

Matters arising

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

June 2023



UNECE



UNECE at a glance

Membership and focus



- *The only UN Regional Commission with a mandate in developing agricultural quality standards*
- *Open for participation by all UN Member States*



- Set up in 1947 by [ECOSOC](#)
- Aim is to promote pan-European economic integration through
 - Policy dialogue
 - Normative work
 - Technical cooperation
- **56 member States** in Europe, North America, the Caucasus, Central Asia and Western Asia
- 17 “programme” countries
- 18 landlocked and 2 double landlocked countries
- **More than 100 countries beyond the UNECE region benefit from its work**

UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7)

Structure, focus and related work



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

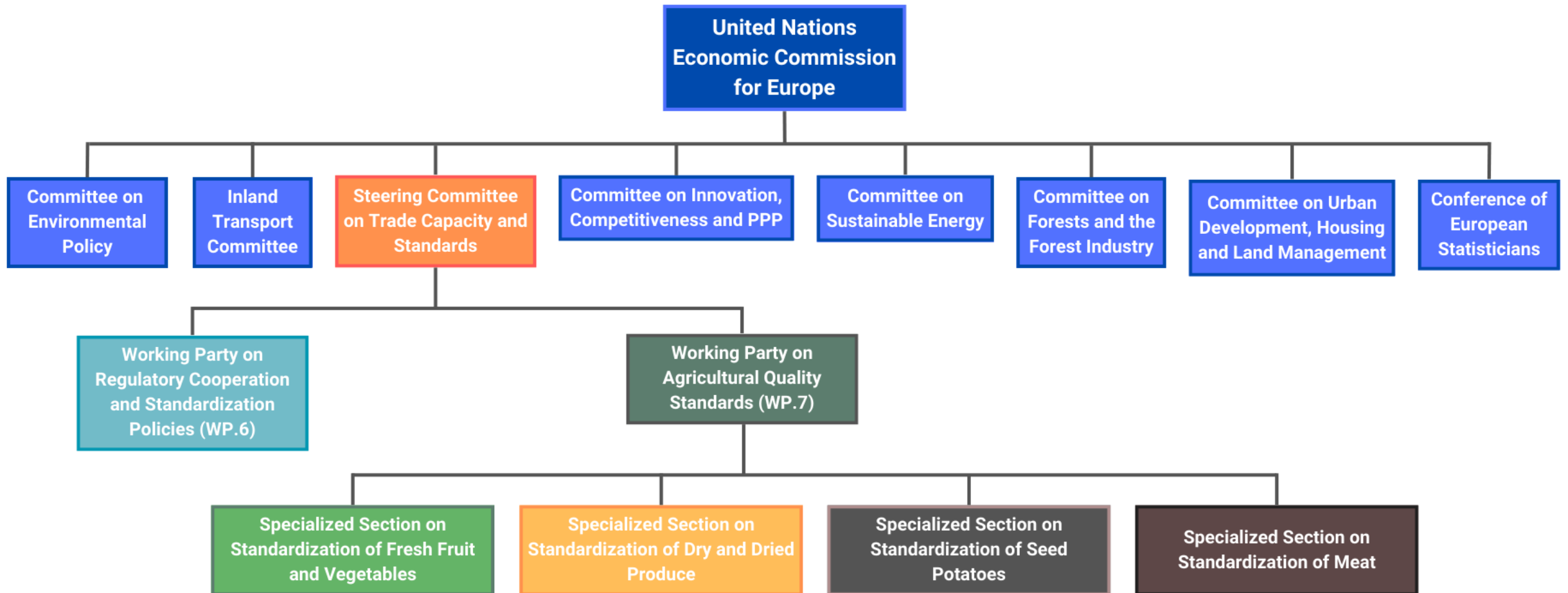
Related work:

- 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

UNECE sectoral committees: WP.7 and subsidiary bodies



Dry and Dried Produce

New and revised UNECE standards and recommendations



| WP.7 session | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 (on the agenda for June DDP session) |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| New standards | Dried melons Dehydrated coconut kernel pieces Dried ripe papayas | | Sweet Apricot Kernels | Dried Persimmons Raw and Roasted Inshell Peanuts Raw and Roasted Peanut Kernels | <i>Inshell Pecans</i> <i>Pecan Kernels</i> |
| Revised standards | Inshell Walnuts | DDP Standard layout | Dates Prunes | DDP Standard layout | <i>Cashew kernels</i> <i>Raw and roasted peanut kernels</i> |
| Recommendations | Prunes (ext.) | Sweet Apricot Kernels Inshell Pecans Pecan Kernels | Dried Persimmons R&R Inshell Peanuts R&R Peanut Kernels Inshell Pecans (ext.) Pecan Kernels (ext.) | Inshell Pecans (ext.) Pecan Kernels (ext.) | |
| Posters and brochures | Inshell pistachio nuts Inshell walnuts | Walnut Kernels Dried Figs Dried Grapes Prunes Dried Apricots (b) | Sampling Plan text | | <i>Cashew Kernels</i> <i>Almond Kernels</i> <i>Dried Melons</i> <i>Dried Persimmons</i> <i>Inshell Peanuts</i> <i>Peanuts Kernels</i> |

Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

New and revised UNECE standards and recommendations



| WP.7 session | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 (tabled) |
|-------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| New standards | | Minimum Quality Specifications (MQS) for FFV | Pomegranates | | <i>Certain small fruits</i> <i>Sweet potatoes</i> |
| Revised standards | Annonas Avocado Berry fruit Broccoli Cauliflower Cherries Onions Root & tubercle vegetables Table grapes Watermelon | Headed cabbages Persimmons Sweet peppers Table grapes Updated lists of varieties (to the standards for Apples, Pears, Plums) | Apricots Carrots Cauliflower Chinese cabbage Cucumbers Fresh figs Strawberries Watermelons FFV Standard layout | Asparagus Cherries Leafy vegetables Pomegranates | <i>Asparagus</i> <i>Broccoli</i> <i>Kiwifruit</i> <i>Onions</i> <i>Peas</i> <i>Sweet chestnuts</i> <i>MQS</i> <i>FFV Standard layout</i> |
| Recommendations | | | | Certain small fruits | |

Related work

Guidance materials, capacity building, and analysis

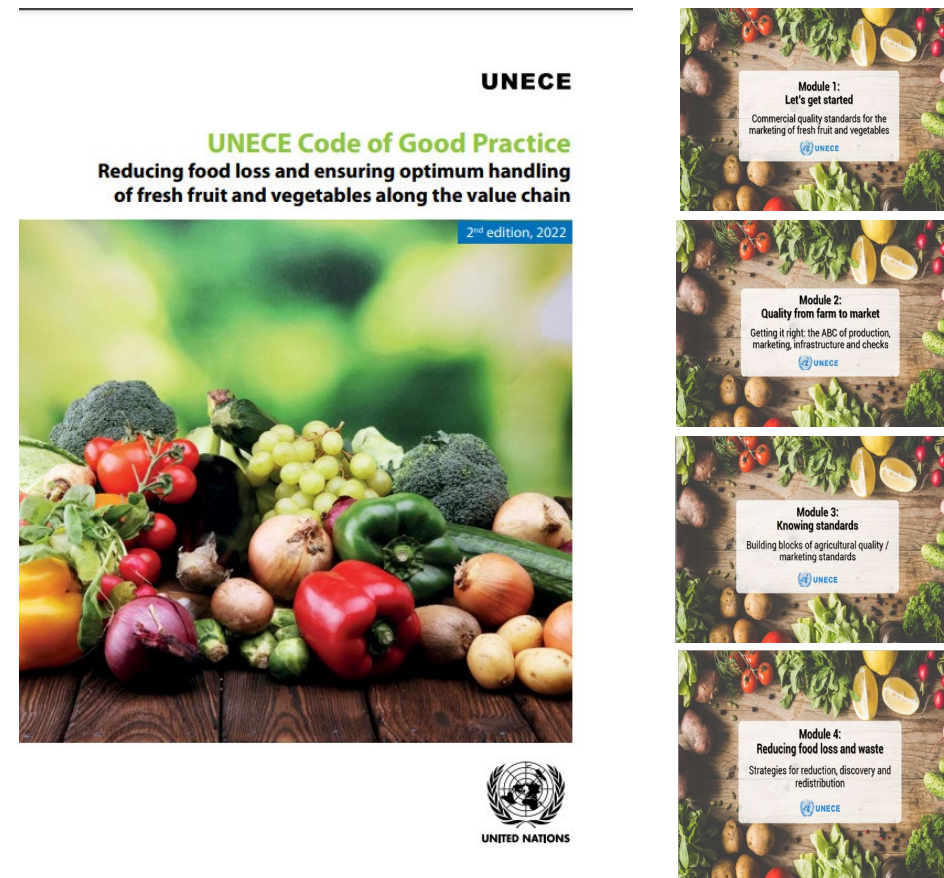


Guidance material and capacity building:

- Online course on agricultural quality standards and food loss <https://unece.org/trade/wp7/e-learning>
- [Code of Good Practice](#) – reducing food loss and ensuring optimum handling of fresh fruit and vegetables along the value chain (2nd ed., Jan. 2023, French and Russian versions forthcoming)

Impact analysis:

- OECD/UNECE [study](#) on the impact of UNECE standards and OECD explanatory brochures on international trade of fruit and vegetables (additional analysis planned)
- WP.7 survey on the use of ECE standards and their link to relevant legislative frameworks



Recent events

of relevance to the Specialized Section



UNECE

Since the last Specialized Section meeting in May 2022:

- Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards, 27-28 June 2022
- Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards, 14-16 November 2022 (incl. roundtable on food loss and waste reduction)
- Other specialized sections:
 - Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat, 28-30 September 2022 (incl. seminar on Sustainable Meat and Livestock Production) + upcoming on 28-29 August 2023
 - Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes, 16-17 March 2023
 - Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, 9-11 May 2023
- Regional forum on sustainable development, 29-30 March 2023:
 - Associated event: Regional preparatory meeting (Europe and Central Asia) for the 2023 Food Systems Stocktaking Moment, 28 March 2023, Issue-based
- 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”

Upcoming meetings

2023-2024



| | 2023 | 2024 (provisional) |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards | 26-27 June 2023 | 26-28 June 2024 |
| Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards | 13-15 Nov. 2023 | 11-13 Nov. 2024 |
| <i>Specialized Section on Standardization of...</i> | | |
| Seed potatoes | 16-17 March 2023 | 26-28 March 2024 |
| Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (FFV) | 9-11 May 2023 | 6-8 May 2024 |
| Dry and Dried Produce (DDP) | 14-16 June 2023 | 12-14 June 2024 |
| Meat | 28-29 August 2023 | 28-30 August 2024 |

Upcoming work

UNECE FFV standards and related material



- Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables in 2023-2024:
 - Alignment of existing standards with revised standard layout (autumn 2023)
 - Continuation of the work in the working group to review standards from a food loss and waste perspective
 - Non-exhaustive list of large-fruited and summer pear varieties annexed to the standard for pears – review of the list
 - Informal reference list of citrus fruit varieties – review of the list
 - Evaluation of the ECE standards for cut flowers for possible revision

See: Report of the seventy-first session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, available at: <https://unece.org/info/Trade/events/wp7/ge1-71st-2023>

Thank you!

Agricultural Standards Unit
Market Access Section

UNECE

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