



# Draft Outline of an ECPGR communication and public relations strategy

- Prepared by the Task Force composed of Jens Weibull, Szonja Csörgő, Gordana Đurić and Marc Lateur, based on principles defined by Recommendation 14 of the Fourteenth Steering Committee, June 2016
- Submitted for discussion at the Fifteenth Steering Committee meeting, May 2018

**Vision: “Yes, we can! - European crop diversity for everyone”**

**Mission: Guarding and using Europe’s crop diversity together**

## 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: (**PROPOSED DRAFT REVISED OBJECTIVES for PHASE X**)

- a. AEGIS: the European Collection efficiently conserves and provides access to unique germplasm in Europe
- b. The EURISCO catalogue provides passport and phenotypic information of actively conserved European PGR diversity *ex situ* and *in situ*
- c. *In situ* conservation and use of crop wild relatives (CWR) are improved via inventory, prioritization, management of populations representing the European CWR diversity and mechanisms to facilitate access
- d. On-farm conservation and management of European PGRFA diversity is promoted
- e. Use of PGR is promoted

## 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. The main objectives of external communication should be to provide information and knowledge on crop genetic resources and ECPGR products to policy-makers, the PGR user and scientific community and the general public, as well as to describe possible ways of synergies in activities and collaborations.

### 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

- Provide evidence-based, clear, brief and well-argued material, incl. position papers, for informing decision-making processes (legislation, funding, 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, incl. serving as a platform for contact and collaboration within the pre-breeding community (PPP) and collection holders;
- 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 incl. 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. General public

- Invite National Coordinators (NCs) to pass on well-founded short messages - once per month - 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:

	Policy-makers	User groups	General public
Importance of PGR for food security, sustainability, bio-economy	X		X
ECPGR achievements and products – the benefits of a European approach to PGR conservation	X	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	X	✗
Promoting diversity on farm	X	X	X

	<b>Policy-makers</b>	<b>User groups</b>	<b>General public</b>
Promoting facilitated access to PGR and benefit-sharing based on IT PGRFA principle as the best ABS model for conservation and use in plant breeding and research	X	X	X
Conservation of crop wild relatives	X	X	X
Genebanks are active repositories of genetic diversity (not passive black holes where life gets frozen and forgotten)	X	X	X
Something about products coming from PGRFA	X		X

To note:

- It is of central importance that messages be very well adapted to each target group and, perhaps in particular, to the general public.
- The participation of NCs is important for the success of the proposed communication activities. A simple survey should be circulated to the NCs asking them for input: do they agree or not to the approach above, and can they provide some good examples?

## 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 website on webpages of institutions collaborating with ECPGR)
- b. Physical publications in European languages
- c. Kind of label and visual sign to be placed in entry hall of institutions participating to ECPGR WGs, or different kind of PR material to be used by the network members
- d. [Developing a kind of ECPGR quality label or charter for developing propagation and/or release channels of best performing genetic resources old cultivars for users – either gardeners via small seed or nursery companies and/or horticulturists and/or farmers.]
- e. Participation in conferences/workshops; organizing from time to time events in the European Parliament (EP) hosted by some MEPs interested in conservation of GRs to present ECPGR and its activities (maybe linked to International Day of Biodiversity/Fascination Plant Day)
- f. 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.
- g. More active direct engagement and collaboration agreements with relevant stakeholders.

## 6. Indicators of achievement

- a. Number of e-bulletins, newsletters, physical and online publications (per given time frame)
- b. Number of other communication events realised (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, if DG AGRI is working on this “genetic resources project” ECPGR could offer to provide expertise or even implement components of a strategy or action plan.
- d. The Commission and the Parliament 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 to be done to prepare for engaging in such external communication activities**

- 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 IT PGRFA and the SMTA etc.);
- Formulating view/positions on issues related to the key objectives of ECPGR;
- Mapping of relevant events, meetings where ECPGR could/should be involved;
- Mapping of key contacts in COM/EP;
- Survey with some key questions about ECPGR to main target groups identified under section 3 in order to identify gaps in communication.

## **8. Resources**

The strategy and activities outlined in this document are scheduled for implementation during Phase X (2019-2023). Their full implementation require a decision taken by the Steering Committee, incl. appropriate funding.

## **9. Roles and responsibilities**

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**

- takes the formal decision concerning the Communication Strategy, incl. priorities, and the resources assigned to it through the Budget
- adopts ECPGR position papers
- assigns task forces for specific communication missions
- [to be completed]

### **ii. The Working Group Chairs**

- communicate achievements and project results to Secretariat for further use
- assist in preparing e-Bulletin news
- [to be completed]

### **iii. The National Coordinators**

- communicate ECPGR matters (vision, goals, activities, outputs) domestically

- publicize ECPGR with participating national institutions
- assist in preparing language translations
- assist in preparing e-Bulletins
- [to be completed]

iv. The **ECPGR Secretariat**

- is responsible for the ECPGR website incl. RSS feed
- assembles and distributes e-Bulletins
- issues e-Briefs
- [to be completed]

## 10. Suggested time plan

Following the log-frame approach, here is an attempt to outline central aspects of a number of crucial communication activities in the near future. The task force is of the opinion that the log-frame could serve as an effective tool in implementing the ECPGR communication strategy.

Activities	Expected outputs	Expected impact	Responsibilities	Indicators	Assumptions	Timeline
ECPGR community info	e-Bulletin	Informed NCs + WG members	Secretariat	(to be elaborated)	None	Tri-annually
40-yr anniversary	Jubilee video release	ECPGR community and activities known to European audience	Jubilee video TF + media producer	(to be elaborated)	Sufficient funding	Preparation 2019, release 2020
Etc.						

In addition, the following actions/activities could also be considered:

- An e-Brief (maximum half a page) following each SC meeting, summarizing main outcomes and distributed widely to the European PGR community
- Ensure that each NC publishes info about ECPGR and its activities on relevant domestic websites (to be completed by end of 2018)
- e-Publication of main achievements/outputs made during Phase IX (maximum two pages, to be completed by mid-2019)
- a condensed version sent to each member of the AGRI, DEVE and ENVI committees in September 2019; elections have been held in June and we have a new Parliament.

It is suggested to invite NCs to provide additional examples, incl. to rank them into “musts” (or “shoulds”) and “maybes”. Taken together, this will show on which communication activities we should focus.