

Protocol from the fiftieth PlantLink steering committee meeting

Date: 06 December 2023, 13:00-16:00

Place: Lund, Kemicentrum, Rum Svante

Present: Thomas Moritz, Copenhagen University (chairman); Sofia Marmon, LU; Mariette Andersson, SLU (deputy director); Allan Rasmusson, LU (from 14:30)

Erik Alexandersson, SLU (acting director); Anna Maňourová, SLU (coordinator); Olivier Van Aken, LU (assistant director)

Online: Jean W.H. Yong, SLU; Allan Rasmusson, LU (until 14:30); Andreas Gustavsson Fredlund (economist)

Absent with valid impediment: Johanna Osterman, SLU (PhD students' representative); Leif Bülow, LTH (vice-chairman); Erik Andreasson, SLU; Abraham Ontiveros Cisneros, LU (PhD students' representative); Alf Ceplitis, Lantmännen Lantbruk AB

1. Opening of the meeting

Thomas Moritz opened the meeting.

2. Election of the person in charge of verifying the minutes

Mariette Andersson agreed to be the verifier of the minutes.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

Thomas Moritz reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes were approved.

4. Messages; Erik Alexandersson, Anna Maňourová

- PlantLink has been invited to attend LUNA's Atlas Career Fair. However, given the current circumstances, the committee agreed that PlantLink could not participate in 2024. Erik Alexandersson will inform LUNA.
- On December 1st, the PlantLink Industrial Mentorship Program held its last wrap-up meeting in Alnarp. Two speakers from outside academia, Alf Ceplitis (Lantmännen) and Lerato Matsaunyane (ARC South Africa), joined the mentors and mentees for engaging discussions on life in/out of academia as well as feedback on the mentorship program. An online survey was employed to obtain additional comments.
- Mariette Andersson presented her research on gene editing during EPSO's monthly open online meeting.
- Johanna Osterman is stepping down from the PlantLink position because of her upcoming PhD thesis defence in spring. The PhD council at SLU Alnarp is searching for her replacement.

5. Financial status report; Andreas Gustavsson Fredlund

Andreas Fredlund stated PlantLink's financial condition as it approaches the end of 2023. PlantLink has enough funds to continue during 2024.

6. Updates on PBN and EPSO memberships; Erik Alexandersson

SLU will centrally cover PBN membership for SLU researchers but no longer as a core member. Magnus Karlsson will be the new contact person for PBN for the SLU. SLU Dpt. of Plant Breeding will cover the EPSO membership. Lund is still looking into different options to stay as a member of PBN and EPSO.

7. PlantLink as a part of Partnerskap Alnarp and its future organisational structure; Erik Alexandersson

Partnerskap Alnarp (PA) have lifted that PlantLink (PL) should focus on three primary pillars: topical focus on bioeconomy; the partnership of SLU and LU and also with Danish collaborators; and increasing the interaction between research and industry in cooperation with PA.

Erik Alexandersson provided an outline of possible PlantLink activities within Partnerskap Alnarp in 2024. The committee members discussed the proposed points and agreed on the necessity of activating PlantLink-associated researchers while reducing the communication/outreach activities due to the lowered time set aside for the management team (30% work time). It would be essential to have discussions with PA about how to best utilise their structures to keep up with the PL's activities.

On March 6th, it is suggested that PlantLink attend the Partnerskap Alnarp subject groups' meeting. It should be seen as an excellent opportunity to meet other themes within PA, network and invite PL-associated researchers. In spring, SASUF (www.sasuf.org) Research & Development Week 13-17 May will be combined with Fascination of Plants Day.

Thomas Moritz is stepping down as PlantLink's chairman and is actively looking for a replacement. The committee members should confirm continued participation in PlantLink in 2024 to him.

8. Goals and meetings in 2024; Erik Alexandersson

One of the primary purposes of 2024 is to develop a solid plan for 2025 and beyond. The committee agreed to retain the essential facilities visible to external stakeholders, such as the website and newsletter. PlantLink must ensure that the SLU-LU relationship is maintained and actively developed. If there is a chance, the PlantLink Industrial Mentorship Program should be continued, as it contributes to closing the gap between academia and industry.

PlantLink and NordPlant could serve as facilitators in a putative SLU research school. The LTV faculty at SLU (based in Alnarp) is set to recruit ten PhD students this coming year.

The committee reviewed various external funding sources (NKJ, Mistra, Horizon Europe, and Interreg). Allan Rasmusson, Olivier van Aken, and Erik Alexandersson will approach LU Samverkan after a discussion with Partnerskap Alnarp.

9. NordPlant status report; Erik Alexandersson

NordPlant's final meeting in Båstad, held concurrently with NPPN, was a great success, and all milestones of NordPlant have been met. NordPlant's funding has also been extended until June 30th, 2024. A phenotyping workshop will be held in Oslo on March 20th.

10. Others

No other issues.

11. Next meeting

6th of March – 9:00 – 11:00 am, SLU Alnarp; during “Subject group meeting SLU Partnerskap Alnarp”

12. Closure of the meeting

Thomas Moritz closed the meeting. As this was Thomas's last meeting, the steering committee thanked him for his time and effort with a small gift!

Signature page

This document has been electronically signed
using eduSign.

eduSign