



# Revised simplified procedure for the selection and flagging of accessions for the European Collection

(Final version, 30 December 2013)

N.B. This version supersedes the previous “simplified selection procedure” (Version 6 – 24.11.2010).

## Introduction

The identification of the ‘unique and important’ accessions from European genebanks for inclusion in the [European Collection](#) has already been mentioned in [A Strategic Framework for the Implementation of a European Genebank Integrated System \(AEGIS\) – A Policy Guide](#) (ECPGR 2009). Since then different approaches were tried out by the Working Groups. In all cases, the Steering Committee agreed that ‘Selection Requirements’ formed the basis of the selection process. With the agreement on the concept of Most Appropriate Accessions (MAAs) to select among duplicate accessions the most appropriate one and on the respective roles of National Coordinators and Working Groups, several Working Groups had initiated the process of selecting candidate European Accessions for approval by the respective National Coordinators. Later on, a few countries also started the selection process of accessions maintained in their genebanks; the selected accessions either have originated in the country or are expected to be unique.

The above-mentioned selection procedures followed proposed and agreed steps, prepared by the Secretariat and approved by the AEGIS Advisory Committee. However, it has become increasingly clear that those steps were heavily leaning on the assumptions that (i) the data available in [EURISCO](#) and the [Central Crop Databases](#) were of high quality – which proved not to be the case – and (ii) the various parties involved would be able to quickly respond and agree on proposed candidate accessions – which also turned out not to be applicable.

Consequently, the Secretariat drafted a ‘revised simplified procedure’ for the selection and flagging of European Accessions. In the revised procedure presented below, countries will play the central role and it is proposed that the Working Groups assume an advisory and monitoring role rather than a central role in selecting the European Accessions.

## Revised procedure

1. Upon signature of the [AEGIS Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) by the country and of the [Associate Membership Agreement](#) with their respective National Coordinator, Associate Members are expected to recommend accessions they maintain to their National Coordinator for inclusion into the European Collection. In addition or alternatively, they may offer specific services (e.g. regeneration of material) or expertise related to conservation of accessions that have been included in the European Collection to ECPGR, also through their National Coordinator.

2. When recommending accessions, Associate Members should keep in mind the following considerations:

2.1 Candidate accessions recommended for inclusion in the European Collection should:

- a. meet the [Selection requirements](#) approved by the Steering Committee (Box 1 below);
- b. be included in EURISCO;
- c. offer no obstacles to be made accessible to recipients expeditiously according to the terms and conditions of the Standard MTA of the International Treaty.

#### **Box 1. Selection requirements**

1. Material **under the management and control of the member countries** and their Associate Members, in the public domain and offered by the associate members for inclusion into AEGIS.
2. **Genetically unique** within AEGIS, to the best available knowledge (i.e. genetically distinct accessions; assessment based on available data and/or on the recorded history of the accession).
3. **Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture** as defined in the International Treaty as well as medicinal and ornamental species.
4. **European origin or introduced germplasm** that is of actual or potential importance to Europe (for breeding, research, education or for historical and cultural reasons).

2.2 In order to avoid unnecessary duplication of AEGIS accessions Associate Members are expected to consider first as candidate AEGIS accessions those that have originated in the country (i.e. collected, selected or bred in that country) or to apply other criteria indicating the uniqueness of the accessions.

2.3 Accessions having been directly deposited in the genebank of an Associate Member as material originally collected in another country by the Associate Member itself or by another institution/individual worldwide form a second category of accessions that Associate Members may propose as candidate AEGIS accessions. These accessions should also be given high priority as this type of material is very likely to be unique and/or unavailable elsewhere.

2.4 If it would be noted at any subsequent stage, i.e. while flagging the accessions in EURISCO (see Article 5), or during assessment of the composition of the European Collection by the Working Groups (see Article 6), that the selection and inclusion of accessions in the European Collection as described above has resulted in unnecessary duplication of accessions, the respective Associate Members and/or National Coordinators holding duplicates, are encouraged to reach consensus on the most appropriate AEGIS accessions. This should be seen as an opportunity to reduce redundancy in the collection and not as an obligation to dispose of the duplicate accessions. When meeting the agreed standards, accessions provided by the country of origin should be given the preference, unless otherwise agreed. Such decisions have to be recorded/updated accordingly in EURISCO. The ECPGR Secretariat will make itself available to facilitate this process whenever requested by the involved parties.

3. Associate Members provide their National Coordinator with the list of recommended accessions for consideration and formal inclusion in the European Collection.
4. The National Coordinator considers the recommendations made by the individual Associate Members of his/her country and makes the final decision of accepting or rejecting these recommendations. Examples of reasons why a National Coordinator might reject accessions are provided in the footnote<sup>1</sup>. He/she will have to ensure that the agreed conservation and availability conditions will be met.
5. The final step of including accessions in the European Collection is their flagging in EURISCO as European Accessions by filling in the corresponding field ('AEGIS status'). This flagging is done by the EURISCO National Inventory Focal Point, under instructions from the National Coordinator.
6. European Accessions flagged in EURISCO are expected to be only un-flagged in specific cases, including: the death of a given accession; an agreement between two or more countries on the most appropriate accession among duplicates; the occurrence of a *force majeure* situation. EURISCO will allow changes in the composition of the European Collection to be tracked.
7. The **Working Groups** will:
  - i. Monitor the composition of the European Crop Collection (including the existence of possible gaps and ways to close these, and the presence of duplicates<sup>2</sup>). The Working Group Chair should send any suggestions or concerns on the composition of the European Collection to the Secretariat for follow-up with the National Coordinators and/or the Steering Committee.
  - ii. Monitor the management of the European Crop Collection, including adherence to the [AEGIS Quality System \(AQUAS\)](#). Details on the monitoring responsibility will be included in the *Monitoring and reporting Guidelines* that are currently being developed.
  - iii. Prepare annual workplans for regeneration and other activities that need coordination at the European or sub-regional level. Details on the scope of such workplans will be included in the *Guidelines for the Management of the European Collection* that will be developed.

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<sup>1</sup> Examples:

- When the National Coordinator concludes that the selection requirements were not respected (i.e. inclusion of forest accessions or accessions that are not under the government control and/or not in the public domain);
- When the National Coordinator finds out that selection criteria have been used that have not been preventively agreed with the National Coordinator;
- When the National Coordinator realizes that, for the given accessions, the Associate Member would not be in a condition to guarantee long-term conservation, to guarantee availability based on the SMTA and/or to meet within a reasonable time the AQUAS standards;
- When financial constraints or political decisions at the national level exist that would stand in the way of accepting accessions, beyond the control of the Associate Member.

<sup>2</sup> Please note the availability of specific software DuplicateFinder to identify duplicates. For details see the [AEGIS Duplicate Finder website](#).