

European Minor Uses Coordination Facility

hosted by

European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization



BR
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Basic Rules

for the

European Minor Uses Coordination Facility (MUCF)

Background

EU Initiative on Minor Uses

[1] The European Commission adopted a report¹ in February 2014 concluding that there is a need to create a European fund for minor uses issues. Minor uses of pesticides (plant protection products) are uses on certain crops which have a high economic value but are not considered as having enough marketing potential to be worth investment by the plant protection industry to get specific uses authorised in the EU Member States.

This leads to a lack of authorised products on the market for farmers to use on these crops, which can lead to illegal uses or loss of crop production. Minor crops in Europe include, for example, most vegetables, fruits, hops, mushrooms, nursery & ornamental plants, rice, tobacco, herbs & spices, seeds, and some arable crops. Overall, it is estimated that they represent more than 60 billion EUR per year, which equates to 20% of the total EU plant production value².

[2] The European Minor Uses Coordination Facility (hereafter MUCF or the Facility) was intended to derive maximum benefit from the existing programme of work across the MUCF Member and Partner countries to support closing crop protection gaps in minor use. However, the proposal also reflected a clear wish from the Member countries to develop a more

¹ REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on the establishment of a European fund for minor uses in the field of plant protection products, Brussels, 18.2.2014 COM(2014) 82 final

² Lamichhane, Jay Ram & Arendse, Wilma & Dachbrodt-Saaydeh, Silke & Kudsk, Per & Roman, Johan & Bijsterveldt-Gels, José & Wick, Mario & Messean, Antoine. (2015). Challenges and opportunities for integrated pest management in Europe: A telling example of minor uses. Crop Protection. 74. 42-47. 10.1016/j.cropro. 2015.04.005.

comprehensive and consistent programme of work with a higher output of solutions for minor uses problems.

- [3] To create the MUCF, three European countries, France, Germany and the Netherlands, agreed to provide funds to match 350 000 EUR per year for three years committed by the European Commission to understand that the costs would be shared more widely in future between European countries benefiting from the work of the MUCF.

EPPO involvement in minor uses

- [4] The European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) was founded by a Convention between 15 countries in 1951 and by 2021 has 54 members, including all of the EU Member States. EPPO has been carrying out work in support of minor uses since 1996.
- [5] The EPPO Convention makes specific provisions for groups of member countries to fund additional work. Article XVIII (h) of the Convention states that "Supplementary contributions may be paid by an individual Government or group of Governments towards special schemes, which the Organization may carry out in the interest of that Government or group of Governments." This may be a useful option for some countries wishing to make a long-term commitment to contribute to the costs of the MUCF.

Establishment of the Facility

- [6] The MUCF was established within EPPO on 15 April 2015 and operated for three years under the supervision of a Steering Group (SG) comprising representatives of the Commission, the three funding countries and EPPO. This Basic Rules describe how the Facility's governance works after 14 April 2018, when the number of funding countries increased so that it was no longer efficient for all of them to take part in the Steering Group.

Mission

- [7] The MUCF supports European stakeholders in closing crop protection gaps in minor uses. It coordinates collaboration and information exchange to improve the availability of sustainable crop protection solutions. The objective is to enable farmers to produce high-quality crops and contribute to sustainable European agriculture.

Tasks

- [8] The main tasks of the MUCF shall cover:

Meetings, technical and administrative support:

- Hosting, organising & facilitating MUCF Commodity and Horizontal Expert meetings.
- Providing administrative and technical support to Commodity Expert Groups (CEG), which carry out projects based on the set priorities within the respective commodity.
- Providing administrative and technical support to the Horizontal Expert Group (HEG) that identifies and discusses issues of general interest with the aim to solve minor use issues across the different sectors.

- Providing administrative support, and preparing information for decision-making to the MUCF Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Steering Group (SG).

Databases and data work

- Maintaining and developing the EUMUDA database in which minor uses needs, projects and solutions are recorded and shared.
- Implementing and gathering information on minor use needs and priorities, minor uses, minor and major crops (as set by National Minor Uses Contact Points), and crop acreage data information.
- Creating and populating new databases.

Project work

- Facilitating the project work and recording project progress and results of the Commodity Expert Groups.
- Facilitating members' and partners' work to solve minor uses needs by referencing available solutions and promoting non-chemical solutions within the IPM framework.

Communication:

- Providing reports, including financial and annual reports, to the Member countries of the MUCF.
- Communicating to stakeholders through the website, newsletters, and meetings.
- The Facility shall maintain links to the EU Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (DG-Sante) and the EPPO Working Party on Plant Protection Products and relevant EPPO Panels and Expert Working groups, to inform them of progress and include on their agenda-specific issues raised by the Steering Group to resolve problems on minor uses.

Legal entity

[9] The MUCF is an activity hosted by EPPO. European countries voluntarily commit funding by means of an agreement with EPPO. Staff of the Facility are employed by EPPO. The Director-General of EPPO is accountable for the use of the funds provided.

Resources and staffing

[10] The Facility comprises staff, an IT system and several Expert Groups. The staff comprises a Coordinator, a Scientific Officer, an IT Officer, and an Administrative Assistant. Staff may be full-time or part-time and may also work part-time on other EPPO activities. Other EPPO Staff may provide some IT and administrative support. Time recording is used to allocate costs clearly and transparently between the Facility and EPPO's other activities. EPPO charges a percentage of MUCF expenditure to cover the overhead costs of office accommodation, etcetera, and a fixed monthly payment towards EPPO's IT infrastructure costs.

[11] The Steering Group and EPPO Director-General are jointly responsible for the appointment of the MUCF Coordinator. The Coordinator and the EPPO Director-General are responsible for appointing other staff who work wholly or mainly on MUCF business. The EPPO Director-General is the line manager of the Coordinator, carries out the annual performance review of

the Coordinator in line with EPPO practice and sets objectives for the Coordinator in consultation with the Chair of the Steering Group. The Coordinator line manages staff who work primarily on MUCF business and is consulted on the annual performance review and objectives of all EPPO staff who contribute to the Facility's work.

- [12] The Technical Secretariat is located in EPPOs offices in Paris. The Coordinator, the IT Officer, the Administrative Assistant, and Scientific Officer will predominately be based in the EPPO headquarters to allow for interaction between the staff and to ensure continuity of the work on a day-to-day basis (to be agreed on in the work contract).

Governance and responsibilities

Membership

- [13] All countries who commit and contribute on a regular annual basis with an appropriate level of funding, as ranked and listed in point 29, and in-kind (e.g. with expertise on relevant minor uses information, providing meeting rooms for expert group meetings etc.) to the MUCF shall be called “members”. All countries who contribute no more than in-kind shall be called “partners”.

There remains a certain degree of flexibility (e.g. the level of the voluntary contribution amount, the regularity of contribution) to participate in the MUCF work; to be decided and agreed on a case-by-case basis by the MUCF Steering Group.

The MUCF shall be responsible to its Member countries.

All Member countries are entitled to be represented in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and in the MUCF Steering Group (SG), receiving reports and relevant information. Each Member and Partner country should nominate at least one administrative and one technical national contact point to the Facility.

- [14] European countries belonging to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) were and are accepted to become ‘MUCF members’ if they follow similar regulatory arrangements for the authorisation of plant protection products and are committed to contribute regularly (funding and in-kind contribution) to the Facility.

- [15] The Steering Group may agree to the participation in the Facility of EPPO Member countries who are not in the EU or belonging to EFTA. However, who follow similar regulatory arrangements for the authorisation of plant protection products and are committed to contribute regularly (funding and in-kind contribution) to the Facility.

- [16] The European Commission shall be invited to attend the Annual General Meeting and Steering Group meetings as a permanent observer.

Annual General Meeting

- [17] An Annual General Meeting of all Member countries shall be convened either as a separate face-to-face meeting in Paris or Brussels or as a remote meeting. The AGM may be arranged

back-to-back with another MUCF meeting at which relevant country representatives are present.

- [18] The role of the AGM will be to approve the Budget and Work Programme for the year to come and to approve the Annual and Financial Reports of the MUCF.
- [19] Decisions of the Annual General Meeting shall be by consensus wherever possible. If it is not possible to reach a consensus, decisions may be taken by an absolute majority of the members present and voting, with each member having one vote.
- [20] The Annual General Meeting shall agree to its own Rules of Procedure.

Steering Group

- [21] The Steering Group (SG) appointed by the Annual General Meeting shall supervise and support the Facility's work. Three to six Member countries shall be appointed onto the SG, for a term of up to three years, from among representatives of Member countries. SG members shall be eligible for reappointment for further terms. In appointing SG members, the Annual General Meeting shall consider the need for representation from the different geographical zones. Each country appointed onto the SG should nominate its representative and an alternate.
- [22] The Steering Group shall meet at least twice each year. One of the two meetings may be held remotely. SG members and alternates receive all the relevant documents for meetings, and both may participate if the meeting is held remotely.
- [23] The Coordinator shall attend meetings of the SG. Part of each SG meeting could be held without the Coordinator or other Facility staff present. The EPPO Director-General (or representative) shall attend SG meetings as the Coordinator's line manager and co-signatory to the MUCF account.
- [24] The Steering Group shall agree to its own Rules of Procedure.

Finances

- [25] Budgeting should follow an agreed template.
- [26] All European countries that benefit from the Coordination Facility's work should have the opportunity to participate in the technical exchanges organised under the umbrella of the Facility and participate in its funding. While it is recognised that most Member countries have an annual budget cycle, commitment in principle for contributions should, if possible, be provided for several years in order to enable the Facility, in turn, to enter into long-term commitments, such as staff contracts.
- [27] The Facility accounts shall be included as a distinct part of the EPPO Financial Report and Accounts, audited and submitted each year to the EPPO Council. An option is available for member countries to contribute to the Facility alongside but distinguished from their regular contribution to EPPO's activities, following Article XVIII (h) of the EPPO Convention.

[28] The Coordination Facility can continue its activities at a similar level as those in the first three years if contributions are weighted according to each European country's population:

- contribution group 1 (>20 Million inhabitants), annual contribution: 50 000 EUR
comprising DE, ES, FR, IT, PL, GB
- contribution group 2 (5.35-20 Million inhabitants), annual contribution: 25 000 EUR
comprising AT, BE, BG, CH, CZ, DK, FI, GR, HU, NL, NO, PT, RO, SE, SK
- contribution group 3 (<5.35 Million inhabitants), annual contribution: 10 000 EUR.
comprising CY, EE, HR, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, SI

If contributions are provided at a lower level, the Steering Group shall recommend priorities to the Annual General Meeting to keep the Facility's costs within the available budget.

Revision history:

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02/2019, Revision 4