



# Record keeping, reporting and monitoring of the European Collection

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J. Engels and L. Maggioni  
ECPGR Secretariat, Bioversity International, Maccaresse, Rome

## Introduction

The AEGIS Quality System (AQUAS) is composed of different elements, including the setting of generic and crop-specific technical standards for routine genebank operations, the production of operational Genebank Manuals by individual Associate Member genebanks, and the agreement on some specific aspects such as the safety duplication of conserved accessions and their distribution.

This document establishes an additional component of AQUAS, composed of three elements:

1. a record-keeping system of verifiable facts of European Collection management by the Associate Members;
2. a reporting system on the European Collection management; and
3. a monitoring system on the application of standards by Associate Members, including the provision of feedback to National Coordinators.

Whereas Article 9 d) iii) of the AEGIS Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Article 1.b.vii) of the AEGIS Membership Agreement establish that AEGIS Associate Members accept the responsibility to ensure the maintenance of European Collection Accessions (=AEGIS Accessions) according to approved standards, the ECPGR Steering Committee approves the following elements as part of the AEGIS Quality System.

## 1. Record-keeping system of verifiable facts of European Collection management

The [Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture](#), endorsed by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in April 2013 and subsequently adopted by the ECPGR Working Groups (WGs) as AEGIS standards, include **standard 4.7.2 for documentation** that provides clear guidance for keeping records by individual Associate Members on germplasm management activities:

*“All data and information generated in the genebank relating to all aspects of conservation and use of the material should be recorded in a suitably designed database.”*

Based on this provision, the following terms apply to each AEGIS Associate Member institute holding one or more accessions of the European Collection:

- a. **To compile the Genebank Operational Manual<sup>1</sup> in English and send it** to the ECPGR Secretariat for review and uploading on the AEGIS website.
- b. **To update** the Genebank Operational Manual **where necessary** in order to harmonize its provisions with the agreed general and crop-specific standards;
- c. **To send** to the ECPGR Secretariat **updates** of the Genebank Operational Manual, no later than one year after the manual has been modified.
- d. **To keep records** of routine operations in the institutional genebank information management system in accordance with the operational Genebank Manual. The necessary level of detail is that of the accession level (i.e. which accession has been tested for germination, regenerated, etc., and any deviation from the genebank protocol for that activity according to its operational Genebank Manual).
- e. **To provide open access** to routine operation data, not necessarily in English, excluding confidential data and only in cases where such access would be required for monitoring purposes.
- f. **To communicate** to the Secretariat the name of the person who has been assigned the responsibility of Focal Point of the Associate Member Institute.

## 2. Reporting system

The regular reporting from the Associate Member genebanks to the ECPGR Secretariat is intended to inform the AEGIS community of progress made with the management of the accessions that have been included by the respective country into AEGIS. This reporting is meant to be as 'light' as possible and with minimum additional work for the Associate Members. The basis for the reporting is provided by the Activity Plans (see template below) in which each Associate Member provides information on the European Collection status according to the procedure indicated below. Such a Plan will allow the genebank to critically evaluate the various aspects of institutional collection management that will contribute to an efficient management of the European Collection, to set priorities for institutional collection management, and to make sure that all the required inputs for effective management are available. It will also allow the respective WGs to discuss the planned activities, to possibly suggest alternative arrangements and thus to contribute to a more streamlined and coordinated management of (the different parts of) the European Collection.

Within two months after receipt of a prompting message from the Secretariat, each Associate Member will prepare an **Activity Plan**, according to a template provided by the Secretariat, including the following details:

- a. Number of AEGIS accessions maintained in the genebank;
- b. Number of AEGIS accessions requiring safety duplication (to be specified per crop) and a timelined workplan for its implementation;

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<sup>1</sup> Template available online ([here](#))

- c. Number of AEGIS accessions requiring multiplication/regeneration/ rejuvenation (to be specified per crop) and a timelined workplan for its implementation;
- d. Brief description of any situation where the currently used genebank operations are deviating from the agreed AQUAS standards for a given crop, with justification and a suggested timelined workplan for adjustments of the above deviations, where feasible and appropriate.

Based on all the received Activity Plans, the Secretariat will elaborate crop-wise aggregated Action Plans, share these with the respective WG Chairs and place them on the AEGIS website.

### **3. Monitoring system**

The full responsibility for meeting FAO Genebank Standards and the Genebank Operational Manual requirements rests with the Associate Member, in consultation with the National Coordinator. WGs, Secretariat and Steering Committee may advise the Associate Member, through the National Coordinator, which corrective measures might be taken.

As a general principle, the Secretariat will assume the role of a focal point and will contribute to the monitoring activities and the implementation of any agreed corrective measures or other activities to improve the management of the European Collection. Such monitoring will allow the identification of the need for capacity-building of individual Associate Member genebanks, to streamline and coordinate operations across genebanks for a given crop (under the technical supervision and assistance of the WGs) and to demonstrate to the ECPGR membership how AQUAS is being implemented and performance standards are being met. Monitoring is intended to stimulate and facilitate capacity-building through collaboration, to provide the basis for more efficient operations across genebanks, to identify opportunities for sharing of services and responsibilities, and thus to move the overall efficiency of the management of the European Collection to a higher quality level. It is foreseen that the Secretariat plays a catalytic and active facilitating role in monitoring activities in order to avoid unnecessary workload to Associate Members, Working Groups and other parties (e.g. National Coordinators/ExCo).

The monitoring system will consist of the following elements:

- a. Associate Members will monitor their own compliance and the Secretariat will monitor compliance of the Associate Members, using the AEGIS record-keeping and reporting systems elaborated above. Either Associate Members or the Secretariat may alert the respective National Coordinator in case of non-compliance with the agreed elements of AQUAS (i.e. the general and crop-specific standards; preparation and updating of the operational genebank manual, safety-duplication policy, distribution guidelines, record-keeping and reporting).
- b. The Secretariat will share crop-wise aggregated Action Plans with the respective WG Chair for technical assessment by the WG with the purpose to guarantee maximum compliance with the Genebank Operational Manual concerned. Major topics to be addressed by the WG with regard to the assessment of the Action Plans include in particular: (i) the implementation of agreed general and crop-specific standards; (ii) the quality of the respective operational Genebank Manuals and (iii) the reported

constraints and problems in institutional collection management regarding the AEGIS accessions. The WG Chair is expected to suggest to the relevant Associated Member, with a copy to the respective National Coordinator and in consultation with the Secretariat, possible measures for improvement, capacity-building activities and/or collaborations among identified Associate Members.

- c. In case of serious indication of lack of compliance with the AQUAS elements by any Associate Member, the respective National Coordinator should take action to resolve the lack of compliance and inform the Secretariat of any action taken by the National Coordinator and the Associate Member to encourage compliance and/or seek capacity-building support from ECPGR.
- d. As part of its Annual Report to the Steering Committee, the Secretariat will include an account of its monitoring activity and of all outstanding or resolved issues.
- e. The Steering Committee is expected to evaluate the effectiveness of the provisions described in this document by the end of Phase IX.