

Technical Working Party for Fruit Crops

TWF/55/2

Fifty-Fifth Session**Original:** English**Virtual meeting, June 3 to 6, 2024****Date:** June 17, 2024

REPORTS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION FROM MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS*Document prepared by the Office of the Union**Disclaimer: this document does not represent UPOV policies or guidance*

1. The Technical Committee (TC), at its forty-seventh session, held in Geneva from April 4 to 6, 2011, agreed to request the Office of the Union to invite experts to submit written reports to the Office of the Union in advance of the Technical Working Party (TWP) sessions in order that a document containing those reports could be prepared by the Office of the Union. The TC noted that TWP experts would be invited to make a brief oral summary of their written report at the session and would also be encouraged to make reports under the agenda item “Experiences with new types and species”, as appropriate. The TC also noted that TWP experts would have an opportunity to raise questions concerning matters of interest (see document TC/47/26 “Report on the Conclusions”, paragraphs 9 and 10).

2. Written reports were invited by the Office of the Union in Circular E-24/024 of March 4, 2024. The following reports were received (in alphabetical order):

- Members of the Union: Annexes I to VII: European Union, Germany, France, Japan, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand and South Africa

[Annexes follow]

EUROPEAN UNION

COMMUNITY PLANT VARIETY OFFICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (CPVO) STATISTICS AND ACTIVITIES

Statistics

CPVO applications decreased in 2023, with 2866 applications in total (previous year: 3196, -10.3%). The distribution between crop sectors was as follows:

- Ornamental, 1088 applications (38%), previous year (1267 applications, 40%),
- Agricultural, 841 applications (29.5%), previous year (1003 applications, 31%),
- Vegetable, 670 applications (23%), previous year (664 applications, 21%),
- Fruit, 267 applications (9.5%), previous year (262 applications, 8%).

The decrease in the number of applications was in the ornamental sector (-31% over 4 years) and in the agricultural (-29% in the past 2 years) is contrasted by a slight increase in application in the fruit sector last year (+5 applications; +1.9%).

In 2023, the CPVO Office granted 2719 titles for Community protection; 30 939 titles were in force by the end of the year. National authorities from all over the world regularly base their decisions on applications for CPVRs on technical examinations carried out on behalf of the CPVO (international cooperation, takeover of reports). In 2023, the CPVO provided 1266 technical reports to 38 countries (550 in 2022), among which 561 in the fruit sector. The five countries from which most requests emanated were United Kingdom, Morocco, Canada, Kenya, and Switzerland.

More statistics are available on the CPVO website: [Statistics | CPVO \(europa.eu\)](https://cpvo.europa.eu/statistics)

Administrative Council (AC)

The CPVO is supervised by an Administrative Council (AC) comprising representatives of the Member States and the European Commission and their alternates. In 2023, the members of the AC adopted the following:

- AC agreement for cooperation with Japan (MAFF) for the take-over of DUS reports of *Podocarpus macrophyllus* (Thunb.) Sweet, *Camellia sinensis* (L.) Kuntze, and several species of Mushrooms (*Flammulina velutipes* (Fr.) Sing, *Grifola frondosa* (Fr.) S. F. Gray, *Hypsizygus marmoreus* (Peck) Bigelow, *Lentinula edodes* (Berk.) Pegler, *Pleurotus eryngii* (DC.) Quél.).
- AC agreement for cooperation with Australia (Plant Breeder's Rights Office) for the take-over of DUS reports of a variety of *Musa acuminata* Colla – GM variety, 'QCAV4' resistant to Panama disease TR4.
- Agreement to set-up a working group to review of the CPVO Policy on Plant material submitted for DUS testing. The CPVO policy on the status of plant material used for DUS testing purposes was discussed within the CPVO meeting with examination offices in 2023 and should be approved by the AC in spring 2024.
- Creation of a denominations working group to address the need for inclusion of plant genetic resources in the CPVO's analysis of denomination proposals.
- Agreement on proposal to European Commission regarding the fee regulation: increase or new fees for examinations, appeals, nullities, objections and fee group merger (adopted; OJ L 147, 7.6.2023, p. 65-67)
- In the course of 2023, the following technical protocols were adopted by the AC:

kangaroo paw	<i>Anigozanthos</i> Labill.; <i>Macropidia fuliginosa</i> (Hook.) Druce	CPVO-TP/175/1
walnut	<i>Juglans regia</i> L.	CPVO/TP-125/1
anthurium	<i>Anthurium</i> Schott	CPVO/TP-086/1
potato	<i>Solanum tuberosum</i> L.	CPVO/TP-023/4
peach, nectarine	<i>Prunus persica</i> (L.) Batsch	CPVO/TP-053/2-Rev
berberis	<i>Berberis</i> L.; excluding <i>Berberis aquifolium</i> Pursh, <i>Berberis bea</i> Fortune, <i>Berberis japonica</i> (Thunb.) Spreng., <i>Berberis napaulensis</i> (DC.) Spreng., <i>Berberis oiwakensis</i> (Hayata) LaFerr., <i>Berberis pumila</i> Greene, <i>Berberis repens</i> Lindl., and hybrids between these species and other <i>Berberis</i> species	CPVO-TP/068/1
garlic	<i>Allium sativum</i> L.	CPVO/TP-162/2
kohlrabi	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> L. var. <i>gongylodes</i> L. (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> Kohlrabi Group)	CPVO/TP-065/2
leaf chicory	<i>Cichorium intybus</i> L. var. <i>foliosum</i> Hegi	CPVO/TP-154/2-Rev
apricot	<i>Prunus armeniaca</i> L., <i>Armeniaca vulgaris</i> Lam.	CPVO/TP-070/3

R&D projects

The Office finances a number of R&D projects; all reports of finalized R&D projects are published on the CPVO web site: <https://cpvo.europa.eu/en/about-us/what-we-do/research-and-development>

FRUIT SECTOR

Statistics

The table hereunder shows the 10 most important fruit crops over the last 5 years.

Species	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total (1995-2023)
<i>Prunus persica</i> (L.) Batsch	34	47	37	41	45	1166
<i>Fragaria x ananassa</i> Duchesne ex Rozier	53	48	48	50	25	866
<i>Malus domestica</i> Borkh.	23	28	21	23	19	665
<i>Vitis</i> L.	14	20	29	22	38	428
<i>Vaccinium</i> L.	20	37	31	34	19	352
<i>Prunus armeniaca</i> L.	10	8	5	4	10	341
<i>Rubus idaeus</i> L.	27	24	13	28	29	333
<i>Prunus salicina</i> Lindl.	8	7	6	3	8	166
<i>Prunus avium</i> (L.) L.	8	5	13	2	9	165
<i>Rubus</i> subg. <i>Rubus</i>	5	12	23	13	9	143
Total	202	236	226	220	211	

The fruit expert meeting (FEM)

The CPVO held its annual meeting with EU ornamental experts on 19/20 September 2023 in cooperation with the Spanish PVP office *Oficina Española de Variedades Vegetales* (OEVV) at the premises of the *Centro de Investigación y Tecnología Agroalimentaria de Aragón* (CITA). The meeting was attended by experts from

eleven examinations offices as well as by representatives of the breeder's organisations. The group discussed several DUS technical examination related topics - technical protocols (see list above), such as:

- Apple mutants: standard procedure for routine plant health tests on material submitted
- various aspects related to plant health matters
- the preparation of reports and variety descriptions
- the revision of the so-called Postponement of Testing Rules allowing applicants to delay the start of the technical examination under certain well-defined circumstances
- the revision of the general submission requirements
- the possibility to submit 2-years-old plants for the conduct technical examination.

The group visited the testing station and measures put in place to avoid the adverse effects of late frost on trials.

[Annex II follows]

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ANNEX II

GERMANY

In 2024, the Bundessortenamt started DUS examinations for 61 new varieties of fruit species. In total, 187 candidate varieties of 10 fruit species are under examination at the testing station Wurzen of the Bundessortenamt; the most important of which are raspberry (61 candidate varieties under examination in 2024), blackberry (43), apple (40), and strawberry (27). The majority of actual examinations of fruit varieties are carried out on behalf of other PBR authorities, mainly for the CPVO.

In the frame of the German Fruit Gene Bank, the Bundessortenamt coordinates a newly founded network for Quince (*Cydonia oblonga* Mill.), where 2 partners maintain jointly a collection of 53 Quince varieties.

[Annex III follows]

GEVES is the Examination Office of France, in charge of DUS and VCUS evaluation of new plant varieties, and in charge of quality testing of seeds.

GEVES website can be consulted here www.geves.fr

Description files can be found on the website for the varieties listed on the French catalogue. <https://www.geves.fr/catalogue-france/>

You can subscribe to our NEWSLETTER available both in French and in English to receive the latest information on GEVES's expert activities in plants and seeds, at national and international levels. Please subscribe here: <https://www.geves.fr/newsletter-en/>

The DUS activity, either in the framework of national listing, or PBR, or in the framework of international cooperation for DUS testing, has slightly decreased in 2023 compared to previous years. Main activity remains on agricultural species. Detailed figures can be found on the annual report available on our website.

In total in 2023, GEVES carried out more than 3300 DUS cycles, mainly in its premises.

Crop sector	Number of DUS cycles in 2023	Main species tested
Agricultural	2330	Maize, wheat, oilseed rape, barley, sunflower, sorghum
Vegetable	435	Lettuce, tomato, melon, cauliflower, pepper, squash
Fruit	320	Peach, vine, apple, sweet cherry, apricot, Japanese plum, pear
Ornamental	230	Hydrangea, Chrysanthemum, Buddleja, Nerium, Lavandula, Salvia

The International System of Cooperation for DUS is active and efficient. For more information, the international cooperation service of GEVES can be contacted here: clarisse.leclair@geves.fr and camille.zitter@geves.fr

In 2023, the international cooperation service of GEVES received more than 1100 applications, mainly from the EU but also from all over the world. 70% of the requests are take-over requests and the DUS reports are then sent according to UPOV document TGP/5.

In addition to that, the French National Office for PBR (**INOV**) has received 110 applications in 2023, out of which 95% were tested for DUS by GEVES.

INOV is involved in UPOV **PRISMA** for all genera and species. Contact INOV: inov@geves.fr

Regarding the use of **molecular markers**, GEVES is using in 2023 in routine molecular markers for the management of reference collection according to UPOV guidance model "Combining Phenotypic and Molecular Distances in the Management of Variety Collections", for maize, sorghum, spring barley.

Projects are being currently led on Oilseed rape and Hydrangea.

For more information on BMT, please contact: GEVES BIOGEVES rene.mathis@geves.fr.

Regarding the use of **disease resistance characteristics**, GEVES uses in routine genetic disease resistance characteristics, processed in bio assays, for DUS results. It provides also services, facilities, protocols, identified standards and strains for such activities to Examination Offices and seed companies, all over the world. For more information, please contact: GEVES SNES sophie.perrot@geves.fr

Research activities: GEVES concentrates on applied research, with projects aimed at developing, improving, and harmonizing methods for seed quality analysis and plant variety testing at a national, European and international level. Our research activities can be divided into three main areas: performance and value of new plant varieties, variety description, and seed quality. These activities draw on GEVES's expertise in phenotyping, pathology, molecular biology and data science.

At national level as well as European level, GEVES leads or contributes to several R&D projects, such as : H2020 INVITE, SUCSEED, H2022 BELIS, PHENET, HARMORESCOLL...and many others. Regarding Ornamentals: GEVES leads the CPVO project "*Harnessing molecular data to support DUS testing in ornamentals: a case-study on Hydrangea*".

International cooperation: GEVES staff regularly contribute their expertise to international cooperation programs aimed at creating or developing systems for the protection or registration of varieties and seed certification. In 2023, these actions were particularly concentrated on the African continent: Algeria, Togo, Ghana, Senegal... Video-conferencing, face-to-face meetings and discussions around plants in trials provide an opportunity to discuss a wide range of subjects, such as the conduct of DUS and VCUS trials on numerous species, the use of GAIA software in DUS, the use of molecular biology to study varieties, and the creation and management of reference collections for examination purposes. More generally, these activities may also concern the adoption and implementation of regulations relating to the intellectual property of plant varieties in accordance with UPOV international standards.

The GEVES contribution to the CPVO

At European level, GEVES experts have played an active part in the various technical working groups, in drawing up protocols, in consolidating the operating rules of the examination offices with the CPVO, and in considering future developments through several surveys, whether for ornamental, fruit, agricultural or vegetable species.

GEVES hosted the second day of the CPVO's annual meeting of ornamental plant experts at its Brion testing station. The CPVO, associations representing breeders and European examination offices visited the facilities and DUS trials conducted on ornamental plants. This was an opportunity to discuss the DUS of the chrysanthemum species. The experts from the various countries were able to share their knowledge about the 351 chrysanthemum varieties present in the GEVES trial, not forgetting the 1400 or so varieties in the collection kept in an insect-proof greenhouse.

GEVES has also played an active role in ongoing discussions on the use of molecular biology in DUS trials and on the opportunity to create future molecular databases shared between European examination offices. On the basis of its expertise and experience, GEVES has reaffirmed the need for transparency of methods for such tools.

GEVES involvement in UPOV

Every year, GEVES is involved in UPOV to provide its technical expertise in DUS and DUS-related methods. In 2023, GEVES was also involved in the webinars prior to the UPOV working groups, giving two presentations: one on the GEVES GAIA software during the webinar on 'Selecting similar varieties using electronic tools', and the other on the French maize DUS system with applicant participation during the webinar on 'Involving breeders in DUS testing'.

GEVES was also involved in the working group responsible for support in DUS testing (WG-DUS), which led to concrete recommendations being made to the UPOV Technical Committee with a view to increasing the participation of the Union's new members in the work of the Technical Committee and reorganising the work of the TWP groups.

In 2023, GEVES was more heavily involved in fruit species, hosting the TWF working group in Nîmes from 3 to 7 July 2023. The hybrid format enabled 73 people from 28 UPOV member countries and 2 observer organisations to take part. On the floor, 35 participants from 18 countries or organisations contributed to the debates. GEVES presented the organisation of DUS for fruit species in France. A technical day of visits focused on DUS practice. Participants were invited to see DUS trials on peach, apricot and Japanese plum and visited a nursery. GEVES's Carole DIRWIMMER is the new Chair of the UPOV Technical Working Party for Fruit crops (TWF) for the next 3 years.

National test guidelines developed for Ornamental crops in 2022-2023: Arbutus, Billardiera, Choisya, Cistus, Elaeagnus, Escallonia, Helenium, Heliopsis, Heptacodium, Kniphofia, Laurus, Mahonia, Ornamental Pyrus, Phytolium, Philotheca, Rhodanthemum, Rosmarinus, Saxifraga, and Vitex.

On-going in 2024: Ceanothus, Cenchrus, Ornamental Banana, Senna and xPyracomeles.

1. Number of applications in 2023

Year	Total number	(2023/2022)	Fruits	(2023/2022)
1978 to 2023	37206	-	2267	-
2022	683		63	
2023	591	(87%)	44	(70%)

Top 3 of application for Fruits in 2023

Strawberry 17, Grapevine 8, Apple 6, Total: 44

2. Number of granted in 2023

Year	Number	(2023/2022)	Fruits	(2023/2022)
1978 to 2023	29992	-	1795	-
2022	672		39	
2023	497	(74%)	24	(62%)

3. National test guidelines harmonized with UPOV TGs in 2023

Common name of plants (6)
Kiwifruit, Japanese tea, Hemp, Timothy grass, Peach, Rye

4. National test guidelines developed for new type of species in 2023

Genera or Species (4)
<i>Aloe L.</i> , <i>Corchorus olitorius L.</i> , <i>Nephrolepis exaltata (L.) Schott</i> , <i>Pinellia ternata (Thunb.) Makino</i>

Web-site: https://www.maff.go.jp/j/shokusan/hinshu/info/sinsa_kijun_jp.html

5. Other

- ✓ Japan continuously provides other UPOV members with examination reports under the Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC). Japan had provided 47 DUS examination reports in total to other countries in 2023. MAFF and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) had signed MOC for cooperation in DUS examination in 2023. It could be used for other DUS result to own DUS examination. In addition, MAFF and CPVO had also signed MOC for cooperation in DUS examination for Japanese tea, Mushrooms and Podocarpus. It could be used Japan's DUS result for DUS examination in CPVR.
- ✓ Since 2016, based on the Memorandum of Understanding, Center for Seeds and Seedlings, NARO (NCSS) and Naktuinbouw have established Calibration Manuals for DUS technical harmonization. "Calibration manual for lettuce ver.2" was finalized in 2023, and it will be published through both of websites. With revision of this, a total of 10 Calibration Manuals will be available for third country.

[Annex V follows]

NETHERLANDS (KINGDOM OF THE)

Naktuinbouw Variety Testing developments

- There are some fundamental changes in the management of the DUS team of the variety department: Raoul Haegens is the new head of the Variety Department (to replace Bert Scholte who retired). Armanda Boere is the new Unit manager (to replace Raoul Haegens). Marco Hoffman is the new Technical Liaison Officer (TLO).
- As from January 1, 2024, Naktuinbouw works within the new organizational structure (so called TON2024). One of the fundamental changes is that the teams become more self-organizing.
- The DUS team now consists of 40 employees, including one unit manager, three cultivation managers and 4 employees specialized in disease resistance. The Unit Variety Testing includes also a support team, a trial management team and a project team. In total there are 70 employees and supplemented with temporary (circa 18) staff in summer.
- In 2024 facilities for resistance testing will be expanded and a new drying and storage room will be built for onions.
- The Variety Testing Unit yearly offers a number of courses on Plant Breeders' Rights and/or Listing. During the COVID epidemic almost all courses have been provided as online-sessions (Zoom/Teams). In 2023 many courses could be organised again in person.
- Applicants more and more use the online systems of UPOV and CPVO for filing their applications for listing and/or Plant Breeders' Rights. Nowadays it is possible to apply in the Netherlands (Kingdom of the) for Plant Breeders' Rights as well as for Listing for all species using UPOV PRISMA.

Number of applications received

In 2023, 2601 applications were received for testing for the first year for National listing, and for National or European Plant Breeders' Rights. Applications of the same variety for Listing as well as PBR, in vegetables and in agricultural crops are split in this table.

	2023	NL listing	NL PBR	EU PBR	TOTAL
<i>Agriculture</i>		242	54	24	320
<i>Vegetable</i>		817	596	74	1487
<i>Ornamental (incl. trees)</i>			206	588	794
TOTAL		1059	856	686	2601

DUS projects

Digitisation

- Naktuinbouw continues to work on the expansion of the Naktuinbouw Academy: a digital training platform.
- Databases: Naktuinbouw develops SNP-databases in French bean, Hemp and Tomato. Some databases are developed nationally, others in international projects (e.g. IMODDUS). The projects are funded by amongst others the Dutch board for plant varieties and CPVO.

EU projects: Harmorescoll, INVITE and IPKey and twinning project Ukraine

- Harmorescoll: in this project the reference material for obligatory disease resistance tests will be harmonized. 2024 will be the final year of the project.
- The EU project INVITE on the improvement on DUS and VCU. Naktuinbouw is one of the partners in this program. 2024 is the last year of this project.
- Naktuinbouw continues to support IPKey projects.
- CPVO funds a project to develop a disease resistance test for ToBRFV in tomato and for Aphis gossypii in cucumber.

Other projects

Methodology projects that are funded by the Board for plant varieties in the Netherlands are e.g.

- the SNP-development for some morphological characteristics in tomato,
- development of a SNP set in courgette,
- development of a disease resistance test for CABYV in cucumber,
- protocol verification and future protocol revision for seed shallot varieties,
- bolting in celery and celeriac.

International cooperation 2024

- Since 2022, a holistic project has been started in the Philippines with the funds provided by RVO. The project aims to share knowledge and provide trainings for the development of the Philippines National Seed Technology Park (NSTP) project. The project will continue till July 2024.
- Since 2021, Naktuinbouw has participated in the Collaborative Seed Program in Nigeria. One of the project's goals is to set up a PVP system in the country.
- In 2023, received a delegation from Morocco regarding knowledge exchange for DUS trials of fibre-cannabis.
- Naktuinbouw collaborated with TAEIX on three occasions. We received a delegation from Colombia for a DUS training on Cannabis, a delegation from Serbia for an exchange on conservation varieties, and a visit to Japan for an exchange of knowledge on molecular techniques for infringements of plant breeder rights is under planning.
- In 2024 a project with Suriname will be funded by the Makandra Program.

PVP Development Program (Toolbox)

- This tool helps countries develop, improve, and implement their Plant Breeders' Rights system. In 2023, different PVP projects were carried out in 11 countries, and thirteen projects were granted in 2024: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Morocco, Türkiye and Western Balkans.
- More info: PVP Development Program – PVP Toolbox | Naktuinbouw or contact: PVPToolbox@naktuinbouw.nl

Plant Breeders Rights training course.

- The course was presented online in 2022. In 2023, 14 participants from 8 different countries attended. Participants rated this course 9.6 out of 10.
- In 2024, the training course on Plant Breeders Rights is entirely presented as an e-learning. The study load is around 80 hrs, depending on prior knowledge. Participants can register and start at any time throughout the year.
- More information: <https://www.naktuinbouw.com/knowledge-education/training-courses/plant-breeders-rights-for-food-security-and-economic-development> or contact I.pinan.gonzalez@naktuinbouw.nl

[Annex VI follows]

NEW ZEALAND

Application numbers for fruit varieties in the 2023/24 period have increased in comparison to last year, with 26 new fruit applications accepted (including several cherry rootstocks). These include varieties of apple five(5), sweet cherry five(5), cherry rootstock five(5), strawberry three(3), grape two(2) and one (1) each of kiwifruit, blackberry, raspberry, avocado, orange, and persimmon. At the conclusion of 2023/2024 there were 142 fruit varieties under examination.

Apple, Sweet Cherry and Cherry Rootstock varieties comprise the highest percentage of new fruit applications in New Zealand, each making up 19% of applications in 2023/2024. Kiwifruit applications have decreased with only application accepted in the last twelve months. Applications for strawberry and blueberry varieties have decreased significantly with no new blueberry applications filed. Currently there are still 17 blueberry varieties and 16 strawberry varieties under test.

The Cultivar Centre Havelock North, location of the PVR Reference Variety Collection for *Malus*, is continuing to show effects from Cyclone Gabrielle which hit eastern parts of New Zealand's North Island, in particular Gisborne (Tairāwhiti) and Hawkes Bay, in February 2023. Over 60 apple varieties have either been resupplied and replanted or have been budded ready for planting in winter 2024. This will continue to have a negative impact on DUS testing in the short term. The collection is continuing to work cooperatively with variety owners or agents to source replacement plant material for both reference and candidate varieties as needed.

The Plant Variety Rights Act 2022 and the Plant Variety Rights Regulations 2022 has now been in force for just over a year, with the exception of the special provisions for applications for varieties belonging to taonga (treasured) species, primarily species of native plants. There has been one application granted under the new act to date.

The greater use of foreign test reports is being considered for fruit species. Foreign test reports have been used for varieties of *Citrus*, *Rubus*, *Malus* and *Diospyros*. A small project has been carried to determine if more frequent use for varieties of *Fragaria* is possible. The Plant Variety Rights Office has existing testing practice regarding use of foreign test reports and more frequent use for fruit species must be consistent with this existing practice.

[Annex VII follows]

SOUTH AFRICA

The South African PBR Office, residing under the Ministry of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development [DALRRD], is the national authority receiving and examining Plant Breeders' Rights applications, and granting of Plant Breeders' Rights.

Updated contact details for the said office are available on the UPOV website.

The DALRRD website is currently under revision.

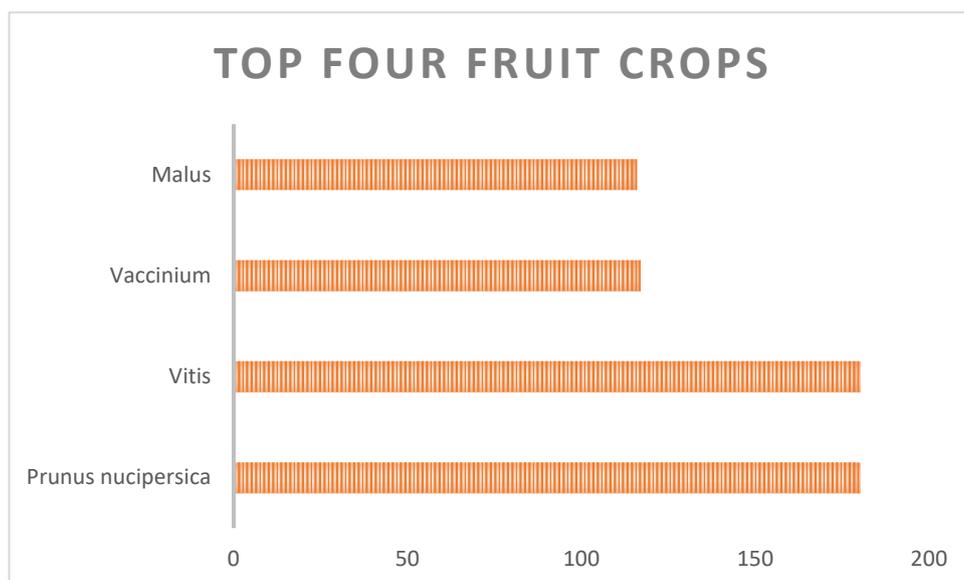
Statistics

With reference to Applications and valid Plant Breeders' Rights for 2023 the following is reported:

- No additional taxon has been declared in terms of the Plant Breeders' Rights Act during 2023.
- 323 PBR applications were received of which 57% [185] were for Agricultural crops, 9% [28] for Ornamental crops, 25% [82] for Fruit crops and 9% [28] for Vegetable crops.
- As of December 2023, a TOTAL of 3809 varieties had valid plant breeder's rights in South Africa, of which 20% [804] were for Ornamental crops, 40% [1500] for Agricultural crops, 32% [1205] for Fruit crops and 8% [300] for Vegetable crops. The top three crops for agricultural crops are:

The top three fruit crops were:

1. *Prunus persica* (L.) Batsch var. *nucipersica* Schneid. [180]
2. *Vitis* L. [180]
3. *Vaccinium* L. [117]
4. *Malus* Mill. [116]



Applications for Fruit crops as well as the grants were for United States of America, China, Germany, Spain, France, New Zealand, Chile, Canada, United Kingdom, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Australia and South Africa.

Changes in the administrative structure

As from 2023, the position of a Scientific Manager was created and a new Scientific Manager was appointed on October 01, 2023, to oversee all DUS processes.

The permanent position of the Registrar: PBR Act of 1976, was also filled.

Research and Development Projects

The South African Agricultural Research Council is a premier science institution that conducts research with partners, develops human capital and fosters innovation to support and develop the agricultural sector. The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) is a statutory parastatal body which resides under DALRRD.

DALRRD entered into a Service Level Agreement with the ARC to establish and maintain reference collections for Kiwi & Stonefruit, Pear, Citrus and Grapevine. These reference collections are of priceless value with the objective to use the collections for the DUS evaluations of new candidate varieties with the varieties of common knowledge.

UPOV PRISMA

South Africa has so far received and processed 34 UPOV PRISMA applications for the following genres:

Brassica oleracea L. convar. *botrytis* (L.) Alef. var. *cymosa* Duch
Impatiens New Guinea Group
×*Petchoa* J. M. H. Shaw
Malus domestica Borkh.
Fragaria × *ananassa* Duch.
Rubus L. [Blackberry]
Rubus L. [Raspberry]
Solanum tuberosum L.
Vaccinium corymbosum L.
Paulownia elongata S. Y. Hu × *Paulownia fortunei* (Seem.) Hemsl.
Lactuca sativa L
Macadamia integrifolia Maiden et Betcher
Hordeum vulgare L.

PLUTO

South Africa has experienced a major challenge regarding the contribution to the PLUTO database. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the South African dataset had to be recommissioned and will be uploaded as soon as possible.

UPOV distance learning courses

South Africa continues to support the UPOV distance learning courses. Newly appointed administrative and technical staff do take advantage of the distance learning opportunities through DL205 and DL305.

Legal developments and regulations

The annual application and examination fees regulation were updated and implemented on 01 April 2023.

Commencement to the revised PBR Act and regulations will be once the regulations are adopted and published. Final inputs on the regulations were received which are currently being considered.

Activities for the promotion of plant variety protection

Title of activity	Date	Location	Organizer(s)	Purpose of activity	Participating countries/ organizations (number of participants from each)	Comments
1. Visit to the South African PBR Office by plant breeding students from University of Limpopo	09 September 2023	Agricultural Research Council, Roodeplaat, Pretoria. South Africa	SA PBR office	Present to plant breeding students PBR and DUS activities and procedures	62 Students 1 Lecturer 2 PBR officials 3 DUS Examiners	

UPOV activities

- Attendance of all TWP's - virtual
- Attendance of regular meetings in Geneva – virtual and in person
- Attendance of EAM - virtual

[End of Annex VII and of document]