

Minutes of the ERFP Steering Committee meeting

2-3 April 2019 in Paris, France

Participants:

Chair: Sipke Joost Hiemstra, The Netherlands

National coordinators:

Beate Berger, Austria

Montserrat Castellanos Moncho, Spain

Eva-Marie Stalhammar, Sweden

Srdjan Stojanović, Serbia

Jan Tomka, Slovakia

Secretariat:

Coralie Danchin-Burge (France)

Eléonore Charvolin-Lemaire (France)

1. Welcome and presentation of the Agenda

S. Hiemstra welcomes the participants. The Agenda of the SC meeting is approved.

2. Follow-up of the decisions taken at the previous SC

a. GDPR

Cf. ppt

A consent form was sent to all the participant names (NCs, experts, invited speakers...) held in the secretariat database. A concern is for NCs that are not answering. M. Castellanos Moncho informs the secretariat that the official Spanish NC has changed function, and the new NC is not chosen yet. Denmark is without NC. E.M. Stalhammar will look further into it. S. Stojanovic contacted both the Russian NC and its institution, without any results.

A last reminder will be done before this summer, and hopefully the meeting in Madrid (see below) will be an occasion to get some more consents. In the end, it can be expected to have a 80% answer rate which can be considered as sufficient to broadcast the new website, as well to exchange emails in the ERFP network without hiding the participants' emails. The secretariat will have to remind the participants that they can be removed from the ERFP database on their request.

So far, the only people that asked to be removed from the ERFP database are people that were NCs and changed situation since.

b. Website transfer

Discussions are on the way between INRA and the Slovenian company that developed the new website. Some drawbacks are due to the use of Linux server by INRA, which is not a technology fully grasped by the website designer. Hopefully the new website will be on line by the end of April.

c. New Ad Hoc actions

Three proposals were received.

- **Mediterranean symposium:**

The proposal is agreed on. Advancement on the proposal will need to be provided for the GA.

- **Development of specifications for a modern gene bank documentation software (CryoWEB 2.0):**

The Steering Committee examined the *Ad hoc* proposal: the action was agreed on, and the budget requested (6 270 €) allocated aside. The SC suggestion is to finalize the final plan of activities after discussing the proposal in the *ex situ* WG meeting in Madrid. In addition another *Ad hoc* action is proposed by the *ex situ* WG chair (Fernando Tejerina Ampudia) to support the development of EUGENA and improve the information about the gene banks in Europe

- **Development of the AnGR Strategy and supporting the GenRes Bridge objectives and goals:**

The main aim is to involve the ERFP network as much as possible in the GenresBridge Workshop “Sharing strategies and perspectives” (autumn 2019) in two ways:

- Having a selected number of ERFP members attending the workshop (mainly GenResBridge partners);
- Having ERFP members contributing to the issues to be discussed during the workshop.

The meeting in Madrid is a great opportunity to start the discussions and to generate input from the ERFP network. Participants of the WGs can provide their input and a selected number of volunteers could support the *Ad hoc* action, in particular by writing a report to be discussed and finalized in the GA meeting in August. A specific call to all NCs should also be sent to see who would be keen to participate in the *Ad hoc* Action.

In general, the SC felt that some further clarification on the *Ad hoc* Action and intended outputs are needed. The secretariat will suggest D. Bojkovski to further develop and clarify the Ad Hoc Action proposal before the meeting in Madrid, with the help of the SC chair and Secretariat, to be able to communicate properly to the whole ERFP network. Further suggestions are decided for the Madrid meeting (see § 9) The SC agreed with the allocation of the budget requested (5,000 €) for 2019.

Secretariat will inform *Ad hoc* action leaders and NCs about the decisions.

It is suggested to add in the template of the Ad Hoc action the name of the person who wrote the proposal.

Exploring the pro's and con's of a future permanent ERFP Secretariat was listed as being a top priority action in the SWOT analysis. It should involve people that were in previous secretariats. Further discussions showed that this action should be longer than a year and therefore it is suggested to implement a Task Force (i.e. budget implication for several years) instead of an *Ad hoc* action. S. Hiemstra will write a draft ToR for a Task Force, including objectives and work plan; the Madrid meeting could be a good opportunity for informal discussions about who could be involved in the group (including external advisers) and who could chair the TF.

It is suggested that the TF “permanent secretariat” should benefit from a 4000 € budget; the proposal will be presented for validation at the GA.

d. List of experts / EU policies

The idea of setting up a list of experts was agreed during the GA and M. Castellanos Moncho wrote a proposal that was circulated among NCs before the SC. Among the first feedbacks, some NCs are wondering about the bias these experts could have. They might represent their countries' views instead of an expert opinion. The SC feels that it should not be a major concern. The SC's main concern is that a limited number of answers will be given by the NCs. Another concern is to keep the list updated: NCs will be responsible to update the list by adding or removing names before the GA. A reminder will be sent to all NCs before the GA.

e. ERFP hosting agreement

Part of the agreement with IDELE hosting the Secretariat was that a formal agreement should be written between IDELE and ERFP to define IDELE's roles and responsibilities. A proposal was drafted by C. Danchin and S. Hiemstra, it is in its final stage. The ultimate version will be sent to the SC for approval.

3. Financial situation

The countries contributions' for 2018 are lower than in 2017. Reminders will be sent to countries that contributed in 2017 but not in 2018 to know why this contribution was not renewed.

A discussion started about what measures should be taken when a country never contributes. ERFP activities are growing and it is not sustainable in the long run despite ERFP's reserve. It is reminded that a suggested add-on in the new TOR is that the minimum reserve for the annual budget “should be two times the annual budget” (i.e. 200 000 €).

In the plant network, non-contributing countries (1) do not have their expenses reimbursed and (2) are not allowed to vote. An issue is that working groups are based on experts which are usually not coming from governmental bodies, and they will not attend meetings if their travel costs are not reimbursed. **The discussion is not finalized** but it will need to be addressed again.

The secretariat is showing a simulation on the budget based on the new UN scale (see Annex 1 and Annex 2). Since Europe, as a region, is receding as a global economy in comparison with other regions, the ERFP budget which is equal to 123 k€ today will go down to 106 k€ if we keep the same fee. Another simulation done by taking into account the countries that are contributing regularly gives the same type of results. The only way to maintain the ERFP budget is by adjusting the fee (Annex 2). **This study will be shown at the GA and the final decisions need to be taken during the new ToR discussions.** It has to be kept in mind that most countries are building their budget before summer which means that the new scale could be used for country contribution not before 2021.

S.J. Hiemstra suggests that the secretariat meets with EAAP during the new meeting to see if the practicalities of the reimbursement procedures could be lightened up.

The contract between ERFP and Z. Ducheve as a node manager ceased in 2018. S. Hiemstra is wondering about the opportunity to issue a new contract with him as a node manager for EFABIS and EUGENA. S. Hiemstra will circulate through the secretariat Z. Ducheve's proposal as what the terms of reference could be for such a role. The next steps will be a (Skype) meeting with Z. Ducheve, the chair and the secretariat, to come up with a formal proposal and a budget to be presented to the next GA, for a multi-year period. The most flexible situation, if agreed by IDELE, would be a contract between IDELE and Z. Ducheve for a certain number of work days per year, with an ERFP funding.

4. Organization of the General Assembly in Ghent

E. Charvolin looked for places to host the Assembly: a good solution would be the "Hotel Monsaterium" which is a seminar place and a hotel, with rooms within the ERFP range (110 €/night). Other options in the vicinity are also checked (including same place as the SAVE annual meeting). The **final choice needs to be finalized in April.**

As suggested by S. Hiemstra, connections were made with SAVE which is holding its annual meeting near Ghent. Sunday afternoon, the field trip will be the Living Heritage Exposition (Wachtebeke – half an hour from Ghent), where a large collection of the Flemish original local breeds (pigeons, chickens, ducks, geese, goats, sheep, cows and draught horses) is presented to the public. The IMAGE forum will be held at this place at 3 pm.

It is also suggested to ask if a **SAVE representative** could **speak at the ERFP GA.**

A provisional agenda is defined (Annex 3). It is suggested to have a global talk about the new CAP policy and its implications for AnGR; hopefully since the GA is close from Brussels we could find an expert to come. S. Hiemstra will ask D. Traon (cf. preparatory actions) and J.C. Cavitte (DG AGRI) for contacts. Another suggestion is to invite people from the EU administration (for instance on zootechnical issues) to attend the meeting. M. Castellanos Moncho will informally tell her contacts about the GA after once S. Hiemstra has informed first his own network. She will also contact the EFFAB representative.

EAAP: unfortunately it was not possible to have a lower fee for ERFP NCs this year, despite J. Fernandez efforts (President of the AnGR working group at EAAP). A suggestion is to include directly this lower fee in the guidelines provided by EAAP to the local organizers. Contacts need to be done with the EAAP organisation (J. Bormann) to amend the guidelines.

Invitations to the GA need to be sent before the “early bird” registration for EAAP (June 1st), with the venue and a provisional agenda.

5. SC 2019 elections

Three members of the SC are finishing their term this summer. The SC discussed names for replacement while paying attention to have a good balance between the different European regions. The potential candidates will be approached by J. Tomka, B. Berger and E. Charvolin. If they agree, an mail will be sent to all NCs before the GA with the list of nominees but it will be reminded to all NCs that they can provide suggestions too, as long as it is sent before the GA.

6. MYPOW and ToR: last comments before dissemination

Amendments were sent by France, Germany, Slovenia and Sweden and discussed by the SC. The new version of the documents need to be edited by the end of April, with a final check from the SC, then sent to NCs with an explanation letter which will focus on the major changes: major comments from the NCs need to be sent by July 1st if we want to be efficient. The discussions during the GA should be on minor items.

7. Update on the GenresBridge project and follow up actions

The H2020 GenresBridge project started in January 2019 and will last for three years (<http://www.genresbridge.eu/>).

S. Hiemstra gives a debriefing of the kick off meeting that was held in Rome last January. All WPs were discussed one by one. The main issue for the first year is to provide a “stakeholder

inventory” about biodiversity issues. Preparatory action is the starting point. All NCs will receive a request to provide details about their main stakeholders.

July: meeting in Slovenia – The main goal is to collect messages from previous and on-going projects. November: stakeholder discussion on the EU strategy. First step is to share and identify gaps in the European strategies.

8. Updates on AnGR issues: 17th CGRFA, CBD, EU policy issues and interaction with the ERFP network

- 17th CGRFA

The specific AnGR issues went smoothly. The main points were the promotion of DAD IS as a tool as well as the need to have regular DAD IS updates by the countries. Environmental services were emphasized as well as the addition of insect pollinators.

The main discussions were related to ABS issues with the Digital sequence information on genetic resources (DSI – see below) and about biodiversity to food and agriculture. For this topic, the main sticking point is the need of setting up a global plan of action; there is a strong disagreement between Europe (who wants it) and America (broad sense) – who does not.

The biggest political issue are the DSI with a strong opposition between developing countries, that want to include them in Nagoya, and the other countries, where genomic research is based mostly on genome data exchanges and cooperation (open data / consortium data), are against. This position is weakened up by the fact that developing countries are making this point as a preamble for the CBD post strategy. It means that environmental organisations are pushing for an agreement since implementing a new strategy is fundamental for them.

Unfortunately, the attendance to side events was quite scarce despite being interesting topics.

- ABS: EU Guidance document on Animal Breeding

Most European countries would like the due diligence obligation to be restricted to one generation.

Both topics will be discussed by the ABS TF in Madrid and a report will be done at the GA.

- EU policy:

Most EU countries are now implementing the new EU animal breeding regulation. It would be interesting to have some time during the GA so that NCs can express how they are dealing with the new regulation.

9. Planning of the further ERFP activities in 2019:

- Joint meetings of the WGs and ABS TF

Cf. ppt

For the joint sessions, the main topics to be discussed are the GenresBridge project and transboundary breeds, since there are common topics for all WG.

The secretariat is suggesting the invitation of a Rediverse project coordinator for the transboundary item. The proposal is agreed on.

S. Hiemstra will give contacts on the Rediverse project coordinators and the secretariat is in charge to contact them directly.

M. Castellanos Moncho offers to have an opening on Tuesday afternoon with a 15 minutes overview on Spanish Animal Genetic Resources. The proposal is also agreed on, the Secretariat is in charge of relaying the information to the WG chairmen.

GenresBridge: the SC's suggestion is that D. Bojovski presents the GenresBridge project on Tuesday, followed by general questions and discussions about the aim and approach of the project. Each WG will debate specific questions and perspectives Wednesday morning. E. Charvolin and E. Stuardo could do the animation in the D&I WG, S. Hiemstra in the Ex Situ WG, and D. Bojovski or S. Winkel in the In Situ WG. Finally, each group will present the outcomes Thursday morning and the WGs will finally discuss conclusions and priority actions, that need follow up by the *Ad hoc* Action towards the General Assembly.

As for the *ex situ* WG, S. Hiemstra suggests that the issues linked with the IMAGE project are started Wednesday morning since the agenda is quite full. The secretariat will invite A. Stella to explain how to fill in the IMAGE portal with genebanks data.

The secretariat needs to send an email for registration before May 6th so that M. Castellanos Moncho can detail the number of guests for each ERFP dinners (Tuesday and Thursday night) as well as the number of lunches. M. Castellanos Moncho will also provide a list of hotels for the venue.

- Strengthening communication and website

Part of the GenresBridge action should help the ERFP in this issue. Since the last SC, M. Castellanos Moncho contacted a Spanish agency that sent a proposal (cf. joint document).

The SC suggests to invite the agency during the WG meeting on Thursday to present the proposal. More information will need to be provided to all NCs before the GA since they are not all part of a WG. A contract will have to be signed with IDELE and will be funded by ERFP with the “communication and tools” budget that was approved during last GA. M. Castellanos Moncho will contact the agency to tell them that their proposal is approved; that they are invited to present it in Madrid; and that the work should start at the beginning of June, for a yearly period. The first outcomes and results will need to be presented at the next GA.

The meeting closed at 13.30.

The next SC will be held in Ghent, Belgium, August 23rd.

Annex 1: Changes of categories with the new UN scales

Country	Old category	New category	Country	Old category	New category
Albania	A	A	Italy	K	J
Armenia	A	A	Latvia	B	B
Austria	G	F	Lithuania	C	C
Azerbaijan	A	B	Luxembourg	C	C
Belarus	B	B	Macedonia(FYR)	A	A
Belgium	H	G	Malta	A	A
Bosnia&Herzegovina	A	A	Moldova	A	A
Bulgaria	B	B	Montenegro	A	A
Croatia	C	C	Netherlands	I	H
Cyprus	B	B	Norway	G	F
Czech Republic	E	E	Poland	G	G
Denmark	F	F	Portugal	F	E
Estonia	B	B	Romania	D	D
Finland	F	F	Russian Federation	I	I
France	K	J	Serbia	B	A
Georgia	A	A	Slovakia	D	D
Germany	K	K	Slovenia	C	C
Greece	F	E	Spain	J	I
Hungary	E	E	Sweden	H	G
Iceland	B	A	Switzerland	H	H
Ireland	F	E	Turkey	F	H
Israel	E	F	Ukraine	C	B
			United Kingdom	K	K

Annex 2: Budget simulations with the new UN scales

Country	Old fee /new cat	New fee	Δ with current fee	Country	Old fee /new cat	New fee	Δ with current fee
Albania	600	690	+90	Italy	4800	5520	-5780
Armenia	600	690	+90	Latvia	800	920	+120
Austria	2600	2990	+290	Lithuania	1400	1610	+210
Azerbaijan	800	920	+320	Luxembourg	1400	1610	+210
Belarus	800	920	+120	Macedonia(FYR)	600	690	+90
Belgium	2700	3105	-995	Malta	600	690	+90
Bosnia&Herzegovina	600	690	+90	Moldova	600	690	+90
Bulgaria	800	920	+120	Montenegro	600	690	+90
Croatia	1400	1610	+210	Netherlands	4100	4715	+415
Cyprus	800	920	+120	Norway	2600	2990	+290
Czech Republic	2400	2760	+360	Poland	2700	3105	+405
Denmark	2600	2990	+390	Portugal	2400	2760	+160
Estonia	800	920	+120	Romania	1600	1840	+240
Finland	2600	2990	+390	Russian Federation	4300	4945	+645
France	4800	5520	-5780	Serbia	600	690	-110
Georgia	600	690	+90	Slovakia	1600	1840	+240
Germany	11300	12995	+1695	Slovenia	1400	1610	+210
Greece	2400	2760	+160	Spain	4300	4945	+145
Hungary	2400	2760	+360	Sweden	2700	3105	-995
Iceland	600	690	-110	Switzerland	4100	4715	+615
Ireland	2400	2760	+160	Turkey	4100	4715	+2115
Israel	2600	690	+90	Ukraine	800	920	-480
				United Kingdom	11300	12995	1695

Total budget old fee: 106 600 €

Total budget new fee: 122 590 €

Category	Old fee	New fee	Old fee	New fee	Old fee
A	600	690	G	2700	3 105
B	800	920	H	4100	4 715
C	1400	1 610	I	4300	4 945
D	1600	1 840	J	4800	5 520
E	2400	2 760	K	11300	12 995
F	2600	2 990			

Annex 3: provisional agenda for the GA

Day 1

09:00	09:20	Welcome and opening
09:20	09:50	Report from the ERFP Secretariat
09:50	10:30	Reports from the WG (incl. EUGENA)
10:30	10:40	Report from the TF (incl. list of experts)
10:40	11:05	Coffee Break
11:05	11:35	Communication strategy
11:35	11:55	Progress report by EAAP WG-AnGR
11:55	12:05	FAO report
12:05	13:05	Lunch Break
13:05	13:35	Approval of the new ToR - UN scales
13:35	14:15	Approval of the new MYPOW
14:15	14:55	ERFP future plans and 2020 budget approval
14:55	15:20	Coffee Break
15:20	16:00	SC elections
16:00	17:20	Genres Bridge: workshop

Day 2

09:00	09:10	Brief recap of the previous day
09:10	10:20	Future of IMAGE: information system, portal
10:20	10:50	Coffee Break
10:50	11:20	DG AGRI / Rural Development future CAP (invited)
11:20	11:40	SAVE = building connections with ERFP (Invited)
11:40	12:00	EFFAB = Genetic variability in mainstream breeds (Invited)

To be added: Save invited speaker