



**ecobreed**  
IMPROVING CROPS



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<b>ABSTRACT (FOR DISSEMINATION)</b>	The document contains minutes of the twenty-eight meeting of the Executive Board held at KIS, Ljubljana, Slovenia on 21 and 22 February 2023
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AGENDA

# ECOBREED 28<sup>th</sup> EB Meeting

Agricultural Institute of Slovenia, Hacquetova ulica 17, Ljubljana

Meeting room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, main building

21 – 22 February 2023

## Monday, 20 February

Arrivals

## Tuesday, 21 February | 08:30 - 18:00

08:30 – 10:00 | Reflections of PR3 review

10:00 – 11:00 | WP1 - Operational plan until the end of the project

11:00 – 12:00 | WP2 - Operational plan until the end of the project

12:00 – 13:00 | WP5 - Operational plan until the end of the project

13:00 – 14:00 | *Lunch*

14:00 – 15:00 | WP8 – IP & exploitation activities

15:00 – 16:00 | WP3 - Operational plan until the end of the project

16:00 – 17:00 | WP4 - Operational plan until the end of the project

17:00 – 18:00 | WP6 - Operational plan until the end of the project

*Dinner together*

## Wednesday, 22 February | 08:30 - 12:30

08:30 – 09:30 | WP7 - Operational plan until the end of the project

09:30 – 10:30 | WP8 - Operational plan until the end of the project

10:30 – 12:30 | General items – Amendment, AGM; FC

12:30 | Departures

### ECOBREED 28<sup>th</sup> EB Meeting

Meeting started on Tuesday, 21 February at 8:35

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*Executive Board members present in person:*

Vladimir Meglič (co-ordinator, KIS), Paul Bilsborrow (deputy co-ordinator, UNEW), Pavol Hauptvogel (WP1 leader, NPPC), Heinrich Grausgruber (WP2 leader, BOKU), Peter Dolničar (WP3 leader, KIS), Vuk Đorđević (WP4 leader, IFVC), Dagmar Janovská (WP5 leader, CRI), Werner Vogt-Kaute (WP6 leader, NATUR), Mario A. Pagnotta (WP7 leader, UNITUS), Antoaneta G. Kuhar (Project Manager and WP8 leader, KIS), Helena Valas (IP manager) and Andreja Žibrat Gašparič (KIS).

Vladimir Meglič, the project coordinator, started the meeting and greeted everybody. He informed the EB members again about the review letter from the EC adding that there are several comments that need to be discussed and addressed. After this, the WP leaders will present their plans for the last period until the end of the project. He also said that the final budget will need to be submitted by February 2024. The final budget will also be discussed in detail by all consortium members at the next annual meeting. He also said that the final ECOBREED conference will need to be announced soon to attract colleagues to join us and present their work. We will also invite various stakeholders to attend the conference.

#### Reflections of PR3 review

Antoaneta G. Kuhar (KIS) said that the review letter arrived quite fast. We especially need to check the comment that we did not take into account the comments from the PR2 review. She prepared a draft of the letter for the EC and suggested that we finalise the letter together.

The EB members then looked at the reviewers' comments and discussed the comments from point to point and jointly prepared the letter for the EC with all the explanations.

#### WP8 – IP & exploitation activities

Helena Valas informed the EB members that business cases for all four ECOBREED crops will be prepared soon. These will then need to be reviewed by WP leaders as well as by their financial departments. The business cases will be prepared by the beginning of March.

She then discussed the reviewers' comments for PR3 regarding exploitation activities and added that the exploitation agreement and possible MTAs will also need to be discussed with consortium members at the annual meeting.

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Vladimir Meglič, the project coordinator, added that we have MTAs within the consortium for exchange and use of material, but never for direct use; for direct use we could use the material that is handed to one of the seed companies that are going to put the material to the market as we already started with Naturland in Germany. For breeders outside the consortium we have a separate MTA that states that the material is the property of ECOBREED and that the material can only be used for breeding or research purposes. The material will be free as its development was publicly funded but we can add a fee after the end of the project for companies outside the consortium for crossing etc.

Helena Valas added that she expects that the exploitation agreement will be finished by end of April.

### WP3 - Operational plan until the end of the project

Peter Dolničar (WP3 leader, KIS) presented the work done in WP3 and plans for 2023.

In Task 3.1 additional advanced phenotyping experiment needs to be conducted in 2023 at KIS with further time for data analyses and interpretation.

In Task 3.2 D3.2 is completed.

In Task 3.3 cover crops there is planned potato planting at UNEW in April 2023. No problems expected.

Task 3.4 was completed.

CPB finished at KIS and MATE. Susceptibility of 65 cultivars tested – IHAR (3<sup>rd</sup> year) as they had very low infection last year.

For Task 3.5 & 3.6

- IHAR/KIS/MATE:
- LB resistant advanced clones evaluations on conventional fields;
- MAS performed;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> year of selection of advanced clones on organic fields at KIS;

WP6-PPB: In 2022 the first year of trials with advanced resistant potato lines on farms a second growing season in 2023 will be performed.

Problems: Polish partner claimed that they don't have CPB, they will now need to improve quality of results.

Deliverables:

D3.3 & D3.6 due in M68 in Task 3.1

D3.5 due M70 in Task 3.3

D3.4 due in M58 in Task 3.4

D3.7 in M70 in Tasks 3.5 & 3.6

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D3.8 due M70 as final report

Milestones

MS17 – due M68 since the additional season that will be performed in year 2023.

He also added that a publication with UNEW is planned in 2023 and another for remote sensing with UNEW and KIS.

### **WP4 - Operational plan until the end of the project**

Vuk Đorđević (WP4 leader, IFVC) presented the plans for 2023. Main work will be on deliverables as there are 8 deliverables to be prepared. Already finished with D4.1, but all the others are due in 2023. One milestone, MS40, must be reached.

First draft on D4.5 already prepared.

For 2023 already 6 publications are planned for WP4.

The WP4 is also preparing actively for the 11<sup>th</sup> World Soybean Conference that will be held in Vienna in June 2023.

### **WP5 - Operational plan until the end of the project**

Dagmar Janovská (WP5 leader, CRI) reported that Task 5.1 is finished and the team is preparing the publication and deliverable.

In Task 5.2, UVIGO is working on two publications, there is also a deliverable planned with due date in April 2023.

In Task 5.3 a deliverable is planned, but there are still some samples missing from Slovenia.

In Task 5.4 CAAS from China was asked to send short text for MS36. One publication is under revision in scientific journal and several publications are planned. Deliverable 5.4 is due in August 2023.

In Task 5.5, the deliverable 5.6 is due December 2023 and the WP5 leader is in contact with partners to prepare this.

New descriptor list based on the phenotyping data from T5.1 from CZ for evaluation of buckwheat genetic resources is prepared by CRI. These evaluation descriptors will be added to GRIN Czech – public database of PGR, where ECOBREED data will be accessible for all users free of charge. PDF version of this descriptors will be published also on the ECOBREED website. KIS is preparing a catalogue of buckwheat for farmers, breeders and other interested public.

For WP6 there are some trials planned for 2023.

### **WP2 - Operational plan until the end of the project**

Heinrich Grausgruber (WP2 leader, BOKU) reported that Task 2.1 is mostly finished. Only quality data for 2021 and 2022 still needs to be done. Durum data

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are currently analysed by Luca Bonfiglioli, Ph.D. student at UNITUS, who will be also responsible for drafting a manuscript for publication. Common wheat experiment data is present, although some quality data missing (as for durum wheat). Final statistical analyses and manuscript drafting is scheduled for autumn 2023.

Advanced phenotyping – a postdoc at PSI agreed to work on the data from the subcontracted greenhouse experiment. A first online meeting between WP leader, Uros Zibrat (KIS) and PSI was organised. There is also a deliverable planned in June 2023.

In Task 2.2, a deliverable with UNEW is due at the end of February 2023. There is also a publication with this data planned.

In Task 2.3, a deliverable is due end of April 2023.

In Task 2.4, a deliverable is due at the end of February 2023 and is being prepared right now. For bunt resistance, there is still one population in field testing, for the other two populations a seed multiplication step for resistant lines is ongoing. Magdalena Ehn, Ph.D. student at BOKU, is currently drafting a manuscript for the research topic “Trends and Perspectives on Breeding for Organic Agriculture” of *Frontiers in Plant Science*; submission deadline is July 3, 2023. At least two other publications are planned for the results from this task.

In Task 2.5, lists of all crosses still in work by partners were compiled. The MAGIC population is in multiplication in Hungary (in bulks) and at BOKU (single lines). Seed material will be available for distribution in fall 2023.

Problems in T2.1 Advanced phenotyping may appear as the WP2 leader is not sure whether this data will be prepared, analysed and published in time. KIS has done some preliminary analysis, but situation is unclear at UNEW and with data from the experiment subcontracted to PSI. Now the postdoc at PSI will work on it but we are dependent on her will and time as it is not her task.

The WP2 leader agreed with the coordinator that all the issues will need to be discussed at the annual meeting with the partners.

### WP1 - Operational plan until the end of the project

Pavol Hauptvogel (WP1 leader, NPPC) presented a new Excel sheet for Task 1.3 with added new data for potato, for the other crops already finished. The WP1 leader will send it to the crop leaders by the end of February. The database should be finished by October 2023.

In the case, accession is not originally from the gene bank and has no EURISCO link, then we will add links by breeders (mainly in the case of used commercial varieties).

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The coordinator added that the crop leaders must check the list so that it is in line with all the varieties used in any ECOBREED activities. The links to EURISCO and to the breeders will need to work. And then we start filling it with the Zenodo link for the information on various experiment done with those accessions. Everything currently in the Task 1.3 database that is redundant needs to be deleted.

After a short discussion it was decided that the Excel sheet for Task 1.3 will be added to MS SharePoint and shared with all crop leaders. Pavol Hauptvogel has to send it to Andreja Žibrat Gašparič (KIS) who will take care that we have back-up copies of this data.

### WP6 - Operational plan until the end of the project

Werner Vogt-Kaute (WP6 leader, NATUR) reported that for Task 6.1 he already asked partners to prepare the text for the next bulletin with the 2022 results. This should be done by the end of February or early March. He also organised a video meeting with all partners to discuss plans for 2023. Some partners will need seeds for trials this year.

In Task 6.2. one trial is missing and will need to be repeated.

In Task 6.3, for soybean in Slovenia and Austria it still needs to be decided who will do the third trial in 2023. Some buckwheat seeds still have to be distributed. There are still at RGA.

Some of the groups had good ideas for publications – regional papers in professional papers, presentations in conferences etc. Marjana Vasiljević (IFVC) will prepare a WP6 presentation for the World Soybean Conference in Vienna.

### General items

At the end of the first day, the coordinator suggested to look at the calendar of events for 2023.

Antoaneta G. Kuhar (KIS) said that the annual meeting date will need to be changed due to objective reasons. She suggested two dates and the EB members discussed which of the dates were more suitable to everybody. Finally, it was decided that the annual meeting and the next EB meeting will be held between 30 May and 1 June in Vienna. She will send the invitation to all project partners and SAG members soon.

The next EB meeting will then be held in September 2023, this perhaps will be organised online. The final ECOBREED conference and meeting will be in February 2024 (probably between 19 and 24 February 2024).

**Meeting ended on Tuesday, 21 February at 17:30**

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### WP7 - Operational plan until the end of the project

Mario A. Pagnotta (WP7 leader, UNITUS) reported that in Task 7.1 he is in regular contact with BOKU for the phenotyping and genotyping workshops. Pavol Hauptvogel (NNPC) will also organise training events.

Antoaneta G. Kuhar showed the World Soybean Congress website and discussed with the EB members all that was prepared for the ECOBREED workshops announcements. The EB members then discussed criteria for bursaries (esp. about country where organic production is in starting phase of development). The EB members decided that the criteria should be “countries with low uptake of organic production” and this will be changed in the congress webpage. This will then also be distributed on the ECOBREED webpage and Twitter etc.

Pavol Hauptvogel (NPPC) said that he plans a genotyping workshop between 24 and 28 April 2023 in Piešťany and Trnava in Slovakia for max. 10 students. He said that he will prepare the invitation etc. soon and send it to the WP7 leader as well as to the coordinator and the project manager.

The WP7 leader informed him that there are also bursaries available for this workshop and they all agreed that for this the Slovakian workshop also needs to be announced soon. It was agreed that the KIS Project office will send the template for invitations to Pavol Hauptvogel (NPPC) this week to speed up the process.

Werner Vogt-Kaute (NATUR) asked the WP7 leader to provide partners with a table with information who still needs to do trainings and which trainings. Also, to provide templates and information how to announce the events.

Antoaneta G. Kuhar (KIS) added that the ECOBREED website will be upgraded with information about training materials as a subpage in Outcomes. In early April, there will be an online meeting for EB members (and Uroš Žibrat from KIS as organiser of the advanced phenotyping workshop) to discuss the applications and bursaries. Each participant must sign a bursary agreement; with NPPC we need to cover cost etc. & with Vienna this is already covered; each organiser must prepare a questionnaire to get feedback from students. In Task 7.3 we prepare the table with missing events from partners and let them know to announce their planned events.

Vuk Đorđević (IFVC) added that instead of a questionnaire we could prepare a short video with impressions by participants as feedback. All EB members agreed that this is a great idea.



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Werner Vogt-Kaute (NATUR) added that the current questionnaire for demonstration events is too long for farmers. Antoaneta G. Kuhar (KIS) assured him that a shorter version will be prepared for the WP8 events.

### WP8 - Operational plan until the end of the project

Antoaneta G. Kuhar (Project Manager and WP8 leader, KIS) reported about the dissemination activities. Most targets have been reached, but there are many demonstration events still missing according to the target. There are also articles in industry/specialized magazines (popularised publication) missing as there should be at least 2 articles per partner according to the GA. We will inform partners who still need to reach those targets in the last period. Andreja Žibrat Gašparič (KIS) will prepare this list and a list of already published articles (to see what topic where covered and where). Another critical point are the MSc and PhD theses as we have only two for now. The EB members added that there are PhDs planned from BOKU, UNITUS, IFVC and KIS. By 2024 this target should be reached.

Exploitation is well underway, but four targets are questionable if they will be reached:

- Pre-breeding of elite varieties (one from Selgen), still three more missing; wheat had some breeding lines in the beginning that are now released; the Selgen variety is still in trial. Peter Dolničar (KIS) said that one will be finished next year, another four will be in the next 5 years.
- Foreseen new organic varieties – two already done. Antoaneta G. Kuhar (KIS) asked WP leaders to send a table with all varieties' names and their status to the KIS Project office to have all the information for the exploitation report.
- Metrics for farmers to assess organic production systems/rotation backgrounds: target is three. The EB members discussed that there are already three metrics: (i) protein yield, (ii) seed availability of the new varieties and (iii) environmental stability as an indicator – this comes from the farmers field trials.
- Efficient, ready-to-use farmer participatory breeding systems: target is four – the WP leaders reported that we develop populations, and they will be ready for farmers. Buckwheat also should be treated as a new population. Antoaneta G. Kuhar asked the crop leaders to explain this in detail for the PR4 exploitation report.

Demonstration event – there are still many events to be organised in 2023 and showed a table for partners who need to do events and on what crops (UNEW will do all crops, Selgen will do 2 events but not only on buckwheat, probably on wheat also, MATE needs to do events on potato). KIS will do additional events for potato and buckwheat in July 2023 and NATUR will do two additional events on soybean.

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Communication – most targets reached, we are only lagging behind in articles in local newspapers (general media) and attendance at fair and business events (mostly due to Covid-19). Peter Dolničar (KIS) said that he will present ECOBREED at the Chamber of Commerce meeting. Then are links with other projects – the coordinator will attend the Bresov final conference and there will be organic plant breeding as round table where he will speak also about ECOBREED.

Antoaneta G. Kuhar (KIS) also asked EB members to report about the conferences they plan to attend. CRI will go to the International Symposium on Buckwheat in Poland in July 2023, KIS will attend conferences on potato in September 2023 in France, IFVC will be at the World Soybean Conference in June 2023. BOKU and NARDI will go to the 14<sup>th</sup> International Gluten Workshop held in June in Madrid, Spain. BOKU and UNITUS plan to attend the EUCARPIA Section Cereals Conference in May in Szeged, Hungary. NATUR will attend the Wissenschaftstagung (Research Days) in Switzerland in March. They agreed to promote ECOBREED as much as possible at various events.

### General items – Amendment, AGM; FC

There was a short discussion about the annual meeting in Vienna and the organisation of conference rooms etc. The coordinator also asked with SAG members will come in person or join the meeting via video. The invitation for the annual meeting will also be sent to our REA project officer.

Antoaneta G. Kuhar (KIS) informed EB members that the last payment letter has arrived and that the documents were distributed to finance administration of all partners for bookkeeping. She has the distribution for each partner prepared. EC kept 5% for now, so partner that have less than 10% left will not get anything right now. Each partner will get an individual calculation sheet.

Then the budget transfer for CRI and UNEW was shortly discussed. Officially an amendment is not needed for such transfers. If the partners still wish the budget transfer, we need the value and why they want to transfer. This will then be sent to the financial officer to decide whether this is ok or whether we need an amendment. This will also be possible for other partners.

The coordinator thanked everybody for their reports and discussion and closed the 28<sup>th</sup> EB meeting.

**Meeting ended on Wednesday, 22 February at 11:15**

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