



TWC/31/6

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INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS

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TECHNICAL WORKING PARTY ON AUTOMATION AND COMPUTER PROGRAMS

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VARIETY DESCRIPTION DATABASES

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1. The purpose of this document is to report on developments concerning variety description databases.
2. The following abbreviations are used in this document:
 - CAJ: Administrative and Legal Committee
 - 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
 - TWPs: Technical Working Parties
 - TWV: Technical Working Party for Vegetables

3. The structure of this document is as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| BACKGROUND | 2 |
| DEVELOPMENTS IN 2012..... | 2 |
| Technical Committee | 2 |
| Technical Working Party for Agricultural Crops..... | 2 |
| Technical Working Party for Vegetables | 2 |
| Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs..... | 2 |
| Technical Working Party on Fruit Crops..... | 3 |
| Technical Working Party for Ornamental Plants and Forest Trees..... | 3 |
| DEVELOPMENTS IN 2013..... | 3 |
| Technical Committee | 3 |

BACKGROUND

4. At its forty-fifth session, held in Geneva from March 30 to April 1, 2009, the Technical Committee (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 Technical Working Parties (TWPs) and the Working Group on Biochemical and Molecular Techniques and DNA Profiling in Particular (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).

DEVELOPMENTS IN 2012

Technical Committee

5. The TC, at its forty-eighth session held in Geneva from March 26 to 28, 2012, considered document TC/48/9 "Variety Description Databases". The TC noted the information provided on variety description databases at the sessions of the TWA, TWC, TWV, TWO, TWF and BMT, held in 2011 (see document TC/48/22 "Report on the Conclusions", paragraphs 114 and 115).

6. The TC requested the experts from France to continue their work on grouping characteristics and on the development of a database containing Pea variety descriptions of members of the Union, and to report on their work to the TWPs at their sessions in 2012 and to the TC at its forty-ninth session (see document TC/48/22 "Report on the Conclusions", paragraph 116).

Technical Working Party for Agricultural Crops

7. The TWA, at its forty-first session, held in Angers, France, from May 21 to 25, 2012, noted the information contained in document TWA/41/6 "Variety Description Databases" and in the presentation on a method to evaluate different grouping characteristics for Pea, provided by an expert from France, included in document TWA/41/6 Add. The TWA agreed that the work on the project for the Pea database should be continued and that it would be a good example for the development of similar databases for other crops. It also agreed that it would be a good basis for future revision of the Test Guidelines for Pea in respect of grouping characteristics (see document TWA/41/34 "Report" paragraph 52).

Technical Working Party for Vegetables

8. The TWV, at its forty-sixth session, held near the city of Venlo, Netherlands, from June 11 to 15, 2012, noted the information contained in document TWV/46/6 "Variety Description Databases" and in the presentation provided by an expert from France, which was included in document TWV/46/6 Add. The expert from France presented a method to evaluate different grouping characteristics for Pea. The TWV congratulated the expert from France for his work and the useful results contained in the presentation. The TWV agreed that the work on the project for the Pea database should be continued and that it would be a good example for the development of similar databases for other crops. It also agreed that it would be a good basis for future revision of the Test Guidelines for Pea in respect of grouping characteristics (see document TWV/46/41 "Report" paragraph 86).

Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs

9. The TWC, at its thirtieth session, held in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, from June 26 to 29, 2012, noted the information provided in document TWC/30/6 "Variety Description Databases" and in a presentation prepared by an expert from France, as contained in document TWC/30/6 Add. The TWC agreed that the work on the project for the Pea Database should be continued and requested to receive information on further developments at its thirty-first session (see document TWC/30/41 "Report" paragraphs 66 and 67).

Technical Working Party on Fruit Crops

10. The TWF, at its forty-third session, held in city of Beijing, China, from July 30 to August 3, 2012, noted the information contained in documents TWF/43/6 "Variety Description Databases" and TWF/43/6 Add. The TWF requested the Office of the Union to check whether any data that was used in a previous similar study for apple could be made available (see document TWF/43/38 "Report" paragraphs 77 and 78).

Technical Working Party for Ornamental Plants and Forest Trees

11. The TWO, at its forty-fifth session, held in Jeju, Republic of Korea, from August 6 to 10, 2012, noted the information contained in documents TWO/45/6 "Variety Description Databases" and TWO/45/6 Add., including the presentation provided by an expert from France in the Annex to document TWO/45/6 Add. The TWO highlighted the importance of the study in the future harmonization of variety descriptions (see document TWO/45/37 "Report" paragraphs 49 and 50).

DEVELOPMENTS IN 2013

Technical Committee

12. The TC, at its forty-ninth session, held in Geneva from March 18 to 20, 2013, noted the developments on variety description databases, as set out in document TC/49/9, and received a presentation by Mr. François Boulineau (France) on "Reference Collection and grouping characteristics-example of the Pea species".

13. The TC, at its forty-ninth session, noted that the results of the study on Pea would be presented to the TWA and the TWV in order to:

- (i) select characteristics to be used as grouping characteristics according to their qualities (discriminating power, distortion, use);
- (ii) develop a procedure to improve the pea database; and
- (iii) consider making the pea database available to all examination offices.

14. The TC agreed that the results of the study should be presented to other TWPs for their comments on the approach for managing variety collections and noted that the TWF would consider the results of the model study on Apple, as presented in document TC/41/9 "Publication of Variety Descriptions" (see document TC/49/41 "Report on the Conclusions", paragraphs 100 to 103).

15. The results of the study on Pea are presented in document TWC/31/25 "Pea Database Study".

16. *The TWC is invited to:*

(a) note the developments on variety description databases; and

(b) note that a report on the Pea Database study will be presented in document TWC/31/25.

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