Ljubljana, 05/03/2020

# Subject │ Minutes of the Second Management Committee Meeting of COST Action CA18221: “PEsticide RIsk AssessMent for Amphibians and Reptiles”

1. **Welcome to participants**

The participants were welcomed by Manuel Ortiz Santaliestra, Chair of the Action. The Chair acknowledged Anamarija Žagar, Martina Lužnik and David Stanković the successful organization of the General Meeting, and thanked the National Institute of Biology for acting as organizing institution.

1. **Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda (**Annex 1**) for the 2nd Management Committee (MC) meeting was adopted. Because of early departure of some of the participants, some minor changes in the order of agenda items were agreed.

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

Total number of COST Countries having accepted the MoU: 30 (**Annex 2** - Action Fact Sheet)

Total number of COST Countries intending to accept the MoU: 0

Number of parties present at the meeting: 24 (**Annex 3**)

The quorum (2/3 of COST Countries participating in the Action) was reached: 24 COST Countries out of 30 attended the meeting (COST doc. 134/14 REV3 “COST Action Management Monitoring and Final Assessment” Annex I, Article 9).

1. **Approval of minutes and matters arising of and after last meeting**

The MC approved the minutes of the 1st MC meeting held in Brussels on November 6th 2019 without modifications.

The following decisions were taken by the MC by written procedure after last meeting:

* Approval of Working Budget Plan for Grant Period 1. Approved by unanimity on 26 November 2019.
* Mandate to the STSM Coordinator (Dr. Dan Cogalniceanu) to act on behalf of the MC to evaluate the applications for STSMs and to approve those applications with enough quality. In those cases in which the appointed STSM Coordinator presents a conflict of interest in his task of evaluating STSM applications, the mandate will be assumed by the Action’s Core Group. Approved by unanimity on 23 December 2019.
* Approval of the request presented by the University of Prishtina (Kosovo) to join the Action as a Near Neighbour Country institution. Approved by unanimity on 28 January 2020.

Matters arising at last meeting, which needed further action from the MC were:

* Choice the Action logo. A call for proposals was launched after MCM1. Nine proposals were received and presented to MC members and MC substitutes. Forty people voted their preferred option, which was the design presented by Dr. Simeon Lukanov. The Core Group approved the final version (**Annex 4**) after incorporation of some modifications to the originally submitted version following several comments from the MC members and substitutes.
* Creation of an expertise database. A preliminary structure for a database containing information on experts and projects relevant to the action had been created. When finished, an intention exists to include it in the Action website as a searchable tool. A Database Committee formed by Marion Junghans, Simeon Lukanov and Neftalí Sillero was created to progress with the expertise database development.

**🡪 Action pending 1 (Database Committee, no deadline specified): create the expertise database based on the preliminary structure, after consultation to the website developer, and request Action participants to fill in the information once the database is created.**

* Elaboration of a glossary of technical terms. No progress was made. A Glossary Committee formed by Flavio Marchetto and Dan Pickford was created to progress with the development of the glossary of technical terms.

**🡪 Action pending 2 (Glossary Committee, no deadline specified): liaise internally to establish a workflow to create the glossary of terms.**

1. **Update from the Action Chair**

* **Status of Action**
* **Summary of activities of Grant Period 1**
* **Monitoring of the action and follow-up of MoU objectives**

The Chair presented the status of the Action:

CSO Approval: 04/06/2019

Start of the Action: 06/11/2019

End of Action: 05/11/2023

Total number of COST Countries having accepted the MoU: 30

Total number of COST Countries intending to accept the MoU: 0

Total number of participating NNC institutions: 2 (from 2 countries)

Total number of participating IPC institutions: 0

Total number of specific organizations: 1 (EU Agency)

The Chair encouraged those MC members from countries who have only one MC member and/or have no MC substitutes to look for relevant experts in their countries to maximize options for participation of all parties in future MC meetings.

Activities carried out during the Grant Period 1:

Networking activities:

* Three STSMs currently ongoing. Earliest starting date 27/01/2020; latest ending date 05/04/2020.
* General Meeting comprising all four Working Group Meetings (Ljubljana, Slovenia 04-05/03/2020).

Dissemination activities:

* Creation of a project for the Action in ResearchGate
* Creation of a provisional website in Google Sites (https://sites.google.com/view/periamar/home). The definitive Action website is being created.
* Creation of a Facebook page for the action.

Monitoring of the action and follow-up of MoU objectives achievement:

According to the MoU, no milestones had to be reached at the present time. Special consideration was taken during WG meetings to ensure that activities proposed for the 2nd Grant Period (GP2) contribute to reach the milestones due during GP2.

1. **Implementation of COST policies on**

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

Number of Inclusiveness Target Countries in the Action: 16 out of 30 parties

Percentage of ECIs or PhD students among Action participants: 32%

Gender balance among Action participants: 42% Women / 58% Men

Extra points were awarded to applicants from ITC and/or who were ECI or PhD students during the evaluation of the applications for STSM of the GP1. No specific consideration was taken in terms of gender balance because of being the first call.

The MC discusses several options to enlarge the network to contribute addressing COST policies about inclusiveness and excellence, and to achieve the objectives established in the MoU about stakeholder involvement. It is agreed to (i) contact new partners from COST countries not currently in the Action; (ii) try to incorporate, as MC observers, at least one NNC from northern Africa, several EU agencies (i.e. EEA, ECHA and JRC), and the OECD; and (iii) try to incorporate, as IPC, representatives from the US EPA and from Environment Canada. Contact persons from all those institutions are suggested by the MC members present in the meeting.

**🡪 Action pending 3 (Action Chair, as soon as contacts are provided by MC members): invite relevant parties and institutions to join the action.**

1. **Action budget status**

None of the GH representatives was present in the meeting. The Action Chair informed that no changes relative to the approved WBP for GP1 had happened so far. Due to cancellations of some meeting participants associated with the Covid-19 situation, it is foreseen that the meeting expenses will be considerably lower than the budget allocated to meetings. The preferred solution in this context is to move the unspent funds from the meeting to the dissemination chapter and use them to pay the website. However, the chances of doing this need to be confirmed. If the amount to be moved across budget sections is above 10% of the total budget, approval from the MC will be requested. It is also possible that, even after using part of the unspent funds to pay the website, some additional funds remain unspent. The Chair informed that this situation is shared by most of the COST Actions currently in its GP1, and that a coordinated request has been sent to COST Association for transferring the unspent funds from GP1 to GP2.

The budget allocated to the Action for the GP2 has not been communicated yet.

1. **Scientific planning**

* **Definition of GP2 goals**
* **Action Budget Planning**
* **Long-term planning (including anticipated locations and dates of future activities)**

The MC discussed the goals and plans of networking activities proposed from the four Working Groups. The goals proposed from the WGs were maintained. A decision was made to:

* Propose 17 scientific priorities for STSMs of GP2 (**Annex 5**), although if funds were not enough, the number of planned STSM finally included in the Working Budget Plan could be reduced to 15.
* Organize a Training School on Ecological Modelling in November or December 2020.
* Organize a large meeting in January or February 2021 that will include:
  + A Workshop on Herpetofauna exposure to PPP, which would be followed by a joint Working Group meeting involving WGs 1 and 2. This would take place in January or February 2021.
  + A WG meeting involving WG4 to discuss on the General Framework of ERA of pesticides for Herpetofauna. This would take place at the same time as the joint WG meeting of WGs 1 and 2.
  + A General Meeting to present STSM results that had not been presented in WG meetings, as well as transversal aspects of the action.
  + An MC meeting.
* Hold a WG meeting of WG2, in September or October 2020, to develop the proposal to relate field ecology to pesticide exposure in herpetofauna.
* Hold a joint WG meeting involving WGs 3 and 4, in late August or September 2020, to review current ERA protocols for all taxa to find out additional options for inter-taxonomical surrogacy.

Requests to organize the proposed events have been received from Action participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain. The MC agreed to postpone the decision about meeting locations until further details from the proposing organisers are received.

**🡪 Action pending 4 (Management Committee, no later than April 15th if information about the budget for GP2 has been received): take a final decision on location and exact dates for the events planned for GP2.**

A strategy for Dissemination and Communication of the Action outputs was presented and discussed. A workflow to transform scientific outputs into communication outputs and make them reachable to relevant receptors was agreed (**Annex 6**). The strategy involves the participation of a Dissemination and Communication Committee (DCC), which will be led by the Science Communication Manager, Cristina Borca, and will count on at least one representative from each contributing stakeholder: academia (Neftalí Sillero), Government (Emily McVey), Industry (Lennart Weltje), NGOs (Thijs Schippers), and SME (to be decided).

**🡪 Action pending 5 (Action Chair, as soon as possible): contact action participants from SMEs to select a representative for the DCC.**

**🡪 Action pending 6 (Science Communication Manager, no specified deadline): coordinate activities of the DCC including, if relevant, a refinement of the Dissemination and Communication Strategy.**

1. **Requests to join the Action**

Request from COST countries are not addressed by the MC until one year has passed since Action approval by the CSO, which will happen on 04/06/2020.

No new requests from NNC, IPC or Specific Organizations were received.

1. **Mandates to the Core Group**

The following mandates to the Core Group were approved by the MC:

* Mandate the Core Group to modify without further explicit MC approval up to a 10% of the GP2 budget respect to what will be approved. Approved by unanimity.
* Mandate the ITC Conference Grant Coordinator (Dr. Anamarija Žagar) to act on behalf of the MC to evaluate the applications for ITC Conference Grants and to approve those applications with enough quality. In those cases in which the appointed ITC Conference Grant Coordinator presents a conflict of interest in her task of evaluating ITC Conference Grant applications, the mandate will be assumed by the Action’s Core Group. Approved by unanimity.
* Mandate the Grant Holder the option to cancel non-answered invitations to meetings after 15 days of sending them. Approved by 23 votes in favour and 1 abstention.

1. **AOB**

There were no any other business.

1. **Closing**

The Chair thanks MC members for their contributions.

## LIST OF ANNEXES

**Annex 1 – Agenda**

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**Annex 2 – Action Fact Sheet**

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**Annex 3 – List of Participants**

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**Annex 4 – Action Logo**

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**Annex 5 – Scientific Priorities and Hosts, if available, for STSM of GP2**

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| **WG** | **Priority** | **Proposed host(s)** |
| 1 | Parameterize variables relevant to exposure models (e.g. skin absorption rate, etc.), using GUTS model for this purpose. TK/TD modelling for combining exposure routes into an internal body burden. Test the applicability of these models using published literature on toxicological sensitivity of amphibians | Wageningen University and Research, Netherlands (Andreas Focks) |
| Review the suitability of US EPA exposure models to estimate the relative importance of different exposure routes | To be decided |
| Update and review data on toxicity of amphibians and reptiles, and perhaps also of surrogates, from both published and unpublished sources. Identify the most urgent gaps to be approached | University of Tirana, Albania (Valbona Aliko) |
| Ecotoxicity on amphibians and reptiles at biochemical levels (including omics) | To be decided |
| 2 | Collect data on pesticide application regimes per crop type and region | Adama, France (Mattia Meli) |
| Review data on spatial ecology and phenology of taxa susceptible of being exposed to pesticides in the wild | University of Florence , Italy (Marta Biaggini, Claudia Corti) |
| Collect data on diet composition of herpetofauna and review methods for diet composition analysis |
| Review further the use of ecological mesocosms in herpetofauna studies and their application to ERA of pesticides | University of Porto, Portugal (Miguel Carretero) |
| 3 | Complete the life history trait database (one or two STSM) | University of Castilla-La Mancha (Manuel Ortiz) |
| Connect TK/TD models to landscape modelling in ALMaSS | Aarhus University, Denmark (Christopher Topping) |
| Adding pesticide fate to aquatic environments in ALMaSS |
| Provide the biological and ecological inputs of a well-known model species necessary to design a lizard model in ALMaSS | Aarhus University, Denmark (Christopher Topping) or University of Castilla-La Mancha (Manuel Ortiz) |
| Explore the potential use of web-ice (USEPA tool) to predict aquatic amphibian LC50 values after inter-species extrapolation | To be decided |
| Identify options to predict toxicity in vivo using in vitro testing | University of Aveiro, Portugal (Isabel Lopes) |
| 3-4 | Review further the current ERA protocols to explore options for surrogacy | To be decided |
| 4 | Review chemical and biological monitoring programmes across Europe and how to integrate them in ERA | To be decided |

**Annex 6 – Science Communication Strategy Workflow**

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