

## **Capacity building to enhance the use of animal genetic resources in a multinational context**

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Management of genetic diversity is crucial to develop programs aimed at the conservation and sustainable utilization of Animal Genetic Resources (AnGR). The IMAGE project was developed with the goal of enhancing the use of genetic collections and upgrading the management of animal gene banks, by developing genomic methodologies, biotechnologies, and bioinformatics for better knowledge and exploitation of AnGR. One key component of IMAGE has been the development of capacity building programs designed to strengthen the activity of gene bank managers and other stakeholders involved in managing AnGR. Three postgraduate training courses were organized in 2018, in Argentina, Colombia and The Netherlands. These one-week courses involved lecturers from several IMAGE partners, and aimed to build capacity in conservation and management of AnGR using novel technologies. The course programs were designed with high quality standards, engaging international lecturers and post-graduate students and professionals, with the goal of developing the skills of researchers and managers engaged in conservation genetics and population management, providing the environment and framework for participants to apply the acquired knowledge in their projects. Nearly 100 participants from 17 different nationalities (in Europe, Africa and America) attended the courses, which covered topics such as the role of AnGR in sustainable development, assessment of genetic diversity using different tools, management of small populations, development and management of conservation programs, and reproductive technologies. Additional training sessions are planned before the project ends in early 2020.