



Report of the Steering Committee



Eleventh meeting, 2-5 September 2008,
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

European
Cooperative
Programme
for Plant
Genetic
Resources

ECP/GR

European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR)



REPORT OF THE ELEVENTH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

2-5 September 2008, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Opening statements by representatives of the host country and Bioversity

(Chair: G. Đurić)

Gordana Đurić, ECPGR National Coordinator for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), opened the meeting and welcomed all the participants to Sarajevo.

Jozef Turok welcomed all participants on behalf of Bioversity International. He highlighted four essential items on the agenda of this meeting: implementation of "A European Genebank Integrated System" (AEGIS); vision for a European plant genetic resources information landscape; assessment of the progress made in the VIIth Phase of ECPGR; and importance of the broad ECPGR membership. He also underlined the wider influences of ECPGR in the European Region and beyond and welcomed observers from FAO, the International Treaty Secretariat, the Global Crop Diversity Trust, the Nordic Genetic Resources Centre, SEEDNet and non-governmental organizations. The Board of Trustees of Bioversity, which met in the previous week, had expressed its appreciation of the high relevance and quality of the outputs provided by ECPGR in terms of global public goods.

With a minute of silence, the participants paid tribute to Mr Martyn Ibbotson, who was the National Coordinator for the United Kingdom. Martyn Ibbotson died in a tragic road accident in June. Martyn will be remembered as a very dedicated colleague and friend who provided valuable inputs, leadership and support in the Steering Committee.

Mr Milad Zeković, director of the Agency for Plant Health Protection of BiH under the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of BiH addressed the meeting, explaining the progress made by the country in the field of genetic resources and the status of international collaboration. BiH signed the agreement of stabilization with the EU in June 2008 and is aiming to become a full member in due course. BiH also signed the Central European Free Trade Agreement and is a member of the European Patent Office (EPO). It is also in the process of ratifying at Parliamentary level the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bioversity International for ECPGR membership. This MoU has recently been signed at Ministerial level, and this has led to the appointment of a National Coordinator (Gordana Đurić) and a Deputy Coordinator (Šćepan Raguž). The aim of BiH is to make an inventory and to conserve genetic resources. BiH is rich in genetic diversity and healthy food products (such as from vegetables and cereals). Mr Zeković wished all the participants a pleasant stay in Sarajevo and looked forward to a continuing collaboration with the international partners.

G. Đurić gave a brief presentation of the status of genetic resources in BiH, including a description of the ongoing activities.

Report on Phase VII

(Chair: G. Đurić)

Technical and financial report of Phase VII

Lorenzo Maggioni presented the technical and financial report of Phase VII and raised a number of issues for the attention of the Steering Committee (SC).

Network Coordinating Groups

Decision

It was agreed to amend the section “Network Coordinating Groups” (NCG) of the Terms of Reference for the ECPGR operational bodies, as proposed in the Technical report.

Therefore, the Documentation and Information NCG will take on the responsibility of acting as the specific advisory body with the function of monitoring progress in the development and maintenance of EURISCO, as well as providing advice to Bioversity International acting on behalf of the ECPGR Secretariat, for the further development of EURISCO. The maximum number of members of the NCGs was raised to 10, with the understanding that only large Networks would need to appoint more than 7 members. The Secretariat will circulate to the SC and upload on the Web site an amended version of the Terms of Reference.

Country quota system

The country quota system was discussed and the SC thought that the mechanism had overall been useful to prioritize the participation of each country at only the most relevant meetings. The underutilization of country quotas was considered to be the effect, in some cases, of the difficulty of identifying committed participants (especially from the private sector) who would be available to devote time to input-in-kind activities. In other cases, countries were not interested in participating in Working Groups (WGs) of no relevance for their particular phytogeographical environment. The effects of the country quota system were considered to be beneficial overall in the sense that they helped the WGs to remain within a manageable size and composed of the more committed members.

It was also noted that countries have been able to benefit from participation in ad hoc meetings organized outside the remits of the quota system, to address specific topics of interest.

Decision

The SC decided to continue with the quota system without changes. The opportunity for the WG Chairs to select one participant at their discretion will also be maintained.

Commitment of Network members

Recommendation

Following the complaint expressed in the Networks that WG members are in some cases participating in meetings on a personal basis rather than as country representatives, and that sometimes the members do not show adequate knowledge of the topics discussed in the meetings, the SC invited the National Coordinators to keep under review their criteria for the selection of WG and Network members.

In situ Conservation Network

Decision

It was recognized that the existing Task Forces of the *In situ* Conservation Network have long-term plans of action and therefore deserve the status of “Working Groups”. The two Task Forces were therefore converted into WGs, as follows:

1. WG on “Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves”
2. WG on “On-farm Conservation and Management”

As a consequence, participation in regular meetings of the above WGs will be subject to the “quota system”.

Inter-regional Cooperation Network

Decision

The SC agreed on the importance of defining the task of the Inter-regional Cooperation Task Force, considering that it will have an important role related to cooperation for the implementation of the International Treaty. The SC requested the Secretariat to write these Terms of Reference, in collaboration with the respective NCG. The SC also requested the Inter-regional Cooperation NCG to revise their budget proposal for Phase VIII, in line with the newly defined role of the above Task Force.

Observers in the Steering Committee

Decision

The SC agreed to assign permanent observer status to the Coordinator of SEEDNet, considering the potential synergies and opportunities for harmonization of objectives with ECPGR. This status will be granted for the duration of the Sida-funded project.

The SC acknowledged the low level of collaboration between ECPGR and EuroMAB and agreed to remove EuroMAB from the list of permanent observers. A letter will be sent to the EuroMAB contact person, Natalya Rybianets, to inform her about the SC decision and to invite EuroMAB to explore areas for collaboration at the level of the WG on "Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves".

Prioritization

It was stressed that the reluctance shown by the Networks to prioritize among the Working Groups was not justified and the SC should send an indication to the Networks of the need to prioritize.

Cross-cutting activities

It was noted that thematic cross-cutting issues were still important and that while AEGIS would only cover one dimension of the possible cross-cutting issues, others should not be excluded. Hence, there was the need to maintain a cross-cutting activities' budget line.

Publication strategy

Decision

The Publication strategy proposed by the Secretariat was endorsed, with the understanding that a half-time (not full-time) scientific assistant will be supported by the ECPGR budget during Phase VIII (see ECPGR publication strategy in Annex A).

Financial status

The SC expressed concern regarding outstanding contributions of a few countries and was concerned as to what will guarantee that these contributions will be received. The Secretariat explained that by the signature of the ECPGR membership Letter of Agreement (LoA), member countries take on the moral obligation to pay their outstanding contributions. The Secretariat has not received indications by any country about lack of intention to honour the payment of the missing contributions.

The representative of Macedonia (FYR) explained that a change of responsibility for the national coordination function is ongoing and that this transfer has delayed the payment, but Macedonia (FYR) is planning to pay the outstanding contributions soon.

The Secretariat informed the SC that contributions from France (2007 and part of 2008), Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal (2007) and Spain were received after the distribution in July of the report of Phase VII.

The representative of Germany expressed concern regarding the negative balance of several budget lines in the table of the estimated contributions and expenses of Phase VII provided by the Secretariat.

He suggested the need to formalize the possibility of accepting a limited transfer of funds across budget lines, or alternatively, to forbid overspending within each budget line.

Decision

The technical report, including the financial tables, was adopted by the SC, taking note of the remark made by Germany about several red budget lines and the need to formalize a limited allowance to transfer funds across budget lines.

Networks' progress reports

Forages; Fruits; In situ and On-Farm Conservation; Oil and Protein Crops

Isaak Rashal reviewed and summarized the progress reported by the Forages, Fruits, *In situ* and On-Farm Conservation and Oil and Protein Crops Networks. Reported bottlenecks were: 1) problems with dataflow between database managers, data providers and National Focal Points; 2) slowing down of activities between WG meetings; 3) differing levels of participation of WG members during discussions; 4) too frequent changes of country delegates; 5) high requirement of inputs-in-kind to carry out the actions and the limited availability of the members. Regarding the requirement for ECPGR support, the Secretariat support was considered very good and useful. Additional financial support for cross-cutting issues was needed. Additional external support would also be required from funding agencies such as the European Commission and from home institutions. The reviewer remarked that reports were not standardized enough and that some Networks were not sufficiently clear about their actual activities and outputs.

Cereals; Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops; Vegetables; Inter-regional Cooperation; Documentation and Information

Merja Veteläinen reviewed and summarized the progress reported by the Cereals, Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops, Vegetables, Inter-regional Cooperation, and Documentation and Information Networks. This group included the AEGIS model crops *Avena*, *Allium*, *Brassica* and the low priority WGs Barley, *Allium*, *Brassica*, Solanaceae and Potato. The AEGIS low priority WGs benefited from being model crops. The output completeness ratio was very variable across all the WGs. Characterization and evaluation were mostly carried out as routine genebank functions. Joint activities were carried out within the frame of EU projects for *Avena*, *Allium* and Leafy Vegetables. ECPGR activities were the Ring tests on barley net blotch, the Barley Core Collection (genetic stock data), the collection of wild *Beta* for diversity analyses and the development of descriptor lists. Twelve out of sixty Central Crop Databases (CCDBs) include characterization and evaluation data. Among the shared tasks the following were listed: inventories on safety-duplication possibilities, identification of duplicates or unique accessions (development of a method by the Potato WG), regeneration, cryopreservation, one Most Appropriate Accessions (MAAs) exercise and one overview on collection management methods (*Brassica*). Some groups were waiting for the AEGIS developments.

In situ conservation was not relevant for all crops and it was mostly carried out as a national activity. Outputs were provided through the *In situ* and On-farm Task Forces or the AEGRO *in situ* EU project: *Beta*, *Avena*, *Brassica* (site identification, data model development for population data). On-farm activities would benefit from support in the form of public awareness, seed legislation and good practices. Documentation activities consisted of CCDB updates, rebuilding of databases (DBs) according to EURISCO descriptors, and data additions. The Potato DB developed a www tool for updates. New www interfaces were prepared. The activities of the Documentation and Information Network included a EURISCO review and provision of tools. Regional cooperation consisted of meetings to exchange experiences and to prepare new workplans, preparation of EU project proposals, DB cooperation with the USA, development of the International Flax DB and of the Barley Core Collection. Among the bottlenecks the following were listed: unsustainable CCDB management as in-kind contributions; difficult data delivery to CCDBs; insufficient safety-duplication; limited availability of national funds for characterization and evaluation; limited number of partners in EU projects; the use of biotechnical methods which require long-term projects (> 10 years). Meetings and

the activity of WG members also faced problems, such as: too few meetings, low attendance, inadequate expertise of members, limited proactivity of members and frequent changes of the members. Lessons learnt showed that funded projects increase the activity level; a close cooperation with thematic networks is beneficial; involving external experts in WG meetings can achieve progress; harmonizing the tool/methodology development through dialogue between Networks (e.g. selection methods for MAAs) is useful and possible; breeding companies can be good regeneration partners; and Vegetable WGs could be merged instead of prioritizing among them.

Suggestions were made to the SC for consideration:

1. Support the ECPGR Secretariat for lobbying and identifying funding sources
2. Recommend the National Coordinators to pay more attention to the selection of the WG members
3. Support cooperation in solving the relationships between EURISCO and CCDBs
4. Discuss pros and cons of formal agreements between ECPGR and DB holder institutes
5. Discuss the distinction between national and ECPGR activities when reporting (demonstration of the added value of European cooperation).

Discussion

Decision on the issue of merging Vegetables WGs was postponed to the Networks' plans and budgets session (see below).

The establishment of formal agreements between ECPGR and DB holder institutes was considered to have pros (recognition of commitment from the hosting institute) and cons (loss of informal flexibility of the arrangement, risk of loss of support from the hosting institution).

The issue of in-kind contributions was said to go further than DBs, since this also includes writing reports, putting together proposals for the budgets and for the Trust, etc. These aspects cannot be formally recognized, since the whole programme is based on in-kind contributions. The issue of reporting and acknowledging the in-kind contributions was dealt with in the Networks' plans and budgets session (see below).

Decision

The SC will not encourage the establishment of formal agreements regarding DBs.

AEGIS

(Chair: B. Visser)

Progress of AEGIS and perspectives for the future

J. Engels presented a summary of the "Progress and synthesis report on the establishment and operation of AEGIS". The report covered the period from the Tenth Meeting of the Steering Committee in Riga in September 2006 onwards until the present, and addressed the decisions that were taken during the SC meeting. In general, good progress on the implementation of the various SC decision points could be reported and a rather positive picture of the keen interest by the various ECPGR bodies involved in the process was described. In addition, the positive impact of the AEGIS development process in relation to the implementation of the International Treaty was noted and appreciated by the Secretariat of the Governing Body of the International Treaty, the Global Crop Diversity Trust and others.

Following the presentation on the progress of AEGIS, the Chairman opened the floor for general questions on AEGIS before he started a discussion of the various proposals made by the Secretariat for decision-making by the SC in the synthesis report.

Decisions

1. The SC appreciated the progress and synthesis report prepared by the Secretariat as well as the progress reports of the four Model Crop Groups and acknowledged and appreciated the inputs from the Model Crop Groups and saw the progress made as an encouragement for further development.
2. The SC took note of the fact that the Strategic Framework for the Implementation of AEGIS was published as a discussion paper and since the earlier constraints that hindered full consensus among the SC members on the Strategic Framework had been removed, the SC adopted the paper as a policy document. It was noted that Figure 1 should be carefully reviewed and that the terms used in the Memorandum of Understanding should be harmonized with those in the Strategic Framework policy document. The final version of the Strategic Framework policy document will be published on the ECPGR Web site.
3. The conclusion of the discussions on the involvement of the stakeholders in the AEGIS process was that there is an important role to be played by the National Coordinators in actually involving identified stakeholders in the national activities and discussions, in particular the private sector and NGOs.
4. The presentation of the framework document and data collection tool for the assessment of operational genebank costs was appreciated, as such data would provide a solid basis for discussion on AEGIS at the ministerial levels and would also establish a baseline to allow monitoring of the financial impact of AEGIS implementation in the longer term. The SC took note of the *Allium* Model Crop Group's offer to validate the cost assessment tool and to use it to establish a cost baseline for the European garlic collection. Furthermore, the SC invited other Model Crop Groups and/or other volunteer crops to consider applying the tool, with the inclusion of assessing the related administrative costs. Another suggestion was to also consider the assessment of time requirements for the establishment and operation of AEGIS by the various individuals involved. The Committee did not see the cost assessment as a precondition for the Model Crop Groups to proceed with AEGIS.
5. The development of a quality system for the management of the dispersed European Accessions received due attention of the SC and was considered necessary for the proper implementation of AEGIS. The SC further noted that AEGIS should aim at "minimum agreed standards" to be achieved and asked the authors of the discussion paper "Quality Management System for AEGIS" to revise the document with this aspect in mind, as well as the notion that the emphasis of the quality management should be on guiding and advising the partners rather than monitoring their performances. Therefore, capacity building should be a central activity while developing the quality management system.
6. The SC suggested that the Secretariat, in collaboration with the WGs, should develop a template to be used by the Associate Members when they describe their current collection management practices in the form of an operational genebank manual.
7. The SC further advised the authors of the aforementioned discussion paper to revisit the time frame that was proposed so as to allow for the active participation of the partners in the development of the various quality system elements, including: 1) the minimum technical standards, 2) a system of record-keeping of the way management activities are actually performed, and 3) an effective guiding and advisory approach at the AEGIS level.
8. In relation to the quality system and the suggestion to establish a Standing Technical Committee, it was agreed to revisit the role of the AEGIS Advisory Committee in this respect and the SC suggested incorporating the conclusions in the new version of the discussion paper on the AEGIS quality system. The SC requested this document to be redrafted before the end of 2008 and circulated for approval by the SC according to the established procedure (listserver).
9. Concerns were expressed that in the absence of a quality management system the AEGIS establishment process could get delayed and, consequently, the SC decided that the process for the individual countries to conclude the MoU should not wait for the final decisions on the quality management system.
10. The SC agreed with the explanation provided and the actual change of the terminology of the criteria to select European Accessions from primary selection criteria into **selection requirements** (which are binding) and secondary selection criteria into **selection criteria** (which are intended for guidance of the selection process only).
11. The SC discussed the selection requirements and agreed on the following wording:

- a. Material under the management and control of the member countries and their associate members, in the public domain and offered by the associate members for inclusion into AEGIS
 - b. Genetically unique within AEGIS, to the best available knowledge (i.e. genetically distinct accessions; assessment based on available data and/or on the recorded history of the accession)
 - c. Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture as defined in the International Treaty as well as medicinal and ornamental species
 - d. European origin or introduced germplasm that is of actual or potential importance to Europe (for breeding, research, education or for historical and cultural reasons).
12. The SC took note of the selection criteria as proposed by the Model Crop Groups and of the constraints reported by those Groups.
 13. The SC, through the National Coordinators, will aim to ensure that all relevant non-confidential available collection data are included in the National Inventories and as soon as possible transferred to EURISCO.
 14. The SC took note of the procedures followed by the Model Crop Groups in identifying the Most Appropriate Accessions (MAAs) and establishing tentative lists of MAAs; the SC also took note of the experiences of the Model Crop Groups in using the selection requirements and criteria and of the lessons learnt by the Model Crop Groups on how these experiences can be applied to other crops. The SC requested the Secretariat to facilitate further development of the procedures by the Crop WGs, including preparation of a procedure for identifying the MAAs in a **flowchart**.
 15. The SC agreed with the proposal that the AEGIS Advisory Committee Sub-group (i.e. Sergey Alexanian, Eliseu Bettencourt, Gert Kleijer and Silvia Strajeru) will work closely with the four Model Crop Groups to assess whether or not any formal inter-institutional agreement is needed to manage the European Collection of a given crop. If they conclude that formal arrangements between Associate Member Institutions are required, the Sub-group will submit its findings to the AEGIS Advisory Committee and subsequently to the Steering Committee not later than the end of 2009.
 16. The SC sees the survey of services by Associate Member Institutes as part of the preparatory process of concluding the MoU by individual countries and consequently, this aspect should be integrated into this process. It was agreed that the Working Groups should play a proactive role in indicating to the National Coordinators concerned what specific activities they would like to see offered by a given country and therefore to consider for inclusion in the specific MoU.
 17. The SC discussed the various constraints reported by the Model Crop Groups while implementing AEGIS, including the additional budgetary requirements indicated by the Model Crop Groups and agreed to reflect this in its discussions of the budget.
 18. Furthermore, the SC noted the importance of establishing a clear road map for the establishment of AEGIS and decided that the final text of the MoU should be sent as soon as possible to the National Coordinators (NCs) with the request to conclude the MoU as soon as possible. The NCs will establish the Associate Membership Agreements as foreseen in the MoU and will present lists of identified MAAs for all plant genetic resources for food and agriculture as defined in the Sections "Requirements" and "Selection criteria" to the respective WGs.
 19. The process described in the above point means that the role of the Model Crop Groups will change and that the "model" character will only continue for specific aspects. A further consequence of the above process is that all WGs are expected to become active in the identification of MAAs and the SC encourages the WGs to actively engage in this important step in establishing AEGIS.

The AEGIS Memorandum of Understanding

The draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment of a European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS) was introduced by Gerald Moore, Honorary Fellow, Bioversity International. G. Moore explained that the MoU had been drafted at the request of the ECPGR Steering Committee, made at its Tenth Meeting in Riga in 2006, and had been the subject of extensive consultations with National Coordinators over the last 18 months. The legal format of a memorandum of understanding was considered to be the most appropriate given the programmatic collaborative

nature of AEGIS and the need for quick action to establish AEGIS. It was pointed out that a memorandum of understanding was not legally binding, but it was a clear statement of political commitment. The legal documents required for the establishment and operation of AEGIS consist of the MoU to be signed by countries and regional organizations eligible for Membership in AEGIS, and an annexed Associate Member Agreement to be signed by participating genebanks, whether public sector, civil society or private sector, and other institutions holding plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) collections or providing conservation-related services (Associate Members) and the respective National Coordinators. The MoU provides for the formal establishment of AEGIS and for the main elements for its operation, including the principles applicable to European Accessions, and defines the responsibilities of AEGIS Members and Associate Members. AEGIS will operate within the framework of ECPGR.

All members of the Steering Committee were unanimous in recognizing the importance and urgency of establishing AEGIS in order to develop a more efficient regional system of conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA through the setting up of a European Collection, and to provide a mechanism for regional cooperation in the implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (referred to below as “the Treaty”).

One member voiced concerns about the need for controls to ensure that plant genetic resources were not misappropriated by recipients claiming intellectual property rights over the materials and their components in the form received, as well as ensuring that there was effective transfer of technologies. It was noted that these concerns had been fully discussed during the negotiation of the Treaty and the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA) and that appropriate controls had been introduced in both the Treaty itself and in the SMTA. It was for this reason that the MoU relied heavily on using the SMTA for the transfer of all European Accessions, including both Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 crops.

The Steering Committee discussed the provisions of the MoU article by article, and agreed on a number of changes, including:

- more precise wording in the references to Articles in the definitions in Article 2;
- the inclusion of the word “Article” in the heading of each article;
- the inclusion of wording to ensure that the quality standards to be adopted by the ECPGR Steering Committee would in fact be “minimum agreed standards”;
- the inclusion of wording to clarify that AEGIS Members would have the authority to withdraw materials from the list of European Accessions, subject to 12 months notice;
- increasing other time limits to 12 months;
- a clarification of the responsibilities of Associate Members by referring to long-term conservation and/or maintenance of the European Accessions;
- bringing the wording of the MoU more in line with the legal nature of a memorandum of understanding by replacing the word “shall” by the term “will” in some articles; and
- clarifying the notions of “requirements” for the selection of European Accessions, which would be adopted by the Steering Committee and would be binding, and “criteria” which would be for guidance only and would be adopted on a crop-specific basis by the respective Crop Working Groups.

The Steering Committee reached consensus on the entire text of the Memorandum of Understanding, with the exception of Article 8(a)(v)¹, on which the Nordic Countries expressed their reservations. The National Coordinators of the Nordic Countries informed the Steering Committee that while they joined in the consensus regarding the need for the establishment of AEGIS and the general provisions of the MoU, the Nordic Council of Ministers had recently adopted a policy that would favour the use of a separate form of material transfer agreement for such non-Annex 1 material, but that this policy might be subject to review in the light of new developments at the international level.

¹ Article 8(a)(v) deals with accessions of crops not included in Annex 1 to the Treaty which have been registered as European Accessions under the MoU. Article 8(a)(v) provides that the terms and conditions of the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA) adopted under the Treaty will be used for the transfer of non-Annex I European Accessions, with an explanatory note.

The Steering Committee adopted the text of the MoU by consensus, including by implication the Annex to the MoU “AEGIS – Associate Membership Agreement”. The SC took note of the fact that the reservation of the Nordic Countries concerning the wording of Article 8(a)(v) also applies to the relevant text in the Annex.

The Steering Committee agreed that the Secretariat should invite the Nordic Countries to reconsider their reservations to Article 8(a)(v) in light of developments at both the global level, including the decision of the Governing Body of the Treaty at its second session to extend the use of the SMTA by the Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) to non-Annex 1 materials held in their in-trust collections, with the addition of an appropriate explanatory footnote, and the discussions in the Steering Committee on the MoU. It is anticipated that this process could be completed by the end of the year, or at least no later than June 2009.

The Steering Committee agreed that:

- should the Nordic Countries withdraw their reservations to Article 8(a)(v), the entire text of the MoU should be considered adopted by the Steering Committee and should be circulated for signature;
- should the Nordic Countries propose new text for Article 8(a)(v), such new text should be circulated for consideration/approval by Steering Committee members by electronic means on a no-objection basis.

Once the MoU has been approved and circulated for signature, the Secretariat will prepare a “Guide” for its implementation.

In the discussions on Article 8(a)(v), the National Coordinator of Spain, while joining in the consensus on the adoption of the MoU, made a statement to explain that for the time being, in accordance with its current national legislation, Spain cannot include non-Annex 1 material in AEGIS (see Annex B for the full statement). Spain also announced that they will make a declaration at the time of signature of the MoU.

The text of the MoU as adopted by the Steering Committee, with Article 8(a)(v) in square brackets, is attached as Annex C.

Documentation and Information

(Chair: G. Popsimonova)

Vision for a European PGR Information Landscape

Theo van Hintum, CGN, The Netherlands, presented a paper, jointly prepared with F. Begemann and L. Maggioni, describing the current status of the European *ex situ* PGR Information Landscape (database management software, data categories, coding systems, systems at national and regional level), recent changes in the landscape (requirements of the International Treaty, a new global Accession Level Information System (ALIS) being established, requirements of AEGIS, changing role of ECCDBs from passport data gathering points to crop-specific PGR entry points), and recent technological changes. The vision for a future information landscape involves a number of steps to develop and adopt agreed standards, to adopt existing new technologies, to invest in open source software, to carry out capacity building and improve data quality, and to improve coordination of the current information initiatives. He concluded with a call to increase the priority of PGR documentation, which is crucial for PGR use and coordination of PGR activities.

Progress of EURISCO and future views

Sónia Dias, EURISCO Coordinator, presented the progress of EURISCO and its future. She described the Network of National Focal Points and its mode of operation and the progress in the EURISCO

catalogue since its inception in 2003 up to the present. Currently, EURISCO provides data for 1,118,772 accessions held by 242 institutions in 38 countries. These refer to more than 8,650 species from more than 1,450 genera and the material was collected in more than 21,600 sites in 202 countries. She described the results of an external evaluation of the catalogue, commissioned by Bioversity, which identified the EURISCO strengths and weaknesses and provided recommendations for the future. Future issues to focus on include provision of further support to countries (National Inventories (NIs) and National Focal Points (NFPs)), revision of the uploading mechanism, improvement of data quality, further improvement of Web site and search components, further links to other data types, revision of standards, etc. The renewal of the EURISCO MoU between Bioversity and all the participating countries is also foreseen in 2009.

Resources allocated to EURISCO by different actors were emphasized, including Bioversity International, which provides the EURISCO Coordinator and other staff contributions and equipment facilities, the support from the Global Information on Germplasm Accessions (GIGA) project (adoption and implementation of cross-cutting technology, helpdesk, training, deployment and support, regional workshops, and seed money), and the ECPGR contribution as per the specific budget line.

Views for the future foresee that EURISCO will become the European PGRFA information hub, providing access to passport and related information from all European National Inventories and all crops, thereby contributing to the Global Information System and to the Multilateral System (MLS) of the Treaty as a reporting mechanism. Overall, EURISCO will be adding value and promoting the sustainable utilization of PGR.

EURISCO as a service to the International Treaty

Frank Begemann, Coordinator of the ECPGR Documentation and Information Network, described how EURISCO can be utilized as a service to fulfil the country information requirements under the Treaty, including the provision of information through a global system, to be developed based on existing information systems and according to Articles 13.2(a) and Article 17 of the Treaty. Information requirements under the Standard Material Transfer Agreements (SMTAs) of the Treaty include the provision of periodic reports from germplasm providers to the Governing Body on the use of SMTAs according to Article 5(e).

As part of the self-funded initiative EPGRIS3, an attempt was made to facilitate the registration of the European material under the Multilateral System of the Treaty and/or the material in the European Collection (AEGIS), as well as an attempt to facilitate the reporting obligations as they result from transactions via the SMTA under the Treaty in Europe, through a cost-effective registration procedure.

The following steps will include:

- to clarify in National Inventories/EURISCO what is the material included in the Multilateral System
- to include SMTA-reporting to the Governing Body into National Inventories/EURISCO
- to offer National Inventories and EURISCO to the FAO/ITPGR Secretariat as the European contribution to the Treaty's Article 17 Information System.

Discussion

The representative of the Secretariat of the Governing Body of the Treaty, Selim Louafi, appreciated the developments of the European region regarding implementation of the Treaty. He explained that no decision had yet been made by the Governing Body regarding the reporting mechanism. He stressed the legal dimension of the issue, i.e. the need not to track the accessions while at the same time offering the necessary information to the third party beneficiary if needed; the political dimension involves the monitoring of the evolution of the MLS. Regarding the technical dimension of information management, he thought that the EURISCO mechanism, as an interim and voluntary measure, would be in line with the Treaty's requirements, in the case of the first generation of SMTA transactions, but it might not fulfil the reporting obligations for subsequent transfers.

It was stressed that the obligation to report on the use of SMTA is already ongoing and EURISCO would offer an opportunity which ensures the maintenance of confidentiality, at the same time allowing the monitoring of implementation of the Treaty, since recording just the SMTA number will make it possible eventually to help the tracking of the material if the third party needs to check. For the assessment aspect, total quantity of accessions and quantity of accessions per genus, and category of recipient will give in broad terms the data enabling an assessment to be made of the running of the system.

The added value of a regional system versus a global system for reporting was questioned by an SC member. It was clarified that the proposal is not to establish a regional system, but a national system, i.e. offering the national inventory as a depository of the obligatory reporting. In this way, the use of the SMTA would be facilitated.

It was also noted that the GIGA project will offer a reporting mechanism.

Decision

The SC approved the proposed mechanism of registration of accessions in the MLS and AEGIS (two new fields in EURISCO on “registry status”) (see Fig. 1, Annex D).

The SC approved the proposed interim reporting procedure at the national level for SMTA reporting (new table in EURISCO on “SMTA reporting”) (see Fig. 2, Annex D).

The SC concluded that the EURISCO SMTA reporting module should be considered and called an “Interim Module”, and should not be interpreted in such a way as to pre-empt any future discussion and decision of the Governing Body of the Treaty on the necessary elements of such a Module.

The Global Information on Germplasm Accessions (GIGA) project

Michael Mackay, Biodiversity Informatics Project, described the project on Global Information on Germplasm Accessions (GIGA), which is funded by three investors (Global Crop Diversity Trust, International Treaty and Bioversity International). The project includes three components: 1) Data standards; 2) The GRIN-Global genebank management information system; 3) the Gateway to Accession Level Information Systems (ALIS). Data will be drawn from existing systems, such as the System-wide Information Network for Genetic Resources (SINGER) of the CGIAR, the European Internet Search Catalogue (EURISCO) and the North American Germplasm Resources Information Network (GRIN).

The GIGA project will identify key characterization and evaluation descriptors for 22 crops, that can assist in selecting accessions containing specific genetic variation. Agro-ecological data will be added.

GRIN-Global, based on the GRIN system of USDA, will be “An effective, easy-to-use information management system for worldwide germplasm management needs”. The system, together with training and support will be delivered free, and will offer an opportunity for standardization across genebanks.

ALIS will be a single “portal” to other networks/systems. Emphasis is on utilization. The initial phase involves defining the users’ vision. The First International Steering Committee (ISC) meeting is planned for October 2008 and ECPGR was invited to nominate a representative. The Documentation and Information Network suggested Frank Begemann be nominated and the SC was invited to comment and/or endorse this proposal. Once the users’ vision is articulated, the programmers will be commissioned to develop the system, which is expected to be completed by mid-2011.

Decision

The SC approved the collaboration of ECPGR with the GIGA project and endorsed the nomination of Frank Begemann as the ECPGR representative in the ALIS International Steering Committee.

ECPGR and other international fora/institutions

(Chair: Z. Bulinska)

Draft ECPGR strategy for collaboration with the European Union

(Introduced by J. Turok)

J. Turok summarized the existing collaborative linkages between the EU and ECPGR and the need for a strategy of collaboration to develop and implement an adequate policy framework on plant genetic resources.

Discussion and recommendations

The ECPGR community has built linkages with several relevant European Union (EU) policy areas and with the EU institutions at various levels. However, there has been no consistent engagement with the Steering Committee. It was agreed that overall collaboration between ECPGR and the EU would need to be substantially strengthened in the next Phase.

An obvious area for strengthening linkages is the implementation process of the International Treaty on PGRFA. The EU ratified the Treaty (in 2004), but did not start measures for its implementation. On the other hand, AEGIS provides a mechanism for regional cooperation in the implementation of the Treaty in the European Region. The European Commission (Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection) should, therefore, be approached with a proposal for collaboration in the implementation of the Treaty.

All efforts undertaken with the European Commission need to be supported by promoting and influencing similar messages through Ministries of the Member States, especially if the objective is to obtain long-term funding for genetic resources activities. In addition, the European Parliament could be approached. Communication with the members of the European Parliament would need to emphasize the importance of PGRFA for the wider socio-economic issues – food security, nutrition and health, and well-being.

Decision

It was decided to establish a Task Force consisting of 4-5 people who would further develop the ECPGR strategy for collaboration with the EU, with the objective of obtaining long-term support for implementation of the Treaty and PGRFA conservation in general. The Task Force will be composed of the following people: Paul Freudenthaler (Austria), Lars Landbo (Denmark), Siegfried Harrer (or another representative from Germany), Fernando Latorre (Spain) and Jozef Turok (Bioversity) who will initiate the work of this TF.

Information on the Svalbard Global Seed Vault

Jessica Kathle, NordGen Managing Director, presented the Svalbard Global Seed Vault (SGSV), a safety backup facility in the Arctic. She presented the vision, structure, organization, operations, terms and conditions of use, and how to participate in the initiative. She informed participants that the SGSV will provide the securest possible safety storage for a rational, effective, efficient and sustainable global system for conserving crop diversity and making it available. She explained this was done to secure vulnerable, existing unique collections using the existing framework for collaboration provided by the International Treaty. She informed the group about the partners involved and their roles in the SGSV. She briefly described the operations, terms and conditions for safely depositing the materials and highlighted that all this information is available through the existing SGSV Web site (www.nordgen.org/sgsv) or NordGen can be contacted for further information on safety depositing.

Information on the State of the World's PGRFA report

Elcio P. Guimarães, Senior Officer – FAO-AGP, presented the process of the preparation of the Second State of the World's PGRFA Report (SOW-2).

He informed participants about the background and main objective; the preparatory process and its current status and main challenges. He presented the eight chapters of the SOW-2: 1) State of Diversity, 2) *In situ* management, 3) *Ex situ* conservation, 4) State of Utilization, 5) National programme, training needs and legislation, 6) Regional and International collaboration, 7) Access and benefit sharing, and farmer's rights, 8) Contribution of PGRFA to food security and sustainable development; and the eleven thematic studies. The first draft of the SOW-2 will be available by April 2009 and the subsequent technical revisions will take place in June and July 2009.

He also informed the Steering Committee of the Inter-Governmental Working Group of the Commission on PGRFA (ITWG-PG) and the CGRFA meetings' dates: on 15-17 July 2009 the ITWG-PG-4 will review the first draft of the SOW-2; on 19-23 October 2009 the SOW-2 will be presented to the CGRFA-12 for endorsement and for the adoption of a plan for the process of updating the Global Plan of Action (GPA); in March 2011 the WG-PGRFA-5 will review the draft for the updated GPA and in November 2011 the CGRFA-13 will finalize the updating of the GPA.

He indicated that countries have been delivering their Country Reports (CRs) and it is estimated that more than 100 reports will arrive at FAO before the end of the year.

Currently, more than 60 countries have finalized their National Information Sharing Mechanism (NISM), 50 countries have prepared their CR and more than 55 other CRs are being prepared.

He communicated the CR status of the European region; seven countries had already made their contribution and all the others were in the process of finalizing them.

The main challenge is the full participation of all countries and to improve the consistency of the information gathering, given that the Commission is expecting that the SOW-2 will provide a concise and succinct assessment of the status and trends of PGRFA and be a high quality document, with regional and global analysis, able to identify the most significant gaps and needs, in order to provide a sound basis for updating the rolling GPA.

Discussion

Thorstein Tomasson enquired about how the CGIAR Centers will report and also how the Nordic Countries should report to FAO. On a similar line, Lars Landbo asked whether Nordic Countries needed to provide individual country reports or would the NordGen report be sufficient.

Concerning the CGIAR, it was stated that Bioversity will provide the necessary information on the CG Centers. However, E. Guimarães noted that the greatest relevance for the SOW-2 is given to the individual country reports. Concerning the Nordic Countries, E. Guimarães indicated that duplication of work should be avoided, and if the status of *ex situ* collections is centralized, individual country reports should only provide complementary information.

The Global Crop Diversity Trust and the regional Networks

Luigi Guarino provided an introduction to the work of the Trust and an update on its collaboration with ECPGR members and the Programme itself. The Trust recognizes AEGIS as Europe's contribution to the development of the rational, effective and efficient global system which is at the heart of its mandate. Collections of wheat, barley and various grain legumes have been identified as priorities for regeneration through the global crops strategies. The Trust received through ECPGR a proposal for regenerating smaller collections (cereals, grain legumes and potatoes) in nine countries and will follow up with them.

A grant scheme on "Enhancing the Value of Crop Diversity in a World of Climate Change" has extended to 1 October 2008 its deadline for applications. Information on all the Trust Grants is available at www.croptrust.org.

Planning for subsequent Phase VIII – Networks’ projects and budgets

(Chair: J. Weibull)

Review of Networks’ plans and budgets

Isaak Rashal and Merja Veteläinen gave a summary and analysis of the Networks’ plans and budget proposals.

In general, substantial differences were noted in the quality of the proposals and some were not considered of sufficiently high quality, especially when they lacked clearly measurable quantitative outputs.

The comments and recommendations of the SC below should be circulated to the Networks for implementation.

Cereals

The insufficient activity dedicated to AEGIS by the *Avena* WG (a model crop) was remarked.

A discussion on the eligibility of activities on genetic stocks for ECPGR funding was concluded by clarifying that certain precise genetic stocks are endangered, as recognized by the strategies developed with Trust support and that these lines are highly requested by scientists working on genomics. Therefore, it is appropriate to dedicate ECPGR efforts to these materials, provided they are in the public domain.

The Barley and Wheat projects were commended for their quality and importance. The project on genetic stocks was a valuable one and could be an example for other Networks, provided the material is proposed for inclusion into the European Collection. The SC also agreed that material collected with ECPGR funds should become available according to the conditions of the MLS of the International Treaty and be offered for designation as European Accessions.

Forages

The proposal was considered not to have sufficient quantitative outputs. However, it was also noted that the results of meetings are generally very valuable although hardly quantifiable, and they are essential in order to proceed with the definition of MAAs.

Fragmentation of the forages catalogues into too many DBs (23) was considered inefficient and the SC therefore encouraged the Network to consider merging some of the DBs.

Fruits

It was noted that the Network is ready to spend funds on DB development, but the value of the dispersed limited amounts dedicated to this task was questioned.

Oil and Protein Crops

Implementation of AEGIS and task sharing was not present in the planning. It was also questioned whether a climate change monitoring network would be an appropriate ECPGR activity.

The Network’s plan was on the other hand defended because the Network will use it to provide a baseline for a project that will offer a general service to the research community. Moreover, regeneration activities and the inventory of pest distribution are valuable activities that are related to the use of genetic resources. Characterization and CCDB development are task sharing activities that are useful for the AEGIS process.

The presence of some strange figures (e.g. 5 €) requested in some budget lines was remarked and the SC asked for an explanation to be provided.

Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops

It was appreciated that the Network identified priority activity, there is a clear timetable and the *Origanum* project was commended for its completeness.

It was reiterated that material collected should remain in the public domain and be proposed for AEGIS designation.

Vegetables

A question was raised on the actual availability of national funding to carry out the *Allium* and *Brassica* activities.

There was a comment that the SC should trust the good faith of the Networks when they make their plans.

Documentation and Information

The use of funds for inter-regional cooperation was questioned. However, it was noted that there is high demand from the Treaty for inter-regional workshops and that the Network can offer unique expertise that is relevant for inter-regional collaboration.

In situ and On-farm Conservation

The SC commended the proactive engagement in cross-network activities.

Inter-regional Cooperation

The usefulness of cooperating with the Documentation and Information Network was acknowledged, since synergies would be created.

Discussion and recommendations

• Allocation of funds to the Networks

The SC observed the general decision made by the Networks not to prioritize among WGs and stressed that it is within the mandate of the SC to decide whether to prioritize or not. The SC has two ways to enforce prioritization, either to directly establish the priorities, or to prioritize on the basis of budget allocation and let the Networks decide from then on.

There was a discussion on the possibility of establishing a Committee that would consider the criteria for fund allocation in order to channel funds towards the best proposals and for decision-making on prioritization.

However, overall the view prevailed that the SC should not engage into micro-management, but rather trust to the expertise of the Network members.

It was reconfirmed that the ratio of 75/25 (Meetings vs. Actions) was acceptable, where 25% is the upper limit for actions. The rationale of ECPGR was reiterated, as a facilitating mechanism where meetings are very important, although they should become more active and operational, as opposed to offering a compilation of country reports.

It was also agreed that a strong message should be sent to indicate that AEGIS activities should be prioritized.

Decision

The SC agreed that the Network proposals would be approved with the budget as outlined in Table 3. Additional funds will be included in a budget line dedicated to AEGIS activities, to be assigned through a competitive grant scheme that will be opened on an equal basis to all the Networks (see below, "Budget for Phase VIII", Point (3) and Table 4).

• Key to divide funds among Networks

A request submitted by the Cereals Network to revise the principle for subdivision of funds among Networks was considered. The different size of the WGs was claimed to be the source of unfair treatment, since large WGs would proportionally receive less funds than small groups.

Decision

The SC considered that funds available per WG member may not necessarily be a fairer key for the allocation of funds. By investing in participation of several members in a given group (through the quota system), National Coordinators are assigning more funds in absolute terms to the large groups, which should consequently be able to create better synergies and to mobilize more resources as

inputs-in-kind than the smaller groups. Therefore, being conscious that the system is far from perfect and that various pros and cons can be identified whatever is the criterion used to divide the funds, the SC opted for maintaining the current system without modifications.

- **Merging of Vegetables WGs**

Recommendation

Given the small size and the large number of WGs within the Vegetables Network, the SC invited the NCG to reconsider the composition of the Network and verify whether some WGs could be merged as a feasible and cost-effective option.

- **Request to expand NCGs to include the Vice-Chairs**

The decision taken by the SC to expand to a maximum of 10 people the size of the NCGs is taking into account the request to extend the NCGs to include the Vice-Chairs. The selection of the NCG members (whether Vice-Chairs, DB managers or other members) remains at the discretion of the Working Group Chairs of each respective Network.

- **Cross-cutting issues**

NCGs are encouraged to propose and carry out cross-cutting activities, despite the limited budgetary situation.

- **Reporting in-kind contributions**

It was considered that reporting in-kind contributions might be a useful exercise to show the level of commitment dedicated to the programme by ECPGR members. This type of quantification might be useful to persuade governments that ECPGR requires additional funding. On the other hand, such an estimate would be very difficult to carry out and would draw on the resources of people and the Secretariat. Messages sent to the ministries, stressing the in-kind contribution effect, could be useful, even without the need to quantify the value.

Overall, there was no consensus or decision taken on this point.

Planning for subsequent Phase VIII – Budget proposal

(Chair: F. Begemann)

Budget for Phase VIII

(Introduced by J. Turok)

J. Turok presented the budget proposed by the Secretariat for Phase VIII of ECPGR and explained the changes compared to Phase VII and the rationale behind the proposed figures.

Discussion and recommendations

The balanced budget for Phase VIII of ECPGR totalling € 2,759,002 (cf. Tables 2, 3 and 4) was discussed and approved with the following recommendations made by the Steering Committee:

- (1) In the overview table of percentage use of funds by category, AEGIS will be divided into two separate categories: “AEGIS project coordination” and “AEGIS project activities”.
- (2) In cases of under-spending of the budgets allocated to specific Network activities, these can be re-used within each Network for meetings or activities. Whenever such cases arise, the Secretariat will take final decisions after careful consideration of the spending situation across all Networks.
- (3) The Steering Committee requested clarification and refinement concerning “grant schemes activities” in the budget of AEGIS. A Task Force composed of Merja Veteläinen, Mike Ambrose, Gert Kleijer, Theo van Hintum and Jan Engels will draft the procedures for approval by the SC.

- (4) In order to increase flexibility as part of ECPGR financial management and wherever necessary, it will be possible to transfer up to 20% of any specific budget line to a different budget line. A proposal for transfer of funds between different budget lines will require endorsement by the Steering Committee in the usual way by e-mail correspondence.
- (5) A new budget line was added for “cross-cutting issues” with a budget amount at zero level. It was agreed that additional contributions will be sought by the NCs for specific activities that may arise under this budget line in the next Phase. Sweden announced to pledge for a contribution of € 5875. Furthermore, it was decided that the first specific activity funded under “cross-cutting issues” would be the proposed external review of ECPGR, which is foreseen to take place in 2009.
- (6) The ECPGR Coordinator was requested to provide the job description for the ECPGR Secretariat staff to the Steering Committee members.

Subsequent to approval of the budget tables, the Steering Committee also endorsed the list of ECPGR annual contributions with expected commitments of the participating countries and the respective country quota (Table 1a) and of potential new members (Table 1b). Final endorsement of each country’s contribution is subject to budgetary procedures at national level.

The Steering Committee acknowledged the pledges made by the representatives/observers from Montenegro and Russian Federation to become member countries of Phase VIII of ECPGR. The Steering Committee also welcomed the statement made by Belarus on the possibility of Belarus joining ECPGR. The Secretariat was requested to explore the interest of Luxembourg in joining ECPGR and to provide assistance to the countries intending to join ECPGR wherever appropriate.

Conclusion

(Chair: G. Kleijer)

Proposal for an independent external review of ECPGR

Jens Weibull presented a proposal for an external review of ECPGR. A few points and questions were listed to give a rationale to the proposal for undertaking such a review, i.e.:

- There is a new policy and legislative landscape
- Are ECPGR objectives in line to those of, e.g., the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Global Crop Diversity Trust and the Treaty?
- Is the current Network structure optimal and effective?
- Is the funding mechanism sustainable and reliable?
- Is the Steering Committee a “steering committee”?
- Are proper tools in place for evaluation of progress?
- The Secretariat is strained.

A proposal was made that the SC endorse the formation of a Task Force with the duty to formulate Terms of Reference for an Independent External Review of ECPGR to be carried out during 2009.

In the ensuing discussion, general support was expressed for the timely proposal of an external review which would be useful to upgrade the Programme. It was pointed out that all the aspects of the current operation of ECPGR should be evaluated, including the functioning of the Networks and Working Groups. A verification of whether ECPGR reflects the regional needs was also suggested. The need for a well balanced group of reviewers was also made, and that the panel should include a member from outside Europe, as well as a professional management expert.

Decision

The SC agreed to arrange for an external review of the ECPGR Programme.

A regionally balanced Task Force (TF) with the task of facilitating the review process will be composed of National Coordinators from Sweden (leading the Group), Macedonia (FYR),

the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, in collaboration with the Secretariat.

The procedure for the selection of the panel composition will be developed by the TF and submitted to the SC for approval before the end of 2008 (including required skills of the panel members and Terms of Reference for the review). The panel should be as broad in its composition as possible, taking into account the needed competencies, including knowledge of genetic resources topics and background.

The tentative time frame will be discussed by the TF. Recommendations resulting from the review will be submitted for consideration of the SC at its next meeting in 2011.

Approval of report

The report of the meeting, submitted by the Secretariat, was approved, including all the decisions and recommendations, with a few amendments.

Any other business and closing remarks

The SC reconfirmed the need for a Secretariat to be based at Bioversity International as the hosting institute, for Phase VIII.

The Chair thanked the meeting's participants for their constructive work.

P. Freudenthaler, on behalf of the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, offered to host the next SC meeting in Vienna. The SC thanked him for the offer, which was welcomed.

The Chair thanked the local organizers for making such an excellent start as members of ECPGR.

The Secretariat also thanked local organizers, participants and staff colleagues for their help, constructive cooperation and patience.

Table 1. ECPGR annual contributions during Phase VIII (€)

COUNTRY	Proposed annual contribution (Phase VIII)				
	UN rates (%) ⁽¹⁾	Category ⁽²⁾	Trend	(€)	Quota
a. List of countries with expected commitment					
MONTENEGRO	0.001	A	new	2750	7
ARMENIA	0.002	A	eq	2750	7
GEORGIA	0.003	A	dwn	2750	7
AZERBAIJAN	0.005	A	up	2750	7
MACEDONIA (FYR)	0.005	A	dwn	2750	7
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	0.006	A	up	2750	7
ALBANIA	0.006	A	up	2750	7
ESTONIA	0.016	A	up	2750	7
MALTA	0.017	A	up	2750	7
LATVIA	0.018	A	up	2750	7
BULGARIA	0.020	A	up	2750	7
SERBIA	0.021	A	up	2750	7
LITHUANIA	0.031	B	up	7000	8
ICELAND	0.037	B	up	7000	8
CYPRUS	0.044	B	up	7000	8
UKRAINE	0.045	B	dwn	7000	8
CROATIA	0.050	B	up	7000	8
SLOVAKIA	0.063	B	up	7000	8
ROMANIA	0.070	B	up	7000	8
SLOVENIA	0.096	B	up	7000	8
HUNGARY	0.244	C	up	11000	9
CZECH REP	0.281	C	up	11000	9
TURKEY	0.381	C	dwn	11000	9
ISRAEL	0.419	C	up	11000	9
IRELAND	0.445	C	up	11000	9
POLAND	0.501	C	up	11000	9
PORTUGAL	0.527	C	up	11000	9
FINLAND	0.564	C	up	11000	9
GREECE	0.596	C	up	11000	9
DENMARK	0.739	D	dwn	18200	11
NORWAY	0.782	D	up	18200	11
AUSTRIA	0.887	D	dwn	18200	11
SWEDEN	1.071	D	up	18200	11
BELGIUM	1.102	D	dwn	18200	11
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	1.200	D	eq	18200	11
SWITZERLAND	1.216	D	dwn	18200	11
NETHERLANDS	1.873	D	up	18200	11
SPAIN	2.968	D	up	18200	11
ITALY	5.079	E	up	50000	13
FRANCE	6.301	E	up	50000	13
UK	6.642	E	up	50000	13
GERMANY	8.577	E	dwn	50000	13
		Annual total		551,800	380
		Total 5 years		2,759,000	
b. List of potential participating countries					
MOLDOVA	0.001	A	dwn	2750	
BELARUS	0.020	A	up	2750	
LUXEMBOURG	0.085	B	up	7000	
		Annual total		12500	
		Total 5 years		62500	

⁽¹⁾ UN Scale of Assessments approved for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009, as established by General Assembly Resolution 61/237 adopted on 22 December 2006

⁽²⁾ Key to calculation of annual contribution to ECPGR

threshold	Category
$x < 0.03$	A
$0.03 \leq x < 0.1$	B
$0.1 \leq x < 0.6$	C
$0.6 \leq x < 5$	D
$5 \leq x$	E

Table 2. Proposed Budget for Phase VIII of ECPGR (in €)

	Phase VIII	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Coordination (Scientist, ECPGR Coordinator, 100%)	566,400	102,500	107,600	113,000	118,700	124,600
Secretariat administrative support (75%)	215,100	38,925	40,875	42,900	45,075	47,325
Secretariat staff travel	35,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
Steering Committee mtgs.	100,000	0	0	50,000	0	50,000
Network operations						
Support to Network activities (scientific assistance 25%)	113,650	20,575	21,600	22,675	23,800	25,000
Reports compilation, editing, layout (scientific assistance 25%)	113,650	20,575	21,600	22,675	23,800	25,000
Network Coordinating Group meetings	60,000	0	0	60,000	0	0
Network operations - crop networks	553,495	110,699	110,699	110,699	110,699	110,699
Network operations - thematic networks	118,910	23,782	23,782	23,782	23,782	23,782
Contribution to the cost of EURISCO	45,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
AEGIS project - coordination (senior scientist 50%)	330,985	68,880	72,320	66,585	60,100	63,100
AEGIS project – activities	129,255	25,851	25,851	25,851	25,851	25,851
Cross-cutting activities*	0					
Network operations – total	1,464,945					
Contribution to the cost of regional Newsletter	16,400	3,280	3,280	3,280	3,280	3,280
Communication and office consumables	43,750	8,750	8,750	8,750	8,750	8,750
Sub-total	2,441,595	439,817	452,357	566,197	459,837	523,387
Overhead (13%)**	317,407	57,176	58,806	73,606	59,779	68,040
Total	2,759,002	496,993	511,163	639,803	519,616	591,427

* Additional contributions are expected for specific activities (Independent review of ECPGR, thematic activities, etc.)

** This includes provision of space in Bioversity headquarters, the input and time of Bioversity professional staff, etc.

Percentage use of funds by category

	Phase VIII
Coordination, including administrative support	28.33%
Staff travel	1.27%
Steering Committee meetings	3.62%
Network operations (meetings, actions), including scientific support	34.78%
EURISCO (contribution)	1.63%
AEGIS project coordination	12.00%
AEGIS project activities	4.68%
Newsletter for Europe (contribution)	0.59%
Bioversity	13.09%
	100.00%

Table 3. Budget breakdown for Networks' activities (in brackets the number of WGs per Network)

	Phase VIII Budget (€)	WG meetings (funds eligible for country quota)	Country quota (1 = 1200 €)
Crop Networks			
Oil and Protein Crops Network (1)	27,700	20,400	
Vegetables Network (6)	188,160	141,120	
Additional activities (<i>Allium</i> and <i>Brassica</i> AEGIS activities)	13,720	11,760	
Cereals Network (3)	90,425	76,200	
Additional activities (<i>Avena</i> WG meeting)	4,300	4,300	
Forages Network (1)	27,700	27,700	
Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops Network (4)	118,100	70,200	
Fruit Network (3)	83,390	55,800	
Total	553,495		
Thematic Networks			
Documentation and Information Network	42,420		
<i>In situ</i> and On-farm Conservation Network (2)*	55,418	55,418	
Inter-regional Cooperation Network	21,072		
Total	118,910		
		462,898	386

Table 4. Budget for AEGIS

	€
Coordination (senior scientist 50%)	330,985
Technical and advisory assistance to countries	6,000
Additional meetings of <i>Avena</i> and <i>Prunus</i>	20,000
Activities (grant scheme)	103,255
Total	460,240

Annex A. ECPGR publication strategy for Phase VIII

The problem

- Backlog of ECPGR publication production is huge (see number of pending reports as of September 2008)
- Disproportion between expectation from the Networks and internal capacity
- Too much time used to correct poorly written papers, obtain feedback from authors, etc.; too many requests from the Networks
- Reports are published with 2-3 years delay
- Energies are spent trying to refine static quality products, therefore looking backwards rather than using the reports as working tools to facilitate implementation of the workplans.

Strategic considerations

The production of high-quality meeting reports has so far been a much appreciated service offered by the Secretariat. Demand for this service has increased, together with the number of Working Groups, and has reached a volume that is out of control, given the available staff resources which have not increased proportionately. Although the ECPGR's published reports have been among the major outputs of the WGs' activities with a positive image impact, it is proposed to take the strategic decision of eliminating this type of service, in order to allow the limited resources of the Secretariat to be better focused on supporting the Networks in their action points and workplan implementation.

The proposed solution

- Give up the idea of offering the service of producing "full meeting proceedings" with country reports and other papers.
- Remove the backlog by cancelling the production of pending reports. Subject to the consent of the authors, papers submitted will be made available online, without editorial changes, as virtual appendices to the existing meetings' "Discussion and recommendations".
- Limit future expectations only to the production of the bare essential minutes of the report including some essential appendices (agenda, list of participants, possibly others on an ad hoc basis) – to be produced only as electronic documents on the ECPGR Web pages.
- Possible time schedule for report writing:
 - Secretariat drafts the report at the meeting
 - Refined draft circulated for comments to be received within one month after the meeting
 - Minutes are edited for English language and Bioversity style, and published on the ECPGR Web site no later than two months after the meeting.
- Scientific assistant (half-time) could dedicate time to editing of the minutes and support to the Working Groups with follow-up of the agreed activities.
- The option to invest Network funds in the production of scientific/thematic proceedings could remain as an activity to be fully budgeted with Network funds, as opposed to relying on the regular Secretariat functions.

Annex B. Statement by Spain

Statement

"Spain interprets Articles 2(c) and 8(a)(i) of the MoU as well as Article 1(b)(i) of the Associate Membership Agreement as allowing full discretion to the AEGIS Members and Associate Members when identifying and proposing accessions for registration as European Accessions.

In the light of this, and due to the fact that the AEGIS coverage of non-Annex 1 crops would be incompatible with several provisions of the Spanish Law 30/2006 on seeds, nursery plants and plant genetic resources which establish a different legal framework of access for non-Annex 1 crops in Spain; I therefore declare that Spain will make use of such discretion and only aim for the time being to contribute to AEGIS with Annex 1 crops."

Declaration at the time of signature of the MoU by Spain

"Spain will only contribute to AEGIS with Annex 1 crops, making use of the discretion allowed in Articles 2 (c) and 8 (a)(i) of the MoU as well as Article 1(b)(i) of the Associate Membership Agreement. A full coverage of AEGIS to Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 crops as laid out in Article 2(c) and 3(a)(ii) would be incompatible with the Spanish Law 30/2006 on seeds, nursery plants and plant genetic resources, particularly its Article 47, which establishes a different set of rules on access for non-Annex 1 crops. This reserve to the scope of AEGIS also affects other related provisions of the MoU, inter alia, Art. 5(d)(ii), Art. 6(a)(ii), Art. 7(iii), Art. 8(a)(v) and Art. 9(d)(i), as well as Art. 1(b)(i) of the Annex to the MoU – Associate Membership Agreement."

Annex C.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
for the establishment of
A EUROPEAN GENE BANK INTEGRATED SYSTEM
(AEGIS)

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, provides for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and for the establishment of a Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing that will allow for the continued exchange of plant genetic resources that are most important to food security and on which countries are most interdependent, on standard, globally agreed terms and conditions;

WHEREAS the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, at its first session in June 2006, adopted the Standard Material Transfer Agreement, under which plant genetic resources for food and agriculture under the Multilateral System established by the Treaty will be transferred;

WHEREAS plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in Europe are conserved in some 500 institutions scattered over more than forty European countries, with a need for more coordination and sharing of responsibilities and activities related to conservation, management and access;

WHEREAS the countries of Europe wish to set up a European Genebank Integrated System to improve coordination with respect to the conservation of PGRFA in Europe and to facilitate the exchange of such PGRFA and related information among the countries and genebanks of Europe, without prejudice to the possible eventual extension of the system to *in situ* materials;

Now therefore, the countries and regional organizations party to this Memorandum of Understanding hereby agree as follows:

Article 1 Definitions

For the purposes of this Memorandum of Understanding –

- i) **“AEGIS”** means the European Genebank Integrated System established under Article 2;
- ii) **“Annex I crops”** means PGRFA listed in Annex I of the Treaty;
- iii) **“Approved standards”** means minimum agreed standards adopted by the ECPGR Steering Committee;
- iv) **“Black box arrangements”** means
 - a. that the deposit of the material will not affect any property or other rights pertaining to the material;

- b. that the material deposited will remain in sealed containers, unless otherwise agreed with the depositor;
 - c. that the terms and conditions governing the deposit of the material will be agreed between the depositor and the institution in which the materials are to be deposited;
 - d. that the institution in which the materials are to be deposited will take no action to further transfer the material except back to the original depositor or the depositor's successor in title, or in accordance with the depositor's instructions.
- v) "**Central Crop Database**" means the ECPGR Central Crop Database (ECCDB) or such other system as may eventually be developed for this purpose;
 - vi) "**Crop Conservation Work Plans**" means the work plans prepared by the ECPGR Crop Working Groups for each crop under Article 5d) and approved by the ECPGR Steering Committee under Article 5b);
 - vii) "**ECPGR**" means the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources;
 - viii) "**European Accessions**" means accessions registered as European Accessions in accordance with Article 6(a)(ii) and (iii), which will be collectively known as "**the European Collection**", to be organized where feasible on a crop gene pool specific basis;
 - ix) "**Non-Annex I crops**" means PGRFA other than PGRFA listed in Annex I of the Treaty;
 - x) "**National Coordinator**" means an ECPGR National Coordinator whose mandate has been extended under Article 6(a)(i) to act also as National Coordinator for AEGIS at the national level;
 - xi) "**PGRFA**" means plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;
 - xii) "**SMTA**" means the Standard Material Transfer Agreement adopted by the Governing Body of the Treaty at its First Session in June 2006;
 - xiii) "**The Parties**" means the countries and regional organizations that have signed this Memorandum of Understanding;
 - xiv) "**Treaty**" means the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which entered into force on **29 June 2004**;
 - xv) "**institutions**" includes public sector, civil society and private sector genebanks, and other institutions holding PGRFA collections or providing conservation related services.

Article 2 Establishment of AEGIS

- a) The Parties hereby **establish** the European Genebank Integrated System.
- b) The **membership** of AEGIS will consist of eligible countries and regional organizations in the European Region that have signed this Memorandum of Understanding.
- c) AEGIS will **cover both Annex I and non-Annex I** crops that are free from any third party obligations or restrictions, provided that this will not limit the discretion of any individual Member of AEGIS with respect to the accessions or class of accessions it deems appropriate to propose for registration as European Accessions.

Article 3 Countries and regional organizations eligible for membership in AEGIS

- a) The countries and regional organizations listed below are **eligible for membership** in AEGIS:
Albania; Armenia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; European Community; Finland; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Iceland; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Macedonia FYR; Malta; Moldova; Montenegro; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; United Kingdom; Ukraine, provided that
- i) they are **Members of ECPGR**; and
 - ii) they are **Parties to the Treaty** or are otherwise willing to make plant genetic resources for food and agriculture under their jurisdiction available under the conditions of the Treaty.
- b) The Members of AEGIS may by consensus **add** other countries and regional organizations to the list of countries and regional organizations eligible for membership in AEGIS.
- c) For the purposes of this Memorandum of Understanding, a country may be represented by its Government or by a person or public entity that has been appointed by its Government, and a regional organization by a Representative appointed on its behalf.

Article 4 Objectives of AEGIS

The **objectives of AEGIS** will be the following:

- i) To develop a **more efficient regional system of conservation and sustainable use** of PGRFA through the setting up of a **European Collection**;
- ii) To **promote and undertake other collaborative action** for the rational conservation, management and sustainable use of PGRFA;
- iii) To **facilitate the exchange** of PGRFA in accordance with standard terms and conditions of exchange;
- iv) To **promote the exchange of information regarding PGRFA** among the Parties, other stakeholders and the broader conservation community; and
- v) To provide a **mechanism for regional cooperation** in the implementation of the Treaty in the European region.

Article 5 Relationship of AEGIS with ECPGR

- a) AEGIS will **operate within the framework of ECPGR**.
- b) The **ECPGR Steering Committee** will have **overall responsibility and oversight over the operation of AEGIS**, will approve the administrative budget* of AEGIS,

* The administrative budget will include costs of coordination and administrative services at the ECPGR Secretariat.

and will use its best efforts to promote the mobilization of the funds required. In particular, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the Steering Committee will –

- i) promote the establishment of the **European Collection**;
 - ii) adopt **general requirements for the selection** of accessions to be proposed for registration as European Accessions;
 - iii) approve the contents of the **Crop Conservation Work Plans**, and oversee their implementation;
 - iv) **adopt minimum agreed standards** for the management of the European Collection on a crop genepool specific basis.
- c) The **ECPGR Secretariat** will –
- i) **support the ECPGR Steering Committee** in the activities outlined under Article 5(b);
 - ii) provide **coordination and secretariat support** for AEGIS activities;
- d) The **ECPGR Crop Working Groups** will provide **technical support** for the implementation of AEGIS, including –
- i) adopting **crop-specific criteria** that are consistent with the general requirements adopted by the ECPGR Steering Committee for the selection of accessions to be proposed for registration as European Accessions;
 - ii) helping to **identify and making recommendations** to the participating countries regarding the accessions proposed for **registration as European Accessions**;
 - iii) preparing and coordinating the implementation of **Crop Conservation Work Plans**;
 - iv) **proposing minimum agreed standards** for the management of the European Collection on a crop genepool specific basis for adoption by the ECPGR Steering Committee.
- e) The **ECPGR Documentation and Information Network** will provide the information infrastructure, including –
- i) **recording registered European Accessions**, and providing reporting services through the National Inventory System and the European Plant Genetic Resources Search Catalogue (EURISCO); and
 - ii) **crop-specific information tools** for characterization and evaluation data.
- f) The **National Coordinators of ECPGR** will act as coordinators for AEGIS at the national level, subject to the extension of their mandates in accordance with Article 6(a)(i).

Article 6 Responsibilities of Members of AEGIS

- a) Each Member country participating in AEGIS will be **responsible** for –
 - i) **extending the mandate of the ECPGR National Coordinator** to act also as National Coordinator for AEGIS at the national level, and providing appropriate support;

- ii) in consultation with the Associate Members concerned within its jurisdiction, **proposing** to the ECPGR Crop Working Groups **lists of such accessions for registration as European Accessions** as it may deem appropriate in accordance with the general selection requirements adopted by the ECPGR and the General Principles applicable to European Accessions under AEGIS set out in Article 8, and taking into account any crop-specific selection criteria adopted by the ECPGR Crop Working Groups;
 - iii) after considering the recommendations by the ECPGR Crop Working Groups, **registering accessions as European Accessions**, notifying such European Accessions to the European Plant Genetic Resources Search Catalogue (EURISCO), through the **National Inventory System**, and, in the event that the AEGIS Member concerned **withdraws from this Memorandum of Understanding**, notifying to EURISCO before the effective date of the withdrawal that the registration of accessions within its jurisdiction as European Accessions will terminate on the effective date of withdrawal;
 - iv) keeping under **review the list of registered European Accessions** for which it is responsible in light of the need to maintain a rational system of *ex situ* conservation. Where an AEGIS Member wishes to **withdraw an accession** from the list of European Accessions, the AEGIS Member will give at least twelve months notice to the ECPGR Crop Working Group concerned of such withdrawal, and will inform EURISCO accordingly when the withdrawal is effective.
- b) The **regional organizations** participating in AEGIS will be responsible for **providing appropriate support**.

Article 7 Responsibilities of National Coordinators with respect to AEGIS

The **National Coordinator will be responsible** within the member country concerned for –

- i) **servicing as the focal point** for interactions with the ECPGR Crop Working Groups and for the implementation of the Crop Conservation Work Plans within his/her country with the participating institution(s);
- ii) **identifying and accepting appropriate eligible institutions as Associate Members** of AEGIS in accordance with the procedures described Article 9, and promoting and coordinating appropriate support for such Associate Members;
- iii) **promoting and coordinating with the Associate Members** concerned within its jurisdiction the designation of **European Accessions** and the development and management of the **European Collection**;
- iv) in case of the **withdrawal of an Associate Member** within its jurisdiction or the termination of its Associate Membership Agreement, informing the ECPGR Secretariat of the withdrawal or termination with, where feasible, twelve months notice before the effective date of withdrawal or termination, in order to allow for an appropriate adjustment of the Crop Conservation Work Plans.

Article 8 General Principles applicable to European Accessions under AEGIS

- a) The following **principles** will be applicable to the management and exchange of **European Accessions** under AEGIS:
- i) The **discretion to propose accessions** as European Accessions lies with the individual Members of AEGIS concerned;
 - ii) Accessions proposed as European Accessions must meet the **general selection requirements** adopted by the ECPGR Steering Committee;
 - iii) Only accessions that are **free from any third party obligations** or restrictions will be registered and conserved as European Accessions;
 - iv) The Standard Material Transfer Agreement (**SMTA**) of the **International Treaty** will be used for the **transfer of Annex I crops**;
 - v) [The terms and conditions of the **SMTA** will be used for the **transfer of Non-Annex I crops** that have been registered as European Accessions, with an explanatory note reflecting the following interpretation of the SMTA:

“In the event that the SMTA is used for the transfer of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture other than those listed in Annex 1 of the Treaty:

- The references in the SMTA to the "Multilateral System" shall not be interpreted as limiting the application of the SMTA to Annex 1 Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- While Non-Annex 1 material distributed with the enclosed SMTA does not become part of the Multilateral System, it will however be available under the same conditions;
- In particular in the case of Article 6.2, Article 6.5(b) and Article 6.10 of the SMTA “from the Multilateral System” shall be taken to mean “under this Agreement”;
- The reference in Article 6.11 and Annex 3 of the SMTA to “Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture belonging to the same crop, as set out in Annex 1 to the Treaty” shall be taken to mean “Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture belonging to the same crop.”]

- vi) In the event that European Accessions are accessed **for purposes other than those provided for in Article 6.1 of the SMTA**, the terms and conditions under which the European Accessions are made available will be agreed on a case by case basis between the Associate Member and the Recipient;
- vii) **Minimum agreed standards regarding management** of the European Collection will be proposed for each crop genepool by the respective ECPGR Crop Working Group and adopted by the ECPGR Steering Committee;
- viii) **Associate Members** of AEGIS will perform all selected activities according to the approved standards;
- ix) **Public domain accession-level information** recorded in accordance with approved standards, as well as non-confidential characterization and evaluation data will be **made available**;
- x) Each European Accession will have an **identified safety-duplicate** stored under the same or better conditions than the original;

- xi) For each of the bodies within the organizational framework of AEGIS, detailed **terms of reference** will be established by the ECPGR Steering Committee.
- b) The above **Principles** will be kept under review and may be **amended** as appropriate, in accordance with the procedure described in Article 11 (a).

Article 9 Associate Membership of AEGIS

- a) The Parties will **encourage** appropriate eligible public, private and civil society institutions to become **Associate Members of AEGIS**, in accordance with their national policy and legal frameworks.
- b) Institutions **located in a Member country** of AEGIS will be **eligible** for associate membership in AEGIS.
- c) An **eligible institution** will become an Associate Member of AEGIS once it has been **accepted** as an Associate Member by the respective National Coordinator and has **signed** an AEGIS - Associate Membership Agreement with the National Coordinator in the form set out in the Annex to this Memorandum of Understanding. The signed AEGIS - Associate Membership Agreement will be **deposited** with the National Coordinator and a copy will be sent to the Executive Head (Director General) of the Organization responsible for providing the Secretariat services to the ECPGR.
- d) The **responsibilities of Associate Members** of AEGIS will be the following:
 - i) **Identifying**, in consultation with the AEGIS Member concerned through the National ECPGR Coordinator, from among the accessions they hold, those accessions that are free from any third party obligations or restrictions and meet the general selection requirements adopted by the ECPGR Steering Committee, to be proposed for registration as **European Accessions**;
 - ii) **managing the European Accessions** in their institutions in accordance with the Objectives and General Principles of AEGIS;
 - iii) **ensuring the long-term conservation** and/or maintenance of their **European Accessions** according to approved standards;
 - iv) participating in and / or facilitating **supporting activities** such as regeneration, viability testing and others organized by the respective ECPGR Crop Working Group for the crop/species in question;
 - v) ensuring as soon as possible **safety-duplication of their European Accessions** in agreed conditions, under black-box arrangements as appropriate, at another Associate Member genebank, possibly in a different country, and/or at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault;
 - vi) **facilitating access to and availability of their European Accessions** and related information in accordance with the General Principles applicable to European Accessions under AEGIS;
 - vii) for European Accessions, making available public **domain accession-level information** regarding available passport data through the National Inventory System and EURISCO, following the minimum standards agreed by the ECPGR Documentation and Information Network; making available non-confidential characterization and evaluation data through the relevant ECPGR

Central Crop Database (ECCDB) or such other system as may eventually be developed for this purpose; and

- viii) **providing and/or managing**, in accordance with AEGIS approved standards, such conservation **related services** as the Associate Member may offer.

Article 10 Entry into force of this Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding will enter into force **on its signature by 10 countries** eligible for membership in AEGIS, and will remain in force until terminated in accordance with Article 11.

Article 11 Amendment, Withdrawal from and Termination of this Memorandum of Understanding

- a) This Memorandum of Understanding may be **amended** by consensus of the Parties.
- b) Any Party may **withdraw** from this Memorandum of Understanding on twelve months written notice to the Depositary. In the event that a Party withdraws from this Memorandum of Understanding, all AEGIS Associate Membership Agreements in respect of Institutions within its jurisdiction will terminate as of the effective date of that withdrawal.
- c) This Memorandum of Understanding will **terminate** if the number of Parties falls below the minimum number required for its entry into force, or if the ECPGR ceases to exist.

Article 12 Depositary of this Memorandum of Understanding

- a) The original of this Memorandum of Understanding and any amendments thereto and Declarations made hereunder will be **deposited** with the Executive Head (**Director General**) of the Organization responsible for providing the Secretariat services to the ECPGR. At the present time, the ECPGR Secretariat services are provided by **Bioversity International**.
- b) Countries and regional organizations eligible for membership in AEGIS may become members of AEGIS by **signing the original copy of this Memorandum of Understanding** held by the Executive Head (Director General) of the Organization responsible for providing the Secretariat services to the ECPGR, or by signing a copy of this Memorandum of Understanding authenticated by the Executive Head (Director General) of the Organization responsible for providing the Secretariat services to the ECPGR as being a true copy.

Signatures and Date

(Name and Position of Country Representative (*country*) or Representative (Regional Organization))

ANNEX

AEGIS – Associate Membership Agreement

This **Agreement** is between (Name of institution), being an eligible institution within the meaning of Article 9 of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of the European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS) (**the Institution**) and the [AEGIS] ECPGR National Coordinator (Name and Institution of Coordinator) for the country (Name of Country) in which the Institution is located (**the National Coordinator**).

1. **The Institution** hereby –
 - a. agrees to become an **Associate Member** of AEGIS;
 - b. accepts the **responsibilities** of an Associate Member of AEGIS as set out below:
 - i) **Identifying**, in consultation with the AEGIS Member concerned through the National ECPGR Coordinator, from among the accessions they hold, those accessions that are free from any third party obligations or restrictions and meet the general selection requirements adopted by the ECPGR Steering Committee, to be proposed for registration as **European Accessions**;
 - ii) **managing the European Accessions** in their institutions in accordance with the Objectives of AEGIS and the General Principles applicable to European Accessions under AEGIS, as set out in the Appendices to this Agreement, as those Objectives and General Principles may be amended from time to time;
 - iii) **ensuring the long-term conservation** and/or maintenance of their **European Accessions** according to approved standards;
 - iv) participating in and / or facilitating **supporting activities** such as regeneration, viability testing and others organized by the respective ECPGR Crop Working Group for the crop/species in question;
 - v) ensuring as soon as possible **safety-duplication of their European Accessions** in agreed conditions, under black-box arrangements as appropriate, at another Associate Member genebank, possibly in a different country, and/or at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault;
 - vi) **facilitating access to and availability of their European Accessions** and related information in accordance with the General Principles of AEGIS;
 - vii) for European Accessions, making available public **domain accession-level information** regarding available passport data through the National Inventory System and EURISCO, following the minimum standards agreed by the ECPGR Documentation and Information Network; making available non-confidential characterization and evaluation data through the relevant ECPGR Central Crop Database (ECCDB) or such other system as may eventually be developed for this purpose; and
 - viii) **providing and/or managing**, in accordance with AEGIS approved standards, such conservation **related services** as the Associate Member may offer.
2. **The National Coordinator** accepts **the Institution** as an Associate Member of AEGIS and agrees to work with the Institution in the implementation of the Objectives and General Principles of AEGIS.

3. The Institution may **withdraw from this Agreement** on twelve months written notice to the **National Coordinator** concerned.
4. In the event that the **National Coordinator** is not satisfied that the Institution has complied fully with its obligations under this Agreement, the **National Coordinator** may at any time give **written notice** to the **Institution** specifying the areas in which compliance by the **Institution** has been **deficient**. If the **Institution** fails to remedy the situation within a period of twelve months following receipt of such written notice, the **National Coordinator** may **terminate this Agreement** forthwith.
5. This agreement will **terminate** on the withdrawal of the AEGIS Member in whose the jurisdiction the Institution is located or on the termination of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of AEGIS.
6. This **Agreement** will be **deposited** with the **National Coordinator**. A copy will be sent to the Executive Head (Director General) of the Organization responsible for providing the Secretariat services to the ECPGR. At the present time, the ECPGR Secretariat services are provided by Bioversity International.

Signature and Date
(Name and Position of Representative of the **Institution**)

Signature and Date
(Name and Position of Representative of **National Coordinator** (*country*))

APPENDIX 1

Objectives of AEGIS

The objectives of AEGIS will be the following:

- i) To develop a more efficient regional system of conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA through the setting up of a **European Collection**;
- ii) To **promote and undertake other collaborative action** for the rational conservation, management and sustainable use of PGRFA;
- iii) To **facilitate the exchange** of PGRFA in accordance with standard terms and conditions of exchange;
- iv) To **promote the exchange of information regarding PGRFA** among the Parties, other stakeholders and the broader conservation community; and
- v) To provide a mechanism for regional cooperation in the implementation of the Treaty in the European region.

APPENDIX 2

General Principles applicable to European Accessions under AEGIS

a) The following **principles** will be applicable to the management and exchange of **European Accessions** under AEGIS:

- i) The discretion to propose accessions as European Accessions lies with the individual Members of AEGIS concerned;
- ii) Accessions proposed as European Accessions must meet the general selection requirements adopted by the ECPGR Steering Committee;
- iii) Only accessions that are **free from any third party obligations** or restrictions will be registered and conserved as European Accessions;
- iv) The Standard Material Transfer Agreement (**SMTA**) of the International **Treaty** will be used for the transfer of Annex I crops;
- v) [The terms and conditions of the **SMTA** will be used for the transfer of Non-Annex I crops that have been registered as European Accessions, with an explanatory note reflecting the following interpretation of the SMTA:

“In the event that the SMTA is used for the transfer of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture other than those listed in Annex 1 of the Treaty:

- The references in the SMTA to the "Multilateral System" shall not be interpreted as limiting the application of the SMTA to Annex 1 Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- While Non-Annex 1 material distributed with the enclosed SMTA does not become part of the Multilateral System, it will however be available under the same conditions;
- In particular in the case of Article 6.2, Article 6.5(b) and Article 6.10 of the SMTA “from the Multilateral System” shall be taken to mean "under this Agreement";
- The reference in Article 6.11 and Annex 3 of the SMTA to "Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture belonging to the same crop, as set out in Annex 1 to the Treaty" shall be taken to mean "Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture belonging to the same crop".”]

- vi) In the event that European Accessions are accessed for **purposes other than those provided for in Article 6.1 of the SMTA**, the terms and conditions under which the European Accessions are made available will be agreed on a case by case basis between the Associate Member and the Recipient;
- vii) **Minimum agreed standards regarding management** of the European Collection will be proposed for each crop genepool by the respective ECPGR Crop Working Group and adopted by the ECPGR Steering Committee;
- viii) **Associate Members** of AEGIS will perform all selected activities according to the approved standards;
- ix) **Public domain accession-level information** recorded in accordance with approved standards, as well as non-confidential characterization and evaluation data will be made **available**;

- x) Each European Accession will have an **identified safety-duplicate** stored under the same or better conditions than the original;
 - xi) For each of the bodies within the organizational framework of AEGIS, detailed **terms of reference** will be established by the ECPGR Steering Committee.
- b) The above **Principles** will be kept under review and may be **amended** as appropriate, in accordance with the procedure described in Article 11 a) of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of a European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS).

Annex D. Descriptors for EURISCO, as a service to the International Treaty

MLS and AEGIS registry status descriptors for EURISCO	
34.* MLS Status	(MLSSTAT)
The coded status of an accession with regard to the Multilateral System (MLS) of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Provides the information on whether the accession is included in the MLS.	
0 – not part of the MLS	
1 – part of the MLS	
If the MLS status is unknown, the field stays empty.	
35.* AEGIS Status	(AEGISSTAT)
The coded status of an accession with regard to the European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS).	
Provides the information on whether the accession is conserved for AEGIS.	
0 – not part of AEGIS	
1 – part of AEGIS	
If the AEGIS status is unknown, the field stays empty.	

* consecutive EURISCO descriptor number, pending on the decision to include these new descriptors.

Fig. 1. Registration procedure for European Material under the MLS of the ITPGR.

SMTA reporting descriptors for EURISCO	
1. SMTA Institute Code	(SMTAINST)
FAO Institute Code [or another official code] for the institute acting as Provider.	
Example: DEU146	
2. SMTA Number	(SMTANUMB)
This number serves as a unique identifier for the SMTA contract within an institute, and is assigned by the institute acting as Provider.	
Example: IPK00724	
3. SMTA Date	(SMTADATE)
Date on which the SMTA contract was concluded as YYYYMMDD. Missing data (MM or DD) should be indicated with hyphens. Leading zeros are required.	
Example: 20020620	
4. SMTA Total Number of Accessions	(SMTACCE)
Total number of accessions transferred by the SMTA.	
Example: 345	
5. SMTA Number of Accessions per Genus	(SMTAGENUS)
The field is used to elaborate on the number of accession per genus transferred by the SMTA. Prefix genus name in Latin, initial uppercase letter required, and a colon followed by the number of transferred accessions for the genus without space. Separate entries referring to different genera by semicolons without space.	
Example: Allium:120;Beta:25;Hordeum:200	
6. SMTA Category of recipient	(SMTARECIP)
The coded category of the Recipient of the accessions transferred by the SMTA.	
1 – genebank	
2 – botanical garden	
3 – public research institute	
4 – private breeder	
5 – private individual, non-profit association	
6 – education	
9 – other (Elaborate in REMARKS field)	
7. SMTA Remarks	(SMTAREMARK)
The remarks field is used to add notes or to elaborate on descriptor(s) with value 9 (=Other). Prefix remarks with the field name they refer to and a colon. Separate remarks are separated by semicolons without space.	
Example: SMTARECIP:museum	

Fig. 2. Interim module for reporting the use of SMTA of the MLS of the ITPGR for European providers.

Annex E. Agenda

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

2 September 2008

Opening (Chair: G. Đurić)

- 8:30 – 9:00 **Opening statements by representatives of the host country and Bioversity**
9:00 – 9:15 **Adoption of the Agenda**

Report on Phase VII (Chair: G. Đurić)

Background document (BD): Secretariat report

- 9:15 – 10:15 **Technical and financial report of Phase VII (L. Maggioni)**
10:15 – 10:45 *Coffee break*
10:45 – 11:45 **Discussion and recommendations**

BD: Networks progress reports

- 11:45 – 12:05 **Forages, Fruits, *In situ* and On-Farm Conservation and Oil and Protein Crops Networks (I. Rashal)**
12:05 – 12:30 **Cereals, Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops, Vegetables, Inter-regional Cooperation, and Documentation and Information Networks (M. Veteläinen)**
12:30 – 14:00 *Lunch*
14:00 – 15:00 **Discussion and recommendations**

AEGIS (Chair: B. Visser)

BD: AEGIS Coordinator report / AEGIS MoU

- 15:00 – 15:30 **Progress of AEGIS and perspectives for the future (J. Engels)**
15:30 – 16:30 **Discussion and recommendations**
16:30 – 17:00 *Coffee break*
17:00 – 17:30 **The AEGIS Memorandum of Understanding (G. Moore)**
17:30 – 18:30 **Discussion and recommendation**

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Documentation and Information (Chair: G. Popsimonova)

BD: Proposed registration of accessions and MTA reporting procedures / Draft vision paper for a European Information Landscape

- 8:30 – 8:50 **Progress of EURISCO and future views (S. Dias)**
8:50 – 9:10 **EURISCO as a service to the International Treaty (F. Begemann)**
9:10 – 9:30 **The Global Information on Germplasm Accessions (GIGA) project (M. Mackay)**
9:30 – 10:00 **Vision for a European PGR Information Landscape (Th. van Hintum)**
10:00 – 10:30 *Coffee break*
10:30 – 11:30 **Discussion and recommendations**

ECPGR and other international fora/institutions (Chair: Z. Bulinska)**BD: Draft ECPGR strategy for collaboration with the EU**

11:30 – 11:45	Draft ECPGR strategy for collaboration with the EU (J. Turok)
11:45 – 12:30	Discussion and recommendations
12:30 – 13:45	<i>Lunch</i>
13:45 – 14:00	Global Crop Diversity Trust and the regional Networks (L. Guarino)
14:00 – 14:15	Information on the Svalbard Global Seed Vault (J. Kathle)
14:15 – 14:30	Information on the State of the World's PGRFA report (E. Guimarães)
14:30 – 15:00	Discussion and recommendations

Planning for subsequent Phase VIII (Chair: J. Weibull)**BD: Networks projects and budgets**

15:00 – 15:10	Review of ECPGR objectives for Phase VIII (i.e. Riga decisions) (L. Maggioni)
15:10 – 15:30	Discussion
15:30 – 16:30	Review of Forages, Fruits, <i>In situ</i> and On-Farm Conservation and Oil and Protein Crops Networks (I. Rashal)
16:30 – 17:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
17:00 – 18:00	Review of Cereals, Sugar, Starch and Fibre Crops, Vegetables, Inter-regional Cooperation and Documentation and Information Networks (M. Veteläinen)
18:00 – 19:00	Discussion and recommendations

4 September 2008**Planning for subsequent Phase VIII (continued)** (Chair: F. Begemann)**BD: Budget proposal**

8:30 – 8:35	ECPGR membership (L. Maggioni)
8:35 – 8:45	Information from non-member countries
8:45 – 9:00	Discussion and recommendations
9:00 – 9:30	The proposed budget for Phase VIII (J. Turok)
9:30 – 10:30	Discussion and recommendations
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:00 – 13:00	Decisions on itemized budget lines
13:00 – 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>

Afternoon: Half-day excursion to Mostar

5 September 2008**Wrap-up**

8:30 – 13:00	Finalizing the draft report <i>Members who are not involved in the drafting are free in the morning</i>
13:00 – 14:30	<i>Lunch</i>

Conclusion (Chair: G. Kleijer)

14:30 – 16:30	Approval of recommendations
16:30 – 17:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
17:00 – 17:15	Proposal for an independent external review of ECPGR (J. Weibull)
17:15 – 17:45	Discussion and recommendations
17:45 – 18:15	Any other business and closing remarks

Social dinner

Annex F. List of participants

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

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