



ECPGR COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Assessment of progress and way
forward

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Editing and Communications Specialist

ECPGR Steering Committee meeting

2 June 2026



Purpose of this presentation

Prompted by WG Chairs' feedback

- WG Chairs and ExCo meeting, March 2026
- Proposals to strengthen ECPGR and WG Coordination included communication
- Lack of awareness of what has been done and is available

Honest assessment

- Review what has been achieved
- Identify what has worked well and what has not, highlighting resource constraints, structural challenges and open questions

Exchange of views

- Start conversation on communications priorities and direction, and possible adjustments
- Explore where roles and responsibilities could be strengthened, including National Coordinators



Agenda



Context



What has been done



Assessment



Open questions and way forward

Context



The strategy at a glance

Approved

January 2020 by the ECPGR Executive Committee

Scope

Focuses exclusively on external communications (not internal)

Validity

Designed for Phase X (2019–2023); principles remain relevant for Phase XI

Three communications objectives:

- Conveying to policymakers what ECPGR is doing in the European context
- Promote ECPGR's achievements, products and tools with user groups
- Communicate the importance of PGR for food security, sustainability and bio-economy

<https://bit.ly/ECPGR-Comms-Strategy>

Target audiences and key messages

- Policymakers
- User groups (researchers, breeders, farmers, NGOs)
- Interest groups

Tailored messaging:

- Importance of PGR for food security, sustainability, bio-economy
- Success stories from ECPGR activities
- ECPGR tools and databases to improve conservation and facilitate access to PGR

Possible actions

The **communication logframe** identifies a series of activities and related:

- Outputs
- Target groups
- Responsibilities
- Timeline
- Resources needed

Activity	Expected output(s)	Target group(s)	Responsibilities	Timeline	Resource needs
ECPGR community info	e-Bulletin	Informed NCs + WG members	Secretariat	Tri-annually	None - regular budget
ECPGR community info	e-Brief	Policy-makers, user groups and general public	Secretariat, in collaboration with NCs and WG chairs	Following each SC meeting	None - regular budget
General ECPGR info	Web info in own language	Domestic PGR networks	NCs and SC observers	Ongoing	None - in kind
PA material	Labels, A3 posters	Network institutions	Secretariat, WG members, Steering Committee	Preparation in 2019 and repetitive distribution	None- Regular budget (for existing material) – External funding for newly designed labels, etc.
Info at conferences, EP events	Side events/ poster presentations	Policy-makers	GenRes Bridge project, Secretariat, WG members, NCs	Appropriate occasions	None - Regular budget- in kind; GenRes Bridge budget
ECPGR achievements including major plans for Phase X	e-publication	Policy-makers	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo	Preparation Q1-2/2019, distribution Q2/2019	None - regular budget
ECPGR achievements including major plans for Phase X	Press releases, Radio, TV interviews	Relevant European and international press	GenRes Bridge project, Secretariat, NCs, WG Chairs	Following specific events and achievements	None - regular budget
ECPGR achievements including major plans for Phase X	Printed folder (in English)	Policy-makers	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo	Preparation Q3-4/2019, distribution Q1/2020	External funding
ECPGR achievements including possible updates regarding plans for Phase X	Printed folder	Members of the new EU-parliament (AGRI, DEVE, ENVI)	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo	Preparation Q1-2/2020, distribution Q3/2020	External funding
ECPGR 40-year anniversary (1980-2020)	Jubilee video(s) released	Policy-makers, user groups and general public	Jubilee video(s) TF + media producer	Preparation Q1-2/2020, release Q3-/2020	External funding
Joining the Food Forever initiative	ECPGR becomes a partner	All target groups	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo	Q4/2019	None
ECPGR and PGR advocacy	Mapping of ongoing policy work, position papers, mapping of EC contacts	Policy-makers	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo, NCs		External funding
Identify gaps in communication	Survey	Key target groups	Secretariat, in collaboration with ExCo	Preparation and distribution Q1-2/2020	External funding

Roles and responsibilities

Everyone in the network plays a part.

As National Coordinators, you are the bridge between ECPGR and your national institutions.

National Coordinators are essential in making ECPGR visible and relevant by:

- Translating messages
- Amplifying outputs
- Ensuring the network's work reaches the institutions that matter most.



**What has been
done**



1. Building a coherent visual identity

Not part of the original Strategy – developed proactively from 2021 onwards

Before 2021

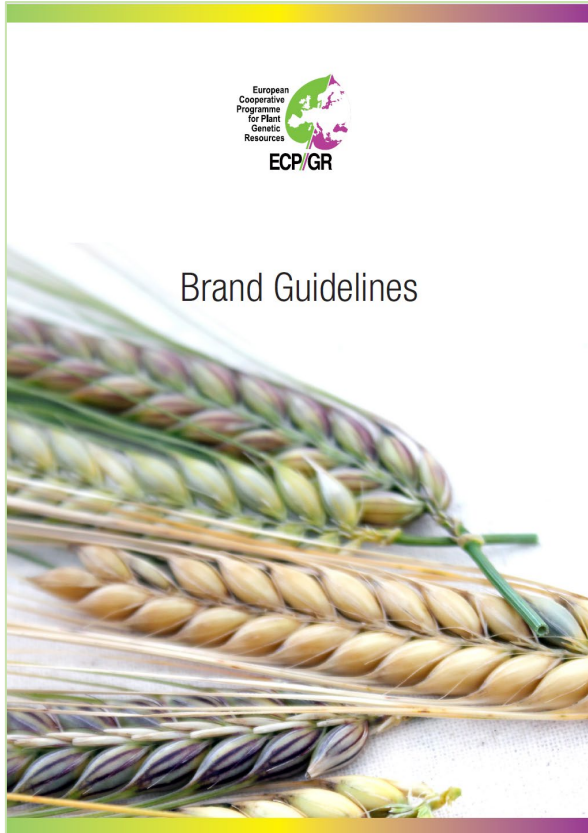
Only a logo, a website design and a few document templates. No unified visual identity or guidelines.



After

A complete, professional and consistent visual identity across all ECPGR materials and communications.

Branding guidelines



Brand Guidelines

Logo Do's and Don'ts

DO's

White or light colour background



On dark or complex pictures, use a white background



DON'Ts

Do not stretch or alter the shape of the logo, and do not change its colours



Do not use the logo without a white background on dark or complex pictures.



Typography

ECPGR's typeface family is a sans serif font, Helvetica Neue LT Std (if not available, use Helvetica Neue), which constitutes a complete typographic system. Its various typefaces can be used to convey different aspects of the brand.

ECPGR sans serif font is Palatino LT Std, which should be used on all official documents (e.g. letterhead).

Helvetica Neue Lt Std

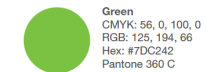
25 Ultra Light
 26 Ultra Light Italic
 27 Ultra Light Condensed
 35 Thin
 36 Thin Italic
 37 Thin Condensed
 45 Light
 46 Light Italic
 47 Light Condensed
 55 Roman
 56 Italic
 57 Condensed
 65 Medium
 66 Medium Italic
 67 Medium Condensed
 75 Bold
 76 Bold Italic
 77 Bold Condensed
 85 Heavy
 86 Heavy Italic
 87 Heavy Condensed
 95 Black
 96 Black Italic
 97 Black Condensed
 107 Extra Black Condensed

Palatino Lt Std

Light
 Light italic
 Roman
 Italic
 Medium
 Medium italic
 Bold
 Bold italic
 Black
 Black italic

Brand Colours

PRIMARY



Green
 CMYK: 56, 0, 100, 0
 RGB: 125, 194, 86
 Hex: #7DD242
 Pantone 360 C



Purple
 CMYK: 29, 90, 0, 0
 RGB: 182, 82, 151
 Hex: #B63E97
 Pantone 294 C

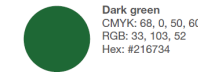
SECONDARY



Light green
 CMYK: 22, 0, 89, 0
 RGB: 201, 228, 174
 Hex: #C9E2AE



Light purple
 CMYK: 2, 24, 0, 0
 RGB: 243, 203, 224
 Hex: #F3CBE0



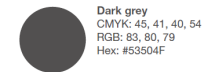
Dark green
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 Hex: #216734



Dark purple
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 RGB: 102, 24, 79
 Hex: #66184F



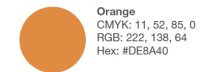
Light grey
 CMYK: 16, 9, 11, 4
 RGB: 203, 208, 209
 Hex: #CBD0D1



Dark grey
 CMYK: 45, 41, 40, 54
 RGB: 83, 80, 79
 Hex: #53504F




Yellow
 CMYK: 9, 2, 99, 0
 RGB: 240, 228, 136
 Hex: #F0E410



Orange
 CMYK: 11, 52, 85, 0
 RGB: 222, 138, 64
 Hex: #DE8A40

2. Communications materials

Letterheads and official document templates, agenda and meeting document templates, email signature



1 March 2022

Mr Georgios Merkouropoulos
Hellenic Agricultural Organization - DEMETER
S. Venizelou 1
14123 Lykovrisi Attikis
Greece

Ref: European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources - ECPGR
Subject: Nomination of Working Group Chair
Letter of Appointment

Dear Georgios,

Based on your Expression of Interest, I am pleased to inform you that the ECPGR Executive Committee nominated you as Chair of the ECPGR Vitis Working Group.

Please find attached the Terms of Reference of the Working Group Chair where you can find the information regarding your role and responsibilities.

Upon consideration of your possible need to receive assistance in order to share your new WG Chair duties, the ExCo is pleased to officially nominate Dragoslav Ivanisevic, Serbia, as Vice-Chair. The specific splitting of responsibilities will be left to your decision, in consultation with the Vice-Chair.

Please note that you have been included in the ECPGR Chairs listserver, whereby you can receive and send messages forwarded to all the Chairs.

Should you need further advice and clarification, please don't hesitate to contact the Secretariat.

I wish to congratulate you with your nomination and look forward to a continued fruitful collaboration with you in the Programme.

Best wishes,

ECPGR Secretariat | c/o Alliance Bioversity International and CIAT | Via di San Domenico, 1 | 00153 Rome, Italy
ecpgr@cgiar.org | www.ecpgr.org | linkedin.com/company/ecpgr/
The ECPGR Secretariat is hosted at the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, a CGIAR Research Centre



Meeting of the Working Groups Chairs and the Executive Committee
8-9 March 2023, online

Agenda

Wednesday 8 March

13:30 – 13:50 Welcome, objectives of the meeting and introduction of the participants (*M. Lefort*)
13:50 – 14:20 Table of ECPGR priorities for Phase XI – Revisions requested by the Working Groups and the Steering Committee (*introduced by L. Maggioni*)
14:20 – 15:20 Collective discussion on Tables 1 and 2 (In situ and on-farm)
15:20 – 15:40 BREAK
15:40 – 16:40 Collective discussion on Tables 3 and 4 (ex situ and documentation)
16:40 – 17:10 Collective discussion on Tables 5 and 6 (use and monitoring)
17:10 – 17:20 Wrap up of the day (*L. Maggioni*)

Thursday 9 March

13:00 – 13:20 ECPGR ToRs for the Working Groups and their Chairs (*introduced by P. Engel*)
13:20 – 15:10 Collective discussion on ToRs
15:10 – 15:30 BREAK
15:30 – 15:45 Reminder about the expected WG report for the SC meeting, with deadline 31 March and feedback on webinar series (*L. Maggioni*)
15:45 – 16:15 Any other business
16:15 – 16:30 Wrap up of the day (*L. Maggioni*)

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Nora Capozio
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European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR)

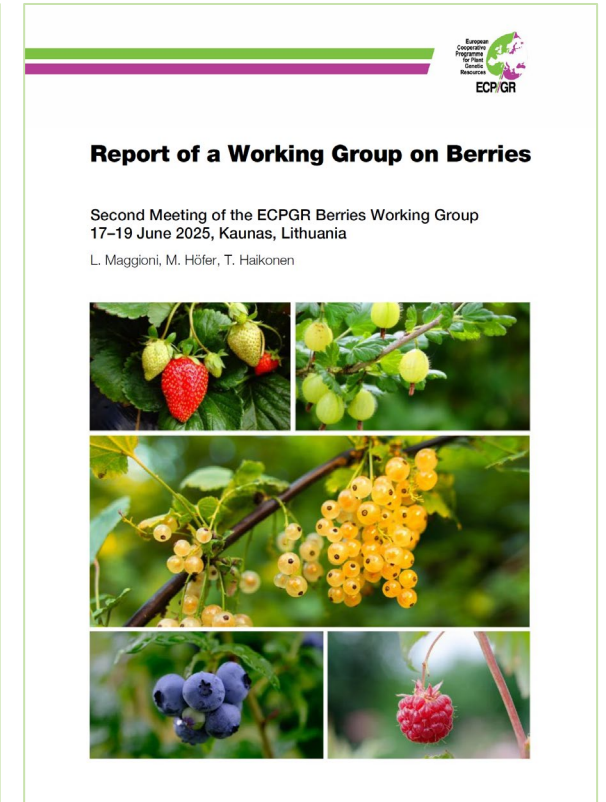
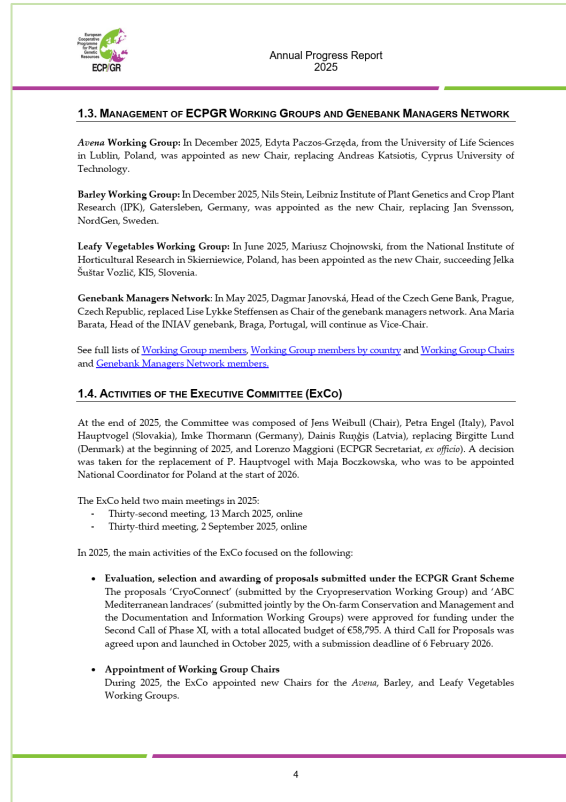
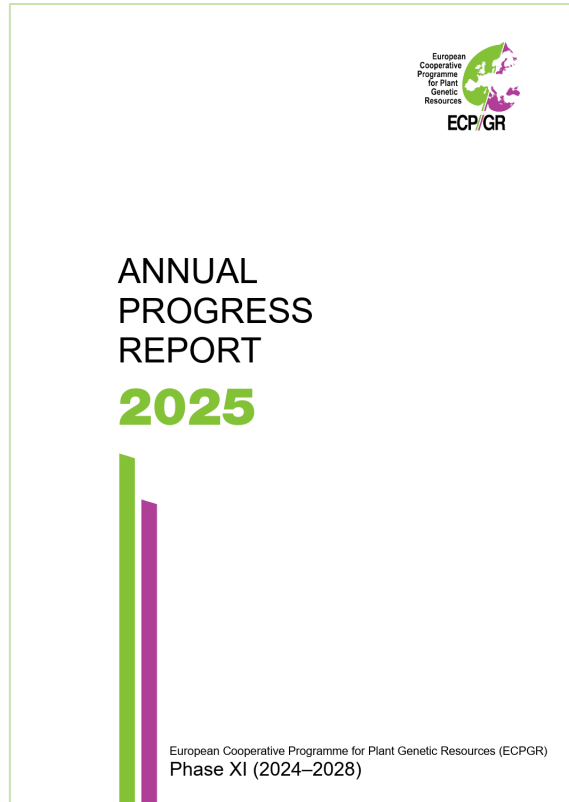
✉ n.capozio@cgiar.org | ☎ +39 06 6118 333 | 🌐 ecpgr.org

c/o Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT
Headquarters – Rome
Via di San Domenico, 1 | 00153 Rome, Italy | alliancebioversityciat.org



2. Communications materials

Reports



2. Communications materials

Policy briefs, descriptors



European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources
ECP/GR

POLICY BRIEF

**PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE
What should Europe urgently do?**

Plant genetic resources: A vital asset under threat

Plant genetic resources are the foundation of our food and bioeconomy. They are the building blocks for selecting or breeding crops that are more nutritious, productive and resilient to pests, diseases and environmental changes.

This vital asset is under threat due to multiple factors, including climate change and shifts in land-management practices and agricultural land use prompted by changing production systems as well as by regulation and marketing obstacles. The loss of these precious resources jeopardizes the long-term productivity, resilience and sustainability of agriculture and food systems.

Despite Europe being rich in plant genetic resources, their conservation and sustainable use face additional challenges. Many European genebanks and collections don't have appropriate resources, capacities, infrastructure and quality control to ensure the long-term conservation of the material they safeguard. The situation of plant genetic resources on farm and in nature is even worse, due to the above-mentioned changes in climate and land management practices, and the replacement of traditional varieties and landraces with new uniform varieties.

The situation is also problematic for European plant genetic resources users. Increased political awareness of their value and legal uncertainty about their exchange has prompted countries and institutes to restrict access to these resources.

As a result, scientists and plant breeders find it increasingly difficult to access the resources they need to address the mounting challenges posed by climate change, declining food security, and the need to decrease the environmental impact of agriculture.

Without immediate remedial action, Europe will continue to experience severe loss of plant genetic resources, impeding the development of sustainable agri-food systems as well as crop improvement.

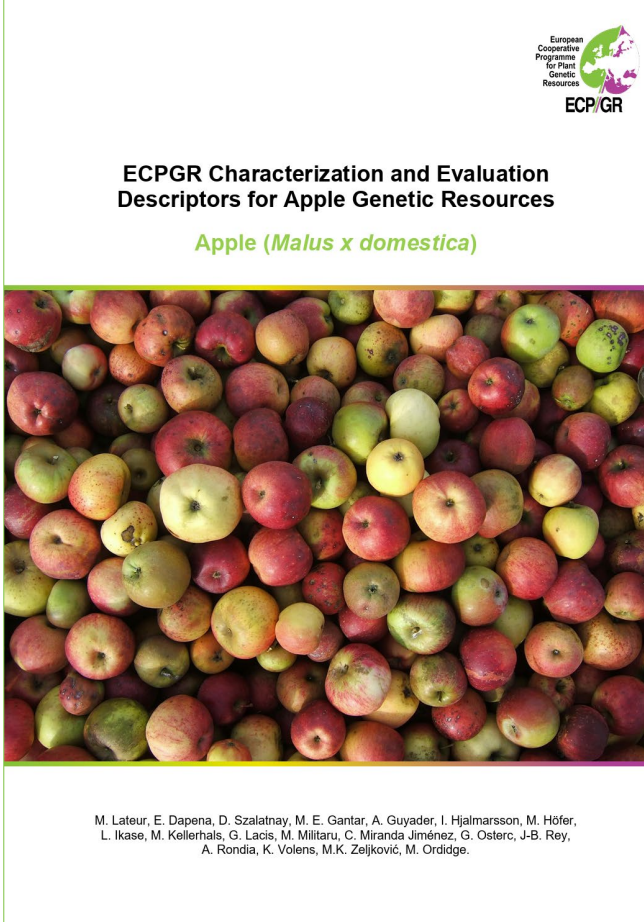
Time for a step-change in political will and action

Europe has instruments and assets to ensure the sustainable conservation and use of its genetic resources. European countries and the EU are formally committed to conserving plant genetic resources and their diversity through several global fora, such as the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Recently, the EU made a strong commitment with the European Green Deal. Both its Farm to Fork Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy underscore the need to preserve genetic resources.

Plant genetic resources are the diversity of traditional and modern crop species and varieties as well as crop wild relatives and other wild plant species that sustain agriculture and food systems, and the genetic material contained in them.


Plant genetic resources occur on farms, in gardens and in nature (*in situ*), and are conserved in facilities called genebanks (*ex situ*). They are essential tools in the hands of farmers, land and landscape managers, breeders and researchers.



European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources
ECP/GR

**ECPGR Characterization and Evaluation
Descriptors for Apple Genetic Resources**

Apple (*Malus x domestica*)



M. Lateur, E. Dapena, D. Szalathay, M. E. Gantar, A. Guyader, I. Hjalmarsson, M. Höfer, L. Ikase, M. Kellerhals, G. Laciš, M. Militaru, C. Miranda Jiménez, G. Osterc, J.-B. Rey, A. Rondia, K. Volens, M.K. Zeljković, M. Ordidge.

2. Communications materials

Brochures



THE EUROPEAN COOPERATIVE PROGRAMME FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
Promoting conservation, management and sustainable use of plant genetic diversity in Europe

The European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) brings together European countries to promote the long-term conservation and increase the use of plant genetic resources in Europe for sustainable agriculture, food security and food quality. Plant genetic resources are a fundamental asset to selecting or breeding crops that are more nutritious, productive and resilient to pests, diseases and climatic changes, and to reducing pressure on the environment.

Founded in 1980 on the recommendations of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Genebank Committee of the European Association for Research on Plant Breeding (EUCARPIA), ECPGR's network is composed of more than 100 centres from about 40 European countries who work together to achieve the following objectives (2024-2028):

- Consolidate and sustain *ex situ* conservation of plant genetic resources by improving the efficiency and efficacy of the European genebank infrastructure
- Strengthen the plant genetic resources information system by improving the quality and quantity of data publicly available in the European Search Catalogue for Plant Genetic Resources (EURISCO)
- Expand *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives, wild food plants and promote conservation and management of on-farm diversity
- Promote sustainable use of genetic diversity by facilitating access to and increasing knowledge on crop diversity, supporting participatory use and evaluation of genetic resources.

www.ecpgr.org




EVA
European Evaluation Network

EVA - The European Evaluation Network
Breeding companies, research institutes and genebanks joining forces to evaluate crop diversity in European collections

European genebanks conserve more than 2 million accessions of **plant genetic resources** – the building blocks for selecting and breeding crops that are more nutritious, productive and resilient to pests, diseases and climatic changes.

However, we have limited information on these resources in terms of their agronomic characteristics, quality traits, resistance to pests or diseases, and how they perform in different environments. This information is essential to translate the full potential of plant genetic resources into breeding and cultivation practices to make European agriculture more sustainable and resilient to climate change.

To bridge this gap, harness the potential of crop stakeholders and increase the diversity of stakeholders in plant breeding, the European Evaluation Network (EVA) was established in 2019 by the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR).

Through crop-specific **public-private partnerships**, EVA is generating standardized evaluation data (both phenotypic and genotypic) for numerous crop accessions and landraces available in European genebanks.

Financial support for the EVA Networks comes from the German Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture, ECPGR and the H2020 project AGENT (www.agent-project.eu).



Europe's crop wild relatives in situ data now in EURISCO

Background

Crop wild relatives (CWR) – wild plant species closely related to cultivated crops – are key genetic resources for crop improvement due to their rich and evolving diversity. As climate change intensifies, utilising this diversity becomes more urgent. Global agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the FAO Global Plan of Action (GPA), and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) emphasize the importance of documenting and conserving CWR, especially *in situ*, i.e. in the natural habitats where they occur, and enabling their sustainable use. However, conservation efforts across Europe vary strongly, with scattered or missing data, making it difficult to find and access these resources.

An ECPGR project, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity, aimed to resolve this situation by increasing the establishment of national CWR inventories and integrating *in situ* data into the central European Search Catalogue for Plant Genetic Resources (EURISCO).

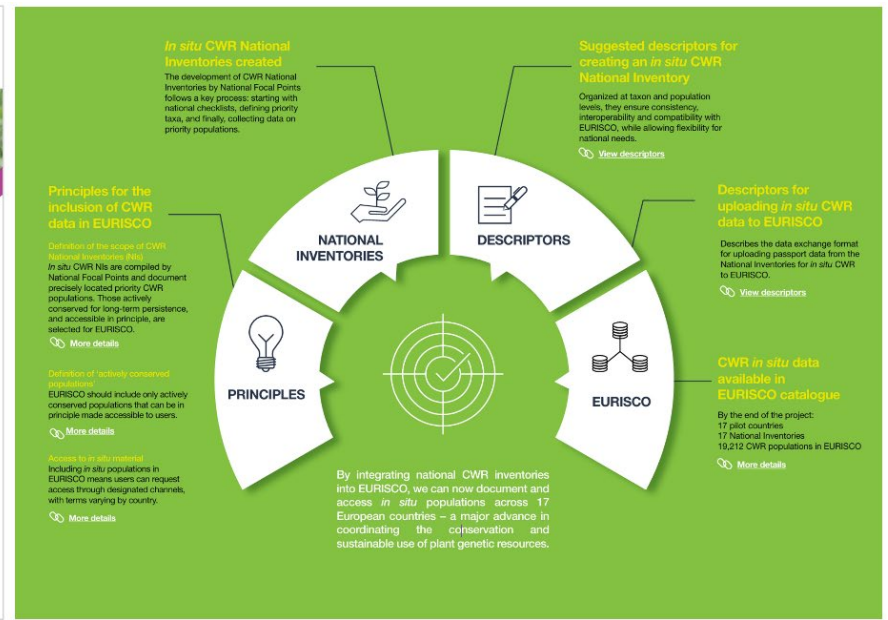
The project

The project successfully extended the EURISCO catalogue to include CWR *in situ* data. Early efforts focused on defining clear criteria for identifying CWR populations eligible for inclusion – specifically, those under active conservation and potentially available to users. These criteria were published in the document 'Protocols for the inclusion of CWR Data in EURISCO' developed in consultation with the ITPGRFA Secretariat and endorsed by project partners and the EURISCO Advisory Committee. A standardized data exchange format was established, and CWR National Inventory Focal Points were appointed to manage national data flows into EURISCO.

Pilot countries were supported in organizing their internal data collection processes and accessibly submitted initial datasets, using EURISCO-specific descriptors. The data were reviewed and uploaded to the system, enabling broader access. As of November 2025, 14 countries have contributed data covering 16,122 CWR populations. EURISCO now offers a centralized, searchable resource that links users to managing institutions or liaison contacts, facilitating access to the material.

This project marks a significant advancement in harmonizing CWR preservation and documentation efforts across Europe, supporting both conservation goals and crop improvement through better access to the valuable genetic diversity.

Funded by: 



In situ CWR National Inventories created
The development of CWR National Inventories by National Focal Points follows a key process: starting with national checklists, defining priority taxa, and finally, collecting data on priority populations.

Suggested descriptors for creating an in situ CWR National Inventory
Organized at taxon and population levels, they ensure consistency, interoperability and compatibility with EURISCO, while allowing flexibility for national needs.

Descriptors for uploading in situ CWR data to EURISCO
Describes the data exchange format for uploading passport data from the National Inventories for *in situ* CWR to EURISCO.

CWR in situ data available in EURISCO catalogues
By the end of the project: 17 National Inventories, 16,122 CWR populations in EURISCO.

Principles for the inclusion of CWR data in EURISCO
Definition of the scope of CWR to be included
In situ CWR NIs are compiled by National Focal Points and document precisely located priority CWR populations. These actively conserved for long-term persistence, and accessible in principle, are selected for EURISCO.

Definition of actively conserved populations
EURISCO should include only actively conserved populations that can be in principle made accessible to users.

Access to in situ material including in situ populations in EURISCO
meets users can request access through designated channels, with terms varying by country.

NATIONAL INVENTORIES

DESCRIPTORS

EURISCO

PRINCIPLES

By integrating national CWR inventories into EURISCO, we can now document and access in situ populations across 17 European countries – a major advance in coordinating the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources.

2. Communications materials

Brochures



EVA Boost Project
Implementation of the ECPGR European Evaluation Network on legumes and preparatory actions for the creation of a new network on perennial plants (berries and fruit trees)

Background
European genebanks conserve over 2 million accessions of plant genetic resources, essential for breeding crops that are more nutritious, resilient and resistant to pests, diseases and climate change. However, there is limited information on these resources, such as their agronomic characteristics, quality traits, pest or disease resistance, and performance in diverse environments. This information is crucial for leveraging plant genetic resources in breeding and cultivation practices, making European agriculture more sustainable and climate resilient.

The project
Building on this legacy, EVA Boost aims to expand the initiative by establishing a new legume network and laying the groundwork for one on perennial plants (fruit trees and berries).

How the EVA crop networks operate

- Network selects accessions with European genebanks.
- Selected experimental and scoring protocols are developed for trials of interest.
- Resources (propagation material and/or improved varieties) are shared with trial partners.
- Trials are conducted in accordance with agreed protocols, and data is shared.
- Field trial data is collected and analyzed.
- Phenotypic data are collected and analyzed in accordance with agreed protocols.

Impact
EVA Boost makes a significant expansion of the EVA Network, building on past achievements to increasingly unlock the potential of Europe's plant genetic resources. The initiative will help identify genetic material useful to strengthen agricultural resilience, offering breeders and growers better access to traits that could meet future challenges while promoting sustainable food production.

In particular, EVA Legumes will play a crucial role in increasing the availability of plant-based proteins, in line with the EU's Farm to Fork strategy. Similarly, EVA Perennials aims to identify resistance traits that could reduce the reliance on pesticides, supporting the European Green Deal's sustainability objectives.

Budget
€ 963,740

Funding
Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity, Germany

Partners
The EVA network includes partners from 24 European countries, including genebanks, universities, research institutes, public and private breeding companies and farming cooperatives. For the full list of partners see <https://www.ecpgr.eu/legumes/partners/legumes>.

Duration
1 September 2024 – 31 December 2027

Contact
Sandra Gatzerting, EVA Coordinator
s.gatzerting@cpgr.de



NEW AEGIS
Strengthening the AEGIS Quality System and EURISCO data coverage

The 'New AEGIS' project was launched at the end of 2024 to strengthen ex situ conservation and documentation in Europe by improving transparency, harmonizing quality standards, and enhancing the effectiveness of the European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS), as well as expanding access to characterization and evaluation data for research and breeding through the European Search Catalogue for Plant Genetic Resources (EURISCO).

However, differences in operational capacity and documentation standards among Associate Member genebanks limit its full potential. The New AEGIS project responded to these challenges by building capacity and quality assurance, and enhancing data management among AEGIS Associate members through activities including:

- Developing and harmonizing **operational genebank manuals** and **Standard Operating Procedures**
- Establishing and testing a **Genebank Metrics Tool** to monitor performance and increase transparency
- Supporting **peer-to-peer learning** through reciprocal genebank visits
- Enhancing **data availability and interoperability** by integrating existing phenotypic and evaluation data into EURISCO.

Key outcomes

Improving quality and transparency
The AEGIS Associate Members convened to discuss quality systems, operational manuals and the use of metrics, fostering greater awareness and commitment within the network. Participants recognized the importance of documenting their operations, improving safety duplication and adopting measurable standards. In several countries – such as Hungary, Albania and Estonia – this led to significant increases in accessions included in AEGIS.

Operational genebank manuals
Nineteen new genebank manuals were developed, with more in progress. These manuals describe each institution's structure, processes and protocols, forming the foundation for continuous quality improvement. An independent expert review of 30 manuals (including both new and existing ones) provided recommendations, calling for clearer, more standardized and regularly updated manuals.

Crop-specific genebank standards
Two new crop-specific genebank standards were finalized for Berries and Maize, while the Malus/Pyrus standards are under development. These standards define quality benchmarks for maintaining crop accessions and future certification systems.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
Three Associate Members – Suceava Genebank (Romania), Isoplexis (Madeira, Portugal) and the University of Pavia (Italy) – shared their SOPs. These examples encouraged greater transparency and shared learning in genebank management practice across the network.

Genebank Metrics Tool
This innovative tool, piloted by 15 genebanks, enables quantitative performance monitoring, creating a data-driven quality system for Europe. Feedback from the pilot phase has been published in Plant Genetic Resources: Characterization and Utilization (DOI: [10.1017/S1472621251002133](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1472621251002133)).

Peer review and reciprocal visits
Nine genebanks participated in reciprocal visits, building trust and sharing practical experience to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The resulting reports and presentations, published online, now serve as practical examples of peer-based quality enhancement within AEGIS.

Expanding data in EURISCO
The project enriched EURISCO with characterization and evaluation data from Albania, France, Italy, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia, covering crops like maize, wheat, Brassica, tomato, grapevine and hop.

2. Communications materials

Virtual backgrounds



2. Communications materials

Roll-ups & display materials

ECPGR
European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources

The European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources is a network that promotes the conservation, management and sustainable use of plant genetic resources in Europe by:

- Sustaining *ex situ* conservation
- Strengthening the plant genetic resources information system
- Expanding *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives & wild food plants
- Promoting on-farm conservation and management
- Facilitating access for use in breeding, research, training and farming

www.ecpgr.org

AEGIS
A European Genebank Integrated System

AEGIS is an ECPGR initiative connecting European genebanks to efficiently conserve and provide access to unique germplasm in Europe through the establishment of the European Collection.

The accessions in the European Collection are maintained by the participating institutions at an agreed quality standard and are made available following the terms of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

www.ecpgr.org/aegis

eurisco
Finding seeds for the future

THE EUROPEAN SEARCH CATALOGUE FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

- > 2 million accessions
- > 6,700 genera
- > 46,000 species

> 400 institutes

> 43 countries

EURISCO is a European online database that provides information on crop plants and their wild relatives preserved by more than 400 institutes in Europe, as *ex situ* accessions or *in situ* populations.

<http://eurisco.ecpgr.org/>

EURISCO is maintained at the Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK), Gatersleben, Germany on behalf of ECPGR.

EVA
European Evaluation Network

BREEDING COMPANIES, RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND GENE BANKS JOINING FORCES TO EVALUATE CROP DIVERSITY IN EUROPEAN COLLECTIONS

- Crop-specific public-private partnerships
- Joint phenotyping and genotyping
- Evaluations in different European environments
- Identification of climate-resilient breeding material
- Enriched genebank inventories

www.ecpgr.org/eva

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
Increasing ECPGR knowledge and opportunities on public-private partnerships for the use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture

FREE TO PUBLISH
FREE TO READ

Genetic Resources

A full open-access peer-reviewed journal serving all genetic resources stakeholders

www.genesj.org

Publishing research and tools on plant and animal genetic resources in the European region and worldwide

- Research articles
- Reviews
- Strategies
- Guidelines
- Short communications
- Methods
- Protocols
- Case studies and more

Genetic Resources is supported by:

- ECPGR
- ERFP

The journal also received its part of the funding from the German Federal Government and the European Union through the ERFP and the ERFP.

3. Digital media products

Bulletin



Grant Scheme: Outcome of the Third Call of Phase XI

The Third Call of the ECPGR Activity Grant Scheme was launched on 6 October 2025, with a deadline of 6 February 2026.

Out of the four submitted proposals, the Executive Committee selected for funding the one submitted by the Barley and Wheat Working Groups on multi-environment validation, mapping, and marker development for resistance to fungal diseases in barley and wheat ([ValoResWB](#)) and the proposal submitted by the Berries Working Group on a collaborative action for developing trait descriptors for berry genetic resources ([BerryTraits](#)).

The Executive Committee asked for a number of clarifications before accepting a third proposal from the Allium Working Group on the 'Conservation and eco-geographical mapping of Ramsons (*Allium ursinum* L.) genetic resources in Europe' (Euro-Ursi). The Working Group decided to revise the proposal for the next Call.

For more information on the selected projects, click [here](#)

Working Group Chairs and Executive Committee meeting



On 3–4 March 2026, the Chairs of the ECPGR Working Groups gathered in Aranjuez, Spain, hosted by the *Instituto de Investigación en Cambio Global* of the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos. They met jointly with the ECPGR Executive Committee in preparation for the 18th ECPGR Steering Committee meeting.

The Working Group Chairs discussed key challenges and opportunities, reported on the work done in 2024–2025, and reviewed with the ExCo issues and priorities for the coming years.

For more information about the meeting and related documents, visit the [dedicated page](#).

On 5 March, the Executive Committee convened to discuss the outcomes of the Chairs' meeting, exchange perspectives and refine proposals ahead of the Steering Committee meeting. They also evaluated the proposals received under the Third Call of the Grant Scheme ([minutes](#)).

The ExCo also agreed to fund the requested meeting of the Leafy Vegetables Working Group, jointly with the EVA Lettuce Network, to be tentatively held in Skierniewice, Poland, in September/October 2026.

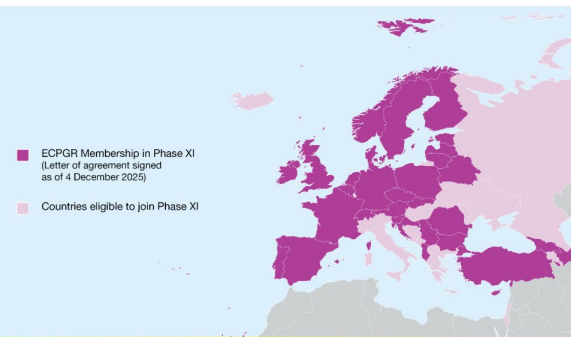


Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will hold its 18th mid-term meeting from 2–4 June 2026 in Tbilisi, Georgia, hosted by the Scientific Research Center of Agriculture (LEPL). Additional information regarding the agenda and logistical arrangements will be provided in due course.

Membership to ECPGR Phase XI (2024–2028)

As of 4 December 2025, 31 countries have signed the Letter of Agreement to join Phase XI ([here](#)). For all the other countries, the Secretariat is available for clarification/support on the signature procedure.



Working Group Chairs meeting

In preparation for the 18th Steering Committee meeting, the Working Group (WG) Chairs will convene from 3–4 March in Aranjuez, Spain, jointly with the Executive Committee. During this session, they will review WG activities and discuss key topics on the upcoming Steering Committee agenda and provide input to support informed discussion and decision-making.

On 5 March, the Executive Committee will hold their own meeting to discuss conclusions and recommendations from the Chairs' meeting, exchange perspectives and refine proposals ahead of the Steering Committee meeting. They will also evaluate proposals submitted under the Third Call of the Grant Scheme.



Germany commits funds to propel ECPGR initiatives

The German Ministry for Food and Agriculture recently approved funding for two new ECPGR initiatives, dedicated to consolidating AEGIS implementation by its Associate members and boosting the activities of the EVA Networks, in particular the recently established EVA Legumes network and the preparation of a new consortium dedicated to berries and/or fruit trees.

- The **'New AEGIS'** project will provide €153,640 between 1 September 2024 and 28 February 2025, with activities aiming to increase the quality of operations and accessibility of the European Collection. New operational genebank manuals and crop-specific standards will be completed. Quality of operations will be promoted with an agreed genebank metrics list, genebanks will be encouraged to translate and publish their Standard Operating Procedures, reciprocal review visits to genebanks will be organized and new phenotypic data will be added to EURISCO.
- The **'EVA-Boost'** project will provide €353,740 between 1 September 2024 and 31 December 2027, with activities aiming to consolidate the EVA Legumes Network with the multiplication and multiple fields evaluation of up to 1,400 accessions of chickpea, lentil, beans, fava beans, peas, lupins and orphan legumes. Agronomic, nutritional, biotic and abiotic tolerance traits data will be provided to EURISCO. A roadmap will also be developed towards establishing an EVA network on berries and/or fruit trees, with relevant stakeholders, scope and activities identified.

Executive Committee

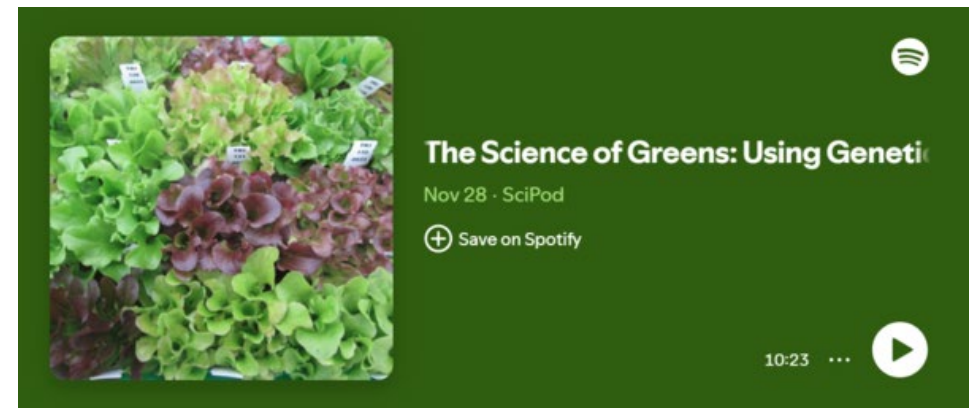
As of September 2024, Jens Welbüll is the new ExCo Chair replacing Marianne Lefort. Marianne's contributions over her 5-year tenure were tremendous. The Steering Committee and the Secretariat are grateful for her sturdy leadership, knowledge, dedication, enthusiasm and kindness. Thank you, Marianne, and best wishes for the next chapter of your life!

The ExCo met on 7 June 2024 ([minutes here](#)). During the meeting, Sandra Gortschning provided an update on the progress of the EU-funded PRO-GRACE project, focusing particularly on the work package led by ECPGR, which will provide inputs to elaborate the governance and financial plan of the future Research Infrastructure (RI) dedicated to plant genetic resources.

The ExCo also participated in a policy symposium organized by PRO-GRACE and EMPHASIS (the European Infrastructure for Plant Phenotyping) in Brussels on 27–28 June 2024. During the event, Jens Welbüll introduced ECPGR as a well-established network that could serve as the foundation for GRACE-RI. For further details, please see the section on PRO-GRACE below.

3. Digital media products

Videos & audiobook



4. Website: Continuous improvement & expansion

ecpgr.org – 1,500+ pages, central hub for all ECPGR activities including AEGIS and EVA subsites
Main audience: ECPGR community

Content

New pages: Grant Scheme Activities, Webinars, 'Why PGR Matter', EU project contributions (planned)

Navigation

Improved navigation of key landing pages: Overview, Management Structure, Grant Scheme, Public Awareness

Domain

Migration from ecpgr.cgiar.org → ecpgr.org (significant branding improvement)

Technical

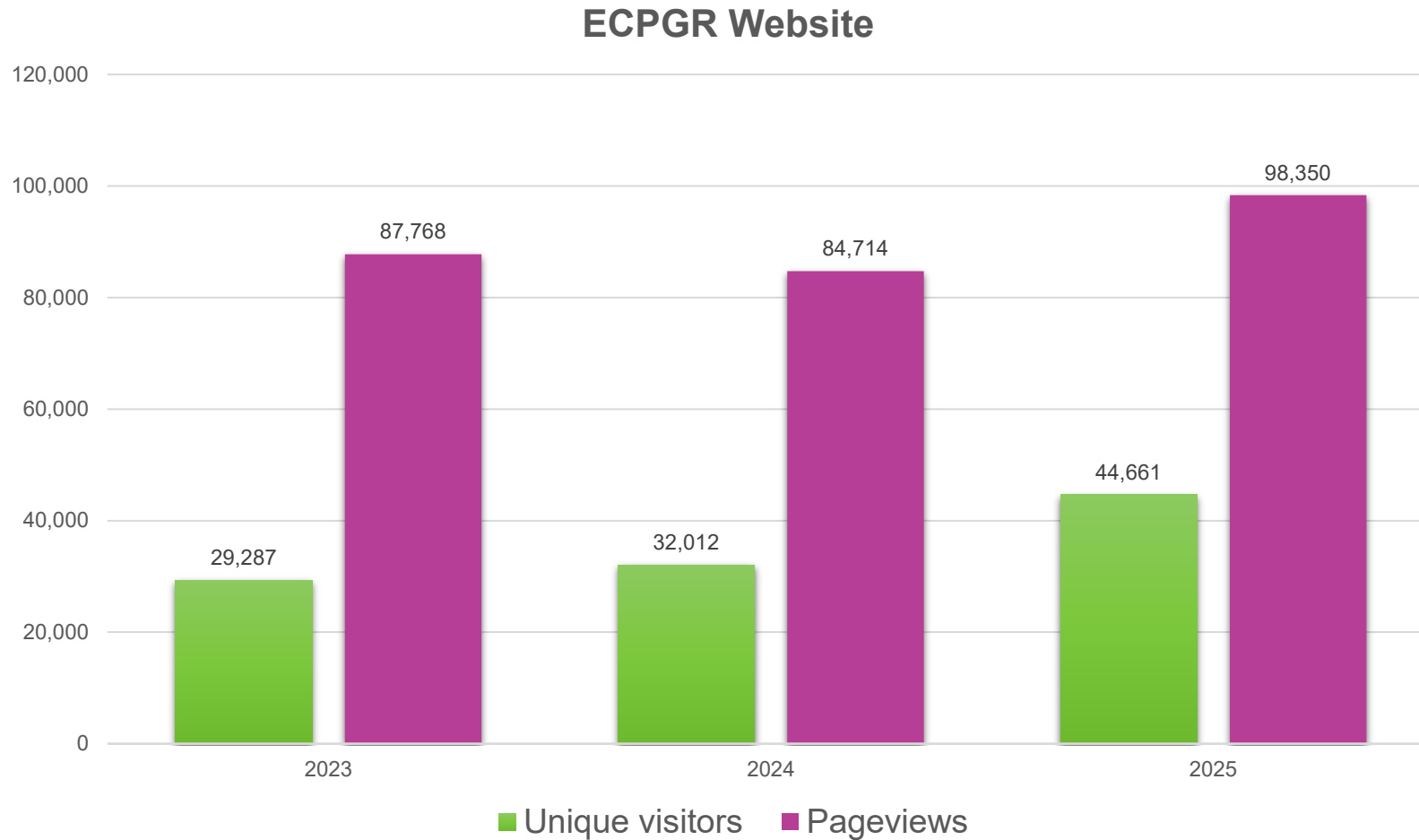
Updated CMS (Typo3), migration to GDPR-compliant analytics (replacing Google Analytics)



Many community members are unaware of website resources → induction materials and outreach to WG chairs and members are addressing this issue

4. Web statistics (2023–2025)

Increase in visitors and users





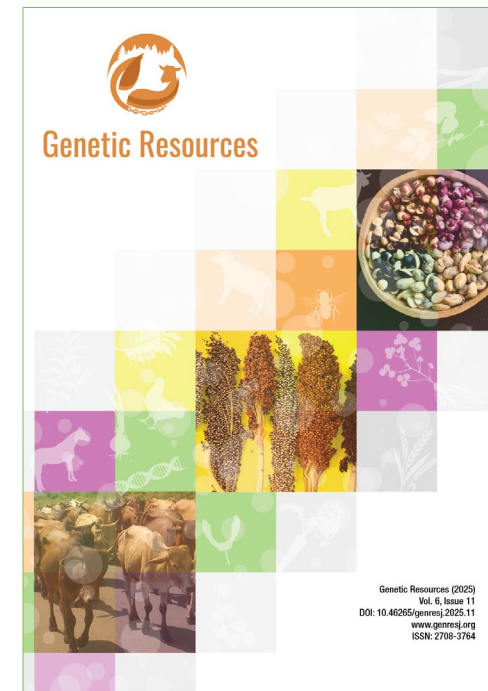
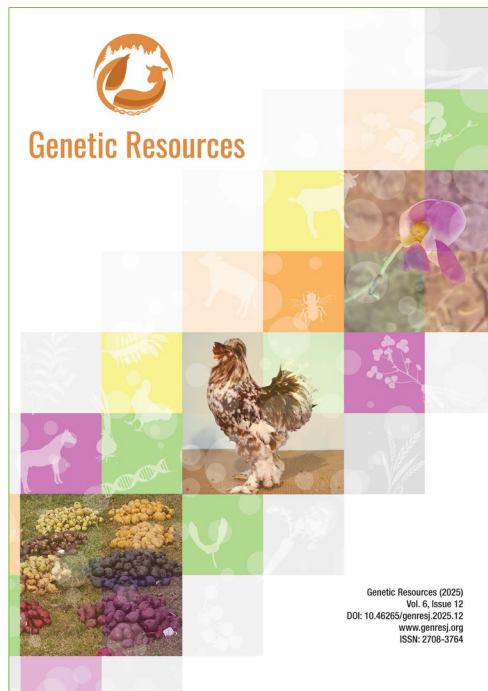
5. Social media – LinkedIn



6. Genetic Resources journal

Launched in 2020 in the context of the GenResBridge project

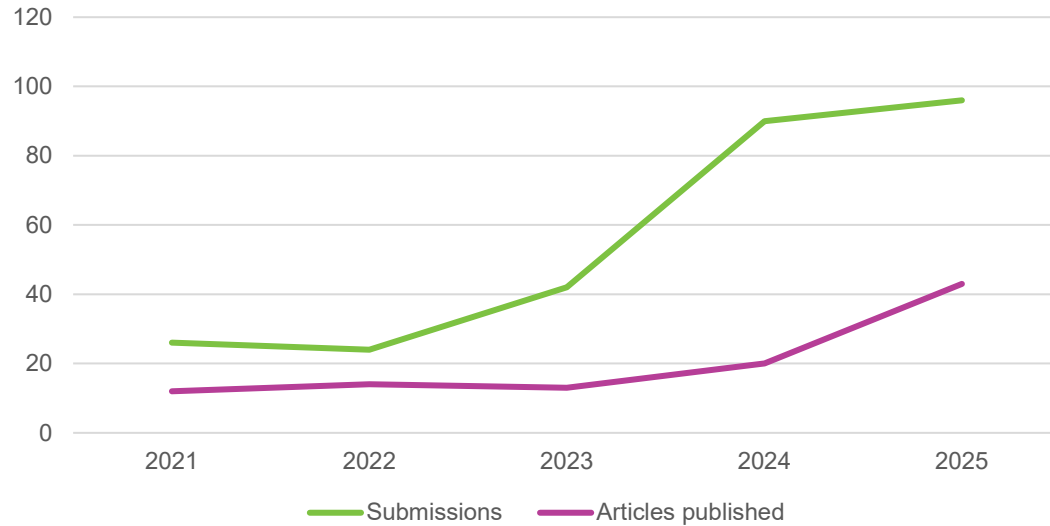
Supported by ECPGR and ERFP



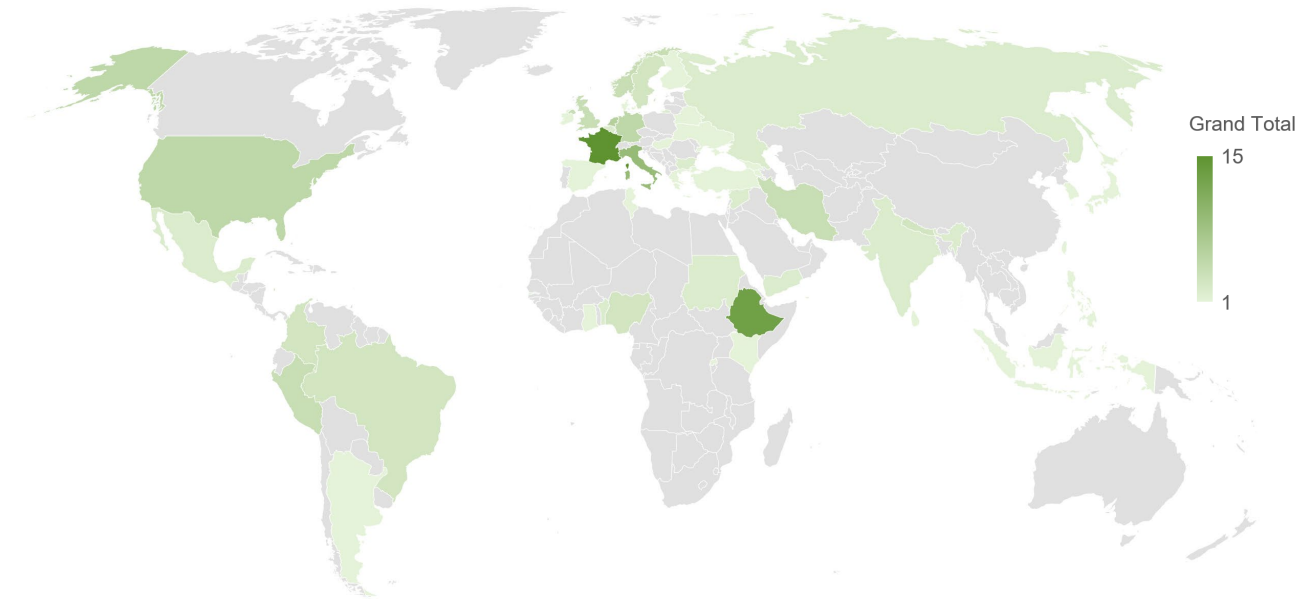
Clear success in visibility and engagement

6. Genetic Resources journal (2021–2025)

Submissions and articles published



Published articles by country

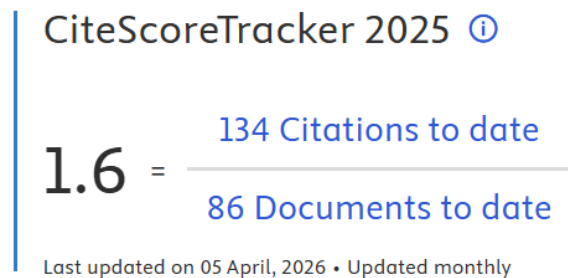


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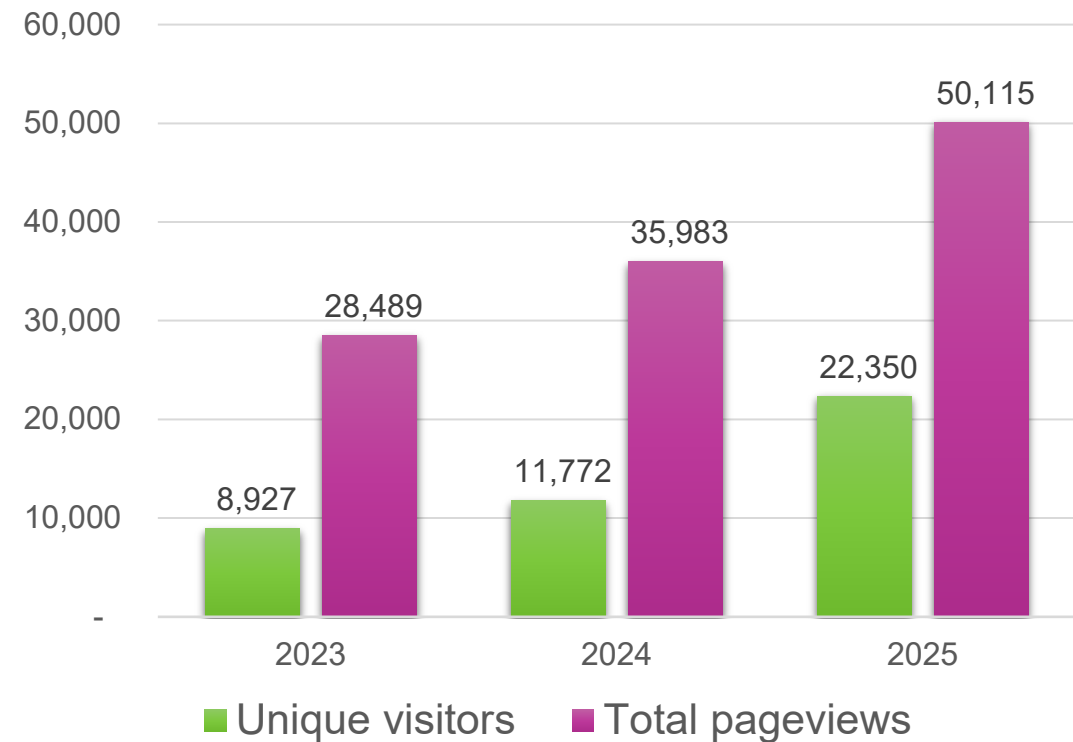
Acceptance rate: 37%

6. Genetic Resources journal

CiteScore



Web usage statistics (2023–2025)



7. Events, conferences and webinars

Conferences and events

- Participated in national and international conferences (reported in Bulletin and Annual Reports)
- Co-organized GenResBridge Final Event in Brussels (with presentation of PGR Strategy)
- Co-organized Joint Policy Symposium on PGR & Phenotyping in Brussels (PRO-GRACE)
- Represented ECPGR at Plant Treaty meetings; contributed to State of the World on PGRFA
- Contributed feedback on EU Plant Reproductive Material Regulation (behind-the-scenes advocacy)

Webinars

- 5 webinars on Grant Scheme Activities (from 2023 onwards)
- EU Plant Reproductive Material Law Reform webinar (with Rete Semi Rurali, Arche Noah, Fundación Entre Tantos)
- Eggplant & *Capsicum* Conservation Strategies (with the Crop Trust)

European Commission events: attempted via GenResBridge – outcomes limited.
Efforts to secure an EU observer at the Steering Committee are ongoing.
COLiBRI project (from June 2026) offers a new opportunity



8. Recognition by the EU

- **CORDIS Results Pack (2026)**

The EU CORDIS Results Pack on plant genetic resources and breeding highlighted both the PGR Strategy (and PRO-GRACE)

<https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/463151-advanced-technologies-for-growing-resilient-sustainable-crops>

- **EU-CAP Network Policy Brief**

A 2024 EU-CAP Network policy insight on 'Protecting Genetic Resources: Essential Strategies for Biodiversity' explicitly highlighted ECPGR and AEGIS.

https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2024-10/eu-cap-network-policy-insight-33-protecting-genetic-resources_0.pdf

- **EU Plant Reproductive Material Regulation**

ECPGR, supported by member countries, provided important feedback to the European Commission on critical aspects of the regulation.

9. Media engagement

Conferences and events

- Press releases for key milestones: PGR Strategy launch, Steering Committee meetings, key publications
- Use of EurekAlert for scientific news – targeted science media service
- Event-linked outreach via local partners (case-by-case)

Why generalist media is not a priority

- Generalist media is not ECPGR's primary audience
- ECPGR activities are specialized and technical – limited appeal for general press
- Effective media outreach requires dedicated communications expertise and resources
- Would also require a shift in ECPGR's strategic focus and priorities

- **National Coordinators can play a key role in advocacy with national media and at EU level**
- **Local partnerships enable access to regional audiences that the Secretariat alone cannot reach**

10. Partnerships

EVA Network

130+ partners – genebanks, research institutes, breeding companies. Largest ECPGR network, strong communications leverage.

Crop Trust

Conversations ongoing on scientific and communications cooperation.

Euroseeds

Example of fruitful industry collaboration, reflecting ECPGR's bridge role between conservation and use.

EU Projects (COLiBRI)

New project starting June 2026. Significant opportunity to raise ECPGR's profile with EU institutions and new audiences.

National Coordinators

Crucial role in national outreach and EU-level lobbying – an area with significant untapped potential.

Scientific community

ECPGR is frequently invited to join consortia for EU-funded projects – reflecting recognized leadership in the field.

Assessment



Overall assessment



What has been achieved

- Strong branding foundations
- Active and growing digital presence (website, LinkedIn)
- Broad portfolio of quality publications and media
- EU recognition in policy documents
- *Genetic Resources Journal* growing significantly
- Strong project-based partnerships (EVA, COLiBRI)



Challenges

- Communications work is resource-intensive
- Limited Secretariat capacity, high workload
- Decentralized structure
- Variable engagement across countries
- Language diversity
- Limited engagement with EU institutions

Overall assessment



Areas for growth

- Roles & responsibilities (especially National Coordinators)
- Coordination between Secretariat and national comms
- EU engagement – sustained, structured approach needed
- Awareness within the ECPGR community of available resources

Low priority

- Media advocacy (requires strategic decision on scope and budget)



Open questions and way forward



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?



A dedicated Communications Task Force



Task Force composition

- **Lead: ExCo Chair**
Providing strategic direction and senior ownership
- **Co-Lead: Secretariat Communications Specialist**
Coordinating the process and drafting outputs
- **Volunteer National Coordinators**
Representing regional/national perspective and needs
- **Communications staff (if available)**
From NCs' institutes – adding comms expertise



Task Force objective

- Address the open questions
- Consolidate NC input and ideas from Steering Committee
- Produce a refreshed – not new – communications strategy, setting realistic, actionable priorities for ECPGR communications



Homework!



Homework no. 1: We want to hear from you!

During the Steering Committee days:

- 1) Share your ideas on the flipchart – your post-its will feed directly into the task force.
- 2) Sign up on the flipchart if you wish to volunteer for the Task Force

What messages about ECPGR resonate in your country?

How can National Coordinators contribute to increasing ECPGR visibility?

What gaps or challenges do you see?

What would you like to see more of?



Homework n.2: Follow us on LinkedIn and share ECPGR content!



European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources
ECP/GR

ECPGR - European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources

Fostering conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources in Europe

Research Services · Roma, Lazio · 2K followers · 2-10 employees



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ecpgr>



THANK YOU