

the origin of material than the country from which the accession was obtained by the current holder. "Trueness to type" will then be used as the second priority criterion. This was considered useful although any assessment would need to take into account that the fruit genebanks would be expected to contain valuable material which had not been described in any way (e.g. landraces and seedlings) and could therefore not be "verified as true to type". It was suggested that material should therefore be recognized as being either found "true to type" or "genetically unique".

The Chair also highlighted that the inclusion of passport information was important but that the intention of the *Prunus* WG was to insist upon a restricted minimal set of passport data since some passport descriptors were less relevant to the clonally propagated perennial crops. It was generally felt that a first approach would be to consider that MAAs would probably be accessions of varieties which were held in their country of origin. High health status was also suggested as important although it was noted that this should focus on quarantine pests and diseases as it was inevitable that some material would probably hold levels of virus which would be expected to remain practically undetectable. The way to address clones, mutants and "sports" as particular germplasm types was also discussed. It was felt that these should be given lesser priority whilst more genetically diverse material was being considered; however a clear approach to these would be needed in the future.

The conclusion of the discussion was that the Working Group should start making progress toward the development of a European Collection as follows: as a first step, all WG members should consider accessions within their respective collections and identify a set of the most likely candidates to be considered for possible future inclusion in the European Collection. These candidates would be accessions of varieties which were likely to meet most of the criteria, which were clearly known to be of value and to originate in the holding country. These accessions could be used to allow the Group to test the procedure and to allow any further items that required consideration to be identified.

### *Workplan*

- The DB Managers will send to each WG member a standardized form (MCPD format) to be filled in with the obvious accessions of national interest and completed with the requested information concerning priority passport data (**by end May 2013**).
- WG members will return the completed forms to the DB Managers **by end July 2013**.
- The DB Managers, together with the Chair and Vice-Chair, will analyse the data and propose a list of candidate European accessions to the WG **by end September 2013**.

### ***The development of crop-specific standards for Malus and Pyrus***

Jan Engels updated the meeting on the current situation of the generic technical genebank standards that form an integral part of the AEGIS Quality Management System (AQUAS). During the process of developing the generic technical standards for seed germplasm by a number of WGs it was decided to join the FAO Genebank Standards updating process. A number of ECPGR members commented on the draft orthodox seed genebank standards and the Secretariat participated in the Expert Consultation. An advanced draft was discussed by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture during its meeting in July 2011 and subsequently a revised draft orthodox seeds document was issued, including the evaluation standards suggested by the Commission. This version will be sent to the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the Commission and can be found on the FAO and AEGIS Web sites. Beside the addition of a section on evaluation standards, the Commission had requested the development of standards on field genebanks and on *in vitro*/cryopreservation of non-orthodox seeds and vegetatively propagated crops. Both first draft documents were

discussed by an Expert Consultation in January 2012 and final drafts will be prepared for the next Technical Working Group meeting, November 2012.

The meeting was informed that the finalized draft field genebank standards, based on the Expert Consultation, will become available soon and that the *Malus/Pyrus* experts (and others) will be asked for comments. It is planned by FAO to submit a final draft to the Technical Working Group during summer 2012 for discussion and guidance to the Commission. It is foreseen that the final draft will be submitted to the Commission for its meeting in April 2013.

Jan Engels shared with the meeting his perception of the methodology followed by the Expert Consultation and indicated that the draft list of field genebank technical standards currently covers the ten technical areas listed below. Examples of the draft texts were provided for the technical standards in sections 3, 4 and 10 (for details see the presentation):

1. Choice of locations,
2. Acquisition of germplasm,
3. **Establishment of field collection,**
4. **Field management,**
5. Regeneration and propagation,
6. Characterization,
7. Evaluation,
8. Documentation,
9. Distribution, and
10. **Security and safety-duplication.**

### ***General discussion and plan of action***

The WG remarked that the draft general standards for the three sections presented by J. Engels made good logical sense, were realistic and useful. However, several members also commented that it was critically important that the final field genebank standards document be short, easy to read and to use in daily work. It was suggested that the document should have the standards presented in the final document at the beginning, to be listed in a logical order and that the necessary explanations regarding the use of the standards be easily accessible.

### ***Workplan***

- The WG will analyse the Commission-approved field genebank standards and decide if and which crop-specific technical standards are required and subsequently, develop these (**within 6 months after the final publication**).

### **How to enhance the efficiency of the *Malus/Pyrus* Working Group?**

The Chair led the discussion on how to ensure progress in implementing the workplan between meetings and invited the Group to suggest solutions for improvement.

The Chair felt that the current system of formal WG meetings held at such long intervals due to ECPGR budget constraints was not convenient. One of the drawbacks is the change in membership from one meeting to the next, making it difficult to develop agreed plans for the future. However, the interim ad hoc meetings had been successful in addressing specific tasks, and increased cost-efficiency had been achieved by linking ad hoc meetings together or to WG meetings to reduce travel costs. It was also observed that significant additional value was gained during this WG meeting through the act of bringing together people with a variety of skills and experience, and it was noted that a number of wider potential