

Minutes of the ERFP Steering Committee meeting

March 10th, 2026, virtual meeting

Participants:

Chair: Danijela Bojkovski, Slovenia

National coordinators, members of the SC:

Marcus Bates, UK

Georgia Hadjipavlou, Cyprus

Ante Ivankovic, Croatia

Gita Jansone, Latvia

Ewa Sosin, Poland

Secretariat:

Coralie Danchin, Idele, France - Eleonore Charvolin-Lemaire, INRAe, France

Danijela Bojkovski welcomes the participants and introduces the agenda. The Agenda of the Steering Committee (SC) meeting is approved.

1. Follow up of the previous meeting - Brief information about the budget and bank payments

Cf. slide presentation.

The following follow-up actions were completed since the last SC meeting: the ERFP newsletter was sent to the ERFP network before Christmas as planned; Enrico Sturaro was informed that the aquaculture topic could be included in the GENRES journal. Regarding the webinar on disease outbreak (lead: Eleonore Charvolin), preliminary work was carried out; however, there was no time to implement the activities. Marcus Bates offered his support. The SC agreed that this topic would also be relevant for discussion within the Working Groups meeting. It was therefore decided that the webinar should be organised at the end of September or beginning of October. The SC also noted that it would be beneficial to include EU Commissioners in the organisation or, at least, to inform them about the webinar at an early stage. In addition, connections should be established with the EURAC EAB consortium. Further follow up work has also been undertaken on this topic. A joint text entitled “Safeguarding Endangered Breeds before and during disease outbreaks” was drafted by ERFP and EURAC EAB and published on their respective websites and social media channels. A revised version of the text is now available following amendments proposed by the EU Commissioners, mainly concerning references in the text.

To finalise the 2025 budget, a reminder will be sent to the participants of the latest AHA and EUGENA Steering Board to complete their reimbursement procedures.

2. Secretariat election

One application was received from the Agency for Rural Development of Istria on 22 December 2025, ahead of the 31 December 2025 deadline. The application is formally eligible. The documents were circulated to the members of the SC in January, for review according to the Terms of Reference (ToR). Members were asked to assess the application based on the following criteria:

- Competence in the field of AnGR, particularly regarding the objectives of ERFP.
- Experience in international collaboration, coordination and networking.
- Possible conflicts of interests between hosting the ERFP Secretariat and applicants other activities.
- Capability to host the ERFP Secretariat, including fluency in English.
- Financial conditions.

Each SC member provided their views according to the ToR, except for Ante Ivankovic, who abstained as the application originates from Croatia. Overall, the SC considered the candidacy to be strong. The staff involved seem competent, and their capacities to host the secretariat considered relevant. It was noted that there are no specific competencies related to monogastric species mentioned in the application. The application was assessed as comprehensive, and questions were addressed satisfactory.

The current secretariat reminded the SC that certain communication activities are currently carried out by IDELE in addition to the Secretariat tasks and questioned whether this aspect is covered in the applicant's proposal. The SC expressed the view that communication activities should ideally be included within the Secretariat's responsibilities to ensure efficiency.

The SC therefore asked IDELE to send a description of the current communication tasks to the applicant to clarify whether these activities are included in the proposal. If not, the applicant should provide an estimate of the additional budget required within two weeks.

Once this aspect has been clarified, the current Secretariat will prepare a draft evaluation of the application, which will be reviewed by the Chair. The application documents and the evaluation will then be sent by email to all National Coordinators.

The change of Secretariat will need to be approved by a vote at the next General Assembly (GA). IDELE will remind the applicant that it should present its candidacy during the GA and explain how the handover process will be organised. The new Secretariat is expected to begin its activities on 1 January 2027.

3. Projection of the budget spending and suggestion how to limit expenses

Cf. slide presentation.

The Assembly requested that a long-term projection should be prepared by the secretariat and that, based on this information, that the SC suggests possible savings and solutions. The Assembly expects concrete suggestions regarding actions to limit expenses and achieve a balanced budget, noting that actual country contributions are consistently below the expected level.

Based on the information provided by the Secretariat for the current SC meeting, the following options could be proposed at the next General Assembly (GA):

- Implement specific actions to encourage more countries to pay their voluntary contributions.
- Discontinue certain communication activities, such as the contribution to the *GENRES* journal
- Continue the practice already initiated of organising AHA meetings alongside Working Group meetings in order to reduce travel reimbursement costs.

By the end of February 2026, the available bank funds were approximately three times the annual spending budget, which is above the two-times threshold defined by the ToR. Financial projections will therefore need to be presented at the GA, together with possible savings – already identified and establishment of an early warning mechanism

According to the Secretariat, the financial situation in 2025 could serve as a model for the long-term functioning of ERFP, with a limited negative balance (estimated at less than €2,000). At the same time, it was recalled that country contributions consist of national public funds and that ERFP should not accumulate profit from them. It is therefore considered normal that funds saved during the COVID period are gradually spent. The final financial presentation for the GA could be delivered either by the Secretariat or by a member of the SC.

Specific discussions also took place regarding the EUGENA Steering Board. According to Ewa Sosin, it is important to continue holding physical meetings in order to strengthen the network, as the participants differ from those in the ERFP network. It was also recalled that a dedicated budget of €4,000 had previously been approved within the ex situ Working Group budget for this purpose, and that this allocation should be respected.

4. Planning of the further ERFP activities in 2026

a. WG planning: organization; first agenda proposal

Holger Göderz, Chair of the In situ Working Group, joined the meeting for this specific item. The general schedule of the Working Group meetings was agreed, with the start on Tuesday

at 09:00 and the conclusion after lunch on Wednesday at 14:30, when the EAAP meeting will begin. Meeting rooms will also be available the previous day for AHA meetings until 20:00.

The Secretariat will send the registration information to the Working Groups within one week, together with the overall time schedule. AHA leaders will be responsible for providing information regarding their respective meetings.

A main topic was suggested to the Working Group Chairs for the joint session, focusing on safeguarding endangered breeds before and during emergencies (e.g. fires, disease outbreaks). The ERFP Chair asked the Working Group Chairs to finalise the agenda one month prior to the meeting and send it to the members of the WG (participants of the meeting).

b. Ad hoc actions and TF

All AHA proposals for 2026 were accepted following a budget revision, with the exception of the proposal on cryopreservation in small ruminants. The AHA leaders will be informed accordingly.

Regarding the 2025 AHA activities, the group working on landscape management will meet in Sassari and is expected to finalise its work in time for the General Assembly. The final outcomes of the AHA on success stories will be presented in May.

The next physical meeting of the EUGENA Steering Board will take place in Nitra on 10–11 June 2026. It was recalled that the approved budget for this meeting is €4,000. Questions were raised regarding the possible transformation of the Steering Board into a Task Force.

5. Organization of the General Assembly

A meeting room for the General Assembly will be available in the same building as the EAAP Congress (CCH). As BMLEH has booked the CCH for both Saturday and Sunday, the room will be available for ERFP. The room can be used throughout Saturday and on Sunday morning.

A separate room will need to be booked for the SC meeting on Friday; Holger Göderz offered his assistance with this arrangement.

Holger Göderz also provided information regarding the proposed field trip. The excursion is planned to Hof Tütsberg, a landscape management farm located in the Lüneburger Heide, approximately one hour from Hamburg, which maintains endangered breeds. The farm is planning to hold a public farm festival on the same day, which would allow ERFP participants to join the visitors, form smaller groups, and explore the various activities and demonstrations.

6. Follow up of the work by the EURC EAB

The first NCA webinar was held on 24 February and was attended by approximately 30 participants, including Ewa Camara (EU). Overall feedback was positive, and good interaction was achieved using online tools such as Wooclap and Poll. Three additional follow-up webinars are planned to take place monthly.

The Secretariat informed the SC that the EURC EAB website now includes links to National Competent Authorities and EU-approved breeding programmes for each country. In addition, two tools are available on the website to calculate mean kinship and the population differentiation index.

Work is still ongoing to finalise the guidelines on endangered breeds.

7. AOB

No AOB.

The next SC will be held virtually June 9th, 2026