EXTERNAL EVALUATION
OF THE EUROPEAN FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES PROGRAMME
EUFORGEN

EUFORGEN

POLICY**BRIEF**

What is EUFORGEN?

Through a uniquely collaborative approach, the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN), promotes conservation and better use of European forest genetic resources as a vital part of sustainable forest management.

WHAT DOES EUFORGEN DO?

EUFORGEN is a network of experts from its member countries and provides a platform for developing and implementing its pan-European conservation strategy. Members can exchange experiences and information, analyze relevant practices and policies, develop science-based tools, methods and strategies, identify knowledge gaps, set priorities for research and identify policy needs. The Programme represents a degree of collective knowledge far beyond that of any single country.
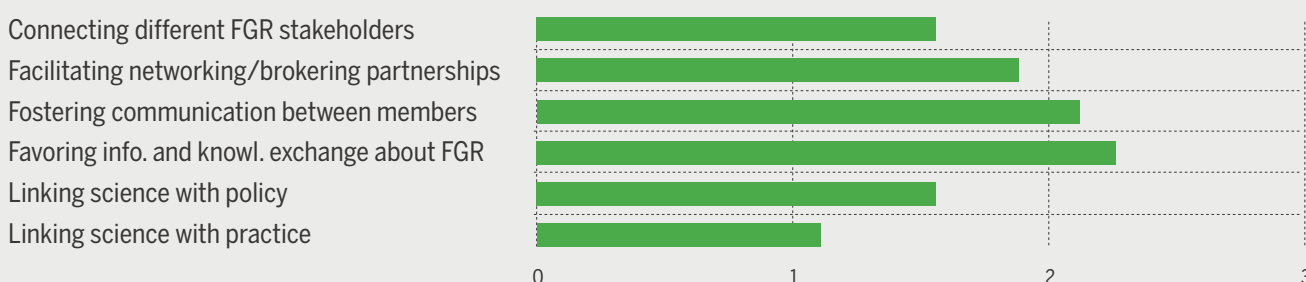
HOW DID WE EVALUATE THE PROGRAMME?

Our analysis of EUFORGEN, which is in its fifth phase (2015-2019), looked at the nature and effectiveness of the Programme through three broad pillars, to provide valuable insights for future decision making.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

01. Develop links and communication channels with policy makers and practitioners on the ground, and make EUFORGEN products more readily available to them.

02. Reach out to more stable funding to sustain the long-term conservation of forest genetic resources.

03. Raise awareness about the importance of the pan-European strategy for the effective conservation of forest genetic resources.

Figure 1: Success of EUFORGEN with respect to its connectivity

- Connecting different FGR stakeholders
- Facilitating networking/brokering partnerships
- Fostering communication between members
- Favoring info. and knowl. exchange about FGR
- Linking science with policy
- Linking science with practice

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Remarks: Scale from -3 (very unsuccessful), 0 (neither successful nor unsuccessful) to +3 (very successful); Number of respondents for each point varies between 98 and 101. FGR - forest genetic resources

WHAT DID WE FIND?

94% of respondents stated that EUFORGEN is needed for successful conservation of forest genetic resources

NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

To examine the effectiveness of the EUFORGEN network, we looked at who was participating, how they are connected and get involved, as well as the type of information exchanged. The network was analyzed both between members, and outside of the EUFORGEN Programme.

STRENGTHS

➔ Collaboration between EUFORGEN members was rated as one of the major successes with the Programme fostering a good quality of communication overall.

➔ Many new working relationships were formed and strengthened, both within the EUFORGEN network and with organizations outside of the Programme.

➔ Working relationships were particularly strong with members of the scientific community.

WEAKNESSES

➔ While EUFORGEN has strong connections with the scientific community, the private sector or NGOs are less well-connected. The Programme has only been partly successful in linking to policy makers or practitioners.

Figure 2: Comparison of membership fee contributions

Contribution: In-kind
Contribution: Membership

Remarks: In-kind contribution based on responses from former and current national coordinators (in thousands of dollars).

NETWORK HEALTH

A network's well-being depends on its capacity to sustain itself and the ability to engage its members to achieve their goal. We looked at the resources that EUFORGEN needs to sustain itself and the capacity for "joint value" creation.
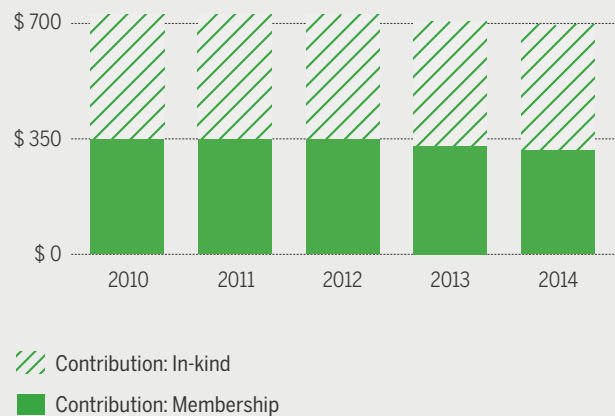
STRENGTHS

➔ EUFORGEN has proved to be a much needed and unique platform for coordinating, exchanging and disseminating information on forest genetic resources European-wide.

➔ EUFORGEN's conservation objectives for forest genetic resources are well-aligned with the objectives of member and even non-member countries.

WEAKNESSES

➔ A major obstacle to achieving its long-term goal is the insufficient resources of both financial and in-kind contributions.

➔ The unstable constellation of member countries is in turn threatening funding.

➔ Overall, the Secretariat were successful in managing and coordinating its activities, although communication was poor at times.

NETWORK RESULTS

While network health and connectivity are essential for results, it is crucial to know if the network itself makes a difference. We looked at the products EUFORGEN has developed, and the long-term consequences for the conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe.

STRENGTHS

➔ Establishing a platform for dialogue at a pan-European level, has enabled the reporting and assessment of the conservation status of forest genetic resources in a consistent manner.

➔ Twelve countries had a different conservation approach prior to their implementation of the strategy, and have since changed their efforts in line with participating countries.

➔ A range of products have been developed with the species distribution maps regarded as the most useful and popular.

WEAKNESSES

➔ Some of the products are restricted to the scientific community, and less commonly address policy makers or forest managers.

➔ Weak connections between EUFORGEN and practitioners and policy makers is slowing down the implementation.

➔ National coordinators reported constraints when implementing the strategy, driven by a lack of resources.

Authors:
Elisabetta Gotor (e.gotor@cgiar.org)
Lars Scheerer

Bioversity International
Via dei Tre Denari, 472/a
00057 Maccarese (Fiumicino)
Rome, Italy - Tel. (+39)066118387