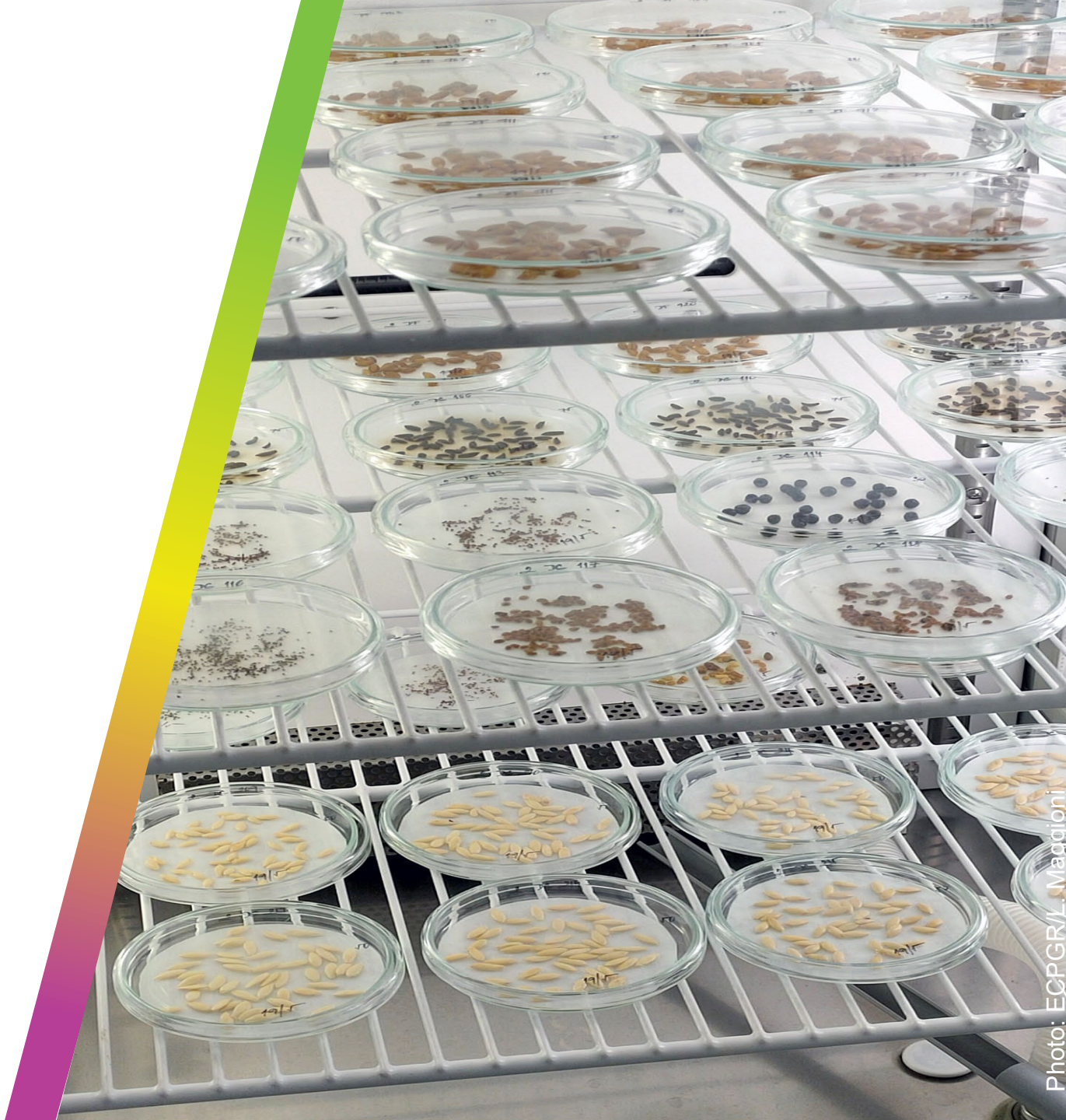


# GENEBANK MANAGERS NETWORK

## Progress and planning

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*18th ECPGR Steering Committee  
1-4 June 2026, Tbilisi, Georgia*



# Content

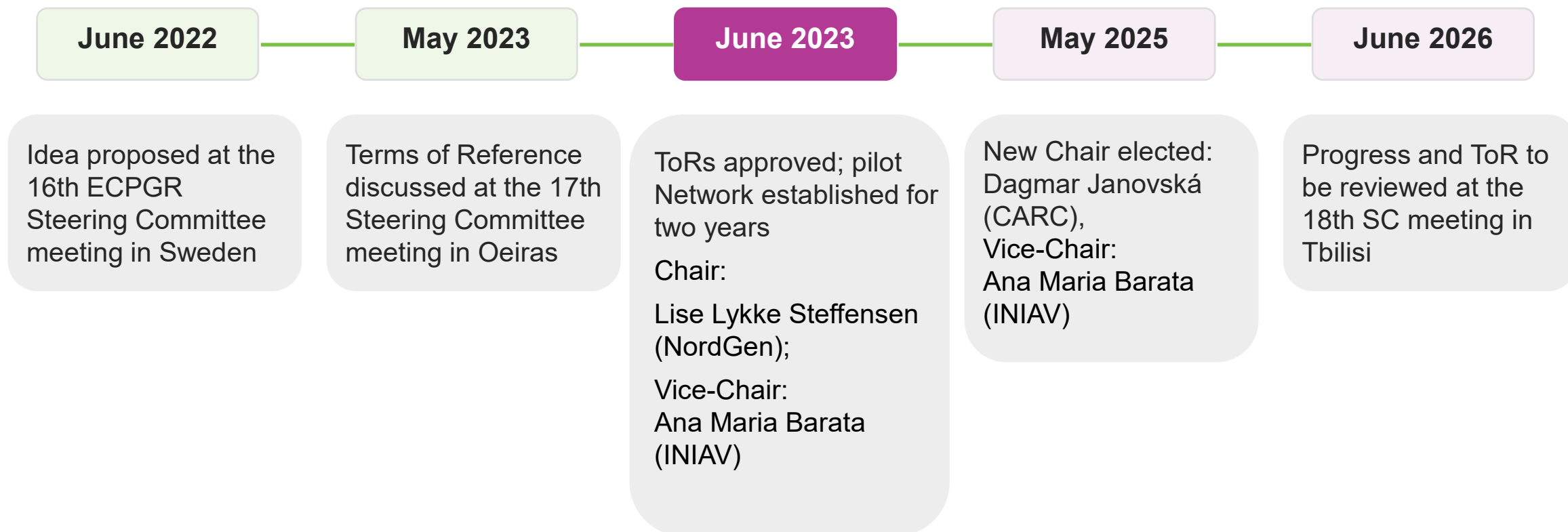
- Recall why the Genebank Managers Network was established
- Summarize what has been achieved since establishment
- Identify lessons learned and remaining needs
- Present priorities for 2026–2028 and towards Phase XII
- Suggest possible clarification to the Terms of Reference

Respond to the pilot review of the Network requested by the Steering Committee

# Why was GMN needed?

- The founding idea was simple: together we are stronger.
- Genebank management combines scientific work, technical responsibility and institutional leadership.

# From idea to mandate



# Questions raised during approval

And how the pilot phase responds to them

## Why a Network?

A regular Working Group would not fit the expected flexibility, frequent meetings and operational focus of this body.

## How to protect ECPGR budget?

The Network was established as **self-funded**, with only possible **complementary** support from ECPGR.

## How to keep links with ECPGR?

Members are nominated by National Coordinators; the Network reports to the SC via the Secretariat.

## Can it help genebanks?

GMN supports preventive measures by sharing practice, risk awareness, peer learning and capacity building.

## Is it a pilot?

Yes. The first two years were intended to test the value, mode of operation and ToR. The pilot phase demonstrated that the Network has practical value and should continue.

# Main rules and safeguards

- Dedicated Terms of Reference approved by the Steering Committee
- Network members nominated by ECPGR National Coordinators
- One main contact person per country, usually managing a public genebank
- Self-funded principle; ECPGR may provide complementary support
- Reporting duties to the Steering Committee via the ECPGR Secretariat
- Chair elected by the Network; two-year mandate
- In-person meetings kept manageable, with virtual meetings open to all members

# Overall objectives

## Better genebank management and leadership



### Knowledge exchange

Share experience, tools, procedures and lessons learned.



### Cooperation

Build stronger collaboration across European genebanks.



### Capacity building

Support training, peer learning and practical improvement.



# Overall objectives

**GMN is focused on cross-cutting management and operational practice:**

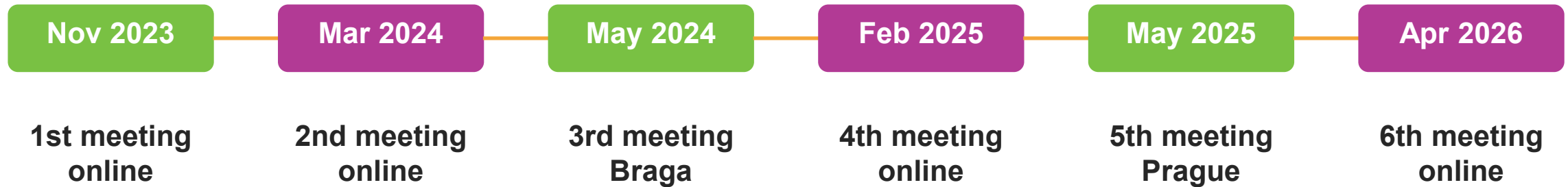
- exchange and sharing of methods, tools and practical experience
  - quality management and operational standards
  - genebank manuals and SOPs
  - safety duplication and risk management
  - data systems, backup and cybersecurity
  - capacity building and peer review
- synergies among genebanks
- inputs to policies and initiatives
- interaction with ECPGR Working Groups when relevant

**GMN does not replace:**

- crop-specific work of ECPGR WGs
- evaluation-focused work of EVA Networks
- scientific activities already covered elsewhere
- emergency regeneration funding mechanisms

# From pilot idea to regular operation

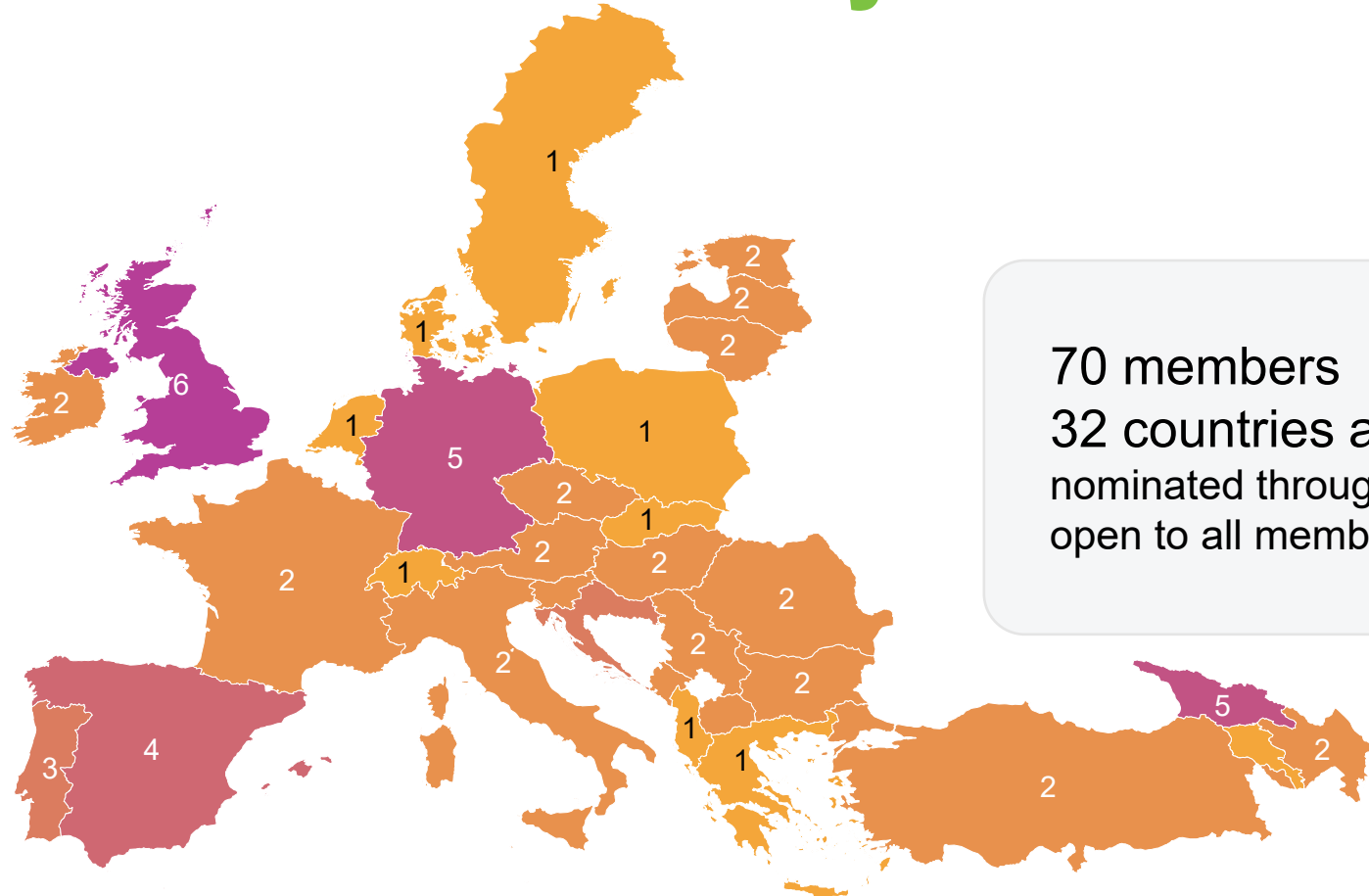
*Meetings held since establishment*



**Result: GMN moved from establishment to regular operation, with online and in-person meetings documented on the ECPGR website.**

# Who we are status - May 2026

Number of participants



70 members  
32 countries and NordGen  
nominated through NC  
open to all members in virtual meetings



# Progress against the SC expectations

## Regular operation

Six meetings held; agendas, minutes and presentations available online: <https://www.ecpgr.org/about/genebank-managers-network>

## Self-funded principle

Network operates mainly through in-kind contributions and support from host institutions, complemented, where possible, by project-based or ECPGR support.

## ECPGR link

Members nominated by NCs; reporting to SC via Secretariat

## Preventive support

Risk, safety duplication, peer review and quality topics included in agenda

## Practical value

Network became a platform for exchange of operational experience

# What we learned from the first questionnaire

- The questionnaire was not an audit, but a first practical mapping exercise.
- It confirmed many good practices already in place.
- It also showed differences among genebanks in capacities, procedures and systems.
- Main areas needing support: safety duplication, SOPs/QMS, staff training, data systems, funding stability and cybersecurity.

# Link with New AEGIS and AEGIS Plus

- GMN provided a practical space for discussing AEGIS implementation.
- New AEGIS and AEGIS Plus connect directly with GMN priorities:
  - genebank manuals
  - SOPs
  - peer review
  - genebank metrics
  - safety duplication
  - practical training and capacity building

# Topics addressed so far

## **AEGIS**

implementation in  
genebanks

## **Quality**

manuals, SOPs, QMS

## **Peer review**

learning and trust  
building

## **Safety**

duplication and  
cryobanking

## **Data**

systems, backup,  
cybersecurity

## **Policy**

ABS, Nagoya,  
ITPGRFA, DSI

## **Communication**

visibility and advocacy

## **Cooperation**

links with Working  
Groups



# Lessons learned

- The need for GMN was real
- Genebank managers face many common challenges
- Practical exchange is highly valuable
- GMN can help avoid duplication of effort by sharing practical solutions.
- Quality management must be useful, not only formal
- Peer review builds trust
- Safety duplication remains uneven
- Data security and cybersecurity are becoming urgent topics
- GMN needs a clear annual work plan

# Remaining needs and challenges

- Different human, technical and financial capacities among genebanks and countries
- Uneven implementation of quality management systems and SOPs
- Need for further harmonization of viability monitoring, regeneration, drying, storage and documentation procedures
- Limited resources for safety duplication and long-term risk management
- Different national information systems and data workflows
- Increasing importance of cybersecurity, data protection and secure backups
- Need for practical training, peer review visits and capacity building

**These are not failures, but clear indications where European cooperation can bring added value.**

# Plans for 2026-2028 and towards Phase XII

## Quality management

manuals, SOPs, peer review, standards

## Safety duplication and risk

duplication, black-box backup, emergency planning

## Metrics and advocacy

evidence, reporting, funding arguments

## Data security

cybersecurity, backups, EURISCO, national systems

## Capacity building

workshops, hackathons, mentoring, peer learning, strengthen cooperation with Working Groups

## Access, distribution and legal aspects

SMTA, ITPGRFA, Nagoya Protocol, DSI, phytosanitary rules, bottlenecks



# What I would like to ask from the Steering Committee

**Take note of pilot phase progress and confirm continuation of GMN as an ECPGR-associated Network.**

## **Take note**

Progress made during the pilot phase

## **Confirm**

Continuation of GMN as an ECPGR Network

## **Support**

Practical training, peer learning and capacity building where possible.

## **Recognize**

GMN as a practical implementation platform.

## **Encourage**

Stronger links with AEGIS, EURISCO and Working Groups.

# Possible ToR clarifications for consideration

## Scope

- GMN 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.

## Members and participation in meetings

- The nominated country contact person remains the main link between the Network, the National Coordinator and the respective national genebank community.

## Role of the Chair and the Vice-Chair

- 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.
- The Chair and Vice-Chair may propose a small annual set of priorities for consultation with Network members, considering ECPGR priorities, AEGIS implementation, EURISCO-related needs and practical issues identified by genebanks.

# Possible ToR clarifications for consideration

## 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.
- *As the Network is not an ECPGR Working Group and does not automatically fall under the standard Working Group Grant Scheme mechanism, such 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 relevant ECPGR body.*

**THANK YOU**

