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| **Minutes** |
| **4rd Management Committee Meeting**  |
| **COST Action no. FA1208** |
| **Action Title: Pathogen-informed strategies for sustainable broad-spectrum crop resistance** |
| **Banyuls sur Mer, France, 17th February 2016**  |

**Meeting Agenda**

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| 1. Welcome to participants2. Verification of the presence of two-thirds of the Participating COST Countries 3. Adoption of agenda4. Approval of minutes and matters arising of last meeting5. Update from the Action Chair  a. Status of Action, including participating countries  b. Applications to the Actions from COST and Non-COST countries  c. STSM – procedures, completed reports and new calls6. Update from the Grant Holder: Action budget status7. Update from the COST Association, if a representative is present8. Monitoring of the Action9. Implementation of COST policies on: a) Promotion of gender balance and Early Career Investigators (ECI) b) Inclusiveness10. Follow-up of MoU objectives11. Scientific planning  a) Action Budget Planning b) Long-term planning (including anticipated locations and dates of future activities)12. AOB13. Location and date of next meeting14. Summary of MC decisions15. Closing |

**1. Welcome to participants**

The participants of the 4th MC meeting were welcomed by the Action Chair.

**2. Verification of the presence of two-thirds of the Participating COST Countries**

25 MC Members or MC Substitutes from 18 countries were present and, therefore, more than 2/3 of the countries were represented. The list of the MC members or MC Substitutes attending the meeting is enclosed at the end of the document.

**3. Adoption of agenda**

The draft agenda was adopted.

**4. Approval of minutes and matters arising from the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were adopted without modifications.

**5. Update from the Action Chair**

**a Status of Action, including participating countries**

26 COST countries participate in the SUSTAIN Action. In this grant period, Bulgaria has joined the Action. In addition, Ukraine, a COST Near Neighbor Country, is in the Action.

b**. Applications to the Actions from COST and Non-COST countries**

Prof Peter Solomon from the Australian National University in Canberra is currently joining the Action as an MC Observer from an International Partner Country.

**c. STSM – procedures, completed reports and new calls**

In the meeting, the strong interest of Action participants in STSMs was emphasized and the MC was unanimously satisfied of the high number and quality of STSMs realized in the Action. Until now 31 STSMs have been funded, 14 of them in this grant period. The MC considers STSMs a key instrument to reach the Action objectives. There was consensus among MC members that STSMs should remain a priority of the Sustain Action.

The procedure for the selection of STSMs that had previously been approved by the MC but had not been explicitly described in previous MC meeting minutes was formally approved by vote of the MC. It was thus confirmed that 2 calls per grant period are organized and that applicants must complete a form available on the COST website, before sending their CV, covering letter, work plan, letter of support from their institution and letter of support from their host institution to the STSM committee, via the dedicated email address (stsm.sustain@supagro.inra.fr) and before the deadline of the call. An STSM committee consisting of the STSM coordinator, the Action Chair and Vice Chair and the 8 WG leaders assess the applications. Each STSM committee member evaluates all applications and gives a note between 1 and 5 according to the following criteria: scientific quality, feasibility, preference for ESRs and STSMs involving inclusiveness countries. Based on the mean notes, the STSM coordinator selects the STSMs in accordance with the budget plan and in agreement with the Chair and the Vice Chair.

**6. Update from the Grant Holder: Action budget status**

The working and budget plan for 2015/16 was recapitulated:

(1) MEETINGS € 103,000

(2) SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS € 27,000

(3) TRAINING SCHOOLS € 0

(4) PUBLICATIONS, DISSEMINATION, OUTREACH € 1,000

(5) OTHERS € 1,000

B. TOTAL SCIENCE EXPENDITURE (sum of (1) to (5)) € 132,00

C. Financial & Scientific Administration and Coordination

(max 15% of B.) € 20,000

D. TOTAL EXPENDITURE (B+C) € 152,000

The budget for the Annual Conference in Banyuls is expected to be close to the estimations. The recent shortening of the grant period by one month was explained to the MC and the associated problems with some STSMs originally planned for May 2016 were discussed.

**7. Update from the COST Office**

The MC members were informed that Ioanna Stavridou, the Action’s Scientific Officer could not attend the meeting. The role of the Action’s Scientific Officer was outlined

**8. Monitoring of the Action**

The 30 month Scientific Report has been prepared for 31/10/2015 and submitted to the COST office. The preparation of the report and the report itself were briefly discussed. The Chair emphasized that participants have to acknowledge the Sustain Action properly in their publications whenever research profits from networking activities developed in the Action.

The preparation of the final scientific report in year 4 was discussed. This report will have to show how well the Action has reached its defined objectives and goals and highlight the impacts of the Action after its completion, including the initiation of any follow-up activities. Preparation of the report will be initiated in Fall 2016 and PIs among the Action participants will have to provide input from October 2016 on.

**9. Implementation of COST policies on:**

**a) Promotion of gender balance and Early Career Investigators (ECI)**

Among the 350 participants of the SUSTAIN Action 35 % are Women (30% in the MC, 45% in the core group) and 30% are ECIs (PhD 8 years or less). The promotion of gender balance and ECI participation are important objectives of the Action and criteria for the attribution of STSM grants and meeting participations.

**b) Inclusiveness**

Inclusiveness is an important objective of the Sustain Action and achievements on this topic were presented. In this grant period, 5 out of 16 STSMs are attributed to scientists from inclusiveness countries (ICs) and a large proportion of participants of the Action’s activities (workshops and annual conference) were from ICs. The organization of the next and last Annual Conference in Slovenia will contribute to the promotion of inclusiveness.

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

The activities (workshops and STSMs) realized since the last MC meeting in Zakopane, Poland (October 2014) were presented and it was unanimously concluded that until now the Action reached its goals.

The workshop on “Experimental approaches for the investigation of effector function” held 10th to 12th February 2015 in Tel Aviv, Israel brought together 37 participants and addressed important WG2 and WG1 objectives. A broad range of cutting edge techniques was presented by world-leading experts and many ESRs had the possibility to present and exchange on their results.

The workshop “Pathogen-informed Crop Improvement” that took place from 8th to 10th April in Wageningen was particularly relevant for WG4 objectives. It consisted of presentations and discussions based on propositions and statements submitted by the presenters and brought together 60 researchers with a large spectrum of different backgrounds from universities, academic institutes and industry. The goals of this two and a half-day workshop were:

* to share latest knowledge regarding plant-pathogen interactions
* to become aware of the desires and challenges in plant breeding companies
* to discuss desires of the public/customers
* to identify opportunities to leverage latest knowledge into applications for breeding companies, finally useful and accepted by the general public and with a broad and durable solution for future generations.

The workshop highlighted that there is strong need for innovative approaches and new solutions to achieve durable disease resistance in crops. Breeding more durably resistant varieties and introducing more diversity at all levels, from the plant to the agrosystem, are required and the huge progress in the understanding of plant pathogen interactions opens many exciting new ways to achieve this goal that is crucial for a sustainable high yielding and environment friendly agriculture. Intensifying exchange between academic research and companies appears as a prime solution to accelerate the implementation of innovative knowledge-based strategies in this important field. A report on the meeting has been submitted for publication to the journal Euphytica and will allow broad dissemination of the major conclusions.

The workshop “Evolutionary genomics of plant pathogens” – Kiel University, Germany, 26-28 August 2015 provided an excellent overview on this highly dynamic and fast moving research field that is mostly covered by WG3. All participants appreciated the originality and outstanding scientific quality of the conference. It gave many ESRs the possibility to present their results to a broad audience. Needs for training in the analysis of large scale genomic data sets were identified and opportunities for the organization of a training school on this topic were discussed.

The COST–Sustain Action session on Effectors and Plant Responses in the “9th international Conference on Pseudomonas syringae and related pathogens”, Malaga, Spain, 2-5 June 2015, contributed to efficient dissemination of results from Action activities. 4 participants of the Action presented progress and objectives of the Action to a broad audience of plant pathologists, epidemiologists and breeders.

20 STSMs have been realized since the last Annual Conference. All MC members agreed that STSMs are a major success of the Sustain Action and a crucial instrument to reach its objectives.

**11. Scientific planning**

a) Action Budget Planning

At the time of the MC meeting, the budget for the next grant period had not been communicated yet. In the mean-time, a budget of 130 k€ has been announced for the next and last grant period, 2016/17. The Work and Budget Plan for the next Grant Period is under preparation. In the MC-Meeting, a decision to keep the same budget for STSM grants as in the last grant period (~28 k€) was taken unanimously.

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

The proposition to organize the next Annual Conference beginning 2017 in Bled/ Slovenia was discussed and approved unanimously by vote. It was agreed to make an inquiry (Doodle) to find the most appropriate date. 1-3 March 2017 has been identified in the mean-time as the date that allows the largest number of MC members to attend the Conference and was therefore chosen. The local organizers will be Saša Širca and Barbara Gerič Stare from the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia in Ljubljana.

Discussions in previous MC meetings had highlighted a consensus that the organization of SUSTAIN-COST Action sessions in Conferences is a versatile instrument for efficient dissemination of Action results and objectives. Therefore, the organization of SUSTAIN-COST Action sessions in three different Conferences was decided unanimously:

* In the 13th European Conference on Fungal Genetics (ECFG, 3-6 April 2016, Paris/France), a plenary session on biotic interactions will be co-organized by the Action and 2 speakers will be funded by the Sustain grant to present activities and objectives of Sustain, i.e. in relation to WGs 1 and 2. Organization of this event had also already been approved by Dr. Ioanna Stavridou, the Scientific Officer of the Action.
* A SUSTAIN-COST Action session on biotic stress tolerance will be organized in the XXth EUCARPIA General Congress "Plant breeding: the art of bringing science to life" (29 August - 1 September 2016, Zurich). 5 participants will be funded to expose in oral presentations activities and objectives of the Sustain Action. This Activity is particularly relevant for WG4 since this conference organized by the Euroean Association for Research on Plant Breeding allows outstanding communication with the European Plant Breeding community. This activity had already previously been approved by an MC vote.
* A session on “Roles of Effectors in Virulence and Host Range” will be organized in the 6th International Bacterial Wilt Symposium (3rd-7th July 2016, Toulouse, France”) Up to 5 participants will be funded to expose in oral presentations activities and objectives of the Sustain Action to an international and broad audience of epidemiologists, plant pathologists and breeders.

Needs for training in the analysis of large scale genomic data sets for the investigation of pathogen and plant genomes were identified in the workshop “Evolutionary genomics of plant pathogens” – Kiel University, Germany, 26-28 August 2015. Opportunities and priorities for the organization of a training school on this topic were discussed and there was broad consensus to organize a training school on “Pathogenomics” beginning of 2017 at the Sainsbury Laboratory in Norwich (UK). Eva Stuckenbrock (WG3 leader) and Sophien Kamoun (Local Organizer) accepted to set-up a scientific committee and to work on a more concrete outline for the training school.

**12. AOB**

No other points were raised

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

The next MC meeting will be combined with the next annual conference of the Action to be held 1-3 March 2017 in Bled:Slovenia. The local organizers will be Saša Širca and Barbara Gerič Stare from the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia in Ljubljana.

**14. Summary of MC decisions**

- Approval of the procedure for the selection of STSMs

- Annual Conference in Bled/Slovenia 1-3 March 2017

- Training School on Pathogenomics in Norwich (UK) organized by Eva Stukenbrock and Sophien Kamoun.

- Plenary session on biotic interactions in the 13th European Conference on Fungal Genetics (ECFG, 3-6 April 2016, Paris/France).

- Session on biotic stress tolerance will be organized in the XXth EUCARPIA General Congress "Plant breeding: the art of bringing science to life" (29 August - 1 September 2016, Zurich)

- Session on “Roles of Effectors in Virulence and Host Range” will be organized in the 6th International Bacterial Wilt Symposium (3rd-7th July 2016, Toulouse, France”)

**15. Closing**

**MC members attending the meeting**

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| **Name** | **Category/Position** | **Country** |
| Armin Djamei | MC Member | Austria |
| Antonin Dreiseitl | MC Member | Czech Republic |
| Alan H. Schulman | MC Member | Finland |
| Thomas Kroj | MC Chair | France |
| Boris Szurek | MC Member | France |
| Didier Tharreau | MC Member | France |
| Jens Boch | MC Member | Germany |
| Eva Stukenbrock | MC Substitute | Germany |
| Dov Prusky | MC Member | Israel |
| Guido Sessa | MC Member | Israel |
| Maria Raffaella Ercolano | MC Member | Italy |
| Aska Goverse | MC Vice-Chair | Netherlands |
| Vivianne Vleeshouwers | MC Substitute | Netherlands |
| Morten Lillemo | MC Member | Norway |
| Marcin Filipecki | MC Member | Poland |
| Magdalena Krzymowska | MC Member | Poland |
| Nuno Almeida | MC Substitute | Portugal |
| Jana Libantova | MC Member | Slovakia |
| Anna Coll Rius | MC Member | Slovenia |
| Marc Valls | MC Member | Spain |
| Daniel Croll | MC Substitute | Switzerland |
| Halil Toktay | MC Member | Turkey |
| Sophien Kamoun | MC Member | United Kingdom |
| John Jones | MC Member | United Kingdom |
| Lander Bauters | MC Substitute | Belgium |