

# European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) Phase V (2015–2019)

## TECHNICAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL SUMMARY 1 January - 31 December 2017

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### 1. Introduction

The European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) is a collaborative programme between European countries to promote the conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources (FGR). It was established in October 1994 as a pan-European implementation mechanism for Resolution S2 (Conservation of forest genetic resources) of the first Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE, now called Forest Europe), held in Strasbourg in 1990. EUFORGEN also contributes to the implementation of Vienna Resolution 4 (Conserving and enhancing forest biological diversity in Europe) (2003).

The role of EUFORGEN as an implementing mechanism of the Forest Europe process, was definitively recognised in 2015, at the 7<sup>th</sup> Forest Europe Ministerial Conference, where 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 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.

The Programme also contributes to implementation of relevant decisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Furthermore, EUFORGEN contributes 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), which was adopted by the FAO<sup>2</sup> Conference in 2013.

The European Commission also recognised the role of EUFORGEN as a mechanism to strengthen forest genetic resources conservation with the 2015-2020 European Commission’s Multi-annual Implementation Plan of the EU Forest Strategy<sup>3</sup>. This is also a recognition of the Programme’s unique role in providing a science-policy interface at EU level.

EUFORGEN is financed by its member countries and coordinated, during the reported period, by Bioversity International in technical collaboration with FAO. EUFORGEN activities are mainly carried out by experts from the member countries. The EUFORGEN Steering Committee is composed of National Coordinators from all member countries and it has overall responsibility for the Programme.

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<sup>1</sup> With effect from 1 December 2006, IPGRI and INIBAP operate under the name "Bioversity International", Bioversity for short.

<sup>2</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

<sup>3</sup> EC Multi-annual Implementation Plan of the EU Forest Strategy [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/forest/forest-map/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/forest/forest-map/index_en.htm)

During Phase V (2015–2019), the EUFORGEN objectives are the following:

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

EUFORGEN carries out its activities through working groups and workshops. The working groups are established by the Steering Committee (SC) to address specific issues under Objectives 2 and 3. The SC also defines the tasks, deadlines and expected outputs of working groups. The results of working groups are discussed during workshops with a broader group of experts and stakeholders engaged in EUFORGEN and reported back to the SC for further action.

Under Objective 1, EUFORGEN is maintaining the EUFGIS (European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources) Portal<sup>4</sup> and its network of National Focal Points created during an EU-supported project 'Establishment of a European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources'<sup>5</sup> (2007–2011). In addition, the National Coordinators and the EUFORGEN Secretariat contribute to international reporting efforts on FGR. A particular emphasis was given by the Secretariat, during the reported period, to the communication of the EUFORGEN results to policymakers, a wider scientific community and practitioners.

This document provides highlights of EUFORGEN activities in 2017. It also includes a summary on expenditures and financial contributions in 2017. The detailed financial reports for 2017 is available as separate document.

## **2. EUFORGEN membership**

In 2017, EUFORGEN had a total of 27 member countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom). Three out of these countries re-joined the programme after several years of break (Austria, Belgium, Spain).

The Secretariat is maintaining an active dialogue with non-member countries in Europe to facilitate their membership.

## **3. EUFORGEN working groups**

### **3.1 Working group on a decision support tool for the management of the genetic conservation units network**

The objective of this working group was to further develop a decision support tool of which a preliminary version was laid out in a thematic publication "*Approaches to the conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe in the context of climate change*"<sup>6</sup> developed during Phase IV of the Programme. The tool is necessary for the establishment of standards in the management of

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<sup>4</sup> <http://portal.eufgis.org>

<sup>5</sup> [www.eufgis.org](http://www.eufgis.org)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/climate-change-and-forest-genetic-diversity>

conservation units and to identify threatened tree populations across Europe.

The working group's task was to identify threats at species and population level, which will guide the definition of priorities and modalities for actions, including introduced tree species important for forestry in several European countries. The decision support tool will allow forest managers who are responsible for the management of the national networks of genetic conservation units (GCUs) to take the right decisions with long-term perspectives. In particular, it will simplify the identification of threats at population level.

The tool will provide a common standard for the consistent management of genetic conservation units and allow uniform implementation and monitoring of the *Pan-European strategy for genetic conservation of forest tree* throughout Europe.

In 2017, the working group met for the second time in Zurich, Switzerland on 28-31 August 2017 where they developed the first draft of the report, which will be open for comments during 2018. The draft report, entitled "Decision support tool for the management of dynamic genetic conservation units" is available in as separate document.

### **3.2 Working group on developing guidelines and a decision support tool for better incorporating genetic aspects into production and use of forest reproductive material**

The objective of this working group was to collect scientific evidence to develop guidelines and decision support tools on genetic aspects in production and use of forest reproductive material (FRM).

The working group reviewed relevant literature and built on the results of the Forest Management network, which was active during Phase III of EUFORGEN (2005-2009)<sup>7</sup>.

The group started its analysis from the publication *Use and transfer of forest reproductive material in Europe in the context of climate change*<sup>8</sup> developed by another EUFORGEN working group during the Phase IV of EUFORGEN and published in 2015.

Furthermore, the working group benefited by the discussion points derived from a GenTree<sup>9</sup> stakeholders' consultation, which took place in Madrid, Spain in October 2016. The consultation was an opportunity for a dialogue between associations of forest owners, forest nurseries, certification scheme officers, policy-makers and researchers working on the management of forest reproductive material in the light of environmental changes.

In its report, the working group (i) documented the production chain of FRM and (ii) examined how genetic aspects are affected in collection/production/deployment of FRM, taking into account how climate change may affect seed production. It (iii) made recommendations on how to improve

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.euforgen.org/about-us/history/phase-iii-2005-2009>

<sup>8</sup> The report, *Use and transfer of forest reproductive material (FRM) in Europe in the context of climate change* is available at the EUFORGEN website: <http://www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/use-and-transfer-of-forest-reproductive-material-in-europe-in-the-context-of-climate-change/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.gentree-h2020.eu/>

existing schemes for tracking and recording FRM and (iv) analysed establishment techniques and use of FRM.

In 2017, the working group met twice: in Warsaw, Poland on 20-22 June and in Rome, Italy on 21-23 November. The report will be completed during 2018 and submitted to the Steering Committee before further circulation to email contributors.

The draft report, entitled “Genetic aspects in production and use of forest reproductive material - Collecting scientific evidence to support the development of guidelines and decision support tools” is available as separate document.

### **3.3 Working group revising the indicator on genetic resources (4.6) of the pan-European criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management**

The indicator 4.6, “Area managed for the conservation and utilization of forest tree genetic resources (*in situ* and *ex situ* genetic conservation) and area managed for seed production”, is part of the set Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for sustainable forest management (SFM) adopted by the FOREST EUROPE process<sup>10</sup>. The objective of this working group was to revise this indicator and to formulate a more effective alternative indicator to the existing 4.6.

These indicators are a tool for forest policy formulation, decision-making, forest monitoring, and communication. Currently the set consists of 34 quantitative indicators and 11 qualitative indicators. The quantitative indicators (including 4.6 under Criterion 4 “Maintenance, Conservation and Appropriate Enhancement of Biological Diversity in Forest Ecosystems”) provide information on the current status of European forests and progress on sustainable forest management.

To date, European countries have been reporting (through EUFORGEN) the number of hectares managed for the conservation and utilization of forest tree genetic resources and area managed for seed production. At its 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, the EUFORGEN SC indicated that an assessment based on the number of hectares was not appropriate to evaluate status and progress of FGR conservation in Europe and to monitor changes, because the indicator in use neither informs on the amount of genetic diversity conserved within each country nor on the added contribution of within-country conservation units to the overall genetic diversity conserved at the pan-European scale. Moreover, the analysis of current information reveals a lack of harmonization among countries regarding the type of genetic resources included, which does not enable a reliable comparison.

The revised indicator was discussed at the 12<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting in May 2017, where the National Coordinators provided comments. During the meeting, it was recognized that EUFORGEN community is presently unable to formulate the component of the indicator to assess static *ex situ* conservation. It was agreed that this component would be further developed in due time in collaboration with the plant genetic resources community. The working group finalized the report during 2017 and opened it for comments to the email-contributors. The Steering Committee is expected to deliberate on its adoption during its 13<sup>th</sup> meeting in June 2018.

The draft report, entitled “Revision of indicator on genetic resources (4.6) of the pan-European criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management” is available as separate document.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://foresteurope.org/themes/?sfm=sfm-criteria-indicators2/#1475853858230-c81b6e40-168d>

#### 4. EUFORGEN Workshops

In 2017, a workshop on “FGR Inventories and GenTree Consultation on the status of conservation of FGR” was organised in collaboration with the GenTree project on 5-6 April in Rome, Italy.

The workshop focused on establishing a dialogue between EUFGIS focal points and training them. The event had multiple objectives: i) to inform the focal points about knowledge that is going to be generated by GenTree, ii) to understand what are the main constraints limiting the quality of the available FGR inventories and limiting optimal implementation of *in situ* conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe, iii) to update the information in the EUFGIS database and iv) to present new features in the portal, designed to produce more elaborated queries.

The workshop provided useful insights to orient future improvements of the EUFGIS Information System and to guide activities of EUFORGEN and the GenTree project.

According to the perception of the participants, the main constraints that limit the implementation of *in situ* conservation of FGR in Europe at various levels are the lack of support by policy-makers and the lack of awareness of the importance of FGR conservation amongst decision makers, general public and forest practitioners. These aspects were considered the most critical ones by the majority of the participants and were flagged as priority themes to be targeted by the EUFORGEN Programme.

The existence of research gaps and the lack of guidelines that translate research findings into management practices were also recognized as important constraints, but they were raised by a lower number of participants and were considered of lower priority.

The GenTree project will take the views expressed in this consultation into consideration, and will integrate the opinions manifested in this event with those emerging from other consultations, in order to package its final research outputs in a way that best reflects the needs of Stakeholders.

The EUFORGEN Secretariat will report the views and concerns expressed to the EUFORGEN Steering Committee as a basis for the definition of future programme of work.

More information on the recommendations and on the event is available on the GenTree website<sup>11</sup>.

#### 5. European information system on forest genetic resources (EUFGIS)

The EUFGIS portal (<http://portal.eufgis.org>) makes available geo-referenced data on the dynamic conservation units of forest trees in Europe. The data are provided and updated by national focal points in line with the pan-European minimum requirements<sup>12</sup> and data standards<sup>13</sup> for these units. The data standards and the minimum requirements were developed as part of the EUFGIS project<sup>14</sup> (2007–2011). The portal<sup>15</sup> has been maintained and further developed by EUFORGEN after the EU-supported project ended.

In 2017, the national focal points continued compiling new data on the units and uploading the data

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.gentree-h2020.eu/fileadmin/Gentree->

[uploads/documents/Report\\_of\\_Gentree\\_Stakeholder\\_event\\_Madrid\\_Nov\\_2016\\_web.pdf](http://www.gentree-h2020.eu/fileadmin/Gentree-)

<sup>12</sup> [http://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>13</sup> [http://portal.eufgis.org/fileadmin/templates/eufgis.org/documents/EUFGIS\\_DataStandards.pdf](http://portal.eufgis.org/fileadmin/templates/eufgis.org/documents/EUFGIS_DataStandards.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.eufgis.org>

<sup>15</sup> <http://portal.eufgis.org>

into the EUFGIS portal. At the end of 2017, the EUFGIS portal contained data on 3,132 units and 103 tree species in 34 countries. The units harbour a total of 3778 tree populations. The number of countries with national focal points (36) remained unchanged.

In 2017, thanks to the support of the GenTree project, a training workshop was organised for the EUFGIS Focal Points (see section above) The Secretariat improved the EUFGIS intranet to better support the EUFGIS National Focal Points.

The core network of dynamic conservation units (following the definitions of the “*Pan-European strategy for genetic conservation of forest trees and establishment*”<sup>16</sup>) was identified for all 103 tree species present in the Information System.

## 6. Activities of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee

The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Steering Committee of the EUFORGEN Programme took place in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, from 30 May to 1 June 2017.

The Steering Committee reviewed the technical and financial reports for 2015 and 16 and discussed the update presented by the Secretariat. The Steering Committee noted that EUFORGEN had made a good progress in its activities and thanked the Secretariat for the prudent management of financial resources. The Steering Committee also adopted the technical and financial reports for 2015/16.

During the meeting the National Coordinators discussed and decided on the future hosting of the EUFORGEN Programme. The decision was reached by a two-step process. As first step, the current hosting situation was presented, the rationale for considering change and the requirements from the host were discussed and proposals from representatives of Bioversity International and the European Forestry Institute (EFI) were outlined. The second step comprised the identification of opportunities and risks with both hosts, an expression of hosting preference by each country member, and the decision-making.

The hosting of the programme was discussed to respond to two major weakness of the EUFORGEN: the lack of close communication with forest-related scientific community outside the FGR field and the weak capacity to communicate with European policy makers and key stakeholders responsible for forest management at various levels. These are not in the mandate of the original hosting organisation, which has a different thematic and geographic mandate.

Additionally FGR are currently under the spotlight in Europe, which has opened a window of opportunities in 2016-2020 to reposition the EUFORGEN programme. The major driving elements are:

1. Forest Europe Madrid Ministerial Resolution 2<sup>17</sup>: Protection of forests in a changing environment – where signatory countries<sup>18</sup> committed to “Continue pan-European

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/pan-european-strategy-for-genetic-conservation-of-forest-trees-and-establishment-of-a-core-network-o/>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.foresteuropemadrid2015.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ELM\\_7MC\\_2\\_2015\\_MadridResolution2\\_Protection.pdf](http://www.foresteuropemadrid2015.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ELM_7MC_2_2015_MadridResolution2_Protection.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.foresteuropa.org/about\\_us/list\\_signatories](http://www.foresteuropa.org/about_us/list_signatories)

collaboration on forest genetic resources through the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN).”

2. Multi-annual Implementation Plan of the EU Forest Strategy<sup>19</sup>, where the European Commission indicates the decision to “Contribution to EUFORGEN to promote conservation and sustainable management of forest genetic resources at pan-European level”
3. The need for the European Commission to develop a strategy for the conservation of genetic diversity, following the European parliament resolution on the mid-term review of the EU’s Biodiversity Strategy<sup>20</sup>

All the above put EUFORGEN at the centre of European forest debate and give the Programme a window of opportunity between now and 2020 when these documents will be revised. EUFORGEN should take advantages of such momentum to seek long-term support for the Programme. To increase the chances for this, EUFORGEN needs strong backstopping and communication channels reaching relevant stakeholders at the European Commission and in member countries.

Representatives from Bioversity International (the original hosting organisation) and the European Forest Institute (candidate hosting organisation) were invited to the meeting to present their respective organisations and describe how EUFORGEN would benefit and integrate in their activities and missions.

After the two presentations and an open discussion with the representatives of the two International Organizations; the members of Steering Committee carried out an in-depth analysis of the pros and cons of the two options, identified risks and opportunities and (where needed) consulted relevant implementing agencies.

The Steering Committee decided that the EUFORGEN Secretariat, assisted by a task group of representatives from, Finland, France Germany and Slovenia would negotiate the transfer of EUFORGEN to the European Forest Institute by the end of 2017.

The decision was taken considering that Bioversity International operates under the CGIAR umbrella and focuses on agricultural and forest biodiversity with special emphasis on the needs of developing countries, while the European Forest Institute is mostly dedicated to European forests and is therefore strategically aligned with EUFORGEN's goals through common thematic and geographic focus. Resilience is one of the three pillars of EFI’s strategy and genetic resources are a key component in resilient forests.

The decision was also taken considering that the European Forest Institute focuses in its own work on conservation and sustainable management of European forests. Therefore, it will have a strong interest in supporting long-term existence of EUFORGEN and a successful implementation of its strategies in Europe. EUFORGEN will complement EFI in providing unbiased policy support on

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<sup>19</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/forest/forest-map/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/forest/forest-map/index_en.htm)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A8-2016-0003&language=GA>

issues related to forests genetic resources: according to the external evaluation<sup>21</sup> of EUFORGEN, the programme has been very strong in connecting scientists in forest genetic resources across Europe, but has not been able to set up a strong dialogue with scientists in other forest-related disciplines and policy makers, which is one of the strengths of EFI.

It was underlined that there would be no governance nor structural changes as consequence of the new hosting arrangement. The same would apply for the budget, except for changing the currency from US dollars to Euros, using the conversion rate of the day when the decision was taken (1 June 2017). Costs such as staff salaries and overheads would remain the same. No changes would apply to annual country contributions and budget lines until the end of the current Phase. The Letters of Agreement between the hosting Institute and the Countries would remain valid and would be transferred to the new hosting Organisation.

In October 2017, the EFI Board decided to locate the Secretariat in the EFI office in Bonn.

## **7. Activities of the EUFORGEN Secretariat**

The Secretariat coordinated the activities of the three working groups that have operated since 2016 and took care of the practical arrangements of their meetings. Furthermore, the Secretariat contributed to the preparation of draft reports of the working groups. In 2017, the Secretariat also organized a workshop on “FGR Inventories and status of conservation of FGR” in collaboration with GenTree project.

During the reporting period, the Secretariat continued to maintain and improve the EUFGIS Information System, Intranet and Portal (see section 5 above). The Secretariat also continued to provide helpdesk support to the EUFGIS National Focal Points.

In 2017, the permanent staff of the Secretariat were Michele Bozzano (coordinator) and Ewa Hermanowicz (Communications Officer). The Secretariat carried out a significant amount of work through collaboration with external consultants and temporary staff, depending on the workload, activities and the required expertise. Temporary staff included a job trainee to support the website re-design and a travel assistant to support the meetings’ logistics. In addition, during the reporting period, fourteen consultants collaborated on a range of tasks including facilitation, science writing, web design, IT, programming, research assistance, film production and evaluation.

### **7.1 Communication strategy**

The communication strategy continued to be implemented according to action plan for 2017. The focus of 2017 was on digital communications, including social media, capacity strengthening, partnerships, participation in events and media engagement. The full report based on the set of agreed indicators listing the actual outcomes is available separately.

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/external-evaluation-of-the-european-forest-genetic-resources-programme-summary>



## 7.2 INPUTS to the Forest Europe process and related work

In 2017, the Coordinator attended and contributed to the following Forest Europe meetings:

- i) Expert Group on Implementation of the Updated pan-European Indicators for SFM- 24 - 25 January 2017, Zvolen, Slovakia.
- ii) Working Group on the future direction of FOREST EUROPE, 13-14 June 2017, Bratislava, Slovakia
- iii) Expert Group on Adaptation to Climate Change, 6-7 September 2017, Bratislava, Slovakia
- iv) Second meeting of the Expert Group on Implementation of Updated pan-European Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, 17-18 October 2017, Vienna, Austria.

The work programme and the minutes of all the meetings are available on the Forest Europe website ([www.foresteurope.org](http://www.foresteurope.org)).

## 7.3 Inputs to the other processes and events

During 2017, the Coordinator attended several events that created awareness about recent outputs of the Programme and introduced EUFORGEN's work to new audiences. A list of key events is presented below.

- i. Biodiversa Advisory Board meetings, 16-17 January, Paris, France.
- ii. Sixteenth Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, FAO. 30 January – 3 February, Rome, Italy
- iii. GenTree annual meeting, 6-10 March, Madrid Spain.
- iv. Workshop on conservation of forest genetic resources in the UK, 14-15 March, RBG Kew, UK
- v. Fifth Mediterranean Forest week, 20-24 March, Agadir, Morocco
- vi. Workshop "Afforestation and Land Use Change in the EU in a Changing Climate", 30 March 2017, EC, Brussels, Belgium.
- vii. International Congress "Sustainable Restoration of Mediterranean Forests", 19-22 April, Palermo, Italy.
- viii. Guidance Development Group for Collection Holders meeting, 24 May. Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- ix. Civil dialogue group on forestry and cork, 8 June, Brussels, Belgium
- x. Workshops on the development of sectoral guidance documents under the EU ABS Regulation, 6-7 July 2017, EC, Brussels, Belgium.
- xi. Third IUFRO restoring forest conference, 12-14 September, Lund, Sweden.
- xii. IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress, 18-22 September, Freiburg, Germany
- xiii. EFI Board meeting, 3 October 2017. Oslo, Norway
- xiv. OECD Technical Working Group Meeting, 3 October, Copenhagen, Denmark
- xv. EFI Annual Conference and Scientific Seminar, 4-5 October, Oslo Norway.
- xvi. GenTree / LIFE GENMON Stakeholders' event on genetic monitoring, 24-25 October, Thessaloniki, Greece.
- xvii. Horizon 2020 Info Week events on Societal Challenge 2, 14-17 November, EC, Brussels Belgium.
- xviii. Organizing committee of the 6<sup>th</sup> Mediterranean Forest Week and 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Committee Silva Mediterranea - 12-15 December, Beirut, Lebanon.

The Communications Officer attended the following events:

- i. Short documentary production training, London, 22-25 Feb 2017
- ii. Ad hoc action group Development of the ERFP Communication Tools meeting, 14-15 March, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- iii. GenTree annual meeting, 6-10 March, Madrid Spain.
- iv. OECD Technical Working Group Meeting, 25-26 Apr, Bordeaux, France
- v. International Cork Oak Congress, 25-26 May, Sassari, Italy
- vi. IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress, 18-22 September, Freiburg, Germany
- vii. Paris Science Film Festival , 8 Oct 2017, Paris, France
- viii. GenTree / LIFE GENMON Stakeholders' event on genetic monitoring, 24-25 October, Thessaloniki, Greece.
- ix. Global Meeting Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World, 31 Oct-1 Nov, Rome, Italy
- x. EFI induction and hosting arrangement meeting, 28 Nov-1 Dec, Joensuu, Finland
- xi. Global Landscapes Forum, 19-21 Dec, Bonn, Germany

## **8. Contributions to European initiatives and projects**

### **8.1 GenTree Project**

GenTree (Optimizing the management and sustainable use of forest genetic resources in Europe) is a project funded by the EU Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. The goal of GenTree is to provide the European forestry sector with better knowledge, methods and tools for optimizing the management and sustainable use of FGR in Europe in the context of climate change. The project (March 2016 -February 2020) is coordinated by Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA), France and includes 22 public and private research organizations and enterprises in the consortium.

Biodiversity International, in collaboration with the EUFORGEN Secretariat, is primarily responsible for leading the work-package on communication and stakeholders' engagement and contributes to other tasks, such as the improved characterization of the EUFGIS Network of genetic conservation units and the definition of priority areas for establishing new genetic conservation units in Europe. The second annual meeting was organized from 6 - 10 March, in Madrid Spain. A workshop, targeting the EUFIS Focal Points "FGR Inventories and GenTree Consultation on the status of conservation of FGR" was organised in collaboration on 5-6 April in Rome, Italy (see above).

More information on GenTree is available at [www.gentree-h2020.eu](http://www.gentree-h2020.eu)

### **8.2 Horizon 2020 SFS-28-2018- Genetic resources and pre-breeding communities**

During the 12th EUFORGEN Steering Committee, National Coordinators discussed possible funding opportunities under the H2020 Work Programme 2018 – 2020 in particular on sub-topic A of topic SFS-28-2018- Genetic resources and pre-breeding communities<sup>22</sup>. National Coordinators agreed to support the Secretariat with a task force, composed of national coordinators from Finland, France, Norway and Slovenia, that supported in defining the objectives and activities and contributed to the initial preparation of the proposal. The secretariat shared the initial concept note to the whole Steering Committee and then continued the preparation of the proposal supported by

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<sup>22</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/sfs-28-2018-2019-2020.html>

the above-mentioned countries. The EUFORGEN Secretariat, represented by the European Forest Institute is the coordinator of the consortium composed of 16 partners,

The project, entitled “GenRes Bridge” aims at strengthening the conservation and sustainable use of GenRes in Europe by: (i) accelerating collaborative efforts among crop, forest and animal GenRes networks and wider (agro) biodiversity stakeholders and (ii) widening individual network capacities to enhance the status and effectiveness of conservation and use of GenRes.

GenRes Bridge will capitalize on the knowledge, strategies, tools and infrastructures developed individually in crop, forest and animal domains over the past few decades by the three pan-European GenRes networks: EUFORGEN, ECPGR23 (European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources), and ERF<sup>24</sup> (The European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources).

### **8.3 Sectoral Guidance Documents to support EU Regulation 511/2014 implementing the Nagoya Protocol**

The European Commission (DG Environment) has commissioned a private consortium to develop draft sectoral guidance documents to support EU Regulation 511/2014 implementing the Nagoya Protocol. Three out of nine sectoral guidance documents (“Plant Breeding” (2016), “Collection Holders” (2017) and “Research” (2017)) are of relevance for the FGR community. The project foresees drafting of each of the sectoral Guidance Documents by a group of 6 – 10 experts, representing various stakeholders in the EU. The EUFORGEN Coordinator was invited to contribute to the first two and to coordinate feedback from the EUFORGEN community.

The first seven drafts were presented in a one-day workshop on 20 September 2016 in Brussels, and feedback was widely collected among EU countries. The remaining two drafts sectoral guidance documents have been developed in 2017, under the responsibility of the European Commission, and will complement the horizontal guidance document<sup>25</sup>, published in August 2016. At the time of writing this report, several issues remain open, delaying the release of the full set of Guidance Documents.

## **9. Financial summary for 2015-2016**

In January 2017, the opening balance of the EUFORGEN trust fund was US\$ 347,782. During 2017, Bioversity International received a total of US\$ 376,400 as financial contributions from member countries. The planned budget for 2016 was US\$ 370,624 while the actual total expenditure in 2017 was US\$ 471,160 . In December 2017, the outstanding contributions for Phase IV was US\$ 8,250 for Romania.

As agreed at the tenth meeting of the EUFORGEN SC, held in Edinburgh (UK) on 16–18 June 2014, “A country with outstanding financial contributions from Phase IV is welcome to re-join the Programme. However, these countries are expected to provide their outstanding financial contributions, or similar level of in-kind contribution, during Phase V”.

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.rfp-europe.org/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C:2016:313:TOC>

In 2017, Greece paid its outstanding contributions and can therefore re-join the programme at any time.

In 2017, the Secretariat continued a prudent management of the financial resources. Furthermore, the GenTree project covered some EUFORGEN expenditures (e.g. part of the Secretariat staff time).

The closing balance of the trust fund was US\$ 239,734 on 30 April 2018 and it was carried forward to 2018. This amount will be transferred to EFI as soon as the Steering Committee approves the financial report. The detailed financial report for 2017 is available as a separate document which was shared with member countries.

## **10. Publications**

In 2017, the following publications were released:

Eriksson G., Varela M.C., Lumaret R., Gil L. 2017. Genetic conservation and management of *Quercus suber*. Technical Bulletin. European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN), Bioversity International, Rome, Italy. 43 p.

Eriksson G. 2017. *Quercus suber* - recent genetic research. European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN), Bioversity International, Rome, Italy. 30 p.

Gotor, E., Scheerer, L., 2017. External evaluation of the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme - Policy brief. Bioversity International, Rome, Italy. 10 p.

Leaflet presenting the Pan-European strategy for genetic conservation of forest trees

Leaflet presenting the EUFORGEN programme