

Protocol from the fifty-second PlantLink steering committee meeting

Date: 20 February 2024, 14:00-16:30

Place: Room Triticum, Horticum building, Sundsvägen 10, SLU Alnarp

Present: Svend Christensen, KU (chair); Leif Bülow, LU (vice-chair); Allan Rasmusson, LU; Jean W.H. Yong, SLU; Abraham Ontiveros Cisneros, LU (PhD students' representative), Milla Karlsson, SLU (PhD students' representative)

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

Online: Alf Ceplitis, Lantmännen Lantbruk AB

Absent with valid impediment: Mariette Andersson, SLU (deputy director); Sofia Marmon, LU

1. Opening of the meeting

Svend Christensen opened the meeting.

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

Abraham Ontiveros Cisneros agreed to be the verifier of the minutes.

3. Introduction round and welcome of new committee members

PlantLink Steering Committee members welcomed new members: Milla Karlsson, SLU PhD students' representative and Svend Christensen, new chair of PlantLink, UCPH.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

Svend Christensen reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting. A clarification was made around point 7. Stakeholders related to Formas call. The minutes were approved.

5. Messages; Erik Alexandersson, Anna Maňourová

- The newsletter will come out on the 29th of February.
- UCPH [Green Solutions Centre Biosolutions seminar series](#) – cross-disciplinary seminars open to everybody. The upcoming one, 29 February: Precision fermentation of novel food.
- EPSO: European Research and Innovation Days 2024 are on 20 and 21 March; please let EPSO know if you plan to attend in person or online.
- EPSO: Fascination of Plants Day (FoPD) is coming up on 18 May in conjunction with SASUF Research and Innovation Week. LU Botanic Garden will probably not be part of FoPD this year but is preparing a separate event on 25 May, which could potentially fit. Olivier Van Aken will contact Allison Perrigo for more information.
- A new department as a part of LU LTH was established, "Department of Process and Life Science Engineering," which is a merger of the previous departments, the Department of Chemical Engineering and the Department of Food Technology, Engineering and Nutrition; for now, it consists of about 60-70 employees.
- Two new Erasmus+ programs ADVALUE and NewClim have recently been initiated as a follow-up to the ESCAPAdE project supported by PlantLink 2019-2022. More information can be found on PlantLink's website.
- New ELLS summer school "Plant health in the wake of AI" will take place in Stuttgart and Pieve Tesino on 15-22 June. The school is financed by ELLS and the LTV faculty.

- DLF Beet Seed will be closing down all their operations in Landskrona from 1 July 2024.
- NordPlant has been automatically prolonged for 6 months and will now end-report on 30 September 2024 instead.
- Messages from others:
Olivier Van Aken contributed to a submission of “EnerGO: mitochondrial biogenesis, function and evolution” in response to the VR Grant for interdisciplinary research environments.
Leif Bülow informed that the research around innovative drinks has moved from the former fruit breeding SLU station Balsgård to Åhus.

6. Financial status report; Erik Alexandersson, Andreas Gustavsson Fredlund

Andreas Gustavsson Fredlund, who has been in active contact with LU economist at the Biology Department, presented updates on PlantLink’s budget for 2024. The remaining capital from last year is ca 770,000 SEK, plus some additional money from ELLS. 100,000 have been set aside for running costs, and that still creates a surplus of ca 160,000 SEK at the end of the year, which could be set aside for events outside of PlantLink Day. Olivier Van Aken and Erik Alexandersson will contribute with 5% of their time in kind.

7. PlantLink's funding opportunities; Erik Alexandersson, Olivier Van Aken

Two major funding opportunity options have been discussed lately. The LU-UU initiative “Excellens inom samverken” will not be possible. However, PlantLink could serve as a communication platform/coordinating body, in the Formas ”Centrumsatsningar för ökad beredskap och konkurrenskraft i livsmedelssystemet” applications planned from LU and SLU. All proposals also need to be approved by the SLU and LU centrally. Deadline: 05/30, 14:00.

Erik Alexandersson, Anna Mañourová and Erik Andreasson, will attend SLU seminar on ”Centrumsatsningar för ökad beredskap och konkurrenskraft i livsmedelssystemet” call. *Olivier Van Aken, Allan Rasmusson and Leif Bülow* will discuss the strategy on the LU side and engage there.

8. Focus groups with roundtable discussions (Attachment 2), PlantLink Day 2024; Erik Alexandersson, Anna Mañourová

The Steering Committee agreed on having Focus Groups (FG) with roundtable discussions connected to PlantLink Day after reviewing the draft prepared by Erik Alexandersson and Anna Mañourová. The FG discussion will start with two themes this spring; two to three topics could be added after the summer break, with a decision taken *per capsulam*. Erik and Anna will circulate all seven suggested themes among PlantLink’s researchers to get broader input.

PlantLink will serve as a facilitator, with the FG leaders driving the debates. Aside from having different stakeholders present in the same group, Danish representatives should be included. The groups have to be diverse, including people that would not ordinarily meet; young researchers should be invited. A bottom-up strategy will be taken. However, we must ensure that the emphasis on basic research and PlantLink's role and future are not lost. Inspiration could be taken from [Green Solutions Centre – thematic solutions](#).

Decisions: To launch FGs with 25,000 SEK as budget per FG with the option to apply for some additional money if needed. PlantLink Day will be held in Lund on the 5th of December (Blå Hallen, Ekologihuset, LU is booked from 10:00 to 17:00).

9. Others

No other issues.

10. Next meeting

5th of June, 9:00-12:00

12. Closing of the meeting

Svend Christensen closed the meeting.

Signed by

Anna Maňourová – secretary

Abraham Ontiveros Cisneros – verifier of the minutes

Svend Christensen – chair

Signature page

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