

**COST Action CA18201**

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

**Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting**

Institute of Botany  
Průhonice, Czech Republic  
February 5, 2020

The beginning of the meeting: 09:12 A.M.

The end of the meeting: 12:10 P.M.

1. Welcome to participants

Action Chair Živa Fišer opened the meeting and welcome the participants. She presented the speakers. Then she welcomed and gave word to invited guest prof. Krahulec – deputy director of the Institute of Botany, CAS. He welcomed the guests, presented the institution, its history, outlined few important past achievements and main goals of the institute.

2. Verification of the presence of two-thirds of the Participating COST Countries or, if applicable, a Quorum

Representatives from 29 Participating COST Countries were present at the meeting, therefore the presence of two-thirds verified the meeting.

3. Adoption of agenda

Agenda was accepted without any disapprove. See at the attachment.

4. Approval of minutes and matters arising of last meeting

Minutes of the Kick off meeting in Brussels from 15 Oct 2019, Minutes of the Core group meeting in Koper from 14-15 Nov 2019 and Minutes of e-voting from 12-18 Dec 2019 were all approved without any disapprove.

5. Update from the Action Chair

- a) Status of Action: start and end dates of Action, participating COST countries, participating NNC/IPC institutions and Specific Organisations.

After the vote, Action Chair Živa Fišer presented meeting timesheet for the whole meeting period.

Word was passed to Vice Chair Giovanna Aronne. She presented the last email (electronical) voting's and outlined that there weren't any objections about decisions.

Action Chair Živa Fišer continued.

- i. The status of the COST Action was presented; start and end dates, participating countries, observer country, cooperating member and international participants.
- ii. Leadership positions were presented; Chair: Živa Fišer, Vice-Chair: Giovanna Aronne, Science Communication Team: Marta Galloni and Sandro Lanfranco, ITC Grant Team: Aida Dervishi and Maja Lazarević, STSM Team: Loukia Vassiliou and Hana Pankova.
- iii. Members of different working groups were presented; WG1: Silvia Castro and Boštjan Surina, WG2: Sandrine Godefroid and Andreas Ensslin, WG3: Peter Glasnović and Michael Kiehn, WG4: Justyna Wiland-Szymańska and Jasmin Joshi, WG5: Phil Aravanopoulos and Marcin Klisz.

The meaning of Core group member was additionally explained and it was outlined that the meeting on Friday is just for the Core group members.

b) Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM): review of completed reports and new applications

- i. **Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)** and the review of completed reports and new applications were presented:
  - o General information as they are Main aim, Duration of each STSM, Budget
  - o Possible applicants
  - o Evaluation criteria
  - o Different aspects of 1st Grant Period – opened from 1st November 2019 to 30th April 2020 was presented; important dates and deadlines for referenced call.
  - o STSM details as they are duration, aims, motivation, plan of work, etc. were presented
  - o Grant applications received and selected under the first STSM call were presented. Relocation of the budget, was explained as at Koper's meeting there was money available to relocate and with that to add additional 4000€ to the STSM and with that increase the number of participants on STSM under the first call.
  - o Presentation of selected grant holders followed.
  - o First STSM addressed from Manica Balant was already finished and therefore report from her side already submitted.
- ii. Questions about procedure and implementation were answered. Recommendations and suggestions were shortly discussed.
  - o Who is applicable, what can be putted into the call, what tasks can be done, what objectives to relate?
  - o There were also suggestions for adaptation of STSM selection procedures, specifying the future calls.
  - o Question about reports of the task and objectives followed.
  - o Recommendation to inform countries representatives or to report participants in general about selected grant holders.
  - o Suggestion to include MC members per countries into the selection criteria when grant applicant is from the same country. Suggestion to include working group leaders into the selection criteria.
  - o Suggestion of inclusion how the proposal is coordinated (and falls into) with target working group into STSM selection criteria.
  - o Item of relevance should be specified. It would be good to have some recommendations.

- It was concluded that for the next STMS call more specified recommendations addressing the procedure and implementation will be added.

c) ITC Conference Grants:

- i. Aida Dervishi presented the purposes, 1<sup>st</sup> call, Eligibility Criteria, The application and evaluation steps.
- ii. Questions were answered and suggestions were made for future evaluations.
- iii. The results of this call will be on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020

6. Update from the Grant Holder: Action budget status

Action Budget status was presented

- i. Planned activities were successfully realized. First instalment was paid to Grant holder on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019.
- ii. As Koper Core Group meeting was cheaper than planned and number of STSMs applications and related costs was higher than planned, money allocations were carried out. In total 4000 € were allocated which enabled increased STSM participation during the first call.
- iii. The importance of submitting “claims” for present meeting as soon as possible was outlined.

7. Update from the COST Association, if a representative is present

- a. Karina Marcus was invited to present the update
  - ii. There are 37 out of maximum 39 COST Countries which are included into CA18101, with only Romania and Sweden missing.
    - She outlined that this is success but that such a cooperation could also be challenging. Not many COST Actions have partnership this big.
    - South Africa as one of the partner Countries has special status
      - It is eligible for budget encouragements, but not eligible to apply for grants under COST Action (there are other options);
  - iii. COST Networking Tools – should be opened to all eligible potential candidates, not just MC members
    - MC members should be ambassadors; all potential participant should be invited into the action.
    - Publications could also be payed from COST Action.
    - WG Meetings, Workshop & Conferences should be opened to broad public.
      - potential to set submission fee for participants to include as many people as possible
  - iv. Management Committee and its role.
    - Governing and decision-making body of the Action
    - She explained policies and outlined the role of mandates
  - v. Communication between partners
    - Discussion topics for this meeting were suggested regarding the kick off meeting
    - She outlined the importance of communication between members and importance of collective effort of communication strategy
  - vi. Management Committee – Composition
    - How to join?
      - Every European country can join without approval
    - MC -> Observers

- \*Participations can be approved from Near Neighbour Countries (NNC) or International Partner Countries (IPC) or specific organisation can be approved by European Commission, EU bodies, Offices and Agencies or International Organisations (IO) or European RTD Organisations

- \* Reference document: "COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation" (<https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/COST-135-14-REV2-COST-International-Cooperation-and-Specific-Organisation-participation-rules.pdf>)

- 1 NNC has joined the Action: Ukrainian Research Institute of Mountain Forestry

vii. Communication and Dissemination

- o An active and attractive Action website was outlined as a MUST and important to set up as soon as possible
- o Contact your Action and Science Communication Manager: Prof. Marta Galloni ([marta.galloni@unibo.it](mailto:marta.galloni@unibo.it))
- o There are also COST Supporting Tools on official COST website:
  - Eligible costs: Vademecum requirements
  - COST strategy and visual identity: brand book (<http://www.cost.eu/visualidentity>)
  - Guidelines for Dissemination of COST Action results: ([http://www.cost.eu/Action\\_dissemination\\_guidelines](http://www.cost.eu/Action_dissemination_guidelines))

viii. Action monitoring

- o 1<sup>st</sup> report is in 12 months from the start of COST Action;
  - o Implementation of SC Recommendations & COST Policies
- o 2<sup>nd</sup> report is in 24 months from the start of COST Action;
  - o Progress
  - o Impacts and successes
  - o Dissemination & Exploitation
  - o Urgent needs for improvement
- o 3<sup>rd</sup> / final report is in 48 months from the start of COST Action;
  - o MoU Achievements
  - o Expected Impact & Successes
  - o Dissemination & Exploitation
  - o Added value of the networking
  - o Lessons for the future and success stories
  - o Emerging themes/ potentially important future developments

ix. SC Recommendations for CA18201

- o Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs) should be maintained
- o The level of involvement of Early Career Investigators (ECIs) should be increased
- o The gender balance should be maintained

x. Preparation for Grant Period 2 / Workflow for the Work and Budget Plan

- o Grant Period 2 - for the activities from 1st May 2020 to 30th April 2021
- o Budget for the Grant Period 2 was not set yet until the presentation
- o Items which will be covered during the Grand Period 2 are Meetings, STSMs, Training Schools, ITC Conference Grants and Dissemination
- o The Work and Budget Plan must be:
  - o submitted by the Action Chair; here it was outlined that we should not wait until the last minute with submissions

- validated by the Science Officer
  - approved by the COST Financial Team
  - approved by the Management Committee (e-COST voting), one week
  - signed by the Grant Holder Legal Representative
  - signed by the COST Director
- xi. **COST Connect**
- An event where different members from different actions are cooperating and exchanging knowledge at same workshops – if there are some proposals should contact Karina Marcus
  - Different COST Connect events are published on <https://www.cost.eu/events/>
- xii. **COST Academy**
- Trainings for COST participants
    - Initiative developed to support the COST Action networks, which offers: trainings, workshops, mentoring, webinars, online modules
  - There is also available online “assistant” at <https://www.cost.eu/academy/>

b. Olga Gorczyca – Administrative Officer - was invited to present the administrative part of COST Action

- i. **Brexit Update**
- Until the end of Horizon 2020, the current Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, the COST Association will keep funding the UK affiliated participants in all COST activities.
- ii. **COST Rules for Travel Reimbursement**
- Local Transport – within 1 country
    - Public transport – for the entire duration of meeting (bus, train, shuttle, metro, tram). If expenses are lower than 25 € (all receipts cumulative), than receipts are not required when submitting reimbursement. If expenses are higher than receipts are required.
    - Other transport
      - Taxi (limitation 80€ for the total duration of meeting, only when late arrival (10 PM), early departure (7 AM), or when no other transportation is available). Receipts are required.
      - Car – proof of distance is required. 0.20 € / km and 0.30 € / km with 2 or more eligible participants.
      - Parking. Receipts are required.
      - Ferry. Receipts are required.
  - Long distance travel = cross border travel
    - Travel costs from the country of residence
    - Flight expenses – Economy class only (max. 1200 € - You must submit an invoice and full itinerary)
    - Car travel expenses – Maximum distance 2000 km at. 0.20 € / km and 0.30 € / km with 2 or more eligible participants. Proof of distance is required
    - Train, bus and ferry expenses – First, second and business class. You must submit invoice / receipts
    - Travel costs can also be reimbursed if you are living in other country and you travel to the meeting. Also if you are on some meeting elsewhere, there can be an exception made but you need to be careful about the economic part.
  - Accommodation Expenses
    - Flat rate: 120 € / night (MC can decide lower flat rate), no receipts required.

- Maximum nights = actual number of meeting days plus additional night before the event
- o Meals expenses
  - Flat rate: 20 € / lunch and dinner (MC can decide lower flat rate). No receipts required. Based on travel. Meals can also be offered by Local Organizer Support (LOS); in that case individual can't submit reimbursement.

8. Monitoring of the Action and Implementation of COST policies on:

- a) Promotion of gender balance and Early Career Investigators (ECI)
- b) Inclusiveness and Excellence (see below list of Inclusiveness Target Countries)

The Action Chair presented the COST policies: all ITC countries except Romania have joined the Action. The gender composition is appropriate, but slightly skewed towards females. ECIs are also involved in leading positions.

10. Follow-up of MoU objectives & Scientific planning:

a) Progress report of working groups

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

Sílvia Castro 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.

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

Sandrine Godefroid 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.

- iii. 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.

- iv. Working Group 4 - Human dimension in plant conservation

Justyna Wiland-Szymańska 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.

- v. Working Group 5 - Genomic Approaches to Plant Conservation

Phil Aravanopoulos 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.

b) Action Budget Planning

The budget from the Work and Budget plan was presented.

c) Long-term planning (including anticipated locations and dates of future activities)

Briefing about ideas proposed by MC members for Grant Period 2 (and later). Proposed locations for upcoming meetings in GP2 are Coimbra (Portugal) – A possible 3<sup>rd</sup> MC meeting, Israel – Action meeting and Workshop, Novi Sad (Serbia) – Action meeting and Italy – Training school in preproduction biology. Proposed locations for upcoming meetings in GP3 is Portugal – Training school in reproductive biology – advanced and Flow cytometry workshop. For other activities there was no proposals yet.

d) Dissemination planning (publications and outreach activities)

11. Requests to join the Action from:

a) COST countries

- Prof. Assoc. Arben Mehmeti (Rep. of Kosovo)  
Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary, University of Prishtina, Kosovo  
Expertise/interests: arable weeds in Kosovo
- Prof. Assoc. Dr. Elez Krasniqi (Rep. of Kosovo)  
University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics,  
Department of Biology  
Expertise/interests: Plant Biology, Systematics, Ecology, Geobotany, Nature and  
Environmental Protection, one of the authors of the Red Book of Vascular Flora of the  
Republic of Kosovo

b) Institutions in Near Neighbouring Countries, International Partner Countries, and/or Specific Organisations: EU agencies, European RTD Organisation, International Organisations

- Prof. Dr. Abdel Rahman Mohammad Said Al-Tawaha (Jordan)  
Department of Biological sciences, Al-Hussein bin Talal University, Jordan  
Expertise/interests: evaluation of new crop species for South part of Jordan,  
Mediterranean flora as a source of nutraceuticals, potential of using natural elicitors as a  
means of increasing plant growth
- Dr. Kristine Margaryan (Armenia)  
Head of the Research group of Plant Genetics and Immunology, Yerevan State  
University, Yerevan (Armenia)  
Expertise/interests: Vitis phenotypic variability, cultivars, Gene bank of crops and wild  
relatives

The MC approved the requests from the participants.

## 12. AOB

Živa Fišer carried out webpage presentation which was created for the purposes of COST Action. Website is still work in progress but it is already available with basic project informations, contacts and breed description at <https://conserveplants.eu/en/>.

Giovanna Aronne presented the image of the logo and described the story behind its creation. After presentation of new project logo and the story behind the logo was uploaded the ConservePlants webpage.

## 13. Location and date of next meeting

There are 3 different proposals for hosting next meeting.

- Coimbra (Portugal) – proposed for November 2020
- Israel – proposed for May 2021
- Novi Sad (Serbia) – proposed for November 2020

Final location and date of next meeting was not determined jet.

## 14. Closing

