



**EUFORGEN**

EUROPEAN FOREST GENETIC  
RESOURCES PROGRAMME

# **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR PHASE VII**

**2025 - 2029**

In May 2023, the EUFORGEN Steering Committee decided to continue the implementation of the EUFORGEN collaboration programme and defined strategic objectives for its seventh phase. The decision recognised three important considerations: the fact that in 2015 Signatory of the Forest Europe process committed to “continuing pan-European collaboration on forest genetic resources through EUFORGEN”; the experience and lessons of 30 years of work; and the need for a long-term vision and continued collaboration on forest genetic resources in Europe.

This plan, adopted by the EUFORGEN Steering Committee in April 2024, sets the objectives and deliverables for Phase VII. This document also provides information on the implementation plan for the Phase VII, and the EUFORGEN *Modus Operandi* (Annex 2).

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## 1. About EUFORGEN

EUFORGEN is a cooperative programme funded by national governments<sup>1</sup> who nominate the National Coordinators through their respective ministries responsible for forests.

**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.** The Programme brings together experts from its member countries to exchange information and experiences, to analyse relevant policies and practices, and to develop tools and methods for better management of FGR.

Over the past 30 years, EUFORGEN has evolved globally into a reference platform for collaboration, information exchange and a science-policy-practice dialogue. Based on the collective knowledge of these national experts and through established synergies, EUFORGEN has produced a large number of important outputs, such as the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe<sup>2</sup> and developed indicators to monitor the conservation of genetic resources of European forest tree species<sup>3</sup>, information systems, operational tools and other technical and expert publications and reports. The Programme has contributed to assessment reports on European forests and enabled member countries to develop and implement European projects related to forest genetic resources.

EUFORGEN plays a key role in the European FGR community, by linking ongoing research projects with the broader FGR community, while at the same time maintaining active communication channels with all European countries.

EUFORGEN also acts as an impartial source of expertise and provides a platform for informed discussion and scientific consensus building. In bringing together people from countries with different levels of expertise and experience, it helps to develop capacity among all member countries and beyond. Furthermore, it provides a venue for enhancing mutual understanding on forest genetic resources conservation and sustainable use.

EUFORGEN developed, maintains, and is currently upgrading the European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (EUFGIS)<sup>4</sup>, a unique system which enables countries' reporting in a harmonised and reliable manner, supports the identifying gaps in conservation of forest species at European level and in setting priorities to fill these conservation gaps.

## 2. Mandate and operating context

Since 1994, countries in Europe have been collaborating effectively on the conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources (FGR) through the EUFORGEN Programme, which was established to fulfil the 1990 resolution by the 1<sup>st</sup> Forest Europe<sup>5</sup> Ministerial Conference. After 20 years of pan-European cooperation in the field of forest genetic resources under the original mandate, in 2015, at the 7<sup>th</sup> Forest Europe Ministerial Conference, signatory countries

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<sup>1</sup> in 2024 29 European countries were members of the EUFORGEN programme Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom)

<sup>2</sup> Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe [www.euforgen.org/FGRStrategy4Europe](http://www.euforgen.org/FGRStrategy4Europe)

<sup>3</sup> Dynamic conservation and utilization of forest tree genetic resources: indicators for in situ and ex situ genetic conservation and forest reproductive material [www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/dynamic-conservation-and-utilization-of-forest-tree-genetic-resources-indicators-for-in-situ/](http://www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/dynamic-conservation-and-utilization-of-forest-tree-genetic-resources-indicators-for-in-situ/)

<sup>4</sup> [portal.eufgis.org](http://portal.eufgis.org)

<sup>5</sup> Strasbourg Ministerial Resolution S2 of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, MCPFE, now Forest Europe

committed to “continuing pan-European collaboration on forest genetic resources through EUFORGEN”<sup>6</sup>. In 2021, at the 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference, signatory countries committed to “recognise the need for dynamic conservation and utilisation of forest tree genetic resources and management of forest tree species populations for production of forest reproductive material (as reflected in the updated pan-European indicator for sustainable forest management 4.6 Genetic Resources) and continue pan-European collaboration on forest genetic resources through the EUFORGEN to this end”. These commitments are a clear recognition of EUFORGEN’s effectiveness and its distinctive and valuable role in conserving forest genetic diversity and contributing to sustainable resource management<sup>7</sup>.

EUFORGEN also contributes to the implementation of relevant decisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)<sup>8</sup> and to the implementation and monitoring of regional-level strategic priorities of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources (GPA-FGR)<sup>9</sup>, which was adopted by the FAO Conference in 2013<sup>10</sup>.

EUFORGEN is an important coordinating tool for European countries to optimise conservation of forest genetic resources at national level and to scale up the conservation needs from a national perspective to the one of the whole species' distribution ranges.

### 3. Why forest genetic diversity is important

Forests provide materials, energy, food, and multiple ecosystem services, mitigate natural disasters caused by pests and diseases and help to regulate water supply and the climate. At a time of continued human population growth and climate change, forests and their biodiversity are a form of life insurance. At the same time, biodiversity is being lost at unprecedented rates.

Genetic diversity enables forest trees to survive, adapt and evolve under changing environmental conditions. It is critical in maintaining the vitality of forests, minimising risks, and coping with pests and diseases. Conserving this diversity, through the sustainable management of FGR, is a key element of sustainable forest management, because diversity ensures the ecological and economical resilience of forests. Such management includes *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation as well as the management of ecosystems in which FGR may adapt and, in a broader sense, collating and managing information on FGR.

Without the diversity of FGR to draw on, the breeding and diversification needed to meet future societal demands from forestry cannot succeed. Climate change, along with the ever-increasing human population, adds urgency to these needs for diversification, increased production, and quality.

Still, the threat to genetic diversity (e.g. because of climate and land-use change) may reduce genetic diversity in forest tree species. Concurrently, the potential of FGR in forest management remains largely unexplored.

There is a clear pathway from well-managed forest genetic resources, through adaptive and resilient forests, to a healthy bioeconomy and greater human well-being.

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<sup>6</sup> Madrid Ministerial Resolution M2, “Protection of forests in a changing environment”

<sup>7</sup> the detailed EUFORGEN’s Mandate is presented in Annex 1

<sup>8</sup> [www.cbd.int/gbo3/?pub=6667&section=6710](http://www.cbd.int/gbo3/?pub=6667&section=6710)

<sup>9</sup> [www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/en/c/469497/](http://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/en/c/469497/)

<sup>10</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [www.fao.org/forest-genetic-resources/global-plan-of-action/en](http://www.fao.org/forest-genetic-resources/global-plan-of-action/en)

EUFORGEN, with its demonstrated ability to provide a platform for pan-European discussion and consensus-building on FGR science, management and policy, is an essential element in responding to the challenges of the future.

#### 4. Vision and areas of work

EUFORGEN's *vision* is to contribute to sustainable forest management, ensuring that European forests are resilient and healthy. Recognising the unpredictable future needs for forest genetic resources in ecological, economic, and societal contexts, EUFORGEN developed the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe during Phase VI, as a strategic approach to the conservation and sustainable use of FGR, detailed in Chapter 8.

The EUFORGEN Steering Committee has identified two *areas of work* that will allow genetic diversity to be part of the solution for resilient forests by sustaining adaptation:

1. The conservation of genetic diversity and genetic adaptation;
2. The development of short and long-term strategies/measures/policies.

#### 5. Mission

EUFORGEN's *mission* is to serve as a platform for pan-European collaboration on FGR, where member countries contribute to the Programme's activities and outputs, formulate joint recommendations and promote national implementation of strategies and guidelines for dynamic conservation and appropriate use of forest genetic resources under changing climate conditions. This *mission* is based on the experience and lessons from 30 years of pan-European collaboration in FGR, and the prioritisation of the Steering Committee.

#### 6. Objectives

In order to pursue EUFORGEN's *vision*, the Steering Committee identified the key changes needed in each *area of work* and agreed on the activities that will be carried out during the five-year timeframe. The activities have been structured according to strategic and operational objectives.

EUFORGEN's long-term goals, outlined until 2030 and referred to as key commitments in the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe, have been aligned with EUFORGEN's vision and integrated into the operational objectives.

During Phase VII, EUFORGEN will work towards three **strategic objectives**:

1. **Facilitate knowledge sharing and communicate with key stakeholders;**
2. **Coordinate the implementation of the conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe;**
3. **Promote the sustainable use of forest genetic resources in European forests.**

These strategic objectives have been considered and reconfirmed for this new phase by the EUFORGEN Steering Committee.

Within each strategic objective, the EUFORGEN Steering Committee has defined a number of **operational objectives** that have been developed taking into account consultations with EUFORGEN’s main stakeholders. The operational objectives for Phase VII focus mainly on the implementation plan of the “Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe”, aiming to tackle the key commitments foreseen to be completed during the timeframe of Phase VII.

The three *strategic objectives* and their related *operational objectives* for EUFORGEN Phase VII are:

- 1. Facilitate knowledge sharing and communicate with key stakeholders**
  - 1.1. Facilitate knowledge sharing and learning among relevant actors (e.g. scientists, national competent authorities, practitioners and policymakers, certification bodies, NGO community)
  - 1.2. Communicate the importance of forest genetic diversity and outputs of EUFORGEN to policymakers, forestry professionals and practitioners on the ground, wider scientific community and civil society
  - 1.3. Conduct regular training of EUFGIS focal points on the use of EUFGIS and the curation of data
  - 1.4. Strengthen and promote the use of EUFGIS to a broad group of stakeholders
  - 1.5. Monitor progress of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and use of FRM for the FOREST EUROPE Process (Indicator 4.6)
  - 1.6. Use AI for communication purposes for the EUFORGEN network
- 2. Coordinate the implementation of the conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe**
  - 2.1. Characterise FGR in Europe
  - 2.2. Identify conservation gaps and prioritise FGR for conservation
  - 2.3. Develop criteria for assessing the threat status of GCUs
  - 2.4. Develop quality management and monitoring strategies for long-term conservation of forest genetic resources
  - 2.5. Integrate *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and develop a platform to store static *ex situ* conservation data when needed
  - 2.6. Support national implementation of the FGR Strategy
- 3. Promote the sustainable use of forest genetic resources in European forests**
  - 3.1. Promote the sustainable use of FGR in Sustainable Forest Management
  - 3.2. Promote the sustainable use of FGR in planting operations
  - 3.3. Analyse the impact of policies on the use of FGR

## **7. European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (EUFGIS)**

The European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (EUFGIS)<sup>11</sup>, established in 2010, is the only transnational information system on FGR in Europe. It is maintained and further developed as part of the EUFORGEN Programme.

Responsible for providing the data are the EUFGIS National Focal Points (NFPs) of each EUFORGEN member country, appointed by the respective National Coordinator, or the respective Contact Person of each non-EUFORGEN member country (Signatory of the Forest

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<sup>11</sup> portal.eufgis.org

Europe Process). The NFPs have a direct access to the EUFGIS intranet ([intranet.eufgis.org](http://intranet.eufgis.org)) to update national data as needed.

EUFGIS contains information on more than 3500 Genetic Conservation Units<sup>12</sup> (GCUs) of more than 100 tree species from 36 European countries. All GCUs entered into EUFGIS must comply with minimum requirements<sup>13</sup>. The EUFGIS data standards<sup>14</sup> ensures comparability of information across GCUs.

A Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) governs the use of GCU data stored in EUFGIS. Currently, a subset of the obligatory data fields in EUFGIS is freely available through a web interface ([portal.eufgis.org](http://portal.eufgis.org)) while the rest of the data can be accessed only by the providing country.

Indicator 4.6 is a quantitative indicator which contributes to Criterion 4 (Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems) of Forest Europe's Sustainable Forest Management concept by focusing on the conservation and use of genetic resources. In 2020 EUFORGEN revised<sup>15</sup> the indicator 4.6 and since then countries can use the data stored in EUFGIS directly for reporting.

## 8. Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe

The Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe<sup>16</sup>, which was released by EUFORGEN in November 2021, is a policy document that provides the framework for enabling the transition to an effective genetic resources conservation and sustainable use in the Region.

The Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe was developed through an in-depth consultation process with the EUFORGEN network and representatives from European countries. To implement the resulting strategy, the EUFORGEN network and European countries pledge to a total of 28 key commitments, with a series of linked actions. Full implementation of the strategy depends on a broad range of actors, including national and regional policy makers, who will guide and monitor its application and provide the required financial, human, and institutional resources to realise the full action plan.

The implementation of the strategy should involve collaboration between all Forest Europe signatory countries. The Secretariat facilitates cooperation between EUFORGEN member countries, and countries outside Europe where the natural distribution range of the species occurs.

Most of the operational objectives for EUFORGEN Phase VII have been established to address the key commitments outlined in this Strategy (in the implementation plan, each operational objective indicates the commitment addressed respectively). The list of the key commitments (KC) is stated below in Box 1.

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<sup>12</sup> Genetic Conservation Unit (GCU): a formally designated forest area to the protection of forest genetic resources (FGR) of one or more forest tree species, established to allow the full cycle of natural processes to occur.

<sup>13</sup> [portal.eufgis.org/fileadmin/templates/eufgis.org/documents/EUFGIS\\_Minimum\\_requirements.pdf](http://portal.eufgis.org/fileadmin/templates/eufgis.org/documents/EUFGIS_Minimum_requirements.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> [portal.eufgis.org/fileadmin/templates/eufgis.org/documents/EUFGIS\\_DataStandards.pdf](http://portal.eufgis.org/fileadmin/templates/eufgis.org/documents/EUFGIS_DataStandards.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> [www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/dynamic-conservation-and-utilization-of-forest-tree-genetic-resources-indicators-for-in-situ/](http://www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/dynamic-conservation-and-utilization-of-forest-tree-genetic-resources-indicators-for-in-situ/)

<sup>16</sup> [www.euforgen.org/FGRStrategy4Europe](http://www.euforgen.org/FGRStrategy4Europe)

**Box 1. Key commitments of the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe to be addressed in EUFORGEN Phase VII**

- KC1.** The EUFORGEN network commits to develop, standardise, and regularly revise protocols for characterisation of FGR that could be applied across Europe.
- KC2.** The European countries and the EUFORGEN network commit to increase the proportion of characterised genetic resources, following the standardised protocols.
- KC4.** The EUFORGEN network commits to further improve EUFGIS to support FAIR data principles and make the FGR data FAIR.
- KC7.** The EUFORGEN network commits to conduct regular training of EUFGIS focal points on the use of EUFGIS and the curation of data.
- KC10.** The EUFORGEN network commits to develop quality management and monitoring strategies for long-term conservation of forest genetic resources.
- KC12.** The EUFORGEN network commits to develop a methodology to improve the identification of conservation gaps in the pan-European core network of GCUs based on additional data (genetic, phenotypic, etc.).
- KC15.** The EUFORGEN network commits to develop criteria for assessing the threat status of GCUs.
- KC16.** The EUFORGEN network commits to develop criteria for the selection of species whose genetic resources should be prioritised for conservation at European level.
- KC17.** The EUFORGEN network commits to develop standards and explore options for creating an online information system(s) for geo-referenced records of forest reproductive material end use and, where available, performance data.
- KC18.** The EUFORGEN network commits to develop guidelines for climate change adaptation of GCUs.
- KC20.** The EUFORGEN network commits to link EUFGIS with other relevant Information Systems in Europe.
- KC22.** The European countries and the EUFORGEN network commit to monitor progress of in situ and ex situ conservation and use of FRM for the FOREST EUROPE Process (Indicator 4.6).
- KC23.** The European Countries and the EUFORGEN network commit to promote the importance of genetic diversity in nature conservation-related and forest-related policies and decision-making processes.

## 9. Mode of operation

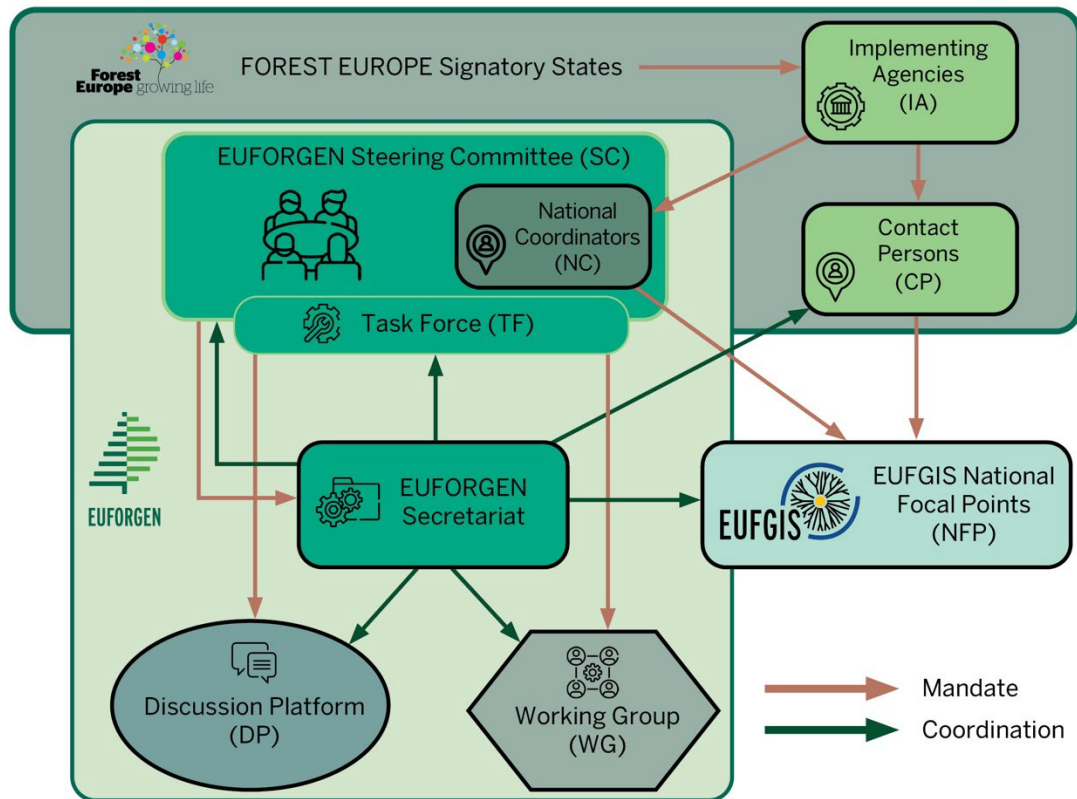
EUFORGEN continues to operate as a multilateral trust fund<sup>17</sup>. Countries may formally join Phase VII as *EUFORGEN member countries* by signing a Letter of Agreement with the European Forest Institute (EFI), which specifies the rights and obligations in relation to the membership.

EUFORGEN is an international collaboration mechanism on forest genetic resources. Its Secretariat is hosted by the European Forest Institute as the programme itself does not have legal personality.

EUFORGEN is overseen by a Steering Committee, composed of a National Coordinator from each EUFORGEN member country. The Programme is coordinated by the EUFORGEN Secretariat with oversight provided by the Steering Committee. It carries out the work through Working Groups, Discussion Platforms and a network of EUFGIS National Focal points. These bodies are described in Annex 2 *Modus Operandi*.

<sup>17</sup> A trust fund is a mechanism for collaboration between the members in relation to funding for activities, with agreed approaches to *inter alia* membership, decision making, and funding criteria.





## 10. Deliverables

The main foreseen deliverables for Phase VII of EUFORGEN are:

1. Strategies and guiding principles for replicating threatened GCUs from *in situ* to *ex situ*, including data recording needs for their complementarity and requirements for storing static *ex situ* conservation data on a platform
2. Threat assessment tools and criteria for assessing the threat status of GCUs
3. Genetic monitoring schemes evaluation
4. Criteria for the selection of species whose genetic resources should be prioritised for conservation at European level
5. A methodology to improve the identification of conservation gaps in the pan-European network of GCUs
6. Identification of the rationale behind the gaps and evaluate the potential solutions for filling them
7. Assessment of the level of characterisation of European forest tree species and their role in SFM
8. Science-based recommendations for better incorporating genetic aspects into SFM practices and to monitor their impact
9. Result of EUFORGEN's evaluation
10. Policy briefs on relevant topics
11. Improvement of the EUFGIS Information System and its usage by:
  - a. Conducting annual EUFGIS National Focal Point trainings
  - b. Updating annually the GCU characterisation using environmental and remote sensing data resources
  - c. Incorporating the Decision Support Tool in EUFGIS
  - d. Supporting FAIR data principles and make the FGR information system data FAIR
  - e. Linking EUFGIS with other relevant Information Systems in Europe (e.g. FOREMATIS, IS for early warning of potential abiotic and biotic threats)

## 11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Steering Committee will develop criteria for the evaluation of the foreseen outputs of Phase VII and monitor the implementation of activities. The Steering Committee will use these criteria to assess progress annually and will review activities during the Phase VII mid-term meeting (i.e. 2027). Finally, the Steering Committee, will evaluate the Phase VII achievements. The means of verification are listed in Annex 4 Implementation Plan for Phase VII.

## 12. Estimated budget

The total estimated budget for Phase VII (2025–2029) is **1,984,093€** (Table 1). Of this amount, 1,801,400€ comes from national financial contributions (for details see Annex 1 - Table 4). The balance from Phase VI is estimated to be 300,000€, which will be carried forward to Phase VII. Of this, 182,693€ will be used for operational purposes, while the remaining 117,307€ will be held as a reserve and is not included in the total estimated operational budget.

*Table 1 Total estimated operational budget*

Funding source	(€)
Expected national financial contribution	1,801,400
Carryover from previous Phase VI (estimate) available for operations	182,693
Total estimated operational budget	1,984,093

In addition to the national financial contribution, the work is also supported by the Horizon 2020 FORGENIUS Project<sup>18</sup> (2021-2025), providing about 300,000€ (only for the work of the Secretariat staff related to the EUFORGEN Implementation Plan), 130,000€ for the database coding and interface development, 20,000€ for the maintenance of the servers over 5 years. The FORGENIUS project is also providing resources for two training sessions of the EUFGIS national focal points and one in-presence consultation with the EUFORGEN Steering Committee.

The Horizon Europe OptFORESTS Project<sup>19</sup> (2022-2026) directly supports EUFORGEN work with 30,000€ (only for the work of the Secretariat staff related to the EUFORGEN Implementation Plan) and 10,000€ for the coding for the linking of EUFGIS with FOREMATIS. The project is also supporting two consultations with the EUFORGEN Steering Committee and one training of the EUFGIS National Focal Points.

Staff costs for Phase VII are the main cost category, representing approximately 55 % of the total cost.

<sup>18</sup> [www.forgenius.eu](http://www.forgenius.eu)

<sup>19</sup> [www.optforests.eu](http://www.optforests.eu)

**Table 2** Total estimated expenditures

Cost category	Budget estimated per category for Phase VII (€)
Secretarial Staff	1,082,440
Staff Travel	90,000
Steering Committee (meetings)	175,000
Working Groups and Task Forces	70,000
EUFGIS Portal and Websites*	184,400
Public Awareness, Communication, Publications and dissemination	42,500
Dissemination events	10,000
Evaluation of the Programme	20,000
Total direct costs	1,674,340
Overheads 18.5%	309,753
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>1,984,093</b>

# Annexes

## Annex 1. Expected annual national financial contributions

The Phase VII annual expected financial contributions, based on the same membership composition as in Phase VI, amount to 360,280€ (Table 4). This leads to total expected financial contributions of 1,801,400€ over the five years of Phase VII. The annual national financial contributions have been defined based on the UN Scale of assessments, approved for the years 2024, 2025 and 2026, as established by the UN General Assembly Resolution 76/238<sup>20</sup> (Table 3).

**Table 3** EUFORGEN Phase VII thresholds, categories and annual financial contributions

Threshold	Category	Annual financial contribution Phase VII (€)
$x < 0.01$	A	2,800
$0.01 < x < 0.1$	B	5,500
$0.1 < x < 0.5$	C	8,300
$0.5 < x < 1.0$	D	13,700
$1.0 < x < 2.0$	E	16,500
$2.0 < x < 3.0$	F	21,900
$3.0 < x < 4.0$	G	27,400
$4.0 < x < 5.0$	H	32,900
$x > 5.0$	I	38,300

with  $x$  = UN rate

To avoid major fluctuation in annual national financial contributions between Phase VI and Phase VII, the Steering Committee decided to apply a +/- 20% cap to limit variations from national financial contributions from one Phase to the following. In addition, the Steering Committee decided to assign Bosnia and Herzegovina to category B. Table 4 presents the annual national financial contribution for Phase VII; where applicable, the caps have been already computed. Phase VI EUFORGN non-member countries and their expected annual national financial contributions in Phase VII are presented in Table 5.

**Table 4** EUFORGEN member countries during Phase VI expected to provide financial contribution in Phase VII b

Country	UN rates (%) Phase VII	Category Phase VII	Phase VII Expected annual national financial contribution (€) from Phase VI Member Countries
Austria	0,679	D	13,700
Belgium	0,828	D	13,700
Croatia	0,091	B	5,500
Czech Republic	0,340	C	8,300
Denmark	0,553	D	13,700
Estonia	0,044	B	5,500
Finland	0,417	C	8,300
France	4,318	H	32,900
Germany	6,111	I	38,300
Hungary	0,228	C	8,300
Iceland	0,036	B	5,500
Ireland	0,439	C	8,300
Italy	3,189	G	19,440

<sup>20</sup> <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n21/418/88/pdf/n2141888.pdf>

Country	UN rates (%) Phase VII	Category Phase VII	Phase VII Expected annual national financial contribution (€) from Phase VI Member Countries
Lithuania	0,077	B	5,500
Luxembourg	0,068	B	5,500
Malta	0,019	B	5,500
Netherlands (the)	1,377	E	16,500
Norway	0,679	D	13,700
Poland	0,837	D	13,700
Portugal	0,353	C	8,300
Romania	0,312	C	8,300
Serbia	0,032	B	5,500
Slovakia	0,155	C	8,300
Slovenia	0,079	B	5,500
Spain	2,134	F	19,440
Sweden	0,871	D	13,700
Switzerland	1,134	E	16,500
Ukraine	0,056	B	-
United Kingdom	4,375	H	32,900
Total annual expected contributions			<b>360,280</b>

*Table 5 EUFORGEN Phase VI non-member countries and their expected financial contributions for Phase VII*

Country	UN rates (%) Phase VII	Category Phase VII	Phase VII potential national financial contribution (€) for EUFORGEN Phase VI non-member countries
Albania	0,008	A	2,800
Andorra	0,005	A	2,800
Belarus	0,041	B	5,500
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0,012	A	2,800
Bulgaria	0,056	B	5,500
Cyprus	0,036	B	5,500
Georgia	0,008	A	2,800
Greece	0,325	C	8,300
Holy See	-	-	-
Latvia	0,050	B	5,500
Liechtenstein	0,010	B	5,500
Moldova	0,005	A	2,800
Monaco	0,011	B	5,500
Montenegro	0,004	A	2,800
North Macedonia	0,007	A	2,800
Türkiye	0,845	D	13,700

## Annex 2. *Modus Operandi*

EUFORGEN operates as a multilateral trust fund<sup>21</sup>. Countries formally join as EUFORGEN member countries by signing a Letter of Agreement with the European Forest Institute (EFI), which hosts the EUFORGEN Secretariat. EUFORGEN is managed by the Secretariat and overseen by the Steering Committee, composed of nationally appointed representatives of EUFORGEN member countries. It carries out its activities through working groups, Discussion Platforms and EUFGIS national focal points.

As of June 2024, EUFORGEN has 29 member countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom) providing both financial resources and technical expertise to its activities.

Furthermore, 34 countries (all EUFORGEN member countries and five non-member countries (signatories of the Forest Europe Process)) are providing geo-referenced and harmonised data on dynamic conservation units of forest trees to the European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (EUFGIS)<sup>22</sup>, see chapter 7 above.

The role and *terms of reference* of all EUFORGEN bodies are described below.

### Membership

Rules of membership:

1. Countries that are signatory to the Forest Europe Process are eligible to become a member of EUFORGEN.
2. A country becomes a EUFORGEN member by signing a letter of agreement (LoA) with EFI.
3. The national financial contribution is agreed and defined for the whole Phase and paid in annual instalments, see table 4 above.
4. The annual instalment of the national financial contribution is to be paid by 31 December for each year. A country can, however, make one single payment for the entire Phase, within 12 months of signing the LoA, if this simplifies the national procedures.
5. In addition to the national financial contribution, countries are expected to provide in-kind contribution for the implementation of the work programme and through participation in its activities.
6. On joining Phase VII, countries that are members of EUFORGEN in Phase VI must pay the national financial contribution for the whole Phase, even if joining later than in 2025. In such case the first instalment will be equal to all annual instalments from 2025 up until entry into force of the LoA.
7. Countries that were not members of EUFORGEN during Phase VI will pay the defined annual instalments starting from the year the LoA enters into force.
8. Any country with difficulty in paying their national financial contribution must inform the Secretariat as soon as possible.

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<sup>21</sup> A trust fund is a mechanism for collaboration between the members in relation to funding for activities, with agreed approaches to inter alia membership, decision making, and funding criteria.

<sup>22</sup> [portal.eufgis.org](http://portal.eufgis.org)

9. If an outstanding national financial contribution remains unpaid by 1 July of the year following the year it is due, the membership of that EUFORGEN member country is terminated with immediate effect.
10. A country with outstanding national financial contribution(s) from the previous Phase is welcome to re-join as an EUFORGEN member country. However, these countries must pay their outstanding national financial contribution(s) prior to re-joining. The Steering Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, decide that the countries, instead of paying the outstanding national financial contribution(s), can make in-kind contribution(s) of equivalent value.

### **National Coordinators**

Each EUFORGEN member country is required to nominate a National Coordinator to act as the official contact person between EFI and the EUFORGEN member country for all matters relating to the Programme. The role of the National Coordinators is to:

1. Participate in Steering Committee meetings and other activities;
2. Promote EUFORGEN and its activities at national level;
3. Liaise with the Secretariat and relevant Ministries and National Agencies regarding membership, fees and other relevant issues;
4. Nominate experts on thematic areas relevant for EUFORGEN and maintain regular contact with them;
5. Assist the experts and the national institutes in contributing to the EUFORGEN activities, as needed;
6. Present EUFORGEN at meetings and events, when relevant / appropriate.

### **Contact Person**

The EUFORGEN Secretariat will invite all Forest Europe signatory states to join the Phase VII. Any signatory state that was not a EUFORGEN member country in Phase VI will be asked to provide the name of a Contact Person, who will follow the membership process. Nomination can be done by email and can be changed in any moment. Once a country signs the Letter of Agreement to become an EUFORGEN member country, they will be asked to formally nominate the National Coordinator. The Contact Person can be invited to attend relevant sessions of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee at their own cost.

The Contact Person will:

1. Serve as contact between the Secretariat and the invited country, until a National Coordinator is nominated;
2. Liaise with the Secretariat to facilitate the signature of the EUFGIS data sharing agreement;
3. Nominate the EUFGIS Focal Point, if a National Coordinator is not nominated.

### **Steering Committee**

The EUFORGEN Steering Committee is composed of one National Coordinator from each of the EUFORGEN member countries (hereinafter "Steering Committee member"), and it has overall responsibility for the Programme.

The Steering Committee will meet in person at least five times during Phase VII. The meetings in person may be complemented by online meetings. In preparation for the Steering



Committee meetings, a series of informative, preparatory webinars may be organised, in order to devote more time during the Steering Committee meetings to interaction and discussion. Members of EFI and other organisations may be invited as observers to the Steering Committee meetings. The Secretariat may also invite individual experts to specific sessions in the Steering Committee meetings, when seen as beneficial.

The Steering Committee can establish *ad hoc* Task Forces between meetings to plan activities and address relevant issues.

The Steering Committee work and decision making is facilitated by the EUFORGEN Coordinator, who will take part in the Steering Committee meetings, along with staff from the Secretariat. The Steering Committee shall seek consensus among its members. If consensus cannot be reached, then voting takes place with decisions taken by simple majority of votes. Each Steering Committee member has one vote; the EUFORGEN Coordinator, Secretariat staff, and the observers have no voting rights. The Steering Committee shall not deliberate and decide validly in meetings unless half (1/2) of its members are present or represented (quorum).

The Secretariat shall give written notice of a meeting to each Steering Committee member no later than twenty-one (21) calendar days preceding the meeting. The notice shall include a draft agenda. Any Steering Committee member may add an item to the draft agenda by written notice to the Secretariat up to fourteen (14) calendar days preceding the meeting. The Secretariat shall without delay inform the Steering Committee members of additions to the draft agenda.

The Secretariat shall produce minutes of each meeting which shall be the formal record of all decisions taken. The draft minutes shall be sent to all Steering Committee members within twenty (20) working days of the meeting, and shall be considered as accepted if, within fifteen (15) working days from receipt, no Steering Committee member has sent an objection by written notice to the Secretariat.

Should the need for a decision arise between meetings, the following procedure will apply:

1. the Secretariat circulates to all Steering Committee members background information and the suggested decision(s) with a deadline for responses (votes) of at least seven (7) calendar days; and
2. a decision is taken by a simple majority of Steering Committee member votes.

The Steering Committee will:

1. Provide guidance and strategic orientation of the Programme;
2. Review progress made and decide upon future activities of the Programme;
3. Define and approve the budget of the Programme;
4. Review technical and audited financial reports;
5. Develop an overall work plan for the Phase;
6. Identify themes for the Discussion Platforms;
7. Establish Working Groups with clear tasks, deadlines, expected outputs and defining roles and responsibilities;
8. Nominate Task Forces (composed of National Coordinators – National Coordinators can invite experts if needed)
  - as a systematic instrument to support the Secretariat (e.g. preparation of steering committee meetings, respond to specific urgent needs, prepare a budget)
  - as a temporal and *ad hoc* instrument with a specific objective;

9. Agree on principles for selecting and inviting individual experts to participate in Working Groups and workshops;
10. Review the outputs of Working Groups;
11. Provide inputs to relevant European and global processes, such as Forest Europe and the Global Plan of Action on FGR;
12. Discuss emerging issues relevant to EUFORGEN and the conservation and use of forest genetic resources in Europe;
13. Identify needs and priorities related to FGR conservation and sustainable use in Europe;
14. Evaluate the achievements at the end of the Phase;
15. Appoint one National Coordinator to be a part of the Selection process of the EUFORGEN Coordinator
16. Identify multi-disciplinary research and action needs on FGR in Europe, relevant to the implementation of EUFORGEN's strategic objectives;
17. Approve engagement with third parties, through a consortium, in proposal writing and submission aiming at getting competitive external funding, as well as in subsequent project implementation, to address EUFORGEN Phase VII operational objectives;
18. Decide on any other matter relevant to EUFORGEN that the Secretariat raises to the agenda.

### **EUFORGEN Secretariat**

The EUFORGEN Secretariat manages the Programme and coordinates its activities, using the resources provided by the EUFORGEN member countries. EFI appoints an EUFORGEN Coordinator (the Steering Committee can appoint one National Coordinator to be part of the selection process) and other Secretariat staff. The Secretariat may also seek advice from observer organisations on relevant scientific, technical or policy-related issues, as needed. In case of major changes in the composition of the Secretariat, EFI will consult with the Steering Committee.

The role of the EUFORGEN Secretariat is to:

1. Ensure that the implementation of the Programme and its activities are in accordance with the mandate given by the Forest Europe process and the work plan and budget decided by the Steering Committee;
2. Prepare annual technical and financial reports;
3. Provide relevant information to the Steering Committee members;
4. Represent EUFORGEN at the Forest Europe relevant events and liaise with its governing bodies;
5. Act as a liaison between the Steering Committee and the Working Groups and Discussion Platforms;
6. Coordinate the Working Groups and Discussion Platforms and provide them with scientific and technical inputs;
7. Organise meetings and workshops in collaboration with local hosts;
8. Prepare reports and other publications;
9. Develop and maintain communication channels with relevant stakeholders;
10. Maintain the EUFORGEN website;
11. Maintain and further develop the EUFGIS Information System;

12. Represent EUFORGEN and advocate for conservation and appropriate use of forest genetic resources in relevant European and global processes;
13. Facilitate collaboration with relevant stakeholders and the expansion of EUFORGEN to encourage new countries to become members;
14. Call for focused online Steering Committee meetings to allow for functioning and decision making in a timely manner.

### **Guiding principles for the EUFORGEN Secretariat involvement in competitive external funding project proposals representing EUFORGEN**

1. The Secretariat shall seek and acquire approval from the Steering Committee, before engaging with third parties, through a consortium, in proposal writing and submission aiming at getting competitive external funding, as well as subsequent project implementation, to address EUFORGEN Phase VII operational objectives.
2. It is acknowledged that:
  - a project consortium has independence and autonomy in defining its own composition, its sharing of responsibilities, and resources;
  - the Secretariat should not aim to coordinate Research and Innovation projects;
  - once a project is being implemented, the Secretariat will inform the respective National Coordinators and connect them with relevant partners to ensure that the activities of the project do not interfere with their national FGR programmes.
3. The Secretariat will respond to a pertinent request to join a potential Consortium by providing a standardised response, as detailed in Annex 5. The Consortium is expected to acknowledge the procedure and respond to the questionnaire specified in Annex 6. Once the Secretariat receives the completed questionnaire, it submits this to the Steering Committee, with background information/material as required. If further requests are received within seven (7) calendar days of the submission, each request should follow the steps described above and will also be submitted to the Steering Committee. After the seven-calendar-day deadline, no further requests will be considered. A decision will thereafter, within five (5) calendar days, be made by the Steering Committee in respect of the requests to be considered for approval.

### **Other project support**

In case the Secretariat is asked to provide support for a project in which it is not a partner- for a call to which the Secretariat is not applying- (e.g. by providing a letter of support, being included in the advisory board, contribute as stakeholder, etc), the Secretariat will evaluate based on the geographical scope (a minimum number of five beneficial countries), (in line with EUFORGEN's strategic objectives) and required involvement (must not affect the Secretariat's operational capacity). The EUFORGEN Coordinator will define the level of involvement.

## Role and responsibilities of the institute hosting the EUFORGEN Secretariat

EFI, being the legal entity hosting the Secretariat, appoints the EUFORGEN Coordinator and other Secretariat staff.

The Secretariat implements the workplan as decided by the Steering Committee (with the means at disposal as decided by the Steering Committee). EFI manages the EUFORGEN funds in accordance with its rules and practices, within budgets and *Modus operandi* in this Annex 2. EFI may in this respect take all actions necessary to efficiently administer the EUFORGEN funds.

## Discussion Platforms and Working Groups

During Phase VII, EUFORGEN will carry out its activities through:

- **Discussion Platforms** where national experts (one per EUFORGEN member country) meet, share, discuss and analyse relevant issues, share perspectives and identify needs;
- **Working Groups**, established directly by the Steering Committee, where selected experts develop specific outputs<sup>23</sup>.

### *Discussion Platforms*

The Discussion Platforms will address issues that need a wide pan-European perspective. Each member will be invited to nominate one national representative for each Platform. These Platforms are the instrument to analyse and discuss relevant issues, to maintain the overall knowledge and understanding of issues relevant to FGR in Europe and to build capacity among the members of the forum. The Steering Committee, through a Task Force, will give a mandate indicating the tasks, expected outputs and a defined timeframe within which each Platform will operate.

The Discussion Platforms will be organised to optimise interactions among experts from all levels of experience, as an opportunity for capacity building, and not as a decision-making body. Progress and findings will be reported to the Steering Committee and presented at relevant events. Discussion Platforms can make recommendations to the Steering Committee to establish Working Groups to address specific issues.

The travel and accommodation costs of national representatives will be covered by EUFORGEN. No Discussion Platform meetings have been budgeted for Phase VII.

### *Working Groups*

Once the need for a Working Group has been identified by the Steering Committee, the Steering Committee, through a Task Force, will give a mandate indicating the tasks, expected outputs, and a defined timeframe. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Task Force (whenever relevant), will develop a tentative list of members from the pool of experts in the field, nominated by National Coordinators. The members will be selected based on their experience and knowledge to match the tasks of a given Working Group. The geographical distribution of members as well as their participation in previous Working Groups will also be considered. The tentative list of selected members will be circulated to the Steering Committee for comments and final approval. The Secretariat will then inform the selected members, coordinate their work (including meeting arrangements) and provide technical and scientific

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<sup>23</sup> Example of *discussion platform*: to identify research needs related to forest genetic resources at European level. Example of *working group*: (i) Analyse European forest policy related to FGR, (ii) contribute to the FGR conservation strategy update

inputs to the tasks of the Working Groups. Each Working Group will appoint a chair who will lead the work of the Working Group and report back to the Steering Committee.

Draft outputs of the Working Groups may be circulated to nominated experts in the given field who did not participate in the Working Group, for their comments and review. Prior to publishing their final output, the Working Group chair will present their results to the Steering Committee.

The travel and accommodation costs of members will be covered by EUFORGEN. Financial resources have been budgeted for a total of six Working Group meetings during Phase VII.

### **EUFGIS National Focal Points**

The European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (EUFGIS) will be maintained and further developed as part of EUFORGEN during Phase VII. The National Focal Points nominated by the National Coordinators (or Contact Person in the case of non-member countries) are expected to continue their work during Phase VII.

At any time, the National Coordinator (or Contact Person in case of non-member countries) can nominate a new National Focal Point (e.g. as a result of staff changes in a given institute) who may benefit from the online tutorials and guidance from the EUFORGEN Secretariat on how to use EUFGIS. Persons nominated for the task are responsible for collecting and maintaining information on forest genetic resources (FGR) as part of national FGR inventories or any similar national arrangement for obtaining and maintaining the data. The EUFGIS National Focal Points are encouraged to link FGR related issues to the development of digitalisation in their countries. More specifically, the EUFGIS National Focal Points are expected to carry out the following tasks:

1. Enter data in EUFGIS according to the minimum requirements<sup>24</sup>;
2. Take responsibility for data already in the information system and update them, ensuring their quality;
3. Participate in EUFGIS-related meetings (associated travel and accommodation costs will be covered by EUFORGEN or relevant projects);
4. Continue providing relevant information on the dynamic genetic conservation units of forest trees and possible extension of the information system on static *ex situ*;
5. Provide inputs to further development of the EUFGIS information system and new initiatives on FGR documentation, as needed.

During Phase VII, the EUFORGEN budget includes financial resources for the maintenance of the information system (including its intranet<sup>25</sup> and the portal<sup>26</sup>, helpdesk support, training of new National Focal Points, etc.).

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<sup>24</sup> [portal.eufgis.org/fileadmin/templates/eufgis.org/documents/EUFGIS\\_Minimum\\_requirements.pdf](https://portal.eufgis.org/fileadmin/templates/eufgis.org/documents/EUFGIS_Minimum_requirements.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> [intranet.eufgis.org](https://intranet.eufgis.org)

<sup>26</sup> [portal.eufgis.org](https://portal.eufgis.org)

### **National Experts**

The EUFORGEN Secretariat will contact the National Coordinators to nominate National Experts, who have relevant experience and knowledge on themes related to the defined Discussion Platforms and Working Groups. The National Coordinators will describe the expertise of the person in relation to the topics.

These experts' names will be listed on the EUFORGEN website.

### **Observer Organisations**

The Steering Committee may invite representatives of relevant organisations to attend as observer to (part of) its meetings.

### Annex 3. Mandate

EUFORGEN was established in 1994 as an implementation mechanism for Resolution S2 (Conservation of forest genetic resources) of the first Ministerial Conference, held in Strasbourg, France in 1990. Strasbourg Resolution 2 called for “*a functional but voluntary instrument of international cooperation*” to be established to promote and coordinate: 1) *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of genetic diversity of European forests; 2) exchange of reproductive materials; and 3) monitor progress in these fields.

After the Strasbourg Conference, a follow-up committee, consisting of experts from Finland, France, Poland and Portugal, was established to propose how to make this instrument operational. The committee carried out its work during 1991–1993 with the help of several experts from other European countries and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI)<sup>27</sup>, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the European Commission. The operational recommendations of the committee and a proposal developed by IPGRI and FAO for the establishment of EUFORGEN were then endorsed by the Helsinki Conference in 1993<sup>28</sup>. Since its establishment, EUFORGEN has also contributed to the implementation of other Forest Europe resolutions which deal with, or are relevant to, forest genetic resources<sup>29</sup>.

In addition to Strasbourg Resolution 2, the Signatory States of Forest Europe and the European Community have expressed their specific commitment to the conservation of forest genetic resources in several other resolutions and declarations. They have agreed to “*promote the conservation of forest genetic resources as an integral part of sustainable forest management and continue the pan-European collaboration in this area*” (Vienna Resolution 4, 2003) and “*maintain, conserve, restore and enhance the biological diversity of forests, including their genetic resources, through sustainable forest management*” (Warsaw Declaration, 2007). In 2011, the Oslo Conference adopted a vision, goals and targets for European forests based on the earlier Forest Europe commitments. The latest Forest Europe work programme, developed in 2012, also includes EUFORGEN as one of the international activities supportive to the follow-up of the Oslo Conference (“*Promotion of conservation and use of forest genetic resources through the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) to contribute to the implementation of sustainable forest management in Europe*”).

In 2015, at the 7<sup>th</sup> Forest Europe Ministerial Conference, signatory countries committed to “*continue pan-European collaboration on forest genetic resources through the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN)*” (Madrid Ministerial Resolution M2, “*Protection of forests in a changing environment*”). In 2021, at the 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference, signatory countries committed to “*recognise the need for dynamic conservation and utilization of forest tree genetic resources and management of forest tree species populations for production of forest reproductive material (As reflected in the updated pan-European indicator for sustainable forest management 4.6 Genetic Resources) and continue pan-European collaboration on forest genetic resources through the EUFORGEN to this end*”. This is a clear

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<sup>27</sup> Now Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

<sup>28</sup>Helsinki Resolutions H1 (General Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Forests in Europe), H2 (General Guidelines for the Conservation of Biodiversity of European Forests) and H4 (Strategies for a Process of Long-Term Adaptation of Forests in Europe to Climate Change); Lisbon Resolution L2 (Pan-European Criteria, Indicators and Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management); Vienna Resolutions V4 (Conserving and Enhancing Forest Biological Diversity in Europe) and V5 (Climate Change and Sustainable Forest Management in Europe); and Warsaw Declaration.

recognition of EUFORGEN’s effectiveness and its distinctive and valuable role in conserving forest genetic diversity and contributing to sustainable resource management. In the same Ministerial Resolution, countries also committed to “promote national implementation of strategies and guidelines for dynamic conservation and appropriate use of forest genetic resources under changing climate conditions,” referencing the strategies and guidelines developed by EUFORGEN over the past decade.

A list of countries committed to the Forest Europe resolutions on forest genetic resources is shown in Table 6.

**Table 6** A list of EUFORGEN member countries (as of June 2024). The table also shows the signatories of relevant Forest Europe commitments on forest genetic resources (Strasbourg Resolution 2 (S2), Madrid Resolution 2 (M2), Bratislava Ministerial Declaration (BD)), the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the FAO member countries in Europe.

Country	EUFORGEN member country during Phase VI (2020-2024)	S2	M2	BD	CBD	FAO
Albania		X	X		X	X
Andorra				X	X	X
Austria	X	X	X	X	X	X
Azerbaijan					X	X
Belarus		X	X	X	X	X
Belgium	X	X	X	X*	X	X
Bosnia and Herzegovina					X	X
Bulgaria		X	X	X	X	X
Croatia	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cyprus		X	X	X	X	X
Czech Republic	X	X	X	X	X	X
Denmark	X	X	X		X	X
Estonia	X	X	X	X	X	X
European Union		X	X	X	X	
Finland	X	X	X	X	X	X
France	X	X	X	X	X	X
Georgia			X	X	X	X
Germany	X		X	X	X	X
Greece		X	X	X	X	X
Holy See		X	X	X		
Hungary	X	X	X	X	X	X
Iceland	X	X	X*	X	X	X
Ireland	X	X	X	X	X	X
Italy	X	X	X	X	X	X
Latvia		X	X		X	X
Liechtenstein		X	X	X	X	
Lithuania	X	X	X	X	X	X
Luxembourg	X	X	X	X	X	X
Malta	X	X			X	X
Moldova				X	X	
Montenegro				X	X	X
Netherlands	X	X	X*	X	X	X
Norway	X	X	X	X	X	X
Poland	X	X	X	X	X	X
Portugal	X	X	X*	X	X	X
Romania	X	X	X	X	X	X
Russian Federation		X	X		X	X
Serbia	X	X	X	X*	X	X
Slovakia	X	X	X	X	X	X
Slovenia	X	X	X	X	X	X



Country	EUFORGEN member country during Phase VI (2020-2024)	S2	M2	BD	CBD	FAO
Spain	X	X	X	X*	X	X
Sweden	X	X	X	X	X	X
Switzerland	X	X	X	X	X	X
North Macedonia				X	X	X
Türkiye		X	X	X*	X	X
Ukraine	X	X	X	X*	X	X
United Kingdom	X	X	X		X	X
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>43</b>

\* Countries pending confirmation of signed docs from relevant Ministerial Resolution/Declaration

The **EU Adaptation Strategy** recognises the importance of implementing forest management approaches that include climate change adaptation, particularly considering the importance of biodiversity and genetic resources for facing environmental challenges (European Commission Directorate - General for Climate Action, 2021). The **European Biodiversity Strategy for 2030** (European Commission - Directorate-General for Environment, 2020) and the **New EU Forest Strategy for 2030** (European Commission - Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, 2021) also highlight the significance of biodiversity and genetic resources for ecological principles and long-term adaptability in the face of climate change.

The sixth meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP-6) to the CBD adopted the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity in 2002. Under Goal 1.4 (*To promote the sustainable use of forest biological diversity*), the Programme of Work specifically encourages development of information systems and strategies for *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic diversity (Objective 1.4.4). COP-9 invited Parties, other governments and international organizations to “*recognize and increase understanding of the potential of forest genetic diversity to address climate change, maintain forest ecosystems resilience and lead to the discovery of new timber and non-timber forest resources*”.

In 2010, COP-10 of the CBD adopted a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, for the period 2011–2020 (Decision X/2). This Strategic Plan aims “*to improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity*” (Strategic Goal C). Strategies for the conservation of cultivated plants and domesticated animals, as well as their wild relatives (including other socio-economically and culturally valuable species, such as forest trees) should be developed and implemented by 2020 (Target 13).

In 2016, COP 13 of CBD adopted a Decision on Forest Biodiversity recognising the role of international organisations in supporting the implementation of the forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In particular, it recognises the role of relevant organisations and initiatives in “*improving monitoring of and reporting on progress, including the harmonization of indicators and reporting processes*” and in “*improving knowledge management, including through open data platforms and interoperability to facilitate the sharing and synthesis of information*”

In 2022, COP 15 of CBD announced four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030 in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, among others, the Target 4 states: “Ensure urgent management actions, to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk, as well as to maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild and domesticated species to maintain their

adaptive potential, including through *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and sustainable management practices, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence”.

The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was formally established in 2012 to support the CBD and to improve the science–policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The new IPBES work programme includes regional assessments for biodiversity and ecosystem services. These types of regional assessments and other IPBES activities will benefit from the results of the EUFORGEN work.

In addition to the Forest Europe process and the CBD, European countries have also expressed their commitment to a new global effort on forest genetic resources in the context of FAO.

In June 2013, the 38<sup>th</sup> session of FAO Conference adopted a Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources (GPA-FGR), which is a voluntary and non-binding document designed to support the implementation of existing commitments and international agreements, such as the CBD. The aims of the GPA-FGR are to: 1) strengthen understanding and knowledge of forest genetic resources; 2) promote the sustainable use and management of forest genetic resources; 3) develop and strengthen *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation programmes through collaboration at national, regional and international levels; and 4) promote access to, and sharing of, information on forest genetic resources at regional and national levels. The GPA-FGR was developed by the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources (ITWG-FGR) in response to the findings of the first report on The State of the World’s Forest Genetic Resources.

The GPA-FGR identifies a total of 27 strategic priorities for action at national, regional and international levels. For Europe, two regional-level strategic priorities are of particular relevance: Strategic Priority 11 (*Develop and implement regional in situ conservation strategies and promote ecoregional networking and collaboration*); and Strategic Priority 24 (*Reinforce regional and international cooperation to support education, knowledge dissemination, research, and conservation and sustainable management of forest genetic resources*). FAO has recognised that regional networks and programmes on forest genetic resources, such as EUFORGEN, play a crucial role in the implementation of the GPA-FGR. Subsequently, the EUFORGEN Steering Committee also discussed the GPA-FGR in December 2013 and agreed that the Programme should contribute to the implementation of the regional-level priorities of the GPA-FGR in Europe.

In 2017, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture adopted targets, indicators, and verifiers for FGR to assess the implementation of the GPA and a schedule to monitor the GPA-implementation. It includes the main steps required to prepare The Second Report on the State of the World’s Forest Genetic Resources (Second Report).

EUFORGEN contributes to the implementation of the regional-level priorities of the GPA-FGR in Europe and to the regional reporting for the State of the World’s Forest Genetic Resources.

#### Annex 4. Implementation Plan for Phase VII

The three tables below (one for each strategic objective) present the key activities for EUFORGEN Phase VI, planned to achieve the defined operational objectives.

#### Strategic Objective 1: Facilitate knowledge sharing and communicate with key stakeholders

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
<b>1.1 Facilitate knowledge sharing and learning among relevant actors (e.g. scientists, national competent authorities, practitioners and policymakers, certification bodies, NGO community)</b>	1.1.1 Review existing and potential channels of communication: i) target stakeholder channels (what are the channels that they currently use that are relevant for FGR issues); ii) EUFORGEN’s own channels	a. Evaluation of EUFORGEN to enable the evolution of the programme	S, NC			CORE	2025-2027	Evaluation results
		b. Develop a comprehensive plan for the Communication and Dissemination of EUFORGEN activities and results, with mid-term review	S			CORE	2025, 2028	Implementation of plan, report on C & D activities, analytics of online tools
		<b>c. External:</b> Organise a workshop bringing FGR conservation and breeders together that will identify aspect of genetic diversity relevant in both				EXTERNAL		

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
	1.1.2 Activities to target non-member countries: Members of Forest Europe process who are not EUFORGEN members.	Engage with Forest Europe non-member countries to conserve and sustainably manage FGR	S, NC		✓	CORE	ongoing	List of nominated Contact Persons
	1.1.3 Activities to target non-member countries: Southern Mediterranean and Caucasus countries who are not in FE (consider hotspots of biodiversity)	<b>External:</b> develop partnerships to support non-European neighbouring countries to conserve and sustainably manage FGR				EXTERNAL		
<b>1.2 Communicate the importance of forest genetic diversity and outputs of EUFORGEN to policymakers, forestry professionals and practitioners on the ground, wider scientific community and civil society</b>	1.2.1 Target forest owners & managers, forest rangers, and forest owners' associations	a. Dissemination campaign of FRM report and "FRM-Focus on Forest Genetic Diversity" at major events (eg SER Europe) and National magazines	S			CORE	2025-2026	Dissemination material produced and distributed
		b. Webinar series to raise awareness for the forestry sectors, eg: (i) evolution-oriented forestry; (ii) multi-risks management; (iii) adaptive strategies	S			CORE	ongoing	Webinar series available online

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
	1.2.2 Target policy makers	<b>a. TFs to develop policy briefs</b> on: i) importance of FGR conservation; ii) use of FRM; iii) existing coherent FGR strategy; iv) project findings. <b>Translation</b> depending on country	S, TF	23		CORE	ongoing	Policy briefs available
		b. Disseminate policy recommendations at international meetings and national events	S, NC	23		CORE	ongoing	List of events where policy briefs were distributed
	1.2.3 Target wider society	Develop dissemination material to communicate the role of trees and genetic diversity using EUFGIS and the GCU network	S			CORE	ongoing	Dissemination material produced and distributed
<b>1.3 Conduct regular training of EUFGIS FP on the use of EUFGIS and the curation of data</b>		Conduct EUFGIS NFP training once a year (online / recorded or physical meeting)	S	7		CORE + FORGENIUS + OptFORESTS	ongoing	List of EUFGIS NFP training events
<b>1.4 Strengthen and promote the use of EUFGIS to a broad group of stakeholders</b>	1.4.1	<b>External:</b> Dissemination workshop on the value and use of EUFGIS for local conservation of FGR		7		EXTERNAL		

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
	1.4.2	Develop standards and explore options for creating an online information system(s) for geo-referenced records of FRM end use and, where available, performance data		17	✓	OptFORESTS	2025-2027	Report available
	1.4.3	Improve EUFGIS to support FAIR data principles and make the FGR data FAIR		4		FORGENIUS	2025	Upgraded EUFGIS using FAIR principles online
	1.4.4	Link EUFGIS with other relevant Information Systems in Europe		20		FORGENIUS, OptFORESTS	2025-2027	List of linked Information Systems
<b>1.5 Monitor progress of <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> conservation and use of FRM for the FOREST EUROPE Process (Indicator 4.6)</b>		Participate in next Forest Europe reporting in phase VII	S, NC, NFP	22	✓	CORE	2025/2029	Chapter in the Forest Europe report

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
1.6 Use AI for communication purposes for the EUFORGEN network		WG to explore the potential applications to use AI for communication purposes for the EUFORGEN network	S, TF, WG			CORE	2027-2029	List of WG members, TF mandate, WG report

**Strategic Objective 2: Coordinate the implementation of conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe**

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
2.1 Characterise FGR in Europe	2.1.1 Based on the characterisation done in GCUs, extract information for FGR in Europe	WG on the assessment of the level of characterisation of European forest tree species and their role in SFM	S, TF, WG	1	✓	CORE/ OptFORESTS	2027-2029	List of WG members, TF mandate, WG report
	2.1.2 Share standardised protocols for GCU characterisation	Follow-up on FORGENIUS project activities: make protocols for GCU characterisation available	S			CORE	2025-2026	Protocols available online
	2.1.3 Improve the characterisation of all GCUs that are part of EUFGIS	Annual update of the GCU characterisation using environmental and remote sensing data resources following the standardised protocols	S	2		FORGENIUS/ CORE	ongoing	GCU Characterisation completed annually

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
<b>2.2 Identify conservation gaps and prioritise FGR for conservation</b>	2.2.1 Improve the identification of conservation gaps in the pan-European core network of GCUs	<b>a. Core:</b> TF to develop a concept on how to collect existing methodologies / documents and how to develop a methodology to improve the identification of conservation gaps in the pan-European core network of GCUs based on additional data (genetic, phenotypic, environmental zones etc.)	S, TF	12	✓	CORE	2025-2026	Concept note available
		<b>b. External:</b> Develop a methodology to improve the identification of conservation gaps in the pan-European core network of GCUs based on additional data (genetic, phenotypic, environmental zones etc.) by combining existing methodologies, and developing new ones, and integrating them in EUFGIS. Identify the rationale behind the gaps and evaluate the potential solutions for filling them			✓	EXTERNAL		



Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
	2.2.2 Select species whose genetic resources should be prioritised for conservation at European level	<b>External:</b> Develop criteria for the selection of species whose genetic resources should be prioritised for conservation at European level		16	✓	EXTERNAL		
2.3 Develop criteria for assessing the threat status of GCUs	2.3.1 Incorporate relevant tools in EUFGIS	<b>External:</b> Upgrade EUFGIS incorporating the Decision Support Tool		15	✓	EXTERNAL		
	2.3.2 Compile robust tools to assess threats to GCUs	<b>External:</b> Collect available <i>threat assessment tools</i> and information available from existing literature and develop threat assessment criteria for assessing the threat status of GCUs		15	✓	EXTERNAL		
	2.3.3 Link to an early warning system for pests/diseases	<b>External:</b> Link EUFGIS with relevant information systems for early warning of potential abiotic and biotic threats			✓	EXTERNAL		
	2.3.4 Evaluate synergies with type of protection areas (as part of EUFGIS)	Create maps in EUFGIS by overlaying maps of GCUs with existing geo-referenced databases from protected areas (e.g. Natura2000)	S	15		CORE	2025-2026	Maps available in EUFGIS

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
2.4 Develop data quality management and monitoring strategies for long-term conservation of forest genetic resources		a. Conduct a 1-day session on data quality management during the EUFGIS training	S, NFP	10		CORE	2025-2027	List of participants, Minutes of the meeting
		b. WG to evaluate the genetic monitoring schemes	S, TF, WG	10	✓	CORE	2027-2029	List of WG members, TF mandate, WG report
2.5 Integrate <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> conservation and develop a platform to store static <i>ex situ</i> conservation data when needed		a. WG to develop strategies and guiding principles for moving threatened GCU from <i>in situ</i> to <i>ex situ</i> and define data recording needs on their complementarity and develop the requirements for a platform to store static <i>ex situ</i> conservation data	S, TF, WG			CORE	2025-2027	List of WG members, TF mandate, WG report
		<b>b. Project:</b> Evaluate enrichment planting in the context of integrating <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> conservation				OptFORESTS	2025-2027	Presentation from OptFORESTS
2.6. Support national implementation of the FGR Strategy for Europe	2.6.1 Support national implementation of the GPA-FGR	a. Align EUFORGEN strategic objectives with the GPA-FGR.	S, NC	22		CORE	2028-2029	Draft of next EUFORGEN Phase (VII) aligned with GPA-FGR

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
		b. Organise a session in a SC meeting to discuss CBD indicators	S, NC			CORE	2026-2028	Minutes of the SC meeting available
	2.6.2 Capacity building and sharing experience within the EUFORGEN community	National report on selected topics during the SC meetings	S, NC			CORE	ongoing	Minutes of the SC meeting available

### Strategic Objective 3: Promote the sustainable use of forest genetic resources

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
<b>3.1. Promote the sustainable use of FGR in Sustainable Forest Management</b>	3.1.1 Prepare science-based recommendations and tools for better incorporating genetic aspects into SFM practices	a. WG to prepare science-based recommendations for better incorporating genetic aspects into SFM practices and to monitor their impact	S, TF, WG	18	✓	CORE	2026-2029	List of WG members, TF mandate, WG report
		b. Dissemination campaign for the Atlas of silvicultural practices	S			CORE	2025-2026	Dissemination material produced and distributed

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
	3.1.2 Target forest owners & managers, forest rangers, and forest owners' associations with tailored information and training	Prepare dissemination material + 1-day session <i>on management and monitoring of GCUs, checklist on minimum requirements, the implications for GCUs</i> during the EUFGIS NFP trainings	S, NC, NFP			CORE/ national level	2026-2028	Dissemination material produced and distributed - List of participants and minutes of the meeting available
<b>3.2 Promote the sustainable use of FGR in planting operations</b>	3.2.1 Compile existing science-based information on FGR use and make recommendations for forest managers and other tree planters (people in charge of FLR) on the use of FRM.	a. Organise an activity with Forest Europe ForISK Facility to support the use of species or provenances coming from other countries / regions, while preventing the risk of introducing invasive species / new pests and diseases.	S		✓	CORE	2026-2027	Report of the activity
		<b>b. External:</b> analyse the effect of breeding programmes, seed orchards, clonal material and somatic embryogenesis on the natural populations of respective species				EXTERNAL / OptFORESTS	2027-2029	
<b>3.3 Analyse the impact of policies on the use of FGR</b>	3.3.1 Analyse policy issues and recommend changes when they are	a. Systematically analyse emerging policy and legal issues to anticipate their development	S, NC			CORE	ongoing	List of emerging policy and legal issues

Operational Objectives		Activities (External activities require external funding)	Responsibility <sup>1</sup>	Mandate <sup>2</sup>		Source of funding <sup>3</sup>	Timeframe	Means of verification
				FGRS4E KC	FE			
	inconsistent with the appropriate use of FGR	b. TFs to prepare policy briefs in response to the emerging policy developments	S, TF			CORE	ongoing	Policy briefs available
		c. WG to prepare a policy brief describing the potential impact(s) of FRM normatives on use of FGR (what are the forestry purposes and different interpretation in countries)	S, TF, WG			CORE	2025-2027	List of WG members, TF mandate, WG report
	3.3.2 Better link EC rural development programme to EUFORGEN strategy to support implementation at national level	a. Develop material for the next RDP preparation to promote the link to EUFORGEN FGR Strategy and its implementation at national level	S			CORE	2026-2028	Material available
		b. Organise an event to brief relevant policymakers	S			CORE	2026-2028	News article of the event

1 S = Secretariat, NC = National Coordinator, SC = Steering Committee, TF = Task Force, WG = Working Group, NFP = EUFGIS National Focal Point

2 FE = Forest Europe, FGRS4E KC = Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe Key Commitments

3 CORE/ EXTERNAL/ PROJECT NAME

Related to EUFGIS



## **Annex 5. Standardised response for potential consortia regarding the EUFORGEN Secretariat's involvement in competitive external funding project proposals representing EUFORGEN**

### **Description of the procedure**

To engage the EUFORGEN Secretariat in the preparation of a competitive project proposal for external funding, an institute or consortium should approach the Secretariat and provide the information outlined in Annex 6. This information will be submitted anonymously to the Steering Committee for approval. Preference will be given to project proposals seeking external funding required to pursue the EUFORGEN Phase VII operational objectives (see Annex 4 above), aligned with other operational objectives or identified as research priorities during Phase VII.

In addition to the approval of the Steering Committee, the EUFORGEN Secretariat can be included in a project proposal consortium, only if the following conditions are fulfilled:

- i. If any research in GCUs is planned, the EUFORGEN National Coordinator or the EUFORGEN Contact Person of the country should be notified once the project proposal is funded.
- ii. In case of activities foreseen in GCUs (if the GCU is selected for its role as part of the FGR conservation programme), the Secretariat will establish the link with the National Coordinator / Contact Person who will then organise the link / contact between the project and the manager / owner of the GCU.

## Annex 6. Template for Steering Committee approval for the EUFORGEN Secretariat’s participation in external funding project proposals

Template to be filled by an institute or a consortium and sent to the EUFORGEN Coordinator. The EUFORGEN Coordinator will then submit the template anonymously to the Steering Committee in order to approve the Secretariat’s participation in external funding project proposals.

1. What is the geographical scope of the project (e.g. European, national, sub-regional)

2. Do you foresee any of the following EUFORGEN Phase VII operational objectives<sup>30</sup> to be addressed by your project?

List of Phase VII operational objectives requiring external funding	Yes/No
1.1 Facilitate knowledge sharing and learning among relevant actors- 1.1.3 Activities to target non-member countries: Southern Mediterranean and Caucasus countries who are not in FE	
1.4 Strengthen and promote the use of EUFGIS to a broad group of stakeholders	
2.2 Identify conservation gaps and prioritise FGR for conservation	
2.3 Develop criteria for assessing the threat status of GCUs	
3.2 Promote the sustainable use of FGR in planting operations	

3. Do you foresee any other EUFORGEN Phase VII operational objectives to be addressed?

4. Do you foresee any research and action needs identified by the Steering Committee during Phase VII to be addressed by your project?

5. Do you foresee any of the key commitments of the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe<sup>31</sup> to be addressed by your project?

<sup>30</sup> [LINK to Phase VII implementation plan]

<sup>31</sup> [www.euforgen.org/fGRStrategy4Europe](http://www.euforgen.org/fGRStrategy4Europe)



6. Please give brief details if your project is foreseen to address any of the following:

Research in GCU (please specify)

Expansion or upgrade to EUFGIS

Linking EUFGIS with other Information Systems

Training or consultation meetings with the EUFGIS National Focal Points?

7. What activities do you foresee for the EUFORGEN Secretariat in your project?

8. Do you foresee any consultation meetings with the EUFORGEN Steering Committee?

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