

**Joint meeting of the Global Crop Diversity Trust and  
the European Genebank Integration System (AEGIS) project Steering Committee**  
21 June 2005, 8:30 – 13:00, FAO room B640, Rome, Italy

**MEETING REPORT**

Date: 25/07/2005

**Participants:**

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| 1. Birgitte Lund - AEGIS Coordinator            | 9. Jane Toll, IPGRI                            |
| 2. Eva Thörn, AEGIS-SC Chair                    | 10. Ehsan Dulloo, IPGRI                        |
| 3. Ayfer Tan, Turkey                            | 11. Elcio Guimaraes, FAO                       |
| 4. Bela Bartha, Pro Specie Rara,<br>Switzerland | 12. Sonia Dias, IPGRI                          |
| 5. Frank Begemann, ZADI, Germany                | 13. Geoff Hawtin, Trust Executive<br>Secretary |
| 6. Geert Kleijer, Switzerland                   | 14. Brigitte Laliberté, Trust Secretariat      |
| 7. Lorenzo Maggioni, ECP/GR<br>Coordinator      | 15. Ruth Raymond, Trust Secretariat            |
| 8. Jan Engels, IPGRI                            |  |

**Introduction**

The overall goal of the AEGIS project is to ensure conservation and continuing use of existing crop genetic diversity in Europe. The guiding principles are the long-term conservation, high quality of and easy access to genetic material, the avoidance of duplication of conservation efforts and making better use of existing but dispersed capacities and capabilities. The goal of the Global Crop Diversity Trust is to secure the long-term conservation of crop diversity for food security worldwide. The purpose of the Trust is to support over the long-term efficient and effective systems for conserving, adding value to and increasing the availability of the world's most important collections of crop diversity. To achieve this purpose, the Trust is currently supporting the development of regional and global crop conservation strategies that will guide the allocations of funds.

Seeing the mutual interest between AEGIS and the Trust in support to efficient and effective conservation systems, it was proposed to hold a joint meeting between the Trust and AEGIS during the AEGIS Steering Committee meeting. The objectives of the meetings were to share information on the AEGIS project and the planned elements of a European conservation strategy for the efficient and effective conservation of PGR collections, the Trust and its experience in supporting the development of conservation strategies and to discuss collaboration on possible approaches for the development of a European conservation strategy.

The following background documents were made available to the participants in advance:

- Trust: Conservation strategies overview paper
- Trust: Guidelines for the development of regional AND crop conservation strategies
- Trust: Update on the regional and global crop conservation strategies – June 2005
- AEGIS project document
- AEGIS first meeting report
- AEGIS draft Vision paper

**Presentations**

Dr Eva Thorn from the Swedish Biodiversity Centre and Chair of the AEGIS Steering Committee presented an update on the AEGIS project. AEGIS is a two year feasibility study funded by the ECP/GR based on 4 model crops: *Allium*, *Avena*, *Brassica*, *Prunus*. AEGIS will come up with a set of recommendations, to be endorsed by the ECP/GR Steering Committee in July 2006, on how to develop an integrated genebank system in Europe based

on the analysis of organizational, structural, technical, legal and financial aspects. Dr Thorn also provided an update on the AEGIS vision for the future.

Brigitte Laliberté from the Trust Secretariat gave an introduction to the Trust (eligibility principles, criteria, and conservation activities), to the development of the regional and global crop conservation strategies (the process and update on progress) and presented some points on the complementary approaches of the regional and global crop conservation strategies and to possibly links with AEGIS. All regional conservation strategies are expected to be completed by end of 2005 and the global crop strategies by end of 2007.

## Discussions

Both groups expressed a lot of interest in sharing information between the initiatives and in establishing close collaboration, particularly sharing experience on the development of regional conservation strategies and also expertise within the ECP/GR working groups for the global crop conservation strategies.

The development of the European conservation strategy would be undertaken in consultation with the ECP/GR-SC being the platform to endorse the process and the recommendations. The AEGIS project extends to the pan-European region which includes countries not formally part of ECP/GR but which have nominated a focal person and are participating as observers (Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine). The geographical coverage therefore includes Russia, CAC the Balkans, Cyprus, and Israel.

The main points of discussions were:

- AEGIS long-term vision
- how AEGIS will extend the systems developed on the 4 model crops (*Allium*, *Avena*, *Brassica* and *Prunus*) to the rest of the crops if importance in Europe
- mechanism for the regional networks to monitor the implementation of the conservation strategies
- the involvement of NGO's (and also the private sector) particularly in setting standards and in ensuring links with users (mainly an impact at the national level) and ensuring a good representation of the NGOs in the process of developing the conservation strategies
- collaboration towards the development of germplasm management and quality standards to ensure best cost effective practices, and in particular:
  - developing standards acceptable at the global level that are transparent and accountable
  - using quality as an incentive for funding vs quantity
  - capacity building and public awareness activities in ensuring that standards are applied
  - learning from the experience of some European institutes in genebank certification (eg. CGN and ISO certification)

Regarding the germplasm management standards, it was mentioned that the Forages WG has had good experience at defining standards. It was proposed to work with the ECP/GR crop working groups to develop the standards (agree on minimum standards) and the quality insurance principles. A joint Trust/AEGIS meeting to specifically address this issue could be organized bringing in key players from different regions and be followed by training workshops. It was proposed to take advantage of the CGN Genebank management training workshops planned in WANA and Eastern Africa in 2006 to build capacity of the priority collections.

In order to ensure implementation and monitoring of the system, standards should be published and recommended.

The development of a system of genebank certification was suggested and should involve the organizations such as IPGRI, FAO, ISF, UPOV and other international agencies.

The Trust is planning to organize, towards end of 2005 or beginning of 2006, a workshop of the regional and crop conservation strategies people to discuss rational conservation approaches. This meeting could also include discussions on quality management systems and approaches to conservation standards.

The Trust is seeking feedback from AEGIS and ECP/GR members on how it can best support the process to develop a European strategy and the identification of collections of priority for Trust support. AEGIS suggested that, in consultation with ECP/GR, a discussion could be initiated on the identification of collections that need urgent support, in line with the long term vision. This could be discussed at the following AEGIS project partners' meeting (22-24 June 2005).

### **Recommendations**

AEGIS and the Trust agreed to:

- share information, experience and lessons learnt from the process of the regional and global crop strategies
- share the AEGIS long-term vision paper with the Trust
- share the Trust discussion papers on the development of rational approaches with AEGIS for feedback by the end of July
- ensure a strong involvement of European institutions in Global Crop Conservation Strategies and particularly linking with the *Brassica* and *Avena* crop groups of AEGIS and the other relevant ECP/GR Crop Working Groups
- jointly organize a meeting on strategy development addressing topics such as management quality standards, rational approaches (end of 2005/beginning of 2006) with key people involved in the strategies and ensuring links with stakeholders, including NGOs
- Invite the Trust in the AEGIS Final Conference in Mid 2006
- jointly seek funds and partners to support *ex situ* conservation in Europe, build capacity with other regions, organized training activities on genebank management (quality and insurance standards) as well as policy issues and public awareness