



## Minutes of the 14th ECPGR Executive Committee meeting

27 October 2019, Tuusula, Finland

Present:

Marianne Lefort (Chair)  
Eva Thörn (former Chair)  
Marc Lateur (Belgium)  
Vojtěch Holubec (Czech Republic)  
Küllü Annamaa (Estonia)  
Benvindo Martins Maçãs (Portugal)  
Lorenzo Maggioni (ECPGR Secretariat)

The Agenda for this meeting is available online ([here](#))

### 1. Evaluation of Grant Scheme proposals for the Second Call of Phase X

Two proposals were submitted as a result of the Second Call of the ECPGR Activity Grant Scheme. Following an evaluation of these proposals, based on the established criteria, the ExCo selected one proposal from the *Avena* Working Group (WG) for funding, with some recommended adjustments. The second proposal, from the On-farm conservation and management WG, was commended for the interesting proposed model, but many precisions and amendments were also considered necessary, therefore the ExCo will request to receive a serious revision of the proposal before funding can be granted.

The approved proposal, listed in the table below, needs to be sent to the Steering Committee (SC) to allow for comments or objections regarding the proposed partnership in the Activity. The results of the evaluation will be sent by the ExCo Chair to the Activity Coordinators of the submitted proposals. The successful proposal and the corresponding Letter of Award will be published on the ECPGR website.

Title of approved proposal, with minor amendments required	Working Group	Coordinator	Budget
Updated MORPHological dEscriptors for <i>Avena</i> Species (UMORPHEAS)	<i>Avena</i>	Andreas Katsiotis, Cyprus	€ 15 000
<b>Total Budget</b>			<b>€15 000</b>

### 2. Evaluation of First Call's proposal from the *Brassica* WG

The ExCo evaluated the replies received from the Chair of the *Brassica* WG, in relation to the proposal 'EUBRASWILD', submitted under the First Call, on 'Capturing *Brassica* wild relatives' diversity in South Eastern Europe'. The ExCo had requested a number of clarifications and possible adjustments before the proposal could be accepted for funding. The clarifications were appreciated as the focus of the proposal was better specified. At the same time, not sufficient corresponding adjustments were noted in the project proposal and budget table. The Activity Coordinator will therefore be requested to submit a fully revised proposal and budget table, focusing on collecting and sharing wild brassicas from the Balkan area.

### 3. WG Activities' budget

The Secretary, Lorenzo Maggioni, explained that the starting budget of Phase X that is dedicated to Grant Scheme activities (€188 599) and Meetings (€188 599), could be tentatively increased during 2019, thanks to various budget sources: 1) carry-over funds (net of missing contributions from Phase X); 2) EC-funded GenRes Bridge project funds; 3) voluntary contribution from Germany; 4) voluntary contribution from Hungary (see table below).

A budget of €302 799 is sufficient to fund twenty 15k activities, that is on average a bit less than one activity for each of the 23 Working Groups.

	<b>WG Meetings</b>	<b>WG Other Actions (Grant Scheme)</b>
Regular budget	188 599	188 599
Carry-over Phase IX (est.)	64 200	64 200
GenRes Bridge support	50 000	50 000
Germany Support to WGs	30 000	7 500
Hungary voluntary contribution for WG activities	6 000	6 000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>338 799</b>	<b>316 299</b>

Based on the above table, the average annual budget available amounts to €67 760 for Meetings and €63 260 for the Grant Scheme. Funds granted in 2019 for the Grant Scheme amount so far to €39 000 (three Activities funded in two Calls) and €30 000 for Meetings.

### 4. Next call for proposals

Upon consideration that few proposals were submitted under the two Calls launched in 2019, and given budget availability, the ExCo suggested to launch a Third Call with deadline 14 February 2020. The ExCo will evaluate the proposals for the Third Call during its next meeting, which is planned for 27 February 2020 in Longyearbyen, Svalbard Islands, Norway. In order to incentivize the submission of proposals, the maximum amount fundable under the Third Call will be raised to €20 000.

### 5. Implementation of Phase X: short briefing by Secretary

The Secretary updated the ExCo about the status of contributions received to date for Phase X (€327 200 from 22 countries) and informed that membership to ECPGR Phase X had reached 23 signatory members. Additional short updates were the following:

- The EVA project funded by Germany started in July 2019 with the preparation of barley and wheat accessions for dispatching from genebanks to the multiplier institutions, in time for the fall planting.
- An additional project proposal had been submitted by the Secretariat to Germany and was approved for funding in support of 'ECPGR meetings and public awareness activities' (€60 000). This project covers, inter alia, the funding of the first meetings of the new WGs on Maize (scheduled in December 2019 in Belgrade, Serbia) and on Berries (scheduled in February 2020 in Dresden, Germany).
- Selections for a new scientific assistant joining the ECPGR Secretariat were completed. The new staff member, Sandra Goritschnig, an Austrian national, is expected to start her new job in Maccarese on 25 November. She will mainly be in charge of the

coordination of the EVA Network project and of the publication of the new GenRes Journal, as part of the GenRes Bridge project.

- A student from Germany (Sonja Ensslin) was undertaking a three-month internship at the ECPGR Secretariat, from October to December 2019, providing support for website, communication and reporting activities.
- One expression of interest had been received for filling the position of Chair of the WG on Fibre crops (Flax and Hemp).

Based on the Expression of Interest and the CV provided by Miroslava Vrbová – Prokopová, Czech Republic, the ExCo agreed to elect her as new Chair of the WG on Fibre crops (Flax and Hemp).

## **6. Follow-up on AEGIS**

The meeting noted with pleasure the recent new membership of Serbia to AEGIS.

The ExCo also appreciated the draft flow diagram prepared by the Secretariat for the implementation of AEGIS at national level. A few improvements were suggested and then the ExCo invited the Secretariat to provide the flow diagram to all National Coordinators.

The Secretariat asked advice about the implementation of Action Point 22 of the Madrid workshop of December 2018 (*Action Point 22: Write a letter to the ministries under advice from NCs, pointing out the results of this meeting and the value of AEGIS*). The ExCo agreed that, one year after the workshop, it would not be appropriate to write such a letter to all ministries, and rather suggested to focus efforts on the few countries that have not yet joined AEGIS, as well as to approach the National Coordinators of those member countries that have not yet identified and flagged AEGIS accessions.

## **7. Establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Crop Trust**

A draft MoU prepared by the Secretariat had been provided to the Trust for comments. Once comments will be received, the whole Steering Committee will be involved for comments and endorsement in view of a possible formal signature at the occasion of the Svalbard anniversary at the end of February 2020.

It was noted that the possibility to formalize the option of primary safety-duplication at the Seed Vault would not be within the remit of the Crop Trust decision-making. However, the Trust could facilitate the dialogue at this regard with the responsible authorities at NordGen and with the Government of Norway.

## **8. Seed Vault anniversary event and opportunity for an ExCo meeting**

It was agreed that the entire ExCo would attend the Seed Vault anniversary and organize a back-to-back meeting of at least one day. It was noted that flights to Svalbard and hotel rooms would need to be booked urgently, before they are sold out for the special event. The ExCo meeting agenda will include the evaluation of the proposals submitted to the Third Call, the preparation of the mid-term Steering Committee meeting and follow up about the Jubilee Video and communication strategy. This meeting is scheduled for the end of 2020/beginning of 2021, as part of the GenRes Bridge project and to be organized together with the other networks EUFORGEN and ERFP.

## **9. ECPGR Communication and public relations strategy**

The ECPGR Communication Strategy, recently endorsed by the Steering Committee, was still missing agreed statements for a Vision and a Mission.

After some discussion, the ExCo proposed the following statements, to be circulated to the Steering Committee for comments and possible approval:

**Vision:** *The widest crop diversity for sustainable agriculture, food security and quality*

**Mission:** *European network for safe conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity*

Regarding the preparation of a Jubilee Video at the occasion of the ECPGR 40th anniversary, it was agreed that the Secretariat should organize as soon as possible a Skype meeting for the respective Task Force, to discuss the questions suggested by Ewa Hermanowicz and other ideas. In addition, Ewa will also be invited, in case she agrees to help.

## **10. Other business**

The ExCo discussed the need to replace Marc Lateur at the end of its term as member of the ExCo on behalf of the 'West region in a broad sense'. Marc agreed to serve as ExCo member for two additional months until the end of February, allowing his participation at the Seed Vault Anniversary event and ExCo meeting. In the meantime, potential candidates will be approached by the ExCo Chair based on an agreed ranking, aiming at the replacement of Marc to take effect as of March 2020.

On the preceding night, the ExCo had celebrated and warmly thanked Eva Thörn for her five-year contribution as Chair of the ExCo and for her long and precious collaboration with ECPGR.