

UK Plant Genetic Resources Group

UKPGR meeting 9 November 2017, 12.30-15.00
Defra, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London

Nigel Maxted, University of Birmingham (NM)
Gerard Hoppe, Afbini (GH)
Catrin Fenton, garden Organic (CF)
John Dickie, Kew (JD)
Andrew Daymond, Reading (AD)
Noam Chayut, JIC (NC)
James Williams, JNCC (JW)
Paul Shaw, James Hutton (PS)
Tom Christie, SASA (TC)
Sean May, University of Nottingham (SM)

Kalani Seymour, Plant Heritage (KL)
Simon Toomer, National Trust (ST)
Matt Ordidge, University of Reading (MO)
Mike Ambrose, JIC (Chair: MA)
Chris Barker, Defra (CB)
Thomas Murphy, Defra (TM)
Richard Littleton, Defra (RL)
Charlotte Petersen, Defra (CP)
Solomy Nantege, Defra admin

17/27 **Apologies (NM)**

Julian Hosking, Lydia Smith (NIAB), Felicidad Fernandez (EMR), Glenn Bryan (James Hutton), Milika Buurman (Limagrain), Frances Gawthrop (Tozer Seed), Jeremy Clitherow (NE), Abi Johnson (EMR), Ruth Eastwood (Kew), Ianto Thomas (Aberystwyth), Penny Maplestone (BSPB), James Armitage (RHS), Charlotte Allender (University of Warwick)

The meeting was chaired by Mike Ambrose (MA).

The meeting started with introductions and **MA** expressing thanks to Milika Buurman for all her input over the past few years.

17/28 **Minutes of the meeting held on 15th March and 28th July (NM)**

Minutes agreed

MO commented that at the summer technical meeting on 28 July they had discussed Digital Sequencing Information (DSI) under AOB and whether the group should formulate a common agreement on this.

ACTION Defra: add DSI to agenda for next meeting.

ACTION RL: send around a summary/presentation on DSI as discussed at the last Governing Body Meeting for the International Plant Treaty in Kigali this year.

17/29 **Matters arising (NM)**

NM commented that there had previously been interest in bringing together closer collaboration between animal and plant genetic resources stakeholder groups. He felt that it would be sensible to make links here and that the group should look into opportunities to do this.

17/30 **Orchard network update (MO/JH)**

MO commented that he is happy to give updates on the orchard network at UKPGR meetings, but suggested that it should not be a standing agenda item. It was agreed that updates on the Orchard Network are useful and interesting, but that it will be up to MO to decide whether there is anything new to share.

ACTION: MO to notify the Secretariat ahead of UKPGR meetings on whether he will be giving an update.

MO explained that the Orchard Network had a meeting on 8 November and he felt that things are progressing and the work is coming together. The Orchard Network is making good progress with regards to landrace inventory. Local groups are also undertaking a significant amount of genetic fingerprinting work to understand what they have in their collections. 1600 accessions were fingerprinted last year which uncovered 100 or more unique varieties in local collections. Next steps involve pulling together all the information collected to date and identifying local varieties by documenting them and adding them to an inventory. The methodology being used is in line with ECPGR standards, using 12 micro satellite indicators,

which is sufficient to identify cultivated varieties. Peter Laws is heavily involved in the work through fruitid.com.

17/31 **EU Exit**

ST attended a Defra meeting in York looking at contingency planning for an EU Exit horticultural sector 'no deal' scenario. This looked at various options from reducing points of entry to the country (in relation to plant health) and inspection points at ports. It had been suggested that a no deal scenario could potentially significantly increase the number of inspections.

Some in the industry are now looking at securing further non EU trade, as there was greater certainty in how these markets operated. In Scotland, there were also discussions taking place around potential impacts of a "no deal" exit from the EU and this had helped focus minds on what the key issues may be. A concern was raised that Brexit is taking up time across the sector that should be devoted to other projects and day jobs.

Defra were clear that negotiations were ongoing, and no decisions regarding EU exit had been made yet.

17/32 **ECPGR Update (CA)**

RL mentioned that the next ECPGR steering committee will take place in Greece next year.

MO gave an update on the *Prunus* alignment project which had been approved through the 5th call for the ECPGR grant scheme. More information can be found [here](#). The hope is that this project will improve working practices and will build on work done on cherries (fingerprinting) and align this with work going on in the NFC. UK, France, Germany and Switzerland are all involved and over the two year period of the project they will be testing a new, efficient way of genetic fingerprinting.

A beet project that Charlotte Allender is a partner of has also been approved – further details are [here](#).

It was noted that Charlotte Allender had in the past attended ECPGR steering group meetings on behalf of Defra. It was suggested that if CA attended the last steering group meeting whether she could send around a short update on this to the group via email.

ACTION Defra: confirm CA's role with regards to ECPGR and attendance at meetings.

NM added that the last working group meeting was useful. Changes are being made to the structure of ECPGR. There are now working group members in attendance at steering groups for a more democratic structure.

17/33 **Update on the Nagoya Protocol (TM)**

TM explained that he has taken over the role of Kim Bridger as point of contact in Defra relating to Nagoya. He works in Holly Kelley-Weil's team on Nagoya and CBD, but Holly will be going on maternity leave shortly and Katie Beckett will cover in this period.

TM gave an update of meetings that had taken place recently and advised that DECLARE the system for which users can make Due Diligence Declarations in the UK was now live and available on the BEIS Regulatory Delivery website, a link to the site would be circulated through the ABS Stakeholder Update and encouraged the group to get in touch if they would like to be signed up to the update.. Under Nagoya, users of genetic resources and / or a traditional knowledge (TK) must also submit a due diligence declaration at the stage of final development of a product, developed from the utilisation of genetic resources and / or TK. The conditions under which this declaration would be required are outlined in the Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1866.

TM reminded the group of upcoming events: there will be a regular EU MS meeting on 20 Nov to discuss unresolved issues with guidance. This will be followed by 3 day workshop to be attended by 80 different members looking at examples of setting access legislation and experience of compliance.

ST asked whether there had been any further discussion about scope and interpretation of the word 'utilisation'.

TM commented that in relation to ornamentals there is ongoing discussion on commercial varieties. However, the question of a unifying definition of utilisation is not currently open for discussion, instead work is currently looking at sector specific utilisation.

MA asked about discussions led by the commercial seed sector in attempts to get registered cultivars out of scope?

TM: not that I am aware of.

ACTION TM: follow up on registered cultivars and whether they are in scope.

17/34 Update on European funding opportunities (CB)

CB gave a short update on Horizon 2020. Firstly, **CB** stressed that UK researchers should still apply to the programme. The EU Science Commissioner has had regular contact with the UK Science Minister and stated that UK applications will continue to be treated in same way as other MS applicants while the UK is a member of the EU and that all proposals will be evaluated on merit and not on nationality. Regarding project proposals, the Government's underwrite commitment guarantees awards where the application is submitted before exit and subsequently approved after exit. This includes proposals submitted through a two-stage application process, provided the proposal for the first stage is submitted before exit and is subsequently approved for submission to the second stage. UK researchers can still apply to 2018 and 2019 work programmes based on current timetables.

CB advised that the Societal Challenge 2 work programme call (food security) for 2017 has now closed. 60% of projects that have been rewarded to date have some form of UK involvement which is a positive message. Two projects are PGR related: Belgian led project (dynaversity) – which has no UK partners and a second UK coordinated project (project detail not yet in public domain). **NM** commented that his group and dynaversity had applied to the WP call. As both had received identical evaluation scores the Commission decided to fund both proposals rather than the one, as set out in the WP. **NM** has received funding and will go ahead with the project 'farmers pride'.

CB provided the following information in relation to the 2018 work programmes:

- Innovate UK, BBSRC and Defra co-hosted a UK information day on 31 October to promote the publication of the 2018 work programme call for Societal Challenge 2 'Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine, maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy'. Presentations, including from the European Commission, can be accessed [here](#).
- The Societal Challenge 2 Work Programme can be accessed [here](#). The PGR-related topic, SFS-28-2018-2019-2020 'Genetic resources and pre-breeding communities' can be found on page 46 of the document.

17/35 Plant Treaty Update (RL)

RL attended the seventh Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in Kigali, Rwanda 30 Oct – 3 Nov.

ACTION: RL to share power point presentation on Digital Sequencing Information (DSI).

RL explained that the main thing discussed was the budget. There was a proposition for a 25% addition to the budget and they are looking for increased funding opportunities, for example for the benefit sharing fund. To date money has not flowed into this fund and developing countries are hesitant to adding further material as they are not getting much out. Regarding the SMTA there is ongoing work and 44 seed companies have signed up to pay a subscription rate (terms to be determined). Over the next 2 years further working group discussions will take place with regards to this. **RL** commented that there was a lot of talk on DSI and a specialist working group will be set up on DSI specifically ahead of the next Governing Body meeting. In addition, many developing countries wanted an increased focus on farmer's rights and it was agreed that an additional working group will be set up with regards to this.

17/36 PGR applications/project news (NM)

Each member of the UKPGR group gave an update on current projects and activities they are involved with. **NM** explained that he is giving a talk in the European Parliament on 7 December. He encouraged everyone to feed in any issues that they would like him to raise.

17/37

AOB (NM)

NM noted that this would be Mike Ambrose's last UKPGR meeting. NM thanked Mike for his friendship and hard work – it was agreed that MA has made a significant contribution to the group over the years. **MA** expressed his thanks to the group and wished the group all the best for the future.

Thanks were given to the RHS for hosting the last summer technical meeting, and the millennium seed bank at Kew offered to possibly hold the summer 2018 meeting (exact details TBC).

17/38

Date of next meeting (NM)

Thursday 15 March 2018

17/39

Presentation: 'UK Biodiversity Indicators' – James Williams (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)

James Williams from JNCC gave a presentation on UK Biodiversity Indicators. There was discussion around updating and extending the PGR National Inventory.

ACTION JW: to share the fiche, dataset (including the list of target taxa used as the first filter stage), and the technical document mentioned during his talk with the group

ACTION Defra: add UK Biodiversity Indicators as an agenda item for next meeting