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Conference paper

**ELBARN:
EUROPEAN LIVESTOCK BREEDS ARK AND RESCUE NET
– A CONCEPT FOR THE FUTURE**

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The European SAVE Foundation, working together with the lead partner Euronatur and further NGO partners, has been awarded a grant from the EU for the ELBARN project under the Work Programme of the Regulation EC 870/2004. The grant was awarded to ELBARN as a ‘Concerted Action’ and thus ELBARN will be financed by the EU to 80% of eligible costs. The work to realise the goals of ELBARN began 1st June 2007 and the project will last for 3 years.

“Ark Farms” are already in existence (example: the RBST’s Approved Farm Parks, GEH’s Arche Höfe). They undertake important work in conservation and publicity. However, there is still an element missing in the system, an element that has long been identified by SAVE. This element is the Rescue Station. ELBARN aims to change the status quo by creating a network of existing Ark Farms, by encouraging the development of new ones so that every European country has at least one ‘**Ark and Rescue Centre**’ and also by enhancing the system with the missing element:

- ⇒ capacity to rescue animals that are both rare breeds and face slaughter or other immediate dangers.

The Ark and Rescue Centres will:

- ⇒ offer emergency places for endangered genetically important livestock,
- ⇒ will offer quarantine places for rare breeds in cases of epidemics,
- ⇒ will keep core breeding groups,
- ⇒ as well as offer breeding help for livestock keepers and

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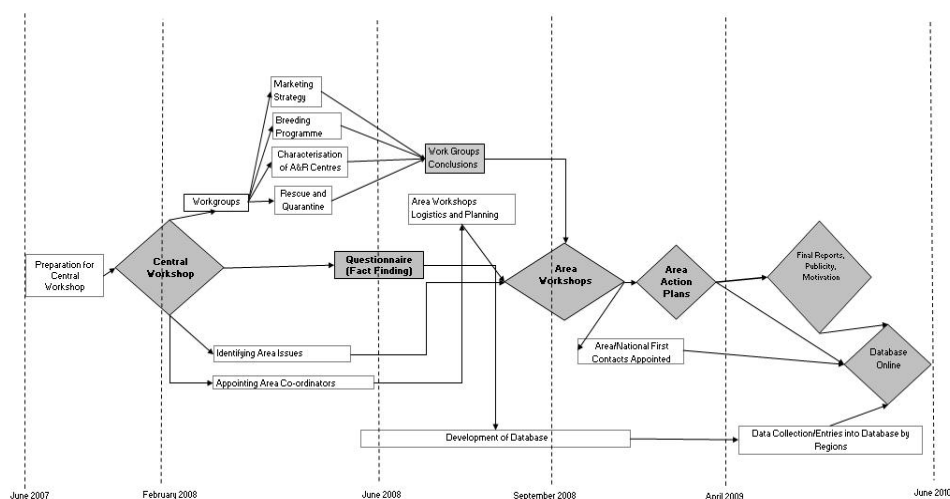
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⇒ will also offer a place for the public to see the animal genetic resources of Europe.

These Ark and Rescue Centres will be electronically networked via an online database. The ELBARN Network will be spread throughout Europe to share knowledge and encourage collaboration between organisations and institutes wishing to conserve European animal genetic resources. Additionally, the promotion of the products of these livestock breeds, whether this is as a food product or as a service such as grazing for environmental management, will be a central theme of the project.

ELBARN is not intended as a project that buys property or animals. Nor does it have any finances available for helping in the upkeep of Ark and Rescue Centres. However, through the Working Groups, ELBARN will be able to make concrete suggestions on how Ark and Rescue Centres can maximise the marketing potential of the rare livestock breeds in their care, thus rendering them profitable. It is also hoped that, through the existence of an international network sponsored by the EU, smaller projects related to fulfilling the wider goals of ELBARN will find funding to achieve their goals.

The three year project will have the following structure:



As can be seen from the above diagram, the launch of ELBARN is the Central Workshop. The Central Workshop is seen as an opportunity to invite the participants of ELBARN to meet together and appoint the Transnational Working Groups and the Area Coordinators. The Work Groups, appointed to create guidelines on the subjects of Rescue and Quarantine, Breeding, Characterisation of Ark and Rescue Centres and Marketing of Products, will meet on the second day of the Central Workshop.

A fact finding questionnaire will be used to gather as much information as possible from all the areas, this information will then be available online as part of the database. This database will be developed and filled with information, both from the questionnaire and, later in the project, with more specific details about each area. This database should be of interest and use to both the general public and people specifically interested in the conservation of livestock breeds. The database will be based on the already existing Arca-Net (<http://www.arca-net.info>).

In order to develop Area Action Plans, tailored to the needs of each Administrative area, Area Workshops will be held in September 2008. These areas are administrated by the Project Partners as well as by the Area Coordinators and other individuals and organisations that are willing to give their time to ELBARN. The Area Action Plans will set out the work required in each area in order to achieve the goals of a fully functioning ELBARN. Issues on a transnational and national level will be discussed at the Area Workshops and the results of the questionnaire and of the Work Groups will feed into a process of setting out a concrete Area Action Plan, which will secure the future of ELBARN in that area. Depending on the area, differing amounts of time will be needed to complete this plan. However, it is within the idea of ELBARN that those areas with least problems will aid the countries that have massive hurdles to climb, in the form of knowledge transfer.

The final report will provide information on the improved state of *in situ* conservation of animal genetic resources in Europe. It will show how Ark and Rescue Centres operate, explain how the Database can be used and also show the work completed and that still to be done. This report will be made public in order to promote the work of ELBARN. As part of the promotion of ELBARN, the Area Action Plans will be presented to governments, in order to communicate the need for action and to show how to achieve successful *in situ* conservation.

Although ELBARN is financed by the EU, it covers the geographical region of Europe, not only the EU. All countries will be invited to participate in the network. The Central Workshop will take place in February 2008, more

details will be announced at the end of the autumn 2007. Also interested people are invited to collaborate in the work. If you wish to express your interest in being a part of ELBARN or have any further questions, please get in contact with SAVE Foundation or the Project Partners.

=> Detailed project description see: <http://www.save-foundation.net/pdf/ELBARN.pdf>

