



EUFORGEN

EUROPEAN FOREST GENETIC
RESOURCES PROGRAMME

EUFORGEN STEERING COMMITTEE: REPORT OF THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING

9-11 MAY 2023, BARCELONA, SPAIN



18th Meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee 9-11 May 2023, Barcelona, Spain

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1. Introduction and approval of the agenda (M. Bozzano, Secretariat)

M. Bozzano opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to the 18th Steering Committee meeting. The meeting was attended by 21 National Coordinators from Phase VI member countries, 5 observers from relevant European initiatives, organisations or alternative representatives, and the members of the EUFORGEN Secretariat and of the hosting Organisation (full list of participants is available in Annex 1). The participants presented themselves.

M. Bozzano introduced the agenda (Annex 2) for the meeting which was approved by the participants. Andreas Rudow and Joukje Buiteveld volunteered to act as rapporteurs.

Decision: The Steering Committee approved the agenda without further changes.

2. Approval of the technical and financial report of 2022 (M. Bozzano, Secretariat)

M. Bozzano, complementing the webinar that was organized on 3 May 2023 in preparation for the meeting, highlighted the main activities and achievements of 2022: the open letter “EUFORGEN solidarity paper on the war in Ukraine”¹; EUFORGEN position paper on the revision of the forest reproductive material (FRM) legislation; the open letter on the role for the EUFORGEN Programme in the framework of the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030² and the Forest Europe webinar on 11 October 2022 “Manage to Conserve – Forest Genetic Resource conservation as part of Sustainable Forest Management”³. He also informed the meeting that the EU Working Party on Forestry discussed the need to support EUFORGEN and that the EC was asked to consider the possibility of becoming a funding member of EUFORGEN.

M. Bozzano explained the additions that were made to the draft technical report that was presented in November 2022, during the 17th Steering Committee meeting. The financial report 2022 was presented. For the next forecast of the annual planned expenditures, separate budget lines should be added to report and some information about the external funding from other projects, when directly contributing to EUFORGEN’s workplan. A more detailed report will be produced for the rest of Phase VI and next Phase. The technical and financial reports were approved by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee, when estimating the budget for next Phase, will decide on the desired percentage of the Reserve and will decide how savings beyond this should be used. R. Mavsar (EFI) clarified that EFI accounting, including the EUFORGEN Programme, is audited on a yearly basis by an independent company after closure of the yearly accounts.

The Technical report for 2022 is available online at the EUFORGEN website⁴.

¹ Open letter: EUFORGEN solidarity paper on the war in Ukraine: EUFORGEN - European forest genetic resources programme: www.euforgen.org/about-us/news/news-detail/open-letter-euforgen-solidarity-paper-on-the-war-in-ukraine

² Open letter on the role for the EUFORGEN Programme in the framework of the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030: www.euforgen.org/about-us/news/news-detail/open-letter-the-role-for-the-euforgen-programme-in-the-framework-of-the-new-eu-forest-strategy-for

³EUFORGEN & Forest Europe Webinar: Forest Genetic Resource conservation as part of Sustainable Forest Management: www.euforgen.org/about-us/news/news-detail/euforgen-forest-europe-webinar-forest-genetic-resource-conservation-as-part-of-sustainable-forest

⁴ www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/technical-report-2022

Decision: The Steering Committee approved the technical and financial report of 2022; however, it identified that a more detailed forecast of the financial report will be needed for the rest of the Phase VI and Phase VII.

3. Update on the implementation of Phase VI activities (M. Bozzano, Secretariat)

M. Bozzano presented the implementation plan for Phase VI highlighting the ongoing activities and respective expected finalisation (annex to the technical report⁵). The following decisions were made:

- a. Collaboration with the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme

As previously discussed and reported in the 2022 technical report, the EUFORGEN Secretariat is collaborating with the OECD Scheme Secretariat on a joint communication strategy on relevant common issues. This collaboration will be an opportunity to disseminate the material developed based on the report on “Genetic aspects linked to production and use of forest reproductive material⁶” (see section 7 below).

Decision: The Steering Committee agreed to continue collaborating with the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme and engage in joint communication activities as planned.

- b. Collaboration with International Seed Federation - ISF

The International Seed Federation (ISF)⁷ expressed interest to collaborate with EUFORGEN. ISF is a non-governmental, non-profit making organization. Steering Committee discussed the possibility of collaborating and the modalities to share knowledge and make a larger impact.

Decision: The Steering Committee agreed to collaborate with ISF to further disseminate EUFORGEN's messages and outputs, without directly engaging in joint communication activities.

- c. Linking EUFGIS with FISE

FISE - Forest Information System for Europe⁸ is a forest knowledge base in support of the EU Forest Strategy. FISE is the EC's entry point for sharing information on Europe's forest environment, its state and development. FISE brings together data, information and knowledge gathered or derived through key forest-related policy drivers. The Secretariat proposed to explore the possibility of linking the EUFGIS and the EUFORGEN website with FISE.

Decision: The Steering Committee agreed that the EUFORGEN Secretariat will explore this initiative and the member countries will separately explore the implications in their countries and a decision on the implementation will be taken during the next Steering Committee Meeting.

- d. Input to the next Forest Europe Ministerial resolution/declaration

⁵ www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Documents/TechReports/Technical_report_2022.pdf#page=23

⁶ <https://www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/genetic-aspects-linked-to-production-and-use-of-forest-reproductive-material-frm/>

⁷ <https://worldseed.org/>

⁸ <https://forest.eea.europa.eu/>

Forest Europe (the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe⁹) expressed willingness to receive inputs from the EUFORGEN programme to feed into the next Ministerial Resolution as appropriate. **Decision:** The Steering Committee agreed that the Secretariat will coordinate with the FOREST EUROPE Liaison Unit Bonn on this matter, identify the next steps and contact the Steering Committee in due time to form a Task Force to draft the input.

e. FGR Projects Heritage

M. Bozzano proposed to create a dedicated section in the website to archive brief information on the focus and main achievements of current and past projects on FGR in Europe. These could be in the form of articles, infographics and webinars. The dedicated section of the website could also serve as a "Repository" for project outputs relevant to EUFORGEN: the life span and sustainability of EUFORGEN is far beyond the lifespan of projects. So archiving project achievements could be an important function and role.

Decision: The Steering Committee agreed that the EUFORGEN Secretariat will prepare a proposal for this initiative for the next Steering Committee Meeting.

f. New series of webinars on EUFORGEN core activities

In Early 2023 the EUFORGEN Programme organised a series of public webinars on ash dieback. These webinars raised awareness on EUFORGEN and its role and work, even if they were not presenting EUFORGEN's direct work. The webinars were very successful in terms of participation and appreciation. The Steering Committee agreed that the Secretariat should plan for a series of webinars on topics relevant for EUFORGEN and for FGR as a whole. The Steering Committee also committed to support the identification of topics and to give visibility to the initiative. The first webinar will be on Estimating Effective Population Size for FGR conservation.

Decision: The Steering Committee agreed to systematically organize webinars for scientific debates on different topics of interest. The Secretariat will contact the Steering Committee to identify a list of possible webinar topics for the rest of Phase VI.

4. Working Group Static and dynamic *ex situ* conservation (A.M. Farsakoglou, Secretariat and E. Scholzen, rapporteur for the Working Group)

The Progress and outline of the report were presented (annex 4). The Steering Committee welcomed the proposed outline of the report. The Steering Committee offered to assist the brainstorming of the Working Group. The Secretariat will give access to the outline to National Coordinators with a deadline of 20 June 2023. The meeting of the working group will take place in person 4-6 July 2023 in Brussels, Belgium.

Decision: The Steering Committee approved the table of contents and will provide further input by 20 June to assist the Working Group's brainstorming.

Clarification: Data quality check should be defined before defining the minimum requirements.

⁹ <https://foresteurope.org/>

5. Discussion Platform on “Adaptation of the Genetic Conservation Units to climate change” (M. Bozzano, Secretariat)

The Steering Committee discussed the list of proposed initiatives prepared by the Discussion Platform during its meeting in October 2022. The Steering Committee selected the suggestion to prepare an opinion paper to propose an alternative terminology to “assisted migration” that is used within the forest genetic resource community (for example “evacuation” or “relocation of forest genetic resources”). The decision on the further procedure were postponed and further discussions about the Discussion Platform took place during the session regarding the activities of Phase VI.

6. Discussion Platform on “GCU Network management in case of biotic outbreaks: the case study of ash dieback” (A.M. Farsakoglou, Secretariat)

A.M. Farsakoglou presented the report of the Discussion Platform. A meeting took place in February 2023, where EUFGIS National Focal Points, Task Force members, one observer and the Secretariat were present.

The Steering Committee found the report of the Discussion Platform very informative and meeting the expectations. They discussed the prioritized items of the report and concluded that those related to EUFGIS that can be easily addressed will be included in the ongoing upgrade of EUFGIS (supported by the FORGENIUS project). Most of the other activities fall outside the scope of the current phase of EUFORGEN, and will be considered when developing the workplan for the next phase. In particular, the Steering Committee found relevant the suggestion to develop a system, integrated in EUFGIS, to allow the reporting of the impact of diseases on Genetic Conservation Units and the suggestion to develop supporting material for the EUFGIS National Focal Points, aimed at informing relevant actors, such as experts involved in GCU management, in case of a biotic outbreak.

Decision: The Steering Committee welcomed the report and decided to include some of the suggestions related to the upgrade of EUFGIS immediately and to reconsider the report when developing the new phase of the programme.

7. FRM dissemination materials (S. Adams, Secretariat)

S. Adams presented the first of the planned six packages for the dissemination of the publication “Genetic aspects linked to production and use of forest reproductive material (FRM)¹⁰”. The overall title for the dissemination material is “Focus on forest genetic diversity”. (Please refer to the minutes of the previous Steering Committee meeting for more details¹¹).

The package for each theme will include: (i) a booklet, (ii) a short video and (iii) a wall poster. The draft of the three elements was presented during the meeting.

The Steering Committee suggested to consider the possibility of producing a digital version of the booklet. The Secretariat will collect feedback from the Steering Committee on the draft material via survey and text suggestions during a given timeframe after the meeting. Once the format is approved, the Secretariat should proceed with the development of materials for the other five themes.

¹⁰ www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/genetic-aspects-linked-to-production-and-use-of-forest-reproductive-material-frm/

¹¹ [SC17_minutesfinal.pdf \(euforgen.org\)](#)

M. Bozzano presented a long and a short version of the policy brief based on the publication¹⁰. Both versions will be sent to the Steering Committee for their inputs. In particular, the Steering Committee asked for the possibility to comment on the selected final recommendations of the short version. The Secretariat will identify suitable modalities to collect inputs.

The timing for the publication of the two briefs was also discussed in relation to the revision of the EU Legislation on forest reproductive material. It was agreed that there is no need to wait for the release of new EU regulation as the process may still take some time.

The Secretariat will ask the National Coordinators to send their comments on the policy brief and the summary. For the shorter version, the Steering Committee asked for a longer timeframe. The key messages should be identified, and the short version rewritten. The Secretariat will prepare a new proposal based on the existing messages and come back to the Steering Committee for further feedback.

Decisions:

Dissemination package:

The SC approved the dissemination package of Theme 5 style, while further revision is required, and a deadline for this revision is set by 10 June. The SC agreed on the production of the remaining five Themes.

Policy briefs: The Steering Committee agreed that both the long and the short version of the policy briefs should be further revised before published, aiming to release both versions as soon as possible. The Steering Committee approved the dissemination of the material through FOREST EUROPE and OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme, with the condition to keep it strictly as a EUFORGEN product.

The Steering Committee agreed on tailored dissemination to respond to the 3 billion tree pledge with existing dissemination products.

8. Case study of one species for the new species pages on EUFORGEN's website (M. Bozzano, E. Veber and J. Chaplin - Secretariat)

The Species pages¹² are the most visited pages of the EUFORGEN website, provide concise and accurate information, unique data and graphics linked from EUFGIS, and can be a very effective channel to communicate about FGR of European forest tree species, the status of their conservation and ongoing research.

M. Bozzano presented a proposal on the possible format and content of the species pages that will include:

- a) a narrative part presenting:
 1. Brief ecological summary
 2. Overview on the species' genetic diversity
 3. Patterns of species' Genetic Distribution
 4. Country Specific Genetic Diversity
 5. Management of the species' Genetic Conservation Units
- b) relevant data and graphics existing in EUFGIS and links to relevant projects:
 6. Distribution of the species and its conservation in Europe

¹² www.euforgen.org/species

7. Genetic Characterisation of the species and its GCUs
8. Status of the species' conservation in Europe (indicator 4.6)
9. Availability of forest reproductive material according to the FOREMATIS information system

c) Other sources of relevant information:

10. Recent and ongoing projects on the genetic diversity of the species
11. EUFORGEN's publications on the species
12. Contact details of the nominated experts
13. Recommendations for further reading

J. Chaplin prepared a draft of the narrative part. M Bozzano also presented a concept for an interactive platform to allow collaboration of the nominated experts. Once upgraded, the species pages will also give visibility to the experts that are curating the pages. E. Veber developed the graphic visualisation for an interactive platform.

Decision: The Steering Committee agreed to proceed with the development of the species pages, according to the proposed timeline. The case study will open for feedback after the Steering Committee Meeting to decide on the basic structure of the necessary elements and the maximum length of each chapter.

9. Feedback on the EUFORGEN Secretariat (in absence of the Secretariat) (R. Mavsar, EFI)

In preparation for the Steering Committee, as part of a survey on the current modus operandi of EUFORGEN, the National Coordinators were asked to indicate if the current role of the Secretariat needs modifications and if the Secretariat is fulfilling its duties. According to the current modus operandi, the EUFORGEN Secretariat manages the Programme and coordinates its activities. Using the resources provided by member countries, European Forest Institute (EFI) appoints the EUFORGEN Coordinator and other Secretariat staff. The Secretariat may also seek advice from observer organisations on relevant scientific, technical or policy-related issues, as needed.

The results of the survey indicate that the role of the EUFORGEN Secretariat does not need any modifications/amendments (90% of the 23 replies). 10% of replies suggested adjustments for some points, e.g. "maintain the EUFORGEN website and maintain the EUFGIS Information System, its intranet and portal". Furthermore, the availability of human resources for implementing tasks was thought to be unclear.

In more detail, regarding the question "Do you think that the EUFORGEN Secretariat have been fulfilling their role?" the replies received were:

- The Secretariat fulfilled their role excellently.
- Timely provision of documents is needed.
- The availability of the Secretariat for liaison between the Steering Committee and Working Groups/Discussion Platforms is limited.
- The identification of Secretariat's contact person for each task is advised.
- There is some overlapping work with projects and other activities.

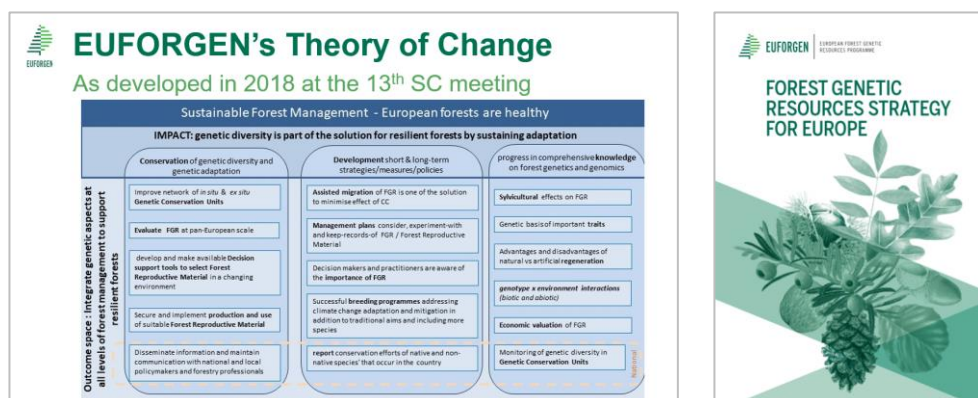
These, together with all feedback received (see section 11 below), will be the basis for the development of Phase VII. In the documentation for Phase VII, clear rule for involvement of the Secretariat in project consortia having clear reference with EUFORGEN should be defined.

10. OptForests – scoping event (J. Giacomoni)

A separate event was organized by the OptForests project¹³, to collect feedback from the EUFORGEN countries (through the National Coordinators present in the meeting), on needs to improve sustainable use and management of forest genetic resources. The report will be provided as separate document.

11. EUFORGEN Phase VII Preparation

The Steering Committee discussed the existing three objectives of EUFORGEN, starting from (i) the Theory of Change¹⁴ developed in 2018 and (ii) the implementation plan of the FGR Strategy for Europe¹⁵.



The discussion was structured, in addition to the strategic objectives for Phase VI, on their respective operational objectives.

The outcomes of the discussions will be further elaborated and framed into a document to be used during the Phase VII preparation. A Task Force nominated by the Steering Committee (see section 0 below) will build on the outcomes of the discussions to prepare a first draft of "Phase VII Strategic Objectives" to be presented to the Steering Committee at the next meeting in November 2023.

11.1 Definition of Phase VII Objectives

The outcomes of the survey "Modus operandi" were presented by J. Chaplin. The results are summarised in Annex 3.

Modus operandi suggested modifications

The Steering Committee agreed that there is no need to change the governance structure of the programme, however, some modifications and few additions were suggested. The Steering Committee also indicated that the level of detail for the modus operandi should not be too rigid, pretending to foresee any possible issue, but maintain the possibility to deal with issues or problems on a case-by-case basis. Below, all the suggested modifications and additions are described per section and will be used by the Task Force of the Phase VII preparation while updating the Modus Operandi. The Task Force developing

¹³ www.optforests.eu

¹⁴ www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Documents/EUFORGEN_PhaseVI_Objectives_and_Plan.pdf

¹⁵ www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Publications/Thematic_publications/FGR_Strategy4Europe.pdf

the draft for the new phase should also consider possibilities and modalities to invite observers (from non-member countries and international organisations).

General notes: The Steering Committee suggested to develop guiding principles for the EUFORGEN Secretariat to participate in project proposals and two new sections, one with a clear role for a “Contact Person” (appointed from the governments for non-EUFORGEN member countries) and another describing the role and responsibility of the hosting institute as well as the explaining the legal status of EUFORGEN. Also, it was suggested to add an organigram of the bodies in the general introduction.

Membership: It was agreed that the rules for membership and nomination of National Coordinators will remain as they are currently but it could be useful to formulate the Terms of Reference for focal persons or contact persons from non-member countries for correspondence issues. Also, the rule for payment of national contributions should be better clarified, including the modalities and expectations for non-member countries to join the new phase.

National Coordinators: No changes were suggested.

Steering Committee: It was suggested to be added that the Steering Committee can nominate a Task Force, as a temporal instrument with a specific objective. Also, that the focused online Steering Committee meetings can be called by the Secretariat to allow it to function and have decisions made in a timely manner. The webinars prior to a physical meeting should be increased to allow more time for discussion in small groups during the actual meetings.

Advisory Committee: The Steering Committee suggested that there is a need to address the modalities of the Advisory Committee and to explore the possibility of developing several Advisory Committees with a specific role (e.g. financial, meeting preparation etc.), in the understanding that there will not be extensions to representative or executive functions. The Secretariat clarified that the role of the Advisory Committee up to now has been very helpful for the preparation of the Steering Committee meetings.

EUFORGEN Secretariat: The Steering Committee suggested the indication of the liaison role with the FOREST EUROPE process and to also add the improvement of the EUFORGEN website and EUFGIS information system apart from its maintenance. The Secretariat clarified that the implementation of new features will be decided on a special basis according to available funds.

Discussion Platforms: The Steering Committee suggested to add in the description that the Discussion Platforms have a clear assignment, with open discussions and facilitated interactions.

Working Groups: The Steering Committee suggested to add in the description that the Working Groups should have a precise mandate, including expected outcomes.

EUFGIS National Focal Points (NFP): The Steering Committee suggested that the process for the nomination of NFPs for non-member countries should be described under the “Contact person” rules to be developed.

National Experts: The Steering Committee suggested two categories under this section, one for specific needs (e.g. Discussion Platforms): appointed at the beginning or during the phase according to needs and another one for permanent needs (e.g. the species pages) appointed at the beginning of the phase.

EUFORGEN Phase VII preparation – Task Force

The roadmap for preparing the activities for Phase VII was presented. The defined timeframe for the preparation of the phase VII documentation was approved and the need to establish a Task Force for the preparation of these documents was identified.

The following countries agreed to be part of the Task Force developing the reference documents for Phase VII of EUFORGEN: Austria, Finland, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and United Kingdom. The Task Force will work on a first draft of the Strategic Objectives and Implementation Plan, including modus operandi, to be presented in November 2023 at the online Steering Committee meeting. National Coordinators will have time to provide comments and the aim is to have the document already finalized for the Steering Committee meeting March-May 2024 to allow countries enough time for internal consultation.

The Secretariat will follow up with the nominated members of the Task Force to jointly elaborate the roadmap and prepare the draft document. The first meeting will take place online.

Decision: The Steering Committee agreed on the proposed roadmap. The following countries volunteered to participate in the Task Force to prepare Phase VII: Austria, Finland, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and United Kingdom. Subgroups may be created within the Task Force to address the modus operandi and the Strategic Objectives separately.

12. EUFORGEN Communication Strategy (S. Adams, Secretariat)

S. Adams introduced the communication team (Gerard Fernández, Eduardo Veber and herself), all working part-time on EUFORGEN as they also constitute the communications team for EFI's Mediterranean Facility.

S. Adams highlighted some of the recent outputs of the team. 1) She mentioned that the audience of the EUFORGEN Newsletter increased between December 2022 and April 2023, following social media campaigns and a call for contributions. 2) She presented a new initiative to organise public webinars (the first have been organised in early 2023 on the ash dieback¹⁶). These webinars increase EUFORGEN visibility and aim to position EUFORGEN as a reference on FGR-related issues outside the internal community. 3) She referred to the previous day's presentation of the FRM dissemination package with focus on forest genetic diversity: six Themes & six Packages (videos, publications and wall posters).

The Steering Committee expressed appreciation for the public webinars organised in early 2023 and agreed to support this initiative in the future.

S. Adams indicated that a review and update of the website is expected for summer 2023. The team is currently working on the development of the species pages. She presented some web analytics, including strengths and weaknesses, goals to improve some figures and statistics (i.e. bounce rates and returning visitors).

S. Adams then presented the planned updates to the Communication strategy. Target audiences have been reviewed for phase VI, but may need further review for phase VII. There is a need to be more specific when it comes to mapping the audiences and stakeholders. The plan for the webinars is to offer more public webinars of four different types: promotion of core activities; training webinars on tools (EUFGIS,

¹⁶ www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLo0vLZs-7p3GGWpnqt29FivGHuG6i9xZW

FOREMATIS, EUFORGEN tree species pages); webinars related to EUFORGEN Discussion Platform topics and project-related webinars (currently FORGENIUS and OptFORESTS). The curation of the species pages on the website will increase visibility and expand engagement.

S. Adams indicated that the Secretariat proposed to mark the 30th anniversary of EUFORGEN in 2024. The proposal is to organize an event which could share Phase VI results and products, targeting a broad range of stakeholders (forest community, practitioners, journalists, civil society, NGOs). It may be that the Secretariat invites with partners to collaborate on co-organising the event, as appropriate.

The Steering Committee welcomed the idea and asked the Secretariat to develop a proposal.

S. Adams indicated EUFORGEN's key partners are specified in the new Communication Strategy as FOREST Europe, OECD, EEA, JRC, FAO and European Commission DGs, and explained the different levels of collaboration with these entities.

S. Adams then presented an overview of the EUFORGEN Dissemination Plan which defines the main results produced by EUFORGEN in phase VI, their means of dissemination, target audience and timeframe. She also presented the communication team's immediate upcoming activities.

The Steering Committee will receive the Communication Strategy for comment in June 2023.

S. Adams finally presented ideas on tailored actions for the dissemination of the Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe and key messages to be prepared for leaflets, postcards and other dissemination materials.

The Steering Committee indicated that the Communications Strategy should be made available in place for all National Coordinators to comment and give feedback (saved in shared folders on MS Teams). They suggested to print the FRM main report¹⁷ (as it is the source document for the six FRM themes). The Secretariat will assess the cost of this. The IUFRO Conference 2024 in Stockholm could be an occasion to present EUFORGEN as a model for other regions. A concern was raised about the public webinars: if they are published, then the online messages should be robust and very clear.

Decisions: The Secretariat will open the revised Communication Strategy for feedback during June 2023 and the updated version will be available by September 2023.

13. EUFORGEN Phase VI activities

On the basis of the various issues discussed during the meeting, the points listed below were agreed as indicated.

- **EUFORGEN's impact assessment**

Following the proposal of the Secretariat, the Steering Committee is open to consider the possibility of commissioning an assessment of the impact of the EUFORGEN Programme. The Secretariat will estimate the costs and will come back to the Steering Committee by the next meeting, with an estimate. Once a

¹⁷ Genetic aspects linked to production and use of forest reproductive material (FRM)

www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/genetic-aspects-linked-to-production-and-use-of-forest-reproductive-material-frm

full picture of the costs is established, the Steering Committee will decide whether it will only include Communication activities or be a broader impact assessment on the programme.

Decision: The Steering Committee agreed that the Secretariat will explore the different possibilities on how to conduct an impact assessment using an external service, estimate the associated costs and present the different possibilities and cost estimate in the next Steering Committee Meeting.

- **Get coverage of the topic of FGR in international media by strengthening media partnerships and developing products of interest to media**

The most relevant topic of FGR, which requires further dissemination and would be of interest to the international media, is the “Forest Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe”, The Steering Committee agreed that the Secretariat will develop ideas on this matter and start the preparation of the dissemination material, to be presented at the next Steering Committee meeting along with a roadmap and the estimated costs, if particularly significant.

Decision: The Steering Committee agreed to start the preparation of dissemination material of the FGR Strategy for Europe.

- **Support the implementation of a pan-European genetic monitoring scheme with focus on the core network of Genetic Conservation Units (GCUs).**

Since the effective implementation of a pan-European genetic monitoring scheme requires a sincere effort, further steps are required and need to be identified. A first step towards this direction will be achieved through the FORGENIUS project which will be collecting baseline data on the core network of the GCUs. The next steps will be identified during the preparation of Phase VII.

Decision: The Steering Committee agreed that the initial implementation of a pan-European genetic monitoring scheme with focus on the core network of GCUs will be done through the FORGENIUS project by collecting baseline data.

- **Discussion Platform on “Adaptation of the Genetic Conservation Units to climate change” (M. Bozzano, Secretariat)**

The Steering Committee discussed the list of proposed initiatives prepared by the Discussion Platform during its meeting in October 2022. The Steering Committee selected the suggestion to prepare an opinion paper to propose an alternative terminology to “assisted migration” that is used within the forest genetic resource community (for example “evacuation” or “relocation of forest genetic resources”). The Steering Committee created a Task Force to prepare the mandate for a Working group that will address “*Evacuation* of threatened material and tracking of movements”. In the context of this Task Force formation it was also mentioned that the final tasks have to be approved and the WG members have to be elected by the Steering Committee.

Decision: The Steering Committee created a Task Force composed of Austria, Iceland and Italy, to prepare the mandate for a Working Group that will address “Evacuation of threatened material and tracking of movements”..

14. 18th EUFORGEN Steering Committee meeting; decisions and final approval

Decision: The Steering Committee approved the decisions of the meeting.

15. Wrap up – meeting feedback decision on date and place of the 19th EUFORGEN SC meeting

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will take place online in November 2023, and the next in-person meeting between March-May 2024, with a duration of 2.5 or 3 days. It was indicated that webinars in advance of the Steering Committee Meeting allow for more discussion time during the meeting. More breakout sessions would also have a positive impact since they give space for more focused brainstorming during the in-person meeting. The 30th anniversary event could mean that the meeting is (half) day longer with press release and invited authorities, if held back-to-back with the Steering Committee meeting.

Decision: France, Slovenia, Norway and United Kingdom were proposed as possible countries for the next physical EUFORGEN Steering Committee Meeting. The Secretariat will estimate the relevant costs and come back with a proposal for the next meeting to be held in late spring 2024. An online meeting will be held in November 2023. Future physical meetings should have more preparatory webinars to allow for more discussion time during the meetings.

Closure of the meeting

M. Bozzano closed the meeting and thanked the participants for attending.

Annex 1 – List of Participants



18th meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee 9-11 May 2023, Barcelona, Spain

List of participants

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Representing David White
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Unable to attend

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Annex 2 – Agenda

18th EUFORGEN Steering Committee (SC) Meeting, 9-11 May 2023 – Barcelona, Spain**AGENDA**

Tuesday 9 May

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
8:30 – 9:00	Registration of the participants		
Session 1 – EUFORGEN Phase VI – Updates on the Phase VI implementation plan Moderator: Sarah Adams			
9:00 – 9:15	Opening of the meeting Round table - introduction of the participants	<i>For discussion and decision</i>	List of participants
9:15 – 9:30	Introduction and approval of the agenda Nomination of rapporteurs	Approval of the agenda	Agenda of the meeting
9:30 – 9:50	Approval of the technical and financial reports 2022	<i>For approval</i> The SC approves the technical and financial reports 2022	Technical and financial reports 2022 link to webinar
9:50 – 10:10	General presentation - ongoing activities (M Bozzano)	<i>For information and discussion</i> The SC is informed about EUFORGEN updates and those among different entities and projects relevant to FGR	<i>Printouts of implementation plan</i>
10:10 – 10:30	WG Static and dynamic <i>ex situ</i> conservation (Anna-Maria Farsakoglou / Eleonore Scholzen) 20 min = 5min presentation + 15min discussion	<i>For information, discussion, and decision</i> The SC is informed on the progress of the WG on static and dynamic <i>ex situ</i> conservation and discussed on the outline of the WG report	WG's mandate and outline of the WG report
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break		
11:00 – 11:50	DP on "Adaptation of the Genetic Conservation Units to climate change" (M Bozzano)	<i>For information, discussion (and decision)</i> The SC decides on the next steps proposed by the EUFORGEN Secretariat	Report of DP meeting on "Adaptation of the Genetic Conservation Units to climate change"
11:50 – 12:30	DP on "GCU Network management in case of biotic outbreaks: the case study of ash dieback (AM Farsakoglou)	<i>For information, discussion (and decision)</i> The SC decides on the next steps of the DP Meeting outcome	Report of DP meeting on "GCU Network management in case of biotic outbreaks: the case study of ash dieback"

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break + Group photo		
14:00 – 14:30	FRM dissemination material (<i>Sarah Adams and M. Bozzano</i>) Presentation of Theme 5 (a) policy brief (b) publication (c) factsheet (d) illustration video	For information, discussion, and approval The SC is informed on the FRM dissemination material package of Theme 5, has a discussion on the content of Theme 5 and approves the development of the other 5 themes The SC gives feedback on the Policy brief (long and short versions) and defines a roadmap for their finalisation	Theme 5 package Policy brief Long version Ensuring forest resilience and productivity in Europe's changing climate Short version: Forest reproductive material is vital to secure Europe's forests
14:30 – 15:00	Case study of one species for the new species pages on EUFORGEN's website (<i>Secretariat</i>)	For information, discussion (and decision)	Presentation
15:00 – 15:30	Feedback on the EUFORGEN Secretariat (in absence of the Secretariat) (<i>Robert Mavsar</i>)	For discussion	
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break		
Session 2 – OptFORESTS – Scoping Event Moderator: Jacopo Giacomoni			
16:00 – 18:00	Agenda - OptFORESTS – Scoping Event		OptFORESTS webinar - Recording
18:00	Closing of the day		
20:00	Social Dinner		

Wednesday 10 May

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents	Participants
Session 3 – EUFORGEN Phase VII Preparation Moderator: AM Farsakoglou				
9.00 – 10:30	- Theory of Change (ToC) (2018) 10 min - FGRS4E – Implementation Plan 10 min - Evaluation of Phase VII Objectives 3 rounds of 3 break-out rooms to discuss on: 1) Facilitate knowledge sharing and communicate with key stakeholders 2) Coordinate the implementation of the conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe. 3) Promote the appropriate use of forest genetic resources.		FGRS4E – Implementation plan EUFORGEN Phase VI – Implementation Plan	
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break			
11:00 – 11:30	Resume			
11:30 – 12:30	Definition of Phase VII Objectives			
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break			
14:00 – 14:30	Presentation of the survey on <i>modus operandi</i> (James Chaplin)	For information and discussion	Results of the survey on EUFORGEN's <i>modus operandi</i>	
14:30 – 15:30	Break out rooms - Brainstorming on updating the <i>modus operandi</i>			
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break			
16:00 – 18:00	Plenary discussion -Reporting on brainstorming from groups -Compiling information			
18:00	Closing of the day			
18:00	Sant Pau Guide Tour			
19:30	Dinner at the hotel			

Thursday 11 May

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents	Participants
Session 4 – EUFORGEN Phase VII Preparation				
Moderator: M. Bozzano				
9:00 – 10:30	EUFORGEN Phase VII Preparation Roadmap and Decisions	For discussion and decision The SC approves the roadmap, the updated <i>modus operandi</i> and nominates a TF for the EUFORGEN Phase VII preparation		
10:30 – 11:30	Coffee Break			
Session 5 – EUFORGEN Phase VI activities, SC meeting decisions and feedback				
Moderator: M Bozzano				
11:30 – 12:15	Communication Strategy (Sarah Adams)	For information, discussion, and approval	EUFORGEN Communication Strategy	
12:15 – 13:15	EUFORGEN Phase VI Activities Workplan - Next steps	For discussion and approval		
13:15 – 13:45	18th EUFORGEN SC Meeting: Decisions final approval	For discussion and approval The SC discusses on the outcomes of the meeting and approve the decisions of each session	To be developed during the meeting	
13:45 – 14:00	Wrap up – Meeting Feedback Decision on date and place of the 19 th EUFORGEN SC Meeting	For discussion and decision		
14:00	Close of the meeting			
14:00 – 15:00	Lunch at EFI office			
15:00	Departure of Participants			

Annex 3 – Outcomes of the survey “*modus operandi*”



James Chaplin (EUFORGEN Secretariat)

May 2023

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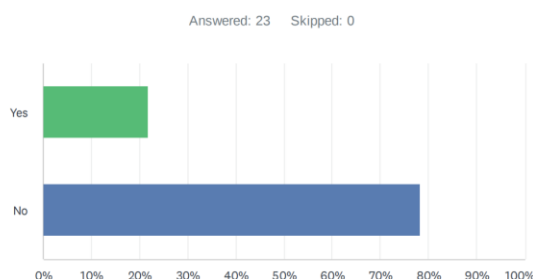
Section 1: Membership

Rules of membership as per EUFORGEN's Strategic objectives and implementation plan for Phase VI (2020-2024):

- I. To join the Programme, a country has to sign a letter of agreement (LoA) with EFI;
- II. Once a country has signed the LoA, it should pay its annual financial contribution during that calendar year;
- III. Should countries have difficulties in paying their financial contributions, they should inform the Secretariat as soon as possible;
- IV. If a country fails to provide its financial contribution for a given year before the end of December of that year, it has time until June of the following year to provide the outstanding financial contribution. After this, it will no longer be considered a member of EUFORGEN;
- V. A country with outstanding financial contributions from the previous phase 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 prior to re-joining.

Question 1: Do you think that the rules of membership need any modifications/further justification?

Question Results



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	21.74%	5
No	78.26%	18
TOTAL		23

Comments

1. In our case, it was impossible to sign the LoA, due to national legislation.
2. No, I think this is fair and leaves flexibility.
3. We made an exception for Ukraine, and we might consider adding something on the possibility for the Steering Committee (SC) to decide on individual cases. However, I consider this as an extremely rare case which do not require amendments in the relevant rules of membership text.
4. V.: Outstanding financial contribution duty for re-joining countries could be acceptable also in lower value.
5. There could be an additional possibility, besides being a full member for countries which might have problems organizing a common country contribution and nomination, such as associated member or remote member - these would be receiving all information but would not be invited to meetings or participate in working groups in which payment for participation at meetings would be through EUFORGEN. They would still be invited to contribute to EUFORGEN through their own contribution (in person months and as experts).
6. V: special cases might be discussed, and decision taken by the Steering Committee (e.g., Ukraine)

Question 2: Please feel free to use the space below for any additional comments or feedback on the rules of membership.

1. I: should be accepted as an exemption not to sign the LoA if the annual financial contributions are paid in due time.
2. Currently membership is for countries. There is an ongoing initiative to invite the EC as a member. At some point, when we know more about this option, we may need to change the wording.

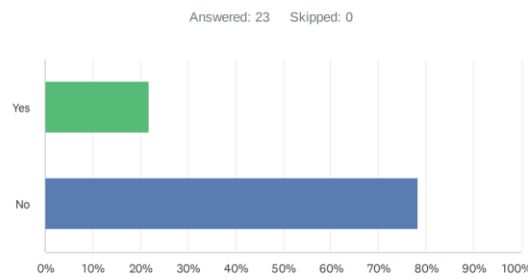
Section 2: National Coordinators

When joining EUFORGEN Phase VI, each country is required to nominate a National Coordinator (NC) to act as the official contact person between EFI and the participating country for all matters relating to the Programme. The role of the National Coordinators is to:

- I. Participate in Steering Committee meetings and other activities;
- II. Promote EUFORGEN and its activities at national level;
- III. Liaise with the Secretariat and relevant Ministries and National Agencies regarding membership, fees and other relevant issues;
- IV. Nominate experts on thematic areas relevant for EUFORGEN and maintain regular contact with them;
- V. Assist the experts and the national institutes in contributing to the EUFORGEN activities, as needed.

Question 3: Do you think that the role of the National Coordinators needs any modifications/amendments?

Question Results



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	21.74%	5
No	78.26%	18
TOTAL		23

Comments

1. How about adding to I. ... and bring in views, needs, and propositions from the national perspective?
2. The national coordinators should be more involved in the preparation of new projects with direct link to EUFORGEN (e.g., EU-projects). Especially their opinion on partners from their country should be considered.
3. Perhaps we should be more explicit on the role of connecting the activities at national and European levels (e.g., as we have done with the GCUs).
4. Report on national activities regarding FGR and FRM problems and initiatives.

Question 4: Please feel free to use the space below for any additional comments or feedback on the role of the National Coordinators.

1. (No Comments)

Question 5: Do you have any suggestions for the next Phase relating to the role of National Coordinators?

1. In case I. any member country has several entities or in case II. the current national coordinator might expect to be replaced or get retired, it would be useful for the NCs under I. to alternate or that two representatives (NC and substitute) are invited to SC meetings, under II. equally that for one or two SC meetings the NC and substitute (expecting to replace the current NC soon) are invited to the SC meeting(s).
2. It is probably appropriate to add: "Participation in the preparation of documents, guidelines, etc".

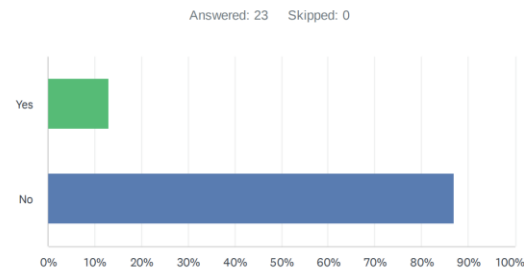
Section 3: Steering Committee

The EUFORGEN Steering Committee (SC) is composed of National Coordinators from all member countries and it has overall responsibility for the Programme. Members of EFI and other Organisations may be invited as observers to the Steering Committee meetings. If needed, individual experts may also be invited to participate in the Steering Committee meetings as observers. The Steering Committee will meet four times during Phase VI. If needed, it can establish ad hoc working groups between the meetings to plan activities and advise on relevant issues. At Steering Committee meetings, decisions are taken by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, then voting takes place based on a simple majority of votes. Each country has one vote; observers have no voting rights. Should the need for an urgent decision arise between meetings, the Secretariat will contact the Steering Committee members by email and take action upon receiving feedback in the given timeframe. The Steering Committee will:

- I. Provide guidance and strategic orientation of the Programme;
- II. Review progress made and decide upon future activities of the Programme;
- III. Define and approve the budget of the Programme;
- IV. Review technical and audited financial reports;
- V. Develop an overall work plan for the Phase;
- VI. Identify themes for the Discussion Platforms to be held;
- VII. Establish working groups with clear tasks, deadlines, expected outputs and defining roles and responsibilities;
- VIII. Agree on principles for selecting and inviting individual experts to participate in working groups and workshops;
- IX. Review the outputs of working groups;
- X. Provide inputs to relevant European and global processes, such as Forest Europe and the Global Plan of Action on FGR;
- XI. Discuss emerging issues relevant to EUFORGEN and the conservation and use of forest genetic resources in Europe;
- XII. Identify needs and priorities related to FGR conservation and sustainable use in Europe;
- XIII. Evaluate the achievements at the end of the Phase.

Question 6: Do you think that the role of the Steering Committee needs any modifications/amendments?

Question Results



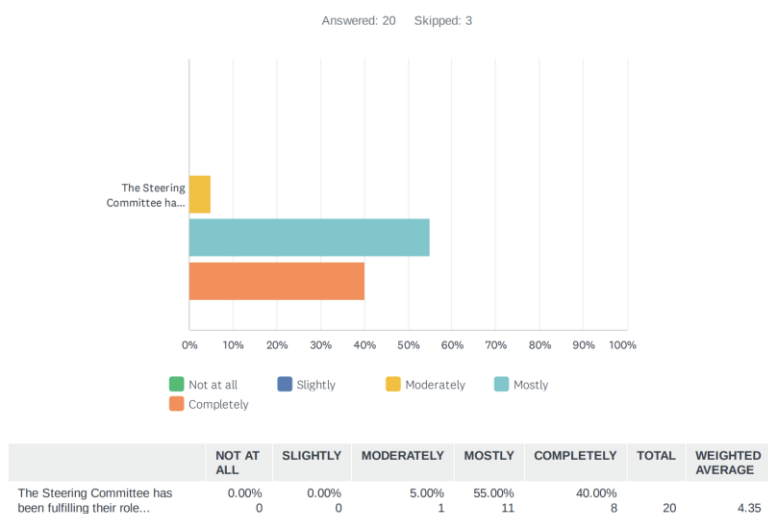
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	13.04%	3
No	86.96%	20
TOTAL		23

Comments

1. The steering committee should be involved in the preparation of EU-projects addressing elements of the EUFORGEN programme.
2. The role of the SC should not only be evaluated based on the views of the NCs. It is important how the Secretariat sees this and if they get sufficient support from the SC. Hopefully this angle will be part of the discussion. Possibly the SC should take a more professional role on financial reporting, it may not be in our core expertise but is one of the tasks.
3. Propose and help prepare common projects; propose and present possibilities and good practices on supporting discussion lines among ministries at national level, get information and prepare common discussion networks among different fields (forestry, agriculture, nature conservation, environment, climate...) at the EU level and neighbouring countries.

Question 7: Do you think that the Steering Committee has been fulfilling their role?

Question Results



Comments

1. The impact of COVID and the necessary need for remote meetings has had an impact.
2. We have a problem with unequal participation of the countries. It is acceptable within the limits but currently is too much. This is something we should pay attention to, seriously. We need face to face meetings, it is money well spent because community feeling, and participation activates also in-kind contributions. There are ways to encourage participation if we decide to invest time in it. The main objective of a SC meeting should not be to run through as fast as possible.
3. NCs could be more active at national level to promote EUFORGEN outputs and recommendations.
4. We should find a way to devote more time for discussion and deliberation during the SC meetings. The preparatory webinars are an excellent tool to go in this direction!

Question 8: Do you have any suggestions for the next Phase relating to the role of the Steering Committee?

1. To favour meetings in person and not by teams.
2. Some NCs have expressed a wish to add elements for exchanging scientific knowledge between the NCs, e.g., with scientific presentations in SC. Personally I'd like to stress the administrative role of the SC and rather add science in a way that would be available also to national experts and wider community. We have already had some excellent webinars to serve this purpose.
3. Re-engage in production of short movies and help translate them into national languages.

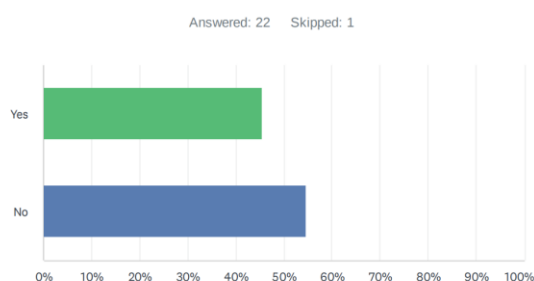
Section 4: Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee consists of four members of the Steering Committee, elected by the Steering Committee for a four-year term of office and representing the European sub-regions (North, West, East and South, in a broad sense), and ex officio a designated representative of the hosting organisation. To ensure continuity, one member of the Advisory Committee is replaced by a new member each year. A re-election is possible. Decisions of the Advisory Committee are made by consensus; voting can take place when necessary. The role of the Advisory Committee is to:

- I. Plan or execute the activities of EUFORGEN as decided by the Steering Committee;
- II. Support the Secretariat in the preparation of the Steering Committee meetings;
- III. Identify issues of strategic importance to EUFORGEN and bring proposals to the attention of the Steering Committee; represent EUFORGEN at meetings and events, whenever relevant.

Question 9: Do you think that the role of the Advisory Committee needs any modifications/amendments?

Question Results



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	45.45%	10
No	54.55%	12
TOTAL		22

Comments

1. In my opinion, national coordinators have enough burden. If they also must be part of the Advisory Committee, it is too much work not assumable in some cases (at least in mine).
2. In my understanding the role under I. is rather ... support the Secretariat in planning (and executing?) activities of EUFORGEN.
3. I have some difficulties to see the added value of this new layer. Up to now it is not clear what was done from the point of National Coordinator. Need more communication of the job done.
4. Is I. needed?
5. Not clear how the advisory committee added value. Perhaps some feedback on this could be provided at the SC meeting. I don't recall too much interaction between the advisory committee members and national coordinators.
6. It says, 'ex officio a designated representative of the hosting organisation'. Shouldn't this be 'ex officio the EUFORGEN secretariat'. For me it is also not clear whether the 'ex officio a designated representative of the hosting organisation' has voting rights. This should be clear.
7. Certain aspects of the process and mandate need to be clarified, e.g., the way of selecting the members and what is expected from them. First round was strange, voting was based on the "regions" (is this really needed?) which created a false impression that the members were representing those who had the voting right. Later on, I was advised that I was selected in my personal capacity, and I should not contact the NCs in my "region". If this

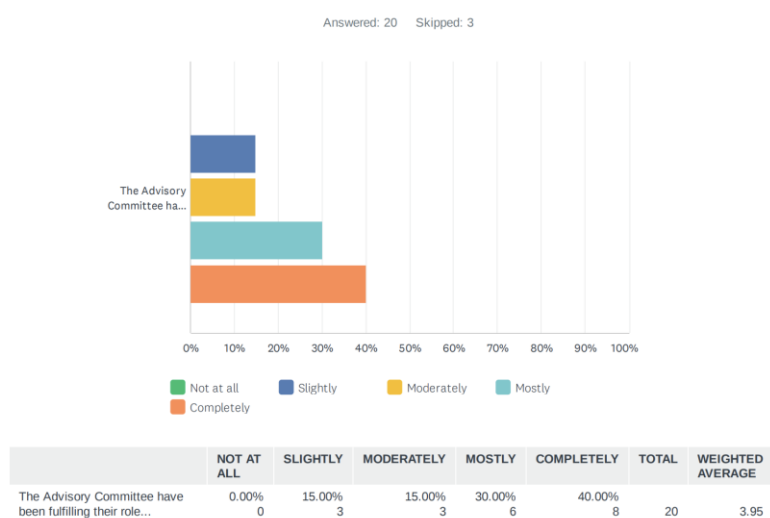
is so, it should be made openly known, so that people would not expect any information from the AC-member. If the Secretariat decides to continue with an AC, the mandate and rules should be written clearly and made available to all SC-members.

8. No influence or positive outcomes have been noticed so far; it is always the same persons that help the secretariat.

9. Just need some clarification on the terms used, mainly for point I. (II. & III. are OK): - formulation is a bit strange, the AC does not "execute" all the activities of EUFORGEN, should it say "supervise implementation of planned activities"? - by the way even "supervision" is the role of the whole SC, who gives delegation to the AC to "supervise implementation" As I see it, the main role of AC is II & III.

Question 10: Do you think that the Advisory Committee has been fulfilling their role?

Question Results



Comments

1. During Phase VI, the role played by the Advisory Committee has barely been seen.
2. After the first four months of active participation, I still not have the full overview what should have been done and what must be done.
3. Difficult to know what they have been doing.
4. I would like to fill in the option 'don't know' here.
5. This should be assessed by the Secretariat because it is up to the Secretariat if they need support from the AC and for which purposes. I feel the need has appeared low, except for year 2023.
6. No influence noticed, so the answer should be NE (non-existent).
7. As I see it, the AC is mainly aimed at supporting the secretariat: the secretariat should answer to the question.
8. Don't know what Advisory Committee does.

Question 11: Do you have any suggestions for the next Phase relating to the role of the Advisory Committee?

1. Maybe to eliminate the Advisory Committee.
2. May be a separate space on the efiint. SharePoint for AC processes would help to keep the overview.
3. To clarify the role with NC.
5. Transparency of the process selection of the membership? - was there a change every year? how did it happen? who is on the advisory committee currently? etc.
4. ask NCs who would be willing to contribute to the activities / problems /... needed to be addressed and include them into the AC as per interest and engagement.

5. No, just slight clarification of the expected role.
6. Membership is subject to change. The number of countries per region can also change. At the beginning of the new phase the situation should be reviewed, and the regions adjusted to balance the number of countries across regions.

Section 5: EUFORGEN Secretariat

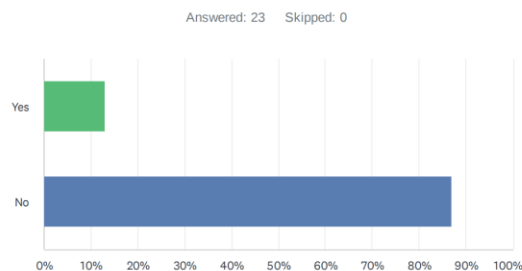
The EUFORGEN Secretariat manages the Programme and coordinates its activities. Using the resources provided by the countries, EFI appoints the EUFORGEN Coordinator and other Secretariat staff. The Secretariat may also seek advice from observer organisations on relevant scientific, technical, or policy-related issues, as needed.

The role of the EUFORGEN Secretariat is to:

- I. Ensure that the implementation of the Programme and its activities are in accordance with the mandate given by the Forest Europe process and the work plan and budget developed by the Steering Committee.
- II. Prepare annual technical and financial reports;
- III. Provide relevant information to the Steering Committee members;
- IV. Act as a liaison between the Steering Committee and the working groups and Discussion Platforms;
- V. Coordinate the working groups and provide them with scientific and technical inputs;
- VI. Organise meetings and workshops in collaboration with local hosts;
- VII. Prepare reports and other publications;
- VIII. Develop and maintain communication channels with relevant stakeholders;
- IX. Maintain the EUFORGEN website;
- X. Maintain the EUFGIS Information System, its intranet and portal;
- XI. Represent EUFORGEN and advocate for conservation and appropriate use of forest genetic resources in relevant European and global processes;
- XII. Facilitate collaboration with relevant stakeholders and the expansion of the Programme to encourage new countries to become members.

Question 12: Do you think that the role of the EUFORGEN Secretariat needs any modifications/amendments?

Question Results



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	13.04%	3
No	86.96%	20
TOTAL		23

Comments

1. Are these really the main functions? In my understanding the Secretariat has over the years/decades very positively grown and developed towards something like a general executive office of EUFORGEN (CEO function). How about adding in the lead text: ...

manages the Program, coordinates its activities, develops further its position and operational basis, and supports its implementation.

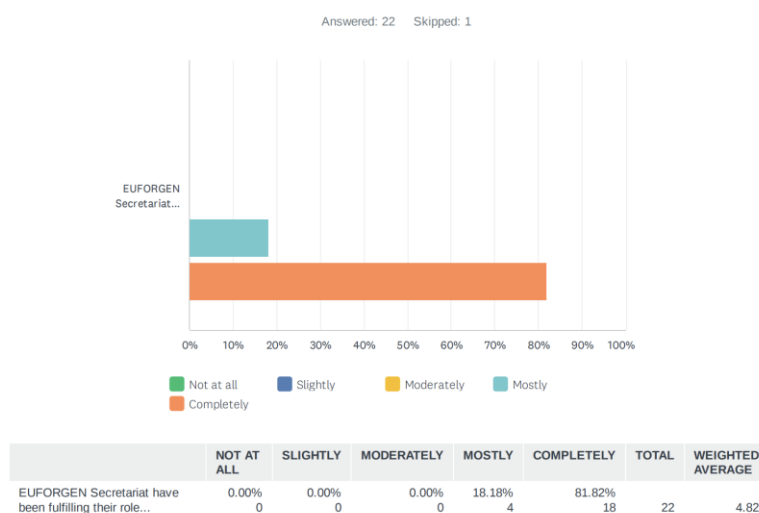
2. Suggest to state "maintain and develop" for IX. and X.

10. It is annoying that the SC does not know the amount of person months available for the tasks, in our Secretary (III. provide relevant information to the SC members). It is most difficult to plan or to monitor the fulfilment when we don't know how many working months our Coordinator (or other staff) is available and paid for. EFI made the decision on reducing the coordinator's person months as part of the management done by the hosting institute, without consulting the SC. However, I feel this was (at least partly) a strategic decision. The procedure casts a shadow on the future work.

3. Should XI. specify the role of liaison with the FOREST EUROPE process? and mention somewhere link with EU and FAO (I think it is more than representation but also more "active contacts" that you have been developing, e.g., with the EC-DGs) where do you put the role of representing EUFORGEN in collaborative research projects? (I think it is slightly different than XI, no?).

Question 13: Do you think that the EUFORGEN Secretariat have been fulfilling their role?

Question Results



Comments

11. The Secretariat has fulfilled their role excellently in some of the listed points and well in most. The problematic aspects are in II. III. and V. The Secretariat has problems in providing documents in time and the availability for liaison between SC and Working Groups / Discussion Platforms is limited, due to lack of time. It has also been difficult to know whom in the Secretariat one should contact for each item and occasionally difficult to get any response at all. However, it may be difficult for me to make a difference of the conduct in core EUFORGEN work and in some projects because they are partly overlapping. Therefore, my feedback may not be totally justified in this context. The Secretariat is doing excellent job in representing EUFORGEN in wider community but there should be more clarity in which role the coordinator is active now that he represents also EFI, being head of the two closely related facilities.

Question 14: Do you have any suggestions for the next Phase relating to the role of the EUFORGEN Secretariat?

1. It is always good to think about improvements: universal standards for nomenclature of documents and folder structure, expansion of efiint. SharePoint into a long-term filing system and archiving of all relevant documents.

12. All the listed points would be important to keep but if we don't have sufficient resources we need to consider pruning. On the other hand, our budget balance does not explain the insufficient time available for the tasks.

Section 6: Discussion Platforms

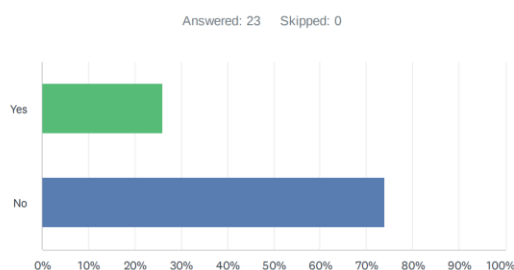
During Phase VI, EUFORGEN will carry out its activities through Discussion Platforms where national experts (one per member country) meet, share, discuss and analyse relevant issues, share perspectives, and identify needs.

The Discussion Platforms will address issues that need a pan-European perspective. Each member country will be invited to nominate a representative for each Platform. These Platforms are the instrument to analyse and discuss relevant issues, to maintain the overall knowledge and understanding of issues relevant to FGR in Europe and to build capacity among the members of the forum. The Steering Committee will indicate a defined timeframe within which each Platform will operate.

The Discussion Platforms will be organised to optimise interactions among more- and less-experienced experts, as a contribution to capacity building. Progress and findings will be reported to the Steering Committee and presented at relevant events. Discussion Platforms can make recommendations to the Steering Committee to establish working groups to address specific issues. The travel and accommodation costs of national representatives will be covered by EUFORGEN. The EUFORGEN Secretariat will seek additional financial resources to support the participation of additional experts from the member countries as well as invited speakers, as needed. A total of three Discussion Platforms' meetings have been budgeted for Phase VI.

Question 15: Do you think that the purpose of the Discussion Platforms needs any modifications/amendments?

Question Results



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	26.09% 6
No	73.91% 17
TOTAL	23

Comments

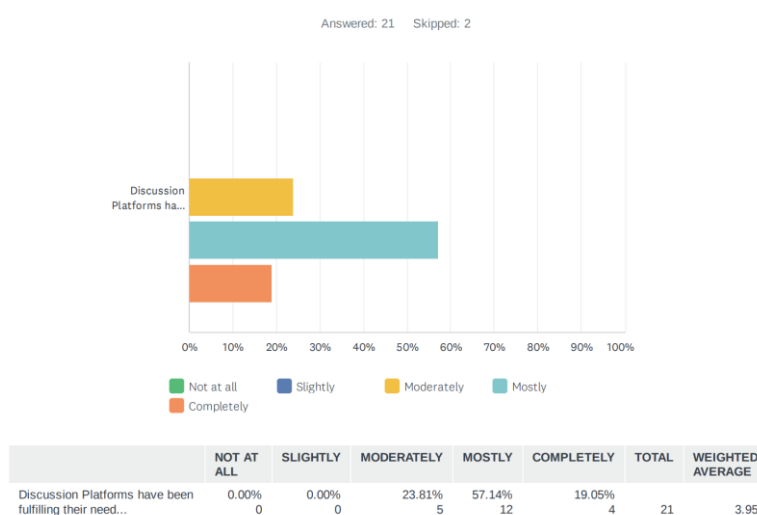
1. Important to report specifically on the work of the Discussion Platforms to understand their role.
2. I have doubts about the effectiveness and usefulness of these discussion platforms.
3. More clearly defined terms of reference for the Discussion Platform, including guidance for the participants in advance of the meeting.
4. Is new way of working and needs to be tested in real life for longer period before reviewing.
5. The objectives should be clarified regarding the level of expertise required for the participants: - I think the true experts on a topic are rather in the working group than in the Discussion Platform, some Discussion Platform participants may be experts but not all of them. Whereas all members of Working Group are experts - the Discussion Platform has 1

participant per member country and is supposed to contribute to "build capacity among the members of the forum", but this capacity building will mainly happen AFTER the work of the working group, not only when preparing the establishment of the Working Group (and, given its expertise on the topic chosen, the Working Group should have the possibility to slightly amend the planned work if needed through pre-discussion with the Discussion Platform) - in that sense, the Discussion Platform appears like a kind of extension of the SC on a specific issue to help in a first pre-analysis of a topic, eventually leading to the establishment of a Working Group, but then the Working Group has the full expertise; at the end of the work of the Working Group, capacity building could be organised by a joint meeting between the Working Group + DP + Steering Committee (the Steering Committee should not be forgotten, it needs capacity building too), where the WG would deliver the work and discuss with the DP and Steering Committee.

6. They seem to be rather useful, so more could be planned and supported.

Question 16: Do you think that the instrument of the Discussion Platforms has been fulfilling its need?

Question Results



Comments

1. Cannot be rated in advance.
2. A bit difficult to say, could be me missing information.
3. Evaluate the two discussion platforms to decide whether they are of sufficient value for achieving the objectives of EUFORGEN and should be continued.
4. I think they (DP) are good idea. They can capture a range of ideas and provide an access point for all countries to contribute to a topic.
5. I'm a little bit confused with the DP on CC, with its numerous recommendations but I understand these belong under "identify needs". I would prefer to keep the DPs more on "meet, share, discuss and analyse relevant issues, share perspectives" and I hope the participants understand not all the recommendation can be taken forward. Maybe we could clarify the procedure how the DP recommendations will be handled and in which way they are filtered before ending up in the work programme.
6. Sometimes unsure of outcomes.

Question 17: Do you have any suggestions for the next Phase relating to the need of the Discussion Platforms?

1. The output and outcome of a DP can be as good as the definition of tasks is elaborated and the timeframe is adequate. Sporty tasks should not turn out to a hectic quick bleach.

Section 7: Working Groups

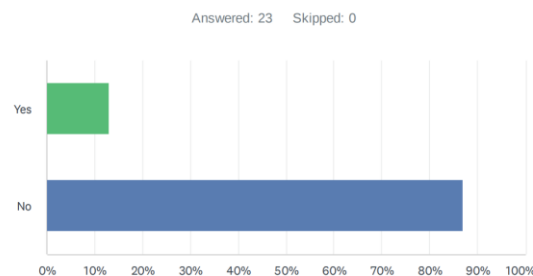
During Phase VI, EUFORGEN will carry out its activities through, Working Groups, which can be established directly by the Steering Committee where selected experts develop specific outputs. Once the need for a working group has been identified, either by the Steering Committee itself or through the Discussion platforms, the Steering Committee will define the tasks, deadlines and expected outputs. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, will develop a tentative list of experts from the pool of nominated experts from all member countries. The experts will be selected based on their experience and knowledge to match the tasks of a given working group. The geographical distribution of experts as well as their participation in previous working groups will also be considered. The tentative list of selected experts will be circulated to the Steering Committee for comments and final approval. The Secretariat will then inform the selected experts, coordinate their work (including meeting arrangements) and provide technical and scientific inputs to the tasks of the working groups.

Draft outputs of the working groups will be circulated to relevant nominated experts under a given area of work for their comments and review to ensure that every expert, whether present at the meetings or not, has an opportunity to provide their contributions and ideas. Prior to publishing their final output, the leaders of the working groups will present their results to the Steering Committee and at relevant workshops.

The travel and accommodation costs of experts will be covered by EUFORGEN. Financial resources have been budgeted for to organise a total of ten working group meetings during Phase VI.

Question 18: Do you think that the purpose of the Working Groups needs any modifications/amendments?

Question Results



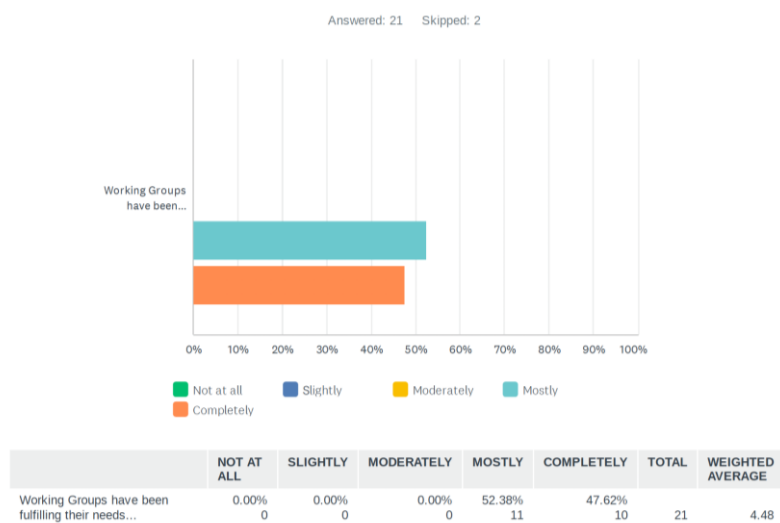
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	13.04% 3
No	86.96% 20
TOTAL	23

Comments

1. "Once the need for a working group has been identified, either by the Steering Committee itself or through the Discussion platforms, the Steering Committee will define the tasks, deadlines and expected outputs." Under DP it writes: "Discussion Platforms can make recommendations to the Steering Committee to establish working groups to address specific issues." I would prefer to keep the text under DP as it is (make recommendations) but here clarify that only the SC can decide to establish a WG. Identifying a need does not necessarily mean that a WG will be established.
2. I feel it is inevitable that the more experienced members of the steering committee have most to offer the working groups.
3. If necessary and useful, more than one expert per country might be included in any specific WG.

Question 19: Do you think that the instrument of the Working Groups has been fulfilling its needs?

Question Results



Comments

1. Maybe more working groups (task forces?) for smaller, ad hoc, or short-term tasks/activities. A more balanced participation of countries in working groups.
2. WGs are a very good instrument if the SC can define tasks and the expected outcome clearly. The problems we have experienced have mostly been connected to an unclear mandate to start with, or the SC changing the mandate along a (too) long process. We should also avoid too huge tasks and extended deadlines.

Question 20: Do you have any suggestions for the next Phase relating to the need of the Working Groups?

1. This also depends on what the Phase VII Objectives will be, as well as whether and how working groups may be most effectively deployed to carry out the objectives and activities of the following Phase.
2. The small and fast (more ad hoc) task forces have proved useful and effective.

Section 8: EUFGIS National Focal Points

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

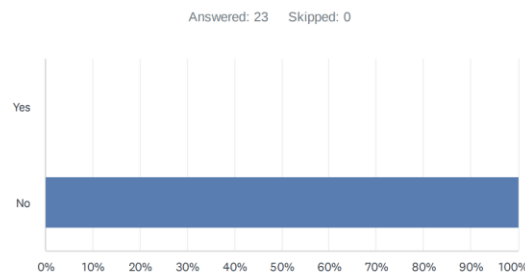
At any time, the National Coordinator (or relevant authority in case of non-member countries) can nominate a new National Focal Point (e.g., because of staff changes in each institute). Persons nominated for the task are responsible for collecting and maintaining information on forest genetic resources as part of national forest genetic resources inventories or any similar arrangement a country may have in place for obtaining and maintaining the data. More specifically, the EUFGIS National Focal Points are expected to carry out the following tasks:

- I. Participate in EUFGIS-related meetings (associated travel and accommodation costs will be covered by EUFORGEN or relevant projects);
- II. Continue gathering relevant information on the dynamic conservation units of forest trees and compiling national data sets;
- III. Update national data sets in the information system;
- IV. Provide inputs to further development of the EUFGIS information system and new initiatives on FGR documentation, as needed.

During Phase VI, the EUFORGEN budget includes financial resources for the maintenance of the information system (including its intranet and the portal, help desk support, training of new National Focal Points, etc.). The GenRes Bridge Project will provide additional resources for further development of the database and for organising workshops for the national focal points.

Question 21: Do you think that the tasks of the EUFGIS National Points need any modifications/amendments?

Question Results

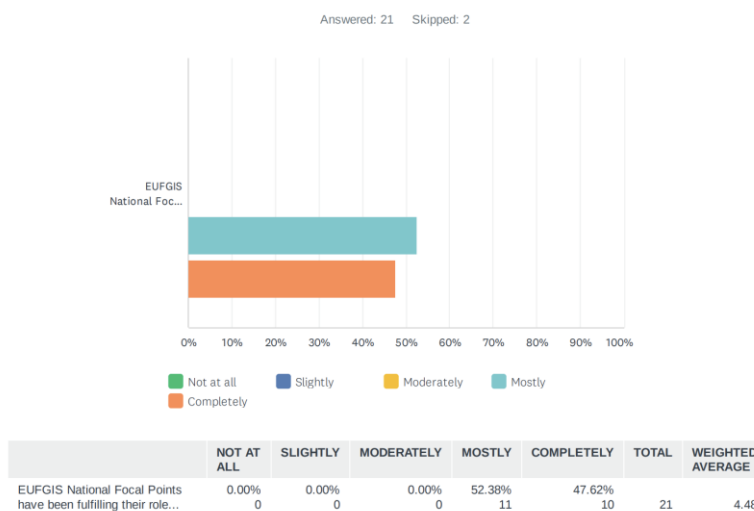


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0.00%	0
No	100.00%	23
TOTAL		23

Comments

Question 22: Do you think that the EUFGIS National Focal Points have been fulfilling their role?

Question Results



Comments

1. Clearly due to national budget restrictions the status and the monitoring of the GCUs is varying a lot between countries.
2. More focus is required on the task 'Continue gathering relevant information on the dynamic conservation units of forest trees and compiling national data sets', particularly where it concerns filling gaps and the quality of the GCUs.
3. Suggestions for improvements can only be done if NFPs have relevant knowledge, such as in e-forestry and similar.

Question 23: Do you have any suggestions for the next Phase relating to the role of the EUFGIS National Focal Points?

1. During Phase VII GenresBridge is finished, does FORGENIUS provide the same support? or even more?
2. They should try to link all FGR related issues to the development of digitalisation processes in their countries.

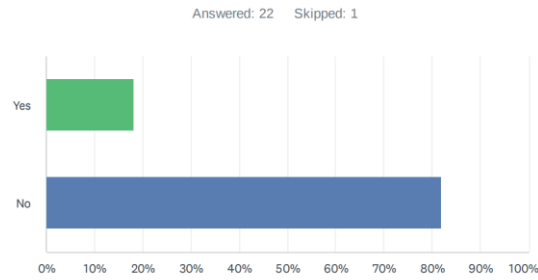
Section 9: National Experts

Once a country has joined Phase VI, the EUFORGEN Secretariat will contact the National Coordinator and ask them to provide a list of National Experts in the country who have relevant experience and knowledge related to the defined Discussion Platforms and to characterise the expertise of the person in relation to the objectives of Phase VI. Additionally, each nominated expert may indicate a list of species of which they have an extensive knowledge.

These experts' names will be listed on the website as resource persons for the designated thematic areas and species. After the initial nomination, the National Coordinators can make changes to the expert nominations, as needed.

Question 24: Do you think that the description of the National Experts needs any modifications/amendments?

Question Results



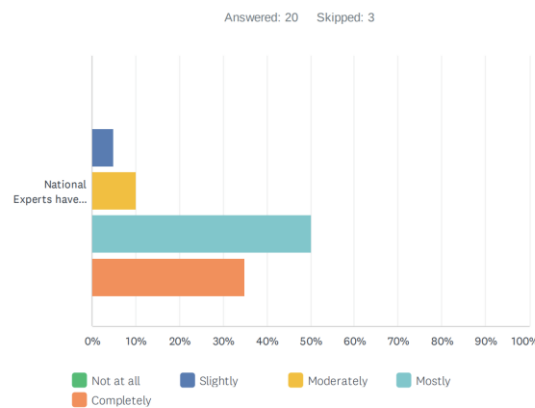
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	18.18%	4
No	81.82%	18
TOTAL		22

Comments

1. The term expert is not very useful, especially when it concerns species.
1. In principle we could continue this model, but we may need to discuss how well this has been working, e.g., the species experts.
2. Just require the ability to add to the list of experts as situations develop.
3. The list of experts depends very much on the subject. It is possible to nominate an expert for a specific DP, but not in relation to the rather broad objectives of the current phase.
4. Portugal joined phase VI only in mid-2022. Therefore, my experience as a national coordinator does not yet allow me to answer this question.
5. At the beginning of the phase, national coordinators provide a tentative list of "candidate names" but some topics can emerge during the phase itself, or personal changes may occur during the phase. Finally, the list of experts effectively involved in the activities (WG) may differ from the tentative list provided at the beginning. This is much OK for me.
6. "Each nominated expert may indicate a list of species of which they have an extensive knowledge" The expertise that EUFORGEN needs and looks for is not always and not necessarily species based. I suggest extending the list of topics as needed.

Question 25: Do you think that the National Experts have been fulfilling their role?

Question Results



	NOT AT ALL	SLIGHTLY	MODERATELY	MOSTLY	COMPLETELY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
National Experts have been fulfilling their role...	0.00%	5.00%	10.00%	50.00%	35.00%	20	4.15
	0	1	2	10	7		

Comments

1. Depending strongly on national capacities and culture.
2. Obviously, some have had a very active role and some not yet, reflecting our progress in the work programme.
3. I am unsure who attends these meetings. For example, did UK expert attend Ash Dieback meeting?
4. Often more than one expert per country should be involved, and NCs should be kept in line with all WGs and DPs progress, possibly also to join any on-line discussions.
5. Experts from Ukraine are only appointed because they did not have time to make their contribution.

Question 26: Do you have any suggestions for the next Phase relating to the role of the National Experts?

1. Effectivity of EUFORGEN projects and products are an important factor to strengthen the whole GENRES community, also on national level, and the national community of experts in turn has a positive effect on international cooperation and the weight of EUFORGEN in policy/society. May be a network offensive of EUFORGEN could help to build a more stable community of experts.
2. Sometimes it may be a problem to nominate a national expert when their expertise may not be needed for years. This can be de-motivating to the expert and may cause problems in planning the national budget.

End of Survey

Question 27: Further comments and/or suggestions.

1. It is important that we can share a survey between experts in a country. It is also a need to have the possibilities to print the answers written in the survey.
2. Our modus operandi does not say anything about the role, responsibilities, and rights of the hosting institute. I'm not suggesting that this should be included in modus operandi but maybe it would be good to have a memorandum where these would be explained. Or, alternatively, make the original agreement easily available for the SC.

Annex 4 - Proposed outline of the report on dynamic and static *ex situ* conservation

EUFORGEN Working Group to develop a report on dynamic and static *ex situ* conservation

EUFORGEN

Working Group members: Alain Servais / Eléonore Scholzen (**Belgium**), Jan-Peter George (**Finland**), Aurore Desgroux (**France**), Colin Kelleher (**Ireland**), Irena Fundova (**Norway**), Gregor Božič (**Slovenia**), Luis Muheim (**Switzerland**)

EUFORGEN Secretariat: Anna-Maria Farsakoglou, Michele Bozzano

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2. Dynamic *ex situ* genetic conservation
 1. Critical evaluation of the minimum requirements for dynamic *ex situ* GCUs
 2. Critical evaluation of the data standards for dynamic *ex situ* GCUs
3. Static *ex situ* genetic conservation
 1. Minimum requirements for static *ex situ* genetic conservation
 2. Data standards for static *ex situ* genetic conservation
 3. Indicator(s) to monitor static *ex situ* genetic conservation
 4. **[TBD]** Develop a quality check of the information collected on static *ex situ* genetic conservation in a form of a checklist
 - Evaluation of the information collected on static *ex situ* genetic conservation

Clarification from the SC: Data quality check should be defined before defining the minimum requirements.
4. Recommendations

(Point below can be one of the recommendations)

 - Discuss if the possibility of recording back-up seed collections of *in situ* GCUs should be included in EUFGIS (as a yes/no closed-ended question)

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