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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 Dry and Dried Produce
Seventieth session

Geneva, 14–16 June 2023

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda*

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 - (a) Cashew kernels
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 - (c) Alignment of standards with the revised standard layout

* Documents for the meeting will be made available at <https://unece.org/trade/wp7/ge2-70th-2023>. Delegates attending the meeting are required to register online at <https://indico.un.org/e/wp7/ge2-70th-2023>. In the event of difficulties with electronic registration, please contact the secretariat by e-mail (olga.kharitonova@un.org).



8. Explanatory materials:
 - (a) Explanatory material developed by the Central Asian Working Group to Promote Exports of Agricultural Produce
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II. Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Specialized Section will adopt the agenda.

Documentation: Annotated provisional agenda (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.2/2023/1)

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. This will include updates by the European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Nut and Dried Fruit Council (INC), and the Central Asian Working Group to Promote Exports of Agricultural Produce (CAWG) on their recent work.

3. Impact of agricultural quality standards on trade

At its 2022 meeting, the Specialized Section considered the results of an econometric study by OECD and ECE, which assessed the impact of ECE agricultural quality standards and OECD explanatory materials on the trade of fruit and vegetables. The Specialized Section decided to include a similar study covering dry and dried produce in its list of future work.

In addition, to further document the impact of ECE standards, in early 2023 the ECE secretariat in consultation with the WP.7 Bureau launched a survey on 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. It is also invited to provide additional information and suggestions for data and references to assess and document the impact of the standards.

Documentation: Preliminary survey findings (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.2/2023/INF.1)

4. 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.

5. Sustainable Development Goal 12 and sustainable food systems

(a) Food loss and waste prevention related to standards

At its 2022 meeting, the Specialized Section took note of the Code of Good Practice developed for reducing food loss in fresh fruit and vegetables value chains and discussed the possibility of developing similar guidelines for nuts and dried fruit. It decided to establish an ad-hoc drafting group consisting of the United States of America, CAWG, INC, and Perlim Noix to work on developing such guidelines for nuts and dried fruit value chains, building on existing materials by industry.

The Specialized Section will receive an update on the work done, and be invited to suggest existing guidelines and resources that the ad-hoc drafting group can build on for its work.

(b) Climate change – impacts on nuts and dried fruit quality

Following an introductory presentation, the Specialized Section will discuss the potential impacts of climate change on the quality and production of nuts and dried fruit.

6. Development of new standards

(a) Inshell pecans

At its 2020 session, the Working Party adopted the draft standard for inshell pecans as a recommendation for a one-year trial period. At its 2021 and 2022 sessions, due to the ongoing review by the United States of its national standards for inshell pecans and pecan kernels, the Specialized Section agreed to submit a request to the Working Party for an extension of the trial period by one year. At its 2022 meeting, the Working Party approved a final one-year extension.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the recommendation and consider whether to recommend it to the Working Party for adoption as a standard.

Documentation: Recommendation for inshell pecans (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/13)

(b) Pecan kernels

At its 2020 session, the Working Party adopted a draft standard for pecan kernels as a recommendation for a one-year trial period. At its 2021 and 2022 sessions, due to the ongoing review by the United States of its national standards for inshell pecans and pecan kernels, the Specialized Section agreed to submit a request to the Working Party for an extension of the trial period by one year. At its 2022 meeting, the Working Party approved a final one-year extension.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the recommendation and consider whether to recommend it to the Working Party for adoption as a standard.

Documentation: Recommendation for pecan kernels (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/14)

7. Review of existing standards

(a) Cashew kernels

At its 2020 session, the Specialized Section reviewed the standard for cashew kernels and proposed some revisions. Following the session, upon receipt of comments from industry, the Bureau concluded that the standard needed further consideration, and decided to bring it back for discussion in the Specialized Section.

The following contain a document outlining the changes to the standard as agreed at the 2022 session of the Specialized Section, and a proposal from the delegation of Germany for the definition of superficial damage.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the proposed revisions to the standard.

Documentation: Revisions to the standard for cashew kernels discussed at the 2022 session (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.2/2023/3)

Proposal by the delegation of Germany to amend the standard for cashew kernels (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.2/2023/4)

(b) Raw and roasted peanut kernels

At its 2022 session, the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards adopted the new standard on raw and roasted peanut kernels. Following its adoption, the delegation of Germany has submitted the following proposal to increase the tolerances for split and broken halves, proposed to avoid food loss and waste.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the proposed revisions to the standard.

Documentation: Proposal by the delegation of Germany to amend the standard for raw and roasted peanut kernels (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.2/2023/5)

(c) Alignment of standards with the revised standard layout

In November 2022, the Working Party adopted a revised standard layout for ECE standards on dry and dried produce. 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. Explanatory materials

(a) Explanatory material developed by the Central Asian Working Group to Promote Exports of Agricultural Produce

At the 2022 session of the Specialized Section, representative of CAWG informed that CAWG had developed many promotional materials in local languages. The delegation of Germany asked if its material existed in English. In follow-up to this discussion, the Central Asian Working Group has submitted the explanatory materials it developed for dried melons, dried persimmons, inshell peanuts and peanut kernels for the review of the Specialized Section.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the text of the explanatory material for correctness. It is also invited to consider the potential development of explanatory materials for those products by the Specialized Section.

Documentation: Texts of explanatory material for standards for dried melons, dried persimmons, inshell peanuts and peanut kernels (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.2/2023/6)

(b) Explanatory material for cashew kernels

At its 2022 session, the Specialized Section reviewed the draft explanatory material on cashew kernels, alongside the standard, and agreed on revisions to both. Following the decision by the Bureau to bring back the standard for cashew kernels for further discussion,

the related explanatory material is also brought back for the review of the Specialized Section.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the draft poster for cashew kernels.

Documentation: Draft poster for cashew kernels (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.2/2023/INF.2)

(c) Explanatory material for almond kernels

At its 2022 session, the Specialized Section reviewed a proposal for explanatory material submitted by the delegation of the United States. The Specialized Section proposed several changes to it, including better depiction of splits, descriptions of what large pieces are, and some changes to the photos. The Specialized Section decided to work on a revised version in a working group led by Germany and the United States, and to submit the revised proposal for consideration at the next session of the Specialized Section in 2023.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the draft poster for almond kernels.

Documentation: Draft poster for almond kernels (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.2/2023/INF.3)

9. Harmonized System codes 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 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 and dried fruit and vegetables, and potential ways to address the challenges.

10. 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. 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.

The secretariat will provide an update on the progress of the work of the open working group. Delegations are invited to provide their views on the Terms of Reference and the Working Procedures, as input to the open working group which will submit its proposals for changes to the Working Party for consideration at its meeting in November 2023.

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

Initial proposals for revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards – comparison to the 2018 version (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.2/2023/INF.4)

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 one or two 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 seventieth session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.2/2023/2)

III. Tentative timetable

Wednesday, 14 June	10:00–13:00	Items 1–5
	15:00–18:00	Items 6–7
Thursday, 15 June	10:00–13:00	Items 7(cont.)–8
	15:00–18:00	Items 8(cont.)–9
Friday, 16 June	10:00–13:00	Items 10–13
	15:00–18:00	Item 14
