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European Minor Uses Coordination Facility

hosted by

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MUCF Work Programme 2023

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Work Programme presents seven Projects with their corresponding Objectives and Key Action Steps that the European Minor Uses Coordination Facility (MUCF) intends to undertake in 2023 to meet the needs of Member Countries (MCs). It takes account of what has been achieved in 2022, some resulting follow-up actions, recommendations of the Steering Group, and recommendations from MUCF's Commodity and Horizontal Expert meetings.

The MUCF works in cooperation with and for the MCs and stakeholders (producer organisations, industry associations, research institutes, regulators, and government experts).

In 2023, the MUCF will primarily focus on the core competencies of the Facility to coordinate, organise and facilitate the work on minor uses between MCs (project 1: MEETINGS), to maintain and further develop the EUMUDA database and to prepare a report on the Minor Uses Survey 2022 (project 2: EUMUDA). The objectives are ranked according to priority in the individual projects.

Definitions and Abbreviations:

The European Union Minor Uses Database (EUMUDA) is an important tool to collect the minor use needs from Member Countries to follow up on these needs and to manage all projects.

Expert Working Group (EWG).

All European countries that commit to the funding of the MUCF regularly (preferably annually) are "member countries" (MCs).

A Minor use means use of a plant protection product in a Member State on plants or plant products which are:

- (a) not widely grown in that Member State; or
- (b) widely grown, to meet an exceptional plant protection need.

(according to Article 3(26) of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009)

A minor use need is an identified plant protection problem on speciality crops (niche crops) or against plant protection problems that are not routinely encountered. These needs are compiled in a 'minor use needs table' in EUMUDA.

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 within an IPM framework. The objective is to enable farmers to produce high-quality crops and contribute to sustainable European agriculture.

All European countries that contribute no more than in-kind (e.g., with expertise on relevant minor uses information, providing meeting rooms for expert group meetings, etc.) are "partner countries".

PROJECT 1: MEETINGS 2023

P1 Objective 1: Spring Commodity Expert Group (CEG) and Horizontal Expert Group (HEG) meetings

The CEG and HEG spring meetings are planned to be held as remote meetings in February and March 2023. The timing of the Autumn CEGs and HEG 2023 meetings will be discussed during the individual Spring meetings. The CEGs work to close minor uses PPP solution gaps by finding chemical or non-chemical solutions within an IPM framework. The CEGs consist of national minor uses experts and representatives of the respective growers' associations or grower groups.

The HEG discusses general issues related to minor uses, as identified by the CEGs, the Steering Group, aiming for harmonised procedures and creating a level playing field among Member and Partner countries.

Actions:

- *Facilitation and organisation of the remote meetings.*
- *Providing assistance for the Chairs and co-Chairs of each CEG in establishing an agenda for the meetings.*
- *Facilitation of follow-up actions, e.g. drafting a position paper on issues raised in the meetings.*
- *Updating ongoing CEG projects and newly generated projects in EUMUDA.*
- *Explore work areas within the CEGs where the MUCF can contribute to support the Member and Partner Countries.*
- *Take on clear tasks within the working groups where and if the MUCF can have added value.*
- *During the Autumn HEG 2022 meeting, it was decided to establish a working group, which stays a sub-group of the HEG, focusing on residue extrapolation proposals (**Residue Expert Group=ReEG**). The MUCF and some selected experts (currently, the lead is held by a Spanish residue expert) prepared "Terms of Reference" for this working group.*

The next actions include:

- *Expert call to chair and co-chair the ReEG to be done before the end of 2022.*
- *Expert calls to participate in the ReEG to be made at the beginning of 2023.*
- *The possibility of establishing a sub-group of the HEG that focuses on criteria to define a harmonised minor crop status was explored during the Autumn HEG 2022 meeting and voted on.*

At the point during the meeting at which this topic was discussed, 13 participants voted in favour of establishing a working group to define criteria for a harmonised minor crop status, 13 voted against it and 4 abstained. These results were therefore presented during the meeting. However, the vote stayed open and by the end of the meeting an additional 6 HEG members had cast their votes. The final results were as follows: 17 voted in favour, 5 abstained, and 14 voted against. These results were not presented to participants and therefore this topic will be further discussed and explored at the Spring HEG meeting 2023 and follow-up actions agreed.

Follow-up actions would include:

- *Expert calls to participate in the HEG sub-group to define criteria for a harmonised minor crop status.*
- *This action is linked to objectives and actions in the projects: EUMUDA and MUCF Communication Material.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Project updates are shared via the 'EUMUDA latest News' e-letter.*
- *Key presentations of the CEGs are published on the MUCF website to highlight the work of the CEGs and raise interest in participating in the CEGs.*
- *Information from the meetings is communicated via the MUCF newsletter.*
- *Increased awareness and use of MUCF material, e.g., Explanatory Note on Minor Uses, Survey data etc.*
- *Providing effective support to all stakeholders on minor uses issues, e.g., PPP solution availability in countries, addressing stakeholder questions at the HEG for discussion etc.*

P1 Objective 2: 1st Steering Group meeting in 2023

The Minor Uses Steering Group comprises representatives from Belgium, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Sweden, and Switzerland and supervises and supports the work of the MUCF. The European Commission and the Director-General of EPPO attend the meetings as a permanent observer.

The first Steering Group meeting in 2023 is planned for the beginning of June. The date and type of meeting will be decided during the 2nd Steering Group meeting in December 2022.

Actions:

- *Facilitation and organisation of the meeting.*
- *The MUCF deliver a draft Work Programme and Budget proposal for 2024 and an Annual and Financial Report for 2022.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *The Steering Group provides advice on the draft Work Programme and Budget proposal for 2024 and the Annual and Financial Report for 2022.*
- *The Steering Group provides advice on who and when to hold (remote or face-to-face, depending on the epidemiological situation) the Annual General Meeting in Autumn 2023.*

P1 Objective 3: Annual General Meeting 2023

The 'Annual General Meeting' (AGM), involving all funding Member Countries, will meet in Autumn (preferably at the end of September, or early October). The AGM shall be convened either as a separate face-to-face meeting in Paris or Brussels or as a remote meeting (depending on the COVID-19 situation). The AGM may be arranged back-to-back with another MUCF meeting at which relevant country representatives are present. 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.

Actions:

- *Facilitation and organisation of the AGM.*

Expected outcome & Success measures:

- *Approved Work Programme and Budget for 2024 and an adopted Annual and Financial Report for 2022.*

P1 Objective 4: Autumn Commodity Expert Group and Horizontal Expert Group meetings

The CEG and HEG Autumn meetings are planned to be held as face-to-face meetings in Autumn 2023 (preferably in October). When and how (face-to-face or remote, depending on the epidemiological situation) meetings should be held will be discussed during the individual Spring meetings in 2023. Final dates will be discussed with each expert working group's Chair(s) and co-Chair(s). Participants will meet to discuss the progress of minor uses projects and issues.

Actions:

- *Facilitation and organisation of the Autumn CEG and HEG meetings.*
- *Providing assistance for the Chairs and co-Chairs of each CEG in establishing an agenda for the meetings.*
- *Facilitation of follow-up actions like drafting a position paper on issues raised in the meetings etc.*
- *Updating ongoing CEG projects and newly generated projects in EUMUDA.*
- *Explore work areas within the CEGs where MUCF can contribute to support the Member and Partner Countries.*
- *Take on clear tasks within the EWG where and if the MUCF can have added value.*

Expected outcome & Success measures:

- *Project updates are shared via the 'EUMUDA latest News' e-letter.*
- *Key presentations of the CEGs are published on the MUCF website to highlight the work of the CEGs and raise interest in participating in the CEGs.*
- *Information from the meetings is communicated via the MUCF newsletter.*
- *Increased awareness and use of MUCF material, e.g., Explanatory Note on Minor Uses, Survey data etc.*
- *Providing effective support to all stakeholders on minor uses issues, e.g., PPP solution availability in countries, addressing stakeholder questions at the HEG for discussion etc.*

P1 Objective 3: 2nd Steering Group meeting in 2023

The Steering Group will meet to discuss the progress of the MUCF's work.

Actions:

- *Facilitation and organisation of the meeting.*
- *The MUCF provides an Annual and Financial activity and funding contribution update for the work year 2023.*

Expected outcome & Success measures:

- *The Steering Group advises the MUCF about the work carried out in 2023.*
- *The Steering Group decided when and how (face-to-face or remote) to hold the 1st Steering group meeting in June 2024.*

PROJECT 2: EUMUDA-further development, updates, and maintenance

P 2 Objective 1: Data processing

In 2021 the MUCF conducted surveys to collect and update existing information on minor uses needs (update accessible in the EUMUDA Table of Needs), minor and major crops, minor and major uses, and national minor crop definitions (information displayed on the home page of the EUMUDA database).

In 2022 the MUCF repeated a survey conducted in 2017 on several Minor Uses topics to update the information and data received in the year 2017 but also to generate added information on Article 51 (Extension of authorisations for minor uses), Risk assessment, Mutual recognition, and the Draft registration report.

One action on comparison of Emergency authorisations (Art. 53.) granted to minor uses needs proposed to be done in 2022 will be carried out in 2023.

Actions:

- *To produce a report on the Minor Uses Survey 2022.*
- *Set up a document (database or Excel file) listing the status of each crop (minor or major) in each country.*
- *To elaborate criteria to define a harmonised minor crop status. Information and data from the 2021 and 2022 surveys conducted by MUCF can be used for this purpose.*

Some follow-up actions may include:

- *The MUCF starts exploring the possibilities of a single European minor/major crop list per regulatory zone or a single European minor/ major crop list.*
- *European experts will be invited to define the criteria for a harmonised minor crop status and a possible single European minor/major crop list or a single European minor/ major crop list per regulatory zone.*
- *To undertake a comparison of Emergency authorisations (Art. 53.) granted to minor uses needs in the EUMUDA "Table of Needs".*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *A report on the Minor Uses survey 2022 is published on the MUCF website.*
- *A report on the comparison of Emergency authorisation granted on minor uses needs in the EUMUDA "Table of Needs" is published on the MUCF website.*

P2 Objective 2: Information sharing

Making information available structured through databases and information hubs will be continued and, where needed, extended in 2023.

How this will be further developed will be guided by the needs and recommendations of MUCF members and stakeholders and by the needs of the user to have specific or general information available.

A. EUMUDA project simplification

The MUCF received feedback from Commodity Expert Group (CEG) members in 2022 on requirements to simplify the structure of the EUMUDA project pages.

Actions:

- *Expert feedback to be implemented.*
- *To explore the possibility that information on a project could be shared between individual CEG groups (for example, a project on fresh herbs initiated by CEG Fruits and Vegetables could be accessed by experts of the CEG Herbs and Spices).*
- *Explore the possibility that a project leader can work on projects on several CEGs.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Increased user-friendliness of EUMUDA project pages.*

B. Efficacy and residues study data availability display in EUMUDA

In 2022 the MUCF shared a template with experts on how they would like to share existing study data availability information. The fields and the structure of the database were explored together with experts in 2022

Actions:

- *To develop the database on efficacy and residues study data availability in EUMUDA.*
- *To start collecting and inputting the information on available efficacy and residue trial data.*
 - *A call to experts to be made to obtain available efficacy and residue trial data and to enquire about study data sharing conditions (e.g., data is free to be shared, or if the data owner requires a fee to obtain the study data etc.)*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Searchable databases established to retrieve information about existing residue and efficacy study data.*
- *Increased numbers of users accessing the EUMUDA database.*

C. Database on residue extrapolation

In 2022 the MUCF started to explore the possibility of setting up and developing a database to retrieve the extrapolation possibilities from the TECHNICAL GUIDELINES: On data requirements for setting MRLs, comparability of residue trials and extrapolation for residue data on products from plant and animal origin (SANTE/2019/12752). The information provided in the Technical Guidelines document will be used to set up the database. The aim is to make the residue extrapolation possibilities available electronically.

Actions:

- *The main fields and the structure of the database are explored by the MUCF team.*

Follow-up actions will include (Long term MUCF work strategy):

- *MUCF experts agreed on the structure of the residue extrapolation database.*
- *To develop and implement a searchable database to retrieve existing residue extrapolation possibilities as listed in the Technical Guidelines.*

PROJECT 3: MUCF COMMUNICATION MATERIAL

P3 Objective 1: Explanatory Note on Minor Uses.

The Explanatory Note on Minor Uses according to Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 was created under the auspices of the European Minor Uses Coordination Facility (MUCF) Secretariat, hosted by the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), to provide comprehensive information on minor uses procedures in the context of the implementation of Article 51 and other provisions related to minor uses for different parties such as authorisation holders, official or scientific bodies involved in agricultural activities, professional agricultural organisations, professional users and competent authorities, as well as for the MUCF Commodity Expert Groups and Horizontal Expert Groups.

The document was endorsed by SCoPAFF in March 2022 and is now available as a reference document.

The 'Note' writing group considers the document to be a 'living document' and is open to revising it regularly if stakeholders express the need for it.

Actions:

- *The possibility of generating a template for a simplified draft registration report Part A (dRR Part A) is explored. The template could supplement the Note as an addendum.*

Expected outcome & success measures (Long term MUCF work strategy):

- *Revised Explanatory Note on Minor Uses.*

P3 Objective 2: Discussion paper

During the workshop on 'Minor Uses and Speciality Crops: The way forward in Europe' held in Paris in 2020, the idea was developed to draft a discussion paper on the topic of "Setting a harmonised status of a minor crop and the creation of a single EU or zonal list of major crops". The information generated by European experts on defining the criteria for a harmonised minor crop status and a possible single European minor/major crop list or a single European minor/ major crop list per regulatory zone could be used as the basis for this paper.

Actions:

- *To establish a writing group to write a discussion paper on this topic.*

Expected outcome & success measures (Long term MUCF work strategy):

- *Drafted discussion paper on "Setting a harmonised status of a minor crop and the creation of a single EU or zonal major crops list".*

PROJECT 4: FINANCE

P4 Objective 1: MUCF Funding for 2023

The MUCF will continue to depend on annual voluntary contributions from Member Country governments for its funding. The sustainability of this approach will depend on the continued timely payment of contributions. This will also require more detailed and targeted budgeting for the coming year.

Actions:

- *National contact points to be visited/contacted to highlight the work of the MUCF and to facilitate a possible contribution to the fund (e.g. Spain, Norway, Poland).*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Satisfaction of Member Countries on the work output of the MUCF.*
- *New Member Countries.*

PROJECT 5: WEBSITE

P5 Objective 1: Content-rich website

The MUCF website serves as both a communication and information hub and is regularly updated with news, survey results, a calendar of events, etc.

Actions:

- *A new general introduction text about the core tasks of the MUCF, the mission and the vision of the MUCF to be displayed on the website.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Increased numbers of users accessing the MUCF website.*

PROJECT 6: IT

P6 Objective 1: Improvement of the IT Infrastructure

The MUCF will work on the following IT tasks in 2023.

Actions:

- *The MUCF Extranet will be reworked.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Improved user-friendliness of the MUCF Extranet.*
- *It will be possible to send formatted emails from the MUCF Extranet.*

PROJECT 7: MISCELLANEOUS

P6 Objective 7: Recurring tasks and actions.

The MUCF will continue with some recurring actions in 2023.

Actions:

- *The Facility participates in (international) events/conferences to provide updates on the work and activities of the Facility.*
- *The Facility continues to cooperate internationally with existing minor uses networks and will play an active role in the OECD-EGMU as it directly relates to and benefits the work of the HEG and CEGs.*
- *The Facility explores the organisation of 'priority setting' meetings with the PPP industry.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Improved visibility of the MUCF's work in Europe and internationally.*

Annex: MUCF Budget Estimation for 2023			
	Expenditure	<i>k</i> <i>EUR</i>	Remarks
1	Salaries and Staff Expenses	300	Salary costs are based upon percentages of full-time salary for each person: 100% of Coordinator, 80% of Scientific-Officer, 40% of IT Officer, 30% of Administrator, 3% of Director-General EPPO, and 2% of Editor EPPO. Related costs include social security, insurance, and pension.
2	Administrative meetings and Governance	27	
2.01	Steering Group	0.5	One remote and one face-to-face meeting at EPPO headquarters (estimated costs for catering).
2.02	Annual General Meeting in Autumn	1.5	The AGM is planned to be held as a face-to-face meeting in Autumn at EPPO headquarters in 2023 (estimated costs for catering).
2.03	Staff travel and subsistence	25	2x SCoPAFF meetings per year (2d) 2x conference (4d) Industry meetings (4x for 1d) to discuss PPP solutions. National contact points visit to facilitate financial contribution (3x for 1d). MUCF team participation in Autumn CEGs and HEG (4d) Travel costs at an assumed average of 300 EUR. Train as a preferred means of transport to reduce emission footprint; accommodation costs at an assumed average of 100 EUR.
3	IT and Communication	15	
3.01	Infrastructure	12	
3.02	Software and services	2	e.g. SurveyMonkey and Zoom subscription.
3.03	Communication	1	Marketing costs. Printing of the MUCF Poster. Pictures for website etc.
4	Technical Meetings	24	
4.01	Spring Meeting CEG and HEG	0	Spring meetings are planned to be held remotely.
4.02	Autumn Meeting CEG and HEG (3d)	24	2-days CEG meetings and 1-day HEG are planned as face-to-face meetings in Brussels or Paris.
04.02.01	Room rental and lunch	21	
04.02.02	Invited guest expert travel grant	3	No cost reimbursement for experts. Experts invited as guest speakers are eligible to receive a travel allowance.
	Overhead (7%)	26	
	Subtotal Expenditure	392	