



European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR)

Phase IX (2014–2018)

Annual Progress Report
January-December 2014

AEGIS section extracted from Annual Progress Report

2.3. AEGIS

2.3.1. AEGIS membership

By the end of December 2014 the 34 countries listed below had returned their signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to Bioversity International. Italy signed the MoU in March 2014. A total of 57 AEGIS Associate Membership Agreements between institutions holding ex situ accessions and the respective National Coordinators were concluded in 26 AEGIS member countries, compared to 54 Associate Members and 26 countries respectively in 2013. The number in brackets following the member country names below indicates the number of Associate Members in those countries:

Albania (2), Austria (1), Azerbaijan (2), Belarus (9), Belgium (1), Bosnia and Herzegovina (0), Bulgaria (1), Croatia (2), Cyprus (1), Czech Republic (8), Denmark (1), Estonia (2), Finland (1), Georgia (1), Germany (3), Hungary (1), Iceland (1), Ireland (0), Italy (0), Latvia (3), Lithuania (0), Montenegro (0), the Netherlands (2), Norway (1), Poland (1), Portugal (0), Romania (1), Slovakia (1), Slovenia (5), Sweden (1), Switzerland (1), Turkey (1), Ukraine (0) and the United Kingdom (3).

The membership status is kept updated online (see the respective webpages [AEGIS membership](#) and [Associate Member Institutions](#)).

2.3.2. Status of the European Collection

By end December 2014 a total of 12 500 accessions from four countries were included in the European Collection.

- The Netherlands: 5864
- Germany: 5324
- Czech Republic: 1222 (of which 1078 added in 2014)
- Croatia: 90 (all added in 2014).

The [European Collection webpage](#) is regularly updated.

In September 2014 the Secretariat circulated to all National Coordinators and AEGIS Associate Members a White paper on the slow rate of inclusion of accessions in the European Collection, inviting them to share their experiences and thus contribute in the identification and solving of bottlenecks. Following the few comments received from the SC, the Secretariat was invited by the ExCo to write a paper highlighting with clear evidence what the benefits of AEGIS would be for the member countries. The Secretariat was also invited to liaise with countries in the process of implementing AEGIS with targeted help and provision of information on the necessary steps.

2.3.3. AEGIS Competitive Grant Scheme

The final report of the following project was received and published on the [AEGIS Grant Scheme webpage](#):

'Identification of old potato clones having unreliable variety name by means of fingerprinting using microsatellite (SSR) markers to assist in setting up the AEGIS collection for potato cultivars' (Centre for Genetic Resources (CGN), the Netherlands).

Fingerprinting of over 400 accessions from 9 countries were studied, allowing the identification of uncertain accessions, fine-tuning of a methodology and drafting of recommendations for further investigations. The results are useful to help countries to prioritize their accessions for inclusion into AEGIS.

2.3.4. AQUAS (AEGIS Quality System)

- **Operational genebank manuals**

The Crop Research Institute (CRI) Prague, Czech Republic, and the Estonian Crop Research Institute, Jõgeva, prepared their genebank manuals using the provided template. The Secretariat provided comments and the final versions were awaited.

- **Crop-specific standards**

A start was made to contact individual Working Group Chairs during 2014 to verify the formal acceptance of the FAO Genebank Standards for PGRFA and/or to provide crop-specific standards. The WGs were requested to indicate and justify any modification or addition made to meet their own needs, according to their crop specificities.

In order to facilitate easy access to the standards it was decided to integrate the crop-specific standards into one table that will include the general FAO Genebank Standards for 1) orthodox seed germplasm, 2) field genebanks and 3) in vitro cultures and cryopreservation (as relevant to the crop). This work is in progress.

- **Establishment of a monitoring and reporting plan**

A draft document on Record keeping, reporting and monitoring of the European Collection, prepared by the Secretariat, was discussed and approved by the ExCo and subsequently shared with the National Coordinators for comment. Unfortunately, only a very limited number of responses (addressing concerns about complexity, bureaucracy and policing) was received, which did not provide sufficient guidance to the Secretariat to prepare a revised draft. Instead, the Secretariat focused more on issues that would facilitate the inclusion of accessions in the European Collection, hoping that the participation of countries and institutions in AEGIS would increase and thus indirectly also increase interest in the topic of reporting and monitoring.

2.3.5. Transfer of responsibilities of the AEGIS Advisory Committee to the ExCo

The Fifth ExCo Meeting (November 2013) had “agreed that the tasks so far assigned to the AEGIS Advisory Committee could be largely taken up by the ExCo itself”. This proposal was endorsed by the Steering Committee and thus on 3 March 2014 ExCo formally assumed the responsibilities previously assigned to the AEGIS Advisory Committee.

The Activity report for 2014 and the Workplan for 2015 were in preparation at the end of 2014 (published online in January 2015 and March 2015 respectively).

4.2. NEW ECPGR AND AEGIS WEBSITE

The [new ECPGR and AEGIS website](#) was launched on 6 November 2014. It now integrates the former ECPGR and AEGIS websites and includes many additional functionalities (see [here](#)).

Information related to previous phases remains accessible on the [ECPGR archive website](#).