

VIRTUAL MOBILITY (VM) GRANT REPORT TEMPLATE

This report is submitted by the VM grantee to VNS Manager, who will coordinate the approval on behalf of the Action MC.

Action number: CA18201

VM grant title: **Merging Europe's Red Lists: data collection, analysis and assessment of the status of Europe's native flora**

VM grant start and end date: 16.8.2021 to 20.10.2021

Grantee name: Peter Glasnović

Description of the outcomes and achieved outputs (including any specific Action objective and deliverables, or publications resulting from the Virtual Mobility).

IUCN Red List categories and criteria at the regional level have been used to produce Red Lists at the national level. Red List data are often used to guide natural resource management at different levels, in national development policy and legislation, and can make an important contribution to the development of multilateral agreements. However, the conclusions drawn from Red List assessments do not always have direct legal implications. Despite increasing efforts to follow IUCN recommendations, some countries still apply regional/national criteria to produce Red Lists. The focus of this VM grant was to obtain data from key Red Listing documents provided by country representatives working on the COST ConservePlants action. In addition to the actual species data and Red List assessment, we compiled information on the year of publication, the Red List categories used and their definitions (IUCN-current, IUCN-old or IUCN-other), the correspondence of the categories to the IUCN Red List categories, availability and access links, and whether or not an assessment of the entire flora was made. Different uses of threat categories were noted, not always following the IUCN recommendation or an older version of the categories. A detailed analysis of the categories represented in the European Red List was presented. Significant differences were found between European countries in terms of year of publication, availability and methodological approaches to the selection of taxa for assessment. This part of the activity was carried out together with the assessment of a general overview of the European plants classified as threatened in the national Red Lists. More specifically, we are now aware of the percentage of threatened plants in relation to the total number of plants assessed per country. The database can be used to determine the percentage of nationally/regionally threatened endemics or other species groups per country. The data obtained can easily be used to provide an overview of threatened species represented in national and international ex situ collections, or to provide an overview of countries/geographical areas where major conservation problems have been identified. The results were prepared in tabular, cartographic and textual form and presented and discussed with the COST action members during the MC and WG meeting.

Description of the benefits to the COST Action Strategy (what and how).

The first IUCN assessment of European vascular plants in 2011 evaluated 1,826 species (=17.4% of the European flora) and showed that at least 467 (=25.6%) are threatened with extinction. However, even a quick glance at the IUCN assessment reveals the geographical unfairness of the assessment, which largely neglects species-rich south-eastern Europe. A lack of coherence in plant conservation is a persistent problem within European countries. There is considerable variation between regions and countries and between approaches. The results of this activity provide a basic document to identify where and what major gaps exist in conservation initiatives across Europe based on the review of national red lists as core conservation documents. Based on this outcome, the members of the Action can plan future activities that will help to fill these gaps and ensure a sound approach to the proper conservation of Europe's most threatened plants. The results of this Action will therefore only be successful through the continued collaboration of researchers and practitioners from all COST member countries and even by extending the area to Near Neighbour Countries. All the important elements of the COST excellence and Inclusiveness Policy were taken into account here: geographical distribution (the activity included all countries that collaborated in the action and other countries that did not), career stage (researchers at the beginning of their career were involved in the activity) and gender balance. The results will be used as part of the overall WG3 activities - filling the gap in plant conservation - to present and share best practises with all participating members, including NNC and IPC. Future activities will take into account experiences from countries outside the COST systems in order to implement them at European level. All activities and their dissemination were discussed with the VNS Manager and the core group to fulfil the virtual networking strategy of this COST action. The results were shared and discussed with the members of WG3.

Description of the virtual collaboration (including constructive reflection on activities undertaken, identified successful practices and lessons learned).

The ConservePlants network, which already includes 38 countries in Europe and beyond, continues to grow, providing tools and resources to connect and support conservation practitioners, scientists and other stakeholders. Only under these circumstances has the work of collecting, analysing and bringing together national conservation documents been possible. To overcome the current situation where it is sometimes difficult to move physically, we have taken advantage of online communication and an extensive network that we have been able to build over the past two years. Gathering data and sharing opinions has been quick and effective under these circumstances. Although I was the only beneficiary of this grant, the work involved ongoing collaboration with other researchers, beneficiaries of STSMs and participants in various working groups within the Action, with a particular focus on WG3. There is still work to be done to achieve the overall goals of the working group. This will only be possible through a solid collaboration of a large number of participants together with new forces that will provide additional insights especially on taxonomic, chorological, ecological and conservation issues.