

ECPGR Leafy Vegetables Working Group

Report on the progress of the group during the first part of Phase IX (2014-2015)

The report follows the Terms of Reference of the WG Chairs (page 6 of the document ECPGR PHASE IX: Goal, Rules of Procedures and Terms of Reference for the Operational Bodies).¹

1. AEGIS related tasks

1.1. Crop Conservation Workplan

The workplan for the Phase IX was developed and agreed upon at the Second meeting of the WG on Leafy vegetables that was held in October 2013 in Ljubljana, Slovenia (pages 17-18 of the Report of the meeting). The follow-up of the workplan and the goals achieved are presented.

- *Selection of accessions for AEGIS: the WG should wait for the European Collection to take shape through national initiatives and then start monitoring the composition of the Collection.*

The survey of the current status of AEGIS accessions included in the European Collection revealed that the majority of genera of leafy vegetables are presented in the Collection, but the contributing countries are mainly Germany, the Netherlands, Nordic countries and UK. The actions need to be undertaken to speed up the nomination/inclusion of accessions also from other countries.

I will approach the WG members from the countries that have already contributed the AEGIS accessions to the Collection to share their experience and upon consultation with the Secretariat and WG members prepare a strategy to speed up the inclusion of accessions also from other countries. To be done in 2016.

- *WG members are expected to promote nominations of AEGIS accessions by the irrespective countries.*

A survey will be performed among the WG members on the current state of the art in their countries, the actions that have already been undertaken or needed to be done in order to promote nominations of AEGIS accessions (also through national coordinators and various national initiatives).

- *Surveys of regeneration and safety duplication status will be carried out and assistance would be sought in case of backlogs.*

The status overview of leafy vegetables collection was updated in March 2014 and is available at ECPGR website. The information includes number of accessions and number of available accessions for individual genus and country. Additionally, information on safety duplication and regeneration was gathered. The number of accessions still to be regenerated was 2312 and the number of accessions in the need to be safety duplicated was 4075. Since not all members responded to the request, the information is not complete. Although there are still a considerable number of accessions in need to be regenerated and safety duplicated, none of the WG members mentioned any problems in regeneration or safety duplication, nor did they indicate the need

¹ The report includes also the information that was provided by Rob van Treuren in March 2015, when I took over the chairmanship of the working group

for support. IPGRI from Bulgaria experienced difficulties in finding a host for their safety duplicates, but they were arranging their safety duplication with a host from Norway. In 2015, a US breeding company 3 Star Lettuce offered willingness to regenerate lettuce. The offer was distributed to the members. The only response was received from Pascal Coquin (GEVES, France), who was interested in regeneration the accessions of endive chicory. The company responded positively; they were willing to regenerate endive chicory as well. The details were then organized bilaterally between Pascal Coquin and the company and the regeneration will be carried out in 2016. The company also responded that the offer to regenerate lettuce is an open one and that they would be willing to assist us in the future as well.

- *Operational genebank standards for chicory and minor leafy vegetables will be developed.*

The workplan agreed at the Second meeting of the WG on Leafy vegetables included also development of operational genebank standards for chicory and minor leafy vegetables. The second goal, development of crop specific standards for minor leafy has not yet been fulfilled. On the other hand, progress was obtained on development of crop-specific genebank standards for the three major leafy vegetables, lettuce, spinach and chicory.

A couple of years ago the Leafy vegetables WG started the process to evaluate whether the FAO standards are suitable also for the leafy vegetables or whether any additions/modifications were required. Initially, the focus was given to lettuce and spinach. The protocols in use by the WG members were discussed at the Second Leafy Vegetables WG meeting in Ljubljana in 2013 (in the meeting report details are presented and specifics/deviations from the FAO standard are indicated where appropriate). Later, Jan Engels used the template for orthodox seeds of the FAO standards and transferred the relevant information from the meeting to the template and sent it for consideration in August 2015. With the help of LV WG members Ulrike Lohwasser, Charlotte Allender, Rob van Treuren and Pascal Coquin we then worked on this draft during the fall 2015, added specifics also for chicory and prepared the draft crop-specific standards for the three major leafy vegetables (lettuce, spinach, chicory). The draft was sent to the LV WG for their consideration and comments at the beginning of January 2016. The few comments that were received by the deadline (28 January 2016) will be worked out early in February 2016 and the final draft will be then sent to the WG for endorsement. The endorsed version will be shared with the ECPGR Steering Committee for its endorsement before finally placing the standards on the AEGIS website.

- *The International Leafy Vegetables Databases will continue to be maintained online, but further developments will for preference be made as part of the EURISCO development. The ECPGR documentation workshop that is planned for 2014 should also give indications to inspire and guide future action.*

The Leafy Vegetables Database is continuously maintained online. The follow up on development of central Crop Database into Crop Portals still needs to be provided by database managers.

- *Development of a minimum descriptor list and regeneration protocol for Asparagus*

The descriptor list for asparagus was developed and agreed upon by the WG members. In April 2014 the Minimum Descriptors for asparagus (*Asparagus* sp.) were published on the ECPGR website.

In 2016 the workplan will be critically looked at and revised/updated if necessary. Any suggestions for improvement of the work are more than welcome (from the Secretariat and as well as from others).

1.2. Oversight of Associate Members' European Collection management

This issue still needs to be addressed in consultation with the Secretariat.

2. Other tasks

2.1. **Provide information** to the WG members on ECPGR events and mode of operation, on a need or request basis.

The information was provided whenever requested or required. In the last period I have also received quite a number of questions on the ECPGR mode of operation on the national (Slovene) level (from gene bank curators of other crops, national focal points, etc). I provided the information to the best of my knowledge.

2.2. **Orchestrate the know-how available in the pool of experts**

Performed whenever needed or required.

2.3. **Initiate and coordinate the preparation of project ideas and proposals** for funding from the competitive ECPGR funding scheme and/or from other sources.

The WG members were stimulated to prepare a proposal already for the first two calls from the ECPG funding scheme, but no idea come out from the group. I started with initiation of a project proposal for the second call (with a deadline of 15 July 2015), but due to the reasons described at the end (my longer absence from work), the initiative did not result in a submitted project. For the third call for proposal under this scheme we have already started discussions on possible topics, so I am confident that by the deadline of 15 April 2016 we will submit a project.

Regarding other funding schemes, the first initiatives are also coming from LV WG members to collaborate in preparation of other projects (related to leafy vegetables, but other founding schemes). This I see as a positive outcome of collaboration between members within the WG.

2.4. **Coordinate ECPGR-related activities for the crop genepool(s)** that fall under the responsibility of the respective WG

Performed.

2.5. **Contribute to the relevant sections of the ECPGR annual reports**

Performed on request basis.

Personal note:

I took over the work as a chair of the LV WG at the beginning of March 2015. I got all the information and support needed for a good start from Rob van Treuren, who chaired the LV WG for a number of years, as well as from Lorenzo Maggioni from the Secretariat. Unfortunately, only a few months later I had to stop my work, also the professional one at my home institute. Due to an accident that I had I was on sick leave for more than three months and started to work again only in fall 2015. I dedicated then most of the 'ECPGR' time to the preparation of crop-specific technical standards, with a very good support provided by Jan Engels.

In the future I will do my best to fulfil the tasks and goals of the Phase IX.

This report was prepared to the best knowledge and information that I have.

Jelka Šuštar Vozlič, Chair of the Leafy vegetables working group

Ljubljana, 29 January 2016