



# 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-second session

Geneva, 6–8 May 2024

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

##### Adoption of the agenda

### Annotated provisional agenda\*

#### I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
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;
  - (b) Recent developments in other organizations.
3. Harmonized System codes for fresh fruits and vegetables.
4. Sustainable Development Goal 12 and sustainable practices: food loss and waste prevention related to standards.
5. Review of existing standards:
  - (a) Discussion of proposals resulting from the last session;
  - (b) New proposals;
  - (c) Review of the standards for cut flowers;
  - (d) Provisions for industrial processing;
  - (d) Alignment of standards with the revised standard layout.
6. Capacity-building and promotional activities.
7. Working Procedures of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards and its Specialized Sections.

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\* Documents for the meeting will be made available six weeks before the meeting at <https://unece.org/info/Trade/events/wp7/ge1-72nd-2024>. Delegates attending the meeting are required to register online at <https://unece.org/info/Trade/events/wp7/ge1-72nd-2024>. In the event of difficulties with electronic registration, please contact the secretariat by e-mail ([nilsesm@un.org](mailto:nilsesm@un.org)).



8. Electronic quality certificates and digitalization.
9. Future work.
10. Other business.
11. Election of officers.
12. 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.1/2024/1)

### **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.7/2023/2)

#### **(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. Harmonized System codes for fresh fruits and vegetables**

At its 2023 session, the Specialized Section discussed the need for more granular (product level) data on the trade in fresh fruit and vegetables, as for many types of fruit the Harmonized System (HS) codes group fresh and dried produce or several types of produce under the same code. The World Customs Organization participated in the session to inform the Specialized Section of the process and timeline for the five-yearly review of HS codes.

The secretariat will provide an update on recent developments on this topic.

### **4. Sustainable Development Goal 12 and sustainable practices: food loss and waste prevention related to standards**

At its 2022 meeting, the Specialized Section agreed to establish a working group to conduct a review of the standard layout and selected ECE standards for fresh fruits and vegetables to identify possible clauses that could contribute to reducing food loss and waste. The working group is led by Sweden and includes Brazil, France, South Africa, Spain and the United States of America. The working group will provide an update on progress.

## 5. Review of existing standards

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

At its 2023 session, the Specialized Section discussed proposed revisions to the standard for pears and to the informal reference list of citrus fruit varieties. It agreed to set up working groups to prepare revised proposals for consideration of the Specialized Section. Moreover, the working group set up to review standards from a food loss and waste perspective completed its review of the standard for carrots and submitted it to the Specialized Section for consideration. The Specialized Section is invited to review the proposals for changes to the standards for carrots and pears, as well as to the informal reference list of citrus fruit varieties, resulting from these reviews.

*Documentation:* Proposal by the food loss and waste working group to amend the standard for carrots (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2024/3)

Proposed revisions to the standard for pears (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2024/4)

Proposal by Iran (Islamic Republic of) for revisions to the standard for pears (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2024/5)

Proposed revisions to the informal reference list of citrus fruit varieties (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2024/6)

Proposed revisions to the informal reference list of citrus fruit varieties – comparison with the 2023 document (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2024/INF.1)

### (b) New proposals

The Specialized Section is invited to review the following proposals for amendments to the standards for headed cabbages, courgettes, garlic, leafy vegetables, and table grapes.

*Documentation:* Proposal by the delegation of Sweden to amend the standard for headed cabbages (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2024/7)

Proposal by the delegation of Germany to amend the standard for courgettes (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2024/8)

Proposal by the delegation of Germany to amend the standard for garlic (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2024/9)

Proposal by the delegation of Germany to amend the standard for leafy vegetables (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2024/10)

Proposal by the delegation of South Africa to amend the standard for citrus fruit (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2024/11)

### (c) Review of the standards for cut flowers

At its 2023 session, the Specialized Section decided to include in its list of future work a discussion/evaluation of the ECE standards for cut flowers for possible revision. The eight ECE standards for cut flowers were first published in 1980, and last revised in 1994. The standards were developed by a subsidiary body of WP.7 called the Meeting of Experts on Standardization of Cut Flowers (GE.9).<sup>1</sup>

The Specialized Section is invited to discuss the desirability of reviewing the ECE standards for cut flowers.

<sup>1</sup> At its fifty-third session in 1997, the Working Party decided that GE.9 would be adjourned sine die (paragraph 61, TRADE/WP.7/1997/11).

**(d) Provisions for industrial processing**

At the 2023 Working Party session, the possible need for standards for products aimed at industrial processing was discussed. Currently, the standards do not include products aimed at industrial processing, as buyers of these products have requirements that are slightly different from those for products intended to be sold fresh.

The Specialized Section is invited to discuss if it would be desirable to include provisions for industrial processing in the standards for fresh fruit, or if there is a need for standards for fruit and vegetables intended for industrial processing.

**(e) Alignment of standards with the revised standard layout**

At its 2023 session, the Working Party adopted revisions to the standard layout for ECE standards on fresh fruit and vegetables. During the end of 2023 and early 2024, the secretariat has worked to align existing standards with the revised standard layout. The secretariat will provide an update on the progress made.

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

The secretariat will inform about the upcoming capacity building on standards and inspection of fresh and dried fruit and vegetables to be organized on 4-6 June 2024 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Delegations will provide information about their promotional and capacity-building activities in the past year and present upcoming events. The Specialized Section is invited to propose other capacity-building activities and discuss related resource mobilization.

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

The Working Party at its 2022 session decided to establish an open working group to conduct a review of its Terms of Reference and Working Procedures. At its 2023 session, the Working Party agreed on revisions to its Terms of Reference, which will be submitted to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards for approval at its meeting in June 2024. The Working Party further decided to continue the review of its Working Procedures and to invite the views of Specialized Sections in the process.

The secretariat will provide an update on the progress of the work of the open working group on revisions to the Working Procedures for the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards. The Specialized Section is invited to consider the proposed revisions to Working Procedures and to provide additional suggestions.

Documentation: Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards: Working Procedures

Revised Working Procedures for the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2023/4)

Revised Working Procedures for the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards – comparison to the 2018 version (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2023/INF.2)

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

On 18 and 19 April 2023, the seventieth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe was held on the theme “Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region”. It requested that the relevant Sectoral Committees and bodies reporting directly to the Executive Committee, and their subsidiaries “consider how to enhance the impact of relevant existing ECE instruments, in order to foster digital and green transformations, including by proposing ways to identify, assess and fill gaps in governance and good practices”.

In 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) had developed functional specifications (i.e. standardized business process) for an electronic certification system for fresh fruit and vegetables (eQuality). Following this, the 2023 session of the Specialized Section included presentations by UN/CEFACT experts on ongoing work in the agricultural domain and related areas.

In line with the Commission decision, taking into account the work done on eQuality and following WP.7 discussions on this topic, the Specialized Section is invited to assess the role of digitalization in ensuring efficient agricultural trade, with a focus on the needs and current solutions for national inspection bodies, and to provide recommendations.

## 9. Future work

The Specialized Section will discuss its future work.

## 10. Other business

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

## 11. Election of officers

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

## 12. 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.1/2024/2)

## III. Tentative timetable

Monday, 6 May	10:00–13:00	Items 1–5
	15:00–18:00	Item 5
Tuesday, 7 May	10:00–13:00	Item 5
	15:00–18:00	Items 6–7
Wednesday, 8 May	10:00–13:00	Items 8–11
	15:00–18:00	Item 12