

The European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks (ECP/GR) – Technical report of Phase VI (1999 –2003)

1. Introduction

This Technical Report was prepared as a background document to aid the Steering Committee in the final evaluation of Phase VI of ECP/GR during its Ninth meeting to be held in Izmir, Turkey, 22-25 October 2003.

The information reported here aims at analyzing the results of Phase VI with regard to the specific objectives identified at the onset of the Phase, during the Seventh meeting of the Steering Committee, held in Braunschweig, Germany in 1998. Detailed information on specific activities carried out within each Network has been reported on a yearly basis through progress reports and will not be repeated here. Progress reports for the years 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are all available from the ECP/GR web pages at:

<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/SteeringCommittee/SC.htm>. Further information on Phase VI activities has been published in the IPGRI Newsletter for Europe (11 issues between 1999 and 2003). The Newsletter is regularly distributed to a mailing list of over 2500 contacts and is available on the web at: <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Publications/Publications.htm>

Over twenty reports of meetings held within the Networks have been published. They contain detailed results of the group activities, workplans and recommendations. The full list is given in **Appendix 1**, including also draft reports still in preparation.

Chapter 3 of this report very schematically summarizes the structure of each network and gives an outlook for the future (i.e. list of actions proposed by WG Chairs, where funds and support from the Secretariat would be required). Complementary information is offered by the Working Group Chairs in their brief reports of Phase VI and Action Plans for the future (see Item 1 of the meeting agenda).

A preliminary financial account for Phase VI is included at the end of this document (Chapter 4).

The European Cooperative Programme for Crop Genetic Resources Networks (ECP/GR), founded in 1980, has as its original objectives the creation of a system to promote direct contact between national programmes and institutions involved in crop genetic resources activities. ECP/GR is to promote the unhindered exchange of crop genetic resources and related data. Consequently, up-to-date information on genetic resources is to be made easily available to users. ECP/GR is also a framework in which joint activities such as documentation, collecting expeditions, characterization and evaluation of germplasm are implemented.

These activities reflect the role of ECP/GR as the platform to facilitate the implementation of the Global Plan of Action (GPA) for the conservation and

sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, at the European level.

The Programme is entirely financed by the participating countries and is governed by a Steering Committee composed of National Coordinators. The Steering Committee makes decisions regarding the general scope of the Programme and approves the Programme's budget. It also mandates the Coordinating Secretariat, currently IPGRI, to carry out its decisions. During Phase VI of the Programme, covering the period 1999–2003, ECP/GR operated through ten broadly focused networks dealing with groups of crops or general themes related to plant genetic resources. The main operational units within the networks were the Working Groups, composed of members representing their respective country. Countries' financial contributions were used for the overall coordination and the cost of meetings and publications, while the Working Group members carried out agreed activities with their own resources as inputs in kind.

2. Summary of achievements during 1999-2003

2.1. Implementation of Phase VI of ECP/GR

The implementation of Phase VI of ECP/GR started in 1999 with revised objectives and a new mode of operation. The objectives of Phase VI were defined as follows:

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

During Phase VI all the networks became operational, including previously “silent” networks such as the “Minor Crops”, the “Inter-regional cooperation” and “*In situ* and on-farm conservation” networks. To achieve greater coordination within the crop networks, Network Coordinating Groups, composed of Working Group Chairs, Vice-Chairs or Database Managers, were activated to establish priorities for action for the extended range of crops covered by the network. The number of Working Groups was raised from nine at the end of Phase V to 15 at the end of Phase VI, as a result of successful requests submitted to the Steering Committee by specific groups of crop experts.

The number of countries joining the Programme increased from 32 (end of Phase V) to 36 in 2003, thanks to the addition of Albania, Armenia, Latvia and Macedonia (FYR) as new members.

Member countries of ECP/GR

Albania	Finland	Lithuania	Serbia and
Armenia	France	Malta	Montenegro
Austria	Germany	Macedonia	Slovakia
Belgium	Greece	(FYR)	Slovenia
Bulgaria	Hungary	The Netherlands	Spain
Croatia	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Cyprus	Ireland	Poland	Switzerland
Czech Republic	Israel	Portugal	Turkey
Denmark	Italy	Romania	United Kingdom
Estonia	Latvia		

As mandated by the Steering Committee, the first two years of Phase VI were mainly dedicated to meetings of the Network Coordinating Groups, in order to plan activities at the network level. During the following years, Working Group meetings, small technical meetings, joint meetings with EU-funded projects and full network meetings took place (a full list is given in **Appendix 2**). Overall, the range of crops and themes dealt with by ECP/GR during Phase VI steadily increased, as testified by the occurrence for the first time of ECP/GR meetings on *Arachis*, *Beta*, Cucurbits, Flax, Leafy vegetables, Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Potato, Solanaceae and *Vitis*.

Phase VI has seen the introduction of new type of meetings, that is Network Coordinating Group and Crop Network meetings. Network Coordinating Groups (NCGs) were created to coordinate activities at the Network level and to partly relieve the Secretariat from coordinating tasks, which were supposedly transferred to Network members. While NCGs have certainly helped in formulating strategies, synergies and initiatives for most of the Networks, they have generally not been successful in replacing the Secretariat with coordinating tasks. On the contrary, they have been additional entities requiring support from the Secretariat. In the case of the Network meetings, only the Vegetables and Cereals Networks have met according to this formula, involving all the respective

Working Groups, *ad hoc* groups and database managers. These meetings have taken place in the form of a complex combination of WG meetings and NCG meeting. The result seemed to be more positive when the respective NCG had been able to prepare their groups for constructive discussion and deliberations (the case of Vegetables). In the case of the Cereals Network, insufficient preparation of the groups by the NCGs and the Secretariat made it difficult to advance discussions beyond simple deliberations at the Working Group level, although the exchange of information between groups remained a positive element.

To provide flexibility in supporting and managing activities related to facilitating the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, but avoiding further strain on the Programme's core budget, the possibility was open for initiating specific modules of action with complementary funds to be raised in addition to the regular member country contributions. This initiative met with limited success and about US\$38,000 was raised between 1999 and 2003. These funds enabled involving non-EU countries into EU-funded projects by simply participating in the EU project meetings and/or undertaking PGR characterization activities complementary to the workplans of the EU projects.

Communication to and among the Steering Committee members and dissemination of information were facilitated by the use of two dedicated listservers maintained by the Nordic Gene Bank on behalf of the Programme. The ECP/GR Web site considerably expanded with provision of specific Network and Working Group pages with the aim to provide an increasingly comprehensive and updated on-line information service.

The full integration of all European countries into ECP/GR was only partially achieved, by inviting all focal persons of ECP/GR non-member countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine) to the Steering Committee meetings and occasionally funding the participation of experts from these countries in ECP/GR meetings.

During its mid-term meeting in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, in October 2001, the Steering Committee expressed its satisfaction with the progress made in fulfilling all ECP/GR objectives and recommended to give increased attention to facilitate the increased use of PGR in Europe and to increase awareness of the importance of PGR activities. In order to fulfill this request, the Secretariat identified available funds to reinforce its human resources and was able to recruit a Programme Specialist in March 2003.

In order to plan a strategy for the future Phase VII, the Steering Committee also established a task force that widely surveyed the ECP/GR community through a questionnaire and proposed a list of priorities and a number of recommendations for future operation (*see Item 4 of the meeting agenda*).

2.2. Facilitating the long-term *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of PGR in Europe

As a result of the first meeting organized within the framework of the *In situ* and on-farm conservation network, two task forces were established. As a result of the activity of a task force on “On-farm conservation and management”, a preliminary inventory was prepared of existing examples of on-farm conservation and management in Europe. A directory of European contacts in the area of on-farm conservation and management of crop genetic resources was compiled and is being prepared for web-enabling and for upload on the ECP/GR Web site. A small pilot project to study the process of the conservation and management of the genetic diversity of landraces conserved on-farm in the Carpathian areas of Romania was sponsored through the ECP/GR budget.

The second task force, focusing on “Wild species conservation in genetic reserves” successfully submitted for funding under the EU Fifth Framework Programme, a project proposal on “European Wild Plant Diversity Assessment and Conservation Forum” (PGR Forum). A larger project for submission to the Sixth Framework Programme on understanding and managing change in European genetic resources conservation, entitled GRACE (Genetic Resources And Changing Ecosystems), was developed including a wide range of European partners.

During most Working Group meetings, information on experiences of *in situ* and on-farm conservation is reported and recommendations are made encouraging *in situ* conservation of wild relatives. These statements, included in the meetings’ proceedings, offer an instrument to promote specific action at the national level, examples are recommendations to protect *Brassica* species in Southern Italy, wild *Avena* in Spain and several relatives of cereal crops in Israel. The Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Working Group agreed to select a priority list of 10 species/genera and to ensure that a survey of natural populations be carried out within each country.

Working Group meetings were always used to inform the groups on the status of conservation of genetic resources in the various countries. This exchange of experiences promoted mutual comparison of the level and quality of conservation, thereby promoting improvement and emulation. Additionally, the Working Groups discussed quality standards for genebank conservation, seed regeneration and fruit tree rejuvenation. The general recommendation to adopt ISO 9000 standards and publicize genebank practices has also been made in several groups. The need for emergency regeneration of valuable seed samples has also occasionally been made evident. This was the case of old carrot samples of the Vavilov Institute, which were subject to a multi-national emergency regeneration initiated by the Working Group on Umbellifer Crops. Working Group meetings are the forum where mechanisms are proposed for safety-duplication of germplasm samples. Genebanks offering cold storage space to host seed samples as black boxes for safety-duplication are listed in the Working Group reports and this has led to several bilateral safety-duplication arrangements.

More integrated systems for rationalizing the conservation of genetic resources at a Regional level have been proposed by several Working Groups and possible mechanisms for sharing responsibilities have been drafted (see 2.7).

2.3. Facilitating increased utilization of PGR in Europe

The ECP/GR programme allowed for increased utilization of crop genetic resources by promoting facilitated access to improved quality information on the existing germplasm collections in Europe. This is an output of the ECP/GR Central Crop Databases (ECCDBs) that have continued to develop as the main tool of each Working Group. During Phase VI, the number of central databases, managed by a partner institute on behalf of the rest of the programme, has increased from 33 at the end of Phase V, up to the current 53 databases. Databases joining the group of ECCDBs during Phase V were those on *Arachis*, *Beta*, Cucurbits, Eggplant, Flax, Hemp, *Lactuca*, Pepper, *Physalis* and *Cyphomandra*, Potato cultivars, wild tuber-bearing Potatoes, *Pyrus*, *Ribes/Rubus*, Tomato, *Vigna*, *Vitis* and Wheat. Databases have constantly grown in size with the addition of new passport data from previously missing collections as well as characterization data, especially collected through the EU-funded projects. On-line availability in downloadable or searchable form has also constantly grown. The ECP/GR Web site currently gives access to 54 ECCDBs entry pages, compared to the 17 of 1998. The development of the on-line EURISCO catalogue of passport data of all European accessions is also a result of the initiative of the ECP/GR Documentation and Information Network (see *EURISCO fact sheet, distributed to all national coordinators*).

Use of the collections is also facilitated by good coverage and availability of characterization data for the existing germplasm. The ECCDBs were further developed during Phase VI, mainly thanks to the Gen Res projects funded by the EU under regulation 1467/94. Several of these projects were prepared by the corresponding ECP/GR Working Groups and allowed to carry out activities agreed upon by these groups. During the last four years, Gen Res projects with linkages to the ECP/GR Working Groups went on for *Allium*, *Avena*, *Beta*, *Brassica*, Barley, Carrot, Eggplant, Maize, Melon, Potato, *Prunus* and *Vitis*. Core collections are another step towards facilitating increased use of PGR and the ECP/GR Working groups have advanced the definition of these collections, in the cases of *Allium*, *Avena*, Barley, *Brassica* and *Lolium*.

The ECP/GR Working Group meetings have helped maintain a spirit of openness to the exchange of genetic material within the ECP/GR circle. At a time when the revision of the International Undertaking at the FAO Commission on GRFA was being concluded with the definition of a Multilateral System (MLS) for access and benefit sharing only applicable to a limited list of crops, the ECP/GR Steering Committee produced a statement encouraging an enlargement of the list of crops to become part of the MLS.

A more direct initiative to facilitate increased utilization of PGR was proposed in 2003 by the ECP/GR Secretariat in the context of the Vegetables Network, with the intention to coordinate a network of contacts between private breeders and genebanks aiming at encouraging the trial by the breeders of genebank material that would be regenerated, multiplied and returned to the genebanks.

2.4. Strengthening links between all national programmes in Europe and promoting the integration of countries, which are not members of ECP/GR

Every ECP/GR meeting reinforces the links among national programmes in Europe. It has also been within the ECP/GR circle that the idea for a European Workshop on national genetic resources programmes was born. This Workshop was then organized in Alnarp, Sweden, by an independent organizing Committee, also in collaboration with the ECP/GR Secretariat, to exchange ideas and compare constraints and opportunities among the European national programmes. This Workshop generated new ideas for a strengthened collaboration in Europe, in particular calling for the establishment of an integrated system for crop genetic resources conservation in Europe. A statement was also endorsed encouraging policy-makers to provide more stable financial support to secure proper conservation and research on crop genetic resources in Europe.

Integration in the Programme of European countries that are not members of ECP/GR (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine) is being promoted by inviting focal points to the Steering Committee meetings, occasionally inviting observers in crop or thematic meetings, ensuring the nomination of national inventory focal persons that participated in the EU-funded EPGRIS project for the development of a PGR Information Infra-structure and also by having organized the Eighth Steering Committee meeting in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, in October 2001.

2.5. Encouraging cooperation between all stakeholders, including NGOs and private breeders

Cooperation between all stakeholders is being encouraged because according to ECP/GR rules, Working Group members come to the meetings as representatives of all the stakeholders within their countries. More directly, the International Seed Federation (and previously the International Association of Plant Breeders (ASSINSEL)) has always been invited, together with FAO, to attend the ECP/GR meetings. Interactions with breeders have led to identify traits that are of higher interest and therefore deserve priority attention for characterization. Initiatives of collaborative regeneration and evaluation have also been started (see 2.3). In the case of NGOs, the presence of a representative of the European NGOs as an observer in the Steering Committee meeting has become stable since 1998 and this has helped to influence the programme's agenda towards the need for increased public awareness raising. The presence of NGOs representatives in the *In situ* and on-farm conservation network task force meetings has also continued the dialogue between governmental or academic and the civil society sector and collaborative projects with the involvement of NGOs have been proposed on this occasion.

2.6. Increasing the planning of joint activities including the development of joint project proposals to be submitted to funding agencies

At each level the ECP/GR meetings were held (Network Coordinating Group, Working Group, Task Force or full Network), they were concluded with a workplan of activities to be carried out either with their own resources, or pending the identification of appropriate funds. These workplans most often consisted in the further development of the central crop databases, standardization of descriptors to be used for characterization, identification of most original samples and rationalization of the collections, definition of most appropriate quality standards for conservation and regeneration, etc. Joint project proposals were prepared by several groups, leading to the approval for funding of the following projects:

- Information and Documentation Network: EPGRIS (European Plant Genetic Resources Information Infra-Structure) – EU funded under Fifth Framework;
- Vegetables Network: Genes projects on *Brassica* and Carrot (EC 1467/94);
- Cereals Network: Gen Res project on *Avena* (EC 1467/94); Complementary module funds for characterization of barley accessions in non-EU countries (ECP/GR funded);
- Forages Network: ICONFORS (Improving germplasm conservation methods for perennial European forage species) – EU funded under Fifth Framework);
- *In situ* and on-farm conservation network task force: PGRForum (European crop wild relative diversity assessment and conservation forum) EU funded under Fifth Framework; On-farm conservation in the Carpathians (ECP/GR funded);
- Industrial crops and potato network: Regeneration and characterization of flax accessions in non-EU countries (ECP/GR funded);
- Inter-regional cooperation: inter-network documentation and policy workshops (multi-donor: ECP/GR, FAO, CTA).

2.7. Encouraging the sharing of conservation responsibilities for PGRFA in Europe

A questionnaire to investigate possible options for sharing responsibilities for conservation was prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with a small Task Force of experts. The results of over 190 replies from germplasm holding institutes were analyzed by the Secretariat and found very high support for the concept of responsibility sharing among the respondents. Both at the Network and Working Group level, documents were prepared towards a definition and implementation of European collections.

Specifically, a document prepared towards the definition and implementation of a European *Prunus* collection was finalized by the Fruit Network. Database Managers of the *Beta* and Forages Groups started to identify the Most Original Samples (MOS), in order to propose that their curators accept responsibility for conservation. The Cereals Network Coordinating Group also agreed that the three Working Groups (*Avena*, Barley and Wheat) start applying a mechanism to

identify MOS. An *ad hoc* group on vegetatively propagated *Allium* proposed to establish an inter-institute consortium of vegetative *Allium* collections.

More recently, a recommendation was made during the Alnarp workshop in April 2003, considering ECP/GR the appropriate context to formulate a vision on a more unified crop genetic resources system across Europe and to submit a project proposal on case studies to be funded by the EC or others.

2.8. Increasing awareness, at all levels of the importance of PGRFA activities, including conservation and sustainable use

Over 20 ECP/GR meeting reports were published by IPGRI in the last four years. These proceedings include the discussion, recommendations and workplan agreed in the meetings, as well as country reports on the status of genetic resources and technical or scientific articles regarding collection, conservation, management, use and research on genetic resources. The IPGRI *Allium* descriptors were also produced with the support of ECP/GR and the *Allium* Working Group.

A new ECP/GR Web site was launched in 2000, with a new design (new logo) and providing easier access to ECP/GR information, including an increasing amount of documents made available in PDF format. This site was further expanded in 2002 with the preparation of specific web pages for each Network and each Working Group within the Networks. Still new improvements were made in 2003, with the intention to make the ECP/GR Web site more dynamic and flexible for quick updates and display of new information. Two fact sheets on ECP/GR and the ECP/GR networks (activity on flax and barley) were produced by the IPGRI Public Awareness Project. Finally, the Secretariat had the chance to give presentations on the activities of ECP/GR in various occasions and contexts, such as the joint meeting of the UK Plant Genetic Resources Group with the Henry Doubleday Research Association (1999); the meeting of the European Association for Grain Legume Research (AEP)(2001); the Eucarpia genetic resources section (2001), the ISHS International Horticultural Congress (2002); the celebration for the anniversary of the Institute "K. Malkov" for Plant Genetic Resources Institute, Sadovo, Bulgaria (2002); the IPGRI-DSE International workshop launching the Eastern Africa Plant Genetic Resources Network "EAPGREN" (2002).

2.9. Seeking collaboration with other relevant regional and global initiatives

Collaboration and linkages were established by the Secretariat with the following organizations and initiatives:

- Council of Europe: participation as observers in the Group of experts on the conservation of plants and involvement in the preparation and implementation of the European Plant Conservation Strategy.
- SAVE/Monitoring Institute: participation in the workshop on "Rare breeds and plant varieties in the Carpathian mountains" and involvement in the Scientific Board of this NGO.

- European Association for Research on Plant Breeding (EUCARPIA): participation in a couple of meetings and subscription of membership to the association.
- European Commission: contribution to evaluating Regulation 1467/94 and for the preparation of a new regulation on plant genetic resources.
- FAO/ESCORENA network: organization of joint meetings and close collaboration with the flax and other bast plants network
- EU-funded projects: participation in EPGRIS (European Plant genetic Resources Infra-Structure), EuroCat (The Catalogue of Life), ENBI (The European Network for Biodiversity Information) and PGRForum (Forum on Plant Genetic Resources).
- Global Conservation Trust: closely following the development of this FAO and CGIAR initiative to establish a trust fund to safeguard in the long term the most important world PGR collections.

3. Network structures and outlook

The outlook described below is a summary of the preliminary action plan requests made by the Working Group/Task Force Chairs for funding and direct support from the ECP/GR Secretariat or IPGRI. Correct wording and further details can be found in the respective brief reports (Item 1 of the meeting agenda).

3.1 Cereals Network

Structure

Network Coordinating Group

Avena Working Group

Barley Working Group

Wheat Working Group

Databases: *Avena*, Barley, Maize, *Secale*, Triticale, Wheat

Outlook

Meetings:

- *Avena* WG, jointly with 7th International Oat Conference (2004)
- Barley WG, jointly with the International Barley Genetic Symposium (2004);
- Wheat WG (2006);

Documentation:

- Support to further develop user-friendliness of EURISCO and promoting frequent national inventory updates
- Legal support for data availability
- Funds for the development of the *Avena* database as a model system within the cereals network
- Possibly funds for travel to facilitate discussion to create international barley information system

- Possibly funds to help further development of the Barley database

Ex situ conservation:

- Funds for regeneration, rationalization and safety-duplication activities (*Avena*)
- Possibly funds to develop a mechanism of sharing responsibilities

In situ conservation:

- Logistic support to facilitate national *in situ* conservation actions (*Avena*)

Pre-breeding:

- Funds and logistic support to initiate task-sharing projects within the breeding community (*Avena* and Barley)

Collecting:

- Funds for collecting *Avena* wild relatives

Public awareness:

- Support to establish an electronic cereal PGR newsletter

3.2 Forages Network

Structure

Network Coordinating Group

Forages Working Group

Databases: 22 Forage databases maintained in 13 institutions

Outlook

Meetings:

- Forages WG, (2005 and 2008)

Publications:

- Reports of two meetings

3.3 Vegetables Network

Structure

Network Coordinating Group

Allium Working Group

Brassica Working Group

Solanaceae Working Group

Umbellifer Crops Working Group

Cucurbit Working Group (**request pending**)

Leafy vegetables Working Group (**request pending**)

Databases: *Allium*, *Brassica*, Cucurbit, Eggplant, *Lactuca*, Pepper, *Physalis* and *Cyphomandra*, Tomato, Umbellifer Crops

Outlook

Meetings:

- *Allium ad hoc* meeting to develop Gen Res project proposal (2004)

- *Brassica ad hoc* meeting to develop Gen Res project proposal (2004)
- Umbellifer crops ad hoc meeting to develop Gen Res project proposal (2004)
- Solanaceae WG, jointly with Gen Res project (2004 with Phase VI funds)
- *Brassica ad hoc* meetings to further inclusion of characterization data into the database and to facilitate a rationalization process through duplicate tracing (2005, 2006)
- *Allium* WG meeting (2006)
- Umbellifer crops WG meeting (2006)
- Solanaceae WG (2007)

Documentation:

- Logistic support to trace duplicates through passport data (*Brassica*)
- Logistic support to merge all data using multi-crop descriptor format (Solanaceae databases)
- Logistic and technical support to establish a standard taxonomy (Solanaceae)

Sharing of responsibilities:

- Fund raising and/or technical involvement to kick start the creation of an *Allium* Conservation Consortium

Wild relatives:

- Logistic support to prepare a questionnaire to get a general overview of the situation (*Brassica*)

Policy:

- Logistic and technical support to clarify issues related to legislation on exchange of PGR

3.4 Grain Legumes Network

Structure

Network Coordinating Group

Grain Legumes Working Group

Databases: *Arachis*, *Cicer*, *Glycine*, *Lens*, *Lupinus*, *Phaseolus*, *Vicia faba*, *Vigna*

Outlook

To be completed

3.5 Fruit Network

Structure

Network Coordinating Group

Malus/Pyrus Working Group

Prunus Working Group

Vitis Working Group

Databases: *Malus*, *Pyrus*, *Prunus*, *Vitis*

Outlook

Meetings:

- *Malus/Pyrus* WG – two meetings (2005, 2007)
- *Prunus* WG – two meetings, one jointly with Eucarpia Fruit Breeding Symposium (2005, 2007)
- Fruit Network meeting devoted to specific common topics (2006)
- *Vitis* WG (2005 or 2006)

Publications:

- Funds to prepare a catalogue of European *Vitis* cultivars

Documentation:

- Logistic support and funds for joint meeting with EUFORGEN noble hardwoods network in order to include wild relatives data into the Databases

Characterization/evaluation:

- Logistic support to apply for funding for a new Gen Res project and to define common minimum descriptors (*Malus/Pyrus*)

Ex situ conservation / Sharing responsibilities:

- Logistic support to implement a decentralized *Malus* and *Pyrus* collection
- Documentation support to study strategies for long-term conservation

Collecting:

- Logistic support to apply for funds for a collecting mission

Raising awareness:

- Funds, logistic and technical support to elaborate leaflets on fruit diversity for children and other PA material

3.6 Industrial Crops and Potato Network

Structure

Network Coordinating Group

Beta Working Group

Potato Working Group

Fibre crops (request pending)

Databases: *Beta*, Flax, Hemp, Potato-cultivated, Potato-wild bearing tubers.

Outlook

Meetings:

- *Beta* WG meeting, jointly with World *Beta* Network (2005)
- Potato WG meeting, jointly with EAPR triennial conference (2005)

Documentation:

- Search for funding to analyze *Beta* characterization data with GIS software
- Support to update Descriptors for *Beta*

Publications:

- Technical support for publishing on the web *Beta* seed production procedures

3.7 Minor Crops Network

Structure

Network Coordinating Group
 Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Working Group
 Databases: *Ribes* and *Rubus*

Outlook

Meetings:

- MAP WG – two meetings (2004 and 2007)

Sharing responsibilities:

- Logistic support to facilitate collaboration between national programmes and for the preparation of a collaborative project proposal

3.8 Information and Documentation Network

Structure

39 National Focal Points for National Inventories
 50 Central Crop Database managers
 ICT Advisory group (former Internet group)
 EURISCO Advisory group
 Documentation Support Centres
 Projects (EPGRIS, PGR Forum, etc.)
 Temporary ad hoc group on taxonomy
 National Inventories (NI)
 European Search Catalogue (EURISCO)
 European Central Crop Databases (ECCDB)
 ECP/GR Listserver
 ECP/GR website
 Publications

Outlook

Meetings:

- National Inventory Focal Points (2006)
- National Inventory Focal Points and ECCDB managers (2008)
- EURISCO Advisory Group – two meetings (2004 and 2005)
- *Ad hoc* meeting on taxonomy (2004)
- Joint workshop of ECP/GR and bioinformatics experts (2005)

EURISCO:

- Funds and Technical support to maintain and further develop EURISCO

- Ensure renewal of nominations of National Focal Points by National Coordinators

ECP/GR Web-site:

- Funds and technical support to update web site, including toolkits, training material, online publications, etc.

3.9 *In situ* and On-farm conservation network

Structure

Task Force on Wild species conservation in genetic reserves

Task Force on On-farm conservation and management

Outlook

Meetings:

- Meeting of the two task forces, jointly with PGRForum (2004)
- Meeting of European PGRFA NGO Association (2005)
- PGR / Botanic Garden community meeting (2005)
- PGR / European Protected Areas community meeting (2006?)

Project development:

- Technical support to submit project grants (on-farm, wild relatives, documentation)

Publications:

- Funds, logistic and technical support to maintain a dedicated page on the ECP/GR web site

Public awareness:

- Funds, logistic and technical support to establish an “*In situ* newsletter” to be published on the ECP/GR Web pages
- Funds and support in establishing closer relationship between gene banks and the *in situ* community

3.10 Inter-regional cooperation Network

Structure

Task Force on Inter-regional cooperation

Outlook

Meetings:

- Logistic and technical support to organize follow-up meetings between European and African PGR networks (2005 – 2006)

Documentation:

- Limited funds for travel and technical support to follow up collaboration with African networks on the establishment of national inventories

Policy:

- Limited funds for travel and technical support to follow up recommendations of the African/European Legal and Policy Workshop

On-Farm:

- Technical support to revisit options for an inter-regional workshop

Project proposals:

- Limited funds for travel to develop joint project proposals between AFR/EUR networks

Shared priorities:

- Logistic support to collaborate with PGR networks from other regions, notably Central America, and Central and West Asia and North Africa (CWANA)

4. Financial situation

4.1 Final balance for Phase V

During Phase VI, all outstanding contributions related to Phase V were regularly paid by the member countries. As mentioned in the financial report of 2002, Phase V was concluded with a positive financial balance of US\$ 1,546.

4.2 Contributions received for Phase VI

Total contributions received for Phase VI amount to US\$ 1,587,909. The Steering Committee decided to convert into Euro the value of the annual contributions, starting with 2002. The UN exchange rates for January 2002 (1 US\$ = 1.136 Euro) and January 2003 (1 US\$ = 0.958 Euro) were used to establish the value in Euro of the respective annual contributions. Due to the increasing strength of the Euro against the Dollar in the past two years, the financial balance of ECP/GR, which is still reported in Dollar currency for Phase VI, registered a positive exchange rate gain of US\$ 24,714 (see Table 1).

Outstanding contributions, as of 30 September 2003, amount to US\$ 190,591. These are due in US\$ for the years 1999 – 2001 and in Euro for the years 2002 and 2003. Considering the agreed value in Euro, the total outstanding is therefore US\$ 6,000 + Euro 167,112 (see Table 2).

Module contributions were additionally received during Phase VI for a total of US\$ 38,246. These were all earmarked to “Cooperation with EU-funded project” and were spent for this purpose, with a positive final balance of US\$ 1,985 (See Table 1 and 4).

4.3 Expenditures

The estimate total expenditure of Phase VI amount to US\$ 1,643,661, with a negative balance of US\$ 55,752 as a difference between expenses and contributions received (Table 3).

An excess expenditure of US\$ 75,846 was made for Secretarial support, mainly covering the cost of scientific assistant support. This deficit was balanced by the following savings and other incomes:

Savings/Incomes	US\$
ECP/GR Coordinator	14,864
Official travel	11,694
Steering Committee meetings	9,759
European Internet Platform	12,330
Newsletter	939
Exchange rate gains	24,714
Phase V contribution	1,546
TOTAL	75,846

Regarding Network operations, expenditures originally budgeted for US\$ 84,826 were not made (See Table 3). These roughly correspond to the following network operations that were not carried out:

Item	Budgeted US\$
Minor Crops Network meeting	30,000
Solanaceae joint meetings with EGGNET	10,000
Grain legumes ad hoc workshop on allogamous species	5,819
NGO project (On-farm conservation)	5,000
On-farm / In situ task force meetings	14,000
Remaining availability for Documentation and information actions	20,000
TOTAL	84,819

Provided outstanding contributions for Phase VI are received in the next few months, the above-mentioned funds could be re-allocated for the same or different network operations to be carried out during Phase VII.

Regarding publications, US\$ 32,737 was unspent, but these funds remain allocated, provided agreement of the Steering Committee, to the finalization of the following meeting report publications under preparation:

- 2nd Potato WG meeting;
- 2nd *Beta* WG meeting;
- Ad hoc *Arachis* workshop
- 8th Forages WG meeting
- 1st *Vitis* WG meeting
- 6th *Prunus* WG meeting
- 1st Vegetables network meeting
- 1st Cereals network meeting
- EPGRIS final conference, jointly with ECP/GR Documentations and Information Network.

Lorenzo Maggioni
ECP/GR Coordinator

Rome, 10 October 2003

Appendix 1 - Publications

The following publications have been produced during Phase VI by ECP/GR. These can be obtained free of charge from IPGRI's Regional Office for Europe or downloaded from:

<http://www.ipgri.cgiar.org/networks/ecpgr/meetings/pastmeeting.asp>.

- Report of the seventh meeting of the Steering Committee, Braunschweig, Germany, June/July 1998.
- Report of the fifth meeting of a Working Group on Barley, held in Alterode/Gatersleben, Germany, July 1997;
- Report of an ad hoc workshop on Umbellifer crops, held in Krakow, Poland, August 1997;
- Report of an extraordinary meeting of the *Brassica* Working Group, held in Rennes, France, September 1997;
- Report of the sixth meeting of a Working Group on *Allium*, held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, October 1997;
- Report of an Extraordinary Meeting of the *Prunus* Working Group and the Second Coordination meeting of the Project Gen Res 61, held in Zaragoza, Spain, November 1997;
- Report of the fifth meeting of a Working Group on *Avena* held in Vilnius, Lithuania, May 1998;
- Proceedings of the European Symposium on the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action, held in Braunschweig, Germany, June/July 1998;
- Report of an Extraordinary Meeting of the *Prunus* Working Group and the Third Coordination meeting of the Project Gen Res 61, held in Rheinfelden, Switzerland, December 1998;
- Prunus Genetic Resources Newsletter No. 4 of the ECP/GR *Prunus* Working Group (compiled at Fruit Growing Station Valcea, Romania);
- Report of the second meeting of the Working Group on Grain Legumes, Norwich, United Kingdom, October 1998;
- Report of the Minor Crops Network Coordinating Group meeting, Turku, Finland, June 1999;
- Report of the first meeting of the Working Group on *Beta*, Bury St Edmunds, United Kingdom, September 1999;
- Report of the seventh meeting of the Working Group on Forages, Elvas, Portugal, November 1999;
- Report of the joint meeting of a Task Force on Wild Species Conservation in Genetic Reserves and a Task Force on On-Farm Conservation and Management, Isola Polvese, Italy, May 2000;
- Report of the Vegetables Network Coordinating Group meeting, Vila Real, Portugal, May 2000;
- "Importance of Vegetables and their *ex situ* Conservation in Europe", a collection of tables and data compiled from FAO and IPGRI sources.

- Report of the meeting of the Cereals Network Coordinating Group, Radzików, Poland, July 2000;
- Report of the sixth meeting of the Working Group on Barley, Salsomaggiore, Italy, December 2000;
- Report of the first meeting of the Working Group on Potato, Wageningen, the Netherlands, March 2000;
- IPGRI descriptors for Allium, 2001;
- Report of an *ad hoc* meeting on vegetatively propagated *Allium*, Gatersleben, Germany, May 2001;
- Report of the third meeting of the Working Group on Grain Legumes, Kraków, Poland, July 2001;
- Report of the eighth meeting of the Steering Committee, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, October 2001;
- Report of the first meeting of the Working Group on Wheat, Prague, Czech Republic, November 2001;
- Report of an *ad hoc* meeting on Flax genetic resources, Prague, Czech Republic, December 2001;
- Report of an *ad hoc* meeting on Cucurbit genetic resources, Adana, Turkey, January 2002;
- Report of an extraordinary meeting of the Working Group on *Brassica*, Vila Real, Portugal, February 2002;
- Solanaceae genetic resources in Europe. Report of two meetings - 21 September 2001, Nijmegen, The Netherlands / 22 May 2003, Skierniewice, Poland.

Electronic documents:

- Report of a preparatory meeting of the Vegetables Network Coordinating Group, held in Rome, Italy, May 1999;
- Internet Advisory Group meeting, held in Rome, Italy, August 1999;
- Report of the meeting of the Industrial Crops Network Coordinating Group, held in Bury St Edmunds, United Kingdom, September 1999;
- Terms of reference and logframe of the Inter-regional cooperation Task Force, meeting held in Florence, Italy, October 1999;
- Report of the meeting of the Fruit Network Coordinating Group, held in Gembloux, Belgium, October 1999;
- Report of the meeting of the Forages Network Coordinating Group, held in Elvas, Portugal, November 1999. Report of an *ad hoc* meeting of a Beta core collection Task Force, held in Capelle-en-Pévèle, France, September 2000;
- Report of the second meeting of the Inter-regional Cooperation Task Force, 11-12 May, 2001, Prague, Czech Republic;
- Report of the second meeting of the Industrial Crops and Potato Network Coordinating Group, held in Bologna, Italy, October 2002.

Publications in preparation:

- Report of the second meeting of the Working Group on *Malus/Pyrus*, Dresden Pillnitz, Germany, May 2002;
- Report of the second meeting of the Working Group on Potato, Hamburg, Germany, July 2002;
- Report of the first meeting of the Working Group on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Gozd Martuljek, Slovenia, September 2002;
- Report of the second meeting of the Working Group on *Beta*, jointly with the World *Beta* Network meeting, Bologna, Italy, October 2002;
- Report of an *ad hoc* meeting on *Arachis* genetic resources, Bulgaria, November 2002;
- Report of the eighth meeting of the Working Group on Forages, Linz, Austria, March 2003;
- Report of a Vegetables Network and *ad hoc* Leafy Vegetables meeting, Skierniewice, Poland, May 2003;
- Report of the first meeting of the Working Group on *Vitis*, Palic, Serbia and Montenegro, June 2003;
- Report of the sixth meeting of the Working Group on *Prunus*, Budapest, Hungary, June 2003;
- Report of a Cereals Network meeting, Yerevan, Armenia, July 2003;
- Report of the final EPGRIS conference, jointly organized with the ECP/GR Documentation and Information Network, Prague, September 2003.

Appendix 2 – List of ECP/GR meetings held between January 1999 and September 2003

Meeting	Location	Date
Steering Committee		
8th Steering Committee meeting	St. Petersburg, Russian Federation	14-17 Oct 2001
Cereals Network		
<i>Ad hoc</i> Cereals Network Coordinating Group meeting	Radzików, Poland	7-8 July 2000
6th Barley Working Group meeting	Salsomaggiore, Italy	3-6 December 2000
1st Wheat Working Group meeting	Prague, Czech Republic	8-10 November 2001
Forages Network		
1st Forages Network Coordinating Group meeting	Elvas, Portugal	17 November 1999
7th Forages Working Group meeting	Elvas, Portugal	18-20 November 1999
8th Forages Working Group meeting	Linz, Austria	10-12 April 2003
Vegetables Network		
Preparatory meeting for the Vegetables Network Coordinating Group	Rome, Italy	7 May 1999
<i>Ad hoc</i> Vegetables Network Coordinating Group meeting	Vila Real, Portugal	26-27 May 2000
<i>Ad hoc</i> meeting on vegetatively propagated Alliums	Gatersleben, Germany	21-22 May 2001
Extraordinary <i>Brassica</i> Working group meeting	Vila Real, Portugal	8-9 February 2002
<i>Ad hoc</i> meeting on Umbellifer genetic resources	Edinburgh, United Kingdom	23 November 2003
<i>Ad hoc</i> meeting on Solanaceae genetic resources	Nijmegen, The Netherlands	21 September 2001
<i>Ad hoc</i> meeting on Cucurbit genetic resources	Adana, Turkey	17-19 January 2002
<i>Ad hoc</i> meeting on Leafy Vegetables and Vegetables Network meeting	Skierniewice, Poland	22-24 May 2003
Grain Legumes Network		
3rd Grain Legumes Working Group meeting	Kraków, Poland	5-7 July 2001
<i>Ad hoc</i> meeting on <i>Arachis</i> genetic resources	Plovdiv, Bulgaria	15-16 November 2002
Fruit Network		
1st Fruit Network Coordinating Group meeting	Gembloux, Belgium	7 November 1999
2nd <i>Malus/Pyrus</i> Working Group meeting	Dresden-Pillnitz, Germany	2-4 May 2002
1st <i>Vitis</i> Working Group meeting	Palic, Serbia and Montenegro	12-14 June 2003
6th <i>Prunus</i> Working Group meeting	Budapest, Hungary	20-21 June 2003
Minor Crops Network		
<i>Ad hoc</i> Minor Crops Network Coordinating Group meeting	Turku, Finland	16 June 1999
1st Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Working Group meeting	Gozd Martuljek, Slovenia	12-14 September 2003

Meeting	Location	Date
Industrial Crops and Potato Network		
1st Network Coordinating Group meeting	Bury St. Edmunds, United Kingdom	11 September 1999
2nd Network Coordinating Group meeting	Bologna, Italy	23-26 October 2003
1st <i>Beta</i> Working Group meeting	Broom's Barn, United Kingdom	9-10 September 1999
2nd <i>Beta</i> Working Group meeting	Bologna, Italy	23-26 October 2002
1st Potato Working Group meeting	Wageningen, The Netherlands	23-25 March 2000
2nd Potato Working Group meeting	Hamburg, Germany	14 July 2002
<i>Ad hoc</i> meeting on <i>Beta</i> core collections	Capelle en Pevèle, France	30 September 2000
<i>Ad hoc</i> meeting on Flax genetic resources	Prague, Czech Republic	7-8 December 2001
Information and Documentation Network		
Internet Advisory Group meeting, in preparation for EPGRIS project	Rome, Italy	30-31 August 1999
Final EPGRIS conference, jointly with ECP/GR Information and Documentation Network	Prague, Czech Republic	11-13 September 2003
Inter-regional Cooperation Network		
1st Inter-regional Cooperation Network	Florence, Italy	29-30 October 1999
2nd Inter-regional Cooperation Network	Prague, Czech Republic	11-12 May 2001
<i>In situ</i> and On-farm Conservation Network		
<i>In situ</i> and On-farm Conservation Network Task Forces meeting	Isola Polvese, Italy	18-20 May 2000
<i>In situ</i> Plant Genetic Resources Information Network, project proposal preparation meeting	Rome, Italy	8-9 December 2000