

# NATURAL CORK USER GROUP

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Natural Cork User Group wishes to acknowledge the Wines and Spirit Association for initiating the development of the Natural Cork User Group at the Cork Summit meeting which took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2002. The Summit's objective was to explore jointly in an atmosphere of co-operation ways of driving down the levels of mustiness in wine. The Summit identified areas that required improvements: C.E.Liege Code of Practice, HACCP and Grading system for Natural Cork and suggested that members of the Trade and Cork Industry develop a User Group to tackle these issues.

### BACKGROUND OF NATURAL CORK USER GROUP

**WHEREAS** the founding members met at the London Wine & Spirits Trade Fair (LWSTF) on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2003 for the inaugural meeting of the Natural Cork User Group. This was the first time that the Cork Industry and the Trade had come together in an international forum as 'stakeholders' in a technical environment to discuss all the issues related to the multiple problems that affect the quality of wine. The cork industry and the representatives of the trade agree to support and promote any actions which are of mutual cooperation to further the advancement of the technical development of the cork industry. In addition, the cork industry will ensure that the members of the Natural Cork User Group will be kept well informed of any action that has been launched by the cork industry in order to improve and ensure quality to the cork stoppers.

On the 20th May 2004, The Natural Cork User Group agreed to adopt this constitution, which states the primary object of the Natural Cork User Group is to improve the quality of natural cork distributed into the international wine industry.

**AND WHEREAS** the members of the Natural Cork User Group established the Group as a voluntary organisation whereby the members comply with this constitution in the spirit of co-operation and of mutual benefit to international trade.

**AND WHEREAS** the Natural Cork User Group adopted the following constitution:

- The cork industry's Code of Manufacturing Practice will be updated to conform to any proposal agreed by the Natural Cork User Group.
- C.E.Liege recommends all members of the Natural Cork User Group selling wine to ensure that all their suppliers buy natural cork originating only from suppliers accredited according to the International Code of Cork Stoppers' Manufacturing Practices; to achieve this accreditation, known as SYSTECODE, the cork companies have to be audited by the BUREAU VERITAS which is the responsible entity for implementing the system.
- Every year C.E.Liège shall distribute to the Members and Interested Party Members of the Natural Cork User Group the list of the companies accredited by BUREAU VERITAS.

### CONSTITUTION

#### 1. DEFINITIONS:

Chairman	The Group shall elect a chairman from its members.
Secretary	The Group shall elect a secretary from its members.
Corks	Punched and composite stoppers made from the bark of <i>Quercus suber</i> L.

Group  
(Natural Cork User Group)

The Natural Cork User Group as constituted hereby and as constituted by the Founding Members at an inaugural meeting held at the LWSTF, in London on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2003.

Membership of the Natural Cork User Group (NCUG) is voluntary. Application for membership of the Group should be made to the Secretary of the NCUG which will then be reviewed by the Members. Three categories of membership are available

Member

A Member is a representative from the Trade and C.E.Liege. A member has the right to vote on matters pertaining to and to attend meetings of the NCUG. A member has the right to join a Working Group providing that the NCUG accepts the nomination and the member has a suitable technical background

Associated Member

An Associate Member is independent of the Trade and C.E.Liege but provides technical expertise to the NCUG. An Associate Member can be from an Association or Organisation or Technical Research Centre that has a vested interest in the developments of the NCUG. An Associate Member has the right to vote on matters pertaining to and to attend meetings of the NCUG. An Associate Member has the right to join a Working Group providing that the NCUG accepts the nomination and the member has an appropriate technical background

Interested Party

An Interested Party Member is neither a Member nor an Associated Member as defined in the Terms of Reference. An Interested Party Member has a vested interest in the technical development of the NCUG and will be kept informed. An Interested Party Member does not have the right to vote in matters pertaining to or to attend meetings of the NCUG. An Interested Party Member can provide comments and information to the Group by corresponding with the Secretary of the NCUG and feedback will be provided.

Notice

Shall be deemed to be given by facsimile, email or registered post to the address and/or number as furnished by the Member, Associate Member or Interested Party Member from time to time.

C.E.Liège

Is a confederation of national federations from countries that represent the entire world cork sector.

C.E.Liège is made up of federations and associations of cork businesses in Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, United Kingdom, USA, Morocco, Algeria, South Africa and Australia.

In addition, C.E.Liège is also made up of public bodies from Spain, Portugal and Italy.

C.E.Liege Group of Experts

The Administration of the C.E.Liège has the right to nominate representatives on behalf of the Cork Industry and to approve the constitution of the Experts' Group.

C.E.Liege Administrator

The C.E.Liège has the right to nominate a representative to be the Administrator on behalf of the Study.

Trade Representatives	Trade Representatives are nominated by the Wine Trade and Retail Trade which have been agreed on behalf of the Natural Cork User Group to represent the International Trade on a technical basis as part of the Working Groups
Working Group	The “Working Group” consists of the C.E.Liège “Group of Experts” and “Trade Representatives” to undertake Technical Research, Studies and Evaluations on behalf of the Natural Cork User Group.
Studies	A Working Group shall carry out a Study that has been agreed by the Natural Cork User Group for the benefit of the international trade. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The sensitivity of consumers to TCA</li> <li>b) The guidance to the buying of natural cork specification</li> <li>c) Others as agreed</li> </ul>
Wine & Spirit Association	The WSA primarily represents shippers and WSA others involved in trading wines and imported spirits in the UK, together with growers of English and Welsh wines and producers of British wines and designer drinks

## **2. MEETINGS OF MEMBERS**

- 2.1 The members of the Natural Cork User Group shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at least once per calendar year. The Group shall determine the date for the meeting and all members shall be given sufficient notice thereof together with an agenda for the meeting and the time and the place where the meeting is to be held. This will normally coincide with the LWSTF.
- 2.2 The meetings of the Working Groups shall take place on a regular basis as appropriate until such time the Studies have been concluded. The Working Group shall determine the date for the meeting, and members of the Working Group shall be given sufficient notice thereof together with an agenda for the meeting and the time and place where the meeting is to be held.
- 2.3 The Natural Cork User Group shall be obliged to keep minutes of all the technical meetings and summaries thereof shall be forwarded to its’ members, Associated members and Interested Parties on a regular basis.

The minutes of the Natural Cork User Group will be disseminated to the C.E.Liege.

The Working Groups shall be obliged to keep minutes of all the technical meetings and summaries thereof shall be forwarded to the working group members and a summary report shall be issued to the Natural Cork User Group.

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 To enable discussion to take place at a technical level in a forum between representatives of the cork industry and their customers with a view to improving standards within an agreed time frame.

Matters to be considered shall include: research projects; international standards; codes of practice; guidance; labelling and any other matters of a non-commercial nature deemed to contribute to the objects of the Group.

3.2 To exchange expertise and participants in the fields of research, ensuring that quality and matters for dissemination to the press are agreed by the members of the Group.

3.3 To improve the quality of cork to minimise the risk of TCA contamination of wines.

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of the Group shall include representatives from national and international trade associations and from individual member companies, as appropriate.

#### **5. OFFICERS**

The Chair of the Natural Cork User Group and of the Working Groups shall be elected from the Trade Representatives, and the Secretary Natural Cork User Group and of the Working Groups shall be elected from the cork industry.

#### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Natural Cork User Group Members, Associate Members, Interested Party Members and the C.E. Liège are to respect a confidentiality agreement.

Data and reports, as well as the results obtained during the common projects, will initially be confidential. The Natural Cork User Group will agree whether or not to disseminate the results, as well as deciding on the relevant media to which to disseminate them.

#### **7. WORKING GROUPS and STUDIES**

The Working Groups consist of members from the cork industry elected by the C.E.Liège and are known as the Group of Experts and also of members elected from the international trade which are the Trade Representatives. A Working Group will carry out a Study/ies agreed by the Natural Cork User Group

Each project and/or programme of action in the context of this framework will be the object of specific agreement that will specify:

- The definition of the objective being followed
- Description of the work plan with a time-scale for actions
- A complete budget, material and human resources, specifying the contribution for each association.
- Procedures for the co-ordination, carrying out the follow-up of the project
- Name of the person, one for each party who will be responsible for the specific agreement.
- A progress report shall be drawn up on a regular basis to feedback to the Natural Cork User Group.

#### **8. INDEMNIFICATION**

No Member, by virtue of his membership, shall be liable to any third party or any other Member resulting from any claim for damages arising out of the operation of the Group. The Group, in its endeavours to uphold the objectives and standards, shall act in good faith, but the Group collectively nor its Members individually are liable to any third party for any claim arising out of its actions or omissions in achieving the aforesaid objectives and standards.