



Matters arising

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



UNECE

Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes, 51st session,
26-28 March 2024



Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7)

Organization:

- Working Party + 4 Specialized Sections
- 5 annual intergovernmental meetings
- Open to all UN member States
- Serviced by the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (ECTD)

Over 100 commercial quality standards:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables, nuts and dried fruit, seed potatoes, meat, eggs
- Open development and adoption process, regular revisions, inputs from parties
- Complemented with guidance materials, illustrative posters and leaflets, code mark registry, etc.



Quality helps:

- Increase benefits from international trade
- Prevent food loss

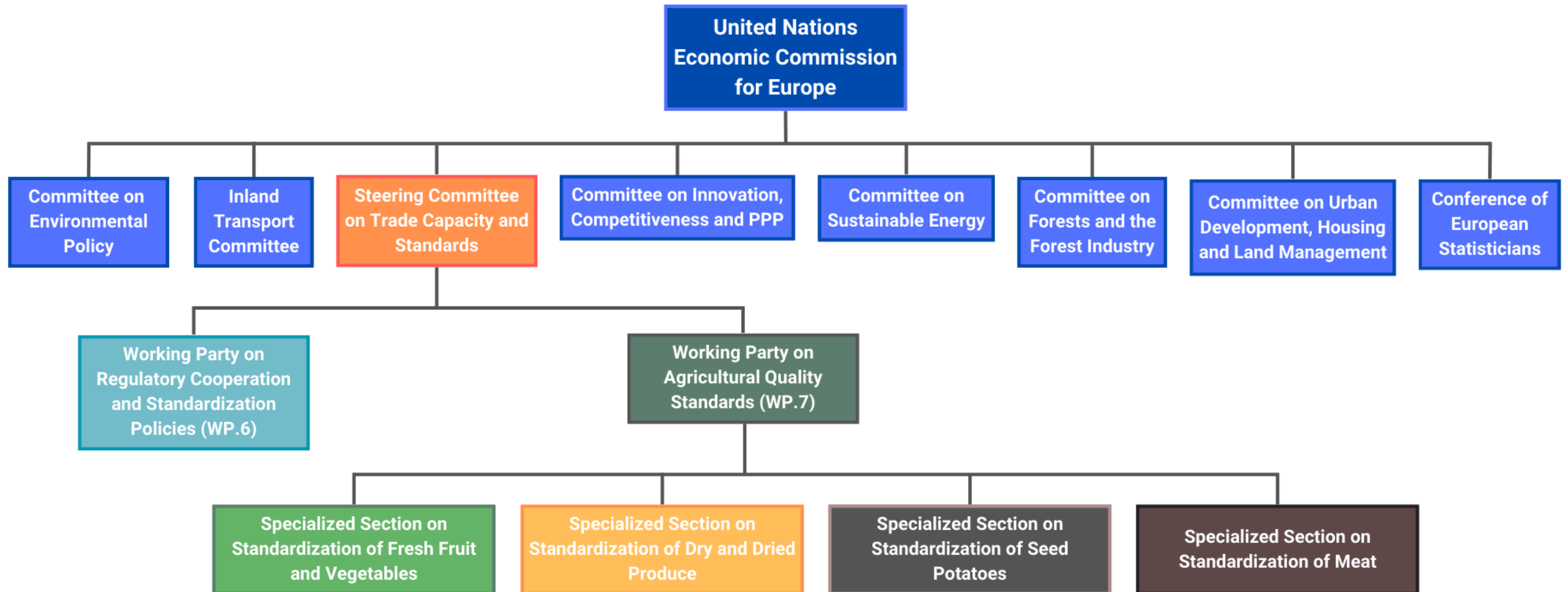
Related work:

- Food loss and waste
- Capacity building
- Illustrated guides
- Studies

Used by:

- Authorities – check products against a set of transparent rules
- Producers – improve production, reach new markets
- Traders & Retail Chains – order confidently

WP.7 in ECE intergovernmental structure



Adoption of ECE standards

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
New standards		Dried melons Dehydrated coconut kernel pieces Dried ripe papayas	Minimum Quality Specifications for FFV	Sweet Apricot Kernels Pomegranates	Dried Persimmons Raw and Roasted Inshell Peanuts Raw and Roasted Peanut Kernels	Certain small fruits Inshell pecans Pecan kernels
Revised standards	Sweet peppers Dried bananas Goose meat Ovine meat Porcine meat	Annonas Avocado Berry fruit Broccoli Cauliflower Cherries Onions Root & Tubercle Veg Table grapes Watermelon Inshell Walnuts	Headed cabbages Persimmons Sweet peppers Table grapes Updated lists of varieties (standards for Apples, Pears, Plums) DDP Standard layout	Apricots Carrots Cauliflower Chinese cabbage Cucumbers Fresh figs Strawberries Watermelons Dates (dried) Prunes (dried) FFV Standard layout	Asparagus Cherries Leafy vegetables Pomegranates Bovine meat DDP Standard layout	Asparagus Broccoli Kiwifruit Onions Peas Sweet chestnuts Cashews kernels Bovine meat Minimum Quality Specifications FFV Standard layout
Recommendations		<i>Prunes (ext.)</i>	<i>Sweet Apricot Kernels Inshell Pecans Pecan Kernels</i>	<i>Dried Persimmons R&R Inshell Peanuts R&R Peanut Kernels Inshell Pecans (ext.) Pecan Kernels (ext.)</i>	<i>Certain small fruits Inshell Pecans (ext.) Pecan Kernels (ext.)</i>	<i>Sweet potatoes</i>

Related work

Guidance materials, capacity building and analysis

Guidance material and capacity building:

- Online course on agricultural quality standards and food loss <https://unece.org/trade/wp7/e-learning>
- [Code of Good Practice](#) – 2nd ed. 2023 (EN, FR, RU)

Analysis:

- OECD/UNECE study on the impact of UNECE standards and OECD explanatory brochures on international trade of fruit and vegetables
- WP.7 survey on the use of ECE standards and their link to relevant legislative frameworks
- Regional policy paper on circularity in agrifood, with a focus on food loss and waste management (forthcoming)



Recent developments of relevance to the Specialized Section

Since the last session:

- Seventieth session of the Commission, 18-19 April 2023
 - Theme: “[Digital and Green Transformations for Sustainable Development in the Region of the Economic Commission for Europe](#)”
- Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards, 27-28 June 2022
- Specialized sections meetings:
 - Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, 9-11 May 2023
 - Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce, 14-16 June 2023
 - Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat, 28-30 September 2022 (+ Sustainable Meat and Livestock seminar) 28-29 August 2023
- Rapporteur’s meeting of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes in Brest, France, 10-12 October 2023
- Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards, 13-15 November 2023
- Regional Forum on Sustainable Development: roundtable on SDG2 (zero hunger), with IBC-SFS, 13-14 March 2024

OIOS evaluation of ECE work on Economic Cooperation and Trade

Background and objective

- In 2022, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted a regular evaluation of subprogrammes 4 (Economic cooperation and integration) and 6 (Trade)
- Report published in March 2023 ([E/AC.51/2023/5](#))

Findings

- Relevance:
 - The work of ECTD was considered aligned with its mandate.
 - The Division largely responded to specific member States' requests and had “found its niche in a crowded space of trade and economic cooperation”.
- Effectiveness.
 - The Division's work on facilitating norms and standards setting was largely effective.
 - There were numerous instances of norms and standards being adopted into national policies and legislation”, such as in the case of fresh fruit and vegetables standards in the European Union.

Recommendations

ECTD should establish a technical cooperation request tracking mechanism; develop divisional action plans to operationalize ECE strategies on resource mobilization, partnerships, and technical cooperation; and ensure integration of gender, environment, disability inclusion, and human rights considerations in its various workstreams.

Meetings in 2024

	Meeting dates
Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards	26-28 June 2024
Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7)	11-13 November 2024
<i>Specialized Section on Standardization of...</i>	
Seed Potatoes	26-28 March 2024
Fresh Fruit and Vegetables	6-8 May 2024
Dry and Dried Produce	15-17 May 2024
Meat	28-30 August 2024



Thank you!

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