

LEAFY VEGETABLES WG REPORT FOR PHASE IX (2014-2018)

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1. CONTRIBUTION TO ECPGR OBJECTIVES

1.1. Achievements and success stories

Outcome 1. AEGIS is operational. Accessions in AEGIS are characterized and evaluated

The AQUAS quality system was adopted and implemented by the WG through the approval in March 2016 of the Leafy Vegetables-specific genebank standards for orthodox seeds.

Four Leafy Vegetables members' institutes have implemented operational genebank manual.

Outcome 3. In situ conservation of priority crop wild relative (CWR) and landrace (LR) populations are implemented throughout Europe. Mechanisms are in place for more effective utilization of the conserved germplasm

Through the CCLEAFY Activity funded by the ECPGR Grant Scheme, a study aimed to assess threat levels for the main leafy vegetable CWR occurring in the European region and to provide recommendations for their conservation. An inventory was made of the gene pools of 19 leafy vegetable crops, from which nearly 30 CWR that have their main distribution in the European region were selected for further analysis. None of the examined CWR are considered threatened in Europe by the IUCN Red List, but climate change is expected to reduce the future distribution of the majority of these species in the European region. The examined CWR are not actively conserved *in situ* and, with the exception of *Lactuca serriola*, are poorly conserved *ex situ*. Therefore, it was recommended to increase the number of accessions with MLS and AEGIS status to ensure both accessibility and proper conservation of samples. This will necessarily also involve more representative *ex situ* collections throughout the species range. Considering that climate change is expected to shift the distribution range of many species northwards, the expected effects of *in situ* conservation on the survival of species in southern regions need to be examined on a case-by-case basis. Climate change will increase the importance of north-western Europe as *in situ* conservation area because of its refuge function for migrating species. A high conservation priority should be given to species that have their main distribution in the southern part of the European region and that are not expected to migrate northwards, such as nearly all artichoke CWR and *Asparagus maritimus*.

1.2. Gaps or constraints identified

The survey of the current status of AEGIS accessions included in the European Collection revealed that the majority of genera of leafy vegetables are presented in the Collection, but the contributing countries are mainly Germany, the Netherlands, Nordic countries and UK. There is a need to approach the countries that have not yet flagged the accessions to AEGIS to speed up the process. The constraint is that despite several attempts trying to stimulate the group to provide different kinds of information there was always very little response from the WG members.

When a questionnaire was sent out in June 2017 asking the members to provide an update on the fulfilment of the ECPGR objectives of Phase IX, again the response was received only from a few WG members. They provided the information on the current state of the fulfilment of the ECPGR objectives in their genebank/country. The main constraint that they pointed out was the lack of face-to-face meetings of the whole group which would enable contact between the WG members and facilitate exchange of information. They raised a couple of other issues, e.g. lack of funding to hold accessions on farm and conduct expeditions.

Appointment of a Vice-chair would facilitate the work of the WG Chair.

2. GRANT SCHEME ACTIVITIES

- **Grant Scheme proposals (submitted: 1; approved: 1)**
 1. [Consequences of climate change for conserving leafy vegetable CWRs in Europe \(CCLEAFY\) – Third Call \(2016\)](#)
- **Total number of partners involved: 6 from 6 countries**
 - ECPGR-funded: 3 from 3 countries
 - Self-funded: 3 from 3 countries
- **Meetings held**
(none)
- **Reports and related data**
 -  [CCLEAFY Activity report \(main document\)](#)
 -  [CCLEAFY Activity report \(appendices\)](#)
- **Funds mobilized**
 - ECPGR granted funds: € 15 000
 - Inputs in-kind declared in Grant activities: € 11 732

3. OTHER ACTIVITIES (CROSS-WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES, LINKS WITH OTHER NETWORKS, PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES)

Cross-Working Group activities

In 2014-2015 new Chairs were nominated for all the 21 WGs, several of them have not chaired the WG before. During the ECPGR Phase IX there were no more meetings of individual WGs (or meetings of several WGs together); the meetings are financed only through the successful projects/activities from the ECPGR Activity Grant Scheme.

Ferdinando Branca, Chair of the *Brassica* WG, initiated the idea to organize a meeting of all WG chairs to establish cooperation between them and to share the experience in order to better coordinate the actions needed to fulfil the ECPGR objectives within the individual WG. The idea was further elaborated together with other WG Chairs; the proposal was finalised and submitted by the Leafy Vegetables WG Chair to the Fourth Call of the ECPGR Activity Grant Scheme. With some amendments, the activity 'ECPGR Networking: Networking among Working Groups for discussing and coordinating the implementation of ECPGR objectives' was selected for funding.

The ECPGR Networking meeting took place 17-18 October 2017 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Nineteen out of 21 Working Group Chairs and two ex-Chairs as well as members of the ECPGR Executive Committee and the Secretariat attended the meeting. WG Chairs presented the review of the progress made in the implementation of ECPGR objectives of Phase IX within the individual WG. Discussions focused on the difficulties encountered by the Chairs within their individual WG when trying to implement the objectives. Various solutions to enhance opportunities and mitigate threats were proposed and discussed. Recommendations were prepared for the ExCo to be considered at their meeting on 19 and 20 October 2017. The recommendations addressed, among others, the WG membership and representation, communication within and between WGs, WG Chairs work and meetings, AEGIS- and EURISCO-related activities.

Details of the Activity are provided on the following link, where also the final report will be published in spring 2018: <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/working-groups/common-working-group-activities/ecpgr-networking/>.

4. WORKING GROUP DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

 [Crop-specific genebank standards for orthodox seeds \(agreed by the Leafy Vegetables WG, March 2016\)](#)

 [Minimum Descriptors for asparagus \(*Asparagus* spp.\)](#) (April 2014)

 [Current status overview of collections available](#) (March 2014)

5. EXPECTED ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The preparation of a proposal for submission to the Sixth Call for proposals under the ECPGR Activity Grant Scheme will be stimulated.