EUFGIS

European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources

The EUFGIS project (2007-2011) was implemented in close collaboration with the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) and its member countries. EUFORGEN was established in 1994 as a pan-European implementation mechanism of Strasbourg Resolution 2 (Conservation of Forest Genetic Resources) adopted by the first Ministerial Conference of the Forest Europe process in 1990. EUFORGEN is financed by its member countries and coordinated by Bioversity International. The EUFORGEN Steering Committee is composed of National Coordinators from all member countries.

EUFORGEN operates through working groups and workshops that bring together national experts to exchange information, discuss needs and develop strategies and methods for better management of forest genetic resources. EUFORGEN also serves as a platform for developing collaborative actions and projects on forest genetic resources.

The national experts provided crucial inputs to the development of the pan-European minimum requirements and data standards for dynamic gene conservation units of forest trees as part of the EUFGIS project. The Steering Committee played a key role in negotiating the data sharing agreement and nominating the EUFGIS national focal points. The EUFGIS Portal is now maintained by EUFORGEN and the working groups are using it for improving pan-European gene conservation strategies and action plans for forest trees.

EUFGIS is maintained by the European Programme on Forest Genetic Resources (EUFORGEN) www.euforgen.org

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EUFGIS is hosted by Bioversity International

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Beech stand near Leuven, Belgium

What is EUFGIS?

The EUFGIS Portal provides geo-referenced data on dynamic conservation units of forest genetic resources in Europe. Presently, the database contains data on more than 2300 units and about 100 tree species. The units harbour more than 3100 tree populations which have adapted to specific environmental conditions or have distinct characteristics.

The information system, including pan-European minimum requirements and data standards for the units, was developed as part of the EUFGIS project (2007-2011). The genetic conservation units are typically located in forests managed for multiple uses, protected areas or seed stands. These units are building blocks of pan-European networks conserving valuable genetic resources for present and future uses.

The units have a designated status as genetic conservation areas of forest trees at national level and they have a certain minimum size in terms of reproducing trees. One or more tree species within each unit have also been identified as target tree species for genetic management. Silvicultural measures are applied, as needed, to favour genetic processes within target tree populations.

The data is provided and frequently updated by national focal points who have online access to the database. The countries have used EUFGIS for international reporting efforts, such as the State of Europe's Forests and the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources reports. EUFGIS can also be used for identifying gaps in genetic conservation efforts within the distribution ranges of forest trees, developing genetic conservation strategies at pan-European level and sampling tree populations for research purposes.

Contributing countries

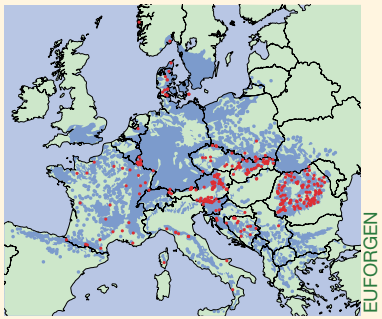
A total of 35 countries have nominated a National Focal Point for EUFGIS (as of June 2011). These include Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

Additional countries are welcome to join EUFGIS and nominate their National Focal Point. Please contact the EUFORGEN Secretariat (euforgen@cgiar.org) at Bioversity International for further information.

Dynamic gene conservation

The future of Europe's forests and forestry depends on the adaptation capacity of trees to climate change. The adaptation capacity, in turn, depends on maintaining evolutionary processes and genetic diversity within tree populations across their distribution range.

The pan-European minimum requirements for the units are based on the concept of dynamic gene conservation which emphasizes maintenance of evolutionary processes within tree populations to safeguard their potential for continuous adaptation. This can be done either by managing tree populations at their natural sites within the environment to which they are adapted (*in situ*), or artificial, but dynamically evolving, populations elsewhere (*ex situ*).



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Distribution map of European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and its gene conservation units (red dots).