European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources

ECP//GR

Report of the Steering Committee

Fifteenth Meeting

15-17 May 2018, Thessaloniki, Greece

Bioversity International

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The European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) is a collaborative programme among most European countries aimed at contributing to rationally and effectively conserve *ex situ* and *in situ* Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, provide access and increase utilization (http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/homepage.html). The Programme, which is entirely financed by the member countries, is overseen by a Steering Committee composed of National Coordinators nominated by the participating countries. The Coordinating Secretariat is hosted by Bioversity International. The Programme operates through Working Groups composed of pools of experts nominated by the National Coordinators. The ECPGR Working Groups deal with either crops or general themes related to plant genetic resources (documentation and information and *in situ* and on-farm conservation). Members of the Working Groups carry out activities based on specific ECPGR objectives, using ECPGR funds and/or their own resources.

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The White Tower of Thessaloniki. © L. Maggioni, ECPGR

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Related background documents and presentations can be downloaded from:
http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/about-ecpgr/steering-committee/sc15/

PART I. SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES DISCUSSED AND OF CLARIFICATIONS GIVEN

Part I of this report includes short summaries of the presentations (all available on the ECPGR website) and/or refers to existing online background documents. Main clarification points and discussed items are also summarized. All the recommendations and decisions agreed by the Steering Committee (SC) during the discussions are listed in Part II.

Opening session

(Chair: E. Thörn)

Opening statements by representatives of the host country

Eirini Pittara, from the General Directorate of Agricultural Research, opened the meeting and welcomed the SC on behalf of the Hellenic Agricultural Organization-DEMETER (HAO-DEMETER), which encompasses the national research network of Agricultural Research Institutions and Units including the Greek Gene Bank. This is the first time that the SC meeting is taking place in Greece, which is a hotspot of plant genetic diversity. In this respect, this meeting in Thessaloniki provides an extra chance for a close cooperation to further unravel the prospective for viable and perpetual utilization of plant genetic resources (PGR) to enhance environment protection, sustainably support the population growth and alleviate the impact of climate changes. Thanks were given to Photini Mylona and the Researchers of the Institute of Plant Breeding and Genetic Resources of HAO-DEMETER for greatly helping the organization and the implementation of this event. The Greek Gene Bank has been recently inaugurated and its full development is being realized. Ms Pittara wished every success to the meeting.

Photini Mylona, Head of the Greek Gene Bank, was honoured to host the SC and thanked the ECPGR Secretary and the Executive Committee (ExCo) for choosing Greece as the host country, and the Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development and Food and HAO-DEMETER for supporting the organization. This occasion was seen as a great opportunity to raise awareness of local authorities about the ECPGR mission and to confirm a strong engagement towards international collaboration.

Welcome address by the Chair and adoption of the Agenda

Eva Thörn welcomed the SC to Thessaloniki, with special greetings for new National Coordinators (NCs) and the meeting's observers. She was looking forward to reviewing the results of the past Phase IX, but especially to setting up the scene for a new Phase X.

The draft agenda was adopted (see Annex 1).
The list of participants is included as Annex 2.

Reporting on Phase IX

(Chair: R. De Salvador)

Technical and financial reports of Phase IX

(L. Maggioni)

See online background documents "Technical report on ECPGR Phase IX", "2017 Financial Report" and presentation.

Report from the ExCo on progress made during Phase IX

(Chair: E. Thörn)

See online background document "Report from the ExCo on progress made during Phase IX, including recommendations for Phase X".
The recommendations made by the ExCo are listed in Annex 3 of this report.

Discussion

F. Begemann thanked the ExCo for the good preparation of the SC meeting. Regarding hosting arrangements, he wondered whether the stability of Bioversity International as an institute could be guaranteed for the next Phase. He also expressed concerns for the reduced number of countries contributing financially to ECPGR and wondered whether the SC members could help in lobbying with appropriate authorities. The same concern was shared by other NCs. Regarding AEGIS, he thought that its low progress required a specific discussion to improve awareness and understanding about its value and benefits. This could be organized in the form of an ECPGR workshop on AEGIS, involving policy-makers, genebanks and other relevant stakeholders. An overall improvement of the quality of the European collections was also considered a pre-requisite before engaging into the effort of connecting AEGIS to the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC).

N. Maxted wished to highlight that the FP7 PGRSecure and H2020-funded Farmer's Pride project should not be forgotten as important achievements of ECPGR during Phase IX.

L. Guasch confirmed the difficulties of the Spanish ministries to pay the ECPGR contributions and that efforts were ongoing to find alternative payment solutions. He also confirmed that it would not be easy to go through the procedure to obtain an ERIC status.

Results of proposals submitted under the Sixth Call

(M. Lateur)
During its meeting on 14 May, the ExCo discussed the five eligible proposals received under the Sixth Call. Three proposals were accepted for funding, either without amendments (submitted by the Forages WG), or with the need for adjustments or clarifications to be provided by the end of June 2018 (submitted by the Grain Legumes and Wheat WGs). Two other proposals submitted by the *Avena* and *Vitis* WGs were not accepted, due to insufficient geographic and expertise representation and lack of clarity on objectives in the former case, and to not convincing feasibility of the Activity in the latter case. Activity Coordinators will be informed about conditions for acceptance or reasons for rejection. A total budget of € 45 000 was awarded under the Sixth Call. After six calls for proposals, a total budget of € 517 850 has been awarded to fund 31 proposals. The ratio of funds allocated to meetings vs. other actions corresponded to 58:42.

Discussion

R. De Salvador flagged the issue of the low quality of several projects submitted to the Grant Scheme and the need for the Working Groups to prepare more convincing documents.

Report from Working Group Chairs' Networking meeting

(Th. van Hintum)
Th. van Hintum reported the positive experience of the WG Chairs meeting held in Ljubljana in October 2017, as part of the Activity 'Networking among Working Groups for discussing

and coordinating the implementation of ECPGR objectives'. During the meeting it was possible to observe that progress is slow in most WGs. At the same time, WG Chairs are key-figures for PGR management in Europe. Twelve recommendations were formulated to the attention of the Executive Committee, which responded with sensible replies after the meeting. Overall, the meeting was very useful to confront each other's experiences with the chairing of WGs and to propose ideas and solutions. One key recommendation was about the usefulness to hold this type of meetings more regularly, in order to provide inputs to the SC meetings (see also online presentation).

Proposals from the ExCo in response to WG Chairs

(E. Thörn)

The response of the ExCo to the recommendations made by the WG Chairs was included in the minutes of the 10th ExCo meeting. A few points requiring the opinion of the SC were presented, regarding the membership of the WGs (whether to introduce or not a two-tiered level of membership), the introduction of regular WG Chairs meetings (two per Phase), the preparation of lists of 'AEGIS candidate' accessions, the re-appointment of all WG Chairs for Phase X and the approval of the establishment of a Working Group on Maize, following a request received by the Secretariat.

Discussion

The establishment of a new WG on Maize was favourably commented, considering the importance of enabling active groups to submit proposals through the Grant Scheme. Other WGs, such as on small fruits/berries, would also be relevant. At the same time, concern was expressed regarding the growing number of WGs and the risk to reduce the available budget for each one. The continuation of not very active WGs was also questioned, and the possibility to merge groups was raised. It was also pointed out that WGs that are temporarily inactive do not cost anything to the Programme, but eliminating them would send a bad signal, while merging WGs might create problems to those that are currently functioning well, and would also introduce rigid frameworks that would reduce the recently acquired flexibility of the system.

The re-appointment of Chairs without a formal process leading to election by the WG was questioned, even though WG members do not have any longer the opportunity to know each other and to elect their Chair. A mechanism that would allow replacement of Chairs would be useful for some NCs, but others preferred to renew the Chairs only if necessary, considering the difficulty to find available Chairs.

The need to identify members with responsibility as reference points for their country was acknowledged as a need that had been expressed by the WGs themselves, but the risk to lose flexibility and openness of the WG to everyone also remained a concern.

Clearer Terms of Reference indicating what is expected from the Working Group members were considered necessary.

The SC recommended that the ExCo analyse the WG structure in order to accommodate the need for representation of all crops, terms of reference and all aspects related to the good operation of the WGs (see decision in Part II, page 14).

ECPGR Objectives (achievements, discussion, planning)

(Chair: K. Annamaa)

AEGIS

(L. Maggioni)

The overall progress towards the implementation of AEGIS during Phase IX was considered low to medium. Thirty-four countries are members of AEGIS and 66 Associate Member agreements were signed with institutions in 31 countries. The total number of European Accessions is 34 364, with an increase of ca. 23 000 during Phase IX. The Associate Member institutions hold 68% of the accessions of the respective countries national inventories. However, they have offered to AEGIS only 5% of these accessions. The AEGIS Quality System (AQUAS) requires the publication of operational genebank manuals (only 8 were published), and the definition of crop-specific standards (50% of the WGs have completed this task). A safety duplication policy has been endorsed and 78% of the AEGIS accessions have been safety-duplicated. The record keeping, reporting and monitoring policy has been endorsed, but not implemented yet. A peer/mentorship review system proposed by CGN is expected to be tested in the near future. Main issues remain the missing membership of a few countries (France, Greece, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Spain) and the fact that 13 member countries did not include any accession. In general, the European Collection is growing very slowly. Moreover, Working Groups recommend lists of accessions, but these are not easily implemented/followed up. A number of new outputs have been proposed for Phase X in order to address some of the identified limitations.

Discussion

Th. van Hintum remarked that the genebank peer review testing was prepared by CGN, but could not take place in 2017 as planned, due to changed conditions in Albania and Poland. The principles and protocols have been drafted and the peer review system is also included in the GenResBridge proposal for implementation.

J. Engels informed that Bioversity and other CGIAR centres have conducted a feasibility study to establish an international facility for cryopreservation, which should operate with principles similar to those of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. He thought that European countries could be interested to learn more about the initiative and possibly to use this facility in the near future.

There was consensus that the objectives and outputs drafted for Phase X should be pursued. The opportunity was debated to organize a specific meeting on AEGIS that could promote the implementation of the system, especially where it is lagging behind.

A small committee was established to draft Terms of Reference for the organization of a meeting on AEGIS before the end of 2018 (see concept note included as Annex 4).

Report on EURISCO

(S. Weise)

The current status and structure of EURISCO were presented: contents, taxonomic composition, biological status, characterization and evaluation (C&E) data, database architecture. Screenshots of the web interface were shown, including display and search options for passport data and C&E data. Four major versions (39 including subversions) of the web interface have been released since October 2014; the next one is planned for June 2018. Activities carried out since the transfer of EURISCO to IPK and their outcomes were

listed. Support to ECPGR Central Crop Databases was highlighted. The EURISCO Coordination carried out regular network maintenance and development and passport data updates. Three EURISCO training workshops were held and a fourth one is in preparation. Additional activities include participation in project proposals and dissemination of information. Plans and challenges for the future ECPGR Phase X are the further development of EURISCO in close collaboration with ECPGR bodies, and a specific focus on phenotypic data, *in situ* data and data quality.
(See online presentation)

Discussion

S. Weise clarified that there is a tendency for an increased use of EURISCO and this was especially noticeable after the incorporation of C&E data into the catalogue. Detailed information on which type of users are involved is not available, but it seems that more interest is expressed by researchers than by breeders. He also explained that inclusion of simple sequence repeat (SSR) data into EURISCO is being requested by some Working Groups, with the purpose to make widely available information that is useful for genebank curators, such as for comparing accessions and distinguishing cases of synonymy and uniqueness. The implementation of this feature is in the plans.

S. Csörgő recommended that the next users' survey be also circulated to the private breeding sector through the European Seed Association (ESA), especially considering her impression that awareness about EURISCO is very low among ESA members.

J. Engels remarked that the data that EURISCO provided to GENESYS and the Global Information System (GLIS) were highly appreciated by FAO as they helped to cover information on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action in the European region.
The answer to the question on what is the incentive for a genebank curator to send C&E data to EURISCO was that a complete catalogue that is rich of information offers a shared benefit to anyone wishing to compare accessions and the related data.

The meeting expressed vivid appreciation for the work done by Stephan Weise and supported by the Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK) on EURISCO since the catalogue was transferred to IPK in 2014.

In situ *conservation of crop wild relatives (CWR)*

(N. Maxted)
Major achievements of the Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG included the finalization of the "ECPGR Concept for *In situ* Conservation of crop wild relatives in Europe", endorsed by the Steering Committee in 2015, and the implementation of specific EU-funded projects (PGR Forum, AEGRO and PGR Secure). Methodologies were published and communities of experts established.
The WG Chair also promoted CWR conservation during a hearing at the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development in December 2017. The project "Farmer's Pride: New partnerships and tools to enhance European capacities for in situ conservation", successfully submitted to HORIZON 2020–SFS-04, will seek to build an integrated multi-actor network of sites and stakeholders to sustain PGR *in situ* conservation that complements *ex situ* activities and enhances utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA).
(See online presentation).

On farm conservation and management

(L. Maggioni)
Major achievements of the On-farm Conservation and Management WG included the "ECPGR Concept for on-farm conservation and management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture", endorsed by the Steering Committee in 2017, and the participation in the successful proposal Farmer's Pride (see above).
Other achievements included the contribution to the EU Preparatory Action, interactions created between genebanks and direct users (LINKAGES Activity), and links with other EC projects (PGRSECURE (2013-2016); DIVERSIFOOD (2015-2019); DYNAVERSITY (2017-2020); and CROSYMED (2018–2021)**)**.
It was noted that possibilities to include on-farm maintained landraces in AEGIS are to be explored.
(See online presentation).

Discussion

During the discussion, the importance of the link between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation was emphasized, as these two complementary methodologies of conservation are often insufficiently integrated. Specifically, valuable material living in the wild or cultivated on farm is often not safely backed-up in genebanks and also not easily accessible to potential users.

It was also remarked that the level of diversity that is present on the farms in Europe is not precisely known and it should be the role of ECPGR to monitor its existence, trends and threats.

Use of PGR - Proposal for a European Evaluation Network

(*G. Moore*)
G. Moore presented the Proposal to establish a European Evaluation Network, resulting from the activities carried out during the project on Private Public Partnerships. He also introduced the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ECPGR and ESA, which could be signed during the meeting, in case of approval of the Evaluation Network. In fact, the MoU is supportive of the Evaluation Network as well as establishing a framework of general cooperation between ESA and ECPGR.

Discussion and decisions

During the discussion, it was clarified that the intention is to promote the evaluation of material in genebanks and to make these data publicly available. The embargo period (3-5 years) on the accessibility of the data outside of each specific evaluation consortium is a necessary incentive for the involvement of the private sector.

It was also clarified that there are no barriers to the participation of anyone to evaluation projects, as long as the principles established by the framework are shared and respected.

The term 'pre-competitive evaluation' was commented to be redundant, as the evaluation network has the declared purpose of making data publicly available. However, it was recommended to maintain such wording since it would make it very clear that it would not be possible to gain exclusive rights on any data generated in this framework.

It was commented that the Network does not necessarily need specific funding, as it is important to establish a framework (structure and format). The framework by itself can

facilitate self-funded initiatives or become the starting basis to submit proposals (ECPGR Grant Scheme, H2020, etc.)

It was clarified that the establishment of the Network would not affect seed companies carrying out their evaluation and would not affect either any national decision regarding access to genetic resources.

J. Weibull proposed to use the acronym EVA for the Evaluation Network.

The Proposal was accepted with the change of acronym name and two small amendments were made to the ECPGR-ESA MoU (see decisions in Part II, page 14).

Cross-cutting issues

(*Chair: V. Holubec*)

Update on FAO Treaty and Global Information System

(F. López, FAO)

The objectives of the International Treaty on PGRFA and the status of the Multilateral System were summarized, including information on the use of the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA) and its 'Easy-SMTA' version. The Global Information System (GLIS) for PGRFA was also explained, with its vision of integrating and augmenting existing systems to create the global entry point to information and knowledge for strengthening the capacity for PGRFA conservation, management and utilization. Specific reference was made to the development of a Permanent unique identifier for germplasm accessions, since this recommendation came from the ECPGR Documentation and Information WG meeting in Prague in 2014. This meeting solicited the Treaty Secretariat to recommend a global standard approach for unique identifiers that EURISCO could also adopt. The Governing Body of the International Treaty and the community agreed on the need to accurately and permanently identifying PGRFAs. Standards were then developed, adopting the concept of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs), also considering the deriving benefits for PGRFA users: facilitated access to information; improved and more homogeneous data quality; support of formats and protocols for machine access to information; better integration among genebanks, breeders and other user communities; easier compliance with SMTA stipulations on information sharing, etc. ECPGR members could benefit from their reporting to EURISCO to obtain DOIs and a proposal is being developed to create synergies with the current reporting. The DOIs could help to improve the visibility and the use of the material in genebanks and also be instrumental in adding value to the material.

A presentation by F. López and S. Diulgheroff also reminded the SC that FAO is in charge of monitoring indicator 2.5.1 on PGRFA *ex situ* conservation for the Sustainable Development Goals. This indicator is monitoring the number of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium- or long-term conservation facilities.

(See online presentations).

Discussion

During the discussion, F. López clarified that the adoption of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) did not meet with resistance from the users' community. On the contrary, the Treaty Secretariat is strongly encouraged to finalize the system as soon as possible. A remaining challenge is the extension of the system to *in situ* data and the involvement of developing

countries. He also reiterated that DOIs are not replacing accession numbers and that there is no duplication of information systems, but rather inter-relation among existing systems.
He also clarified that FAO Treaty Secretariat provides DOIs at no cost. To obtain DOIs, the users submit an Excel table through the online system with the accessions requiring DOIs and the DOIs are then sent back to be included in the genebank documentation system.
DOIs are 'opaque', which means that no information can be acquired by reading the DOI itself.

Th. van Hintum confirmed that the use of DOIs is not complicated. CGN already implemented the DOIs for genebank accessions and this means that any data related to such accessions will be easily traceable to the original source. CGN decided to assign DOIs to single seed descent lines. The system works very well and he strongly recommended all genebanks to adopt it.

S. Weise informed the meeting that the EURISCO Coordinator, in collaboration with FAO Treaty, can offer the service of facilitating the registration of DOIs, thereby simplifying the task for National Focal Points who wish to use this opportunity. A letter with instructions will follow.

F. Begemann pointed out that it will be important that existing information systems are not replicated by the Global Information System (GLIS), since collection holders are invited to provide additional passport information to GLIS. It should be considered that it is also possible to generate DOIs independently, as done by IPK. Another item to consider is the risk that confidential transfer of data by private partners could be tracked by the DOIs. They might not wish to use DOIs in such cases.

It was suggested to encourage all genebanks to adopt the DOIs, particularly for the AEGIS accessions, and that the EURISCO Advisory Group could draft a statement to encourage all the National Focal Points to assign DOIs to their accessions. M. Rasmussen stressed that this is an opportunity to eliminate redundant material (see decisions in Part II, page 14).

In the discussion, it was clarified that DOIs can be used to analyse collections and reduce redundancies, but it is a sovereign decision of each country to decide what to do at this regard. It is not a task of FAO. As the Crop Trust is updating global conservation strategies, they might be interested to use the DOIs to analyse the collections once appropriate associated information becomes available.

F. López informed that the Treaty Secretariat is assisting other countries to join the International Treaty, including Mongolia. The signature of the Treaty by the USA has encouraged other countries to join, and the entering into force of Nagoya Protocol has also made it evident to countries that there is space for regulating access to PGRFA through the International Treaty.

Draft Communication Strategy

(J. Weibull)
Referring to the recommendations made in the last SC meeting, J. Weibull reported progress for the preparation of an ECPGR Communication Strategy, which is dedicated to external communication. The strategy includes the following components: overall communication objectives, target audiences and specific objectives, key messages, communication activities, indicators of achievement, resources, roles and responsibilities, and a suggested time plan.

It was emphasized that communication is not a task for the Secretariat alone, but for all of us who need to take on responsibilities for the implementation of the strategy, not the least WG Chairs who are essential to communicate achievements to the network members. National Coordinators must explain the role and value of PGR in their respective countries. It was foreseen that the Secretariat will maintain the ECPGR website and prepare e-bulletins and briefs.

It was indicated that the Communication Strategy Task Force agreed on a vast majority of the draft outlined issues in the strategy, with some minor matters of difference. Although there is a need for additional funding for the implementation of the strategy, some parts can be done at no cost, e.g. an e-brief summarizing the main SC meeting's outcomes, ECPGR information published on domestic websites by NCs, an e-publication of main achievements/outputs during Phase IX, a condensed version to be sent to all members of the new EC Directorates (AGRI, ENVI etc.).

J. Weibull finished his presentation by proposing that the document should be re-drafted on the basis of suggestions by the present meeting, and be finalized and adopted by 1 July 2018. He also strongly proposed to prepare an ECPGR 40-year jubilee video and to include a budget line for that purpose. He stressed that this is a very effective way to send a message.

Discussion

E. Thörn thanked the Task Force for their work and appraised the short and clear strategy that should be easy to finalize. She especially valued the nice vision and mission of the strategy.

N. Maxted emphasized the need for a document promoting the role and achievements of ECPGR during its history, which could be in the form of a brochure. He thought that it is very important to communicate to the public.

K. Koutis said that ECPGR should create occasions of interaction with user communities and the general public and asked how many genebanks are open to the public and how well-known these are among the public. He also stressed the vital role of ECPGR for farmers and food chain stakeholders.

V. Holubec replied that there are several possibilities to show activities to the public e.g. "fascination days" and open-doors events.

L. Guasch pointed out that other fields of science are not required by the media to justify their usefulness so much. We have some tools to feed the world and we know our work is useful, but we need to communicate how important it is.

J. Engels noted that everybody knows about Svalbard, but not about ECPGR.

F. Begemann pointed out that a lot is happening within countries with regard to public awareness; some are more active than others. He asked what the outcome of the strategy document will be; it should become a framework document from where individual countries could pick specific actions. He suggested that it be developed as a menu of potential concrete products with the possibility for countries to fund one or the other. He was not in favour of including these activities into the ECPGR budget.

He then mentioned the Trust and "Food Forever Initiative" and stressed that it is always important to present success as well as problem stories similar to what had been presented in the EU Preparatory Action. He proposed to use the same products translated in local languages. He called for concrete products, especially for the 2020 celebration and to link up with the Food Forever Initiative.

L.L. Steffensen said that "if you are not visible, you do not exist", and also pointed out that the resources for doing things are limited. She agreed that everyone has responsibility and that this should be much more reflected upon. Communication to general public is a massive investment and perhaps it is not the real target of ECPGR. Twitter, Facebook, web inputs should be given weekly or daily depending on target groups; this is in itself a huge effort, for which we do not have sufficient resources. Therefore, we need to be much more focused and slim. She indicated that a video is not so expensive and will not bankrupt ECPGR, but needs to be directed to the right target and prepared by hired professionals.

She mentioned that Svalbard is a symbol that can be the entrance to the story about the genebanks which is often used by the Crop Trust, which by the way has one of the best communication officers in the world. She suggested that Facebook users should link to each other in order to help spreading posted information and messages.

She asked about the role of ECPGR with regard to communication. Perhaps a branding strategy would be more useful than a communication strategy, which would expose us as experts, and not just promote the importance of genetic resources. The latter is important but also done by many others. Fact sheets could be prepared about the high number of experts and the many WGs with a broad coverage.

J. Cvelbar pointed out that it is very difficult to compete with information. Preparation of a leaflet following SC meetings that could be translated in several languages e.g. every two years would be useful. She also agreed that a video would be useful. She informed that the annual workshop in Slovenia which also involves non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been helpful for awareness raising.

Th. van Hintum expressed doubts about the ECPGR communication strategy and wondered if the general public needs to know about ECPGR. He pointed out that documents to ministries should be easy and simple and need to be prepared.

V. Holubec stressed that head officers at national level need information about ECPGR and the ministerial officers need to receive the messages directly.

J. Weibull responded that we need to justify why we spend the funds for ECPGR and emphasized that we have a pedagogic role to explain that food does not come automatically.

G. Đurić said that the visibility of AEGIS within the European Parliament is probably weak.

I. Rukavina expressed the opinion that a video on YouTube will not do much. Public relations need to be well targeted, which is a complex job and requires hiring of professionals. She stressed that NCs have a role to play at national level, and that everyone should take on this duty. She emphasized that the final document needs to reflect the discussion held by the meeting.

F. Begemann stated that the strategy could serve two different purposes: 1) to convey what ECPGR has achieved, which is directed to the ministries; 2) to convey the importance of PGRFA to the general public. This should be reflected in the draft. He also stressed the importance to list pressing and concrete products that need to be developed.

(See decisions in Part II, page 15)

ECPGR towards Phase X

(Chair: M. Lateur)

Amendment of ECPGR Objectives

(*L. Maggioni*)
L. Maggioni presented the Objectives for Phase X prepared by the Secretariat. The draft had been circulated electronically among the NCs and the WG Chairs during 2017. Two revisions were made before presenting the document to the SC.

Discussion and decisions

The Objectives were revised and a few amendments were suggested and approved by the SC. Agreed Objectives are included as Annex 5.

Mode of Operation for Phase X

(*L. Maggioni*)
L. Maggioni presented the proposal based on the principles defined by the 14th SC meeting. WG activities are covered by two budget lines with similar amounts, one for "meetings" and one for "other activities" (see online presentation).

Discussion and decisions

A proposal to further simplify the Mode of Operation such as eliminating the country quota system did not meet the consensus of all countries, as the quotas are seen as a guarantee of balanced participation in meetings and actions. The SC decided to accept the principle of using two budget lines and to maintain the country quota for "meetings". It was recommended that the ExCo revisit the 'Mode of Operation' in the framework of the revision of the WG structure and that efforts be made towards simplification of the mechanism, such as removing limitations in the number of participants in the activities (see decisions in Part II, page 15).

Statements from all countries on future participation and financing of the programme and comments from observers

(*All National Coordinators and observers*)

All National Coordinators expressed positive appreciation for the importance to continue to be member of ECPGR and indicated that they had either already obtained the agreement from their respective authorities or would make all possible efforts to ensure their country's participation.

Konstantinos Koutis (AEGILOPS Network for Biodiversity and Ecology in Agriculture) expressed appreciation for the role of ECPGR and its efforts in support of *ex situ*, *in situ*, on-farm conservation and documentation of PGRFA. He recommended that small farmers,

NGOs and small seed enterprises should remain involved as essential targets and/or partners of ECPGR. He also remarked that ECPGR should improve its lobbying effectiveness to ensure that resources are dedicated to PGRFA in Europe. The establishment of a European Evaluation Network was seen as a positive development and an opportunity that should remain open to all stakeholders without any privilege regarding access to genetic material or data generated.

S. Csörgő (ESA) confirmed the intention to continue collaboration with ECPGR, as clearly shown by the MoU that was agreed in this meeting and that will further enhance collaboration between the two bodies.

L.L. Steffensen (NordGen) confirmed the intention to continue assisting the Steering Committee as an observer, considering the useful collaboration with ECPGR. NordGen is also happy to offer two very active WG Chairs to the Programme.

F. López (FAO Treaty) acknowledged the existence of several areas of collaboration with ECPGR and reminded the meeting that FAO Treaty Secretariat intended to serve the needs of the PGRFA community.

In a recorded presentation, S. Kell, affiliated with the University of Birmingham in the UK and Chair of the Genetic Resources section of the European Association for Research on Plant Breeding (EUCARPIA), provided information about EUCARPIA, the Genetic Resources section and about collaboration with ECPGR.
She reported on the programme and outputs of the last EUCARPIA Genetic Resources conference which was organized in association with ECPGR and took place in Montpellier in May 2017. She informed the participants about plans for the next section conference which will be hosted by the Portuguese Gene Bank at the Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária e Veterinária (INIAV) in 2020, most likely in association with the final conference of the EU-funded Farmer's Pride project.

J. Engels (Bioversity International) informed the meeting that Bioversity offers partnerships and collaboration with European countries to carry out projects of common interest. Under the new arrangement with the CGIAR, there will not be any more restrictions on spending funds in European countries.

Hosting arrangements for EURISCO and the Secretariat and proposal for Phase X budget

E. Thörn, Chair of the ExCo, thanked Bioversity International and IPK for hosting respectively the ECPGR Secretariat and EURISCO during Phase IX. She recommended that the collaboration agreements continue during Phase X, both with Bioversity and IPK under the same framework and contractual terms as in the previous Phase. She presented the offer of continuation of hosting arrangements made by IPK and the financial requirements, which were embedded in the budget proposal for Phase X.

J. Engels, on behalf of Bioversity International, reported about the interest and availability expressed by the Bioversity Director-General, Ann Tutwiler, to continue hosting the ECPGR Secretariat during Phase X. In this context, J. Engels presented the budget proposal, including a reduced overhead rate from 18.15% to 15.84% for the five years 2019-2023.

Discussion

A protracted and animated discussion was carried out aiming at reaching consensus on the total budget and the country contributions. The budget was slightly reduced. In order to maintain a principle of fairness, it was considered important to continue ranking all the countries based on UN rates, although changes in the rates may determine significant variations in the percentage increase or decrease of the annual country contributions (see decisions in Part II, page 15).

Visit to the Greek Gene Bank

During the morning of 17 May, the SC visited the Greek Gene Bank (GGB) and the experimental fields of the Institute of Plant Breeding and Genetic Resources of HAO-DEMETER in Thermi, Thessaloniki. GGB is the executive coordinating body of the National System for Conservation and Protection of PGR and cultivated species.

Conclusion

(Chair: E. Thörn)

Discussion and approval of the report

The report prepared by the Secretariat, including the annexes, was approved with a few amendments. The budget for Phase X (Annex 6) and the table of contributions (Annex 7) were approved.

Concluding remarks of the meeting

E. Thörn thanked all the participants for their active, lively and constructive participation. She also thanked the ECPGR Secretariat and ExCo members for the effective preparation of the meeting and the local hosts for their excellent hospitality and organization.

Finally, she proposed that Belgium, Hungary and Sweden try to maintain the same level of contribution to ECPGR as they did in the past Phase, in the form of voluntary contributions.

The meeting expressed their thanks to E. Thörn for her very constructive and effective leadership of the ExCo during Phase IX and the meeting that was thus concluded.

PART II. DECISIONS

1. Decisions addressing recommendations from Working Groups' Chairs

a. WG Membership

The ExCo will make a review and evaluation regarding how the WG system could be further improved and will come up with a thoroughly thought out proposal about the structure and operation of the WGs during Phase X, keeping in mind agreed key principles of flexibility and openness to a wide participation, and taking into account the feedback given by the WG Chairs for the present situation. A proposal should be submitted to the SC before the end of Phase IX, also involving the WG Chairs in the process. The question about re-appointment of WG Chairs will also be included in this review.

b. WG representation

Meetings of all Chairs should become regular events, to be held possibly twice per Phase, in advance of the SC meetings, with the dual purpose of improving coordination across WGs and of creating a consultation mechanism that can provide feedback and suggestions to the SC.

c. AEGIS-related activities

Every decision is postponed to after the broader discussion on how AEGIS should be making progress; see decision 3 below.

2. Working Groups' structure

A decision on the establishment of a Maize Working Group will be taken as part of the revision of the WGs' structure (see point 1.a above), where also a WG on small fruits/berries will be considered.

3. Workshop on AEGIS

The proposal for the organization of a meeting on AEGIS before the end of 2018 was accepted (see concept note, Annex 4).

4. Proposal for a European Evaluation Network

The proposal was endorsed with the adoption of the acronym EVA for the Evaluation Network (Annex 8).

5. MoU between ECPGR and ESA

The MoU (Annex 9) was endorsed for signature, with the newly adopted acronym 'EVA' and with two amendments:

- In Art. 2, it was specified that the Parties will seek to facilitate for their members to connect with each other with the aim of collaborating in PGRFA evaluation partnerships, **including within the ECPGR Working Groups**.
- In Art. 3, it was specified that the Parties agree that the present enhanced cooperation does not involve any **obligation for a** financial engagement from either of the Parties.

6. Global Information System

a. The SC welcomed the operationalization of the Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) developed by the International Treaty on PGRFA and recommended their use to permanently identify PGRFA. It also appreciated the continuing collaboration with the Secretariat of the International Treaty in the framework of the current Memorandum and encouraged to explore the modalities in which the assignation of DOIs can be facilitated during the reporting process to EURISCO.

b. The EURISCO Advisory Group was requested to draft a statement to encourage all the National Focal Points to assign DOIs to their accessions.

7. Communication Strategy

a. The Task Force is requested to re-draft the document on the basis of comments and proposals expressed by the SC meeting and finalize the document for submission to the SC within 1 July 2018.

b. The development of products such as an ECPGR 40-year jubilee video is recommended and suitable external funds should be sought.

8. Objectives of ECPGR during Phase X

The SC approved the Objectives with few amendments. Agreed Objectives are included as Annex 5.

9. Mode of Operation of Phase X

The 'Mode of Operation' was not adopted as such, but the ExCo is expected to revisit the mechanism in the framework of their analysis and review of the overall WGs' structure. Efforts towards simplification are recommended, still maintaining the principle of two budget lines for WG activities: "meetings and "other activities". The country quota for "meetings" should also be maintained. The proposed Mode of Operation should be submitted to the SC before the end of Phase IX, together with the proposals on the WGs' structure (as per point 2a above).

10. Hosting arrangements for EURISCO and the Secretariat

The SC agreed that the hosting arrangements of EURISCO and the ECPGR Secretariat should remain the same as during Phase IX, respectively hosted by IPK, Gatersleben, Germany and Bioversity International, Maccarese, Italy.

11. Phase X budget

The total budget for Phase X (Annex 6) and the list of country contributions (Annex 7) were approved by the Steering Committee.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Agenda

Fifteenth meeting of the ECPGR Steering Committee
15-17 May 2018, Thessaloniki, Greece

Monday, 14 May 2018

Starting at 9:30 Meeting of the ExCo

Tuesday, 15 May 2018

Registration
8:30–9:00 Conference venue at Electra Palace Thessaloniki

1. Opening (*Chair: E. Thörn*)
09:00–09:30 Opening statements by representatives of the host country
09:30–09:45 Welcome address by the Chair and adoption of the Agenda

2. Reporting on Phase IX (*Chair: R. De Salvador*)
09:45–10:05 Technical and financial report of Phase IX (*L. Maggioni*)
10:05–10:20 Report from the ExCo on progress made during Phase IX (*E. Thörn*)
10:20–10:35 Discussion

10:35–11:00 Coffee/Tea break

11:00–11:20 Results of proposals submitted under the Sixth Call (*ExCo*)
11:20–11:30 Discussion
11:30–11:50 Report from Working Group Chairs' Networking meeting *(Th. van Hintum)*
11:50–12:10 Proposals from the ExCo in response to WG Chairs (*ExCo*)
12:10–12:30 Discussion

12:30–14:00 Lunch

3. ECPGR Objectives (achievements, discussion, planning) (*Chair: K. Annamaa*)
14:00–14:15 AEGIS (*L. Maggioni*)
14:15–14:30 Discussion
14:30–14:50 Report on EURISCO (*S. Weise*)
14:50–15:05 Discussion
15:05–15:20 *In situ* conservation of CWR (*N. Maxted*)
15:20–15:35 Discussion

15:35–16:00 Coffee/Tea break

16:00–16:10 On farm conservation and management (*L. Maggioni*)
16:10–16:25 Discussion
16:25–16:55 Use of PGR - Proposal for a European Evaluation Network (*G. Moore*)
16:55–17:30 Discussion and decisions

No dinner organized

Wednesday, 16 May 2018

4. Cross-cutting issues (*Chair: V. Holubec*)

08:30–09:00	Update on FAO Treaty and Global Information System (*F. López, FAO*)
09:00–09:30	Discussion
09:30-10:00	Draft Communication Strategy (*J. Weibull*)
10:00–10:30	Discussion and decisions
10:30–11:00	*Coffee/Tea break*

5. ECPGR towards Phase X *(Chair: M. Lateur)*

11:00–11:30	Amendment of ECPGR Objectives (*L. Maggioni*)
11:30–12:00	Discussion and decisions
12:00–12:30	Mode of Operation for Phase X (*L. Maggioni*)
12:30–13:00	Discussion and decisions
13:00–14:00	*Lunch*
14:00–15:00	Statements from all countries on future participation and financing of the programme and comments from observers (*All National Coordinators and observers*)
15:00–15:30	Discussion
15:30–16:00	*Coffee/Tea break*
16:00–16:30	Hosting arrangements for EURISCO and the Secretariat (*ExCo*)
16:30–17:30	Proposal for Phase X budget (*Bioversity*)
17:30–18:30	Discussion and approval of decisions
20:00	*Social dinner*

Thursday, 17 May 2018

Study Tour

08:30–12:30	Visit to genebank
13:00–14:00	*Lunch*

Conclusion (*Chair: E. Thörn*)

14:00–14:45	Reading of meeting's report
14:45–16:45	Discussion and approval of report
16:45–17:00	Concluding remarks of the meeting

Annex 2. List of participants

Fifteenth meeting of the ECPGR Steering Committee
15-17 May 2018, Thessaloniki, Greece

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Annex 3. Recommendations proposed by the ExCo in relation to the ECPGR objectives

Output 1.1 – Membership agreements signed

- The ECPGR members not yet members of AEGIS are urged to prepare for the signing of the MoU before the end of December 2018.
- Additional AEGIS members are encouraged to complete Associate Member Agreements with relevant institutions within their countries before the end of December 2018.

Output 1.2 – AEGIS collections established

- The National Focal Points (NFPs) should be encouraged to report the reasons for not flagging accessions which have been proposed as AEGIS candidates by the Working Groups (WGs).
- A target of 35% of the EURISCO accessions to be included in the European Collection should be settled. The target could be divided into at least 7% accomplishment each year during Phase X. The 35% target should be applied to each collection of Associate Members (AMs). A consequence of this will be that the number of newly identified accessions will vary greatly both between and within countries.

Output 1.3 – AQUAS quality system developed and operationalized

- In those cases where the language is an obstacle for finalization of the genebank manuals of AMs, members of AEGIS having a common language are encouraged to support each other with translation into the English language.
- National Coordinators (NCs) are encouraged to promote the implementation of a peer/mentorship review system of operations of AM collections.
- Where possible, countries should offer in-kind contributions to others when training and capacity building needs have been identified through the anticipated peer/mentorship review system.
- The WGs should be given a deadline for the finalization of the crop-specific standards.

Output 1.4 – Funds mobilized to help Associate Members to implement the AEGIS Quality System (AQUAS)

- To investigate needs and obstacles among AMs hampering the flagging of AEGIS accessions.
- To prepare a register of AMs offering services to others.

Output 1.5 – Other capacity building schemes for Associate Members operational

- An inventory of training and capacity building needs should be prepared based on the results from the anticipated peer review.

Output 2.2 – C&E data in EURISCO included, with high quality and wide coverage

- The WG members should be requested to actively contact their respective NFP when C&E data are ready to be uploaded into EURISCO.

Output 4.1 – Relationship between ECPGR and EC/EU and responsible national ministries strengthened and sustainable funding of ECPGR secured

- NCs are encouraged to search all opportunities for voluntary contributions to ECPGR. Even the smallest contribution will be of value, e.g. increase of the travel budget for ECPGR meetings or a contribution for a specific activity.
- NCs are requested to consider whether it would be likely for ECPGR to become a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) and if so, how the process should be carried out.

Output 4.4 – Increased awareness of the value of PGRFA amongst users and the wider public

- Request the Task Force to finalize the Communication Strategy in line with the proposed revisions from the SC.
- Endorse the Communication Strategy after discussion and revisions made accordingly.

Output 5.1 – Good knowledge of which C&E data are of high relevance to potential users

- NCs should promote the continuation of the European Evaluation Network (EVA) and search for additional funding. Even if it is intended to be self-funded to a large extent there will be need for additional money, which will contribute to ensure a long-term activity.

Annex 4. Proposal to organize an AEGIS workshop (concept note)

Objectives

1. Provide information at all levels about scope and importance of AEGIS (targeting relevant stakeholders)
2. Offer examples of positive policy engagement
3. Offer examples of mechanisms to identify accessions to be included in the AEGIS European Collection
4. Identify reasons why the process is slowed down at different levels and offer solutions
5. Facilitate AEGIS activities during Phase X

Outcomes

- Create sense of ownership in the AEGIS process
- Provide solutions to processes of technical nature
- Provide simple documents showing the benefits

Mechanism

Split part of the meeting into policy and processes (and possibly other aspects)

Participants (ca. 50 people)

(Targeting countries expressing an interest to advance the process (AEGIS + non-AEGIS members)

- Ministerial authorities
- National Coordinators
- Genebank curators
- WG Chairs

Timing

2-3 days meeting, to be held before the end of 2018

Funding

ECPGR, from extraordinary contributions

Implementation

Secretariat with support as appropriate

Annex 5. Objectives of ECPGR for Phase X (2019-2023) (agreed at the 15th Steering Committee meeting, May 2018)

Note: the Objectives are available online as a stand-alone document (here).

OBJECTIVES OF ECPGR FOR PHASE X (2019-2023)

(agreed at the 15th Steering Committee meeting, May 2018)

LONG-TERM GOAL

	Stakeholders in Europe collaboratively, rationally and effectively conserve *ex situ* and *in situ* PGRFA, provide access and increase sustainable use.

OBJECTIVES

click on the 'objective' below to go to the respective page

1	**To efficiently conserve and provide access to unique germplasm in Europe through AEGIS and the European Collection**
2	**To provide passport and phenotypic information of actively conserved European PGRFA diversity *ex situ* and *in situ* through the EURISCO catalogue**
3	**To improve *in situ* conservation and use of crop wild relatives**
4	**To promote on-farm conservation and management of European PGRFA diversity**
5	**To promote use of PGRFA**

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OBJECTIVE 1	**To efficiently conserve and provide access to unique germplasm in Europe through AEGIS and the European Collection**			
Outputs	**Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Indicators**	**Assumptions**
1.1 New membership agreements & Associate Member Agreements signed	1.1.1 Continue discussions with ECPGR members on AEGIS membership and Associate Membership	1.1.1 National Coordinators with support of Secretariat	1.1.1.1 Number of Membership Agreements 1.1.1.2 Number of Associate Member Agreements	- Funds for conservation and the promotion of utilization, and qualified personnel are available at the national level (see also outputs 1.5 / 1.6) - ECPGR member countries share the AEGIS vision
1.2 European Collection represents the European *ex situ* PGR diversity	1.2.1 Identification of new European Accessions for inclusion into AEGIS	1.2.1 Associate Members and National Coordinators	1.2.1.1 Number of new accessions flagged as part of AEGIS 1.2.1.2 Percentage of the national collection analysed for eligible accessions to be included into AEGIS	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
	1.2.2 Verification of the European Collection by crops in terms of representation of the *ex situ* PGR diversity	1.2.2 Respective Crop Working Groups	1.2.2.1 Number of recommendations made by WGs to improve representation	
1.3 European Accessions properly maintained	1.3.1 Maintenance of AEGIS accessions in good viability condition through multiplication and safety-duplication	1.3.1 Respective Associate Members	1.3.1.1 Number of AEGIS accessions multiplied/rejuvenated and safety-duplicated 1.3.1.2 Percentage of AEGIS accessions not requiring multiplication/rejuvenation and safety-duplication	
1.4 Issues limiting access to material explored and addressed (e.g. phytosanitary issues)	1.4.1 Survey of issues impacting on the possibility to access material	1.4.1 Relevant WG members and AEGIS Associate Members	1.4.1.1 Published survey results	
	1.4.2 Investigate ways to improve access to material subject to prior identified issues	1.4.2 Relevant WG members and AEGIS Associate Members	1.4.2.1 Published recommendations for solutions	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
1.5 Options and opportunities for a cryopreservation network explored	1.5.1 Organize a meeting to identify cryopreservation needs and aims and consider setting up a dedicated network	1.5.1 Relevant WG members; Secretariat	1.5.1.1 Recommendations published; Framework for a cryopreservation network defined 1.5.1.2 Number of vegetatively propagated accessions cryopreserved	
1.6 AEGIS Quality System (AQUAS) operational	1.6.1 Transparency: preparation and online provision of genebank manuals	1.6.1 Associate Members and Secretariat	1.6.1.1 Number of online genebank manuals	
	1.6.2 Standards: agree on crop-specific genebank standards	1.6.2 Crop WGs	1.6.2.1 Number of new or updated crop-specific standards	
1.7 Capacity building schemes for Associate Members (AMs) operational	1.7.1 Identify capacity building needs, including training of AMs (continuing activity)	1.7.1 Associate Members; National Coordinators; WGs; Secretariat	1.7.1.1 Number of AMs needs identified	Capacity for conservation and the promotion of utilization are available at the national level

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
1.8 Funds mobilized to help Associate Members to implement AQUAS	1.8.1 Undertake fundraising among potential donors to improve Associate Members capacities	1.8.1 National Coordinators; ExCo; Secretariat	1.8.1.1 Volume of dedicated grants available for capacity development of Associate Members	
	1.8.2 ECPGR-mediated characterization, evaluation and/or phenotyping/genotyping of AEGIS accessions	1.8.2 Associate Members; National Coordinators; WGs; Secretariat	1.8.2.1 Number of AEGIS accessions characterized/evaluated via ECPGR	
	1.8.3 ECPGR-mediated regeneration of AEGIS accessions	1.8.3 Associate Members; National Coordinators; WGs; Secretariat	1.8.3.1 Number of AEGIS accessions regenerated via ECPGR	
	1.8.4 ECPGR-mediated safety duplication of AEGIS accessions	1.8.4 Associate Members; National Coordinators; WGs; Secretariat	1.8.4.1 Number of AEGIS accessions safety duplicated via ECPGR	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
1.9 Visibility of AEGIS accessions improved	1.9.1 Increase visibility of AEGIS accessions available under the terms and conditions of the International Treaty	1.9.1 Associate Members; Secretariat	1.9.1.1 Number of AEGIS accessions and samples provided to users 1.9.1.2 Percentage of AEGIS accessions provided to users compared to the total number of AEGIS accessions	
1.10 AEGIS system evaluated	1.10.1 Develop a questionnaire together with users for feedback from users	1.10.1 Secretariat; users; AEGIS Associate Members	1.10.1.1 Number of filled-in questionnaires received	
	1.10.2 Evaluate results of the questionnaire and develop recommendations for improvement	1.10.2 Secretariat; users; Associate Members	1.10.2.1 Results of the questionnaire and recommendations published	
1.11 System of genebank peer review established and functioning	1.11.1 Set up system of mutual peer review of ECPGR national genebanks and AEGIS Associate Members	1.11.1 ExCo, based on pilot project led by CGN; Secretariat; National Coordinators	1.11.1.1 Principles of the system agreed and published	Consensus of national genebanks/AEGIS Associate Members to undergo mutual peer review

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
	1.11.2 ECPGR-coordinated peer reviews performed and reported	1.11.2 Secretariat; selected peer reviewers	1.11.2.1 Number of peer-reviewed genebanks	
1.12 Options for the integration of *in situ* and on-farm conservation into AEGIS explored and AEGIS used as European *in situ* and on-farm conservation official designation system	1.12.1 Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG-mediated discussion and recommendations concerning integration	1.12.1 Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG members, Secretariat and Farmer's Pride project	1.12.1.1 Discussion Report and Recommendations published	
	1.12.2 On-farm Conservation and Management WG-mediated discussion and recommendations concerning integration	1.12.2 On-farm Conservation and Management WG members, Secretariat and Farmer's Pride project	1.12.2.1 Discussion Report and Recommendations published	

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OBJECTIVE 2	**To provide passport and phenotypic information of actively conserved European PGRFA diversity *ex situ* and *in situ* through the EURISCO catalogue**

Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
2.1 All National Focal Points (NFPs) update national *ex situ* inventories effectively and timely	2.1.1 Identification of National Inventory (NI) PGRFA accessions to be included in EURISCO	2.1.1 National Focal Points, in consultation with ECPGR members	2.1.1.1 Number of yearly updates of national inventories in EURISCO 2.1.1.2 Increase in the number of accessions in EURISCO	- ECPGR member countries are able to invest in the establishment and/or improvement of data repositories, including for high-quality C&E data - ECPGR member countries are prepared to share their data
	2.1.2 Improving quality of data in EURISCO (including taxonomic data as well as coverage and precision of descriptors; inclusion of DOIs)	2.1.2 National Focal Points, in collaboration with genebanks and WG members	2.1.2.1 Increase in the average number of filled-in descriptors in EURISCO 2.1.2.2 Number of descriptors updated for data quality improvement (including taxonomic data) 2.1.2.3 Number of accessions with DOI	- Genebanks and National Focal Points are able to adopt DOIs

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
	2.1.3 Training of National Focal Points (how to compile, maintain, update and upload National Inventory)	2.1.3 EURISCO Coordinator; Doc&Info WG	2.1.3.1 Number of National Focal Points trained	
2.2 C&E data in EURISCO included, with high quality and wide coverage	2.2.1 Identification of available C&E data and their inclusion into EURISCO	2.2.1 National Focal Points and delegates to upload C&E data	2.2.1.1 Number of European accessions with C&E data in EURISCO 2.2.1.2 Number of updates of C&E data sets in EURISCO per year	
	2.2.2 Training of National Focal Points and selected C&E data providers in gathering and uploading C&E data	2.2.2 EURISCO Coordinator; Doc&Info WG	2.2.2.1 Number of National Focal Points and selected C&E data providers trained on uploading C&E data	

Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
2.3 Inclusion of relevant *in situ* CWR data in EURISCO realized	2.3.1 Identification of CWR *in situ* populations/sites qualifying for inclusion in EURISCO in each country	2.3.1 National Focal Points, Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG, in consultation with ECPGR members	2.3.1.1 Number of *in situ* CWR data sets qualifying for inclusion in EURISCO identified in each country 2.3.1.2 Number of *in situ* PGRFA data sets included in EURISCO	Crop wild relative (CWR) genetic reserves are formally established (see also output 3)
	2.3.2 Development of an agreed minimum *in situ* data exchange format on the basis of existing CWR descriptor lists	2.3.2 Chairs of Doc&Info WG and Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG and *in situ* National Focal Points	2.3.2.1 Minimum *in situ* data exchange format agreed by National Coordinators	
	2.3.3 Inclusion of first *in situ* data into EURISCO	2.3.3 EURISCO Coordinator and *in situ* National Focal Points	2.3.3.1 Number of PGRFA *in situ* data included in EURISCO	
	2.3.4 Training of *in situ* National Focal Points on gathering and uploading *in situ* data	2.3.4 EURISCO Coordinator Doc&Info WG; Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG	2.3.4.1 Number of *in situ* National Focal Points trained	

Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
2.4 Users' expectations explored and functionalities of EURISCO increased	2.4.1 Perform users' surveys; analyse results and formulate recommendations for improvements	2.4.1 EURISCO Coordinator, Doc&Info WG and Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG with support from National Focal Points; users	2.4.1.1 Number of respondents to survey	
	2.4.2 Adapting or adding database functions	2.4.2 EURISCO Coordinator; Doc&Info WG	2.4.2.1 Number of adaptations realized	

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OBJECTIVE 3 **To improve *in situ* conservation and use of crop wild relatives**

Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions *Note: the "assumptions" listed apply to the whole set of items*
3.1 National crop wild relative (CWR) conservation strategies produced	3.1.1 Identify official national conservation authorities	3.1.1 National Coordinators, Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG members	3.1.1.1 Lists of official national conservation authorities available	- Funds for European level *in situ* activities are available - Funds for national *in situ* conservation management of PGR are available - Collaboration between Wild species Conservation WG members and official national authorities and, as appropriate, other stakeholders is viable and all partners are willing to share data - There is access to sustainable use of *in situ* conserved CWR germplasm located in genetic reserves
	3.1.2 Generation of national CWR checklists	3.1.2 – 3.1.6 Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG members with official national conservation authorities and EC-funded Farmer's Pride project	3.1.2.1 Number of national CWR checklists produced	
	3.1.3 Prioritization of CWR checklists			
	3.1.4 Production of national CWR inventories		3.1.4.1 Number of national CWR inventories produced	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions *Note: the "assumptions" listed apply to the whole set of items*
	3.1.5 Diversity and gap analysis of national priority CWR taxa 3.1.6 Definition of national CWR conservation actions 3.1.7 Production of national CWR conservation action plans		3.1.7.1 Number of national CWR conservation action plans produced	- European policy is developed to support the establishment and operation of the integrated European strategy for CWR conservation - The European Commission facilitates the long-term monitoring of the integrated European strategy for CWR conservation
3.2 Regional (European) CWR conservation strategy produced	3.2.1 Generation of regional (European) CWR checklist 3.2.2 Prioritization of regional (European) CWR checklists	3.2.1–3.2.6 Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG members in cooperation with official national conservation authorities	3.2.1.1 Checklist produced	- Barriers to accessing CWR germplasm by user communities are removed and the use of CWR germplasm promoted, encouraged and facilitated - Cooperation between the conservation and user communities is improved

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions *Note: the "assumptions" listed apply to the whole set of items*
	3.2.3 Production of regional (European) CWR inventories		3.2.3.1 Regional (European) CWR inventories produced and endorsed by Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG members	- Coordination between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation managers is operational - The Most Appropriate crop Wild relative Population (MAWP) concept will be supported at national level
	3.2.4 Diversity and gap analysis of regional (European) priority CWR taxa			
	3.2.5 Elaboration and agreement of regional (European) CWR conservation actions			
	3.2.6 Production of regional (European) CWR conservation strategy, including CWR conservation action plans		3.2.6.1 Regional (European) CWR conservation action plans produced and endorsed by Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG members	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions *Note: the "assumptions" listed apply to the whole set of items*
3.3 Integrated European strategy for CWR conservation produced	3.3.1 Drafting of integrated European strategy for CWR conservation strategy, integrating national and regional level activities	3.3.1 Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG	3.3.1.1 Integrated European strategy for CWR conservation published	
	3.3.2 Agreement on regional (European) and national MAWPs (Most Appropriate crop Wild relative Populations) to form European *in situ* network	3.3.2 National government agencies responsible for PGR conservation in association with ECPGR National Coordinators and members of the Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves WG	3.3.2.1 List of agreed regional (European) and national MAWPs for inclusion in the *in situ* network published	
3.4 National and European MAWP networks established	3.4.1 Official designation of national and regional (European) MAWPs at national level	3.4.1 National government agencies and authorities responsible for PGR conservation and utilization	3.4.1.1 List of officially designated national and regional (European) MAWPs published	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions *Note: the "assumptions" listed apply to the whole set of items*
3.5 National and European MAWP Networks operational	3.5.1 Active conservation management of national and regional (European) MAWPs	3.5.1 National official authorities for *in situ* conservation and local administrators and landowners	3.5.1.1 Periodic reports submitted to European Topic Centre for Biodiversity indicating national and regional (European) MAWP conservation status and conservation management actions 3.5.1.2 Adherence to minimum quality standards for genetic reserve conservation of CWR	
3.6 Germplasm of National and European MAWPs networks effectively utilized	3.6.1 Germplasm samples collected and actively managed *ex situ*	3.6.1 National PGR genebanks	3.6.1.1 Number of germplasm accessions of MAWPs collected and actively managed *ex situ*	
	3.6.2 MAWP germplasm characterized through *ex situ* regeneration	3.6.2 National PGR genebanks and plant breeding research institutes	3.6.2.1 Number of MAWP germplasm accessions characterized	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions *Note: the "assumptions" listed apply to the whole set of items*
	3.6.3 Access to MAWP germplasm facilitated	3.6.3 National official authorities for *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation and utilization of PGRFA	3.6.3.1 Number of MAWP germplasm accessions provided to users	
	3.6.4 MAWP germplasm evaluated	3.6.4 National plant breeding research institutes and public and private plant breeding companies	3.6.4.1 Number of MAWP germplasm accessions evaluated	
	3.6.5 MAWP germplasm utilized in crop improvement programmes	3.6.5 Public and private plant breeding companies	3.6.5.1 Number of MAWP utilized in crop improvement programmes 3.6.5.2 Number of MAWP utilized successfully for crop improvement	

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OBJECTIVE 4	To promote on-farm conservation and management of European PGRFA diversity

Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
4.1 Snapshot Inventory of the European on-farm diversity (landraces, obsolete cultivars and conservation varieties) carried out	4.1.1 Designation of National On-farm Inventory Focal Points	4.1.1 National Coordinators	4.1.1.1 On-line list of Focal Points	
	4.1.2 Promoting agreement on data exchange format	4.1.2 On-farm Inventory Focal Points, On-farm Conservation and Management WG members	4.1.2.1 Published data exchange format (list of descriptors and instructions)	
	4.1.3 Defining the coordination mechanism and responsibility for on-farm data gathering and compiling	4.1.3 On-farm Inventory Focal Points and relevant stakeholders	4.1.3.1 Responsible manager(s) of European Inventory identified	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
	4.1.4 Collecting on-farm data	4.1.4 On-farm Inventory Focal Points	4.1.4.1 On-line available on-farm data	- National or international funds are made available for database management and for data collecting
4.2 European on-farm diversity and trends monitored	4.2.1 Defining simple and effective indicators of on-farm diversity and trends	4.2.1 Task Force on on-farm diversity indicators	4.2.1.1 On-line agreed indicators	
	4.2.2 Analysing on-farm diversity and trends, based on agreed indicators and the European on-farm Inventory	4.2.2 Task Force on on-farm diversity indicators	4.2.2.1 Published reports of on-farm diversity analysis	
	4.2.3 Establishing a knowledge base of case studies aiming to analyse genetic diversity and its trend in the field	4.2.3 On-farm Conservation and Management WG; Secretariat	4.2.3.1 Published knowledge base	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
	4.2.4 Monitoring relevant initiatives aiming at refining indicators of genetic diversity and trends	4.2.4 On-farm Conservation and Management WG; Secretariat	4.2.4.1 Published reports on relevant initiatives	
4.3 Good practices for on-farm management and conservation and adding value promoted	4.3.1 Provision of store of knowledge and evidence-based practices, related to successful experiences of conservation and sustainable use of landraces and other heterogeneous genetic resources in Europe	4.3.1 On-farm Conservation and Management WG; Secretariat	4.3.1.1 Store of knowledge and evidence-based practices made available on the ECPGR website	
4.4 Definition of Most Appropriate Areas (MAPAs) sites of on-farm cultivated plant diversity discussed and implemented	4.4.1 Through dedicated meetings of interested country representatives, promoting agreement on criteria for definition of MAPAs containing unique landrace populations	4.4.1 On-farm Conservation and Management WG; Secretariat	4.4.1.1 Agreement on the Terms of Reference for the creation of a Network of MAPAs	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
	4.4.2 Identification of MAPA sites for recognition at National /European level	4.4.2 On-farm Conservation and Management WG with appropriate national stakeholders and authorities	4.4.2.1 List of proposed MAPA sites 4.4.2.2 List of recognized MAPA sites at National/European level	
	4.4.3 Promoting planning and implementation of conservation/ management activities within MAPAs	4.4.3 On-farm Conservation and Management WG with appropriate national stakeholders	4.4.3.1 Number of drafted/approved MAPA management plans	Steering Committee agrees to consolidate ECPGR position on specific issues of ownership, access, availability, marketing, etc.
4.5 Obstacles to on-farm conservation and management analysed and solutions proposed	4.5.1 Establishing task forces of appropriate experts to study, analyse and propose solutions to issues of regional interest	4.5.1 On-farm Conservation and Management WG; Secretariat	4.5.1.1 Number of issues analysed 4.5.1.2 Number of solutions to issues proposed/implemented 4.5.1.3 Number of Task Force recommendations endorsed by the Steering Committee	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
	4.5.2 Exercise lobbying at the appropriate level to encourage implementation of the proposed solutions	4.5.2 Steering Committee; National Coordinators; On-farm Conservation and Management WG; Secretariat		

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OBJECTIVE 5 **To promote use of PGRFA**

Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
5.1 European Evaluation Network for PGRFA developed	5.1.1 Survey of existing national evaluation programmes (research partnerships between genebanks, researchers, breeders; e.g. public private partnerships)	5.1.1 ECPGR Secretariat and genebanks, researchers, breeders	5.1.1.1 Number of existing national evaluation programmes	
	5.1.2 Development of a concept for an European Evaluation Programme	5.1.2 ECPGR Secretariat and genebanks, researchers, breeders supported by National Coordinators	5.1.2.1 European Evaluation Programme for PGRFA agreed	
	5.1.3 Generation of evaluation data throughout the European region	5.1.3 Researchers and breeders	5.1.3.1 Number of crops and accessions evaluated	
	5.1.4 Inclusion of evaluation data generated by the European Evaluation Programme in EURISCO	5.1.4 Partners of the Evaluation Programme and EURISCO coordinator, National Focal Points	5.1.4.1 Data sets available in EURISCO (see also objective 2)	

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Outputs	Activities	Responsibility	Indicators	Assumptions
5.2 Facilitated use and consumption of crop species and varieties or landraces by consumers	5.2.1 Survey about new consumer trends and their demands regarding crop species and varieties including consumer behaviour and potential links to promote PGRFA diversity by consumption of species- or variety-based products as well as the analysis of the interests of the food industry in this matter	5.2.1 ECPGR Secretariat, WG members, researchers, food industry	5.2.1.1 Survey report available	Consideration of similar surveys available may influence this activity
	5.2.2 Support for the development and promotion of innovative value chains for PGRFA	5.2.2 ECPGR Secretariat, WG members, researchers, food industry	5.2.2.1 New value chains for PGRFA established	
5.3 Working Groups' structure and composition provide the entire range of expertise required for efficient (*ex/in situ*) conservation and promotion of the use/consumption of all crops	5.3.1 Review of WG structure and composition	5.3.1 ECPGR Secretariat, National Coordinators	5.3.1.1 Report of the review available 5.3.1.2 Working Group structure provides a platform for all relevant crops (e.g. maize and small fruits/berries)	

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Annex 6. Budget ECPGR Phase X (in Euros)

Activity	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Staff costs						
Secretary at Bioversity (100%)	121,336	124,976	128,725	132,587	136,563	644,187
Secretarial administrative support (100%)	59,300	61,079	62,911	64,799	66,743	314,832
Sub-total	**180,636**	**186,055**	**191,636**	**197,386**	**203,307**	**959,020**
Overhead 15.84%	28,613	29,471	30,355	31,266	32,204	151,909
Staff Total	**209,249**	**215,526**	**221,991**	**228,652**	**235,511**	**1,110,929**
Steering Committee, ExCo and staff travel						
Staff travel	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000
Steering Committee meetings (2)	0	0	38,000	0	38,000	76,000
ExCo meetings (3)	3,500	3,500	0	3,500	0	10,500
ExCo Chair's travel for lobbying with EU and others	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
ExCo Chair compensation	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	75,000
Sub-total	**24,500**	**24,500**	**59,000**	**24,500**	**59,000**	**191,500**
Overheads 15.84%	3,881	3,881	9,346	3,881	9,346	30,334
SC and travel Total	**28,381**	**28,381**	**68,346**	**28,381**	**68,346**	**221,834**
WG activities						
WG Chair's meeting	0	15,750	0	15,750	0	31,500
WG activities - meetings	37,720	37,720	37,720	37,720	37,720	188,599
WG activities - other actions	37,720	37,720	37,720	37,720	37,720	188,599
Training workshops EURISCO	11,250	0	11,250	0	11,250	33,750
WG operations - scientific assistance (50%)	44,864	46,210	47,597	49,024	50,495	238,190
Sub-total	**131,554**	**137,400**	**134,287**	**140,214**	**137,185**	**680,638**
Overhead 15.84%	20,838	21,764	21,271	22,210	21,730	107,813
WG activities Total	**152,392**	**159,164**	**155,558**	**162,423**	**158,915**	**788,451**
EURISCO at IPK						
Personnel	89,500	92,000	95,000	98,000	101,000	475,500
Consumables	550	550	550	550	550	2,750
Travel Coordinator	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	11,250
Total EURISCO	**92,300**	**94,800**	**97,800**	**100,800**	**103,800**	**489,500**
Other costs						
Facilities, IT services, communications and office consumables	14,620	15,016	15,492	15,967	16,442	**77,537**
TOTAL	**496,942**	**512,887**	**559,186**	**536,223**	**583,012**	**2,688,250** *

* Carry-over from Phase IX will be added to the budget table after closure of the financial year 2018. The carry-over will be added, in equal amounts, to the budget lines "WG activities - meetings" and "WG activities - other actions".

Annex 7. ECPGR annual contributions during Phase X (2019-2023)

a. List of countries with expected commitment

Country	UN rates (%) [1]	Category [2]	Annual contribution (Phase X) [3] Euros	Difference from Phase IX	% increase	Phase IX fee
Montenegro	0.004	A	3,150	400	15%	2,750
Macedonia (FYR)	0.007	A	3,150	400	15%	2,750
Albania	0.008	A	3,150	400	15%	2,750
Georgia	0.008	A	3,150	400	15%	2,750
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.013	A	3,150	400	15%	2,750
Iceland	0.023	A	3,150	-350	-10%	3,500
Serbia	0.032	B	4,000	500	14%	3,500
Estonia	0.038	B	4,000	500	14%	3,500
Cyprus	0.043	B	4,000	500	14%	3,500
Bulgaria	0.045	B	4,000	500	14%	3,500
Latvia	0.050	B	4,000	500	14%	3,500
Belarus	0.056	B	4,000	500	14%	3,500
Lithuania	0.072	C	7,500	1,000	15%	6,500
Slovenia	0.084	C	7,500	1,000	15%	6,500
Croatia	0.099	C	7,500	1,000	15%	6,500
Slovakia	0.160	D	8,600	1,100	15%	7,500
Hungary	0.161	D	8,600	-2,400	-22%	11,000
Romania	0.184	D	8,600	1,100	15%	7,500
Ireland	0.335	E	12,650	650	5%	12,000
Czech Republic	0.344	E	12,650	1,650	15%	11,000
Portugal	0.392	E	12,650	650	5%	12,000
Finland	0.456	F	13,800	1,800	15%	12,000
Greece	0.471	F	13,800	1,800	15%	12,000
Denmark	0.584	F	13,800	1,800	15%	12,000
Austria	0.720	F	13,800	1,300	10%	12,500
Norway	0.849	G	14,400	1,900	15%	12,500
Belgium	0.885	G	14,400	-4,600	-24%	19,000
Sweden	0.956	G	14,400	-4,600	-24%	19,000
Turkey	1.018	G	14,400	2,400	20%	12,000
Switzerland	1.140	H	21,850	2,850	15%	19,000
Netherlands	1.482	H	21,850	1,850	9%	20,000
Spain	2.443	I	23,000	1,000	5%	22,000
Italy	3.748	J	56,000	4,000	8%	52,000
United Kingdom	4.463	J	56,000	4,000	8%	52,000
France	4.859	K	58,500	6,500	13%	52,000
Germany	6.389	K	58,500	6,500	13%	52,000
		Annual Total:	**537,650**			498,750
		Total 5 years:	**2,688,250**			

b. List of potential participating countries

Country	UN rates (%) [1]	Category [2]	Annual contribution (Phase X) [3] Euros	Difference from Phase IX	% increase	Phase IX fee
Moldova	0.004	A	3,150	400	15%	2,750
Armenia	0.006	A	3,150	400	15%	2,750
Liechtenstein	0.007	A	3,150	400	15%	2,750
Malta	0.016	A	3,150	400	15%	2,750
Azerbaijan	0.060	C	7,500	4,750	173%	2,750
Luxembourg	0.064	C	7,500	1,000	15%	6,500
Ukraine	0.103	C	7,500	1,000	15%	6,500
Israel	0.430	F	13,800	2,800	25%	11,000
Poland	0.841	G	14,400	1,900	15%	12,500
Russian Federation	3.088	J	56,000	36,000	180%	20,000
		Annual Total:	**119,300**			
		Total 5 years:	**596,500**			

[1] UN Scale of Assessments approved for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018, as established by General Assembly Resolution 70/245

[2] Key to calculation of annual contribution to ECPGR

	Category
with x = UN rate %	
x < 0.030	**A**
0.030 ≤ x < 0.060	**B**
0.060 ≤ x < 0.120	**C**
0.120 ≤ x < 0.200	**D**
0.200 ≤ x < 0.400	**E**
0.400 ≤ x < 0.800	**F**
0.800 ≤ x < 1.100	**G**
1.000 ≤ x < 1.500	**H**
1.500 ≤ x < 3.000	**I**
3.000 ≤ x < 4.500	**J**
4.500 ≤ x	**K**

[3] The annual contributions indicated in the above table, upon bilateral agreement, can be partially postponed to another year, as long as the total 5-year contribution equals the sum of 5 annual contributions.

Annex 8. Establishment of the European PGRFA Evaluation Network (EVA)

WHEREAS the world is facing increasing challenges to food security through the loss of diversity and the underutilization of the diversity that exists;

WHEREAS the natural range of growing conditions in Europe calls for and permits more comprehensive evaluation of PGRFA across different environments;

WHEREAS it is of strategic importance for Europe to better utilize Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to facilitate adaptation of European agriculture to climate change and to contribute towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals;

WHEREAS it is important not only to increase the use of genetic diversity in plant breeding, but also to increase the diversity of stakeholders in plant breeding, including private and public sectors, small and medium enterprises and participatory plant breeding actions;

WHEREAS there is an opportunity to build on existing networks for conservation and use of PGRFA and to develop a European PGRFA Evaluation Network which is open for participation by both private and public sectors in order to facilitate the exchange of data on evaluation in a standardized format;

Now therefore, the Steering Committee of the ECPGR hereby establishes the European PGRFA Evaluation Network in the form of Private/ Public Partnerships within the framework of the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR), in accordance with the following provisions.

01 Definitions

For the purposes of this Proposal –

i) "**AEGIS**" means the European Genebank Integrated System;[1]

ii) "**ECPGR**" means the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources;

iii) **"EURISCO"** means the European Search Catalogue for Plant Genetic Resources;[2]

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[1] **AEGIS** entered into force in 2009 within the framework of **ECPGR** in order to improve coordination with respect to the conservation of PGRFA in Europe and to facilitate the exchange of PGRFA and related information among the countries and genebanks of Europe, and is now functioning to conserve genetically unique and important accessions for Europe and to make them available for breeding and research

[2] **EURISCO** is a European cooperative mechanism, which provides information on nearly 2 million accessions of crop plants and their wild relatives, preserved *ex situ* by almost 400 **institutes**, based on a network of National Inventories of **43 member countries: EURISCO** forms part of the Global Information System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture provided for under the **International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture,** and is now being extended to characterization and evaluation data.

iv) "**Evaluation**" means: **–**

- the generation of phenotypic and/or genotypic data and the linkage of such data;
- the usage of such data to develop genetic markers;
- the use of the information generated under the subparagraphs above to enhance the use of PGRFA in breeding and research;

all the above must be at a pre-competitive level.

v) "**EVA**" means the European PGRFA Evaluation Network;

vi) "**Members of EVA**" means the persons or entities committed to active involvement in the evaluation of plant genetic resources in the European region that sign and deposit a **Letter of Commitment** as referred to in point 02 below;

vii) **"PGRFA"** means plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;

viii) **"SMTA"** means the Standard Material Transfer Agreement adopted by the Governing Body of the Treaty;

ix) "**Treaty**" means the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which entered into force on **29 June 2004**;

02 Establishment of the European Evaluation Network

Persons or entities eligible for membership that wish to become members of EVA should sign a Letter of Commitment in the form set out in Annex A below and deposit it with the Secretariat of ECPGR.

03 Goal, Objectives and expected benefits of EVA

a) The goal of **EVA** will be to increase, facilitate and improve the use of genetic diversity present in PGRFA in Europe for crop improvement.

b) **EVA** will seek to achieve its goal through pursuing the following objectives:

1. To promote and support the establishment of crop- or crop group-specific European Private Public Partnerships and other collaborative projects to carry out targeted evaluation of PGRFA;
2. To promote and improve the digitization, harmonization, availability and exchange of existing and newly generated evaluation data of PGRFA using to the extent possible the existing EURISCO infrastructure;
3. To improve the evaluation of PGRFA through coordinated and collaborative efforts, using harmonized methods and standard protocols and the development of best practices, guidelines and tools;
4. To promote cooperation with other relevant EU infrastructures and collaborations related to the scope of the network.

c) In pursuing its objectives, **EVA** expects to achieve the following benefits:

1. Increased access to well-evaluated genetic material and related information from all over Europe;
2. The setting up of a structured network that will allow for the testing of PGRFA across a wide range of agro-environmental areas, using the same standards and methods, thus generating data that are scientifically more meaningful and useful for plant breeding;
3. The centralization of data in a dynamic information system (EURISCO) providing privileged access (data embargo) for members as appropriate;
4. Further strengthening and use of a well-developed and coordinated infrastructure for long-term maintenance of relevant material (AEGIS);
5. The provision of a mechanism for pooling resources for the evaluation of PGRFA in order to better exploit the diversity of growing conditions across the region;
6. The transfer of knowledge and ideas among genebanks, crop and breeding communities.

04 Principles to which Members of EVA should adhere

a) EVA will operate in accordance with the principles of the **Treaty** and should be supportive of the **Treaty**;

b) Members will use the SMTA currently in force for the transfer of PGRFA within the EVA to the maximum extent possible;

c) EVA should make maximum use of AEGIS, including in the identification of relevant crops and accessions to be evaluated, as well as for the conservation of relevant material;

d) EVA members should make maximum use of agreed standards for evaluation and maximum effort for the production of evaluation data in agreed standards;

e) EVA should make maximum use of EURISCO, including in the use of EURISCO standard terminology and supportive collaborative data platform for documenting evaluation observations and acquired data;

f) EVA should make maximum use of the supportive structure of ECPGR, including the ECPGR Crop Working Groups and the ECPGR Documentation and Information Network;

g) EVA Members should abide by the agreed rules regarding the release of evaluation data as set out in any applicable crop-specific PPP project Cooperation Agreement;

h) EVA will in principle be self-funded.

05 Structure of EVA

The structure of EVA will be as set out in Annex B. It will be composed of the following:

a) **Permanent Units**
   a. A Steering Unit of no more than 8 experts appointed by the Steering Committee of ECGPR in consultation with the private sector, which will provide overall policy guidance for EVA;
   b. A Coordination unit provided by the Secretariat of ECPGR;
   c. A data and information management support group appointed by the Steering Unit.

b) **Crop-specific PPP/projects established on an *ad hoc* basis**

   Members of EVA may, as appropriate,

   a. enter into crop-specific cooperation agreements amongst themselves and with the participation of ECPGR, in the type of format set out in Annex C, providing for the detailed obligations and rights of such members, including the genetic resources to be investigated, the evaluation protocol, the way of reporting, the duration of any confidentiality period, and the moment when this period starts;

   b. establish crop-specific Expert Groups within the framework of crop-specific projects, elected by the Members participating in those crop-specific projects.

06 Entry into operation of EVA

   a. EVA will enter into operation on approval by the Steering Committee of **ECPGR**, and will remain in force until terminated by the Steering Committee.

   b. ECPGR will invite interested persons and entities committed to active involvement in evaluation of plant genetic resources in the European Region to become Members of EVA.

   c. ECPGR may invite, and will encourage regional organizations or associations representing seed companies or growers to support the objectives of EVA and/or its work.

ANNEX A

EVA – Letter of Commitment

_____, being a person or entity committed to active involvement in the evaluation of plant genetic resources in the European region, wishes to become a member of the European PGRFA Evaluation Network (EVA), and undertakes to adhere to the Principles set out in Point 04 of the Proposal for the Establishment of the European PGRFA Evaluation Network and to abide by the following commitments:

- Membership of EVA is free of charge: Participation in specific projects may have financial implications, which shall be set out in the applicable cooperation agreement.

Generators of data

- Full data on evaluations undertaken through any EVA crop-specific PPP project should be made available to other members of the EVA crop-specific PPP project. This could be through EURISCO directly or through links provided by EURISCO. The full data should be made available within such period as may be specified in the applicable crop-specific PPP project Cooperation Agreement;
- To abide by all restrictions on the release of evaluation data produced in the context of the crop-specific PPP in which they are involved in accordance with the rules adopted by the corresponding crop-specific PPP project Cooperation Agreement;
- To actively participate in the work of any crop-specific PPP activity charged with setting standards for the crop(s) covered by the crop-specific PPP in which they are involved and to abide by applicable agreed standards;
- To strive to enter into agreement with providers of genetic material for multiplication of given accessions under standard procedures and return of multiplied material to the providers.

Providers of material

- To provide partners in crop-specific PPP projects with the propagating material of genetic resources that are jointly selected for evaluation, in appropriate quantities and of suitable quality, within agreed deadlines and based on signature of an SMTA by recipients, if possible.

In return, the Member has the right to expect the following benefits from its membership in EVA:

- The right to participate in crop-specific PPP evaluation Projects under the EVA structure;

- Access to data standards and regeneration protocols generated under EVA and appropriate support in using them;
- Privileged access to data generated for such time as set in the applicable crop-specific PPP project Cooperation Agreement;
- Multiplication/regeneration carried out by breeders of accessions provided by genebanks / collection holders and the multiplied/regenerated material **subsequently** returned to the genebank/collection holder at no cost to the genebank/collection holder.

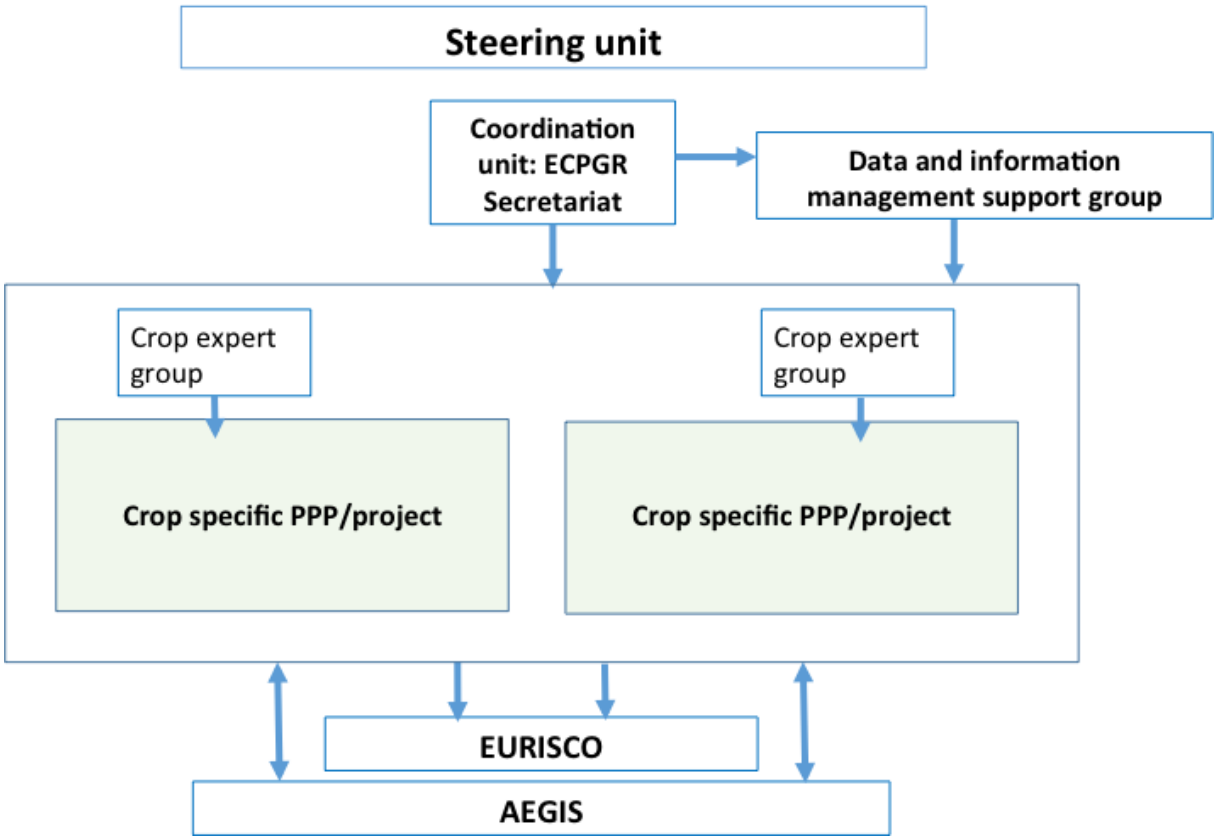
Withdrawal or termination of EVA Membership

- An EVA Member may withdraw its membership at any time by giving 3 months' notice of withdrawal in writing to the Secretariat of ECPGR. Any such withdrawal shall not affect any rights or obligations entered into under a Cooperation Agreement currently in force.
- The Steering Unit of EVA may terminate the membership of any EVA Member in the event that a Member fails to abide by the conditions set out in this Letter of Commitment. Termination of membership shall not affect any obligations entered into under a Cooperation Agreement currently in force.

Signed _____ Date

ANNEX B

EVA Structure



ANNEX C

Format of a Cooperation Agreement

(Example that can be adapted to specific cases)

This Cooperation Agreement is entered into by the Steering Unit of the European Evaluation Network (EVA) acting through the ECPGR Secretariat and the following Members of EVA _____ (**the Evaluation Partners**).

1. The Evaluation Partners agree to collectively evaluate ____ accessions of _____ for _____ (e.g. resistance) to _____ with the option to extend the evaluations to ___ additional isolates at a later stage. The total selection of ____ accessions is attached as Appendix 1 to this Agreement.

2. The Evaluation Protocol to be used is attached as Appendix 2 to this Agreement.

3. Accessions to be evaluated will be distributed by _____.

4. Each Evaluation Partner shall test ____ accessions ___ for _____ (e.g. resistance) before the following date ____.

5. Each Evaluation Partner shall send the data generated by the evaluation undertaken by it to ____ by _____20**.

6. _____ shall then compile the data provided for a joint analysis by the Evaluation Partners. An overview of all evaluation data (the Results) will be prepared and sent by _____ to all Evaluation Partners.

7. All Evaluation partners may use the Results freely for research and development provided that the provisions set out in this Agreement are complied with.

8. The embargo period for the Results obtained under the contract shall be ____ years starting from the date on which the Results are distributed by _____ among the evaluation Partners, after which the Results shall be made publicly available.

9. Both during the project and the embargo period, each Evaluation Partner shall treat the Results as confidential. Each Evaluation Partner shall hold the Results in strictest confidence and shall not disclose or allow the disclosure of the Results to any third party, or make the Results, or any part thereof, available to a third party, unless publication of the results is accepted by all partners.

10. The confidentiality obligation shall not be applicable to the Results, or any part thereof:

    a. Which were already in the public domain prior to the entry into force of this Agreement, or
    b. Which have become part of the public domain otherwise than through any unlawful act or omission of the party wishing to disclose the results, or
    c. Which were disclosed by a third party that was entitled to disclose the results, or

d. Which are required to be disclosed by law or by order of a competent court of law, provided that the Evaluation Partner first provides the other Evaluation Partners with notice of such requirements and of its intent to disclose the Results, or

e. Which an Evaluation Partner needs to disclose as part of a patent application.

11. Each Evaluation Partner is entitled to give its employees and the employees of its affiliated companies access to the Results, in so far as necessary for them to fulfill their tasks. Each Evaluation Partner shall ensure that its employees and the employees of Affiliated Companies shall use the Results, and hold the Results, in strict confidence, in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement.

12. A company shall be considered an Affiliated Company if that company controls, is under control of, or is under the same control as an Evaluation Partner under this Agreement. In this context, control means –

    a. the direct or indirect ownership of more than 50% of the capital stock of a company;
    b. the power to exercise more than 50% of the voting rights in a company, and/or
    c. the power to determine the policy of a company in a decisive way.

13. _____ will distribute the accessions to be evaluated under the terms of the SMTA of the Multilateral System of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

14. This copy of this Agreement, together with the copies of this Agreement signed by other Evaluation Partners, shall constitute a single Agreement.

Signed by

_____	_____
Steering Unit of EVA Acting through ECPGR Secretariat, Bioversity International	Evaluation Partner
Date	Date

Appendix 1

Selection of ____ accessions

(List Accession number, taxon name, holding institution)

Appendix 2

Evaluation Protocol

(Example that can be adapted to specific cases)

Test Protocol

1. **Maintenance:**

2. **Host differentials:**

3. **Sample size:**

4. **Temperature:**

5. **Inoculum concentration:**

6. **Illumination:**

7. **Recording:**

Scoring Protocol

1. **Abiotic stress susceptibility**

Scored under artificial and/or natural conditions, this should be clearly specified. These are coded on a susceptibility scale from 1 to 9, viz.:

1 – Very low or no visible sign of stress susceptibility
3 – Low
5 – Intermediate
7 – High
9 – Very high

2. **Biotic stress susceptibility**

In each case, it is important to state the life cycle tested, i.e. seedling, excised leaf, mature plant, seed-bearing plant, storage organ. These are coded on a susceptibility scale from 1 to 9, viz.:

1 -– Very low or no visible sign of susceptibility
3 – Low
5 – Intermediate
7 – High
9 – Very high

Annex 9. Memorandum of Understanding for an enhanced cooperation between ECPGR and ESA

Memorandum of Understanding for an enhanced cooperation between

ECPGR,

the **European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources** which is a collaborative programme among most European countries aimed at ensuring the long-term conservation and facilitating the increased utilization of plant genetic resources in Europe;

and

ESA,

the **European Seed Association** which is a non-profit International Association, registered according to Belgian law; representing the interests of the European seed industry and in particular those active in research, breeding, production and marketing of seeds of agricultural, horticultural and ornamental plant species.

WHEREAS ECPGR and ESA wish to collaborate more closely and to find more ways to make mutually beneficial use of their networks, thereby supporting the objectives and the work of the European Evaluation Network (EVA) established by the ECPGR Steering Committee; whereas the overall aim of collaboration is to facilitate further evaluation projects of PGR through synergies and harmonized approaches at the European level;

ECPGR and ESA, hereinafter referred to as "the Parties" agree as follows:

1. **Enhanced Cooperation**

The Parties hereby decide to strengthen their working relations and to collaborate in the future in a more enhanced manner, in particular, within the framework of the EVA.

All members of ECPGR and ESA should be given the possibility to engage in any activities carried out within the framework of the present enhanced cooperation.

2. **Goals, objectives and possible benefits of the enhanced cooperation**

The main goals of the enhanced cooperation will be to work more closely together, in particular in the EVA, and within that framework to (i) incentivize evaluation partnerships; (ii) and to create synergies and harmonized approaches at the European level with the aim of improving efficiency of evaluation efforts in Europe.

The Parties will seek to achieve these goals through:

- promoting the EVA through a dedicated webpage as well as through other communication channels;
- exchanging information about possible crop or crop group specific partnerships and projects aimed at targeted evaluation of PGRFA;
- facilitating for their members to connect with each other with the aim of collaborating in PGRFA evaluation partnerships, including within the ECPGR working groups;
- promoting collaborative efforts for the evaluation of PGRFA among their members.

Through the enhanced cooperation, the Parties will seek to achieve the following benefits:

- Better and more efficient collaboration and work on evaluation of PGRFA all over Europe;
- Increased knowledge on PGRFA available in genebanks;
- Increased access to genetic material and related information from all over Europe;
- The provision of a mechanism for pooling resources for the evaluation of PGRFA;
- The transfer of knowledge and ideas among genebank, crop and breeding communities.

3. **Principles of cooperation**

The Parties agree to cooperate under the principles of the EVA as outlined under section 04 of the ECPGR Steering Committee decision establishing the EVA.[1]

The Parties agree that the present enhanced cooperation does not involve any obligation for a financial engagement from either of the Parties.

The Parties also agree that the present enhanced cooperation does not entail any obligation for either of the Parties to develop any concrete projects, but agree to continue discussions regarding possible forms of cooperation.

[1] The ECPGR Steering Committee decision is annexed to the present Memorandum of Understanding.

4. Governance

Any matter related to the present enhanced cooperation and its implementation should be addressed jointly by the Secretariats of ECPGR and ESA.

5. Entry into force of this Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding will enter into force on the day of its signature by ECPGR and ESA, and will remain in force until terminated in accordance with the procedure set out in point 6 below.

6. **Amendment, Withdrawal from and Termination of this Memorandum of Understanding**

This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended by mutual consent of the Parties.

Either Party may withdraw from this Memorandum of Understanding on twelve months written notice to the other Party. Withdrawal by any of the Parties entails termination of any and all commitments agreed to in this Memorandum of Understanding. Withdrawal from this Memorandum of Understanding will however not affect projects already established under the umbrella of the Platform.

Eva Thörn	Garlich von Essen
Chair of the ECPGR Executive Committee	Secretary General
ECPGR	European Seed Association
Signature and Date	Signature and Date