Report on the activities of the Eurasian Dry Grassland Group (EDGG) to the IAVS Council (2023), covering the period June 2022 – July 2023

Compiled by the EDGG Representative to IAVS; Alireza Naqinezhad, 09 August 2023

The Working Group ([https://edgg.org](https://edgg.org))
The Eurasian Dry Grassland Group (EDGG) deals with flora, fauna, vegetation, ecology and conservation of any type of natural and semi-natural grassland in the Palaeartic biogeographic realm. On 31 July 2023, we had 1,417 members from 65 countries.

Governance
In spring 2023, the elections for the EDGG Executive Committee (EC) 2023–2025 were conducted electronically over four weeks. Each EDGG member had up to seven votes to the eight candidates. The new EDGG EC will consist of seven members. 172 members voted and cast a total of 995 votes. Iwona Dembicz and Anna Kuzemko were members of our election committee. It should be mentioned here that there is no chair or president among the seven EC members, but all have equal rights.

The new EC members are with their responsibilities:

- Idoia Biurrun, Spain: Membership Administrator; Deputy Chief Editor of Palaeartic Grasslands.
- Jürgen Dengler, Switzerland: Secretary-General, Special Feature Coordinator, Deputy Chief Editor of Palaeartic Grasslands, Deputy Contact to IAVS and Treasurer, Deputy Field Workshop Coordinator.
- Ellen De Vroeze, Belgium: Social Media Administrator, Deputy Website Editor, Deputy Secretary-General.
- Rocco Labadessa, Italy: Chief Editor of Palaeartic Grasslands.
- Alireza Naqinezhad, Iran & UK: Contact to IAVS and Treasurer, Deputy Chief Editor of Palaeartic Grasslands.
- Stephen Venn, Finland: Website Editor, Conference Coordinator, Deputy Social Media administrator.
- Denys Vynokurov, Spain & Ukraine: Field Workshop Coordinator, Deputy Conference Coordinator.
If you have questions or suggestions, please contact the responsible Executive Committee member as EDGG does not have a Chair/President.

**EDGG conferences (S. Venn & D. Vynokurov)**

After two consecutive postponements due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 17th Eurasian Grassland Conference “Grassland dynamics and conservation in a changing world” was held in Tolosa (Basque Country, Spain) with a post-conference excursion in Navarre from 12th to 18th September 2022. The conference was attended by 71 participants from 18 countries. Ten were supported by IAVS, both via regular grants (three, from Poland) and an ad hoc grant for seven Ukrainian scientists. The next EDGG conference (18th) will be held in Szarvas, Hungary in September 2023 (More information is available in Palaerctic Grasslands #54-55:14-36).

**TalkGrasslands! (S. Venn & D. Vynokurov)**

In winter 2023, we broadcast the third series of online keynote talks on grassland topics by internationally renowned specialists, called “**TalkGrasslands!**”. On 27th January 2023, Jianshuang Wu offered the talk “**Alpine Grassland Conservation in North Tibet, China**”, and on 24th February, we had the opportunity to listen to Elena Eustacchio and Marco Bonelli in their talk entitled “**Flower-insect interactions in mountain ecosystems**”. Finally, Sara Cousins gave her talk “**Ancient grasslands-Land use legacies**” on 17th March 2023. The three talks were well attended, and the series will continue next winter. (More information about these and earlier talks, as well as links to recordings of the talks in the EDGG YouTube channel can be found via the EDGG website: [https://edgg.org/talks](https://edgg.org/talks)).

**Field Workshops (D. Vynokurov & J. Dengler)**

Up to now, 17 EDGG Field Workshops have been held. The 17th Field Workshop was held in Northern Italy, in the region of South Tyrol (2-10 June 2023), and gathered 19 participants including the local organizing team. For 9 days, we sampled 111 normal 10 m² plots and 26 biodiversity plot series from 1 cm² to 100 m². Currently, as of now, the preparation for the following Field Workshop in 2024 began. It will be held in the region of the southwestern Alps and will include sampling the dry grasslands in the inneralpine dry valleys of this region. More information is available in Palaerctic Grasslands #54-55.
**Social Media** (E. De Vrieze & S. Venn)

We use several social media platforms, namely the website, Facebook group, Twitter and YouTube channel. Currently, August 2023, the Facebook group has 599 members, of which 53% are women and 47% are men. Most members are in the 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 age groups (resp. 20%, 32% and 26%). In the past seven months, the group has shared 19 posts, averaging 7.2 responses per post, 0.5 comments per post and 106.7 views per post. The Twitter account has 249 followers and the YouTube channel has 114 subscribers, with 14 videos. Currently, we do not have a unified vision concerning our outreach activities. To address this, we recognize the need to develop a clear vision and then translate this vision into a communications strategy. This strategy includes setting specific goals, defining the most suitable social media platforms for specific types of content and establishing specific guidelines for each platform's content.

In addition, we consider including Instagram and a Facebook page (aside the Facebook group) in our social media repertoire. This allows us to reach a broader and younger audience, not currently engaged in existing channels.

To gather input and ideas from the EDGG community for the social media platforms, a general fill-in form will be set up. Members will have the opportunity to contribute to the content of various social media platforms. Ellen and Stephen will oversee this process and determine the final output of posts. See attachment for a general idea of this fill-in form. We might also consider starting an EDGG podcast. Such a podcast would highlight the group's extensive and diverse grassland expertise.

**Palaearctic Grasslands** (R. Labadessa, I. Biurrun, J. Dengler & A. Naqinezhad)

EDGG’s diamond open access journal, Palaearctic Grasslands (PG), has developed well. It is now published in 3-month intervals, thus with 3 regular single issues (PG#53, PG#56 and PG#57) and one double issue (PG#54-55) in the reporting time, with a total of 175 pages. One peer-reviewed scientific article and several reports, news, short contributions and photographic items (Photo Stories, Photo Competition) have been published. The issues about DOIs registration were finally solved by MCI in 2022 and the new DOIs are regularly functioning.

**EDGG-edited publications** (Jürgen Dengler)

EDGG is continuing its tradition of edited Special Features in international journals. However, recently it became more and more challenging to attract submissions for our Special Features (in parallel to a general decrease in submissions/publications in nearly all serious journals of ecology and botany):
• In *Tuexenia*, we got only one submission in 2022, meaning that there was no Special Feature in this year. However, the single submission got the prize of the FlorSoz. For 2023 we again got only one submission to our *Tuexenia* Special Feature so far so that it is again questionable whether there will be a Special Feature.

• For our planned Special Feature in *Hacquetia*, we did not receive a single submission during the last two years, even though *Hacquetia* some time ago got a Journal Impact Factor.

• In *Vegetation Classification and Survey*, Jürgen Dengler and co-editors are preparing a Special Collection on “Grasslands of Asia” on behalf of EDGG and of the IAVS Regional Section for Asia: [https://vcs.pensoft.net/collection/317/](https://vcs.pensoft.net/collection/317/). So far one paper has been published and three more are in the peer review.

• In *Biodiversity and Conservation*, Didem Ambarli and co-editors are organising a Special Feature on “Biodiversity and conservation of Asian grasslands” in conjunction with the Asian Grassland Conference. While relatively few submissions came from the conference, a larger number were submitted due to advertisement on the journal website, resulting in more than 20 manuscripts that are now in peer review.

**GrassPlot, the EDGG database** (Jürgen Dengler)

In the reporting period, we concentrated on increasing the consistency and completeness of header data and metadata rather than adding new datasets. Moreover, we have now prepared the composition data ready to use for a significant part of our datasets. Meanwhile, GrassPlot has also joined the European plot database EVA and the global plot database sPlot.

**IAVS-supported EDGG projects**

The project “Preparation of the species composition data in the GrassPlot database” is still ongoing.

**EDGG supports Ukraine**

EDGG managed to collect significant amounts of money from its members and from the auction at the Eurasian Grassland Conference 2022 for its Fund to Support Ukrainian Scientists. So far, we awarded four small grants of 500 EUR each, and meanwhile four Ukrainian scientists finished their projects. We are waiting for new applications to support further Ukrainian colleagues.