

MINUTES OF THE WP4 MEETING

Meeting:	WP4. Establishment of Diagnostic and Training Hubs (DTHs)
Date of Meeting:	26/02/2019, Zagreb
Minutes kept by:	Mrs Arnela Okic (UNSA)
WP leaders	Dr Dimitrios Tsitsigiannis (AUA) and Dr Magdalena Cara (AUT)

Participants: Dimitrios Tsitsigiannis (AUA), Magdalena Cara (AUT), Francesco Faretra (UNIBA), Fuad Gaši (UNSA), Željko Jaćimović (UoM), Mladen Naydenov (AU), Bojan Konstantinović (UNS), Nedeljko Latinovic (UOM), Milan Ivanović (UB), Ivan Juran (FAZ), Mladen Zovko (SVEMO), Karolina Vrandečić, (PFOS), Robert Dumi (AKKSHI/NASRI), Jordan Mekcuri (Gjergj Kastrioti Skenderbeu), Arnela Okic (UNSA).

The meeting of WP4 started at 15:00, according to the program of the Kick off meeting of the project "Harmonization and Innovation in PhD Study Programs for Plant Health in Sustainable Agriculture – HarISA". The meeting was chaired by WP4 leaders Dimitrios Tsitsigiannis and Magdalena Cara. They appointed Mrs Arnela Okic as the Minute-taker Secretary of WP4 meeting. Dr Dimitris Tsitsigiannis presented the WP4 to all participants and discussed the implementation of all Tasks. The presentation consists part of the Minutes.

Description of WP4: Diagnostic and training hubs (DTHs) will be established at PIs in partner countries and equipped with additional equipment in order to serve as the future regional centers of excellence in the selected specific fields.

The objectives of WP4 are:

- To develop the **selection criteria** and identify the excellence of scientific groups within the PIs from partner countries
- To upgrade existing facilities in service of PhD students', staff and professionals' needs
- To establish diagnostic and training hubs with high expertise in particular fields available to serve as regional centers for education and spreading knowledge

WP4 Tasks

1. Selection criteria and evaluation procedure for diagnostic and training hubs - May 2019
2. Workshop: selection of candidates - October 2019
3. Purchase of the equipment - September 2020
4. Forming a network of DTHs, signing agreements between DTHs - October 2020

Dr Tsitsigiannis pointed out the importance of DTHs. He explained the difficulties in plant disease diagnostics, as well as the objectives, outcomes and activities of the WP4 that were further discussed along with the proposed methodology. As he mentioned the ultimate goal is to establish strong networking in order to improve the diagnostic efficiency of plant health laboratories in partner countries.

WP4 leader suggested the need to prepare a table for every PI that would list all existing equipment as well as a table with a list of the needed equipment. WP4 co-leader Dr Cara emphasized the rules of Erasmus and that the equipment has to be purchased as soon as possible.

Several PIs from partner countries engaged in discussions, describing the equipment in their labs. Most labs have the basic equipment for a Plant Pathology setting including: 1) standard laboratory workspace, 2) microscopes – stereoscopes, 3) laboratory supplies and consumables (media etc), 4) basic equipment for molecular diagnostics e.g. thermocyclers, electrophoresis apparatus etc, 5) basic equipment for serological diagnostics e.g. photometer for ELISA, 6) growth chambers, 7) greenhouse, 8) reference materials-library, 9) internet access – computers, 10) cameras. However, there are some partners that have very few or do not have any equipment for plant disease diagnosis as is the case of University of Mostar. Dr Milan Ivanović from University of Belgrade and Dr Bojan Konstantinović from University of Novi Sad pointed out that the equipment in their laboratories is old and outdated. Dr Fuad Gaši from University of Sarajevo suggested purchasing a 3D printer for the production of lab plastic ware consumables e.g. small tubes that could save some money and would also contribute in several teaching activities. Partners were also discussed regarding the need of Real Time PCR and LAMP instrumentation in plant pest diagnosis labs. Selection criteria for the purchase of equipment will be suggested and will be sent to all members of WP4.

There was a decision to start the equipment purchase process sooner than indicated in project application.

Finally, Dr Tsitsigiannis introduced to all PIs and project members the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as well as EPPO guidelines for pest identification. There was also proposal from Dr Magdalena Cara for in lab protocols' calibration. Finally, it was decided to organise (if feasible) workshop trainings in plant pest and disease diagnosis especially for students.

The meeting was concluded at 17:00 pm.

WP4 Leaders

Dimitrios Tsitsigiannis, Associate Professor

Magdalena Cara, Professor

Minute-taker Secretary:

Arnela Okic, MSc

