

Communications report 2018

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In this report, we address the indicators of achievement of the communication strategy and action plan for 2019 and evaluate the activities based on the actual outcome.

1. Website

1.1 Website traffic

In 2018, the website has had approximately 52 daily visitors and 2722 monthly visitors, which represents an increase of **17%** compared to 2017 (figure 1). The audience was composed of mostly new visitors (87%) with 12% of returning visitors (figure 2) and average visit duration of 2.05 minutes. This indicates that more people are visiting the EUFORGEN website, but some of these additional visitors do not find the content of interest and thus leave immediately (bounce rate of 68%).

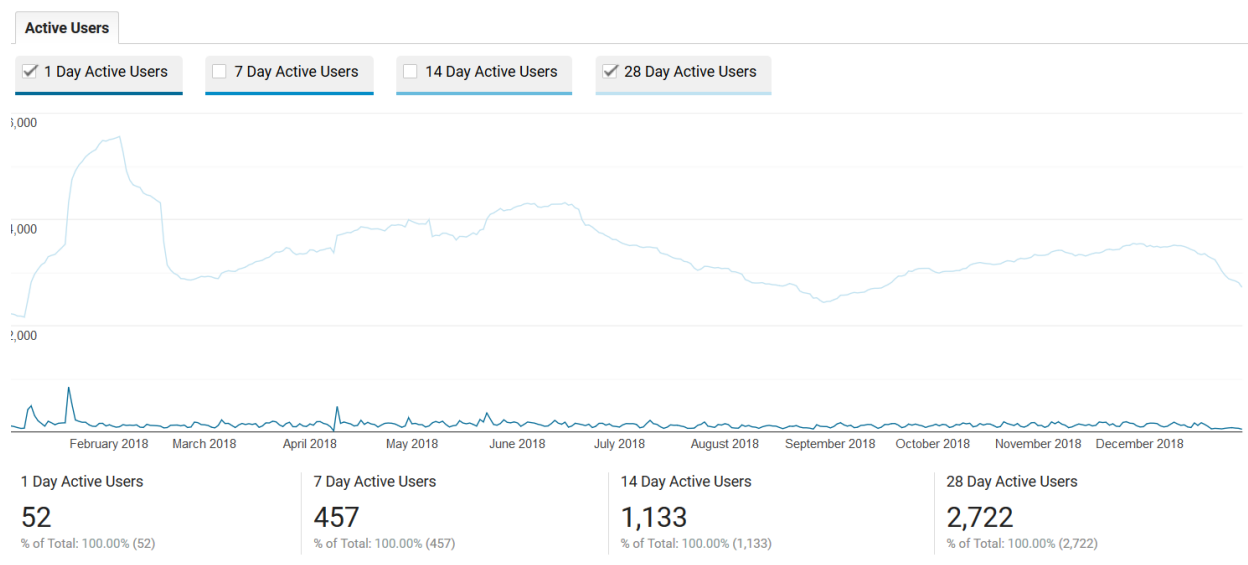


Figure 1: Active users over 2018.

As can be seen from figure 2, the level of activity had a peak in January 2018. This was the result of publishing the EUFORGEN film 'Afforesting Iceland – a cause for optimism' on National Geographic website which attracted a lot of attention.

Examining the most visited pages of the website, the species pages are clearly the most popular ones (19,000 pageviews for the species list and specific species following in the ranking). The top most visited non-species page was the news story *Regreening Iceland* gaining almost 6000 views.

Most traffic came from organic search – almost 60%, with 25% coming from direct search, 12% from referrals (other websites linking to EUFORGEN – top ones were National Geographic immediately followed by Wikipedia) and only 3% of traffic coming from social media (figure 3).

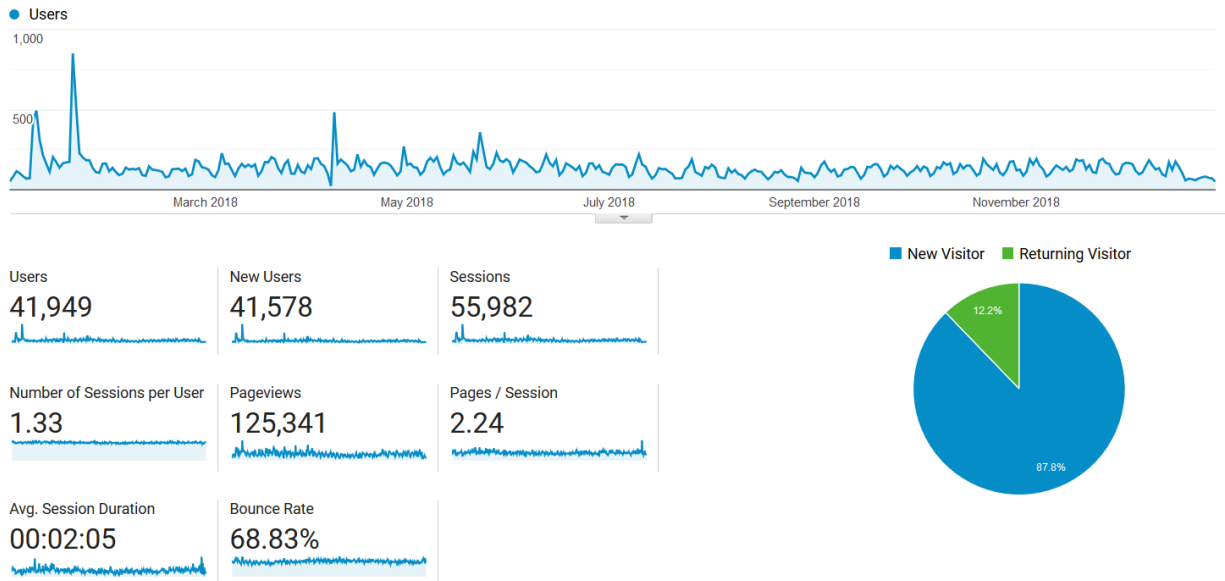
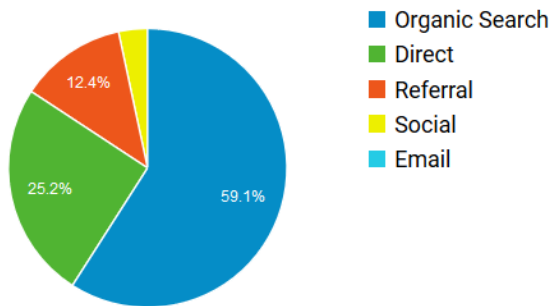


Figure 2: Overview of website users in 2018.

Top Channels



Users

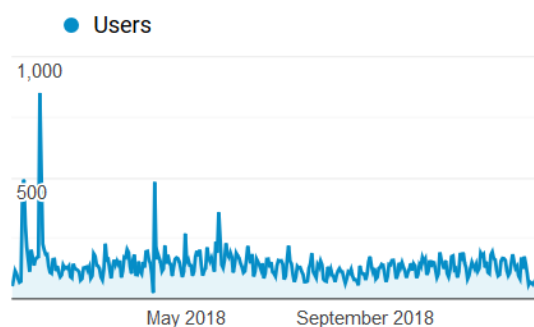


Figure 3: Acquisition in 2018.

The distribution maps of *Pinus sylvestris* and *Fagus sylvatica* were both downloaded 657 times in 2018 and are thereby the most downloaded elements on the website while the Pan-European Conservation Strategy with 250 downloads is the most downloaded publication. Generally, the distribution maps remain very popular and are frequently downloaded.

The license of the website is Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-ShareAlike license, which allows the visitors to use the website content as long as it is properly acknowledged and not used for commercial purposes. Illustrations, in particular, are licenced with the Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0) license, which enables us to share them on Wikimedia commons. The intention is to encourage people to use and disseminate EUFORGEN's illustrations, pictures and distribution maps in addition to publications and other products.

1.2 Wikipedia

In 2016, the secretariat initiated linking the EUFORGEN website and products to the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia. An article about EUFORGEN is present and updated on English, Polish, Italian and Danish Wikipedia (created in early 2017).

Relevant Wikipedia pages, such as *Climate change*, *Forest Reproductive Material*, *Forestry*, *Provenances* and *Sustainable Forest Management* are linking directly to publications, especially the technical guidelines and the five thematic publications, and to species pages on the EUFORGEN website.

In addition, the illustrations prepared for the technical guidelines are present in the sister site, Wikimedia Commons, where they can be freely downloaded.

Continued efforts should be made to update Wikipedia. A very easy edit is to translate the pages/sentences in selected articles from English into other European languages. National Coordinators in other countries are encouraged to translate the EUFORGEN page into their languages and engage their teams to update other pages of their competence.

Wikipedia was the #2 referral page for EUFORGEN after National Geographic in 2018, but it is worth to invest time in updating it as the visits from that website are stable and can generate impact at national level in all EUFORGEN countries.

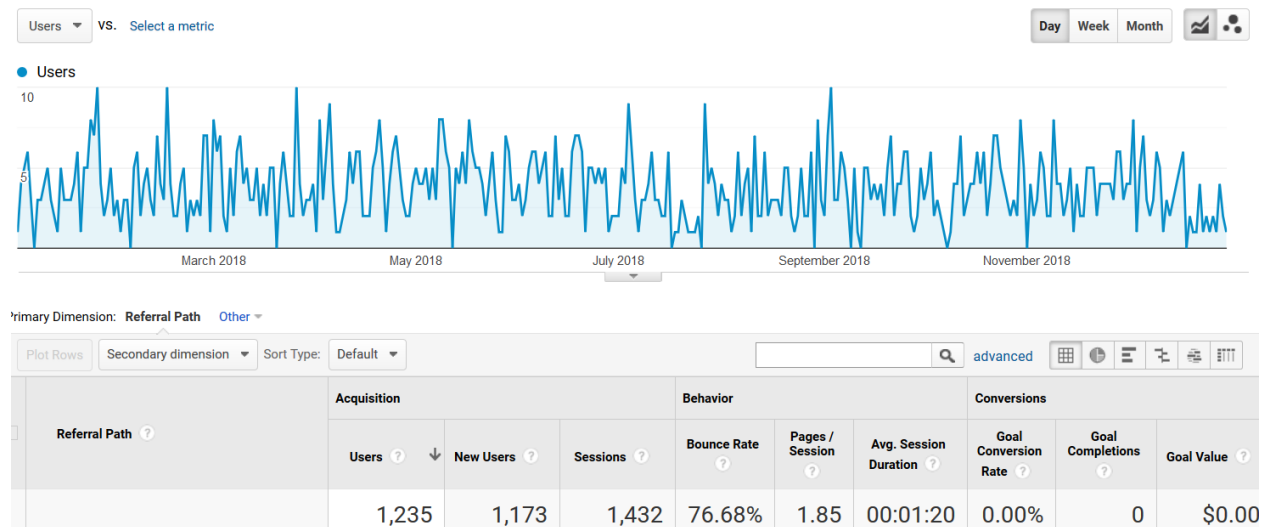


Figure 4: The graph shows the number of people reaching the EUFORGEN website through Wikipedia. Activities have been more or less stable throughout the year.

	5,312 % of Total: 12.66% (41,949)	
1. nationalgeographic.com	1,569 (29.22%)	
2. en.wikipedia.org	1,235 (23.00%)	←
3. en.m.wikipedia.org	394 (7.34%)	←
4. ecosia.org	185 (3.45%)	
5. portal.eufgis.org	140 (2.61%)	
6. conifers.org	99 (1.84%)	
7. duckduckgo.com	83 (1.55%)	
8. mailchi.mp	65 (1.21%)	
9. peupliernoir.orleans.inra.fr	61 (1.14%)	
10. wwwsp.inia.es	52 (0.97%)	

Figure 5: The figure gives an overview of the number of visitors that has reached the website through links on other websites (referrals) in 2018. Visitors coming from Wikipedia (and its mobile version) constitute a substantial number of these.

2. News

2.1 Newsletter

According to the communication action plan for 2018, the target was to increase the number of subscribers to the EUFORGEN newsletter by 20%. In December 2017, the newsletter had 300 subscribers, which increased to 398 subscribers one year later (32%). Newsletters were sent out in March, May, July, October and December.

2.2 News stories on FGR issues in Europe

News stories related to forest genetic resources issues in Europe are regularly posted in the 'News' section of the website to which the newsletter is addressing the viewers. The following ten news stories were written in 2017:

- [Better distribution maps for tree species now available](#)
- [A thematic day about forests for practitioners in the Nordic countries](#)
- [Exploring new approaches to tree breeding and conservation](#)
- ["Wood first" takes a back seat in Sardinia](#)
- [Tree evolution and conservation - a review](#)
- [Present your research in Brazil](#)
- [Global efforts on forest genetic resources make progress](#)
- [Crop, forest and animal genetic resources networks join forces](#)
- [Luxembourg takes steps to conserve rare tree species](#)
- [Ash dieback disease: studying the survivors](#)

One news stories engaged a particular high number of readers (712): [Better distribution maps for tree species now available](#). This indicates that news stories on the EUFORGEN website are potentially able to attract a high number of readers as long as the topic is of interest to wider audience and they are promoted through the right channels.

3. Social media

Social media channels are actively maintained and used to promote relevant materials and attract the attention of new stakeholders.

3.1 Twitter

In the start of 2018, the profile was followed by around 614 followers, which has increased by **57%** to 969 people in 2017. The number of new followers thereby exceeds the target of a 20% increase, stated in the communication plan for 2018. Nevertheless, with new followers from diverse communities joining every day, this channel has become an important mechanism to reach a wide ranch of relevant target groups.

Throughout the year, a 'Friday species' campaign was continued on twitter and Facebook to promote species of interest to EUFORGEN every Friday. In 2017, 24 species were highlighted. The example below shows the engagement on Twitter related to Friday Species which however varies a lot from week to week.

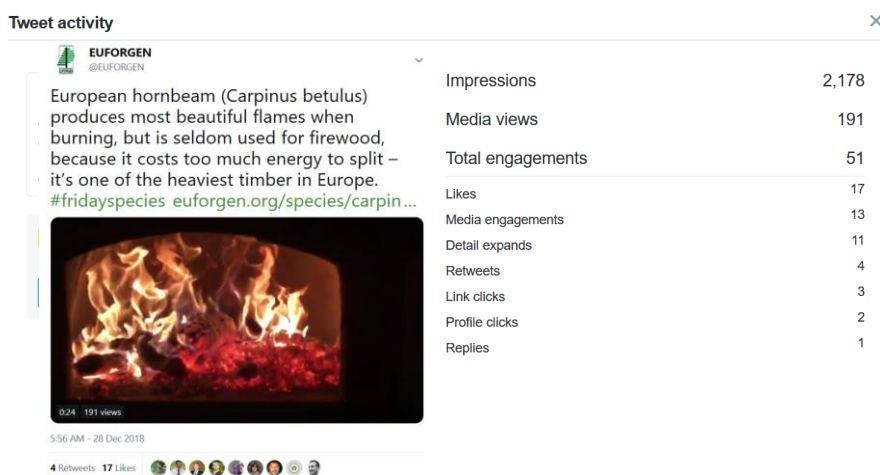


Figure 6: Examples of a Friday species tweet and the related engagement rates.

Twitter is also used as a tool to live report from events in which the EUFORGEN community is participating, raising our visibility at the events themselves and linking to new audiences.

Tweet activity




EUFORGEN @EUFORGEN
 How to make forests and people thrive in an uncertain future?
 The #ESOF2018 session at 5 pm today will respond to this question.

We welcome anyone interested in [#interdisciplinary](#) research
pic.twitter.com/jTrTXx1DKv

Impressions	3,620
Total engagements	37
Retweets	12
Detail expands	9
Likes	8
Profile clicks	5
Media engagements	2
Hashtag clicks	1



Reach a bigger audience
 Get more engagements by promoting this Tweet!

Figure 7. Example of a tweet from the European Open Science Forum where EUFORGEN participated and the related engagement rates.

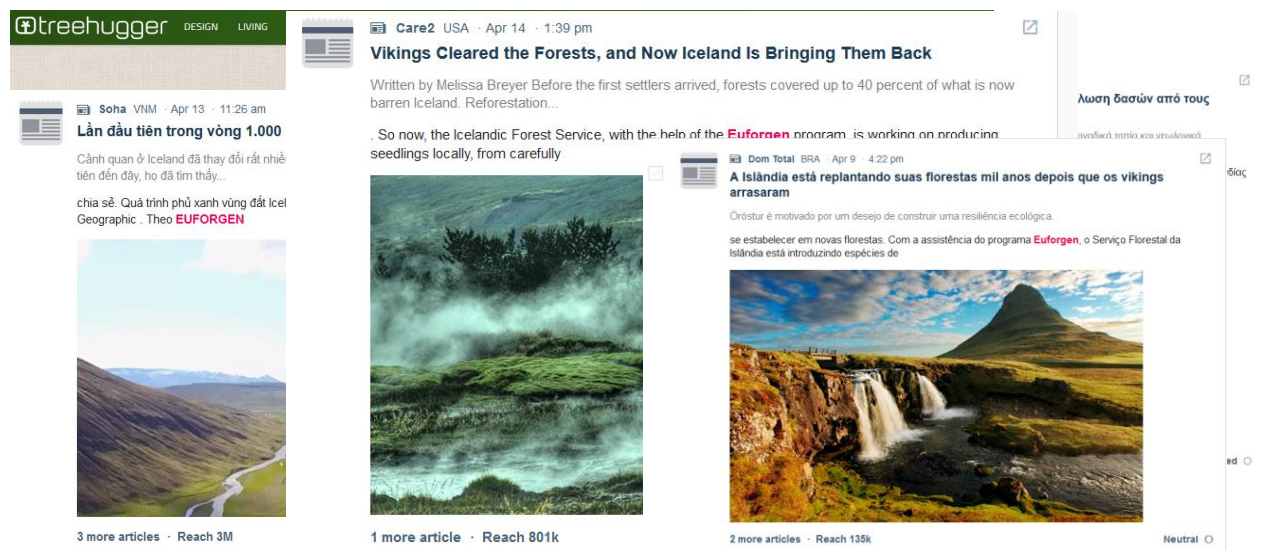
3.2 Facebook

In the start of 2018, the profile was followed by around 234 people and liked by 220, which increased to 619 and 595 respectively (**164%**) by the end of the year. The number of new followers thereby exceeds the target of a 20% stated in the communication plan for 2018.

EUFORGEN social media posts have been shared, among others, by FAO Forestry, EU Joint Research Center, European Forest Institute, Bioversity International, Evoltree, EUSTAFOR, Forest Europe.

3.3 Youtube

In January 2019, the film *Afforesting Iceland – a cause for optimism* was published on National Geographic Short Feature Film and across their online viewing channels – website, youtube, apple news generating over 2.2 mln views <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnRNdbqXu1I&t=5s> and great media engagement (articles in international and national media, blogs e.g. New York Times, TreeHugger), screening in eight conferences and film festivals (Life Sciences Film Festival, Prague).



The screenshot shows three news articles triggered by a tweet. The first article is from treehugger.com, the second from Care2 USA, and the third from Dom Total BRA. Each article features a landscape image and mentions EUFORGEN.

Figure 7. Examples of articles triggered by the post on National Geographic where EUFORGEN was mentioned.

3.4 Flickr

The Flickr account was updated with several images, including photos from EUFORGEN meetings, pictures displaying tree species from all over Europe and botanical illustrations developed for the technical guidelines. The account serves as image bank for the EUFORGEN community and general public. EUFORGEN community members are encouraged to contribute with material. All images shared on Flickr is also under the licence of Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike, which allows to freely distribute and use the pictures.

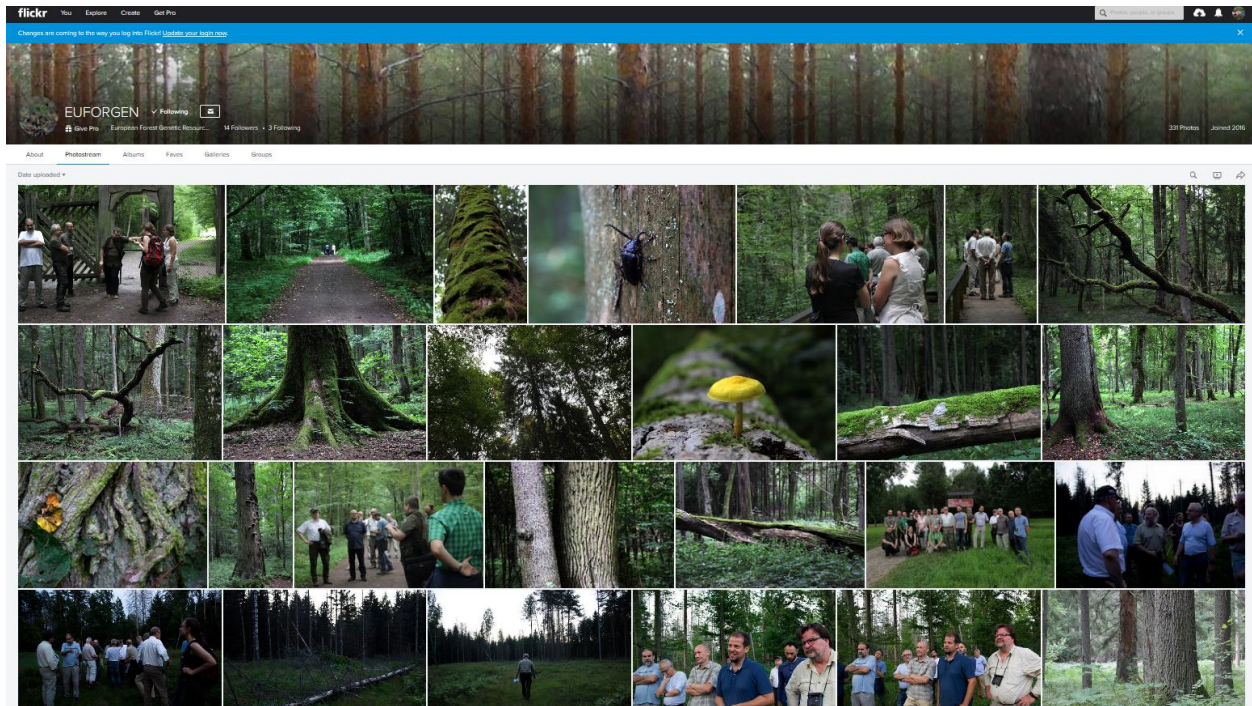


Figure 9: Photostream on the EUFORGEN Flickr account.

4. Publications

4.1 Leaflets

A new leaflet explaining the Pan-European strategy for genetic conservation of forest trees was published and printed in 2018. It follows the design of the other similar publications.



Figure 11: New EUFORGEN leaflet explaining the goal of the Pan-European conservation strategy.

4.2 Scientific publications

Technical guidelines on white poplar were published and added to the publications catalogue.

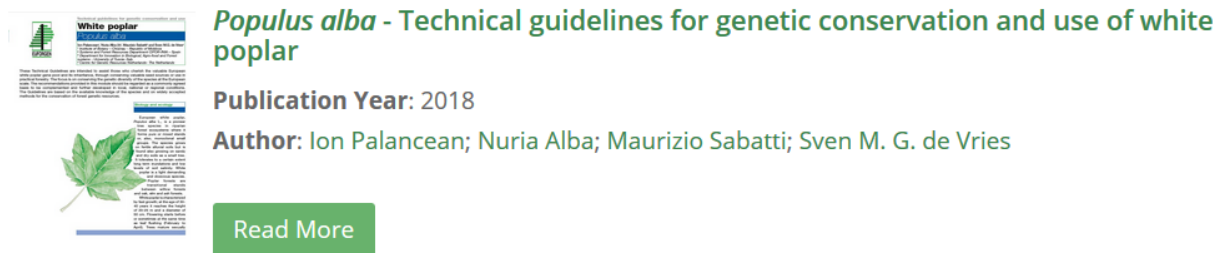


Figure 12: The technical guidelines

5. Media and other websites

The main interest of media was related to the EUFORGEN film posted on National Geographic channel as mentioned in the section 3.3 above. A number of articles were written across international and national media, for example:

Vikings cleared the forests, now Iceland is bringing them back (Tree Hugger – reach 801 K)

<https://www.treehugger.com/conservation/vikings-cleared-forests-now-iceland-finally-growing-new-ones.html>

Iceland: Reforestation 1,000 years after deforestation by the Vikings (from Greek)

<http://www.zougla.gr/kosmos/article/islandia-anadasosi-1000-xronia-meta-tin-aposilosidason-apotous-vikings>

Iceland is planting its forests a thousand years after the Vikings rocked: Thröstur is motivated by a desire to build an ecological resilience (Dom Total)

<http://domtotal.com/noticia/1247912/2018/04/a-islandia-esta-replantando-suas-florestas-mil-anos-depois-que-os-vikings-arrasaram/>

Moving EUFORGEN under EFI enabled new opportunities in the area of media engagement through collaboration with EFI Lookout Station project. EUFORGEN started to build alliances with media houses that invest in science and environment journalism. This was done through workshops with journalists (International Journalism Festival in Perugia, Open Science Forum in Toulouse, Solution Hack for Journalists at the Biocities Forum in Barcelona) and scientific inputs to story development of the Lookout360 Accelerator. This resulted in several stories published in major media outlets that had a genetic angle to them, creating thus greater awareness of the importance of genetic resources among journalists and general public.

6. Engagement in policy processes

During 2017, the Coordinator, Michele Bozzano, attended 12 events that created awareness about recent outputs of the Programme (mainly Pan-European Strategy and indicator on genetic resources) and introduced EUFORGEN's work to new audiences. Nine of these forums and international conferences were attended by policy-makers. The Coordinator actively contributed with presentations and/or interventions in all of them and was interviewed as part of a Forest Europe video [European Forests and Climate Change](#). The Communications Officer, Ewa Hermanowicz, attended four international events during which EUFORGEN was presented in relation to the programme's science communication activities.

7. New partnerships

In 2018, a few new partnerships were initiated, mainly with journalists from major international media houses participating in the activities organized in the context of the Lookout Station project led by EFI (see section 5).

8. Qualitative feedback

Feedback on Afforesting Iceland – a cause for optimism (over 2800 comments were posted on youtube)



A Nein 2 weeks ago

This is so great!! I'm amazed.

REPLY 11

Hide replies ^



National Geographic ✓ 1 week ago

Who knew the genetics of trees are so important to preserving our forests?

REPLY 3



CJ Cares 6 days ago

This is so touching. For the first time I've been touched by tree story.)

REPLY



David Penn 1 week ago

wow im impressed you are the first greenie i agree with you have the answers and iceland what a place to start well done and thank you

REPLY

Feedback on the new genetic conservation unit



John Weir @JohnWeirFC · Mar 20

Replying to @scavers_at_wk @EUFORGEN and 4 others

Well done, first a strategy and now an output. Looking forward to hearing of more across the UK @clareten

2 1

Feedback on maps and technical guidelines



9. Conclusion

All communication activities rolled out as part of the Action Plan 2018 to implement the Communications Strategy led to increased interest and engagement in EUFORGEN's work by researchers, international organizations, forest-related associations and policy-makers, which can be demonstrated by the fulfilment and surpass of most quantitative and qualitative indicators of achievement outlined in the Communication activity plan for 2018:

- increase in website traffic by 17%,
- increase in newsletter readership by 32%,
- increase in twitter followers by 57%,
- increase in facebook followers by 164%
- increase in media mentions by at least 500%

Innovative storytelling approach and film production along with move to EFI and engagement in the Lookout Station project and strong presence on social media resulted in very high media interest reaching the highest levels in EUFORGEN's history. The website statistics demonstrate a growing interest in EUFORGEN's work and continuous efforts to share knowledge through Wikipedia make it a top referral page – something to bear in mind for future planning of communication activities.