



CPVO

Community Plant Variety Office

CPVO's vision towards 2026

———— Strategic Plan 2022-2026 ————



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This document presents the Strategic Plan of the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO) for the period 2022-2026 (SP2026).

While the mission of the CPVO has remained relatively untouched, the pace of change in the environment and myriad challenges facing the CPVO mean that it has arrived at a crossroad.

Preparing and positioning the CPVO for the years to come requires ambition for it to be a key player in the evolving intellectual property (IP) and plant variety (PV) landscape, the openness to developing as an organisation based on a partnership approach and the necessary human and financial resources to best serve its stakeholders.

Within the scope of its mission, the CPVO has contributed to create incentives for innovation and to facilitating continual investment in new plant varieties¹, leading to higher and more sustainable outputs and to job creation in the European Union (EU) agriculture and horticulture sectors. The CPVO therefore contributed to the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth.² Food security has been and continues being one of the most important issues society is faced with, particularly in the context of climate change.

The CPVO, through the management of the Community plant variety rights (CPVR) system and through the execution of the tasks entrusted to it, contributes to this crucial policy by supporting all stakeholders with a stable system which promotes research and development (R&D) and breeding of better and improved varieties. High-yield, disease-resistant, stress-tolerant varieties which are better suited to the changing climatic conditions can only be promoted if the system of protection of such varieties is robust.

In that context, supporting its stakeholders in accessing, using and exploiting the IP system for the protection of new plant varieties on the basis of a cost-efficiency approach remains an important challenge for the CPVO.

¹ See GHK Consulting (2011): Evaluation of the Community Plant Variety Right acquis – Final Report. Frankfurt am Main: GHK Consulting”, as quoted in [“Impact of the Community Plant Variety Rights system on the EU economy and the environment”](#), jointly published by the EUIPO and the CPVO – April 2022 (“EUIPO-CPVO Study”), page 62.

² Communication from the Commission, [Europe 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth](#), COM (2010) 2020, Brussels, 3 March 2010.

Working together with the European Commission, its stakeholders, the network of examination offices, EU agencies and other IP players, the CPVO has promoted the sharing of information and expertise and has helped implementing EU policies more efficiently, responding to particular needs identified by the EU Institutions (EUI) and EU Member States.

The CPVO will continue fostering the highest technical harmonisation of practices and legal certainty on a high-quality level which aims at ensuring reliable, solid and enforceable decisions on Plant Variety Rights (PVR) in the EU. This remains a challenge for the CPVO that will require even better coordination between all players, both at EU level and internationally, to address the needs of the stakeholders.

Detailed performance indicators will be elaborated and included in the annual work programme of the CPVO. The Strategic Plan provides an overall vision of the future of the CPVO. It is translated, through the CPVO's Single Programming Document (SPD), into a series of multiannual and annual objectives to be implemented. Each year the CPVO will report on how the objectives have been implemented to its Administrative Council.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: FRANCESCO MATTINA



Francesco Mattina, President of the CPVO

The CPVO vision towards 2026 comes to birth in times of great and far-reaching changes. Business models based on globalised ones and new technologies on innovation in plant breeding are being affected by unprecedented challenges. On the one side, we have to respond to the effects of climate change; on the other side, the increasing consumers' demand for healthier and more nutritious food characterised by various culinary qualities, needs to be tackled with sustainable practices under various and often extreme agroecological conditions (for example, vegetables and fruits containing an increased number of antioxidant elements and higher vitamin levels, disease, drought and heat-tolerant varieties that can be grown everywhere and possibly with a smaller environmental footprint).

In this context, the SP2026 is a key element of the CPVO's performance management framework, helping ensure that the CPVO achieves its objectives in an efficient, effective and consistent manner.

Under a new collaborative framework, the CPVO will focus on the creation of strategic partnerships strengthening their efforts wherever they will have the greatest impact, based on partnerships clear objectives to insightful digital data sharing mechanisms.

The CPVO strives for continuous enhancement of its customer service levels. The flexibility that results from key strategic alliances, supported by wider communication activities, can provide significant leverage for improving operational efficiency to the benefit of our users. The Office will continue cooperating with partners such as the European Commission, examination offices in the EU Member States, international organisations like the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), other institutions and bodies as well as the network of European Agencies, universities and User Associations. This participatory leadership approach will support a better fact-based decision-making, and greater automation where opportunities arise that are technologically driven aiming at reducing manual intervention and costs' savings.

As regards the organisational model of the CPVO, the rapid evolution of the breeding sector at European and global level requires a flexible, efficient, open, inclusive and accountable agency capable of quickly adapting to new challenges that are likely to become increasingly harder to anticipate or foresee.

Overall, the CPVO will need to implement promptly effective process changes and updates, as they become necessary. This requires agile teams with high specialization in different domains that can carry out different functions following an interdisciplinary approach by empowering mid-level cross-functional teams.

We aim at developing a “greener” and “more digital” organisation based on a stronger teamwork culture and a broad toolbox of dynamic skill sets, digital tools, personal lifelong learning path and development programs and long-term career options that would support staff to work smarter and profit from new challenges and opportunities, while guaranteeing a good work-life balance in a sustainable physical environment.

In summary, in my capacity as President of the CPVO, I commit to warrant the good execution of the SP2026:

- guaranteeing and coordinating the smooth processing of CPVO's core business activities;
- instilling and nurturing a corporate culture that embraces change and that is aligned with European values;
- enabling foresight and building new strategic partnerships to pave the way for a future-proof organisation that has a voice to address tomorrow's societal challenges.

BACKGROUND / RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

2017-2021 Strategic Plan retrospective

In accordance with Article 29 of the CPVO Financial Regulation, the CPVO performed a retrospective evaluation of the performance of the CPVO under the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (Retrospective Report), as one of the initiatives to lay foundations for the development of the SP2026.

For the first time since several years, a participatory leadership approach was implemented in information gathering, both internally (about the organisation and its culture) and externally (about the surrounding economic and market conditions), collecting the source material and process for the development of the SP2026. This exercise served as a basis to formulate the SP2026 strategic goals. The CPVO staff and management had the opportunity to take part in different social events and express their views, share their experience and ideas.

Moreover, one-to-one and group interviews have been carried out by the President with all CPVO staff.

In parallel, an equivalent participatory exercise was run by organizing interviews with key stakeholders and partners – namely the European Commission, users' organisations, representatives from the breeders, academia, other international organisations, bodies and representatives from EU Member States' authorities. Furthermore, study visits were organized in different Member States where examination offices, breeding companies and breeders' organisations have been consulted.

In particular, the main external stakeholders were consulted to answer strategic questions, regarding the general policies affecting the CPVO's mission, the developments, innovations and challenges that may affect the work of the CPVO, including a reflection on areas for improvement.

The analysis was therefore based on internal and external data intelligence, as well as on the statutory reporting and planning documents of previous years (Single Programming Document - "SPD" and Consolidated Annual Activity Report - "CAAR") and on the monitoring of performance indicators established for the attainment of the strategic objectives. Moreover, the management has been conducting individual and group interviews with the staff and organising workshops to reflect upon the future of the CPVO and where it should stand in the short and long term.

Overall, the activities carried out during the past 5 years have contributed to the accomplishment of the objectives linked to the *raison d'être* of the CPVO. The SP2026 will continue in the direction of improving CPVO's services and enhancing its relevance in the breeding sector, not forgetting the commitment to make it better known among the general public and decision-makers.

IMPACT of the EU PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION SYSTEM³



The protection of new plant varieties is a specific form of industrial property right applied in various countries around the world. The objective is to encourage and promote the creation of new varieties and to improve the quality of products for the benefit of consumers.

The EU protection system managed by the CPVO provides added value in the sense that breeders can achieve a return on investment throughout the entire European Union. All botanical taxa are eligible for protection.

To date, ornamental species account for the largest number of applications (approximately 49 %), ahead of agricultural species (approximately 29 %) and fruit and vegetable species (approximately 22 %).

More than 3 000 applications are processed annually by the CPVO, over the years adding up to 2400 species and making it the most extensive system of its kind in the world. Although applications are received primarily from individuals and companies in EU Member States, almost 25 % come from countries outside the European Union. A large majority of the applicants are Small and medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). This represents 90% of all applicants for CPVR according to the recent EUIPO-CPVO Study.⁴

³ "Impact of the Community Plant Variety Rights system on the EU economy and the environment", jointly published by the EUIPO and the CPVO - April 2022. Hereinafter "EUIPO-CPVO Study".

⁴ EUIPO-CPVO Study.

Assessment of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The CPVO has been successfully managing the CPVR system since 1995 under Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 of 27 July 1994 (Basic Regulation).

The CPVO is an intensive knowledge-based organisation in which technical and legal specializations are mutually supportive in different domains. The CPVO has developed a deep expertise in plant variety fields and has a strong relationship with plant breeders and other players in the plant variety ecosystem. The fast changes in the technological landscape in the field of life sciences, which make various business models possible, each adapted to the peculiarities of a given crop sector (ornamentals, agriculture, horticulture and fruits), may have a major impact on the management of the CPVR system.

Some of the emerging technologies applicable to agriculture and horticulture, such as the use of robots, imagery from drones and satellites (remote sensing) and machine learning, coupled with advanced plant breeding programs that facilitate the identification of better traits in plant varieties, are intended to help farmers and growers improve efficiency and return on investment. New plant varieties are adaptable to changing environments, where light, temperature, humidity, and nutrients can be measured with an improved set of tools.

The CPVO needs to stay abreast of these developments, to continue satisfying the demand for a robust IPR system capable of supporting plant innovation in the context of the European Green Deal and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

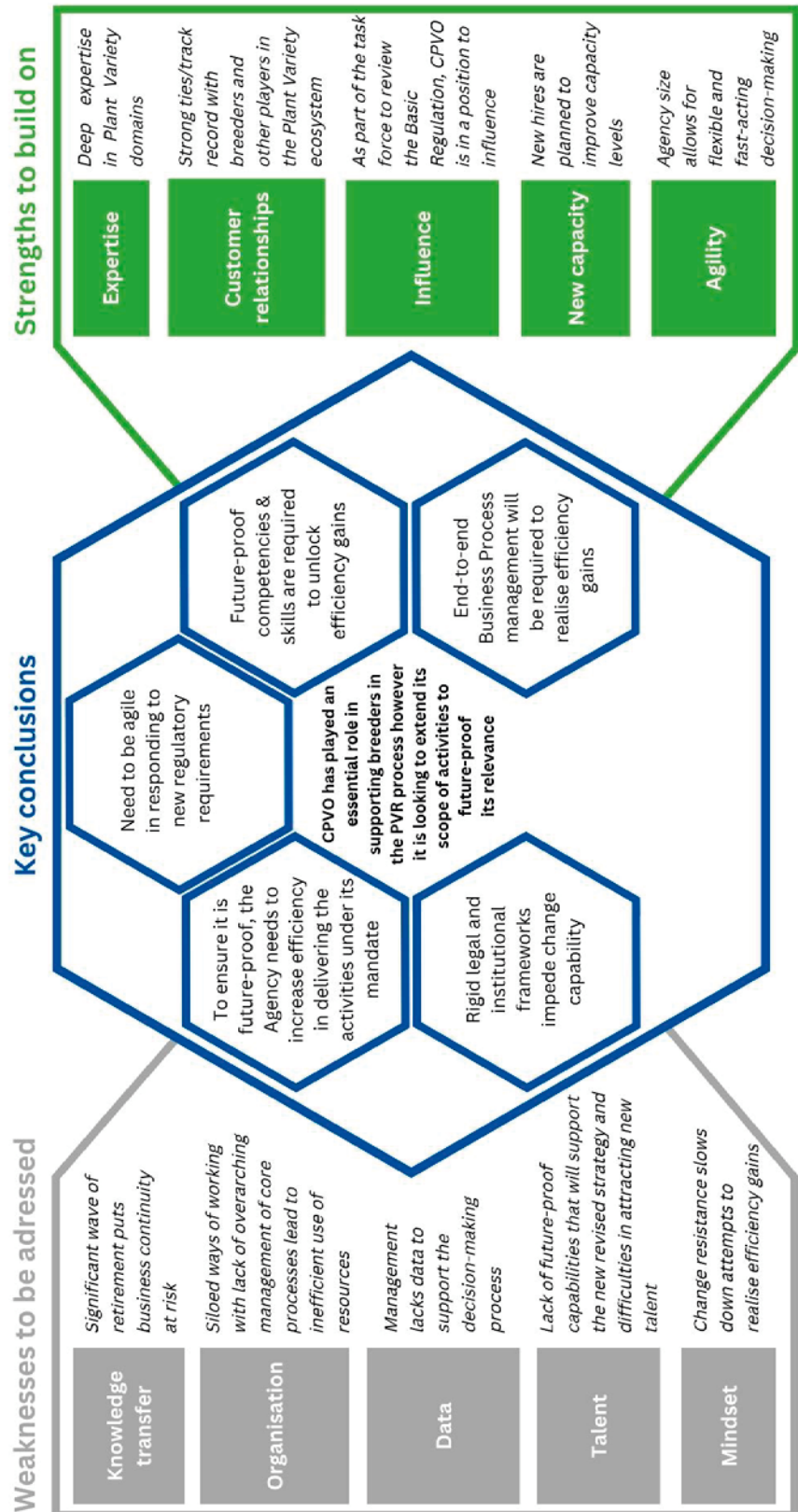
The CPVO must guarantee business continuity securing a proper knowledge transfer to improve processes, which are necessary to manage the CPVR system. The CPVO lacks business intelligence necessary to determine industry trends and understand stakeholders' needs, given the rapid pace of technological change, which is also shaping business models.

Within this framework, the CPVO needs to ensure an effective CPVR system. In the case of SMEs, the system would benefit from supporting the implementation of the Commission Intellectual Property action plan⁵ (IP Action Plan) and making use of existing SMEs tools for plant variety protection, delivering high-quality public service that assist European business to become more competitive in the European and in the global marketplace.

The CPVO performed a thorough review of the operations with an external consultant, with a view to ensuring a "future-proof" organisation. This allowed the CPVO to have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses and to set up a roadmap for the way forward.

5 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *Making the most of the EU's innovative potential An intellectual property action plan to support the EU's recovery and resilience*; COM/2020/760 final.

Figure: High-level diagnostic of the CPVO



THE COMMUNITY PLANT VARIETY OFFICE: MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

1.1. Who we are

The Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO) is a self-financed EU agency responsible for the management of the Community Plant Variety Rights (CPVR) system. Located in Angers, France, the CPVO was created by the Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 and has been operational since April 1995.

The European Union's system of protection for plant varieties, which is based on the principles of the 1991 Act of the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (the UPOV Convention), contributes to the development of agriculture and horticulture. By stimulating innovation and research, the EU system promotes the development of new varieties in the marketplace.

The CPVR system incorporates the principle of the breeders' exemption, which guarantees free access to protected varieties for the development and exploitation of new plant varieties.

1.2. What we do and how we work

In managing the system, the CPVO fulfils the mandate of the Basic Regulation. The core task of the CPVO is processing of and taking decisions on applications for CPVRs.

The CPVO is supervised by an Administrative Council (AC) composed of representatives of the Member States and of the European Commission, as well as observers. The AC lays down general guidelines, monitors activities, and adopts the budget.

The CPVO is managed by its President who is assisted by a Vice-President; both are appointed by the Council of the European Union. The CPVO currently employs about 50 staff members of various European nationalities in separate units and support services, including an independent Quality Audit Service. Alongside the CPVO a Board of Appeal (BoA) comprising independent members (a chairperson nominated by the Council of the European Union and two other members) has been established. It is responsible for deciding on appeals made against decisions taken by the CPVO. Actions against the decisions of the Board of Appeal can be lodged before the Court of Justice of the European Union ("CJEU").

1.3. Who we work with

In the granting process of a CPVR, the application goes through formal, substantial and technical examinations, to assess if the candidate variety meets the legal and technical requirements set in the Regulations⁶. While formal and substantial checks are performed directly by the CPVO, technical examinations are entrusted to competent bodies in the European Member States (national Examination Offices). Technical examinations are conducted in accordance with protocols established by the CPVO and are monitored by its technical experts.

Furthermore, the CPVO either directly or by its Administrative Council, advises the EU institutions and the European Member States on Plant Variety Rights legislation and related policy areas. The CPVO furthers effective plant variety protection through awareness raising activities designed to support the enforcement of plant variety rights. It also supports research and development activities aimed at improving DUS testing methods with national Examination Offices.

The CPVO is involved in European funded projects with the European Commission, other European Agencies, Member States' authorities, international partners, breeders' organisations and academia.

⁶ The regulations governing the CPVR system are, at the moment of writing and considering them as amended in time: Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 of 27 July 1994 on Community plant variety rights; Commission Regulation (EC) No 874/2009 of 17 September 2009 establishing implementing rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 as regards proceedings before the Community Plant Variety Office; Commission Regulation (EC) No 1238/95 of 31 May 1995 establishing implementing rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 as regards the fees payable to the Community Plant Variety Office; Commission Regulation (EC) No 1768/95 of 24 July 1995 implementing rules on the agricultural exemption provided for in Article 14 (3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 2100/94 on Community plant variety rights. As well, two regulations regarding the extension of duration of CPVRs: Council Regulation (EC) No 2470/96 of 17 December 1996 providing for an extension of the terms of a Community plant variety right in respect of potatoes; [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1873 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the extension of the term of the Community plant variety rights for varieties of the species *Asparagus officinalis* L. and of the species groups flower bulbs, woody small fruits and woody ornamentals](#)

1.4. Mission, Vision and Values

The alignment of CPVO's mission with its vision and values lays the foundation of the SP2026. The mission clarifies the CPVO purpose, while the vision clarifies what the organisation will look like and how it will behave in fulfilling its mission. The values are principles identified by the CPVO Staff. They will guide the behaviour of the CPVO staff and their relationships with stakeholders.



Mission

The CPVO operates, develops and promotes an efficient intellectual property rights system providing customer-centric services, thereby supporting innovation and the creation of new plant varieties for the benefit of society.



Vision

The CPVO is a growing world-class dynamic, people-driven IP organisation, recognised as a data driven customer-centric centre of excellence by the global plant breeding industry, stakeholder organisations, national and international authorities, and the general public.

As part of a strong intellectual property network, it contributes to a coherent and harmonized legal framework for the benefit of its stakeholders and will be a valued partner for all matters related to plant varieties.



Values

The CPVO is a knowledge-based organisation. Its key asset and potential lie in 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 in the future of the PVR system.

Fulfilling the CPVO mission requires that we have access to the best and the brightest. We must also strive to remain at the forefront of what we do, through excellence in all our work and through ensuring that we can react with flexibility to an ever-changing environment.

The CPVO promotes a culture of honesty, transparency, accountability and openness to new working methods and will continuously strive to improve. The CPVO shall be innovative and will facilitate the development of techniques and services that advance the PVR system.

The CPVO will set and achieve ambitious goals through the values embraced by its staff:

- **Integrity:** only by aspiring to the highest standards of integrity CPVO can ensure its credibility. When we have integrity, we act ethically, which means adhering consistently to ethical standards and making sound decisions based on them.
- **Flexibility:** new ideas drive continuous improvement, and flexibility is the key for a dynamic mindset, open to innovating and being creative.
- **Keep it human and simple:** our talents are committed to deliver an efficient and effective work, and this is translated in meeting measurable goals for today and tomorrow.
- **Respect and equal treatment:** we respect and embrace the diversity of our staff, our customers and our stakeholders and believe in creating a working environment based on fairness, non-discrimination, building good working relationships and inclusion.



STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS



The CPVO is facing significant pressure to evolve its role, with increased expectations from all stakeholders (interinstitutional, breeders, examination offices etc.) stemming from the developing socio-economic situation; the impact of inflation which in the first quarter of 2022 across Europe recorded the highest levels in a decade, political priorities and strategies of the European Commission and ensuing programmes and regulatory reforms.

Growing global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and geopolitical conflicts, impact the way the CPVO operates. As an EU Agency, the CPVO must adjust to new ways of working, utilise advanced digitalisation and continued focus on creating a sustainable organisation.

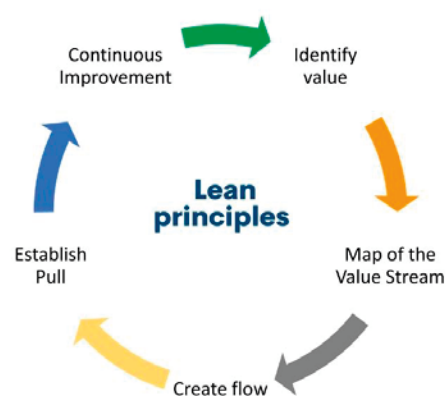
The strategic goals presented below, demonstrate not only the desire to continuously improve the inner workings of the CPVO, the commitment to deliver upon our mission to our stakeholders, but also the clear contribution of the CPVO to some of the desired outcomes of the EU political priorities such as:

- "to accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems that have a neutral or positive environmental impact, can adapt to or mitigate climate change, ensure food security and make healthy diets the easy choice for EU citizens ⁷";
- "to reduce dependency on pesticides and antimicrobials, reduce excess fertilisation, increase organic farming and improve animal welfare" under the Farm to Fork (F2F) and the Biodiversity Strategies of the European Commission;
- supporting activities under the Commission IP Action Plan and contributing to the European Research framework programme Horizon Europe.

⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system*, COM/2020/381 final.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1 - STRIVE FOR OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The aim of operational excellence is to ensure that our users and stakeholders' expectations are met, by continually improving our processes and the breadth and quality of the services we provide. It is a culture and mindset that uses principles and tools to ensure that we strive continually towards excellence in everything we do.



Lean management refers to a technique developed with the aim of minimising the process waste and maximising the value of the service to the customer, without compromising the quality.

1.1. Continuous improvement of operational processes

The CPVO intends to develop its capacity and capability to optimise its operating framework through the adoption and development of a Lean management practice whose objective is to continuously improve, monitor and control business processes ensuring they deliver cost effective value to CPVO's stakeholders.

The success of this effort will depend on developing our staff competencies and supporting a change of mindset. All units and services shall review and update their processes and procedures under the Lean principles to improve effectiveness, efficiency and adaptability and the working culture through better organisation, workflow efficiency, standards and behavioural change.

The new Digital Transformation Unit shall pilot initiatives and coordinate a coherent approach across all units and services of the CPVO.

1.2. Strengthen internal control

Internal control applies to all activities, irrespective of whether they are administrative or operational. It is a process that ensures that the CPVO achieves its objectives whilst respecting applicable rules and regulations.

To meet the evolving operating context of the CPVO and updated operational and administrative processes, the internal control framework will be strengthened in 4 key areas:



- the risk management practice will be better embedded in all CPVO administration, operations, or project activities to face growing threats and uncertainties. Risk assessment and mapping are carried out regularly with the support of the Internal Auditor, and risks are therefore well identified;
- monitoring of activities will be improved to provide timely and actionable information on any deficiencies, and systematic follow-up controls on remediations, focusing on processes that are often transversal;
- adapt control framework for upcoming regulatory changes (Basic regulation, Seat Agreement, Cybersecurity, Data Governance act ⁸, ...);
- set up a sustainability program for the CPVO, identify and coordinate opportunities to reduce CPVO's carbon footprint.

⁸ Regulation (EU) 2022/868 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2022 on European data governance and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 (Data Governance Act). The Data Governance Act came into force in June 2022 and it shall apply from 24 September 2023

1.3. Ensure preparedness for upcoming regulatory framework changes

The CPVO is bound by the existing legal framework, linked not only to the CPVR system, but also to its legal personality as EU decentralised agency, to which it needs to be compliant. But said framework evolves, as society and the challenges that it confronts.

Climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, the energy crisis, inflation, and food security questions linked to the war in Ukraine are some of the most important and urgent challenges to which the EU (and the CPVO, in line with its mission) needs to respond.

Moreover, technology developments as well as other factors, such as geopolitical tensions, have given rise to new cybersecurity threats and challenges, such as the increase of attacks and phishing, among others.

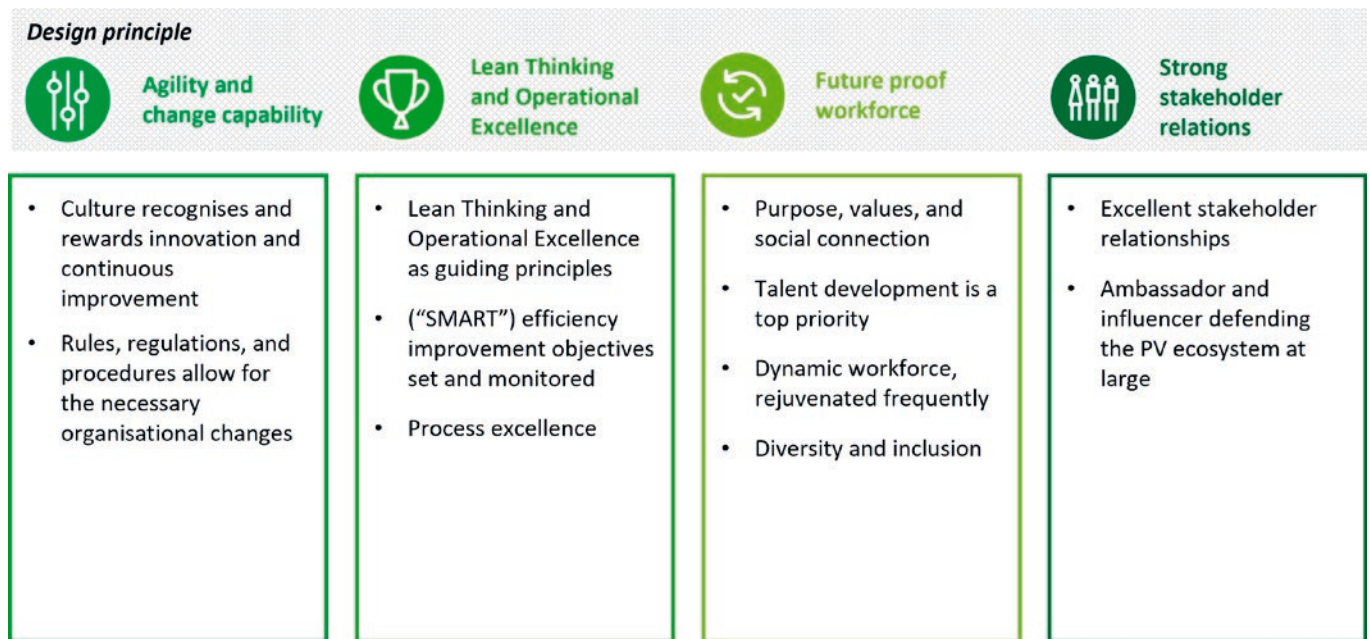
The CPVO intends to:



- take a more active advisory role at the service of the European Commission for the revision of the EU plant and forest reproductive material (PRM) legislation which aims to modernise and to better align with the goals of the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork, Biodiversity as well as the new EU Forest and EU Adaptation Strategies;
- evolve CPVO's cybersecurity practice for the upcoming EU regulation that establishes common cybersecurity measures across the European Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies;
- review and adapt Data Governance practices to align with the evolutions of EUDPR jurisprudence and the new Data Governance Act that creates a framework for data sharing (re-use), such as data held by public bodies and protected under data protection laws, confidentiality and IPRs.

1.4. Ensure a fit for purpose organisational model

Four design principles have been set to address the identified weaknesses (discussed in the introduction) and built on the identified strengths to future-proof the CPVO organisation model:



The CPVO faces some limitations that prevent an immediate application of the full scope of recommended changes to the organisational structure. These limitations are correlated to the number of available posts in the establishment plan, the impact of the wave of retirements in the upcoming years, and time required for staff up-skilling/re-skilling when the required new expertise allows it, and/or acquisition of new talents.

1.4.1. People and Resources Unit

The People and Resources Unit (previously known as ‘Administration Unit’) faces several critical challenges such as a high proportion of staff close to retirement age (20 % of staff will have retired by end 2024); strong competition for talents with other public Agencies / organisations and the private sector and record high inflation.

The Unit will develop and rollout an HR strategy that, among others:



- implements a modern HR structure and accompanying process for management and staff to allow HR to play a strategic role as business partner for management and staff alike;
- ensures that the CPVO has the right skills and competencies needed by attracting and retaining the right talents and expertise whilst improving balance (geographical and gender);

- develops human capital where gaps in training and knowledge exist, to enable CPVO's existing and future aspirations;
- ensures sound financial management by executing CPVO's financial resources according to the principles of **economy**, **efficiency** and **effectiveness**;
- inflation mitigation: The CPVO aims to achieve efficiencies by reducing unnecessary expenses and costs in terms of time, money and duplication of current tasks.

1.4.2. Legal & Governance Affairs (L&GA) Unit

A **Legal & Governance Affairs (L&GA) Unit** was created from the merger of the Legal Service, the Procurement Sector and the Registry, which all previously held legal or legally related roles and procedures. They will be unified under a common 'roof' to gain efficiency and accentuate its transversal role.

The new Unit aims to:



- support the CPVO granting robust CPVRs in close cooperation with technical experts, starting with the reception of the application and finalising with the defence of decisions before the CJEU;
- digitalise legal procedures to facilitate the management of applications, making them more responsive, agile and reliable;
- ensure compliance with legally related obligations, linked to transparency, data protection, staff regulations, financial obligations, or public procurement, to mention some of them.

1.4.3. Plant Variety Expertise Unit

To reinforce the role of the CPVO being a Centre of Excellence for the PV sector, the **Plant Variety Expertise Unit** (previously known as 'Technical Unit') will transfer the Registry duties over to the L&GA Unit.

The Unit will focus on the assessment of applications for CPVR, new technological developments and their impact on technical examination (in particular, on the assessment of Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability requirements, so called DUS) with a view to ensure quality and improve efficiencies, keeping costs under control, monitoring Examination Offices' practices and harmonizing best practices.

The new Unit aims to:



- ensure high-quality DUS testing in view of the granting of solid IP rights;
- improve efficiencies in processing PVR applications and related processes;
- create a Research and Innovation (R&I) sector to foster applied R&D in PV-testing and be highly recognised internationally for its expertise and the value it adds to the sector;
- increase data portability and exchange between Examination Offices, CPVO and other stakeholders (i.e. UPOV/European Commission/European Patent Office (EPO)).

1.4.4. Digital Transformation Unit

The IT Unit will be renamed to the **Digital Transformation Unit** (DTU) to reflect its revised scope of work changing the mindset from a purely IT support function to a more strategic Unit that acts as a business partner throughout the CPVO to understand the specific goals of the overall organisation and its individual units.

Within the Digital Transformation Unit, a new sector, the **Transformation Office**, will be created to pilot and sustain transformational programmes and new practices empowering the Agency's digital transformation. It will facilitate end-to-end Business Process efficiency by breaking down silos and championing agility. It will also provide actionable data for management to take data-driven decisions.



The new Unit aims to:

- ensure secure, robust, scalable, cloud-enabled and cost-effective digital operations meeting stakeholders' needs;
- becoming structurally agile to quicken its responsiveness capacity to the increasing frequency and complexity of changes of CPVO's operating context;
- developing CPVO's transformational management practices (Lean, Strategy, Performance, Content, Business Intelligence, Projects, Programmes and Portfolio management).

1.5. Other organisational optimisations

The Quality Audit Service (QAS) tasks are similar in nature to Internal Control mechanisms and Risk Management practices, thus **QAS** and **Internal Control and Risk Management** will be consolidated under the CPVO Vice President to group all control activities outside of the other Units/Sectors thus avoiding potential conflicts of interest.

A **communication and stakeholder relations sector** has been setup with a broader scope of activities to better focus on advocacy, public policy, stakeholders' relationship, international and outreach activities.

1.6. Ensure reliability of entrustment decisions for Examination Offices

QAS shall ensure that the entrustment requirements remain on an adequate level and are duly implemented and that robust recommendations on entrustment of Examination Offices are presented to the Administrative Council within a specified time frame after any individual assessment exercise is finalised.

QAS aims to:



- implement the entrustment requirements within the quality audit plan;
- monitor the compliance of Examination Offices with the entrustment requirements.



STRATEGIC GOAL 2: DEVELOP THE PVR VALUE CHAIN

Over the last decades, the CPVO has been rather successful supporting breeders with a robust and reliable IP right system, however, both internal and external stakeholders have suggested optimising the scope/range of activities to provide a more seamless, richer and yet simplified set of services, or 'one stop PV shop', to deliver the most value for users.



2.1. Identify Plant Variety domains where the CPVO ought to be (more) present

The CPVO can contribute to identify PV domains where its users seek additional services. Inefficiencies linked to navigating among service providers, lacking critical timely information or advice, disjointed processes are a *reservoir* of opportunities for the CPVO to strengthen the PV value chain.



The CPVO will:

- keep abreast with latest developments in plant breeding including their contribution to a sustainable and resilient agri-food system, become a centre of competency for our stakeholders and advise policy makers;
- ensure that variety descriptions as a result of a DUS examination by entrusted Examination Offices are the basis for granting an IP right but also for the registration of varieties for marketing purposes and representing an integral part of seed certification for agricultural crops;

- seek enhanced cooperation with organisations engaged in closely related fields in order to mutually benefit from respective activities and expertise and join forces where possible (e.g. UPOV, OECD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), etc.);
- support the enhancement of PVRs enforcement working in close collaboration with partners, such as the European Commission, the Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights (the Observatory) based in the EUIPO, EU Member States' authorities, Users Organisations at national and regional level, law enforcers, public prosecutors and judges, other institutions and bodies and academia to share best practices, intelligence, and resources;
- continue the work to support European breeders and right holders, in particular SMEs, to increase education and raise awareness through seminars, workshops, practical trainings and courses for stakeholders and IP enforcement practitioners, agents and the courts and any other tool made available under the European IP Action Plan, such as the SMEs Fund, or other initiatives that may be adopted within the execution of the SP2026. In this respect, we will continue to work closely with the Observatory to deliver the projects set out in its annual work programme and seek opportunities for further close collaboration.

2.2. Provide support for the harmonisation of DUS testing procedures

By keeping abreast with developments in plant breeding, the CPVO ensures that technical procedures and technical protocols continuously enable innovative varieties to be protected. As the CPVO has built over the last decades full confidence in its decisions and the underlying variety examinations carried out within the network of entrusted examination offices, it will:



- strive to take a leading role in further developing the technical procedures in the relevant fora in the EU and internationally;
- provide advice and assistance in outreach activities which promote the adoption of high-quality standards of DUS testing to countries/organisations outside the EU. This will ensure that the CPVO has a higher level of trust in the contracting of DUS testing or taking over of technical reports from such countries in compliance with the applicable European legal framework, as well as promoting the UPOV principle of exchange of DUS technical reports amongst its members to ease administrative burdens for breeders.

2.3. Enhance our capabilities to monitor, support and influence PV R&D developments

As an EU Agency in charge of managing the PVR system in the EU, the CPVO aims at being involved in the implementation of the F2F strategy where a direct link with plant breeding and the creation of new varieties benefits from the support provided through the R&D activities.

As regards Horizon Europe (HE), the Commission has underlined the important role of EU Agencies not only as a multiplier in disseminating results and exploiting research knowledge but also in shaping the research agenda. Accordingly, the objective for the CPVO is to provide:



- expertise and advice so that EU funded projects related to variety research and testing are designed and implemented in a way that supports its strategic goals;
- expertise and advice in shaping the research agenda in the field of its mission and tasks, the CPVO could, on request of the European Commission, provide assistance in:
 1. the preparation of the HE strategic planning;
 2. the drafting of the HE work-programme and;
 3. the dissemination of results including recommendations and the implementation of the latter where appropriate.
- Through networking and cooperating with European and international partners, co-financing specific projects that have the potential to impact the quality and efficiency of DUS testing and closely monitoring innovative trends, the CPVO will strengthen the PVR system in order to maintain a strong incentive for the development of new and improved varieties.

2.4. Develop PVR awareness programmes

PVRs are a form of IP that foster R&I in the plant domain. Plant breeding applies to all botanical genera and species. Breeding techniques build up on natural features that are specific to each crop. The breeding industry implements R&I according to various business models, each particular to a specific sector (agriculture, horticulture, fruits and ornamentals). Against this background, the necessity to develop PVR awareness programmes, will improve the understanding and experience of relevant target audiences to take proper actions.



The CPVO aims to:

- continue to be a reference of excellence in the plant innovation sector and in raising PVR awareness, as well as in following/monitoring future trends that might have an impact on PVRs and plant innovation in the future;
- build a PVR section in the Academy Learning Portal of EUIPO: the creation of a PVR section in the Academy Learning Portal of EUIPO is a very good opportunity to raise awareness on the PVR system, gain visibility as an EUI and provide users or potential users with tools to better understand our system. In this respect, it is of great importance that such section contains a diversity of courses, that are useful, rigorous and of interest to the general public, with a special focus on the public involved in the agri-food sector;
- continue providing lectures, webinars and presentations in relevant/targeted scenarios in order for the CPVO to be seen as a centre of expertise and excellence and to raise awareness on the PVR system.

2.5. Strengthen PVR value chain through enhanced digital interactions and tools

The CPVO has developed a growing number of digital platforms addressing the needs of its various stakeholders and PVR processes. The multiplication of tools and functionalities is however increasing complexity for users who may find it difficult to navigate to the right functionality.

The CPVO therefore aims to:



- improve user experience by mapping and understanding user journeys; customizing user experience where appropriate; providing advanced self-administration capabilities optimizing for speed and accessibility; investigating multilingual support and continuously researching, validating and redesigning platforms interfaces;
- continue expanding the capabilities of its platforms to strengthen core digital services. Focus will be given on Customer relationship management (CRM); Content management (CMS); Business Intelligence (BI); Secured communication; Advanced process automation and Customised digital interactions;
- invest in innovative digital areas of interest such as: Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered Chat Bots to improve user support and facilitate training; Machine Learning to improve PV denominations recognition/suggestion algorithms; Blockchain for catalogue management; Big Data for PVR; etc.

2.6. Ensure cost-effective, high-quality DUS testing as basis of CPVR protection

Article 15(5) of Commission Regulation (EC) No 874/2009 requires the CPVO's Examination Offices to periodically submit to the CPVO a breakdown of the costs of the technical examinations performed. This breakdown is the basis for the review of the fees for the conduct of technical examinations.

Whereas the entrustment requirements aim at ensuring the quality of the DUS testing, the regular cost calculation exercise performed according to an agreed method aims at ensuring a harmonised, transparent and cost based setting of fees.

The CPVO will:



- strive for achieving efficiency gains through Technical Protocol discussions, by sharing best practices between national Examination Offices and by identifying exploitable R&D results;
- continue strengthening the incentives for Examination Offices to offer services at affordable cost and at the same time maintaining high quality level.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: CONTRIBUTE TO SHAPING A LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FIT FOR PURPOSE

The CPVO is a decentralised EU agency that manages the Community Plant Variety Rights system. Its main legal basis, as mentioned, is the Basic Regulation which establishes the legal pillars of the system of protection of new plant varieties in the European Union.

Since then, many changes have occurred in the PVR/plant innovation sector, linked to technical progress and urgent challenges such as the climate change, that need to be addressed and reflected in a new revision of the Basic Regulation.



3.1. Basic Regulation fit for purpose

Logically, the revision of the Basic Regulation will have a direct impact on the legal framework of the CPVO, in particular in the existing implementing regulations such as the Proceedings Regulation and the Fees Regulation which are implementing acts of the Basic Regulation ⁹.

The CPVO will therefore:



- support the European Commission as regards the revision of the Basic Regulation that, on the one hand, reflects the changes and evolutions in the PVR/plant innovation sector and is better suited to respond to them and, on the other hand, to correct deficiencies in the Regulation
- help the Commission in the Better Regulation process ¹⁰ - for instance, by preparing proposals for articles to be corrected and proposals for improvement, to be ready when the Commission decides to launch the revision of the Basic Regulation.

On 6 December 1996, the Intergovernmental Conference of representatives of the Member States decided that the seat of the CPVO would be in Angers and since then it has been in France. However, in all these years the CPVO has not signed a seat agreement with France, an agreement which would be very beneficial, as it would give clarity on the legal situation of the CPVO.



- Secure seat agreement: a seat agreement signed with France would ensure a proper application of the Protocol of privileges and immunities to the CPVO, which would be very beneficial as it would give clarity on the legal situation of the CPVO in our hosting country.

⁹ See footnote 6 for the list of Regulations.

¹⁰ [Better Regulation Agenda](#) of the EU Commission.

3.2. Build capabilities to anticipate and influence policy making

The CPVO must follow and anticipate future trends and developments that might have an impact on PVRs and plant innovation in the future, to be capable to be a step beyond or at least to be aware of developments and ready to react.

This is the case with technical developments, such as new breeding techniques, new variety types (e.g. True Potato Seeds) or new species trends (e.g. Cannabis), but also related to other potential options for breeders to seek protection for plant innovations, such as plant related patents or trademarks.

Moreover, there are new developments linked to technology that might have an impact as well both in the plant innovation and in the functioning of the CPVO. That would be the case, for example, for new tools developed in the Biomolecular techniques (BMT) area, for possibilities offered by using Artificial Intelligence or the use of blockchain technology.

The CPVO will:



- build confidence with relevant decision-makers, to place the CPVO as a natural partner to provide support in the drafting of EU PVR related regulations, and to ensure that the CPVR system keeps flourishing for the benefit of society
- strengthen CPVO's 'technology watch' capabilities through a horizon scanning approach across all units; develop exploratory mindset embracing opportunities and invest in prototyping and proof testing innovative procedures, methods and technologies.

3.3. Facilitate cooperation between EU and other institutional partners in matters of PVR

PVR related initiatives could benefit from identifying and involving appropriate actors at the right time. The CPVO proposes to facilitate the intermediation between EU and other institutional partners in matters of PVR:



- provide PVR advice/support to the European Commission
- prepare awareness campaigns towards co-legislators (European Parliament and Council of the European Union)
- support and bring forward EU objectives related to the CPVO's field of activity in international fora like UPOV, OECD and FAO
- seek cooperation with other EUIs (EUIPO, European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)) or other organisations (EPO and Customs Organisations, etc...): among others, those aimed at fostering cooperation in enforcement and policy studies as well as increasing the general awareness in other institutions of the PVR system.

3.4. Communications & outreach

External communication as well as institutional and stakeholders outreach activities are essential for the CPVO to thrive. Communication and in particular online communication enable the CPVO to promote the CPVR system, its activities, tools and procedures, and its people.

It also allows the CPVO to:



- leverage collective intelligence and to connect with and receive feedback from the breeding community, multipliers of plant material and policymakers;
- put more emphasis on stakeholders and institutional outreach activities in the next five years with the goal to help shape a legal and policy framework that remains fit for purpose. For instance, institutional outreach activities will be key to optimise the legal foundations of the CPVR system and to ensure the long-lasting sustainability of the CPVO;
- be perceived as a natural catalyst for all PVR awareness campaigns in Europe and as a go-to facilitator for PVR matters between the European Union and its Member States. Its ultimate outcome being its capacity to become the PV one-stop-shop for breeding innovators in the EU, with the view to support the EU's objectives in UPOV and in third countries.



3.5. Prepare the PVR professionals of tomorrow

The PVR system requires high specialisation spanning from life science, computer science, economics, statistics, IP and food law. The interconnections among these fields require an interdisciplinary approach. The CPVO will pave the way to prepare the PVR professionals of tomorrow by:



- broadening partnerships with schools and academia
- offering learning modules about the features of the CPVR system and its validity in today's world in order to gather interest from a larger proportion of students and professionals.



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation / Acronym	
A	
AC	Administrative Council
AI	Artificial Intelligence
B	
Basic Regulation	Council Regulation (EC) 2100/94 of 27 July 1994
BMT	Bio Molecular Techniques
C	
CAAR	Consolidated Annual Activity Report
CJUE	Court of Justice of the European Union
Commission, the	European Commission
CPVO	Community Plant Variety Office
CPVR	Community Plant Variety Rights
D	
DTU	Digital transformation Unit
DUS	Distinction – Uniformity – Stability
DUS	Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability
E	
EC	European Commission
EFSA	European Food Safety Agency
EO	Examination Office
EP	European Parliament
EPO	European Patent Office
EU	European Union
EUDPR	European Union Data Protection Regulation
EUI	European Union Institution
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office
F	
F2F	Farm to Fork
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
H	
HE	Horizon Europe
HR	Human Resources
I	
IP	Intellectual Property
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IT	Information Technology
L	
L&GA	Legal and Governance Affairs Unit
N	
NGT	New Genomic Techniques

Abbreviation / Acronym	
O	
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
P	
PRM	Plant and Forest Reproductive Material
PV	Plant Variety
PVP	Plant Variety Protection
PVR	Plant Variety Rights
Q	
QAS	Quality Audit Service
R	
R&D	Research and Development
R&I	Research and Innovation
S	
SME(s)	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise(s)
SP2026	CPVO Strategic Plan 2022-2026
SPD	Single Programming Document
U	
UN SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
UPOV	Union Internationale pour la Protection des Obtentions Végétales (International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants)



CPVO

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 CPVO Youtube channel

 @CPVOTweets

 Community Plant Variety Office

Служба на Общността за сортовете растения

Oficina Comunitaria de Variedades Vegetales

Odrůdový úřad Společenství

EF-Sortsmyndigheden

Gemeinschaftliches Sortenamt

Ühenduse Sordiamet

Κοινοτικό Γραφείο Φυτικών Ποικιλιών

Community Plant Variety Office

Office communautaire des variétés végétales

Ured Zajednice za zaštitu biljnih sorti

Ufficio comunitario delle varietà vegetali

Kopienas Augu šķirņu birojs

Bendrijos augalų veislių tarnyba

Közösségi Növényfajta-hivatal

L-Uffiċju Komunitarju dwar il-Varjetajiet tal-Pjanti

Communautair Bureau voor plantenrassen

Wspólnotowy Urząd Ochrony Odmian

Instituto Comunitário das Variedades Vegetais

Oficiul Comunitar pentru Soiuri de Plante

Úrad Spoločenstva pre odrody rastlín

Urad Skupnosti za rastlinske sorte

Yhteisön kasvilajikevirasto

Gemenskapens växtsortsmyndighet



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