

Informal meeting of *Avena* Working Group members and partners, 13 July 2016, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation

(held as a side event of the [10th International Oat Conference](#), 11-15 July 2016)

Minutes prepared by Tim Langdon and Andreas Katsiotis

Participants

***Avena* WG members**

Trond Buraas, Norway
Peter Hozlár, Slovakia
Andreas Katsiotis, Cyprus
Elina Kiviharju, Finland
Tim Langdon, United Kingdom
Boguslaw Łapiński, Poland
Igor Loskutov, Russian Federation
Edyta Paczos-Grzęda, Poland
Elena Prats, Spain

Observers

Axel Diederichsen, Canada
Nezha Saidi, Morocco
Ben Schmehe, Germany

Andreas Katsiotis welcomed the group and thanked Igor Loskutov for his hospitality and excellent organization. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss ways to reinvigorate the ECPGR *Avena* Working Group (WG) and to identify areas of common interest that would merit funding. Considering that the new mode of operation of ECPGR would no longer assemble the full WG, Andreas welcomed suggestions on how to proceed.

The example was made of the Forages WG, which remained active by canvassing ideas by email and Skype, which focussed on EURISCO and established criteria for data standards. Workshops were also held on the back of other meetings with care to arrange workshop content in advance. Discussions were posted online and a follow-on workshop request submitted and funded.

Igor Loskutov suggested that the European *Avena* Database (maintained by JKI) could be continued, unless an alternative could be provided. There was discussion over the need to identify and eliminate duplicate entries, which could be as high as 40%. There was a need to address European genebank material which could not be met by the ongoing North American based initiatives such as the genotyping initiative Oat Global alone.

The recent ECPGR-funded collecting activities in Spain sparked a discussion about recent devolution of germplasm safeguard responsibilities to Spanish regional governments. There are now three Spanish contacts for access to germplasm collections.

Nezha Saidi pointed out the urgency in collecting Moroccan germplasm before habitats were lost, and discussed relevant changes in local legislation being proposed. She outlined some of the major collections for which she has responsibility. These are not readily accessible for

use outside the country and no systematic regeneration of stock has been carried out since 1985 due to lack of funds. Without international exchange it is unlikely that external funding will be found.

The Slovakian collections have recently been expanded from 130 accessions to well over a thousand in response to breeders' requests. Little duplication is expected but there are few/no landraces. IPK holds the main collection of Slovak landraces, however.

Elina Kiviharju confirmed NordGen's willingness to be involved in any European initiative.

Bogusław Łapiński described the current characterization and regeneration regime for the 2572 accessions in the Polish genebank – 70 accessions are being assessed for characters such as fibre content at any time, 30 accessions are regenerated per year. In addition new cultivars are archived. Nine sub-populations of *A. machrostachya* are being maintained.

After further discussion of limits to collecting and maintaining germplasm in various member countries, Andreas thanked the group for its participation and expressed his willingness to prepare an application for ECPGR funding in the current round after communicating with the *Avena* Working Group members.