



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization  
of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Seventy-first session

Geneva, 9–11 May 2023

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

### Annotated provisional agenda\*

#### I. Provisional agenda

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  - (a) Recent developments in the United Nations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and its subsidiary bodies
  - (b) Recent developments in other organizations
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4. Harmonized System codes for fresh fruits and vegetables relevant to the work of the Specialized Section
5. Sustainable Development Goal 12 and sustainable practices:
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  - (b) Climate change – impacts on fruit and vegetable quality
6. Development of new standards:
  - (a) Certain small fruits
  - (b) Sweet potato
7. Review of existing standards:
  - (a) Discussion of proposals resulting from the last session
  - (b) New proposals

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\* Documents for the meeting will be made available at <https://unece.org/trade/wp7/ge1-71st-2023>. Delegates attending the meeting are required to register online at <https://indico.un.org/e/wp7/ge1-71st-2023>. In the event of difficulties with electronic registration, please contact the secretariat by e-mail ([olga.kharitonova@un.org](mailto:olga.kharitonova@un.org)).



- (c) Alignment of standards with the revised standard layout
- 8. Capacity-building and promotional activities
- 9. Terms of Reference and Working Procedures of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards and its Specialized Sections
- 10. Electronic quality certificates and digitalization
- 11. Future work
- 12. Other business
- 13. Election of officers
- 14. Adoption of the report

## **II. Annotations**

### **1. Adoption of the agenda**

The Specialized Section will adopt the agenda.

*Documentation:* Annotated provisional agenda (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/1)

### **2. Matters arising since the last session**

#### **(a) Recent developments in the United Nations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and its subsidiary bodies**

The secretariat will present recent matters arising from the United Nations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS) and the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) having an impact on the work of the Specialized Section.

*Documentation:* Report of the seventy-seventh session of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/2)

#### **(b) Recent developments in other organizations**

Representatives of other organizations and country delegations will inform the Specialized Section about activities taking place in their agencies that are of relevance to the work of the Specialized Section.

### **3. Impact of agricultural quality standards on trade**

During 2021–2022, ECE and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) collaborated with ECE on an econometric study assessing the impact of agricultural quality standards on the trade of fruit and vegetables, the results of which were presented to the Working Party at its meeting in November 2022. The results showed a positive effect of agricultural quality standards and OECD explanatory materials on trade.

Following that, to further document the impact of ECE standards, in early 2023 the ECE secretariat in consultation with the WP.7 Bureau launched a survey to compile information on and document the application of ECE standards and their link to relevant legislative frameworks in participating countries.

The Specialized Section is invited to discuss the preliminary findings of the survey and provide additional information and suggestions for how to document the impact of the standards.

*Documentation:* Preliminary survey findings (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/INF.1)

#### **4. Harmonized System codes for fresh fruits and vegetables relevant to the work of the Specialized Section**

At the 2022 meeting of the Working Party, the delegation of Brazil suggested discussing the issue of Harmonized System (HS) codes and the difficulty to access data for fresh fruit and vegetables at the product level, as fresh and dried fruit fall under the same HS code. The Working Party agreed that this issue could be brought for discussion in Specialized Sections.

The Specialized Section is invited to discuss data-related challenges resulting from how HS codes are grouped for fresh fruit and vegetables, and potential ways to address the challenges.

*Documentation:* Proposal by the delegation of Brazil concerning Harmonized System codes for fresh fruit and vegetables (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/3)

#### **5. Sustainable Development Goal 12 and sustainable practices**

##### **(a) Food loss and waste prevention related to standards**

At its 2022 meeting, the Specialized Section discussed a proposal to systematically review the standard layout and the ECE standards for fresh fruits and vegetables with the aim to identify possible clauses that could contribute to reducing food losses and waste. It decided to establish a working group led by Sweden and including Brazil, France, South Africa, Spain and the United States of America, which would start by reviewing the standard layout for ECE standards on fresh fruit and vegetables as well as two–three of the existing standards for fresh fruit and vegetables. Over the past year, the working group has met twice and started its work by discussing the standard for carrots.

The Specialized Section will be briefed on the work done by the working group and discuss potential next steps.

##### **(b) Climate change – impacts on fruit and vegetable quality**

In 2022, South Africa conducted a study on the impacts of climate change on fruit and vegetables, funded by OECD. The Specialized Section will hear a presentation of and discuss the study findings.

#### **6. Development of new standards**

##### **(a) Certain small fruits**

At its 2022 meeting, the Specialized Section discussed a proposed draft standard for certain small fruits, tabled by the delegation of Brazil. It decided to submit the draft standard for adoption by the Working Party as a recommendation for a one-year trial period. The Working Party adopted the recommendation for a one-year trial period starting in November 2022.

When preparing the recommendation for publication, the delegations of Brazil and Germany proposed editorial revisions in the sections on the definition of produce and on nature of produce, to ensure alignment of species/variety names.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the recommendation, with the revisions proposed by Brazil and Germany.

*Documentation:* Recommendation for certain small fruits  
(ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/4)

##### **(b) Sweet potato**

At its 2021 session, the Specialized Section discussed a proposal by the delegations of Germany and South Africa to develop a new standard for sweet potato. As there were several comments on the draft standard, it decided to form a working group consisting of France, Germany, South Africa, Spain, United States and the Committee Linking Entrepreneurship-Agriculture-Development (COLEAD, formerly called COLEACP) to work on developing the proposed standard and table it at the 2023 session.

The Specialized Section is invited to discuss the revised proposal developed by the working group.

*Documentation:* Proposed draft standard/recommendation for sweet potato (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/5)

## **7. Review of existing standards**

### **(a) Discussion of proposals resulting from the last session**

At its 2022 session, the Specialized Section discussed a proposal for revisions to the standard for beans as regards the cutting of ends and decided to amend the standard for peas instead of the standard for beans.

*Documentation:* Proposal by the delegation of Sweden to amend the standard for peas (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/6)

### **(b) New proposals**

The Specialized Section is invited to review the proposals for amendments to the standards for asparagus, broccoli, and kiwifruit, as well as proposed changes to the informal reference list of citrus fruit varieties.

*Documentation:* Proposal by the delegation of Germany to amend the standard for asparagus (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/7)

Proposal by the delegation of Germany to amend the standard for broccoli (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/8)

Proposal by the delegation of Germany to amend the standard for kiwifruit (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/9)

Proposal by the delegation of Germany to amend the informal reference list of citrus fruit varieties (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/10)

Proposal by the delegation of France to amend the non-exhaustive list of large-fruited and summer pear varieties annexed to the standard for pears (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/11)

### **(c) Alignment of standards with the revised standard layout**

In November 2021, the Working Party adopted a revised standard layout for ECE standards on fresh fruit and vegetables. Following this revision, existing standards need to be aligned with the new standard layout. The Specialized Section is invited to review the revised editions of the standards for correctness.

## **8. Capacity-building and promotional activities**

The secretariat and delegations will provide information about their promotional and capacity-building activities in the past year and preview upcoming events and training. The Specialized Section is invited to propose other capacity-building activities and discuss related resource mobilization.

## **9. Terms of Reference and Working Procedures of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards and its Specialized Sections**

As per its Terms of Reference, the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards shall review its Terms of Reference every five years and submit them for approval to SCTCS and the Executive Committee of ECE. With the next revision due for consideration at its 2023 meeting, at its meeting in November 2022, the Working Party decided to set up an open working group, initially consisting of Brazil, Poland, Spain, and the United States but open

to other countries expressing interest, to review the Terms of Reference and Working Procedures and prepare a proposal. It further decided that the review of the Terms of Reference and Working Procedures be placed on the agenda of Specialized Section meetings to invite their input. Proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference would then be submitted for consideration by the Working Party at its seventy-eighth session in November 2023.

The secretariat will provide an update on the progress of the work of the open working group and invite the views of delegations on the Terms of Reference and the Working Procedures as input to the work of the open working group.

*Documentation:* Terms of Reference of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (2018) (ECE/CTCS/2019/12)  
Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards: Working Procedures

## **10. Electronic quality certificates and digitalization**

During 2020–2021, the secretariat in collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) developed the functional specifications (i.e. standardized business process) for an electronic certification system for fresh fruit and vegetables. The functional specifications were completed in November 2021 and submitted to WP.7 for review, with comments received from Brazil, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United States.

To capitalize on the fact that the 2023 session is being held the same week as the UN/CEFACT Forum, this agenda item will involve a presentation of UN/CEFACT work in the agricultural domain and a discussion with UN/CEFACT experts on the digitalization of agricultural trade processes.

## **11. Future work**

The Specialized Section will discuss its future work.

## **12. Other business**

Any other issues of interest for the work of the Specialized Section can be discussed under this agenda item.

## **13. Election of officers**

The Specialized Section will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair(s) for a one-year term.

## **14. Adoption of the report**

The Specialized Section will adopt the report of the session.

*Documentation:* Report of the seventy-first session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2023/2)

### III. Tentative timetable

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Tuesday, 9 May	10:00–13:00	Items 1–5
	15:00–18:00	Item 6
Wednesday, 10 May	10:00–13:00	Item 7
	15:00–18:00	Items 8–9
Thursday, 11 May	10:00–13:00	Items 10–13
	15:00–18:00	Item 14

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