

Danijela Bojkovski

Chair of the WG *In situ* conservation and valorisation of AnGR working group

Report of In situ conservation and valorisation of AnGR ERF working group – 2019/2020

1. Objectives of the group (Summary)

The overall goal of this WG is the improvement of the in situ conservation (on-farm conservation) and valorisation of AnGR to provide a base for their sustainable use. Experiences on different initiatives with sharing of information among countries about implemented and planned activities related to on-farm conservation, success stories and projects need to be exchanged. The group will review legal conditions and financial support measures in order to optimize their implementation in on-farm conservation strategies. The WG will also support the on-farm conservation efforts for transboundary breeds as well as the promotion of the utilization of rare breeds and respective R&D activities to relevant stakeholders, for value chains and landscape management, the identification of “added value”-arguments (e. g. cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, ecosystem services, local marketing, organic agriculture). Approaches for a better integration of in situ and ex situ conservation activities in Europe need to be elaborated and promoted together with the WG “Ex situ conservation”.

2. Membership of the group (chair in grey)

Country	Name Member	Surname
Albania	Kristaq	KUME
Austria	Beate	BERGER
Croatia	Ante	IVANKOVIĆ
Finland	Juha	KANTANEN
France	Coralie	DANCHIN
Germany	Sebastian	Winkel
Greece	Dimitrios	TSIOKOS
Iceland	Birna K.	BALDURSDÓTTIR
Italy	Fabio	PILLA
Latvia	Ligija	OZOLINA
Lithuania	Ruta	ŠVEISTIENĖ

WG *in situ*

Country	Name Member	Surname
Montenegro	Milan	MARKOVIC
Nordgen*	Mervi	HONKATUKIA
Norway	Peer	BERG
Poland	Agnieszka	CHEŁMIŃSKA
Portugal	Filomena	AFONSO
Switzerland	Philippe	AMMANN
Serbia	Srdjan	STOJANOVIĆ
Slovenia	Danijela	BOJKOVSKI
Spain	Jesus	FERNANDEZ MARTIN
Sweden	Per	THUNMAN
The Netherlands	Jack	WINDIG
United Kingdom	Marcus	BATES

*observer

3. Activities in the past year and output/results

Due to the Corona pandemic, the activities of the WG were limited. A planned joint meeting with the other ERFP WGs was cancelled. However, the WG *In situ* conservation had a video conference on 20th August 2020 to discuss the most important things.

Promote and support rural development measures for AnGR

Task leader: Srdjan Stojanovic, Serbia, srdjan.stojanovic@minpolj.gov.rs

Each country has its own action plans for the breeds that are at risk of extinction. Financial support for the conservation of endangered locally adapted breeds in the countries is implemented through action plans, which are part of the Rural Development Program (RDP). A first overview on the payments for endangered breeds in the European countries has been achieved by the ERFP Ad hoc action SUBSIBREED. In addition, the EU project “Preparatory action – EU plant and animal genetic resources” provided valuable results for the implementation of payments for endangered breeds. This task shall continue the respective activities of these projects. Except direct support through the payments for conservation of AnGR, the other agro-environmental measures are being implemented in many countries within the framework of RDPs, which indirectly help conserve of AnGR (e.g. payments for the preservation of high-value pastures through grazing, organic production, etc.).

WG in situ

The objective of this task is analysing and reviewing the support measures of rural development action plans for conservation of farm animal species in the countries of member partners. This includes measures directly for endangered breeds and their impact on population trend of the breeds in partner countries and other indirect measures that affect the preservation of locally adapted endangered breeds. Most probably there are different solutions that could be used in the countries. National Coordinators will have an insight into different solutions that they could implement for their locally adapted breeds.

One main task was to review the support measures for individual breeds through questionnaires in autumn 2019. Additionally, it has been analysed which countries apply indirect support measures

Support of the project GenRes Bridge

Task leader: Danijela Bojkovski, Slovenia, danijela.bojkovski@bf.uni-lj.si

ERFP together with ECPGR and EUFORGEN applied successfully for the EU-project GenRes Bridge. The main goals of this project are the development of the European Genetic Resources Strategy and the improvement of the collaboration between the three networks ECPGR (PGR), ERFP (AnGR) and EUFORGEN (FGR) with the European Union. The three networks and their bodies shall be intensively involved in this project. The objective of the WG is to support “GenRes Bridge” with the expertise of the WG members.

The WG has provided content for the drafting of the European Genetic Resources Strategy and the domain-specific strategy for AnGR. The WG chair is member of the ERFP Ad hoc action GenRes Bridge and has contributed to the development of the European Genetic Resources Strategy and a domain-specific strategy for AnGR.

ERFP Guidelines for transboundary breeds

Task leader: Srdjan Stojanovic, Serbia, srdjan.stojanovic@minpolj.gov.rs

Very good FAO guidelines for in situ conservation of AnGR exist. However, cross-border collaboration is not well covered. In Europe, many endangered transboundary breeds exist, and thus additional efforts are needed for improved in situ conservation of these breeds. During the joint WG meeting in May 2019, however, all three WGs agreed that the issue transboundary breeds not only concerns in situ conservation but also ex situ conservation

and documentation. The WGs therefore proposed an Ad hoc action with representatives of all three WGs.

Based on the proposal of the WGs, during the ERFP Assembly Meeting 2019 it has been decided to develop an Ad hoc action for transboundary breeds. The ERFP Secretariat and the three WG chairs developed the proposal for such an Ad hoc action, which has been agreed by the SC in April 2020. The WG has nominated Srdjan Stojanovic (Task leader) to represent the WG In situ conservation and valorization of AnGR in this Ad hoc action. Furthermore, a colleague from the cattle breed society 'Rinderzucht Schleswig-Holstein' has been nominated as an external expert for this Ad hoc action.

Development of the Ad hoc action Merino

Ad hoc action leader: Fabio Pilla, Italy, pilla@unimol.it

Merino and Merino-derived sheep breeds have been widely distributed across the world, both as purebred and admixed populations. They represent an economically and historically important genetic resource, which over time has been used as the basis for the development of new breeds. In the last fifty years, several factors, among which the international crisis of the wool market, lead European Merino sheep to experience a dramatic numerical decrease to the point that most of them are considered as endangered breeds and no longer undergo active genetic improvement. However, in the last two decades, a renovated interest on natural fibres has progressively emerged and several attempts to produce high value Merino wool textile products are in place. In the following years, several local, national, or EU initiatives have been launched with the goal of giving back value to wool and either traditional or innovative wool-derived products. Under this scenario of growing interest by the industrial sector toward wool biomasses, it looks a favourable and promising time to address the issue of cross-border management and conservation of European Merino genetic stocks. It is indeed imperative to capitalize previous national and international experiences and competencies, revitalize and strengthen existing cross-sectoral interactions, stimulate active participation and joint formulation of solution-oriented strategies.

The general goal is to establish a European network of stakeholders from different categories (breeders, breeder associations, researchers, governmental organizations, the private sector, etc.) for the joint monitoring and promotion of the transnational Merino sheep population, with special emphasis on the issues concerning conservation genetics and wool use and valorization.

WG *in situ*

The WG member Fabio Pilla suggested an Ad hoc action to establish an European network on the conservation and sustainable use of Merino and Merino-derived breeds. The WG has been involved in the development of the Ad hoc action proposal, which has been agreed by the SC in spring 2020.

4. Plans and priorities for the next year (to be formally approved by Assembly)

Promote and support rural development measures for AnGR

The categorization of the answers, the development of a method to calculate the payments and the completion of the on-line brochure are still pending. For this the WG needs a further year.

Support of the project GenRes Bridge

The WG will continue to support GenRes Bridge and collaborate to the development of the European genetic resource strategy for AnGR.

ERFP Guidelines for transboundary breeds

The WG will support the Ad hoc action Transboundary breeds on request.

ERFP Ad hoc action on Merino

The WG will support the Ad hoc action on Merino breeds on request.

Best practices for in situ conservation and valorisation of AnGR and Exchange of recommendations of national advisory bodies on AnGR

Links to best practices initiatives and recommendations for in situ conservation and valorisation of AnGR can be added in the ERFP website.

5. Other

Because Sebastian Winkel leaved the WG in August 2020, the WG elected a new chair. Danijela Bojkovski is the new chair of the WG In situ conservation and valorization of AnGR.