

Report of the Steering Committee

Eighteenth (Mid-Term) Meeting
1–4 June 2026, Tbilisi, Georgia



The **European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR)** is a collaborative programme among most European countries aimed at rationally and effectively conserving *ex situ* and *in situ* plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, providing access and increasing their sustainable use (<http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org>).

The Programme, which is entirely financed by the member countries, is overseen by a Steering Committee composed of National Coordinators nominated by the participating countries. The Coordinating Secretariat is hosted by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT.

The Programme operates through Working Groups composed of pools of experts nominated by the National Coordinators. The ECPGR Working Groups deal with either crops or general themes related to plant genetic resources (crop wild relatives, cryopreservation, documentation and information, and on-farm conservation). Members of the Working Groups carry out activities based on specific ECPGR objectives, using ECPGR funds and/or their own resources.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEGIS	A European Genebank Integrated System
AGENT	Activated GENEbank NeTwork
Alliance	Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)
AQUAS	AEGIS Quality System
Bioversity	Bioversity International
COLiBRI	Collaborative Crop Breeding Research & Innovation for a Green Europe
Crop Trust	Global Crop Diversity Trust
CWR	Crop Wild Relatives
EC	European Commission
ECPGR	European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources
DOI	Digital object identifier
EURISCO	European Search Catalogue for Plant Genetic Resources
EVA	European Evaluation Network for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
ExCo	Executive Committee
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
LEPL	Scientific Research Center of Agriculture (LEPL)
NC	National Coordinator
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PGR	Plant Genetic Resources
PGR Strategy	Plant Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe
PRO-GRACE	Promoting a Plant Genetic Resources Community for Europe
PUID	Permanent Unique Identifiers
SC	Steering Committee
WFP	Wild Food Plants
ToRs	Terms of Reference
WG	Working Group

PART I. SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES DISCUSSED AND CLARIFICATIONS GIVEN

Part I of this report includes short summaries of the [presentations](#), which are available on the ECPGR website and/or refers to existing online [background documents](#). Main clarification points and discussed items are also summarized. All the recommendations and decisions agreed by the Steering Committee (SC) during the discussion are listed in Part II.

1. Opening session

(Chair: J. Weibull)

Opening statements by representatives of the host country

Lasha Avaliani, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, warmly welcomed the distinguished guests of the ECPGR Steering Committee to Georgia. He expressed that it was a great honour to host this important meeting on the conservation and use of Plant Genetic Resources (PGR), especially given the shared challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and food security. He emphasized that it is now more important than ever to share responsibilities. This meeting holds particular significance for Georgia – a country that represents both the cradle and the centre of diversity for many crops, which are also part of the nation's identity. He was pleased to introduce Georgia's scientific potential in the field of agricultural biodiversity and expressed his hope that the meeting would foster the exchange of ideas and information. He concluded by wishing all participants a successful meeting and a pleasant stay in Georgia.

Welcome address by the Chair and adoption of the Agenda

J. Weibull warmly welcomed participants to the 18th Steering Committee meeting in Tbilisi, thanking the Government of Georgia and local host Tamar Jinjikhadze. Georgia, an ECPGR member since 2004, was recognized as a key centre of crop diversity. The Chair noted that while the 2021 Plant Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe was not adopted by the European Commission, it has effectively guided the Programme's implementation and monitoring. The meeting's agenda includes reviewing progress, including on EURISCO, EVA, AEGIS and communications and planning for Phase XII. The Chair emphasized collaboration as the key to ECPGR's continued success after 46 years. The draft agenda was then adopted with a few modifications.

J. Weibull then informed the Steering Committee about the selection process to appoint a new ECPGR Secretary. The Selection Panel was composed of five members: three from the ECPGR Executive Committee and two from Bioversity International staff. Thirty-two applications were received. Five applicants were shortlisted and invited to Rome for interviews, which included a technical presentation. The selection process was completed during the first week of May. The candidate proposed for appointment is Rosemary Navarrete, a US national who has worked for several years in Rome with United Nations agencies and the Australian Embassy. She has been invited to this meeting and will join on the final day.

2. Reporting on Phase XI

(Chair: D. Ruņģis)

Mid-term technical and financial report of Phase XI

(L. Maggioni)

L. Maggioni provided the Steering Committee with an update on the implementation of decisions made at the previous meeting (Oeiras, Portugal, 2023) and the progress of Phase XI activities. The update focused on the current status of ECPGR membership and the activities carried out during the first half of the phase. Special attention was given to statistics on participation in the Grant Scheme, including funding levels, with comparisons made to previous phases. The financial status of the Programme was also presented, covering the evolution of the Phase XI budget, the level of regular and voluntary contributions received, support from German and EC projects, major expenditures, and the cash balance. (For further details, see the online background documents: [Mid-term technical report on ECPGR Phase XI \(January 2024 – April 2026\)](#), [2025 Financial Report](#), the [Working Group reports for 2024–2025](#), and the presentation [ECPGR Phase XI Mid-Term Report](#)).

Discussion

When asked about the required level of cash reserve, the Secretary clarified that the Hosting Agreement with Bioversity requires three months of ECPGR costs, approximately €200,000.

Communications strategy report and way forward

(N. Capozio)

The presentation reviewed ECPGR's communication strategy progress since 2020. Key achievements: unified visual identity and materials; growth in website and LinkedIn presence; launch of the open-access journal *Genetic Resources*; and recognition in EU policy documents. The Secretariat has delivered results with lean resources, but stronger national engagement and deeper EU institutional connections could expand impact further. A task force is proposed to refresh the strategy and define priorities for Phases XI–XII. National Coordinators were invited to share ideas and volunteer. (See online presentation [Communication strategy report and way forward](#)).

Discussion

A. Bedmar wished to express appreciation for the work done by the communication specialist and for the good visibility that the various products are providing to ECPGR.

Report from the ExCo on its activities during Phase XI

(J. Weibull)

J. Weibull presented the report of ExCo activities during Phase XI, including his appointment as new Chair following M. Lefort's retirement from the position in September 2024. Beyond the regular evaluation of Grant Scheme activities, highlights of the period included: follow-up on PRO-GRACE project developments, particularly ECPGR's potential role in a future GRACE Research Infrastructure (GRACE-RI); the preparation of the All-Chairs and Steering

Committee meetings; and the recruitment of a new Secretary (See online presentation: [Report from the ExCo on its activities](#)).

The EVA experience during Phase XI

(S. Goritschnig)

S. Goritschnig presented EVA Network progress during Phase XI. One German-funded project has concluded; the EVA Boost project supports the Legumes network (until 2027) and a roadmap for a Perennials network. Other networks continue via the ECPGR Grant Scheme, in-kind contributions, or alternative funding. Significant gaps remain in the inclusion of EVA material within EURISCO and AEGIS. Data management and resource mobilization remain key future priorities, especially for activities not covered in kind. (See online presentation [The EVA experience during Phase XI](#)).

Discussion

D. Ruņģis asked how to propose a new EVA network and how new partners can join existing ones. It was clarified that networks are open to new partners, and expressions of interest should be directed to the EVA Coordinator. New crop networks require a critical mass of interested stakeholders, especially from the private sector.

S. Irwin sought details on the carrot group's Agroecology Partnership proposal. If approved, the project will involve farmers, combine conservation with trait evaluation, and disseminate results to breeders and farmers. Since the UK is not co-funding this call, organizations from the UK could only join as associate partners or stakeholders at their own cost.

T. van Hintum noted that much EVA-evaluated material is missing from EURISCO and asked about its availability and conservation. The response confirmed availability under SMTA. Some material, particularly legumes from the INCREASE project, is breeding stock not yet conserved. One goal of EVA Boost is to promote inclusion in EURISCO.

J. Weibull praised Germany's strong support for the EVA Networks and stressed the need to recognize it.

EURISCO update and prospects for Phase XI

(S. Weise)

As of May 2026, the EURISCO catalogue contains over 2.12 million PGR accessions from 43 countries, including more than 120,000 AEGIS accessions and 438,000 under the Multilateral System. The system now holds nearly 2.8 million phenotypic data points from 22 countries. A major milestone has been the assignment of over 316,000 digital object identifiers (DOIs), enabling clear identification of PGR, either through national efforts or the EURISCO DOI service. Following the delayed hiring of a developer in late 2024, the first phase of a complete overhaul of the public EURISCO web application is on track for launch by the end of June 2026. The new prototype offers a uniform, user-friendly interface with separate modules for *ex situ* passport data – integrated via Genesys APIs – and *in situ* crop wild relative data. Interactive graphs and filters allow users to explore accession categories, taxonomy, origin, and more. Work is also underway on a phenotypic data module, based on a detailed mockup, which is expected to go live before the end of the year. Its completion will allow the import of many waiting datasets, including 185,000 data points from the EVA project. Looking ahead to the remainder of Phase XI (until December 2028), priorities include refining the *in situ* module based on user feedback, implementing single seed descent (SSD) handling, and closing data

gaps using results from the PRO-GRACE project. Newly approved projects, such as a German-funded initiative on data quality, will further help assess and improve the reliability of PGR data across Europe. (See online presentation [EURISCO update and prospects for Phase XI](#)).

Discussion

It was asked whether any data on EURISCO usage exists. Although statistics were presented at the previous Steering Committee meeting, they could not be retrieved this time due to batch attacks by bots.

Other German-funded projects: AEGIS and Crop Wild Relatives

(L. Maggioni)

L. Maggioni summarized three German-funded projects managed during the first part of Phase XI. The continuation of the project 'Extension of EURISCO for Crop Wild Relative *in situ* data' (2021–2025, €317,000) enabled 17 countries to participate in the preparation of *in situ* inventories of crop wild relative populations and to contribute data to EURISCO.

The projects 'New AEGIS' (2024–2025, €136,500) and 'AEGIS Plus' (2025–2026, €175,000) focused on improving the AEGIS Quality System (AQUAS). Their efforts promoted genebank quality management through several activities, notably the preparation of operational genebank manuals, testing of a genebank metrics tool, over 20 genebank peer visits, and trainings and meetings conducted in collaboration with the Genebank Managers Network.

An overview of the status of AEGIS progress was also provided, concluding that AEGIS still falls short of its objectives to increase the accessibility of collections and enhance their quality system. Nevertheless, AEGIS has created a shared framework for quality management across European genebanks, fostering trust and interoperability, while also offering a practical mechanism for identifying capacity needs and setting priorities. (See online presentation [ECPGR 2024–2025 German-funded projects \(focus on AEGIS\)](#)).

Discussion

D. Ruņģis noted that AEGIS originally aimed to identify unique accessions and asked whether any mapping of duplicates has been done to reduce them. L. Maggioni expressed uncertainty about how feasible this would be. He had actually done the opposite: identifying the number of accessions originating in the holding country and proposing their inclusion in AEGIS.

T. van Hintum explained that the initial AEGIS concept was complicated – genebank curators were asked to include what they perceived as unique, which may have led to skewed representation. He suggested instead including accessions that are well preserved in AEGIS, ensuring conservation and availability, which would serve as a starting point to reduce duplications.

L. Maggioni clarified that AEGIS's objective was to ensure access to designated material and conserve it at a high-quality level. Designation of accessible material would serve as a prioritization for quality enhancement.

J. Weibull asked why countries assign material to AEGIS without being able to provide it. L. Maggioni replied that, based on a self-assessment study, AEGIS material is available at 97%. A separate study based on real requests revealed lower availability (~40%) for all accessions in EURISCO.

Spain expressed interest in becoming an AEGIS member. Estonia asked whether applications for safety duplication funding from AEGIS Plus would still be possible, which

was confirmed.

3. Reporting on Phase XI (continued)

(Chair: M. Boczkowska)

ECPGR Secretariat involvement with EU Horizon projects

(S. Goritschnig)

S. Goritschnig presented EU Horizon projects involving the ECPGR Secretariat during Phase XI (see presentation). PRO-GRACE results were discussed in a dedicated session.

The H2020 project AGENT (Activated GENEbank NeTwork), coordinated by IPK, Germany, produced characterized precision collections of wheat and barley (from 14 genebanks), data curation tools, and a data portal, which assembles historic and novel phenotypic data. Capacity building included hackathons, webinars and genebank peer reviews. The EVA Wheat and Barley network evaluated ~1,200 accessions in multilocation field trials. Further exploitation will occur through the ECPGR network.

A new Horizon Europe Coordination and Support Action, COLiBRI (Collaborative Crop Breeding Research & Innovation for a Green Europe), coordinated by JKI, Germany, brings together important networks in plant research and breeding. It aims to develop a European roadmap and implementation strategy for coordinated plant breeding R&I funding, uniting public and private sectors, involving also NGOs. The ECPGR Secretariat co-leads stakeholder engagement and contributes to communications. A stakeholder workshop will take place in Rome (June 2027). The ECPGR community will be engaged via surveys and workshops to place PGR at the core of plant breeding R&I and the establishment of an SC task force was suggested.

(See online presentation [ECPGR Secretariat involvement with EU Horizon projects](#)).

Discussion

N. Faslia asked how an institute could become a member of EC projects and what ECPGR is doing to facilitate wider participation. It was explained that partner selection depends on consortium coordinators. The ECPGR Secretariat engages in projects where it can help shape frameworks beneficial to all, such as developing the PGR Strategy, creating a PGR Research Infrastructure, or building a breeding R&I network. In other cases, EC projects have been used to complement and advance the EVA Networks. For an individual institute to join as a partner, it must demonstrate its specific added value to the consortium. Active participation in Working Groups and EVA Networks can increase visibility and mutual recognition.

The Genebank Managers Network – Progress and planning

(D. Janovská)

D. Janovská, Chair of the Genebank Managers Network (GMN), reflected on the network's pilot phase. Established in June 2023 on the principle that "together we are stronger," the GMN was designed for flexibility and operational focus – something a regular Working Group could not offer. Self-funded to protect the ECPGR budget, it maintained links with ECPGR through National Coordinators and reported to the SC via the Secretariat. Over two years, the GMN moved from pilot to regular operation, growing to 70 members from 32 countries and NordGen. It delivered practical support through safety duplication, peer reviews, and quality

management discussions, while also becoming a platform for operational exchange and AEGIS implementation. Experiences so far have confirmed the network's value, though challenges remain: uneven genebank capacities, limited resources for safety duplication, and growing cybersecurity concerns, among others. Looking toward 2026–2028 and Phase XII, D. Janovská requested that the SC take note of the pilot's progress and confirm the GMN as a permanent ECPGR-associated Network, with a few suggested amendments to its Terms of Reference (see online presentation [Genebank Managers Network – Progress and Planning](#)).

Discussion

I. Thormann clarified that country contact persons are the main contact for in-person meetings, but communication extends to all network members. She shared positive feedback from German members on the network's usefulness.

A. Brohan confirmed similar positive feedback from UK institutions. It was clarified that only contact point members are invited to in-person meetings in order to keep the meetings manageable with a maximum of 35 participants, whereas all members may attend online meetings.

Though most genebanks focus on seed, vegetatively propagated collections are also included and welcome.

Proposed amendments to the GMN's Terms of Reference were circulated, discussed, and approved as in Annex I. The changes clarify the network's scope, members, Chair and Vice-Chair's roles, and allow the network to apply for ECPGR funds, similar to Working Groups.

Feedback from the Working Group Chairs

(K. Annamaa)

K. Annamaa, Vice-Chair of the Documentation and Information Working Group (WG), provided an overview of the meeting of all Chairs held in March 2026 in Aranjuez, Spain. The meeting was attended by most WG Chairs, several Vice-Chairs, the Chair of the Genebank Managers Network (GMN), and the Executive Committee (ExCo).

The gathering offered an opportunity for WGs to present their past activities, including those funded by the Grant Scheme, and to exchange ideas and proposals for the Steering Committee's consideration. The main discussion topics included: WG collaboration, cooperation with the GMN, communication and visibility, funding opportunities and strategic partnerships, the roles of WG Chairs and members, alignment with the objectives of the PGR Strategy and ECPGR Phase Targets, engagement of junior WG members and capacity building, as well as common challenges in European PGR conservation.

She reported all recommendations formulated by the Chairs, along with the respective ExCo comments (see online background documents). The meeting proved conducive to promoting more active and better-connected WGs, with increased commitment from WG Chairs, WG members, and National Coordinators. (See online presentation [Feedback from the WG Chairs](#)).

Discussion

The ExCo comments within the document delivered by the WG Chairs at their meeting in Aranjuez, Spain, March 2026, were approved by the Steering Committee. (See online Background document [Summary of Chairs' proposals with ExCo annotations](#)).

4. ECPGR next steps in Phase XI

(Chair: I. Thormann)

Proposal from Bioversity for continued hosting of the Secretariat

(V. Guardia)

V. Guardia, Head of Bioversity International Financial Operations, joined the meeting from Rome. He declared that The Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT is honoured to uphold its longstanding role as host of the ECPGR Secretariat.

He recalled the comprehensive range of services the Alliance provides to hosted entities, including: legal personality in the host country; use of office space, meeting rooms, common areas, and the library; staff recruitment and contract administration; financial services such as accounting, treasury, financial planning, and audit support; operational services including procurement, travel, protocol, security, and reception; and IT 'Gold service' covering laptops, email, data sharing, systems and enterprise applications, and IT consulting. Additionally, the Alliance offers legal status in the country for internationally recruited staff and their dependents, including privileges, immunities, and exemptions.

The Alliance is actively investing in its facilities, using financial reserves without the intention to increase fees for hosted organizations. For the 2027–2028 period, which corresponds to the second part of ECPGR Phase XI's 5-year cycle, the Alliance's overhead, facilities, and IT rates follow CGIAR methodology. Importantly, no increase has been committed for 2027 and 2028. (See online presentation [Hosting of ECPGR Secretariat by the Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT](#)).

Discussion

The SC thanked V. Guardia for his availability to address the meeting on a holiday in Rome and welcomed the news of unchanged rates and continued effective hosting.

Proposal for Phase XI budget revision (2026–2028)

(L. Maggioni)

L. Maggioni explained the opportunity to revise the Phase XI budget for the years 2026–2028 in order to align planned resources with actual needs and available funds. The specific reasons for this revision relate to the need to fill shortfalls in budget lines stemming from the Oeiras 2023 agreement, to apply updated staff cost estimates for 2026–2028, to reflect new Facilities and IT costs agreed with Bioversity, and to allocate carryover funds (unspent Phase X resources) to specific budget lines.

He then explained the table presenting the proposed budget revision. The grand total remains unchanged compared to the Financial Report 2025, and consequently country contributions are also unaffected. The table structure is composed of an upper part showing the Phase XI budget with an overhead of 15%, and a lower part covering the Phase X carryover with an overhead of 15.84%, and funds cannot move between the two parts. The main changes, shown in the orange cells, relate to reduced staff costs for 2026–2027, since these are partly covered by German projects; lower costs for Facilities and IT as agreed with Bioversity; and the proposal to spend carryover funds early, covering with these most of the 2026 programme budget. All staff cost gaps that were left in the budget agreed in Oeiras are covered, and the

amount dedicated to Working Group activities is raised in 2027 and 2028 to the same level assigned to the previous three years. The remaining balance after filling all cells, totalling net €78,307 (gross €90,480), is allocated to a reserve line.

Discussion

Following a brief discussion, a modification to the proposed budget was implemented to ensure that all carryover funds would be budgeted for 2026. The agreed budget table is presented in Annex II.

Statements from all countries on financing of the programme, continuation in Phase XII and comments from observers

All National Coordinators and observers expressed their position regarding the continuation of ECPGR into a new Phase XII (2029–2033):

All country representatives expressed appreciation for the work carried out by ECPGR and reaffirmed their continued commitment during the current phase.

The following countries agree to continue into a new Phase XII and expect to obtain ministerial approval without major difficulties: Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye.

Another group of countries also wishes to continue into the next phase but will only be able to confirm ministerial approval in 2028: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

France and Norway recommended maintaining the level of annual contributions at the same level as in Phase XI.

Italy, though currently not a member of ECPGR, communicated its intention to try to join Phase XI in the near future and hopefully also in the next phase.

Ukraine will soon sign an agreement with FAO, which will enable its participation and contribution for 2027 and 2028. It is not yet possible to make plans for the subsequent Phase XII.

The Crop Trust is happy to support ECPGR as much as possible and has expressed strong interest in implementing the GRIN Global Community Edition across European genebanks.

Euroseeds also supports the work of ECPGR and appreciates the partnership in many projects.

Let's Liberate Diversity is supportive of ECPGR and is keen to collaborate, especially in the areas of on-farm sustainable use and community seedbanks.

5. ECPGR next steps in Phase XI (continued)

(Chair: Th. van Hintum)

Building on PRO-GRACE outputs to strengthen ECPGR: a SWOT analysis exercise

(S.Goritschnig)

S. Goritschnig presented the results of the Horizon project PRO-GRACE, in which the ECPGR Secretariat as well as several stakeholder organizations and NCs were involved. The project developed useful outputs, including standards for data and quality management, blueprints

for *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, and capacity building and demonstration cases for technical services for PGR management and use (see background document [Building on PRO-GRACE outputs to strengthen ECPGR](#) and online presentation [Strengthening ECPGR by Building on PRO-GRACE outputs](#)). Despite interest from the user community, an application for inclusion in the ESFRI 2026 roadmap was not submitted. Nevertheless, ECPGR is well positioned to exploit the outputs and lessons learned from PRO-GRACE. Doing so will further enhance ECPGR's impact by strengthening its network of critical PGR infrastructures for European food security and sovereignty. The presentation was followed by a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of ECPGR and the European PGR system. This analysis served as input for subregional group discussions on ECPGR operations and priorities in Phase XII.

Discussion

The group split into smaller teams to discuss the pre-populated SWOT table and propose additions or amendments. As a result of a prioritization exercise, a revised SWOT table (included as Annex III) was prepared for the next day's sub-group discussions. All discussion inputs will be used by the Secretariat to produce a synthesis to be made available on the SC meeting's webpage.

Discussion and revision of Table of Priorities. Proposals for Phase XI

(J. Weibull)

J. Weibull presented an assessment of progress toward the 2030 Targets of the PGR Strategy. Each target linked to the five ECPGR objectives was assigned a progress level: red (not achieved), yellow (in progress), green (partially achieved), and star (achieved). The majority of targets were found to be either in progress or partially achieved. This assessment served as the basis for revising the ECPGR Table of Priorities.

Discussion

It was noted that the traffic light dots used in the presentation to indicate progress levels were misleading, as green dots only signified "partial achievement" while giving the impression of full accomplishment.

The discussion then focused on changes to the Table of Priorities. T. van Hintum stressed that a genebank certification system is a top priority (Priority 1) for Europe. S. Krishnan from the Crop Trust informed that an independent company is carrying out a feasibility study to assess whether a certification system is needed and whether the Crop Trust would be suitable to serve as the certification agency. A feedback survey is also open for participation, and ECPGR representatives will be contacted for their input. The consultancy report will be released by the end of December 2026. I. Thormann asked whether the acceptance of a certification system globally and the specific need for it in Europe would be considered in the feasibility study, and this was confirmed.

F. Pisani stressed the importance for the private sector of assessing crop diversity needs and gaps in the conservation system. He recommended not lowering the priority level of this activity and offered collaboration to carry it out.

T. van Hintum expressed his concern regarding the current status of PGR conservation in Europe considering the expected impact of climate change and emphasized the utmost importance of properly conserving PGR in *ex situ* genebanks and proposed adding a related

Priority 1 activity to the *ex situ* section. This proposal was approved.

With a few modifications, the revised Table of Priorities for Phase XI with final agreed wording was approved and is included as Annex IV (*Track-changed Table of Priority Activities for Phase XI*).

ECPGR towards Phase XII – sub-regional groups discussion

(Chair J. Weibull)

Four sub-regional groups (East, North, South, and West) were established to discuss priorities and mode of operation for ECPGR Phase XII, with a view to bringing their conclusions to the attention of the plenary. Each group presented its observations, ideas, and proposals, which have been compiled in presentations available online:

[Report from sub-group East](#)

[Report from sub-group North](#)

[Report from sub-group South](#)

[Report from sub-group West](#)

A brief discussion followed, during which it was clarified that the input generated in the limited time available represents only a starting point for further elaboration.

J. Weibull summarized a number of conclusions, confirming that all participants are expected to contribute to preparing the groundwork for Phase XII over the next two years. Several recurring and outstanding themes that warrant further elaboration are listed below:

1. **Increased involvement of National Coordinators (NCs):** This entails both Secretariat support to help NCs convey messages domestically, and more frequent reporting from NCs to the Secretariat about their achievements to facilitate broader recognition.
2. **Communication:** While ECPGR communication has greatly improved in recent years, there is potential to better communicate what ECPGR is, what it does, and what it delivers – for example, by increasing its presence in side events organized by partner networks and institutions.
3. **Organizational structure:** Continuous attention is needed to adjust and improve the structure. Variations in activity levels among WGs should be examined to identify possible harmonization measures. The Grant Scheme functions well in stimulating ideas and funding activities, but it does not reach all WGs; this aspect should be analyzed.
4. **PGR Strategy:** The strategy requires revision and updating. It should be sharpened and better aligned with ECPGR's capacities and possibilities and the changing technological and geopolitical realities.
5. **ECPGR Strategy:** ECPGR should develop its own persuasive strategy with clear vision and priorities, including its role in PGR research and conservation in Europe, and a roadmap towards funding sustainability.
6. **Engagement with the European Commission:** Relations with the EC have remained challenging – beyond just the PGR Strategy, which had received insufficient feedback. Despite repeated invitations to EC representatives to participate in SC events and meetings, securing attention and commitment has proven difficult. Establishing communication channels and improving links with the EC will be necessary.

The Secretariat, in collaboration with the Executive Committee and based on the input from the sub-group discussions, is recommended to prepare a synthesis of the sub-groups' inputs. This synthesis will serve as a basis for updating the PGR Strategy, its objectives, and associated targets. The synthesis should be submitted to the Steering Committee by the end of March 2027 for further input and suggestions.

Proposed amendments to ECPGR Terms of Reference

(I. Thormann)

On behalf of Germany, I. Thormann proposed two amendments to the ECPGR Rules of Procedure. The first amendment concerns ECPGR membership, specifically Rule of Procedure 2, point 6. It was proposed to shorten the period of non-payment allowed for countries before they lose the right to use ECPGR funds and the right to vote – from two years to one year. The rationale for this change is to encourage earlier engagement with the implementing agencies and facilitate quicker resolution of potential issues. This adjusted timeline would also allow for more timely adjustments to budgets and budget allocations. The second proposed amendment aims to clarify the composition of the Executive Committee by explicitly specifying – both in the Rules of Procedure and in the Terms of Reference – that the four sub-regional representatives must be members of the Steering Committee. (See online presentation [Amendments to Rules of Procedure and Terms of Reference](#)).

Discussion

After a brief discussion, both proposals were approved by the Steering Committee. The agreed amendments are presented in Part II, Recommendations and Decisions.

The Plant Genetic Resources System of Ukraine

(K. Dokukina)

Ukraine's PGR system, overseen by the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences, comprises the National Centre for PGRU (NCPGRU) and 28 research institutions. Four institutions were annexed in 2014 and three occupied in 2022 due to Russian aggression. The NCPGRU serves as the scientific, methodological, and coordination hub, housing the main long-term seed storage facility.

The GeneBank of Ukraine ranks among the world's top ten genebanks, holding 157,200 accessions of 544 crops and 2,020 species. Key collections include cereals (47,269), legumes (22,828), and corn (14,804). Annually, some 16,000 samples are evaluated, identifying 1,200–1,400 sources of valuable traits. Between 2021 and 2025, the system provided 18,200 sample packages to users.

To safeguard collections, duplicate storage exists at the Institute of Agriculture of the Carpathian Region (51,004 samples) and Ustymivka station (31,600 samples). In November 2025, the EU and FAO officially opened the Ukrainian Doublet Repository for PGR, a modern modular facility with cold storage, labs, and planned solar energy. Additionally, 2,780 Ukrainian accessions are secured at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

The Plant Gene Pool Information System manages 113,900 samples and is being upgraded to GRIN Global with international support. Ukraine's 2030 strategy emphasizes long-term storage, duplication, cryopreservation, expeditions, DNA labelling, and enhanced user access. Ukraine intends to join ECPGR Phase XI and participate in six Working Groups, and will also ratify the ITPGRFA in 2026. Cooperation is ongoing with genebanks worldwide. International

partners – including ECPGR, NordGen, the Novo Nordisk Foundation, Crop Trust, and FAO – have provided critical funding for staff salaries, diesel, generators, and threshers. The presentation expresses deep gratitude for this timely and efficient assistance. (See online presentation [The Plant Genetic Resources System of Ukraine](#)).

6. Study Tour

During the morning of 4 June, the SC visited the *Vitis* collection at Jighaura.

7. Conclusion

(Chair: J. Weibull)

Discussion and approval of the report

The report prepared by the Secretariat, including Part II (Recommendations and Decisions), was approved with a few modifications.

Concluding remarks of the meeting

J. Weibull thanked the Secretary and the Secretariat staff for all the work done, the Scientific Research Center of Agriculture (LEPL) host and all the team, for the excellent organization of the meeting.

The SC warmly thanked J. Weibull for steering the meeting with soft efficiency, timeliness, and balance.

PART II. RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS

1. Genebank Managers Network

The SC recognized the value and activities of the GMN and granted it permanent status, moving it out of the pilot phase.

Proposed amendments to the GMN's Terms of Reference were approved as in Annex I. The changes clarify the network's scope, member and chair roles, and allow the network to apply for ECPGR funds, similar to Working Groups.

2. Feedback from the WG Chairs

The ExCo comments within the document produced by the WG Chairs at their meeting in Aranjuez, Spain (March 2026) were approved by the Steering Committee (see [Summary of Chairs' proposals with ExCo annotations](#)).

3. Hosting arrangements

The SC welcomed the Alliance's unchanged rates and the continued hosting of the Secretariat until the end of the Phase.

4. Phase XI budget

A revised budget table for Phase XI was approved and is presented in Annex II.

5. Table of Priorities for Phase XI

The revised Table of Priorities was endorsed with a few changes (Annex IV).

6. Preparations for Phase XII

The Secretariat, in collaboration with the Executive Committee and based on the input from the subgroup discussions, is recommended to prepare a synthesis of the subgroups' inputs. This synthesis will serve as a basis for updating the PGR Strategy, its objectives, and associated targets. The synthesis should be submitted to the Steering Committee by the end of March 2027 for further input and suggestions.

7. Amendments to the ECPGR Rules of Procedure and the Terms of Reference

ECPGR Membership: Rule of Procedure 2, Point 6 is changed to read as follows:

*In case of non-payment of (the) outstanding membership fee(s) for **one calendar year**, the member country will lose the right to use any ECPGR funds and the right to vote as long as the contributions have not been paid. A 3-month advance notice of this occurrence will be sent to the national authority having signed the LoA (NC in copy).*

Election of the Executive Committee (ExCo): Rule of Procedure 5, Point 2 and 3 are changed to read as follows:

2. *The other ExCo members are **SC members** elected for a 4-year term of office and represent the European subregions (North, West, East and South, in a broad sense).*

3. *To ensure continuity, except for the ExCo Chair, one SC member of the ExCo is replaced annually by*

a new member from the same subregion on a rotational basis. This member will be elected by the SC upon ExCo's proposition. Re-election is possible only after a break period of five years.

The Executive Committee section of the ToRs of the operational bodies (page 7), is changed as follows:

The Executive Committee (ExCo) consists of a Chair, four ~~other~~ SC members elected by the SC and ex officio the ECPGR Secretary who has no voting rights. The procedure for the election of the ExCo Chair and members is explained in Rules of Procedure 5.

8. Other issues

The SC recognized the strong performance of the Cryopreservation WG and confirmed it as an established group, moving it beyond the pilot phase.

- The SC agreed to establish a Communications Task Force with the following mandate:
 - Address the following open questions:
 - Which communications activities do you consider most valuable and should be prioritized?
 - What role should National Coordinators play in external communications and advocacy?
 - How should we approach EU engagement?
 - Are there audiences or channels we are not reaching but should?
 - What does the Steering Committee expect from the Secretariat in terms of communications reporting and coordination?
 - Consolidate NC input and ideas from the Steering Committee
 - Produce a refreshed – not new – communications strategy, setting realistic, actionable priorities for ECPGR communications

The Task Force will be led by the ExCo Chair, co-led by the communication specialist, and will include volunteer national coordinators and other available communication experts from the national programmes.

- The SC noted that the COLiBRI project requires a task force drawn from its members. SC members may consider volunteering and inform S. Goritschnig.

Annexes

Annex I: Amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Genebank Managers Network

ECPGR

Network of European Genebank Managers

Terms of Reference

Background

The idea of establishing a Network for European Genebank Managers was proposed during the Steering Committee (SC) meeting in June 2022, with the aim to better connect people with this function and focus on their specific area of work. Establishing the Network would strengthen the cooperation among leaders of genebanks in Europe.

In 2022, the ECPGR SC gave its support for the establishment of this Network. It is the aim that the Network of European Genebank Managers shall be a long-term entity which these ToRs are defining.

Objectives

The establishment of the European Genebank Managers Network has the overall aim to strengthen the management of genebanks through the exchange of knowledge, cooperation and capacity building of genebanks, including the various aspects of leading and managing a genebank.

Scope

The Network will focus on management and leadership issues of relevance for improving genebanks and their management. This will be done through exchanging experiences and ideas; learning from each other to obtain efficient and high-quality systems of plant genetic resources conservation and utilization.

The Network will share and exchange ideas and experiences, demonstrate each other's methodology, and support and find synergies when possible. Further, the Network can contribute to inputs and developments of various policies and initiatives to strengthen the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources in genebanks.

The Network may address cross-cutting operational, managerial and quality-related issues relevant to genebanks, while avoiding duplication of crop-specific Working Group activities or the EVA Network.

Topics

The Network will decide on which topics and activities it wants to use its time and resources within its mandate. The below list of topics is therefore for inspiration and not exhaustive:

- Professional topics such as facilitation of AEGIS and AQUAS, development of a Genebank Quality Certification System and management of genebank collections, e.g. developments of a genebank manual; databases, conservation techniques and new developments etc.

- Leadership topics such as the development of strategies, change management, digitalization, security back-ups, fundraising, working with a Board, etc.
- Management topics such as people management, capacity building, optimization of techniques and work streams, genebank methodology, sourcing etc.
- Policy issues, e.g. promoting the implementation of national and regional conservation strategies through sharing of knowledge and experience, promoting the implementation of relevant aspects of the Plant Genetic Resource Strategy for Europe, etc.
- Support, help and back up each other in case of challenges and problems.
- Support to solve practical problems at genebanks within the scope of ECPGR and provide guidance for other European countries' genebanks, which are beyond the scope of ECPGR.
- When relevant, support and interact with the ECPGR Working Groups.

Meetings

The Network should meet at least once a year for a 1–2-day meeting at the premises of a European genebank. The Network should strive for 1–3 digital meetings each year.

The preparation and meeting location should rotate among the participating institutions.

The Network will, well in advance of each calendar year, plan topics and dates for next year's in-person meeting and digital meetings.

Funding

The Network shall be self-funded. ECPGR may provide complementary funding for the organization and participants of category A and B ECPGR contributors, based on the available budget, and is mobilized by the Secretariat upon request of the Network Chair.

The Genebank Network may apply for additional ECPGR funding, such as for capacity building or other activities by submitting proposals to the Steering Committee.

The Network is not an ECPGR Working Group and does not automatically fall under the standard Working Group Grant Scheme mechanism. Funding support may be requested through a specific proposal submitted by the Network Chair, in consultation with the ECPGR Secretariat, and shall be subject to the availability of funds and approval by the ExCo.

Working methods

The approach at the meetings will be to gain as much shared knowledge as possible within the objectives of the Network.

The in-person meeting will be co-organized by the Network Chair and the host of the meeting. The digital meetings will also be co-organized between the Network Chair and members of the Network.

The agenda and meeting documents will be circulated at least three weeks in advance of the network meeting. Minutes will be circulated not later than seven working days after a Network meeting.

Subgroups can be formed for the preparation of any relevant topic for the Network.

Members and participation in meetings

Network members are nominated by the ECPGR National Coordinators, indicating one contact person per country who should be heading and/or managing a public genebank in Europe.

The nominated country contact person or a delegated representative will attend in-person meetings, ensuring representation of their countries' other network members. The Network remains open to all ECPGR genebanks to receive updates and attend virtual meetings.

Normally, only one person from each country should attend the in-person meetings. To allow for maximal benefit from the available expertise in the European Region, the Network Chair can invite additional experts.

The Network should seek to have members from as many ECPGR member countries as possible. However, to make the in-person meetings manageable, these meetings should strive to be limited to a maximum of 35 persons. The final list of participants in each in-person meeting is defined by the Chair, based on the nominations made by National Coordinators, the level of contribution that participants can offer to each specific meeting and the need to maintain the size of the meeting within the limit of 35 participants, for the meeting to be effective and manageable.

All members can attend the virtual meetings.

Role of the Chair and the Vice-Chair

1. Formulate the meeting's agenda in consultation with the network members
2. Chair the Network meetings
3. Oversee the implementation of the Network work plan
4. Provide information to the Network members on ECPGR events
5. Encourage the involvement of all Network members
6. Be proactive in proposing activities for the Network
7. Contribute to the coordination of the Network
8. If needed, define the list of participants for each meeting
9. Three months in advance of the Steering Committee (SC) meetings, provide the ECPGR Secretary with a status report on progress made
10. The Vice-Chair supports the Chair in strategic coordination, preparation and follow-up of meetings, may lead specific thematic tasks or subgroups, and acts on behalf of the Chair when needed. The Vice-Chair also supports the preparation of minutes and short outputs from Network meetings.
11. The Chair and Vice-Chair may propose priorities for consultation with Network members, considering ECPGR priorities, AEGIS implementation, EURISCO-related needs and practical issues identified by genebanks.

Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair

The Network selects a Chair among its members. The Chair is selected at the end of an

inperson Network meeting, and they exercise their role for two years until the next election. The selection of the Chair is made by consensus. In case of a lack of consensus, a majority vote by secret ballot is organized by the Vice-Chair. Only regular Network members attending the meeting have the right to vote. In case of resignation of the Chair at any time during their term, the Vice-Chair will act as an 'interim' Chair. The selected 'interim' Chair leads the Network until the next regular election.

The Chair selects the Vice-Chair amongst the Network members and seeks the consensus of the Network members on their choice.

Amendment, modification or variation

These Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation with and agreement by the Steering Committee.

Term

These Terms of Reference are effective from 4 June 2026.

Annex II: Revised Budget for Phase XI

Orange cells indicate changes from the budget approved at the 17th Steering Committee Meeting (Oeiras, Portugal, 2023). Yellow cells indicate grand totals.

Mid-term Revised Budget ECPGR Phase XI (in Euro)

Activity	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
Staff costs						
Secretary at Bioversity (80%)	109,942	113,943		96,413	99,305	419,603
Secretary overlap			10,043			10,043
Secretarial administrative support (100%)	59,937	63,008		67,373	69,731	260,049
Secretariat Staff Total	169,879	176,951	10,043	163,786	169,035	689,695
Steering Committee, ExCo and staff travel						
Staff travel	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	20,000
Steering Committee meetings (2)					40,000	40,000
ExCo travel	3,000	3,000		3,000		9,000
ExCo Chair compensation	15,000	15,000		15,000	15,000	60,000
SC and travel Total	22,000	22,000	4,000	22,000	59,000	129,000
Activities						
WG Chair's meeting					20,000	20,000
WG activities	102,064	102,064	51,157	102,064	102,064	459,413
EVA Coordination (90%)	21,165	55,046		55,411	71,323	202,946
AEGIS Coordination (20%)	27,486	28,486		24,103	24,826	104,901
Training workshops EURISCO		12,000		12,000		24,000
Activities Total	150,715	197,596	51,157	193,579	218,213	811,260
Communication and dissemination						
Communication (80%)	66,330	68,651		65,628	73,721	274,330
Genetic Resources Journal (30%)	18,934	23,279		22,564	26,355	91,132
Communication and dissemination Total	85,264	91,930	0	88,192	100,076	365,462
Miscellaneous/Reserve			26,102	26,102	26,102	78,307
OH 15%	64,179	73,272	13,695	74,049	85,864	311,058
EURISCO at IPK						
EURISCO Coordinator 0,5	50,500	52,000	53,500	55,000	57,000	268,000
EURISCO developer 0.75	49,125	50,625	51,750	54,000	54,661	260,161
Office material	550	550	550	550	550	2,750
5% pass-through fee	5,009	5,159	5,290	5,478	5,611	26,546
Total EURISCO	105,183	108,334	111,090	115,028	117,822	557,457
Other costs						
Facilities at Bioversity	17,678	19,446	21,391	21,392	21,392	101,299
IT services	9,244	10,168	11,185	11,184	11,184	52,965
Total Other costs	26,922	29,614	32,576	32,576	32,576	154,264
Total Phase XI	624,142	699,695	248,664	715,311	808,689	3,096,500
Carryover Funds Phase X						
Secretary at Bioversity (80%)			112,704			112,704
Secretarial administrative support			61,152			61,152
Steering Committee meeting 2026			40,000			40,000
ExCo Chair compensation			15,000			15,000
WG Chair's meeting			20,000			20,000
EVA Coordination (90%)			48,372			48,372
Communication (80%)			57,026			57,026
AEGIS Coordination (20%)			28,176			28,176
Genetic Resources Journal (30%)			19,631			19,631
WG activities			50,907			50,907
Sub-total	107,474	143,048	452,969	0	0	703,491
OH 15.84%	17,024	22,659	71,750	0	0	111,433
Total Carryover Phase X	124,498	165,707	524,719	0	0	814,924
GRAND TOTAL BUDGET including carry over from	748,640	865,402	773,383	715,311	808,689	3,911,424

Annex III. An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of ECPGR in the European PGR system.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• International network and WGs with technical expertise• Effective PGR infrastructure (EURISCO, AEGIS, EVA, GenResJ)• Online resources for practitioners (standards, protocols etc.)• Strong connection btw. Secretariat and NCs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited political recognition of ECPGR contributions and linkages at national level• Unequal capacity of national programmes and engagement in ECPGR• Financial limitation (dependence on in kind contributions and bilateral funds)• Low visibility and outreach of ECPGR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genebanks recognized as critical infrastructure• EU projects developed within WG (also COLiBRI)• Outreach (50-year anniversary of ECPGR in 2030, FAO side events, Svalbard)• ECPGR to enable PGR use and support national programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political priorities at national and EU level• Limited funds for PGR and lack of stable financing• Geopolitical developments• Limitation for PGR regeneration

STRENGTHS

- PGR diversity and data? (national resp.)
- Established ECPGR FRAMEWORK/Gov
- 40+ years of multi country collaboration
- ^{International} Network of technical expertise
- Effective PGR infrastructure (EURISCA, EVA, AEGIS, Genes7) → opportunity?
- Strong Partnerships (existing and new)
- only regional PGR network in the world that works
- Support PGR Research
- NCs in ECPGR
- online resources for practitioners
- strong communication b/w Secretariat & NC
- agile structure of ECPGR

WEAKNESSES

- Financial limitation to scale up ECPGR ^{infrastructure services} (but at least it's stable)
- Low visibility and outreach of ECPGR
- Limited political recognition of ECPGR ^{at national level} contributions and linkages
- Legal status of ECPGR
- Unequal capacity of national programmes
- Lack of strategic vision
- only linked with Agri ministers
- need for co-funding
- uneven ~~active~~ engagement across countries and MS
- strong dependence on bilateral funds
- capacity and empowerment of National Coord.
- member countries without national programmes

OPPORTUNITIES

- Global crises affecting food security → ^{What?}
- Genebanks recognized as critical ^{infrastructure}
- GBF reporting on genetic diversity?
- Horizon CSA project COLIBRI
- Exploitation of project results ^(needs more work)
- New tools and innovations
- 50-year anniversary of ECPGR in 2030
- ECPGR to enable use of PGR
- Leverage other resources for ^{showing value of ECPGR}
- EU projects developed within MS
- Side event @ Governing Body
- Legal personality for ECPGR (also weakness)
- Smallband coverage in media
- Provide more support to national programmes

THREATS

- Genetic erosion and loss of bio diversity
- Political priorities at national ^{+ European} level
- ~~Competition~~ for limited funds
- Complexity of legal frameworks and lack of understanding
- Limitations for regeneration of PGR
- Climate change
- Geopolitical developments
- Competition (other RI)
- Stable financing
- Broad range of topics/activities and weak prioritization

Annex IV: Track changed Table of Priority Activities in Phase XI – ExCo proposal for revision

Tables 1 to 6: Objectives and targets of the [Plant Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe](#) (PGR Strategy) and associated priorities for ECPGR Phase XI

Tables correspond to the objectives as identified in section 2 (Conserving and sustainably using plant genetic resources) of the PGR strategy. Priorities are indicated as follows: **P1 – high** (starting or continuing at the beginning of Phase XI); **P2 – medium** (based on mid-term progress in the implementation of P1 activities and depending on available funds, could be supported by ECPGR in the 2nd part of Phase XI); **P3 – low** (Activities are too premature to be supported by ECPGR in Phase XI and should be considered for implementation during Phase XII)

Table 1: Expanding *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants

PGR Strategy for Europe Objectives	PGR Strategy for Europe Targets	Responsibility (main level/responsible bodies)	Type of action that ECPGR could undertake	Potential sources of funding to cover the ECPGR action	Executive Committee (ExCo) proposal for activities to be included in Phase XI work plan (Tracked changes proposed by the ExCo – 13 April 2026)
By 2030, Europe has significantly increased its Crop Wild Relatives (CWR) and Wild Food Plants (WFP) inventories to enable a more comprehensive view of available CWR and WFP genetic diversity, to better understand how this diversity is distributed across the region and its neighbouring countries, and to identify which are the priority populations to actively conserve.	1. All countries in Europe have included CWR and WFP conservation in national PGR programmes and actions	National	Support of Crop Wild Relatives WG activities contributing to Target 1	National funds/ European Commission (EC) project or external donor/ ECPGR Grant CWR Portal: Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Disseminate methodologies and support documents and organize webinars on how to do diversity and gap analysis and how to develop National CWR strategies. • P1 - Develop or improve an ECPGR CWR Portal compiling links to national checklists, inventories and conservation strategies, and relevant documentation, resources, guidelines and tools. • P2 - Work towards the preparation of an online map of European hotspots. • P3 - CWR Working Group to develop Wild Food Plants conservation guidelines.
	2. All countries in Europe have identified CWR priority taxa and populations – including those in protected areas – forming the basis of their national and a European <i>in situ</i> network of CWR	National	Support of Crop Wild Relatives WG activities contributing to Target 2	National funds EC project or external donor ECPGR Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Extend the list of countries that prepare (or have already prepared) national inventories or lists for CWR priority taxa and provide <i>in situ</i> population data to EURISCO.
	3. Europe has a coherent, comprehensive,	European/ EURISCO/	Implement extension of EURISCO	ECPGR-EURISCO budget line / German-funded project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (COMPLETED)

By 2030, the European countries have elaborated and approved National CWR and WFP conservation strategies , and set up and manage a network for <i>in situ</i> management of priority CWR populations as part of an integrated CWR conservation strategy for Europe, in which active and sustainable long-term <i>in situ</i> conservation actions are implemented at national level.	coordinated and centralized documentation of CWR and WFP <i>in situ</i> diversity.	Doc&Info WG/Crop Wild Relatives WG			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Manage and update continuously the CWR <i>in situ</i> section in EURISCO.
	4. CWR priority populations within the European network of CWR are managed and monitored following agreed guidelines for the <i>in situ</i> management of CWR populations.	National and Crop Wild Relatives WG	Agree on demographic and monitoring techniques. Monitoring as proof of concept	National funds/ ECPGR Grant/ EC project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P2 - Working Group to obtain an ECPGR agreement on minimum quality standards for <i>in situ</i> management of PGR, and develop a monitoring and reporting system. (also based on PRO-GRACE activity, which has planned to “develop methods and minimum quality standards for <i>in situ</i> including CWR and WFP”- see below). • P3 - Implement the above-mentioned monitoring and reporting system.
	5. <i>In situ</i> conserved CWR populations are safely backed-up in <i>ex situ</i> collections and made available to users.	National	Coordination/monitoring by Crop Wild Relatives WG	National funds/ ECPGR Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P2 - Working Group to cooperate and advise the countries to implement the necessary safety back-up for a number of populations with the support of genebanks' managers network.

Table 2: On-farm plant genetic resources conservation and management

PGR Strategy for Europe Objectives	PGR Strategy for Europe Targets	Responsibility (main level/responsible bodies)	Type of action that ECPGR could undertake	Potential sources of funding to cover the ECPGR action	ExCo proposal for activities to be included in Phase XI workplan
By 2030, an inventory of on-farm landraces has been made in Europe, based on national inventories, compiled in close collaboration with local actors and organizations and with periodic updating. By 2030, valuable	1. All countries in Europe include on-farm PGR conservation and management in national programmes and actions.	National	Support of On-farm WG activities contributing to Target 1	National funds/ EC project or external donor/ ECPGR grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Develop or improve an ECPGR Portal compiling links to existing national on-farm conservation and management strategies, programmes and initiatives. • P2 – Carry out a survey to identify and describe ongoing on-farm PGR conservation and use examples at national and regional levels (Objectives; history; material and methods; links between <i>ex situ</i> and on-farm management; strengths, weaknesses and opportunities). Focus on arable crops, vegetables, small fruits and top fruits (e.g. orchard meadows).

landraces' identified diversity is comprehensively conserved on-farm, complemented with <i>ex situ</i> back-ups, and is made available for sustainable use.	2. A European Inventory of on-farm genetic diversity is formally established; a minimum set of passport and characterization descriptors for data exchange is defined.	EURISCO/ Doc&Info WG/On-farm WG	Design extension of EURISCO and implement it	ECPGR-EURISCO budget line/ ECPGR grant/ External donor	PRO-GRACE (COMPLETED) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P2 - Implement the necessary EURISCO extension to import national lists of on-farm landraces' names . • P3 - Provide training workshops on the existing methodologies and criteria for identifying material to be inventoried. • P2 - Support on-farm inventory compilation in pilot countries and provision of data to the centralized EURISCO section.
	3. All landraces recorded in the European Inventory have <i>ex situ</i> backup in national genebanks.	National	Coordination/monitoring by On-farm WG	National funds/ ECPGR Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P3 - Working Group to cooperate and advise the countries to implement the necessary safety back-up for a number of selected on-farm landraces populations, with support from the Genebank Managers Network.
	4. Conservation and management guidelines for on-farm landraces have been defined in the context of the European collaborative programme and are implemented at local level.	National and On-farm WG, in collaboration with stakeholders ¹ that are engaged in diverse conservation and management schemes	Coordination/monitoring by On-Farm WG	National funds/ ECPGR Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Working Group to advise and support the implementation of conservation and management guidelines in a number of countries for selected crops.

Table 3: Consolidating and sustaining ex situ conservation

PGR Strategy for Europe Objectives	PGR Strategy for Europe Targets	Responsibility (main level/responsible bodies)	Type of action that ECPGR could undertake	Potential sources of funding to cover the ECPGR action	ExCo proposal for activities to be included in Phase XI workplan
By 2030, the GR diversity in European genebanks is conserved reliably and made accessible for sustainable use , by improving the efficiency	1.The AEGIS Certification System, guaranteeing the quality of genebank operations, has been developed and is widely recognized and implemented in Europe through a decentralized	Task Force / Steering Committee	Develop the Certification System	EU-funded project (currently through PRO-GRACE project)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRO-GRACE (COMPLETED) •

¹ Including farmers, amateur gardeners, farmer/gardener networks, seed savers, researchers, local communities, genebanks, community seed bank, NGOs, etc.

PGR Strategy for Europe Objectives	PGR Strategy for Europe Targets	Responsibility (main level/ responsible bodies)	Type of action that ECPGR could undertake	Potential sources of funding to cover the ECPGR action	ExCo proposal for activities to be included in Phase XI workplan
<p>and efficacy of the European genebank infrastructure. Thus, the European <i>ex situ</i> conservation system will be raised to a level of excellence in terms of i) long-term quality (conservation management, viability, genetic integrity and phytosanitary protection), and ii) accessibility of conserved material to users, thereby positioning Europe as a primary contributor to the global PGR conservation and use effort.</p> <p>By 2030 European genebanks ensure the long-term conservation of PGR and provide access to appropriate samples of the genetic diversity that has occurred and/or is still occurring in European agriculture and in-nature. This covers the diversity needed for direct use, research and plant breeding that contributes</p>	<p>network of AEGIS-certified genebanks.</p>			<p>External donor</p>	
	<p>2. Up to one third of European genebanks have been AEGIS-certified (100–150, including all those with more than 1,000 accessions), relying when needed on a capacity-building and support system to facilitate their upgrading to reach the AEGIS certification level.</p>	<p>National/Task Force/ Crop and Cryo WGs/ Secretariat</p>	<p>Implement Certification System and capacity-building services, including cryo, phytosanitary and duplication</p>	<p>National Funds EU-funded project External donor ECPGR Grant /AEGIS budget line</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Certification system to be implemented, based on mechanism proposed by PRO-GRACE. (Possible role of ECPGR Secretariat - Budget may not be necessary) • P1 - Capacity building services to be organized within the framework of the genebank managers' network, also based on blueprint provided by PRO-GRACE • P1 Increase quality of genebank operations by creating a mechanism for organizing peer reviews, introducing genebank metrics and supporting the implementation of quality management systems.
	<p>3. The coordinated European collection (i.e. the combined collections of AEGIS-certified genebanks) contains a substantial part of the accessions conserved in European genebanks. All these accessions are conserved to AQUAS standards (see section 2.3.1) and fully available from the AEGIS-certified genebanks via a request system through EURISCO. All AEGIS material is safety-duplicated possibly in another European country and/or in the Svalbard Seed Vault and/or at one of the CGIAR Centres</p>	<p>National/Genebanks EURISCO</p>	<p>Implement genebank review system</p>	<p>National Funds ECPGR Grant/ EURISCO budget lines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Support to countries to identify and include material into AEGIS, including regeneration and safety-duplication. • P1 - Implementation of genebank review system by the network of genebank managers, taking into account Crop Trust certification experience and global strategies. • P1 - Extension of EURISCO to include a centralized genebank ordering system.

PGR Strategy for Europe Objectives	PGR Strategy for Europe Targets	Responsibility (main level/ responsible bodies)	Type of action that ECPGR could undertake	Potential sources of funding to cover the ECPGR action	ExCo proposal for activities to be included in Phase XI workplan
to the continuous adaptation of European agriculture to current and future needs.	4. A comprehensive assessment of European plant genetic resources and diversity required by users for present and future needs in food and agriculture and the corresponding gaps in the conservation system has been completed and is regularly updated.	National and regional (Crop WGs)	Crop by crop assessment	National funds/External donor / ECPGR Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P2 - Crop Working Groups to develop methodology to assess crop diversity required and gaps in the conservation system in cooperation with users, as a dynamic process, for current and future needs.
	5. The genetic diversity maintained in European AEGIS-certified genebanks includes: i) the vast majority of the European landraces; ii) a wide range of CWR diversity of crops grown in Europe; iii) a representative selection of developed varieties, and iv) other relevant material related to crops grown in Europe, including WFP	National and regional (Crop WGs)	Crop by crop assessment	National funds / External donor / ECPGR Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P2 - Crop WGs, in collaboration with CWR and On-farm WGs, assess and remedy to gaps in <i>ex situ</i> genebanks, including through collecting missions. • P3 - An exhaustive inventory of the genetic diversity conserved in all national or local genebanks maintaining and characterizing GR – outside the network of AEGIS certified genebanks – is made to enlarge the potential of European genetic diversity to be conserved in a long-term perspective. • P3 - <i>Countries encourage the development of cooperative work between their national AEGIS – certified genebanks and other local or national genebanks to ensure that all original genetic diversity held in genebanks outside AEGIS-certified ones be conserved in a long-term perspective.</i>

Table 4: Strengthening a comprehensive information system for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (Documentation)

PGR Strategy for Europe Objectives	PGR Strategy for Europe Targets	Responsibility (main level/ responsible bodies)	Type of action that ECPGR could undertake	Potential sources of funding to cover the ECPGR action	ExCo proposal for activities to be included in Phase XI workplan
<p>By 2030, the NFPs are supported in their activities to collect the passport data of all PGR genebanks in their countries and upload them to EURISCO. They are trained appropriately (e.g. on data standardization and quality), and feel part of a network that provides mutual support. The NFPs play an active role in supporting the genebanks in their country in improving the quality of the data, and support actors in the <i>in situ</i> community in providing access to their data. EURISCO grows to become a respected, well-known and well-used repository of European PGR passport data.</p> <p>By 2030, provide publicly available quality phenotypic data to EURISCO that is collected using standardized methods and in collaboration with various public and private partners. EURISCO acts as the phenotypic dataset's repository.</p> <p>By 2030, EURISCO comprehensively applies the Findable-Accessible-Interoperable-Reproducible (FAIR) principles, and the</p>	<p>1. The EURISCO network of National Focal Points is optimally supported.</p>	National / EURISCO	Training workshops	National funds / ECPGR Grant / ECPGR-EURISCO budget line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Training workshops for <i>ex situ</i> and <i>in situ</i> National Focal Points (NFPs). • P3 - Training workshops for on-farm NFPs.
	<p>2. EURISCO contains high-quality passport data of all European <i>ex situ</i> collections, progressively extended to include actively-managed <i>in situ</i> CWR populations and appropriate on-farm landraces data.</p>	National / Subregional EURISCO	Training workshops	National funds / ECPGR Grant or ECPGR-EURISCO budget line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Training workshops for <i>ex situ</i> and <i>in situ</i> NFPs.
	<p>3. NFPs assure access to all publicly-available quality phenotypic data related to the conserved PGR, in collaboration with various public and private partners. Access is provided initially via inclusion in EURISCO.</p>	National / Subregional	Crop WG support for data gathering and transfer	National funds / ECPGR Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Compilation and transfer of existing Characterization and Evaluation data to EURISCO.
	<p>4. European genebanks and other PGR holders have improved (or can improve) their data management practices through access to, and use of facilitating tools, resources and services, having adopted (or allowing them to adopt) the FAIR principles and becoming part of the open data community.</p>	Genebanks	Training workshops	External donor / ECPGR Grant or ECPGR-EURISCO budget line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Training workshops for genebank information system officers and <i>ex situ/in situ</i> NFPs to foster cooperation, and based on consultation with WG Chairs and the assessments of local needs reported by the NFPs.
	<p>5. Both data in EURISCO and the associated IT infrastructure are compliant with the FAIR principles, allowing better use of the data by a wide community of users across sectors and domains.</p>	EURISCO	EURISCO development	ECPGR-EURISCO budget line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P2 - Development of EURISCO, based on EURISCO work plans. (EURISCO budget)

<p>NFPs are trained to also adopt the principles for local data sources (see 2.5.1). EURISCO's data governance and management are improved to reach an acceptable high standard. As a result, EURISCO becomes a trusted European and Global open-access database repository.</p>	<p>6. EURISCO becomes a trustable repository in the arena of European and global open-access databases with acceptably high governance and data-management standards</p>	<p>EURISCO</p>	<p>EURISCO development</p>	<p>ECPGR-EURISCO budget line</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Development of EURISCO, based on EURISCO work plans. (EURISCO budget)
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The EURISCO budget can be complemented by Grant Scheme activities. Workplans are prepared annually by the EURISCO Coordinator/EURISCO Advisory Committee

Table 5: Promoting sustainable use of PGR

PGR Strategy for Europe Objectives	PGR Strategy for Europe Targets	Responsibility (main level/responsible bodies)	Type of action that ECPGR could undertake	Potential sources of funding to cover the ECPGR action	ExCo proposal for activities to be included in Phase XI workplan
<p>By 2030, assure access to well-documented genetic diversity that is conserved <i>ex situ</i> and, where and as appropriate, <i>in situ</i> in Europe.</p> <p>By 2030, PGR crop portals for European crops have been established and maintained.</p> <p>By 2030, promote and secure commitment for targeted phenotypic and genotypic characterization and evaluation of European PGR and improve digitization, harmonization, availability and exchange of existing and newly-generated PGR characterization and evaluation data for private and public actors.</p> <p>By 2030, achieve a coordinated and systematic use of CWR genetic diversity in research and crop improvement.</p> <p>By 2030, farmers and civil society actors are better enabled to add value to European landraces through participatory breeding methodologies such as evolutionary breeding, thus contributing to crop diversity in landscapes and over time.</p> <p>By 2030, more diversified European agricultural and horticultural production systems are established for the benefit of sustainable food production, entrepreneurial development, and long-term management of PGR.</p>	<p>1. Collections of PGR in Europe are increasingly characterized and evaluated under standard conditions, as well as genotyped with suitable sets of molecular markers.</p>	<p>EVA Network</p>	<p>Implement public-private partnerships</p>	<p>ECPGR Budget / EVA budget line or Grant Scheme</p> <p>ECPGR project / External donor/ National funds / Support From EU-project AGENT for the Wheat/Barley EVA Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Continuation of existing EVA Networks. • P1 - Support for the creation of other crops' public-private partnerships, including attention to the possibility to adapt the EVA concept to perennial plants such as fruit trees.
	<p>2. Data and accessions in the public domain, including those with relevant agronomic and quality traits identified at molecular level, are available to users through open centralized information systems, including Crop Portals.</p>	<p>National Research Centres / Genebanks</p> <p>Doc&Info WG / EURISCO</p>	<p>Support of Crop WGs</p>	<p>National funds / EU project or External donor / ECPGR Grant</p> <p>ECPGR-EURISCO budget line</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P3 - Based on crop-specific WG proposals, set up Crop Portals to facilitate access to information about PGR targeted to specific user groups. • P3 - Infrastructure for data provisioning of the Crop Portals from EURISCO.
	<p>3. A wider use of pre-breeding of CWR and participatory-breeding on landraces on-farm generates added value to the unique diversity of these materials.</p>	<p>Research consortia/ Genebanks / Stakeholders</p>	<p>Support of Crop WGs</p>	<p>EU-funded project External donor / Grant Scheme</p> <p>National funds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 - Promote participatory use and evaluation of PGR, especially climate-resilient and low-input, underutilized crops.
	<p>4. All elements of existing relevant legislation have been reviewed, and elements of previously developed disincentives for (small-scale) producers of diversified plant propagation material, are eliminated, where appropriate</p>	<p>Task Force involving crop and thematic WGs</p>	<p>Carry out analysis</p>	<p>External donor / ECPGR Task Force budget line</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P2 - Set up Task Force involving crop and thematic WGs, to carry out analysis of existing legislation, including access to PGR phytosanitary issues and other legal constraints and disincentives limiting conservation and use of PGR diversity.

Specific budget lines can be made available for TF activities.

Table 6: Developing a system to monitor European conservation and sustainable use of PGR (Monitoring)

PGR Strategy for Europe Objectives	PGR Strategy for Europe Targets	Responsibility (main level/responsible bodies)	Type of action that ECPGR could undertake	Potential sources of funding to cover the ECPGR action	ExCo proposal for activities to be included in Phase XI workplan
<p>By 2030, sets of indicators of genetic resource conservation and use are developed/adapted and agreed by all stakeholders involved, and integrated and deployed within monitoring strategies to ensure that genetic diversity is maintained or increased in Europe</p> <p>By 2030:</p> <p>i) The proposed European coordination and information centre for conservation and sustainable use of agricultural genetic resources becomes the hub to gather and publish PGR conservation and use data provided by local and national networks under the guidance of ECPGR National Coordinators.</p> <p>ii) Trends in the conservation and sustainable use of PGR are assessed, analyzed and published every 5 years and necessary corrective measures are proposed.</p>	<p>1. By 2025, sets of relevant indicators and associated baseline data to be collected for monitoring activities under this Strategy, have been consensually defined by all involved stakeholders.</p> <p>2. By 2030, a sound system for the collection of all relevant baseline data has been set up and data are being actively collected and compiled, providing the baseline for further monitoring.</p> <p>1. Trends in the conservation and use of PGR in Europe are being monitored, and the information from local, national and regional levels is compiled and available via the European coordination and information centre for conservation and sustainable use of agricultural genetic resources.</p> <p>2. Information about trends in the conservation and use of PGR in Europe is readily available and regularly disseminated through different forms to PGR managers and users, policymakers and the wider public.</p> <p>3. Europe is actively and efficiently contributing to international reports on monitoring of conservation and use of genetic resources.</p>	<p>Task Force and WGs</p> <p>Next Phase XII</p> <p>Next Phase XII</p>	<p>Define and reach agreement on indicators</p>	<p>ECPGR Task Force budget line</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P3 - Set up a Task Force involving different categories of users (breeders, farmers, NGOs, etc.), to define indicators and associated baseline data to be collected for monitoring activities under the PGR Strategy (avoiding overlap with existing monitoring mechanisms).

Only the first item relates to Phase XI. A budget line for TF activities may be created

Annex V: Agenda

Eighteenth meeting of the ECPGR Steering Committee 1–4 June 2026, Tbilisi, Georgia

Agenda

Sunday, 31 May or Monday, 1 June 2026

Arrival of participants at Hotel Holiday Inn, Tbilisi

Monday, 1 June 2026

13:00 – 14:00 *Lunch*

Registration *Conference venue: Hotel Holiday Inn*

14:00 – 14:30 *Registration*

1. Opening (Chair: J. Weibull)

14:30 – 14:45 Opening statements by Lasha Dolidze, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia

14:45 – 15:00 Welcome address by the Chair and adoption of the Agenda

2. Reporting on Phase XI (Chair: D. Ruņģis)

15:00 – 15:40 Mid-Term technical and financial report of Phase XI (*L. Maggioni*)

15:40 – 16:10 Communications strategy report and way forward (*N. Capozio*)

16:10 – 16:40 *Coffee/Tea break*

16:40 – 16:50 Report from the ExCo on its activities (*J. Weibull*)

16:50 – 17:20 The EVA experience during Phase XI (*S. Goritschnig*)

17:20 – 17:50 EURISCO update and prospects for Phase XI (*S. Weise*)

17:50 – 18:20 Other German-funded projects: AEGIS and CWRs (*L. Maggioni*)

Dinner (self-organized)

Tuesday, 2 June 2026

3. Reporting on Phase XI (continued) (Chair: M. Boczkowska)

09:00 – 09:30 ECPGR Secretariat involvement with Horizon Europe projects (*S. Goritschnig*)

09:30 – 10:00 The Genebank Managers Network – Progress and planning (*D. Janovská*)

10:00 – 10:40 Feedback from the WG Chairs (*K. Annamaa*)

10:40 – 11:10 *Coffee/Tea break*

4. ECPGR next steps in Phase XI (Chair: I. Thormann)

11:10 – 11:40 Proposal from Bioversity for continued hosting of the Secretariat (*V. Guardia - online*)

11:40 – 12:10 Proposal for Phase XI budget revision (2027/2028) (*L. Maggioni / J. Weibull*)

12:10 – 13:30 Statements from all countries on financing of the programme, continuation in Phase XII and comments from observers (*All National Coordinators and observers*)

13:30 – 14:30 *Lunch break*

5. ECPGR next steps in Phase XI (continued) (*Chair: Th. van Hintum*)

- 14:30 – 15:30 Building on PRO-GRACE outputs to strengthen ECPGR: a SWOT analysis exercise (*S.Goritschnig*)
- 15:30 – 16:15 Discussion and revision of Table of Priorities. Proposals for Phase XI (*J. Weibull*)
- 16:15 – 16:45 *Coffee/Tea break*
- 16:45 – 17:30 Discussion on budget revision 2027/28
- 17:30 – 18:00 Wrap-up SC decisions and instructions for group discussion on Wednesday (*J. Weibull*)
- Dinner (self-organized)*

Wednesday, 3 June 2026**6. ECPGR towards Phase XII - sub-regional groups discussion** (*Chair: J. Weibull*)

- 08:30–10:30 Four sub-regional groups are formed to openly discuss ECPGR priorities and mode of operation for Phase XII and bring proposals to the attention of the plenary
- 10:30–11:00 *Coffee/Tea break*
- 11:00–11:20 Proposed amendments to ECPGR Terms of Reference (*I. Thormann*)
- 11:20 –12:00 Reports from sub-regional rapporteurs (10' each)
- 12:00–13:00 Discussion on ECPGR priorities and mode of operation for Phase XII
- 13:00–13:15 Wrap-up on Phase XII (*J. Weibull*)
- 13:15 *Lunch break*
- Afternoon free (Rapporteurs compile the draft report)*
- 20:00 *Social dinner*

Thursday, 4 June 2026**7. Study Tour**

- 08:30 *Departure from the hotel*
- 09:00 – 12:00 *Excursion to Jighaura and visit to the grape collection*
- 12:00 – 12:30 *Coffee break (organized by SRCA)*

8. Conclusion (*Chair: J. Weibull*)

- 12:30 – 13:30 Reading of the meeting report
- 13:30 – 15:30 Discussion and approval of report
- 15:30 – 15:45 Concluding remarks of the meeting
- 16:00 – 18:00 Lunch (organized by SRCA)
- 18:30 *Return to Tbilisi and departure of participants*

Annex VI: List of participants**Eighteenth meeting of the ECPGR Steering Committee**

1– 4 June 2026, Tbilisi, Georgia

List of participants

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