

**ECPGR
Review Panel Report**

July 2010

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Section A

Introduction

- (1) At its 11th meeting in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in September 2008, the ECPGR Steering Committee decided to commission an Independent External Review to be carried out during 2010. The Terms of Reference (ToR) of this review are included as **Annex 1**. The Review Panel comprised three members: Thomas Gass (Chair), Marianne Lefort and Orlando de Ponti, see Biodata as **Annex 2**. Two members of the ECPGR Steering Committee: Jens Weibull, Chair and Silvia Strajeru also attended the ECPGR presentations and the visits to partners at FAO. Prior to the actual review which took place at Bioversity International (Bioversity) headquarters in Maccaresse, Rome, Orlando de Ponti attended an ECPGR Working Group meeting¹. The Panel also analyzed numerous documents including a Stakeholders Survey (see **Annex 3** for a summary of the Survey) which was conducted in March 2010² and a synthesis document prepared by the ECPGR Secretariat³. Face to face meetings and teleconferences were held in Rome with the ECPGR Secretariat Team and its coordinator Lorenzo Maggioni; with various Bioversity staff; the AGP office at FAO; the Global Crop Diversity Trust; and the Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (see **Annex 4** for full Panel Schedule). Furthermore, a number of telephone interviews were conducted with members of ECPGR Working Groups and with National Coordinators.
- (2) While the Review Panel took into consideration the evolution and impact of ECPGR over the whole duration of the Programme (i.e. from 1980), the analysis regarding approach, *modus operandi*, efficiency and management arrangement focuses mainly on the recent past, namely Phase VII (2004-2008) and the first half of Phase VIII (2009 – 2013).
- (3) Section B of this report includes the main findings of this review including recommendations. The lead questions at the beginning of each section are the questions referred to in the ToR of the review. These questions have been regrouped into three sections to enhance clarity of the analysis. Section C includes a prioritized summary of the recommendations.
- (4) The Review Panel would like to acknowledge and thank the ECPGR Secretariat Team and its coordinator Lorenzo Maggioni for the excellent preparation, background documents and availability, as well as the staff of Bioversity for its inputs to the review. Furthermore the Review Panel would like to thank Patti Sands for her invaluable logistic and organizational support.

¹ Fourth meeting of the Brassica Working Group, Linguaglossa, Italy, 2- 4 March 2010

² Stakeholders' Consultation Report :http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Evaluation_Report_ECPGR_final.pdf

³ ECPGR: Secretariat's overview of its current status, issues and future perspectives
http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Secretariat%20overview_finalcorr_280610.pdf

Section B

Analysis

1. Objectives

Lead questions:

- *Are the objectives and strategy of the Programme well defined and relevant?*
- *Are ECPGR objectives in line to those of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture including the Global Plan of Action?*
- *Is the Programme pursuing its objectives well?*

(5) While ECPGR is *aimed at facilitating the long-term conservation on a co-operative basis and the increased utilization of plant genetic resources in Europe*, it has a set of **eight agreed objectives** as follows:

- facilitate the long-term *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of plant genetic resources in Europe;
- facilitate the increased utilization of plant genetic resources in Europe;
- strengthen links between all plant genetic resources programmes in Europe and promote the integration of countries that are not members of ECPGR
- encourage cooperation between all stakeholders, including NGOs and private breeders;
- increase the planning of joint activities including the development of joint project proposals to be submitted to funding agencies;
- encourage the sharing of conservation responsibilities for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) in Europe;
- increase awareness, at all levels, of the importance of PGRFA activities including conservation and sustainable use; and
- seek collaboration with other relevant regional and global initiatives.

(6) These objectives were agreed by the Steering Committee in 1998 for Phase VI of the Programme and re-endorsed without changes for subsequent Phases. Notwithstanding this, **emphasis and priority for Phase VIII** was given to:

- sharing of responsibilities;
- characterization and evaluation;
- documentation and information; and
- *in situ/on-farm* conservation.

(7) The 1998 objectives are considered by a majority of the stakeholders to still be relevant to the current context and ECPGR is perceived as successfully pursuing them⁴. Nevertheless the Review Panel feels that **a sense of hierarchy needs to be built into the objectives** to enable clearer monitoring of outcomes and impact and to facilitate priority setting. Of the current eight objectives, the latter six are clearly “outcome” attributable directly to ECPGR and the former two are “goals” to which the Programme contributes. This is also illustrated by the use of the caveat “to facilitate” at the beginning of the first two objectives.

(8) In terms of the relevance of the objectives, the Review Panel feels that after 30 years of activity during which the facilitation role of ECPGR has been predominant, the Programme now has the potential to and should **take more responsibility for conservation and utilization of PGRFA by establishing more accountability among its membership**. The rationale for this recommendation is outlined below: (see 2. Effectiveness and impact). This is probably the most

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fundamental recommendation of the review and has implications, inter alia, for ECPGR's strategy, *Modus Operandi* and funding.

- (9) Since the adoption in 2006 of the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA) by its Governing Body, the Treaty is fully operational. Of the 43 members states of ECPGR, 33 and the European Community have ratified the Treaty. The three principal elements of the Treaty are: (1) the recognition of national sovereignty of PGRFA; (2) the implementation of a Multilateral System (MLS); and (3) a regime for Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) for the so-called Annex 1 crops, materialized through the SMTA. Although access to the so-called non-Annex 1 crops is governed by default by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), efforts are being undertaken within the framework of ECPGR to extend the provisions of the Treaty to non-Annex 1 crops through AEGIS.
- (10) The Review Panel feels that ECPGR's **objectives need to more explicitly refer to and contribute to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and the International Treaty on PGRFA**, inter alia, by implementing the Standard Material Transfer Agreement SMTA as the standard regime for exchange and release of all the plant genetic resources, both Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 crops.

Recommendations

- a) **Establish a clear hierarchy of objectives, including outcomes attributable to ECPGR and a Goal(s) to which ECPGR contributes.**
- b) **Adapt the objectives of ECPGR, taking more responsibility for conservation and use of PGRFA by establishing more accountability among its membership.**
- c) **ECPGR's objectives need to more explicitly refer to and contribute to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and the International Treaty on PGRFA, inter alia, by implementing the SMTA as the standard regime for exchange and release of all the plant genetic resources, both Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 crops.**

2. Effectiveness and impact

Lead questions:

- *How has the context changed in 30 years (policies, science, institutions, private sector)?*
- *Has ECPGR made the necessary changes / adaptations and a significant contribution in response to these changes?*
- *What impact is the Programme having for PGRFA in Europe?*
- *Has ECPGR led to increased use of genetic resources?*
- *Are the impact pathways clearly spelled out?*
- *Is the underlying concept of ECPGR – a Programme largely based upon National Programmes that makes use of synergies among them by funding additional costs for cooperation, information and communication at the regional level – effective?*

- (11) ECPGR was conceived as a Programme largely based upon National Programmes that makes use of synergies among them by funding additional costs for cooperation, information and communication at the European level. During the past 30 years **the Region's context has evolved very significantly**, including the information and communication technology (ICT) and the biotech revolutions, and the geopolitical reshaping of the region, which have all strongly impacted the world of genetic resources.

- The **entry into force of the CBD** (1993) and the recognition of national sovereign rights over genetic resources, contributed to politicizing the debate on access and benefit sharing regarding genetic resources, leading to the de facto freezing of exchanges of genetic material during 15 years and limiting the wider use of genetic resources until the entry into force of the International Treaty on PGRFA (2004) and the adoption of a SMTA (2006), which provided a legal framework to stimulate the exchange and wider use of genetic resources,
- The widespread **privatization of breeding**, particularly in eastern Europe, and the dependency of public research on non-public funding sources, as well as the concentration of such activities in a few international companies, has led to a loss of accessions particularly of under-utilized crops. It also reinforced the need for genebanks to work with private and public breeders. At the same time, the globalization of agricultural trade and the promotion of IPRs (Intellectual Property Rights) have placed the breeding industry into a strongly law driven environment.
- The **rapid development of ICT** has allowed the establishment of sophisticated information systems and databases, and has accelerated the exchange of data, as well as the comparison of records and the use of databases to improve the documentation of collections.
- **Biotechnology and bioinformatics** have made available new technologies for conservation, characterization and evaluation of collections, but they have also changed the way users approach and view the potential usefulness of collections.
- The development of **scientific knowledge on genomes** and genetic diversity through genomic tools, as well as new knowledge on the short and long term evolution of genomes, their mutational potential and adaptive capacities in response to environmental variations and pressure (biotic and abiotic), have opened new perspectives on the use and generation of genetic diversity.

(12) A number of **clear outcomes and impacts** have been achieved in regard to **ex situ conservation**, including:

- Mobilization of considerable additional funding, particularly from the European Commission (18.4 Mio Euro from 1996 to 2011, see **Annex 5** expressed in USD).
- Establishment of a decentralized coordinated system of 37 institutions maintaining up to 62 Central Crop Databases covering about 755 000 accessions. As of 2003, passport data for all crops were integrated, through national inventories, into a Central European PGR Database (EURISCO), including approximately 1 Mio accessions (about 50% of the estimated total of accessions conserved in Europe).
- Descriptors and characterization protocols were developed for approximately 30 crops and crop groups. Characterization and evaluation data, based on the descriptors and protocols established within ECPGR, are provided with variable coverage in 17 of the Central Crop Databases, including about 500 000 accessions.
- Regeneration guidelines were established for several outcrossing crops such as forages, grain legumes and vegetables.
- Bilateral safety-duplication arrangements were promoted and enacted by several Working Groups.
- Emergency situations were responded to by Working Groups in the case of the endangered carrot accessions of the Vavilov Institute, the partial rescue of the Cambridge *Phaseolus* collection, and the partial reconstruction of the Albanian forage collection which was lost during civil unrest.
- Relative to the scope of ECPGR, only modest progress was made in regard to establishing core collections (Barley; *Brassica rapa*, *B. carinata*, *B. napus* and *B. oleracea*; *Lolium perenne*).

- Conservation responsibilities were first formally shared in the case of the Nordic Genebank (now NordGen) and the Dutch-German Potato collection. Another bilateral agreement took place between CGN and Wellesbourne to share conservation of carrot and lettuce, by each taking the conservation responsibility for one species on behalf of the other institution. In a few cases, European collections were maintained by institutions on behalf of ECPGR: the long-day Alliums (RICP, Czech Republic), the short-day Alliums (Hebrew University, Rehovot, Israel), Wild *Brassica* relatives (Universidad Politecnica, Madrid, Spain), Cruciferous crops and *Allium* species (HRI, Wellesbourne).
- Following the ratification of the International Treaty on PGRFA, ECPGR established a European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS) aiming at the foundation of the European Collection of PGRFA and implementing the Multilateral System for Access and Benefit Sharing. Currently 22 of the 43 ECPGR Member States have signed the MoU regarding AEGIS.

(13) In regard to ***in situ* and on-farm conservation of genetic resources**, the impact and achievements of ECPGR are less pronounced than for *ex situ* conservation. This may be partly explained by the very late initiation of the respective network (May 2000). The main achievements are:

- the sharing of experiences and collaborative efforts which led to successful EU-funded projects on Phase VI (CWRIS which supplied a generic catalogue of Crop Wild Relatives through Europe and Mediterranean Basin; publicly available through the PGR Forum Crop Wild Relatives Information System web-site) and Phase VII (AEGRO which aimed to develop *in situ* management for Crop Wild Relatives and landraces conservation, focusing on 4 pilot crops);
- a comprehensive scientific, peer-reviewed, book dealing with conservation of genetic diversity of wild plants in their native habitats (2008): population monitoring strategies, habitat recovery techniques, complementation of *in situ* and *ex situ* measures;
- a comprehensive technical book on European landraces (2009) which provides information on inventories in Europe, on landraces' management and use within a European context, as well as well as on the current policy environment;
- the recent success in a new EU-funded project (PGR Secure) dealing with the novel characterization of crop wild relatives and landraces resources as a basis for improved crop breeding, which associates Bioversity on behalf of ECPGR.

(14) While recognizing the importance and relevance of the above mentioned achievements, the Review Panel thinks that the development of *in situ* and on-farm management should be further expanded with the aim to effectively be part of the European integrated system that has been initiated with Genebanks' *ex situ* collections through AEGIS. This will imply to expand EURISCO's structure, in order to include relevant data for the management of the *in situ* and on-farm components. The Review Panel think that **AEGIS/EURISCO should, in its next step, include both *in situ* crop relatives' populations and on farm managed landraces, in order to comprehensively implement the Global Plan of Action for PGRFA and to fulfill the obligations of the International Treaty**. The Review Panel considers that these activities are of utmost importance to complement the static *ex situ* conservation with a more dynamic strategy, which allows the maintenance and development of evolutionary and adaptive capabilities of genetic diversity, in response to ongoing changing environment and particularly climate change. The Review Panel also considers important to develop *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation in a more interlinked manner.

- (15) Facilitating the utilization of PGRFA is a longstanding explicit objective of ECPGR. In addition, it is widely recognized that increased utilization of the collections is very important to justify the cost of conservation. **It is difficult to find evidence or indications that ECPGR has significantly promoted the utilization of the collections**, which has also suffered from a difficult political/legal environment and a general disinvestment in public agricultural research. Some progress has been achieved in making central crop databases more useful by including standardized characterization data, nevertheless, EURISCO so far only includes passport data. ECPGR has not yet made significant progress in including evaluation data into its databases and interconnecting them with other important genebanks at the global level, for a given crop. Furthermore, little progress has been achieved in structuring and rationalizing the collections to enhance use of germplasm (e.g. Core collections). The Review Panel recommends that these efforts be enhanced.
- (16) Whereas the more rational and qualitative conservation of PGRFA is a clear achievement of ECPGR, the Review Panel recommends to **continue the development of AEGIS** to enhance the mutual commitment of all the ECPGR collection holders, and establish virtual integrated European Collections of sufficient quality and availability. **ECPGR should continue to support weaker national programmes to achieve the level of capacity and structure to be able to participate actively in ECPGR** components such as AEGIS and EURISCO.
- (17) Furthermore, ECPGR should **rapidly resolve the perceived duplication/competition between EURISCO and the Central Crop Databases**, by integrating characterization and evaluation data from CCDBS into EURISCO. The Review Panel considers the integration of EURISCO into a global system such as GENESYS as a valuable next step enabling online comparison with databases from other regions and the CGIAR. However, **EURISCO and its supporting mechanism needs to be maintained distinctly and made visible** in order to assert ECPGR's ownership and authority, and secure future commitment and resources for the ECPGR database activities.
- (18) The continued outreach of the conservation community to its clients - breeders and others – is crucial if the collections are to be used and found useful. The European Association for Research on Plant Breeding (EUCARPIA), incorporating both public and private breeders, is an effective and highly appreciated platform for open discussions on the evolution of plant breeding and plant breeding related topics, such as plant genetic resources, in the public and private sector. EUCARPIA is one of the founders of ECPGR. To promote better understanding on the need and way of conservation and utilization of the plant genetic resources, the Review Panel recommends **a strengthened collaboration with EUCARPIA**, in particular ECPGR WG members should be mandated to systematically present findings and updates in the relevant EUCARPIA crop sections.
- (19) While the clear attribution of the abovementioned impact and achievements to ECPGR is very difficult to make, and the fundamental role of national programmes can not be overemphasized, ECPGR is acknowledged by its stakeholders to have made a significant and sometimes essential contribution to achieving them⁵. Generally, **the pathways for ECPGR to achieve its objectives (overarching goals and attributable outcomes) are not clear**. For this reason, the Review Panel recommends to establish a clear hierarchy of objectives (logframe) for ECPGR (see Recommendation (a) and paragraph 7).

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Recommendations

- d) Continue the development of AEGIS to enhance the mutual commitment of all collection holders within ECPGR and establish an integrated European Collection of sufficient quality.
- e) Continue to support weaker national programmes to achieve the level of capacity and structure to be able to participate adequately in ECPGR components such as AEGIS and EURISCO.
- f) Rapidly resolve the perceived duplication/competition between EURISCO and the Central Crop Databases and integrate C&E data into EURISCO.
- g) The integration of EURISCO into a global system such as GENESYS is considered valuable. However, EURISCO and its supporting mechanism needs to be maintained distinctly and made visible in order to assert ECPGR's ownership and authority, and secure future commitment and resources for the ECPGR database activities.
- h) Fully integrate *in situ* and on-farm activities in The European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS), expanding in a second step the Genebanks' *ex situ* coverage to both *in situ* crop relatives' populations and on farm managed landraces; this will imply to expand EURISCO's structure, in order to include relevant data for the management of the *in situ* and on-farm components.
- i) Strengthen the collaboration and linkages with EUCARPIA by mandating ECPGR working group members to systematically present findings and updates in the relevant EUCARPIA crop sections.

3. Priority setting mechanisms

Lead questions:

- *Does it have the proper tools for evaluation?*
- *Does the Programme effectively set priorities and is there a clear process in place for priority setting?*

(20) ECPGR has an elaborate **system to report outputs and activities** to its Steering Committee as well as to its stakeholder community. This includes annual technical reports and audited financial statements to the Steering Committee, and contributions to Bioversity's Regional Newsletter for Europe, and other *ad hoc* publications. In addition, the Secretariat prepares aggregated reports on outputs and activities in view of the mid-Phase and end Phase Steering Committee meetings. In addition to the above, **the Review Panel recommends incorporating quantitative indicators into standardized reporting formats to be used annually by Working Groups to report to the Network Coordination Groups and the Secretariat.**

(21) Notwithstanding the value of the abovementioned reporting instruments, **ECPGR does not have a mechanism nor does it have indicators and benchmarks to systematically assess and report on its outcomes** (objectives attributable to the Programme over the duration of a given Phase) and to evaluate the achievement of its goals (impact or objectives towards which ECPGR contributes in the longer term). In 1994, 1998 and 2003, the Europe Group, including ECPGR, has been evaluated. The present review is the first external review mandated by the Steering Committee to focus specifically on ECPGR. The Review Panel recommends that an **external review (analogous to the present one) be conducted at least**

once per Phase (6-12 months before the final Steering Committee meeting of the Phase). Furthermore, and as part of the logframing exercise referred to in Recommendations (a) and paragraph 7, the Review Panel recommends the **establishment of verifiable indicators for the Programme – particularly at the level of Outcomes and Goal**. It is also very important that ECPGR Working Groups regularly provide quantitative data on the progress of their workplans. These data can then be aggregated at ECPGR level.

- (22) Priority setting is of particular importance for a Programme, which per definition, aspires to be comprehensive in coverage and membership, and to respond to the expectations of an ambitious overarching policy framework (Global Plan of Action), while disposing of very limited resources. While in previous Phases the priority setting was focusing on whether or not to include certain crops or carry out specific activities, the Steering Committee prioritized the sharing of responsibilities. The Review Panel feels that the systematic implementation of recommendations regarding the establishment and monitoring of a logframe for the Programme will provide a stronger basis for priority setting by the Steering Committee.

Recommendations

- j) **Incorporate quantitative indicators into standardized reporting formats to be used annually by Working Groups to report to the Network Coordination Groups and the Secretariat, and aggregate this information at the ECPGR level at regular intervals.**
- k) **An external review (analogous to the present one) should be conducted at least once per Phase (6-12 months before the final Steering Committee meeting of the Phase).**
- l) **As a part of the logframing exercise referred to in Recommendation (a), verifiable indicators and benchmarks should be established – particularly at the level of Outcomes and Goal(s).**

4. *Modus Operandi* and governance

Lead questions:

- *is the current network and working group structure optimal and effective?*
- *Are appropriate linkages and partnerships in place?*
- *Is the Steering Committee a ‘Steering Committee’ and how effective is it in its role? Does it have the proper tools for governance?*

- (23) The current network structure and participation mechanism seems to be largely adequate, allowing flexibility to Networks and National Coordinators respectively to establish workplans and determine priorities (e.g. which Working Groups should meet and who should participate). As activities are carried out on a voluntary basis, accountability and commitment remain relatively low, however. In a Programme with this size and limited resources, it may no longer be possible for all the Working Groups and Networks to have “statutory meetings”. **Meetings should rather be linked to concrete (thematic or crop related) initiatives or projects.** The Review Panel recognizes the importance of activities of Working Groups and Networks, independently of whether they physically meet.

- (24) The Review Panel noted some **activities in Phase VIII to support national and regional programmes in developing countries**. ECPGR should be commended for such activities. As the goals of ECPGR refer to *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation and increased utilization of PGRFA *in Europe*, such activities should only be undertaken if their costs are fully recovered from external sources to ECPGR.

- (25) The voluntary nature of activities within ECPGR and its status as a *multilaterally funded Programme implemented by Bioversity*, de facto places most of the accountability for the outcomes on the Secretariat, while the resources for implementation actually lie with national programmes. The Review Panel feels that ECPGR needs to receive a greater degree of commitment, including resources, if it is to achieve and be responsible for the *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation and enhanced utilization of PGRFA. It, therefore, **recommends that options for its institutionalization be explored to obtain a legal persona, a higher profile, and an executive leadership and board.** A stronger institutionalization would enhance the ownership by Member Countries of ECPGR and their authority over the implementation of its strategy. It would also enable ECPGR to approach authorities at the national and regional level, including the European Commission, in a more affirmative manner.
- (26) While such institutionalization could follow various scenarios (**see Annex 6**), which need to be further explored, the Review Panel is inclined to favour either the **establishment of a public charitable corporation or of a subsidiary body of the EU or EC.** The name of the new entity needs to convey a stronger sense of ownership and authority, such as Board or Consortium.
- (27) In order to provide the minimum required support to ECPGR, whatever the decision of the Steering Committee regarding the institutionalization is, the Secretariat should include, **in addition to the Coordinator, an Executive Director to represent ECPGR.** Terms of Reference of the Executive Director should include empowering ECPGR as a self-standing institution, mobilizing additional national commitment and resources, as well as securing additional funding from entities such as the EC, the Global Crop Diversity Trust, and the International Treaty Secretariat. The Review Panel feels that the responsibilities of the Executive Director could include the management of AEGIS. **The Executive Director should report directly to the ECPGR Steering Committee.**
- (28) One of the recent accomplishments of ECPGR and its Member Countries is the establishment of AEGIS. AEGIS is undoubtedly a seized opportunity to advance the sharing of responsibilities on a more formal basis. It is therefore a step in direction of more institutionalization as recommended in paragraph 22 above. **The Steering Committee, however, needs to be very clear regarding the relationship between AEGIS and ECPGR and communicate accordingly,** bearing in mind that AEGIS could compete with and ultimately make ECPGR redundant. This could lead to the marginalization of countries with lower capacities, as well as a reduced “fit” with the International Treaty (for example, by focusing on *ex situ* conservation). Communication about AEGIS and ECPGR should systematically contribute towards the clarification of this relationship (e.g. using the name of AEGIS in full and avoiding the proliferation of acronyms and logos).
- (29) The increasing size of the membership of ECPGR and the provision that each participating country is represented in its Steering Committee has made decision making on a consensus basis in this Committee very challenging. With agreement from the Steering Committee, the Secretariat has responded to this challenge by consulting National Coordinators through email and by encouraging the Network Coordinating Committees to take more initiative and responsibility. On an *ad hoc* basis a reduced number of National Coordinators has been convened by the Secretariat as a kind of sounding board. The Review Panel has received feedback from representatives of several countries from across Europe criticizing the functioning of the Steering Committee for its lack of transparency and inclusiveness. This weakness needs to be addressed as a high priority to ensure that all participating countries retain a high level of ownership of the Programme. **The**

Steering Committee should adopt rules of procedure to make its functioning and decision making more transparent and inclusive. It should consider extending the length of its meetings to allow for more discussion of proposals, and require the Secretariat to propose options for discussion rather than decisions for endorsement. Although, an increased formalization of Steering Committee proceedings may lead to longer, more difficult and more costly meetings, this is the price to pay for a truly multilateral system/programme. At times, the preparation of option papers by sub-Committees may be useful. In addition, existing regional subgroups (e.g. SeedNet) should be encouraged, if they wish, to pre-discuss the agenda of the Steering Committee and participate in the proceedings in a more active way.

(30) Notwithstanding more fundamental changes envisaged in implementing the abovementioned recommendations on institutionalization of ECPGR, the Review Panel recommends that the Steering Committee **elect for terms of 2 or 3 years an ECPGR President and two Vice-presidents** (past and future presidents) to lead ECPGR and its Secretariat in advocacy, resource mobilization and the orientation of important events. **The president, the two Vice-Presidents and the Executive Director should constitute the Executive Committee.** The ultimate decision making power must remain with the Steering Committee (or Board).

(31) In order to deal with the festering problem of backlog in the publication of working group reports, the Secretariat has obtained clearance by the Steering Committee to move to web-based and non-edited publication of information. These measures have reduced the backlog, enabling the rapid circulation of agreed workplans, and considerably reducing the cost associated with editing, printing and dissemination. The Review Panel, however, **cautions against the hasty publication on an open web of non-edited low-quality papers** that discredit ECPGR and reduce its potential to attract commitment and resources. It, therefore, recommends the following:

- Only the workplan should be given priority for rapid dissemination on open web;
- Reports by national programmes on the implementation of agreed past workplans should be made using a standardized template, to facilitate editing;
- If a Network or the Programme as a whole chooses to publish other types of papers than workplans and national reports, it should be required to establish (outside of the Secretariat) a peer review and editing Committee responsible for the scientific and technical quality of papers;
- Any non-edited papers should only be published on a website with restricted access (intranet);
- The Annual report of ECPGR should be the only reoccurring printed publication and should hold essential achievements, outcomes, statistics and financial data required to mobilize commitment engagement and resources on behalf of ECPGR.
- Investing into the design of a new “image” for the Programme should only be considered in the context of a new institutionalization.

(32) While partnerships with other organizations and entities are important for the realization of ECPGR’s objectives, they are also costly to maintain. The Review Panel recommends that the Secretariat **prioritize partnerships with the relevant directorates of the EC and the Secretariat of the International Treaty of PGRFA.** In both cases a dialogue about policy and reciprocal accountability is relevant. Furthermore, attention should be given to entities which can facilitate the linkages to significant groups of users (e.g. EUCARPIA and ESA). Linkages should also be maintained with several sub-regional entities contributing towards the goals of ECPGR (e.g. NordGen, SeedNet) and with entities that can assist in positioning ECPGR in the area of *in situ*/on-farm conservation.

Recommendations

- m) Activities in support of developing countries should only be undertaken if their costs are fully recovered from external sources to ECPGR.
- n) Options for the institutionalization of ECPGR should be explored to obtain a legal persona.
- o) An Executive Director should be appointed to represent ECPGR, to empower ECPGR as a self standing institution, to pursue the institutional establishment, to mobilize national commitment and to secure additional funding.
- p) The Steering Committee needs to be very clear regarding the relationship between AEGIS and ECPGR and communicate accordingly.
- q) The Steering Committee should elect for, terms of 2 or 3 years, a President and two Vice-presidents (past and future presidents) to lead ECPGR and its Secretariat in advocacy, resource mobilisation and the orientation of important events. The president, the two Vice-Presidents and the Executive Director (ex officio) should constitute the Executive Committee. The ultimate decision making power must remain with the Steering Committee (or Board).
- r) The Steering Committee should adopt rules of procedure to make its functioning and decision making more transparent and inclusive. It should consider extending the duration of its meetings to allow for more discussion of proposals, and require the Secretariat to propose options for discussion rather than decisions for endorsement.
- s) Workplans should be given priority for rapid dissemination on open web, reports by national programmes on the implementation of agreed past Workplans should be made using a standardized template, to facilitate editing. If a Network or the Programme chooses to publish papers, it should be required to establish a peer review and editing Committee responsible for the scientific and technical quality of the papers. Any other papers should be published on intranet only.
- t) Partnerships with the EC and the Secretariat of the ITPGRFA should be given priority.

5. Funding and financial sustainability and Efficiency

Lead questions:

- *Does the Programme have a sustainable and reliable funding mechanism? Are available funds used effectively?*
- *Is the investment in ECPGR, including AEGIS, strategically relevant, well-directed and proportional?*
- *(additional) Has ECPGR leveraged significant additional funds from national or regional programmes towards the conservation and/or use of genetic resources?*

(33) Since Phase IV (1990-1993), ECPGR has been funded exclusively by the participating countries. The Steering Committee agreed to increase the budget for Phase V to include a full time coordinator, implying approximately a doubling of participating countries' annual contributions to the Programme. For Phase VI the budget was increased further including the possibility for countries to provide earmarked additional funding for specific activities within the Programme. In 2004 the Steering Committee decided to establish the budget in Euros. Subsequently, the

budget and the countries' contributions were increased further and to reach EUR 511 163 in 2010 (ref graphic). This mechanism of establishing a participation fee, the level of which depends on the country's UN assessment rate, enabled ECPGR to be sustainably funded at the anticipated level.

(34) The use of funds by ECPGR is very effective, generally. In terms of the administration of the Programme, the staff costs are high but Bioversity is charging only 13% overhead which is relatively low in comparison to the real costs incurred. **As Bioversity and the CGIAR shift from unrestricted towards restricted funding, it will have to apply full cost recovery.** This could lead to a considerable increase in charges to ECPGR and reduce the comparative advantage of the hosting arrangement by Bioversity. Furthermore, the Review Panel recommends that **any funds mobilized and projects implemented by Bioversity on behalf of ECPGR be presented in ECPGR's Annual Financial report.** This will make it clear that such funds accrue to ECPGR and thus strengthen ECPGR's ability to attract further commitment and resources.

(35) In addition, ECPGR was used as a collaborative platform to submit a number of proposals to the EC. Between 1996 and 2011, 18.4 Mio Euros were thus mobilized by Working Groups or Networks of ECPGR. Further earmarked funds were obtained by Bioversity (IPGRI) on behalf of ECPGR from the Global Crop Diversity Trust. The Review Panel is convinced that the annual budget of ECPGR needs to ultimately be increased to approximately 1 Mio. Euro to have sufficient impact on *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation and the increased utilization of PGRFA in Europe. This implies that **national contributions will have to be increased and that ECPGR enhance its fund mobilization activities with the EC and other potential donors such as the Global Crop Diversity Trust.**

Recommendations

- u) **Funds mobilized and projects implemented by Bioversity on behalf of ECPGR should be presented in ECPGR's Annual Financial report so as to visibly strengthen ECPGR and its ability to attract further commitment and resources.**
- v) **ECPGR should enhance its fund mobilization activities at the national level, as well as with the EC and other potential donors such as the Global Crop Diversity Trust.**

6. Programme management and role of Host Institution (Bioversity)

Lead questions:

- *Is the Programme well managed? Are the managerial resources sufficient?*
- *Are the current hosting arrangements the most appropriate?*

(36) Since Phase II, Bioversity and its predecessor institutes IPGRI and IBPGR have administered ECPGR and provided its Secretariat. The perception of the stakeholders is that **Bioversity fulfils this role effectively and efficiently**⁶. Although the main resources and the responsibility for the implementation of ECPGR's workplan lie with the national programmes, the Secretariat plays an essential role in monitoring and promoting the implementation of the various workplans and thus ensuring the outcomes of the Programme. This role is recognized and highly appreciated by European countries, which have renewed and increased their participation in ECPGR Phase after Phase for the past 30 years.

⁶ Stakeholders' Consultation Report

- (37) While the Secretariat of ECPGR could be provided by other institutions, Bioversity (formerly IPGRI and IBPGR) has a number of comparative advantages as hosting institution and brings significant benefits to the Programme. The scientific environment of Bioversity dedicated to agricultural biodiversity presents opportunities for synergies in fields such as PGR conservation, use, law, policy, documentation, informatics, public awareness, etc. Bioversity also provides logistic support (office infrastructure, travel, finance, ICT, publications, website hosting and maintenance, travel arrangements and payments, auditing, etc.). In addition, Bioversity currently provides a half-time EURISCO coordinator as input in kind. On the other hand, being totally integrated into a large, continually evolving institution also has disadvantages. Over the years, the staff of the ECPGR Secretariat has had to participate in sometimes burdensome internal coordination and management processes, defend the interests of ECPGR at times of organizational change, and respond to sometimes diverging or even opposing interests between the host institution and the Programme.
- (38) The role of Bioversity in ECPGR is not always understood clearly by all stakeholders. While Bioversity may be perceived as providing the Secretariat function of a Programme that lies firmly within the hands of member countries, ECPGR is actually a multilaterally funded Programme managed by Bioversity. In the letter of agreement signed at the beginning of each Phase, **European countries agree bilaterally with Bioversity to “participate” in the Programme**, to fund it and to nominate a National Coordinator as counterpart to the Programme. The legal implications and the multilateral commitment of this arrangement do not go much further for the participating countries or their institutions and genebanks. ECPGR has no legal persona and the Steering Committee no legal responsibility for the Programme. This implies that ECPGR has no staff and no assets of its own, and that Bioversity has much latitude in terms of how it wishes to organize the Secretariat function of ECPGR. **This arrangement was suitable at a time when ECPGR was expected to facilitate regional activities** and Bioversity (IPGRI) was also mandated to bring regional actors together and build the capacities of national programmes. If (a) ECPGR is to take more responsibility for the conservation (*ex situ* and *in situ*) and the enhanced utilization of PGRFA; (b) if it has to establish accountability among European countries, and (c) if it has to mobilize the resources commensurate with that ambitious mandate, then ECPGR and its Steering Committee needs to be empowered in its own right.
- (39) Bioversity International is a Centre of the CGIAR and **the CGIAR is evolving**. Through the creation of the Consortium of CGIAR Centres and the CGIAR Fund, the funding mechanism of the CG Centres will drastically move towards restricted funding of global CG-wide research programmes. This will reduce the flexibility of individual Centres, including Bioversity, to allocate resources to activities outside these programmes. It will also restrain Bioversity from engaging in or supporting regional networks, such as ECPGR. **The Review Panel recommends that Bioversity see it as its responsibility to usher ECPGR into a stronger form of institutionalization and independence. The Secretariat needs to be consolidated organizationally under the Executive Director** (or in his/her absence under the Coordinator) and include all the programmatic functions (AEGIS, EURISCO, etc.) that are part of ECPGR. This would not preclude a formal hosting arrangement with Bioversity if the conditions offered are considered favourable on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis.
- (40) In order to enable the ECPGR Secretariat to successfully implement the above-mentioned organizational transition, the Review Panel recommends the following steps:

- Advance the mid-term Steering Committee meeting to December 2010 or early January 2011;
- Establish an Executive Committee by electing a President and two Vice-presidents (former and future President) with a 2-3 year mandate;
- Agree on **a transition road map**, which could include :
 - Options and necessary steps to establish ECPGR's legal persona;
 - Urgently initiate selection process for an Executive Director, whose responsibility would be to empower ECPGR as a self standing institution, to mobilize national commitment and to secure additional funding;
 - Establish the necessary sub-Committees of the Steering Committee to support the institutionalization process;
 - Change the workplan and budget of ECPGR Phase VIII to accommodate the above-mentioned extraordinary activities/costs

Recommendations

- w) **The Review Panel recommends that Bioversity see it as its responsibility to usher ECPGR into a stronger form of institutionalization and independence.**
- x) **The Secretariat needs to be consolidated organizationally under the Executive Director.**
- y) **To enable the successful implementation of the organizational transition, the mid-term Steering Committee meeting should be advanced to the end of 2010 to consider the present report. And if so agreed, decide to implement some of its most urgent recommendations to facilitate the organizational transition, including the election of an Executive Committee, the search for an Executive Director and the establishment of a transition road map.**

Section C

Prioritized summary of recommendations

- (41) As the present review was mandated by the Steering Committee of ECPGR, the large majority of its recommendations are addressed to the Steering Committee. Notwithstanding this and assuming these recommendations were adopted by the Steering Committee, most of the recommendations would require a strong support by Bioversity in order to be implemented. Recommendation (u) and (w) are addressed directly at Bioversity.
- (42) A number of the Review Panel's recommendations are of generic nature and self standing. These include the recommendations regarding priority setting, hierarchy of objectives, communication, etc. Their implementation is expected to significantly improve the functioning and effectiveness of ECPGR.
- (43) Many of the recommendations are, however, interlinked and contingent on an agreement by the Steering Committee to raise the level of accountability in ECPGR and improve its institutionalization so that the ownership by Member Countries of ECPGR and their authority over the implementation of its strategy can be strengthened, enable ECPGR to approach authorities at National and regional level, including the European Commission, in a more affirmative manner.

Ref	Recommendation	Urgency	Type	Subject
b)	Adapt the objectives of ECPGR, taking more responsibility for conservation and use of PGRFA by establishing more accountability among its membership.	1	New ECPGR	Institutional
n)	Options for the institutionalization of ECPGR should be explored to obtain a legal persona.	1	New ECPGR	Institutional
o)	An Executive Director should be appointed to represent ECPGR, to empower ECPGR as a self standing institution, to mobilize national commitment and to secure additional funding.	1	New ECPGR	Institutional
q)	The Steering Committee should elect for, terms of 2 or 3 years, a President and two Vice-presidents (past and future presidents) to lead ECPGR and its Secretariat in advocacy, resource mobilisation and the orientation of important events. The president, the two Vice-Presidents and the Executive Director (ex officio) should constitute the Executive Committee. The ultimate decision making power must remain with the Steering Committee (or Board).	1	New ECPGR	Institutional
w)	The Review Panel recommends that Bioversity see it as its responsibility to usher ECPGR into a stronger form of institutionalization and independence.	1	New ECPGR	Institutional
x)	The Secretariat needs to be consolidated organizationally under the Executive Director.	1	New ECPGR	Institutional
y)	To enable the successful implementation of the organizational transition, the mid-term Steering Committee meeting should be advanced to the end of 2010 to consider the present report. And if so agreed, decide to implement some of its most urgent recommendations to facilitate the organizational transition, including the election of an Executive Committee, the search for an Executive Director and the establishment of a transition road map.	1	New ECPGR	Institutional
f)	Rapidly resolve the perceived duplication / competition between EURISCO and the Central Crop Databases and integrate C&E data into EURISCO.	1	Generic	ECPGR Components
g)	The integration of EURISCO into a global system such as GENESYS is considered valuable. However, EURISCO and its supporting mechanism needs to be maintained distinctly and made visible in order to assert ECPGR's ownership and authority, and secure future commitment and resources for the ECPGR database activities.	1	Generic	ECPGR Components
m)	Activities in support of developing countries should only be undertaken if their costs are fully recovered from external sources to ECPGR.	1	Generic	Capacity building

Ref	Recommendation	Urgency	Type	Subject
p)	The Steering Committee needs to be very clear regarding the relationship between AEGIS and ECPGR and communicate accordingly.	1	Generic	ECPGR Components
r)	The Steering Committee should adopt rules of procedure to make its functioning and decision making more transparent and inclusive. It should consider extending the duration of its meetings to allow for more discussion of proposals, and require the Secretariat to propose options for discussion rather than decisions for endorsement.	1	Generic	<i>Modus Operandi</i>
t)	Partnerships with the EC and the Secretariat of the ITPGRFA should be given priority.	1	Generic	Partnerships
a)	Establish a clear hierarchy of objectives, including outcomes attributable to ECPGR and a Goal(s) to which ECPGR contributes.	2	Generic	Objectives
c)	ECPGR's objectives need to more explicitly refer to and contribute to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and the International Treaty on PGRFA, inter alia, by implementing the SMTA as the standard regime for exchange and release of all the plant genetic resources, both Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 crops.	2	Generic	Objectives
d)	Continue the development of AEGIS to enhance the mutual commitment of all collection holders within ECPGR and establish an integrated European Collection of sufficient quality.	2	Generic	ECPGR Components
e)	Continue to support weaker national programmes to achieve the level of capacity and structure to be able to participate adequately in ECPGR components such as AEGIS and EURISCO.	2	Generic	Capacity building
i)	Strengthen the collaboration and linkages with EUCARPIA by mandating ECPGR working group members to systematically present findings and updates in the relevant EUCARPIA crop sections.	2	Generic	Partnerships
j)	Incorporate quantitative indicators into standardized reporting formats to be used annually by Working Groups to report to the Network Coordination Groups and the Secretariat, and aggregate this information at the ECPGR level at regular intervals	2	Generic	Objectives
l)	As a part of the logframing exercise referred to in Recommendation (a), verifiable indicators and benchmarks should be established – particularly at the level of Outcomes and Goal(s).	2	Generic	Objectives
s)	Workplans should be given priority for rapid dissemination on open web, reports by national programmes on the implementation of agreed past Workplans should be made using a standardized template, to facilitate editing. If a Network or the Programme chooses to publish papers, it should be required to establish a peer review and editing Committee responsible for the scientific and technical quality of the papers. Any other papers should be published on intranet only.	2	Generic	ECPGR Components
u)	Funds mobilized and projects implemented by Bioversity on behalf of ECPGR should be presented in ECPGR's Annual Financial report so as to visibly strengthen ECPGR and its ability to attract further commitment and resources.	2	Generic	Resources
v)	ECPGR should enhance its fund mobilization activities at the national level, as well as with the EC and other potential donors such as the Global Crop Diversity Trust.	2	Generic	Resources
h)	Fully integrate <i>in situ</i> and on-farm activities in The European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS), expanding in a second step the Genebanks' <i>ex situ</i> coverage to both <i>in situ</i> crop relatives' populations and on farm managed landraces; this will imply to expand EURISCO's structure, in order to include relevant data for the management of the <i>in situ</i> and on-farm components.	3	Generic	ECPGR Components
k)	An external review (analogous to the present one) should be conducted at least once per Phase (6-12 months before the final Steering Committee meeting of the Phase).	3	Generic	<i>Modus Operandi</i>

Independent External Review (IER) of the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

The European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) (formerly "European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks") was founded in 1980 on the basis of the recommendations of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Genebank Committee of the European Association for Research on Plant Breeding (EUCARPIA).

ECPGR is a collaborative Programme among most European countries, aimed at facilitating the long-term conservation on a co-operative basis and the increased utilization of plant genetic resources in Europe. The Programme, which is entirely financed by the participating countries and is coordinated by a Secretariat at Bioversity International, Rome, operates through broadly focused Networks dealing with groups of crops or general themes related to plant genetic resources. Following a Steering Committee decision in 1996 the ECPGR was recognized as a vehicle to facilitate implementation of the FAO Global Plan of Action (GPA) in Europe.

The objectives of ECPGR are to:

- facilitate the long-term *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of plant genetic resources in Europe
- facilitate the increased utilization of plant genetic resources in Europe
- strengthen links between all plant genetic resources programmes in Europe and promote the integration of countries that are not members of ECPGR
- encourage cooperation between all stakeholders, including NGOs and private breeders
- increase the planning of joint activities including the development of joint project proposals to be submitted to funding agencies
- encourage the sharing of conservation responsibilities for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) in Europe
- increase awareness, at all levels, of the importance of PGRFA activities including conservation and sustainable use, and
- seek collaboration with other relevant regional and global initiatives.

During Phase VII (2004-2008), the Programme has included 40 member countries and has carried out activities and actions totalling a budget of more than 2.2 million Euro. The Programme now represents a wide structure encompassing six crop networks, 18 crop Working Groups and three cross-cutting networks.

In 2010, ECPGR has its 30th anniversary. The last External Review of Bioversity International (formerly IPGRI) that focused on activities in Europe, were carried out in 1998 and 2003, respectively. The Institute was subject to an External Programme and Management Review (EPMR) in 2009. In the relevant recommendations made by these previous reviews regarding the Regional Programme of Europe, which were relevant to ECPGR, it was suggested to promote and support national PGR programmes; consider fund-raising activities and develop a funding strategy, involving the plant breeding sector into network activities; strengthen the inter-regional contacts; strengthen links with Eastern

Europe (notably with the Vavilov Institute and with Balkan countries); improve the regional information infrastructure. These reviews involve all the activities carried out within the Institute and thus also ECPGR, albeit marginally, will be addressed with regard to its relationship with Bioversity. No Bioversity related or other independent reviews that specifically focused on ECPGR have ever been carried out.

At its 11th meeting in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in September 2008, the ECPGR Steering Committee therefore decided to commission an Independent External Review to be carried out. Preparations started in 2009 and the review will be conducted during 2010. The commissioned Review Panel will then submit its recommendations at the Phase VIII mid-term meeting of the Steering Committee in 2011. The Steering Committee furthermore assigned a Task Force⁷ with the responsibility to formulate Terms of Reference for the review. A tentative budget frame for the review, allocated for cross-cutting issues, of € 30 000 has been suggested and is shown as *Appendix 1*.

The Review Panel will consist of three external reviewers, one of whom will serve as Panel Chair to lead the review team and focus on the process of organizing and managing the review. One Panel member, if funds permit, will be identified from outside Europe. The Review will take place during 2010. The Chair should have expertise in organizing and managing teams plus prior experience in leading evaluations. The Panel members will represent the following types of scientific expertise which form the core of the Programme's work:

- Plant genetic resources in its broad sense (conservation, utilization)
- Institutional governance and process management
- Economic and financial governance and mechanisms of follow-up
- Knowledge of the policy and agricultural development issues in geographic Europe

In addition to their technical expertise, Panel members will be selected based upon the following criteria:

- International experience
- Ability to act effectively as a member of a team
- Gender and geographic balance of the Panel
- Professional integrity

The National Coordinators and the ECPGR Secretariat will be invited to propose Panel members. Final selection of Panel members, including appointment of the Panel Chair, will be made by the Task Force. The Steering Committee will approve by consensus the selection of Panel members through a decision by electronic correspondence. The Task Force will oversee the entire review process on behalf of and in consultation with the Steering Committee.

The ECPGR Secretariat⁸ will provide administrative and logistic support to the Panel, including approaching the invited selected members, establishing formal contractual arrangements and organizing their visit to Rome, including field visits and/or selected ECPGR meetings. Furthermore, the Secretariat will also assist with travel arrangements, in developing the actual programme as well as providing all appropriate background documents. It is understood that these activities will be undertaken in close co-ordination with the Task Force. Preparatory steps preceding the Panel's work is provided in *Annex 2*.

⁷ The Task Force is composed of National Coordinators from Sweden (Chair of the Group), Macedonia (FYR), The Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

⁸ "ECPGR Secretariat" in this document refers to the ECPGR Coordinator, supported and guided by an internal task force, created for the purpose of this review.

Major activities of the Review Panel are as follows:

1. February 2010: Teleconference among the three Panel members, the Chair of the Task Force and the ECPGR Coordinator. The Panel will receive an orientation from the Task Force members on the objectives of the review and issues to be considered. The ECPGR Coordinator will be available for clarifications. Panel members will carry on the discussion among themselves.
2. March 2010. Proposed half a day face-to-face meeting of the three Panel members at a location to be agreed.

Based on the above interactions, the Panel will develop a plan for the review including:

- roles and responsibilities of Panel members
- plans for interactions with the ECPGR Secretariat and other relevant Bioversity staff, the Steering Committee Task Force and telephone or electronic interviews with other National Coordinators, as appropriate
- interactions with partners of the networks and Working Groups during selected ECPGR meetings
- timelines, milestones and deadlines
- presentation and discussion of recommendations with the ECPGR Secretariat and at least one member (Chair) of the Task Force

This plan will be discussed and agreed with the Steering Committee Task Force by email correspondence.

3. March-April 2010. Participation of one Panel member in the Brassica WG meeting in Catania, Italy, 2-4 March, and of another Panel member in the Grain legumes WG meeting, Antalya, Turkey, 22-23 April.⁹
4. March 2010. A detailed suggested programme for the week 23 July to 30 July will be prepared by the ECP GR Team and sent to the Panel members.
5. Prior to the review, the Panel will review supporting documentation (largely focused on Phase VII), including impact assessments if available, network and working group reports on activities, outputs and outcomes, and other background documents related to the Programme. Key documents include reports from Steering Committee meetings and Terms of Reference for the operational bodies of ECPGR (October 2008). The ECPGR Secretariat will also provide a stakeholder analysis based on a representative survey and a Secretariat's background document.
6. July 2010. Independent External Review in Maccarese, Rome, Italy during one week (7 full working days from Friday 23 July to Friday 30 July) where the Panel will formulate its conclusions and produce the final Panel Report. The Steering Committee Task Force Chair and another member of the Task Force will also attend the last two days of the review (29-30 July).

During the July visit, the Panel will receive from the ECPGR Secretariat and other relevant Bioversity staff an orientation on the ECPGR Programme, its *modus operandi*, its hosting arrangements, on-going work and challenges and opportunities.

During the review, the Review Panel will analyse both qualitative and quantitative evidence from interviews, visits and background documentation and draw conclusions about the Programme's effectiveness in the following areas:

- Are the objectives and strategy of the Programme well defined and relevant?

⁹ This meeting had to be cancelled as flights were cancelled due to the volcanic ash.

- Are ECPGR objectives in line to those of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture including the Global Plan of Action? Is the Programme pursuing its objectives well?
- Does the Programme effectively set priorities and is there a clear process in place for priority setting?
- Is the underlying concept of ECPGR – a programme largely based upon National Programmes that makes use of synergies among them by funding additional costs for cooperation, information and communication at the regional level – effective?
- Is the investment in ECPGR, including AEGIS, strategically relevant, well-directed and proportional?
- How effective is the Programme at re-aligning itself with external changes (i.e. Climate change, new Members or Treaty existence) and are appropriate procedures/mechanisms in place?
- Is the Programme well managed? Are the managerial resources sufficient?
- Are the current hosting arrangements the most appropriate?
- Is the current network and working group structure optimal and effective?
- Does the Programme have a sustainable and reliable funding mechanism? Are available funds used effectively?
- Is the Steering Committee a 'steering committee' and how effective is it in its role? Does it have the proper tools for governance and evaluation?
- Are appropriate linkages and partnerships in place?
- What impact is the Programme having for PGRFA in Europe? Are the impact pathways clearly spelled out?

Based upon its analysis, the Panel will be requested to provide a clear and focused set of recommendations for future direction and action, with a particular focus on the issues raised by the Programme for Panel consideration.

The conclusions of the Panel will represent the view of the Panel as a group, not the perspectives of individual members of the Panel. The Panel's conclusions will be drawn from all available evidence (both quantitative and qualitative), ensuring that careful standards of evidence are adhered to such as:

- Sources are reliable and informed, and possible personal biases have been assessed
- Claims are verified by multiple sources of evidence
- Rival explanations and claims are tested and ruled out
- Bias is reduced by comparing and challenging the perspectives of individual Panel members and collectively drawing conclusions

The Panel will develop a comprehensive written report that documents the conclusions reached from its deliberations. The report will provide suggestions for future direction and recommendations for areas of future emphasis or action. The final report will be completed by Friday 30 July. Prior to finalizing the report, the Review Panel will present and discuss its findings and recommendations with the ECPGR Secretariat and at least one member (Chair) of the Task Force for clarification and feedback, which may be taken into consideration before completing the final report. The Secretariat will provide assistance in editing and formatting of the report and will then send the final report to the Steering Committee.

7. The Panel Chair will present an oral report of the Panel conclusions and recommendations to the ECPGR Steering Committee at the Phase VIII mid-term meeting in 2011.

REVIEW PANEL BIODATA

Thomas Gass (Panel Chair)

Thomas Gass is currently the Ambassador of Switzerland to Nepal and Country Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and cooperation.

From 2004-2009 he was the Counsellor and Team Leader for Economic and Development Affairs at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN in New York which he represented Switzerland at the Economic and Social Council of the UN, as well as on the Executive Boards of the UN Funds and Programme.

He was Vice President of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS in 2008 and Vice President of the UN Commission on Population and Development in 2007. He became Chair of the Donor Group of the UN Global Compact from 2004-2009 and from 2002-2004 was Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP in Guyana, including Resident Representative for a year.

From 1998 – 2002 he took leadership of a broad portfolio of development and environmental projects including Programme manager and advisor for rural development at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation with a focus mainly on Latin America; Evaluation and planning of several development projects at national and regional level, including the Irrigated Rice Research Consortium (Manila, The Philippines); and several Latin America based crop improvement networks.

From 1994-1998 he was the ECPGR Coordinator and Regional Director for Europe of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) in Rome Italy which involved the coordination of ECPGR during the first years of its Phase V and then leadership of the IPGRI Europe Group, including the two programmes ECPGR and EUFORGEN. From 1991 – 1994 he was Junior Scientist of the Cereals Breeding Department, RAC Research Station, Nyon, Switzerland and during that time gained his PhD on breeding and physiology of cold tolerance in soybean. From 1989-1991 he was Junior Scientist (and Associate Expert) with the International Potato Centre (CIP) in Bamenda, Cameroon, working mainly on the adaptation and pathology of introduced breeding lines, as well as the establishment of a national potato seed programme. In 1988 Thomas Gass gained his MSc in Agricultural Sciences at the ETH-Zurich with specialisation in plant sciences and entomology.

Orlando de Ponti (Panel member)

In 1971 Dr. Ir. Orlando de Ponti graduated as Agricultural Engineer at the Wageningen Agricultural University in Plant Breeding, Genetics, Plant Protection and Horticulture. In 1980 he obtained his doctorate from the same University with a thesis on Resistance in *Cucumis sativus* L. to the spider mite *Tetranychus urticae* Koch.

From 1971 to 1991 he worked in Wageningen, the Netherlands, for the Directorate for Agricultural Research (DLO) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. First as a plant breeding scientist at the Institute for Horticultural Plant Breeding (IVT-DLO), then as Head of the Vegetables Breeding Department at the same institute and finally as Director of the Research Institute for Plant Protection (IPO-DLO).

In 1991 Orlando de Ponti made the change-over from public research to industry, when he accepted the function of Managing Director Research and Development and member of the Management Board of Nunhems B.V., Haalen, the Netherlands, which company belongs today to Bayer CropScience. Since May 2008 he is Senior R&D Advisor with Nunhems B.V.

Nunhems' R&D department is active in breeding, biotechnology, seed-technology and food-technology. It has research and breeding locations in the Netherlands, France, Italy, Spain, Israel, Jordan, Turkey, USA, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, India and China. The global R&D department has more than 350 employees, more than 60 with an academic degree. The breeding is market driven, and innovative by implementing the latest results from cell and molecular biology.

Orlando de Ponti was also the President of the International Seed Federation (ISF) from 2008 to 2010 and a member of the CGIAR Genetic Resources Policy Committee (GRPC). Currently he is a member of the Executive Committee of ISF, a member of the Governing Board of the Dutch Technology Top Institute for Green Genetics (TTI GG), and member of the supervisory board of three international breeding companies.

Marianne Lefort (Panel member)

Marianne Lefort is currently the Scientific Director at AgroParisTech. Since 2006, she has been the Head of scientific direction at AgroParisTech, a French Higher Education School in *Agriculture, Food and Environment Science and Technology* which trains Master students (French Engineers and MSc) and PhDs; Head of the Doctoral School ABIES within AgroParisTech, which trained about 450 doctoral students.

From 1999 to 2005 she was Head of the Plant Genetics and Breeding Department at INRA (Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique); coordinating research and pre-breeding activities of numerous crops, both annual and perennial, including associated genetic resources conservation and evaluation. During the same period, she was also a Board Member of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI).

From 1994 to 1999 she was the Director of the Board of Genetic Resources, a French Scientific Federation which deals with animal, plant and microorganisms' genetic resources: (i) establishment and implementation of a National Strategy for GR conservation, characterisation and use; (ii) development of a French research community to enhance scientific knowledge in genetic conservation, analysis, evolution and adaptation, while creating a link with Biodiversity community; and (iii) leading the French delegation in the negotiation of the International Treaty on PGRFA. During the same period, she was also involved in ECPGR as the National French coordinator.

From 1977 to 1994, she was a researcher at INRA with a background in quantitative genetics; the first part of her career was devoted to the analysis and potential exploitation of rapeseed hybrids (quantification and exploitation of heterotic potentialities, understanding heterosis phenomenon); with the second part focussing on maize (heterosis and hybrids' breeding, landraces genetic diversity sustainable management and use) introducing molecular tools in breeding strategies and management of diversity.

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY

The European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) is undergoing an external review in 2010 and, as part of the process, a Stakeholders Survey was carried out. The consultation mainly focused on assessing the relevance and effectiveness of ECPGR's strategy, objectives and priorities, as well as the adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness of its structure and management and the usefulness and impact of its outputs. A total of 310 stakeholders responded to the online survey (43% response rate) out of 719 e-mails sent.

The survey results can be summarized in the following points:

- ECPGR's strategy, objectives and priorities are considered relevant and effective.
- The current priorities are considered adequate by 87% of respondents.
- Cost efficiency in meeting the objectives was considered efficient by a range between 57 and 70% of respondents, depending on the cost efficiency element under scrutiny.
- The documentation and information area was considered to be the most effective of ECPGR's current priorities (89% of respondents rated it effective).
- 87% of respondents considered ECPGR the appropriate programme to support the established priorities.
- The funding mechanism was considered adequate by 71% of respondents. Bioversity International was considered the adequate host institute for ECPGR by 76% of respondents.
- The priority setting process driven by the Steering Committee was considered adequate by 77% of respondents.
- The management of the ECPGR Programme was regarded as efficient (80%), while the use of available funds was considered efficient by 64% of respondents.
- Investments made by member countries in the conservation and use of PGR were reported as insufficient by 33% of respondents, whereas 34% were not able to respond to the question.
- The size of the Secretariat was considered sufficient by 50% of respondents, insufficient by 19% and too generous by 5%.
- The Steering Committee's role in providing leadership and direction to ECPGR was reported as effective (68%).
- The current network and working group structure was considered effective (85%) and the Programme was regarded as effective in its flexibility to re-align itself with external changes (80%).
- The majority of respondents were not able to judge whether the Steering Committee had an appropriate mechanism and procedures for governance (52%), while 32% indicated that it had.
- The ECPGR linkages and partnerships were considered appropriate by 90% of the respondents.
- Respondents reported that the outputs produced by ECPGR were useful, in particular the databases, guidelines and project proposals were the most cited.
- In general, ECPGR was considered effective in reaching expected impacts.

REVIEW PANEL SCHEDULE

Independent External Review (IER) of the European Cooperative Programme for
Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) - 16 – 23 July 2010

FRIDAY 16 JULY		
Time	Name and Title	Subject
0830	<i>Board Room, 4th Floor x 346</i> Patti Sands	Discuss schedule and logistics
0900	<i>Sakura Room, Ground Floor x 317</i> ECPGR Steering Committee: Jens Weibull, Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the ECPGR Review ECPGR Secretariat - overview and presentations: Lorenzo Maggioni, ECPGR Coordinator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECPGR Overview Jan Engels, AEGIS Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AEGIS Jozef Turok, Regional Director for Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECPGR and Bioversity 	Presentations Questions and discussion throughout the presentations <i>Coffee available courtyard outside Sakura Room</i>
1230	Lunch - Steering Committee members/Emile Frison	San Georgio Restaurant
1230 - 1400	Lunch - Review Panel followed by discussions	Dining Room, Bioversity
1400 - 1615	<i>Panel discussion</i>	Board Room, 4 th floor
1600 - 1800	<i>Meeting with Emile Frison, Director General</i>	Board Room, 4 th floor
1800 - 1900	Elinor Lipman, Scientific Assistant Elinor Lipman, Scientific Assistant, Presentation and interactions with Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Policy 	Sakura Room, Ground Floor

SATURDAY 17 JULY		
Time	Name and Title	Subject
	<i>Bioversity offices</i> - Panel members	Discussion on programme of work. Prepare report template

The following interactions/telephone calls will all take place in the Board Room, 4th floor

MONDAY 19 JULY		
Time	Name and Title	Subject
0830 - 0900	Panel discussion	
0900 - 1000	Lorenzo Maggioni, ECPGR Coordinator	EURISCO presentation (Sakura Room)
1000 - 1045	Lorenzo Maggioni and Jan Engels	
1100 - 1130	Michael Mackay, Senior Scientist, Biodiversity Informatics, Telephone: (+61264537214) Australia	AEGIS (Board Room) EURISCO/GENESYS
1200 - 1230	Gerald Moore - Policy and Law. Telephone: 06 9351171	Policy and Law
1230	Lunch	

MONDAY 19 JULY (contd)		
Time	Name and Title	Subject
1400	Individual interactions: Jozef Turok, Regional Director for Europe Jan Engels, AEGIS Coordinator	
1600 - 1630	Sónia Dias, EURISCO Coordinator (+351 214539895 or +351 966366343)	Teleconference with Marianne Lefort and Orlando de Ponti
1600 - 1630	Gerry O'Donoghue, Director, Corporate Services/Melanie Glover, Budget Officer	Met with Thomas Gass
1720	Lorenzo Maggioni, ECPGR Coordinator	
	Each interaction followed by panel discussion Panel discussion, work on Report	<i>Coffee available 4th floor kitchen</i>

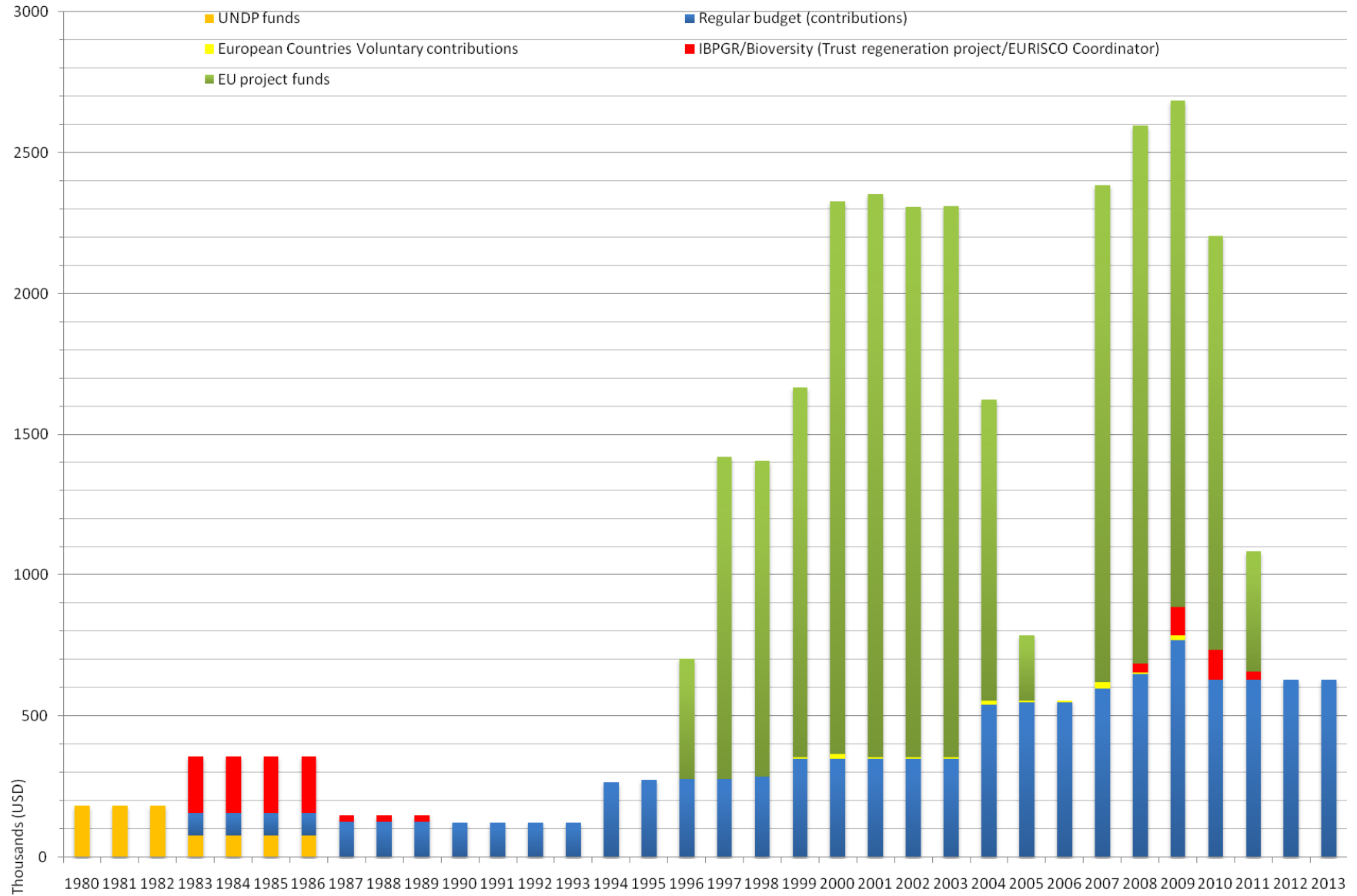
TUESDAY 20 JULY		
Time	Name and Title	Subject
0930	Visit to FAO: AGP MG: Ms Kakoli Ghosh, Agricultural Officer (Plant Genetic Resources Policy and Capacity)/Team Leader Mr Stefano Diulgheroff, Information Management Officer. Room C784. Tel: 57054533	AGPMG: Discuss collaboration between AGP and the ECPGR programme, including collaboration towards the preparation of the State of the World and update of the Global Plan of Action.
1030	Global Crop Diversity Trust: Jane Toll, Project Manager, Luigi Guarino, Senior Science Coordinator Room B258. Tel: 065705 4195	The Trust: Discuss collaboration including collaboration for the identification of threatened accessions in Europe and for the implementation of a regeneration and safety-duplication project.
1130	Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: Daniele Manzella, Legal Officer Xuan Li, Treaty Support Officer, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department Room B628 Tel: 57053554	The Treaty: Collaboration including Inter-regional networks' collaboration in the context of the Joint Treaty-Bioersity Programme for the implementation of the Treaty.
1230 - 1400	Lunch - La Villetta, Rome	
1500	Telephone calls to partners: Ladislav Dotlacil (+420 233 022374)	
1600	Frank Begemann (+49 228 6845 3239)	
1715	Silvia Strajeru, Steering Committee member	
1730	Jens Weibull, Steering Committee Chair	
1800	Panel discussion, continue working on Report	

WEDNESDAY 21 JULY		
Time	Name and Title	Subject
0830 - 0900	Panel discussion	<i>Coffee available 4th floor kitchen</i>
0900 -1000	Communications and External Relations: Pascal Marbois, Communications Director	Communications Strategy for ECPGR
1000 - 1030	Telephone calls to Partners :	Marianne Lefort and Orlando de Ponti
1130 - 1200	Fernando Latorre (+34 91 8819261) Lothar Frese (+49 3946 47701)	
1230	Lunch	
1500 - 1530	Gerald Moore (Telephone: 06 9351171) Isabel Lopez Noriega, Legal Expert, Policy & Law x307	Board Room
1600 - 1700	Emile Frison	Board Room
1700 - 1800	Jan Engels, Jozef Turok	
1800	Panel discussion, continue working on Report	<i>Coffee available 4th floor kitchen</i>

THURSDAY 22 JULY		
Time	Name and Title	Subject
0830	Report writing (further interactions with staff/telephone interactions if required)	<i>Coffee available 4th floor kitchen</i>
1230	Lunch	
1500	1 st draft of report produced	
1600 - 1800	Panel clarification meeting with ECPGR Secretariat and Steering Committee Task Force representatives	<i>Coffee available 4th floor kitchen</i>

FRIDAY 23 JULY		
Time	Name and Title	Room
	Finalize Report	

EVOLUTION OF FUNDING FOR ECPGR (1980-2013)



STATUS OF ECPGR
(Notes for discussion prepared by Gerald Moore, Policy & Law, Bioversity International)

1. Requirements:

- a. More defined structure and organization;
- b. More defined status;
- c. Separate identity;
- d. Legal capacity to accept funds and run projects in its own right;
- e. Separate legal personality.

2. Options for legal status:

a. Continue present status

- i. Could draw up Statutes that define more clearly structure and organization
- ii. But this would not fully meet all requirements:
 - 1. inability to handle projects except through legal framework of host organization – Bioversity International;
 - 2. Future of ECPGR linked to that of host organization
 - 3. Could seek new host organization, e.g. FAO – but this may not be advisable

b. Set up as international organization with its own international legal personality

- i. International organizations can only be set up through international agreements entered into by sovereign states;
- ii. There are four main sub-options here.
 - 1. A full-blown international agreement with substantive obligations on the part of the Contracting Parties, e.g. financial commitments, privileges and immunities etc.
 - a. Would accommodate objectives; but
 - b. Will take a long time, particularly if the establishment agreement, which will need to be at the level of sovereign governments, will need to contain substantive obligations on the part of governments. In this case, the agreement will need to be ratified by Parliaments.
 - c. Establishment agreement will need to be supplemented by a Headquarters agreement
 - d. At my reading, you would be looking at all governments members of ECPGR at least being signatories to the Establishment agreement.
 - e. At my estimation, you are looking at something like 8 or 9 years minimum, even if you eventually get there, which I rather doubt.
 - 2. **A simplified international agreement without substantive obligations on the part of the Contracting Parties, along the lines of the international agreement establishing the Global Crop Diversity Trust.**
 - a. The establishment agreement could be brought into force on its signature by a smaller number of government, e.g. 4-6;
 - b. The establishment agreement could remain open for signature or accession by other countries in due course.

- c. Establishment agreement will need to be supplemented by a Headquarters agreement
- d. *Examples: The Global Crop Diversity Trust*
- e. Pros:
 - i. Would accommodate objectives;
 - ii. Would reflect inter-governmental nature of ECPGR;
 - iii. Could be accomplished in a shorter period than the full international agreement.
- f. Cons:
 - i. This simplified approach may not be accepted by all ECPGR Governments. Some governments may have objections to setting up international organizations without ratification by Parliaments;
 - ii. Establishment agreement will need to be supplemented by Headquarters Agreement and letters of agreement with individual governments making substantive commitments, e.g. funds;
 - iii. Whole process will take some time in any case, e.g. 2-3 years minimum;

3. Establish ECPGR as a subsidiary body of the EU or EC

- a. The feasibility of this option would need to be explored with the EU;
- b. *Example: To be explored*
- c. Pros:
 - i. Would meet the main requirements;
 - ii. Would tie the ECPGR more closely to a potential funding source;
 - iii. Would reflect core EU Membership of 27 countries;
- d. Cons:
 - i. EU Membership includes only 27 out of ECPGR membership of 43. Means would need to be sought to accommodate other members, without according them a status that is inferior to the EU Members.
 - ii. ECPGR would become a body of the EU, which may not be acceptable to all countries;
- e. This approach may not necessarily be acceptable to EU.

4. Establish ECPGR as an international organization under an agreement adopted under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution

- a. This approach would need to be explored with FAO;
- b. *Examples: European Commission for the Control of Foot and Mouth Disease; General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean*
- c. Pros:
 - i. Would meet the main requirements;
 - ii. Could be accomplished by an agreement under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution (Regional agreement adopted by Council). Adopted agreement is then circulated to countries for acceptance.
 - iii. Process could be accomplished quite quickly. E.g. 1 year for adoption by FAO, and 2-3 years for entry into force;
 - iv. Established procedure for establishment of regional bodies with their own legal personality. Legal process for establishment would not be contested;

- v. No need to negotiate separate Headquarters Agreement, as ECPGR would automatically be covered by existing FAO Headquarters Agreement. Secretariat staff would be staff members of FAO, with their privileges and immunities;
- vi. Would reflect intergovernmental nature of ECPGR;
- vii. Would tie the ECPGR with a leading international food and agriculture organization;

d. Cons :

- i. Would subject ECPGR to more control by FAO, which may not be politically acceptable;
- ii. This approach may not necessarily be acceptable to FAO.
- iii. The association with FAO may perhaps make it more difficult to secure outside funds.

c. Establish as a national charitable corporation

- i. This approach would require the drawing up of necessary documents (Statutes, Articles of Association, Byelaws, etc) and registration of ECPGR as a national non-profit organization;
- ii. *Examples: The Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria*
- iii. Pros:
 - 1. Would accommodate most objectives;
 - 2. Will give you independent legal personality quite quickly
 - 3. Can get recognition of charitable status and tax exemption for funds and income quite quickly
 - 4. Could perhaps negotiate headquarters agreement eventually that might include tax exemption for staff.
- iv. Cons:
 - 1. Would not fully reflect the intergovernmental nature of ECPGR;
 - 2. Pending the negotiation of a suitable headquarters agreement,, staff would be subject to national taxation;
- v. Possible locations could be Switzerland, or Netherlands, in view of ease of incorporation. Probably Switzerland in view of new legislation. Other possibilities could be Bonn or Montpellier, because of other moves in this direction.