

NOMENCLATURE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Edited by John McNeill

Report of the General Committee: 21

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Summary Decisions of the General Committee are reported on: (1) translations of the *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants*, and (2) appointment of the members of the post-Shenzhen Special-purpose Committees.

The previous report of the General Committee for Botanical Nomenclature (Wilson in *Taxon* 66: 981. 2017) was by the committee appointed at the XVIII International Botanical Congress (IBC) in Melbourne, Australia, in 2011. At the XIX IBC in Shenzhen, China, in 2017 a new General Committee was appointed to hold office until the XX IBC in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2023. The 25 members appointed in Shenzhen were listed in the Report of Congress action on nomenclatural matters (Turland & al. in *Taxon* 66: 1236. 2017). The General Committee has considered the following matters in 2018: (1) translations of the *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants*, and (2) appointment of the members of the post-Shenzhen Special-purpose Committees.

(1) Translations of the Code

The *Code* is published by the International Association for Plant Taxonomy (IAPT), as part of its *Regnum Vegetabile* series. The current version of the *Code*, for example, is *Regnum Vegetabile* volume 159 (2018). The copyright for the published *Code* is held by IAPT, and anyone wishing to produce a translation must ask permission from IAPT to do so. This is a legal matter, and does not provide any “stamp of approval” for the quality of the translation.

In earlier decades, the *Code* was published usually in three languages – English, French and German – but the XIV IBC in Berlin in 1987 voted to produce only one official version: the English version (see the report by Greuter & al. in *Englera* 9: 31–33. 1989). However, it was agreed then that translation into other languages was still beneficial in making the *Code* more accessible to botanists from a non-English-speaking background. A further proposal was carried that “Publication ... in other languages be sponsored ... by the appropriate bodies” and “The General Committee is asked to declare the conditions under which translations of the *Code* be authorized.”

The General Committee (GC) discussed this matter extensively in 1987–88 but failed to come up with a practical procedure for approval of the quality of a translation. As reported in GC Report 2 (Nicolson in *Taxon* 38: 662–663. 1989):

“The sense of the [Berlin] meeting was that the General Committee should declare under which conditions official

recognition would be granted to other language versions. Burdet’s French version (*Boissiera* 42: 1–136. 1988) was the first case. This was easy because the translator was a member of the Editorial Committee and two French-speaking members of the Editorial Committee recommended the translation with certain minor changes. In essence this translation involved the very people that would have done it if the Congress had not decided to publish only the English version.”

“The discussion focussed on two general areas: requirements for official recognition and text(s) to be used to express the official recognition. We were made aware of interest in translation into German, Polish, Czech, perhaps Chinese. Several things caused us to proceed no further and the issue was set in abeyance: no expertise, difficulty of finding experts in both nomenclature and the language who weren’t the translators, and the disinterest of potential translators in our ‘approval’. What translators were seeking had to do with the copyright, held by IAPT. In the end, the General Committee (1) approved Burdet’s French translation [expressed [in] his preface as ‘un accord pour publication nous a été donné par le Comité Général’], (2) recognized that control of ‘authorized’ translations will be exercised by the copyright holder (IAPT), and (3) will consider further discussion if necessary.”

In summary, the GC in 1988–89 considered this matter so complex that any attempt to resolve it risked complicating it still further and concluded that it should do no more than support the French and German translations of the *Berlin Code*. One member at that time objected that one could hardly ask GC members to “approve” a text they had never seen (or if they had, could not understand). The question of procedures and wording, then, remained open.

Since then, a wide range of translations have been published for each version of the *Code*, most of them without seeking the GC’s approval of the content. For example, the *Tokyo Code* was translated into Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Slovak (recorded in the preface to the *St Louis Code*), but the GC was only asked to approve three of these translations. This implies no criticism of the translators of recent *Code* versions since there has not been a clear statement of what procedure they should follow (apart from getting permission to publish from the copyright holder, IAPT).

This matter was not discussed by subsequent GCs until 2012–13. However, it was agreed then that the same practical problem still existed: that often the only people with suitable expertise in both nomenclature and the relevant language are those doing the translation.

The current GC discussed this matter again recently, and came to the same conclusion, namely, that there is no practical procedure for the GC to approve the quality of a translation. It also looked at the current procedure followed by IAPT (the copyright holder).

When someone asks IAPT for permission to publish a translation, the Secretary-General of IAPT consults the Rapporteur-général as chair of the Editorial Committee (EC) before giving permission. If the translator is not a member of the EC, then IAPT asks that a statement be included in the translation that “the exactness and quality of the translation is the sole responsibility of the translator(s) and not that of either the International Association for Plant Taxonomy or the Editorial Committee of the *Code*”. If, on the other hand, the translator is a member of the EC, no such statement is required by IAPT. This implies that the quality of a translation is validated by that EC member being listed in the translation both as an EC member and as the translator.

The GC endorsed (24 votes in favour, 1 against) the procedure followed by the Secretary-General of IAPT as outlined above. This is considered a practical way to regulate the quality of a translation of the *Code* as far as that is possible. It also voted not to develop extra criteria and procedures for approving the quality of translations (2 in favour of extra criteria and procedures, 23 against).

That is, there was nearly unanimous support for (1) endorsing the procedure followed by IAPT when formally giving permission for translations and (2) not setting up any extra procedures for the GC to give a “stamp of approval” to the contents of any such translation.

The only role visualised for the GC is if someone raises a problem with the text of a translation. The GC could then be asked to appoint competent people to assess and report on this.

(2) Appointment of members of Special-purpose Committees

The Nomenclature Section of the XIX IBC held in Shenzhen, China, in July 2017 set up five Special-purpose Committees (SPCs; Turland & al. in *Taxon* 66: 1236. 2017). These are what were previously called “Special Committees”, set up to consider a particular issue relevant to the *Code*, and to report to the next IBC (in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2023) about this issue and, where desirable, make appropriate proposals to amend the *Code*. The members of these committees are formally appointed by the GC and announced by publication, as set out in the *Code* (Div. III. Provisions 4.3(d) and 6.1(b)). They are listed below.

Changes to the *Code* made in Shenzhen allow the Fungal Nomenclature Session of the International Mycological Congress (IMC) to set up SPCs to consider issues relating only to names of fungi (Div. III Provision 8.5(d)). The XI IMC in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in July 2018 set up two such committees: the SPC for DNA Sequences as Types for Fungi and the SPC on Names of Fungi with the Same Epithet (which is a re-naming of the SPC on Pleomorphic Fungi set up in Shenzhen). Their memberships

have not yet been finalised, so the GC will formally approve these later.

The setting up and procedures for Special-purpose Committees

In practice, membership of such committees is based on participants at a Nomenclature Section indicating their interest and others who later contact the Secretary of the GC. Others may be co-opted (in consultation with the Secretary of the GC) if further expertise in the subject is required. As usual, the President and Rapporteur-général of the Nomenclature Section in Shenzhen and the Secretary of the GC have discussed potential office-bearers for these SPCs, and the Secretary has contacted these people. The Secretary and the proposed office-bearers have then set up the full membership of each committee for formal approval by the GC.

The *Code* does not set out detailed procedures for SPCs to follow. However, the following general procedures have worked previously and are recommended now. Each SPC should have one person, usually the Convener, launch the committee’s proceedings by outlining its goals, offering comments and, perhaps, a first draft of proposals, and inviting members to respond. Members’ comments should be addressed to the committee Secretary, who agrees to act as the focus of correspondence and to bring the proceedings to a successful conclusion by drafting a report, which will include proposals to amend the *Code* as appropriate, to the Nomenclature Section of the next Congress in 2023.

Each committee usually carries out its business by email and using appropriate document-sharing services accessible to all its members. The only meetings are likely to be of those members present at the next IBC. All circulars and proceedings of the committee should be clearly titled and dated. The Rapporteur-général for the next IBC (Nicholas Turland), the Vice-rapporteur (when appointed) and the current Secretary of the GC (Karen Wilson) are ex officio, non-voting members of each committee when not a regular (voting) member of the committee. They should be included in its mailing list and may participate in the discussions.

Committee members who do not participate in the work of the committee over a period of nine months, or who fail, after two reminders over a period of three months, to respond to a specific request to all members (e.g., to vote), are considered to have resigned. Committees may co-opt additional members and are encouraged to do so to replace members who are not responsive. This ensures a range of opinions and expertise. It is suggested that membership be at least 6 (or a higher multiple of 3), because committees should usually not submit proposals without the support of at least two-thirds of the active membership, defined as those participating in the final vote. Proposals with strong committee support have a much better chance of being accepted by the Nomenclature Section. It is recommended that at least the office-bearers attend the Nomenclature Section to speak to their committee’s proposals and, sometimes, to convene an informal group during the sessions to amend the wording of proposals.

Anyone who can offer examples or comments to any of these SPCs are urged to communicate directly with one of the office-bearers or a member. It is recommended that anyone considering making individual proposals to amend the *Code* that impinge directly on a

committee's mandate should discuss them with that committee before submitting them for publication in *Taxon*.

Final committee reports and related proposals to amend the *Code* should be sent to the editors of *Taxon* by whatever deadline is set and publicised in *Taxon* (usually about a year before the next IBC). This is essential to give the Rapporteurs time to complete and publish the Synopsis of Proposals, and to give everyone else a chance to consider the proposals before receiving the Synopsis and mail ballot.

Special-purpose Committee on DNA Sequences as Types

Mandate: to consider the use of DNA sequence data in typification (including proposals referred from Shenzhen: Art. 8 Prop. O [as amended in Shenzhen]; Rec. 8C Prop. A; Art. 9 Prop. A).

Convener: Kevin Thiele (Australia)

Secretary: Samuli Lehtonen (Finland)

Members: Maria do Carmo Amaral (Brazil), Wendy Applequist (U.S.A.), Arvind Dhabe (India), Ali Dönmez (Turkey), Kanchi Gandhi (U.S.A.), Quentin Groom (Belgium), Angela McDonnell (U.S.A.), Christine Maggs (U.K.), Valéry Malécot (France), Karol Marhold (Slovakia), Tom May (Australia), Øjvind Moestrup (Denmark), Susanne Renner (Germany), Gary Saunders (Canada), Yijian Yao (China), Hwan Su Yoon (South Korea).

Special-purpose Committee on Typification

Mandate: to consider issues relating to typification (other than the use of DNA sequences as types), in particular to consider the proposals referred to it by the Nomenclature Section in Shenzhen (Art. 9 Prop. M [as amended], Prop. N [as amended], Prop. U, Prop. V, Prop. Z, Prop. DD, Prop. EE; Art. 40.5 Prop. 8 [from the floor]).

Convener: Fred Barrie (U.S.A.)

Secretary: Helen Hartley (U.K.)

Members: Robert Andersen (U.S.A.), Wendy Applequist (U.S.A.), Martin Callmander (Switzerland), Glenda Cardenas (Finland), Rocio Deanna (Argentina/U.S.A.), Arvind Dhabe (India), Cheng Du (China), Renée Fortunato (Argentina), Alina Freire-Fierro (Ecuador), Kanchi Gandhi (U.S.A.), Dmitry Geltman (Russia), Werner Greuter (Italy), Patrick Herendeen (U.S.A.), Jana Leong-Škorníčková (Singapore), Karol Marhold (Slovakia), John McNeill (U.K.), Maria

Emilia Mascarenhas (India), Hidetoshi Nagamasu (Japan), Takashi Nakada (Japan), Jarosław Proćków (Poland), Melanie Schori (U.S.A.), Alexander Sennikov (Finland), Lars Söderström (Norway), Omokafe Ugboogu (Nigeria).

Special-purpose Committee on Lists of Available Names

Mandate: to consider the idea of “lists of available names” for non-fossil vascular plants, arising from the “IPNI 2020” proposal; with participation to be sought from the other communities covered by the *Code* (proposal referred from Shenzhen: Chapter V Section 4 Prop. A).

Convener: Sandra Knapp (U.K.)

Secretary: Melanie Schori (U.S.A.)

Members: Andrea Karla Almeida dos Santos (Brazil), Fred Barrie (U.S.A.), Pedro Bond-Schwartzburd (Brazil), Yunfei Deng (China), Arvind Dhabe (India), Estrela Figueiredo (Portugal/South Africa), Kanchi Gandhi (U.S.A.), Rafaël Govaerts (U.K.), Werner Greuter (Italy), Shelley James (Australia), Sandra Lindstrom (Canada), Anderson Machado (Brazil), Valéry Malécot (France), Karol Marhold (Slovakia), Jaideep Mazumdar (India), Anna Monro (Australia), Gerry Moore (U.S.A.), Jarosław Proćków (Poland), Gideon Smith (South Africa).

Special-purpose Committee on Virtual Participation in the Nomenclature Section

Mandate: to investigate the possibility of and mechanisms for virtual participation and voting in the Nomenclature Section of an International Botanical Congress via the internet.

Convener: Renée Fortunato (Argentina)

Secretary: Leslie Landrum (U.S.A.)

Members: Mary Barkworth (U.S.A.), Ilse Breitwieser (New Zealand), Sebsebe Demissew (Ethiopia), Ali Dönmez (Turkey), Suchandra Dutta (India), Alina Freire-Fierro (Ecuador), Young-Dong Kim (South Korea), Blanca Leon (U.S.A.), Gerry Moore (U.S.A.), Sergei Mosyakin (Ukraine), Sang-Hun Oh (South Korea), Carlos Alberto Parra Osorio (Colombia), Jefferson Prado (Brazil), Lourdes Rico Arce (Mexico), Alexander Sennikov (Finland), Gideon Smith (South Africa).