How will the network operate?

Network governance

For the network to be sustainable, it needs to be permanently established within existing and developing legal and policy frameworks for genetic resource conservation and to ensure biodiversity conservation, as well as sustainable development and climate resilience. This requires the support of national governments which are responsible for implementing the provisions of relevant international treaties and agreements, such as the CBD, GPA, ITFPGR, SDGs, UNESCO and European Green Deal.

Although not all countries in the region are members of the EU, it is an important and influential political body for the whole region. Embedding the network in the EU framework would provide strong commitment and support throughout the region and links to relevant global and regional policy and legislative instruments. Therefore, the European Commission, which plays a role in developing the overall strategy of the EU and designing and implementing its policies—is the most suitable body to oversee the development and permanent operation of the new network.

While it is premature to specify the precise network governance structure, an example of how it might operate is given here. Two main governing bodies, both of which would include a balanced representation of all stakeholder groups (‘Network membership’) and whose members will be elected on a periodic rolling basis, could be established:

1. An executive committee: A decision-making body that would have overall responsibility for the management of the network, including policy development and budget control.

2. A council: A decision-making body that would be elected by the members of the executive committee and review and approve its outputs, including policy, plans, budget and accounts. Council members could be elected by network members’ organizations and designated through a process of nomination and voting.

Meetings of the above two bodies would take place on a regular basis.

A general assembly could be periodically convened to allow network members to discuss and vote on issues pertaining to the management of the network, such as policy development and budget expenditure. In cases where a general assembly cannot be convened (such as in association with a plenary conference), members could have an opportunity to contribute their views via an electronic medium.

A secretariat would be established by the executive committee to support the general assembly and its work. It would be charged with the day-to-day management of the network.

National governments would play a vital role in supporting the establishment of the network, linking it to relevant policy and legal instruments, and in contributing to the development of network policy for the whole region.

Network funding

It is anticipated that the operation of the network would be funded through the contributions of governments and other relevant bodies and stakeholders. These would be structured according to different categories of members (organizational, individual, custodian and non-custodian), with contributions by EU member states and non-member countries that have network members based within them being proportionately represented in the membership. In addition, financial support would be provided by EU member states and by non-member countries that have network members based within them in relation to their membership.

Membership fees: These fees would be structured according to different categories of members (organizational, individual, custodian and non-custodian) with contributions in proportion to the benefits of membership, while also recognizing their roles as managers of plant genetic resources (see ‘Network membership’).

Other funding agencies and donors: The network governing bodies would seek additional funding from other sources.

For further information

If you are interested in learning more about the network and/or about the Farmer’s Pride project and related initiatives, please sign up to our mailing list and visit our website.

www.farmerspride.eu

Project partners

Network (green points), and need to be conserved as trait donors for crop improvement throughout the region (blue points), including in the Natura 2000 Network (green points), and need to be conserved as trait donors for crop improvement throughout the region (blue points), including in the Natura 2000

Plant genetic resources—the diversity of crops, their varieties and wild relatives—are essential for food, agriculture, nutrition, economic and livelihood security, as well as for associated cultural, spiritual and social values. However, these resources are threatened by a range of factors. Landrace cultivation has decreased significantly due to a loss of diverse crop wild relative diversity being eroded by unsustainable and intensive land management, which reduce diversity and natural regeneration—particularity due to development for tourism and expansion of agricultural infrastructure. Climate change is threatening both cultivated and wild plant genetic resources due to changing environmental conditions and associated pests and diseases, as well as an increase in poaching and sale of adverse weather events.

The conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources is a priority, although the locations where they are cultivated in the case of landraces/Farmers’
Impart reliable information and offer technical support, and training for plant genetic resources populations. A key requirement is the need to develop and implement strategies to strengthen the awareness of the importance of plant genetic resources conservation. This can be achieved by promoting the importance of plant genetic resources conservation and sustainable use across the European continent. Additionally, it is necessary to foster greater cross-sector collaboration, providing recognition for their different contributions and fostering greater cross-sector collaboration, understanding and mutual appreciation for custodian and non-custodian members. Specifically, the new European network will be that of making a powerful force for influencing policymakers and stakeholders in a variety of fields. It will be a powerful force for influencing policymakers and stakeholders in a variety of fields.

**How will members join the network?**

- Local and regional networks and organizations can be active in the development of diversity on-farm and in-garden, tourism, community engagement and education.
- For custodian and non-custodian members, the network membership will be recognized:
  - If they are not a member of a body affiliated with the new European network (see ‘Organization membership’).
  - If they are a member of a body affiliated with the new European network. However, to help promote and sustain existing organizations involved in plant genetic resources conservation and sustainable use, it is necessary to foster greater cross-sector collaboration, understanding and mutual appreciation for custodian and non-custodian members.

**Who would be the members of the network?**

- The network membership would include:
  - The managers of plant genetic resources populations—farmers, gardeners, communities, and public and private protected area managers.
  - Local, national and regional networks and organizations.
  - Other actors with an interest in conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources.
  - Members of the network will be embedded within the EU framework.

**How will members join the network?**

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