



Reference ISO/TMB IWA

Date 2018-07-13

Invitation to an international workshop on Screening of GMOs in cotton and textiles

Dear ISO Members,

Following approval by the Technical Management Board of a proposal from NEN (Netherlands Standardization Institute), we are pleased to enclose an invitation, including a registration link, and a draft International Workshop Agreement (IWA) for a workshop to develop an IWA on Screening of GMOs in cotton and textiles.

Meeting dates: 16-17 January 2019

Location: India (venue to be confirmed)

In addition, two online preparatory meetings will be organized:

- Tuesday September 11, 2018 (CET)
- Thursday November 15, 2018 (CET)

We ask that you register for the workshop not later than **2 August 2018** using the [link](#) in the attached invitation. We would be grateful if you could publicize this event in your country.

Yours sincerely,

Sophie Clivio

Secretary to the Technical Management Board

Encl.:

- Invitation, including a link to the registration form
- Draft IWA



NEN AgroFood & Consument

Postbus 5059
2600 GB Delft

Vlinderweg 6
2623 AX Delft

(015) 2 690 178
afc@nen.nl
www.nen.nl

ING NL02 INGB 0000 0253 01
Rabobank NL43 RABO 0106 8395 43

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DATUM
2018-07-09

ONDERWERP

Invitation to an International Workshop Agreement on 'Screening of GMOs in cotton and textiles'

Dear ISO Members,

Following approval by the Technical management Board of a proposal by the Netherlands Standardization Institute (NEN), we are pleased to enclose the invitation to and draft planning for an International Workshop Agreement (ISO/IWA) on 'Screening of GMOs in cotton and textiles'.

International Workshop Agreement:

2 day meeting: **16 and 17 January 2019**
Location: India (venue to be confirmed)

2 online preparatory meetings:
Tuesday September 11, 2018 (CET)

Thursday November 15, 2018 (CET)

Ahead of the workshop, two preparatory meetings (online) will be organised. The exact dates of all meetings (online and offline) as well as details on venue will be confirmed as soon as possible to registered participants. We kindly ask interested parties to register as soon as possible (preferably before 2 August 2018) to register to this event, using the following link:

<https://www.nen.nl/Evenementen/Evenementdetailpagina/International-Workshop-Agreement-for-the-screening-of-GMOs-in-cotton-and-textiles.htm>

We would be grateful if you could publicize this event in your country.

Kind regards



Jelte Dijkstra
Manager NEN - Agrofood and consumer affairs

NEN AgroFood & Consument

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1 Introduction

Key players in the cotton and fashion sector—such as H&M, C&A, Inditex, Kering, Tchibo, Patagonia, amongst others—are united in the Organic Cotton Accelerator (OCA) and they have joined forces for a prosperous organic cotton sector which benefits all, from farmer to consumer

The ability to make credible claims about the presence of GM cotton in (organically certified) textiles and garment based on globally accepted objective methods is an important component in strengthening the sector and serving the interest of industry and consumers.

2 Purpose and justification

To meet regulations about organic products, cotton farmers and processors must show they are not using GMOs, and that they are preventing the contact and mixing of their organic products with non-organic conventional cotton throughout the chain of custody – from seed to shirt. Buyers of organic cotton or textile products, including large fashion labels, increasingly want to be assured that the product they buy does not contain any GM cotton, authorised or unauthorised.

An example for an objective method enabling the sourcing partners to validate their product claims is a standardized method for the detection of genetic modification in cotton. Although actors in the food and feed sector can opt for analyses based on ISO standards of their samples on GMO, no such international method exist for testing for GMO in cotton and fibre. The IWA to be developed would take into account relevant ISO standards on the topic of testing on GMO, but is determined to refine that knowledge to the use for cotton and cotton derivatives. However, as it will be a first attempt in that direction, the IWA will only focus on a screening protocol and will not enter into the level of detail as currently set out in various ISO standards on testing for GMO.

The aim of the project is to develop an ISO protocol to screen¹ specific (processed) cotton samples (for instance, seed, leaves, seed cotton, lint, yarn, fabric and garment; both dyed and natural) for the potential presence of known GMOs (both authorised, as well as non-authorised).

This protocol would help to create clarity in the sector with regard to what can and cannot be tested for GMO presence in cotton and textiles. Therefore, an assessment of the possibility to isolate sufficient good quality DNA from samples derived from the

¹ The project aims to result in a screening protocol. The project is not on the development of a method for sampling or method for analysis. Neither an in-house validation of a proposed method nor a collaborative trial are part of the project.



subsequent cotton and textiles production steps (for instance, seed, leaves, seed cotton, lint, yarn, fabric and garment; both dyed and natural), i.e. sufficient for qPCR analyses, is included in the work. The established method as laid down in International Standards of DNA isolation from seeds is in place and will be optimised for other input materials derived from cotton. The protocol will provide precise guidelines to laboratories on how to test in a reliable and replicable way and help with reputational concerns in the sector. The project aims to result in an ISO International Workshop Agreement on the preferred protocol for screening GMOs in cotton and processed cotton fibre.

Given the urgent request and small scope of the proposed work, an International Workshop Agreement was considered the appropriate solution to serve the sector at this moment. With an ISO/IWA on screening of GMOs in cotton, visibility of professional practices within the field of testing cotton or textiles on GMO presence is given. Such an international recognized document allows players in the sector to request their laboratories to follow the international agreed procedures as laid down in the IWA. This would be an important step in strengthening the claims regarding the presence of GM cotton in cotton and textiles.

2.1 Scope of the project

The International Workshop Agreement provides a standardized protocol to screen (processed) cotton and textiles samples for the potential presence of known GMOs (both authorised, as well as non-authorised).

The possibility to isolate good quality DNA from samples derived from subsequent cotton production and processing steps (e.g. seed, leaf, seed cotton, fibre, yarn, textiles) will also be assessed to inform the protocol.

2.2 Relationship to existing ISO / IEC work

The following TCs are working on a subject and/or with similar stakeholders groups:

- ISO/TC 34/WG 21 'Social responsibility/sustainability'
- ISO/TC 34/SC 16 'Horizontal methods for molecular biomarker analysis'
- ISO/TC 38 'Textiles'

There is no clash in work, and to make the most of the expertise within the various work fields a request for collaboration with all three ISO/TCs will be sent out.

3 Relevant documents

The following standards, among other, could provide valuable insights for the project at hand:

ISO 24276:2006 'Foodstuffs -- Methods of analysis for the detection of genetically modified organisms and derived products -- General requirements and definitions'

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ISO 21569: 2005/A1:2013 'Foodstuffs - Methods of analysis for the detection of genetically modified organisms and derived products - Qualitative nucleic acid based methods

ISO 21570:2005/A1:2013 'Foodstuffs - Methods of analysis for the detection of genetically modified organisms and derived products - Quantitative nucleic acid based methods'

4 Relevant stakeholders

4.1 Stakeholder categories

The following stakeholder categories are defined for this project:

1. Cotton and textiles industry (cotton producers, ginnerers, spinners, weavers, cut-made-trim, traders, brands and retail)
2. Laboratories;
3. Academic, research bodies and knowledge institutes;
4. Sector standards and platforms;
5. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
6. Donors and foundations

4.2 Interested stakeholders

Actors from across the textiles supply chain and laboratory field have expressed interest in participation, ranging from multinational brands and retailers, large spinners, traders and processors, industry standards and platforms, and laboratories.

The wider OCA network has already expressed interest in participation. Affiliated organizations of OCA are:

C&A	Kering Group
C&A Foundation	Patagonia
Cotton Connect	Pesticide Action Network UK
Eileen Fisher	Pratibha Syntex
Eileen Fisher Foundation	Superdry
Inditex	Tchibo
H&M	Textile Exchange
KappAhl	

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4.3 Project leader, chair, secretariat

The Dutch National Reference Institute (Rikilt) will provide a project leader.

Secretariat: NEN, Charlotte Mosies (charlotte.mosies@nen.nl)

Chair: t.b.c.

5 Development of IWA

5.1 Time plan

Table 1 'General time plan IWA 'Protocol for Screening of GMOs in cotton and cotton derivatives' shows the overall planning.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Submit proposal	ISO/TMB approval	circulation ISO members	Workshop meeting	Publication
<i>February 2018</i>	<i>March – May 2018</i>	<i>June – August 2018</i>	<i>January 2019</i>	<i>March 2019</i>

5.2 Detailed time plan for development of IWA

The development of an IWA goes with a detailed timetable that consists of various activities and moments of exchanging information, both online as face-to-face. The secretariat will organize online and offline meeting moments, all accessible to Workshop members. In between the meeting moments, the secretariat will circulate drafts of the proposed protocol, together with a request for input, multiple times (see Table 2 below) in order to ensure the IWA is finalized in due time, taking into account the input and consensus of all vital stakeholders within the sector. Comments received on the (multiple versions of the) draft protocol will be collated and discussed within the group of workshop members. Please note that a first draft of a proposal for a protocol is planned to be circulated to registered participants mid-August 2018. Table 2 shows a proposal for a detailed time plan.

Table 2 'Proposal Workplan'

Period	Steps in IWA process	What:
02 August 2018	DEADLINE Registration participants	Collection of registered parties Registered participants will receive a 1 st draft of the protocol
15 August 2018	DEADLINE	Collating of preliminary comments received to the 1 st draft protocol

Period	Steps in IWA process	What:
	Submission of comments to proposal draft protocol	
Tuesday September 11, 2018 (CET)	Preliminary workshop (online): Preparatory meeting	Organize and participate in online-meeting for different time zones, incl draft agenda and minutes/info package consisting of the collates preliminary comments on the 1 st draft protocol. These will be discussed and agreed on during the preliminary meeting.
Sept – Nov	Support participants	Registration of participants, introduce participants to standardization, advise participants, answer questions on process etc.
Week 39		Circulate the outcomes of the preliminary online workshop in order to allow participants to prepare for the 2 nd online workshop Revision of the document following the 1st online meeting in order to allow participants to prepare for the 2 nd online workshop > 2 nd draft protocol
Thursday November 15, 2018 (CET)		Organize and participate in 2 nd online-meeting for different time zones, incl draft agenda and minutes/info package consisting of the collates preliminary comments on the 2 nd draft protocol. These will be discussed and agreed on during the 2 nd online meeting
Week 48 (2018)		Circulate the outcomes of the 2 nd preliminary online workshop in order to allow participants to prepare for the face to face workshop. Revision of the document following the 2nd online meeting in order to allow participants to prepare for the face to face workshop > 3rd draft protocol
16 and 17 January 2019		Organize a face-to-face Workshop in India, incl. participants registration, draft agenda and minutes, collation and circulation of comments. Meeting outcome is approval on the content of the final IWA Preparation and circulation of final IWA with a request to approve the document using the online voting system.
February 2019	Voting on adoption of IWA	NEN: online vote by registered participants and disseminate result
March 2019	Publication of the IWA	Quality check on the IWA as submitted and approval on any final editorial changes suggested by ISO/CS.



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- **Online meeting**

Once the ISO/TMB has accepted the proposal and ISO CS has circulated notification to ISO members, the proposer will circulate the 1st draft protocol to registered participants, who are invited to submit their comments to the secretariat. The proposer will organize two online meetings with these interested experts to discuss the draft protocol and the comments received to this draft protocol. After the online meeting, the project leader and the secretariat will revise the draft protocol. This draft will be circulated again and discussed in a second online meeting. The project leader and the secretariat will revise the draft accordingly.

- **Workshop**

A proposal for the final protocol will be sent to the interested parties for commenting. Comments will be discussed and resolved during the workshop meeting. The protocol shall be approved during the formal workshop meeting, to be organized in January 2019.

- **Publication**

The final product of the workshop will be sent to ISO for publication. ISO members may market and promote the document through their regular channels. The exploitation rights of the IWA remain within ISO.

- **Systematic review**

After three years stakeholders will be consulted whether they want to confirm, adjust or withdraw the IWA.

5.3 Project management

The secretariat will facilitate the distribution of documents to registered participants with its own or publicly available project management tools, including email, Webex, ISOLutions and other tools available to ISO members. Registered participants will be informed about this in due time.

5.4 Participation fee

There is no participation fee for this project.

5.5 Information and registration

For more information please contact Charlotte Mosies (NEN) through charlotte.mosies@nen.nl

Participants can register through a dedicated link:

<https://www.nen.nl/Evenementen/Evenementdetailpagina/International-Workshop-Agreement-for-the-screening-of-GMOs-in-cotton-and-textiles.htm>

Preferably before 2 August 2018