

Scientific Advisory Council: Kick-off Meeting on March 20-21, 2009

Venue: Biology Centre of the Academy of Sciences (BCAS), Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic

Minutes of Part I : General and Scientific Session

Present Scientific Advisory Council members:

Dr. František Sehnal, project co-ordinator and Council Chairman, BCAS;
Dr. Ramon Albajes, Council member) University Lleida, Spain;
Dr. Jindřich Bříza, Council Vice-chairman, BCAS;
Ms. Michaela Křišťůfková, Council secretary, BCAS;
Dr. František Marec, Council member, BCAS;
Dr. Franco Penacchio, Council member, Università di Napoli, Portici, Italy;

Excused Scientific Advisory Council members:

Dr. Yuriy Gleba (busy)
Dr. Alan Robinson (ill)

MOBITAG researchers and administrators: See Appendix List of presence

1. Foreign members of the Advisory Council - Drs. R. Albajes and F. Pennacchio – were introduced to the plenum by Dr. F. Sehnal. Remaining members of the Council and the leaders of individual Workpackages briefly introduced themselves. F. Sehnal further introduced project manager Ing. Veronika Zázvorková. She replaces Mgr. M. Procházková-Svobodová who will be on maternity leave since the beginning of April. In MOBITAG administration, V. Zázvorková will take over the duties of Ms. Barbora Helclová who is busy with distant university studies.
2. F. Sehnal summarized the history and current status of the MOBITAG project that had been prepared and submitted in the spring and negotiated in the autumn 2008. Personal and electronic consultations with Ms. Clara Hombrados, who was appointed contact officer, facilitated revisions of certain project sections. Project start was planned for January 1, 2009, but delayed preparation of the Grant Agreement (GA) caused a shift to March 1, 2009. The original term of the kick-off meeting had to be cancelled and a few other problems were caused by this change. Everything is under control at the time of this meeting. EC administration (Directorate B - European Research Area, Programs Regions of Knowledge and Research Potential) praised the careful preparation of MOBITAG which was selected as one of the projects that would demonstrate EU support of scientific research in the Czech Republic at the conference “Research Connection 2009” (Prague, May 7-8, 2009). Directorate office prepared 1000 leaflets with MOBITAG characterization to be distributed at the conference. BCAS will provide additional informative material (including the White Book described below) and will participate in MOBITAG presentation to the media. This activity will encourage involvement of Czech institutions in the EU 7FP programs.
3. In the following Scientific Session (4 h), R. Albajes and F. Pennacchio described investigations conducted at their respective workplaces and BCAS researchers presented studies conducted in frame of MOBITAG. All PowerPoint presentations were of high quality and revealed great research potential of BCAS and new possibilities of collaborations within ERA. Only the titles of presentations are listed here:
Dr. R. Albajes – “Spanish experience with the deployment of GM crops”
Dr. F. Pennacchio – “Parasitoids and their interaction with insect hosts”
Dr. J. Vlasák – “Cry3A transgenic, bark beetle resistant spruce”
Dr. J. Matoušek – “Prenylflavonoids of medical importance from hops”, “Diagnostics of economically important plant viroids”, “Anticancerogenic nucleases”

Dr. K. Petrzik – “Improved detection of plant pathogens”
Dr. F. Marec – “Molecular cytogenetic analysis of sex chromosomes in the lepidopteran pests”
“Molecular markers for the identification of aphids” (on behalf of Dr. M. Žurovcová)
Dr. D. Kodřík – “Insect stress hormones”
Dr. R. Sidorov – “Growth factors in Drosophila”
Dr. O. Habušťová – “Side effect of transgenic plants”

Minutes of Part II : Project Management Session

Present Scientific Advisory Council members:

Dr. František Sehnal, project co-ordinator and Council Chairman, BCAS;
Dr. Ramon Albajes, Council member) University Lleida, Spain;
Dr. Jindřich Bříza, Council Vice-chairman, BCAS;
Ms. Michaela Křišťůfková, Council secretary, BCAS;
Dr. František Marec, Council member, BCAS;
Dr. Franco Penacchio, Council member, Università di Napoli, Portici, Italy;

Invited Workpackage leaders:

Dr. Oxana Habušťová
Dr. Vladimír Košťál (on behalf of Dr. Martina Žurovcová)
Dr. Jaroslav Matoušek
Dr. Karel Petrzik (absent)

Project manager: Ing. Veronika Zázvorková

1. General comments. F. Sehnal opened the meeting and than all specifications of individual research tasks relevant for 2009 and partly also for the following years were presented and discussed at this meeting.
2. WP1 (Dr. František Marec)
Small perosnnel changes that occured in WP1 were discussed and approved. The set-up of two laboratories will begin in April and completed by the end of 2009, i.e. several months earlier than planned. Acceleration of this work is needed in respect to MOBITAG research.
3. WP2 (Dr. Jindřich Bříza)
All mobility activities planned for 2009 have been approved by all parties concerned. Reasons were given for a small personnel change in training stay in France and have also been approved. Preliminary mobility schedule for 2010 was discussed.
4. WP3 (presented by Dr. F. Sehnal)
Since Mgr. Procházková-Svobodová will start her maternity leave in April 2009, she was replaced as R&D manager of BCAS by Ing. V. Zázvorková. The timing of the training of two project managers was approved.
5. WP4 (presented by Dr. Vladimír Košťál)
Selection procedure for the purchase of instruments has been initiated in compliance with the Czech law. In the present situation it is economic to replace ProteomeLab PA800 with a set of instruments that has better performance and is more versatile. The cost will not exceed the plan in GA.

6. WP5 (Dr. Oxana Habušťová)

Two of the proposed seminar speakers cannot visit BCAS in 2009 and were therefore replaced by Dr. G. Steger (University Düsseldorf, Germany, seminar on "Bioinformatics and analysis of viroids" to be delivered in mid-April) and Dr. A. Gatehouse (University of New Castle, UK, seminar "The role of biotechnology in crop protection-towards sustainability" planned for May). A core of the Organizing Committee of the 2010 conference "Invertebrate Reproduction and Development in the Age of Genetically Modified Organisms" (T 5.2) was formed.

7. WP6 (Ing. Michaela Krišťůfková)

Current contents and general arrangement of the web page were approved. It was agreed that the page would be made public by April 1, 2009. The plan of participations of MOBITAG researchers at international meetings (T 6.2) in 2009 was finalized.

Information on modern agrobiotechnologies will be prepared for general public, policy makers, and NGOs (T 6.6) in form of White Book summarizing Czech experience and views on the deployment of GM crops. The book will be published in April, presented at the conference Research Connection 2009 that will be organized in Prague in connection with the Czech presidency of EU, and made afterwards available in the printed and electronic versions. Preparation of the instruction film (T 6.4) in the autumn 2009 will be a second major dissemination activity in the first reporting period of MOBITAG.

8. WP7 (Dr. František Sehnal)

MOBITAG administration will be largely in hands of V. Zázvorková. Leaders of the work packages will control the faithfulness of the time sheets, other documents will be countersigned by F. Sehnal. Budget handling will be consulted with the prospective MOBITAG auditor and all crucial management and research issues with the Advisory Council. Next meeting of the Council will be organized at the occasion of MOBITAG conference in August 2010.

9. Miscellaneous

Future participation in the EU projects was discussed. F. Pennacchio proposed to promote Modern biotechnologies for agriculture by establishing "European Consortium on GMOs" co-ordinated by BCAS.

10. Concluding remarks

F. Sehnal acknowledged the work done by the Advisory Council and all members of the MOBITAG team and declared the meeting closed.

Recorded by: V. Zázvorková

Confirmed by: F. Sehnal