

European Minor Uses Coordination Facility

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MUCF Work Programme 2024

Contents

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	2
PROJECT 1: MEETINGS 2024.....	3
Technical meetings.....	3
Governance meetings	4
PROJECT 2: EUMUDA-further development, updates, and maintenance.....	5
A. Database on residue extrapolation.....	5
B. EUMUDA projects and improved user-friendliness	6
PROJECT 3: Discussion paper.....	6
PROJECT 4: FINANCE.....	7
PROJECT 5: WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA	7
PROJECT 6: IT	8
PROJECT 7: PROMOTING AWARENESS & NETWORKING	8
Annex: MUCF Budget Estimation for 2024.....	9

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 2024 to meet the needs of Member Countries (MCs) and to improve its services. It takes account of what has been achieved in 2023, some resulting follow-up actions, recommendations of the Steering Group, and recommendations from MUCF's Commodity, Horizontal, and Residue Expert meetings. This Work Programme indicates a MUCF work outlook for 2025 to 2026 for some activities, as some actions cannot be completed in one year. These activities are referred to as the Long-Term Work Strategy (labelled **LTWS**).

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

In 2024, the MUCF will focus its activities primarily on the following key areas of work:

- to coordinate, organise and facilitate the work on minor uses between MCs (project 1: MEETINGS)
- to maintain and further develop the EUMUDA database (project 2: EUMUDA):
 - a. setting up 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).
 - b. updating the table of minor uses needs (Table of Needs Survey 2024).
- to promote cooperation with the PPP industry and to organise “PPP priority setting” meetings (PROJECT 7: PROMOTING AWARENESS & NETWORKING)

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.
The MUCF currently hosts several Commodity Expert Groups (CEGs), a Horizontal Expert Groups (HEG) and a Residue Expert Groups (ReEG).
All European countries that contribute to the funding of the MUCF regularly (preferably annually) are called “ Member Countries ”. All European countries that contribute in-kind (e.g., with expertise on relevant minor uses information, providing meeting rooms for expert group meetings, etc.) but do not commit to funding are “ Partner Countries ”.
A “ Minor use ” means the use of a plant protection product in a Member State on plants or plant products which are (<i>according to Article 3(26) of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009</i>): <ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) not widely grown in that Member State; or(b) widely grown, to meet an exceptional plant protection need.
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 MUCFs mission is to support 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.

PROJECT 1: MEETINGS 2024

The MUCF will facilitate and organise the meetings.

Technical meetings

P1 Objective 1: Spring and Autumn Commodity Expert Group (CEG), Horizontal Expert Group (HEG), and Residue Expert Group (ReEG) meetings

Participants will meet to discuss the progress of minor uses projects and issues.

The CEG, HEG, and ReEG Spring meetings are planned to be held as remote meetings in February and March on separate days in 2024, so that cross-participation for experts in several MUCF expert groups will be possible. The timing and location of the Autumn EGs 2024 meetings will be discussed during the individual Spring meetings. The Autumn EGs 2024 are planned to be held as face-to-face meetings.

The CEGs work to close minor uses PPP solution gaps, via MUCF projects, 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. The HEG consists of national minor use experts from all Member and Partner Countries, high-level representatives of the respective growers' associations or grower groups, and representatives of the European crop protection industry associations.

The ReEG works to close minor uses PPP solution gaps by finding and proposing solutions for setting Maximum Residue Levels (MRL) by means of extrapolations of residue data for plant protection products. The ReEG consists of, national residue experts and representatives of the respective growers' associations or grower groups, representatives of European crop protection industry associations, pesticide industry.

Actions:

- *Providing assistance for the Chair(s) and co-Chair(s) of each EG in establishing an agenda and inviting speakers for the meetings.*
- *Facilitation of follow-up actions, e.g. drafting a position paper on issues raised in the meetings or establishing a small writing group to work on specific topics in more detail.*
- *Updating ongoing CEG projects and newly generated projects in EUMUDA.*
- *Exploring work areas within the EGs where the MUCF can contribute to support the Member and Partner Countries.*
- *Taking on precise tasks within the EGs where the MUCF can have added value.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *CEG project updates are shared via the "EUMUDA latest News" e-letter.*
- *Information from the EG meetings is communicated via the MUCF general newsletter (to be shared at least biannually).*
- *Key presentations of the EGs are published on the MUCF website to highlight their work and raise interest in participating in the EGs.*
- *Effective and improved support to all stakeholders, e.g., PPP solution availability in countries shared, addressing stakeholder questions at the HEG for discussion, etc.*
- *A centralised platform provided for exchanging on the topic and tackling minor uses issues together.*

Action (which was decided, after the AGM approved (2023-10-13) the work programme for 2024):

At the Autumn HEG 2023-10-27 meeting, it was agreed to make a call to establish a sub-working group of the HEG that focuses on the feasibility of defining and elaborating criteria for a European harmonised minor crop status. This topic was explored at the Spring HEG 2023 and Autumn HEG 2022 meetings. This work would be based on the information received in the “MUCF 2022 and 2021 Minor Uses Surveys”.

Follow-up actions for 2024 and beyond include:

- 1. Expert call to participate in a HEG sub-working group which will check the feasibility to define and elaborate criteria for a European harmonised minor crop status.*
- 2. Exploring the possibility of generating a single European minor/major crop list or a single European minor/major crop list per regulatory zone.*
- 3. This action is linked to objective P3: Discussion paper.*

Governance meetings

P1 Objective 2: 1st & 2nd Steering Group meeting in 2024

The Minor Uses Steering Group comprises representatives from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Lithuania and Switzerland and supervises and supports the work of the MUCF.

The European Commission and the Director-General of EPPO attend the meetings as permanent observers.

The Steering Group will meet to discuss and provide guidance on the work of the MUCF.

The first Steering Group meeting is planned for the beginning of June, and the second Steering Group meeting for December 2024. The meeting dates (1st and 2nd meeting) and type (remote or face-to-face, hybrid) are to be decided by the Steering Group members.

1st Steering Group meeting (Summer Steering Group Meeting)

Actions:

- The MUCF will deliver a draft Work Programme and Budget proposal for 2025, a financial overview of funding contributions received for 2024 and a draft Annual and Financial Report for 2023.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- The Steering Group provides advice on the draft Work Programme and Budget proposal for 2025 and the draft Annual and draft Financial Report for 2023.*
- The Steering Group provides advice on how and when to hold (remote or face-to-face, hybrid) the Annual General Meeting in Autumn 2024.*
- The Steering Group provides advice on how and when to hold (remote or face-to-face, hybrid) the 2nd Steering group meeting in 2024.*

2nd Steering Group meeting (Winter Steering Group Meeting)

Actions:

- *The MUCF provides an Annual and Financial activity and funding contribution update for the work year 2024.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *The Steering Group advises the MUCF about the work carried out in 2024 and on improvements for 2025.*
- *The Steering Group decides when and how (remote or face-to-face, hybrid) to hold the 1st Steering Group meeting in June 2025.*

P1 Objective 3: Annual General Meeting 2024

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. 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 Report from the previous MUCF work year.

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Approved Work Programme and Budget for 2025 and an adopted Annual and Financial Report for 2023.*

PROJECT 2: EUMUDA-further development, updates, and maintenance**P2 Objective 1: Processing information**

Making information available structured through databases and information hubs will be continued and, where needed, extended in 2024.

How this will be further developed will be guided by the needs and recommendations of the MUCF community.

A. Database on residue extrapolation

In 2023, the MUCF started to explore the possibility of setting up and developing a database to allow users to easily access 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 (i.e. established extrapolation rules from a major to minor crop) provided in the Technical Guidelines document will be used to set up this database. The aim is to make the residue extrapolation possibilities electronically available.

Actions:

- *The MUCF team explores the main fields and the structure and logic of the database.*
- *Extrapolation rules from the Technical Guidelines document are integrated into EUMUDA (prototype).*
- *MUCF experts need to validate the structure of the residue extrapolation database prototype and support entering the data (LTWS).*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Searchable database to retrieve existing residue extrapolation possibilities as listed in the Technical Guidelines document.*

B. EUMUDA projects and improved user-friendliness

The MUCF received feedback from Commodity Expert Group (CEG) members on requirements to amend the mode of operation for EUMUDA project pages.

Actions:

- *Explore the possibility that a project leader can work on projects on several CEGs.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Increased user-friendliness of EUMUDA projects, as data can be shared and accessed more broadly without compromising the data confidentiality rights.*

P 2 Objective 2: Minor Uses Table of Needs data update

The current table includes and displays minor uses needs of 26 Member countries (22 EU Member States, plus the United Kingdom, Norway, Switzerland, and Macedonia). The last update of the Minor Uses Table of Needs was carried out in 2021. A data update will be repeated in 2024.

Actions:

- *Table of Needs Survey 2024, to update the information displayed in the EUMUDA Table of Needs. To be shared with MUCF national contact points by the end of the second quarter of 2024.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Table of Needs updated, with information received from the Survey 2024 and data is accessible.*

P 2 Objective 3: Data evaluation

Overview of Emergency authorisations (Art. 53.) granted on minor uses needs (LTWS).

Actions:

- *To provide and elaborate an overview of Emergency authorisations (Art. 53.) granted on MUCF collected minor uses needs.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *A document on Emergency authorisation granted on minor uses needs is published on the MUCF website.*

PROJECT 3: Discussion paper

P3 Objective 1: Discussion paper (LTWS):

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 HEG sub-working group on defining 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.

Possible future action:

- *To establish a writing group 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”.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Drafted discussion paper.*

PROJECT 4: FINANCE

P4 Objective 1: MUCF Funding

The MUCF will continue to depend on annual (and other regular) voluntary contributions from Member Country governments for its funding. The sustainability of this approach will depend on the continued timely payment of contributions.

Actions:

- The MUCF explores having the funding situation of the MUCF addressed as an AOB point in an EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council configuration (AGRIFISH) meeting.
Upcoming presidencies (held by MUCF Member Countries) of the EU Council are: Belgium (January-June 2024), Denmark (July-December 2025), Cyprus (January-June 2026), and Ireland (July-December 2026).

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Secured long-term funding of the MUCF and new Member Countries.*

PROJECT 5: WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

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:

- *Regularly updated with new information.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

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

P5 Objective 2: Social Media

The MUCF joined LinkedIn at the end of 2022, to further communicate and share information on minor uses. It posts under the hashtags #EuropeanMUCF and #minoruses.

Actions:

- *Regularly post on LinkedIn (i.e. meeting schedule, news on minor uses etc.).*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Increased numbers of LinkedIn page followers.*
- *Improved visibility of the work of the MUCF.*

PROJECT 6: IT

P6 Objective 1: Improvement of the IT Infrastructure

The MUCF will undertake the following IT tasks in 2024.

Actions:

- *The MUCF Extranet will be reworked allowing the following:*
 - *possibility to send formatted emails directly from the Extranet.*
 - *to have a unique EXTRANET list of contacts (different from the general MUCF contact lists), including EUMUDA contacts.*
 - *a common login page.*
 - *to give EG members the possibility to exchange files directly within Extranet.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Improved user-friendliness of the MUCF Extranet.*

PROJECT 7: PROMOTING AWARENESS & NETWORKING

P 7 Objective 1: Promoting awareness and networking meetings.

The MUCF will continue exploring how to improve some recurring actions in 2024.

Actions:

- *The Facility promotes cooperation with the PPP industry to organise “PPP priority setting” meetings. The goal for 2024 is to engage with at least 6 PPP industry companies and discuss minor uses needs.*
- *The Facility participates in (international) events/conferences such as the Global Minor Uses Summit in Madrid, Spain, in February 2024, a Copa*Cogeca Agriculture Roundtable meeting, CropLife meetings and the Annual Biocontrol meeting (ABIM) in Basel, Switzerland, to raise awareness on minor uses matters.*
- *The Facility participates in SCoPAFF meetings to provide updates on the work and activities of the Facility.*
- *The Facility continues to cooperate internationally with existing minor uses networks. It will play an active role in the OECD-Expert Group on Minor Uses as it directly relates to and benefits the work of the HEG, ReEG, and CEGs.*

Expected outcome & success measures:

- *Improved visibility of the MUCF’s work in Europe and internationally.*
- *Raised awareness of minor uses needs within the PPP industry.*

Annex: MUCF Budget Estimation for 2024

	Expenditure	<i>k</i> <i>EUR</i>	Remarks
1	Salaries and Staff Expenses	352	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, 3% of Editor EPPO and 1% Accounting Service EPPO. Related costs include social security, insurance, and pension.
1.01	Salaries and related costs: MUCF Staff	330	Coordinator, Scientific-Officer, IT Officer, and Administrator
1.02	Salaries and related costs: EPPO Staff	22	Director-General EPPO, Editor EPPO and Accounting Service
2	Administrative meetings and Governance	35	
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. Venue to be discussed. (estimated costs for catering).
2.03	Staff travel and subsistence	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 SCoPAFF meetings per year (4 days [d] x 1 person [p]) • 6 PPP industry meetings (1 d x 2 p) to discuss minor uses solutions and issues. • 1 Copa*Cogeca (1 d x 1 p), 1 CropLife (1 d x 1 p) and 1 ABIM (2 d x 1 p) meeting. • MUCF team participation in Autumn CEGs, HEG and ReEG (4 d x 4 p). • Global Minor Uses Meeting in Madrid (5 d x 1 p) Travel costs at an assumed average of 300 EUR (per return journey). Train as a preferred means of transport to reduce CO ₂ emission footprint. Accommodation costs at an assumed average of 120 EUR per night. Daily allowance at an assumed average of 300 EUR per day.
3	IT and Communication	19	
3.01	Infrastructure	12	e.g. office rent
3.02	Software and services	4	e.g. Zoom subscription, server service fee
3.03	Communication fees & Miscellaneous	3	Pictures for the website, MUCF Visa Card fee etc.
4	Technical Meetings	19	
4.01	Spring CEG, HEG and ReEG	0	Spring meetings are planned to be held remotely.
4.02	Autumn CEG, HEG and ReEG (3d)	19	2-days CEG meetings and 1-day HEG and ReEG are planned as face-to-face meetings. Venue to be discussed.
04.02.01	<i>Room rental and lunch</i>	15	
04.02.02	<i>Invited guest expert travel grant</i>	4	<i>No cost reimbursement for experts. Experts invited as guest speakers may be eligible to receive a travel allowance. To be considered on a case-by-case basis.</i>
	Overhead (7%)	30	
	Subtotal Expenditure	455	