



## European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR)

**AEGIS section extracted from:  
2006 Progress Report**

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

The AEGIS feasibility study continued in 2006 with a combined meeting of the *Allium* and *Brassica* subgroups (Prague, Czech Republic, 20-21 January 2006).

Activities devoted to fundraising consisted of the preparation of an expression of interest for a call of proposals under the COST scheme, which was submitted by 30 May 2006. A targeted action project application, including Bioversity as coordinator and 11 other partners was also submitted by 30 June to the second call for proposals under Regulation 870/2004 (AGRI GEN RES). Unfortunately, none of these initiatives were successful.

Final reports of the outcome of the feasibility study of the four crop subgroups were prepared and provided the basis for the final technical and financial project report and for an update of the draft Strategy Framework Discussion Paper prepared by Bioversity. These documents were submitted to the ECPGR Steering Committee at its meeting in Riga (September 2006) and are available from the ECPGR Web site ([http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/SteeringCommittee/SC10/SC10\\_backdocs.htm](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/SteeringCommittee/SC10/SC10_backdocs.htm)).

The ECPGR Steering Committee recognized the relevance of the reports resulting from the feasibility study and made positive comments about the concept of AEGIS. It was felt that the AEGIS project had made substantial progress since its initiation. It was also agreed that further considerations of the practical aspects of implementation of the AEGIS projects were needed and it was decided to re-allocate part of the funds (ca. 150 000 euro) from the existing ECPGR budget, to be dedicated to appointing a 50% Coordinator for 2 years and other supporting measures (see the Report of the Tenth meeting of the ECPGR Steering Committee).

In December 2006, Jan Engels was appointed by Bioversity as AEGIS Coordinator as of 1 January 2007. His first initiatives consisted in the establishment of Terms of Reference and composition of a new AEGIS Advisory Committee and a Local (Bioversity) Task Force. The Strategy Framework paper is being finalized by the Bioversity Local Task Force, based on the findings of the four model crop groups, in close consultation with the AEGIS Advisory Committee, and is being prepared for endorsement by the ECPGR Steering Committee and subsequent publication.

The next steps of the AEGIS initiative, undertaken within the framework of ECPGR, will need to be carried out with inputs from the ECPGR Steering Committee members and Bioversity staff. These include the following:

- Development of a Collective Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), containing details on responsibilities that each country agrees to assume for accessions included as part of the European Collection;
- Development of model institutional contracts, containing details on responsibilities that collaborating institutes agree to assume for the conservation/distribution of accessions of a given crop of the European Collection;
- Development of a Quality Management System for long-term conservation of the AEGIS Collection;
- Surveying (potential) capacities and availability amongst European institutes to develop European task-sharing in the context of AEGIS;
- Assessing economic implications of AEGIS implementation (i.e. operational costs prior and after the introduction of AEGIS);
- Work closely with four model crops in implementing European collections;
- Influence and seek funding in order to carry out the implementation process through national commitments, regional commitments (i.e. EU), global opportunities and project proposals.

The **Web pages on AEGIS** will be revised and kept up to date in the course of 2007.