

Progress made in the ECPGR Documentation and Information Working Group during 2014-2015

Organisation workshop

A Workshop of the Documentation and Information Working Group, "Tailoring the Documentation of Plant Genetic Resources in Europe to the Needs of the User", was held in Prague, Czech Republic, from 20 to 22 May 2014. This workshop, attended by 49 participants from 29 different countries, gathered a selected group of National Inventory Focal Points, ECPGR Central Crop Database managers and international experts of PGR documentation and informatics. A number of ECPGR National Coordinators and Working Group Chairs also attended. The new coordinator and manager of EURISCO, which has been transferred from Bioversity International, Rome to IPK, Gatersleben, introduced themselves and discussed the future short- and medium-term perspectives of the online PGR catalogue. The relationship between EURISCO and the ECPGR Central Crop Databases (CCDBs) was also discussed, based on an extensive survey of the current status of the 48 CCDBs. An agreement was reached, indicating that CCDBs will be encouraged to evolve towards crop portals, providing various types of information of interest for the crop users. The Workshop also discussed documentation of in situ data (crop wild relatives and landraces) and about the future role of genebanks in the genomics era.

Participation in ECPGR Grant Proposals

The Documentation and Information Working Group submitted proposals for both calls of the ECPGR Activity Grant Scheme, and both were selected for funding by the Executive Committee. Both proposals aimed at organising training workshops for EURISCO Focal Persons. The first focussed on Southeast Europe 2015, the second on the Western European region and new Focal Persons. The initiative for the proposals came from the EURISCO manager, supported by the working group chair. Furthermore the working group supported two more proposals in the first call: "Identification and updating of C&E data in EBDB of AEGIS Hordeum (HordEva)" submitted by the Barley Working Group and "ECPGR WG for Forages towards 2020s (Forages 2020)" submitted by the Forages Working Group.

Organisation workshop

The "EURISCO NFP regional training workshop for Southeast Europe 2015 (EURISCO Training 2015)" was organised by the EURISCO management in collaboration with the Agricultural University of Tirana, Department of Plant Sciences and Technology, in Albania from 19 to 21 May 2015. The 20 participants, all National Focal Points or National coordinators, came from Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Macedonia (FYR), Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey (three participants on self-funded basis). The objective of the workshop was to revive the series of regional training workshops of EURISCO, starting with Southeast Europe, focussing on the South East European Development Network on Plant Genetic Resources (SEEDNet) member countries. It tried to provide training of the new users, solve problems with data formatting, obtain feedback from the users, strengthen cooperation through personal interaction, discuss strategies for increasing update frequency and completeness of data, and finally discussion C&E data inclusion in EURISCO.

Planning workshop

The "EURISCO National Focal Point regional training workshop 2016" will be organised later this year in Paris, by the EURISCO management in collaboration with the Unit of Research in Genomics-Informatics of INRA. It will involve 11 funded partners from France, the Czech Republic, Lithuania,

Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Poland, UK,, Romania, Italy and Spain and an additional five self-funded participants from Germany, the Netherlands, France and Spain.

Representation ECPGR / EURISCO

The chair of the Documentation and Information Working Group represented the interest of EURISCO on a personal basis in several international initiatives in the field of genebank documentation.

1. As chair of the Genesys Oversight Committee (until 31 Dec 2015) and as member of the Genesys Advisory Committee (from 1 Jan 2016). Genesys is a global system with objectives similar to EURISCO. Beside the WG Chair, the EURISCO manager is *ex officio* member of the Advisory Committee.
2. As co-chair of the Expert Consultation on the Global Information System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (GLIS) as part of the ITPGRFA. The establishment of GLIS is an obligation under the Treaty and detailed proposals have been adopted by its VIth Governing Body in Dec 2015.
3. As active participant of the DivSeek initiative that tries to bridge the gap between the genomics community, creating big data, and the genebank community.

Advising EURISCO

A list of names has been set up by the WG Chair in consultation with the ECPGR Secretariat, that can be approached to be member of an Advisory Committee for EURISCO. This committee has not been formed yet since there has been no opportunity for activities yet.

Since the transfer of EURISCO from Rome to Gatersleben, the WG Chair has been actively overseeing the activities of the EURISCO management, helping with priority setting, technical design, testing of applications, etc. A highlight in this regards is the developments towards inclusion of phenotypic data in EURISCO (see the EURISCO report).

Conclusion

Given the shortage of resources, the WG has been relatively active in terms of applying for funds, organising workshops and representing ECPGR in other international initiatives. Given the importance of EURISCO, structural support for the EURISCO Training Workshops, also outside the competitive granting schemas would make sense.

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