

GENEBANK MANAGERS NETWORK REPORT (2024–2025)

In preparation for the 18th Steering Committee Meeting, Tbilisi, Georgia, 2-4 June 2026

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1. CONTRIBUTION TO ECPGR OBJECTIVES

1.1. Achievements and success stories

- To efficiently conserve and provide access to unique germplasm in Europe through AEGIS and the European Collection

During the reporting period, the Genebank Managers Network further strengthened its role as a practical and strategic platform for managers of European genebanks. The Network provided space for exchange of experience, discussion of operational challenges and identification of shared priorities relevant for the long-term conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

A major achievement was the close cooperation with the New AEGIS project and the follow-up AEGIS Plus activities. The GMN meeting held in Prague in May 2025, side by side with the New AEGIS final project meeting, created an important opportunity to connect genebank management issues with the further development of AEGIS and the European Collection. The meeting helped to strengthen communication between genebank managers, ECPGR Secretariat and supported discussion on the practical implementation of AEGIS principles in daily genebank operations.

The Network also contributed to the development of a common understanding of quality management, genebank standards, safety duplication, risk management, documentation, operational procedures and peer-review approaches. These topics are essential for strengthening the reliability, transparency and efficiency of European *ex situ* conservation systems.

- To provide passport and phenotypic information of actively conserved European PGRFA diversity *ex situ* and *in situ* through the EURISCO catalogue

GMN repeatedly emphasized the importance of high-quality passport and characterization/evaluation data as a basis for effective conservation, access and use of PGRFA. Discussions within the network supported the idea that genebank managers should be more actively involved in improving data quality, harmonization of procedures and links between national information systems, EURISCO and other international platforms.

The GMN also contributed to discussions on the future development of genebank information systems, including possible links to GRIN-Global Community Edition and other tools that may support better documentation, reporting and data exchange in Europe, including *ex situ* as well as *in situ* conservation.

- To promote use of PGRFA

The Network contributed to promoting the use of PGRFA by focusing on practical issues that directly influence the availability of material for users, including regeneration, viability monitoring, distribution procedures, documentation and the implementation of international rules for access and benefit-sharing.

The GMN provided a useful platform for discussing how genebanks can better demonstrate their impact, including through operational metrics such as numbers of conserved accessions, regenerated samples, safety duplicated accessions and distributed material. This approach can help to explain the importance of genebanks to policymakers, funders and users, including breeders, researchers and farmers. Moreover, one of the presentations on the 4th online meeting was dedicated to the [communication](#) for genebanks.

1.2. Gaps or constraints identified

The Network recognized that many genebanks face similar challenges, but solutions are often developed individually. Therefore, the GMN can play an important role in sharing good practices and avoiding duplication of effort.

The following text compiles findings from surveys conducted during the meetings. While not all genebanks face these issues, they are significant and are therefore included here.

- differences in human, financial and technical capacities among European genebanks;
- uneven implementation of quality management systems and written standard operating procedures;
- need for further harmonisation of viability monitoring, regeneration, drying, storage and documentation procedures;
- limited resources for safety duplication, infrastructure development and long-term risk management;
- need for better integration of national information systems with European and global platforms;
- increasing importance of cybersecurity, data protection and secure backup systems for genebank data;
- need for clearer communication between crop/thematic Working Groups and the Genebank Managers Network;
- need for practical training, peer-review visits and capacity building focused on the real operational needs of genebanks.

2. ACTIVITIES

- **Meetings held**
 - **Fifth meeting**, Prague, Czech Republic, 19-23 May 2025 side by side with the New AEGIS final project meeting
 - **Fourth meeting**, online, 12 February 2025
 - **Third meeting**, Braga, Portugal, 13-15 May 2024
 - **Second meeting**, online, 4 March 2024

- **Reports and related data**
 - [Minutes Fifth meeting](#)
 - [Minutes Fourth meeting](#)
 - [Minutes Third meeting](#)
 - [Minutes Second meeting](#)

- **Funds mobilized**
 - ECPGR granted funds:
 - 2024: €1,918 (support for travel of participant from Georgia & social dinner of Third meeting, Portugal, May 2024)
 - 2025: €27,852 (Fifth meeting, May 2025, Prague)

3. DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- [Presentations given at the Third meeting, Portugal, May 2024](#)
- [Presentations given at the Fourth meeting, online, February 2025](#)
- [Presentations given at the Fifth meeting, Czech Republic, May 2025](#)

4. EXPECTED ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Planned and expected future activities include:

- further development of GMN as a solid basis for cooperation among European genebanks;
- stronger interaction between GMN and ECPGR crop and thematic Working Groups;
- organization of further physical and online meetings;
- further discussion on genebank metrics and their possible use for reporting, advocacy and management;
- exchange of good practices on cybersecurity, data protection and backup systems;
- discussion of ABS, Nagoya Protocol, ITPGRFA and DSI implications for genebank operations;
- exploration of a possible COST Action as a networking and capacity-building tool for genebanks and related PGRFA activities;
- preparation of the next physical GMN meeting, possibly linked with AEGIS Plus final activities.