

REPORT OF THE EVALUATION MISSION

FAO/UNDP EUROPEAN COOPERATIVE
PROGRAMME ON CONSERVATION AND
EXCHANGE OF CROP GENETIC RESOURCES

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, and do not commit the Governments, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, or the United Nations Development Programme

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ACRONYMS

CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMEA	Committee of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
DANIDA	Danish International Development Authority
EC	European Communities
ECP/GR	FAO/UNDP European Cooperative Programme for Conservation and Exchange of Crop Genetic Resources
EPPO	European Plant Protection Organization
EUCARPIA	European Association for Research on Plant Breeding
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IBPGR	International Board for Plant Genetic Resources
ISTA	International Seed Testing Association
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
NIAVT	National Institute for Agricultural Variety Testing (Hungary)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPOV	International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The project under review became operational in 1980, but the beginning of action in Europe to save crop genetic resources started about a decade and a half earlier.

In 1966 the European Association for Research and Plant Breeding (EUCARPIA) formulated the concept of gene banks for the major agro-ecological zones of Europe. This concern for the conservation of plant genetic resources was given a global perspective at the United Nations Environment Conference held in Stockholm in 1982, strongly supported by FAO and the International Biological Programme.

The next event of major significance was the establishment in 1974 of the International Board for Plant Genetic Resources (IBPGR) by the Consultative Group in International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). The basic function of the Board is to promote an international network of plant resources activities to further the collection, conservation, documentation, evaluation and utilization of plant germplasm and thereby contribute to raising the standards of living and welfare of people throughout the world.

Since the IBPGR was established, some European gene banks have accepted sub-regional responsibilities within the IBPGR's network of activities. The Istituto del Germoplasma, Bari, Italy, is the leading centre for a Mediterranean Programme, and the Institut für Pflanzenbau und Pflanzenzüchtung, Braunschweig, FRG, at which the German-Netherlands Potato Genebank is located, is designated by the IBPGR as a centre for base collections of oil seed and green manure crucifers.

In 1979, a gene bank for the five Nordic Countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) was established at Lund, Sweden. Also in 1979 the then nine countries of the European Community (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany (Federal Republic), Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, United Kingdom) started a programme for the better use of plant genetic resources, especially in

resistance breeding. In Eastern Europe, the Socialist countries cooperate on plant genetic resources activities through a Committee of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).

Plant genetic resources was seen by UNDP as a suitable topic for a European Cooperative Programme, a concept introduced by UNDP's European Office following the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Helsinki, 1975. The aim of these programmes is to encourage cooperation between European countries that do and do not receive UNDP assistance, particularly in activities that offer the likelihood of a spin-off to benefit developing countries.

The European Cooperative Programme for the Conservation and Exchange of Crop Genetic Resources (ECP/GR) was defined during a series of meetings from 1977-1979 between UNDP, FAO and the EUCARPIA Gene Bank Committee that culminated in a Governments Consultation in Rome in May, 1979, at which a Background Paper was considered. Various matters were thought to require further consideration and a UNDP/FAO mission was appointed to do this in consultation with European Governments and appropriate organizations.

As requested, this mission prepared the outlines of an ECP/GR including a Project Document. These documents were submitted to a Government Consultation held in Geneva in December 1979 and the recommendations were accepted unanimously.

An Executive Secretary for the ECP/GR was appointed in March 1980, and the project became operational on 1 October 1980, by which date eight countries had signed the Project Document, of which more than half were IFP countries.

1.2 Scope of the Project

The following twenty countries signed the Project Document: ^{have} Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, German Democratic Republic, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia.

The Gene Bank Committee of EUCARPIA acts as the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Governing Board with the addition of the Chairman of the Governing Board and the Executive Secretary as ex officio members.

Half of the countries have appointed a National Coordinator who is responsible for the coordination within his country of activities relevant to the ECP/GR.

The ECP/GR is intended to develop in three phases - preparation, consolidation and operation.

This review is concerned with Phase I: Preparation. It started on 1 October 1980 and is due to end on 31 December 1982.

1.3 Evaluation Mission

Arrangements for the evaluation of Phase I were agreed at the Second Governing Board Meeting held in Geneva 14 to 17 December 1981. Mr. Vlassios D. Krentos was elected to represent participating Governments and subsequently Mr. J.P. Huyser and Mr. K.S. Dodds were nominated by UNDP and FAO, respectively. Mr. J.P. Huyser was the leader of the Evaluation Mission, for which the Terms of Reference are given in Appendix 1.

The Governing Board also agreed that the Evaluation Mission should visit the following countries to get an impression of the progress and achievements during Phase I of the Programme, and to obtain views regarding its future:- Hungary, Greece, Poland and Portugal with, in addition, visits to Nordic Genebank, Lund, Sweden; EC Programme, Brussels, Belgium, and the Germplasm Institute, Bari, Italy, (IBPGR Mediterranean Programme). In the event, a visit to Bulgaria was substituted for that to Poland.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the very open way in which the Mission was received in each country, and the helpful information that was given so readily. The Mission also expresses its appreciation of the arrangements made by FAO, enabling it to visit many countries and institutes in a short time. All this greatly facilitated its task.

The Mission assembled at FAO Headquarters in Rome on Monday, 15 March for briefing. Country visits as reported in Appendix 2 were made between March 16 and March 27. From March 28 to April 2 the Mission was at UNDP Geneva for report writing.

2. ASSESSMENT OF OBJECTIVES

2.1 Development Objectives

Crop genetic resources are indispensable as a source of genetic diversity to be used for the improvement of crop plants by plant breeders and other plant scientists.

The conservation and the use of these resources is going on with different degrees of intensity and efficiency in all the countries participating in the ECP/GR, and in addition many of them are also members of sub-regional groups concerned with plant genetic resources.

That the concept of a programme to encourage cooperation between nations in the pursuit of these activities in order to raise the level of attainment is justifiable cannot be questioned. Undoubtedly, the programme has extremely worthwhile long term developmental objectives.

According to the Project Document:

"The development objectives of the European Cooperative Programme for the Conservation and Exchange of Genetic Resources for Plant Breeding (ECP/GR) are to contribute to the future development of agriculture in the participating countries by the more effective use of plant genetic resources, which are well conserved and accessible, and to further the activities of national and sub-regional institutions for plant genetic resources in Europe, by supplementing and strengthening the cooperation between such institutions through the establishment of inter-governmental links".

The mission is of the view, based on its discussions in the countries, that the establishment of inter-governmental links, if left unqualified, may well militate against a further sound development of the European Programme. In the future, inter-governmental structure should be kept as light and flexible as possible in order a) to reduce the cost of the programme, and b) to facilitate direct contacts between workers engaged in genetic resources activities.

2.2 Immediate Objectives

The Mission considers that the immediate objectives of the ECP/GR should also be re-defined so as to reflect the work programme of Phase II.

The Mission has not attempted to write a new set of immediate objectives because it believes that this can only be done with reasonable precision when the financial situation in Phase II is clear and a work programme has been agreed.

For example, if the decision is taken to use "Crop Working Groups" as a basis for activities, knowing the amount of funds available, it will then be possible to determine the size and number of working groups that can be properly supported depending upon the crops that are given priority.

In drawing up the immediate objectives, care should be taken to avoid generalities and to impute to the ECO/GR capabilities that it cannot possess.

The ECP/GR cannot "create the means for full and free exchange of available plant genetic material". It can do no more than encourage the exchange of plant genetic resources.

Plant genetic resources in any gene bank will not be freely available to all if the curator is not willing to distribute them. "To make (them) available" is beyond the capacity of the ECP/GR.

These points are made as a reminder that the progress of the ECP/GR depends entirely upon the willingness of participating nations to cooperate. The ECP/GR can only encourage cooperation.

3. ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Administrative and Technical Support

The ECP/GR was provided with very few material inputs to be delivered in the Phase I. The most recent Budget Revision dated July 1981 is attached as Appendix 3 for easy reference.

Apart from some minor items of equipment, all inputs were of one type - the costs of visits for trainees. Slightly less than half of the funds available for this purpose were used. Apparently, this was due to a lack of applicants. That five of the seven applicants will not undertake their tours until later in 1982, although they were planned in 1981, is a measure of the time taken to complete formalities.

Direct government support and participating in ECP/GR must be regarded as satisfactory for the simple reason that many national programmes on crop genetic resources with government support were functional before the ECP/GR was initiated. The purpose of the ECP/GR is to encourage cooperation between these and established programmes.

In many of the participating countries, the gene banks are closely associated with plant breeding programmes. In those that are not, every effort should be made during Phase II to change the situation. Plant breeders should be actively engaged in the evaluation of the plant collections. Collections that are not used have little, if any, value.

The Executive Secretary of the ECP/GR has had good administrative support and valuable direct and indirect technical backing from FAO, the former from the Agricultural Operations Division of FAO and the latter from the Office of the Crop Genetic Resources Centre which includes the IBPGR Executive Secretariat.

Indirect support has come through IBPGR grants to twelve or more European countries towards collecting expeditions, special studies, research projects and training to further the IBPGR global activities. National programmes have been strengthened as a result and this has, of course, facilitated national participation in the ECP/GR and cooperation between countries (Appendix 4).

3.2 Accomplishments

In assessing what has been done in Phase I, it should be borne in mind that the ECP/GR is not a typical UNDP/FAO project with a manager, experts, counterparts and a budget to be used in a drive towards well-defined practical goals. The project is an attempt to lead up to a long lasting programme of cooperation in a specialized field between all European countries. Furthermore, in the ECP/GR goals are defined to a considerable extent at a national level and progress is likewise determined at the national level, independent of external influences.

The ECP/GR has been operational for seventeen months only. This is a very short time in which to develop cooperation between the many nations of Europe in plans for joint activities on crop genetic resources; particularly in view of differences between climates and crops of the sub-regions - Nordic Group, EC Programme, COMECON countries and the IBPGR Mediterranean Programme. In view of this the Mission did not attempt to assess progress against expenditures.

It is not possible to quantify the goodwill that has developed during Phase I, but it is a reality. All the participants that were met by the Mission during its series of visits acknowledge the value of the international approach fostered by the Executive Secretary during his visits to participating countries. The two Annual Governing Board meetings have also contributed significantly to this goodwill. They were both organized very effectively and were appreciated not only for the discussion of plans for cooperative work but also for the exchange of views at a personal level.

Moreover, the Executive Secretary is to be congratulated on the very successful efforts that he made to get the Project Document signed. So much so that six months after his appointment eight countries had signed it; the ECP/GR became operational and by January 1982 twenty countries were participants. In addition, the Executive Secretary is able to report that the following countries have expressed their interest in the Programme: Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Hidden benefits that have accrued from the ECP/GR are illustrated by the experience at Tapioszele Institute, Hungary. The Director acknowledges that the Institute's programme on plant genetic resources has been accelerated as a direct response to membership of the ECP/GR to meet the challenge of technical standards that had to be reached.

The Mission notes that the Executive Secretary, following a decision in the Second Governing Board Meeting, has convened twelve Crop Working Groups, of which six have met. Although this represents considerable initiative on his part, the Mission feels bound to express the fear that the ECP/GR may not have either the manpower or budgetary resources to nurture so many Groups effectively. This subject is discussed below in the section of work plans for Phase II.

The Mission notes that a member of the staff of the Plant Breeding and Acclimatization Institute, Radzikow, Poland, started six months of training on data management last October at the Institut für Pflanzenbau und Pflanzenzüchtung FAL, Braunschweig-Völkenrode, Federal Republic of Germany.

Another staff member of this Institute is attending a short course in Plant Genetic Resources at the University of Birmingham, England from January to March 1982.

Three short study tours are planned for 1982 under which three staff members from Tapioszele, Hungary, will each visit a gene bank. Those to be visited are the Gemplasm Institute, Bari, Italy; Nordic Genebank, Lund, Sweden; and the Vegetable Research Station, Wellesbourne, United Kingdom.

Another staff member will spend nine months at the Gemplasm Institute, Bari, working on the cytotaxonomy of crop plants.

Finally, the Mission wishes to record its awareness of the very appreciative reception that has been given to the "Directory of European Gene Banks" prepared by the Executive Secretary. It is generally recognized as an extremely useful publication, and in some instances has facilitated exchange of seeds between participants.

3.3 Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee

At the First Meeting of the Governing Board of the ECP/GR, 15-18 December 1980, it was decided that the Scientific Advisory Committee should be the EUCARPIA Gene Bank Committee with the addition of three Board Members who were then nominated; in all a Committee of thirteen members.

At the Second Meeting of the Governing Board, 14-17 December 1981, attention was drawn to the functions of the Scientific Advisory Committee as defined in the "Report of the FAO/UNDP/Governments Consultation on the European Cooperative Programme for the Conservation and Exchange of Genetic Resources for Plant Breeding", held in Geneva 17-19 December 1979. The view was expressed that "not all of them had been pursued. An important task is the consideration of crop working groups with lead institutes to encourage cooperation and avoid duplication of effort by the ECP/GR and other programmes such as the IBP/GR sub-regional efforts".

At this same Board Meeting (pp. 11 and 12):

- "70 Mr. Hawkes, SAC Chairman, said that experience since then suggested that some of the terms of reference should be revised in order to make them more practical.
- "72 Following lengthy discussion, the decision was taken "that the Chairman of SAC and the Executive Secretary should redraft the terms of reference and list operational procedures suitable for the programme".

The revised terms of reference for SAC are reproduced in Appendix 5 as being pertinent to the recommendations made by the Mission as regards the Scientific Advisory Committee (4.4).

During Phase I there have been two meetings of SAC, the first in Gatersleben, Democratic Republic of Germany, in July 1980, and the second in Lund, Sweden, 13-14 July 1981 jointly with the EUCARPIA extended Genebank Committee at which there were 27 participants.

At both meetings brief reports on activities at their respective gene banks were given by directors from nine countries. Various aspects of genetic resources activities were discussed at the first meeting, especially on documentation matters, and recommendations were made at the second meeting about crop working groups, the chief one being that Vitis be included in the first list of crops.

4. THE NEW PROGRAMME

4.1 Crop Working Groups

The Mission accepts the rationale that led to the establishment of the ECP/GR. Indeed, all the individuals with whom discussions were held spoke of the need for close cooperation in crop genetic resources activities.

The Mission is of the opinion, however, that a different organizational framework from the present one could be designed to make better use of the limited funds that are available to promote international collaboration.

In fact, the Mission questions the very concept of a project "administered by a Governing Board which will be assisted by an Executive Secretary, with appropriate administrative assistance, as well as by the Scientific Advisory Committee".

Bearing in mind the limited financial resources, this type of structure is top-heavy administratively, nor does it allow for differences of interests between the diverse sub-regional programmes on crop genetic resources that are being carried out by the Nordic Group, the EC Research Programme, the COMECON Group and the Mediterranean Programme of the IBPGR.

In itself, a common general interest in crop genetic resources is not sufficient to ensure productive international cooperation. Nor for that matter is an annual meeting of a Governing Board, no matter how valuable personal contacts may be.

The most obvious common denominator between sub-groups is an interest in a particular crop.

In this connection it is essential to ensure three factors: 1) that the selected crops are of major economic importance to particular countries; 2) that members of Working Groups are recognized specialists, and 3) that collaboration with similar Working Groups of other organizations is established and maintained. The Mission is of the opinion, therefore, that Crop Working Groups should be the organizational framework for Phase II.

Inevitably membership of Working Groups will be limited by sub-regional interests. For example, the EC Programme is confined to a few well defined activities on a limited number of crops; the Nordic Group is not concerned with Vitis sp. and certain fruit species of interest to the Nordic Group are not significant in the Mediterranean region.

In addition, membership of Crop Working Groups restricted by common crop interests will cater for compatibility of national interests in the sub-regions.

Care must be taken not to form more Working Groups than can be adequately financed. The Mission believes that funding the work of no more than six such Groups will allow the Programme to be placed on a sound footing.

The Mission realizes that this recommendation to restrict severely the number of Working Groups will disappoint some country representatives. The Mission is convinced, however, that it is essential initially to limit activities in this way so as to work intensively on the crops that are selected and thereby demonstrate in a practical way the value of the ECP/GR. The number of Working Groups should only be increased when the first ones are judged to be truly successful.

4.2 Transfer to the IBPGR

Representatives of six countries and two sub-regional groupings were met by the Mission during the evaluation tour. All of them felt that the ECP/GR should be under the aegis of the IBPGR during Phase II. The Mission is of the same opinion.

The IBPGR was set up to support resources activities throughout the world and in so doing has developed strong links in Europe (Appendix 4).

In view of the Mission's recommendation to place more emphasis on Crop Working Groups in Phase II it is logical to transfer overall coordination of the programme to the IBPGR. The IBPGR has indicated its willingness to accept this responsibility.

4.3 The Location of the ECP/GR Administration

Two governments, Italy and Switzerland, had offered accommodation for the Secretariat of the ECP/GR.

The Mission (represented by Messrs. Huyser and Krentos) visited the office facilities of the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche in Rome offered by the Italian Government to accommodate the Secretariat of ECP/GR.

The accommodation, found to be most adequate, was only offered, however, for part-time occupancy, sharing the facilities with staff of Italian national programmes.

The Mission feels that sharing facilities would not suit the ECP/GR, and therefore has to recommend that the offer be declined.

The Mission (represented by Messrs. Dodds and Krentos) also visited the Station fédérale de recherches agronomiques de Changins at Nyon where accommodation is offered by the Swiss Government to be rented by the ECP/GR for the Secretariat. It would be very suitable for the requirements of the Programme.

4.4 The Administration of the ECP/GR

In considering the precise method of achieving coordination in the ECP/GR, the guiding principle for the Mission has been to keep costs down and to devote as much as possible of a limited budget to the actual work programme.

With this in mind, the Mission recommends that a full time Executive Secretary should not be appointed for Phase II.

Instead, the administrative needs of the ECP/GR should be dealt with by the IBPGR. The staff of the IBPGR Executive Secretariat should be suitably strengthened out of the ECP/GR budget.

The Mission noted the difficulties faced by FAO in finding enough space for the IBPGR Secretariat. The transfer of the ECP/GR to the office of the Executive Secretary could further exacerbate the problem. In addition, accommodation will be required for ad hoc consultants appointed to deal with requests from member countries for technical assistance.

4.5 Concerning the Scientific Advisory Committee

The Mission is not convinced that the present Scientific Advisory Committee will be necessary during Phase II if the ECP/GR is transferred to the IBPGR.

The Mission recommends, therefore, that the Committee be disbanded at the end of Phase I.

Members of the Crop Working Groups, selected on account of their expertise, should themselves be aware of the sources from which further technical advice can be obtained should this be necessary.

4.6 Concerning the Governing Board of the ECP/GR

Given a merger with the IBPGR, then clearly the Governing Board of the ECP/GR must cease to exist as such. Nevertheless, representatives of member countries of the ECP/GR will wish to be fully informed about the development and progress of the programme, and it is they who will continue to seek national donations towards the costs of the joint programme.

The Mission recommends that for Phase II, given the merger with the IBPGR, the Board should be transferred into an Intergovernmental Committee for the European Programme, composed of representatives of all participating countries that would meet once every three years. The main functions of this Committee would be to review progress of the Programme based on reports prepared by the Secretariat and to decide amounts of cash contributions from governments.

The Intergovernmental Committee will be assisted by an Executive Committee meeting annually and consisting of the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee and representatives nominated by the participating countries of each sub-regional programme. Other representatives may be co-opted onto the Executive Committee as deemed necessary.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 General

If the Mission's recommendation to merge ECP/GR with IBPGR is accepted, IBPGR anticipates additional funding as restricted core budget. (ninth meeting of the Board, 16-19 February 1982, in Rome).

This funding should initially come, as originally envisaged, through a phase two UNDP supported project and thereafter entirely from contributions of participating countries.

The Programme would finance the costs necessary for the work and meetings of the Working Groups, meetings of the ~~Advisory~~ Committee, and additional support for the IBPGR Executive Secretariat. TG Executive

5.2 Programme Costs

The backbone of the Programme will be the activities of Working Groups. Assuming that on average each Working Group meets twice in a three year period, and that host institutes bear most of the local costs of these meetings, the cost of a Working Group over the three years would be:

Meeting costs (including interpreters)	US\$ 10,000
Communications	5,000
Travel and DSA for 5 participants	10,000
Exchange visits and training	20,000
Miscellaneous	5,000
	<hr/>
Cash cost of an average Working Group over three years	US\$ 50,000

As an illustration, if 6 Working Groups are catered for, a three-year budget for the Programme as a whole would be of the order of:

Working Group costs, 6 x US\$ 50,000	US\$ 300,000
Intergovernmental and Executive Committees	30,000
Consultants	60,000
Coordination and Administrative support	200,000
Miscellaneous	10,000
	<hr/>
Cost of Programme over 3 years - Total:	US\$ 600,000

5.3 Cost-sharing

According to the Report of the FAO/UNDP Governments Consultation of the European Cooperative Programme for the Conservation and Exchange of Genetic Resources for Plant Breeding (Geneva, 1979), and as agreed at the Second Meeting of the Governing Board (1981), the budget of Phase II will be met by cost-sharing.

The Mission does not wish to enter into detailed consideration of this matter. It considers, however, that the ECP/GR should only continue if countries of the four sub-regions are well represented as contributors to costs.

6. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Phase I of the ECP/GR was evaluated in accordance with policies and procedures established by the UNDP.

6.2 Achievements during the short time Phase I was operational cannot be quantified. They have led to improved communication and understanding between the plant scientists of member countries dealing with plant genetic resources.

6.3 The Mission's recommendations are:

- the ECP/GR should be extended into a Phase II to meet the wishes of member countries;
- if the ECP/GR is extended, Phase II should be executed under the aegis of the IBPGR, but should be separately financed;
- a full-time Executive Secretary should not be appointed; instead this office should be merged with that of the Executive Secretary of IBPGR;
- an Intergovernmental Committee for the European Programme should replace the present Governing Board of the ECP/GR. The Committee should advise the IBPGR *and governments*;
- the present Scientific Advisory Committee should be disbanded;
- the Programme of Work in Phase II should be based on Crop Working Groups and limited initially to six selected crops.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE MISSION

The mission will:

- a) examine the FAO/UNDP European Cooperative Programme for the Conservation and Exchange of Crop Genetic Resources;
- b) assess the progress achieved towards attainment of the long-term as well as immediate objectives of the project;
- c) assess the viability of the objectives of the project in the light of the results achieved;
- d) determine the outputs of the project in terms of concrete results up to the present time;
- e) assess the adequacy of the inputs provided by FAO and UNDP as well as the existing institutional framework for the execution of the project, and the coordination and functional relationship with IBPGR;
- f) assess the adequacy of the cooperation of the participating Governments;
- g) submit recommendations regarding the continuation of the project.

In case a positive recommendation is made, the mission will:

- a) submit recommendations on the main emphasis and the priorities to be put in the workplan of Phase II;
- b) submit recommendations on the possible intensification of the cooperation between the participating countries; and
- c) submit recommendations on the functional and financial relationship between any proposed continuation and the IBPGR.

Appendix 2

REPORTS OF COUNTRY VISITS

Reports of Country Visits

Visit to Gemplasm Institute, Bari, Italy

J.P. Huyser and V.D. Krentos

Itinerary

- 16.3.82 Rome-Bari by car, accompanied by Dr. Pietro Perrino
- 17.3.82 Gemplasm Institute; discussions with the Director,
Dr. Enrico Porceddu
- 17.3.82 Return to Rome by air in the evening

Summary of discussions

a. The European Cooperative Programme

Dr. Porceddu stated that his Institute is very interested in and keen on the Mediterranean Programme funded by IBPGR and while also interested in the ECP/GR is afraid that a merger or close linkage between both programmes might weaken the Mediterranean Programme with possible loss of its identity. He felt that the ECP/GR had been in operation for too short a time to show concrete results or benefits. The crop working groups would only become valuable if their activities could be deepened. As regards cooperative arrangements with other institutes for evaluation, his experience had not been very positive to date as there had been little or no information fed back regarding evaluation results of samples sent out.

b. Facilities

Prior to going to Bari, the Mission visited the office facilities in Rome, offered by the Government of Italy to the ECP/GR. These facilities were found to be adequate - two well furnished offices, a meeting room, a visiting consultants room, telephones, telex, etc.

During the discussions with Dr. Porceddu, it became evident, however, that these facilities were offered free of charge, but for part-time use by the ECP/GR Secretariat visiting Rome from its Headquarters elsewhere. Full-time occupancy, i.e. as Headquarters, would not be easy since the same premises are to be used by staff of Italian Programmes, during certain periods of the year.

Visit to Nordic Gene Bank, Lund, Sweden

K.S. Dodds

Itinerary

- 15.3.82 Rome-Geneva by air (16 March, Rome airport closed)
- 16.3.82 Geneva-Copenhagen-Malmo by air. Evening meeting with Board Members of Nordic Gene Bank, in Lund
- 17.3.82 Visit to Nordic Gene Bank by car and discussion with Messrs. Skov, Kjellqvist and Blixt
- 18.3.82 Lund-Malmo by car, Malmo to Copenhagen by ferry, (Malmo airport closed by fog), outward direct flight to Athens missed; Copenhagen-Paris-Rome-Athens
- 19.3.82 Athens-Thessaloniki by air
- 20.3.82 Return to Athens

Summary of discussions

The Governing Board of the Nordic Gene Bank met in Lund on 16 March and in the evening of that day, Mr. K.S. Dodds met Messrs. Hansen, Kahre and Skov, who represent Norway, Sweden and Denmark respectively on the Board. Mr. E.H. Kjellqvist, Director of the Nordic Gene Bank, was also present. Messrs. Hansen and Kahre regretted that they would not be able to join in the detailed discussion of ECP/GR that was planned for the following day (17 March), but said that the views presented by Messrs. Skov and Kjellqvist would be those of the Nordic Group as a whole. Dr. Stig G. Blixt, Weibullsholm Plant Breeding Institute, participated in the meeting on 17 March.

The Nordic Group thought that a major accomplishment in Phase I was the generation of goodwill between participating countries and willingness to cooperate.

In retrospect, the time schedule for Phase I activities was too optimistic and some of the activities were too ambitious. The latter should be revised for Phase II.

The Group favours a Phase II but wishes all European countries to participate, e.g. Federal Republic of Germany, France, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Failing this, the Nordic Group will tend to strengthen bilateral arrangements with the non-participants.

The Nordic Group expressed dissatisfaction with the suggested way of calculating cash contributions for Phase II (described in the Report of the Second Board Meeting, p.13). The five Nordic Countries would be expected to contribute 20 per cent of the total cash contribution each year.

Concerning the method of execution, the Nordic Group favours placing ECP/GR within the IBPGR, and then a full-time ECP/GR Executive Secretary would not be necessary. Administrative needs could be met by the IBPGR Secretariat, and special technical requirements by ad hoc consultants.

Because the Nordic Group is aware of the problem of accommodation within FAO, alternative locations for the management of ECP/GR were considered. Mr. Skov reiterated the view he expressed at the Second Board Meeting, namely that sited in Geneva, the ECP/GR would be alongside many organizations dealing with plant affairs - UPOV, EPPO, ISTA, OECD, DANIDA, SIDA and CIDA. Indeed, the general opinion was that the IBPGR Secretariat would benefit from proximity to these organizations. In FAO, the IBPGR does not link with them, although such links are thought to be essential if plant breeders are to be drawn into genetic resources activities.

As regards working methods for Phase II, the way forward was seen to be through Crop Working Groups. For each of these, the first priority was to document extant collections in order to discard redundant duplicates. This would expose gaps in collections and enable a programme of work to be developed.

Crop Working Groups under a leader could be expected to bring about an intensification of work programmes. Organizational and financial matters would be the responsibility of the IBPGR Secretariat.

The Nordic Group emphasizes the importance of financial aspects. Crop Working Groups could not succeed without funds to meet travel and subsistence costs for participants. It was thought that a Crop Working Group might take two years to work out initial problems. Once the programme was under way, meetings might be no more frequent than once every two years, owing to the time that would elapse before reportable results were obtained.

The Nordic Groups feels that the structure of the Scientific Advisory Committee should be changed for Phase II. It should consist of experts from different disciplines - documentation, genetics, plant physiology, etc. - experts who can be expected to deal authoritatively with problems raised by member countries. EUCARPIA and IUCN could be represented on the Committee which might meet possibly every two years.

Visit to Cereal Institute, Thessaloniki, Greece

K.S. Dodds, J.P. Huyser, V.D. Krentos

Itinerary

- 18.3.82 Rome-Athens-Thessaloniki by air
- 18.3.82 Visit to Cereal Institute and discussions with Deputy Director, Dr. E. Skorda and Dr. S. Sendouca-Galanopoulou of the Cotton and Industrial Plants Research Institute, and Mr. A. Zamanis of the Greek Gene Bank
Courtesy visit to Director, Dr. J. Karayiannis
- 20.3.82 Return to Athens

Summary of discussions

Greece is interested in and keen on participating in the ECP/GR and willing to contribute its share, though no commitment on cash contributions could be made at the time. Dr. Skorda stated that Greece had benefited much from the direct support of the IBPGR and its Mediterranean Programme, and that ECP/GR was too young to have made an impact. In future, ECP/GR emphasis should be placed on the activities of the Crop Working Groups. ECP/GR should preferably be merged with the IBPGR. Greece felt that broad enough consultations had not been held before designating sub-regional crop centres and work programmes. As a result, all the accumulated knowledge and experience in Europe had not been used. The ECP/GR should help to avoid this in future. Like Italy, Greece does not wish the Mediterranean Programme to lose its identity.

Visit to Institute of Plant Introduction and Genetic
Resources, "K. Malkov", Sadovo, Bulgaria
K.S. Dodds, J.P. Huyser, V.D. Krentos .

Itinerary

- 21.3.82 Athens-Sofia by air
Sofia-Plovdiv by car accompanied by Ms N. Christova of the Institute
- 22.3.82 Plovdiv by car. Visit to the Institute at Sadovo and discussions
with the Director, Professor Dr. K.D. Kostov and Deputy
Director, Dr. D.V. Stoyanov. Ms. N. Christova of the Institute's
technical staff kindly assisted as interpreter during the entire
day.
- 23.3.82 Return to Sofia and on to Budapest

Summary of discussions

Dr. Kostov stated that Bulgaria is very interested in the ECP/GR and willing to pay its share of the cash contributions. The Institute sees as a main advantage of the programme the future strengthening of its contacts with Institutes abroad. The Institute already has contacts with some 800 institutes in 80 countries. Bulgaria is benefitting from a UNDP/FAO project that has been in operation for several years and also from IBPGR technical assistance. The work of the ECP/GR during its first phase is appreciated but Bulgaria would prefer a less formal approach in future by giving the crop oriented Working Groups full authority and freedom of action to develop their programmes. The Working Groups should be composed of the technical staff of the countries concerned who are actively engaged in genetic resources work. The Working Groups should be "problem oriented". Bulgaria, like Greece, feels that consultations on important technical and other issues should be improved in future.

In order to streamline work, a merger with IBPGR should be considered, but care should be taken that the merger would not result in a loss of identity of the ECP/GR. The Headquarters of the programme should be in Rome with the IBPGR Secretariat, provided that FAO would make sufficient space available for the Secretariat to work efficiently.

The ECP/GR should arrange more exchange visits of technical staff of the participating institutes than it has done in order to facilitate closer working discussions and a visual appreciation of approach and work. The budget heading "Training" should be broader and re-worded "Training and Exchange Visits".

Visit to Ministry of Agriculture, Budapest, and
Research Centre for Agrobotany NIAVT, Taposzele,
Hungary

K.S. Dodds, J.P. Huyser and V.D. Krentos

Itinerary

- 23.3.82 Sofia-Budapest by air met by Dr. Holly
Discussions at Ministry of Agriculture
24.3.82 Budapest-Taposzele and return by car
25.3.82 Departure from Budapest for Brussels and Lisbon

Summary of discussions

- a. Visit to Ministry of Agriculture and discussions with Mr. Tamas Bokor, Head of Section, Department of International Relations, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and Mr. Tamas Karacsony, Dr. J. Unk and Dr. L. Holly.

The meeting commenced with a general exchange of information on the purposes of the Mission and the details of the programme for the Mission in Hungary. The Hungarian representatives then informed the Mission that Hungary was interested in participating in the ECP/GR but unfortunately would not be able to pay its cash contribution in convertible currency. After some discussion, during which use of the national UNDP/IPF resources was also discarded (IPF was already fully committed to priority projects) the Government representatives agreed to consider the possibility of paying its contribution in local currency. Asked if Hungary could join the Programme later if it so wished, the Mission replied that it could do so and pay the dues then. In the meantime, Hungary could ask to be admitted as an observer to the Programme's meetings; the decision would rest with the governing body of the Programme.

- b. Discussions at the Institute

Dr. Unk and Dr. Holly felt that the first phase of the Programme had been positive. They appreciated the work of the Executive Secretary and the assistance he had given, as well as the better contacts established with other

Institutes through the Programme. As regards the future, there should be a crop oriented approach and a recognition right from the start that genetic resources work and international cooperation should be placed on a long-term footing. It would be a waste of time and funds if a cooperative programme, once started, were to be broken off after 2-3 years. It was therefore necessary to start phase two modestly, allowing for expansion rather than contraction at a later stage.

Visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
National Agriculture Research Station and its
Department of Genetics, Lisbon, Portugal

J.P. Huyser and V.D. Krentos

Itinerary

- 25.3.82 Budapest-Lisbon by air, met by Mr. M. Mota
Visited Secretary-General of National FAO Committee,
Mr. J.E. Mendes Ferrao at Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 26.3.82 Visit to National Agricultural Research Station and met:
Dr. H. Padua de Carvalho Acting Director
Dr. M. Mota Head of Genetics Dept.
Mr. E. Bettencourt Researcher
- 27.3.82 Lisbon-Geneva by air

Summary of discussions

a. Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Secretary-General of the National FAO Committee explained the important role the Committee had in dealing with questions on all FAO programmes, including the ECP/GR. For important issues the Committee had created sub-committees with technically qualified members to advise the Government. As regards the ECP/GR, Portugal remained very interested and in principle would be willing to pay its cash contribution. It would much prefer to pay such contributions in local currency but if that was not possible and contributions did not escalate, would consider a convertible currency contribution.

b. Discussions at the National Institute with its Acting Director and Dr. Mota of the Department of Genetics revealed the active participation of Portugal in the IBPGR's Mediterranean Programme and an interest to collaborate in the ECP/GR. The first phase of the latter had been too short to have direct results. In the light of experience, Dr. Mota also felt that the second phase should have a well defined crop oriented approach. It should concentrate

on technical work and reduce administrative costs as much as possible. For this purpose, the Secretariat could well be merged with that of the IBPGR. Working Groups should be informed, meeting at one of the participating institutes which would defray the local costs. Whenever possible, an effort should be made to reduce the cost of interpretation.

Visit to the Directorate-General for Agriculture:
EC Research Programme on disease resistance and better
use of gene banks

K.S. Dodds

Itinerary

- 25.3.82 Budapest-Zurich-Brussels by air
- 26.3.82 Morning, discussion with Mr. R. Craps, Director of
VI-F-4, Environment and Forestry
Mr. A. Szarf, Head of Division of Coordination of Agriculture
Mr. M.J. Dehandtschutter, Agricultural Officer
Afternoon, technical discussion with Mr. Dehandtschutter
- 27.3.82 Brussels-Geneva by air

Summary of discussions

In discussion with Messrs. Craps, Szarf and Dehandtschutter, it became evident that the EC Programme has very practical goals. The standardization of evaluation descriptors and the documentation of collections are being undertaken so that plant scientists of member countries have a "working language" in common. The collections themselves are best thought of as "Working Collections" to be used in applied research.

It is not intended to develop gene banks per se, but to distribute collected material to member countries that have expressed an interest in receiving it. For example, the collection of grasses is coordinated at an Irish Institute where the accessions are planted for seed production and subsequent distribution.

Under the system of data management that is being adopted, all the national "gene banks" will be linked.

In the afternoon, Mr. Dehandtschutter explained the EC Programme in detail.

Activities that have been approved by the Programme Committee are conducted by lead institutes mostly under Contracts that meet up to 50 percent of the cost of the activity. The lead institutes report to Working Groups composed of representatives of participating countries. Not all countries participate in every activity.

Mr. Dehandtschutter stressed the importance of adequate funds to support Working Groups and that they should not be hampered by formality.

Cooperation between the EC Programme, the ECP/GR, and the IBPGR was essential to keep members of the three programmes informed about each other's activities and to enable a joint approach to particular aspects of genetic resources when this was feasible.

Visit to the Station fédérale de recherches agronomiques
de Changins, Nyon, Switzerland
K.S. Dodds and V.D. Krentos

Itinerary

30.3.82 By car to Nyon
Morning discussion with Dr. M. Ingold, Deputy Director

Summary of discussions

Following an inspection of the accommodation that could be offered at the Institute, a general discussion of the ECP/GR was held.

Dr. Ingold was in favour of a continuation of the ECP/GR into a Phase II, and thought that a merger with the IBPGR would be beneficial. He added a rider to the effect that the Programme should be truly European, that is, include, for example, France and West Germany. He felt that it was also a pity that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was not participating. If these countries did not join in the near future, he thought that the Swiss Government might wish to reconsider its own participation.

Dr. Ingold said that the Swiss Government was willing to pay a cash contribution but was surprised to find Switzerland in the same category as Holland and Denmark, two countries in which agriculture was so important to their economies.

Appendix 3

PROJECT BUDGET COVERING UNDP CONTRIBUTION

(in US dollars)

Country: Regional
 Project symbol: RER/80/005/D/01/12
 Title: Crop Genetic Resources

	TOTAL		1980		1981		1982		1983	
	m/m	\$	m/m	\$	m/m	\$	m/m	\$	m/m	\$
10 PROJECT PERSONNEL										
11 Experts	27.7	241,468	9.7	80,468	12.0	96,623	9.0	65,000	3.0	24,000
11.01 Executive Secretary	6.0	41,750		750	2.0	5,228	5.0	40,000		
11.99 Sub-total	<u>33.7</u>	<u>283,218</u>	<u>7.9</u>	<u>81,218</u>	<u>14.0</u>	<u>101,851</u>	<u>14.0</u>	<u>105,000</u>	<u>3.0</u>	<u>24,000</u>
12 Opas Experts										
13 Admin. support		79,480		1,480		25,284		28,000		7,000
14 UN Volunteers										
15 Official travel		57,839		19,839		10,873		18,000		
16 Other costs - Mission costs		39,562		4,562		14,597		16,000		
17.99 Sub-total										
18 Savings/overspendings on the liquidation of prior years commitments						(2,929)				
COMPONENT TOTAL		<u>460,099</u>		<u>107,099</u>		<u>149,676</u>		<u>169,000</u>		<u>31,000</u>
29 Sub-contracts		22,000						10,000		
31 Individual fellowships						3,453		5,000		
32 Group training		45,163		3,163		11,121		30,000		8,000
33 Inservice training										
38 Savings/overspendings on the liquidation of prior years commitments						(723)				
COMPONENT TOTAL		<u>45,163</u>		<u>3,163</u>		<u>13,851</u>		<u>35,000</u>		
49 Equipment		39,275				7,178		10,000		
59 Miscellaneous		21,000				18,909		20,000		4,661
99 Total UNDP contribution		<u>587,537</u>		<u>110,262</u>		<u>189,614</u>		<u>244,000</u>		<u>43,661</u>

EUROPEAN TECHNICAL COLLABORATION WITH IBPGR

There is a great deal of collaboration between countries of Europe and the IBPGR global programme. Some aspects of this are outlined below.

Working Groups

In order to receive practicable advice, the IBPGR convenes ad hoc Working Groups. Major European inputs have been the coordination of meetings and special reports on Vegetables for the Tropics (Netherlands); Allium (United Kingdom and Netherlands); Pisum (Sweden); Amaranthus (Netherlands); Okra (France); and Tropical Fruits (Netherlands). In addition, numerous European scientists have been members of IBPGR Working Groups.

Collecting

The following countries have assisted IBPGR in collecting missions: Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Germany, France, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Seed Storage (base collections)

The following have, or in the immediate future will hold, designated IBPGR base collections of seed crops with a guarantee of free availability; Belgium, Democratic Republic of Germany, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

A number of germplasm collections are being regenerated for the IBPGR e.g. by France, Greece, Netherlands and Spain. Technical assistance for seed storage has been provided by the IBPGR to Cyprus, Greece, Portugal and Spain. In addition some funding was provided to the United Kingdom to

conserve vegetable material for tropical countries until such time as there are other facilities available.

Documentation

The IBPGR has close linkage with the documentation systems developed and given financial assistance to Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Portugal and Poland. Numerous contacts are maintained with many countries for the development of descriptor lists.

Training courses

The United Kingdom offers a one year training course in crop genetic conservation and the IBPGR provides funds for students from developing countries, (University of Birmingham), and also funds a short course in seed technology for gene banks (University of Edinburgh). Italy has organized an IBPGR regional training course on documentation for the Mediterranean region. Approximately 40 fellowships have been provided by IBPGR to European countries for short technical training courses (including modules of the Birmingham course). Gene banks in Italy, Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom are regularly used for short training visits.

REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR
SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF ECP/GR

The Scientific Advisory Committee will consist of recognized specialists who are known in Europe to have special knowledge or experience in the field of plant genetic resources. Because of successful activities in the EUCARPIA Gene Bank Committee since the late 1960s, and to ensure continuity and avoid unnecessary duplication, it is strongly recommended to let this EUCARPIA Committee as elected at each EUCARPIA technical congress, act as the Scientific Advisory Committee of the ECP/GR. In addition, the Chairman and one other member of the Governing Board, who could be the Vice-Chairman, or the Executive Secretary, should be ex officio members. The Scientific Advisory Committee can seek assistance by inviting other specialists to its meetings; especially drawn from the group of directors and scientific staff of the national institutions for plant genetic resources in Europe, from the sub-regional groups and from other international organizations.

The Scientific Advisory Committee shall have the following functions:

1. To assist the Governing Board and the Executive Secretary in executing their functions by submitting general scientific advice and special reports, both on request of the Governing Board and on the initiative of the Committee itself;
2. To continue constituting a link between the European institutions on plant genetic resources by organizing yearly meetings, to which the directors of these institutions or their representatives are being invited, to discuss problems of mutual interest, as well as joint programmes. When required, these meetings should take place separately from those of the elected EGBC, which together with other members proposed by the Governing Board, constitutes the SAC;
3. To advise on links between the ECP/GR and the European plant breeders, as organized in EUCARPIA and other appropriate organizations;
4. To advise on proposals which will further and stimulate the full and free exchange of plant genetic resources and genetic data related to them;
5. To advise on the use of information management and the preparation of the European Crop Catalogues of Genetic Resources for Plant Breeding;
6. To formulate priorities for the collection and preservation of European genetic resources, which are not yet available in collections and especially those which stand in particular danger of extinction;

7. To advise on the needs for organization of joint evaluation programmes, with breeders, including the distribution of the results;
8. To start the development of plans for the division of responsibilities among European institutions with base and active collections of plant genetic resources for long-term storage and rejuvenation of various crops. Such plans, as well as proposals for duplicate storage for safety, should be drawn up in close contact with IBPGR/FAO and should take into account the possible implications from quarantine legislation;
9. To consult concerning the work, review of work and the annual progress report before it is presented to the Governing Board;
10. The Scientific Advisory Committee to meet at least once a year (or more frequently if necessary) and report to each meeting of the Governing Board.