



European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR)

Phase VIII (2009-2013)

AEGIS section extracted from:

**Progress Report for the 12th Meeting of the
Steering Committee
14-16 December 2010, Bratislava, Slovakia**

3. AEGIS INITIATIVE FOR “A EUROPEAN GENE BANK INTEGRATED SYSTEM”

The major milestones reached in the development of AEGIS in the first two years of Phase VIII are summarized below:

- On 22 April 2009 the AEGIS Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was sent to the ECPGR National Coordinators for signature by the respective country authorities.
- On 23 July 2009, upon signature of the tenth country eligible for membership, AEGIS entered into force.
- By the end of November 2010 the following 25 countries had returned the signed MoU to Bioversity International: Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. In addition, in ten countries, nineteen AEGIS Associate Membership Agreements between institutions holding *ex situ* accessions and the respective National Coordinators were concluded.
- In September 2009 the Secretariat, in close collaboration with Theo van Hintum (CGN, The Netherlands), finalized the discussion paper “Quality Management System for AEGIS”, AQUAS in short. The paper includes a definition of a quality management system, the principles of such a system, the operational framework including responsibilities, and the implementation steps of AQUAS.
- In September 2009 the Steering Committee approved the Terms of Reference and the composition of the newly established AEGIS Advisory Committee. The Committee consists of Dave Astley (UK), Ladislav Dotlačil (Czech Republic), Gert Poulsen (Denmark), Anke van den Hurk (The Netherlands) and Vladimir Meglič (Slovenia).
- Two calls for proposals for the Competitive Grant Scheme were launched on 26 June 2009 and 13 October 2010, inviting ECPGR Networks, Network Coordinating Groups and Working Groups to submit proposals. A total of 17 proposals were received for the first call and 3 were granted. The deadline for applications to the second call for proposals is 31 December 2010.
- On 3 December 2009 a project proposal (EUROGENEBANK in short), coordinated by the ECPGR Secretariat, was submitted to a Call under the Seventh Framework Programme of the EU (Research Infrastructures – Support to existing research infrastructures – Integrating Activities). The proposal successfully passed the thresholds of eligibility, but was not funded due to a shortage of funds.
- • The following publication, previously printed as a “Discussion paper”, was made available on the Web in a revised form and as a “Policy guide”: ECPGR. 2009. A Strategic Framework for the Implementation of a European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS). A Policy Guide. European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR). Bioversity International, Rome, Italy.
- A new dedicated Web site for AEGIS was developed and launched in December 2009 (<http://www.aegis.cgiar.org/>).
- The Secretariat developed a template for an operational genebank manual. This document was tested by NordGen, Sweden and IPK, Germany and it was presented in various WG meetings. It was finally approved by the AEGIS Advisory Committee and the final version is available on the AEGIS Web site (September 2010).
- The Secretariat has been actively involved in the process of revision of the FAO Genebank Standards, with the intention to ensure the participation of the EPGR community in the revision process. The first draft of the revised standards is expected to be circulated to the ECPGR Networks for comments in early 2011. The revised FAO Genebank Standards document could eventually be adopted for AEGIS.
- A “simplified” procedure for the selection of European Accessions has been prepared by the Secretariat (24 November 2010) and it has been proposed for adoption by the Working Groups
- The Secretariat attended several WG and other meetings, presenting the concept and status of development of AEGIS. Presentations given are available on the AEGIS Web site.