

Minutes of the ERFP Steering Committee meeting

March 13th 2025, virtual meeting

Participants:

Chair: Danijela Bojkovski, Slovenia

National coordinators, members of the SC:

Rachel Davis, UK

Georgia Hadjipavlou, Cyprus

Ante Ivankovic, Croatia

Gita Jansone, Latvia

Nina Svartedal, Norway

Secretariat:

Coralie Danchin, and Eleonore Charvolin-Lemaire (Inrae) (France)

Danijela Bojkovski welcomes the participants and introduces the agenda. The agenda of the SC meeting is approved.

1. Brief information about the budget and bank payments

Cf. slide presentation.

Reimbursement rules: the rules were amended according to the SC suggestions. Following the requests from EAAP – see mail sent in February – the template was changed a second time.

The SC reviewed the 2025 AHA proposals at our last meeting and gave several orientations. The secretariat informs about the outcomes of these orientations:

- Transhumance AHA

Requests were made by the Secretariat to valorize the work of the 2024 AHA by writing at least one article in the GENRES journal. No information was returned therefore the 2025 AHA is not accepted.

- Cryopreservation in small ruminants

A large group of experts has been defined which will conduct to exceed the maximum threshold of 10 k€ for the AHA if all are travelling to meet.

There is a consensus from the SC to reject the validation of a meeting which will not follow the ERFP rules for various reasons including the fact that it will set a precedent. The secretariat will inform the AHA leader and suggest meeting first virtually, define a clear action plan including a restricted set of experts for a physical meeting. If possible, finding sponsorship for a wider meeting will be suggested.

- Country contributions

Following the decision voted during the 2023 General Assembly, the secretariat asked for modified country contributions. Italy stated that it will pay the previous fee, and Greece informed the secretariat and chair that to its opinion, the Assembly did not follow the ToR when voting the contribution raise: “Voting at the Assembly is by majority vote of the NCs except voting on financial matters where consensus is required”.

Rachel Davis reminds the SC that in English “consensus” means “majority”. However, the ToR wording leads to confusion. This important issue needs further expertise, contacts will be taken with ECPGR to know how financial matters are decided in this network.

2. Follow up of the work by the EURC EAB

Most of the work done by the EURC EAB consisted of reporting on the first period of activity. The only active task is the “breeding program” one, contacts will be made with Christina Ligda (AHA leader) and WG chairs to continue.

3. Follow-up of the AnGR Strategy for Europe: implementation of the Action Plan

The virtual meeting was not held, a date is decided during the SC before the ERFP WG.

4. Planning of the further ERFP activities in 2025

Most of the meeting is dedicated to exchanging the timetable and topics. A follow-up meeting will be held between ERFP chairs and secretariat to finalize the agenda. Three topics are suggested for the joint session:

- Global plan of action, a European perspective. Starting with the FAO’s GPA, a review of points that could be changed. Nina Svartedal could start this work with the help of experienced NCs since Sipke Hiemstra which will be on sabbatical at the time of the WG meeting.
- TB breeds, topic led by Eleonore Charvolin;
- A FAO perspective on the reasons why countries are not reporting and/or updating data. Eleonore will contact Roswitha to see if she agrees to do the presentation.

Logistics issues: according to the ERFP reimbursement rules, one meal per day can be paid / reimbursed by ERFP. Since the meeting rooms are paid by the local organizer and that lunch will be provided by catering, the SC votes to pay also for the social dinner on Tuesday night since it is an important time for networking. The secretariat will contact Christina Ligda to let her know about the decision.

The secretariat asked the different AHA leaders about the implementation of their work for 2025. The “new genebank tool” for EUGENA had its first meeting. Ante Ivanovic has almost achieved its template for a survey, it will be presented during the ERFP WG. Danijela Bojkovski suggested collaborating with the landscape AHA since a template will also be prepared for one of the tasks of the AHA. The ex situ/in situ AHA is not started yet.

TF Transboundary breeds: the article has been submitted to the GENRES journal and is under review. The secretariat will investigate if further work is planned for the TF genebank documentation.

5. Organization of the General Assembly

The GA was thought to be held in Innsbruck, Austria, however the secretariat did not get any details information yet from the NC.

6. 2025 Election

Nina SVARTEDAL will finish her mandate this summer, a new representative from the Northern region needs to be found. Unfortunately, Denmark does not have a NC anymore and it seems that the Swedish NC also left her position.

7. AOB

- Letter of interest from EUGENA

The platform GENOPHENIX (Michèle Boichard, INRAe) asked a letter of support from EUGENA. This infrastructure is an ESFRI infrastructure, and it is expected to operate for 10 to 20 years. A possibility for EUGENA would be to be part of the stakeholder’s forum, for this GENOPHENIX needs a letter of interest from EUGENA. The EUGENA SC approved the initiative that needs to be validated by the ERFP SC. M. Boichard was also wondering about the possibility for ERFP to send such a letter too.

The SC debates briefly about when ERFP should endorse projects. In this case, since EUGENA would be part of a stakeholder forum, it seems appropriate, and since EUGENA is a network endorsed by ERFP, there is no need for ERFP to send another letter.

- FAO terminology

Natalia Kravtsova, who is a FAO terminology Officer, had the following request:

“We’ve noticed that on your website only the long denomination “European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources” and abbreviation ERFP are used, whereas in other sources (including FAO sources) the short version “European Regional Focal Point” is also widely used.



Could you kindly advise whether the short denomination “European Regional Focal Point” is also acceptable or is to be avoided. We will then revise our entry accordingly.”

The SC is uncertain whether "European Regional Focal Point" refers exclusively to our organization or if it could also apply to another entity. For this reason, our response will specify that we prefer the full name, **‘European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources,’** to be used when first mentioned in any document. Afterward, the abbreviation **ERFP** should be used consistently.

The next SC will be held virtually June 10th 2025