

# 14 Executive Board Video Meeting\_17.12.2020\_Minutes



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AGENDA

## ECOBREED 14<sup>th</sup> EB Video Meeting

17<sup>th</sup> of December 2020

<https://zoom.us/j/94459329159?pwd=RCs5WCt2VHZ1L253a1QrZC9PZk04UT09>

Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> of December | 13:00 - 14:00

PR1 resubmission

AOB

MINUTES

Executive Board members present: Vladimir Meglič (Co-ordinator), Paul Bilsborrow (deputy Co-ordinator), Pavol Hauptvogel (WP1 leader), Heinrich Grausgruber (WP2 leader), Peter Dolničar (WP3 leader), Kristina Petrović (WP4 leader), Dagmar Janovská (WP5 leader) Werner Vogt-Kaute (WP6 leader), Mario A. Pagnotta (WP7 leader) and Antoaneta G. Kuhar (project manager and WP8 leader).

The video meeting of the Executive Board was constituted, and the zoom video & audio connection tested. The Co-ordinator welcomed participants and presented the main purpose of the meeting, which is **the late re-submission of PR1**. We finally uploaded everything on Monday, Dec 14<sup>th</sup> at noon, even though we were faced with several anomalies, missing contributions, etc. when putting together all texts and the deadlines not respected. When the last Deliverables came in mid/late autumn, editing work went out of track. You have probably seen and noticed that some deliverables, after submission were rejected right away (e.g. D10.3). They were corrected and resubmitted immediately. Since yesterday, after the resubmission of D8.8 Practice Abstract, the whole set is at REA. Now we should assure that we are thinking beyond our short-term desires and focus on the long-term goals and deliver what we were supposed to and even go beyond. You received the minutes (by email) of the meeting that me and Antoaneta had last week with PO and other colleagues from REA. It was hard and not a pleasant one. We are aware that the year 2020 was very difficult, but nevertheless we deserve some credit for achieving most of the project's goals; except

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for the delays in training and demonstration activities caused by the pandemic which require rescheduling. However, we managed to see in person with WP5 partners to discuss the evaluation of the buckwheat fields. In Slovenia we managed to organize a demonstration event within Task 8.4., meeting organic farmers and extension service of Slovenia. We are still struggling with a couple of things we have agreed on during our past meetings like 3-months progress and 6-month financial reports; there was some misunderstanding with publications that were not submitted to the IP sub-committee, but clear instructions and guidelines have been reissued to all project partners. We have also had issues with the upload of data to Zenodo; some were done properly, some needed further reminders. Announcing and informing about completion of different Milestones was not conducted according to the protocol that was approved in Prague, and to deposit outputs in a proper way.

Paul Bilsborrow asked if the Ds were submitted separately, Coordinator answered positively. PO is sitting with the Financial Officer and scrutinizing the whole package; so, we get feedback probably by tomorrow or after New Year's start. Paul Bilsborrow asked also who had not submitted the interim financial report. Project Manager answered this was NPPC, who had not responded to any of the series messages addressed to them. The Project Management Team will meet early in 2021 to evaluate the options available for dealing with lack of responses from partner NPPC.

Project Coordinator said we are going to wait for the approval of the PR1 and then proceed with requests for the submission of the 2<sup>nd</sup> interim financial reports, covering the period May-Oct 2020. The next 3-month progress report is due in January. We need to hold an EB meeting in the second half of January and start planning the activities. PO will also be present at that meeting. Project Coordinator suggested to present 2021 Operational plans for each WP, especially having in mind training activities that are planned; how to issue deal with bursaries for the training events, publish calls, selection of participants. The next Amendment will be open immediately after PR1 is closed. We were discussing a 9-month extension, but we need to rethink if it is really needed or can we go for the standard 6-month, which would be probably granted automatically based on the *force major*. With that we need to take into the account harvest time, FPTs, training activities etc that may need to be held in the final year due to cancellation in 2021. Mario A. Pagnotta suggested to have a pre-meeting to the next EB meeting scheduled for January; stressing WP7 trainings are problematic due to uncertainties with Covid-19, some events were again rescheduled and when start planning the next one we should be ready to perform either in person or online, and we need to ensure sufficient time for advertising.

### Conclusions:

**Antoaneta will check PO's availability for the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of January and then send a doodle poll to EB members: internal in the morning and with PO in the afternoon.**

**6-months interim financial reports to be requested after the approval of PR1.**

AOB: IP sub-committee will meet tomorrow with a proposed 11am start which needs to be confirmed with Helena. Mario A. Pagnotta asked if Nikos is still in the project. The Coordinator explained we got official letter stating that he cannot continue to participate in the project anymore, and this will be included in the amendment. There is also change with UP, which is moving to Szent Istvan University. Heinrich Grausgruber announced that WSU is working on WP5, but cannot do anything on

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WP2, for which Kevin Murphy needs to travel 8 hours to find organic fields. The Coordinator said that EUCARPIA meeting is going to be run remotely in March, so it might be prudent to talk to University of Wisconsin who are dealing with development of organic varieties, organic farming, and education. Heinrich Grausgruber reported on the collaboration with LIVESEED on bunt resistance in wheat, which does not offer any promising outputs.

Meeting closed at 2:10pm.

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*Minutes of the meeting with PO, held online on Dec 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020:*

*Coordinator of the project, Vladimir elaborated on the status of RP1; explaining difficulties and issues linked to it and impact of covid-19 restrictions, as well as issues trying to persuade some of the beneficiaries to deliver what is needed to be delivered. Right now, is pretty much on the computer, editorial work and cross-check of the deliverables is progressing, so the documents are in line with comments and suggestions of the reviewers. Last step is adding documents to the Portal.*

*Project manager, Antoaneta said that Financial Statements for all partners are included to the PR1, gender and publications are amended.*

*Project officer, Maria José stressed that the PR1 is submitted and elaborated as one package including Financial and Technical Part. It is urgent that the package is submitted, so the Financial Statements can be assessed, and any other needed clarifications provided so the payment can be finalised. Project Officer stressed that the Coordinator needs to justify why the consortium has not delivered for 9 months. Being so late means that strict measures on the management side need to be introduced for partners who are notoriously late or underperform. The same issue appeared when submitting the PR1 and now it is repeating again; there is no need to continue with that. Partners who do not respond at the beginning usually do not change this attitude. The management team should put in place measures to ensure the consortiums is able to stay on track also for the future. Advisory group and WP leaders need to be activated, if necessary, WP leaders should be replaced. The Consortium should apply mitigation measures and develop a contingency plan, so the work is progressing, and impact is not compromised. Not only for fields experiments, but for the lab work and training activities. If the latter are going to happen online, these need to be planned and prepared much more in advance comparing to the onsite events. However, Maria José acknowledged that in terms of progress of activities, it is as expected.*

*Vladimir explained that 6 months interim Financial Reports were introduced and personal contacts with lead beneficiaries responsible for the rejected deliverables are being applied. Mitigation measures in terms of glass-house experiments are considered; If there will be stricter lockdown, than laboratory work could be affected. However, up to know partners are not reporting any difficulties. Most of the crossings are done in Hungary and Austria; they are working in shifts, so less people are working together. Training should start in April-May 2021 associated in phenotyping trial in Czech Republic. If that will not be possible, online training should be performed.*

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*Maria José elaborated further on the extension already asked in line with the force majeure and what might be considered as a reason and what cannot be due to the amendment that has been already introduced. The Consortium needs to show what is the added value of having one more season and extension with more than 6 months. Whatever goes over, the Consortium needs to justify and put in place a contingency plan. The amendment must be closed before the submission of the PR2.*

*Conclusion: PR1 needs to be submitted by Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> noon.*