Minutes Final
Public-Private Partnership for pre-breeding Steering Committee (PPP-SC)

Meeting: 15th PPP SC meeting
Purpose: Applications to 3rd PPP Call 2015
Date: 27th November 2015
Time: 10.00-15.00, lunch 12.30
Place: Park INN by Radisson Copenhagen Airport Hotel, Engvej 171, DK-2300
Copenhagen S

Participants:
Country representatives:
Birgitte Lund, NAER, DK (BL)
Tuula Pehu, MMM, FI (TP)
Thoroddur Sveinsson, LBHI, IS (TS)
Anders Nilsson, SLU, SE (AN)

Plant breeding entities representatives:
Annette Olesen, Lantmännens, SE (AO)
Idun Christie, Graminor, NO (IC)
Marja Jalli, LUKE, FI (MJ)
Ahmed Jahoo, Nordic Seed, DK (AJ)

Nordic Academia representative:
Rodomiro Ortiz, SLU, SE (RO)
NCM
Torfi Johannesson (TF)
(Participated in item 1-3)

Secretariat:
Arnir Bragason, NordGen (AB)
Annette Hägnefelt, NordGen (AH)

Absence notice: Magne Gullord, LMD, NO
Mati Koppel, Jõgeva, Estonia

Minutes:
Annette Hägnefelt

Minutes:
1. Opening of meeting & welcome (AN)

AN opened the meeting and greeted all welcome and also especially to Torfi Johannesson from NCM.

2. Agenda, adjustment (AN)

Thoroddur Sveinsson was chosen to adjust the minutes. Item 5, Updates from NCM was decided to be moved up after item 2 since TJ had to leave the meeting earlier. New agenda was accepted.
3. Updates from NCM (AN/TJ)

a) Changes in agreement on the PPP. SC participants received the document - Agreement between the Nordic Council of Ministries and Nordic plant breeding companies/ Nordic public plant breeding entities concerning continuation of the Nordic Public-Private Partnership for Pre-Breeding in Plants for 2015-2017" - (appendix 228b). Also one copy of the document - Interpretation of new wording of Agreement between NCM and Nordic plant breeding entities on PPP Pre-Breeding - (appendix 228c) was handed out.

TJ apologized for the confusion regarding different alternative texts in “The Agreement” and continued to inform that the Committee of Senior Officials (EK-FJLS) decided Nov 24, 2015 on the following new wording of the Agreement.

“Plant breeding entities from non-funding, non-Nordic countries can participate in the project collaboration under part B as associated partners. Associated partners will share equal rights and obligations in the plan, budgets and consortium agreements.”

The Interpretation, 228c, had been written by AN in order to clarify how the changes in the Agreement will be handled by the SC.

“..................................”

This document was set up after the EK-FJLS meeting. The wording of the interpretation had been accepted by a Finnish member of EK-FJLS. The background for the changed wording of the Agreement and the need for its interpretation were discussed.

SC decided to file the new wording of the Agreement, to acknowledge the proposed interpretation and to inform the 12 plant breeding entities that are parties to the Agreement, as well as other plant breeding entities and universities engaged in PPP activities, on this matter.

b) Other updates. Torfi informed that there will be organizational changes regarding decision making which will influence all institutions, NordGen included. NCM has a very positive opinion of the PPP and it serves as model for other joint activities. AJ is invited to Oxford to make a speech about the Nordic PPP.

The SC asked AB to send the NordGen logo and ppt-presentations on PPP. The SC also thanked Torfi Johannesson for his attendance and support in the development of the PPP.

4. Minutes from last meeting (AN)

Minutes from the last meeting were accepted and filed.

5. Updates from secretariat (AH)

a) Funding and payments

- A scheme of the five national contributions made to PPP annually from its start in 2011 until today was presented and commented by AH and representatives from the ministries.
• Contributions to part B from Denmark, Iceland and Sweden will follow a stepwise increase. A considerable part of the Swedish contribution will come as project funding within the Swedish EIP-program, handled by the Swedish Board of Agriculture.

• A similar scheme of the payments to the project owners was presented. Due to high workload at NordGen the last 15% payments after final reports 2013 and 2014 have been delayed. For the Ryegrass project the final report from 2014 has also been missing. A scheme on the balance between agreed contributions and made commitments on funding up through 2017 showed that in part B there are still 4,598.147 DKK to be used for new projects.

SC concluded that the secretariat must be stricter and demand reports on time. Contact need to be taken with professor Odd Arne Rognli, aiming at having an accepted report from the Ryegrass project latest mid-February. It was also noted that reporting can be quite easy if a well-adapted reporting model is used.

b) Update on contracts (AH)

• As requested by SC - PPP 1501 NordApp has included a contingency plan in the Collaboration Agreement in Clauses 3.7 and 3.8, signed by all partners and submitted to the secretariat.

• The signed Collaboration Agreement of PPP 1503 Ryegrass was sent out with the newest member Lithuanian Research center for Agriculture and Forestry, LLU, included as a partner.

• Withdrawal of LBHI, due to lack of time (budget) as well as equipment (NIR) and unexpected staff reduction at LKF Vandel forced the project leader of the PPP 1504 6P project to re-calculate the budget. SC accepted the proposal to redistribute the 420,000 DKK in kind contribution from LBHI to LM and DLF 150,000 DKK each and LKF Vandel and SECOBRA 60,000 each in the project budget. SC also accepted to reallocate the 80,000 DKK of public funding from LBHI to the R&I operational costs budget of UCph, which gives UCph the possibility to collect data at LKF Vandel's trial fields. The new budget plan does not affect the overall project schedule or the number of crops included. However, the Collaboration Agreement has to be adjusted.

c) Update on reporting

The secretariat will focus on establishing user-friendly ways to ensure financial as well as scientific report templates.

6. Listing of active breeding programs in the Nordic countries, eligible for PPP participation

It is important for the SC to continuously have an updated list of active Nordic breeding programs at the plant breeding entities that are parties to the PPP Agreement, not least is this central when judging if new project applications are in line with the guidelines that have been established for the PPP.

It was noted that a plant breeding entity had to be officially registered in a Nordic country in order to be able to join the PPP Agreement. A discussion followed regarding the definition of “breeding program in the Nordic countries for the Nordic countries” means, which ended with the conclusion that AH shall circulate the list to all breeding partners for updating and confirmation of active breeding programs, including comments when judged to be relevant. On our next meeting the list will be presented again.
7. 3rd Call – application and decision

Only one application has been submitted. It is from Professor Inger Åhman with the title “Technology platform for site-directed mutations in Nordic PPP crops”.

The SC concluded that no member of the SC could be considered to be disqualified from taking part in the evaluation, discussion and decision on the application at hand after consultation with the Rules of Procedures and how the SC had dealt with this matter at earlier Calls.

The SC noted the high competence of the participating scientists and also the fact that three breeding companies are making sizable cash contributions. Further, it was stressed that access to gene editing technology will be essential for the ability of small and medium-size breeding entities such as the parties to the PPP. With this background the SC decided to recommend the funding of the project from the Swedish EIP-program on condition that several minor shortcomings of the project application can be overcome. These are:

- Clarify how the four different subprojects (entities) can exchange experience and become more integrated.
- Syngenta has to state what specific trait they aim for.
- Add a Gant-diagram for the process of the project
- Clarification of “Delivery and results” – what and when?
- Statement on intellectual property needs to be described satisfactory. How secure possibilities for the entities to utilize the results at the same time as the process of building the platform can be accessible in general for Nordic plant breeding.
- Describe how the project can deliver values to Swedish (and Nordic) farmers – EIP shall lead to strengthened competitiveness for primary production in agri-and horticulture.

Decided time schedule: The upgraded application shall be sent to PPP’s secretariat and then forwarded to the SC as soon as possible, not later than the 18th of December. SC can give comments to the amendments latest at New Year. The secretariat will then send the application to SJV (Swedish Board of Agriculture) in the beginning of January 2016 after consultation with the Chair of SC.

8. Updating of Flow Chart for PPP

An updated Flow chart for the PPP was presented. A row for “Reporting” regarding Projects could be added. The schedule should also contain future plans.

9. Updates from all members on PPP related issues

AN: CRISP/CAS material is approved for field trials in Sweden by SJV. The news has been announced in several newspapers and media. Further, a strategy for the Swedish food sector is being prepared by the government. Plant breeding is on the agenda.

RO: NOVA will organize their annual PhD course on Genomic Selection in Plant Breeding. Prof Sören Rasmussen is responsible for the course. In summer Sören Rasmussen will arrange a summer course at the UCph which also is open for breeders.

AJ and Nordic Seed has received funding with 5 x 5 million DKK/year for breeding of legumes (field beans). CID is discussing a number of crops and a big program could be
started as soon as the new technologies are not judged to be GM. Bridge is needed between breeding and state.

BL: The present Minister is positive to GMO as well as to inorganic fertilizers, which is opposite to the former minister. However, Denmark has a minority government.

IC: planning for an expanded follow-up of project on genomic selection in wheat and forage grass. Reorganizing NIBio has started which entails reduction of personnel all over the country and also trial stations.

MJ: LUKE is establishing a new strategy. Some research stations will shut down and the merging is more or less over. Business in Boreal runs as usual.

TP: Resources for the institute have been reduced with 20% and some research stations are shut down.

TS: The government speaks about the importance of supporting "Farming" to sustain rural development and food security in Iceland. However, so far nothing substantial is delivered regarding future schemes.

AO: An Oat Center is under establishment with involvement of food and breeding industries.

AB: A new steering model of the different institutions within NCM. 2016 will be the year of change. 10 million DKK will be allocated to long-term projects. We are promised a part to Genetic Resources. There is also an increasing interest in our conserved material, an increase that has a parallel in e.g. Germany. NordGen has been through a tough period with many new staff members. NordGen works with a 20-year plan, and can use balanced funds in this context. As a part of the 20-year plan NordGen will hold a Workshop the 8th of March when national coordinators, NordGen working groups, SC and invited speakers among others will attend. The theme will be — "How can we serve better".

10. Next meeting and topic suggestion 6P or NordApp

Next meeting was decided to the 8th of April, 10.00-15.00, in Tosterup when we ask the 6P team to present their project.

11. Any other business

It was decided to give the secretariat the task to prepare a communication plan and to present this at the next SC meeting. The background is that the respective ministries and NCM expect publications and media coverage on the development and success of the PPP program and the involved projects. It was stressed that the PPP needs to become more visible also in other, more general aspects.

Anders thanked all for an interesting meeting. Meeting ended at 14.30

Annette Hågnerfelt
Secretary

Anders Nilsson
Chairman

Thoroddur Sveinsson
Adjustment