29/04/2021

# Subject │ Minutes of the Third 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.

1. **Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda (**Annex 1**) for the 3rd Management Committee (MC) meeting was adopted.

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

Total number of COST Countries having accepted the MoU: 32 (**Annex 2** - Action Fact Sheet)

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

Number of parties present at the meeting: 21 (**Annex 3**)

The quorum (2/3 of COST Countries participating in the Action) was not reached: 21 COST Countries out of 32 attended the meeting (COST doc. 134/14 REV3 “COST Action Management Monitoring and Final Assessment” Annex I, Article 9). No MC decisions can be taken through presential vote at the meeting.

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

The MC approved the minutes of the 2nd MC meeting held in Ljubljana on March 5th 2020 without modifications.

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

* Modifications to the Working Budget Plan for Grant Period 1. Approved by unanimity on 01 April 2020.
* Selection of Krakow as place for the 2nd General Meeting. Selected by simple majority on 01 Apr 2020
* Approval of Working Budget Plan for Grant Period 1. Approved by unanimity on 05 May 2020.
* Approval of United States Environmental Protection Agency as IPC institution. Approved by unanimity on 21 Jun 2020.
* Approval of budget top-up request. Approved by unanimity on 04 Mar 2021.

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

* Creation of an expertise database for Action participants to fill in their information, including current and past projects. The database is available at the Action website (<https://periamar.com/>)
* Initiation of a glossary of terms. This task was started by Rachel Sharp (EFSA) after the last WG4 meeting, and is now pending of further elaboration first by WG4 members and then by the rest of the WGs.

**🡪 Action pending 1 (WG4 followed by other WGs, no deadline specified): elaborate further the glossary of terms.**

* Invite relevant parties and institutions to join the action. The US EPA was incoporated as IPC institution. Relevant international bodies (e.g. OECD) will be approached at a later Action stage.
* Dates and places were determined for the physical activities initially planned for GP2, although these were later cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemics.
* Complete the Science Communication Committee with the incopopration of a representative of small and medium-sized entreprises. Jan Dieter Ludwigs (RifCon) was added as SMEs representative in the SCC.
* Create the Science Communication Strategy, which is pending of final, minor corrections.

**🡪 Action pending 2 (Science Communication Committee, no deadline specified): finalise the Science Communication Strategy and share it with all Action participants.**

1. **Update on the Action progress**

* **Submission of the First Progress Report**

The Chair presented the first progress report (**Annex 4**), which was submitted after completing the first 12 months of the Action. This report has the purpose of monitoring the Action’s implementation of the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy (Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC), Early Career Investigators (ECIs) and gender balance) and of the Scientific Committee (SC) Recommendations (from the proposal stage).

The figures show that the Action has efficiently address the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy, therefore implementing the SC recommendations.

* **Summary of activities of Grant Period 2**

Activities carried out so far during the Grant Period 2:

Networking activities:

* One STSMs finalised on 23/03/2021, and another four approved and pending on decision about dates.
* Three WG Meetings:
  + WG2 meeting 2 (21/01/2021) to elaborate a report detailing the aspects of amphibian and reptilian biology and ecology which should be considered while characterizing the exposure to pesticides under realistic scenarios. This WG meeting contributes to Task 2.2 and its output is the above mentioned report, which is currently under ellaboration.
  + WG4 meeting 2 (05/02/2021 and 09/04/2021) to identify major needs to progress in the elaboration of a risk assessment scheme for amphibians and reptiles. This WG meeting contributes to Task 4.1 and its output is a list of questions to be placed on PERIAMAR WGs (a preliminary list is shown at the MC meeting).

Annette Aldrich and Chris Topping commented on the possibility of liaise with PARC (European Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals), as some of the issues appearing in the questions, in particular the differentiation of chemicals and other stressors, are in line with project ideas of that partnership.

Petros Lymberakis comments on the similar option with the COST Action 16224 (ERBfacility), as they are addressing the role of raptors as tools for environmental stress monitoring.

**🡪 Action pending 3 (Annette Aldrich / Petros Lymberakis / Chair, after finalisation of the list of questions by WG4): explore the possibilities to liaise with other projects or partnerships for mutual addressment of some of the questions.**

* + WG2 meeting 3 (06/04/2021 and 13/04/2021) to describe amphibian pond characteristics to define the requirements for TOXSWA model (development of pesticide exposure scenario). This WG meeting contributes to Task 2.3 and its output is a compilation about pond characteristics. Wim Beltman, leader of Task 2.3, presented a summary of the meeting and its conclusions, and explained the next steps to compile the information about pond characteristics.

Simeon Lukanov mentioned that they have several data on hydrology and/or amphibian occupancy of several lakes in Bulgaria, that could be provided to be used in the model. Wim Beltman mentioned that for now they just need information on the databases that are available to be used, but that more specific information can become useful at a later stage.

Dissemination activities:

* Creation of the Action website. This includes a registration option for Action participants to register and describe their profiles, and also to incorporate information to the expertise database. The Chair encourages all Action participants to register and add information about their past and current projects in the expertise database.
* Creation of a promotional video about the STSM held by Bruno Bekic in the National Institute of Biology of Slovenia. The video was filmed by a professional company and is available at the new Action YouTube channel (<https://m.youtube.com/watch?fbclid=IwAR3PlA5vdF6Haxd1c0Ny6Q-JN3w3NzFQIef5TxYZeb0xPx2NOBVsmDtWG-Y&v=-KMkp_GyPcg&feature=youtu.be>).
* Maintenance of social networks of the Action (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and ResearchGate).
* **Action budget status**

The Chair presented the list of expenses made so far. Most of the budget is still unspent, which is related to the lack of physical activities given the sanitary situation. Considering the budget that is compromised by the approved STSM, 89.2% of the direct costs budget are still unspent.

1. **Science Communication Strategy**

Cristina Borca, Science Communication Manager of the Action, summarized the activities conducted by the Science Communication Committee. There are some planned activities that include improve visualization of the news section in the website and elaboration of promotional videos about the Action and specific activities (WGs or STSM). The SCM also explained the ways for bottom-up dissemination, and encouraged Action participants to follow these ways to feed Action communication channels with relevant content. She also encouraged Action participants to place a banner with a logo of the project in our email

1. **Scientific and budget planning**

Federica Ortelli, COST Scientific Officer, give an overview of the new Virtual Networking Tools that have been just launched by COST, and informed about an informative webinar in this sense that will take place on May 7th.

The Chair explained that, after requesting a budget top-up following COST offer, and getting the approval for this top-up, the Working Budget Plan needs to be amended. In particular, it is necessary to incorporate the new expenses and then getting MC approval by written procedure. A budget proposal, based on what was submitted to COTS to request the top-up with minor modifications, was presented.

The MC discussed about the convenience of considering the addition of budget for Virtual Networking Tools. It is agreed that a final budget proposal will be prepared after attending the informative webinar on May 7th.

**🡪 Action pending 4 (Action Chair, asap after May 7th): prepare a new WBP and submit for discussion and further approval by the MC.**

1. **AOB**

The Chair suggested the possibility of taking some initiatives within the Action to get involved in application to Horizon Europe calls or other international calls for research projects. After discussing the question, the main ideas arising from the MC were:

* Even if, as a COST-related network, we do not have entity to apply, the network offers an undoubtful advantage to liaise scientists with expertise to apply for big projects. We should make use of that advantage.
* Current Horizon Europe calls of pillars 2 and 3 offer little options to prepare proposals whose core is within the Action, and participating in established consortia on an individual basis appears as a more suitable option. However, it is important to keep track of upcoming calls within those pillars.
* The option to prepare an ad hoc proposal to open calls (e.g. pillar 1 of Horizon Europe or other international calls) seems more adequate to liaise as an established network.
* it is important to identify the right call/with the right topic to submit the application.

The Chair proposed the creation of a commission to explore the chances of applying for funding in international calls. The discussion is postponed.

1. **Closing**

The Chair thanks MC members and the rest of participants for their contributions.

## LIST OF ANNEXES

**Annex 1 – Agenda**

****

**Annex 2 – Action Fact Sheet**

****

**Annex 3 – List of Participants**

****

**Annex 4 – First Progress Report**

****