

**Technical Committee**

**TC/57/INF/5**

**Fifty-Seventh Session  
Geneva, October 25 and 26, 2021**

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**VARIETY DESCRIPTION DATABASES**

*Document prepared by the Office of the Union*

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The purpose of this document is to report on developments concerning variety description databases and invite members of the Union to report on work concerning the development of databases containing morphological and/or molecular data.
2. Matters concerning the development of a platform for UPOV member databases containing variety description information are presented in document TC/57/9 "Cooperation in Examination".
3. Developments at the Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs, at its thirty-ninth session<sup>1</sup>, will be reported as an addendum to this document.
4. The following abbreviations are used in this document:

BMT:	Working Group on Biochemical and Molecular Techniques, and DNA-Profiling in Particular
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
TWV:	Technical Working Party for Vegetables
TWPs:	Technical Working Parties

5. The structure of this document is as follows:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
BACKGROUND .....	2
DEVELOPMENTS AT THE TECHNICAL WORKING PARTIES AT THEIR SESSIONS IN 2021 .....	2

<sup>1</sup> Hosted by the United States of America and held via electronic means from September 20 to 22, 2021

## BACKGROUND

6. At its forty-fifth session<sup>2</sup>, the 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 TWPs and the 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, and reproduced below. 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).

“3. At its forty-third session, held in Geneva, from March 26 to 28, 2007, the Technical Committee (TC) agreed the list of criteria for consideration by the Technical Working Parties (TWPs) for the use of descriptions obtained from different locations and sources as follows:

- “(a) to consider the species for which they see a real interest in creating an international database with variety descriptions;
- “(b) to specify the aim and benefits expected;
- “(c) to select the characteristics for which descriptions should be published;
- “(d) to specify for each characteristic the degree of harmonization already achieved or aimed at (in the latter case, to specify if actions should be planned in order to improve the level of harmonization: ring tests, revision of the description of the way of observation in the guideline, ...);
- “(e) to study the pertinence of a “regional approach”, rather than an “international approach” (to consider groups of countries and to compare descriptions within those groups only);
- “(f) to propose minimum distances when making comparisons of data, for the relevant characteristics;
- “(g) to list the countries which would contribute to the publication;
- “(h) to consider the type of access (free or restricted to the contributors); and
- “(i) to consider the cost of any project.”

7. Following the decision by the TC, at its forty-fifth session, it is recalled that members of the Union are invited to report to TC, TWPs and BMT on work concerning the development of databases containing morphological and/or molecular data.

## DEVELOPMENTS AT THE TECHNICAL WORKING PARTIES AT THEIR SESSIONS IN 2021

8. At their sessions in 2021, the TWV<sup>3</sup>, TWO<sup>4</sup>, TWA<sup>5</sup> and TWF<sup>6</sup> considered document TWP/5/2 (see documents TWV/55/16 “Report”, paragraphs 87 to 92; TWO/53/10 “Report”, paragraphs 48 to 50; TWA/50/9 “Report”, paragraphs 59 to 62; and TWF/52/10 “Report”, paragraphs 55 to 59).

9. Comments by the TWC, at its thirty-ninth session, will be reported as an Addendum to this document.

10. The TWV, TWO, TWA and TWF noted the reports made at the TWPs in 2020 on databases containing morphological and/or molecular data.

11. The TWV, TWO, TWA and TWF noted that members of the Union would be invited to report to the TWPs on work concerning the development of databases containing morphological and/or molecular data.

12. The TWV, at its fifty-fifth session, received a presentation on “Management of the reference collection – European Union Melon database” by an expert from France. A copy of the presentation is provided in document TWV/55/7.

<sup>2</sup> held in Geneva from March 30 to April 1, 2009

<sup>3</sup> at its fifty-fifth session, hosted by Turkey and held via electronic means, from May 3 to 7, 2021

<sup>4</sup> at its fifty-third session, hosted by the Netherlands and held via electronic means, from June 7 to 11, 2021

<sup>5</sup> at its fiftieth session, hosted by the United Republic of Tanzania and held via electronic means, from June 21 to 25, 2021

<sup>6</sup> at its fifty-second session, hosted by China and held via electronic means, from July 12 to 16, 2021

13. The TWV, at its fifty-fifth session, received an oral report on the “Tomato database” from an expert from the Netherlands.

14. The TWV, at its fifty-fifth session, welcomed the work done in relation to the constitution of such databases for managing reference collections and invited participating authorities to share knowledge and information in order to build harmonized and reliable variety descriptions. It further welcomed the proposal made by an expert from the Netherlands to make a presentation, at the fifty-sixth session of the TWV, on the collection of variety descriptions that would be publically available for further use.

15. The TWA, at its fiftieth session, received a presentation on “Integration of molecular data into DUS testing in Durum Wheat” by an expert from Austria. A copy of the presentation is provided in document TWA/50/7. The TWA noted the information provided and agreed to invite the expert from Austria to report further developments at its fifty-first session.

16. The TWF, at its fifty-second session, noted that Canada, European Union, France, Japan and New Zealand published variety descriptions on their websites. The TWF agreed to invite members to provide information to the Office of the Union, by December 31, 2021, on how to access the variety descriptions published, such as the links to webpages with this information.

17. The TWF, at its fifty-second session, noted that information reported to the Office of the Union would be presented to the Technical Working Parties, at their sessions in 2022, in document “Variety Description Databases”. The TWF agreed that, once information was available, the Office of the Union should be invited to check whether the information on webpages with variety descriptions could be made available on the UPOV website.

18. Matters concerning the development of a platform for UPOV member databases containing variety description information are presented in document TC/57/9 “Cooperation in Examination”.

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