



**DIRECTORATE FOR FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES  
COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE**

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AGR/CA/F/M(2000)1

**OECD Scheme for the Control of Forest Reproductive Material Moving in International Trade**

**DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD OF THE MEETING  
OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATIONAL DESIGNATED AUTHORITIES**

**Paris, 3-5 October 2000**

*The present document was prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Meeting.*

*It is circulated to Delegations and National Designated Authorities for COMMENTS by 30 December 2000 with a view to its adoption at the next Meeting.*

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**DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD OF THE MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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**1. Opening statement and election of Chairman**

The Secretariat welcomed participants to the Meeting. It was held more than two years after the previous one because no solution had been found in the meantime to the issue of including or excluding GMO's provisions in the draft revised Scheme. Mr. Debois expressed special thanks to the new delegates and the representatives from two observer countries, Czech Republic and Slovak Republic, which had shown interest in participating in the Scheme in the future.

Dr. Fletcher (United Kingdom), who co-ordinated the revision of the Scheme and chaired previous Meetings for several years, could not attend the Meeting and was no longer available for keeping its mandate. Dr. Ackzell (Sweden) was elected on a proposal from the German representative seconded by Canada and Italy. A successor to Dr. Ackzell whose mandate as Vice-Chairman was up for renewal would be proposed in the course of the meeting.

**2. Adoption of Summary Record of the 1998 Meeting**

No comments were received by the Secretariat after circulation in September 1998 of the draft Summary Record AGR/CA/F/M(98)1. The document was adopted without modifications.

**3. Adoption of the draft Agenda AGR/CA/F/A(2000)1**

The Secretariat had received two proposals as additional items on the Agenda. This information had been circulated to delegates before the Meeting:

- FIS suggested to discuss the possibility for the Forest Seed and Plant Scheme to allow for accreditation of some official certification activities (seed sampling, testing and labelling), as was already provided for agricultural species within the framework of the OECD Seed Schemes.
- IUFRO proposed to study possible collaboration including promotion of the use of the OECD Scheme by new countries.

In addition, France proposed to briefly inform the Meeting of the current situation of the "F1 Polycross Seed Orchards".

These above-mentioned items would be included to the Agenda under "Other business". The list of available documents was updated, and the draft Agenda was adopted as amended.

## 4. Information on the proposed new Scheme

### 4.1 *Progress report on OECD Committee and Council approval*

Document AGR/CA/F(2000)6 reproduced the latest version of the proposed new Scheme, dated March 1997 (circulated at the 1997 Meeting as a room document). This was the text of the revised Scheme as submitted to the OECD Committee for Agriculture in December 1996 [AGR/CA(96)25] completed with its Corrigendum 1 and some editorial improvements. The GMO references –that the United States wanted to have removed and the European Community wanted to maintain-- are highlighted in bold italics.

The Secretariat reminded the attempt made in December 1999 to resubmit the revised Scheme to the OECD Committee for Agriculture, with the proposal to both maintain the disputed GM clauses and suspend their implementation until appropriate measures could be approved. [see AGR/CA(99)17, circulated to all delegates in the Information Note No.5 on 17/12/2000]. The Committee concluded that it was still premature to endorse the 1996 draft revised Scheme in view of on-going international discussions.

Nevertheless the Committee recommended that “*the proposal to suspend the implementation of the GM clauses should be explored as a solution to permit the enactment of the new Scheme*” [Memorandum of the Committee Meeting held on 14-15 December 1999 AGR/CA/M(99)2, point 44].

In addition, the Committee “*invited the Secretariat to convene a meeting with the EU, the US (and other interested Delegations) to examine the proposal*”.

### 4.2 *Progress report on contacts between European Community, United States and the Secretariat*

Having widely discussed several possible options to resolve the impasse regarding the GM issues, the 1998 Meeting of National Designated Authorities suggested that USA and the EC should meet and try to find a solution. The Secretariat reported that some informal discussions had taken place since that time with the US and EU delegations, but without making real progress.

In the meantime the EU took further steps and finalised the revision of the EU forest seed scheme. The new Council Directive 1999/105/EC on the marketing of forest reproductive material was adopted on 22 December 1999 (published in the Official Journal L011 of 15 January 2000). The EU scheme is very similar to the proposed revised OECD Scheme and includes information requirements for GM tree seeds (see comparison below, under item 8). EU Member countries are currently in the process of adapting their respective national laws to the new Directive which should come into force on 1st January 2003.

### 4.3 *Outlook for the proposed new Scheme and possible follow-up*

#### 4.3.1 *Discussions*

Delegates stressed the need for adopting without further delay the proposed new Scheme which is the culmination of 5 years of wide consultations and meetings, resulting in a complete overhaul of the 1974 version. It provides the broadest certification system adapted to the current situation and outlook of the forest seed market.

In addition, the current waiting position is damaging in that some new countries refrain from applying for joining the Scheme.

A wide exchange took place between country delegates and observers (BIAC, FIS, IUFRO) in which:

- The unanimous agreement on all technical points of the draft revised Scheme, except for the few lines relating to GM issues, was confirmed;
- The rapid change concerning these issues at scientific level, in state policies and in public opinion was stressed;
- The necessity for any seed exporter to fulfil, in addition to the Scheme rules, the specific requirements of the importing country where applicable, was emphasized, as would be the case already for the labelling of GM seed in EU countries;
- It was noted that the GM issues were also discussed in other OECD groups (Agricultural Seed Schemes, G8 report, Food Safety and Biotechnology Working Parties, etc.) as well as in other international fora such as the Biosafety Protocol under the auspices of the Convention for Bio-Diversity which will have its first implementation meeting next December.

#### 4.3.2 *Action to take*

**The Secretariat suggested to prepare a new proposal for the next OECD Committee for Agriculture to be held on 27-29 November 2000.** Support from the National Designated Authorities at this meeting and favourable informal contacts at the Committee level should open the way to successful compromising.

The new proposal would contain 2 parts:

Part A: Revised text as already submitted but without the GM provisions (consensual part);

Part B: GM provisions (disputed clauses), to be further discussed for eventual insertion in Part A, and current application on a voluntary basis when requested by the importing country in case of GM seed trade.

A first draft of Part B, including an explanatory introduction, was circulated to the representatives at the Meeting.

Both the EU and the US delegates confirmed to be open to a new proposal but needed to refer to their respective Authorities before any commitment. The Secretariat should also check with the OECD Legal Office the feasibility of such draft Council Decision.

*It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate as soon as possible after the Meeting a final draft for comments by the end of October. Contacts with stakeholders would be developed and a possible action taken in November for a new submission at the next meeting of the OECD Committee for Agriculture.*

## **5. Participating countries, applicant and interested countries**

The Secretariat updated the list of countries participating or having officially applied to OECD Agricultural Codes and Schemes [AGR/CA/F(2000)1 issued on 27 July].

As agreed by the 1998 Meeting, Madagascar joined officially the Scheme by a Decision of the OECD Council on 10 December 1998 and became the 22<sup>nd</sup> participating country. The corresponding “blue band” document C(98)179/FINAL had been sent in early 1999 to all participating countries and observers.

The Slovak Republic was about to become a full OECD Member. The country was already participating in the Agricultural Seed Schemes and indicated to the Meeting its wish to participate in the Forest Seed Scheme once the general procedure would be finalised. Mr. Hoffman, Ministry of Agriculture, Forest Division, explained the importance of forest activities (surfaces, timber volumes, production of tree seeds and plants) for domestic purpose, trade with foreign countries of Central Europe and elsewhere. He also mentioned the willingness of his country to put the national forest law in conformity with the EU. The Secretariat would provide the basic documentation and will keep in contact with the Forest Division as well as the Slovak representation to OECD in Paris. An official letter would be sent by the Slovak Authority in due course.

The Czech Republic delegate, Mr. Vancura, Director of Forestry Development Department, Ministry of Agriculture, confirmed the national interest in joining the Scheme as previously announced to representatives during the 1998 Meeting. A meeting with MM. Debois and Dagallier (OECD Secretariat) was held in October 1999 in Prague. Although being a full OECD Member, the country agreed to offer the possibility for a visit by two experts for a survey of the national forest seed activity. Nevertheless the official application was delayed by the preparation of the new Forestry Act. This legal framework will not be restricted to forest seed and plants production but will concern all forestry activities, aiming to harmonisation with EU. It should be finalised by the end of November and implementation Decrees would follow. An evaluation visit by OECD might take place in May 2001.

The Secretariat mentioned other countries having shown interest in the Scheme and having asked for a copy of the Rules over the two past years:

Slovenia, Unit for Forest Seed and Seedlings of the Slovenian Forestry Institute, Ljubljana, October 1998;

Malaysia, Malaysian-German Forestry Planting Material Procurement Project, (GTZ) April 1999;

Uruguay, National Seed Institute INASE, Montevideo, documentation requested by the national delegate on the occasion of the Annual Meeting of the OECD Agricultural Seed Schemes held in Paris, May 1999;

Botswana, National Tree Seed Centre, Gaboroné, via the German GTZ co-operation agency, June 1999;

Argentina, National Seed Institute INASE, Certification and Control Directorate, Buenos Aires, July 1999;

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Institute for Forestry, Beograd, November 1999. Information was provided but no official application could be accepted at that time given disputed UN Status of the country.

Mexico, Mexican delegation to the OECD, Paris, February 2000;

Burkina Faso, Centre National des Semences Forestières, Ouagadougou, September 2000. Established in 1983 with the FAO support, the Centre is active in seed collection and distribution. The letter mentions current support provided by a Belgium Forestry Institute (Gembloux).

The Secretariat had contacted the Greek delegation to the OECD, underlining the technical participation of Greece in the Scheme (participation in previous meetings, responses to questionnaires sent regularly to the Secretariat) but without official adherence. Poland had showed recurring interest for about 15 years without adherence either.

Mr. Nanson (Belgium) mentioned Morocco and Senegal, both of them being technically advanced in forest seed activities and eligible for applying to the OECD Scheme.

Mr. Morandini (Italy) welcomed the interest of many developing countries in the OECD Scheme but underscored that the annual fee, albeit its current low level, could appear as a stumbling block for some of them. He added that FAO had conducted a study in Morocco confirming the readiness of the country to implement an international certification Scheme.

Hungary gave support to the Slovak future application having developed contacts and experienced satisfactory trading conditions, and suggested that the Hungarian Forest Law recently adopted could be a useful reference for this country.

Mr. Gordon (CPFUE) mentioned the Danish/World Bank project developed in India which was promoting the use of the OECD Scheme. It seems to be part of the current recommendation at national level (Forest Direction) as well as in the Madhya Pradesh region.

Sweden said that forest seed exchanges are developing with neighbouring countries, and in particular with Belarus which is required to apply the OECD Scheme when exporting seed to Sweden.

Mr. Olinski (EPPO) informed the Meeting of a new forest project in which ex-USSR countries are actively involved. He offered EPPO help where necessary for contacting appropriate correspondents.

## **6. Financing of the Scheme**

### **6.1 *Budget for the Scheme***

Mr. Debois presented the 2000 and 2001 budget tables for the Scheme (*see last page of Room Document No. 2*). Total amounts show no substantial changes from previous years. A slight increase (+ 4 %) more of a technical nature was proposed for the 2001 budget.

Three countries were in arrears, Romania, Rwanda and the United States. Romania was about to settle its account after completing the administrative transfer of responsibilities. Mail to Rwanda remained unanswered. As for the United States, the problem was due to the financing system in place. Being based upon trade and trade declining, adequate funding should not be expected in the medium-term. The sustainability and stability of the financial base would have to be addressed as an issue between the Secretariat and the US Designated Authority.

### **6.2 *New scale of contributions***

The Secretariat proposed in Room Document No. 2 to revise the scale of contributions. The new annual fee would consist of two parts:

- a lump sum to be paid equally by all countries, completed with
- an amount different for each country and proportional to the official OECD scale (which is based on the national economic growth per capita).

Mr. Worrel (OECD Budget and Finance Service) explained that this revision exercise had been already done and agreed by other OECD groups similar to the Forest Seed Scheme where the funds are provided by the participating countries only (Part II of the budget). This would lead to consider equally the OECD Member and non member countries, provide for a narrower range of contributions. Funding should

better reflect the low certification activity and adjustment costs of developing participating countries, often from outside the OECD and the low OECD certification activity of the largest contributors (USA mainly).

Calculations were proposed with a lump sum of both 5.000 and 10.000 FRF.

Mrs. Ramamonjisoa (Madagascar) stressed the difficulty faced by developing countries to find each year the requested amount when all external assistance has ended, even with the current modest level of contribution applied. Mr. Fürst (Switzerland) wondered whether other funding schemes could not allow countries to pay for the contributions of the developing countries. This would meet FAO concerns.

It was replied that with both of the lump sum levels proposed, countries with the lowest economic level would see their annual contribution reduced.

Switzerland gave support to the lesser of both levels and, *in conclusion, the meeting agreed that the Secretariat would submit the proposal with the 5.000 FRF lump sum fee to the OECD Committee for agriculture which, if favourable, would transmit it to the Council for adoption.*

## **7. Statistics on implementation of the Scheme**

### **7.1 *Weights of seed certified***

#### **7.1.1 Summary Tables**

Since the last Meeting, the Secretariat finalised the summary tables of weights of forest seed certified, used or traded corresponding to the following periods:

1996/97	Document AGR/CA/F(99)2 + Corrigendum 1
1997/98	Document AGR/CA/F(99)5
1998/99	Room document No.3 distributed at the present Meeting (draft).

Due to some late answers to the annual questionnaire, the 1998/99 could not be completed in time for the Meeting. It will be finalised by the Secretariat as soon as possible (waiting for the French response).

All participating countries now provide data regularly, except for Rwanda. Greece also sent a national certification table which was added for information, this OECD country not an official participant in the Scheme. Madagascar which had provided national data for 1997/98 reported OECD certified seed data for 1998/99 for the first time. The delegate stated that, as expected, the OECD certification boosted national seed production and external trade.

The newly drawn distinction between EU and non EU data in the questionnaire was confirmed and found to be both meaningful and convenient. Weight reporting and consolidation was a useful indicator of development of the Scheme.

The summary tables clearly point out the importance of "Source Identified" (yellow label) and "Selected" (green label) categories, compared to the other categories such as "Untested Seed Orchards" and "Tested". Figures concerning the importation and exportation of seed remain partial. They should not be deemed to reflect the total amount of seed movements during the period, because several countries were not able to provide comprehensive import or export data.

To sum up, the total of OECD certified seed shown in the documents remains modest, reaching between 900 to 1,100 tonnes per year. Delegates pointed out that the weight of OECD-labelled seed moving in international trade was not the sole purpose of the Scheme. It was also used implicitly for other types of trade and was the reference for classifying basic or reproductive materials and implementing control at national level.

#### 7.1.2 Proposal for revising weight statistics

A discussion had been held at the 1998 Meeting on enlarging the scope of statistics to traded values via proper weighting of species, and Sweden had volunteered for tentative conversion and valuation.

Mr. Ackzell presented paper AGR/CA/F(2000)4 entitled “*Summarizing OECD Statistics on implementation of the Scheme*” which analysed the factors in converting raw weights of seed into living tree numbers.

A proposal focusing on the number of seeds and potential seedlings was discussed. The general opinion was that this should be left to each Designated Authority who had the best knowledge of conversion rates appropriate to each species.

Several delegates (Finland, Netherlands, Hungary) pointed out the difficulties of harmonising such data. The average number of seeds per kilogram offers a very large range according to species, but this information is generally well known by the D.A. for species that are present in the country.

The weight of seed certified, given by species, is thus considered to be the most important data because it allows conversion. An estimation can be done on that basis where needed; further systematic conversion would hardly provide better information and seemed to be useless.

*The meeting agreed to keep the weight statistics unchanged.*

## 7.2 Summary list of approved basic material

The Secretariat completed the provisional list of selected seed stands distributed at the 1998 Meeting. The final document AGR/CA/F(99)4 was circulated in October 1999.

It includes tables from 22 countries listing, by species and regions of provenance whenever applicable, selected stands from which harvested seed is eligible for green label certification (“Selected category of basic material”). All these countries are participating in the OECD Scheme, except for Greece which provided national data and can apply the EU certification only.

The Summary Table at the end of the document lists 106 species in total for which selected seed stands were reported at least once; the total stand area amounts to 500 000 hectares.

The document provides explanations for each country, in particular concerning the definition of regions of provenance.

It also lists the highest ten species (or groups of species) totals which covering between themselves almost 97 % of the reported total of selected seed stands, corresponding to the European climatic area. The inclusion of Madagascar and Rwanda data opened the list to a new range of tropical species; this was noted as an interesting area of development for the Scheme.



Selected seed stands represent the most important part of the basic material available for seed certification. These area statistics cannot offer very detailed or precise figures, but indicate another possible use of the Scheme.

*Delegates recommended that the Secretariat complete this document with other categories (in particular seed orchards) whenever such information was recorded.*

*Delegates are requested to keep sending updated information (paper copies, website addresses) relating to approved basic material of any category.*

## **8. Comparison between the proposed new OECD Scheme and the EU Directive 1999/105/EC**

All delegates were reminded that the first objective of the recently adopted EU Directive on the marketing of forest reproductive material was to deal with trade between EU countries as a single market (Art.1); material for export was exempted (Art.3.4), material for import could benefit from equivalence by derogation.

The Directive was built on the technical basis of the draft revised OECD Scheme.

No comparison document was available at the Meeting but the Chairman summarised the main points of similarity and difference, drawing from a memorandum prepared by Dr. Fletcher:

### Both texts are similar concerning:

- Same types of basic material (except 3. below).
- Same requirement for Regions of Provenance delineation.
- “National Register” + “National List of basic material” must be maintained and kept available.
- Same 4 categories of reproductive material. The requirements to be met by the basic material intended for the production of certified reproductive material are almost identical (except 4. below).
- Specific reference to GMOs, to be certified under the “tested” category only (see 7. below).
- Same role for the Designated Authority: approval of basic material, authorisation, control, etc.
- Same prescribed information on the label/document accompanying the marketed seed/plants
- Same colours for the labels, if colours are used

### The following differences are:

- 1) The OECD Scheme is “voluntary”: a country can apply it to the species, types of basic material and categories of reproductive material of its choice.  
The EC Directive is “compulsory”: provisions must be applied by Member States to all species, types or categories except for derogations.
- 2) EC applies to a defined list of species; OECD covers any species that a country may wish to include.
- 3) Basic material: no “seed plantations” in the EC Directive

- 4) Very slight differences in requirements for the basic material giving "Source Identified" rep. material
- 5) National Register: detailed information to be recorded is described in OECD, whereas the EC leaves it to the individual Member States to record material according to their own systems.
- 6) Following harvest, a "Master Certificate of Identity" is issued in EC. A "Certificate of Provenance" or "Identity" is issued in OECD by category (the information provided remains the same).
- 7) For GMOs, the EC Directive prescribes additional requirements (Art.5)
- 8) Differences in labelling: -- The EC material "not for forestry purposes" is dealt with separately  
-- Further detailed EC requirements relating to the external quality of seeds (Art.14.2) and plants (Art.6.3).

The Meeting concluded that both Schemes remain largely compatible since the new EC Directive was broadly based on the OECD Expert Group's work. The differences as listed cannot result in seed quality divergences or bring serious additional risk for the seed user. Requirements specific to the EC Scheme should, however, be fulfilled for any seed intended to be imported in EU.

*This comparison exercise would need to be conducted again in detail once the new OECD Scheme is adopted.*

## **9. Discussion on early implementation of the new Scheme by countries**

A general discussion on the subject seemed to be premature. National details would be given with the country reports under item 11 of the Agenda.

The EU Member States confirmed that they were all in the process of adapting their national laws to the Directive adopted last December.

Newly admitted countries, such as Madagascar, stated they built their national forest seed certification and control on the basis of the revised OECD Scheme. Countries from Central Europe mentioned they were working to adapt their national laws to the EU requirements, therefore becoming equivalent to the new OECD Scheme.

It was concluded that the new OECD Scheme was considered to be technically good for present seed certification -- and was sometimes already used.

## **10. Review of the operation of the OECD Scheme in Romania**

Romania prepared paper AGR/CA/F(2000)5 describing the operation of the OECD Forest Scheme in the country. Mrs. Moise presented the national forest system, showed maps and organisation charts and provided detailed information.

An area equal to 27% of the country is covered by forest. Regions of provenance are 15 in number, each of them being divided in sub-regions according to ecological criteria. Forests are currently managed by the State but privatisation of part of it is underway.

Forest seed activity is subject to the 1996 National Law (domestic) and to the OECD Scheme (international trade). Selected stands of many species are included in the National Catalogue. Approved clones are allowed for seed production in the case of *Populus* spp. and willow.

Some seed orchards, entitled for “Qualified” material, are being tested. They may be admitted in the future to produce “Tested” material.

The Ministry is the Authority in charge of certification and control, to be implemented in the country by the regional units of the Forest Research Institute.

Even for the future private plots, forest destination and use will remain under State control. For instance, privatised seed stands shall keep their seed production activity and cannot be used for timber of other usage. Some private export of forest seed is currently emerging.

Work is in progress to fully adapt the national certification system to the EU requirements, with a view to a future adherence of the country to EU.

## **11. Country reports: national developments in forest seed certification since the 1998 Meeting**

Hungary gave a complete Power Point presentation of the national certification scheme. Dr. Bach explained the Seed Law and Decree with annexes recently adopted, aiming to organise the whole certification and control process: list of species, map of regions of provenance, trials and register, requirements and standards for basic materials according to seed category to be produced. A chart of the National Institute for Agricultural Quality Control (OMMI) which includes the Forest Seed control. Harmonisation with EU legislation was underlying this reorganisation work.

A booklet issued this year, containing the “Decree N°. 91/1997 on the Forest Reproductive Material” and the “Certification Scheme of Forest Reproductive Materials in Hungary” was kindly distributed to all participants.

Dr. Morandini, who participated in the evaluation mission preceding the country's admission in 1989, complimented the Hungarian delegates for the huge progress made and the full compliance with the OECD Scheme.

All delegates from the EU Member States mentioned the adaptation of their national laws relating to forest reproductive material, to be put in line with the new EC Directive 1999/105/EC.

Austria informed the representatives that the review of the Regions of provenance was in progress.

Ireland insisted on the need for good traceability and accurate labelling of seed moving in international trade, reflecting on a recent problem with seed lots of *Fraxinus excelsior*.

Norway informed the delegates of effects on offspring of the climatic conditions, during seed reproduction, in the Norwegian spruce seed orchards. When seed is produced under warmer conditions than experienced by the parents at their sites of origin, phenotypes of the offspring are different from those of the parents and performance is similar to those of more southern provenances. Mr. Skrøppa kindly offered his expertise and will provide more information to any colleague facing the same problems.

Madagascar stated that the OECD certification was easy to apply when the admission came at the end of 1998, because the country already applied the same Scheme at that time. Mrs. Ramamonjisoa added that forest management also had to follow a national bio-diversity strategy since last year.

## 12. Information from the “OECD Working Group for the Harmonization of Regulatory Oversight in Biotechnology” relating to forestry

The OECD Environment Directorate/”Working Group for the Harmonization of Regulatory Oversight in Biotechnology” was developing work relating to forestry:

- “Consensus documents” for Norway Spruce and White Spruce were distributed to all participants; Other species are in preparation: Poplar, European White Birch, Eastern White Pine, Sitka Spruce. Future work is planned for other genera: *Prunus* and *Citrus*.
- A Workshop on Environmental Considerations of Genetically Modified Trees was organised in September 1999 in Norway. Dr. Fletcher was an invited participant as Chairman of the Scheme and presented the OECD Scheme activities. He prepared an information paper reporting the main Workshop conclusions AGR/CA/F(2000)3 which were presented by Mr. Skrøppa. The final Workshop Summary Report and the complete proceedings are being prepared by the Environment Directorate [*to be circulated as ENV/JM/BIO(2000)5 and 5/ADD*].

BIAC emphasized the need to provide legal certainty for companies producing and trading genetically modified trees, including labelling aspects.

Other delegates (Germany, Sweden) who participated in the Workshop confirmed its great interest for all attendees by reviewing scientific aspects and current developments of GM tree research in several countries, and highlighting differences for risk assessment between North America and Europe.

- The newsletter “OECD Biotechnology Update” No.8 of 29 September 2000, prepared by the Internal Co-ordination Group for Biotechnology (ICGB) was distributed to the participants. It provides summary information on the horizontal work developed at OECD on the subject.

## 13. Statements by international organisations

FIS/ASSINSEL Mr. Martinez (FIS Secretariat) introduced Mr. Arie Boevé, the new President of the FIS Tree and Shrub Seed Group. Mr. Boevé, having long standing experience of the Dutch seed industry and the international seed trade, explained the FIS request to OECD in respect of the accreditation of seed sampling and testing (see item 14 below). There is a rising need for forest seed companies to obtain seed analysis results without delay given the globalisation of the seed market and the “just-in-time” requirements. Post-harvest germination behaviour can be significant and contrary to annual crops. Tree seed is often stored for long periods. In addition, some tree species require special or time-consuming techniques for seed analysis. ISTA laboratories are often overbooked. To delegate some sampling and testing activity to the seed companies would help to provide quick results as more and more often required by industry.

Mr. Martinez informed the Meeting of the future change of the name of FIS/ASSINSEL soon to become the International Seed Federation (ISF), as a result of the merger of both organisations.

CPFUE Dr. Gordon, Secretary, explained the decrease of activity of the Committee of Forest Nurseries in the EU. After a flourishing period of reforestation, changing trends in forest management have developed, as was perfectly illustrated by the field visit in Germany. The rising importance of local species and the emphasis given to natural regeneration obviously led to a decline of forest seed and seedling trade.

Dr. Gordon stressed that the still unresolved problem of “origin” constituted a severe barrier to trade. A list of acceptable origins is badly needed within the framework of the EU Directive. Delegates were urged to find a solution lest source-identified material becomes unacceptable by national restrictions.

CPFUE supported the FIS request to consider that accreditation of seed sampling, testing and labelling to be devolved to private companies to a larger extent.

IUFRO Mr. Muhs, Chairman of the IUFRO Working Party on Legislation for Forest Reproductive Material reminded delegates that the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations was a forum of scientists. IUFRO deals with a large range of subjects in many working parties, organises meetings and conferences, often in partnership with other organisations and technical institutes.

Its Working Party on Legislation for Forest Reproductive Material offers the Meeting delegates to collaborate more closely and contribute to promote the use of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme. IUFRO has noticed a need for establishing rules pertaining to tropical reproductive material. IUFRO and OECD could probably help developing countries on specific aspects of international trade in this material.

Mr. Morandini concurred. Mr. Nanson underlined that a better knowledge of the international seed certification rules would certainly benefit research programmes in several countries and avoid wasting time and money by focusing on the right issues.

The Meeting welcomed the proposal. The OECD Secretariat suggested as a first step to increase participation in IUFRO meetings, specially in countries showing potential for the Scheme. Joint OECD-IUFRO meetings, workshops or conferences could be envisaged in the future in tropical countries.

BIAC Mrs. Parks presented the Business and Industry Advisory Council, a consultative body to OECD representing enterprises. She referred to her statement during the GM discussion (see above).

EPPO Mr. Orlinski stated its interest in the OECD Scheme developments, offered assistance to contact some countries interested in the Scheme, and mentioned the national Plant Protection Institutes as a possible source of additional information about seed import/export statistics.

## **14. Other business**

### ***14.1 Accreditation for seed sampling, testing and labelling***

As an introductory comparison, the Secretariat explained that the OECD agricultural Seed Schemes allowed for some delegation of activities required by certification --field inspections, seed sampling, testing and labelling. These could be implemented by private persons/companies instead of officials. This “accreditation” of some tasks is subject to a set of conditions. It is performed with the authorisation, under the control and with final responsibility of the Designated Authority.

Accreditation for agricultural seed certification started with an experiment for field inspection. Countries willing to participate reported annually to the Secretariat the results. Guidelines were elaborated. After a few years of good results, the experiment was converted to a regular option open to National Designated Authorities. Countries remain free to use it or not, according to national preferences

A second step consist of an experiment, initiated in 2000, on accreditation of private persons/laboratories for seed sampling, testing and labelling.

Basic documentation was provided to the Forest Seed Scheme delegates during the Meeting.

- Room Document No.1 comprising the excerpts of the rules of the Agriculture Seed Scheme relating to accreditation.
- Guidelines relating to field inspection [AGR/CA/S(98)32] and to seed sampling (including labelling and sealing) and seed testing [AGR/CA/S(2000)30] were also distributed.

Delegates agreed this could be of interest for the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme. They would revert to the subject at the next meeting.

#### **14.2 *French Polycross Seed Orchards***

The French delegation informed the Meeting of technical developments in the management of the “F1 Polycross Seed Orchards” established for Maritime Pine. A total area of 180 hectares is located in the South-West region of France.

The case for inclusion in the OECD Scheme of this special type of basic material was discussed during previous Meetings and the material was shown during the 1998 technical visit; it had been agreed that the matter should be considered further.

France informed the Meeting that comparative testing of these orchards started two years ago, aiming to a future change of classification by being recognised for the production of certified “Tested” reproductive material. Work is in progress and the expectations for this upgrading are good. The future management and production plan will change them to the usual “Seed Orchards” as defined in the OECD Scheme, with individual identification of all the component trees.

Given these changes, France withdrew its request for specific consideration as F1 Polycross Seed Orchards. The Meeting took note of this.

#### **14.3 *Nomination of Vice-Chairman***

On the proposal of several countries, the meeting unanimously agreed that Mr. Dale Simpson (Canada) should become the Vice-Chairman of the Meeting of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme.

### **15. *Date of the next Meeting***

The question to change from “biennial” to “annual” Meeting of representatives of the National Designated Authorities was discussed. The two-year period was standard practice up to now, except for 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998 where the Group met each year in order to prepare and amend the draft new Scheme.

The general feeling was that an annual meeting would certainly be useful once the proposal for the revised Scheme would be accepted. The Chairman proposed to keep the date of the next Meeting open. It would be held within 6 months after the approval of the new Scheme and would focus on its implementation, or else would take place in Autumn 2002. This was agreed by the Meeting.

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**16. Special thanks and regards** were sent to the former Chairmen:

- Prof. Morandini (Italy) attended the Meeting for the last time. He participated in the development of the Scheme adopted in 1967 and chaired the Biennial Meeting for over 10 years.
- Dr. Fletcher (United Kingdom) succeeded him in the early 90s until the present session and presided over the drafting of the new Scheme. He was warmly thanked for his great work in developing the Scheme activities and more specifically for his efforts with the new Scheme.

All delegates expressed their best wishes for good health and happy retirement to both of them.

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**17. Technical visit in Germany**

A one-day field trip was organised with the German Designated Authority to visit the Rhineland-Palatinate forest (Kaiserslautern region). This forest is the largest continuous wooded area of the country (8,300 km<sup>2</sup>) and is managed by the State. Its tree population is mixed with broad-leaved (mainly beech, oak and hornbeam) and coniferous species (spruce, Scots pine and Douglas-fir). The 27 participants visited various places presenting the following forestry management cases:

- Cultivation of sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) on a disaster-affected plot by establishing hursts;
- Natural regeneration of Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) with/ without shelter trees, and admixing with broad-leaved tree species;
- Natural regeneration of beech stands having reached exploitable size for harvesting, tending interventions for light demander trees;
- Specimens of one hundred year-old Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*);
- Selected seed stand of oaks (264-year-old) with high-grade timber, plans for regeneration.

A written summary description of the visited sites was distributed to delegates. The forest management strategy focused on natural regeneration, with a view to maintaining bio-diversity and high quality of wood; social and cost/benefit aspects were also discussed. The clearing policy (including pruning and tending) is to maintain a wide range of species and ages in the forest.

Germany was warmly thanked for this very interesting and informative visit which gave rise to fruitful discussions.

ANNEX

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