



# ECPGR communication and public relations strategy

Approved by the Steering Committee, January 2020

**Vision:** *The widest plant diversity is preserved for sustainable agriculture, food security and quality.*

**Mission:** *European Network to promote conservation, management and sustainable use of plant genetic diversity.*

## 1. Introduction

ECPGR is a collaborative Programme among most European countries. Its long-term goals are the effective long-term conservation, provision of access and increased utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) in Europe. Specific objectives relate to *ex situ*, *in situ* and on-farm conservation, documentation and use, as follows:

1. To efficiently conserve and provide access to unique germplasm in Europe through AEGIS and the European Collection
2. To provide passport and phenotypic information of actively conserved European PGRFA diversity *ex situ* and *in situ* through the EURISCO catalogue
3. To improve *in situ* conservation and use of crop wild relatives
4. To promote on-farm conservation and management of European PGRFA diversity
5. To promote use of PGRFA

## 2. Overall communication objectives

Communication efforts of ECPGR should be two-fold: (i) external; and (ii) internal. This document however focusses only on external communication.

As a well-established body ECPGR should seek to increase its resources in order to become even more effective and communicate the crucial importance of PGR diversity for food security. Therefore, the main objectives of external communication should serve three main purposes: (a) conveying to responsible policy-makers, in particular to ministries, what ECPGR has achieved so far, and is continuing to do within the European context, (b) promoting ECPGR products to PGR user groups (including the scientific community), and (c) conveying the importance of PGRFA to the general public.

### **3. Target audiences and specific objectives**

The Programme's external communication will aim to reach the following three main target audiences, for whom the activities and results of the Programme are, or should be, of interest:

#### **a) Policy-makers at national and European level**

- Provide evidence-based, clear, brief and well-argued material, including position papers, for informing decision-making processes (legislation, funding, and agreements) relevant for PGR conservation and use.

#### **b) User groups**

- Breeding community: provide information about ECPGR assets/tools in terms of facilitating access to genetic resources for plant breeding and related collaboration actions, including serving as a platform for contact and collaboration within the pre-breeding community (Private-Public Partnership, PPP) and collection holders through the ECPGR Evaluation Network (EVA)<sup>1</sup>;
- Scientific community (research and training): provide information about ECPGR concepts, products and mechanisms that can facilitate research and education;
- Farming and horticulturist community: provide information about ECPGR as a platform of expertise, with linkages to collection holders and tentative project partners, and their collections; provide options for participatory activities including breeding and on-farm management;
- Seed savers/conservationist NGOs, community seed banks and the like: provide information about opportunities for collaboration for the sake of maintaining, or perhaps multiplying, material;

#### **c) Various interest groups**

- Invite National Coordinators (NCs) to pass on well-founded short messages - three per year – on how ECPGR contributes to conservation and improvement of biodiversity and indirectly to important societal challenges (such as finding solutions to challenges like climate change, food security, quality etc.)

### **4. Key messages**

The following table summarizes the key messages and indicates for which target groups which message would be relevant:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/eva-network/>

	<b>Policy-makers</b>	<b>User groups</b>	<b>Interest groups</b>
Importance of PGR for food security, sustainability, bio-economy	X		X
'Success stories': ECPGR achievements and products – the benefits of a European approach to PGR conservation	X	X	
The potential of ECPGR to become a partner to EU institutions in implementing policies/projects in the field of PGR conservation	X	X	
ECPGR databases as tools to facilitate access to PGR		X	
Promoting diversity on farm	X	X	X
Providing facilitated access to PGR and benefit-sharing based on ITPGRFA principle	X		
Providing facilitated access to PGR for conservation and use in plant breeding and research		X	
Conservation of crop wild relatives	X	X	
Genebanks are active repositories of genetic diversity (not passive black holes where life gets frozen and forgotten)	(X)		X
Where does our food come from?			X

To note:

- Of central importance that messages are well adapted to each target group and, not least, to the general public.
- The participation of NCs is important for the success of the proposed communication activities: all have a role to play.

## 5. Communication activities

The following are examples of possible activities:

- a) Digital communication in each European language (website, newsletter, social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter), online publications, videos, reports, link to ECPGR webpage on each institution's webpage collaborating with ECPGR).
- b) Physical publications in European languages.

- c) ECPGR label or poster to be placed in entry hall of institutions participating to ECPGR Working Groups (WGs), or different kind(s) of public awareness (PA) material to be used by the network members.
- d) Participation in conferences/workshops; organizing from time-to-time events in the European Parliament (EP) hosted by some Members of Parliament (MPs) interested in conservation of genetic resources to present ECPGR and its activities (maybe linked to International Day of Biodiversity 22 May/Fascination Plant Day 18 May).
- e) Reaching out to media (mainly agro-biodiversity/agriculture-related international and European press): this could involve issuing press releases from time to time on important achievements of ECPGR – send these press releases to a list of press contacts.
- f) More active direct engagement and collaboration agreements with relevant stakeholders.
- g) Consider joining the [Food Forever](#) initiative as a partner, which will increase visibility of ECPGR globally and may lead to other positive effects.

## 6. Indicators of achievement

- a) Number of e-bulletins, newsletters, physical and online publications (per given time frame)
- b) Number of other communication events realized (radio, TV, etc.)
- c) Ideally, an indicator of success would be to see ECPGR, or the activities ECPGR is conducting, reflected in the relevant policies and publications of the Commission/EP. For example, adoption by DG AGRI of the products created by the GenRes Bridge (Integrated strategy on genetic resources) or other EC-funded projects.
- d) The Commission and the EP general publications and perhaps also resolutions/reports on PGR issues should include reference to ECPGR.
- e) Survey before and 2-3 years after the start of action.

## 7. Work in preparation for external communication activities

- a) Mapping of relevant legislation, policy debates and initiatives where ECPGR could have an input into these discussions (such as EU guidance document for collection holders regarding EU ABS Regulation; revision of MLS of the ITPGRFA and the SMTA etc.);
- b) Formulating view/positions on issues related to the key objectives of ECPGR;
- c) Mapping of relevant events, meetings where ECPGR could/should be involved;
- d) Mapping of key contacts in Commission/EP
- e) Survey with some key questions about ECPGR to main target groups identified under 3 in order to identify gaps in communication.

## 8. Timeline

The strategy and activities outlined in this document are scheduled for implementation during Phase X (2019-2023).

## 9. Resources

Some of the proposed activities can be carried out within the framework of the regular ECPGR budget (as identified in the logframe table below), while others (also identified below) will be dependent on the availability of additional funding.

## 10. Roles and responsibilities

Everybody active within the ECPGR network has a role to play in communication. However, to facilitate putting the communication strategy and its activities into work, it is essential to specify the roles and responsibilities of each of the ECPGR decision-making levels:

### i. The **Steering Committee**

- adopts the Communication Strategy, and subsequent updates as appropriate
- adopts ECPGR position papers
- assigns task forces for specific communication missions

### ii. The **Executive Committee**

- assists the Secretariat in preparing information for policy-makers
- scrutinizes information prior to publication

### iii. The **Working Group Chairs** and members

- communicate achievements and project results to Secretariat for further use
- communicate results and actions of ECPGR in their own scientific communities
- assist the Secretariat in preparing e-Bulletins

### iv. The **National Coordinators**

- communicate ECPGR matters (vision, goals, activities, outputs) domestically
- visualize ECPGR at participating national institutions (a plaque, a poster, a pennant/small flag, etc.)
- assist in preparing language translations
- assist the Secretariat in preparing e-Bulletins

### v. The **ECPGR Secretariat**

- coordinates the implementation and monitoring of the strategy
- promotes updates of the strategy in liaison with the ExCo when appropriate
- compiles and distributes e-Bulletins
- issues e-Briefs, e-publications and press releases
- prepares and distributes PA material
- presents ECPGR at conferences and side events
- prepares printed folder on ECPGR achievements in collaboration with the ExCo
- maps ongoing policy work, position papers, and relevant EC contacts together with the ExCo
- identifies gaps in communication through a survey in collaboration with the ExCo

## 11. Communication logframe

It is central to outline crucial communication activities in the near future. The logframe approach can serve as an effective tool in implementing the ECPGR communication strategy and guide potential donors.

Activity	Expected output(s)	Target group(s)	Responsibilities	Timeline	Resource needs
ECPGR community info	e-Bulletin	Informed NCs + WG members	Secretariat	Tri-annually	None - regular budget
ECPGR community info	e-Brief	Policy-makers, user groups and general public	Secretariat, in collaboration with NCs and WG chairs	Following each SC meeting	None - regular budget
General ECPGR info	Web info in own language	Domestic PGR networks	NCs and SC observers	Ongoing	None - in kind
PA material	Labels, A3 posters	Network institutions	Secretariat, WG members, Steering Committee	Preparation in 2019 and repetitive distribution	None- Regular budget (for existing material) – External funding for newly designed labels, etc.
Info at conferences, EP events	Side events/ poster presentations	Policy-makers	GenRes Bridge project, Secretariat, WG members, NCs	Appropriate occasions	None - Regular budget- in kind; GenRes Bridge budget
ECPGR achievements including major plans for Phase X	e-publication	Policy-makers	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo	Preparation Q1-2/2019, distribution Q2/2019	None - regular budget
ECPGR achievements including major plans for Phase X	Press releases, Radio, TV interviews	Relevant European and international press	GenRes Bridge project, Secretariat, NCs, WG Chairs	Following specific events and achievements	None - regular budget
ECPGR achievements including major plans for Phase X	Printed folder (in English)	Policy-makers	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo	Preparation Q3-4/2019, distribution Q1/2020	External funding
ECPGR achievements including possible updates regarding plans for Phase X	Printed folder	Members of the new EU-parliament (AGRI, DEVE, ENVI)	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo	Preparation Q1-2/2020, distribution Q3/2020	External funding
ECPGR 40-year anniversary (1980-2020)	Jubilee video(s) released	Policy-makers, user groups and general public	Jubilee video(s) TF + media producer	Preparation Q1-2/2020, release Q3-/2020	External funding
Joining the Food Forever initiative	ECPGR becomes a partner	All target groups	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo	Q4/2019	None
ECPGR and PGR advocacy	Mapping of ongoing policy work, position papers, mapping of EC contacts	Policy-makers	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo, NCs		External funding
Identify gaps in communication	Survey	Key target groups	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo	Preparation and distribution Q1-2/2020	External funding