



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 December 2024

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

Fifty-second session

Geneva, 18–20 March 2025

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Matters arising:
 - (a) Recent developments in the United Nations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and its subsidiary bodies;
 - (b) Recent developments in other organizations.
3. Revision of the Standard for Seed Potatoes.
4. Sample size and interpretation of diagnostics used to support certification.
5. Guide on minituber production.
6. Soil-borne vectored viruses.
7. Revision of the position of the Specialized Section on vigour of seed potatoes.
8. True potato seeds and plantlets.
9. Impact of climate change on seed potato production.
10. New and emerging diseases and issues.
11. New technologies – impact and use in seed potato certification.
12. Capacity-building:
 - (a) Review of online guide on potato diseases, pests and defects;
 - (b) Revision of information leaflet about the seed potato standard;

* Documents for the meeting will be made available at: <https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.7-Meetings/events/ge6-52nd-2025>. Delegates attending the meeting are required to register online through: <https://indico.un.org/event/1011627/>. In the event of difficulties with electronic registration, please contact the secretariat by e-mail (agristandards@un.org).



- (c) Seed potato webinar series and expert talks;
 - (d) Information-sharing on capacity-building and use of standards.
- 13. Impact and use of standards.
 - 14. Future work.
 - 15. Other business.
 - 16. Election of officers.
 - 17. 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.6/2025/1)

2. Matters arising

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

The secretariat will present developments at the United Nations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards, 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-ninth session of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2024/2)

(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. Revision of the Standard for Seed Potatoes

At its forty-ninth session in 2022, the Specialized Section decided to undertake a full review of the ECE Standard S-1 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of seed potatoes.

During 2022-2024 the standard was reviewed in a rapporteur's group consisting of Finland (rapporteur), France, Germany, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Australian Seed Potato Industry Certification Authority, Euroseeds, and Potato Certification Service (South Africa). Proposals by the rapporteur's group for revisions to the standard were discussed by the Specialized Section at its fiftieth and fifty-first sessions in 2023 and 2024 (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2023/3 and ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2024/3).

Over the course of 2024, the rapporteur's group has worked on finalizing the review in six half-day online meetings, facilitated by the secretariat, the last of which was held on 5 December 2024.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the proposed revisions to the ECE Standard for Seed Potatoes.

Documentation: Proposed revised Standard for Seed Potatoes (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2025/3)

Proposed revised Standard for Seed Potatoes – comparison with 2021 version (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2025/INF.1)

4. Sample size and interpretation of diagnostics used to support certification

At its 2023 session, the Specialized Section discussed the results of the survey on lot size and sample size of seed potatoes. It concluded to use the findings of the survey when revising the relevant paragraphs of the standard.

At its 2024 session, the Specialized Section agreed to move out annex IX on “Sample sizes for virus testing and field inspection” from the standard into a separate guidance document, and to establish a rapporteur’s group consisting of the Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Sweden, United Kingdom, United States and the Australian Seed Potato Industry Certification Authority to review the text.

The Specialized Section is invited to discuss the text on sample sizes for virus testing and field inspection that has been moved out of the standard and provide input to the forthcoming discussions in the rapporteur’s group. It is also invited to discuss potential future work relating to sample size and interpretation of diagnostics used to support certification.

Documentation: Sample sizes for virus testing and field inspection (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2025/4)

5. Guide on minituber production

At its fiftieth session in 2023, the Specialized Section reviewed and provided comments on the draft guide on minituber production which had been developed in a rapporteur’s group consisting of France, Germany, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), the United Kingdom, Australian Seed Potato Industry Certification Authority (rapporteur), Euroseeds, Potato Certification Service (South Africa) and Potatoes New Zealand, and which was nearly finalized.

At its 2024 session, the Specialized Section agreed to finalize the minituber guide in conjunction with the revision of the standard and to submit it for consideration at the fifty-second session in 2025.

The Specialized Section will receive an update by the rapporteur’s group.

Documentation: Draft guide on minituber production (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2025/5)

6. Soil-borne vectored viruses

At its 2024 session, the Specialized Section agreed to establish a rapporteur’s group to identify key experts and develop a position paper on soil-borne vectored viruses. However, it did not appoint members of the rapporteur’s group.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the draft position on soilborne viruses, provided by the delegation of the United States of America. Delegations are invited to volunteer for the rapporteur’s group.

Documentation: Draft position on soil-borne viruses (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2025/6)

7. Revision of the position of the Specialized Section on vigour of seed potatoes

At its 2024 session, the Specialized Section reviewed the position paper on vigour of seed potatoes along with input provided by Potato Certification Service (South Africa) and agreed to establish a rapporteur's group led by Potato Certification Service (South Africa) and including France, Netherlands (Kingdom of), and the United Kingdom.

The Specialized Section will receive an update by the rapporteur's group.

Documentation: The position of the Specialized Section on vigour of seed potatoes (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2024/5)

Vigour of seed potatoes – input by Potato Certification Service South Africa (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2024/6)

8. True potato seeds and plantlets

At its 2024 session, the Specialized Section discussed its potential future work related to the topic of true potato seeds (TPS) and potato plantlets. It agreed it was an important issue which would be kept on the agenda. The delegation of the Netherlands (Kingdom of the) offered to send a note on TPS for discussion at the 2025 session.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the note on TPS submitted by the delegation of the Netherlands (Kingdom of the), and to discuss its potential future work relating to TPS and potato plantlets.

Documentation: Experience of the Netherlands (Kingdom of the) with true potato seeds (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2025/7)

9. Impact of climate change on seed potato production

At its 2024 session, the delegation of France provided a presentation on climate change and seed potato production based on discussions held at the rapporteur's meeting in Brest, France in October 2023. The Specialized Section agreed to establish a rapporteur's group led by France and including Finland, Netherlands (Kingdom of), United Kingdom, Australian Seed Potato Industry Certification Authority and Europatat to discuss the impact of climate change on seed potato production and propose potential actions for consideration by the Specialized Section.

The Specialized Section will receive an update by the rapporteur's group.

10. New and emerging diseases and issues

At its 2024 session, the Specialized Section shared experiences on new and emerging diseases and issues, including pepper ring spot virus, *Candidatus arsenophonus phytopathogenicus*, Potato Spindle Tuber Viroid (PSTVd) and fungicidal resistance, potato wart, potato leafroll virus, and potato virus Y. The Specialized Section agreed to continue sharing experiences on new and emerging diseases and issues at its 2025 session.

Delegations are invited to provide updates and share information on the topic.

11. New technologies – impact and use in seed potato certification

New technologies such as using drones for inspections, or hyperspectral cameras or image analysis for tuber inspection are advancing rapidly and may have an impact on seed potato certification.

The Specialized Section is invited to share experiences regarding new technologies that can be used for seed potato certification and discuss potential future work of the Specialized Section in this regard.

12. Capacity-building

(a) Review of online guide on potato diseases, pests and defects

At its 2024 session, the Specialized Section decided to establish a rapporteur's group to review the online guide on potato diseases, pests and defects to identify gaps and provide additional information. The rapporteur's group consists of Czechia, France, the Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the Australian Seed Potato Industry Certification Authority, which hosts the online guide. The rapporteur's group will provide an update on progress of the work.

(b) Revision of information leaflet about the seed potato standard

At its 2024 session, the Specialized Section agreed to revise the two-page information leaflet about the standard. It further agreed that the review would be undertaken by the rapporteur's group that had worked on revising the standard, upon completion of the revision of the standard.

(c) Seed potato webinar series and expert talks

At its 2023 session, the Specialized Section reviewed proposals for an online webinar series developed by a rapporteur's group consisting of Australia (rapporteur), Finland, the Netherlands (Kingdom of the), the United Kingdom, and the United States. Proposals for webinars included sessions on the ECE Standard for Seed Potatoes; herbicide damage; blackleg; *Liberibacter* (Zebra Chip); potato virus Y; and potato mop-top virus.

At its 2024 session, the Specialized Section added pepper ring spot virus, tobacco rattle virus, fungicidal resistance, and the impact of the phaseout of neonicotinoids on diseases and pests to the list of webinars. It also suggested holding a webinar on the challenges of adoption of seed potato schemes in developing countries. The Specialized Section agreed to proceed with the organization of a webinar with World Potato Congress (WPC) about the ECE standard, to do expert-talk video clips about the standard, and to explore the organization of additional webinars.

The Specialized Section is invited to discuss the organization of webinars and provide suggestions for expert speakers, as well as to propose other capacity-building activities.

(d) Information-sharing on capacity-building and use of standards

Delegations are invited to share information on ongoing and planned capacity-building activities.

13. Impact and use of standards

As part of its efforts to document the use and impact of the standards, in 2023 the secretariat in cooperation 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 further ways of documenting the use and impact of the ECE standard for seed potatoes and related guidance materials.

14. Future work

The Specialized Section will discuss its future work.

15. Other business

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

16. Election of officers

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

17. Adoption of the report

The Specialized Section will adopt the report of the session.

Documentation: Report of the fifty-second session of the Specialized Section on
Standardization of Seed Potatoes (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2025/2)

III. Tentative timetable

| <i>Day</i> | <i>Time</i> | <i>Agenda item</i> |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Tuesday, 18 March | 10:00–13:00 | Items 1–3 |
| | 15:00–18:00 | Items 4–6 |
| Wednesday, 19 March | 10:00–13:00 | Items 7–10 |
| | 15:00–18:00 | Items 11–15 |
| Thursday, 20 March | 10:00–13:00 | Item 17 |