

Minutes of the ERFP Assembly of National Coordinators

24th – 25th August 2019, Ghent, Belgium

Chair: Sipke Joost Hiemstra, NC The Netherlands

Participants: See attached list

All presentations delivered during the ERFP Assembly are uploaded on the ERFP website.

1. Welcome and opening

Sipke Joost Hiemstra, the Chair of the ERFP Steering Committee, welcomed the Assembly in Ghent. He thanked the Secretariat for its organization.

The Agenda is presented with modifications. There are no further amendments; the agenda is accepted.

2. Report from the ERFP Secretariat

Cf. slide presentation and written report (1_ERFP_Secretariat_WrittenReport_Assembly_2019_Final.pdf) prepared by the Secretariat prior to the GA meeting.

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1to3-ERFP_GA_2019_SecretariatProgressReport-1.pdf

a. ERFP Annual Progress report

Some editing comments are made: the full explanations of the acronyms used should be included as well as people's entire name (first name + last name).

The presented Annual Progress Report 2018-2019 was approved by the Assembly.

b. ERFP Financial report

ERFP concluded the 2018 financial year with a balance of 277.968,06 €. This budget was transferred from the Slovenian Secretariat to the French Secretariat and all the payments effected from January 1st 2019 fell under the responsibility of the new Secretariat.

As per August 1st 2019, the remaining funds are equal to 281,262.79 €.

The general expenses in 2019 amounted to 22 692.66 € and the countries contributions to 46,600.00 € (all amounts as per 15th August 2018).

The total expenses are expected/estimated at 81.601,50 €, with total remaining funds projected at 299.762,13 €.

The presented final budget for 2018 was approved by the Assembly.

Since the Ad hoc action “SWOT” is not completely finalized in 2018 (submission of an article during summer 2019 with the remaining budget), the funding required will be added to the 2019 budget.

The National Coordinators attention is directed to the fact that ERFP plans to spend more than the yearly budget for the second year in the row, due to the increase volume of activity and cost of Secretariat.

c. Reimbursement forms and policy

The new reimbursement form and slight amendments to the reimbursement policy are presented and adopted.

Another amendment is proposed during the session: all participants entitled to reimbursement have four months to send their travel costs for approval by secretariat.

The amendment is approved.

3. Presentation of the new ToR

Minor editorial changes are suggested.

The increase volume of ERFP activities (including communication) leads to a yearly budget with a deficit for the second year in a row. It is suggested to compare what are the different country contributions for the other two networks (plant – ECPGR and forest - EUFORGEN). One of the major issue is that there is no constraining regulations/agreements behind the setting up of ERFP, which means that contributions are voluntary. Discussions need to be pushed further by the Steering Committee in order to present a new distribution key by spring 2020 to help NCs prepare their 2021 countries' budget. It is also reminded that the SWOT analysis (which was used to draft the new MYPOW) also focused on outcomes of the last years which should be used in order to convince the different government of the usefulness of ERFP.

The presented new ToR was approved by the Assembly. A new version including the minor editorial changes will be sent to all NCs.

Final version available here:

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ERFP_ToR_2019.pdf

4. Presentation of the new MYPOW

Minor editorial changes are suggested.

The presented new MYPOW was approved by the Assembly. A new version including the minor editorial changes will be sent to all NCs.

Final version available here:

<https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/19-23-MyPow.pdf>

5. Reports from the ERFP Working Groups and Task Force

All chairs briefly summarized the work of the group and future plans. All the details are described in the written report and in the slide presentations.

A change of work plan for the *in situ* working group was presented:

- The development of a grid to collect best practices was given up since the work needed is too important for the group; instead members of the group are encouraged to forward any experiences in this topic to the task leader (Coralie Danchin) to be used for communication purposes.

- The task about Transboundary breeds is changed to a common Ad Hoc action across the 3 working groups.

All presented reports and work plan were approved by the Assembly.

	Slide presentation	Written report	Related AH action
ABS TF	ABS slide show	ABS written report	/
Doc & Info WG	Doc&Info slide show	Doc&Info written report	Mediterranean WS
Ex situ WG	Ex situ slide show	Ex situ written report	Cryobank documentation
In situ WG	In situ slide show	In Situ written report	/

6. List of policy experts

Cf. slide presentation.

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/5_ERFP_GA_2019_List_experts.pdf

The document will be sent with the comments from different countries (such as France and Germany) to all NCs after the General Assembly, with clarification on some issues. The list will not be finalized since it is an iterative process where NCs can amend the list at any time. In the first round, there is a priorities for the policies which are targeted as being the most important ones for ERFP.

7. Animal Genetic Resources in Belgium

Cf. slide presentation.

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6_ERFP_GA_2019_AnGR_Belgium.pdf

8. ERFP future plans and 2020 budget approval

Cf. secretariat report and slide presentations.

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6_ERFP_GA_2019_AnGR_Belgium.pdf

A main proposal of the SWOT analysis was to investigate the pros and cons of setting up a permanent Secretariat. The General Assembly is therefore asked for approval to create a Task Force “Permanent Secretariat” (cf. document provided). Its members are the SC members and the previous two secretariats. It is debated the opportunity to add a legal

adviser to the workforce, however the costs for such help might be prohibitive. Sipke Hiemstra offers to chair the TF unless someone else is interested to do so.

The creation of the TF is approved by the GA, with Sipke Hiemstra as a chairman.

Terms of Reference were discussed among the SC for getting the help of a “node manager” that will help ERFP mainly with EFABIS and EUGENA issues, with the person of Zhivko Duchevev (Bulgaria). The terms need to be finalized, the contract should be issued by the end of the year.

Since the communication plan is presented Sunday, after the formal budget approval, the GA’s vote on Saturday will be on a maximum amount to be spent for communication issues.

The future plans were approved by the Assembly.

The total budget proposal in the amount 131 500 € for the year 2020 was presented.

The 2020 budget was approved.

9. Elections in 2019 - ERFP Steering Committee members

According to the ERFP Terms of Reference, the term of office for the North, East and West Regions (respectively Eva-Marie Stålhammar, Jan Tomka and Beate Berger) ends in 2019. The SC suggested three candidates (Christina LIGDA, Greece; Jan Hendrik SCHNEIDER, Germany; Ruta ŠVEISTIENĖ, Lithuania). The Secretariat sent their CV to all the NCs before the GA and offered to provide more candidates. No additional proposal were received. Each candidate briefly introduced themselves.

The General Assembly elected Christina LIGDA, Jan Hendrik SCHNEIDER and Ruta ŠVEISTIENĖ as new members of the SC.

10. FAO report

Cf. slide presentations.

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/9_ERFP_GA_2019_FAO-Report.pdf

11. GenRes Bridge – status and Ad hoc action

Cf. slide presentations.

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/10a_ERFP_GA_2019_GenResBridge-Ad-Hoc-actionpptx.pdf
https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/10b_ERFP_GA_2019_GenResBridge-Scientific-messages.pdf

A brief reminder of the project is presented. The main goal of this topic is to involve all the NCs in the outputs of the project. Some NCs are directly involved in the project as well as

the ERFP secretariat and in order to involve the entire network, an Ad hoc action was created specifically – all NCs were invited to join the action, one candidacy (Nina Sæther, Norway) on top of the members of the group (cf. slide presentation) is declared during the Assembly. The three chairmen of the working groups are presenting what were the main outcomes of the work undergone in Madrid. Jesus Fernandez also presented the results of the first workshop that was held in Slovenia, “How recent scientific evidence can support the development and improvement of dynamic *in situ* GenRes conservation strategies and implementation?”

The Assembly is invited to react and amend the various proposals as well as to rank them. The results of this work will be used as a basis for exchanges in the next workshop to be held in Finland (<http://www.genresbridge.eu/about-us/events/event/sharing-perspectives-workshop/>), which will be a first step to start writing a strategy common to the three domains. The list of participants for the Animal Genetic Resources community was defined by the members of the Ad Hoc action GenRes Bridge.

The secretariat and Ad hoc action leader will pay close attention to send all relevant information about the project to the NCs and transmit their feedback to the project participants.

12. Future of IMAGE: information system and portal

Cf. slide presentations.

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/11_ERFP_GA_2019_IMAGE.pdf

There are two portals at present, EUGENA and IMAGE, one gives information at sample level (EUGENA) and the other one metadata (IMAGE). Our main goal is to help the development of EUGENA. However getting information at sample level is still a main challenge in lot of countries since in lot of cases an animal ID number is a way to access farmers' information such as their address etc. One way to tackle this issue would be to transform the animal ID into anonymous one.

13. Communication strategy

Cf. slide presentation.

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/12_ERFP_GA_2019_communication-strategy.pdf

The communication strategy is building on the Ad Hoc action that was developed in 2017. To do so, a contract was issued for a year (starting in June 2019) with a Spanish company, Alcandora, which works with the Spanish ministry on the topic of local products and other topics of food and agriculture. The contract will be renewed if the work is approved by the network. One of the first task of Alcandora was to promote ERFP through the social media. All the actions undergone by ERFP need to find a way to be advertised on the social media, so feel free to use the following keywords:

Instagram: @ERFP_animalgenetics

Twitter: @ERFPAnGR
Facebook: @ERFPAnGR
LinkedIn: ERFP Animal Genetic

The secretariat is also asking all NCs to send any website with relevant information about their country breeds, even if it is developed only in their national language.

14. Presentation of the SAVE network and discussion about future interactions with ERFP

Cf. slide presentation.

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/13_ERFP_GA_2019_SAVE_network.pdf

After a presentation made by N. Remijn and G. Boink (SAVE network), a discussion starts to see how both networks could better interact. The following ideas are provided:

- Invitations of ERFP experts in SAVE Foundations workshops and discussions about specific issues;
- Invitations of SAVE representative to the ERFP General Assembly;
- Nomination of a SAVE expert in the *in situ* working group;
- Tuning up of our communication strategies;
- Organizing joint meetings about suitable subjects.

15. Progress report by EAAP WG-AnGR

Cf. slide presentation.

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/14_ERFP_GA_2019_EAAP-WG-AnGR.pdf

Jesús Fernández Martín introduced the members of the EAAP WG-AnGR and the current topics proposed by the WG, ERFP and FAO for EAAP conference in Ghent:

Session 15 - What to conserve? (chair Peer Berg)

This session would deal with the fact that genetic diversity may be adaptive, neutral or detrimental and may be worthy or not conserving. The topics to be included could be: Management of recessive detrimental alleles in a small population; functional genomics; specific adaptive variation of local breeds. The presentation of real examples of populations harbouring beneficial unique genetic diversity would be encouraged.

Session 16 - Awareness of the importance of genetic resources (chair Roswitha Baumung)

This session aims at allowing to discover to what extent different sectors of the society (not only scientists) realize the benefits (damages) of the maintenance (loss) of Genetic Resources.

Two other sessions are also related to AnGR with the sessions organized by the H2020 IMAGE project on Wednesday. The sessions are:

Session 17 - Burning issues in biodiversity 1: what are the benefits from animal gene banks? Chair: Asko Maki-Tanila

Session 18 - Burning issues in biodiversity 2: fitter livestock farms from better gene banks.
Chair: Michèle Tixier-Boichard

All NCs are invited to attend the sessions. A special fee for NCs attending only one day could not be agreed on this year but further discussions with EAAP would hopefully bring up a long term solution.

16. Animal breeding regulation

Cf. slide presentation.

https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/15_ERFP_GA_2019_Animal-Breeding-Regulation.pdf

S.J. Hiemstra thanks deeply Ewa Camara (EC) for her presence to the General Assembly. Other issues related to ABS will be discussed in the afternoon during the IMAGE Forum, with the intervention of Alicja Kozłowska (EC).

Ewa Camara presented the Animal breeding regulation in a nutshell and its possible impact on genetic resources.

17. AOB

Technical information about the dinner (Saturday) and the technical tour (Sunday) were given.

The meeting ended at noon, Sunday 25th 2019.

The afternoon was dedicated to a field trip in Wachtebeke, and the participation to the IMAGE dialogue forum. The two presentations are available on the IMAGE portal, <http://www.imageh2020.eu/conteudo.php?idm=25&lang=en>.

The next GA will be held in Portugal, August 29th and 30th
