



European Forest Genetic Resources Programme

PROJECT TEAM

National Co-ordinator – John Fennessy, COFORD*

EUFORGEN National Co-ordinators:

- Conifers – Alistair Pfeifer, COFORD
- Scattered Broadleaves – Elaine O'Connor, University College Cork
- Stand-forming Broadleaves – John Fennessy, COFORD
- Thematic Networks (Forest Management) – Noel Foley, Forest Service
- National Focal Point (EUFGEN Project) – Cathal Ryan, Forest Service

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COMPLETION DATE: This is an ongoing programme on gene conservation at European level. Phase IV commenced on 1 January 2010 and is scheduled to end on 31 December 2014.

OBJECTIVES

In 1994, the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) was established as an implementation mechanism for Resolution S2 (Conservation of forest genetic resources) adopted by the first Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) in 1990. EUFORGEN is coordinated by Bioversity International and has participants from over 30 European countries. The programme operates through networks in which policy-makers, scientists and managers from participating countries agree work programmes, exchange information and identify needs and priorities to enhance pan-European collaboration on forest genetic resources. In Ireland the programme is serviced by COFORD in co-operation with the Forest Service.

PROGRESS

In early 2009, Irish representatives met to review progress with the EUFORGEN programme and to decide whether Ireland should continue membership during Phase IV. It was agreed that Ireland should continue as an integral part of EUFORGEN.

As Phase III of EUFORGEN came to an end in December 2009, a Steering Committee Meeting was held in Greece in mid June 2009 to discuss the outcomes from the current phase and to consider future plans for EUFORGEN. At the Steering Committee Meeting updates were provided on

progress made by the EUFORGEN Networks during Phase III and whether there was a need to continue into Phase IV. Due to the many factors affecting forest genetic resources, especially climate change, it was decided that EUFORGEN should continue and had an important role to play into Phase IV. At the meeting a speaker from the Canadian Forest Genetic Resources Information System (CAFGRIS), Dr Judy Loo, provided information on the structure and status of gene conservation of tree species in Canada. CAFGRIS provides information on native tree species biology and ecology as well as on threats to the species (e.g. alien invasive species and developing environmental change). Summarised data are also available as text and graphs for public use. More information is available at Canada's National Forest Information System (NSIF) website (<https://cfsnet.nfis.org/cafgris/index.html>).

In spring 2009, the EUFGIS project (Establishment of a European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources), an EU-funded project began its third year of activities, with a series of training workshops for national focal points. An important element was an introduction to the pan-European minimum requirements and data standards for dynamic gene conservation units of forest trees. This programme is expected to conclude in late 2010.

OUTPUTS

During Phase III, EUFORGEN had continued to operate through one thematic and three species networks – Forest Management, Conifers, Scattered Broadleaves and Stand-forming Broadleaves.

In 2009 the Stand-forming Broadleaves Network Meeting was held in Antalya, Turkey (31 March – 2 April) at which representatives from 27 countries participated. At this meeting the common action plans for scattered broadleaves were progressed and the meeting reported on the development of common action plans in a number of member countries. Progress on the network's work programme for phase III was also evaluated and tasks to be completed before the end of the phase were highlighted.

It concluded with an agreement that network members will finalize working plans for the completion of the programme in Phase III of EUFORGEN with:

- publication of guidelines on genetic aspects of forest management,



Participants of the EUFORGEN Stand-forming Broadleaves Network meeting in Turkey visiting a stand of Kasnak oak (*Quercus vulcanica* L.) at the Isparta Forest Conservancy.

- include relevant policies and practices related to gene conservation and forest management in the summary report to be developed by all networks and published at the conclusion of Phase III,
- the network will also prepare a chapter on policy tools to promote the use of high quality forest reproductive material in the summary report as agreed to be prepared by all networks and published at the conclusion of Phase III.

It was also agreed that the network will review climate change strategies in European countries with a view to developing a comprehensive set of recommendations for the use of forest genetic resources in Europe in the light of this change.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED

The EUFORGEN Steering Committee decided to continue the programme into Phase IV (1 January 2010 – 31 December 2014). The meeting also decided to change the way EUFORGEN operates. During the new phase, activities will be carried out through smaller working groups coming together and focusing on specific tasks.

Each working group will consist of approximately ten members and will be established by the Steering Committee, which will also identify and define the task to be addressed, will set deadlines for completion and will direct the group on expected outputs for each working group. The Steering Committee is scheduled to meet in early 2010 to develop the programme for Phase IV.