

Minutes of the CONAM -Leaders meeting, CONAM Review Board.
16 December 2005, Sheraton-Airport Hotel, Brussels (13h30-16h30)

Attendance:

Prof. V. Rogiers (chairperson *ecopa* and co-ordinator CONAM), Dr. B. Garthoff (treasurer *ecopa*), Mrs. K. Gabrielson (team leader WP 2 Chemicals Policy), Dr. Zucco, Dr.A. De Cerain Lopez (replaced prof .E. Vilanova), Prof.H. Spielmann, Prof.P. Maier.

Dr. S. Webb and Dr.Karsten Mueller presented the” animal calculator” before the real start of the board meeting.

Excused :

Dr. J. Van der Valk (team leader WP 3), Prof. T. De Cock Buning (team leader WP 4), Prof.W. Pfaller, Dr.A. Van Iersel, Prof. E.Vilanova.

The proposed agenda is adopted.

AGENDA

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|----|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Opening, Overview | V. Rogiers/B. Garthoff |
| 2. | Project Planning, Gantt Charts,
Events, future Dates | B. Garthoff |
| 3. | Work package presentations | WP leaders, resp. representatives |
| 4. | Budget | V. Rogiers et al. |
| 5. | Plans for 2006, activities | V. Rogiers et al. |

1. Opening and Overview

Dr.B. Garthoff welcomed the attendants to the Board meeting of WP Leaders of CONAM. He explained the presence of Dr. S. Webb and Dr.Karsten Mueller of the Chemical Policies Working Group as they would give a preview of the “REACH” animal calculator tool before the real start of the board meeting. It was to be presented at the forthcoming *ecopa* Annual Meeting.

***Calculator for estimating the animal use under REACH.**

Dr.Karsten Mueller and Dr.Simon Webb will present the animal test calculator during the REACH *ecopa* workshop and in the mean time a teaser will be put on the *ecopa* website and the newsletter. This CONAM project tool has been developed in collaboration with P&G, BASF and Bayer CropScience, and will help develop intelligent testing strategies.

As a special, participants will receive a free copy of the “animal test calculator” prepared by the Chemical Policies Working Group.

Dr. Webb explained the starting point of the calculator. That was based on (1) data of the number of animals used in test protocols, (2) information of the E.C giving some indication of availability of data for substances which might exist already and (3) the REACH proposal in terms of which test are mandatory for different tonnage, etc....They made a synthesis of those different inputs and this resulted in a tool that allows a transparent estimate of the number of animals used under REACH. It can also contribute to the development of intelligent testing strategies and a more informed debate on REACH. It can provide arguments how REACH can be improved and implemented.

Besides all of that, it can give an indication of the costs and the timeframe of different tests.

Dr.Mueller gave a demonstration of the tool, which was still a beta version open for improvement.

Even additional tests can be taken up in the tool.

The board agreed that a screenshot will be shown as a preview at the annual meeting. The attendants also agreed on the educational value of this tool.

Finally, Dr. Webb and Dr.Mueller were thanked by the chair for their fruitful contribution and left the meeting.

2.FURTHER NEWS ON CONAM PROJECT- PROJECT PLANNING : CALENDAR OF CONAM PROJECT AND CRITICAL DATES FOR WGS

1.Agenda Timeline

- CONAM Review meeting (Sheraton Brussels, BE)	16/12/2005
- <i>ecopa</i> annual meeting (Sheraton Brussels, BE)	17-18/12/2005
Future meetings and reviews are foreseen on:	
- REACH Workshop (Sheraton Brussels, BE)	01/02/2006
- CONAM review meeting (Basel, CH)	16/03/2006
- eSI meeting (Alicante, Spain)	29-30/09/2006
- Next CONAM review	12/10/2006
- <i>ecopa</i> annual meeting	25-26/11/2006
- Final EU review CONAM programme	1 st quarter of 2007

2. Plans

Dr.Garthoff drew special attention to the Chemical Workshop, which was normally foreseen to take place on 16 December 2005, one day before the *ecopa* Annual Meeting but was now postponed to 1 February 2006.

*The programme of REACH needed some adaptation.

Dr.Garthoff asked for additional input for the programme of the Chemical Workshop that has been postponed to February, due to a pending decision by the European Union. Depending on the decision that will be taken, the programme will be adjusted, so different scenarios are taken into account. The workshop will also take place in the middle of the week instead of a weekend and more publicity may be necessary. The REACH workshop should be the basis of the consensus paper, a deliverable within the CONAM project by the end of 2006.

*Following points were brought up with respect to this workshop;

(1) Magda Chlebus at EFPIA and Colin Humphris at Cefic will be approached and asked to spread the Chemical Workshop invitation to their contact list, in order to reach a wider public. (2) If eventually the number of registrations would exceed more than 60 participants, the infrastructure of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel could be used, otherwise the workshop will be held in the Sheraton Airport Hotel. (3) Invitations need to be sent out by the week of 23/12/05

Dr.Garthoff provided the attendants with the dates of the other planned meetings (see above) and Prof.Rogiers stated that it is now the moment to look into the 7th FP for new projects that could be a continuation of the existing CONAM Project. The remark was made that it should be induced through SusChem. Everyone was asked to have a look at the 1st call within 7th FP.

Dr.Garthoff mentioned with regard to the themes of the coming workshops that it would be wise to expand the action radius of *ecopa* after the implementation of REACH. Until now the focus was mainly on the regulatory domain, but he suggested expanding the areas to more experimental research, pharmacology, areas that are not that regulated. In these areas, there are still a lot of blind spots and it involves the majority of animals respective savings. The topic of the degree of suffering was also suggested.

Browsing through the performance review for 2005 of CONAM, ecopa.

*With regard to the **expansion of interaction** with Iccvam and IVTIP, it was said that there was a lot of interaction with IVTIP, especially through the Reprotect and Sens-it-iv projects.

***Corporate membership recruitment**

This process is not up to speed, yet. The current sponsoring comes mainly from four companies (P&G, Bayer Crop Science, Johnson & Johnson and CEFIC).

-Following remarks were made by the attendants:

(1) In response to the remark that a more accurate split between the different partners had to be made to avoid possible criticism Prof. Rogiers replied that this was already in place.

Two platforms, namely the Netherlands and Germany provided financial contributions in the past.

(2) Membership money is needed to sponsor extra activities and at this moment it is more an ad hoc mechanism. Membership should include contributions from industry as well as animal welfare.

(3) The secretary made a remark that as the amounts for the membership fees are written down in the statutes, (varies between 10 and 100€ for of a NCP) whilst the corporate membership fee goes from 1.500€ up to 10.000€, it would be better to call it "supportive" membership, in order to explain the different amounts.

(4) There was also the question what *ecopa* provides in return for membership: Tax return, access to an interesting network, early inside information, knowledge, information dissemination through the newsletter/website and the eventual set up of additional educational programmes would be possible on request.

Dr. Garthoff asked the attendants to send their input on this subject to the general secretary, and stressed that the membership forms had to be sent out in due time.

***With regard to the more active involvement of NCP's and starting up activities for new member platforms.**

(1) Contacts are made with Ireland, as Prof. Ryan will give a presentation at the next *ecopa* annual meeting (12/05). (2) Spain was going to contact Portugal but without significant progress until now. Dr. De Lopez Cerain promised to take this matter up again. (3) A representative of the French government is attending the annual meeting and could be approached.

A comment was made that the communication between *ecopa* and the national platforms had to be improved. This will also be discussed at the next annual meeting. Names, emails of the delegates and sub delegates will be asked again, to ensure that everyone at the national platform is informed properly.

***Interaction with FP and planning, participation in SusChem and similar Projects. Technology Platforms**

The participation/involvement with SusChem was established. Dr. Garthoff mentioned that he has not found similar FP projects or suitable technical platforms addressing alternative methods yet. The following potential platforms were brought up: Nanotechnology, Innovative medicine, System Biology, (animal health e.g. fisheries is more livestock). No platform was involved in the Era network up to now either.

A partnership is missing at this point to facilitate interaction more easily. An official role in the partnership as a stakeholder mirror group might be an opportunity to join, as until now there is only an existing partnership between the European Commission and industry.

However, an action plan is under construction wherein typical projects with subgroups will be presented, and in which scientists' competence is needed. The governance of the partnership is being discussed at this moment and gets input from a joint central steering committee (EU and industry) and a stakeholder mirror group.

The stakeholder mirror group consists of NGO's, patient groups with the necessary expertise and whoever has a legitimate interest in the topic. Another possibility for involvement in various action groups would be based on individual competence/expertise.

The governance principles were said to be available in January and would then be published in the *ecopa* newsletter to inform individuals.

*The topic of the next **eSI workshop** is not finally defined yet. The suggestion was made to use this workshop as a pre runner to the next annual workshop of 2006 in terms of identifying new themes, which would be more advisable as eSI is essentially about basic research.

Prof Decio Eizerik, a top system biologist, was named as a possible lecturer.

Dr.Garthoff asked everyone to think about possible themes and the following possible subjects were proposed: Pharmacology, biological research and the theme of suffering.
eSI will be funded by the P&G/ Eurotox/ HS 'alternatives' award Prof.Rogiers won.
Until November 2006, the expenses for the organization of the eSI workshop, REACH and the Annual meeting workshop are covered by the current budget for a total of 92.544€.

-Planning Gantt Chart

*Dr.Garthoff announced that the activities mentioned on the Gantt Chart are on plan; some delays are due to circumstances out of their control, such as the delay of the chemical meeting caused by the pending decision of the EU.

The activity list will be presented to all the WP leaders and does not need further explanation.

The maximum delay is of 3 months. (The final is the end of 2006 e.g. launch of final website for the ethical Working group. Only WP2 is reaching into March.)

With an average rate of 2/ 3 appearances a year, there was an overachievement of the newsletter.

The final review date with endpoint is at the 1st quarter of 2007.

*The project planning tool, implemented by Mrs. Habermann, can be handed over to the general secretary for further updating, but therefore the necessary license for the project planning tool, amounting to +/- 2000 € -4000€, has to be foreseen.

3. Workpackage presentations:

WP 2 (EU Policy Chemicals under the responsibility of K. Gabrielson)

Dr. Garthoff looked back, and concluded that WP2 fulfilled its tasks and was perfectly on scheme. (1) The review on collected data has been completed. (2) The first results of the expanded data collection appeared in the newsletter. (3) The status of the 3Rs, (4) the status of legislation, (5) the defining of the different task groups, (6) preparation of the workshop and (7) finally, the publication of the consensus paper that is actually foreseen for the 1st quarter of 2007.

(8) The only thing that was not exactly executed, according to the description, was the modification of the WG2 (8 members), normally each stakeholder had to be represented by 2 members in the chemical workgroup, but there was only one member per stakeholder. However, this was not considered to be a problem for the EU and was already reported in the first CONAM annual report to the European Commission.

WP 0

Data of board meetings and reviews

17/03/05-(NL)

16/12/05-(BE)

16/03/06-(CH)

(See agenda timeline)

WP1 (Consensus networking in alternative methods and FP6 under the responsibility of V.Rogiers)

* **Solid network building on 3R-alternatives in the EU** : See previous.

* Information on the **different FP6 projects** on alternatives, such as CONAM, Predictomics, Reprotect, Sens-it-iv, A-Cute-Tox, are already mentioned in the newsletter.

* With regard to **the website**: A thorough expansion and re design has been effectuated on several sections such as news, events, archive, education, databases, members, forum, newsletter, links, legislation and contact. The expansion of the website into the ethical area is still under construction.

*** With respect to the induction of new and future national consensus platforms:**

(1) A new initiative will be introduced as Ireland will be represented at the annual meeting by Prof. Ryan.

(2) Prof. Rogiers mentioned that the French government, represented by Mrs. Isabelle Fabre, could be approached at the *ecopa* Annual Meeting in order to establish further contacts. (A potential problem for France to join *ecopa* can be caused by the fact that the government might ask larger financial contributions from industry, (1 mio € per year was mentioned)

(3) Denmark and Hungary are ready to join as full members and Poland, Norway are associated platforms. Contacts in the Baltic States are made.

Maybe that France and Portugal could be added as associate members within the next years.

Prof Rogiers briefly explained the procedure to become a member.

***Newsletter**

The lay out of the messenger will remain and the fact that only links are shown, received good feedback. As such, it gives the option to obtain more detailed information by a simple click. Activities and meetings of working groups and of the board are listed.

An additional Newsletter will be sent around Xmas, (as last year called the Xmas Xpress-edition.).

***With regard to the participation of CONAM members in FP6 projects on 3R:**

New calls (9/11/2005):

(1) Carcinogenomics: VUB is a scientific partner in this project and initially *ecopa* was represented by Dr. Van Iersel but as he withdrew from the board, he was replaced by the general secretary. The main participation is the dissemination of information through the website and the newsletter and no further funding is involved.

(2) Lintop board: board member (Prof. Spielmann) is present in the management board, whilst Dr. Zucco is the coordinator of Lintop.

Existing projects:

(3) Reprotect: coordination of the board by Dr. Garthoff (Chair), Prof. Rogiers and Mrs. Karin Gabrielson.

(4) Predictomics: Prof. Castell is coordinator and Dr. Garthoff represents *ecopa*.

(5) A-CuteTox: board member (Prof. Maier) is present in Advisory Board.

(6) Sens-it-iv: Prof. Rogiers is present in the management board

(7) Dr. F Zucco is in the advisory board of Biosim (network of excellence-developing mathematical models). Dr. Zucco gave a brief explanation on Biosim and handed over a one pager to be published in the newsletter. (The next meeting of the advisory board is foreseen on the 1st of May 2006.)

***With regard to the linking with relevant third parties in 3R's**

(1) DG Research will be present at the annual meeting. (2) There are existing contacts with OECD, but the head of OECD, Mr. Wagner is now being replaced by Mrs. Laurence Musset. No official data from OECD are available on nanotechnology; therefore they will not be present at the *ecopa* Annual Meeting.

(3) There is a good collaboration with ECVAM: the head of the unit, Prof. Dr. Hartung is always willing to give a lecture at *ecopa* workshops (4) Prof. Rogiers will be representing *ecopa* as an observatory member at ESAC meetings. (5) The relation with Eurogroup was optimised again after a brief discussion about the possible approach on consensus issues. (6) There is a good interaction with Zebet (7) Prof. Rogiers was asked for the round table at CEFIC meetings. (8) Good contacts are established with Colipa (9) Prof. Rogiers will represent also Eurogroup at their request, at SusChem meetings. (10) *ecopa* is regularly invited at IVTIP meetings

***Plans for 2006**

Expansion of the website into the ethical area is foreseen and will be discussed with the team leader of WP 4; Prof. T. De Cock Buning. The content of the ethical area of the website needs some clarification. Under supervision of Prof. De Cock Buning, the process of updating the database has started and a link to the database will be provided.

***National platforms:**

The fact that the English platform is mainly represented by the Boyd group was brought up again, but the Board agreed again that it is not its role to interfere with the countries. Ireland, Portugal, France were mentioned as possible new associate platform candidates next to Malta, Greece, Estonia and Rumania. In the latter contacts were already made, but without a concrete result. The board concluded that France should be considered a focus country besides Luxembourg and Portugal.

The board will enquire at the annual meeting which NCP paid their contribution to *ecopa*.

Dr. Garthoff stressed again the importance of the correct use of the emails for delegates and their substitutes, in order to improve the communication flow. A list will be circulated at the annual meeting to collect the emails of the delegates

*With regard to the organization of workshops, the 7th *ecopa* annual workshop and the eSI workshop: see previous.

The only deviation from the projects work programme was that the scientific collaborator came in later in than expected, month 11 instead of month 5.

4. Budget CONAM prof. Rogiers

Prof. Rogiers gave an overview of the CONAM budget as assigned for the 3-year period (150.000€) and an update on the status today.

The allocation of the budget is as follows;

75.500€	part time collaborator
10.800€	web expansion
20.500€	travel expenses (over a period of 3 years).
700€	the newsletter
12.500€	external audit/service and
30.000€	indirect costs
Sponsoring/no budget	workshops

A prepayment has been done by the European Commission. This amount has been divided into direct and indirect costs and after deducting the salary of the scientific collaborator, an amount of 12.000€ is left.

Until now the payments are effectuated by the financial department of the VUB. This will change for the *ecopa* general account, as an external account has been opened with the Degussa bank in Germany. The project account for CONAM stays with the VUB, as well as Sens-it-iv, Reprotect.

Prof. Rogiers stressed again the importance of sending in the required official invoices in order to get reimbursement and asked all the WP leaders to send in their invoices for an amount of 11.000€ over the whole period as the allocated money needs to be spent, otherwise this will be commented by the European Commission.

A briefly explanation followed on the different possible modalities of the budget spending: Such initiatives taken by the WP leaders like organizing workshops as in Den Hague, Monheim or travel expenses within the CONAM activities.

***Miscellaneous**

A misunderstanding at the 5th World Congress in Berlin was the basis of the creation of a consensus procedure with regard to *ecopa* publications and statements. The consensus procedure takes into consideration the interest of the different stakeholders when spreading information. There will be a voting upon this consensus procedure at the *ecopa* Annual Meeting.

WP3 (Education), under the responsibility of J. Van der Valk

-Three information pages on education, databases and legislation were created on the website.

-With regard to education and training in 3Rs, Dr. A. De Lopez informed that Rema / Spain organised a course about safety evaluation. This 2nd course was held in Madrid on 23/11/2005. The primary aim of the course is to train people in alternative methods.

Even though the course is open for a broad public, the number of participants was restricted to 40, as the approach of the course is very practical. The scientific documents were distributed on a CD. The 4 parties were represented and Rema received a very good feedback. *ecopa* was also mentioned as a sponsor in the brochure.

The idea is to design a pilot course that could be translated to other platforms on an international level. Spain is developing the concept of the tutorial for other countries and asked for funding to realize this scope.

-Dr. Zucco was interested in introducing this Spanish course in Italy.

-Prof. Rogiers answered that the question about funding had to be taken up with the team leader of WP3 as it is his responsibility to decide upon the allocation of the budget, Dr. Zucco planned to contact him.

The remark was made that *ecopa* can help with the starting up or the initiation of such a course/ tutorial but it is the responsibility of the national platform involved, to ensure the development and roll out of such a course on a long term basis.

A deviation from the CONAM programme consists in the changing of the titles of planned courses on 3Rs.

WP4 (Ethics), under the responsibility of T. de Cock Buning

-The calendar of CONAM WP4 started in August 2004, with the creation of the Working Group, a review of the actual status, followed by the start of concept and ethics operational programme elaboration.

-A workshop, planned and organized by the 4 stakeholders was held in Ljubljana, 10-12/6/2005 on "assessing pain and suffering against research aims" and "assessing relevance of species difference."

- Note that on 01/05/2006, a database on local ethical committees prepared by Rema is anticipated and the WP4 members are committed to promote that action. On the 1st of November 2006, involvement of other countries is expected and on the 1st of May of that year, the website should contain a part on ethics for alternative methods. Thus, there is still a lot of work to be accomplished.

There were no deviations from the projects work programme, as planned before.