



**EUFORGEN**

EUROPEAN FOREST GENETIC  
RESOURCES PROGRAMME

# **EUFORGEN STEERING COMMITTEE: REPORT OF THE SIXTEENTH MEETING**

**1-2 DECEMBER 2021, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM**





# 16th Meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee 1-2 December 2021, Brussels, Belgium

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## 1. Introduction and approval of the agenda (Michele Bozzano, EFI)

M. Bozzano opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to the 16<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting. A total of 38 participants joined the meeting, 16 in person and 22 online. The meeting was attended by 23 National Coordinators from Phase VI member countries, 3 Focal Points from non-member countries, 9 Observers from relevant European initiatives, organisations or alternative representatives, and 3 members of the EUFORGEN Secretariat. The Secretariat, the National Coordinators, the Focal Points and the Observers introduced themselves.

M. Bozzano introduced the agenda for the meeting on 1 and 2 December. He briefly informed about the GenRes Bridge event for the launch of the Genetic Resources Strategies that took place on 30 November<sup>1</sup>. The agenda was approved with a small change in the programme changing the sequence of one session (annex 1).

R. Mavsar, Deputy Director of the European Forest Institute (EFI), welcomed the participants on behalf of EFI and gave an overview of EFI's institutional development, in particular he highlighted that EFI has established a new Facility on Genetic Resources.

He explained that during the process of updating EFI's [Strategy Implementation Plan](#) in 2021, it was decided to create the Genetic Resources Facility (EFIGEN), which would become the European reference for science-policy-practice dialogue on forest genetics.

**EFI Facilities** are key structures for **connecting knowledge to action**. They facilitate knowledge uptake by policy makers, practitioners and other stakeholders via capacity building, knowledge networking and the provision of demand-based expertise. Facilities are flexible structures that can address a particular policy, topic or activity. Facilities build on the research knowledge generated by Programmes, Research Networks, other EFI member organizations and the wider science community. Facilities also aim to provide feedback to EFI's Programmes and Research Networks from end-users.

## 2. Implementation of the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe (M. Bozzano, EFI)

M. Bozzano introduced the key commitments of the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe (FGRS)<sup>2</sup> and highlighted the ones that are already foreseen by EUFORGEN's Phase VI activities and those that are being addressed by the FORGENIUS project. Almost all activities related to Chapter 2 described for 2021-25 in the implementation plan, have been planned already in the FORGENIUS project or by EUFORGEN's Phase VI workplan (see annex 4 PowerPoint presentation "Implementation of the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe").

He highlighted that in the framework of the FORGENIUS Project, EFI is preparing the Data Sharing Agreement on the transfer of data to EUFGIS, and the management and use of that data once transferred. This is in line with EUFORGEN's objectives and FGRS.

M. Bozzano devoted some time to introduce the rationale and the implications related to the Recommendation number 11 "*The European Commission is urged to provide direct funding to the*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.genresbridge.eu/30-nov-2021/launch-of-the-strategies/>

<sup>2</sup> EUFORGEN. Forest Genetic Resources Strategy For Europe. 2021, European Forest Institute.

[www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Publications/Thematic\\_publications/FGR\\_Strategy4Europe.pdf](http://www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Publications/Thematic_publications/FGR_Strategy4Europe.pdf)

*EUFORGEN Programme in order to strengthen its capacity and ensure the participation of all European countries".* The conservation of forest genetic resources is an ongoing process, continually challenged by emerging threats and needs. To ensure that the genetic diversity of forest trees in Europe is properly conserved, all countries need to join together collectively to address the issue. The European Union has an important part to play in long term support of EUFORGEN, so that the network can facilitate and coordinate the essential participation of all relevant countries.

The annual fees to be member of the EUFORGEN Programme range from 2,500–35,000 Euro per year, depending on the country's Gross Domestic Product. These funds only cover the direct costs of meetings and coordination, while countries further contribute an equivalent amount through staff time of experts who participate in working groups and develop strategies.

To reach the full potential of a networking programme such as EUFORGEN, a regular funding mechanism is needed. A regular contribution from the European Union would guarantee the continued coordination efforts of EUFORGEN and ongoing interactions among stakeholders, with the expectation that current member countries will continue to support financially the programme.

The European Union has the potential to play a crucial role in supporting the overall, long-term coordination of EUFORGEN by facilitating a broader engagement and contribution from all members and neighbouring countries where valuable forest genetic resources exist.

To reach its potential and achieve the full range of possible outcomes, a regular funding mechanism is needed to support EUFORGEN. The allocation of a regular contribution from the European Union would guarantee the continued coordination of EUFORGEN and ongoing interactions among stakeholders, with the expectation that current EUFORGEN members maintain their existing levels of contribution for development and implementation of strategies.

The EUFORGEN Secretariat, in collaboration with the upcoming French Presidency of the Council of the EU will work to have the European Union Council Working Party on Forestry to identify the procedure and initiate the steps necessary to set up a possible funding mechanism for EUFORGEN.

The Secretariat will first Approach all National Coordinators of EUFORGEN Member that are also part of the EU in due time, as soon as there will be any progresses on this matter.

The Secretariat will also prepare and circulate a background document that National Coordinators will be able to brief the respective representatives at the EU Council Working Party on Forestry.

The Steering Committee agreed that, in case a direct funding from the EC will be established, a fee for European member countries would be maintained so that the governance of the programme will not be affected. F. Lefèvre, clarified that the initial request from the French Presidency would not be addressing the financial issues but to have the EC engaged as such.

## **Summary**

The Steering Committee endorsed the following: the Secretariat will have further communication with the relevant actors and with the French Presidency to define the next steps in order to add a point in the agenda of the European Union Council Working Party on Forestry to discuss the possibility to set up a possible funding mechanism for EUFORGEN. The Secretariat will update the Steering Committee in due time.

### **3. Update on the implementation of Phase VI activities (M. Bozzano, EFI)**

The development of the *State of European's Forest Genetic Resources Report*, was identified as a need for the programme and for the FGR domain at large. As agreed during the previous Steering Committee meeting, the report should be largely based on the reports submitted to FAO for the State of the World's Forest Genetics Resources report.

The Secretariat will approach all European Countries directly to ask for a copy of the report, since this cannot be obtained from FAO directly.

The Secretariat was asked to present a plan for the development of such report at the next Steering Committee meeting. The plan will also include the identification of additional funding to support the initiative.

M. Rusanen, added that no agreement was made about the level of details of the reports and there was no agreement about the idea of carrying out a survey. It was however agreed to prepare a Roadmap to identify the activities and efforts that have been required on national level to contribute to this report.

M. Bozzano informed that the Discussion Platform on adaptation to Climate Change due to COVID-19 limitation in traveling and meeting has been postponed to 2022. Based on the Discussion Platform, a Working Group will prepare a report. The Secretariat was asked to indicate the possible composition of the Working Group at the same time when circulating the list of identified participants at the Discussion Platform.

Regarding the Working Group on developing minimum requirements for static *ex situ* conservation, the Secretariat has already collected a first overview of the status and perspectives through a survey launched in early 2021. The composition of the working group addressing this topic will be circulated together with the other working groups.

M. Bozzano informed that the Secretariat will come with a proposal for the membership of this WG, also inviting representatives with a specific expertise outside the nominated experts, as relevant. C. Koziol suggested to invite also experts from Esconet, botanical gardens and *ex situ* conservation experts.

A major effort of the EUFORGEN programme Phase V was the report 'Genetic aspects linked to production and use of forest reproductive material (FRM)'<sup>3</sup>. The Report is comprehensive and detailed, but it is not in the appropriate format for communicating key findings to policymakers and practitioners. During Phase VI two products should be developed based on the evidence presented in the report, and on its recommendations: (i) a summary for policymakers that presents the key messages and guidance for policymakers; and (ii) a summary for practitioners (possibly sub-divided into forest managers and nursery managers), that provides a streamlined and easily accessible reference to guide the practical implementation of the report's recommendations. The SC will address this issue by means of two small WGs.

The Secretariat will be supported by one or two Working group and the developed draft summaries will be circulated among Member Countries before their finalisation.

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<sup>3</sup> D.Gömöry, K.Himanen, M. M.Tollefsrud, C. Uggla, H. Kraigher, S. Bordács, P. Alizoti; S. A'Hara, A. Frank, G. F. Proschowsky, J. Frýdl, T. Geburek, M. Guibert, M. Ivanković, A. Jurše, S. Kennedy, J. Kowalczyk, H. Liesebach, T. Maaten, A. Pilipović, R. Proietti, V. Schneck, A. Servais, B. Skúlason, C. Sperisen, F. Wolter, T. Yüksel and M. Bozzano. 2021. Genetic aspects in production and use of forest reproductive material: Collecting scientific evidence to support the development of guidelines and decision support tools. European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN), European Forest Institute. 216 p  
[http://www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Publications/Thematic\\_publications/FRM\\_report\\_22.03.21.pdf](http://www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Publications/Thematic_publications/FRM_report_22.03.21.pdf)

EUFORGEN updated the Steering Committee on the collaboration with the OECD Scheme for the Certification of Forest Reproductive Material: a joint communication strategy and the evaluation for the need of a database to track FRM use.

The two Secretariats (EUFORGEN and OECD) are currently working together to develop a communication strategy on common issues. The purpose is to disseminate the relevant findings of the working group report on Genetic aspects linked to production and use of forest reproductive material (FRM)<sup>4</sup>. The foreseeing joint communication materials would explain the importance of selecting suitable FRM in the face of climate change, as well as the importance of arguing for the development of policies and regulation that enable the use of a more appropriate FRM and not necessarily limit them to the use of endogenous material.

In 2019, the EUFORGEN programme released a set of three “Recommendations with Policy Relevance”<sup>5</sup>, one of which was calling to “Monitor adaptation and evolutionary potential of transferred forest reproductive material”. In the specific, there was a suggestion to create “an online information system for geo-referenced records of the origin, movement and use of forest reproductive material”, “to record the production, marketing and end use of the forest reproductive material and, where available, performance data”. Being the topic of relevance for both OECD and EUFORGEN, the two Secretariats are coordinating, in order make a proper assessment on the needs and the willingness of countries to contribute and to benefit as much as possible of the digitalisation transition that is currently affecting the sector.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/genetic-aspects-linked-to-production-and-use-of-forest-reproductive-material-frm/>

<sup>5</sup> [www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Documents/LeafletBrux\\_EUFORGEN\\_messages.pdf](http://www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Documents/LeafletBrux_EUFORGEN_messages.pdf)



## Summary

The meetings of the Discussion Platform and the Working Groups that have been postponed due to COVID 19, should be scheduled to start activities in 2022.

Regarding the “State of Europe’s FGR report” it was agreed that additional funding would be needed to address this issue. The Steering Committee asked the Secretariat, once the needed additional funding will be identified, to prepare a Roadmap to identify the activities and efforts that have been required on national level to contribute to this report.

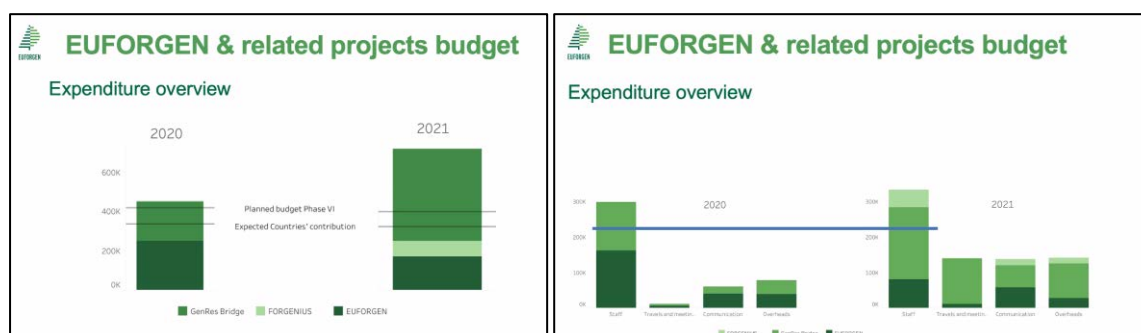
Regarding the WG on developing Minimum Requirements for static *ex situ* conservation, it was agreed to go ahead with a virtual meeting during the first semester 2022 and the composition of the WG will be of 7-10 members. The Secretariat will approach possible members across Europe based on their expertise. The proposal for the potential composition of the WG will then be shared with the Steering Committee. C. Koziol and F. Lefèvre offered to be members of the WG. It was agreed that an external actor from another domain as well as a representative from a botanical garden will be invited to the first meeting.

WG(s) building on Phase V WG on FRM – Customisation of guidelines for various audiences

The Secretariat will identify the composition of a small working group(s) to support the drafting of the two summaries that will be developed based on the evidence presented in the report ‘Genetic aspects linked to production and use of forest reproductive material (FRM)’. The developed draft summaries will be circulated among Member Countries before their finalisation.

## 4. Technical and financial overview (M. Bozzano, EFI)

M. Bozzano gave a general overview of the activities implemented and the budget situation. Less activities than originally planned were implemented during 2020 and 2021, mainly due to limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic. Anyhow, the Secretariat resized its staff time allocation to second the lower needs. It needs to be taken into consideration however that the planned budget is still higher than the contributions to be received from the member countries that joined Phase VI.



The Secretariat team will be strengthened recruiting a communication expert, this could eventually be a person employed by EFI already working in other Facilities in the EFI office in Barcelona.

## Summary

Regarding the technical and financial reporting, M. Bozzano proposed the Steering Committee that the technical and financial reports for 2020 and 2021 will be presented in spring 2022. The proposal was accepted by the Steering Committee.

### 5. Advisory Committee (M. Bozzano, EFI)

The procedure for rotation and nomination should be established. The voting system was not the most appropriate way to handle this. The new members should be identified by the sub-regions. As defined in [the Phase VI implementation plan](#)<sup>6</sup> only one representative of a sub-region would be changed at a time. The rotation protocol needs to be defined, specifying modalities and timing.

It was also suggested that instead of having a one-year rotation period, the members can be renominated or decide to stay, this would be up to the member to decide.

It was agreed that, in preparation for the next Steering Committee meeting, the Secretariat would approach the four sub-regions asking them to consult their members on whether they can be confirmed or if a new member should be identified.

## Summary

There is a need to define the rotation protocol and the Steering Committee agreed that in preparation for the next Steering Committee meeting, the Secretariat will approach the four sub-regions asking them to have a consultation by sub-region to see whether the current member can be reconfirmed or if a new member should be appointed.

### 6. Proposal for collaboration with Forest Europe Liaison Unit Bonn Forest risk knowledge mechanism (on potential conflicts related to the status of strict protection in old forests, overlapping with GCU) (M. Bozzano, EFI)

In the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030 there is a plan to strictly protect old growth forests. Often the old growth forests are also very valuable conservation sites for forest genetic resources and can also be identified as Genetic Conservation Units (as part of the [Pan-European network](#)). If the interpretation of strict protection is too narrow, and forests not managed to favour the conservation of the target tree species diversity, valuable genetic resources could be lost forever.

The Secretariat will seek high level dialogue opportunities through the *Forest Europe Liaison Unit Bonn Forest risk knowledge mechanism* in order to have the relevant stakeholders in Europe discussing the possible conflict.

The Steering Committee welcomed the proposal and asked the Secretariat to explore further also involving relevant Units in the European Commission's DG Environment.

Following issues were agreed:

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<sup>6</sup> [www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Documents/EUFORGEN\\_PhaseVI\\_Objectives](http://www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Documents/EUFORGEN_PhaseVI_Objectives)

- The Steering Committee welcomed the proposal of the secretariat to organize an event with Forest Europe, discussing on the possible conflict between “strictly protected areas” and “GCUs”.
- The Steering Committee agreed to support the development of a position paper or open letter on the management of “strictly protected forests” in case this will be needed and appropriate.

### Summary

The Steering Committee welcomed the proposal of the secretariat to start high level interaction with Forest Europe discussing on the possible conflict between strictly protected areas and GCUs. The Secretariat will explore collaboration with EC’s DG ENV, as appropriate.

The Steering Committee agreed to support the development of a position paper or open letter on the management of “strictly protected forests” in case this will be needed and appropriate.

## 7. GenRes Journal (Sandra Goritschnig, ECPGR)

M. Bozzano introduced S. Goritschnig (ECPGR’s Secretariat<sup>7</sup>), she presented the GenRes journal ([www.genresj.org](http://www.genresj.org)) already in the previous meetings when it was suggested to review the sustainability plan (Annex 6) which was shared as background document, prior to the meeting.

Establishment of the Genetic Resources journal have been supported through funding from the GenRes Bridge project. The decision to continue Genetic Resources journal in its current form, as a service to the genetic resources community, constitutes a major commitment of the European networks for genetic resources and needs to consider financial support both in the short and long term. The sustainability plan was developed based on estimated workloads and running costs and reflecting the capacity and commitment of the European genetic resources Networks to continue to provide this service to their stakeholders. (see Annex 6 for more details)

After discussing the relevance of the journal for the FGR community and priorities for the EUFORGEN Programme, the Steering Committee agreed that the Journal is not sufficiently high in the agenda of priorities, and in addition, that the kind of expertise in the Steering Committee may not be sufficient to support the process. The Steering Committee decided that EUFORGEN funding will not be used to supporting the journal.

As far as the request to approach experts in the FGR domain is concerned, the willingness of the Steering Committee doesn’t indicate to allocate human and financial resources, but as individuals for species that are relevant to the community, they are willing to contribute.

### Summary

The EUFORGEN Programme will not support financially nor in kind the production and the maintenance of the GenRes Journal.

## 8. Research and action needs relevant to FGR in Europe (M. Bozzano, EFI)

M. Bozzano proposed to initiate a process aiming to assess research and action needs relevant to FGR in Europe. The Steering Committee, after a brief discussion, decided that was premature initiating such a process, since several initiatives (eg the FORGENIUS Project and the Phase VI Implementation Plan) will have a role in the identification of those needs, but are in a too early stage to properly contribute. The

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<sup>7</sup> [www.ecpgr.cgiar.org](http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org)

Steering Committee therefore decided to postpone the initiative to a later stage (end of Phase VI or beginning of Phase VII).

## Summary

The Steering Committee will evaluate the achievements of EUFORGEN's Phase VI and the outputs of the FORGENIUS project, before assessing the Research and action needs relevant to FGR in Europe.

### 9. EUFORGEN & the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030 (M. Bozzano, EFI)

The EUFORGEN Programme could play an important role in the implementation of the *New EU Forest Strategy for 2030*. The Steering Committee decided to prepare an *Open letter* to define the potential role of the EUFORGEN Programme in support to the Strategy.

The Steering Committee established a Task Force to prepare a draft of the open letter to be submitted to the relevant offices of the European Commission.

In the letter it will be indicated that EUFORGEN welcomes the *New EU Forest Strategy for 2030* and will describe how EUFORGEN could support its implementation, especially in regard to forest genetic resources. The Task Force will also identify the broad areas in which the programme's mandate and ongoing work could contribute to the new EU Forest Strategy and give relevant examples.

The process to prepare the *open letter* will be as follows:

1. The Task Force will draft a document and send it to the Steering Committee by the third week of January 2022.
2. The Steering Committee will be asked to give feedback within two weeks.
3. In case not many changes arise, then there will be a one-week timeframe to make sure that request for changes has been properly addressed.
4. Additional reiterations can be undertaken as needed and appropriate
5. The Secretariat will submit the *open letter* to all the relevant contacts at the European Commission.

The composition of task force was agreed as follows:

- Heino Konrad - Austria
- Mari Rusanen – Finland
- Frank Wolter - Luxembourg
- Hojka Kraigher - Slovenia

## Summary

The Steering Committee established a Task Force that will draft the *Open letter* on the role for the EUFORGEN Programme in the framework of the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030. The Steering Committee will provide feedback on progressive drafts of the letter, aiming to release the letter by the end of February- early March 2022.

## 10. GenRes Bridge Project – lesson learnt (M. Bozzano, EFI)

The EUFORGEN Steering Committee reflected on the close collaboration with the other two Networking programmes on genetic resources (i.e. ECPGR and ERFP) that was possible thanks to the GenRes Bridge project. The Steering Committee, while recognising that there are several points in common with the other domains, also recognised the differences, mainly due to the different focus (not agriculture) of the FGR domain. The Steering Committee wishes for regular inter-networking meetings that could take place between the domains at an informal level, to exchange information and to identify areas for future collaboration on voluntary basis.

The SC understanding the differences in context, recognized the value of the collaboration with the other two domains and the importance of keeping in touch and having informal cooperation through the Advisory Board, depending on the need for collaboration with key actors would be identified. The SC suggested to invite experts of other domains to the meetings of the WGs.

### Summary

The SC decided to convey the following points to the other domains:

- Willingness to be in touch in an informal way, through the Secretariat or Advisory Board.
- Inviting experts from other domains to WGs meetings, as relevant.

## 11. FORGENIUS (Ivan Scotti, INRAE)

I. Scotti gave a presentation on the FORGENIUS project.

FORGENIUS H2020 project will give an insight into the diversity of European forests and their resilience to climate change. The project uses state-of-the-art technology and knowledge in plant and evolutionary biology, ecology, remote-sensing, genomics, genetics, modelling, and forestry. It aims to upgrade the current European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (EUFGIS) platform, by adding new types of data and information on the Genetic Conservation Units (GCU), allowing predictions of the fate of European forests in the short, medium, and long term. A close collaboration between the FORGENIUS Project and the EUFORGEN's key actors (i.e., the EUFORGEN Steering Committee and the EUFGIS Focal Points) will ensure not only the FORGENIUS Project's success but also a better service to the wider EUFORGEN Community.

M. Bozzano underlined that all the activities of the FORGENIUS project are fully in line with the EUFORGEN Phase VI implementation plan and the FGR Strategy for Europe.

In order to better understand and being able to support the FORGENIUS project, the Steering Committee asked the Secretariat (also responsible for communication activities within the FORGENIUS project), to organise a webinar to present in more details the FORGENIUS project and the activities to give the opportunity to the national coordinators to ask questions and to provide inputs.

### Summary

The Secretariat, in coordination with relevant FORGENIUS partners will organise a webinar during the second quarter of 2022.

## **12. Data Sharing Agreement between EFI and data providers to the EUFGIS (Jerker Brolén, EFI)**

Jerker Brolén, Legal Counsel at EFI, presented the draft Data Sharing Agreement that was already shared with the NCs previously (see annex 5). M. Bozzano presented the roadmap for the preparation and finalization of the Data Sharing Agreement.

Several questions were raised about the compliance of data protection as per GDPR. EFI stressed that it is an international organisation and as such not under the EU GDPR but, understands that the EU MSs need to comply with the regulation when they are transferring data to an international organisation. Some countries expressed their concerns about the share of responsibilities, e.g. EFI possibly not having responsibility in case of loss of data. The National Coordinators were asked to provide inputs directly on the file which will be further developed and amended, taking into consideration all inputs received. The Data Sharing Agreement should in principle be identical for all partners but if needed, some minor integrations can be explored as long as the core parts stay the same for all.

### **Summary**

The second draft will be prepared during February 2022 and circulated to the National Coordinators by the end of March 2022. Feedback on this second version to be received by the end of April 2022.

## **13. Revision of the Plant and Forest Reproductive Material (FRM) Legislation (Diana Charels, EC DG SANTE)**

D. Charels presented the roadmap for the revision of the FRM legislation and presented a guidance sought on the Revision of the FRM legislation, with specific questions to the EUFORGEN Steering Committee. This document was already made available to the Steering Committee as background document to the meeting. She encouraged the Steering Committee to reply to the guidance sought and to submit a position paper to complement the replies in the timeframe when the consultation is open.

The Steering Committee established a Task Force, composed by Heino Konrad (Austria), Alain Servais (Belgium), Aðalsteinn Sigurgeirsson (Iceland), Hojka Kraigher (Slovenia) and Felipe Pérez (Spain) to prepare the reply to the guidance sought and to draft the position paper. Both documents will be shared with the Steering Committee and finalised in due time.

### **Summary**

A Task Force was established to draft the reply to guidance sought and to draft the position paper. The Steering Committee will submit through the Secretariat a position directly to Mrs Charels and via the consultation process.

## **14. AOB (M. Bozzano, EFI)**

The following meetings are scheduled for 2022:

- Virtual EUFORGEN Steering Committee meeting between April and June 2022 presenting the technical and financial reports for 2020 and 2021.
- Webinar presenting the FORGENIUS project and related activities more in detail. This will be a half day webinar and discussion to take place during the second quarter of 2022.
- 17<sup>th</sup> Steering committee meeting in presence in autumn 2022, in the assumption that the pandemic situation will be over and that the Phase VI workplan will be sufficiently implemented to allow the Steering Committee to assess the progresses. The Secretariat offered to organise the meeting in Barcelona.

### **Closure of the meeting**

M. Bozzano closed the meeting and thanked the participants for joining. It was the first time that a meeting took place both in person and with participants attending in remote.



## Annex 1 - Agenda

**16<sup>th</sup> EUFORGEN Steering Committee Meeting**  
**European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN)**  
 1-2 December 2021 – Brussels, Belgium  
**DRAFT AGENDA**



### Wednesday 1 December

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents	Participants
9.00	Connection with persons attending online	The virtual space is open to allow the meeting participants to informally gather and get ready for the meeting		NC remote
9.15	<b>Opening of the meeting</b> Introduction and approval of the agenda (M. Bozzano) Introduction of participants	<b>For discussion and approval</b> The agenda is approved	Draft Agenda of the meeting  List of participants	NC +NC remote
9:45	<b>Update on the implementation of Phase VI activities</b> (M. Bozzano)	<b>For information and discussion</b> SC is updated on achieved, ongoing and planned activities	<a href="#">EUFORGEN's Implementation Plan for Phase VI</a>	NC +NC remote
10:15	Implementation of the <b>Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe</b> (M. Bozzano)	<b>For discussion</b> The SC identifies relevant actions related to the Implementation plan of the FGR Strategy	<a href="#">FGR Strategy for Europe</a>	NC +NC remote
10:45	<b>Coffee break</b>			
11:15	Proposal for <b>collaboration with Forest Europe Liaison Unit Bonn Forest risk knowledge mechanism</b> (on potential conflicts related to the status of strict protection in old forests, overlapping with GCU) (M. Bozzano)  Roadmap to <b>identify Research and Action needs relevant to FGR in Europe</b> (M. Bozzano)	<b>For discussion</b> SC identifies modalities to collaborate with Forest Europe LUBo  <b>For discussion</b> SC defines the modalities to identify Research and Actions needs in Europe, related to FGR	<a href="#">FOREST-EUROPE-Work-program-2021-24</a>  <a href="#">2019 EUFORGEN's recommendations with policy relevance.pdf</a> <a href="#">HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-0</a>	NC +NC remote
12:45	<b>Lunch break</b>			



**Thursday 2 December**

14:00	<b>GenRes Journal</b> (Sandra Goritschnig)	<b>For discussion and decision</b> The SC decides if supporting the GenRes Journal	GenRes Journal <a href="#">Sustainability plan</a> and <a href="#">impact report</a>	NC+NC Remote + Sandra Goritschnig
14:30	EUFORGEN & the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030 (M. Bozzano)	<b>For discussion</b> The SC identifies the key elements of the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030 relevant for EUFORGEN  The SC identifies the key messages to be included in the position paper	<a href="#">The new EU Forest Strategy 2030</a> <a href="#">EU Council adopts conclusions on the new EU forest strategy for 2030</a> <a href="#">The 3 Billion Tree Planting Pledge For 2030</a>	NC+NC Remote
15:30	<b>Coffee break</b>			
16:00	Identification of the key elements to be included in the the position paper of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee on the potential role on the EUFORGEN Programme in the framework of the New EU Forest Strategy 2030	The SC defines the process for the finalisation of the Position paper on the <i>new EU Forest Strategy for 2030</i>	<a href="#">draft position paper</a>	
17:00	<b>GenRes Bridge Project</b> – lesson learnt (M. Bozzano)	<b>For information and discussion</b> The SC is aware of GenRes Bridge project’s outcomes and possibilities for future collaboration with other domains		
17:30	<b>Closing of the day</b>			
19:00	<b>Social Dinner</b>			

Legend:

SC: Steering Committee

NC: National Coordinator

NC Remote: National Coordinator attending the meeting from remote

FP: national focal points in EUFORGEN non-member countries

**Annex 2 - List of Participants**

**16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee  
1-2 December 2021, Brussels, Belgium**

Draft list of Participants

**EUFORGEN National Coordinators**

Heino Konrad (*online*)  
Federal Research and Training Centre for Forests,  
Natural Hazards and Landscape  
Austria

Alain Servais  
Public Service of Wallonia  
Belgium

Miran Lanščak (*online*)  
*Representing Mladen Invankovic*  
Croatian Forest Research Institute  
Croatia

Josef Frýdl (*online*)  
Forestry and Game Management Research Institute  
(FGMRI)  
Czech Republic

Ditte Christina Olrik (*online*)  
Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark,  
Nature Agency  
Denmark

Tiit Maaten  
Institute of Forestry and Rural Engineering  
Estonian University of Life Sciences  
Estonia

Mari Rusanen  
Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE)  
Finland

Maurizio Sabatti  
University of Tuscia - Innovation in biological  
systems, food and forestry (DIBAF)  
Italy

Adalsteinn Sigurgeirsson  
Icelandic Forest Service  
Iceland

Brian Clifford  
DAFM - Forest Sector Development Division  
Ireland

Darius Kavaliauskas  
Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy -  
Lithuanian Forest Research Institute  
Lithuania

Frank Wolter (*online*)  
Administration de la nature et des forêts  
Luxembourg

Maria Masini (*online*)  
Environment and Resources Authority  
Malta

Joukje Buiteveld (*online*)  
Centre for Genetic Resources Netherlands  
Netherlands

Tor Myking  
Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research  
Norway

Czesław Kozioł (*online*)  
The Kostrzyca Forest Gene Bank  
Poland

Mirjana Šijačić-Nikolić (*online*)  
Faculty of Forestry, Belgrade  
Serbia

Roman Longauer (*online*)  
National Forest Centre  
Slovakia

Hojka Kraigher  
Slovenian Forestry Institute  
Slovenia

Felipe Pérez Martín  
Ministry of Ecological Transition and the  
Demographic Challenge (MITECO)  
Spain

Sanna Black-Samuelsson (*online*)  
Swedish Forest Agency  
Sweden

Andreas Rudow  
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH)  
Institute of Terrestrial Ecosystems  
Switzerland

David White (*online*)  
Forestry Commission  
United Kingdom

### **EUFORGEN Focal Points**

Isabel Carrasquinho (*online*)  
Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária e  
Veterinária (INIAV)  
Portugal

Despina Paitaridou (*online*)  
Ministry of Environment and Energy, General  
Directorate of Forest  
Greece

Gaye Eren Kandemir (*online*)  
General Directorate of Forestry  
Turkey

### **Observers**

Jerker Brolen (*online*)  
*Session on DSA - 2 December 2021*  
European Forest Institute (EFI)

Diana Charels  
*Session on Revision of plant and forest reproductive  
material legislation – 2 December 2021*  
DG SANTE European Commission

Brogan Costello  
*Session on Revision of plant and forest reproductive  
material legislation – 2 December 2021*  
European Commission

Bart De Cupyer (*online*)  
*All sessions*  
Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO)  
Belgium

Lara Galea (*online*)  
Environment and Resources Authority  
Malta

Sandra Goritschnig  
*Session on Genres Journal – 1 December 2021*  
ECPGR - Allianz of Bioversity and CIAT  
Italy

Robert Mavsar  
*Attending sessions of 1 December 2021*  
European Forest Institute (EFI)

Ivan Scotti (*online*)  
*Session on Forgenius – 2 December 2021*  
INRAE  
France

Marjana Westergren (*online*)  
*All sessions*  
Slovenian Forestry Institute  
Slovenia

### **EUFORGEN Secretariat**

European Forest Institute (EFI)  
Barcelona Office  
Michele Bozzano  
Anna-Maria Farsakoglou  
Lidwina Koop

**Unable to attend**

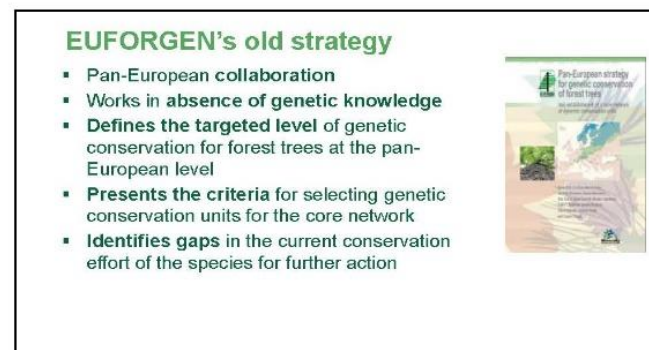
Mladen Ivankovic  
Croatian Forest Research Institute  
Croatia

Darrin T. Stevens  
Environment and Resources Authority  
Malta

### Annex 3 - PowerPoint presentation “Implementation of the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe”.



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4/13/2022



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**Strategy's Novelties**

- Follows an **integrated approach** considering both **conservation and use** of FGR
- Includes **genetic information** to define conservation targets
- Sets **priorities for conservation**
- Defines the **role of**:
  - The EUFORGEN network
  - The European countries

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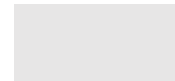
**Key Commitments & Recommendations**

**9.**  
 “The **European countries** commit to establish new **Genetic Conservation Units**, according to the **pan-European minimum requirements**, in order to fill existing **conservation gaps**”

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## Key Commitments & Recommendations

9. *"The European countries commit to establish new Genetic Conservation Units, according to the pan-European minimum requirements, in order to fill existing conservation gaps"*

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## Authors

<b>EUFORGEN Working Group</b> Ricardo Allia (ISPA, IT) Phil Aravanopoulos (Greece) Bertoldo Brande (ANAFR, IT) Gyula Kenderás (Hungary) Czesław Kozioł (Poland) Frank Wobler (LJ-ARBOT, DE)	<b>Coordinators of relevant research projects and networks</b> Dajana Farly (GRI, TR) Santiago C. González-Martel (EVO, ES) Ivan Scotti (PORD, PT)	<b>GenRes Bridge Project partner representatives</b> Kirsti Hinkka-Piilistad (MBC, FI) Hajo Ailhaud (INRA, FR) François Lefèvre (INRAE, FR) Matti Rusanen (MCP, FI) Marjane Westergren (KIS, FI)	<b>EUFORGEN Secretariat</b> Michela Bozzano (EFI) Anna-Maria Patsakoglou (EFI)
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## What will happen next?

### Future challenges and priorities

- Achieve **same level of implementation** across all European countries
- Expand characterization and conservation of FGR **beyond the European borders**
- Include all forest species **regardless their economic importance**

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EUFORGEN  
EUROPEAN FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES PROGRAMME

Use the link or the QR Code to download the Strategy :  
[euforgen.org/FGRStrategy4Europe](http://euforgen.org/FGRStrategy4Europe)

EFI  
EUFORGEN is hosted by European Forest Institute

EUFORGEN Secretariat  
[euforgen@efi.int](mailto:euforgen@efi.int)  
Follow us on Twitter: @EUFORGEN

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Annex 4 – Data Sharing Agreement

**DATA SHARING AGREEMENT**

BETWEEN

**European Forest Institute, Yliopistokatu 6B, 80100 Joensuu, Finland (“EFI”)**

AND

**[Counterparty], [Address] (“Data Sharing Party”)**

together hereafter referred to as “Parties”, and individually as “Party”

**WHEREAS:**

- I. The European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (EUFGIS) consists of a Web-based information system to make available data on forest genetic resources in European countries;
- II. Data available in EUFGIS is provided as contribution to the implementation of the Strasbourg Resolution S2 (1990), the Madrid Resolution M2 (2015), and the Bratislava Declaration (2021) of the Forests Europe Process and other international commitments;
- III. EUFGIS has two interfaces: an intranet with access limited to the providers of the data and a public user interface;
- IV. EUFGIS is managed and maintained by EFI within the frame of the EUFORGEN programme; and
- V. This Agreement concerns the transfer of data to EUFGIS and the management and use of that data once transferred;

**THE PARTIES NOW AGREE:**

**Section I. Data and sharing of data**

1. Data Sharing Party will transfer data to EUFGIS from time to time as it sees fit, when updates are available.

Data Sharing Party may transfer data itself or ensure transfer of the data by an implementing agency. In case of transfer by an implementing agency, Data Sharing Party will inform EFI in writing of the identity of the implementing agency. Implementing agency can be changed by notification to EFI in writing.

Data will be uploaded directly to EUFGIS, and not transferred to EFI otherwise.

Any data transferred to EUFGIS by Data Sharing Party prior to the entry into force of this Agreement will also be covered by this Agreement.



2. Any data made available by Data Sharing Party in EUFGIS must adhere to the Pan-European minimum requirements for dynamic genetic conservation units of forest trees decided by the EUFORGEN Steering Committee.
3. Data Sharing Party will appoint one or more National Focal Points (“NFP”). Notification of the appointment of a NFP will be done in writing to EFI.

NFP is authorised by Data Sharing Party to transfer data on behalf of Data Sharing Party to EUFGIS, as well as to manage (including deleting) data made available by Data Sharing Party in EUFGIS, as further stated in section II.

EFI will provide access for NFP to EUFGIS, subject to general conditions for use set by EFI. Access will be provided by EFI issuing NFP with a user name. NFP will choose password, that is to be kept safe and strictly confidential.

EFI may remove NFP access if NFP is changed or in case of abuse by NFP, such as interfering with EUFGIS as to damage, impair, overburden or disable the system, or interfere with any other person's use of EUFGIS. EFI will at its own discretion decide if abuse has taken place, and will strive to consult NFP before access is removed.

4. Data Sharing Party will ensure that it has the right to transfer the data to EUFGIS to be used for the purposes stated in this agreement.

EFI will not claim ownership rights to the data.

## **Section II. Management and use of data**

5. The data provided to EUFGIS can be used for the following purposes:
  - a. Making the data publicly available unless restricted by NFP in the EUFGIS interface. Data thus restricted is hereinafter referred to as restricted data.
  - b. Create index and indicators based on the data; the index and indicators may be made available to the public and also disclosed in other ways
  - c. Combining the data with other information to produce aggregated/summary statistics and make such aggregated/summary statistics available publicly and otherwise to third parties
  - d. Linking of the data to external systems, unless the data is restricted data

Other than stated above, the data provided in EUFGIS will only be made available to third parties with the consent of Data Sharing Party.

The Parties can separately in writing agree to other use of the data.

6. Any derivative or aggregated data that is created from the original data may be retained in EUFGIS, even if the data from which it is derived or aggregated is removed. EFI will indicate all aggregated data with a date of creation.
7. Data Sharing Party will ensure that NFP removes any data provided by Data Sharing Party that does not meet the minimum requirements as decided by the EUFORGEN Steering Committee.
8. EFI will provide safeguards to ensure the confidentiality and security of restricted data and to prevent unauthorized use or access to it.
  - Confidentiality: as with its own proprietary/confidential information but in any case not less than reasonable
  - Security: as with its own proprietary/confidential information but in any case not less than reasonable

As part of these security measures, EFI will regularly back up the data.

9. EFI can manage, limit access to, or delete data in EUFGIS as needed to safeguard EFI's legitimate interests.
10. Upon notice of termination of this Agreement by any of the Parties, Data Sharing Party will during the notice period have the possibility to back-up its data in EUFGIS. Following the notice period EFI has the right to delete any data remaining in EUFGIS.

### **Section III. Personal Data**

11. Insofar as the fulfilment of this agreement involves the processing of personal data, the Parties undertake to comply with applicable legislation in their respective operations.
12. Each Party is an individual data controller in respect of personal data.
13. The Parties agree to implement appropriate technical and organisational protection measures to ensure the secure processing of personal data.

### **Section IV. Final provisions**

14. This Agreement will enter into force on the date when the last of the Parties sign.
15. The Agreement may be terminated by either party at any time for any reason upon at least 30 days' written notice. Articles 6, 10, 16, and 17 will survive termination.
16. The Parties shall seek to settle amicably any differences of opinion and disputes arising from or related to the implementation of this Contract. Should this fail, any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of or relating to this Contract, or the breach, termination or validity thereof shall be finally settled in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of the Finland Chamber of Commerce. Article 36 on Interim measures of protection of the Arbitration Rules shall not apply. The language of the proceedings shall be English. The place of arbitration shall be Helsinki, Finland.
17. Nothing in the Agreement may be interpreted as a waiver of any privileges or immunities accorded to EFI by its constituent documents or international law.

#### **On behalf of EFI**

Name:

Position:

Date:

#### **On behalf of Data Sharing Party**

Name:

Position:

Date:

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# GenRes Bridge



## GenRes Bridge - Joining forces for genetic resources and biodiversity management

Project no. 817580

Start date of project: 1 January 2018

Duration of project: 36 months

Genetic resources and pre-breeding communities - SFS-28-2018-2019-2020

### **D4.6 Impact Report of Genetic Resources journal and Sustainability plan for its continuation after the project**

Due date of deliverable: **31 10 2021**

Actual submission date: 28. 10. 2021

Organisation name of lead contractor for this deliverable: **IPGRI**

Dissemination level: **Public**



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 817580.



## Sustainability plan for the *Genetic Resources* journal

By Sandra Goritschnig (IPGRI/ECPGR, Managing Editor of *Genetic Resources*) with input from ECPGR, ERF and EUFORGEN Secretariats

Establishment of the *Genetic Resources* journal including development of the journal policies and guidelines, website and production style have been supported through funding directed to the ECPGR Secretariat from the GenRes Bridge project. The decision to continue *Genetic Resources* journal in its current form, as a service to the genetic resources community, providing free publication and access to relevant literature, constitutes a major commitment of the European networks for genetic resources and needs to consider financial support both in the short and long term. For the journal's continuation beyond the project duration a sustainability plan has been developed based on estimated workloads and running costs and reflecting the capacity and commitment of the European GR Networks to continue to provide this service to their stakeholders.

### Defining the business model of *Genetic Resources*

Genetic Resources has been established as a fully open access journal, charging no publication or subscription fees from authors and readers. Over the last decades, open access publishing has emerged as an important driver of scientific research, especially for researchers from small institutions, developing countries or underrepresented groups. Many funding agencies, including the European Commission, require research results from their funded projects to be published with open access. Within Agriculture and the Biological Sciences, open access journals make up more than 27% of all published journals, and the share of open access journals overall is growing by 1% every year<sup>1</sup>. The costs for open access publishing can be carried either by the authors, through article processing charges estimated on average at 2,000 EUR<sup>2</sup> or by the publishers through society membership fees or external funding. Other journals in the field of genetic resources publishing require payment of article processing charges (APC) between 1590 EUR (Genetics Selection Evolution) and 2590 EUR (Genetic Resources and Crop Evolution). In addition, some of these journals do not provide full open access to articles, charging upwards of 30 EUR for access to individual articles.

In order to cover the journal's personnel and running costs, contributions would either need to be recruited through donors, such as the European GR networks sustaining the journal, or transferred to users of the journal, possibly through charging of a publication fee. If no agreement on the sustainable funding of the journal can be reached, charging a small publication fee may need to be considered to cover some of the costs. This latter option, however, would be in conflict with the journal's starting principle to operate as a service to the community and to offer fully open access publishing to a sector that often struggles with financial constraints, i.e. remain free to publish and free to read, which was also identified as a main priority in the stakeholder survey.

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<sup>1</sup> BJÖRK, Bo-Christer; KORKEAMÄKI, Timo. Adoption of the Open Access Business Model in Scientific Journal Publishing: A Cross-disciplinary Study. College & Research Libraries, [S.l.], v. 81, n. 7, p. 1080, nov. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.81.7.1080>.

<sup>2</sup>Schimmer, R., Geschuhn, K. K., & Vogler, A. (2015). Disrupting the subscription journals' business model for the necessary large-scale transformation to open access. <https://doi.org/10.17617/1.3>.

## Estimation of workload and running costs

*Genetic Resources* uses the open-source platform Open Journal Systems (OJS) for its journal website and submission management, hosted by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT as part of the ECPGR website. Archiving is provided by the free preservation service of OJS (PKP-PN) and the CGIAR archive CGSpace at no cost to the journal. Thus, apart from the personnel needs of journal management, the main running costs of *Genetic Resources* are made up of a subscription to CrossRef for DOI registration (~300 USD per year), the license fee for the production software typeset.io (2,500 USD per year for 50 articles) and general website support provided by the local company Newtvision (~500 EUR per year), summing up to ~ 3,000 EUR per year (depending on exchange rate).

The editorial office is responsible for regular maintenance of the journal and website, for supporting subject editors in moving submitted manuscripts through the review process and for copy-editing and production of accepted manuscripts for publication as pdf and html files. In this respect the volunteer work of the subject editors and referees providing peer-review must be rightfully acknowledged. So far, subject editor volunteers have been recruited with support of the plant and animal GR networks.

Table 1 shows the workload estimate for relevant activities in journal management to be performed by the editorial office. While general maintenance is independent of the number of manuscripts received, other activities depend on the number of submissions to be handled. Furthermore, the workload for copyediting and production differs between manuscripts, depending on the length and complexity of the manuscript, its initial quality and consequently the amount of copyediting and language revision necessary. We also highlight the editorial support given during the copyediting stage as a service to non-native English speakers, early-stage researchers and members of underserved communities. It should also be noted that due to confidentiality, access restrictions for the journal submission system are in place. Thus, the journal manager is the only actor able to access all submissions from initial submission to final publication, assigns them to responsible editors during the review and production process and communicates with authors, editors and referees as necessary.

**Table 1:** Workload estimate for the most relevant activities of the editorial office.

Activity		journal manager	copyeditor	production editor
general maintenance (respond to requests from authors, editors, reviewers; update webpage; make announcements; social media)	days/month	2		
Assistance to peer-review process (communicate with editors, identify potential reviewers, send reminders)	days/submission	0,5		
copyediting of accepted articles (language editing, check for completeness, grammatical correctness, correct format for production)	days/accepted article		1-2	
production of pdf and html galley (using typeset software; checking references, table and figure formatting, updating metadata)	days/accepted article			1-2
publication of articles (communication with authors to review copyedits and galleys, upload galleys to website, register DOI, check metadata)	days/accepted article	0,5		
Create full issue pdf	days/issue			0,5
<b>Total estimated workload per year (based on 15 accepted submissions)</b>	<b>days</b>	<b>41,5</b>	<b>15-30</b>	<b>16-31</b>

As outlined in Table 1 and based on the current number of articles published by *Genetic Resources* (~15 per year; with a rejection rate of ~20%), the workload for the journal management can be estimated to be around 2 person months for the journal manager, and around one person month for copyeditors and production editors, for a current estimate of 25,000 Euros per year of total staff costs. With some expected growth of the journal in the coming years (current capacity of the typesetting software is for production of up to 50 high quality articles per year), the workload may increase, requiring periodic review of contributions to the management of the journal. At its current publishing level, the estimated production costs per published article are still relatively high. However, with continued growth of the journal it can be expected that average production costs per published article reach comparable levels with other journals as the publication volume increases.

### Discussion of sustainability plan between European GR networks

Representatives of the three European GR networks met online on 4 October 2021 to discuss the sustainability plan and proposals.

EUFORGEN secretary Michele Bozzano noted that while the journal closes a gap for agricultural GR, the forestry community has several other options to publish their research and thus may not be interested in supporting the journal. In addition, EUFORGEN questioned whether the initial intention of the journal to close the gap for “grey” literature relevant for GR was achieved, considering that the journal applies a rigorous review process. The EUFORGEN Steering Committee will be meeting on 1-2 December 2021 and consider the proposed sustainability plan options.

ERFP chair Montse Castellanos supported a continued collaboration between the networks after the end of the GenRes Bridge project and considered the journal a good opportunity. The *Genetic Resources* journal should avoid overlap with existing publications on the topic and focus on the specific needs of the community, maintaining its open access policy and covering topics that do not fit top tier scientific journals. ERFP noted that their budget is relatively small and an increase in member countries' contributions to support the journal could only be considered in the future. ERFP had not budgeted for the journal in 2022, but some savings from the lack of meetings due to Covid-19 could be used and a shift of funds from the communications budget line could be considered by the ERFP Steering committee during their meeting on 16 December 2021, when they would also discuss the proposed sustainability plan options.

ECPGR Secretary Lorenzo Maggioni emphasized the support of the ECPGR community for the journal and its continuation and highlighted the need to understand the level of support that the other networks could provide for this affordable service to the GR community. He noted that the journal could become an official output of the networks, if it receives sufficient support from them, maintains a quality review process and pursues its establishment as a recommended journal with an impact factor. The scope and identity of the journal could be reviewed with the goal of finding a balance between publishing scientific research and other types of articles.

### Proposals for continuation of publication

Considering that the Genetic Resources journal is published by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT on behalf of ECPGR, which has provided the editorial office from the beginning, the ECPGR Secretariat is proposing to continue taking the main responsibility for the journal, including contributing

the journal manager who already takes charge of day-to-day maintenance. At the moment the journal is labeled as a joint product of the three networks through acknowledgement of GenRes Bridge and the use of the project logo. However, in the future, the individual logos of the supporting networks could replace the GenRes Bridge logo. The first two years of experience, as well as the indications received from the impact survey, indicate that support of volunteers from the networks (at least plant and animal) is sufficiently reliable to cover the editorial board and peer review needs. Regarding the remaining live costs, support of the networks should be formalized, and it could be organized according to two proposed scenarios below:

- 1) Given the diversity of submitted manuscripts, covering different domains, each supporting network could recruit specific editors to support the copyediting and production processes of the respective domains' articles. Thus, networks could identify suitable experts for copyediting and/or production of articles within their domain who would thus provide their services as and when needed in-kind or through financial support of their respective networks. Only running costs (currently ca. 3,000 EUR per year) and the staff costs for the Journal Manager (41.5 days per year) would need to be equally split among the supporting networks. A provisional estimate of total costs to be shared in this scenario is ~16,200 EUR per year.
- 2) Alternatively, and given the specific technical requirements of article production, financial support from supporting networks could feed into a joint budget for the journal, administered by ECPGR through letters of agreement with the other Secretariats. Thus, European GR networks would contribute equally to the continuation of the *Genetic Resources* journal, ensuring consistently high quality through dedicated personnel for journal management, copyediting and production (currently 3-4 PM per year). A provisional estimate of the total annual cost to be shared in this scenario is ~28,000 EUR per year.

## Conclusion

Considering the need for training on the production software for volunteer production editors the proposal where supporting networks would share the costs of the journal, but the responsibility would remain with ECPGR (option 2) was identified as the preferred alternative. Detailed timekeeping of staff time devoted to the journal would ensure transparency for the networks and actual costs reported annually. In the short term, the supporting networks would cover the associated production costs, while promoting the journal to increase its reach and publication volume. In the long term, it was suggested to explore other sources of financing and to seek the financial support of European and international institutions for the journal, including in the framework of European strategies and policies.

The above proposals will be considered by the ERF and EUFORGEN Steering committees in their upcoming meetings in December 2021, where the networks should primarily consider their general support for the journal. The ECPGR community is committed to continuing the journal in the short term but would welcome the support of the other GR domains to ensure that the journal's intended scope to cover "all GR domains" can be maintained.

Based on decisions made by the networks Steering Committees on their level of support, specific arrangements on how the supporting networks would manage the journal going forward will be discussed and formalized in the beginning of 2022.





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**EUFORGEN Secretariat**

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