



WORKING GROUP EX SITU CONSERVATION

THE REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2025-2026

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Chair of the ERFP Ex Situ WG
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ERFP General Assembly
Hamburg, Germany



Aims of the Ex situ WG

- 1. To exchange experiences and knowledge between European countries on Ex Situ conservation strategies;
- 2. To support the establishment, further development, efficiency and effectiveness of national gene banks for AnGR
- 3. To develop the European Gene Bank Network for AnGR (EUGENA)

Main activities in 2025/2026

- a) ERFP General Assembly 2025 – Innsbruck, Austria (August 2025)
– report and workplan 2025/2026, new AHA’s
- b) EUGENA development (2 new countries on board: 5 new genebanks)
- c) Ex situ WG meeting 2026 – Sassari, Sardinia, Italy – collaboration with other WG’s
- d) Collaboration with the ERFP Secretariat and SC

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Workplan of Ex situ WG Activities for 2025/2026

Integration of in situ and ex situ conservation approaches – Fernando & Holger & Ewa – in progress – see the specific report

Advances in semen cryopreservation in small ruminants – Jane Morrell – see the specific report

NEW!
ex situ in vivo for EUGENA – lead by Zhivko Ducheve

NEW!
AHA for genomic data by Annemieke Rattink

NEW!
cryotechnics-pigs and horses by Jane Morrell

Ranking rate		Implementation status
1.	To Promote the incorporation of the ex situ conservation activities in the breeding programs of breeders societies together with in situ conservation activities (AHA in situ/ex situ integration)	+/-
2.	To Disseminate and promote the guidelines with recommendations to implement derogations for the collection, processing, storage and use of germinal products intended to be kept in genebanks. (AHA Animal Health Regulation and Genebanks)	+
3.	To Share knowledge and expertise in relation with ex situ conservation.	+/-
4.	To Develop of EUGENA.	+/-
5.	To Spread information about ex situ conservation and EUGENA in collaboration with the Communication Strategy of the ERFP.	-/+
6.	To Analyse the incorporation of ex situ – in vivo facilities to EUGENA, in collaboration with the in situ Conservation WG.	+/-
7.	To Support the utilization of Quality Management Systems in Genebanks	+
8.	To Support the implementation of a modern gene bank documentation software	+/-

A follow-up seminar was organised as a continuation of this AHA.
Presentations from the event are available here:
<https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/index.php/event/ad-hoc-action-workshop-on-small-ruminant-semen-cryopreservation/>

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Annual meeting – Sassari -18-19th May 2026

The issues of the **ex situ WG meeting agenda** were:

- EUGENA development – updating the status of the network, discussing recent activities and future plans, defining ex situ in vivo gene banks, and encouraging further participation in EUGENA.
- Priorities and new Ad Hoc Actions (AHAs) – identifying future priorities, including activities related to the cryoconservation of horses and pigs and the use of genomic data.
- Cryoconservation and reproductive material – exchange of practical experience concerning epididymal sperm and assessment of post-thaw semen quality in conserved populations.

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Annual meeting – Sassari -18-19th May 2026

- Emergency preparedness – improving the preparedness of gene banks for outbreaks, potential threats and losses in livestock populations, particularly endangered breeds.
- Strengthening national ex situ conservation systems – including the development of the National Gene Bank in Greece and support from the Working Group.
- Conservation of endangered breeds – discussion of practical cases, regulatory support and state aid measures for endangered breeds.
- Integration of in situ and ex situ approaches – further development of cooperation between the two conservation approaches, supported by examples from Morocco, Serbia and Poland – joint meeting of in situ and ex situ WG.

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Annual meeting – Sassari -18-19th May 2026

Joint session of all three WGs

- The joint meeting focused on three main areas:
- Report from the Ex situ Working Group – presentation of the main activities and current work of the respective ERFP Working Groups, followed by discussion.
- EURC-EAB activities – presentation of a report from the European Union Reference Centre for Endangered Animal Breeds (EURC-EAB), followed by discussion.
- Emergencies in endangered breeds – discussion of emergency situations affecting endangered breeds and their conservation, presented within the ERFP framework.

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b) Development of EUGENA

New Gene Banks in EuGena

2 new countries (Lithuania, Norway)

5 new gene banks

+ 2 340 918 new samples

August 2025



August 2026



*more information in Eugena SB raport for 2025/2026

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d) Collaboration with ERFP Secretary and SC

- the dissemination of information and knowledge (about ex situ conservation activities) in the ERFP Webpage and social media.

- The presentations of the meeting can be downloaded from:

- <https://www.animalgeneticresources.net/index.php/event/erfp-working-groups-joint-meetings/>

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

- **Seventeen countries** (Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK) submitted their rankings of the tasks.



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The final results are as follows:

RANKING	Priority
1.	SHARING KNOWLEDGE TO FAVOR incorporation of the ex situ/in situ conservation activities in the breeding programs
2.	Genebanks in Emergencies: Preparedness, Response and Recovery*
3.	Developing National Animal Gene Banks: Knowledge Exchange between Countries Requiring and Providing Support
4.	Sharing knowledge and expertise in relation with ex situ conservation – poultry, bees, aquatic, steam cells
5.	Development of EUGENA – genebanks and ex situ in vivo facilities
6.	Analysis the incorporation of ex situ – in vivo facilities to EUGENA*
7.	Spread information about ex situ conservation and EUGENA in collaboration with the Communication Strategy of the ERFP
8.	Support the implementation of a modern gene bank documentation software

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Proposal of new AHA’s or ex situ WG tasks in 2027/2028

No	Working title	Leader	Countries
1	Establishing and Developing National Gene Banks: Knowledge Exchange between Countries Requiring and Providing Support	Katerina Saratsi, Ewa	Cyprus, Greece, Albania, The United Kingdom, Spain, Poland, The Netherlands, ?
2	Cryotechnics - poultry	Jaana, Krisztina	Finland, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, The Netherlands, ?
3	Genebanks in Emergencies: Preparedness, Response and Recovery (with in situ WG)	Ewa, Srdjan, EURC-EAB?	Spain, Serbia, Poland, The United Kingdom, The Netherlands, ?

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