MINUTES OF UK PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES GROUP MEETING

20 APRIL 2007

Present:

Mike Ambrose (Chair)	John Innes Centre	Martin Lewis	Defra
		Martyn Ibbotson	Defra
Nigel Maxted	Birmingham University	Chiara Sorisi	Defra
Brian Ford-Lloyd	Birmingham University	Ian Thomas	IGER
Niall Green	SASA	Emma-Jane Allen	Imperial College
Simon Linington	Millennium Seed Bank	Bob Sherman	Garden Organic
Michael Camlin	DARDNI	Sandra Bywater	Garden Organic
Amanda Read	BBSRC	Charlotte Allender	Warwick HRI
Gavin Ramsay	SCRI	Mercy Morris	NCCPG

07/01 Apologies for absence

1. Apologies received from:

Dave Astley	Warwick HRI
Angela Karp	Rothamsted Research
Penny Maplestone	BSPB
Ken Tobutt	EMR

07/02 Minutes of the meeting held 19th October 2006

2. Agreed.

07/03 Matters arising from previous minutes

3. They were dealt within this meeting.

07/04 Report on AEGIS project arising from the ECPGR Steering Committee Mid-phase meeting held in Riga in September

4. Following point 11 of agenda item 06/16, Martyn Ibbotson addressed in more detail the Report of the ECPGR Steering Committee (SC) held at Riga in September 2006, particularly the decisions on AEGIS.

5. The **AEGIS Project** had been central to the meeting and the report registers the nature of the AEGIS Project: this remains a 'project' or a 'concept'. Discussions resulted in an 11 point Decision proposal to develop the project, so that the pre-phase VIII SC in two years time would be well placed to make final decisions on the implementation of AEGIS as a central element of Phase VIII.

6. Referring to Minute 06/16, Martyn Ibbotson felt that it was worth re-emphasising that at the Riga meeting, the UK and Spain, with general support from ECPGR members had expressed disquiet with the concept of 'European' ownership since there would be no international funds to support national gene banks.:. . An alternative system of continued 'national' ownership, with relevant accessions universally available should be explored: this would be parallel to the Multilateral System (MLS) of the International Treaty for PGRFA.

7. Martyn Ibbotson reiterated that there are similarities between AEGIS and the IT, and therefore potential synergies that need to be captured. There could be scope for using EURISCO to make clear the availability of material to other state members and potentially to employ the same tool to record sMTA.

8. Mercy Morris suggested that it would be useful to circulate the report of the technical stakeholder consultation meeting that took place in Rome in February 2007, which aimed to explore how Information Techniques could support the IT.

07/05 International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, including update on stakeholder meetings associated with sMTA

- ***8th March 2007 - ad hoc UKPGR meeting***

9. Martyn Ibbotson reported on the outcome of the third meeting of the *ad hoc* UKPGR Group, which took place on the 8th March. This forum involved directly gene banks stakeholders who hold material listed under Annex 1 of the ITPGRFA and are "in the public domain". These series of meeting are proving very helpful as they support the Government in gathering a common view on the most effective way to implement the IT and therefore underpin the UK compliance with the IT.

10. Martyn Ibbotson said that the discussion, initially based on a series of Questions & Answers, have been fundamental in shaping a common view on many of the main issues. These Q&A have now been grouped and rationalised. On the basis of this, Defra is drafting a policy guidelines document: once finalised, then intention is to transmit it to all Gene Bank Managers and to be made available on Defra's web page. A draft of this document will be circulated to the *ad hoc* group for consultation by the end of May.

11. Mike Ambrose highlighted that the *ad hoc* UKPGR meetings are open to whoever wishes to participate. There are no minutes of these meetings; they have been developing from the list of Q&A, which provided a baseline for actions forward. Date of the next meeting is the 9th August. Dave Astley has kindly offered to host the meeting at the Vegetable Gene Bank, Wellesbourne.

- ***13th March 2007 - BSPB meeting***

12. Martyn Ibbotson explained that the meeting of the 13th March was arranged through the British Society of Plant Breeders (BSPB), in order to engage the users and potential suppliers (from private collections) of genetic material. The UKPGR Group was represented by Mike Ambrose.

13. The meeting proved very useful as it raised awareness, on both sides, on the implications of using sMTA and in general on the practical implementation of the Multilateral System. Defra is currently developing a Q&A list that will be circulated and discussed before the next meeting to be held with the BSPB in September (date to be confirmed).

14. The main issues raised were the following:

- Plant breeders' rights
- Limitations to the use of material acquired under a sMTA, in particular the issue of derivatives
- Benefit sharing obligations

15. Mike Ambrose suggested that it would be useful to extent the consultation to other stakeholders such as NIAB.

07/06 UK National Inventory of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

16. Martin Lewis reported that for 2007/08 financial year funding would only be available for the maintenance of the Portal website although within the maintenance charge there was provision for three days of development work of the website.

17. In view of this UKPGR Members were asked to consider how they would like to see the Portal website revised. But as only three days development time was available, it was suggested that members' responses should be co-ordinated and prioritised before passing on to Defra who would then need to consult ADAS (the web developers) about what could be achieved within the three days. Nigel Maxted agreed to act as co-ordinator. Members were invited to visit the

development website (a hard copy of the re-designed home page was circulated at the meeting), and send their comments by 30 April to Nigel.

UPDATE: Nigel Maxted forwarded Members' comments 5 June.

18. It was agreed that the Portal might be a useful place to disseminate information regarding sMTA and more general background information on the ITPGRFA. This issue will be re-visited once the Multilateral System is fully operational and the use of sMTA is part of standard practice.

07/07 Update on EURISCO initiative

19. Ian Thomas, the EURISCO *ex situ* National Inventory Focal Point, updated the UKPGR Group on the outcome of a joint meeting of the Documentation and Information Network Coordinating Group and the EURISCO Advisory Group, held in Rome in April 2007. In particular, he illustrated the status of EPGRIS II and further programmes of work. Ian said he would circulate minutes of the meeting once these become available.

UPDATE: Minutes of the meeting now available and have been attached to this document.

07/08 Biodiversity indicators for PGR

20. Nigel Maxted summarised the necessity of developing biodiversity indicators as discussed under agenda item 06/19 paragraph 21. He explained that the CBD has identified 22 indicators to assess progress towards the 2010 target (Monitoring Implementation for Achievement of the 2010 target[1] to reduce loss of Biodiversity).

21. Data for animal GR are ready for use and/or testing. On the basis of these, indicators in this field are currently under development. Indicators for plant genetic resources will follow as soon as baseline data are made available.

22. Mike Ambrose suggested that the UKPGR members need to discuss the possibility of gathering these data and make them available for further research. In general, members agreed on the need for more co-ordination. Mike Ambrose suggested that NCCPG could be in a position to gather these data.

ACTION: Mercy Morris will explore the possibility of gathering suitable data. Mike Ambrose will draft a reflection paper.

[1] "To achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth". DecisionVI/6 para. 11 (Mission of the Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity).

07/09 Harvesting Diversity II

23. Mike Ambrose reported that he had discussed with Mike Roper (policy team leader for animal genetic resources in Defra) the possibility of a Harvesting Diversity II event. This would not be on the same scale as the original Harvesting Diversity conference (probably a one day event). It had been a number of years since Harvesting Diversity I and it would be opportune to take stock of and review developments within the genetic resources field since then. Mike Ambrose would report on planning developments at the next UKPGR meeting in the autumn.

07/10 EU GENRES II Programme (EC Regulation 870/2004)

24. Martin Lewis gave the Group a brief update on the state of play of GENRES II. The selection procedure of successful proposals under the second call has now been completed. Out of 17 successful projects, 11 had an input from a UK based institute.

25. No decisions had been taken by the Commission on whether a further GENRES exercise (or similar) would be run after GENRES II finishes 4 years time. An alternative source of funding for plant genetic resources associated projects may be the FP7 programme. However, this does have its limitation and Nigel Maxted expressed the need for the UKPGR Group to establish a direct contact in Defra with the Team responsible for FP7 programmes to explore this further. This would also serve as a support for the UKPGR members to formulate proposals consistent with FP7 objectives, and it might also provide the ability to convey to Europe the UKPGR requests.

ACTION: Defra to set up a meeting between UKPGR and a Defra Team responsible for FP7 funding.

07/11 Review of the Terms of Reference of the UKPGR

26. Mike Ambrose circulated an amended version of the UKPGR ToR (see file attached). He invited all the members to comment and contribute to develop the document. This will be discussed at the next UKPGR.

27. Martyn Ibbotson also suggested that at the next meeting members might consider the election (or re-election) of the Chairman and Technical Secretary. This was no reflection in any way on the present incumbents performance or abilities but simply that the democratic process of allowing others members the opportunity to sit as Chairman needs to be seen to be put into practice and this would be an opportune time to do so.

ACTION: Members to review and amend the ToR

07/12 Summer Technical visit

27. Niall Green offered to host the Summer Technical visit at SASA on the 11th September. Gavin Ramsay suggested that if members would like to extend the visit to the following day, there would be the possibility to visit the Scottish Crop Research Institute.

ACTION: Niall Green will circulate proposed arrangements for the Summer Technical visit.

UPDATE: Niall Green circulated a note on the 23rd May. Members are invited to reply to Niall Green, copy to Gavin Ramsay, so that further arrangements can be completed.

07/13 AOB

28. The following items were raised:

- Mike Ambrose reminded members that the ECPGR Secretariat requested member countries to nominate an *in situ/on farm* National Inventory Focal Point. It was agreed that the *in situ/on farm* National Inventory Focal Point for the UK will be Nigel Maxted.

- Niall Green informed other member of the following conferences:

  1. 5th International Symposium on the Taxonomy of Cultivated Plants 15-19 October 2007. www.istcp2007.wur.nl

  2. Proposals for amendments to the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (to be considered at the above symposium) - Deadline 31st May 2007. www.ishs.org/sci/icncp

- Ian Thomas communicated that the *ex situ* National Inventory is ready to be updated. Data set is ready and is probably going to be uploaded in the summer.

- Bob Sherman raised the issue of the draft "Seeds Directive" on conservation varieties for agricultural species. This document, once approved, might have an impact on the activity of many stakeholders. It is therefore necessary to analyse it and illustrate the issue to the next UKPGR meeting.

07/14 Date of next meeting

29. Thursday 18th October in room 406, Eastbury House. The meeting with start at 13.00 with lunch at 12.00.