

**UK Plant Genetic Resources Group Meeting**  
**DATE & TIME: Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023, 12:30 – 15:30**  
**LOCATION: Defra, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF**

**Nigel Maxted**, Uni of Birmingham (NM – Chair)  
**Charlotte Allender**, University of Warwick (CA)  
**Lin Huang**, Aberystwyth University (LH)

**Noam Chayut**, JIC (NC)  
**Ed Cockman**, Defra (EC)  
**Chloe Johnson**, Defra (CJ)

**Catrina Fenton**, Heritage Seeds (CF)  
**Matt Ordidge**, Univ. of Reading (MO)  
**Sean May**, Univ. of Nottingham (SM)  
**Kalani Seymour**, Plant Heritage (KS)  
**Amelia Greenham**, Defra (AG)

**Solomy Kaweesi**, Defra (SK)  
**Elizabeth Scott**, NIAB (ES)  
**Caroline Liddell**, Defra (CL)  
**Lydia Smith**, NIAB (LS)  
**Glenn Bryan**, JHI (GB)

**23/01**

**Apologies (NM)**

Abi Johnson – NIAB EMR, Frances Gawthorp – Tozer Seeds, James Williams – JNCC, Lesley McCarthy – SASA, Paul Shaw – JHI, Vickie Cooke – Plant Heritage, Chris Byrne – SASA, Julian Hosking, John Dickie – Kew

The meeting was chaired by Nigel Maxted (NM).

**23/02**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (CA)**

Minutes all accepted

**23/03**

**Actions and Matters arising (CA)**

- **Secretariat to arrange for an update from the CBD team at the next UKPGR meeting (March 2023):** CLOSED CJ to give an update at today's meeting.
- **Secretariat to liaise with the wider group to review previous membership and invite key industry stakeholders to future meetings:** ONGOING secretariat to review list and suggest additions, especially within the Botanical Garden, RHS and DA sphere.
- **Secretariat to organise the election of a Chair and Deputy Chair from the group's membership prior to the next meeting:** CLOSED *info below.*
- **CWR Horizon Europe Application and UK CWR conservation – to be included on next meeting's agenda (March 2023) for further discussion:** ONGOING NM to provide an update at today's meeting.
- **GDPR and reporting SMTAs to the FAO- NC/ST to share with MO excel sheet used:** CLOSED NC confirmed this has been done.
- **SPS Issues – CA to lead a task group to feedback concerns and share solutions:** ONGOING carried over action for CA to set up a separate task force.
- **SPS Issues – The secretariat requested to invite Jason Pollock to the next meeting for an update:** CLOSED JP confirmed there was no policy update in terms of changes to phytosanitary requirements, secretariat to revisit in the future.
- Action: Next meeting NM will make a presentation on the scale of what is involved CWR, and in-situ join on

**23/04 Review of Terms of reference and Chair/Deputy Chair position (All)**

- Nigel Maxted and Charlotte Allender have been confirmed as ongoing Chair and Deputy Chair for the next 3 years. The next election for these positions should be held in Spring 2026.
- **Actions:**
  - (ONGOING) Secretariat to liaise with the wider group to review previous membership and invite key industry stakeholders to future meetings.
  - NM to review TORs to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

**23/05 Defra Update (CL)**

- Jason Pollock from Defra has no update regarding SPS issues until the Target Operating Model (TOM) for the 2025 Border Strategy is published, which sets out policies for wider international trade. A draft TOM will be published in early 2023 for consultation. There will be summer workshops and further engagement with key stakeholders involved in the trade of plants and plant products which this group will be invited to participate in.
- Seeds and plant material for black box storage at other genebanks is currently not exempt from SPS requirements, CL is going to take this up the line. SM suggested that ACGM lab to ACGM lab may be exempt as this material is never planted outside and protected from deliberate release.
- The release of the tenders for the vegetable and pea genebank contracts was delayed, so a short extension will be put in place until the new contracts can be issued. The NFC contract renewal process will start in the summer 2023, ahead of a new contract being agreed for 1 April 2024.
- International meetings upcoming:
  - o CGRFA, ITWG PGR, 18-20 April 2023
  - o ECPGR, 17<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee, 30 May – 1 June 2023
  - o CGRFA, 19<sup>th</sup> Regular Session, 17-21 July 2023
- The Nature Strategy evolved into the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, a refresh of the 25-Year Environment Plan, which unfortunately meant that the PGR contribution was not included. The policy team is seeking Ministerial approval to publish a standalone genetic resources strategy for plants and animals. NM stressed a missed opportunity in connecting PGR to wider biodiversity goals and invited the draft strategy to be sent to the UKPGR group for input.

**23/06 Defra Scheme work and Rapid Evidence Assessment Update (EC and AG)**

- Defra have had positive engagement with the ELM (Environmental Land Management) Team; discussions have moved to practical elements the schemes would need i.e., monitoring tools for CWR's.
- EC asked for advice regarding LR schemes. Specifically; ideal area of crop to maintain (this would be species specific), where LR's would be sourced from, input needed from the seed industry, UK current market, allotment growth and providence.
- NM suggested that we would not want to encourage people to grow for the sake of it, but that LR's should be grown in places where there is history or a significant reason i.e., thatching.

- EC will take ideas generated to the ELM team and let the group know if there is any other input needed.
- AG gave an update on the REA commissioned by Defra, which will provide evidence that feeds into scheme work. The inception meeting with the supplier has been had, attended by NM, and work is underway, she will share the results with the group once published.

**23/07 DSI Update from Defra CBD Team, 2:30 Dial in (CJ)**

- CJ gave a presentation on the Digital Sequence Information (DSI) and ABS updates from COP15, held in December 2022.
- The group discussed specifics relating to how DSI is dated (at point of collection or when digitally sequenced?), how geographical origin will be recorded, how to ensure indigenous communities will benefit as appropriate. CJ confirmed ongoing work will be taken forward via the working group.
- [Action: Secretariat to circulate PowerPoint to group.](#)

**23/08 CWR Horizon Europe Application and UK CWR Conservation (NM)**

- NM gave a brief update on Horizon Europe and UK CWR Conservation; the European Commission are going to fund 2 projects, representing 33 national programmes across Europe.
- The work packages will be focused on setting up a European network to facilitate long-term monitoring across Europe, looking at the links between in situ and ex situ conservation, CWR characterization, pre-breeding work and communications.
- The Agricultural Act 2020 has been seen as an exemplar for Europe.
- [Action: Item to be added to next meeting's agenda for NM to give a more detailed presentation.](#)

**23/09 Ongoing phytosanitary issues when distributing and receiving germplasm (CA)**

- CL confirmed there is no update from Jason Pollock available at present.
- MO is still finding it impossible to move fruit trees to the EU as the EU needs to carry out a risk assessment which has not yet been done.
- Some seeds can be sent, but the cost is high still.
- GB confirmed JHI have been able to move potato material in and out of Europe since EU Exit, facilitated by SASA, which grew the material in quarantine and produced SPS certificates.
- [Action: CA to lead a task group to feedback concerns and share solutions.](#)

**23/10 PGR applications / Project updates (All)**

- Each member of the UKPGR group gave an update on current projects and activities they were undertaking.

**23/11 AOB (NM)**

- [Action: To add link between ex situ and in situ genebanking and collections as an agenda item for next meeting.](#)

**23/12 Date of next meeting/ Summer Technical (all)**

- NC confirmed that the John Innes Centre will most likely be able to host, he will confirm dates shortly.
- [Action: Secretariat to circulate doodle poll with dates for Summer Technical.](#)