



European Forest Genetic Resources Programme Phase V (January 2015 - December 2019)

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2018-2019

1. INTRODUCTION

The overall **goal** of EUFORGEN is to promote the conservation and appropriate use of forest genetic resources (FGR) as an integral part of sustainable forest management in Europe.

EUFORGEN has **three objectives**:

1. Collate, maintain and disseminate reliable information on forest genetic resources in Europe
2. Coordinate and monitor conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe
3. Develop guidelines and analyses on issues and topics relevant for the use of forest genetic resources in Europe

This communication, knowledge sharing and learning strategy will help fulfil the programme objectives by sharing knowledge, engaging key audiences and collaborating with relevant stakeholders and media.

2. OVERALL COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

The strategy has three main objectives:

1. Share knowledge on forest genetic resources and EUFORGEN products with policy makers, scientists from related forest fields and forest professionals adapted to their needs, expectations and level of literacy on forest genetic resources.
2. Keep programme stakeholders engaged in programme activities, and outputs, and stimulate dialogue, knowledge exchange and learning.
3. Raise awareness in society about the importance of forest genetic resources.

3. TARGET AUDIENCES AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The programme's communication will aim to reach **five main target audiences**, for whom the activities and results of the programme are or should be of interest and who benefit from using programme outputs:

- **Policymakers and their advisers at European and international levels**
 - Provide evidence-based materials for informing decision-making processes relevant for FGR conservation and use
 - Explain the importance of forest genetic resources for climate change, forest reproductive material (FRM), conservation and monitoring strategies
- **Academia: Scientists whose research touches upon areas relevant for forest genetic resources, including lecturers and students in forest universities and technical colleges**
 - Communicate strategies, tools and methods for strengthening FGR research and education
 - Provide training resources on FGR (technical guidelines, maps, publications)
 - Facilitate creation of interdisciplinary linkages with other thematic areas affected by sustainable conservation and use beyond the FGR community.
- **Forestry professionals: International associations and organizations connected with individuals involved in forest management**
 - Support the networks of actors, facilitators and organizations to best implement the National Action Plans
 - Share EUFORGEN products at national level to facilitate integration of FGR into forest management
- **Society and journalists: European citizens sensitive about environmental issues and science and environmental journalists or media houses with these departments**
 - Raise awareness about forest genetic resources and their importance for resilient forests so that people understand and care about political and forest management decisions and organize individual or collective action.
- **Internal: National Coordinators and the experts, EUFGIS national focal points, implementing agencies, partners and associated experts.**
 - Effectively communicate with EFI, EUFORGEN network, different partners and share results and lessons learned to understand each other, to get everyone on the same level of awareness and to prepare to do things together in working groups; communicate with EFI comms team to coordinate our efforts and maximize synergies.
 - Regular updates to EUFORGEN SC, working groups; call for newsletter contributions.
 - Internal EFI meetings

4. KEY MESSAGES

'Key messages' are a starting point for a conversation because when engaging with audiences, it becomes clear that some messages are not on point and can be improved with their inputs.

Policy makers

- European **tree species don't restrict themselves to national borders**, so Pan-European collaboration is needed (with neighboring countries where relevant)

- EUFORGEN has been successful in serving as mechanism for Pan-European collaboration and for developing **common conservation strategies** and research synergies and continues to be relevant and needed
- EUFORGEN is a unique Science-Policy-Practice platform on forest genetic resources and can play an **advisory role for the development of future European policies and strategies**

Academia

- Genetic diversity/variation within tree populations and stands is an important element for the **adaptive capacity of forests**, which are facing the challenges such as adaptation to climate change and more pressure to deliver ecosystem services (biodiversity, biomass, social services, water)
- Genetic diversity for tree populations **at the margins (geographical and ecological) of their distribution range** may not be sufficient to ensure the survival of the population. In some cases, **assisting their migration or pollination** will be necessary

Forestry professionals

- Genetic conservation units need to be **actively managed** otherwise target species may be lost
- New **genetic conservation units** need to be established to cover most of the forest tree species occurring in Europe in different climatic zones

Society and journalists

- FGR is absolutely crucial to allow forests to thrive, meeting future **human needs** in a world shifting towards **circular bioeconomy**

Internal

We can all be part of communication activities and good knowledge sharing among the community members translates directly into better external communication; without internal communications our activities cannot be effective and up-to-date.

5. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The main communication activities will focus on:

- Creating digital content: reports, guidelines, articles and multimedia available in formats appropriate for the selected target groups on websites, YouTube and Flickr;
- Promoting products: through events and online channels (newsletter, publications available online, social media);
- Strengthening communication skills of programme team, media, colleagues and partners;
- Facilitating knowledge sharing and learning: collate information on forest genetic resources, sharing it in the right format through appropriate platforms and engaging with relevant stakeholders for feedback.

Website

The programme website www.euforgen.org remains the main digital communications tool and entry point for all target audiences. It centralizes all information and products generated as part of EUFORGEN communication activities.

The website, redesigned in 2016, will be reviewed and improved following the stakeholders' needs, programme developments and latest relevant technology every two years. The new information architecture addresses the trends demonstrated by the Google analytics data to retain more visitors and facilitate search for relevant information, and its effectiveness will remain monitored.

The National Coordinators will be encouraged to provide content to [the country pages](#).

News section

A dynamic section with articles about important events, activities, policy developments and relevant findings in Europe or opinion pieces related to issues in the area of FGR. Additional efforts are made to encourage the EUFORGEN community to contribute to News stories.

National and international media

EUFORGEN seeks to invite media representatives and journalists to key events and keep them informed on the outcomes of interest to general public. The Secretariat will also produce news stories and multimedia to spark journalists' interest in forest genetic resources and engage with journalists through social media. A collaboration with EFI through the Lookout Station project will be key in this regard by providing training and helping journalists find relevant stories and by training scientists on how to work with media.

Social media

The programme will build and maintain its own social media channels. These include:

- **Twitter**, which gives an easy way to engage in conversations on topics of our interest; helps connect with the wider network of interest on these issues, very quickly.
- **Facebook**, which allows to promote our contents to a wider non-scientific audience.
- **Flickr** as a platform to share our visual material.
- **YouTube channel** to share our short films about EUFORGEN's work and related topics.
- **RSS feed** connected to the Global Forest Information System, which enables subscribers to receive alerts when new contents are added to the news section.

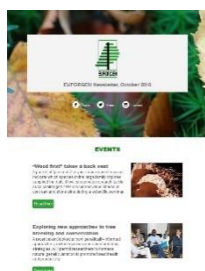
Wikipedia

This online encyclopedia is the fifth most visited website in the world that attracts millions of users daily to its English version only.

The analysis of website statistics shows that a significant amount of traffic comes from links in Wikipedia pages and thanks to the new articles and EUFORGEN page in multiple languages, the ranking of Wikipedia has risen up to #1 of referrals.

National Coordinators may be asked to support a similar effort for the pages in their respective languages. A page on EUFORGEN will be created and links to species pages added as references to the relative pages on Wikipedia.

Newsletter



An electronic newsletter will be published at least twice a year. Implementing agencies and other stakeholders will be encouraged to subscribe and new subscriptions will be collected during major events. The community is encouraged to share news to be featured in the newsletter: a call for contributions is sent a month before publication to all active community members.

Public awareness materials

New leaflets, posters are developed using a coherent branding and attractive layout.



Partnerships

We collaborate with the communications offices of a number of like-minded organizations with an interest in FGR. In an effort to strengthen the mutual benefits deriving from multiple communication channels, we will reach out to selected individuals responsible for communications to become part of existing networks to make use of their channels and create communication synergies whenever possible. In an effort to link our science to media and society, opportunities will be sought to organize science-media projects, events and training workshops in science communication. The EUFORGEN communications focal point will attend the Forest Communicators Network and International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) working party on communications annual meetings to share knowledge and learn from other good practices in communications to incorporate them in the future communication strategies.

Conferences and meetings

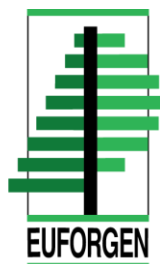
The EUFORGEN Secretariat staff attends a range of international conferences and meetings, in which programme-related information and products will be shared. The degree of involvement and visibility may differ depending on the type of event:

- a) events that EUFORGEN is organizing (e.g. policy events in Brussels in collaboration with other projects)
- b) events where some EUFORGEN members are presenting/hosting side events (e.g. side events at the EFI Annual Conference or Mediterranean Forest Week, IUFRO Forest Communicators Annual Conference) and
- c) events where EUFORGEN staff are attending (European Environmental Agency meeting on information systems, OECD Forest Scheme meetings etc)

The list of conferences and meetings which EUFORGEN will actively co-organize or participate in will be developed on a year-to-year basis.

Graphic profile

All communication and visibility products shall include the logo



Communications products should also include logos of programme partners and EFI, as appropriate.

6. INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Monitoring

The implementation of the communication and visibility plan is monitored by the EUFORGEN Secretariat annually and described in an annual report. Communications is a standing agenda item at biannual Steering Committee meetings.

Indicators

A number of indicators to track the achievements of the communication objectives. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators will be used to get beyond reach into influence, use, and impact.

Quantitative indicators:

- Web: Google analytics – number of visits, sessions, users
- Newsletter: Mailchimp analytics – number of opens and link clicks
- Videos: YouTube statistics – number of views and comments
- Twitter: Twitter analytics – number of new followers and engagement rate
- Online publications: numbers of downloads
- Events: numbers of applications and participants
- General visibility: Number of mentions in media

Qualitative indicators:

- User surveys
- Comments on the website
- Comments on YouTube
- Interactions on social media
- Direct feedback during meetings and events

7. RESOURCES

Human resources

EUFORGEN Secretariat will contribute a part of their staff time towards the programme's communications activities. In addition, all National Coordinators make contribution time to selected communication activities.

Operational costs

Apart from staff time cost, there is a **yearly operational budget** dedicated to implementing the communication and visibility actions foreseen in the plan.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Partner	Roles and responsibilities
EUFORGEN Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate the implementation of this strategy• Reach out to partner organizations (e.g.IUFRO,FAO etc)• Give updates on the communication activities at the Steering Committee meetings
National Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Link to EUFORGEN on own organization's websites• Propose contents for news section of EUFORGEN website and newsletter• The role of the national coordinators will be crucial in facilitating the linkages with relevant national organizations
EFI Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redirect audiences to EUFORGEN whenever genetic resources are discussed; collaborate to create a common narrative and more visible presence of forest-related issues across media, policy discussions

The National Coordinators and national partners will be encouraged to inform national policies (through liaison with relevant organizations and attendance of national conferences) about the programme outputs and promote the programme actions in the respective countries.