

Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

Progress report for the period June 2006 – June 2008

I. RESULTS			
a. Comparison of workplan (milestones) versus results obtained			
Workplan (milestones)	Which results have been obtained?	Which aims/goals have not been (fully) reached?	Completeness ratio (%)
Milestone 1 MAP WG Meeting (3 rd) in 2007	MAP WG meeting in Olomouc (26 – 28 June 2007), review of the work done till June 2007 within each of the member countries, work plan has been recommended	WG Meeting Report not published, it is in finalization (revision) phase	99 %
Milestone 2 Development of descriptors for in situ and ex situ conservation for 10 model species (<i>Achillea millefolium</i> agg., <i>Artemisia absinthium</i> , <i>Carum carvi</i> , <i>Gentiana lutea</i> , <i>Hypericum perforatum</i> , <i>Melissa officinalis</i> , <i>Mentha</i> spp., <i>Origanum vulgare</i> , <i>Salvia officinalis</i> , <i>Thymus</i> spp.)	5 categories of descriptors (Passport - accession descriptors + collecting descriptors; Management; Environment and Site, Characterization and Evaluation) have been identified, 4 categories elaborated, harmonized and used in surveying MAP distribution on the national levels of member countries as well as in characterization /evaluation of genetic resources	Biodiversity evaluation and comments are expected by the group	100%
Milestone 3 Monitoring (surveying) <i>in situ</i> and collecting of seed material, <i>Ex situ</i> conservation and regeneration of autochthonous MAP accessions (10 model species) in each member country	Ongoing activity in 2007, 2008. Specimens provided to the MAP national genebank collections	Results to be presented at the next (fourth) WG meeting	100 %
Milestone 4 Submission of collaborative project proposal “ Conservation and characterization of oregano (<i>Origanum vulgare</i> L.) wild populations in Europe ”	Interested WG members prepared their individual information - state of the art, workplan, estimated costs for surveys, characterization and conservation of oregano wild populations. Chair compiled received information from project partners. Majority of partners agreed to support the project realization by co-financing the project by national funds.	Additional funds for some partners, who don't have national budget for conservation activities, have not been provided yet	70 %
Milestone 5 Update and proactive management of the relational database by WG Chair	Ongoing activity on the National level (Slovenia) coordinated by Chair of the WG Results to be presented at the next (fourth) WG meeting	Characterization/evaluation and environmental data in elaboration;	50%

b. Contribution to the four ECP/GR priorities for Phase VII
<p>1. Characterization/evaluation (including modern technologies) In member countries MAP accessions (10 model species) are successively characterized/evaluated according to their morphological, chemical and cytological characteristics, defined in a crop specific descriptors. The results have been presented during the third WG Meeting in 2007. At that occasion a professional discussion was opened in order to find the most appropriate molecular tools for assessment of genetic variability among populations of 10 target species. The results from the field work done in 2008 will be presented at the next WG meeting, which will be held in the second part of ECPGR phase VIII, probably in 2012.</p>
<p>2. Task sharing Responsibilities for the revision and finalization of some descriptor lists among the 10 model species selected by the WG were assigned to new members. Ali Osman Sari (Turkey) took over the responsibility for <i>Melissa officinalis</i> and <i>Salvia officinalis</i>, replacing Jenő Bernáth and Hajri Haska/Tatjana Dishnica, respectively. Ieva Zukauskā (Latvia) will be responsible for <i>Origanum</i>, replacing J. Bernáth.</p>
<p>3. <i>In situ</i>/on-farm conservation and development Protocols for assessing the natural distribution of natural populations of target MAP species have been developed. Each country should (dependent on disposal of national funds) make an inventory and survey on distribution pattern of the autochthonous populations of 10 model species. The survey results on distribution of MAP populations, on the degree of potential diversity drop and data on eco-geographical characteristics of natural habitats were registered. The seed material from native populations were collected, recommendations on regeneration of seed/vegetative material were dispatched, so member countries had opportunity to regenerate the collected material, seed it into <i>ex situ</i> collections for characterization/evaluation in 2006, 2007, 2008.</p>
<p>4. Documentation and information The background information on EURISCO descriptors (which are an essential part of Passport descriptors) of registered populations/accessions obtained during national surveys, which should be sent to national focal point coordinators, were provided to WG members. In each member country documentation on passport descriptors has been provided, the exchange format has to be made in ECPGR phase VIII.</p>
c. Relevance (regional / international)
<p>Did your work and/or outputs have inter-regional dimension? (if it did, give precisions) Information on surveys and mapping of MAPs in member countries will enable regional and international review of distribution and estimation of abundance of natural populations of 10 model species, together with registration/evaluation of eco-geographical data on their natural habitats and monitoring the impacts with bad influence on the status of observed populations. Such a review will enable estimation of the level of endangerness of target species in the European region and in case of noticed biodiversity drop, actions should be undertaken to control or remove the factors that cause the threats, the detailed management or recovery should be planned and implemented through natural resource managers, local communities and policy makers.</p>
d. Lessons learnt (recommendations)
<p>Which lessons learnt are also relevant for other Working Groups? Collecting, Environment and Site descriptors, as well as approaches, developed for survey (expedition) purposes, could be used by members of other WG or Networks (for example <i>In situ</i> Network, Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops Network). The methodologies and background knowledge used by ECPGR MAP WG and <i>In situ</i> Network should be reviewed and updated in ECPGR phase VIII in order to harmonize work and to involve the latest scientific and professional information in recommendations for other working groups/Networks within ECPGR and worldwide.</p>

II. ANALYSIS	
a. Bottlenecks	
What were the experienced bottlenecks?	How do you plan to solve the bottlenecks?
1. Time consuming morphological, chemical and citological characterization/evaluation. National financing insufficient.	Application of international projects.
b. Internal support needed (Secretariat, Steering Committee, other Working Groups, etc.)	
<p>Considering the 25% of the budget to be devoted to project activities during Phase VIII of ECPGR, the Group was thinking of applying a collaborative project/study on the distribution and characterization of <i>Origanum</i> spp. populations, widely grown in Europe and present in all member countries as representative species. According to the Group, the prioritization mechanism is preferable, since the MAP WG is a recent and very large one. The Group is involved with a large number of taxa and the majority of the plant populations live in the wild (<i>in situ</i>). Moreover, no seed company is interested in financing activities for <i>in situ</i> conservation of MAPs, therefore she thought that this WG should be prioritized in terms of funds by ECPGR.</p>	
c. External resources needed (collaboration, external funding)	
<p>Upgrading of information system (relational database) is presently limited to one country, external funds are needed to develop international database. The database incorporates all Environment and Site descriptors, Characterization and Evaluation descriptors (up to now for 10 model species). The data (survey data, specimen characters, environment and site) management system anticipates a standardized input/output formats. Continuation and proactive management of the database and its internationalization has been foreseen for ECP/GR Phase VIII with the collaboration/support of all MAP WG members, Documentation & Information Network and Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops Network.</p>	