## Minutes of the ERFP Steering Committee meeting

August 23rd 2019, Ghent, Belgium

# Participants:

**Chair:** Sipke Joost Hiemstra, The Netherlands

**National coordinators, members of the SC:**

Beate Berger, Austria

Montserrat Castellanos Moncho, Spain

Eva-Marie Stalhammar, Sweden

Srdjan Stojanović, Serbia

Jan Tomka , Slovakia

**Secretariat:**

Coralie Danchin-Burge (France)

**Working groups and Task Force chairmen**

Elzbieta Martyniuk (ABS TF)

Enrico Sturaro (Doc & Info WG)

Fernando Tejerina Ampudia (ex situ WG)

Sebastian Winkel (in situ WG)

**FAO representative**

Roswitha Baumung

## 1. Welcome and presentation of the Agenda

S. Hiemstra welcomes the participants. Due to personal reason, E. Charvolin (Secretariat) cannot attend the meeting.

The Agenda of the SC meeting is approved.

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

### a. GDPR

A substantial additional number of NCs/experts signed the GDPR consent form, thanks to the Madrid meeting. Questions remained for the status of the people included in the policy expert list as well as occasional speakers/invited: do we need to have them sign a consent form?

A practical approach is suggested: the NCs should remind the experts that part of the process of being nominated includes the fact that their professional details will be stored by ERFP and made available to NCs when ERFP needs to deal with a specific topic.

### b. Website transfer

The website is now operational and hosted by INRA. The transfer was a bit hectic since it required to train the website developer by INRA to Linux language. Some issues remain since the development, such as how to monitor the website statistics and if there is a possibility to create an intranet interface. It would be very helpful to benefit from an intranet since some documents should not be made publically available on the website as long as there are not final documents. An intermediate situation would be to load PDF document with a password for use by the NCs or SC only.

### c. ERFP hosting agreement

The final proposal was signed by IDELE CEO and S. Hiemstra as the ERFP chairman. The document is written in such a way that it allows IDELE to contract directly with some companies, as long as it falls within the mission detailed in the hosting agreement. For instance, since implementing ERFP communication is part of IDELE's task, the contract with the communication company, Alcandora (see § e), was signed directly with IDELE instead of going through EAAP.

### d. Node manager contract

Z. Duchev had a contract with EAAP regarding the updating and changes related to EFABIS. Since the situation with EFABIS is different now, there is no need to go through EAAP anymore. Zhivko's work will be evaluated every year during the GA where it will be decided to go on, modify or terminate the contract.

The proposal will be sent to the SC for a final evaluation. The main idea is to make sure that the terms specified does not put ERFP at risk of committing itself at a higher level than we thought – which is a maximum budget of 6000€ per period.

### e. Communication contract

A solution had to be found in order to have a contract directly signed by IDELE without the help of EAAP. Since the ERFP hosting agreement specifies clearly that IDELE is in charge of communication issues, IDELE could sign a contract with external financing without having to pay the VAT twice. However the contract made with ALCANDORA had to include VAT. Since ALCANDORA agreed to offer their services for a limited amount, it was agreed that the fare negotiated by M. Castellanos was without VAT.

## 3. Financial situation
### a. Annual progress report – financial report

Cf. Secretariat report to NCs and slides.

Amendments are made to the presentation in order to clearly show that the ERFP activities are generating more spending than expected budget (actual country contributions that are received).

An amendment is validated and then added to the travel reimbursement rules: requirement for reimbursement should be sent to the Secretariat within 4 months after the event to be eligible.

### b. Scenarios for future country contributions

S. Hiemstra worked on options how to increase the ERFP budget, based on 2019 as a reference for the next years as far as spending.

The following options are discussed by the SC:

1. Five year agreements with governments on their voluntary financial contributions to ERFP ("membership")
2. 33% increase of voluntary fees overall
3. Voting rights only if country made voluntary financial contribution
4. Steering Committee election only in case country pays voluntary financial contribution
5. Reimbursement rights for GA only in case of voluntary financial contributions
6. Reimbursement rights for SC only in case of voluntary financial contributions
7. Reimbursement rights for WGs only in case of voluntary financial contributions (
8. In all cases, reimbursement rights only in case of voluntary financial contributions

The proposals 2, 3 and 4 are the ones that seem the most plausible. Further work needs to be done in that direction by the SC, after discussion in the General Assembly. If fees are changing for the year 2021, the NCs need to be aware of it as early spring 2020 since lot of countries are building their budget for the following year during this time period.

### 4. Steering Committee member elections

Cf. slides.

All the CVs were sent to the NCs in advance. No other candidate presented itself.

### 5. Communication issues

Cf. slides.

The secretariat has the administration rights for the ERFP Facebook account since it created it, but Alcandora created the accounts for Twitter, Instagram and Linkedin. Therefore the secretariat does not have access to the statistics for these last three social media.

⇨ See with Alcandora how to get access and/or information about the statistics.
⇨ Add a page on the ERFP website about the presence of ERFP in the social networks.

The General Assembly will be important to deliver the message about how important is that everybody communicates about ERFP and gives us information that can be broadcasted in our network. M. Castellanos and the secretariat will be leading this task, with the help of Acandora.

## 6. Organization of the General Assembly

### a. Agenda

With summer vacation, the final answer from an EU representative for a talk during the General Assembly was received only couple days before our meeting. As a result the draft agenda is slightly changed to leave room for the EU presentation (E. Camara). Further exchanges and amendments to the agenda are expected for the presentation of the GenresBridge project, but this point will be discussed with the WG chairmen.

### b. Participants

A total of 49 participants registered, two (E. Charvolin and the new Swiss NC) have unexpected events which will prevent them to attend.

### c. Permanent secretariat TF

***Cf. SJ. Hiemstra' proposal.***

The SC suggests to add the help from a legal consultant. An issue might be the budget required for this type of help. ECPGR did the same type of work with a legal consultant, the secretariat will ask inputs.

The SC also suggests to further consult the surveys collected by the SWOT *Ad Hoc* action to get more ideas.

The TF will be presented to the GA for adoption. The chair position for this new TF is still open and proposal for a candidate will be asked for. If no one else presents itself, S. Hiemstra will start as the chair of this TF. .

### d. List of experts

M. Castellanos will present the status of the list of experts during the GA and offer Germany and other countries to explain their views during the GA.

After the GA a new version of the proposal and the list of experts will be sent to all NCs for their feedback and further nominations of experts.

### e. ToR and MYPOW

Some editing comments are adopted. Both documents will be presented at the GA for a final adoption. NCs had the opportunity to react to the documents before the GA. An accompanying document had been elaborated by the secretariat, following the SC suggestion, in order to pinpoint the main changes and important points. Few comments

were received from the NCs, therefore we should not expect important discussion on these items.

## 7. Meeting with the WG/TF Chairs

### a. Evaluation of (joint) meetings of WGs/TF

Cf. slides.

### b. Workplan and budget proposal for 2020

Cf. reports provided by each chair

- Doc & Info WG

E. Sturaro makes a brief recap of the work done since the last GA. The main objective of the group is to improve data quality and completeness, in collaboration with the development and data implementation of EFABIS, by assisting the NCs and getting their feedback. This task is permanent and there are no real specific activities except the work done about honeybees indicators. FAO is going to develop a prototype and will involve the experts from the 2018 *Ad Hoc* action on honeybees, at no extra costs (webconference)

He approves the idea of doing another common WG meeting in 2020 if it does not impair the budget plan.

E. Sturaro is also involved in two *Ad Hoc* actions presented for 2020:

- Transboundary breed guidelines, mostly for the indicators aspect.
- GenresBridge: mostly the work package on data quality.


- In situ WG

S. Winkel reports that the working plan is followed as planned. However two changes were decided:

- Task 1 "best practices": the group acknowledge the fact that the objective was not feasible without a specific workforce which cannot be founded by the group. Instead, a collection of in situ projects will be done and shared through the ERFP website, which will also help to boost the ERFP communication.
- Transboundary guidelines for in situ conservation: it was decided to extend the approach beyond in situ by the setting up of a common *Ad Hoc* action with the other WG.

Two outputs are expected from the WG, one is the collection of best practices and another item are recommendations. Both outcomes will be published on the ERFP secretariat once approved by the GA.

For 2020; the budget asked for remains the same. S. Winkel agrees on the idea of another joint WG meeting next year.

- Ex situ WG

The agenda for this group was the longest which is why it was asked to its members to prioritize the future tasks of the group.

EUGENA: a new *Ad Hoc* action was decided to help the promotion of the network in 2020. The idea too is to use EUGENA as a tool for communication purposes.

As for 2019, Z. Duchev developed a questionnaire about Cryoweb. A meeting will be set up to analyse the answers and the final outcome will be the writing out of specifications for a new software.

Another main issue is the collaboration and follow up of the IMAGE project and portal since the project will end in 2020.

- ABS TF

MAA and MTA : the joint session between the ABS TF and the ex situ WG was very fruitful since it showed that to end the process, it was not possible to edit model/standard documents since countries and/or genebanks differ too much in the way they are organized. Therefore it was suggested to transform the draft documents into guidelines. Since the expectations changed during the working process, only the MAA was finalized in Madrid.

Both drafts were edited and sent to the members of the TF and WG for comments. E. Martyniuk will finalize the drafts and the guidelines will be made publicly available and promoted, through ERFP, GenresBridge and IMAGE.

It is suggested that an article is written about these guidelines, led by E. Maryniuk.

There are no clear future plans for this TF since there is no chairman anymore and no clear deadlines about ABS. We will need to rely on the experts nominated by the countries to be aware of developments and to raise awareness. As a reminder, two papers were written as an outcome from this group, one about ABS and the livestock sector, and the second one, to be published, about an analysis of gene flow.

c. On-going *Ad Hoc* actions

The main discussion is about the GenresBridge *Ad Hoc* action and its presentation during the GA.

What we want to achieve is to have a good understanding of the project objectives and present outcomes, and to try to get feedback from the assembly. To do so, the project will

be briefly presented, a recap of what has been achieved so far will be detailed, and then the plan for the next year and what is expected from ERFP will be given. S. Winkel and E. Sturaro will present this part jointly.

It is suggested that the conclusions of the Madrid meetings should be presented to the GA for reaction: do they agree, do they want to add something or prioritize something. The three WG chairmen will work after the SC to do such a joint presentation. E. Sturaro and J. Fernandez will do the same thing about the outcomes of the workshop that was held in Slovenia, "Scientific messages", to help prioritize and better define what was done so far.

Symposium Mediterranean *Ad Hoc* action: the budget asked is to fund ERFP coordinator, external support is asked for non-European countries. Hopefully the symposium will be held this fall.

## 8. Consolidation of Activity plan

### a. New ad hoc actions

Cf. documents provided.

Since the *Ad Hoc* action about the Merino network was provided just before the meeting, this action will be examined at the next SC. The transboundary breed *Ad Hoc* action is accepted as for its general purpose but further work is also needed to define more precisely its outlines.

The development of EUGENA *Ad Hoc* action is accepted.

### b. EAAP related issues

Cf. note provided.

Despite a long history of collaboration, ERFP is not mentioned in EAAP website and the other way around.

The secretariat will add EAAP in one of the page of our website.

### c. SC calendar for the coming year

Since the amount of work is increasing, it is necessary to increase also the number of SC meetings. It is suggested that a third meeting should be added in the calendar. A physical meeting at the beginning of the spring is still necessary to help to prepare the WG/TF meetings as well as the GA.

⇨ A webconference meeting will be set up by the end of the year 2019.

### d. Budget Proposal for 2020

Cf. secretariat report/slides.

**The meeting closed at 18:20.**

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**The next SC will be held by webconference by the end of the year 2019.**

**The next physical venue of the SC will be held in February or March 2020.**

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**9. Bilateral meeting of the ERFP SC and the FAO**

The new FAO director general started his position August 1ˢᵗ.

- Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources (GPA) implementation

The FAO is in the phase of gathering the country reports on implementation of the GPA. Worldwide, 74 have been received and 9 more are expected. At European level, 19 reports have been received and 4 countries (Finland, France, Portugal, and Switzerland) asked for an extended deadline. There are no responses from the following countries, who reported to the Second State of the World Report: Albania, Bulgaria, Iceland, Israel, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Turkey and Ukraine. Further, no reports from Armenia, Georgia, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova and Romania have been received. However, those4 countries also did not contribute to the Second State of the World Report.

⇨ The GA will be an opportunity to motivate the missing countries to send a report latest by September 15ᵗʰ.

About Turkey: the previous NC has left its position but no new nomination was send to FAO. Denmark has still not provided the official nomination letter to FAO. An official letter should be send either to dad-is@fao.org or Roswitha.baumung@fao.org.

- DAD IS / EFABIS

FAO developed the virtual national EFABIS nodes and several EFABIS tools as requested. Currently only English versions of the national nodes are online as none of the responsible National Coordinators provided a translation into the respective national language. Nofurther national EFABIS nodes will be developed. The maintenance of DAD IS/EFABIS is not at risk, even there are issues with the further development of the system due to the new rules on hiring consultants. R.Baumung pointed out that decisions made by member countries of FAO (e.g. on hiring consultants), sometimes do have severe impact on delivery.

- General discussion

R. Baumung asked what are the ERFP needs regarding FAO intervention during the GA as time for presentation is very limited. The SC suggested as a first topic the next ITWG's

agenda, information on the synthesis on the implementation of GPA; advancements in DAD-IS/EFABIS, e.g. the inclusion of honeybee and ecosystem services. The meeting will be held at the beginning of July 2020.

R. Baumung supported a continued collaboration with Zhivko Duchev as he might contribute with his knowledge and experience to future developments of EFABIS and can help in communication on IT related issues. This can be done even though he is not the NC for Bulgaria: the data entry for this country is restricted to its NC, like it is for all countries.

**The bilateral meeting closed at 5:35 pm.**