

COST Action FP1305: Linking belowground biodiversity and ecosystem function in European forests
(BioLink)

Minutes of the 1st Management Committee Meeting

Location: Four Points by Sheraton Brussels,

Rue Paul Spaak 15, Brussels,

from 10:00 to 17:00 on Wednesday 14th May 2014.

1. Welcome to participants

The participants of the kick-off meeting of COST Action FP1305 were welcomed by the Science officer Dr Fatima Bouchama and by the Administrative officer Ms Cassia Azevedo.

Dr. Fatima Bouchama introduced the Cost office, its history, mission and structure. She also briefly outlined Cost Action activities supported by the Cost Office and some of the changes happening later this year as a result of the changeover from FP7 to Horizon2020.

The first session was chaired by F. Bouchama until the election of the chair of the Action.

2. The COST Action FP1305 officially started with the first MC meeting and will end in four years time on 13th May 2018.

30 Countries had accepted the MoU according to the official records of the COST Council Secretariat. At the time of the meeting, Parties who accepted the MoU were Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom.

3. General information on the COST mechanism and on the funding of co-ordination

At the beginning of this item Dr. Fatima Bouchama gave a briefing on the COST mechanism, presenting the general framework for that programme created to promote scientific and technical co-operation in Europe.

The Administrative Officer for the Action, Ms Cassia Azevedo informed the delegates about the principles and procedures related to the COST Actions and about the possibilities of getting activities funded from the COST budget. The relevant documents can be found at the official

Website of COST:

- Rules and procedures for implementing COST Actions (Annex 3)
- Rules of Procedure for Management Committees of COST Actions (Annex 3a)
- Financing of COST activities (Annex 4)
- Guidelines for the implementation of Short-Term Scientific Missions (Annex 4a)
- Rules for reimbursement of expenses for experts eligible for reimbursement (Annex 4b)
- Guidelines for evaluation and monitoring of COST Actions (COST 270/07) (Annex 5)

- Memorandum of Understanding of COST Action FP0803 (Annex 6)
- COST Grant System (CGS) (Annex 7)
- COST Strategy for Early Stage Researchers (Annex 8)

4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Management Committee elected Martin Lukac (UK) the Chair of COST Action FP1305, while Ivika Ostonen (EE) was elected the Vice-Chair. The new Action Chair took over the chairing of the meeting from this item forward.

5. Selection of the Grant Holder and Scientific Representatives and two Financial Rapporteurs

The Management Committee selected University of Reading (the institution of the Chair) as the Grant Holder for FP1305 with Martin Lukac as the Scientific Representative, subject to the agreement of the institution. The MC agreed the FSAC rate to be 15% of scientific expenditure.

The Management Committee appointed Mark Ronald Bakker (FR) and Elena Vanguelova (UK), and Nadia Soudzilovskaia (NL, reserve) as the t Financial Rapporteurs of FP1305.

6. NNC (near neighbour countries) and IPC (International Partner Countries)

The MC decided to approve the following requests from NNC & IPC countries to participate in the Action:

- Russia
- Tunisia
- Japan

The MC agreed the chair to initiate e-voting after receiving more applications.

7. Action website

Action chair has registered the domain www.bio-link.eu for Action website.

MC agreed Hojka Kraiger (Slovenia) to establish and run the website. MC agreed to allocate 2000 EUR in the first instance from the budget for establishment the website. MC agreed that if more resources were needed, up to 3500 EUR may be spent on the website at the Chair's discretion without further agreement from the MC.

Nadia Soudzilovskaia (NL) will prepare a template for participants profiles and create the database of expertizes to be presented on website of Action.

8. Working groups of the Action

MC decided the Action will be carried out mainly through four Working Groups and WG leaders were elected:

WG 1 Linking belowground biodiversity to ecosystem function.

Leader: Douglas Godbold (AU)

WG 2 Microbial and faunal functional biodiversity in belowground food-webs.

Leader: Johannes Rousk (SE)(ESR)

WG 3 Belowground biodiversity in plantations and tree crops.

Leaded: Mauro Gamboni (IT)

WG 4 Functional diversity in forest models.

Dr Gabrielle Deckmyn (BE)

9. Core group

In accordance with the existing COST rules the MC established an Executive Committee (Core group) consisting of the Chair, Vice-Chair and the four Working Group Co-ordinators, and the STSM Coordinator

10. The MC appointed Miglena Zhiyanski (BUL) the STSM Coordinator. STSM applications will be assessed by the STSM Coordinator and special evaluation committee. MC agreed following evaluation committee: Mark Ronald BAKKER (FR)

Tarja Lehto (FI)

Mauro Gamboni (IT)

Elena Vanguelova (UK)

Stela Lazarova (BUL)

If needed additional expertise can be asked from other MC members.

All MC members have been invited to encourage, in particular, Early Stage Researchers, to participate in the scheme. First call for application will be announced in November 2014, just after the first COST-Action meeting in Reading (UK) and deadline for applications will be in December 2014.

11. Place and date of the next meetings

MC agreed to set a limit of 1 month for accepting meeting invitation. After this period, the funding allocated to unaccepted invitations will be redistributed to MC substitutes (if nominated) and then to other participants.

Next meeting

The next meeting, preferably a joint MC2/ WG will be held in early November 2014 in Reading (UK) hosted by the institution of the Chair (exact dates to be confirmed and communicated to the COST Office by the Chair on behalf of the MC).

MC agreed to facilitate involvement of a wider scientific community (focusing specifically on ESR and PhD students from participating countries) at the first Cost Action meeting. The goal is to promote networking and contact building within the network created by the Cost Action. To this end, up to €30K will be allocated to support participation of ESR. A call for abstracts will be published as soon as feasible, STMS evaluation committee will judge received abstracts and recommend ESRs for funding support on merit.

Next meetings

Italy (Mauro Gamboni) and Portugal (Isabel Abrantes) offered to organise meetings next years.