



EU MINOR USES COORDINATION FACILITY

Newsletter

No. 9, January-February-March 2019

Minor uses, major issue!

Continuity of MUCF at stake

Speciality crops have a high economic value for farmers but may be of low economic interest for the crop protection industry. This leads to a lack of authorised products on the market for farmers to use on these crops.

The Minor Uses Coordination Facility (MUCF) supports growers in finding solutions for minor use needs and to increase the number of tools for farmers.

Since the creation of the MUCF a lot has been achieved. The European Minor Use Database EUMUDA has been enhanced and relaunched. It now displays a consolidated list of minor use needs from almost all the EU Member States (as well as Norway and Switzerland) and includes 87 projects.

In the report prepared in the framework of the REFIT process it is stated that EU Member States and stakeholders welcome the establishment of the EU Minor Uses Coordination Facility.

Growers' associations indicate that one of the achievements of the MUCF is bringing people together and building trust between experts (for example through twice yearly meetings). Another benefit, acknowledged by stakeholders, is that the MUCF is undertaking important work on the harmonization of procedures by developing a Guidance Document.

Countries indicate that minor uses problems are increasing and, as they do not have the capacity to solve these minor uses problems on their own, they value the coordinated approach as put into place by the MUCF. In coordinating the minor use work at EU level, the MUCF prevents duplication of work, effort and resources. The fact that the MUCF has created a platform for information exchange and work sharing between minor uses experts is acknowledged by countries.

However, the continuity of the MUCF is at stake. Although 14 countries have expressed their interest in co-funding the Minor Uses Coordination Facility the funding for 2019 has not yet been secured. We count on your support for this year and for the coming years.

Without additional financial support the Coordination Facility may already have to end its activities before the end of this year.

Jeroen Meeussen,
Coordinator of the MUCF

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Annual General Meeting and long-term funding

On 26 February 2019 the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in Brussels. This was the first meeting in the new governance structure of the Coordination Facility after the expiry of the grant agreement with the Commission on 15 April 2018. The main point of discussion was the long-term funding of the Coordination Facility and how the Coordination Facility can become a financially sustainable organization.

All countries who have committed to fund the Coordination Facility in 2018 and/or 2019 were invited to the Annual General Meeting, as well as the members of the Minor Uses Steering Group.

At the present time, the contributions from countries to the funding of the MUCF for 2019 will not be sufficient to fully cover the expenditure at current levels and as a consequence in 2019 there will be a deficit of approximately EUR 140 000.

The AGM acknowledged that the financial situation of the Coordination Facility is critical and that voluntary assessed contributions reaching at least EUR 500 000 annually are required to guarantee its continuity.

The possibility to discuss again the issue of long-term funding of the Coordination Facility at the AGRIFISH Council of the EU will be explored. Contributions from third parties could be considered, but with caution to avoid any conflict of interest.

The first public annual report of the EU Minor Uses Coordination Facility has been adopted by the AGM. Exceptionally, this report does not cover a full year but only the period from 15 April 2018, which is the expiry of the EU grant agreement, until 31 December 2018.

Future annual reports will cover a full year. In the annual report you can read about our achievements over the past year. The report also includes a financial overview.

The work plan for 2019 of the EU Minor Uses Coordination Facility has been adopted by the Annual General Meeting. In the work plan you can read about our objectives for 2019. The report also includes a provisional budget.

The annual report and work plan will soon be made available on the Minor Uses Website.

Stakeholder Advisory Forum

The Third Stakeholder Advisory Forum of the EU Minor Uses Coordination Facility (MUCF) took place in the afternoon of 26 February 2019 in Brussels. The event was, as in previous years, well attended with 38 stakeholders from a wide range of countries and organizations.

The first part of the Stakeholder Advisory Forum consisted of presentations. Mr Jeroen Meeussen from the MUCF presented the main achievements since early 2018 and provided feedback from the Annual General Meeting. The Executive Director of IR-4, Mr Jerry Baron, introduced the minor use programme



Mr Jerry BARON

in the US. The IR-4 project is a US government funded research programme, facilitating the regulatory approval of sustainable pest management technology for speciality crops and speciality uses to promote public well-being. In the US speciality crops are divided into food crops (fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs, spices) and non-food horticulture crops.

A 'minor use need' is defined as a pesticide use where the use is so limited that commercial development would be unprofitable (less than 300 000 acres). The cooperation between US and Canada is a good example of work sharing and has led to numerous registrations for minor uses.

Ms Paula de Vera indicated that the mission of Copa-Cogeca is to ensure a viable, innovative, competitive EU agriculture and agri-food sector guaranteeing food security to half a billion people throughout Europe. EU farmers are a major producer of speciality crops and therefore Copa-Cogeca is very supportive of the work of the MUCF.

Mr Laurent Oger from the European Crop Protection Association presented ECPA's view on the issue of minor uses and the current challenges. There is an increasing pressure on pesticides in general. The high number of emergency authorizations illustrates how difficult it is to solve minor uses issues.



Mr Laurent OGER

Stakeholder Advisory Forum (continued)

In the second part of the afternoon a panel discussion was held. Panel members were representatives from DG SANTE, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Slovakia, Freshfel, IR-4, Syngenta and the International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA). The moderator of the panel discussion was Mr Hans Mattaar (Technical Director of the European Crop Care Association, ECCA).

The panel promoted more clarity regarding the rules for authorization and harmonization and thus creating a level playing field for EU growers of speciality crops. The panel made a few suggestions on how industry can be motivated to apply for minor uses.

It is crucial to have a clear indication of the minor uses needs and an overview of the available plant protection products in different countries. The MUCF can play an important role in this. Another incentive can be found in extended data protection on the major use. This is already operational in both the US and the EU.

To create a more streamlined process for the authorisation of ‘minor uses’ can only be achieved with clear support from countries at a political level. As Mr Hans Mattaar summarized concise and to the point: *“Where there is a will, there is a way”*.

The full report of the Stakeholder Advisory Forum will soon be made available on the Minor Uses Website.



Panel discussion

Spring minor uses expert meetings

The Commodity Expert Groups (CEG) and Horizontal Expert Group (HEG) will be held in Brussels from 26 to 28 March 2019. More than 100 participants from 20 different countries have registered.

For the plenary session on Wednesday morning 27 March a variety of topics have been scheduled. There will be a presentation on new developments regarding Homologa. Homologa is a database that contains detailed information about authorized products and their uses (in English). It also contains information regarding Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) of agrochemicals in food and statistics on export and import of food and ornamentals. It covers more than 60 countries.

Marrone Bio Innovations will present a general overview of the biopesticide and biostimulant industries, including the award-winning bacterial strain with uses as a bioinsecticide, bionematicide and bioherbicide. Austria will give an overview of the ‘Alert service for plant protection in Austria’. An update on basic substances will be provided. Basic substances are commodity substances that are not predominantly used for plant protection purposes but nevertheless are useful in plant protection (e.g. beer for trapping, fructose, sucrose, vinegar). The status of three ‘IPM and Minor Uses’ research projects as carried out by C-IPM ERA-NET’ will be presented.

We are looking forward to meeting all minor uses experts again in Brussels.

OECD-meetings

The meeting of the OECD Expert Group on Biopesticides (EGBP) will be held on Tuesday 25 June 2019 at the OECD Headquarters in Paris. The EGBP meeting will follow a one-day seminar at the same venue on “Bioinformatics and regulation of microbial pesticides” on Monday 24 June 2019.

Delegates from OECD Member countries must register for OECD-meetings via their OECD Permanent Delegations.



Guidance Document on Minor Uses

Where are we with the Guidance Document on Minor Uses?

A draft version of the Guidance Document was circulated to the minor uses experts and comments received were discussed in the meeting of the Horizontal Expert Group last October.

On 5-6 December 2018 a meeting of the drafting group took place to address all the comments in detail. The comments deal with a variety of topics e.g. zonal process and mutual recognition, Article 51, risk envelope, draft Registration Report, renewal procedure, residues and data protection. Based on the comments received it was decided to replace most of the text referring to different provisions in the Regulation related to minor uses with an overview table providing the general principles of the zonal system, mutual recognition and applications for extension of authorisations for minor uses. This table has also been discussed by the regulatory experts in the Post Approvals Issues (PAI) Group mid-March 2019.

The Guidance Document will now be forwarded to the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (SCoPAFF) for adoption.

Homologa searches and industry feedback

In 2018 the Minor Uses Coordination Facility (MUCF) conducted a survey of countries about their minor uses needs and priorities. Data from 25 EU Member States and from Norway and Switzerland are available in EUMUDA (<https://eumuda.minoruses.eu>).



As a first step in finding solutions the MUCF will check databases for possible solutions. The MUCF has started to make searches in Homologa for the main priorities as listed in the table of needs. The results of these searches are available for the experts in the Minor Uses Extranet.

In addition, the MUCF has recently visited three plant protection companies (Andermatt, Belchim and BASF). Meetings with other companies are in preparation. The purpose of these meetings is twofold: (i) to receive feedback on the structure and content of EUMUDA and (ii) to discuss possible solutions for the minor uses needs, especially for the needs with the highest priorities.

Andermatt is a producer of biocontrol products and is market leader for baculoviruses. The policy of Andermatt is to provide so-called 'crop solutions', solutions for all pests and diseases in a crop.



Belchim has a similar crop-oriented approach and develops solutions for a sustainable crop management. Belchim invests in minor crops and label extensions and works closely together with BI-PA (Biological Products for Agriculture).



BASF has its 'minor uses team' in place since 2011, comprising experts from different disciplines (technical, registration, marketing) in which the different zones are also represented. BASF motivation for minor uses are to provide solutions for minor crops and to broaden the label and thus to increase market coverage.



The presentation of the minor uses needs and priorities in the current format in EUMUDA is considered very useful. The table with the 'grouped minor uses needs' is considered the most useful table and can be used by companies to expand the label of products with more minor uses.

The proposed possible solutions as presented by the companies will be discussed in more detail in the spring meetings of the CEGs.