

**Draft Minutes
Management Committee Meeting**

**COST Action 872
Exploiting genomics to understand plant–nematode interactions
Lisbon (Portugal) 25/05/2010**

0. Welcome to participants (5 pm)

Present: J. Jones (Chair – UK), G. Gheysen (vice-chair – BE), K. Davies (UK), P. Abad (FR), G. Smant (NL), T. Allersma (NL), D. Cai (DE), M. Sobczak (PL), W. Golinowski (PL), S. Kiewnick (CH), B. Geric Stare (SI), S. Sirca (SI), M. Mota (PT), L. Robertson (ES), C. Escobar (ES), C. De Giorgi (IT), G. Colucci (IT), J. Hoffman (AT - substitute), H. Koltai, (IL), Y. Spiegel (IL), H. Elekcioglu (TK), T. Kakouli-Duarte (IE), R. Holgado, (NO), E. Karanastasi (GR), N. Mestrovic (HR), M. Plohl (HR), C. Azevedo (COST Office),

Apologies: Florian Grundler (Austria).

The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting.

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted unanimously.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were unanimously accepted as a true record of the previous meeting.

3. Matters arising

P. Abad (Fr) had been asked to make enquiries regarding the participation of Croatia in COST 872. This has been done, Croatia has signed the MoU and two representatives from Croatia were present at the meeting. The Chair welcomed them to COST 872.

4. Report from the COST Office (Cassia Azevedo)

COST Office has confirmed that the budget for the period June 2010 to December 2010 will be 40,000 Euro. It was confirmed that this money must be used (including claim and reimbursement) before the end of the Action, even if the Action is extended (see point 6.3.2.).

5. Progress report of working groups:

MC members were encouraged to examine the proceedings of the current meeting in order to view the progress being made in the various areas covered by COST 872.

Specific activities funded by COST 872 in the last year have included a training school on RNAi in Belfast. Geert Smant provided a brief overview of the meeting and the

selection process for the students that attended. 12 applicants were selected to attend the training school which included lectures, computer based exercises and practical sessions in the laboratory. Aaron Maule and 9 of his staff provided intensive supervision of the participants. Rick Davies & Peter Urwin were invited speakers supported by COST. The course was positively evaluated by all participants. The Chair provided details of additional support provided by COST Office in order to help attendants with the consequences of the volcanic eruption which prevented all of them from travelling home after the meeting.

6. Action planning

6.1 Annual Progress Conference (preparation and/or feedback from DC)

2009: The Chair reported that COST872 was positively evaluated at the annual progress conference in Prague. After this meeting COST 872 was chosen as an example of a successful Action and its activities were highlighted on the COST website and in an article in the COST Newsletter.

No information was available on the progress monitoring process for 2010

6.2 Action Budget Planning

The available funds for June 2010 – Dec 2010 were confirmed to be 40,000 Euro.

6.3 Action Planning (including meetings)

6.3.1 Proposal for ESR event associated with ESN 2010

The Chair proposed that an event highlighting the progress in the areas covered by COST 872 should be held in conjunction with the biennial meeting of the European Society for Nematologists in Vienna in September 2010. This event would serve to disseminate progress to the wider Nematology community. The ESN organisers have offered three sessions at the meeting for this purpose. It was suggested that one high profile invited expert for each working group would be supported and that the remaining time slots would be allocated to talks by ESRs working in the areas covered by COST 872. Strong support for this proposal was voiced by the MC, particularly for the idea of focusing funds on ESR participation. No requirement for a meeting support grant is anticipated.

DECISION: The MC unanimously agrees to hold an interWG workshop in conjunction with the ESN meeting in Vienna in September 2010 in order to allow ESRs to disseminate their work to a wider audience.

Following this decision some discussion about implementation took place. It was agreed that an announcement would be made at the current meeting and that the Chair would place information on the Action website.

ACTION: J. Jones to place information on the Action website.

The possibility of holding a training event associated with the annotation of the potato cyst nematode genome was discussed. No firm plans can be made for this yet as it is not known when annotation will take place.

6.3.2 Final meeting.

A final meeting of the MC within 3 months of the end of the Action is mandatory. The Chair suggested that a short meeting in Brussels consumes a lot of COST money and that, when held as a stand alone event, does not represent an efficient use of people's time. It was suggested that it would be better to connect it to another event of interest to nematologists. Suggestions regarding the timing of this meeting included:

1. Association of Applied Biologists meeting in London (end of December).
2. International Crop Protection Meeting, Ghent, May 2011. However for this to be a possibility a no cost extension to COST 872 would be required as the final meeting must be held within 3 months of the end of the Action.

After some discussion it was decided that the Chair would seek further suggestions for venues for the meeting and would then request a final decision by the MC using the written procedure.

ACTION: All MC members to consider additional venues and to email any suggestions to the Chair before 4th June 2010.

ACTION: J. Jones to send an email outlining options for final MC meeting and to seek approval using the written procedure for the most popular choice.

7. STSM status, applications

10 STSMs have been approved by the STSM committee since the last MC meeting. The Chair sought and obtained approval of the MC for these decisions.

Decision: The MC unanimously approved the decisions taken by the STSM committee since the previous MC meeting.

In total 23 STSMs have been funded through COST 872. STSMs will be available until the end of the Action and the Chair asked all MC Members to remind workers in their countries of the availability of this funding.

Action: All MC members to remind researchers within their countries of the availability of STSM funding.

8. Publications, dissemination and outreach activities

G. Gheysen presented an update on progress with the Final Publication for COST 872. The book is progressing well with over half of the chapters already received and edited or currently being edited, 7 chapters are nearly ready (final check being done by the authors) and the remaining 4 chapters to be delivered during June 2010. It was confirmed that the budget for this book comes from a different source, and not from the 40,000 Euro available for the remaining Action time period.

A training session on science communication is being made available at the current meeting and is provided by Frank Burnet. 39 people have signed up to this course.

9. Request for new members

No requests have been received.

10. Promotion of gender balance and of Early Stage Researchers (ESR)

The MC of COST 872 has tried to ensure that ESRs always make up a good proportion of the main meeting and this year's event is no exception. The RNAi training school was targeted specifically at ESRs and the event planned for September 2010 is also targeted at ESRs.

Gender: 40% of delegates at the current meeting and almost half of the RNAi training school participants were female. 11 of 23 STSM awards have been made to female applicants.

11. Non-COST country participations

Representatives from all three Non-COST countries associated with COST872 are present at the current meeting. The Chair reported that the Ukrainian Delegate (L. Pylypenko) has obtained enormous benefit from COST activities, particularly in gaining training in techniques that she would never have had access to in her home institution. J. Hoffman reported that A. El Ashry from Egypt is also very positive about this COST Action.

12. Web news

The COST 872 website has been updated regularly during the past year. The Chair is happy to receive suggestions for changes or improvements.

13. AOB

13.1 Possibility of a further COST Action

Prior to the MC meeting the Chair had sought input from MC members about the possibility of putting together an application for a further COST Action. Sebastian Kiewnick (Switzerland) has expressed a keen interest in leading a new proposal as COST Actions are of huge importance in terms of Swiss national funding. The deadline for first (outline) proposal is 24 September 2010 and Sebastian has requested any potential participants to contact him. Some discussion on the potential subject areas for a new COST Action was held and the area of translational plant pathology (emphasising the use of new knowledge for control) was viewed favourably by the MC. Sebastian has agreed to contact a core group of key institutes (in addition to those expressing an interest) and to examine the possibility of organising a one day meeting in Switzerland to set up the proposal.

ACTION: Sebastian Kiewnick to contact potential participants and coordinate draft of outline proposal.

ACTION: MC members to encourage any groups interested in participating in a further COST Action to make Sebastian aware of this interest.

13.1 Position paper for EU funding

The Chair will put together a text summarising the problems caused by nematodes and the links fostered by COST 872 along with a list of potential work areas under FW7. An

event had previously been planned at COST Office that would have been helpful for the writing of this document but this has been delayed. It will be important to send this document to national contact points before September 2010 and the Chair agreed to ensure that the document is complete before then.

14. Close

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 18.00.