

First physical meeting
ECPGR

Network of European Genebank Managers

14-15 May 2024



Meeting agenda - Tuesday 14 May 2024

- 09.00 Welcome by the chairperson and the President of INIAV
- 09.10 Introduction to the Portuguese National Genebank (BPGV), Ana Maria Barata
- 09.30 ECPGR Network of Genebank Managers – how to use it in the best possible way, Lise Lykke Steffensen
- 10.30 *Coffee break*
- 10.45 ECPGR Network of Genebank Managers – how to use it in the best possible way.
- 12.30 *Lunch*
- 13.15 Tour at the Portuguese National Genebank (BPGV)
- 14.15 Group photo
- 14.30 AEGIS: A European Genebank Integrated System; Lorenzo Maggioni
- 15.15 *Coffee break*
- 15.30 Let's fly high: the perfect genebank community in Europe (and improving the current by collaborating more effectively), Theo van Hintum
- 16.45 PRO-GRACE – Horizon European Research Infrastructure status and discussion on the strategic pros and cons of the initiative, Lorenzo Maggioni

Meeting agenda – Wednesday 15 May 2024

Theme: Distribution and Quality

09.00 Quality management system set up in genebanks

- Thoughts about elements in a quality management system; Lise Lykke Steffensen
- Experiences from EU Horizont AGENT project; Dagmar Janovská
- Examples from genebanks on quality management systems, Jelka Šuštar Vozlič
- Discussions

10.30 Coffee break

11.00 The Network hour – questions for discussion

- What are the legal provisions for distribution of seeds with a SMTA ?, Alvaro Toledo and Francisco Lopez from the Treaty Secretariat (Virtual presentation)
- Providing seeds to private persons/hobby gardeners. How it has been solved indifferent genebanks, Külli Annamaa to introduce

12.00 Recap of the two days, next meetings, and closure. Ana Maria Barata and Lise Lykke Steffensen

12.30 Lunch

13.30 Departure or voluntary field excursion organized by INIAV – BPGV

13.30 Return to hotel and/or departure of participants not joining the field excursion.

Presentation

First time we meet in this setting and the first physical meeting.

Please give a short presentation of you and your genebank

What are your expectations for the meeting?



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ECPGR Network of Genebank Managers

How to use the Network in the best possible way?

- A few facts
- General information and rules
- Input from the questionnaire on topics
- Diskussions about how to use the Network in the best possible way
 - Topics for digital and physical meetings
 - Functioning and engagement within the network

A few facts - countries

- Albania
- Armenia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Georgia
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Montenegro
- Netherlands
- NordGen
- North Macedonia
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Serbia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Türkiye
- United Kingdom

A few facts: Members in numbers

64 Genebank Managers Network Members

29 Contact persons – genebank managers

35 Observers

Why a Network for European Genebank Managers ?

Together we are stronger.

We collaborate today on the basis of projects, national, regional and international forums and settings, friendships etc

But leading a genebank is also leadership and management of the operations of the genebank in the combination with the professional work.

There are no such network today within Europe

Background

- The idea of establishing a Network for European Genebank Managers was proposed during the Steering Committee (SC) meeting in June 2022, with the aim to better connect people with this function and focus in their specific area of work.
- Establishing the Network would allow for strengthening the cooperation among leaders of genebanks in Europe.
- The ECPGR SC gave in 2022 its support for the establishment of this network. It is the aim that the Network of European Genebank Managers shall be a longterm entity which this ToRs is defining.



Objectives

The establishment of the European Genebank Managers Network has the overall aim to strengthen the management of genebanks by exchange of knowledge, cooperation and capacity building of genebanks, including the various aspects of leading and managing a genebank.



Scope

- a. **The Network will focus on management and leadership issues of relevance for improving genebanks and their management.**
- b. This will be done through exchanging experiences and ideas; learning from each other to obtain efficient and high quality systems of plant genetic resources conservation and utilization.
- c. **The Network will share and exchange ideas, experiences, demonstrate methodology of each other, support and find synergies when possible.**
- d. Further, the Network can contribute to inputs and developments of various policies and initiatives to strengthen the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources in genebanks.
- e. The Network will not cover topics already covered by the ECPGR Working Groups or the EVA Networks

Topics - The Network will decide on topics and activities within its mandate.

The below list of topics is therefore for inspiration and not exhaustive:

- **Professional topics** like fx; facilitation of AEGIS and AQUAS, development of a Genebank Quality Certification System and management of genebank collections, eg developments of a genebank manual. Databases, conservation techniques and new developments etc.
- **Leadership topics** like fx development of strategies, change management, digitalisation, security back-ups, fund raising, working with a Board etc
- **Management topics** fx like people management, capacity building, optimization of techniques and work streams, genebank methodology, sourcing etc
- **Policy issues** like fx promote the implementation of national and regional conservation strategies through sharing of knowledge and experiences
- **Support, help and back-up** for each other in case of challenges and problems.
- **Support to solve practical problems** at genebanks within the scope of ECPGR and provide guidance for other European countries genebanks, which are beyond the scope of ECPGR.
- **When relevant, support and interact** with the ECPGR Working Groups

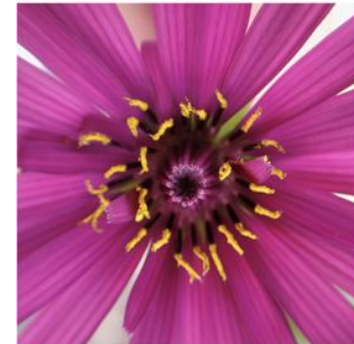
Meetings

- 1 physical meeting (1-2 days) at the premises of a European genebank.
- 1-3 digital meetings each year.
- The preparation and meeting location should rotate among the participating institutions.
- The Network will well in advance of each calendar year plan topics and dates for next years in person meeting and digital meetings.



Working methods

- The approach at the meetings will be to gain as much shared knowledge as possible within the objectives of the Network.
- The in-person meeting will be co-organized by the chairmanship and the host of the meeting. The digital meetings will also be co-organized between the chairmanship and members of the Network.
- The agenda and meeting documents will be circulated at least three weeks in advance of the network meeting. Minutes will be circulated not later than 7 working days after a Network meeting.
- Sub-groups can be formed for the preparation of any relevant topic for the Network.



Members and participation in meetings

- Members are nominated by the ECPGR National Coordinators, indicating one contact person per country who should be heading and/or managing a public genebank in Europe
- Normally, only one person from each country should attend the in-person meetings.
- Seek to have members from as many ECPGR member countries as possible.
- To make the in-person meetings manageable limitations to maximum of 35 persons.
- The final list of participants in each in-person meeting is defined by the Chair, based on the nominations made by the NC
- All the members can attend the virtual meetings.

Funding

- The Network shall seek to be as much self-funded as possible.
- ECPGR can provide complementary funding for the organization and for participants of category A and B of the 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.



Chairmanship

The Chair:

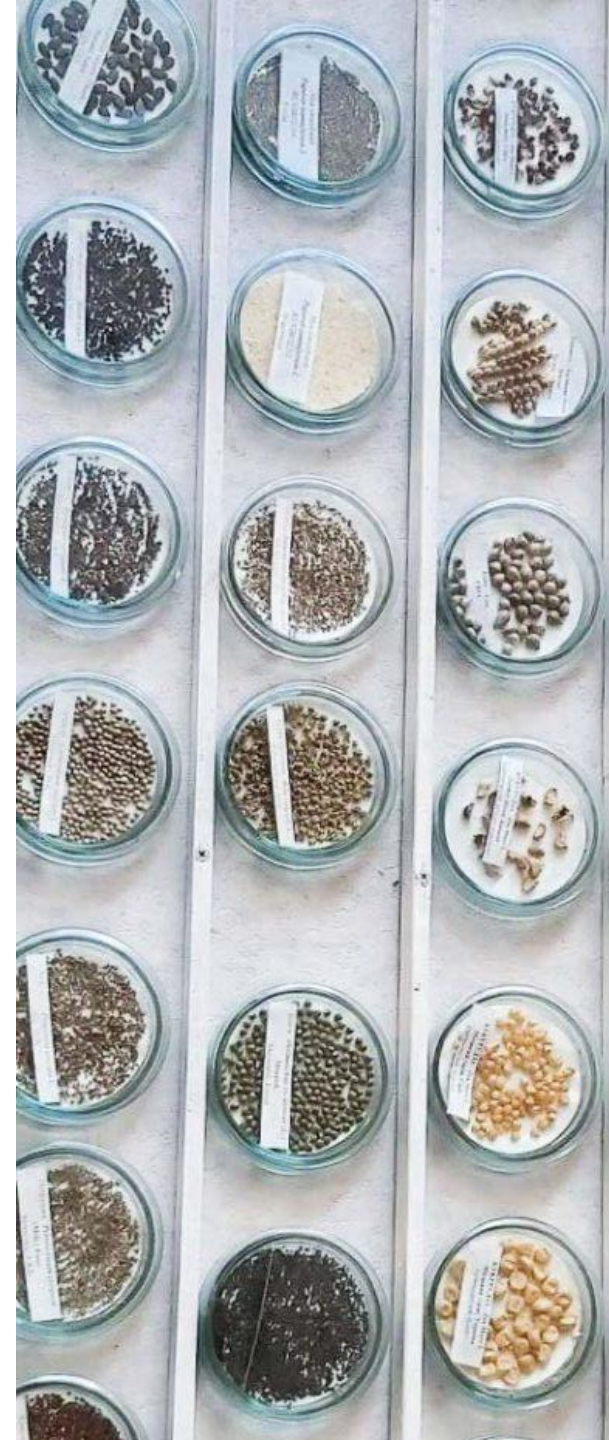
- ❖ Formulate the meeting's agenda in consultation with the network members + chair the Network meetings
- ❖ Oversee the implementation of the Network workplan.
- ❖ Provide information to the Network members on ECPGR events and encourage involvement of all the Network members.
- ❖ Be proactive in proposing activities and contribute to the coordination.
- ❖ If needed, define the list of participants of each meeting.
- ❖ Provide the ECPGR Secretary with a status report on progress made.

The Vice-Chair

- ❖ Supporting function in the implementation of the Chair's tasks (and prepare the minutes from the Network meetings.)

Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair

- ❖ The Network selects a Chair amongst its members.
- ❖ The Chair is selected at the end of an in-person Network meeting, and s/he exercises her/his role for two years until the next election.
- ❖ The selection of the Chair is made by consensus.
- ❖ The Chair selects the Vice-Chair amongst the Network members and seeks the consensus of the Network members on her/his choice.



A few facts – results from the questionnaire

Results of questionnaire – Basic information

A. 29 answers: 27 contact persons and 2 observers

B. Experiences as leaders:

A. 14 persons 0-5 years

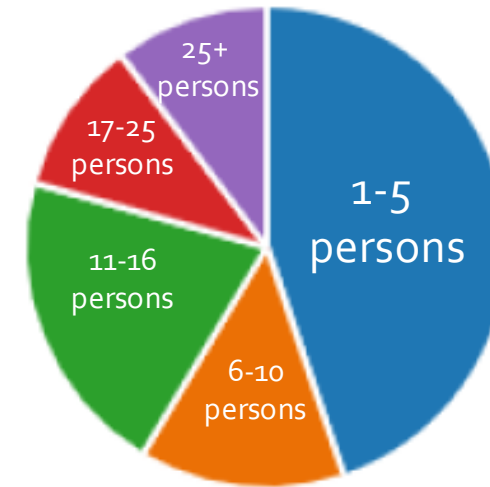
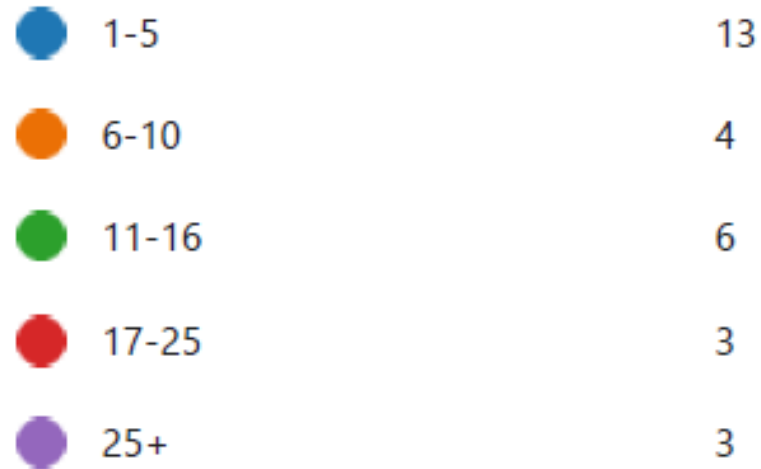
B. 15 persons + 5 years

2. How long have you been leader of your genebank?



Results of questionnaire – Basic information

3. How many people do you lead?



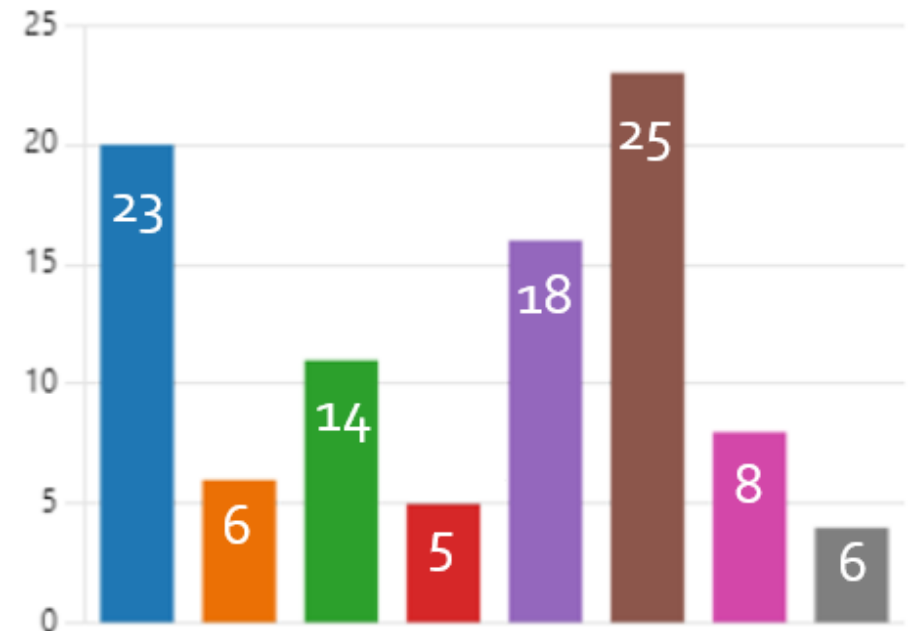
Results of questionnaire – Basic information

What responsibilities do you have

- I have the strategic responsibility of the genebank
- I have the mandate to take all economic decisions and the full budget responsibility for the genebank
- I have the responsibility of the budget for the part that I manage
- I have the full staff responsibility (hire and fire)
- I have staff management (I manage staff but can not hire and fire)
- I take decisions on the professional direction/s
- I lead through other leaders
- I lead direct reports and none of them are leaders

Top 3 answers:

1. I take decisions on the professional direction/s (25)
2. I have the strategic responsibility of the genebank (23)
3. I have staff management (I manage staff but can not hire and fire) (18)



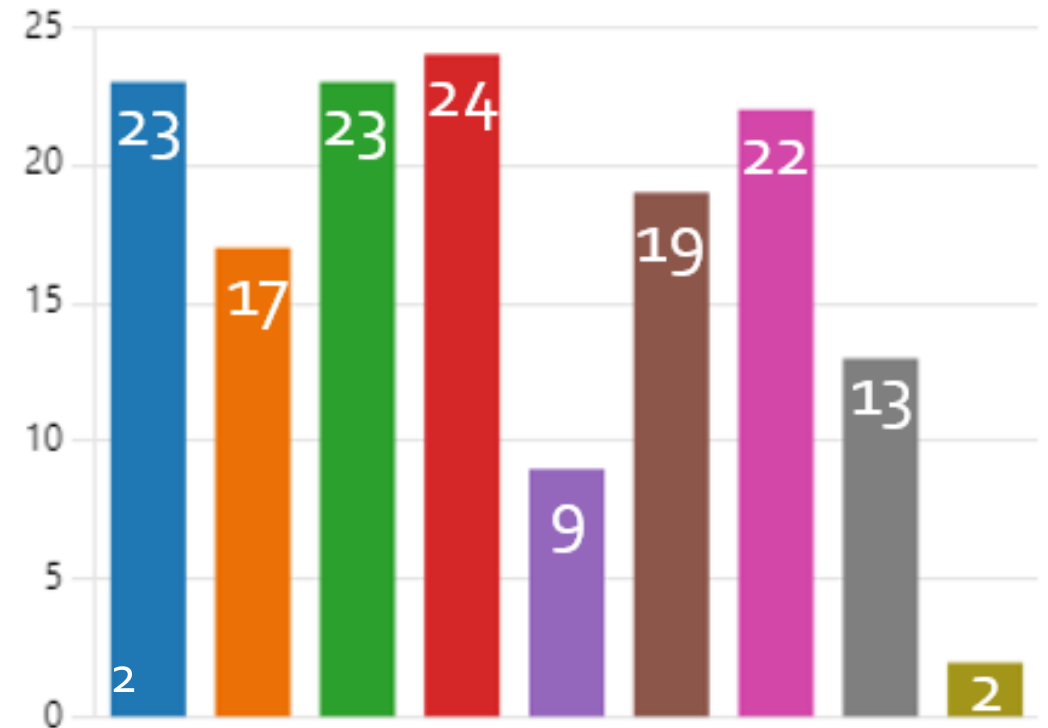
Results of questionnaire- Leadership topics

– What topics do you find relevant to focus on within the Network?

- Development of strategies
- Developments of the organization
- Enlarging the scope of the genebank
- Stakeholder cooperation
- Change management
- Digitalisation and AI
- Fund raising
- Working with a Board or Advisory Board
- Other: support to small genebanks – phenotyping/genotyping

Top 3 answers:

1. Stakeholder cooperation (24)
2. Development of strategies (23)
3. Enlarging the scope of the genebank (23)



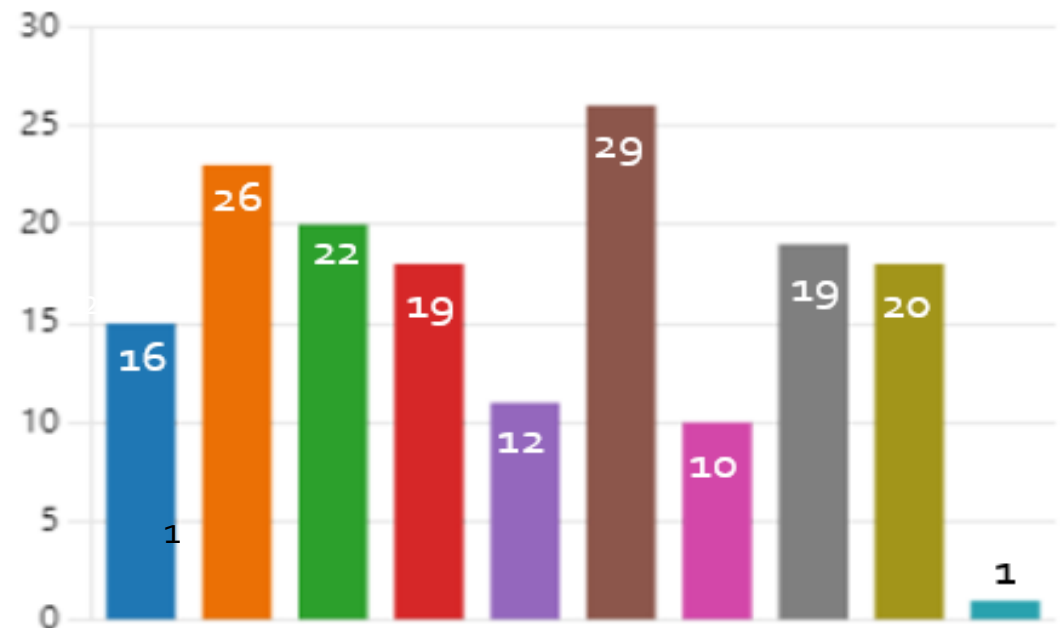
Results of questionnaire – Management topics

– What topics do you find relevant to focus on within the Network?

- People management
- Capacity building
- Optimization of techniques
- More efficient work streams
- Time optimization
- Genebank methodology and standards
- Sourcing
- Communication activities
- Support, help and back-up for each other in case of challenges and problems
- Other





Top 3 answers:

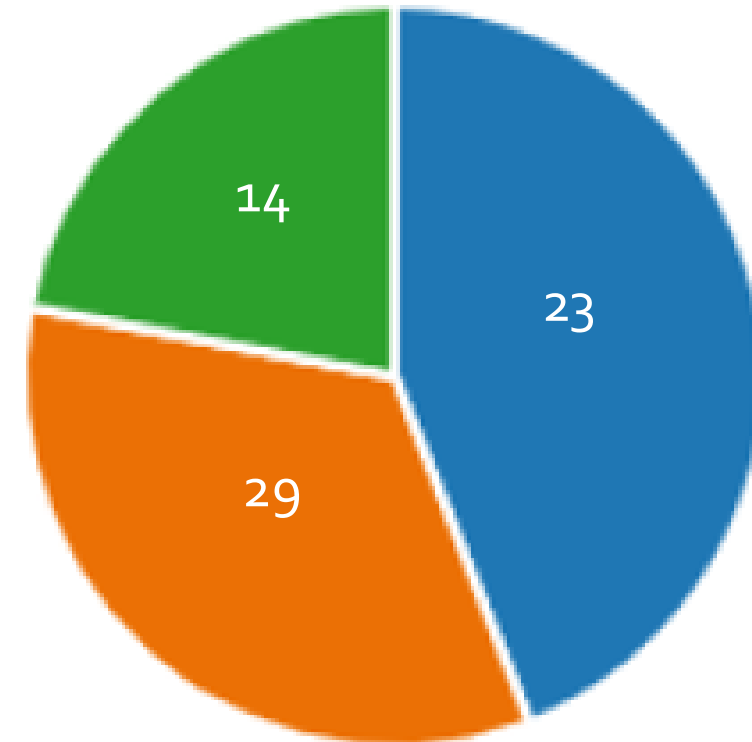
1. Genebank methodology and standards (29)
2. Capacity building (26)
3. Optimization of techniques (22)



Results of questionnaire – Policy issues

– What topics do you find relevant to focus on within the Network?

-  Promote the implementation of national and regional conservation strategies
-  Get overviews of EU and European political initiatives
-  When relevant, support and interact in political issues when relevant
-  Other – *phytosanitary issues, access to PGR, international policies, implementation of strategies to promote sustainable use with farmers and breeders*



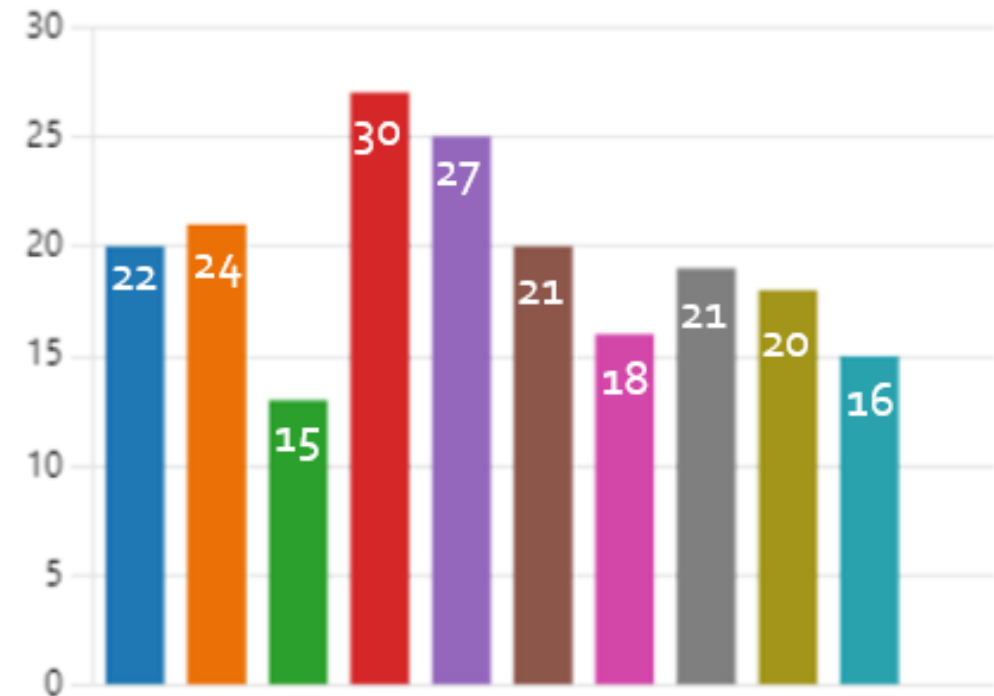
Results of questionnaire – professional topics

– What topics do you find relevant to focus on within the Network?

- Quality management systems
- Development of a Genebank Quality System
- Facilitation of AEGIS and AQUAS
- Management of genebank collections
- Database management
- Conservation techniques and new developments
- Seed technologies
- Conservation management
- Safety back-up
- Support to solve practical problems at genebanks
- Other – phytosanitary issues. How to write proper and easy understandable working instructions as well as procedure instructions for the genebank working procedures

Top 3 answers:

1. Management of genebank collections (30)
2. Database management (27)
3. Development of a Genebank Quality System (24)



Results of questionnaire – Other topics

13. Other topics to be covered by the Network?

Please specify any other topics of relevance for the Network

3
Responses

"Creating transparency / implementing genebank metrics
Providing access to each others facilities (at cost recovery basis)"

"Learning by doing or by looking at different solutions or different approaches. Promote staff exchange among the partners of the Network."

"Toolkits for ex situ like the in situ toolkit would be great
A platform where genebanks share documents e.g. management documents, C&E descriptors, ..."

ECPGR Network of Genebank Managers

How to use the Network in the best possible way?



How to use the Network the best possible way ?

1. **Topics – ideas and suggestions for the next 3 years and a list of topics for the next year**
 1. Leadership
 2. Management
 3. Professional
 4. Policy
2. **Functioning and engagement within the network**
 1. How should the Network function in the best of all worlds? And how to get there?
 2. Engagement of participants and organization of digital and physical meetings
 3. Set-up of infrastructure like meeting documents and maybe a platform to raise questions or dialogue
 4. The hot potato – one or more networks?
3. **Anything else important going forward ?**



Group work

- Discuss open minded the questions on how to use the Network in the best possible way.
- Present you discussions to plenary
- Take notes and send them to josefin.grano@nordgen.org

