



PROJECT FULL TITLE:
COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN REFERENCE COLLECTIONS OF PLANT PESTS AND DISEASES FOR EU PLANT HEALTH POLICY

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The report of the second Q-collect Workshop was posted online on the 15th of October 2015 and is available on the Q-Collect Website <http://www.q-collect.eu/events/rome> .



Q-collect
Creating a harmonized Europe-wide framework of plant pest collections
2nd Workshop for collections and users of biological material
Rome, 2015-09-08/09

Conclusions and recommendations

All presentation accessible through <http://www.q-collect.eu/events/rome>

Q-collect is a EU FP7 funded project which started on the 1st of October 2013 and aims to improve the status of (reference) collections important to plant health (more information on the project is available on the Q-collect website, www.q-collect.eu). In this framework, two Workshops were organized by the EPPO Secretariat (a partner in this project). The objective of the first Workshop (Kleinmachnow, DE) was to present the progress made after 12 months, and gather stakeholder expectations. A summary report of this first Workshop is available on the EPPO website (http://archives.eppo.int/MEETINGS/2014_conferences/q-collect_de.htm).

The second Workshop was organized at the Plant Pathology Research Centre of the Council for agronomic research and economic analysis (CRA-PAV) in Rome. Ms Barba Head of the Plant Pathology Research Centre presented the research Center with a special focus on activities in pathology.

The overall goal of the Workshop was to present the main findings of the Q-collect European project to its stakeholders, namely representatives of collections and Heads of national plant protection laboratories within the EPPO region.

The Workshop was organized in different sessions.

The first session aimed to present why availability of reference material is important in the current regional and international plant health context.

- An overview of the Q-collect main objectives was given by coordinator of the Q-collect project, Mr Bonants (DLO, NL). The different work packages (WPs) were presented globally. Details of the different WPs were presented in Session 2.
- An overview was given by Mr Mumford (GB) on the new plant health regime currently under preparation in the European Union. A new strategy has been elaborated, which is more risk-based and where more emphasis is put on prevention and preparedness. The circa 250 regulated pests will be maintained from the previous regulation but priority pests will be identified; It was noted that the EU control regulation EC no 882/2004 is also under revision and will now include the phytosanitary area. This regulation lays down rules for establishing a competent authority in each Member

State and for establishing official laboratories, European Reference Laboratories and National Reference Laboratories. One of the consequences of this new regulation will be that Plant Health EU Reference Laboratories will be designated. The requirements, tasks and responsibilities for such EU reference laboratories as included in the current draft version were presented, including those related to the access to biological material and to collections. Implementation is envisaged by 2018 at the earliest.

- Ms Moreira (IPPC Secretariat) presented the activities on diagnostics conducted at the IPPC level in particular the development of diagnostic protocols. She highlighted that whenever possible, sources of reference material are identified in the protocols as this was valuable information for laboratories. At the moment there are no initiatives at IPPC level to map the availability of biological material held in collections globally, however, it is recognized that access to reference material is important. The example and achievements of the Q-collect project could be a trigger for international cooperation in this area.

The second session (Mr Streito (INRA, F) and Ms Pottier (INRA, F)) focussed on the state of the art of collections as mapped during the project.

The surveys organized (both with the collections and their users) confirmed that although there are a significant number of plant pathogen and pest collections still present within Europe, they are dispersed, widespread and of very variable quality.

The main findings of the project are as follows:

- Most collections are working or research collections and only few of these collections are likely to be organized to provide services to outside users.
- There is a limited amount of information on collection's holdings available online.
- Many collections have no quality system in place, and accreditation of collections is rare.
- Sharing of material between collections to ensure resilience is not common and can be considered as a high risk for loss of important biological material in case of incidents with buildings or equipment.
- Appropriate basic funding is not secure enough and there is a need for a common policy towards collection management throughout the region.

During the third session (Mr Elphinstone (Fera, UK), Ms Blümel (Ages, AT) and Mr Robert (CBS, NL)) of the Workshop proposals made during the project to improve the current situation were presented.

- Guidelines on quality assurance for reference collections elaborated during the project were presented. It was noted that these should be further developed in the framework of the EPPO specialized Panels on diagnostics for each group of organisms. The final objective is to prepare an EPPO Standard to provide guidance on quality assurance for reference collections.
- The proposed criteria for the establishment of a sustainable network were described. The objective of this network is to bring together previously dispersed information on biological material and stimulate collaboration. Criteria for reference and working collections were proposed.
- Plans for an online platform to stimulate and facilitate networking and data sharing were presented. The objective of the establishment of such platform is to improve accessibility and visibility of biological material (and related information) available in collections.

The Workshop discussed the question of sharing of material from collections. Participants from various working collections (from Denmark, Hungary, Latvia, Russia, Switzerland) considered that sharing the material in their possession was important. They were also positive that as a first step, having their information about their collections displayed through a web-portal was essential. The workshop concluded that a pilot platform including a deposit form for biological material should be developed. Collections agreed to try to complete this form (the information could also be provided to those collections which participated in the survey but did not attend the Workshop). Regarding the criteria for reference collection the Workshop welcomed that these should be reviewed by the EPPO specialised Panels on diagnostics for each group of organisms. The Workshop also recommended that the criteria proposed for the establishment of a sustainable network should also be reviewed in the EPPO Panels on diagnostics. It was also suggested that the guidelines developed within Q-collect project should be sent for information to the organizers of test performance studies (as these are laboratories sharing biological material from their collections in this framework). This will allow feedback to be gathered about the criteria proposed for the network.

During the fourth session of the Workshop, an analysis of the impact of the 'Nagoya Protocol' for collections was presented (M de Vos (UGent, B)) as well as the White paper (Ms Edema (NVWA, NL)) prepared in the framework of the Q-collect project.

- The main potential impacts of the 'Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization' on collection were presented. It was noted that this Protocol is now going to be implemented in the EU and that guidelines are being prepared. The objective at European level is an implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on the 12th of October 2015. The Workshop noted that this legislation seems to create conflict with obligations under the IPPC, for example it is not clear if specimens isolated from imported consignments can be stored and used for diagnostic and research purposes.
- The main content of the White Paper of Q-collect was presented and the document was amended to include proposals made during the Workshop. It was in particular considered important that not only the state of the art of collection(s) are presented but also the main proposals made during the project. The Workshop welcomed the possibility offered to the EPPO Secretariat to present the White Paper at the EPPO Council (Riga, 2015-09-15/16).

Conclusions and recommendations

- The Workshop participants supported the White Paper developed in the framework of the Q-collect project.
- The Workshop welcomed the possibility to present the outcome of the project and the White Paper to the Heads of NPPOs at the EPPO Council (Riga, 2015-09-15/16)

The Workshop suggested

- That a presentation of the outcomes of the project should be made during the next Conference on Diagnostics (Angers, FR, 2015-11-30/12-02).
- That papers presenting the outcome of the project are published in the EPPO Bulletin.

Ms Belissario explained the organisation of the collection of the Plant Pathology Research Centre including fungi, oomycetes, bacteria, viruses, and viroids and the participants had the opportunity to visit the collection.

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