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COST Action FA1204
(Action 01/10/2012– Action 30/09/2016)

Vegetable Grafting to Improve Yield and Fruit Quality under Biotic and Abiotic Stress Conditions

PROGRESS REVIEW 1/2
(01/10/2012 – 31/07/2015)

This report assessing the period stated above is submitted by the Rapporteur and is validated by the Scientific Committee of the COST Association

Confidentiality: the Progress Review will be made available to the COST Association (Committee of Senior Officials, Scientific Committee, and Administration) and Action Management Committee only. The Summary assessment below will be included in the Progress Report which will be made publicly available on the Action page on the COST website.

Summary assessment of progress (for publication):

This action aims at enhancing basic understanding of vegetable grafting as well as communication and networking between scientists and stakeholders. The project team has been doing an excellent job in organizing meetings/conferences in various locations (Athens, Murcia, Jerusalem, Lisboa, Antalya, and Berlin) and communicating with other international groups working on vegetable grafting. They have also some key publications in highly recognized journals in relevant scientific areas, as listed in page 10 of the progress report. However, it is highly recommended that they report ALL publications out of this action including peer-review journal papers, conference proceedings, and extension articles. Limiting to 10 publications to report for this large group of scientists is not realistic. List of publications can also include graduate students' publications such as thesis. If COST progress report format/guidelines cannot be changed to include such information, the project team should voluntarily do so in their COST project website. Currently the project website serves mainly for sharing the conference information (program, abstracts, and, for some meetings, presentations) and does not act much as organized portal of scientific information that the project team is generating and publishing in different media. It is also equally important to report how many students (undergraduate and graduate students) were engaged in the funded projects. Short term scientific missions (STSMs): 15 STSMs were funded and the short description of the projects are available in the project website. Many of the projects listed are highly relevant to the project objective. It would be helpful if they can indicate which STSMs are completed and what publications came out of them.

Training schools: the first training school was organized in Italy, but the number of participants were rather small (15 participants). The project team plans to organize another training in the Netherlands. Better communication with target audience is needed to increase the participating and thereby the potential impact. Unless the training school has much hands-on component, the school can reach larger number of audience by considering online access through webinar.

Dissemination: The project team has been active in networking rather internally through the conferences they organize. However, book publication is expected and this will serve as the central resource to provide various information on vegetable grafting. The exact contribution and outcome of this project still needs to be described with quantitative information in the project website. Proposed database will be an excellent resource useful in many countries including those outside of COST.

Overall the project team has been making a good progress and likely to complete all the tasks proposed in the MoU document.

Validation by Scientific Committee

This report was validated by the Scientific Committee on: <COST Association inserts SC validation date>



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Confidential to COST Association and Action Management Committee

I. Review of Progress					
MoU objectives					
Objective of this Action is to understand the basics of sciences behind vegetable grafting and then to exchange the information (existing and newly found) among participating scientists, stakeholders and beyond. The project team has been excellent job in networking and communicating, but actual outcomes of scientific activities are yet to be determined (by the end of project). More information is needed to provide in the project website including all publications.					
MoU deliverables					
Most deliverables are 75% completion level, as many of them are on-going. Database development may not be completed in time as it has to rely on submission of data by scientists and stakeholders.					
Co-authored publications and FP7/ H2020 proposals/ projects					
10 selected publications are all in high quality, but projects like this need to report all publications including local extension publications developed for dissemination. Website use for that purpose is highly encouraged. The project team members submitted two proposals to conduct more in-depth scientific research in some of areas addressed in this COST project (rootstock-scion interactions with environmental factors and rootstock breeding).					
Additional Outputs and achievements					
Strong connection with international groups working on vegetable grafting (China, ISHS, and US) is additional achievements. A book of vegetable grafting is timely publication.					
General assessment of progress					
To make the overall assessment of progress:					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select the overall level of risk that best corresponds to that of the MoU objectives and deliverables¹ (high/ moderate/ low) at the time the Action was approved and 2. Select the statement that corresponds to the level of progress with achievement of these objectives, delivery of deliverables and any additional outputs. Policy as well as scientific/ technological outputs and impacts must be addressed. 					
Correlate the selected options in order to arrive at the overall assessment (which is a result of the combination of achievement level and risk/ ambition level).					
	Level of MoU objective achievement, MoU deliverable delivery and additional outputs		General risk/ ambition level of Action MoU objectives and/ or deliverables (at the time of submission)		
			<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Scientific/ technological and policy outcomes and impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Action is progressing appropriately with achievement of MoU objectives and delivery of MoU deliverables and delivery of multiple valid additional outputs, contributing to the COST mission of "COST enables breakthrough scientific developments leading to new concepts and products and thereby contributes to strengthen Europe's research and innovation capacities."	Excellent	Excellent	Very Good
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Action is progressing appropriately with achievement of MoU objectives and delivery of MoU deliverables and delivery of at least one valid additional output	Excellent	Excellent	Very Good
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action is progressing appropriately with achievement of all MoU objectives and delivery of all MoU deliverables OR Action is progressing appropriately with achievement	Excellent	Very Good]	Good

¹ When assessing achievement of MoU objectives and delivery of MoU deliverables any changes approved by the (Scientific Committee/ CSO) must be considered the base against which the assessment is made.

		of most MoU objectives and delivery of most MoU deliverables AND delivery of at least one valid additional output			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Action is progressing appropriately with achievement of the majority of MoU objectives and delivery of the majority of MoU deliverables and no valid additional outputs	Very Good	Good	Fair
	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Action is progressing appropriately with achievement of half of the MoU objectives and delivery of half of the MoU deliverables.	Good	Fair	Poor
	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Action is progressing appropriately with achieving few if any of the MoU objectives and delivering few if any of the MoU deliverables although there is progress with some other valid outputs	Fair	Poor	Fail
	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Action is not progressing appropriately with the achievement of any MoU objectives, or delivery of any MoU deliverables or any valid additional outcomes	Poor	Fail	Fail

II. Review of the Networking	
Added value of the networking	
1. Comment on the Action's description of the added value of the networking	
The project team has been very active in networking through meetings and conferences. The degree of actual collaborations and outcomes through collaborative activities are not described in this report.	
2. Assess the validity of the Action's statement regarding the necessity of the added value of the Action networking for the Action co-authored publications:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action statement is valid
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action statement is not valid for the following publications for the following reasons (specify which publications and justify/ explain)

III. Review of Impacts²	
1. With reference to the definition of impacts in Annex 1 comment on the validity, relevance and significance (in particular importance and timeliness) of the impacts (Scientific/ technological, Economic, Societal) claimed by the Action (in Section I.D of the Achievement Report).	
2. Indicate any additional possible impacts not considered by the Action.	
1.	This project is still on-going and the only clear impacts that they achieved are collaborations and book of abstracts. Database has not been developed and so it should be described separately.
2.	Education of undergraduate and graduate students. However, actually number is not reported.
Overall assessment of impacts	
Select the statement that best describes the Action's impacts:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple highly significant impacts are reasonably foreseen, at least one of which is already observed [Excellent]
<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple highly significant impacts are reasonably foreseen for the future OR one highly or moderately significant impact is already observed [Very Good]
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	One highly significant or multiple moderately significant impacts are reasonably foreseen for the future [Good]

² Scientific/ technological, Economic, Societal

- One moderately significant impact or multiple impacts of low significance is/ are reasonably foreseen for the future OR one impact of low significant is already observed [Fair]
- At least one impact of low significance may occur in the future [Poor]
- No impacts have occurred or can be foreseen to occur in the future [Fail]

IV. Review of Dissemination and exploitation of Action results

1. Assess the effectiveness of the Action's dissemination and exploitation approach.
Conferences have been organized well and developed the main platform for dissemination. However, the project website needs more effort as it is currently serving to offer conference information only.

2. Indicate whether each initiative implemented by the Action was effective and added value or not.

Item/activity	Target audience	Result	Hyperlink	Effective and added value Y/N
Meetings	Agronomists, breeders, nurserists, horticulturists	Presentations of COST Action results	www.vegetablegrafting.unitus.it	Y
ISHS conf.	Scientists, breeders, nurserists, horticulturists	Presentations of COST Action results	www.ishs.org/ishs-book/1086	Y (limited extent)
EPSO Newsletter	General	Dissemination of COST Action	http://www.epsoweb.org/newsletter/newsletter-september-2013	Y (limited extent)
Try-fold flyer	General	Dissemination of COST Action	http://www.vegetablegrafting.unitus.it/ifile/trifold_brochure_cost_2014_final.pdf	N

3. Select which of the following statements best describes the Action

- There were many highly effective Action activities focusing on dissemination³ and exploitation of Action results [Excellent]
- All Action activities focusing on dissemination and exploitation of Action results were effective [Very Good]
- Most Action activities focusing on dissemination and exploitation of Action results were effective [Good]
- A few Action activities focusing on dissemination and exploitation of Action results were effective [Fair]
- The activities undertaken focusing on dissemination and exploitation were ineffective [Poor]
- The Action did not undertake any valid activities focusing on dissemination and exploitation of Action results [Fail]

V. Review of Action Success(s)

³ Dissemination activities could include: Action website, co-authored publications listed at Section I.B of Action's Progress Report, other Action publications, attendance at Dissemination Meetings listed at Section II.B.2 of Action's Progress Report.

COST regularly communicates the successes of Actions. Please comment on the validity of the aspect(s) identified by this Action as its greatest successes (see Final Achievement Report Section I.G). The project is still on-going and the final achievement section is not available. Per Section I.F, there are some successes already indicated although the details of these “breakthrough” are not known.

If you believe that another aspect(s) (outcomes and/ or impacts, rather than activities) of the Action should be considered its greatest success(es) please define these below (maximum two).

Description of the success story	Dimension of the success Breakthrough: scientific, technological or socioeconomic Policy implementation (specify which policy) Capacity building)
Increase in number of grafted plants, grafting nurseries used in participating countries	technological
Increase in number of scientific publications relevant to vegetable grafting in participating countries	scientific

VI. Review of the management of the Action budget

Funds spent outside of the COST countries

1. If the Action spent funds on STSMs to approved institutions in International Partner Countries (IPC) or Near Neighbour Countries (NNC) and/ or STSMs from an approved institution in a NNC please assess the value of these activities to the Action.

Total budget and especially the budget for dissemination seem to be smaller than what we usually see for this size of project.

2. If the Action spent funds on any “Invited Speakers” for meetings and/ or Training Schools or on Dissemination meetings please assess the value these added to the Action

Stated above.

General comments on Action management

More details need to be presented.

Action Rapporteur details and procedures

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In completing the Assessment Report the Action Rapporteur

- reviewed the following documents:
 - Action MoU (http://w3.cost.eu/fileadmin/domain_files/FA/Action_FA1204/mou/FA1204-e.pdf)
 - Draft Action Achievement Report
 - Publications (listed in the report)
 - COST project website (<http://www.vegetablegrafting.unitus.it/>)
- used the following methodology: N/A

Please remember to write a summary assessment of progress on the first page of this report. This summary will be made public, while the rest of this report will not.

Annex 1

Definitions:

COST Action Challenge (main aim)	“The research question addressed by the COST Action targeting scientific, technological, and / or socioeconomic problems”
COST Action Innovation	“The creation and / or development of new or improved concepts, products, processes, services, and / or technologies that are made available to markets, governments and society”
COST Action objectives	“COST Action objectives are the results that an Action needs to achieve in order to respond to meet its challenge. These are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely) and twofold: research coordination objectives and capacity building objectives.”
COST Action research coordination objectives	“Achieving these objectives turns COST Actions from initially scattered teams into one transnational team and leverages the existing funded research. These objectives entail the distribution of tasks, sharing of knowledge and know-how, and the creation of synergies among Action participants to achieve specific outputs.”
COST Action capacity building objectives	“Achieving these objectives entail building critical mass to drive scientific progress, thereby strengthening the European Research Area. They can be achieved by the delivery of specific outputs and / or through network features or types and levels of participation.”
COST Action networking activities	“any activities organised by the COST Action (whether or not directly funded by COST) in order to achieve research coordination and capacity building objectives.”
COST Action networking tools	“instruments through which eligible activities can be funded”
COST Action outputs	“direct results from the COST Action activities. These can be codified knowledge, tacit knowledge, technology, and societal applications.”
COST Action impact	“the short- to long-term scientific, technological, and / or socioeconomic changes produced by a COST Action, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.”
COST Action deliverable	“a distinct, expected and tangible output of the Action, meaningful in terms of the Action’s overall objectives such as a report, a document, a technical diagram, a software etc. Action deliverables are used to measure its progress and success.”
COST Action milestones	“Control points in the Action that help to chart progress. They are also needed at intermediary points so that, if problems have arisen, corrective measures can be taken. A milestone may be a critical decision point in the Action where, for example, the MC must decide which of several technologies to adopt for further development (e.g. core group and MC meetings, mid-term reviews)”
Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC):	Current COST Member Countries targeted by the COST inclusiveness Policy (“Inclusiveness Target Countries” (ITC)): EU 13 (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia), EU candidate countries (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Serbia, Turkey) and potential EU candidate countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina). In addition, to comply with the EC criteria for ‘Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation’, Portugal and Luxemburg are included.