Meeting of Representatives of the National Designated Authorities for the Implementation of the OECD Scheme for the Certification of Forest Reproductive Material Moving in International Trade

Draft Summary Record of the Meeting of the Technical Working Group of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme

6 October 2009, hosted by ISAR, Kigali, Rwanda

This Draft Summary Record was prepared by the Secretariat. It will be presented to the 2010 Meeting for discussion and adoption.

The list of participants is attached as Annex I.

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1. Opening statements

Mr. Michael Ryan, Head of the OECD Codes and Schemes Unit welcomed the delegates. The meeting was opened by Mr. Jean R. Gapusi, Chair of the Technical Working Group.

2. Adoption of the Agenda [TAD/CA/F/A(2009)2/REV2]

The draft agenda was adopted without modifications.

The Chair of the Annual Meeting, Mrs. Lolona Ramamonjisoa, provided some background information on previous meetings of the Technical Working Group. She recalled that the Terms of Reference had been discussed in 2007 and agreed in 2008 (see document TAD/CA/F(2008)3/REV1). At the time, 10 experts had volunteered to work in the TWG. At the last Annual Meeting in Paris, it was agreed that the TWG would work on the 5 following topics: development of a relevant and more up-to-date database, development of common definitions, adaptation of the Scheme to conditions in tropical countries, short rotation plantations for bioenergy and agro-forestry and shrub species and proposal on how to deal with the category “Qualified”. The topic “Short rotation plantations for bioenergy and agro-forestry and shrub species” was not dealt with, due to lack of time.

Mr. Jean. R. Gapusi mentioned that the establishment of the Technical Working Group had been proposed at the meeting in Hungary and was adopted in Paris the following year. Discussion took place online. The previous meeting lasted for half a day and it had been agreed that at least one day is required.

3. Development of a relevant and more up-to-date database WD/RWANDA/AM/2009/2

The work on the development of a relevant and more up-to-date database started in 2008 with a sub-working group composed of Mr. Sven de Vries, Mr. Bruno Foletto, Mr. Jean R. Gapusi and Mr. Pierre Bouillon. Mr. Bouillon, updated the meeting on the progress of the work: the database is a key instrument to implement the OECD Scheme and the EU directive. In the EU directive, there is a decision to harmonize the information included in the national register and in the simplified list of basic material. A major problem is linked to the huge quantity of information to be stored in a single file. It is particularly complicated in the EU as there are 27 member states. It is impossible to send the data in an Excel file via email as the file may be quite heavy. It was proposed to use a web application where each person would have the permission to enter information. So far, each country developed its own system.
The representative of the European Commission, Mr. Altpeter, mentioned that the OECD Secretariat manages complex and user-friendly databases. This experience could benefit the OECD Forest Scheme.

It was agreed that information should be harmonized between countries and that a standardized format should be used in order to avoid language problems. An identical number would be given to required fields of information in all languages. An automatic system could allow selecting the preferred language. The final database would be in a read-only format.

The Secretariat informed the delegates that a database was also under development for the OECD Seed Scheme which has 56 Member countries. A standardized questionnaire is linked to the database and can be inputted electronically. The database is set up in order to cross-check errors and double entries. Pilot checks are currently being carried out and the Forest Scheme could benefit from this experience. A key element will be to decide on the information we want to include into the database. It will also be essential to create a robust database. It was proposed to present the Seed Scheme database at the next Forest Scheme meeting.

Mr. Pierre Bouillon from France presented their webpage with links to other databases. Fabio Gorian from ISTA also presented an initiative in Northern Italy, using Google earth. On a map, information is provided for each stand location such as geographic data (latitude, surface) and wide patterns (selected or not) etc.

The working document was discussed and several corrections were made. It was agreed to remove the issue of traceability. The delegate of Finland raised the issue of confidentiality of some information provided by private companies. Fields could be left blank if the information is not available or confidential.

It was agreed that the next steps would be to compare national systems, to explore similarities and complementarities. Guidelines could be established and followed by the different countries. Mr. Nanson recalled that he published a paper in 2001 about the new OECD Scheme where he proposed a system of identification which could be used as a starting point to elaborate a database. He mentioned that in his system, there was compulsory information and some optional information that could be left blank. As a conclusion, it was decided that the work on the database would be continued, taking into account Mr. Nanson’s proposal.

The current Working Document will be fleshed out by the Secretariat in collaboration with the TWG who will give a proposal for a consensual system which could be adopted by all members. Discussions will continue at the next Technical Working Group meeting. The system should be flexible enough to allow for the addition of new countries and new varieties.


The work on common definitions started in 2008 with a sub-group composed of Mrs. Lolona Ramamonjisoa, Mr. Guy Sancey and Mr. Fabio Gorian.

Delegates disagreed with the statement that EU member countries are obliged to use EU categories instead of OECD ones. Mr. Bouillon recalled that the use of equivalences allow to trade on the basis of the OECD Scheme. There are 2 possibilities. On the one hand, FRM from Canada, US, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Serbia and Croatia can be traded within the EU on the basis of the Master certificate or an OECD certificate in identified or selected category. On the other hand, national equivalence authorized by the European Commission can be granted to countries that are not member of the OECD Scheme. It is the case of FRM imported by Sweden from Belarus.
The OECD Scheme can be used between 2 countries that are not members of the EU. It is considered that the legislation in countries that are members of the OECD Scheme is equivalent.

It was agreed to use botanical names (in Latin) to identify species. Vernacular names should not be used. Concerning the number of mother trees, it was mentioned that this information is important to avoid in-breeding. Delegates disagreed with the statement that the supplier’s document is more important than the label: however, the supplier’s document can induce more problems. If there is a mistake in the supplier’s document, it can be replicated in several nurseries. It was also mentioned that the supplier’s document is more complete than the label.

It was discussed that a number associated to data would allow a better understanding of the data in various languages. A numbering system would allow deciphering the information. According to OECD rules, all documents should be in English and/or French accompanied by the language of the dealer if needed, in order to solve possible understanding problems. It was underlined that the numbering system should be consistent with the system used by the EC. As soon as the EC has a concrete text, the OECD will take it into account. A Working Document from the EU should be ready by the end of the year.

The Working Document will be revised to reflect the discussions at the meeting. Development in legislation will be monitored. The TWG will continue the discussion about genetic and physiological data to be added to the supplier’s document.

5. Adaptation of the Scheme to conditions in tropical countries [TAD/CA/F(2009)3]

The OECD Secretariat presented the progress of the work on the adaptation of the Scheme to tropical countries. At the Technical Working Group and Annual Meeting in 2008, a document prepared by Professor Hans Muhs was discussed [TAD/CA/F(2008)7]. A new document was drafted to include Member countries’ comments [TAD/CA/F(2009)3]. The Secretariat mentioned that the quorum of Member countries was not reached and that the written procedure would be proposed at the Annual Meeting in order to allow Member countries to take part in the decision process.

The EC considered that the current definition of stand was sufficient to be used by tropical countries.

Proposal 1: AMENDING THE DEFINITION OF STAND

The expert from Madagascar agreed with this proposal because plantations are not mono-specific but rather pluri-specific. Rwanda mentioned that the text should be more precise in the definition of homogeneity. ISTA wondered what is the meaning of “a sufficient number of trees”. Mr. Nanson explained that this sentence was useful to avoid in-breeding. It is generally recommended not to set a specific figure for the number of trees. The EC questioned the need for the additional sentence. He mentioned that tropical countries were still underrepresented in the Scheme and that we may not have enough expertise about the region.

Madagascar proposed to change the wording into: “A delineated population of trees possessing sufficient uniformity and suitable genetic diversity”.

Belgium proposed to use an appendix for the basic materials of the category “identified” similar to the one used for the category “selected” to precise the minimum requirements for the stands. Rwanda proposed to provide guidelines on how to implement the definitions. ISTA stressed that the tropical region is not limited to Africa. He suggested inviting Brazilian experts as they are very much involved in the research on biodiversity. The Secretariat mentioned that Brazil participated in the last Annual Meeting.
The current definition of stands will be kept. The Technical Working Group will work on guidelines for the implementation of the definition in tropical countries. Guidelines allow for a more flexible approach at this time.

Importance of genetic diversity may be taken into account and mentioned in the adaptation of the scheme to conditions in tropical countries.

Proposal 2: AMENDING THE DEFINITION OF REGION OF PROVENANCE

Delegates disagreed with the additional words “natural or artificial” and on the addition of a reference to the flowering time and soil type as these elements are linked to the different ecological conditions.

Proposal 2 was refused.

Proposal 3: INTRODUCTION OF SEED PLANTATIONS AS NEW TYPE OF BASIC MATERIAL INTO THE SCHEME

3.A: Belgium discussed the difference between a seed plantation and a seed orchard and proposed a new definition that would cover both seed plantations and seed orchards. France proposed to call the new category “provenance trial”.

3.B: It was noted that the proposal excludes the use of GMO.

The adaptation of the Scheme to tropical countries will be discussed at the next Technical Working Group. Participation of all member countries is encouraged, in particular countries that were not represented at the meeting. Belgium and France will prepare a new proposal.

6. Short rotation plantations for bioenergy and agro-forestry and shrub species

This item was not discussed by the Technical Working Group since the last meeting due to lack of time. This topic will be discussed at the next TWG as it is considered as still relevant for some countries (in particular Rwanda, Madagascar and Burkina Faso).

7. Proposal on how to deal with the category “Qualified” [TAD/CA/F/RD(2009)6]

It was mentioned that the Scheme had been at a standstill for a decade due to the GM issue. In 2006, a compromise was found by simplifying the Scheme. The new Scheme covered only 2 categories (source identified and selected) which represents over 98% of forest seed traded.

The document presented was prepared by Belgium with a view to adding the qualified category to the scheme. Belgium proposed to add “and/or provenance” to the definition of qualified.

“Qualified: the components of the basic material have been selected at the individual and/or provenance level; however evaluation may not have been undertaken or completed.”

The Belgian delegate proposed to merge the 2 basic materials seed plantation and seed orchard on page 6 of the proposal, under a common definition called seed orchard: “Seed Orchard: A plantation of
selected clones, or families or provenances which is isolated or managed to avoid or reduce pollination from outside sources, and managed to produce frequent, abundant and easily harvested crops of seed.” Seed plantation was subsequently removed from the document.

The Secretariat shared with the TWG some written concerns expressed by the US on the initial proposal.

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**The Technical Working Group supported the proposal with the corrections proposed during the meeting. The revised document was recommended to the Annual Meeting for approval. The Secretariat was requested to enquire from the US whether they could agree with the proposal. The text could then be submitted for approval by written procedure. The issue of GM could be covered in a tested category.**

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8. **Future work of the TWG [ANNEX 1 of TAD/CA/F(2008)3/REV1]**

It was agreed to maintain the topic “Short rotation plantations for bioenergy and agroforestry and shrub species” on the agenda of the TWG. Capacity building (8), New countries adhesion (9) and Marketing and Promotion of the Scheme (10) were added as new topics of work for the TWG. ISTA proposed to deal with the procedure of storage and the procedures to collect and produce seeds. The members agreed with the proposal to have two meetings of the TWG each year, one around March-April and the second one back to back with the Annual Meeting around the end of September-early October. The Secretariat mentioned that it would welcome proposals from countries to host the meetings.

9. **Other business**

France agreed to prepare a proposal for the addition of a sentence to the introduction of the Scheme, concerning the efforts to promote genetic diversity in order to adapt better to climate change. The new proposal will be presented for discussion at the next TWG meeting.
# ANNEX I

## 2009 Technical Working Group Meeting of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme

Held in Kigali, Rwanda on 6 October 2009

**Final List of Participants / Liste finale des participants**

<table>
<thead>
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