

Protocol from the fifty-first PlantLink steering committee meeting

Date: 29 January 2023, 15:00-17:00

Place: Online

Present: Leif Bülow, LU (vice-chairman); Sofia Marmon, LU; Mariette Andersson, SLU (deputy director); Allan Rasmusson, LU; Erik Alexandersson, SLU (acting director); Anna Maňourová, SLU (coordinator); Olivier Van Aken, LU (assistant director); Jean W.H. Yong, SLU; Abraham Ontiveros Cisneros, LU (PhD students' representative)

Absent with valid impediment: Alf Ceplitis, Lantmännen Lantbruk AB; Johanna Osterman, SLU (PhD students' representative)

1. Opening of the meeting

Leif Bülow opened the meeting.

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

Allan Rasmusson agreed to be the verifier of the minutes.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

Leif Bülow reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes were approved.

4. Messages; *Erik Alexandersson, Anna Maňourová*

- Erik Alexandersson was involved in NKJ application preparation, which will be submitted on the 31st of January.
- SLU Dept. of Plant Breeding will cover EPSO membership fee with a possibility for researchers outside of the department to contribute. Erik Alexandersson's and Olivier Van Aken's groups have decided to do so. There are no further updates about PBN memberships; Allan Rasmusson will be a member from LU, and SLU will be covered by Magnus Karlsson.
- PlantLink's Newsletter will be released on the 31st of January, with PhD thesis defence announcement being revived and included as a separate point.
- Johanna Osterman has not yet identified a student representative replacement for the Steering Committee. However, she maintains active communication with the PhD Students' Union at SLU Alnarp.
- DLF Beet Seed R&D site in Landskrona is closing down by the 1st of July.
- Anna Maňourová will be the new coordinator (20-30%) of the SLU Breeding Network from 1st February.

5. Financial status report; *Erik Alexandersson*

Erik Alexandersson has been in contact with the economist Andreas Fredlund about PlantLink's budget for 2024. Some financial capital remains from the past year and might be utilised as an extra wage or to pay membership fees for the following year. This option is only possible if a new decision to open up for membership payments is taken by the Steering Committee, as it was previously decided not to pay any memberships.

6. PlantLink's future organisational structure and location; *Erik Alexandersson*

Svend Christensen, PLEN, University of Copenhagen, will take over as PlantLink's chair in 2024. Svend will attend the upcoming Steering Committee meeting and have a pre-meeting with the PlantLink management team. The SLU LTV dean has already been notified of this decision, as have the heads of

the Departments of Plant Breeding and Plant Protection Biology. An email to the LU deans will be prepared accordingly.

7. PlantLink's funding opportunities from 2025 and meeting with LU Samverkan; *Olivier Van Aken; Erik Alexandersson*

On January 15th, Olivier Van Aken, Erik Alexandersson, and Anna Maňourová discussed PlantLink's future with LU Samverkan representatives Lisa Thelin, Emma Nordell, LU, Håkan Schroeder, SLU Partnerskap Alnarp, and Anders Carlsson, Head of Dept of Plant Breeding, SLU. One potential next step for PlantLink is the "Centrumsatsningar för ökad beredskap och konkurrenskraft i livsmedelssystemet" Formas call, which is expected to open in mid-February. The number of applications per university as the main applicant is two, so a dialogue with the deans will be initiated.

Olivier Van Aken contacted Lisa Thelin and Emma Nordell again following the meeting to get more feedback. Leif Bülow will contact Emma Nordell as well. Suggestion: LU Samverkan could be invited to the PlantLink Steering Committee meeting.

Decision: A list of stakeholders who can participate should be made.

8. PlantLink's activities in 2024, round table proposal; *Erik Alexandersson*

This year's PlantLink Day could be built around roundtable discussions on six predetermined critical subjects for the development and future of plant research in the Greater Copenhagen region. The discussions would be led by LU/SLU/Danish researchers/stakeholders, who would also get monetary compensation for their activity. The results would be presented and discussed at PlantLink Day, which would be moved to November/December. The roundtable discussions aim to bring together various stakeholders, discuss plant science-related concerns, and make recommendations for future development. Additionally, the event could provide a useful connection between several different actors who are not regularly meeting in one place. PlantLink would act as a control body, creating report templates and reviewing the results.

Steering Committee Reaction: These discussions need to have a clear objective and a clear outcome. In addition to the roundtable discussion leaders, perhaps there should be other speakers at the PlantLink Day. There is a concern that both the general public and students will find the issue of little interest and overly generic.

Decision: Erik Alexandersson and Anna Maňourová will elaborate on the topic and draft a text summary that will be circulated within the Steering Committee before the next meeting.

9. NordPlant status report; *Erik Alexandersson*

NordPlant's funding has been extended until June 30th, 2024. A workshop on phenotyping will be held in Oslo on March 20th, and there will be a NordPlant-UPSCALE meeting in Lithuania at the end of May. Anna Maňourová will work 10% for NordPlant-UPSCALE during 2024.

10. Others

No other issues.

11. Next meeting

February 20, 14:00-17:00, SLU Alnarp.

12. Closure of the meeting

Leif Bülow closed the meeting.

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