



EUFORGEN

EUROPEAN FOREST GENETIC
RESOURCES PROGRAMME

EUFORGEN STEERING COMMITTEE: REPORT OF THE TWENTYTHIRD MEETING

2-3 DECEMBER 2025, ONLINE



23rd Meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee 2-3 December 2025, online

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1. Approval of the agenda and rapporteurs' appointment

Sarah Adams opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to the 23rd Steering Committee meeting.

The meeting was attended online by 24 National Coordinators appointed for Phase VII, observers and the members of the EUFORGEN Secretariat (full list of participants is available in Annex 1).

Aðalsteinn Sigurgeirsson (Iceland) and An Vanden Broeck (Belgium) were nominated as rapporteurs.

Michele Bozzano introduced the updated agenda (Annex 2), which was approved by the participants.

Decision: The agenda of the 23rd EUFORGEN Steering Committee (SC) meeting was approved without further changes content-wise. Aðalsteinn Sigurgeirsson (Iceland) and An Vanden Broeck (Belgium) were appointed as rapporteurs.

2. Roundtable introductions

Each National Coordinator briefly presented how species are selected for FGR conservation in their country. The criteria for selecting the species suggested were: economic importance, threatened status/risk of extinction, scatteredness, need for FRM, regional status, endemism, relic, importance for restoration, marginality, life history traits, socio-economic value and ecological importance. The presentations are available in the MS Teams space (in a restricted area accessible only to National Coordinators).

María González Delgado was introduced as a new member of the Secretariat. She joined in July 2025 as communications officer.

3. Checklist of SC22 decisions

Anna-Maria Farsakoglou presented the list of decisions taken during the 22nd Steering Committee meeting and informed about their status. Any ongoing activities were discussed during the meeting.

4. Presentation of key elements of the draft technical and financial reports 2025

A.M. Farsakoglou presented the technical report for 2025.

All member countries during Phase VI signed the Letter of Agreement for Phase VII, except Germany.

A.M. Farsakoglou gave updates on the status of the activities of the Working Groups on “dynamic and static *ex situ* conservation” and “evacuation of threatened material and tracking on movements”. She also gave updates on the Task Force to develop a concept on how to collect existing methodologies/documents, and how to develop a methodology to improve the identification of conservation gaps in the pan-European core network of GCUs, based on additional data.

The joint OECD-EUFORGEN Working Group to prepare policy briefs to “Raise awareness and inform stakeholders and decision-makers about the important role of Forest Reproductive Material (FRM)” will resume its work in January and more information will be provided once a more advanced draft of each policy brief is available.

M. Bozzano attended the Forest Europe Expert Level meeting in September 2025 in Stockholm, Sweden, presenting EUFORGEN and encouraging Forest Europe members/non-EUFORGEN member countries to nominate a contact person.

The new EUFGIS portal¹ was released and GCU Characterisation Protocols are now available.

S. Adams presented updates on the 2025 communication activities. The draft of the 2025 - 2029 Communication Strategy is in progress, will be sent for comments to the Steering Committee early in 2026, to be finalised for approval at the next Steering Committee meeting.

She gave an overview of the main activities that had taken place and how these were targeted to different audiences. Regular activities took place throughout the year, with updates to the EUFORGEN website, activity on EUFORGEN social media channels (LinkedIn and Bluesky), quarterly newsletters to the community, as well as FORGENIUS and OptFORESTS project ongoing communication activities.

In addition to the regular activities, the [EUFORGEN 30 years video](#) was launched in April to celebrate EUFORGEN's 30-year journey, highlighting milestones, collaborations, and strategies since the programme's inception.

Training was given to EUFGIS National Focal Points and Contact Points in a [workshop](#) organised by the FORGENIUS project on the redesigned EUFGIS platform in February.

Webinars were organised over the course of the year, in collaboration with OptFORESTS ([April](#), [November](#)), with attendance of 70 + 70 online participants and 228 views of the recording on YouTube for the most recent webinar held in November.

Text for an additional 50 forest tree species was written to add to the [110 species already available on the EUFORGEN website](#). This will complete the listing of all forest tree species used to compute indicator 4.6 on FGR, and the new pages will be included on the EUFORGEN website.

Policy briefs were developed in the [OptFORESTS](#) and [FORGENIUS](#) projects, and FORGENIUS protocols were developed in November 2025.

A [final conference for FORGENIUS took place in collaboration with EvoTree](#) in November, where the redesigned EUFGIS was officially launched.

Activities for the near future include a [FORGENIUS webinar](#) to demonstrate the upgraded EUFGIS platform, planned for December, and a social media campaign to feature the EUFORGEN tree species collection.

S. Adams also presented web analytics, which showed 7.5K monthly visitors to the website and a total number of unique visitors (to date) of more than 89K. Top pages were the species pages, publications and "about us". Chat GPT was reported as the third-largest external source, and is expected to increase in share. On social media, EUFORGEN LinkedIn now has 1,315 followers, with 460 new followers being gained in 2025. A newly launched Bluesky account has 191 followers to date and is targeted to a niche research and academic community.

National Coordinators are encouraged to translate guidelines already produced on Forest Reproductive Material (FRM) into their national language. In case of interest, they can contact the Secretariat to receive the InDesign files. The Secretariat will be happy to facilitate in the process.

A suggestion was made for a general EUFORGEN presentation with core information that National Coordinators could take to conferences and meetings. The Secretariat agreed to produce this.

The financial report will be presented next year once the financial books have been closed.

¹ <https://eufgis.org/>

5. The MEDFORGEN Project

Magda Bou Dagher Kharrat, Principal Scientist at EFI Mediterranean Facility (EFIMED), informed the Steering Committee about the new development cooperation MEDFORGEN project (Mediterranean Forest Genetic Resources Network), funded by the European Commission's DG MENA. The project started in October 2025 and will be implemented in the South and East Mediterranean countries. The presentation is available to the Steering Committee in a restricted area.

As decided in the 21st meeting of the Steering Committee, the data on Genetic Conservation Units meeting the Minimum requirements² from MEDFORGEN can be included in EUFGIS. The MEDFORGEN project will provide the resources to assist local adaptation and to support further development of the Information System.

The Steering Committee showed interest to link EUFORGEN and MEDFORGEN, through joint meetings and by creating synergies between the two networks.

6. Working Group on dynamic and static ex situ conservation and WG on evacuation

A.M. Farsakoglou informed about the status of the dynamic and static ex situ conservation report. It has passed through language editing and was shared with the Steering Committee.

A comment was raised that the difference in static and dynamic ex situ conservation is not clear for plantations and should be better developed. As explained, the categories of static and dynamic ex situ elements were thoroughly discussed by the WG, and the current text is the outcome of these discussions. This report serves as the baseline for ex situ conservation and further activities are foreseen on this matter in the upcoming years.

A new timeframe was agreed (see "Decision" below).

Decision: The Steering Committee decided that National Coordinators will provide their comments on the "Recommendations section" by 5 January 2026. They may also review the rest of the document, but only to flag grammatical or syntax issues, without revising the content. Between 5–12 January 2026, NCs may review and comment on each other's inputs. After 12 January, the document will be shared with the WG to integrate the comments, after which the Steering Committee will proceed to approve the report of the WG on static and dynamic *ex situ* conservation and confirm its release. This approval will be done via email, and no formal Steering Committee meeting is required.

7. Adding species in EUFGIS

All 160 forest tree species used to compute indicator 4.6 on FGR will be included on the EUFORGEN website as of November 2025, there are 110 species pages and pages for a further 50 species are under development. The Steering Committee received the request to *Quercus faginea* into EUFGIS. Spain already has GCUs for this species. The Steering Committee evaluated the proposal and approved its addition.

²

https://www.euforgen.org/fileadmin/templates/euforgen.org/upload/Publications/Other_PDFs/EUFGIS_Minimum_requirements.pdf

Decision: The Steering Committee meeting approved the additional species (*Quercus faginea* Lam.) in EUFGIS proposed by Spain.

8. Update on EFI new structure

M. Bozzano informed the Steering Committee about the new structure of the European Forest Institute. It will be based on more decentralised, non-location-specific units, with self-management and accountability, and there will be a more strategic alignment through a central operational framework.

The structure will consist of three units: Global Partnership Unit, Research Unit and Engagement Unit. EUFORGEN will be integrated in this last unit which will be a bridge between science, policy, and practice, coordinating networks, facilities, and partnerships that ensure EFI's knowledge is accessible, relevant, and used and informed by external partners. It will be leading science-policy dialogues and knowledge exchange platforms.

The Engagement Unit will include four programmes under the umbrella of "Network", each with their own governance structure: EUFORGEN; FoRISK; Integrate Network; and Policy Support.

9. EUFORGEN evaluation

M. Bozzano updated the Steering Committee on the progress of EUFORGEN's evaluation procedure to decide on the next steps. The evaluation of the EUFORGEN Programme was planned as a main output of Phase VII. The purpose is to assess the programme's achievements over its 30 years, and to provide actionable recommendations for the future strategic direction of EUFORGEN. The Steering Committee had allocated 20k euros for the evaluation, plus Secretariat time. Two offers have been received, both higher than the allocated resources. A third quote is still to be received.

The Steering Committee was requested to decide whether to:

1. proceed with the evaluation of the programme,
2. modify the ToR (to reduce the workload required from an external evaluator and better align with the allocated budget),
3. postpone the evaluation, or
4. propose alternatives.

The estimated cost for the evaluation by external consultancy was based on the previous evaluation that was carried out. Savings could be made by reducing some of the activities, such as eliminating or reducing the number of stakeholder interviews, and/or by replacing these with surveys, or by focusing only on recommendations and not on past achievements.

The Secretariat will approach staff at EFI to request a quotation and will obtain the quotation from the third service provider already contacted. Once all quotations are received, the Task Force will analyse them, before assessing the available or any alternative options.

Decision: The Steering Committee decided that the Secretariat, using the same ToR, will seek an additional quote from the 3rd proposed service provider and also obtain a quote from EFI. The TF will meet to review these quotes and may decide to request a breakdown of the costs from all providers or review the ToR and request new quotes, before assessing the available or alternative options. The Steering Committee will take a decision based on the TF's review via email before the next Steering Committee meeting.

10. Task Force on a concept note to develop a methodology on GCU conservation gaps

A.M. Farsakoglou presented the first draft of the concept note, developed by the Task Force established in Spring 2025, to develop a concept on how to collect existing methodologies / documents and how to develop a methodology to improve the identification of conservation gaps in the pan-European core network of GCUs based on additional data (genetic, phenotypic, environmental zones etc.).

The members nominated for the Task Force are:

- François Lefèvre (France) maybe later be replaced by Aurore Desgroux (French EUFGIS NFP)
- Tom Sim (UK)
- Andreas Rudow (Switzerland)
- Maurizio Sabatti (Italy) with the support of Maurizio Marchi (Italian EUFGIS NFP).

The Steering Committee was asked to provide feedback directly in the background document by 5 January 2026. Suggestions were made to have a more explicit narrative suitable for a broader audience, outside the EUFORGEN community.

Decision: The Steering Committee will provide feedback in the background document by 5th January 2026. Then the TF will resume its work and further elaborate the document based on the feedback received.

11. Project Heritage

A new type of page on the EUFORGEN website, created to showcase the heritage of the GenTree project, was presented as an example for how this new section on the website might work³.

Guiding principles to select a project for heritage status are that the project contributes to EUFORGEN objectives and is not a national initiative (projects for 3-4 countries can be included). Projects can be considered for inclusion from the establishment of EUFGIS onwards.

There was a request to move the paragraph “Contribution to EUFORGEN objectives“ under the “main achievements”.

There is a section on the website for ongoing relevant projects⁴ providing access to the projects' websites. When a project ends it will be included in the project heritage section.

Decision: The Steering Committee approved the general structure of the project heritage pages with minor restructuring and agreed to develop the pages for other former projects based on their contributions to the EUFORGEN objectives. The starting point for developing the project heritage pages will be from 2007 onwards.

12. 2026 Activities workplan

A.M. Farsakoglou presented the planned activities for the second year of Phase VII, based on the Strategic Objectives, 1, 2 and 3 (1: Facilitate knowledge sharing and communicate with key stakeholders, 2: Coordinate the implementation of conservation of Forest Genetic Resources in Europe and 3: Promote the sustainable use of forest genetic resources), and following the implementation plan.

³ <https://www.euforgen.org/resources/project-heritage/gentree>

⁴ <https://www.euforgen.org/about-us/projects>

A.M. Farsakoglou also presented other initiatives that fall beyond the activities of the implementation plan, foreseen to take place in 2026. These include FGR Conservation in Central Asia, an initiative in collaboration with FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (FAO REU) and representatives from the Caucasus and Central Asia countries to organise a three-day regional workshop. The scope of the initiative is to assess the status of FGR conservation in the region, identify key needs and priorities for sub-regional cooperation, and outline a roadmap for establishing a long-term collaborative framework for FGR conservation. Another initiative relates to the Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU (July–December 2026), as part of the dissemination campaign of the FRM report and "FRM – Focus on Forest Genetic Diversity". The proposal is to include the dissemination of the FRM material as an item in the agenda of the EU Forest Directors' meeting (in collaboration with EUFORGEN), ensuring that the prepared material is presented at a high political level.

13. Any Other Business

No other business.

14. Date and place for next meeting

The 24th Steering Committee meeting will take place in person in Avignon, France, 21-23 April 2026. A field trip will be organised to visit a GCU. Invitations will be sent at the beginning of next year.

Decision: The Steering Committee approved the decision that the 24th Steering Committee meeting will take place in person in Avignon, France, 21-23 April 2026.

15. Final approval of decisions 23rd Steering Committee meeting

The Steering Committee discussed the outcomes of the meeting and approved the decisions of each session.

Decision: The Steering Committee approved the decisions of the 23rd EUFORGEN Steering Committee Meeting.

16. Wrap up and closure of the meeting

A meeting appraisal will be sent to the participants of the meeting with the deadline for completion by 5 January 2026.

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

Annex 1 – List of participants



**23rd meeting of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee
2-3 December 2025, online**

List of participants

EUFORGEN National Coordinators

Heino Konrad
Federal Research and Training Centre for
Forests, Natural Hazards and Landscape
Austria

An Vanden Broeck
Research Institute for Nature and Forest
(INBO)
Belgium

Mladen Ivanković
Croatian Forest Research Institute
Croatia

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

Mari Rusanen
Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE)
Finland

François Lefèvre
INRAE – Ecology of Mediterranean Forests
France

László Nagy
Forest Research Institute, University of
Sopron
Hungary

Aðalsteinn Sigurgeirsson
Land and Forest Iceland
Iceland

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

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

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

Martine Neuberg
Administration de la nature et des forêts
Luxembourg

Ethelbert Erasmus Duca
Environment and Resources Authority
Malta

Joukje Buiteveld
Centre for Genetic Resources Netherlands
Netherlands

Tor Myking
Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research
Norway

Czeslaw Koziol
The Kostrzyca Forest Gene Bank
Poland

Isabel Carrasquinho
National Institute for Agrarian and Veterinary
Research, IP (INIAV)
Portugal

Ecaterina Nicoleta Apostol
National Institute for Research and
development in Forestry "Marin Dracea"
Romania

Marina Nonic
Faculty of Forestry, Belgrade
Serbia

Roman Longauer
National Forest Centre
Slovakia

Hojka Kraigher
Slovenian Forestry Institute
Slovenia

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

Sanna Black-Samuelsson
Swedish Forest Agency
Sweden

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

Svitlana Los
Ukrainian Research Institute of Forestry &
Forest Melioration
Ukraine

Jonathan Burton
Forestry Commission
United Kingdom

Observers

Magda Bou Dagher Karrat
European Forest Institute

Thierry Diedenhofen
Administration de la nature et des forêts
Luxembourg

EUFORGEN Secretariat

European Forest Institute (EFI), Barcelona
Office

Sarah Adams

Michele Bozzano

Anna-Maria Farsakoglou

María González Delgado

Lidwina Koop

Unable to attend

Christina Kjærby
Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark,
Nature Agency

Denmark

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

Estonia

Annex 2 – Agenda

23rd EUFORGEN Steering Committee (SC) Meeting of the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN)

2-3 December 2025 (10-13 CET) Online meeting

Moderation: *Sarah Adams*

The background documents are available in the MS Teams space (in a restricted area accessible only to National Coordinators)

Tuesday 2 December 10:00-13:00 CET – online

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
10:00 – 10:05	Opening of the meeting Approval of the agenda	<i>For discussion and decision</i> Approval of the agenda	
10:05 – 10:45	Round table – introduction Each <u>NC</u> will have one minute to inform the SC on how species are selected nationally for FGR conservation (<i>All</i>)	<i>For information</i>	
10:45 – 10:50	Nomination of rapporteurs	<i>For decision</i>	
10:50 – 10:55	Checklist of SC22 decisions (<i>Anna-Maria Farsakoglou</i>)	<i>For information</i>	
10:55 – 11:15	Presentation of key elements of the draft technical report 2025 (<i>A.M. Farsakoglou & Sarah Adams</i>)	<i>For information</i> The SC is informed on the progress of the technical report 2025. This information can be used by the NCs for national reporting.	
11:15 – 11:30	Break		

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
11:30 – 12:05	The MEDFORGEN Project (Magda Bou Dagher-Kharrat)	For information The SC is informed on the new development cooperation MEDFORGEN project.	
12:05 – 12:20	WG Dynamic and static ex situ conservation & WG on evacuation (A.M. Farsakoglou)	For discussion and decision The SC approves the release of the report of the WG on static and dynamic ex situ conservation.	
12:20 – 12:35	Adding species in EUFGIS (M. Bozzano)	For discussion and decision The SC evaluates proposals from NCs and decides whether the proposed species will be added to EUFGIS.	
12:35 – 12:50	Update on EFI restructure (Michele Bozzano)	For information The SC is informed on the new EFI structure	
12:50 – 13:00	Wrap-up of first day (Sarah Adams)		

Wednesday 3 December 10:00-13:00 CET - online

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
10:00 – 10:30	EUFORGEN evaluation (M. Bozzano)	For discussion and decision The SC receives an update on the progress of EUFORGEN's evaluation procedure and decides on the next steps	
10:30 – 11:15	TF on a concept note to develop a methodology on GCU conservation gaps (A.M. Farsakoglou)	For discussion The SC discusses the first draft of the concept note	
11:15 – 11:30	Break		
11:30 – 11:45	Project Heritage (A.M. Farsakoglou & María González Delgado)	For discussion and decision The SC approves the project heritage template and format for the EUFORGEN's website.	

Time	Session	Purpose Outcome	Background documents
11:45 – 12:30	2026 activities workplan (A.M. Farsakoglou)	For information The SC is informed on the planned activities for the second year of Phase VII, based on the implementation plan	
12:30 – 12:40	AoB		
12:40 – 12:45	Date and place for the next meeting (M. Bozzano)	For information The SC is informed about the 24 th SC meeting.	
12:45 – 12:50	23rd EUFORGEN SC Meeting: Decisions final approval (A.M. Farsakoglou)	For discussion and approval The SC discusses on the outcomes of the meeting and approve the decisions of each session	
12:50 – 12:55	Wrap up – Meeting Feedback	For discussion and decision	
12:55 – 13:00	Closure of the meeting		

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