



Brussels  
28 October 2011  
ESA\_11.0677.3

ESA is the voice of the European seed sector. ESA's members are national associations and individual companies active in research, breeding, production and marketing of seeds of agricultural and ornamental plant species. ESA represents more than 7000 seed businesses in the EU and beyond.

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# POSITION

## ON THE CONCEPT OF

### 'DELEGATION OF TASKS UNDER OFFICIAL SUPERVISION'

ESA is in favor of more options for involvement of the private sector in testing as well as in seed certification. ESA calls for the introduction of this option also in plant health testing. The possibility of more involvement of the private sector in the said fields offers benefits to the whole system: it can bring about important cost savings for all actors of the system; it allows making use of the expertise which already exists within the industry and it facilitates the daily work of the companies concerned as such involvement fits better with the logistic operation of the industry. However both in the area of seeds and plant health the system can only keep its credibility and wide acceptance within and outside the EU if such an involvement is realized under official supervision.

Delegation under official supervision -as also explained above- is aimed at making the current system more efficient and less costly. In simple words it means that

- private operators may ask for delegation to them
- of some or all tasks related to seed testing, certification and plant health related inspections and tests
- while maintaining the official character of the certificate issued
- by means of officially controlling these private operators regarding the standards\* to be met
- by means of random post-controls.

The test results as well as the label used on the seed bags remain official and it is not differentiated to the outside world whether a test was carried out by the authority itself or was delegated to a private entity as the result always remains under the control of the official authority. So, delegation under official supervision does in no way mean privatization of testing and/or certification. In order to keep the reliability and credibility of the system it is indispensable to keep all delegated tasks under official supervision. On the other hand, this does not mean the phasing out of official authorities either as they continue offering the same services and carrying out tests and post-controls themselves.

\* By standards the criteria are meant which have to be met by the private operators willing to carry out tasks under official supervision such as quality management systems, testing methods applied, sampling methods, testing facilities and equipment used, qualification of personnel etc.