



Report of the fourteenth Steering Committee meeting

Stadtbredimus, Luxembourg, 9-11 April 2019



Definition and deliberation on EUFORGEN Phase VI
Reporting on 2018 activities and planning for 2019-2020

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Executive Summary

The 14th meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) took place in Luxembourg, from 9 – 11 April 2019.

The meeting objectives were to:

1. Report and follow-up on Phase V activities
2. Define the programme for the next two years
3. Deliberate on Phase VI (2020-2024)

Below a summary of the key discussions points and respective decisions.

1. Deliberation on Phase VI

- **Strategic objectives, operational objectives and activities for Phase VI** have been revised and agreed by members countries;
- **New thresholds to define national financial contributions** to the EUFORGEN programme for Phase VI have been agreed upon. The SC have chosen the option that was the most equitable. The majority voted for the new thresholds, Austria and Germany voted against the selected option which implies an increase in their contributions;

- During the next Phase, an **Advisory Committee** will operate to support the EUFORGEN Secretariat.

2. Reporting and follow-up on the Phase V activities

- Technical, financial and communication reports for 2018 were approved.
- Working Group on updating the indicators 4.6. WG members will develop the rationale for adding new reference species. All member and associated countries will receive data extracted from the EUFGIS information system for revision from the Secretariat, to allow reporting to Forest Europe by June 2019. The report is to be released in June 2019.
- Working Group on Forest Reproductive Material (FRM): the WG will further improve the set of draft recommendations, that will be shared with selected national contributors and National Coordinators. The report is to be finalised by the end of 2019.
- Working Group on Decision Support Tool (DST): the report was approved. WG was asked to finalise the case studies. The report will be finalised by the end of 2019.
- All reports will only be published as PDFs.

3. Work programme for 2019-2020

- SC established a **WG on identification of policy needs** to re-launch and improve the survey circulated before the SC meeting. Aiming to produce a synthesis (to be approved by the SC). The synthesis is to be finalised by September 2019. (the working group will remain active for Phase V and VI)
Members: Thomas Geburek (Austria), Alain Servais (Belgium), Ditte Christina Olrik (Denmark), Francois Lefevre (France), Mari Rusanen (Finland), Frank Wolter (Luxembourg), Hojka Kraigher (Slovenia), Felipe Perez (Spain).
- SC established a **WG on the update of the Pan-European FGR conservation strategy**. the working group will contribute to the activities of the GenRes Bridge project, the representatives will contribute by bringing the EUFORGEN perspective (the working group will remain active in 2020-2021). Countries that will be invited to nominate members: Austria, Greece, Luxembourg, Poland, Spain, Serbia and Turkey.
- **Discussion Platform (DP) on Adaptation to Climate change**. a Task Force composed by representatives of France, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland and United Kingdom was established to define the focus, title, agenda and selected speakers for a DP on Adaptation to Climate change to be organised in autumn 2020. All member countries will be invited to nominate representatives to attend and contribute to the DP.
- **Discussion platform on the identification of FGR-related research needs** will be organised back-to-back with the GenTree project final conference

(Jan 2020), with funding from GenTree and EUFORGEN. The aim is to define research needs on forest genetic resources in the short, medium and long terms. The meeting will be organised by Secretariat and GenTree representatives.

- **Discussion platform on ash dieback: status and future of genetic conservation units ash** in Europe. Date: first months of 2020. the existing Task Force (composed by J. Buiteveld (the Netherlands); B. Degen (Germany); T. Geburek (Austria); C. Koziol (Poland); L. Nagy (Hungary); R. Verbylaite (Lithuania); M. Westergren (Slovenia)), will define the topic, title, agenda and selected speakers for the DP. All member countries will be invited to the event.
- **WG on the customisation of FRM report's recommendations**, the key findings and selected recommendations will be customised for selected interest groups (e.g. policy makers, nurseries, practitioners, etc.). Composition: 2 or 3 members of the Phase V WG and communication experts to be identified. Operating in 2020-2021.

Any other business:

László Nagy will replace the Sándor Bordács as EUFORGEN **representative in the Advisory Board** of the LIFEGEMON project.

Next meeting

The next Steering Committee meeting is expected to be held at the end of 2020 or at the beginning of 2021, funded by GenRes Bridge project.

Section 1: Definition and deliberation on EUFORGEN Phase VI

1. Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda

Welcome from Host Country – F. Wolter welcomed the participants to Luxembourg and the 14th EUFORGEN Steering Committee Meeting. In his introduction, he highlighted the growing emphasis on biodiversity conservation and on forest regeneration; now recognised as being of crucial importance for climate change adaptation of European forests. As such, he stressed the need to include long-term regeneration activities and the planting of selected provenances and species in forests. Relating to the host country, he mentioned that the Government of Luxembourg had decided to increase conservation areas in the country to 5%, an important aspect to protect local genetic resources. He extended his thanks to the work of the EUFORGEN Programme and all its members for the support for European forests and the wellbeing of society.

Afterwards, R. Mavsar addressed participants on behalf of EFI. M. Bozzano thanked Luxembourg and the GenTree project for the financial support for the meeting. He furthermore highlighted that, due to the meeting being hosted by EFI, EUFORGEN can benefit from the support of human resources from the Institute, that complements the Secretariat's expertise and capacities.

The National coordinators then introduced themselves and M. Bozzano introduced the agenda for the week. The agenda was approved without modifications (annex 2).

2. EUFORGEN Phase VI

2.1. Introduction

T. Eysteinnsson presented the draft *Strategic objectives and implementation plan for Phase VI*. He mentioned that at the 13th Steering Committee meeting in Bonn, a Task Force had been established to plan the objectives and implementation of the next phase. The Task Force prepared options to define the *Operational Objectives* that EUFORGEN aims to accomplish during the next five years and the *Activities* to achieve these objectives.

In 2018, the Steering Committee developed EUFORGEN's Theory of Change that identified the overarching goal of contributing to sustainable forest management ensuring healthy European forests. As such, there were three overall *Objectives*:

1. Facilitate knowledge sharing and communicate with key stakeholders;
2. Coordinate the implementation of conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe;
3. Promote the appropriate use of forest genetic resources.

For each overall *Objective*, building on the draft developed by the Task Force, the Steering Committee defined the *Operational Objectives* for Phase VI. Consequently, for each *Operational Objective* the Steering Committee also defined the *Activities* for 2020-2024, which are listed as Annex 4 (Implementation Plan for Phase VI) of the attached “EUFORGEN - Strategic objectives and implementation plan for Phase VI”.

2.2. EUFORGEN’s *modus operandi*

During Phase VI, the following bodies will be added to the existing ones:

1. *Advisory Committee*. Composed of four members of the Steering Committee from four European geographical regions (to be elected before the next Steering Committee meeting), on a rotation basis, who will act as representatives of the Programme and support the EUFORGEN coordinator;
2. *Discussion Platforms*. All countries will nominate a representative for the *Discussion platform* which aims to offer an understanding of selected topics, the present knowledge at European level and together paint a complete picture of the issue – this will be one of the most important elements to achieve Objective 1 of Phase VI;
3. *National Experts* (nominated by National Coordinators), with the needed expertise to support the implementation of Phase VI bringing with them the national perspective, the personal knowledge contributing to the scientific, and the technical and geographical capacity of the programme.

2.3. Budget

M. Bozzano introduced the budget and financial options for EUFORGEN phase VI. He provided a detailed explanation of how the funds will be managed, the amount and purpose of each expense, as well as the expected amount to be carried forward from the current Phase. The Steering Committee agreed to set-aside a reserve equivalent to 90 working days of operations. This reserve will be constituted using carry-forward funds from the previous Phase V.

The Steering Committee decided to maintain a similar budget to phase V and, through the introduction of new thresholds, to enable more equity in the country contributions. The Steering Committee analysed three different options for Annual Financial Contributions for Member Countries for Phase VI (based on different rate per countries categories).

The total estimated budget for Phase VI (2020–2024) is 2,088,400 EUR. Of that, 106,650 EUR are carried on from the previous Phase V; 296,250 EUR are based on secured external funding. The total of 1,685,500 EUR is funded directly by countries’ contributions. The foreseen annual financial contribution from member countries (assuming the same membership as of Phase V) is 337,100 EUR.

Table 1: Funding sources for EUFORGEN Phase VI

Funding source	
Countries contribution	1 685 500
Carry-on from previous Phase V	106 650
External funding (secured <i>i.e.</i> H2020 projects)	296 250
Total	2 088 400

After analysing the different options for Annual Financial Contribution for different categories, the Steering Committee identified the option presented in Table 2 as the most appropriate. The following countries voted in favour of this option: Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom; while Austria and Germany voted against it since it was implying an increase in the national contribution. A simple majority principle was applied to deliberate on the new thresholds and budget and the option was approved.

Table 2: Annual Financial Contribution per category

Threshold	Category	Annual contribution Phase VI (proposed)
$x < 0.01$	A	2500
$0.01 < x < 0.1$	B	5000
$0.1 < x < 0.5$	C	7500
$0.5 < x < 1$	D	12500
$1 < x < 2$	E	15000
$2 < x < 3$	F	20000
$3 < x < 4$	G	25000
$4 < x < 5$	H	30000
$x > 5$	I	35000

To avoid major fluctuations in annual financial contributions between Phase V and Phase VI, the Steering Committee decided to apply +/- 15% caps to limit variations from countries' contributions from one phase to the following. The table presenting the annual contribution for Phase VI, is presented in the Strategic objectives and implementation plan for Phase VI (2020-2024)¹.

¹http://www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Documents/EUFORGEN_Phase_VI_Objectives_and_Plan.pdf

Section 2: Reporting on activities in 2018 and planning for 2019-2020

1. Reporting

M. Bozzano presented [the technical report for 2018²](#). To facilitate the national reporting, it was agreed that an **abbreviated draft technical report would be made available before the end of each calendar year.**

R. Mavsar presented the financial report for 2018. In January 2018, the opening balance of the EUFORGEN trust fund was 203,099 EUR. During 2018, a total income of 339,662 EUR was received as financial contributions from member countries.

The overall actual expenses for 2018 (332,201 EUR) were in line with the planned budget, which was 335,966 EUR. The closing balance of the trust fund was 197,475 EUR and it was carried forward to 2019. Staff costs in 2018 remained the main cost category, representing approximately 61% of the total cost. These costs were in line with the budget for 2018. When comparing to actual expenses for 2017, the staff related costs increased by approx. 18%. This increase was mainly due to increased workload, which was previously agreed with the Steering Committee. Travel costs for 2018 accounted to about 8% of the total costs. These costs were significantly higher than foreseen in the budget as the implementation of the ambitious work programme required more travels than originally planned in 2014.

As of December 2018, the outstanding contributions were for Phase IV 6,989 from Romania and for Phase V 2,228 EUR from Moldova. The Steering Committee deliberated to write off the outstanding payments for Romania. Romania can then re-join EUFORGEN Phase VI as of 1 January 2020.

The Steering Committee showed a strong interest in monitoring the success of EUFORGEN. This would also facilitate the reporting in each country. **The Steering Committee agreed to have a series of indicators to measure EUFORGEN's achievements** during Phase VI, included in the Implementation Plan for Phase VI. In addition, as 2019 is EUFORGEN's 25th anniversary, the Steering Committee asked the Secretariat to mark this achievement with a specific initiative.

The Steering Committee approved the technical and financial reports.

E. Hermanowicz summarised the communications activities and outcomes of the past year. She highlighted both the positive as well as the negative aspects. These included:

² <http://www.euforgen.org/publications/publication/annual-report-2018/>

- Renewal of EUFORGEN’s website with growing traffic (an increase of user of 70% and an increase of time spent of 60% when comparing 2017 and 2018). To keep this trend up, E. Hermanowicz encouraged National Coordinators to contribute to the website with suggestions for news stories.
- EUFORGEN now supports the EC’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) on the development of forest tree species distribution maps, which remain a precious planning and monitoring tool for the FGR community. Original EUFORGEN maps will be progressively replaced in the website with the JRC’s map, which are more accurate and updated.
- Some member countries don’t have any content on their country pages in the website. E. Hermanowicz encouraged countries to give visibility to FGR in their countries, by providing content and links to national initiatives.
- There were more than 2 million views of the film ‘Afforesting Iceland’ on the topic of forest reproductive material and almost 3000 comments. The media coverage also led to an increased public awareness on the role and importance of genetic diversity and increments in funding for afforestation.

The communication report for 2018 was approved.

2. EUFORGEN Working groups and other initiatives

2.1. Katri Himanen ‘Recommendations on forest reproductive material – report of the EUFORGEN working group’

The objective of this working group was to collect scientific evidence on genetic aspects in production and use of forest reproductive material (FRM) aimed to the development of guidelines and decision support tools for the different actors involved in the production and use chains.

The working group reviewed relevant literature and built on the results of the Forest Management network, which was active during Phase III of EUFORGEN (2005-2009). In 2018, a sub-group of the working group met in Oslo, Norway on 13-15 November to speed-up the finalisation of the report and prepare the draft recommendations that will be an integral part of the final version of the report.

The Steering Committee noted progress in preparation of the report and asked the working group members to improve the set of draft recommendations. The report is to be finalised by the end of 2019, after being shared with selected national contributors and National Coordinators for inputs.

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

M. Bozzano will send the FRM report for a round of comments in electronic format, after which recommendations will be open for further discussion again.

2.2. Andreas Rudow 'Developing a Decision Support Tool for the Management of dynamic Genetic Conservation Units'

The draft report (vers.3.0) had already been presented and generally approved by the Steering Committee meeting in 2018. In that occasion, the Steering Committee set two additional minor tasks: i) to elaborate case studies illustrating the functioning of the Decision Support Tool structure with regard to various scenarios (now available as annex to the report); ii) to complete the open list of implementation measures for the management action levels in regard to support standardised documentation of realised measures (available as table 12 in the report).

The case studies are now available as annex to the report illustrate the potential functioning of the Decision Support Tool structure using different alternative indicators and verifiers under different scenarios, including cases of severe pests or increasing risk of forest fire. The elaborated graphs for each scenario aim to visually illustrate the changes and indicate the needs for actions. This visualisation should be incorporated in a new version of the EUFGIS information system. For the completion of the open list of implementation measures, it was proposed to work through a small subgroup of national experts (5-6 experts, expertise/network in GCU management, covering boreal nemoral and Mediterranean conditions).

It was suggested that the EUFGIS Focal Points are trained on how to use the information from the information tool. A. Rudow mentioned that the WG doesn't have the right composition of experts to finish table 12. He asked for support from national experts.

The report and the proposed steps for its finalisation were approved. The Working Group was asked to integrate the exemplary case studies as presented, and to integrate the open list of implementation measures of management action which will be completed by a small subgroup of national experts. The report will be finalised by the end of 2019.

The report was endorsed by the Steering Committee. The Secretariat, in coordination with Chair and Vice Chair will define the most appropriate modalities for its finalisation and release, including a new meeting to seek experts in management action and respective matters to finalise the table 12.

2.3. Indicator 4.6 of the pan-European criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

S. Oggioni presented the data of the revised Indicator 4.6 on genetic resources sourced through EUFGIS. The data of the 1st sub-indicator (native populations) can be presented by country, over time, or by species and are shown in a table or in star-plot. The data of the 2nd sub-indicator (non-native populations) are presented by country in a table. The data of the 3rd sub-indicator (static *ex situ* conservation) will not be submitted since until now, it has not been possible to formulate the minimum requirements for static *ex situ* conservation. The data of the 4th sub-indicator (FRM) are presented by country.

S. Oggioni will send out an email to National Coordinators and Focal Points about the data currently saved in EUFGIS. The country representatives will have one month to provide new data which will be submitted to Forest Europe LUB afterwards. EUFORGEN will present a global European picture (as one country) and a graph for the whole of Europe to show EUFORGEN's progress. **Data per species on the EUFGIS website will be presented using the revised indicator.** Country data will be only visible internally, by the EUFGIS focal point. If EUFORGEN was to produce a publication, only data by species would be presented. **The EUFORGEN Secretariat will explore the possibility of publishing data on the state of European species FGR as 25th anniversary publication.**

The Working Group was asked to develop the rationale for adding new reference species. All member countries and associated countries will receive data extracted from the EUFGIS information system for revision from the Secretariat, to allow reporting to Forest Europe by June 2019. The report is to be released in June 2019.

2.4. Silvia Abruscato - Rural Development Funds (RDF) Sub-measure 15.2

The Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) are active forms of support for European rural areas facing environmental, societal and economic challenges (e.g. biodiversity loss and food security). In 2014, a new sub-measure 15.2 was introduced to support forest genetic conservation and uses of forest genetic resources among European countries and regions. The purpose of the assessment is to raise awareness on the opportunities offered by the RDPs for the FGR in EU member countries.

The Steering Committee found the content of the analysis was relevant and interesting. The Secretariat was invited to prepare a working paper based on the analysis to be shared within the Community.

2.5. EUFORGEN Task Force on ash dieback

Ash Dieback spread rapidly throughout almost all of Europe from north-east to south-west, over a period of about 10-20 years. The severity of the disease is such that in many countries the infection has already spread throughout the entire state and in many the

restoration of the populations seems to be impossible. Almost all affected countries have a monitoring programme, but often these programmes are not organised on a national level. *In situ* conservation is very difficult in all affected countries, because implementing the rehabilitation protocols is impossible. Right now, the most effective *ex situ* measure is the implantation of field trials for the identification of individuals that are tolerant to the infection. EUFORGEN has activated a special Task Force to work on defining common guidelines on how to deal with the disease.

The Steering Committee decided to organise a Discussion Platform in 2020, on the implications of the ash dieback for ash GCUs, as one of the initiatives of Phase VI, after which two or three experts will be identified for a new working group on this topic.

2.6. Survey on “Needs and Priorities in Policies, Research and Actions related to Forest Genetic Resources”

M. Bozzano presented the outcomes of a preparatory survey aiming to identify priorities and needs in policy research and actions in Europe in the field of FGR. 25 out of invited 29 countries contributed to the survey.

Through a participatory approach, the Steering Committee identified the research and coordination needs in forest genetic resources in Europe (full list available in annex 3). The secretariat was encouraged to share the list with potential donors and implementing agencies. It was agreed to undertake a deeper analysis, in a separate event to be organised back to back with the GenTree final conference in early 2020 (See section 6.5).

The analysis to identify policies needs in FGR was considered not exhaustive, for this reason, the Steering Committee established a Working group that will support the Secretariat in the reformulation of the survey and in the analysis of the results.

Composition of the working group: H. Kraigher (SLO), F. Lefevre (FRA), F. Perez (ESP), A. Servais (BEL), M. Rusanen (FIN), T. Geburek (AUT), F. Wolter (LUX).

The Working Group will remain operative also during Phase VI, to support the Secretariat, in case new FGR-related-policy needs or opportunities emerge.

4. Communication and stakeholder engagement

E. Hermanowicz introduced the plan for 2019. The revised communications strategy takes into account the new partnerships, including that with EFI as hosting organization. The activities for 2019 will see the continuation of existing channels such as the news section content featuring stories of relevance to the stakeholders, a quarterly newsletter and social

media. A new short film would be released in 2019 showing the importance of conserving FGR using an example from Greece. The new engagement with EFI lookout station aiming to bridge the gap between science and media will see EUFORGEN as part of its [Sound Reporting Co-Lab project](#)³.

E. Hermanowicz introduced how the activities already in place respond to the activities in the next phase. National Coordinators were asked to comment and rank the activities according to priority.

Based on the example of the Forest Reproductive Material report, executive summaries and policy briefs were identified as the most important part and thus should be supported by visuals and infographics. Any output needs to be tailored towards the different target audiences (e.g. forest managers, policy makers, teachers and students, etc.). Further suggestions included animated explanatory interviews, short introductions to each chapter, thematic excursions, seminars and courses for different audiences and certificates for participants.

The Steering Committee deliberated that the key messages of the communication strategy will be reconfirmed through a survey which will be sent to all National Coordinators.

M. Bozzano summarised the discussion about expanding EUFORGEN's influence by listing several entities EUFORGEN with whom should establish communication channels. The Steering Committee suggested to explore possible collaboration with key players at European level such as FSC and PEFC Certification bodies, EASAC, IUCN, UN-FCCC, IPCC, IPBES, IUFRO, EFNA, COST action BIKE. The Secretariat will follow up on the European level. The national and regional initiatives are of high priority to the success of the programme and remain a responsibility of National Coordinators.

5. Relevant initiatives and projects

Most of the relevant initiatives were presented as webinars prior the meeting. E. Hermanowicz introduced the concept of webinars to the Steering Committee. Webinars are live presentations given by Working Groups leaders or other experts on topics selected based on the on-going activities and the strategy itself. The intention of this initiative was to diminish the number of presentations during the Steering Committee meeting and distribute the workload in the weeks beforehand so that only questions left open or any pending issues were discussed.

³ <https://thelookoutstation.com/projects/sound-reporting-co-lab-media-support-initiative-sound-and-science-based-storytelling>

The webinars had been received very well, and it was **agreed that they should be employed more often in the future**. Additionally, it was decided that the link to the webinars should be accessible for another month after the meetings.

5.1. Michele Bozzano on the 'GenRes Bridge project'

In 2018, the EUFORGEN Secretariat, supported by a Task Force composed of national coordinators from Finland, France, Norway and Slovenia, submitted a project proposal for the H2020 call SFS 28 "Genetic resources and pre-breeding communities" entitled "GenRes Bridge - Joining forces for genetic resources and biodiversity management". The EUFORGEN Secretariat, represented by the European Forest Institute, is the coordinator of the consortium composed of 17 partners.

The project aims to strengthen the conservation and sustainable use of GenRes in Europe by: (i) accelerating collaborative efforts among crop, forest and animal GenRes networks and wider (agro) biodiversity stakeholders and (ii) widening individual network capacities to enhance the status and effectiveness of conservation and use of GenRes. The project started on 1 January 2019 and will last for three years. More information on GenRes Bridge is available at www.genresbridge.eu

The Steering Committee deliberated to support the GenRes Bridge project by forming a Working Group to support the revision of the Pan-European strategy for the conservation of Forest Genetic Resources.

5.2. Hojka Kraigher on the [LIFEGENMON](#) project

LIFE for European forest genetic monitoring system project (2014-2020) aimed at monitoring changes in forest genetic diversity over time and implementing forest genetic monitoring locally, nationally and across borders. The project includes partners from Slovenia, Germany and Greece. H. Kraigher illustrated the most recent activities such as workshops and dissemination actions aiming at facilitating the uptake of genetic monitoring in the future and the ongoing research activities.

More information on the project website: <http://www.lifegenmon.si/>

5.3 Silvio Schueler on the [SUSTREE](#) project

The project is funded by Interreg, with partners from six Central European countries and ends in Summer 2019. The background for the project was that with climate change, tree species distribution is going to face serious changes which in turn impact conservation and use of FGR. The existing regulation in most European countries is not prepared to face these changes – both for conservation and tree breeding aspects. The project aimed at

establishing a trans-national model for seed transfer and raising awareness among forest managers of the importance of using the right FGR.

More information on the project website: <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/SUSTREE.html>

5.4. Bruno Fady '[GenTree](#) - goals, results and benefits for the EUFORGEN community'

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

The EUFORGEN Secretariat is co-responsible for the work-package on communication and stakeholders’ engagement and contributes to other tasks, such as the improved characterisation of the EUFGIS Network of genetic conservation units and the definition of priority areas for establishing new genetic conservation units in Europe. The third annual meeting was organised from –13-15 March 2018, in Rome, Italy. More information on GenTree is available at www.gentree-h2020.eu

The Steering Committee agreed to contribute to an event aiming to identify key research need in Forest Genetic Resources in Europe, to be organised back-to-back with GenTree final conference on 27-30 January 2020, in Avignon, France.

5.5. Jarkko Koskela 'Preparation of The Second Report on the State of the World’s Forest Genetic Resources'

The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture has recently invited countries to continue the collaboration and reporting on forest genetic resources and endorsed the guidelines of the Global Plan of Action. The Commission also adopted the timeline for preparation of the next report. J. Koskela summarised the main steps with related deadlines and explained how to submit the country reports. The documents presented at the 17th session are all available at the Commission’s website.

<http://www.fao.org/cgrfa/meetings/detail/en/c/1153541/>

5.6. Hans Verkerk on the Atlas of forest management options

Hans Verkerk and Marcus Lindner reported on the progress in the GenTree project on linking forest genetic resources (FGR) to forest management and policy. Their work focused on developing an atlas on how forests are managed in Europe and they outlined a decision tree that links major forest management decisions to implications for FGR. Feedback on the decision tree is welcome and will be addressed in a final version of the decision tree.

5.7. Chris Kettle on Bioversity International's global work on forest genetic resources

Bioversity is now in alliance with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), another Center of CGIAR. C. Kettle outlined the global challenges such as food insecurity, poor nutrition and land degradation which have to be addressed by sustainable food systems and land restoration – issues at the core of Bioversity/CIAT Alliance's mission. He described several projects that use forests and FGR in particular to address these global issues.

More information about Bioversity International's work on forests:

<https://www.bioversityinternational.org/research-portfolio/forests/>

6. Activities in 2019-2020

6.1. Working Group revising the pan-European strategy for the conservation of forest tree diversity

The Steering Committee established a Working Group to support the revision of the pan-European strategy for the conservation of forest tree diversity and bringing the broader European perspective in support to the project's consortium. The following countries agreed to nominate representatives:

- Luxembourg to bring the policy perspective
- Poland to bring the *ex situ* perspective
- Serbia to bring the clonal perspective
- Austria, Greece and Spain to bring the innovative FGR conservation perspective.
- Serbia and Turkey to bring the non-EU perspective
- Austria to bring the Alpine perspective
- Serbia to bring the low land perspective
- Austria, Luxembourg, and Poland to bring the central European perspective
- Greece, Spain and Turkey to bring the Mediterranean perspective

The WG will meet the first time in Finland at the end of October 2019. Additional meetings will be organised as needed and appropriate.

6.2. Working group on the uptake of FRM report (2020 – 2021)

The Working Group will transform relevant messages from the FRM report into a format which is suitable for several target audiences (e.g. nurseries, practitioners, foresters, educators and forest owners). Formats to include executive summaries, videos, etc. as appropriate. The Secretariat will involve 2-3 authors of the original report, to ensure that the messages are properly transformed.

6.3. Discussion Platform on adaptation to climate change

In consultation with the Steering Committee to identify the country representatives and supported by A. Rudow (Switzerland), R. Isted (United Kingdom), F. Lefevre (France), T. Myking (Norway) and H. Kraigher (Slovenia), the Secretariat will identify topics for presentations. The first event is to take place in autumn 2020.

6.4. Discussion platform on Ash Dieback

A Discussion Platform on Ash Dieback will be established in early 2020. The Phase V Task Force on Ash Dieback will support the preparation of the Agenda and the identification of the invited presentations. All member countries should be represented in the Discussion Platform.

6.5. Discussion platform on the identification of Research Needs in FGR in Europe

A one-day Discussion Platform aiming to identify Research Needs in forest genetic resources in Europe will be organised back-to-back with Gentree final conference in January 2020. All EUFORGEN Member countries from Phase V will be asked to nominate a person to represent the country in the discussion. Participants will be also invited to attend the first two days of the GenTree Conference. The outcomes of the discussion will be used to communicate with implementing agencies and possible funding agencies. The event will be a co-funding of GenTree and EUFORGEN. The Secretariat, in collaboration with GenTree WP in Communication will identify additional stakeholders and countries to be invited.

All reports of the Phase V working groups should be finalised by the end of Phase V and disseminated in the first years of Phase VI.

7. Feedback session

7.1. The Secretariat

M. Bozzano opened the session asking for feedback on the work of the Secretariat. R. Mavsar welcomed feedback on the work of the past one and half year, since EUFORGEN was hosted by EFI. The overall feedback received from the meeting participants was very positive.

7.2. The meeting

Most people strongly agreed that there were enough chances to speak, the sessions were balanced, and they felt that they were steering the process. It was recommended that in the future the agenda be less full and the issues on the agenda be numbered so as to help NCs navigate through them. Further, the items on the agenda could be “characterised” (discussion, decision, information, etc.) which would make it clearer to know what to expect. The world café-style discussions as session format and the webinar approach were very well received, and it was decided that from now on webinars would be a regular tool to be used.

7.3. EUFORGEN’s transition from Bioversity International to EFI

The feedback was **highly positive**. It was appreciated that further human resources were put into EUFORGEN Secretariat (C. Düring, R. Mavsar, S. Abruscato and S. Oggioni). Some participants praised EFI for support to the GenRes Bridge proposal which was considered a great asset to EUFORGEN. Finally, the National Coordinators expressed their relief that EFI retained both, M. Bozzano and E. Hermanowicz as the Secretariat staff, considered a key asset in the transition and implementation of the new phase. It was furthermore remarked that EFI and EUFORGEN complement each other well.

8. Any other business

The Steering Committee nominated L. Nagy to replace the former Hungarian representative as Advisory Board member to project LIFEENMON. L. Nagy accepted his nomination.

9. Closing of the meeting

M. Bozzano thanked F. Wolter for hosting the 14th Steering Committee meeting, and B. Vinceti for contributing to the event and facilitating a part of the meeting. He expressed appreciation for C. Düring, R. Mavsar, and E. Hermanowicz, S. Abruscato and S. Oggioni for supporting the meeting and its preparation. He thanked all the National Coordinators for the active contributions to the event. He then closed the meeting.

Annex 1: List of participants

EUFORGEN National Coordinators

Thomas Geburek
 Department of Forest Genetics, Research and
 Training Centre for Forests, Natural Hazards
 and Landscape (BFW)
Austria

Alain Servais
 Public Service of Wallonia, Department of
 Nature and Forests - Forest Tree Seed Center
Belgium

Mladen Ivankovic
(on behalf of Davorin Kajba)
 Croatian Forest Research Institute
 Dept. of Tree Breeding and Forest Seed
 Husbandry
Croatia

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

Ditte Christina Olrik
 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

François Lefèvre
 INRA - Ecologie des Forêts Méditerranéennes
France

Bernd Degen
 Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute,
 Federal Research Institute for Rural Areas,
 Forestry and Fisheries
Germany

Despina Paitaridou
 General Secretariat of Environment
Greece

László Nagy
 Forest Research Institute
Hungary

Thröstur Eysteinnsson
 Iceland Forest Service
Iceland

Brian Clifford
 Department of Agriculture, Food and the
 Marine (DAFM), FSD/COFORD
Ireland

Giovanbattista de Dato
(on behalf of Fulvio Ducci)
 Council for Agricultural Research and
 Economics, Research Centre for Forestry and
 Wood,
Italy

Darius Kavaliauskas
(on behalf of Virgilijus Baliuckas)
 Forest Institute
Lithuania

Frank Wolter
 Administration de la nature et des forêts
Luxembourg

Joukje Buiteveld
 Centre for Genetic Resources
The Netherlands

Tor Myking
 Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research
Norway

Czesław Koziol
 Kostrzyca Forest Gene bank
Poland

Andrej Pilipovic
(on behalf of Sasa Orlovic)
 University of Novi Sad – Institute of Lowland
 Forestry and Environment
Serbia

Roman Longauer
 National Forest Centre
Slovakia

Hojka Kraigher
 Slovenian Forestry Institute
Slovenia

Felipe Perez Marin
 Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fishing
 and Food
Spain

Sanna Black-Samuelsson
 Swedish Forest Agency
Sweden

Andreas Rudow
 Swiss Federal Institute of Technology
 (ETHZ), Waldmanagement/Waldbau
Switzerland

Gaye Eren Kandemir
 Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs
 Forest Tree Seeds and Tree Breeding
 Research Directorate
Turkey

Rebecca Isted
(on behalf of Jason Hubert)
 Forestry Commission
United Kingdom

Observers

Filipe Costa e Silva
Istituto Superior de Agronomia

Barbara Vinceti
Biodiversity International

Dr. Marcus Lindner
European Forest Institute

Robert Mavsar
European Forest Institute

EUFORGEN Secretariat
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Germany

Michele Bozzano
EUFORGEN Coordinator

Ewa Hermanowicz
Communications Officer

Christiane Düring
Administrative Officer

Silvia Abruscato
Junior Researcher

Silvio Oggioni
Trainee

Unable to attend

Valeriu Caisin
FRMI, Codri Reserve com Lozova
Moldova

Annex 2: Agenda

Tuesday 9 April

Time	Session	Outcome (What the SC is expected to do)	Background documents
8.30	Registration		
9.00	<p>Welcome words Chair <i>Frank Wolter, EUFORGEN, National Coordinator for Luxembourg</i> <i>Robert Mavsar, European Forest Institute</i> <i>Michele Bozzano, EUFORGEN Secretariat</i></p> <p>Introduction and approval of the agenda; introduction of participants and nomination of meeting rapporteurs <i>M. Bozzano</i></p>	<p>The meeting is officially opened</p> <p>Agenda is approved</p>	Draft Agenda of the meeting
9.15	<p>Session 1 - Introduction to Phase VI</p> <p>Presentation of the draft strategic objectives and implementation plan for Phase VI – <i>Pröstur Eysteinnsson, Task Force developing the draft of Phase VI</i></p> <p>Presentation of the Options (Excel file) for Phase VI - <i>M. Bozzano</i></p>	All National Coordinators are updated on possible options for Phase VI	Draft strategic objectives and implementation plan for Phase VI
10.30	Break		
11.00	<p>Session 2 - Fine-tuning activities for EUFORGEN Phase VI</p> <p>World Café: discussion of the three Objectives for Phase VI in three rotating groups <i>Facilitated by Secretariat</i></p>	The Phase VI activities are verified	EUFORGEN Phase VI Options (Excel file)

Time	Session	Outcome (What the SC is expected to do)	Background documents
12.30	Lunch		
14:00	Session 2 - Fine-tuning activities for EUFORGEN Phase VI (cont.) Wrap-up in plenary	The Phase VI activities are agreed	
15.00	Session 3 - EUFORGEN's modus operandi during Phase VI <i>M. Bozzano</i>	Phase VI Modus Operandi is defined	Draft Strategic objectives and implementation plan for Phase VI
15.30	Coffee Break		
16:00	Session 4 - Phase VI budget and finance <i>R. Mavsar and M. Bozzano</i>	EUFORGEN Phase VI Countries contribution is defined	EUFORGEN Phase VI Options
16.30	Session 5 - Deliberation on Phase VI <i>M. Bozzano</i>	EUFORGEN's Phase VI strategic objectives and implementation plan is agreed	Draft Strategic objectives and implementation plan for Phase VI
17.00	Assessment of day 1 <i>M. Bozzano</i>	Strengths and improvable of the first day are identified - to bear in mind for day 2	
17.30	Close		
18.30	Departure for visit at 'Biodiversum' with wine tasting and walking dinner		

Wednesday 10 April

Time	Session	Outcome (What the SC is expected to do)	Background documents
8.30	<p>Introduction and approval of the agenda (<i>M. Bozzano</i>); Introduction of participants and nomination of meeting rapporteurs (<i>M. Bozzano</i>)</p> <p>Reporting EUFORGEN 2018 Technical report <i>M. Bozzano</i> EUFORGEN 2018 Financial report <i>R. Mavsar</i> EUFORGEN communications in 2018 – <i>Ewa Hermanowicz</i></p> <p>Discussion on the issues stemming from webinars – <i>E. Hermanowicz</i></p>	<p>Technical and financial report for 2018 are approved</p> <p>Pending actions from the webinars are addressed</p>	<p>Technical and financial report for 2018 Communications report Webinars http://www.euforgen.org/index.php?id=2994</p>
9:30	<p>Ongoing initiatives</p> <p>Reporting on indicator 4.6 <i>M. Bozzano, Silvio Oggioni, François Lefevre</i></p> <p>Overview on the application of the Rural Development Funds Sub-measure 15.2 'Support for the conservation and promotion of forest genetic resources' <i>Silvia Abruscato</i></p>	<p>Approval of the Report of the WG and definition of the next steps for reporting for 2020 SoEF and wider communication about the revised indicator National Coordinators are aware of the application of the RDF Sub-measure 15.2</p>	<p>Final Draft of the report of the WG updating the indicator 4.6</p>
10.30	Coffee Break		
11.00	<p>Phase VI wider influence</p> <p>World Café to discuss communication activities and stakeholders' engagement for Phase VI. (discussions in two rotating groups) <i>Facilitated by E. Hermanowicz, and M. Bozzano</i></p> <p>Wrap-up in plenary</p>	<p>Communication objectives and new stakeholders are defined</p>	<p>Communications strategy 2018-2019</p>

Time	Session	Outcome (What the SC is expected to do)	Background documents
12.30	Lunch		
14:00	<p>Ongoing initiatives (continued)</p> <p>Ash dieback - status of the spread in Europe <i>S. Oggioni and Bernd Degen (TBC)</i></p> <p>Result of EUFORGEN survey on needs and priorities in policies, research and actions related to forest genetic resources in Europe <i>M. Bozzano and S. Abruscato</i></p>	<p>Definition of next steps</p> <p>National coordinators are updated on the results of the survey</p>	Results of a survey on status of the spread of Ash dieback in Europe
15.30	Coffee Break		
16:00	<p>World Café: needs and priorities in policies, research and actions (discussion in three rotating groups)</p> <p>Policies Facilitated by <i>B. Vinceti and Marcus Lindner</i></p> <p>Research Facilitated by <i>M. Bozzano and S. Abruscato</i></p> <p>Actions Facilitated by <i>E. Hermanowicz and S. Oggioni</i></p> <p>Wrap-up in plenary</p>	Needs and priorities in policies, research and actions are identified and ranked	Results of the survey
17.45	<p>Assessment of day 2</p> <p><i>M. Bozzano</i></p>	Strengths and improvable of the second day are identified - to bear in mind for day 3	
18.00	Close		
18.30	Departure by bus to Luxembourg city tour and social dinner		

Thursday 11 April

Time	Session - responsibilities	Outcome (What the SC is expected to do)	Background documents
8.00 / 8:30	Brief recap – <i>M. Bozzano and participants</i>		
8.45	New initiatives: GenRes Bridge - <i>M. Bozzano</i> Establishment of new working groups - <i>discussion</i>	All participants are clear what GenRes Bridge aims to achieve; new working groups are established	
10.00	Break		
11.15	Development of 2019 - 2020 work programme		
12.00	Lunch		
13.30	Any other business – <i>M. Bozzano</i>	Participants have discussed any other issue that mattered	
14:00	Feedback from Member Countries – <i>R. Mavsar</i>	Feedback by all member countries is recorded on the performance of the Secretariat and hosting organisation	
14.30	Closing Date and place of the next meeting – <i>M. Bozzano</i>	The meeting is brought to an end and all participants are clear on the next steps	
15:00	Departure to the airport		Schedule of departures

Annex 3: Identified research and coordination needs in Forest Genetic Resources (FGR) in Europe

This is a non-prioritized list, organised in two main areas: (i) coordination and support and (ii) Research and innovation)

i. Coordination and Support

- sustainable strategies for **assisted migration** as a support to forest adaptation
- range-wide controlled **gene flow across genetic conservation units**, as well as *ex situ x in situ* interactions
- effectiveness and efficiency **assessment of FGR conservation and sustainable use**
- identification of **conservation gaps**
- establishment of long-term **genetic monitoring strategies**
- development of **innovative provenance research** and establishment of new species' provenances trials

ii. Research and innovation

- Species' **adaptive capacity** to new climates
- impact of **assisted migration** on receiving ecosystems and local FGR
- Roles of FGR on **ecosystem services** and valuation ensuring traceability of FGR deployment in the forests
- effects of **large scale biotic** (including agro-pastoral practices) and **abiotic disturbances** on FGR
- improve fine scale **modelling to predict impact of climate change** at population level, including the use of new technologies (e.g. remote sensing) to obtain phenotypic data to characterize populations
- **Risk**
 - Risk assessment and management approaches for genetic conservation units
 - early warning systems for future pests (related to conservation sites)
 - potential and risk of genome editing for conservation
- **Forest management**
 - Effects of silvicultural practices on adaptation and adaptive capacity of the forest stands
 - research on behavioural change (so that practitioners adopt new practices for adaptive management)

- **Modelling** purposes and **analytical** tools
 - genetic architecture of adaptive traits and variation within- and across tree populations
 - reverse engineering methods and tools (=optimization of the use of FGR test of material in controlled conditions, simulating extreme conditions, analytical methods to retrieve knowledge on vulnerability and adaptive capacity of FGR after extreme climatic events, etc.)