

Summary of comments expressed during ECP/GR Working Group and Network meetings on the draft recommendations for Phase VII

The following paragraphs are extracted from the draft reports of recent Network and Network Coordinating Group meetings and refer to specific comments made on the proposals for Phase VII. Other Groups or Networks did not have the opportunity to specifically discuss the recommendations for Phase VII or decided not to do so. All the Working Group Chairs were also invited to send their comments and two of them replied (see below).

Industrial Crops and Potato Network Coordinating Group meeting, 22 October 2002, Bologna, Italy

Suggestions on priorities for Phase VII of ECP/GR

The Group agreed to present the following recommendations to the attention of the Steering Committee:

Flax and Hemp

It was considered important to broaden activities devoted to underutilized crops, such as flax and hemp, for which breeding activities are reducing in Europe, leading to the risk of loss of genetic resources. At the same time these crops are considered important for the future of European agriculture, considering their increasing importance for industry (fibres for cars, textile, pharmaceuticals, etc.) and their beneficial impact in rotation systems and diversification of agriculture.

Recommendations

- Request the Steering Committee to establish a Working Group on fibre crops (flax and hemp), with the objective to facilitate the implementation of the workplan proposed by the *ad hoc* group on flax and to help the development of a European Central Database for Hemp.

Potato

Considering that the potato databases have substantially developed, also with the inclusion of characterization data, the main challenge acknowledged by the WG is the implementation of a system for sharing responsibilities. This is particularly important in the case of potato germplasm, which requires expensive maintenance *in vitro* or in the field.

Recommendation

- Maintain in existence the WG on potato and allow for a third meeting of the WG. This would be used, *inter alia*, to formalize responsibilities for the maintenance of unique potato germplasm clones and to closely monitor their phytosanitary status. An accurate analysis, made by the central database managers, of the state of duplication of the material in the European collections would serve as a basis for the definition of shared responsibilities.

Beta

The level of development of the IDBB is considered very advanced, with a good coverage of the main collections in the world and a good set of characterization data.

Recommendation

- Maintain in existence the WG on *Beta*, with the purpose of facilitating the formalization of responsibilities on a decentralized basis, as well as to address specific issues such as the complementary conservation strategy for *Beta* genetic resources in Europe, with special attention to the conservation of wild populations.

Vegetables Network meeting, 22-24 May, Skierniewice, Poland

After having reviewed the activities of the Working Groups, these were asked to stress priorities among their actions, according to the five priority areas identified and proposed by the Steering Committee task force for Phase VII, i.e.:

1. Documentation
2. Application and use of high technology
3. Task-sharing
4. Characterization and evaluation
5. In situ and on-farm conservation

At the Network level, the five priorities were recognized as relevant for the activities of the Vegetables Network WGs. A specific request to formalize safety-duplication actions in Priority area 3 is made at Network level.

The review of the WG priorities is synthesized in Table 2.

Table 2. Main priorities identified by the Working Groups

| <i>Group</i> | <i>Documentation</i> | <i>Application and use of high technology</i> | <i>Task-sharing</i> | <i>Characterization and evaluation</i> | <i>In situ and on-farm conservation</i> |
|------------------|----------------------|---|---------------------|--|---|
| <i>Allium</i> | | X | X | X | |
| <i>Brassica</i> | X | | X | X | |
| Cucurbits | X | | X | | |
| Leafy Vegetables | X | | X | X | |
| Solanaceae | X | | X | | X |
| Umbellifers | X | | X | | X |

Cereals Network meeting, 3-5 July, Yerevan, Armenia

Priorities at the Cereals Network Level for Phase VII

1. Documentation: most priorities have already been described in the Working Group reports. Additional priorities would be passed on to the information and documentation network.
2. Application and use of high technology: molecular markers, genomics, deployment of molecular markers are a high priority in appropriate genetic resources studies.

3. Task-sharing: a common view from all working groups is needed to harmonise procedures.
4. Characterization and evaluation: no additional priorities over those discussed and presented by the working groups.
5. In situ and On-farm conservation: no additional priorities over those discussed and presented by the working groups.
6. The Network stressed as a high priority the increased, sustainable and continuous utilization of PGR as envisaged by the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Comments from Jesús María Ortiz, Chair of the Working Group on *Vitis* – August 2003

I have read the document that you sent with this mail. I have not comments to it and I agree with the Recommendations for Phase VII.

Comments from Helmut Knüpffer, Chair of the Working Group on Barley – September 2003

Re: Mode of Operation

Issues relevant across the WGs and crop networks should also be dealt with on a wider basis, e.g. through flexible temporary structures such as ad hoc groups or task forces, to avoid redundancy of work between WGs or networks.

Such topics could be, e.g., sharing of responsibilities, handling of pedigree information, general (non crop-specific) aspects of handling of characterization and evaluation data, or proposing solutions how to deal with taxonomic data in EURISCO (such as proposed recently). Ad hoc groups can be a powerful, flexible, yet comparably inexpensive mechanism to work on cross-cutting issues. [this has been reflected in one way or another, in other places of this and other documents, but I would like to strongly support it]

Re: Recommendation 20

Under "Documentation", instead of "the EPGRIS project" should be read the following: "EURISCO and the extension of its functionality and user-friendliness"

Under "Application and use of high technology": Strong support.

Re: Recommendations from Germany

I would like to support especially recommendations 24 and 25.