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Item 5 of the Draft Provisional Agenda

COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

WORKING GROUP ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Second Session

Rome, 5 – 7 November 2003

PROGRESS REPORT ON CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE GLOBAL SYSTEM FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE UTILIZATION OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. Since 1991, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the "Commission") has considered progress reports on its Global System at all its regular sessions. At its Ninth Regular Session, the Commission agreed that "the Inter-governmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources should […] provide further guidance: on the preparation of the second report on the *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* […]; on the development of plant genetic resource networks, and the assessment of their effectiveness; and on the possible need to update elements of the *Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer*"[1], which are three elements of the Global System.

2. From its establishment, by the 1983 FAO Conference, as the first permanent intergovernmental forum in the United Nations system dealing with an important component of biological diversity, the Commission has coordinated, overseen and monitored the development of a Global System for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Its terms of reference, as revised by the FAO Council in 1995 (Resolution CL 1/110), specify that one of the tasks of the Commission is "to recommend such measures as may be necessary or desirable to ensure the development, as appropriate, of a comprehensive global system or systems on genetic resources of relevance to food and agriculture and to monitor the operation of its/their components, in harmony, where applicable, with the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant international instruments".

3. The objectives of the Global System are to ensure the safe conservation and promote the availability and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources, for present and future generations, and to provide a flexible framework for sharing the benefits. It addresses global agreements, cooperation, information and action in the conservation of plant genetic resources and their sustainable utilization.

2. PREPARATION OF THE SECOND REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

4. The First Report on the *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and* Agriculture was published in 1998. It was prepared for the Fourth International Technical Conference held in Leipzig, 1996, which welcomed it as the first comprehensive worldwide assessment of the status and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The Commission, at its Eighth Regular Session in 1999, "agreed that a second *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* […] should be considered by the Commission after the completion of the negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking"[2]. The Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources, at its first session in 2001, made recommendations for updating the *Report*[3]. It recalled that the *Report* should provide objective information and analysis, as a basis for updating the rolling *Global Plan of Action*. In light of the recommendations and earlier guidance from the Commission, the Secretariat provided document CGRFA-9/02/8, *Preparation of the Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, to the Ninth Session of the Commission in 2003, outlining the scope, and steps for the preparation of the second *Report*. *Annex* 1 of this document presented an outline of the second *Report* by chapter and annex.

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[1] CGRFA-9/02/REP: *Report of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Ninth Regular Session.*

[2] CGRFA-8/99/REP: *Report of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Eighth Regular Session*, para. 19.

[3] CGRFA/WG-PGR-1/01/REPORT, para. 20-25.

5. At its Ninth Regular Session, the Commission agreed that work should progress on the development of the second *Report of the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* as outlined in the document, and stressed that the preparatory process should be fully integrated with the process of monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* (see document CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/03/4). In emphasizing the country-driven nature of the preparatory process, the Commission requested that countries be given an opportunity to review the guidelines for country reporting, prior to their finalization. The Commission agreed that priority should be given to updating the *Report*, focussing as far as possible on the changes that have occurred. The thematic background studies listed in *Annex 2* of document CGRFA-9/02/8 (see *Annex 1*) would be carried out as far as resources allowed. The Commission requested the Working Group to provide guidance on the preparation of the *Report*.

6. A technical workshop for developing guidelines for Country Reports is being organized by the Secretariat at the FAO headquarters on 4 November, 2003. The workshop will prepare guidelines, which will then be reviewed by member countries, as requested by the Commission. It is expected that once the guidelines are finalized, member countries will hold national workshops and consultations with stakeholders in updating their Country Reports.

7. At its Ninth Regular Session the Commission considered that the Indicative Timetable for the preparatory process presented in *Annex 3* of document CGRFA-9/02/8 was "realistic". It now appears that certain provisionally planned activities, in particular preparation of the thematic studies and updating of Country Reports, will not be completed by the end of 2003, in part because of insufficient resources. *Annex 4* of document CGRFA-9/02/8 presented cost estimates for extra-budgetary resources required in support of the preparatory process. At the time that this document was being prepared, no extra-budgetary resources had been received.

8. In developing the thematic background studies, full use needs to be made of existing information and relevant ongoing activities, within FAO and in other organizations. Case studies from selected areas could provide useful inputs to the thematic background studies. Linkages are being established with the relevant activities being carried out within the technical units of FAO, and through the Priority Areas for Interdisciplinary Action on Biological Diversity, and on Biotechnology in Food and Agriculture.

9. On the thematic background study of indicators of genetic diversity, genetic erosion and genetic vulnerability, FAO and IPGRI jointly organized a workshop in Rome in September 2002. The report of this workshop, which was put at the disposal of the Ninth Regular Session of the Commission, contributes to the ongoing study in this area.

10. The development of the *Report* and its thematic background studies provide a clear opportunity for strengthening appropriate linkages with the on-going activities among stakeholders and with other related international initiatives, in particular in the context of the joint programme of work on agricultural biodiversity with the Convention of Biological Diversity, to ensure a comprehensive coverage of relevant issues. However, the extent to which they can be addressed will depend on the availability of resources and the time frame. Though the minimum essential cost of the core preparatory process will be covered by the Regular Programme of the Organisation, extra-budgetary resources will be needed to support the full participation of developing countries in the process through, *inter alia,* assistance in Country Report preparation, support to national workshops, and participation in regional meetings.

11. The second *Report* is currently planned to be presented for endorsement by the Commission in 2006. The extended outlines are planned to be reviewed by the Working Group in 2004, and the draft report in 2005.

3. THE INTERNATIONAL PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES NETWORKS

12. Since 1991, the Commission has considered the role of networks (crop, regional and thematic) as a significant element of the Global System. Priority Activity 16 of the *Global Plan of*

Action and Article 16 of the recently adopted International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture recognised the importance of networks as mechanisms for their implementation.

13. In preparation for the Commission's Ninth Regular Session in 2002, and in the context of Article 16 of the International Treaty, a background study[4] was commissioned by FAO to provide an overview of networks currently contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and to provide a conceptual basis for analysing their effectiveness and efficiency. As the first step, an inventory was compiled of the networks which contribute to the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* and the objectives of the International Treaty, including regional plant genetic resources networks, global and regional crop networks, *in situ*-oriented networks, and thematic networks. The inventory was based on information drawn from a number of sources, including the first *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, a network inventory carried out by IPGRI in 1999, and information available on the internet.

14. This background study formed a basis for the document *International Plant Genetic Resources Networks*[5], which was presented to the Commission at its Ninth Regular Session. The Commission "encouraged countries to provide information on the networks in which they participate, in order to complete the inventory of networks", and agreed that "the effectiveness of networks should be assessed, and that synergy between different networks should be promoted".

15. In order to address these recommendations, FAO has initiated a process that includes these two complementary activities. FAO has invited the collaboration of over 200 network coordinators in completing and updating the information contained in the inventory of networks and, at the same time, invited them to complete a self-assessment questionnaire aiming at analysing network efficiency and effectiveness. Network coordinators have also been requested to share the results of self-assessment with the Secretariat in order to inform the Commission and its Working Group. The self-assessment questionnaire was developed jointly by FAO and IPGRI, with additional contributions from experts working in the field. A copy of the self-assessment is provided in *Annex 2*.

16. The process that has been initiated will contribute (i) to enhancing the synergy between networks, by providing a searchable database of all networks working on issues related to PGRFA conservation and sustainable use; and (ii) to assisting networks to enhance their own effectiveness and efficiency.

4. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE *INTERNATIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PLANT GERMPLASM COLLECTING AND TRANSFER*

17. At its Ninth Session, the Commission noted the continued usefulness of the *International Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer* in providing guidance for collecting missions and in formulating national legislation. It considered the document, *Report on the Status of the International Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer*,[6] and discussed the possible need to update elements of the *Code* in the light of the adoption of the International Treaty and other relevant developments. The Commission requested its Working Group to consider the *Code*, and make recommendations to the Commission at its next regular session, regarding the possible need to update elements of the *Code*. Member countries were invited to submit information on measures taken at national level

[4] Background Study Paper no. 16, "A summary and analysis of existing international plant genetic resources networks", available at ftp://ext-ftp.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/BSP/bsp16e.pdf .

[5] CGRFA-9/02/12 International Plant Genetic Resources Networks.

[6] CGRFA-9/02/19.

to implement the *Code*. The Secretariat was requested to compile this information for the Working Group[7].

18. The Secretariat, accordingly, invited Members to provide information and suggestions, in the light of recent developments, in particular regarding the implementation of the *Code* and the current relevance of each of the elements of the *Code*. While 24 Members[8] replied by the requested date, responses were still being received at the time this report was being prepared. A summary of the information received from Members so far follows.

19. Responding Members confirmed that they continue to find the *Code* extremely useful and routinely refer to many of its elements, such as guidance to collectors, sponsors and curators in their practical activities. They indicated that the *Code* has been widely circulated to many national stakeholders, who were encouraged to use it in their missions. It was also used by major public institutions engaged in national germplasm collecting- and transfer-related activities, and has proven to be an useful and practical reference tool.

20. With regard to the measures taken at national level to implement the *Code*, some member states indicated that they have successfully used the *Code* to develop agreements for joint collecting missions with other member states. Several members provided information about their national guidelines for exploration, collecting and transfer of plant germplasm. Some mentioned that elements of the *Code* have been drawn upon for their national laws. Information received from several members also indicated that they are at various stages of developing national legislation governing transfer of genetic resources, including access to traditional knowledge and benefit-sharing.

21. Responding Member countries also provided diverse opinions with regard to possible updating of elements of the *Code*. Many members felt that, with the adoption of the International Treaty and other related developments in various fora, much of the subject matter has been adequately covered. Others pointed out that an updated *Code* could be very useful for collecting and transfer of plant genetic resources not included in the Multilateral System of the International Treaty. Such an upgraded *Code* could include elements that ensure that collector and user countries safeguard the rights of countries providing plant genetic resources, within the context of the objectives of the International Treaty and relevant national laws, international agreements and guidelines.

5. GUIDANCE REQUESTED FROM THE WORKING GROUP

22. In the context of the preparation of the second Report on the *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, the Working Group may wish to:

a) encourage Member states and other countries and relevant organizations to participate in the preparatory process;
b) provide advice concerning the Indicative timetable;
c) provide advice as to prioritizing work on the thematic areas listed in *Annex 1*, and,
d) encourage donors to provide the necessary extra-budgetary resources, in particular to allow the full participation of developing countries in the preparatory process and the preparation of some thematic studies.

23. In the context of International Plant Genetic Resources Networks, the Working Group may wish to:

[7] CGRFA-9/02/Rep. para. 60

[8] Armenia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary**,** Kenya, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mauritius, Morocco, Poland**,** Senegal, Sweden, Spain, SriLanka, Switzerland , United Kingdom, and United States of America.

a) provide advice on criteria and characteristics of effective and efficient networks (crop, regional and thematic); and
b) provide advice on the process initiated by the Secretariat regarding the furthering of the contribution of networks in the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.

24. In the context of *International Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer*, the Working Group may wish to consider the possible need and requisite mechanisms for updating elements of the *Code*.

ANNEX 1

The Second Report on the State of the World's PGRFA – Indicative list of thematic background studies[9]

The Second Report on the State of the World's PGRFA – Indicative list of thematic background studies

	Study	Rationale	Scope	Sources & Linkages
A	**Plant genetic resources of forage crops, pasture and rangelands**	Coverage of forage crops, pasture and rangeland species was very limited in the first Report. This study will seek to address this imbalance, and thereby improve the relevance of the report to agricultural systems dominated by livestock production, mixed farming and pastoralism. It will also provide information needed to update Annex 2 of the Report.	Value and role of forage crops, pasture and rangeland species. Special issues related to the management of plant genetic resources in pastures and rangelands.	Material assembled by the Crop and Grassland Service; Country Reports.
B	**The conservation of crop wild relatives**	Crop wild relatives require specific approaches to conservation.	Value and role of crop wild relatives; Conservation status in protected areas and elsewhere; Country capacities for conservation (with detailed case studies in nine countries).	This study will build upon work carried out in the framework of the proposed GEF-UNEP-IPGRI project: "Conservation of wild crop relatives"
C	**Indicators of genetic diversity, genetic erosion and genetic vulnerability**	Indicators are useful tools to identify and monitor trends, and to convey summary information to policy makers and the public opinion. They are needed for application at global, national and local levels.	The "state of the art" of indicator development and use for genetic diversity, genetic erosion and genetic vulnerability, at various scales, including an evaluation of the feasibility of assessing genetic diversity/erosion at the national level, including through modern molecular techniques.	The study will build upon work carried out in the frameworks of the CBD, CSD, and OECD.
D	**Methodologies and capacities for crop improvement; the use of PGRFA in base-broadening and crop improvement, including new approaches to plant breeding and new biotechnologies**	There has been significant advancement in the available technologies and methodologies since the preparation of the first Report, but the application of these technologies and methodologies may be limited by plant breeding capacity in developing countries.	Applications of biotechnologies (including marker-assisted selection, and transformation) and genomics to the identification, conservation and use of PGRFA; Participatory and decentralized approaches to plant breeding; Population management.	Crop and Grassland Service and other FAO services; IPGRI and other IARCS.

[9] CGRFA-9/02/8 *Annex 2*

E	**Seed security for food security: the management of plant genetic resources in seed systems**	Seeds are the physical embodiment of PGRFA, and the main vehicle by which farmer management of PGRFA can be improved.	Analysis of formal and informal seed systems; ways of strengthening links between public, private and informal sectors; strengthening seed security through relief, rehabilitation, development and information services.	Country Reports; FAO's regional seed consultations and seed security networks.
F	**The contribution of plant genetic resources to health and dietary diversity**	While just three crops dominate human energy intake, many more are required for a healthy diet. Some plants are especially important sources of nutrition for the poor. Yet they are often overlooked.	Plants important for human health and nutrition at global, national and sub-national scales. Inter- and Intra- species variation in nutrient content. Value of "minor" crops and other plants for vulnerable groups. Role of home and school gardens.	FAO Nutrition Division; IPGRI; Country Reports.
G	**Managing plant genetic resources in the agro-ecosystem; global change, crop-associated biodiversity and ecosystem services**	PGRFA and associated biodiversity may provide multiple goods and services; they may need to be managed together to maximize these goods and services.	Ecosystem goods and services provided by PGRFA. Deployment of genetic resources in production systems; interactions with crop-associated biodiversity (pest and disease organisms; pollinators etc.).	FAO Interdepartmental Working Group on Biodiversity. The study will contribute to the CBD programme of work on agricultural biodiversity.
H	**Interactions between plant and animal genetic resources, and opportunities for synergy in their management**	While FAO has established programmes for both plant and domestic animal genetic resources, there has been little attention to date given to the interactions between these sets of resources. Yet at the level of the production system, crops and livestock are managed together, and the required characteristics of particular breeds or varieties are strongly determined by other components on the farming system.	Interactions between the management of plant and livestock genetic resources in farming system – interactions of the plant and animal genetic resources with other components of the farming system – dependence of the required traits of plant varieties by the presence/absence, type of domestic animal genetic resources and dependence of the required traits of animal breeds by the available plant genetic resources –comparison of approaches of managing crop and livestock genetic resources; lessons learned from one, applicable to the other; opportunities for common institutions, etc.	This study will also be prepared jointly with the preparatory process for the first Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources.
I	**The impact of national, regional and global agricultural policies and agreements on conservation and use of PGRFA**	Agricultural policies and the incentive structures they create have major impacts on the conservation and use of PGRFA. Understanding of such impacts is necessary in order to improve policies.	Survey of national, regional and global policies. Analysis of incentive structures and possible impacts on PGRFA conservation and use.	Country Reports; Various services in FAO. Could be linked with CBD study on impacts of trade liberalization on agricultural biodiversity.
J	**Biosafety and biosecurity issues related to the conservation and sustainable utilization of PGRFA**	The use of genetically modified organisms raises issues for the management of PGRFA. At the same time restrictions on transboundary movement of plants may impact on PGRFA conservation and use.	Genetic contamination in centres of origin and diversity; plant protection and quarantine issues.	Country Reports, IPPC and FAO Services.

ANNEX 2

Self-Assessment on Network - Questionnaire

1.0 COORDINATION

1.1) Are the purpose(s) and objective(s) of the network clearly defined and agreed upon by members? Select one:

Yes □ Partly agree □ No □ Not sure □

1.2) Is there a "founding" document that describes the purpose(s) and objective(s) and a strategy for addressing agreed issues? Select one:

Yes □ Partly agree □ No □ Not sure □

1.3) **If yes**, what year was the founding document finalised? Indicate year approved

1.4) What year was it last updated? Indicate year last updated

1.5) Is there a plan of work that details responsibilities, resource commitments and time frames?

Yes □ No □

1.6) **If yes,** what year was the plan of work developed? Indicate year

1.7) When was the plan of work last updated? Select one:

Never updated □
Updated 1-2 years ago □
Updated 3-5 years ago □
Updated more than 5 years ago □

2.0 INTEREST AND COMMITMENT/SELF-MONITORING/CAPACITY FOR EVOLVING

2.1) Is the program of work of the network based upon an assessment of member needs and priorities?

Yes □ No □

2.2) **If yes**, what year was the needs assessment completed? Indicate year

2.3 What year was it last updated? Select one:

Never updated □
Updated 1-2 years ago □
Updated 3-5 years ago □
Updated more than 5 years ago □

2.3) Does the network have a system in place to monitor and evaluate its results/outputs? Select one:

Yes □ Partly, but not adequate □ No □ Not sure □

2.4) **If yes**, how does it do this? Please select one or more of the following:

Annual meeting reports □
Steering Committee reviews □
Donor reviews □
Other (please provide details) □

2.5) Does the network monitor its results/outputs? Select one:

Yes □ Partly, but not adequate □ No □ Not sure □

2.6) **If yes**, how?

2.7) Does the network have mechanisms for assessing the changing needs of the members/users and evolving in response to those changing needs? Select one:

Yes □ Partly, but not adequate □ No □ Not sure □

2.8) **If yes**, please give details.

Needs assessment questionnaire to members □
Consultation visits to member countries to assess needs □
Project meetings to discuss and agree on priorities □
Steering Committee priority setting □
Donor meetings □
Other (please specify) □

3.0 MEMBERSHIP

3.1) Are there formal agreements between network members and the network?

Yes □ No □

3.2) **If yes**, at what level are these agreed: Select one:

- Individual scientist □
- Individual research center □
- Departmental level within Ministry □
- Ministerial level □
- Other (please specify) □

3.3) Does the agreement require a formal commitment of resources by members?

Yes □ No □

3.4) **If yes**, please tick those resources that are included in membership agreements:

- Staff time □
- Research facilities □
- Membership dues □
- Hosting of network meetings □
- Counterpart and co-financing funds □
- Other (please specify) □

3.5) Is the membership of the network stable? Select one:

- Very stable □
- Stable □
- A lot of rotation □

3.6) Should there be more rotation in the membership?

Yes □ No □

4.0 DIVERSITY OF THE NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

4.1) Is the network dominated by member(s) coming from specific sector(s)?

If so, please select all of those that apply:

- Ministries □
- NGOS □
- Private sector □
- Research institutions □
- Others: □

5.0 ABILITY OF NETWORK IN STIMULATING AND MAINTAINING COLLABORATION AMONG MEMBERS AND BETWEEN NETWORKS.

5.1) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (please select only one rating for each statement):

	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Strongly disagree
Network goals are well understood and shared among network members				
Network members perceive tangible benefits from participating in the network				
Responsibilities for network activities are shared among network members				

5.2) How often does the steering committee meet to define objectives, validate overall principles and define work programmes? Select one:

Never □

Less than once per year □

Once per year □

More than once per year □

5.3) How often do working groups meet for technical collaboration, sharing scientific concerns and research results? Select one:

Never □

Less than once per year □

Once per year □

More than once per year □

5.4) Please rate the degree of duplication between the network and other networks. Select one:

Little duplication between the network and other networks □

Some duplication between network and other networks □

A lot of duplication between the network and other networks □

Not sure □

5.5) Please rate the effectiveness of the network in collaborating with other networks. Select one:

Very effective □

Somewhat effective □

Not very effective □

Not sure □

6.0 STRONG LEADERSHIP

6.1) Is the leadership of the network elected by participants or appointed?

6.2) For how many years has the present network coordinator been in place? Select one:

Less than one year □
2-5 years □
5-10 years □
More than 10 years □
Not sure □

6.3) What type of organization hosts the network coordination unit: Select one:

IARC □
Regional organization □
NARS □
NGO □
Other (please describe) □

7.0 EXTERNAL FUNDING

7.1) How is network coordination funded? Select one or more:

Member resources only □
Member resources supplemented by external sources □
External sources □
Self-generated income □
Contributions of hosting institute □

7.2) How are network activities funded? Select one or more:

Member resources only □
Member resources supplemented by external sources □
External sources □
Self-generated income □
Contributions of hosting institute □

7.3) To what degree is external funding channelled towards activities that help the network meet its goals, objectives, and established programme of work? Select one:

External funding very well targeted towards network objectives □

External funding somewhat well targeted towards network objectives □

External funding not well targeted towards network objectives □

Not sure □

No external funding □

7.4) Please indicate the approximately ratio of member contributions to external funding: Select one:

Member: External

100:0 □

80:20 □

60:40 □

50:50 □

40:60 □

20:80 □

0:100 □

7.5) Please indicate different sources of funding support (please tick those that are applicable)

	Category of Support				
Source of funding	**Staff time**	**Facilities**	**Hosting**	**Financial resources**	**Other (please indicate)**
Member contributions					
Bilateral donors					
Multilateral government donors					
Development banks					
Foundations					
NGOs					
Private companies					
Other (please indicate)					

8.0 NETWORK OUTPUTS

8.1) Please indicate the major outputs of the network in the past five years (tick all that apply):

- Information services □
- Publications □
- Collaborative research □
- Training □
- Other (please indicate) □

8.2) Does the network maintain one or more central crop databases?

Yes □ No □

8.3) How many collaborative research programmes were active within the network in 2002?

8.4) What areas were addressed by these programmes? (please indicate)

8.5) Approximately how many publications were produced by the network in 2002?

8.6) What subjects were covered (please tick all that apply)

- Findings of collaborative research activities □
- Steering committee meeting proceedings □
- Technical working group proceedings □
- Network newsletters □
- Other (please specify) □

8.7) Approximately how many training programmes were carried out by the network in 2002?

8.8) Approximately how many people were trained by the network in 2002?

8.9) What topics were covered by the training in 2002?