ECP/GR TASK FORCE ON PRIORITIES FOR PHASE VII

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Before the end of each half Phase Network Co-ordinating Groups should, in consultation with Working Groups, determine the division of work between the Working Groups and the Network Co-ordinating Group for the subsequent Phase. The results should be communicated as a proposal to the mid-term or end of Phase meeting of the Steering Committee.

[Purpose: to provide the Steering Committee with information for budgetary purposes.]

Recommendation 2

Before the end of years 1 and 3 of each Phase, Network Co-ordinating Group should assess and monitor progress of Working Groups against targets and, as appropriate, to provide guidance to them.

[Purpose: to give the Network Co-ordinating Group a role in helping Working Groups to achieve their objectives; and to improve co-operation, communication and exchange of information within a Network.]

Recommendation 3

Meetings of full Network Groups should only take place where a need is identified and should concentrate on crosscutting issues and/or longer-term strategies.

[Purpose: to limit costs and to ensure that available resources are prioritised for Working Group activity.]

Recommendation 4

Taking into account the various suggestions made on how to resolve this problem, the Steering Committee is invited to consider the following options, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive:

a) Revision of the existing key for countries to nominate attending and corresponding members.

b) Encourage corresponding members to make greater use of the facility to provide reports and written comments for consideration by the Working Group.

c) Each country to define its members for each Working Group, with no distinction between attending and corresponding members. On the basis of a quota of participants assigned to each country, a maximum number of ECP/GR-funded participants per country could attend the meetings of each Phase, with the option to send self-funded participants to the remaining meetings. (e.g. out of 30 meetings that might be programmed for a phase, country X/Y/Z would be allowed to send ECP/GR-funded participants to 25/20/15 meetings, with the option to send self-funded participants to the remaining 5/10/15 meetings.

d) An increase in Member Country subscriptions sufficient to enable one participant per country to attend each Working Group meeting. To enable proper budgeting, each Member Country should nominate the Working Groups in which they would like to participate.

e) If funding is not sufficient to enable full participation in nominated Working Groups (either because of no increase in subscription or an increase is not sufficient), the Steering Committee might like to consider the following options:
- A maximum amount of support to be provided for each Working Group, leaving it to the Working Group to decide who should benefit from support and to what extent. This could, for example, be on a rota basis; or
- Allow corresponding members to attend at their own expense.

Recommendation 5

Working Group Chairpersons should be asked to provide a short standardised report, which could be developed from that produced for the purposes of this review, one month prior to meetings of the Steering Committee. Such reports should be made available through the ECP/GR list-server for the benefit of other Working Groups.

[Purpose: to provide useful information to the Steering Committee and to improve communication between Networks and between Working Groups.]

Recommendation 6

Where considered appropriate and acting on proposals from Network Co-ordinating Groups, developed in consultation with Working Groups, the Steering Committee should, subject to availability of resources, convene ad hoc meetings of Working Group/Network Chairpersons to consider and advise Working Groups on the handling of common problems.

[Purpose: to consider common problems and, where appropriate, to identify common solutions.]

Recommendation 7

A list server should be created to enable greater co-ordination and communication between Chairpersons of Networks and Working Groups through e-discussion.

[Purpose: to provide a forum of e-discussion on a continuing basis.]

Recommendation 8

Working Group and other reports should be published on the ECP/GR website in order to improve the information flow within and between Working Groups and Networks. This could produce cost savings by reducing the number of printed versions.

[Purpose: to cut costs, releasing resources for other purposes.]

Recommendation 9

With the aim of providing the Secretariat with the resources necessary to become proactive in the identification of new and additional funding sources, the Steering Committee is invited to consider the following options, which are not intended to be mutually exclusive:

a) Subscriptions from Member Countries should be increased.
b) All current expenditure of the Secretariat should be examined to identify potential savings.

Recommendation 10

The Secretariat should seek to establish more formal arrangements, e.g. an MOU, with the EU and the private sector over project funding. Similar arrangements should be sought with other potential multilateral funding bodies, particularly with the proposed Global Conservation Trust.

[Purpose: to improve certainty and stability of funding for projects.]

Recommendation 11

The European Commission should be invited to become a full member of the Steering Committee. ISF, FAO, IPGRI EUROMAB, NGB and NGOs should continue to be invited as observers to meetings of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee may wish to consider extending observer status to other organisations, e.g. EUCARPIA either on a permanent or an ad hoc basis, although it is recommended that this be kept to the minimum necessary.

Recommendation 12

Working Groups should consider inviting the private sector, NGOs and specific experts to their meetings in appropriate cases and on an ad hoc basis. The private Sector and NGOs should only attend on a self-funded basis.

Recommendation 13

At their meetings before the end of the first half Phase (see Recommendation 1) Network Co-ordinating Groups will make proposals for Working Groups to be active in the subsequent Phase. The proposals should prioritise between Working Groups. They should also include a broad indication of the activities to be pursued by the Working Groups, prioritise those activities and identify the funds required. They should be communicated to the Secretariat at least one month prior to the mid-term review meeting of the Steering Committee.

[Purpose: to provide the information necessary for the Steering Committee to take decisions referred to in Recommendation 14.]

Recommendation 14

At its mid-term review meeting, on the basis of the proposals for priorities made by Network Co-ordinating Groups (see Recommendation 13), the Steering Committee should determine which Working Groups will be active in the subsequent Phase. The Steering Committee should also set broad priorities and objectives, including the funds to be attributed to each Network/Working Group.

Recommendation 15

Prior to the end-of-Phase meeting of the Steering Committee, Working Groups to be active in the next Phase (see Recommendation 14), in consultation with Network Co-ordinating Groups as appropriate, should make proposals for specific priorities and objectives. Such proposals should include clear, measurable targets, dates for completion and an estimate of funding required. The proposals should be sent to the Secretariat and copied to Steering Committee members at the same time as the report referred to in Recommendation 5. The Steering Committee should adopt such proposals, provided they fit the broad priorities previously set by it and can be accommodated with available funds.

[Purpose: to enable the Steering Committee to approve detailed proposals on the activities of Working Groups in the next phase.]

Recommendation 16

The Steering Committee should consider making modest funds available to Working Groups that have no funded prioritised activity during any period, where they make proposals to promote continued contact between Working Group members by means other than through formal meetings.

[Purpose: to promote contact between members of Working Groups when inactive.]

Recommendation 17

The restricted range of crops covered by the Multilateral System of the International Treaty should not affect ECP/GR priorities.

Recommendation 18

Although no specific action is currently necessary, ECP/GR National Co-ordinators should monitor developments in the EU and in other international fora that might impact on ECP/GR activities. If, at some future date, developments indicate the need for action within ECP/GR, this should be considered by the Steering Committee.

[Purpose: to ensure the Steering Committee is aware of new developments and their possible impact on ECP/GR activities.]

Recommendation 19

The private sector should be consulted and their views should be taken into account when establishing priorities. Similarly the importance of crops in the market place should also be taken into consideration. However, care must be taken in the weight given to these aspects in finalizing priorities. It is of the utmost importance not to lose sight of the broader and longer-term conservation issues which are a major part of the raison d'être of ECP/GR.

[Purpose: to ensure all relevant information is available to the Steering Committee when considering priorities. It would be for the Steering Committee to decide what weight to be given to information from different sources.]

Recommendation 20

Priorities for Phase VII should focus on 4 main issues:

- Characterisation and evaluation for conservation (e.g. genetic integrity, genetic drift, diversity analysis), and sustainable utilisation of genetic resources (including for traits of agronomic importance) using *inter alia* modern technologies such as molecular markers, genomics and bioinformatics;

- Task sharing through collaboration, rationalisation and specialisation of activities and collections (formation of core collections, identification of most original samples) to maximise efficient use of human and financial resources;

- In situ and on farm conservation, including an analysis of material subject to in situ and on farm conservation, and development of conservation and management techniques in relation to the existing opportunities of ex situ conservation;

- Documentation - establishment, completion, improvement and maintenance of national PGR inventories, central crop databases, including validation of data, integration of characterisation and evaluation data, improved and integrated data management, completion of infrastructure for automatic up-dating and completion of the national inventories and the EURISCO catalogue in the EPGRIS project.

Recommendation 21

Although no respondent referred to it, the Steering Committee is recommended to reflect on the network structure, which could be modified to focus on the utilisation aspects of PGR as follows:

- Cereals Network (no change)
- Forages Network (no change)
- Fruit Network (no change)
- Oil and Protein Crops Network (old Grain Legumes Network + rape + sunflower)

- Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops Network (old Industrial Crops and Potato Network)
- Vegetable, Aromatic and Medicinal Crops Network (old Minor Crops Network + old Vegetable Crops Network)
- Documentation and Information Network (no change)
- In situ and On Farm Conservation Network (no change)
- Inter-regional Co-operation Network (no change).

Recommendation 22

In making proposals for activities in Phase VII, Working Groups should restrict themselves to the 4 priority areas identified above. They should summarise progress to date in achieving those objectives and set out the necessary tasks and expected dates for their completion.

[Purpose: to ensure that Working Groups make relevant proposals for activity in Phase VII.]