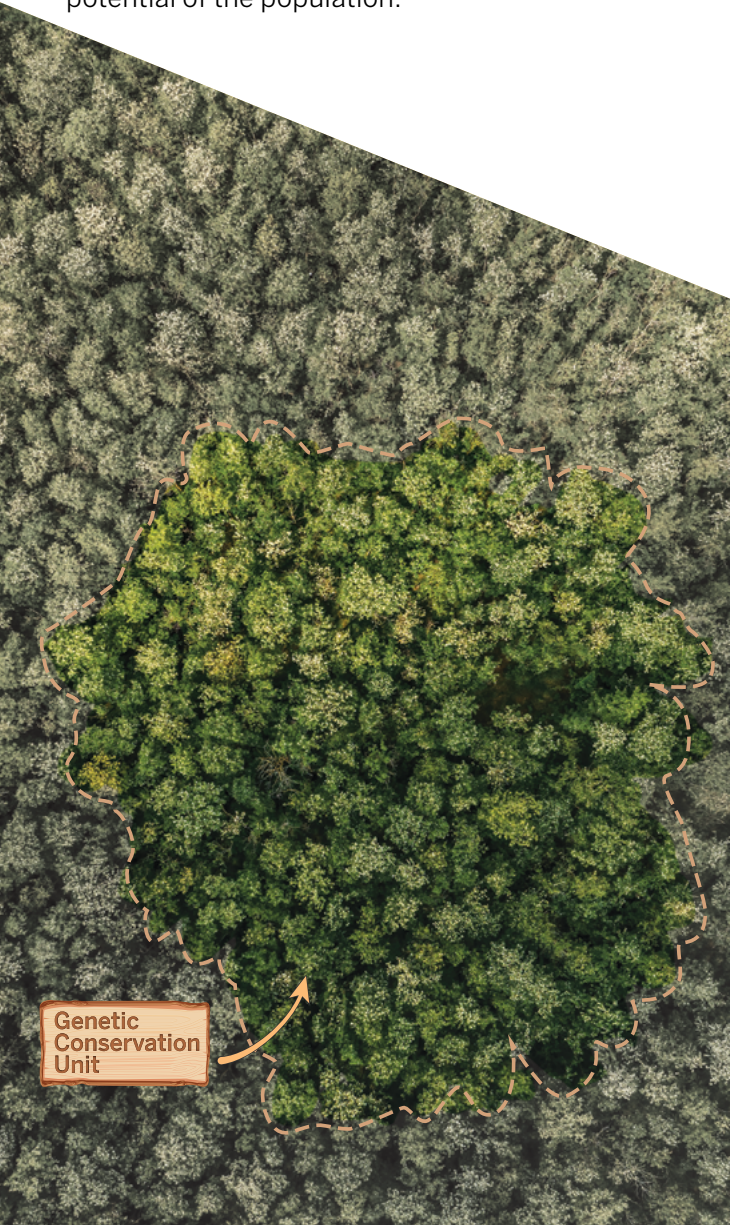


WHAT IS A GENETIC CONSERVATION UNIT?

A **Genetic Conservation Unit (GCU)** is a forest area that is formally designated to the protection of forest genetic resources (FGR) of one or more forest tree species. It allows the full cycle of natural processes to occur while dynamically conserving the evolutionary potential of the population.



EUROPEAN FOREST GENETIC
RESOURCES PROGRAMME

The European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) is an international cooperation programme that promotes the conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources in Europe as an integral part of sustainable forest management.



Find out more

euforgen.org/GCU



GENETIC CONSERVATION UNITS

Protecting forest genetic resources

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EUFORGEN is hosted by the European Forest Institute

THE GENETIC CONSERVATION UNIT NETWORK

European countries are coordinating their efforts to proactively conserve invaluable forest genetic resources (FGR) through the **European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN)**, as part of a Pan-European effort for a joint conservation strategy. EUFORGEN fosters this conservation through a network of Genetic Conservation Units (GCU) across Europe. A selection of GCU of a given species form the GCU core network of the species.

WHERE ARE GCU LOCATED?

GCU are typically located in forests managed for multiple uses, protected areas or seed stands. They can support the genetic conservation of the designated forest tree species population in two different ways:

- ◆ **in situ**: at the site where the tree population is native.
- ◆ **ex situ**: in another location.

GCU MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Each site should meet a set of minimum requirements to be recognised as a Genetic Conservation Unit:

- ◆ **Designation**: formally designated as a national genetic conservation area.
- ◆ **Minimum size**: contains a minimum number of reproducing trees, depending on tree species and conservation objectives.
- ◆ **Target species**: one or more tree species can be designated as target species for each unit.
- ◆ **Management**: when applied, aims to maintain and enhance the long-term evolutionary potential of tree populations, using appropriate measures and silvicultural techniques to support genetic processes.
- ◆ **Monitoring**: regular visits ensure the units remain intact and effective.

EUFGIS: GCU DATA AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Information on GCU is entered by a network of **National Focal Points** into the **European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (EUFGIS)**. EUFGIS is a unique system which enables countries' reporting in a harmonised and reliable manner. It supports the identification of gaps in conservation of forest species at European level and the setting of priorities to fill these conservation gaps.

GCU stored in EUFGIS are characterised using remote sensing and existing climatic datasets, and other information on FGR, such as genetic and phenotypic indicators. This means that valuable information on forest tree species is readily available and easily accessible to forest managers.



eufgis.org

EUFGIS is managed and maintained by EUFORGEN.

