

# Genebank Managers Network Meeting

16 April 2026



# Agenda



- 1. Welcome and brief updates from Genebank Managers Network**  
by chairperson Dagmar Janovská
- 2. Cybersecurity and Data Protection in Genebank Operations**  
by Lene Krøl Andersen, PhD, MBA, Executive Director, Nordic Genetic Resource Center
- 3. Nagoya Protocol, Digital Sequence Information (DSI): Implications for Genebanks** by Eliška Rolfová, Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic
- 4. Follow-up Actions and Next Steps**
- 5. Planning of the Next GMN Meeting**
- 6. Any Other Business and Closing**

# GMN



- **Proposed:** June 2022.
- **ToR effective from:** 1 June 2023.
- **Meetings:** 1 in-person meeting/year (1–2 days) + 1–3 online meetings/year.
- **Membership model:** 1 nominated contact person per country.
- **In-person size limit:** max. 35 participants.
- **Chair term:** 2 years.
- **Funding model:** self-funded, with possible complementary ECPGR support.

# GMN



- A platform for **exchange, cooperation and capacity building**
- Focus on **practical support for genebank managers**
- The network is increasingly focused on **practical solutions**, not only discussion
- Current priorities: **quality, documentation, accessibility, training**



# GMN

- **Germination testing and viability monitoring** – comparing protocols, sample sizes, decision points, and interpretation of results.
- **Drying procedures** – sharing practical experience with drying rooms/chambers, cabinets, machines, or silica gel, and discussing what works best under different conditions.
- **Seed handling and sampling routines** – small operational improvements in how seed lots are received, processed, handled, and prepared for storage or testing.
- **SOPs, working instructions and manuals** – exchanging existing documents and improving them together instead of creating everything from scratch.
- **Collection management workflows** – learning how colleagues organize routine operations, prioritization, and day-to-day genebank work.
- **Database management and documentation** – sharing simple workflows for recording results, checking data quality, and linking documentation to routine operations.
- **Quality management in practice** – not expensive certification, but practical quality routines, checklists, and clearer internal procedures.
- **Safety duplication and operational troubleshooting** – learning from each other how to solve practical problems without major investments.

# 4. Follow-up Actions and Next Steps

## WG Chairs and ExCo Meeting

3–4 March 2026, Aranjuez, Spain

- in preparation for the 18th ECPGR Steering Committee and focused on Working Group activities and key topics for future discussion.
- GMN was presented as a network supporting better genebank management and leadership through cooperation, exchange of experience and capacity building.
- a broader discussion on how to improve communication and interaction across crop Working Groups, thematic Working Groups and GMN.
- other important topics included visibility of WG outputs, post-PRO-GRACE follow-up, funding opportunities, training needs and common risks for European PGR conservation.



# ECPGR Structure



# 4. Follow-up Actions and Next Steps

## WG Chairs and ExCo Meeting

### Where do WGs meet GMN?

In documentation and information management, cryopreservation, peer review, SOPs, risk management, training, and safety duplication priorities.

### Why is this important?

Because it helps transform WG outputs into practical tools and solutions for everyday genebank management.



# PRO-GRACE



## 7 October 2025 PRO-GRACE final project meeting

- Horizon Europe concept-development action designed to prepare a future European RI for PGR.
- worked on governance, services, data systems, quality standards, certification, legal/regulatory issues, training and stakeholder engagement.
- generated substantial outputs:
  - minimum quality standards for genebanks,
  - blueprint for a Genebank Quality Certification System,
  - capacity-building proposals, data interoperability concepts, etc.
- Next step – GRACE RI

# PRO-GRACE

## The GRACE-RI proposed scientific services

### GRACE-RI SERVICES

I. SERVICES FOR <i>EX SITU</i> CONSERVATION	II. SERVICES FOR <i>IN SITU</i> CONSERVATION	III. DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	IV. CHARACTERIZATION AND (PRE)BREEDING SERVICES	V. SERVICES FOR PGR ACCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality management system</li> <li>• State-of-the-art conservation protocols</li> <li>• Routine use of (cyto)genomics and phenomics in PGR management</li> <li>• Well-characterized  core collections</li> <li>• Safety duplication of collections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In situ</i> PGR inventories and conservation strategies for natural populations</li> <li>• On-farm/ in-garden conservation of landraces</li> <li>• Genomic-phenomic monitoring of <i>in situ</i> populations</li> <li>• Safety <i>ex situ</i> duplication of threatened populations/ landraces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced EURISCO</li> <li>• Standardized data formats</li> <li>• Integrated solutions for PGR project data management</li> <li>• Integrated systems for <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> data</li> <li>• AI-powered data curation</li> <li>• Predictive Modeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genotyping/ sequencing/ eDNA barcoding</li> <li>• Cytogenomic, metabolomic, phenomic, introgressiomic services</li> <li>• Data analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulatory support services for PGR users</li> <li>• Phytosanitary infrastructure</li> <li>• Scientific expertise for policymakers</li> <li>• Regulatory support for conservation strategies</li> </ul>

### CAPACITY BUILDING AND OUTREACH

# PRO-GRACE



- proposed services closely match many GMN priorities.
- did not secure support to enter the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) Roadmap
  - due to lack of financial support, even though the project had already significantly advanced the maturity of the RI concept.
- **not mean failure** - PRO-GRACE created the scientific, strategic and community foundations - take years to rebuild.

*Losing this momentum would mean losing some of the best coordinated work the European PGR community has produced so far.*

**PRO-GRACE already resulted in a formal GRACE consortium, with 25 institutions from 15 countries signing the MoU, and additional support expressed by 54 institutions across 19 countries.**

# What a COST Action is

**A 4-year  
pan-European  
network**

## **Bottom-up**

Topics are defined by the research community.

## **Open**

New members can join during the Action lifetime.

## **Output & impact oriented**

The Action is expected to achieve clear objectives.

## **Networking-based**

COST funds coordination, exchange, training and mobility — not the underlying research.

# What COST can support



## Meetings

Management Committee meetings, Working Group meetings and other Action meetings.

## Training Schools

Specialised training events for participants.

## Mobility

Short-Term Scientific Missions and Virtual Mobility for capacity building and knowledge transfer.

## Communication & dissemination

Conference grants, dissemination products and expenses for the benefit of the network.

**COST does not fund the research itself.**

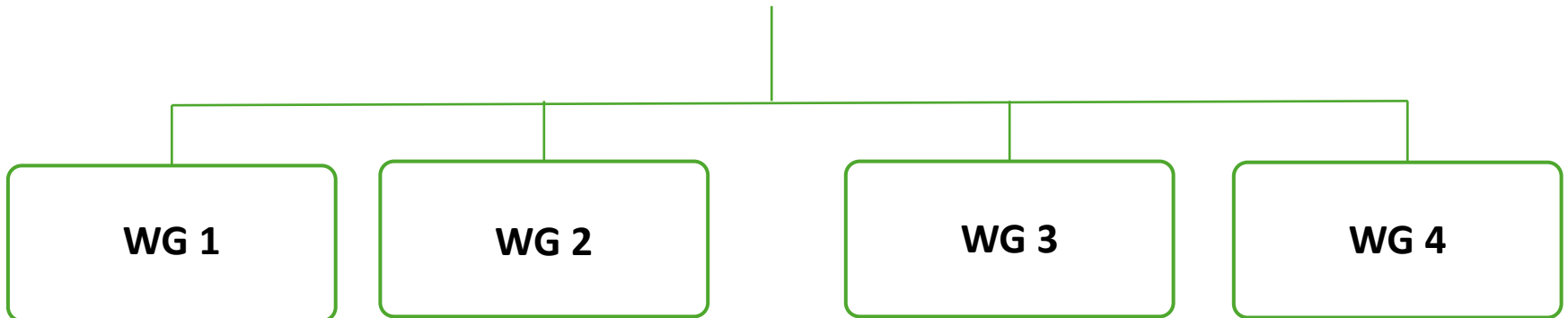
The proposal should therefore be built around coordination, exchange, capacity building, and shared European added value.



# How a COST is organised

## Management Committee (MC)

Decision-making and overall  
coordination

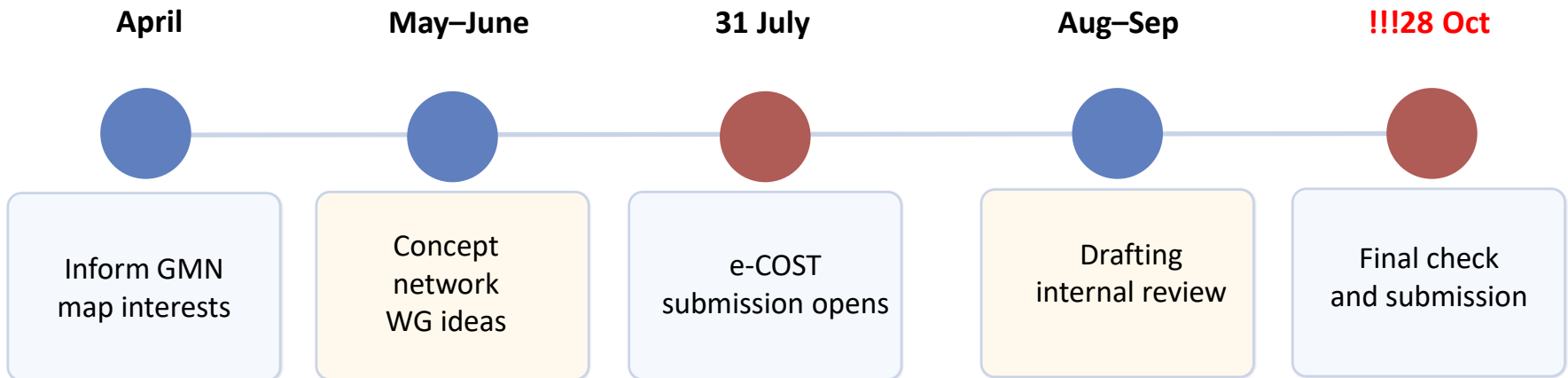


Participants: MC members, observers, WG members and  
*ad hoc* participants

WG members can join from any country in the world, subject to Action rules and  
MC approval.



# COST Timeline



**Official call window: 31 July 2026, 12:00 noon CEST → 28 October 2026, 12:00 noon CET**

# COST Action – Why only one



- A single common COST Action allows us to avoid **internal competition** and to build on the shared achievements of PRO-GRACE and GMN instead of creating parallel initiatives.
- One individual may participate **in only one proposal role** per Open Call: either Main Proposer or Secondary Proposer.
- COST is a good instrument for what is needed right now and ready-to-implement:
  - capacity building and development,
  - trainings,
  - networking,
  - peer learning,
  - knowledge exchange and widening participation across Europe.

# COST Action – Why only one



GRACE-RI remains the long-term infrastructure vision;

GMN – self-funded

COST can be the practical bridge that keeps the community working, growing and delivering until the next RI window opens.

**Aim today:** information, not final decisions

# AEGIS Plus



15 November 2025 to 31 December 2026, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity and coordinated by the ECPGR Secretariat.

- Improving operational quality
  - Advancing quality monitoring tools and updating core operational guidance
- Strengthening genebank capacity
  - Supporting technical skill development and promoting consistent procedures across AEGIS partners
- Enhancing accessibility and impact
  - Assessing the availability, use and distribution of AEGIS material to identify bottlenecks and opportunities for improvement.

# AEGIS Plus planned activities



- **Metrics Tool Integration Workshop:** A 2-day training for documentation officers to install and implement the metrics tool at an AEGIS genebank
- **Operational Manual Template:** Preparation of a revised and more accessible manual template by a dedicated expert group
- **Technical Hackathons:** Two 2-day, hands-on workshops in different locations for curators to align best practices for core operations (e.g. germination testing, drying)
- **Safety Duplication Support:** Facilitation of safety duplication for up to 700 AEGIS accessions in a foreign genebank
- **Peer Review Visits:** Reciprocal reviews among 12 genebanks – including at least three field orchards – to exchange knowledge and improve standards
- **Accessibility Desk Study:** A CGN–ECPGR-led analysis of request levels, accessibility, and distribution of AEGIS accessions over the past five years, supported by a questionnaire and bilateral follow-up.

# AEGIS Plus planned activities



## Metrics Tool Integration Workshop:

24–25 February 2026 in Prague, Czech Republic

- aim to discuss and improve universal genebank metrics and support their broader adoption.
- presentations, detailed discussion of indicators and a hands-on hackathon with genebank data.
- strong focus on clearer definitions, real data use and implementation, especially in GGCE and EURISCO.
- metrics should support internal monitoring and improvement, not be used as simplistic KPIs
- discussion also opened future work on metrics for field, *in vitro* and cryoconservation.
- 11 trainees from 9 countries (AL, CH, CZ, IT, NL, PL, PT, SI, SK)



# Why this matters for us



- It gives genebank managers a shared way to describe genebank status and progress.
- It helps reveal gaps in documentation, data structure and SOPs.
- It supports quality management, peer review and more transparent communication.
- It can become a practical management tool if linked to databases and automated workflows.
- It shows what has been conserved, regenerated and made available to users.
- It helps explain why this work matters for long-term conservation and future use.
- **It helps us demonstrate the real value of genebank work in numbers and in practice.**

# AEGIS Plus planned activities



## Technical Hackathons:

Two 2-day, hands-on workshops in different locations for curators to align best practices for core operations (e.g. germination testing, drying)

Volunteers, volunteering genebanks should be AEGIS Associate Members, BUT

may be proposed another practical topic if consider relevant

two-three months in advance

# AEGIS Plus planned activities



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# Thank you

