

# Subject | Minutes of the Second Management Committee Meeting of COST Action CA16107

EuroXanth: Integrating science on *Xanthomonadaceae* for integrated plant disease management in Europe, Lednice, September 10, 2019

## 1. Welcome to participants

On 10 September 2019 at 5:00 p.m., all participants were welcomed by Ralf Koebnik, Chair of the COST Action CA16107.

## 2. Verification of the presence of two-thirds of the Participating COST Countries (Quorum)

The quorum (2/3 of COST Countries participating in the Action) was reached: 22 country representatives out of 31 attended the meeting. The list of participating delegates with their contact information is presented in **Annex 1**.

## 3. Adoption of agenda

The agenda (**Annex 2**) of the 4<sup>th</sup> Management Committee (MC) Meeting was unanimously adopted.

## 4. Replacement of the current WG1 Vice Leader and presentation of new candidates

Member of the Core Group had discussed beforehand to replace the WG1 Vice Leader Nicholas Skandalis, who has moved to the USA and changed his research focus since then. He had been contacted by the Chair via email on July 26, 2019, to ask for his consent, which he gave by email on July 27, 2019. The Core Group had then discussed possible candidates, among which two emerged as very strong candidates, Pavel Beran (ECI, Czech Republic) and Massimiliano Morelli (ECI, Italy). Both candidates

presented themselves during the MC Meeting. It was decided to elect the new WG1 Vice Leader via e-vote after the MC Meeting.

## **5. Approval of minutes and matters arising of/since last meeting (if applicable)**

Minutes of all events have been approved and the election of the new WG1 Vice Leader was approved to be done via e-vote in October 2019.

## **6. Update from the Action Chair (Ralf Koebnik)**

Ralf Koebnik gave a presentation on the activities and achievements of the COST Action.

### **6.1 Status of Action**

All participants were reminded that the COST Action started on March 16, 2017, and will end by March 15, 2021. Three new participating countries were welcomed, Montenegro and Slovakia, and the NNC Tunisia. The Chair informed about the new status of Albania and Kosovo, who became COST countries since the last MC Meeting.

### **6.2 Feedback from Mid-term Report**

The Chair summarised the feedback that was obtained in response to the mid-term report. Details are given in the confidential **Annex 3** (PDF file with the Slides shown at the MC Meeting). In particular, the evaluation and status of the objectives, deliverables, publications, projects, proposals, other outputs, impact dissemination and exploitation were presented. Despite several attempts to improve the situation, positioning ECIs in the COST Action was identified as a critical point, which has been further addressed since the mid-term report (e.g. specific involvement of ECIs during the Annual Conference, appointment of the new WG1 Vice Leader).

### **6.3 Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM)**

Together with the STSM Coordinator, Monika Kałużna, the participants were informed about the fifth and sixth STSM call. Six grants were given in the frame of the fifth call (50% ITC), while the sixth STSM is still open until end of September. The funding for this call will come from the savings that will be made during the Annual Conference.

In total, 65% of all STSM applications have been supported. Many grants were linked to WG1, whereas WG3 barely got any applications. Unfortunately, only 46% of the STSMs have made their reports public. The Chair has therefore contacted all Grantees to check whether the reports still need to be considered confidential.

### **6.4 ITC Conference Grants**

Together with the ITC Conference Manager, Katarina Gašić, the participants were informed about the response to the ITC Conference Grant calls 4 to 6, which received seven applications altogether. Three of them suffered from an insufficient link to the specific goals and objectives of the EuroXanth COST Action and one candidate did not accept the offered grant because she had obtained alternative funding. The other three applicants were offered specific grants (see website).

## **7. Update from the Grant Holder**

First, an overview about the budget situation was given by the Chair. There was some underspending for the WG4 Meeting (2682 €) and the second Training School (964 €) and significant overspending for STSMs (4600 €). Consequently, the budget is in red

number but this is not considered problematic due to expected underspending for the Annual Conference.

The Chair informed that the second Grant Holder Manager of the COST Action, Isabelle Sciacco, had finished working for the COST Action by August 31, 2019, and that replacement is only available by October 1, 2019. Since the new person, Cécile Gerdy, has already worked for the Travel Department of IRD before, reimbursement procedures should be as smooth as before. The email address remains unchanged: [CA16107@ird.fr](mailto:CA16107@ird.fr).

## **8. Update from the COST Association Science Officer Estelle Emeriau**

Estelle Emeriau gave an update about COST Actions in general (new COST members, new president, enlarged Policy and Communication units, new website, new Vademecum [changes for STSMs], COST networking tools, roles and rights of NNCs, IPCs and specific organisations, the Brexit challenge). She then reported on the EuroXanth COST Action, its increase in budget and growth with respect to bilateral interactions and interdisciplinarity. Our Science Officer also presented a German study showing how COST provides great benefits (<https://www.cost.eu/news/findings-benefit-impact-cost-germany/>).

## **9. Implementation of COST policies**

The Chair reminded of the key elements of COST policy, i.e. gender balance, geographic balance and commitment to early-career investigators (ECIs). While the EuroXanth COST Action is pretty good with respect to the first two criteria, more efforts should be put to the stronger involvement of ECIs. This concern, however, has already been addressed since the Core Group Meeting in Catania in February 2019.

## **10. Follow-up of MoU objectives**

The responsible Core Group members presented their achievements with respect to the COST Actions' goals and objectives.

### **10.1 Transversal: Deliverables 1 to 4**

The Science Communication Manager, Joana Vicente, gave an update about our dissemination activities, such as presence in the internet and social media (website, newsletter, Twitter, Scoop.it!). She highlighted the press release linked to COST-supported work on *Xanthomonas oryzae* pv. *leersiae* (<https://www.alphagalileo.org/en-gb/Item-Display/ItemId/180295>) and encouraged all participants to consider press releases whenever they report important findings. She then reminded everybody of the success of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual EuroXanth Conference, which was coorganised with the 6<sup>th</sup> *Xanthomonas* Genomics Conference (Deliverable 4).

### **10.2 WG1: Deliverables 5 to 8**

The WG1 Leader, Joana Costa, presented the composition of WG1 (35 members from 23 countries) and the WG1-specific deliverables, which had been carefully discussed at the WG1 Meeting in Zagreb (September 2018). Deliverable 5 has been particularly addressed when Joana participated at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the EPPO Panel on Diagnostics in Bacteriology in Gent in November 2018 ([https://www.eppo.int/MEETINGS/2018\\_meetings/p\\_bact](https://www.eppo.int/MEETINGS/2018_meetings/p_bact)). Members of the COST Action are since then involved in revising EPPO Standards on Diagnosis of *Xanthomonas* or *Xylella fastidiosa*. Deliverable 6 has been assembled in an Excel-

based database and is planned to be widely popularised in an upcoming publication during or after (via a Dissemination grant) budget period 4. Deliverable 7 has been implemented and will be further updated over the full life cycle of the COST Action (<https://pubmlst.org/xfastidiosa/>; <http://www.biopred.net/MLVA/>). Deliverable 8 was achieved with the organisation of two Training Schools, with 33 Trainees (five participated twice) from 16 countries, half of them ITCs. Moreover, almost half of the STSM Grants (15 out of 32) and two ITC Conference Grants were given to young researchers active in WG1, where they received training on various aspects of diagnostics and epidemiology.

### **10.3 WG2 & WG3: Deliverables 9 to 11**

The WG2 and WG3 Leaders, Joël Pothier and Jens Boch, presented the status and next steps of the DokuWiki project on virulence factors and resistance genes (Deliverables 10 and 11). It was stressed that Deliverable 9 (protocols for resistance and pathogenicity screening) is due by month 30 of the COST Action (September 2019). This topic will therefore receive highest priority during the WG2/WG3 Meeting, which will take place immediately after the Annual Conference in Lednice.

### **10.4 WG4: Deliverable 12**

The WG4 Vice Leader, Tamás Kovács, gave a progress report on Deliverable 12, which was addressed by seven oral presentations and discussions during the WG4 Meeting in Viterbo on July 8, 2019. Specifically, an underrepresentation of STSMs linked to WG4 and a need for more intense collaboration was brought up.

## **11. Scientific planning**

The Chair addressed various points with respect to the upcoming 18 months until the end of the EuroXanth COST Action.

### **11.1 Scientific strategy**

All participants were asked whether there is a need in changing the scientific strategy, which was not the case.

### **11.2 Action budget planning**

The Chair came then back to the budget planning, suggesting to use an expected underspending of the Annual Conference (between 5 and 10 k€) to primarily support more STSMs within the 6<sup>th</sup> STSM call. There were no concerns against this proposal.

### **11.3 Long-term planning**

The organisers/coorganisers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Training School “Tracking bacteria in planta” (Castanet-Tolosan, March 2020) and the 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Plant-Pathogenic Bacteria (ICPPB 2020; Assisi, June 2020), Alice Boulanger and Vittoria Catara, informed about these two upcoming events. The Training School will be advertised via website, newsletter and social media by end of September/Beginning of October, and applications will be evaluated by the scientific committee, involving the Chair, Vice Chair, WG2 Leader and Vice Leader, two local organisers and two ECIs. It is planned to organise a COST Session at the ICPPB 2020 targeting vascular pathogens, including *Xanthomonas campestris* and *Xylella fastidiosa*, for which candidate speakers have been identified. It was stressed by the COST Science Officer, Estelle Emeriau, that one cannot do any commitments to this activity by now because it falls into the next budget period for which a new Work and Budget Plan needs to be submitted and accepted.

For budget period 4, it was suggested to organise an Annual Conference, to provide STSMs and ITC Conference Grants for the ICPPB 2020, and to increase the dissemination activities (publications). Ideas for Core Group or WG Meetings or Training Schools are welcome.

#### 11.4 Dissemination planning

The participants were informed about the possibility, criteria and procedure of a Final Action Dissemination (FAD) Grant. Ideas are to publish a book, tentatively called “*Xanthomonas 2.0*” in reminiscence of the “*Xanthomonas*” book, edited by J. G. Swings and E. L. Civerolo (Spinger, 1993), or to edit a Special Issue on *Xanthomonadaceae* in one of the new Open Access journals (e.g. Frontiers, MDPI).

Topics for Special Issue	Candidate authors
Detection methods and new tools for strain/lineage identification based on genome sequences	Vittoria Catara (IT), Tanja Dreo (SI), Joël F. Pothier (CH), Fernando Tavares (PT)
Taxonomy of <i>Xanthomonadaceae</i>	Bart Cottyn (BE), Marie-Agnès Jacques (FR)
Genetic diversity and population structure	Joana Costa, Olivier Pruvost (FR)
Virulence factors: Effectors and beyond	Eran Bosis, Daniela Büttner (DE), Ralf Koebnik (FR)
Breeding for resistance against infection by <i>Xanthomonadaceae</i> : from QTLs to genome editing	Jens Boch (DE), Roland Kölliker (CH), Pilar Soengas (ES), Joana Vicente (UK)
(Bio)control of <i>Xanthomonadaceae</i>	Katarina Gašić (RS), Tamás Kovács (HU), Aleksa Obradovic (RS), Emilio Stefani (IT)
PLUS research papers!	

The four WG Leaders were proposed to act as guest editors, maybe accompanied by a non-COST expert (e.g. Helvecio Della Coletta-Filho, a renowned expert on *X. fastidiosa*). It was pointed out to specifically consider ECIs as authors and maybe also as guest editors. Moreover, in order to be eligible for COST support, authors need to originate from at least three different participating COST countries.

In addition, it was discussed to publish Pathogen Profiles in the BSPP journal MOLECULAR PLANT PATHOLOGY, an idea that was well perceived by the editor Ralph Dean. Ideas for authorships were presented and discussed afterwards:

EPPO A1/A2 list pathogen	Candidate authors
<i>Xanthomonas axonopodis</i> pv. <i>allii</i>	Isabelle Robène (FR)
<i>Xanthomonas oryzae</i> pvs. <i>oryzae</i> , <i>oryzicola</i>	Boris Szurek (FR)
<i>Xanthomonas arboricola</i> pvs. <i>corylina</i> , <i>juglandis</i>	Monika Kałużna (PL), Marion Le Saux (FR), Emilio Stefani (IT)
<i>Xanthomonas axonopodis</i> pv. <i>phaseoli</i>	Nicolas Chen (FR), Marie-Agnès Jacques (FR)
<i>Xanthomonas axonopodis</i> pv. <i>poinsettiicola</i> & <i>Xanthomonas phaseoli</i> pv. <i>dieffenbachiae</i>	Bart Cottyn (BE)
<i>Xanthomonas fragariae</i>	Joël Pothier (BE), Joanna Puławska (PL), Jan van der Wolf (NL)
<i>Xanthomonas translucens</i> pv. <i>translucens</i>	Claude Bragard (BE), Ralf Koebnik (FR), Roland Kölliker (CH)

## **12. AOB (Brexit)**

The Chair expressed his concern by a message at the e-COST website that says that one “needs to expire/unassign the current Science Communication Manager to assign a new one”, which he interpreted as a consequence of the Brexit process because of the UK affiliation of our Science Communication Manager. Fortunately, this point was clarified by the COST Science Officer and it appeared to be a mistakable standard message at the e-COST website for all Science Communication Managers and not linked to the Brexit.

## **13. Location and date of next meeting**

It was announced that the next Annual Conference is considered to be organised in Serbia, likely in September 2020, which would be the occasion to co-organise the next MC Meeting at that place and time.

## **14. Summary of MC decisions (if any)**

It was reminded that the new WG1 Vice Leader will be elected via e-vote by the participants of the forth MC Meeting in October 2019.

## **15. Closing**

In closing the meeting on 10 September 2019 at 6:30 p.m., Action Chair Ralf Koebnik expressed his gratitude to all MC Members and Substitutes for their active participation in the meeting, for their feedback and for their more than timely e-votes in the past.

## Annex 1: Attendance list

Chair of the COST Action	
Dr Ralf KOEBNIK <a href="mailto:koebnik@gmx.de">koebnik@gmx.de</a>	
(1) Albania	
Prof Jordan MERKURI <a href="mailto:jordanmerkuri@gmail.com">jordanmerkuri@gmail.com</a>	
(2) Belgium	
Prof Claude BRAGARD <a href="mailto:claude.bragard@uclouvain.be">claude.bragard@uclouvain.be</a>	
(3) Bosnia and Herzegovina	
ABSENT	
(4) Bulgaria	
Dr Mariya STOYANOVA <a href="mailto:mimka@gbg.bg">mimka@gbg.bg</a>	
(5) Croatia	
ABSENT	
(6) Czech Republic	
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(7) Denmark	
ABSENT	
(8) Estonia	
ABSENT	
(9) France	
Dr Alice BOULANGER <a href="mailto:alice.boulangier@inra.fr">alice.boulangier@inra.fr</a>	
(10) Germany	
Dr Jens BOCH <a href="mailto:jens.boch@genetik.uni-hannover.de">jens.boch@genetik.uni-hannover.de</a>	
(11) Greece	
ABSENT	
(12) Hungary	
Dr Tamas KOVACS <a href="mailto:kovacst@enviroinvest.hu">kovacst@enviroinvest.hu</a>	
(13) Ireland	
Dr Alexandre DE MENEZES <a href="mailto:alexandre.demenezes@nuigalway.ie">alexandre.demenezes@nuigalway.ie</a>	
(14) Israel	
Prof Guido SESSA <a href="mailto:guidos@post.tau.ac.il">guidos@post.tau.ac.il</a>	Prof Saul BURDMAN <a href="mailto:saul.burdman@mail.huji.ac.il">saul.burdman@mail.huji.ac.il</a>
(15) Italy	
Prof Vittoria CATARA <a href="mailto:vcatara@unict.it">vcatara@unict.it</a>	



(16) Latvia	
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(17) Lithuania	
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(18) Montenegro	
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(19) Netherlands	
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(20) North Macedonia	
ABSENT	
(21) Norway	
ABSENT	
(22) Poland	
Dr Monika KAŁUŻNA <a href="mailto:monika.kaluzna@inhort.pl">monika.kaluzna@inhort.pl</a>	
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Prof Joana COSTA <a href="mailto:jcosta@uc.pt">jcosta@uc.pt</a>	Prof Fernando TAVARES <a href="mailto:ftavares@cibio.up.pt">ftavares@cibio.up.pt</a>
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(25) Slovakia	
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(27) Spain	
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**COST Association Brussels, Belgium**

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## Annex 2 – Agenda

<b>COST Action CA16107</b>
<b>Action Title: EuroXanth: Integrating science on <i>Xanthomonadaceae</i> for integrated plant disease management in Europe</b>
<b>Management Committee Meeting No. 4</b>
<b>Faculty of Horticulture, Mendel University, Lednice, Czech Republic</b>
<b>10 September 2019 from 17:00 to 18:30</b>

1. Welcome to participants
2. Verification of the presence of two-thirds of the Participating COST Countries (Quorum)
3. Adoption of agenda
4. Replacement of the current WG1 Vice Leader and presentation of new candidates (WG1 Leader Joana Costa)
5. Approval of minutes and matters arising of/since last meeting (if applicable)
6. Update from the Action Chair (Ralf Koebnik)
a) Status of Action: start and end dates of Action, participating COST countries, participating NNC/IPC institutions and Specific Organisations
b) Feedback from Mid-term Report
c) Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM): review of completed reports and new applications (STSM Coordinator Monika Kałużna)
d) ITC Conference Grants: review of completed reports and new applications (ITC Conference Manager Katarina Gašić)
7. Update from the Grant Holder, given by the Action Chair: Action budget status
8. Update from the COST Association Science Officer Estelle Emeriau
9. Implementation of COST policies on promotion of gender balance and Early Career Investigators
10. Follow-up of MoU objectives: progress report of working groups
a) Transversal: Deliverables 1 to 4 (Science Communication Manager Joana Vicente)
b) WG1: Deliverables 5 to 8 (WG Leader Joana Costa)
c) WG2 & WG3: Deliverables 9 to 11 (WG2/WG3) (WG Leaders Joël Pothier & Jens Boch)
d) WG4: Deliverable 12 (WG Vice Leader Tamás Kovács)
11. Scientific planning
a) Scientific strategy (MoU objectives, GP Goals, WG tasks and deliverables)
b) Action Budget Planning
c) Long-term planning (including anticipated locations and dates of future activities) (Training School Toulouse 2020, Alice Boulanger; ICPPB 2020, Vittoria Catara)
d) Dissemination planning (Publications and outreach activities)
12. AOB (Brexit)
13. Location and date of next meeting
14. Summary of MC decisions (if any)
15. Closing