

European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks (ECP/GR)



AEGIS section extracted from:

2004 Progress Report

6. AEGIS project

During its ninth Steering Committee meeting in October 2003 in Izmir, Turkey, the ECP/GR Steering Committee (SC) approved funding of a feasibility study project on sharing of responsibilities as a possible model for A European Genebank Integration System (AEGIS). The ECP/GR Secretariat formulated a draft proposal which was circulated to the ECP/GR SC in December 2003 for selection of an **AEGIS Steering Committee, terms of reference of project manager, project partners, and model crops**. The commented proposal was finalized in January 2004 by the ECP/GR Secretariat and it has been approved by the ECP/GR SC.

A **Web Site on the AEGIS project** was launched in May 2004 containing all information, relevant documents, meeting reports and updates on activities. An AEGIS logo has been designed and published. The AEGIS Web site is available on line at <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/AEGIS/AEGIS.htm/>.

The **first meeting of the AEGIS Steering Committee** was held at IPGRI in Rome on 1 March 2004. Eva Thörn was elected Chair of the SC. The AEGIS Project Document "Sharing of long-term conservation responsibilities as a possible model for 'A European Genebank Integration System' AEGIS" was finalized. The Project Document together with the report from the meeting can be found on the AEGIS homepage.

Birgitte Lund was appointed as **Project Manager** for development of a European Genebank Integration System and started working at IPGRI Headquarters in Rome on 17 August 2004.

During September 2004 eleven countries via their respective National Coordinators, the Nordic countries via the director of the Nordic Gene Bank, and the South East Europe Development Network on Plant Genetic Resources (SEEDNet) via the SEEDNet coordinator have been invited and confirmed their participation in the AEGIS project. Information about the crop(s) and institutions for which each project partner is responsible is published on the AEGIS home page.

An informal sub-group of the AEGIS SC met in Rome in November 2004 to discuss progress of the project and prepare the **start-up AEGIS meeting for the project partners**, which was held on 26-27 November 2004 at the Nordic Gene Bank in Alnarp, Sweden. The aim of the meeting was to inform and update the project partners and for the project partners to prepare a workplan for the next two years based upon presentations and the AEGIS Project Document. The report of the AEGIS start-up meeting, including the workplans of the *Allium*, *Avena*, *Brassica* and *Prunus* subgroups, is available from the AEGIS Web site.

Germany and the Netherlands have independently made **additional voluntary contributions** to the AEGIS project of 5000 euro each. Similar contributions from other ECP/GR countries could be an option, to obtain missing funds for the budget of the second year of the project.

A **meeting of the AEGIS Steering Committee** is planned to take place in June 2005 in Rome, followed by a meeting of the AEGIS SC with representatives of the Global Crop Diversity Trust and by the Mid-term Project Partners meeting. These meetings are expected to bring the project forward, with the possible endorsement of a vision paper for A European Genebank Integration System. This paper would set out what the ideal scenario the AEGIS Steering Committee hopes to achieve through the AEGIS project. The objective is to share this vision widely with the ECP/GR technical partners and eventually with policy-makers in Europe.