



Minutes of the 32nd ECPGR Executive Committee meeting

13 March 2025 (h 10:30-12:00)

Online (Teams)

Present:

Jens Weibull (Chair)
Imke Thormann (Germany)
Petra Engel (Italy)
Dainis Rungis (Latvia)
Pavol Hauptvogel (Slovakia)
Lorenzo Maggioni (ECPGR Secretariat)

1. Evaluation of Grant Scheme proposals

Two proposals were received for evaluation, one submitted by the Cryopreservation Working Group (WG) and the other by the On-farm Conservation and Management WG, together with the Documentation and Information WG.

The Executive Committee (ExCo) members were pleased they had sent very similar scores for their overall evaluation. Both proposals were considered worthy of support, with only the need for some clarifications.

The proposal from the Cryopreservation WG was approved for funding, considering that the initiative to create a subregional cryopreservation hub was following the philosophy of the past SeedNet approach. It was remarked that more countries in the region might be encouraged to join the initiative and to sign the MoU that will be prepared, even non-ECPGR countries of South-East Europe and the Caucasus. The targets listed in the *Plant Genetic Resources Strategy for Europe* did not seem to be relevant and aligned to the tasks, except the need to organize capacity-building services, which is effectively a P1 target.

Clarifications will be requested about elements of the expected impact and expected products, which were considered to be unclear in the proposal. Also the relationship between the cryopreserved accessions and AEGIS will need to be emphasized.

The proposal from the On-farm Conservation and Management, and Documentation and Information WGs was also approved for funding, acknowledging that it was a follow-up of the recommendations given at the meeting of the Documentation and Information WG in Tallinn, in September 2024. The creation of a link between national lists of landrace names and physical accessions registered in EURISCO was seen as a useful integration of *in situ* and *ex situ* strategies, as well as a tool for gap analysis. The countries' representation, focused on Mediterranean countries, was understood, given their higher density of remaining landraces. The small number of partners was accepted, considering this is a pilot project. In contrast with the apparent absence of inputs-in-kind, it was noted that Bosnia and Herzegovina was actually offering their contribution on a self-funded basis.

Also in this case, a few clarifications will be needed regarding the final products. In particular, the ExCo wished to better understand how EURISCO will be involved and what it means in practice to "extend EURISCO to host the landrace inventories". How will it be possible to search national inventories and what will be included in EURISCO?

The submitted proposals are listed in the table below. The full proposals, and the Letters of Award are available on the [ECPGR website](#).

Title of submitted proposals	Working Group	Coordinator	Budget
CryoConnect – A Regional Initiative for a Cross-Border Cryobank in the Western Balkans and the Caucasus	Cryopreservation	Tatjana Vujović, Serbia	€ 29,975
LrCoMeCo – Landraces Catalogue of Mediterranean Countries	On-farm Conservation and Management & Documentation and information	Lorenzo Raggi, Italy	€ 28,820

2. Any other business

Petra Engel wished to remind the ExCo about the planning for the recruitment of a new Secretary in 2026. The timetable originally prepared by Marianne Lefort for this purpose was eventually circulated by the Secretary to the ExCo members. It was clarified that the first preparations can be started later this year.

Lorenzo Maggioni updated the group about the ongoing preparation of the GRACE-RI proposal. Confirmation of political and financial support by the coordinating country (Denmark) has not yet been confirmed. In particular, the Danish agricultural agency responsible for PGR did not express their support considering that it has not been clarified how GRACE and ECPGR will work together. The ExCo noted that no progress in this direction was made after last December, when the Secretariat drafted a proposal for a possible integration for GRACE/ECPGR.