

COST Action CA18201

Action Title: An integrated approach to conservation of threatened plants for the 21st Century

Minutes of the 4th Management Committee Meeting

Venue: Bologna, Aula Giorgio Prodi, Piazza San Giovanni in Monte 2, 40124 – Bologna

Date: 14 October 2021

Beginning of the meeting: 9:00 A.M.

End of the meeting: 12:00 P.M.

- MC members & substitutes present in person: AL Aida Dervishi, AL Dhimiter Peci, BA Dalibor Ballian, CH Andreas Ensslin, DE Detlev Metzger, DE Elke Zippel, EE Tiiu Kull, ES Carolina Sanchez Romero, ES Manica Balant, IL Margareta Walczak, IL Merav Lebel Vine, IL Oz Barazani, IS Rannveig Thoroddsen, IT Aronne, Giovanna, IT Edy Fantinato, IT Marta Galloni, LA Baiba Pruse, LU Laura Daco, MN Branka Knezevic, MN Snežana Dragičević, MT Adrian Bugeja Douglas, MT Sandro Lanfranco, NM Renata Kjushterevska, PT Carapeto André, SI Peter Glasnović, SK Terezia Salaj, TR Meleksen Akin,
- Representatives from NNC present in person: LB Magda Bou Dagher, UA Taras Parpan
- Other participants present in person: Action Chair Ziva Fiser, Action Administrator Amy Simmons
- MC members & substitutes present on-line: BE Sandrine Godefroid, BG Ivo Tsvetkov, BA Amra Kazić, CR Ivan Radosavljević, CY Loukia Vassiliou, EE Tsipe Aavik, GR Filippos Aravanopoulos, IR Conor Meade, LT Rita Verbylaite, LT Valerijus Rašomavičius, MT Andrea Francesca Bellia, PL Marcin Klisz, PT Sílvia Castro, SK Jozef Sibik, SK Maria Sibikova, SR Maja Lazarević

1. Welcome to participants

Action Chair Živa Fišer opened the meeting and welcomed the participants and presented the schedule of the meetings between 14-15 October 2021.

Thursday, 14th October

- morning: MC meeting (9.00-12.00)

-afternoon: guest speakers (14.00-16.00) & STSM presentations & time for discussion

Friday, 15th October

- morning: WG2 sessions & WG3 sessions (9.00-12.00)

- afternoon: Core Group Meeting (15.00-18.00)

2. Verification of the presence of two-thirds of the Participating COST Countries

Representatives from 25 out of 37 Participating COST Countries were present at the meeting, therefore quorum was met. Representatives from 2 Near Neighbour countries were also present at the meeting (Ukraine, Lebanon).

3. Adoption of agenda

Agenda was accepted without any disapprove.

4. Approval of minutes and matters arising of last meeting

Minutes of the ZOOM MC meeting (18 November 2021) were approved without any disapprove.

5. Update from the Action Chair

a) Status of Action:

- Action Chair presented the start and end dates of Action (15/10/2019 - 14/10/2023), participating COST countries (37 COST countries), participating members from NNC (Ukraine, Lebanon, Armenia) and the changes in the Grant Period, which was extended for 6 months due to Covid-19. End of the 2nd Grant Period is now 31/10/2021 instead of 30/04/2021.
- Action Chair presented the leadership positions: Chair: Živa Fišer, Vice-Chair: Giovanna Aronne, Administrator: Amy Simmons, Science Communication Team: Marta Galloni, Sandro Lanfranco and Andrea Bellia, ITC Grant Team: Aida Dervishi and Maja Lazarević, STSM Team: Loukia Vassiliou and Hana Pankova.
- Members of the five working groups were presented; WG1: Silvia Castro and Boštjan Surina, WG2: Sandrine Godefroid and Andreas Ensslin, WG3: Peter Glasnović, Michael Kiehn and Edy Fantinato, WG4: Justyna Wiland-Szymańska, Jasmin Joshi and Baiba Pruse, WG5: Phil Aravanopoulos and Marcin Klisz.

b) Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM):

- STSM coordinator Loukia Vassiliou presented some general information about STSMs (Main aim, Duration of each STSM, Budget, Possible applicants, Evaluation criteria). She presented the 2 Calls from the 2nd Grant Period. The first was open on 03/09/2020 and closed on 21/09/20. 9 applications were received with the total approved amount of 11 680 eur: Aida Dervishi, Ali Murat Gulsoy, Alrun Siebenkäs, Anastasia Stefanaki, Meleksen Akin, Nina Loncarevic. The second call was open on 16/02/2021. 9 applications were received with the total approved amount of 23 970 eur: Baiba Pruse, Cristiane Forgiarini Da Silva, Ibrahim Salman, Kaspars Goba, Maria Viota, Mohamad Ali El Chami, Sissi Lozada Gobilard, Solveig Franziska Bucher, Stef Haesen. Some of the participants will not conduct the STSM due to Covid-19 situation.

c) ITC Conference Grants:

ITC Conference Grant coordinator Aida Dervishi presented the 2nd call, Eligibility Criteria, The application and evaluation steps. She informed the MC that due to Covid-19, COST allows to grant on-line conferences as well. The awarded ITC Conference Grants from GP2 (3 grants in total amount of EUR 909) were the following:

- Iris Reinula (University of Tartu, Estonia) attended BES (Festival of Ecology organized by British Ecological Society),
- Sisi D. Lozada Gobilard (Institute of Botany, Czech Republic) attended BES (Festival of Ecology organized by British Ecological Society),
- Meleksen Akin (Department of horticulture, Igdir University) attended In Vitro Biology Meeting 2021.

d) Virtual Networking Tools - new to COST

Action Chair presented the new networking tools introduced by the COST Association in spring 2021:

Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants were introduced to strengthen the existing networks in a virtual setting, to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, disseminate Action results, and to perform activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence (e.g. surveys, questionnaires or preparation of protocols, virtual



mentoring of activities that can generate capacity, build new skills, etc.)

The maximum amount per VM Grant is EUR 1.500, with a maximum of 6 VM Grants per Action per Grant Period (up to 1,500 EUR per grant, max 9,000 EUR). Action chair presented the Call for VM grants and the awarded 5 participants, who were selected by the ITC Conference Grants Committee:

- Peter Glasnović: Merging Europe's Red Lists: data collection, analysis and assessment of the status of Europe's native flora, 16/08/2021 - 20/10/2021
- Daniele Calabrese: Construction of a Plant-Pollinator Network for protected European plants, 28/07/2021 - 31/10/2021
- Maja Lazarevic: Data collecting for the Establishment of the Database on the Conservation actions on threatened plant species, and institutions, 21/07/2021 - 15/10/2021
- Giovanna Aronne: Looking for bottleneck in the life cycle of species living on cliffs and rocky slopes, 20/07/2021 - 10/10/2021
- Anastasia Stefanaki: Data processing Floral complexity Project - Assessing floral complexity as plant vulnerability indicator of the European flora, 15/07/2021 - 20/10/2021

The *Virtual Networking Support (VNS) Grant* was introduced to promote virtual collaboration to complement traditional ways of collaboration within the research and innovation communities, to stimulate virtual collaboration among the members of a given Action by designating a *Virtual Networking Support Manager*, to develop a virtual networking strategy for the Action, taking overall responsibility for Virtual Mobility Grants and to support the MC in the discussions and planning of virtual events and collaboration activities.

The Virtual Networking Support (VNS) Grant amount per grant period is set to a maximum of EUR 4.000.

Action chair presented the call and the awarded participant, who was selected by the ITC Conference Grants Committee:

- Ziva Fiser: Virtual Networking Support for ConservePlants, 22/07/2021 - 31/10/2021

Action chair, who was also selected as the Virtual Networking Support Manager, reminded the present participants to complete the ConservePlants survey on virtual activities that was sent to all ConservePlants participants recently.

6. Update from the Grant Holder: Action budget status

COST Action administrator Amy Simmons presented the plan of expenditures from GP2: Meetings – 67 812.00, Training Schools – 30 400.00, STSMs – 18 450.00, ITC Conference Grants – 2 640.00, Dissemination – 11 800.00. Total science expenditure: 131 102.00, FSAC 19 665.30.

The current expenditures were presented (not final): Meetings – 46,000.00, Training Schools – 1,002.24, STSMs – 29,102.50, ITC Conference Grants – 909.00, Dissemination – 12,999.00. Total science expenditure: 101,512.74, FSAC 15,226.91.

Dissemination activities were explained in more detail.

7. Update from the COST Association

Action chair announced that Mickael Pero is the new Science Officer of ConservePlants, he replaced Karina Marcus who left COST in October 2021. Mickael Pero did not attend the MC meeting but he attended the Core Group Meeting and presented several changes in COST.

Action Chair briefly presented some of the major changes:

- New Leadership Position will need to be elected: Grant Awarding Coordinator.
- No need to be an MC member to take up most of the Leadership positions.
- Possibility for researchers in the Partner Member, the NNCs and IPCs/third states to take some leadership positions.
- Action specific leadership positions will be encoded on eCOST and visible on the website.
- WG members will be encoded on eCOST.
- Dissemination Meeting – is now a Grant.
- No more permanent MC substitutes nor MC Observers from NNC or IPC - will be made automatically WG members.
- Action to approve all MC members within 4 weeks.
- MC Meetings will be open to any relevant participant (even if not MC member) as attendee
- MC can decide to reimburse only 1 MC member per country.
- No more limit of 4 Invited Speakers per event.
- Vademecum, Action Management and Dissemination Guidelines have been merged into a one single document: Annotated Rules for COST Action.

8. Monitoring of the Action

Action Chair presented that the 1st Progress Report, submitted on 2/11/2020, was positively evaluated (implementation sufficient). 2nd progress report due date is 14th November 2021. Second progress report checks the realisation of activities and deliverables.

9. Scientific Planning

- a) Working group leaders briefly presented the progress and future plans.

Working Group 1 - Improving knowledge in plant biology for appropriate in situ conservation.

Giovanna Aronne presented planned activities up to date and outlined the change in Activity plan. She summarized priorities of suggested activities and outlined the objectives and ideas which were addressed during the following Working Group meetings. For more, check the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Working Group 2 - Sharing experience in plant ex situ conservation.

Andreas Ensslin presented planned activities planned activities up to date. He summarized priorities of suggested activities and outlined the objectives and ideas which were addressed during the following Working Group meetings. For more, check the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Working Group 3 – Filling the gaps in plant conservation.

Peter Glasnović presented planned activities planned activities up to date. He summarized priorities of suggested activities and outlined the objectives and ideas which were addressed during the following Working Group meetings. For more, check the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Working Group 4 - Human dimension in plant conservation.

Baiba Pruse presented planned activities planned activities up to date. She summarized priorities of suggested activities and outlined the objectives and ideas which were addressed during the following Working Group meetings. For more, check the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Working Group 5 - Genomic Approaches to Plant Conservation.



Phil Aravanopoulos presented planned activities up to date. He summarized priorities of suggested activities and outlined the objectives and ideas which were addressed during the following Working Group meetings. For more, check the attached PowerPoint presentation.

b) Action Budget Planning

Action Chair announced that the new budget for GP3 is 200.200,00 eur. A draft W&B for GP3 will be prepared at the CG meeting on 15th October 2021. The following networking activities will be discussed at the CG meeting: Meetings (MC Meetings, Working Group Meetings, Core Group Meetings, Conferences), Training Schools, STSMs & ITC Conference Grants - how many/budget, VM and VNT grants - probably will stay in 3rd GP (but yet to be confirmed), Dissemination meetings, Action Dissemination - open access publications, promotion materials, and FSAC.

11. Dissemination planning (publications and outreach activities)

Sandro Lanfranco presented the activities of the Dissemination team, composed of Marta Galloni, Andrea Bellia and himself. The group met once (22 July 2021) on-line after the last MC meeting.

Popular articles published since the last MC meeting: 1) Nectar: not only a plant's affair (Effect of nectar quality and composition on pollinator preferences and behaviours) by Andrea Bellia, Published on CA18201 ConservePlants website, in Newspoint @UM (University of Malta news portal) and The Times of Malta (online and in print). 2) Outputs of the COST Action – two-year update by Andrea Bellia is to be published on 17 October 2021 on CA18201 ConservePlants website, in Newspoint @UM (University of Malta news portal) and The Times of Malta (online and in print).

Marta Galloni presented the ConservePlants at European Researchers night on 24th September 2021.

Sandro Lanfranco presented the numbers of articles by year and by language, number of events by type and the details about publications outlet. Most publications were in English and Slovenian language - the trend should change and more countries should be involved in dissemination activities. Social networks are now more active but should be improved. He also mentioned that popular articles should be translated into Italian and other languages, more popular articles about plant research should emerge from the Action and stories focused on people within ConservePlants would attract a wider public.

Sandro Lanfranco also invited all participants to promote events or news by providing the following info by e-mail to: marta.galloni@unibo.it, sandro.lanfranco@um.edu.mt and andrea-francesca.bellia.17@um.edu.mt.

The information sent to the Science communication team should be the following:

- Type of event/news? (conference, workshop, training school..)
- When? Date, schedule, deadlines if any: in case registrations in advance is needed with the link.
- Where? Place with the full address and link to the location/venue.
- What? A short description, a pdf programme or link to be included.
- Who? Contact person for further information.

Pictures or a graphic elements related to the event should be always included.



13. AOB

No discussion.

13. Location and date of next meeting

Action chair presented the organisations that expressed interest in organising a meeting in a survey sent in July 2021:

- Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences, Rapperswil, Switzerland
- Agricultural Research Institute, Cyprus
- University of Bologna, Italy
- University of Malta, Malta
- Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry, Lithuania
- Faculty of natural sciences, Skopje, North Macedonia
- Hakfar hayarok school, Israel
- Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France
- University of Málaga, Spain

These were the candidate locations for the present meeting, and potentially for the future MC meeting in GP3. Novi Sad, Serbia was planned for the 3rd MC meeting in November 2020 which was moved on-line due to Covid-19. Location and date of next meeting will be discussed at the CG meeting on 15th October 2021.

14. Summary of MC decisions

There were no decisions

15. Closing

Action chair thanked the MC members for their attendance at the meeting and invited the participants to attend the WG meetings and guest lectures.