

Draft Minutes

3rd Management Committee Meeting

COST Action 872

Exploiting genomics to understand plant–nematode interactions

Postojna, Slovenia

27th May 2008

Present: John Jones (UK – Chair), Bouktje Stol (COST Office), Pierre Abad & Eric Grenier (FR), Keith Davies (UK), Halil Elekcioglu (TR), Barabara Geric Stare & Sasa Sirca (SI), Godelieve Gheysen (BE), Wladyslaw Golinowski & Miroslaw Sobczak (PL), Florian Grundler (AT), Ricardo Holgado & Christer Magnusson (NO), Hinanit Koltai & Yitzhak Spiegel (IL), Sanja Manduric (SE), Manual Mota (PT), Lee Robertson (ES), Geert Smant (NL), Thomae Kakouli-Duarte (IE).

1. Welcome

Dr John Jones welcomed delegates to the meeting and introduced new MC members to those present.

2. Adoption of agenda

This was adopted unanimously.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last MC meeting (La Colle sur Loupe, May 2007) were accepted unanimously as a true record of the meeting. Matters arising from these minutes were to be discussed under agenda items for the current meeting.

4. Report from scientific officer

Bouktje Stol reported further delays in terms of establishing the annual grant system at COST Office. It had previously been intended that all COST Actions should transfer to this system of payment from 2008 onwards. However, current advice is to remain on the “pay as you go” system until further notice. There would therefore be no need to reserve 15% of the grant total for the fund holding institution (as permitted under the annual grant system) when planning the budget for next year.

Bouktje Stol also informed the MC that this would be her last meeting as Science Officer for COST 872 and that a new Science Officer will be allocated to the project from June 2009.

A change in the way in which funds are allocated to individual Actions was also reported. Currently each Action receives a set amount of approximately 50,000 Euro plus an additional amount for each signatory country. However, this system meant that larger Actions are short of funds. Under the new system the fixed budget will be lower and a greater sum per signatory country will be paid. It was suggested that the amount of money received by COST 872 is unlikely to change dramatically under the new system.

It was reported that there will be a change in the financial year for COST Actions in future. Currently the financial year runs from June-June but this will change to the calendar year from 2009. For 2008/2009 it is planned that Actions will receive part of their budget for the period June-December and a fresh allocation to cover the year from January-December 2009. However, for Actions that planned to spend the bulk of their funds in the second part of the old financial year it will be possible to carry unspent funds over to the new financial year. COST 872 generally holds its large meeting in May of each year and consequently falls into this category. It will therefore be necessary to contact COST Office to warn them of the need for COST 872 to carry funds over from 2008 to 2009.

ACTION: John Jones to contact the new Science Officer to discuss allocation of funds across the two financial years.

In discussion John Jones asked for clarification about how funds are allocated to non-COST countries associated with COST 872. Bouktje Stol informed the MC that approved Ukrainian participants receive their funding from the “near neighbours” scheme while funds are provided to Australian participants under a bilateral agreement. Bouktje Stol also informed the MC that similar arrangements will be made that will allow scientists from India, S. Africa and Brazil to participate in COST activities.

5. Budget planning 2008/2009

Main meeting

Lee Robertson proposed holding an inter WG workshop and MC meeting at Toledo (ES) in 2009. The meeting would be organized by Lee Robertson and Carmen Fenoll, with assistance from local colleagues. Lee Robertson will be the first point of contact for the meeting. Some details on the proposed venue and its accessibility were provided. After some discussion the MC agreed to the proposition.

DECISION: The MC unanimously agrees to hold an inter-WG workshop and MC meeting in Toledo (ES) in May or June 2009.

DECISION: The MC unanimously approves a workshop support grant of up to 3000 Euro to the local organizers towards costs associated with this meeting.

It was not possible to determine precise dates for the meeting but John Jones agreed to set up an online vote for the MC to choose the most suitable dates for the meeting.

ACTION: John Jones to liaise with Lee Robertson over dates and to set up online vote to decide meeting dates.

Other events

During the scientific sessions held at the meeting it emerged that the bulk of the future annotation of the *Meloidogyne incognita* genome sequence would be driven by the scientific community and that there was therefore an urgent need to provide training in use of the genome annotation and browsing software to the people most likely to be working in this area. The MC recognized that, given the importance of the *M. incognita* sequence to the community, this is one area where COST 872 could have a genuine impact. Pierre Abad therefore proposed to organize a training workshop in France in November 2008 to provide this training to interested parties. Due to practical reasons the number of people attending the workshop would need to be limited to approximately 10 people. After some discussion the

MC agreed to hold the workshop and also suggested that a second workshop may need to be organized if demand required it.

DECISION: The MC unanimously agrees to hold a WG2 workshop on annotation of the *M. incognita* genome in Sophia-Antipolis (FR) in November 2008.

DECISION: The MC unanimously approves a workshop support grant of up to 3000 Euro to the local organizers towards costs associated with this meeting.

The MC was also keen that funding for STSMs should continue.

6. STSMs

John Jones reported that 9 STSMs have been funded through COST 872. Eight of these are completed with reports available on the COST 872 website and the 9th is currently in progress. The MC unanimously approved the decisions of the STSM committee taken throughout the previous year.

John Jones asked whether any other MC members wished to join the STSM committee. In the absence of any volunteers the MC agreed that the composition of the STSM committee should remain the same.

7. Publications

The MC formally approved the 2007 Annual Report. John Jones sought feedback on the report from Bouktje Stol who said that COST Office very much appreciated the emphasis on the added value provided by COST funding to the field. It was suggested that in the next report additional information on the value of cooperation with Australia would be appreciated.

ACTION: John Jones to ensure that report for 2008 contains a summary of activities in this area.

The MC then discussed the production of a book in the area covered by the Action. Florian Grundler reported that he had spoken with a representative of Springer who were very enthusiastic about a book in this area. The Springer representative had suggested that the company would aim to keep the price of the book as competitive as possible. Carmen Fenoll (by email to the Chair) had contacted Elsevier who had sent a book proposal form to be completed. CABI had sent a similar form to John Jones in response to an approach. John Jones reported that he had made an enquiry to Brill who were extremely enthusiastic about publishing a book of this nature as part of their "Monographs and Perspectives in Nematology" series.

A brief discussion on the number of copies of a book to be produced and how best to proceed then followed. The MC agreed that a smaller group of interested people (J. Jones, G. Gheysen, F. Grundler and C. Fenoll) should put together an outline of the book which could be sent to various publishers for consideration. A decision on the structure and authors would be circulated to the MC for approval later this year.

ACTION: J. Jones, G. Gheysen, C. Fenoll and F. Grundler to construct chapter list and potential authors.

8. Evaluations

The evaluation of COST Actions will take place at a meeting of the FA Domain Committee to be held in Ljubljana on November 4th. J. Jones is not available to attend this meeting but the local MC representative (Sasa Sirca) agreed to attend the meeting and present a poster on behalf of COST 872.

9. Requests for new members:

Since COST 872 has been running for more than 12 months all new signatories to the Action need to be approved by the MC. John Jones reported that he had been contacted by a group of Croatian Nematologists that wish to join the Action. The MC agreed unanimously to their participation.

DECISION: The MC unanimously agrees to the participation of Croatia in the activities of COST 872.

10. Non-COST participants

The MC were reminded that participants from Ukraine and Australia are linked to COST 872. A third non-COST application has been received, approved by the MC and sent to COST Office for approval. Bouktje Stol reported that this application would be considered by the CSO at their next meeting.

11. Website

No issues with the website were reported. John Jones requested feedback on the site. Geert Smant asked whether information on the number of hits was available. John Jones agreed to check this.

12. Report from the WGs

Florian Grundler provided a brief summary of the WG3 workshop on microarrays held in Vienna.

Florian reported that there was a consensus from this workshop that there was a huge amount of data available from microarray studies that needs to be made more accessible in order to be of maximum use to the scientific community. Florian asked whether COST may be able to provide support to establish a database for the microarray information as a dissemination exercise and indicated that this would require funding for one person (a bioinformatics specialist) for one year. Bouktje Stol indicated that under the terms of its funding from ESF it is not permitted to spend money to pay for staff time.

In further discussions the idea that funding for this activity could be provided if it were part of the book production exercise was explored. Bouktje Stol remained unconvinced that this would be the case but suggested that a request be sent to COST Office for consideration.

ACTION: Florian Grundler and John Jones to write a case for funding activities relation to dissemination of array data and send to COST Office for consideration.

As an alternative the idea that a series of STSMs be set in place to build the database was discussed. However, it was thought that it would be difficult for several different people with different skill sets attempt to set up the database.

13. Long term planning

John Jones suggested that the 2010 COST meeting could be held in parallel with the ESN-meeting in Vienna which will run from 21-25 September 2010. Bouktje Stol indicated that this would be feasible but that COST sessions need to run as separate sessions. While approving of the idea in principle the MC needs to consider this further at its next meeting.

14. Time and place of next meeting

The next MC meeting will be held in Toledo (ES) during the inter-WG workshop planned for May/June 2009. MC members will be notified of the date once it is known.

15. AOCB

Since no other business was raised the meeting was closed.