

Group 3: How can genebanks collaborate more effectively?

- Specialization: it was thought that “knowledge specialization” among European genebanks might be more feasible than specialization according to crops managed at specific genebanks. Many institutions have mandates and missions for crop germplasm that cannot readily be changed.
- Areas of knowledge specialization might include: cryopreservation, seed physiology, taxonomy/nomenclature, fruticulture, and bioinformatics.

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- To develop trust among genebanks regarding curatorial capacity and quality, the standards in place for particular genebanks should be known. Certification might be a means for assuring quality. For example, participants observed that various genebank data require much checking, corrections, and updating.
- Genebank users sometimes find it difficult to identify the responsible staff for particular crops. But, the cucurbit network is an example of how a crop genebank network can function well to direct users to key personnel.

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- The ECPGR was cited as the most suitable single focal point for communicating the needs of PGR conservation to European politicians and policy makers, e.g., in the EU. These needs should be clearly articulated to policy makers, perhaps by professional lobbyists.
- Technical direction might be provided by the crop working groups. The working groups should include private sector breeders, but it is difficult to identify those who have time to serve as such.
- Centers of excellence for specific crops might more efficient management frameworks than are individual sites.

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- Although some genebank consolidation and mergers might be helpful, over-centralization would be counterproductive.
- Although web conferences are helpful, face-to-face meetings are irreplaceable for building trust and durable collaboration.
- Participants mentioned that the FAO/Bioversity Plant Genetic Resources Newsletter was quite valuable; apparently it was now discontinued because of lack of funding.