

Minutes of the 1st Management Committee Meeting of the COST Action

CA18201 - An integrated approach to conservation of threatened plants for the 21st Century

COST Association, Av. Louise 149, 1050 Brussels

Brussels, 15 October 2019

1) Agenda and Materials	2
2) Participants and Hosting Team	2
3) Pre-requisites for the Decision Making	2
4) Relevant Information to the Management Committee.....	2
5) Discussions on the Action Aims, Implementation and Management	3
a. MoU Tasks and Deliverables: Working Group Meetings and Use of the COST networking tools	3
b. Management of the COST Action	6
6) Decisions by the Management Committee	6
a. Election of the Chair and Vice-chair.....	6
b. Selection of the Grant Holder (Scientific Representative) and agreement of FSAC.....	6
c. Establishment of Action Management Structure.....	6
7) Initial plans for the Work and Budget Plan	7
8) Next meeting and Closing	7
9) List of Annexes.....	7

ACTION Status

- Action parties: 33 COST countries
- CSO approval: 04/06/2019
- Start date: 15/10/2019



1) Agenda and Materials

The agenda is in Annex 1. The meeting was organised following a participatory methodology. The presentations given throughout the day are in Annex 2: The supporting materials on networking tools and tasks of the Management Committee are in Annex 3 and 4.

2) Participants and Hosting Team

Karina Marcus (Science Officer assigned for this Action) and Olga Gorczyca (Administrative Officer assigned to this Action) hosted the meeting. Further colleagues from the COST Association supported the hosting team in the afternoon session “How to manage the COST Action”.

The hosting team welcomed the participants (list in Annex 5). The participants introduced themselves and expressed their main interest for their participation in this COST Action.

3) Pre-requisites for the Decision Making

During the day, the participants acknowledged and agreed to comply with the Rules of Procedure for the Management Committee that were presented and read by the meeting participants from Annex I *COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment (COST 134/14)*:
http://www.cost.eu/download/COST_Action_Management_Monitoring_and_Final_Assessment).

Before any decision was taken, the SO verified that the minimum of 2/3 of the parties was present, the necessary quorum was achieved allowing the Management Committee meeting to officially take place in accordance with Article 9 of the Rules of Procedure for the Management Committee (see http://www.cost.eu/download/COST_Action_Management_Monitoring_and_Final_Assessment).

4) Relevant Information to the Management Committee

During the day, the hosting team provided the MC with information on:

- The main features of the COST programme and the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy.
- The COST Actions, participation in COST Actions, the networking tools and the financial rules for their implementation and the COST Grant System.
- The rules for the reimbursement of expenses for attending meetings and/or give training in training schools.
- The tasks for managing the Action.

5) Discussions on the Action Aims, Implementation and Management

a. MoU Tasks and Deliverables: Working Group Meetings and Use of the COST networking tools

After an introduction by the Main Proposer, the participants divided in Working Groups for discussing the tasks and deliverables. The results are presented below.

Following, the hosting team presented the COST Actions, the networking tools and financial rules. The participants returned to the WGs to discuss the funding of the activities needed to achieve the Action Objectives using the COST networking tools. The hosting team supported the WGs on the discussions clarifying the COST rules and giving examples of best practice. The results were used as input for the draft proposal for the Work and Budget Plan for the upcoming Grant Period discussed below in these minutes. See also Annex 6.

WG1: Improving knowledge in plant biology for appropriate in situ conservation
Reported by: Sílvia Castro
MC members preliminarily listed as members of the WG: Hana Pánková, Karel Križ, Sílvia Castro, Marta Galloni, Giovanna Aronne, Luis Navarro, Boštjan Surina, Sandro Lanfranco, Tiiu Kuul, Laura Daco, Maja Lazarević, Marianne Evju, Anna Kövendi-Jakó, Dalibor Ballian, Katalin Szitar, Koenraad Van Meerbeek, Carolina Sánchez-Romero, Theodora Petanidou, Jasmin Joshi, Elke Zippel, Rannveig Thorodsen, Ligita Liepina, Margareta Walczak, Philippine Vergeer, Phil Aravanopoulos, Aida Dervishi
Summary of the Discussion Outcomes: The WP The WG members agreed that a holistic perspective should be used for planning in situ plant conservation, including a methodology to identify bottlenecks in life-cycle of threatened plant species as well as the inclusion of national lists. Additional criteria/traits should also be analysed, e.g., flower complexity and reproductive traits, mating system, and mutualistic and antagonistic interactions. Future threats should be evaluated, and a landscape approach should be used to identify threats related with land use changes and for spatial planning and definition of re-introduction zones. Finally, best practices for an in situ conservation and evaluation should be identified. All the activities of WG1 should be closely connected with WG2 (informing the need for ex situ conservation) and WG5 (providing data for genetic diversity interpretation). The goals for the first 6-12 months are the following: organisation of one working group meeting with the aim to discuss methodologies, one Training School to test the methodologies discussed in the WG meeting and the production of a list of threatened plants based on information at the national level. One STSM and one ITC Conference grant are planned in the 6-12-month period within WG1. The WG members agreed that it is too soon to organize workshops/conferences.

WG2: Sharing experience in plant ex situ conservation
Reported by: Michael Kiehn
MC members preliminarily listed as members of the WG: Renata Kjushterovska, Carolina Sánchez-Romero, Maja Lazarević, Cvetana Cvetkoska, Terezia Salaj, Tor Carlsen, Anna Kövendi-Jakó, Katalin Szitar, Justina Wiland Szymanska, Loukia Vassiliou, Giovanna Aronne, Boštjan Surina, Tiiu Kuul, Suzanne Sharrock, Margareta Walczak, Oz Barazani, Snežana Dragičević, Hana Pánková, Sandrine Godefroid, Michael Kiehn, Andreas Ensslin, Elke Zippel, Ivaylo Tsvetkov, Dušica Čalić, Marko Hyvarinene

Summary of the Discussion Outcomes:

The WG2 should put a strong focus on deliverable 10 (Material for training school "From ex situ to in situ - challenges in plant material transfer", deliverable 12 (preparation of Conservation guidelines for appropriate ex- and in-situ conservation measures for conservation practitioners), deliverable 15 (peer reviewed papers), and 18 (materials for participants of the workshop on ex-situ conservation). The WG2 should link up to other WGs to work on other deliverables. This COST Action should be used as a base for a sustainable network of European ex-situ-conservation organisations linked to international and regional conservation strategies (e.g. GSPC).

Within the ex-situ activities, there is a number of different fields of competence, e.g., seedbanking, cryopreservation, in-vitro-cultivation, physiological aspects (germination, nutrition, light), cultivation knowledge, which will deserve attention. In some of these fields, there is already considerable experience and best practise published or available, which should be collected in order to avoid duplication of work.

In the next 12-18 months, WG2 should organise a WG meeting of maximum of 2 days and disseminate activities on several conferences as well as organise a training school in summer 2020.

WG3: Filling the gaps in plant conservation

Reported by: Peter Glasnović

MC members preliminarily listed as members of the WG:

Peter Glasnović, Branka Knežević, Snežana Dragičević, Margareta Walczak, Ligita Liepina, Koenraad van Meerbeek, Adrian Bugeja Douglas, Theodora Petanidou, Hana Pánková, Suzanne Sharrock, Maja Lazarević, Giovanna Aronne, Aida Drevishi, Michael Kiehn, Tiiu Kuul

Summary of the Discussion Outcomes:

Within the discussion of WG 3 (Filling the gaps in plant conservation) participants identified the following tasks that should be implemented in the next 4 years: 1) revision of existing red lists per county; 2) revision of existing criteria with implementations according to new knowledge (e.g. role of pollinators, flower traits); 3) creation/improvement of a list of species of conservation concern based on (a) expert based opinion and (b) based on objective criteria (e.g. determination of AOO, EOO and species distribution modelling); 4) creation of a common database. Prior to this a revision of existing databases should be done in order to avoid redundancy.

The following tasks should be initiated in the next 12 – 18 months: 1) List of criteria (WG meeting, STSM); 2) Compilation of existing red list (WG meeting, STSM); 3) Starting up a database (WG meeting)

In the long term, a new list of species of conservation concern should be created.

WG4: Human dimension in plant conservation

Reported by: Justina Wiland-Szymanska

MC members preliminarily listed as members of the WG:

Marta Galloni, Jasmin Joshi, Justina Wiland-Szymanska, Suzanne Sharrock, Luis Navarro, Theodora Petanidou, Karel Križ, Rannveig Thoroddsen, Katalin Szitar, Anna Kövendi-Jakó, Dalibor Ballian, Ligita Liepina, Loukia Vassiliou, Birgit Gemeinholzer

Summary of the Discussion Outcomes:

Members of the discussion on WP4 identified the following tasks that should be discussed in the next 4 years:

Identification of influencers of society and on appropriate methods highlighting the value of wild threatened plants - e.g. projects with school children, nature lovers, gardeners.

Review of citizen science projects. Highlighting the importance of plant-pollinator relationships as well as other plant-animal relationships, which result in food webs and ecological networks: plants & pollinators/insects, plants & herbivores and plants & seed dispersers. Social events for public should be identified (e.g. Science night, Fascination of plants day).

Open access databases on threatened species needed (providing maps, but also genetic resources, management techniques, ex situ, in situ projects) to foster use in rural & urban development.

The goals of grant period for the next 12-18 months are: 1) review of current and past successful citizen science projects (past and successful) on wild plant diversity and values (WG meeting), 2) review list of projects on plant - pollinators (WG meeting), 3) review of social economic aspects of threatened species from the updated Red Lists (e.g. as medicinal plants, edible plants, collectible plants for gardens) and 4) review of dissemination methods for wild plant conservation (Training School).

WG5: Genomic approaches in plant conservation

Reported by: Filippos A. Aravanopoulos

MC members preliminarily listed as members of the WG:

Aida Dervishi, Phil Aravanopoulos, Marcin Klisz, Oz Barazani, Birgit Gemeinholzer, Philippine Vergeer, Guy Colling, Tsipe Aavik, Silvia Castro, Ivan Radosavljević, Dušica Čalić, Dalibor Ballian, Maja Lazarević, Laura Daco, Loukia Vassiliou

Summary of the Discussion Outcomes:

This WG will focus on the conservation genetics and genomics of threatened plants.

The following topics should be taken into priority consideration in the tasks that should be discussed and advance in the next 4 years: estimation of standing genetic diversity effective population size, landscape genetics and genomics, local adaptation and selection, population fragmentation and connectivity, hybridisation-introgression-apomixis, gene conservation of cryptic species, comparison of *in vivo* / *in vitro* / *ex situ* diversity. Emphasis should be placed in marginal populations and in the consideration of both annual and perennial non-model species.

These topics should be studied using the following approaches: genomics, genetics, quantitative genetics, metabolomics, species distribution modelling, bioinformatics, data analysis, sampling approaches, development and use of data bases.

Outputs predicted for the next 4 years: laboratory and field sampling manuals / protocols, training schools, peer-reviewed papers, videos (e.g. COST Action STReSS <http://stress-cost.eu/index.php/output/films>), recommendations for conservation managers focusing on genetic diversity, best practice approaches and technologies, establishment of links with other CA18201 WGs, other COST Actions (e.g. G-BIKE) and other Projects, development of policy briefs.

The goals for the upcoming 12-18 month period are:

A review of landscape genetics/genomics for plant conservation of threatened population/species, a review of local adaptation/gene flow/mating systems/connectivity, a relevant opinion and/or review

paper, an investigation of means for protocol sharing, start of a database development. These goals should be achieved by organising 2 WG meetings, 4 ITC conference grants, 5 STSMs. A workshop/conference and/or a training school could be organised together with other WGs.

b. Management of the COST Action

After an introduction on the tasks of the Management Committee for managing COST Actions, the participants divided into groups to discuss and make proposals for different management aspects:

1. Manage requests to join the Action
2. Decide who to invite and reimburse for Action meetings
3. Implementing STSMs
4. Communication Strategy
5. Plan your first Grant Period
6. Implementing ITC Conference Grants
7. International Cooperation
8. Organising Training Schools
9. Stakeholder engagement

The results can be found in Annex 7.

The Management Committee will develop further the ideas into internal rules and procedures of the COST Action.

6) Decisions by the Management Committee

a. Election of the Chair and Vice-chair

Decision 1: Živa FIŠER (SI) was elected Chair

Decision 2: Giovanna ARONNE (IT) was elected Vice Chair

b. Selection of the Grant Holder (Scientific Representative) and agreement of FSAC

Decision 3: The MC selected University of Primorska (SI) as Grant Holder Institution, represented at the MC by the elected Action Chair. Upon request of the elected Action Chair, the MC agreed to award the maximum FSAC rate of 15% of the total Scientific Expenditure.

c. Establishment of Action Management Structure

Decision 4: The following MC members were elected to the leadership positions:

- WG1: Leader Sílvia CASTRO (PT) and Co-Leader Boštjan SURINA (HR)
- WG2: Leader Sandrine GODEFROID (BE) and Co-Leader Andreas ENSSLIN (CH)
- WG3: Leader Peter GLASNOVIĆ (SI) and Co-Leader Michael KIEHN (AT)
- WG4: Leader Justyna WILAND-SZYMANSKA (PL) and Co-Leader Jasmin JOSHI (CH)
- WG5: Leader Filippou A. ARAVANOPOULOS (IL) and Co-Leader Marcin KLISZ (PL)
- STSM Coordinator: Ms Loukia VASSILIOU (CY) and Co-Coordinator Hana PÁNKOVÁ (CZ)
- Communication manager: Marta GALLONI (IT) and Co-Manager Sandro LANFRANCO (MT)
- ITC Conference Grant Manager: Aida DERVISHI (AL)

Decision 5: The MC decided that the colleagues listed in Decision 1 to 4 will form the Core Group for the daily management of the Action. Any specific mandates from the MC to the Core Group will be discussed and decided in the upcoming months.

7) Initial plans for the Work and Budget Plan

The initial budget allocated to the Action is EUR 82 000.00. This budget includes the Financial and Scientific Administration and Coordination (FSAC) and depends on the number of COST countries participating on the Action.

The initial plan for Grant period 1 is to organise a MC and WG meeting in early 2020, a core group meeting in November or beginning of December 2019 and approximately 5-6 STSMs.

8) Next meeting and Closing

The MC agreed to meet in Prague, Czech republic presumably in February 2020 for a joint MC+WG meeting.

The hosting team gave some final words about the COST Action. The participants expressed their individual follow up actions for the success of the Action.

9) List of Annexes

- Annex 1 - Agenda
- Annex 2 - Presentation from COST Association and Main Proposer/Elected Chair (attached)
- Annex 3 - A Quick Guide to the COST Networking tools (attached)
- Annex 4 - A Quick Guide to the Tasks and Decision of the Management Committee (attached)
- Annex 5 - List of participants (attached)

Minutes prepared by:

- *Action Science Officer*
- *Action Chair*
- *Action Vice Chair*

ANNEX 1- AGENDA

- Welcome by the hosting team
- COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy
- Tour de table: What am I looking for in this COST Action?
- Presentation of the COST Action by the Main Proposer: Challenge and MoU Objectives, Deliverables, General Action Structure (WGs, Horizontal Tasks, management...), SC recommendations
- Discussion on the MoU (Open Space): Working Groups tasks and deliverables
- Presentation on How COST Actions Work
- Discussion on the use of COST networking tools for financing the Action activities
- Reimbursement Rules
- How to Manage COST Actions?
- Acceptance by the MC of Rules of Procedures for MC of COST Actions
- Election of Chair and Vice Chair; Selection of Grant Holder
- Action Structure and organises the election for the WG and task leaders
- Proposal for WBP for the next Period and Next meeting: date and place
- Final Messages from COST and checkout: What will you start tomorrow to contribute to the success of this Network?