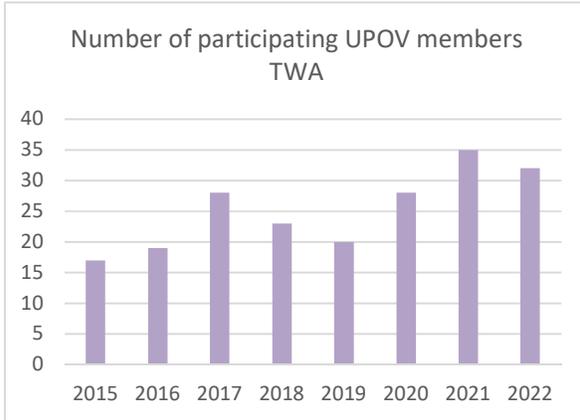


Table 2: Total number of members of the Union represented at TWP from 2015 to 2022

	TWA	TWF	TWO	TWV	TWC	BMT
2015	17	16	16	20	7	No session
2016	19	23	14	15	5	12
2017	28	19	14	18	9	19
2018	23	18	No session	15	15	18
2019	20	19	12	15	16	18
Average 2015-2019	21	19	14	17	10	17
2020	28	26	20	27	19	26
2021	35	29	25	28	23	32
2022	32	27	28	34	discontinued	discontinued
Change (%)**	+50%	+42%	+100%	+105%	+121%	+91%

* Hybrid meeting

** TWA, TWF, TWO and TWV: Change (%) comparing 2022 against average 2015-2019;
TWC and BMT: Change (%) comparing 2021 against the average 2015-2019



[Annex III follows]

ANNEX III

MEASURES FOR PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION AT TWP MEETINGS AGREED BY THE TC AT ITS FIFTY-SEVENTH SESSION

The TC, at its fifty-seventh session, agreed the following measures for physical and virtual participation at TWP meetings (extract from document TC/57/25 "Report", paragraphs 64 to 66):

(a) Virtual preparatory workshops prior to the TWPs

- The virtual preparatory workshops would be organized as a series of webinars.
- The content of the virtual preparatory workshops would be agreed by the TC under agenda item "Preparatory Workshops".
- The content would be organized according to themes (e.g. drafting of Test Guidelines, molecular techniques in DUS testing, DUS testing methods, image analysis).
- Arrangements for the webinars would be finalized by the Office of the Union in coordination with the chairpersons of the TC and TWPs (e.g. dates, number of webinars required to cover content, speakers and panelists).
- The virtual preparatory workshops would replace the preparatory workshops held before each individual TWP. The series of webinars would open for experts from all TWPs.
- The webinars would be recorded and maintained online until replaced by an updated version. The Office of the Union would organize a webpage to host the videos (e.g. UPOV YouTube channel).

(b) Comments and questions on TWP meeting documents to be provided in advance of the sessions

- Participants would be invited to provide written comments on meeting documents in advance of the sessions, in the same way as in 2020 and 2021.
- The compilation of written comments would be circulated to registered participants one week prior to the session.
- Comments received in advance would be included in the discussions on the respective agenda item during the session.

(c) Alternating one year of physical meeting with one year of virtual meeting

- The TWP sessions would be scheduled one year as a virtual meeting and the following year as a physical meeting (e.g. 2023: virtual; 2024: physical).
- There would be at least two virtual TWP meetings in a calendar year, thereby ensuring that experts would be able to participate electronically in all discussions on Test Guidelines, TGP and TWP documents.
- Technical visits via virtual means: there would be an open invitation for any UPOV member to make a presentation on aspects of their testing systems through presentations, videos or live online demonstrations (e.g. DUS examination for particular crops, testing procedures, image analysis, trial layout).
- The timing of a particular virtual TWP session would be discussed by the TWP when planning the agenda for the forthcoming session.

(d) Electronic participation at physical TWP sessions

- The TWP host or the Office of the Union should provide a meeting platform for electronic participation in Test Guidelines subgroup meetings at physical TWP sessions. This measure should enable participation of crop experts otherwise not attending TWP sessions.

- The hosts of TWP physical meetings should participate in deciding how to organize virtual participation in Test Guidelines subgroup discussions.

(e) Technical Working Party on Testing Methods and Techniques (TWM)

- The TWM will meet electronically in 2022 and will assess the need to meet physically in the future, according to the range of topics to be covered.

(f) Reporting and review of measures

The TC agreed to invite the Office of the Union to report on the measures adopted for review and consideration by the TC, at its fifty-eighth session.

The TC agreed to request the Office of the Union to conduct a survey on the needs of members and observers in relation to TWPs and report to the TC at its fifty-eighth session.

[End of Annex III and of document]