

CPVO STRATEGIC PLAN

2017-2021

**DRAFT FOR EXTERNAL CONSULTATION**



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## 1. Introduction

This document presents the vision for the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO) to 2021. While the mission of the CPVO has remained relatively untouched, the pace of change in the environment and myriad challenges facing the CPVO means that we have arrived at a crossroads. Preparing and positioning the CPVO for the years to come requires the ambition to be a key player in the evolving Intellectual Property and plant variety landscape, the openness to developing as an organization on the basis of a partnership approach and the necessary financial and human resources to best serve our stakeholders.

Within the scope of its mission the CPVO has contributed to create "*strong incentives for innovation and investment in new plant varieties, leading to higher and more sustainable agricultural outputs and job creation in rural areas*". The CPVO therefore contributes to the Europe 2020 Strategy for *Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*.

In that context supporting its stakeholders in accessing, using and exploiting the IP system for the protection of plant varieties on the basis of a cost-efficiency approach remains an important challenge for the CPVO. Working together with its stakeholders, the network of Examination Offices, of the EU Agencies and other IP players the CPVO has promoted the sharing of information and expertise and has helped implementing EU policies more efficiently and responding to particular needs identified by the EU institutions and Member States. The CPVO will continue fostering highest technical harmonization of practices and legal certainty on a high quality level which aims at ensuring reliable and defensible decisions on Plant Variety Rights in the EU. This remains a challenge for the CPVO that will require even better coordination between all players at EU level and internationally to address the needs of the stakeholders.

Performance indicators will be elaborated and included in the annual work program for the CPVO.

### 1.1. Strategic Plan 2010-2015

That previous Strategic Plan concentrated on two strategic goals:

- Maintain and, where possible, enhance the attractiveness of the Community plant variety protection system in comparison to other relevant IP rights.
- Be a benchmark organisation in the management of a plant variety protection system

These goals were to be achieved by the following four objectives

1. Optimize Community Plant Variety Rights System, quality and costs
2. Improve international cooperation in plant variety protection
3. Contribute to the enforcement of Community variety rights
4. Achieve organizational excellence

The CPVO had reported regularly during the relevant period of the Strategic Plan to its Administrative Council in order to compare the objectives with the achievements. Looking back, it appears correct to state that the goals have been achieved to a large extent.

However, as mentioned in the introduction to this Strategic Plan and considering today's environment described hereunder, it is evident that for a proper response of the CPVO the goals and the objectives need to be updated.

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<sup>1</sup> Deloitte Report "*How do EU agencies and other bodies contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy and to the Juncker Commission Agenda?*" of November 2016, pages 95-96.



## 1.2. The process of defining the new strategy

The strategic planning process started in 2016 with the launch of a reflection with a working group of staff representing a number of services within the CPVO. All staff were consulted through survey to provide feedback on the overall mission, values, goals and the objectives for the strategic plan, as well in the identification of key stakeholders.

The staff were further consulted through an open debate, with a view to further refining the elements of the strategic plan and on the basis of this, a first complete draft version of the strategic plan was drawn up and reviewed.

The *current* step in the process involves an open public consultation through the CPVO website, with a view to soliciting feedback from key stakeholders, but also from the general public.

A final version of the document will be drawn up for presentation to the CPVO's Administrative Council for comment before finally endorsing the document.

## 1.3. CPVO Environment

The modern economy is globally connected and this is not exclusively limited to the domain of business, as governments, research and non-profit organisations also operate across country borders with a variety of objectives. Technological advancements create new opportunities and challenges. For the CPVO this relates to breeding technology, to techniques used in creating and evaluating new varieties, to the way information is gathered, stored and disseminated and affects every area of its activities. Linkage to the patent system, to food security, to plant genetic resource management and international treaties have an impact on the CPVO's field of activities and increasingly require adequate strategic response. The general public takes an interest in related topics and is receptive to obtaining information on the merits of the plant variety protection implemented by the CPVO. The EU's priorities and strategic reference framework defined in Europe 2020 provide the setting within which the CPVO has a part to play towards a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.

## 2. Mission

The CPVO was established by Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 of 27 July 1994 on Community plant variety rights (OJ L 227 of 01.09.94 p.1). It was established with a view to creating a system of industrial property rights for plants, with uniform effect in the territory of the European Union.

The mission statement below, which is broadly in line with the one defined for the period 2010-2015, provides a clear *raison d'être* for the CPVO. It is on this solid basis, that the Strategic Vision is developed and the objectives and actions over the period 2017-2021 are derived.

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*To run and promote an efficient Intellectual Property Rights system that supports the creation of new plant varieties for the benefit of Society*

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This mission has many implications for how the CPVO works and develops over time. Achieving this means we will implement high quality, robust and defensible decisions which maintain the confidence of breeders and society as a whole. This in turn requires recruiting and developing staff with access to cutting-edge IT



tools, maintaining excellent relations with all our stakeholders while taking our responsibility as a worldwide player in Intellectual Property Rights for plants.

### **3. Organisational Values**

The CPVO is a knowledge organisation. Its key asset and potential is its staff. Fulfilling the CPVO mission requires that we have access to the best and brightest. We must also strive to remain at the forefront of what we do, through excellence in all our work and ensuring that we can react to an ever-changing environment.

The organisational values of the CPVO outlined below are important to us and necessary to fulfill our mission.

#### **3.1. People**

The CPVO is its people. They allow us to make an impact, responding to all our stakeholders needs and delivering results. Investing in and taking care of our people is investing in the future of the CPVO and the future of the PVP system.

We will focus on ensuring a working environment where teamwork, lifelong training and development will be possible while valuing individuals' staff rights to a healthy working environment and culture, thereby promoting the wellbeing of our staff.

#### **3.2. Innovation**

The CPVO will promote a culture of openness to new working methods and continuously strive to make ourselves better. The CPVO shall be innovative and open to organizational improvement and the use of new tools.

#### **3.3. Excellence**

The CPVO will set and achieve ambitious goals through competence, professionalism and integrity. We add value, and take pride in what we do and the service we provide.



## 4. Our Vision

Whereas the mission statement shows the CPVO's *raison d'être*, the vision outlines where we want to get to and what we want to become during the timeframe of the strategic plan.

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*The CPVO will be a dynamic, people-driven IP organisation, highly recognised within industry and the general public. As part of a strong network of IP players, it contributes to a coherent and harmonized legal framework for the benefit of its stakeholders and will be a 'natural choice' for protection of plant varieties.*

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## 5. Strategic Goals

The Strategic Goals guiding directions for the CPVO in order to achieve its vision are:

- Making PVR the natural choice for the protection of IP related to plant varieties
- An innovative, people-driven organisation, promoting EU values

We shall align our objectives and actions with these guiding principles.

## 6. Objectives / Activities

In order to achieve our vision, respecting the strategic goals defined above, concrete objectives and related activities shall be undertaken. These objectives cover

- Achieving excellence through people – giving life to our values
- Supporting breeders with a robust and reliable Intellectual Property Right
- Make the CPVO strong in a strong Intellectual Property network
- Promoting PVR, in the EU and internationally

### 6.1. Achieving excellence through people – giving life to our values

#### Challenges

The organisational values identified as most important by the CPVO must be cultivated. CPVO has to adapt to a changing environment and so have staff. This includes staying abreast of developments and matching ambitions and manpower. Areas where an impact can be made are quality management, HR and communication.

#### 6.1.1. Recruit and develop staff in line with real needs

It is important to match human resources to real needs. This refers both to the need to have adequate number of staff in order to avoid excessive structural overtime, and also to ensuring that staff are adequately trained to take on new challenges and remain up-to-speed with the evolving digital and operational environment.



### 6.1.2. Empower and motivate staff

The CPVO will capitalise on the capacities of its staff through promotion of autonomy and through delegation of responsibilities.

### 6.1.3. Cost efficiency

High quality, low cost decisions for the benefit of breeders. This can be done through the continuous improvement of work processes and permanent attention to reduction of costs.

### 6.1.4. Communication

Efficient communication, both internally and with external stakeholders is crucial. The implementation of the recommendations of the external communication evaluation shall be a priority. Best practices for internal communication shall be pursued and knowledge management approaches shall be applied.

## 6.2. Supporting breeders with a robust and reliable Intellectual Property Right

### Challenges

The CPVO focuses on ensuring that the breeders have full confidence in the decisions taken and also that the costs of such decisions remain reasonable. For that purpose all tools providing excellence in the technical assessment of new plant varieties must be applied by the network of entrusted examination offices. The positive result of the variety examination, a Community plant variety right, must be reliable and defensible, both technically and legally, so that breeders can safely enforce their rights.

### 6.2.1. High quality, reliable DUS results and PVP decisions

The main output of the CPVO is the processing of applications and taking defensible decisions. Doing so requires close collaboration with Examination Offices and a constant focus on quality improvements. Furthermore, the CPVO shall promote cutting edge technologies for variety testing through appropriate Research and Development projects. Interactions with the CPVO will be made through user-friendly tools.

### 6.2.2. Contribute to the enforcement of Community rights

Cooperation with bodies related to enforcement such as the Observatory, EUROPOL, CEPOL and other law professionals should be pursued in order to raise awareness of breeders' rights. Seminars shall be organised to this end to disseminate this information widely.

## 6.3. Make the CPVO strong in a strong Intellectual Property network

### Challenges

The worldwide network of Intellectual Property players is considerable, and making an impact in this network will require investment in establishing and maintaining close contact with key players and in identifying opportunities.

Various Intellectual Property Rights systems offer choices to breeders. The CPVO believes that plant variety protection UPOV type is ideally adapted to breeders' needs while safeguarding further innovation and ultimately continuous progress for the benefit of society. At the same time plant varieties represent a small



proportion of the applications for protection of intellectual property. Vis-à-vis other forms of Intellectual Property the CPVO will have to collaborate and, at the same time, stand its ground by furthering the understanding for the particularities of plant variety protection.

#### 6.3.1. International cooperation

Through close collaboration with key IP actors (UPOV, EPO, EUIPO), participation in international events and seminars and visiting key stakeholders, the CPVO shall stay abreast of developments in the IP world and further the Plant Variety Right system through international networks.

### 6.4. Promoting PVR, in Europe and internationally

#### Challenges

The PVR system in place in the European Union is the world's largest in terms of the number of applications per year and is regarded as a model for many countries and regions considering creating or improving their Plant Variety protection systems. Promoting this system is beneficial not only for those countries, but also for the European Union.

Many varieties protected under the Community system are also marketed outside the European Union. International cooperation and harmonisation will benefit the breeders with access to other countries while as far as possible avoiding repeated testing and provide consumers and growers with new varieties from an even wider origin.

The public opinion about benefits of variety protection beyond the immediate economic relevance to individual breeders, such as more choices for consumers, response to environmental challenges and food security, is often due to misunderstanding or lack of information.

#### 6.4.1. Develop external communication

The recommendations of the evaluation of the CPVO external communication policy shall be implemented. This shall cover, amongst others, media coverage of PVP, drafting press releases, managing the relation to the press, and organisation information events with Media

#### 6.4.2. Promote the system

Through participation in working groups, seminars and events, the CPVO shall share best practices. The CPVO shall support other countries and regions in the implementation of the UPOV approach to PVP and participate in collaboration projects with other PVP authorities inside and outside the European Union. This should be formalised through the use of administrative agreements with non-EU countries.

#### 6.4.3. PVP Education programs

Cooperate with the EPO and EUIPO Academies and Universities in order to prepare and participate in specialized Master programs on plant variety rights and conferences.

