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INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS

GENEVA

TECHNICAL WORKING PARTY
ON
AUTOMATION AND COMPUTER PROGRAMS

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REPLIES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE USE OF THE GAÏA SOFTWARE

Document prepared by the Office of the Union with information provided by experts from France

1.   During its twenty-first session in Tjele, Denmark, from June 10 to 13, 2003, the Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs (hereinafter referred to as "the TWC") discussed the calculation of phenotypic distances based upon document TWC/21/4, presented by experts from France. The TWC agreed that the Office of the Union should issue a questionnaire to all recipients of the GAÏA software, requesting information on the crops to which the software was being applied, with the outcome to be reported to the TWC at its twenty-second session. On February 2004, the developers of the GAÏA software, the *Groupe d'Étude des Variétés et des Semences* (GEVES) from France, circulated a questionnaire to the recipients of the software requesting comments and suggestions. Since the questionnaire issued by GEVES requested the same information as that sought in the Office of the Union questionnaire, it was decided, in conjunction with the Chairman of the TWC and the experts from GEVES, that a document should be prepared containing the information collected by GEVES.

2.   The following countries replied to the questionnaire issued by GEVES: Croatia, Estonia, Netherlands, Portugal and United Kingdom.

3.   Estonia and Portugal had not tried the software and Portugal had asked for further guidance on how to use it.

4.   Croatia, Netherlands and United Kingdom sent the following information and comments:

Croatia:

5.   The GAÏA software was used in official variety trials for maize, winter wheat, winter and spring barley. Croatia declared the successful use of GAÏA for the above-mentioned species for the estimation of phenotypic distinctness between varieties (for comparison of varieties in the process of distinctness assessment) and as a basis for the management of variety collections.

6.   The experts were satisfied with the results but noted the following problems:

    (a)   when forming a database and importing data about species, varieties and characteristics (level of expression, and weighing matrix), it was necessary to define a session where the parameters required for the comparison would be stored;

    (b)   the comparison of one variety with all other varieties (candidate varieties and varieties in the reference collection) was done in a very short time –in a matter of seconds. They found that the results were very easy to view by displaying them as tree view and tab (table) view. However, in the latest version of the GAÏA software there were problems to see the tree view – AREA C; the option "Show" - to click "the qualitative results" or "the electrophoretic results" was missing, and it was not possible to see results of qualitative comparisons for the current two varieties which had been previously selected in AREA B in the case of a NON-distinct variety.

7.   In the meantime, a comprehensive reply has been sent by experts from GEVES to Croatia.

Netherlands:

8.   The GAÏA software was used in the case of lettuce. The experts from the Netherlands noted that they had experienced some problems. In particular the understanding, loading and running of the GAÏA software took longer than had been previously estimated and finally the trial was stopped due to lack of time. Further explanations were not considered to be necessary but time availability was mentioned as the missing factor to be able to use the GAÏA software.

United Kingdom:

9.   The United Kingdom considered that it was not necessary to add further information to the previous exchange between that country and France. It expressed its interest to pursue the use of the GAÏA software more thoroughly and in its local conditions, in particular in conjunction with the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO).

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