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| International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants |  |

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| Working Group on DUS Support  Second Meeting  Geneva, February 8, 2023 | UPOV/WG-DUS/2/3  Original: English  Date: March 16, 2023 |

report

Adopted by the Working Group on DUS Support

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# Opening of the MEETING

The Working Group on DUS Support (WG-DUS) held its second meeting via electronic means on February 8, 2023, chaired by Mr. Peter Button, Vice Secretary-General of UPOV. The Terms of Reference of the WG‑DUS are presented in Annex I to this report.

The meeting was opened by the Chair, who welcomed the participants.

The list of participants is reproduced in Annex II to this report.

# agenda

The WG-DUS adopted the draft agenda as proposed in document UPOV/WG-DUS/2/1.

# options to address issues raised

The WG-DUS considered document UPOV/WG-DUS/2/2.

## List of issues

The WG-DUS considered the following list of issues to improve the technical support provided by UPOV for DUS examination:

1. avoid unnecessary repetition of content across meetings;
2. integrating TWM-related matters into meetings/events with DUS examiners;
3. time for members’ presentations on DUS procedures;
4. visits to field trials with sufficient time for engagement (e.g. ring-tests);
5. providing opportunities for experts to meet and exchange views;
6. facilitating training;
7. focus Test Guidelines (TG) discussion on revising existing TGs, including improving explanations and usability;
8. hybrid or online TG meetings to increase involvement of experts and members;
9. facilitate drafting national test guidelines through access to other members’ test guidelines and experts who can assist drafting;
10. other cross-cutting matters historically considered by Technical Working Parties (TWP) (e.g. TGP documents, UPOV Codes etc.).

The WG-DUS provided comments on the list of issues as follows:

Issues:

1. avoid unnecessary repetition of content across meetings;
2. integrating TWM-related matters into meetings/events with DUS examiners;

The WG-DUS agreed that there was a need to better integrate TWM-related matters in the work of the TWPs, while retaining the TWM as the forum for experts to discuss developments on the matters within its terms of reference.

Issues:

1. time for members’ presentations on DUS procedures;
2. visits to field trials with sufficient time for engagement (e.g. ring-tests);
3. providing opportunities for experts to meet and exchange views;

The WG-DUS agreed that technical visits were a fundamental element in supporting the work of technical experts. The WG-DUS also agreed that ring-tests were a particularly important means of technical support.

The WG-DUS agreed that more time during TWP meetings should be dedicated to technical visits and ring‑tests. The WG-DUS agreed that technology should be used to enable virtual participants to join technical visits to the maximum extent possible. The WG-DUS noted that experts could also participate in ring-tests through the distribution of seed and propagating material.

The WG-DUS noted that the staff of the Office of the Union would not need to be involved in organizing technical visits and would not need to be physically present. The WG-DUS agreed that, given that participation in the other elements of the meeting would be possible by virtual means, this could substantially reduce the time and cost for the Office of the Union.

The WG-DUS agreed that TWP technical visits should demonstrate different models and arrangements for DUS examination used by UPOV members. In particular, the WG-DUS agreed that it should be possible for any member to host a TWP meeting.

Issue:

1. facilitating training;

The WG-DUS agreed that technical visits and ring-tests provided a means of sharing experiences but, beyond these aspects, TWPs were not the best forum to provide training. Training initiatives by the Office of the Union and UPOV members should be developed outside the scope of TWP meetings.

Issues:

1. focus TG discussions on revising existing TGs, including improving explanations and usability;
2. hybrid or online TG meetings to increase involvement of experts and members;
3. facilitate drafting national test guidelines through access to other members’ test guidelines and experts who can assist drafting;

The WG-DUS recalled that the procedure to decide on revising and drafting new TGs was already covered by the present text of document TGP/7 “Development of Test Guidelines”. The WG-DUS agreed that it would not be necessary to change those procedures substantially. The WG-DUS noted that the doubling of the number of Test Guidelines over the last 20 years had changed the emphasis away from drafting new TGs to revising the existing ones, as witnessed in the statistics from the TWPs. In relation to document TGP/7, it was agreed that there would be advantages in providing more flexibility in the use of the web-based TG Template in the process of drafting TGs.

The WG-DUS also agreed that TWP meetings should provide more flexibility on the amount of time allocated to discussing individual TGs, according to need.

Issue:

1. other cross-cutting matters historically considered by TWPs (e.g. TGP documents, UPOV code etc.).

The WG-DUS agreed to consider whether cross-cutting issues could be dealt with in sub-groups that would report to the TC, in order to maximize the time available for technical visits, ring-tests and TG discussions.

## Next steps

The WG-DUS agreed that the discussions had provided new insights and had clarified the needs for technical support. Therefore, it agreed that it would not be appropriate to consider the proposed alternatives in document UPOV/WG-DUS/2/2. The WG-DUS requested the Office of the Union to prepare a document for its third meeting with recommendations in relation to the proposals in document TC/58/18, on the basis of the above conclusions. The document would be circulated two weeks prior to the third meeting of the WG-DUS.

# Date of the NEXT meeting

The WG-DUS agreed to hold its third meeting as a hybrid meeting in Geneva on March 20, 2023, from 13.00 to 15.30 (CET).

The Working Group on DUS Support adopted this report by correspondence on March 16, 2023.

[Annexes follow]

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE

WORKING GROUP ON DUS SUPPORT (WG-DUS)

PURPOSE

The purpose of the WG-DUS is to make recommendations to the Technical Committee at its fifty-ninth session on the proposals presented in TC/58/18 “Survey on the needs of members and observers in relation to TWPs”.

COMPOSITION

(a) the following members of the Union and observers that expressed an interest to be part of the WG-DUS: Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, the Czech Republic, the European Union, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, CIOPORA, CropLife International, ISF and SAA;

(b) other members of the Union would be free to participate at any meeting of the WG-DUS; and

(c) meetings to be chaired by the Vice Secretary-General.

*MODUS OPERANDI*

(a) The WG-DUS to:

1. draft recommendations on the proposals presented in TC/58/18 “Survey on the needs of members and observers in relation to TWPs”, including the possibility to present new proposals that would address the issues identified by participants in the interviews;
2. specify the objectives of each of the recommended proposals and identify performance indicators that would enable an objective measurement of the success of those proposals;
3. clarify the role of the Office of the Union, as appropriate, in each of the proposals;
4. present draft recommendations at the Technical Working Parties at their meetings in 2023; and
5. present recommendations to the Technical Committee at its fifty-ninth session.

(b) the WG-DUS to meet at a time and frequency to address its mandate, by physical and/or virtual means, as agreed by the WG-DUS; and

(c) the documents of the WG-DUS to be made available to the TC.

[Annex II follows]

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

I. Members

ARGENTINA

Alberto BALLESTEROS (Sr.), Examinador de Variedades, Dirección de Registro de Variedades, Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Pesca y Alimentación, Buenos Aires   
(e-mail: aballesteros@inase.gob.ar)

Mariano Alejandro MANGIERI (Sr.), Examinador de Variedades, Dirección de Registro de Variedades, Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Pesca y Alimentación, Buenos Aires   
(e-mail: mmangieri@inase.gob.ar)

AUSTRALIA

Edwina VANDINE (Ms.), Chief of Plant Breeders' Rights, IP Australia, Woden   
(e-mail: edwina.vandine@ipaustralia.gov.au)

Andrew HALLINAN (Mr.), Senior Examiner, Plant Breeders Rights, IP Australia, Phillip   
(e-mail: andrew.hallinan@ipaustralia.gov.au)

Hai LE (Mr.), Examiner, Plant Breeders Rights, IP Australia, Phillip   
(e-mail: hai.le@ipaustralia.gov.au)

AUSTRIA

Christina SCHRAML (Ms.), DUS Expert, Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety, Vienna  
(e-mail: Christina.schraml@ages.at)

BELARUS

Tatsiana SIAMASHKA (Ms.), Deputy Director, State Inspection for Testing and Protection of Plant Varieties, Minsk   
(e-mail: belsort@mail.ru)

Maryna SALADUKHA (Ms.), Deputy Head, International Cooperation Department, State Inspection for Testing and Protection of Plant Varieties, Minsk   
(e-mail: belsort@mail.ru)

BRAZIL

Stefania PALMA ARAUJO (Ms.), Coordinator, Plant Variety Protection Office, Serviço Nacional de Proteção de Cultivares (SNPC), Brasilia   
(e-mail: stefania.araujo@agro.gov.br)

CANADA

Renée CLOUTIER (Ms.), Examiner, Plant Breeders' Rights Office, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Ottawa   
(e-mail: Renee.Cloutier@inspection.gc.ca)

Marc DE WIT (Mr.), Senior Examiner, Plant Breeders' Rights Office, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Ottawa   
(e-mail: Marc.deWit@Inspection.gc.ca)

CHINA

Ruixi HAN (Mr.), Deputy Divisional Director, Division of DUS Tests, Development Center of Science and Technology (DCST), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA), Beijing   
(e-mail: wudifeixue007@163.com)

Kun YANG (Mr.), Deputy Director, Associate Researcher, Beijing Sub-Center for DUS Testing, affiliated to Institute of Vegetables and Flowers under Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Beijing   
(e-mail: yangkun@caas.cn)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Lenka CLOWEZOVÁ (Ms.), Ministry official, Plant Commodities Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Praha   
(e-mail: lenka.clowezova@mze.cz)

Andrea POVOLNÁ (Ms.), Head of DUS Department, National Plant Variety Office, Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture (UKZUZ), Brno   
(e-mail: andrea.povolna@ukzuz.cz)

Pavla BÍMOVÁ (Ms.), General affairs of DUS testing, National Plant Variety Office, Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture (ÚKZÚZ), Brno   
(e-mail: pavla.bimova@ukzuz.cz)

Lydie CECHOVÁ (Ms.), DUS Agricultural Crops Specialist, National Plant Variety Office, Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture (UKZUZ), Hradec Nad Svitavou   
(e-mail: lydie.cechova@ukzuz.cz)

EUROPEAN UNION

Dirk THEOBALD (Mr.), Senior Adviser, Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO), Angers   
(e-mail: theobald@cpvo.europa.eu)

FRANCE

Clarisse LECLAIR (Ms.), Head of DUS Testing, Groupe d'étude et de contrôle des variétés et des semences (GEVES), Beaucouzé   
(e-mail: clarisse.leclair@geves.fr)

GERMANY

Beate RÜCKER (Ms.), Head of Division, Bundessortenamt, Hanover   
(e-mail: beate.ruecker@bundessortenamt.de)

HUNGARY

Márton PÉCS (Mr.), Agricultural IT Expert, Department of Agricultural Variety Trials, Directorate of Agricultural Genetic Resources, National Food Chain Safety Office (NÉBIH), Budapest   
(e-mail: pecsm@nebih.gov.hu)

IRELAND

Elizabeth HYLAND (Ms.), Deputy Controller for Plant Breeders Rights, Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, Leixlip   
(e-mail: Elizabeth.Hyland@agriculture.gov.ie)

ITALY

Annapia Maria GIULINI (Ms.), Researcher, Research Centre for Plant Protection and Certification (CREA DC), Milano   
(e-mail: annapiamaria.giulini@crea.gov.it)

JAPAN

Minori HAGIWARA (Ms.), Director for International Affairs on Plant Variety Protection, Plant Variety Protection Office, Intellectual Property Division Export and International Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Tokyo   
(e-mail: minori\_hagiwara110@maff.go.jp)

Hajime WAKABAYASHI (Mr.), Deputy Director, Plant Variety Protection Office, Intellectual Property Division, Export and International Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Tokyo   
(e-mail: hajime\_wakabayash210@maff.go.jp)

Daisuke FUJITSUKA (Mr.), Technical Official, Plant Variety Protection Office, Intellectual Property Division, Food Industry Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Tokyo   
(e-mail: daisuke\_fujitsuka080@maff.go.jp)

Takeshi SUGISAWA (Mr.), Senior Examiner, Plant Variety Protection Office, Intellectual Property Division, Export and International Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Tokyo  
(e-mail: takeshi\_sugisawa820@maff.go.jp)

Yoshiyuki OHNO, Examiner, Intellectual Property Division, Export and International Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Tokyo   
(e-mail: yoshiyuki\_ono300@maff.go.jp)

Yosuke ABE (Mr.), Assistant Examiner, Plant Variety Protection Office, Intellectual Property Division, Export and International Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Tokyo  
(e-mail: yosuke\_abe880@maff.go.jp)

KENYA

Gentrix Nasimiyu JUMA (Ms.), Chief Plant Examiner, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), Ministry of Agriculture, Nairobi   
(e-mail: gjuma@kephis.org)

Lucas SUVA (Mr.), Principal Plant Examiner, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), Ministry of Agriculture, Nairobi   
(e-mail: lsuva@kephis.org)

MEXICO

Víctor Manuel VÁSQUEZ NAVARRETE (Sr.), Director de área, Servicio Nacional de Inspección y Certificación de Semillas (SNICS), Secretaria de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural (Agricultura), Ciudad de México   
(e-mail: victor.vasquez@agricultura.gob.mx)

Ana Lilia ROJAS SALINAS (Sra.), Jefa de Departamento de Armonización Técnica, Servicio Nacional de Inspección y Certificación de Semillas (SNICS), Secretaria de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural (Agricultura), Ciudad de México   
(e-mail: ana.rojas@snics.gob.mx)

NETHERLANDS

Bert SCHOLTE (Mr.), Head of Department Variety Testing, Naktuinbouw, Roelofarendsveen   
(e-mail: b.scholte@naktuinbouw.nl)

NEW ZEALAND

Christopher James BARNABY (Mr.), PVR Manager / Assistant Commissioner, Plant Variety Rights Office, Intellectual Property Office of New Zealand, Ministry of Economic Development, Christchurch   
(e-mail: Chris.Barnaby@pvr.govt.nz)

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Tae Hoon KIM (Mr.), Senior Forest Researcher, Examiner, National Forest Seed Variety Center (NFSV), Chungcheongbuk-do   
(e-mail: algae23@korea.kr)

Won-Bum CHO (Mr.), Forest Researcher, Plant Variety Protection Division, National Forest Seed Variety Center (NFSV), Chungcheongbuk-do   
(e-mail: rudis99@korea.kr)

Hwan-Su HWANG (Mr.), Forest Researcher, Plant Variety Protection Division, National Forest Seed Variety Center, Korea Forest Service, Chungcheongbuk-do   
(e-mail: hwansu3368@korea.kr)

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Evghenia PARTAS (Ms.), Head of DUS Testing Department, State Commission for Crops Variety Testing of the Republic of Moldova, Chisinau   
(e-mail: e.partas@cstsp.md)

Liudmila CHIRILOV (Ms.), Senior specialist in DUS plant variety testing, State Commission for Crops Variety Testing, Chisinau   
(e-mail: chirilov.liudmila@cstsp.md)

SLOVAKIA

Ľubomír BASTA (Mr.), Head of DUS testing, Department of Variety Testing, Central Control and Testing Institute in Agriculture (ÚKSÚP), Bratislava   
(e-mail: lubomir.basta@uksup.sk)

Marianna JAKUBOVA (Ms.), DUS and International Cooperation, Central Control and Testing Institute in Agriculture (ÚKSÚP), Bratislava   
(e-mail: marianna.jakubova@uksup.sk)

SOUTH AFRICA

Noluthando NETNOU-NKOANA (Ms.), Director, Genetic Resources, Department of Agriculture, Rural development and Land Reform, Pretoria   
(e-mail: NoluthandoN@Dalrrd.gov.za)

UNITED KINGDOM

Sigurd RAMANS-HARBOROUGH (Mr.), Manager of UK Variety Listing and PBR, Plant Varieties and Seeds, Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Cambridge  
(e-mail: Sigurd.Ramans-Harborough@defra.gov.uk)

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Twalib Mustafa NJOHOLE (Mr.), Registrar of Plant Breeders' Rights, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Dodoma  
(e-mail: twalib.njohole@kilimo.go.tz)

II. ORGANIZATIONS

CROPLIFE INTERNATIONAL

Marcel BRUINS (Mr.), Consultant, CropLife International, Brussels, Belgium   
(e-mail: marcel@bruinsseedconsultancy.com)

INTERNATIONAL SEED FEDERATION (ISF)

Astrid M. SCHENKEVELD (Ms.), Specialist, Plant Breeder's Rights & Variety Registration | Legal, Rijk Zwaan Zaadteelt en Zaadhandel B.V., De Lier, Netherlands   
(e-mail: a.schenkeveld@rijkzwaan.nl)

EUROSEEDS

Claudius MARONDEDZE (Mr.), Technical Manager Plant Health and Seed Trade, Euroseeds, Brussels, Belgium  
(e-mail: claudiusmarondedze@euroseeds.eu)

Jared ONSANDO (Mr.), Technical Manager Variety Testing and Registration, Brussels, Belgium  
(e-mail: JaredOnsando@euroseeds.eu)

III. OFFICER

Peter BUTTON (Mr.), Chair

IV. OFFICE OF UPOV

Peter BUTTON (Mr.), Vice Secretary-General

Leontino TAVEIRA (Mr.), Head of Technical Affairs and Regional Development (Latin America, Caribbean)

Manabu SUZUKI (Mr.), Technical/Regional Officer (Asia)

Cornelis VAN ETTEKOVEN, Technical Expert

Romy OERTEL (Ms.), Secretary II

[End of Annex II and of document]