Short descriptions of the European Programmes
ECPGR, ERFP/EUGENA, EUFORGEN and MIRRI

European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR)

www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/

The European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) is a collaborative Programme funded by currently 35 countries of the European region, aimed at ensuring the long-term conservation and facilitating the increased utilization of plant genetic resources in Europe. This Programme operates since 1980 and is overseen by a Steering Committee composed by the National Coordinators of the member countries. National Coordinators are nominated by the respective Ministries of Agriculture or competent authorities. ECPGR was originally created on the basis of the recommendations of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Genebank Committee of the European Association for Research on Plant Breeding (EUCARPIA).

ECPGR has embraced the principles of the FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Treaty). All ECPGR activities are therefore in line with the Treaty and aim at facilitating its implementation by the European countries.

ECPGR has created EURISCO, the online catalogue of European *ex situ* plant collections (currently the largest contributor to the FAO Global Information System) and the European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS). The latter is a joint approach to conservation, access and management of the European *ex situ* collections. Moreover, a European concept for the *in situ* conservation of Crop Wild Relatives in Europe has been agreed by all the ECPGR member countries and is currently a reference document for action. A similar concept for the conservation and management of on-farm genetic resources in Europe is under way.

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European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources (ERFP)

www.rfp-europe.org

The European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources (ERFP) was initiated in 1998 and became formally operational in 2001 as the European part of FAO´s global coordination structure for animal genetic resources which is based upon national and regional focal points. Today the ERFP is the regional platform to support the *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and sustainable use of animal genetic resources, to enhance the National Coordinators (NCs) activities at the European level and to facilitate the implementation of FAO's Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources in Europe.

The objectives of the ERFP are:

- To support the in situ and ex situ conservation and sustainable use of AnGR in European countries.
- To facilitate the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for AnGR in Europe.
- To assist and enhance the AnGR activities of NCs at the European level.
- To develop and maintain regular contact and exchange of relevant information on AnGR horizontally between European NCs and EAAP and vertically with the Global Focal Point in Rome using existing structures.
- To stimulate the funding and organisation of regional projects, research, workshops and national programmes for AnGR within the European Region.
- To maintain an appropriate liaison with the European Institutions, the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and regional and international NGOs. For scientific aspects, it is supported by the European Association of Animal Production's Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources (EAAP WG-AGR).
- To stimulate and coordinate the maintenance and further development of national and regional AnGR databases and to encourage European information networking on AnGR.

The organisational core of ERFP consists of the Assembly of NCs, Steering Committee (SC) and Secretariat. The ERFP activities are carried out inter alia through Working Groups, Task Forces and *Ad hoc* actions such as projects. Over the years of functioning a lot of successful projects, workshops and Ad hoc Actions were completed. The results of those activities can be seen at the ERFP website (http://www.rfp-europe.org/).

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European Gene Bank Network for Animal Genetic Resources (EUGENA)

In 2013 first steps have been taken to officially establish the European Genebank Network for Animal Genetic Resources (EUGENA) in order to facilitate the implementation of the FAO's Global Plan of Action and the Nagoya Protocol for ABS in Europe. EUGENA is the network of gene banks in the European countries with the objective to support the *ex situ* conservation and sustainable use of AnGR in Europe under common terms of agreement. EUGENA is the platform of national gene banks operating under the umbrella of ERFP at the regional level of Europe.

The Objectives of EUGENA are:

- to support Genebanks in ERFP member states to fulfil their individual roles and objectives;
- to improve monitoring and assessment of AnGR kept in ex situ collections in ERFP member states by sharing information on Genebank collections;
- to improve Genebank operations and procedures in ERFP member states by sharing information;
- to contribute to the long-term conservation and maintenance of AnGR in ex situ collections in ERFP member states;
- to use synergies for ex situ conservation and sustainable use of AnGR by joint activities of Genebanks in ERFP member states;
- to increase the efficiency of ex situ conservation and sustainable use of the genetic diversity of transboundary breeds;
- to promote harmonization of acquisition and access terms for ex situ conservation and sustainable use throughout the Genebanks in ERFP member states;
- to facilitate a quality improvement of the Genebanks in ERFP member states;
- to create an element of the European research infrastructure for conservation and sustainable use of AnGR;
- to facilitate a regional European approach for international cooperation and exchange of AnGR in the context of the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol for Access and Benefit Sharing.

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European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN)

www.euforgen.org

The European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) is an international cooperation programme that promotes the conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources in Europe as an integral part of sustainable forest management. It was established in 1994 as a result of a resolution adopted in 1990 by the first Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe) a pan-European high-level political process for dialogue and cooperation on forest policies in Europe. EUFORGEN contributes to the implementation of Forest Europe commitments on forest genetic resources and to relevant decisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). EUFORGEN also contributes to the implementation of regional strategic priorities of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources (GPA-FGR) and provides inputs to European and global assessments on forest genetic resources. EUFORGEN is overseen by a Steering Committee composed by the National Coordinators of the member countries. National Coordinators are nominated by the respective Ministries responsible for forests in the member countries. More than 30 European countries have contributed to its work; currently 23 countries are funding the Programme.

EUFORGEN has developed and maintains the EUFGIS information system (http://portal.eufgis.org). EUFGIS provides geo-referenced information on the conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe and access to detailed data on genetic conservation units of forest trees in different countries. EUFGIS serves as a documentation platform linking national inventories on forest genetic resources in Europe. Countries use EUFGIS for various reporting efforts, such as the State of Europe's Forests and the State of World's Forest Genetic Resources reports. It is also used for identifying gaps in genetic conservation efforts and for developing genetic conservation strategies for forest trees at pan-European level.

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Microbial Resource Research Infrastructure (MIRRI)

www.mirri.org/

MIRRI is the pan-European research infrastructure for microbial resources.

By provision of high quality microorganisms, associated data and the broad expertise of our partners, MIRRI aims to support research and development in the field of biotechnology.

Launched in 2012, the pan-European **Microbial Resource Research Infrastructure** (MIRRI) is part of the BioMedical Science Research Infrastructure (BMS RI) ESFRI landscape. Currently **more than 40 public biorepositories and research institutes** from 19 European countries collaborate to establish MIRRI as an European Research Infrastructure, the legal structure of which is currently under discussion.

The **vision of MIRRI** is to be a unique pan-European high-performance platform **adding value to known and yet unknown microbial biodiversity** and exploiting novel sources and knowledge to discover and disclose for the bioeconomy and bioscience.

MIRRI will generate solutions to societal challenges by stimulating interaction between academia and bioindustry.

MIRRI aims to provide a **collaborative work environment** inspiring excellence and to drive collaboration across borders and disciplines. Within concerted efforts, the consortium partners coherently and jointly work together with the objective to alleviate the current fragmentation of bioresource holdings and information, and eliminate duplication and redundancy at the national and pan-European level.

We bring together research, education and industry to promote global responsibility towards biodiversity and to construct an innovative Europe.

This vision is feasible thanks to the development of strong trust in the legally secured exchange of high quality resources and enriched as well as curated data sets. Presenting global solutions to microbiological needs, a **coordinated approach** is required by a consortium of national mBRCs guided by their stakeholders. Thus, MIRRI provides targeted microbial resources that enable researchers in every major discipline to solve our grand societal challenges – energy supply, climate change, and healthcare for all.