

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 What is the name of your organisation?**

Irish Seed Savers Association

### **1.2 What stakeholder group does your organisation belong to?**

Supplier of S&PM; User of S&PM; SME company; Company operating on national level; International organisation

#### **1.2.1 Please specify**

### **1.3 Please write down the address (postal, e-mail, telephone, fax and web page if available) of your organisation**

Irish Seed Savers Association, Capparoe, Scariff, County Clare, Republic of Ireland PH: 353 61 921866 Fax: 353 61921397 www.irishseedsavers.ie

## **2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION**

### **2.1 Are the problems defined correctly in the context of S&PM marketing?**

No opinion

### **2.2 Have certain problems been overlooked?**

Yes

#### **2.2.1 Please state which one(s)**

The limitations on the production and distribution of conservation and niche market varieties as separate from varieties that are more suited to large-scale commercial agriculture have not been adequately addressed. The current seed testing for commercial varieties is distorted and ineffectual. Firstly there is an incompatibility of the VCU testing with the organic sector, as varieties which are suited to growing under organic conditions are being trialled for VCU under non-organic conditions, which distorts the outcomes. We believe that the organic sector should be allowed to self-regulate on VCU testing. We would also question whether the DUS requirements have led to any benefits. In the introduction they are purported to be used 'to ensure that the characteristics of the varieties are clearly identified'. In practice they are leading to a widespread of agro-biodiversity as heirloom and landrace varieties carry a much greater genetic elasticity. We believe that the use of a customised IPGRI descriptor would be more relevant. Furthermore, if the stability requirement were properly enforced, F1 hybrids would not be allowed.

### **2.3 Are certain problems underestimated or overly emphasized?**

No opinion

#### **2.3.1 Please indicate the problems that have not been estimated rightly**

#### **2.4 Other suggestions or remarks**

## **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW**

### **3.1 Are the objectives defined correctly in the context of S&PM marketing?**

No opinion

### **3.2 Have certain objectives been overlooked?**

Yes

#### **3.2.1 Please state which one(s)**

One objective should be to liberalise the production of conservation and niche market varieties that are of use to home gardeners and market gardeners.

### **3.3 Are certain objectives inappropriate?**

Yes

#### **3.3.1 Please state which one(s)**

Better consistency on GMOs and Plant Protection Products is an inappropriate objective. Member states should retain the right to question and if they so wish impose an indefinite moratorium on their use, while unanswered questions remain (ie. honeybee colony collapse; wild insect population collapse; wild bird population collapse). Agriculture is the single biggest industry that affects the EU area environment.

### **3.4 Is it possible to have a regime whereby a variety is considered as being automatically registered in an EU catalogue as soon as a variety protection title is granted by CPVO?**

No opinion

### **3.5 If there is a need to prioritise the objectives, which should be the most important ones? (Please rank 1 to 5, 1 being first priority)**

**Ensure availability of healthy high quality seed and propagating material**

3

**Secure the functioning of the internal market for seed and propagating material**

5

**Empower users by informing them about seed and propagating material**

4

**Contribute to improve biodiversity, sustainability and favour innovation**

1

**Promote plant health and support agriculture, horticulture and forestry**

2

### **3.6 Other suggestions and remarks**

## **4. OPTIONS FOR CHANGE**

### **4.1 Are the scenarios defined correctly in the context of S&PM marketing?**

No opinion

### **4.2 Have certain scenarios been overlooked?**

Yes

#### **4.2.1 Please state which one(s)**

A scenario that allows the development of a system that runs parallel to the commercial seed sector with relaxed DUS requirements and organic VCU requirements, which draws from non-PBR & conservation varieties to provide seed on a smaller localised scale to smallholdings and intensive market gardeners selling produce locally. This would facilitate the development of farmers' seed co-ops and small scale seed companies who could operate freely without costly registration requirements to re-develop regionally adapted strains and market the seed mainly locally. If the option exists to market these varieties outside their province we suggest that the guidelines developed for conservation varieties (2009 EC/145) would apply.

### **4.3 Are certain scenarios unrealistic?**

Yes

**4.3.1 Please state which one(s) and why**

Scenario 5 is unrealistic because trying to harmonise legislation to a 'one size fits all' model is not realistic given the varying needs of the numerous different member states.

**4.4 Do you agree with the reasoning leading to the discard of the "no-changes" and the "abolishment" scenarios?**

Yes

**4.5 Other suggestions and remarks**

**5. ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS**

**5.1 Are the impacts correctly analysed in the context of S&PM marketing?**

No

**5.2 Have certain impacts been overlooked?**

Yes

**5.2.1 Please state which one(s)**

The impact of Scenario 5 on biodiversity has not been assessed correctly. The increased harmonisation could lead to the deletion of nationally divergent strains of varieties leading to a loss of agro-biodiversity, as happened with the 1980 harmonisation of the national seed catalogues. (The Henry Doubleday Research Association documented this in the 1980's.)

**5.3 Are certain impacts underestimated or overly emphasized?**

No opinion

**5.3.1 Please provide evidence or data to support your assessment:**

**5.4 How do you rate the proportionality of a generalised traceability/labelling and fit-for-purpose requirement (as set out in scenario 4)?**

No opinion

**5.5 How do you assess the possible impact of the various scenarios on your organisation or on the stakeholders that your organisation represents?**

**Scenario 1**

Neutral

**Scenario 2**

Neutral

**Scenario 3**

Neutral

**Scenario 4**

Fairly beneficial

**Scenario 5**

Very negative

**5.5.1 Please state your reasons for your answers above, where possible providing evidence or data to support your assessment:**

We are an organisation of almost 2,000 members that we supply with seeds of conservation varieties that we produce. Most of these members are home gardeners and use small packets of

seed. However, the current restriction on the packet size of conservation varieties has made it difficult for Irish market growers to be able to use seeds produced in their own region. Scenario 4 liberalises the marketing of niche and conservation varieties which would allow better access to larger quantities of seed produced in their own region which contributes to both sustainability and agro-biodiversity, which are two of the objectives for changing the current legislation. Removing the restriction on the region of origin of varieties would also allow the development of regionally adapted strains and hence the agro-biodiversity of the future. Scenario 5, on the other hand, limits the use and usefulness of conservation varieties to their region of origin which will have a negative impact on sustainability and agro-biodiversity.

## **6. ASSESSMENT OF SCENARIOS**

### **6.1 Which scenario or combination of scenarios would best meet the objectives of the review of the legislation?**

Scenario 4

#### **6.1.1 What are your views with regards to combining elements from the various scenarios into a new scenario?**

##### **6.1.1 Please explain the new scenario in terms of key features**

#### **6.2 Do you agree with the comparison of the scenarios in the light of the potential to achieve the objectives?**

No

##### **6.2.1 Please explain:**

Scenario 5: It is too ambitious to expect that there will be a significant reduction of costs and administrative burdens for public authorities given that this scenario would increase the bureaucracy involved in S&PM marketing. On balance we also feel that the impact on biodiversity and sustainability from Scenario 5 would not be neutral given that conservation varieties would be strictly limited to their region of origin.

## **7. OTHER COMMENTS**

### **7.1 Further written comments on the seeds and propagating material review:**

#### **7.2 Please make reference here to any available data/documents that support your answer, or indicate sources where such data/documents can be found:**

