

## Protocol from the fifty-fifth PlantLink steering committee meeting

**Date: 5 December 2024, 9:00-11:00**

**Place: Room Svante, Kemicentrum, Lund**

*Present:* Svend Christensen, KU (chair); Allan Rasmusson, LU; Jean W.H. Yong, SLU; Mariette Andersson, SLU (deputy director); Sofia Marmon, LU; Erik Andreasson, SLU (until 10:30), Vivian Schmitt, LU (PhD students' representative), Alf Ceplitis, Lantmännen Lantbruk AB; Leif Bülow, LU (vice-chair), Esther Kuper SLU (PhD students' representative), Sajeevan Radha Sivarajan, SLU

Olivier Van Aken, LU (acting director); Anna Maňourová, SLU (coordinator)

*Online:* Andreas Gustavsson Fredlund, SLU (economist)

*Absent with valid impediment:*

### **1. Introduction round**

The meeting started with a short introduction round to welcome new Steering Committee member Sajeevan Radha Sivarajan, a researcher at the SLU Department of Plant Protection Biology.

### **2. Opening of the meeting**

Svend Christensen opened the meeting.

### **3. Election of the person in charge of verifying the minutes**

Leif Bülow agreed to be the verifier of the minutes.

### **4. Minutes of the previous meeting**

Svend Christensen reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting. Following a clarification regarding discussions with Håkan Schroeder (led by Erik Alexandersson and Anna Maňourová), the minutes were approved.

### **5. Messages** *Olivier Van Aken, Anna Maňourová*

- Anna Maňourová shared updates on the Centre for Primary Production. It was agreed to monitor the appointment of the new director and arrange a meeting to explore potential collaboration opportunities for PlantLink.

### **6. Financial status report and discussions around memberships;** *Andreas Gustavsson Fredlund, Olivier Van Aken, Anna Maňourová*

Andreas Gustavsson Fredlund, Olivier Van Aken, and Anna Maňourová provided an update on the financial status of PlantLink and discussions around membership fee payment. The prognosis is that after the end of December, there will be 185,000 SEK remaining at LU and around 0 at SLU.

PlantLink might have the capacity to pre-pay some membership fees in advance, with EPSO identified as the top priority. Anna will investigate the cost of EPSO membership, while Svend will confirm the costs for PBN and NBPPN. Additionally, Allan will explore whether LU can cover

the membership fees exclusively for SLU. To gain further clarity on the budget situation, Olivier and Anna scheduled a follow-up meeting with Andreas on December 11.

### **7. PL Board members during 2025; Olivier Van Aken**

Olivier has been approved as the new Director of PlantLink. The role of Assistant Director remains vacant. The members who are not listed below confirmed their presence in the Steering Committee in 2025.

Members seeking replacements:

- Jean Yong (SLU)
- Mariette Andersson (SLU): May stay or find a replacement.
- Erik Andreasson (SLU): To be replaced by Sajeevan Radha Sivarajan.
- Leif Bülow (LU)

The committee discussed potential candidates for the Assistant Director role and into the Committee. We agreed it might be beneficial to involve someone from a faculty-level position or a professor emeritus. It was also suggested that engaging the LU Botanic Garden in the committee could be a valuable addition. Olivier, Allan and Mariette will start the dialogue.

The idea of holding another round of meetings with the deans was raised to improve engagement. Reaching out to Copenhagen deans was suggested as a way to open new collaboration opportunities.

### **8. Any other business;**

Leif Bülow mentioned that the relocation of Lund University facilities to Brunshög is likely on indefinite hold, with only the Nanotechnology division at the Department of Physics potentially moving there.

The Committee also discussed the need to maximise the value of PlantLink's memberships. If we continue to cover membership fees, it is essential to enhance communication about how these memberships can benefit researchers and students. For instance, there should be more outreach to help stakeholders understand how to access information and resources from EPSO and how PhD students can get involved in relevant activities.

### **9. List of core PL activities/goals for 2025; Olivier Van Aken**

It was agreed that PlantLink will send out a newsletter 4 times/year. Members of the Committee are kindly asked to contribute and reach out to their students, colleagues, and anyone interested.

PlantLink Day will continue, if funding is secured. We will try to apply e.g. to the Royal Physiographic Society of Lund or Crafoord Foundation (1<sup>st</sup> Thursday in February)

The website will remain active; however, Anna will need support with content creation. Both Olivier and Sofia will receive access to WordPress – Sofia can assist in website updates. The Researcher in the Spotlight series will be maintained but reduced to approximately four features per year. Researchers from Lantmännen and Oatly could be excellent candidates for interviews!

The committee decided that PlantLink Board meetings should be held in person, with four meetings planned for the year.

**10. Update on PL future funding options Olivier Van Aken**


Olivier Van Aken provided an update on funding initiatives. A Formas communication grant application has been submitted, with Mats Hansson and Cecilia Hammenhag contributing as potential 'house researchers'. Additionally, a proposal for a mentorship program will be prepared and submitted to the Novo Nordisk Foundation in the coming year. Funding for PL Day 2025 can be sought from KFS and Crafoordska Stiftelsen.

**11. Next meeting; Svend Christensen**

The next meeting will be on 26 February 13-16:00, the place will be specified.

**16. Closing of the meeting; Svend Christensen**

Svend Christensen closed the meeting.

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