

UK Plant Genetic Resources Group Meeting
DATE & TIME: Monday 8th April 2019 from 11am – 4pm
LOCATION: DEFRA, London Nobel House, Room 806

Nigel Maxted, University of Birmingham (Chair: NM)
Matt Ordidge, University of Reading (MO)
Catrina Fenton, Garden Organic (CF)
Solomy Nantege, Defra (SN)
Ian Taylor, Natural England (IT)
Lin Huang, Aberystwyth University (LH)
Danny Thorogood, Aberystwyth University (DT)
Gaynor McKenzie, James Hutton Institute (GM)
Charlotte Allender, University of Warwick (CA)

John Dickie, Kew (JD)
Rachel Davis, Defra (RD)
Tom Christie, SASA (TC)
Chris Barker, Defra (CB)
Vicki Cooke, Plant Heritage (VC)
Lesley McCarthy, SASA (LM)
Elizabeth Scott, NIAB (ES)
Jemilah Vanderpump, Defra (JV)

- 19/01 Apologies (NM)**
Lydia Smith (NIAB), Simon Toomer (National Trust), Julian Hosking, Joanne Russell (James Hutton Institute), Andrew Daymond (University of Reading), Kalani Seymour (Plant Heritage), Peter Hoebe (SCRUC), Penny Maplestone (BSPB), James Williams (JNCC), Felicidad Fernandez (EMR), Abi Johnson (NIAB EMR), Noam Chayut (JIC), Sean May (University of Nottingham), Sue Goligher (Defra), Gerard Hoppe (AFBI Crossnacreevy)
- The meeting was chaired by Nigel Maxted (NM).
- 19/02 Minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2018 (NM)**
MO questioned agenda item 18/25 18 about the breadth of material included in UK national PGR inventory and suggested it be reworded for clarity. It was unanimously agreed that 'PGR' and 'food & agriculture' be added to lines 1 and 5 respectively to achieve this.
Action: Defra to send final minutes to Sean May.
- 19/03 Update on the revised PGR Indicator (NM)**
James Williams managed to get the data needed to inform the changes to the indicator from Ianto Thomas before he retired. However, he wasn't able to analyse the data in time for this meeting but is hoping to be able to present at the October meeting.
- 19/04 Defra update (RD)**
ECPGR secretariat have requested Adrian Turner's replacement on the Barley working group be communicated to them. They have further requested one name from each working group that has more than one representative from a country be put forward as the lead point of contact. There is also a new Berries working group and anyone interested should contact RD for inclusion.
- The EURISCO data sharing agreement hasn't been signed yet. Defra advise that the organization doing the active sharing of data should sign it. Defra's legal team is however happy to review the document.
- Actions:** RD to circulate the working group lists asking for a lead contact volunteer.
RD to send the EURISCO data sharing agreement to LH and DT.
- 19/05 UK national PGR inventory – Post-Ianto (NM)**
LN and DT confirmed that they'll be taking over all of Ianto Thomas' responsibilities he previously did for the group. NM advised LN to join the 'Documentation and Information' ECPGR working group and DT to join the 'Forages' working group as Ianto's replacements.
- 19/06 Orchard network update (MO)**

MO reported on the Orchard Network meeting that was held in Reading looking at the work local groups had done to commission the genetic fingerprinting of the material. This involved about 150 accessions with the aim of generating a register of local cultivars. This is going to be a continuous exercise with two more meetings scheduled in 2019.

He also mentioned that the local groups had commissioned their own fingerprinting of about 3000 accessions, some of which were unknown but the exercise was progressing well, leading to identifying new genetic material. However, the group should note that none of this will be recorded in EURISCO or the national inventory but a list of what has been found will be published.

NM reminded the group about the aim of the GenRes Bridge project Horizon2020 is to build up national & European inventories. This included European Landraces, but the data on these in the EURISCO database is inadequate. He therefore urged the group to send him additional datasets that weren't in EURISCO to be included in the analysis. This will aid in stimulating other countries' national inventories.

19/07

ECPGR Update (MO)

MO attended the latest ECPGR meeting with the purpose of discussing the lack of progress within AEGIS. There were a number of suggestions as to what was hindering countries to sign up and get more involved in the development of the collection. These included; the premiums, the needs for a modified selection and flagging procedure, quality standards and the completion of genebank manuals.

There was a suggestion for a peer review approach of UK genebanks' standards and practices.

19/08

Replacement of European funding opportunities (CB)

CB informed the group that the submissions deadline for the 2019 work programme call for Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 2 (SC2) had closed in January. No information was available on the 19 proposals submitted. There was a deadline of 4 September 2019 for any applications invited to submit their proposals to the second stage.

In parallel to this call, the Commission has been working with Member States to develop the text for the SC2 2020 work programme call. The Commission aims to adopt the work programme in June, with the call for applications formally opening in October. This will include one PGR topic.

In relation to EU exit, the Government's priority remains ensuring the draft Withdrawal Agreement is finalised; this would enable UK applicants to continue participating in Horizon2020 for the remainder of the programme as full partners. However, in case of a 'no-deal' scenario, the Government's underwrite guarantee and the post EU exit extension to the guarantee would cover successful collaborative bids involving UK participants for the lifetime of their projects. It is expected that UK researchers will be eligible to participate in all Horizon 2020 calls that are open to 3rd country participants. The group should however note that calls open to 3rd country participants may include societal challenge areas but not the European Research Council grants and some Marie Curie actions which are only open to EU member states and associated countries. The Government has produced Technical Notices for Horizon 2020 and other EU funding programmes providing information about applying to these programmes in the event of a 'no deal'.

Post Horizon 2020, the government remains committed to ongoing collaboration on research and innovation with EU partners and would like the option to fully associate to Horizon Europe. While we remain a Member State, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has been coordinating UK input to help shape the development of the Horizon Europe programme. Defra is actively involved in this.

Horizon Europe includes a proposed €10bn specifically for research and innovation in food, agriculture, environment and the bio-economy.

ACTION: CB to send the above information to the group mail list.

19/09 PGR applications/project news (NM)

Each member of the UKPGR group gave an update on current projects and activities. LH questioned whether there'll be a need of extra documentation when transferring material across the European Union post-Brexit. The Group advised she contact Plant Health with these concerns.

ACTION: A Defra representative to update the group at the next meeting.

19/10 Biodiversity 2020 evaluation (JV) – after lunch at 14:30pm

Jemilah Vanderpump informed the group about the evaluation for the Bioersity2020 strategy which references the maintenance of PGR. She asked the group what could be done to best include PGR in the evaluation with the aim of reporting on its progress and any hindrances.

The group felt that PGR has not been properly included in the past and they welcomed this opportunity to raise its profile. They expressed the difficulty in giving immediate responses due to not having discussed this previously. JV felt a questionnaire was the best way to capture the group's views and encouraged them to send their thoughts on the possible questions to include to the policy team.

The questionnaire will be sent to Rachel who will circulate it to the group. NM mentioned it would be best if questions were targeted at members according to their area of expertise.

Action: JV to send questionnaire to RD who'll circulate it to the group.

The group mentioned that the current indicator was unsatisfactory and James Williams was in the process of developing a clearer replacement.

19/11 AOB (NM)

- MO reminded the group of a meeting organized by Noam at JIC titled 'Adding value to field crop genetic resources'.
- NM asked that future UKPGR meetings start at 12pm.

19/12 Date of next meeting (NM) – 24th October 2019