



AEGIS: **a progress report**

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**Eleventh meeting of the ECPGR Steering Committee
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2-5 September 2008**

Content of presentation



1. Main objectives of AEGIS
2. Role + responsibilities of ECPGR bodies and other background information
3. Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements
4. General observations on AEGIS establishment process
5. Proposal on how to proceed with establishment/operation of AEGIS
6. Concluding remarks

Main objectives of AEGIS



To establish a European Collection

and...

- exploit collective cultural, scientific and environmental strengths and opportunities
- increase general conservation quality
- facilitate sharing of responsibilities
- allow a more rational and cost- efficient approach
- overcome collectively constraints and problems
- facilitate implementation of IT

Some facts and figures



■ Europe



■ Model Crops



- ❖ App. 500 genebanks/germplasm coll.
- ❖ App. 2 million accessions
- ❖ Only 30-40% unique(?)
- ❖ > 40 European countries

- ❖ Model crops: > 110 collections
- ❖ Total 74,000 accessions
- ❖ Average 21 countries/crop

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Roles and responsibilities of various bodies



ECPGR SC (SC): approve budget; decision-maker; oversight; interface with countries

AEGIS Advisory Committee (AC): provider of advice and ideas; discussion forum

Local Bioversity AEGIS Task Force (LTF) : discussion and brainstorming forum; linking AEGIS with Bioversity

Model crops (MCGs): developers/implementers of ideas; guinea pigs; linking AEGIS to ECPGR reality

ECPGR Secretariat (S): initiator; developer; implementer

The Four Model Crops



❖ Seed propagated material – annual

❖ Annex I crops of ITPGRFA

■ *Avena spp*
(entire
genepool)



selfing

■ *Brassica spp*

For MAA: *B. rapa*



outcrossing

❖ Vegetatively propagated material – biennial and perennial

❖ Non Annex I of ITPGRFA

■ *Allium sp.*
(vegetatively
propagated)



■ *Prunus spp*
(cherry)



Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements



3. Strategic Framework for the Implementation of AEGIS published (1000 copies) and on the website
 - a. Discussion paper; no final consensus
 - **S and LTF: drafts; AC and SC comments and approval**
4. Reports of the four Model Crop groups: on the AEGIS and SC meeting webpages
 - a) They provided the basis for the AEGIS report
 - b) Reflect adequately where we stand as well as what they propose to do next
 - **S: outline; draft discussion papers**

Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements



5. Involvement of stakeholders

- a. Important role of **NCs** in identifying stakeholders, including private sector and NGOs to select Eur. Acc. and to manage them
- b. Where applicable, build capacity of stakeholders and involve them in national PGR coordination mechanisms

6. Assessment of operational **costs** (see 6.P.)

- a. **SC** to comment on framework document and data collecting tool?
- b. **SC** to agree that tool for *in vitro* + cryopreserv. activities of garlic is validated at IPK and later by *Allium* Network
- c. **SC** to advise on procedure with establishment of baseline costs for other crops (i.e. other 3 model crops and/or volunteer crops from other Networks)

Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements



7. AEGIS Quality System (**AQUAS**) (see 7.P.)
 - a. **Each Associated Member** of AEGIS to prepare operational genebank manual (< 1 year after signing MOU)
 - b. **WGs** to develop crop specific technical standards (< 1 y after establishment of list of Eur. Acc. of resp. crop) – to be approved by SC
 - c. **Each Associated Member** put in place an effective system of record keeping of verifiable facts of collection management activities (< 1y after signing MOU)
 - d. **WGs** will monitor application of standards and provide feedback to NCs on improvements/capacity bldng/etc and will report on monitoring system to SC (< 2y after establishing list of Eur. Acc. of resp. crop)

Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements



7. AEGIS Quality System (AQUAS)- cont. (2)
 - e. **Secretariat** to develop proposal for effective monitoring approach at multiple crop and regional level (< 1y after AEGIS start)
 - f. **SC** to establish independent Standing Technical Committee (to ensure comparability of AQUAS performances across crops, WGs, countries, providing feedback on standards and oversight of external monitoring) - asap

Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements



8. Requirements and selection criteria for MAAs (see 8.P.) - 1

- a. **SC** to endorse requirements (see 8.1 and **next slide**)
- b. **SC** to take note of list of selection criteria (8.2) and provide comments
- c. **NCs** to ensure that National Inventories include all relevant collection data that will be transferred to EURISCO

Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements



8. Requirements and selection criteria for MAAs (see 8.P.) - 2

Requirements

1. Material under the management and control of the member countries and their associate members and in the public domain.
2. Genetically unique, to the best available knowledge (i.e. genetically distinct accessions; assessment based on available data and/or on the recorded history of the accession).
3. Plant genetic resources, including:
 - a. Medicinal and ornamental species
 - b. Crop Wild Relatives
 - c. Used wild speciesExcluded are:
 - a. Non-plant agrobiodiversity species
 - b. Forest genetic resources species
4. European origin or introduced germplasm that is of actual or potential importance to Europe (for breeding, research, education or for historical and cultural reasons).

Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements



9. MAAs, establishing lists and procedures (see 9.P.)
 - a. SC to take note of the procedures followed by four model crops in establishing lists of MAAs
 - b. SC to note the experiences made by model crops in using requirements and selection criteria to establish lists
 - c. SC to note lessons learnt for other crops
 - d. SC to decide on most appropriate process for identifying MAAs, incl. the respective roles of WGs, NCs and National Crop Specialists (see **point 9.5**)

Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements



10. Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (see 10.P.)

THIS ASPECT WILL BE DISCUSSED SPERATELY IN THE NEXT SESSION OF THE MEETING.

- a. **SC** to consider the current draft text of the MOU
- b. **NCs** to seek signature of Country Representative on MOU and of the Associate Institutions representatives on Associate Membership Agreement
- c. **Secretariat** prepare a “guide” for implementation of MOU at national level

Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements



10. Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

d. **SC** to establish a timetable for implementation of MOU:

1. Proceed with 4 model crops; to be completed by Dec. 2010
2. WGs of model crops to extend MOU implementation to other crops of their mandate; to be completed by Dec. 2011
3. Other WGs to initiate/continue MOU implementation process; to be completed by Dec. 2013

Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements



11. Draft Model Institutional Contract (see 11.P.)

- a. Need for and form of such agreement becomes clearer when model crop groups develop Crop Conservation Workplans
- b. Small AC sub-group has been formed to collaborate with Associate Institutions holding germplasm
- c. In close consultation with AC it is proposed that sub-group initiates development process in close consultation with MCGs upon conclusion of MOU and submits findings to AC by end 2009

Expected decisions by SC and progress on important elements



12. Survey of capacity and availability of services (see 12.P.)

- a. **Countries** are expected to indicate services they are prepared to offer and commit to AEGIS as part of MOU conclusion process to respective WGs
- b. **WGs** to indicate to NCs which specific activities and services they would like to see indiv. countries to provide as a commitment to AEGIS

13. Acquisition of additional funding for AEGIS

- a. **SC** to realize that AEGIS implementation and operation will largely depend on in-kind contributions
- b. **Secretariat** to continue pro-active stance on proposal development for EU funded schemes
- c. **SC** to discuss proposal on a strategy for collaboration with the EU (**refer to agenda item on 3 Sept.**)

General observations on AEGIS establishment process (1)



1. Increasing difficulties in obtaining in-kind contributions from **institutions and individuals** —► Suggested to properly plan time to be spent by individuals on AEGIS (ECPGR) activities as part of their institutional responsibilities/workplan
2. To strengthen the coordination of AEGIS activities at the national level it is **suggested that NCs consider (and formally plan) their time commitment and inputs into AEGIS**
3. Need for additional funding to MCGs to conduct essential activities (MAA related; technical standards; etc.). Proposals to EU funding schemes formulated; limited success —► **refer to budget discussion on Sept. 4**

General observations on AEGIS establishment process (2)



4. **SC** to note variable degrees that countries prefer to formalize AEGIS activities and commitments; the MOU will provide basis for the approach
5. Information management (i.e. EURISCO and CCDBs) identified as constraint by MCGs in establishing MAA lists —▶ **National Inventories** need to urgently provide to EURISCO complete and accurate data of all accessions that could potentially become part of AEGIS

Proposal on how to proceed with establishment/operation of AEGIS (1)



Considering need for funding of WGs to continue the establishment activities of AEGIS and to initiate its operation, **SC should consider the following (see 14.P.):**

- **Allium MCG** foresees need for additional funding to extend the list of MAAs to include all European garlic + shallot accessions and to get them cryopreserved
- **Avena MCG** identified a series of follow-up actions, without providing budget figures. **It is anticipated that a number of additional meetings will be needed to move forwards**
- **Brassica MCG** requested additional funding for WG meetings every 2 years; however, this is already budgeted for. Other costs are foreseen to be covered from in kind contributions

Proposal on how to proceed with establishment/operation of AEGIS (2)



4. **Prunus MCG** foresees ambitious and expensive workplan, i.e. for two additional meetings, data enhancement, fingerprinting, verifying health status, safety duplication and public awareness costs (total € 303K).

SC to consider approval of one additional meeting (€ 25K); data enhancement and safety duplication (i.e. € 112 + 80K resp.) suggested from external funding

5. Phase VIII Network budgets include AEGIS activities also for other crops (e.g. barley, wheat, vegetables, fruits, grain legumes, potato and forages (see point 5, page 15)

Proposal on how to proceed with establishment/operation of AEGIS (3)



- 5. SC to consider proposal Secretariat to provide additional €149K to support AEGIS establishment for activities that fall outside regular WG budgets:**
- a. € 6K for technical/advisory assistance to countries for MOU process
 - b. € 20K for additional meetings of *Prunus* and *Avena* MCGs
 - c. € 123K for a competitive grant scheme for model and other crops to support formal, well-justified requests in areas such as data acquisition and quality improvement; complementing existing regular ECPGR meeting budgets to allow more participants or add more time; overcome any other constraints; etc. At least 60% of grant scheme proposed for MCGs

Concluding remarks (1)



1. Broad support for AEGIS concept:
 - a. Within ECPGR
 - b. SEEDNet promotes the same approach
 - c. Secretariat of Governing Body and Bioversity consider AEGIS as example of regional collaboration and IT implementation
2. Feasibility of further AEGIS implementation only possible by putting it into practice!
3. Some points of reluctance regarding AEGIS:
 - a. Compatibility of AEGIS with IT and national legislation (especially Non-Annex I crops) —► *Extension of MLS to non-Annex I crops is left to countries on voluntary basis*

Concluding remarks (2)



- b. Establishment of a quality management system and an (external) monitoring system
 - ▶ *through signing MOU countries commit themselves to abide to AQUAS that will be established by consensus*
- c. Speed of implementation to be too high
 - ▶ *a balance needs to be found; Secretariat is consciously aware of this and tries to assist countries where possible*
- d. Insufficient time to discuss in particular legal matters in SC
 - ▶ *complexity of subject is high; not always sufficient knowledge (and interest?) at hand; different role of Secretariat?*

Concluding remarks (3)



e. Concerns about overall costs



- 1. The cost is not a quantifiable figure. However, by signing the MOU, countries will “only” commit themselves to conserve for the long-term at to-be-agreed quality standards and to make available accessions they will identify and voluntarily include in European Collection.*
- 2. Such “national heritage” germplasm is an integral part of the collections they already fund in any way!*
- 3. Additional costs for establishment of AEGIS coordination system are at the moment included in ECPGR budget*

Concluding remarks (4)



4. *A gradual AEGIS implementation seems to be more logical and feasible than a “big bang” approach!*
5. *Possible source for additional funds could be the “adoption” by individual countries of the cost to implement the entire AEGIS process for a given crop as extra budgetary contributions*

Endorsement of MOU and signing of the MOUs by individual countries will be the next essential steps in the process of establishing AEGIS and to start its operation!



■ Thank you!