

**Short note about the progress made by the ECPGR Wheat Working Group during
the first part of Phase IX (2014-2015)**

(F. Balfourier, Chair of WWG)

A-1) AEGIS related task:

During the first part of Phase IX (2014-2015), the Wheat Working Group was mainly involved in the preparation and the development of an activity in the framework of the first call for proposals under the ECPGR Activity Grant Scheme. An activity named “**TRITICUM in AEGIS: Identification and Documentation**” (TRAID) was prepared during 2014, proposed to the SC, and accepted for funding at the beginning of 2015. The aims of TRAID activity were (i) to increase the participation of WWG members in AEGIS initiative to create A European Collection on Triticum, and (ii) to increase the quantity and quality of data in EURISCO. Considering the objectives of ECPGR for phase IX, TRAID project was both related to outcomes 1 and 2. In outcome 1 (accessions in AEGIS are characterized and evaluated), activities developed in TRAID were the identification of eligible accessions to be proposed for registration as AEGIS accessions (1.2.1) and the establishment of proper documentation of AEGIS accessions (1.1.2). In outcome 2 (Quality and quantity of data in EURISCO have been increased) TRAID activities were related to point 2.1 (All NFPs update national inventories), and point 2.2 (C&E data in EURISCO included with high quality and wide coverage).

From the 12 selected participants to this project, a half part of them had not yet defined AEGIS candidate accessions at the beginning of the TRAID project; so, their main activity consisted on the identification of eligible AEGIS candidate accessions within the list of EWDB accessions distributed during the last meeting of WWG in Piestany (2012). They referred to the revised simplified procedure to finalize their list and updated passport data according to MCP2 v2. Final lists had to be sent to François Balfourier, Chair of WWG, then to Ludmila Papouskova, the EWDB manager, in order to be checked and thereafter marked in EWDB.

Concerning the second part of the participants who already had sent their list, a special effort was planned to check carefully accessions list and related passport data, then to update Characterization and Evaluation (C&E) data for these accessions, according to EWDB descriptor list.

A common meeting, involving the 12 ECPGR funded partners and 5 self-funded ones, was organized in Tallinn (Estonia), in collaboration with the Estonian Crop Research Institute (ECRI), Jogeva. During this meeting (16-17 September 2015), the status of AEGIS candidate accessions selected per country members and the update of both passport and C&E data were presented by each partners during the first day (see meeting agenda). The future management of these accessions in accordance with the principles of AEGIS was also discussed during the second day. Then, each participant to TRAID project was asked to provide its National Coordinator with the list of recommended accessions for consideration and formal inclusion in the European Collection.

Finally, the EURISCO National Inventory Focal Point, under instructions from the National Coordinator, had to officially include the accessions into the European Collection by flagging them in EURISCO database.

Results concerning this activity are given in the “**TRAID Activity Report**”. To summarize, 5659 accessions were identified as eligible accessions to be proposed as AEGIS accessions. Both passport and C&E data were as far as possible improved then updated in EWDB and finally flagged in EURISCO database as AEGIS accessions.

The meeting was also dedicated to discussion about management of this AEGIS collection. Considering safety duplication, it was reminded that safety-duplicates of AEGIS accessions should be sent to another Associate Member genebank, possibly in a different country and/or at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Members from Sweden, Switzerland and Czech Republic indicated that they were able to receive duplicates in black box in their institutes and that they will send to all TRAID members their agreement conditions of safety duplication. Members who do not start to develop duplicates were invited to do it. In order to collect information within the WWG concerning their conditions of conservation and their quality management system, members were also invited to fill the « template for the preparation of operational genebank manual » form for the end of the year.

A-2 Other tasks:

During the considered period, the WWG Chair spent many times to contact, by email, the WWG members, in order to inform them about the new rules for the organisation of ECPGR activities, to suggest new activities, and finally to encourage those who were involved in TRAIID project, to effectively do their job.

New activities of the Wheat Working Group were proposed and considered during Tallinn meeting in order to prepare the future third calls. Two possible future activities were retained: (i) to increase the *Triticum aestivum* AEGIS collection by adding new accessions and new data from other European countries (possibly DEU, GBR, HUN, ESP, PRT) and (ii) to develop new AEGIS collection for other species worked in WWG:

Spelt: CHE, FRA, BEL, DEU, CZE

Rye: POL, SWE, LVA, EST, CZE, FRA, ROM, SVK, CHE, BGR

Triticale: POL, SVK, CZE, CHE, FRA, ROM

Tertraploid wheat: BGR, ITA, CZE, SVK, POL, FRA

Diploid wheat: ROM, ITA, BGR, CZE, POL, SVK, FRA

Finally, at the end of 2015, the whole WWG was also involved in the endorsement of wheat specific genepool standards, in the framework of AQUAS. After two rounds of revision, a final document was adopted by WWG members and sent in January 2016 to ECPGR Secretariat for uploading on web-site.

General comments:

Even if there are more than 80 different members in the WWG, only very few of them (less than 20) are active members who react when they receive an email. I am really surprise by the low level of motivation or availability (?) within the group. Eastern European country members seem to be more active than Western ones. Why do these last ones stand as candidate for being a WWG members? Hopefully, the 12 members who agreed to participate to TRAIID activity were more reacting even if, sometimes I needed a long time to receive an answer. Nobody seems to be really able to follow a work plan with clear deadlines and finally, I waste a lot of time and spend a lot of energy to send reminding messages, hoping to receive answer/results in due time!

What is the solution? Probably to be more strict 1) to accept members within a group, and 2) to select members for a specific activity. But, how to evaluate the level of motivation of the different members ? Chair activities are evaluated, which seems to be normal, but member's activities are not submitted to similar process. Why not ?