



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE  
Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (Seville)  
Agriculture and Life Sciences in the Economy

24 November 2008

## EUROPEAN COEXISTENCE BUREAU

### SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP FOR MAIZE KICK-OFF MEETING ON 6-7 OCTOBER 2008 SEVILLE, SPAIN

The main objectives of the Technical Working Group for Maize (TWG-Maize) kick-off meeting were:

- to introduce the European Coexistence Bureau and its mandate;
- to agree on terms of reference with respect to procedures towards the elaboration of a Best Practice Document for maize;
- to identify and agree on the issues that should be dealt with in the Best Practice Document for maize;
- to identify sources of relevant scientific and technical information to support the development of the Best Practice Document for maize;
- to agree on a work programme.

TWG-Maize members, the European Coexistence Bureau (ECoB) staff and other IPTS staff as well as representatives from DG Agriculture and Rural Development and DG Environment participated in the kick-off meeting.

#### **1. Introduction**

The draft agenda (see attached document) was approved. This included a welcome and an introduction to the structure and mission of the Joint Research Centre and IPTS as well as its activities in the area of GMOs, a *tour de table*, an introduction to the European Coexistence Bureau, an introduction to the BSCW platform, and an overview of the European framework for coexistence.

#### **2. Terms of Reference**

The "TWG Terms of Reference" map out the process and common terms of reference towards the development of a Best Practice Document, including meetings, drafting procedure, inter-sessional periods, stakeholder consultation as well as general principles for submission of information and data. The "TWG Terms of Reference" were agreed by the TWG-Maize.

### **3. Issues that should be dealt with in the Best Practice Document for maize**

The Best Practice Document structure was agreed. The Best Practice Document will include the rationale for providing detailed background information as well as a clear description of the scope.

Furthermore, the TWG-Maize concluded the following:

- **Items to cover in the Best Practice Document**

The Best Practice Document should be limited to single gene events of GM maize. It should cover Bt maize as well as herbicide tolerant GM maize, although the latter is not yet approved for commercial cultivation in the EU. Three categories of maize cultivation will be covered: cultivation intended for grain use (incl. corn cob mix, CCM), whole plant use and sweet maize. Furthermore, the document should consider transport of pollen other than wind-mediated (provided data are available) and spillage control in the context of machine management and seed and harvest handling. Also the management of maize volunteers, potentially relevant for some Member States and regions, will be included in the Best Practice Document. The use of farm-saved seeds of traditional (population) varieties, although this is not considered "good agricultural practice", will be included in the Best Practice Document because of the regional significance for some Member States.

- **Relevant thresholds**

Coexistence measures to be identified should allow compliance with the legally binding labelling threshold (0.9%), applicable at the first point of sale. Coexistence measures will be targeted at the individual field.

- **Absence of seed thresholds**

Currently, no labelling thresholds regarding the presence of GM seeds in seed lots are established at EU level. The European Commission is working on an impact assessment regarding the introduction of such thresholds. A legislative proposal will not be available before the work of the TWG-Maize has advanced. Therefore three different scenarios of GM content in seed will be taken into account for the Best Practice Document: 0.1%, 0.3% and 0.5%.

- **GM content quantification units**

In the scientific literature two approaches for expressing the GM content in quantitative terms are used. One expresses the GM content as the share in percent of harvested grains/seeds carrying one or several transgenes (considered roughly equivalent to percentage of weight). This approach is used in many field experiments on cross-pollination. The other approach expresses the GM content as the number of GM DNA copies in relation to target taxon specific DNA copy numbers calculated in terms of haploid genomes. It is used to quantify the GM content throughout the food processing chain, according to Recommendation 2004/787/EC. The TWG-Maize agreed to use the latter approach for the Best Practice Document.

Sampling methods and measurement uncertainty are beyond the scope of the Best Practice Document.

- **Basic approach to the identification of best practices and consideration of regional characteristics**

Best practices for coexistence should be feasible, efficient, and cost-effective. The TWG-Maize will identify “standard coexistence measures” based on isolation distance and will define the extent to which it can be replaced by other measures, such as buffer zones or temporal isolation measures. Other factors, apart from isolation distance, which may influence cross-pollination, will be taken into account (e.g. field size, natural barriers). This approach will also allow considering regional characteristics.

- **Cross-border issues**

The development of consensus-based best practices for coexistence as such will contribute to the reduction of cross-border problems between EU Members States. According to the ECoB mandate, the TWG-Maize will focus on technical segregation measures; administrative issues will not be dealt with. Cross-border issues involving non-EU countries will not be covered.

- **Measures for areas, where coexistence is difficult to achieve**

The TWG-Maize will take a two step approach towards recommendations for areas where coexistence is difficult to achieve. Firstly, best practices will be identified. Secondly, on that basis, factors, if any, which could render coexistence difficult to achieve will be determined. In this context, alternative approaches (such as production clustering) could be considered.

The final decision regarding the scope of the Best Practice Document will be taken by the TWG-Maize after having considered the results of stakeholder consultations.

#### **4. Identification of sources of relevant scientific and technical information**

The principal source of information and data for the development of the Best Practice Document are TWG members. All members agreed to identify the publications and reports available in the public domain which they consider to be relevant for drafting the Best Practice Document. The submission of additional information and data that is not widely publicised or not yet in the public domain was volunteered by TWG members.

#### **5. TWG work programme**

The following work programme and indicative schedule was agreed:

Oct 08	TWG-Maize Kick-off meeting
Nov 08	Deadline for submission of data/information by TWG: 21 November 2008
Feb 09	Background document provided by ECoB summarising collected information and data

Mar 09	Plenary Meeting
Apr 09	Submission of proposal for best practices by TWG-Maize
Jul-Sep 09	Written consultation on First Draft of the Best Practice Document
Nov 09	Revised First Draft of the Best Practice Document provided by ECoB Summary of stakeholder consultations provided by DG AGRI
Dec 09	Plenary Meeting
Apr-May 10	Written consultation on Second Draft of the Best Practice Document
Jun 10	Summary of stakeholders consultations provided by DG AGRI
Jul 10	Final Draft of the Best Practice Document



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## **European Coexistence Bureau**

### **Technical Working Group for Maize (TWG-Maize)**

**Kick-off meeting 6 & 7 October 2008, Room 116**

**Edificio EXPO, c/Inca Garcilaso, s/n  
Seville, Spain**

## **Agenda**

### **6 October 2008**

#### 09.00-12.30 Welcome and Introduction

- Welcome
- Tour de table
- Introduction to the European Coexistence Bureau
- Meeting overview

10.15-10.45 Coffee

- TWG Terms of Reference - working together
- Internet data exchange tool
- The European framework for coexistence

#### 12.30-19.00 Discussion of scope and structure of Best Practice Document

- Presentation of proposal for Best Practice Document structure
- Discussion of Best Practice Document structure and main issues/needs for clarification

13.15-14.30 Lunch

16.30-17.00 Coffee

**19:00 End of meeting Day 1**

**21:00 Working dinner**

## **7 October 2008**

### **09.00-13.00 Meeting conclusions and next steps**

- Updated Best Practice Document structure based on TWG member input, and conclusions from discussion
- Discussion
- Presentation of draft TWG work programme and discussion

11.00-11.30 Coffee

- Contributions of data/information to the Best Practice Document
- Overall conclusions of the meeting and next steps

**13.00 Closure of the meeting**