Minutes of the ERFP Steering Committee meeting

28th of August 2020

Participants:

Chair: Sipke Joost Hiemstra, The Netherlands

National coordinators, members of the SC:

Christina Ligda, Greece

Montserrat Castellanos Moncho, Spain

Jan Hendrik Schneider, Germany

Srdjan Stojanović, Serbia

Ruta Šveistienė, Lithuania

Secretariat:

Coralie Danchin-Burge and Eleonore Charvolin-Lemaire (France)

Working groups chairmen

Danijela Bojkovski (*in* situ WG)

Enrico Sturaro (Doc & Info WG)

Fernando Tejerina Ampudia (*ex situ* WG)

FAO representative

Roswitha Baumung

1. Welcome and presentation of the SC – agenda

Sipke Hiemstra asks the Secretariat to present the agenda. All the documents presented were sent before the meeting so the SC could prepare their questions in advance to facilitate the web meeting.

2. Bilateral meeting of the ERFP SC and the FAO

Roswitha Baumung updated the SC on the latest news about FAO and presenting the slides that will be shown during the GA for comments.

EFABIS is now available in three languages (English, French, Spanish).

A guidelines about genomic characterization is being drafted under Paul Boettcher coordination, as well as an update of the ex situ guidelines, based on the H2020 IMAGE outputs.

About EFABIS: a comment is made about the fact that there is no field that can show when the date of the last update was. Eléonore Charvolin-Lemaire will do a screen shot of the view where the data is missing. On a more general level, Roswitha Baumung is pushing for sending screen shots when a problem appears or data / fields are missing so she can forward the problem to the IT team.

Enrico Sturaro reminds the audience that an item of the GenResBridge project is to provide an online training to improve the implementation of the regional database. Roswitha Baumung assures that FAO staff will be happy to give lectures on the topic, provided that the audience are the NCs or the people responsible for updating EFABIS.

It is suggested to have more links between the communication realised at ERFP level and FAO; for instance breeds presentation are now published on the ERFP website and this information could be relayed in the FAO portal.

A discussion is triggered about cryoconservation data. NCs are asked to provide information on three different portals: EFABIS, EUGENA and IMAGE. The information provided is slightly different from one portal to another but it is suggested to investigate further on the possibilities of interoperability. The best way to investigate this issue would be to implement an *Ad Hoc* action on the topic. It should be developed in link with the WG *Ex situ* and Doc & Info and the expertise of Zhivko Duchev.

The bilateral meeting closed at 10:30

3. Annual Progress report• Financial Report

Cf. slideshow.

In order to organize the next meeting, Coralie Danchin asked the NCs which online meeting tool they have been using lately. Zoom is being ranked first, with no issues regarding its use.

The SC approves that Coralie Danchin buys a Zoom licence on behalf of ERFP to organize the next General Assembly as well as all the other ERFP virtual meetings.

4. **Communication issues**

a.   Website, news items, Alcandora contract
Cf. slideshow

A proposal for a new Ad Hoc action will be presented during the GA. For now it is led by Montserrat Castellanos, but it will asked for other candidates during the session in case another NC is willing to lead the task.

It is suggested to ask Ewa Hermanowicz (EFI, leader of the communication work package in the GenResBridge project) if we would agree to join the AHA to enhance exchanges of experiences and links between our network and benefit from the GenRes Bridge activity in communication. Sipke Hiemstra will ask her before the GA.

It is reminded the previous suggestion to involve more the WG by having one person responsible for communicating issues related to the WG group.

Along with the communication AHA, the communication budget should be increased to include the possibility of realizing videos or professional pictures.

All the persons involved in the ERFP communication (therefore Alcandora and Zhivko Duchev) should be invited to the ERFP assembly.

b. – IMAGE, EFABIS and EUGENA portal - Zhivko contract

As for today, there are 10 countries and 8 genebanks that are involved in EUGENA: The work needs to be restarted in Italy since the MoU was not signed by both party and the ERFP chairman changed.

The adoption and maintenance of the IMAGE portal needs to be further discussed, it might be considered as an item of the AHA to be developed about the interoperability of the EFABIS, EUGENA, and IMAGE portals.

A private deed between Zhivko Duchev and IDELE has been signed, the invoice should be paid before the end of the summer.

5. Organisation of the General Assembly meeting

As for August 28th, 43 participants have registered including secretariat, with 30 NCs or NC representative from 28 countries, 8 observers from 5 different organisations (EAAP, EFFAB, FAO Nordgen, RBI) as well as the two WG chairmen which are not NCs.

A recap is done of all the documents provided before the meeting:

- Secretariat written report;
- WG reports;
- TF permanent secretariat report;
- AHA
    - Communication about EUGENA, led by Fernando Tejerina Ampudia (Spain)
    - Transboundary breeds, led by Eleonore Charvolin-Lemaire (France)
    - Merino network, led by Fabio Pilla (Italy)

The agenda is slightly amended following the discussion about the GenResBridge strategy (see later).

6. Meeting with the WG/TF Chairs

Cf. reports provided by each chair that will be distributed to the NCs next Monday.

a. Doc & Info WG

The chairman proposes to renew the actions in 2021 with the same budget.

Several problems hindered the way to the organization of the Mediterranean symposium. Since no progress were achieved, the action was replaced by a more informal network.

Enrico Sturaro supports the setting up of the database interoperability AHA and so is Fernando Tejerina. Enrico Sturaro emphasizes that this action would also be very relevant for the GenResridge project. It would be interesting to include someone from a genebank or familiar with genomic or genebank database such as Alessandra Stella. It should also include data analysis regarding the SDG goals and indicators.

b. Ex situ WG

The EUGENA network is improving but there are constant drawbacks since countries do not want to join the network for administrative reasons and/or it is not set as a priority for the government.

The outcome of the survey about Cryoweb came as a surprise since a majority of the respondent do not want to implement the US solution (GRIN). Before making a choice, the NCs need to bear in mind that the software devloppment is not the sole cost of the project, a constant maintenance is always needed (about 6 000 €/year for GRIN).

c. In situ WG

The SC thanks warmly Sebastian Winkel for all the work done and regrets its departure. The SC welcomes Danijela Bojkovski and thanks her for agreeing to take over the chair.

The task 1 is almost completed and the draft version will be sent by Srdjan Stojanović to the SC. Sebastian Winkel suggested to add new chapters. Dimitrios Tskiokos (Greece) will help to finish the drafting.

d. On-going Ad Hoc actions

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

Sipke Hiemstra wants to thank all the AHA leaders since a lot was achieved this year.

7. TF Permanent secretariat

Due to the Covid situation, the ERFP 2020 expenses are limited. At the same time, the budget situation is such in the various European countries that it might be difficult to argue for increased country contributions. On the other hand, the network is relying on the work of a small number of people, with a limited budget, which is not realistic in the long run with the new MYPOW objectives.

The main issue is to see if there is an agreement to increase the overall budget, and if the answer is yes, when this raise will start.

8. GenResBridge

Danijela Bojkovski (AHA task leader) starts with a brief update on the integrated strategy. The new draft is expected for September 10th. It was hoped that a beta version could be sent to the NCs before the GA but the task leader was not able to provide it [Information added after the SC].

Therefore the work done during the GA will be focused on the AnGR strategy. The structure will be presented and feedback from the NCs will be collected during the online sessions. The AHA will work on questions to be answered during the sessions, the assembly will be divided in three groups led by Enrico Sturaro, Danijela Bojkoski and Sipke Hiemstra. The people will be randomly assigned to the different groups by the secretariat by avoiding having all the representatives from a given country / organisation in the same group.

9. Activity plan and Budget Proposal for 2021

Cf. slides.

For the second year in a row, the budget presented is more than the expected country contribution. It shows the increasing amount of work the ERFP achieves, which is sustainable now thanks to the existing remaining funds. However this cannot be sustained in the long run, which argues for an increase in the countries' contribution (cf. TF Permanent Secretariat).

The budget voted in the General Assembly is the maximum amount that can be spent per item. The funding devoted to the SC implies that most of them will be held virtually, since there are now 4 meetings per year.

10. AOB

Cf. presentation of the Geronimo project sent to the SC.

Following previous discussions in a former SC, the ERFP network is again asked to participate to project. The content is related to AnGR and some participants are involved in ERFP activities. The main drawback is that as the number of requests is growing, it will impact the ERFP secretariat workload. When the projects are clearly linked to AnGR, the secretariat should answer in a positive way but also state that other members of the SC might replace the secretariat in case of incompatible agenda. In general, the ERFP implications in these projects is a great way to increase the visibility of our network and an opportunity to remind the scientific communities that their results need to be communication to breeding societies.

> **The next meeting of the SC will be held virtually November 16th 2020 at 13:30**

The meeting closed at17:30.