

**UK Plant Genetic Resources Group Meeting
16 March 2010**

Minutes

Present:

Mike Ambrose	JIC (Chair)	Ianto Thomas	IBERS
Matthew Ordidge	Reading Uni.	Gavin Ramsey	SCRI
Neil Munro	Garden Organic	Charlotte Allender	WHRI
Michael Camlin	AFBNI	Simon Linington	RBG Kew
Nigel Maxted	Birmingham Uni.	Felicidad Fernandez	EMR
Brian Ford-Lloyd	Birmingham Uni.	Niall Green	SASA

10/01 Apologies:

Janice Munday	Defra	Joan Cottrell	Forest Research
Farhana Amin	Defra	Penny Maplestone	BSPB
Abi Johnson	EMR	Sviatlana Trybush	Rothamsted

10/02 Minutes of the meeting held 29 October 2009
Subject to a few corrections these were agreed.

10/03 Matters arising from previous minutes

09/18 (Conservation varieties)

Neil Munroe reported that FERA were at an early stage of consultation and were likely to concentrate on varieties that are being sold, as opposed to conservation varieties. Jack Edgley (PVR) had recently visited Garden Organics and indicated that the implementation would be light touch. A consultation exercise would be undertaken by the PVR office over the summer.

Niall further updated the group that under the Commission Directive 2009/145/EC that seed samples would not need to be tested but seed samples were required to be kept to agreed standards. While no official involvement was necessary, people could elect to use statutory testing if they preferred and that the details of the implementation indicated that the amateur vegetables requirements still had some way to go. Implementation was likely to take 4-5 years and it was not clear how registration would take place. According to the European Commission there was no requirement to maintain a register.

Michael Camlin commented that if there was no proper description then that reduced the validity of the system. He also added that while seed stocks needed to be stored there was no necessity to grow them for testing.

Mike Ambrose pointed out the need to balance cost and control.

09/22 (FP7)

Mike reported that he was involved in a project that had got through the first round as it met the criteria but the score indicated that it was unlikely that it would be funding.

Simon Linington was in a similar position. They had a number of criticisms different from last time their proposal was submitted and currently they were neither in nor out.

Nigel Maxted said that a project proposed for Life+ funding had not been accepted as common species could not be used. They also commented that they needed results within the three years. He had not heard back from the FP7 proposal.

09/24 - AEGIS –

Julian had circulated the check list and would sign the MoU if there were no objections.

9/31 (Guest Speaker)

Mike reported that Geoff Tansy was interested in talking to the group but unavailable on that occasion he would also consider Kate Perry.

10/04 Recent Institutional and Operational Developments at some Ex situ collections in the UK (Mike Ambrose)

Mike Ambrose had drafted a letter on behalf of the group regarding the future of the GRU at WHRI Warwick. He had received a reply from Samuel Palmer (interim Head of the new School of Life Sciences) who had replied saying that the associated infrastructure were included in their plans for next 5 years. Interested parties would be placed on a mailing list for updates and invitations to attend stakeholder meetings. Mike had not invited to the first consultation as it was not relevant to crop concerns. Brian Ford-Lloyd commented that he had also written to Samuel Palmer and had not been invited.

Charlotte Allender reminded the group that the project was due to finish in 2014. Brian Ford-Lloyd had also contacted Samuel Palmer and stated that the Collections are an important resource which ought to be a standing item on the UKPGR meeting. Julian Jackson reported that Sue Popple had made representations on behalf of the Department and also attended stakeholder meeting, but there was little to report at this stage.

Michael Camlin asked if it was worth having technical visit to the Genebank.

Charlotte Allender said that the March meeting was related to exploring the possibility of setting up an industry facing unit that would carry out contract research, but not the Life Sciences.

Mike Ambrose updated the group on changes to BBSRC institute funding arrangements which included a specific funding mechanism for National Capability (key long term resources that were of high strategic value to UK bioscience community). It have been decided that the GRU and public collections

maintained at JIC would be submitted as a National Capability which would ring fence funding from the duration of the grant and help raise the profile of the GRU.

Simon Linington asked if there was any way the group could increase GR and their value up the priority when submitting applications for EU funding.

10/05 Circulation of the 2nd UK Country Report for the State of the World Conference (Julian Jackson)

Julian said the report was ready for publication although a further check of accession numbers in the annex was required.

Nigel Maxted asked whether it was possible to credit organisations for their help with coordinating the report.

Felicidad Fernandez reported that the Strawberry breeding accession numbers were likely to be halved.

10/06 Updating the Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources

Julian Jackson said he would circulate the previous GPA. There was a European Regional Meeting called for mid April on which he would report back.

10/07 UK Landrace Conservation and use Concept Note (Nigel Maxted)

Nigel Maxted introduced the 6 main objectives of the concept note; completion of the inventory; GAP analysis (a simple concept -looking at percentage of actively conserved material); active conservation; use -developing a conservation and use strategy; public awareness; producing a booklet. He underlined the higher priority given to use that had come out of the consultation exercise and thought they were close to a final version.

Mike Ambrose added that much had been done to match the proposal to Defra's objectives and that the scope ought to be vegetables and fruit throughout the UK although he was mindful of rolling out in the devolved administrations. The Group further discussed the various merits of different traits that ought to be conserved, Nigel Maxted suggested liaising with industry groups and Frances Radcliffe suggested liaising with Defra's Crop Hub and Science colleagues to gain a steer. Felicidad Fernandez suggested drafting the proposal into a SID2 format for further consideration. Michael Camlin offered to pass the note onto the NI CSO and Niall Green offered to pass it on to the director of SCRI, he further explained that SNH are considering the importance of the different types of soils. Matt Ordidge pointed out that there was a need to clarify the crops as some elements will be more suited to vegetable as some fruit is propagated.

Actions: Frances Radcliffe to discuss the initiative with Sue Pople to establish the best way forward. Nigel Maxted to revise the concept note in the light of the discussion and to format into a SID2 document for circulation to all interested Group members

10/07 International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Julian Jackson)

Julian said that he would be seeking an update of accession numbers from UK ex-situ public collection for formal notification of inclusion into the Plant Treaty's MLS. He informed the Group that he would be drafting a letter to individual Institutions to identify the specific holdings for inclusion. He further updated the Group on the financial implications within the Treaty; the fund raising for the benefit sharing fund was going well, but the Core Administrative Budget was not so well. There was talk of possible ratification by US and he was in the process of exploring possible UK contributions from seed companies.

Julian welcomed ideas from the group about the encouragement of natural and legal persons to include PGRFA in the multilateral system. Felicidad Fernandez suggested the RHS, NT in Cornwall and Perry Pears funded through NE. Simon Linington pointed out that NT was not in the Country report, Nigel Maxted added that they should be part of the National Inventory. Regarding industrial contributions it was noted that Branstons had made a contribution to Peru for potatoes.

10/09 Industry and Stakeholder Meeting on ABS (Julian Jackson)

Julian reported on the preparations for the forthcoming ABS negotiations in Cali, relevant issues included of the protocol with regards to ITPGRFA (more than annex 1) and research provisions. The latest version of the co-chairs paper which would be the starting point of the meeting would be circulated in due course.

10/10 UK Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Portal (Julian Jackson and Nigel Maxted)

Nigel and Julian sought suggestions and improvements for the portal from the Group. Matt Ordidge suggested that the search option needed to be updated citing the apples links to Wye College as an example. Nigel asked the Group if it would be helpful to send out a straw man list of ideas.

Simon Linington asked whether it was possible to indicate on the top page how many hits had been received by the site.

10/11 EU GENRES programme (Julian Jackson)

Julian reported that one of the articles calls for a review of the current programme, which is not due to start until the 1st quarter of 2012, so any subsequent programme will have to wait until then and any decision is likely to be taken at a political level.

10/12 ECPGR Use of Country Quota (Julian Jackson)

Mike Ambrose reported from the previous Steering Group meeting that in readjusting the budgets the country quotas had been reduced and there were 13 places now available for the whole of Phase VIII. While immediate decisions on attending members were being made the projection was that the quota did not look sufficient to meet our needs. There may therefore be a need for self funding

or alternative funding to be sources which might be possible if the meeting was linked to a conference for example. Mike Ambrose suggested that a discussion paper to the Group on this subject would help. Nigel Maxted asked for it to be highlighted to the Steering Committee mid-term meeting that AEGIS was taking money from crop networks.

Action: Mike Ambrose and Julian to prepare and circulate a discussion paper.

10/13 Agrobiodiversity / Biodiversity Joint Meeting (Mike Ambrose)

Mike indicated that it had not been possible to arrange a date, but Nigel Maxted pointed out that John Hopkins (NE) was due to visit Birmingham in the near future.

10/14 Harvesting Diversity II (Mike Ambrose)

Julian Jackson said that David Smith (CABI) would be available in the 1st and 3rd week in May, Frances Radcliffe reported that FAnGR were keen on the idea, but that there would need to be clear objectives for the meeting.

10/15 Summer Technical Visit (Mike Ambrose)

The group discussed the various options, and the need to visit an in-situ location. A number of possible options were discussed and the decision was made to try to visit a site in Breckland and the GRU at the JIC in July.

10/16 AOB

Ianto Thomas reported that Sonia Dias (Bioversity) and colleagues were planning to run a software analysis of the quality of data given to EURISCO. There were spelling, grammatical and other errors as well as simple duplications.

Brian Ford Lloyd told the group that that Brian and Nigel had a joint-project with China starting on Monday.

Niall Green told the group that SASA would be putting up a display on biodiversity in the Royal Highland show.

Matt Ordidge reported that Reading University would be displaying in the Chelsea flower show.

10/17 Date of next meeting

7 October 2010

Julian Jackson
5/10/2010