



16 November 2009

MIRROR GROUPS

Minutes of the 3rd meeting held on 22 September 2009 in Brussels, Belgium

Attendance

Danish Mirror Group

[Anne Birgitte Lundholt](#) (VIF)
[Kristian Moeller](#) (Danish Veterinary Institute,
Technical University of Denmark)
[Henrik Stampe Lund](#) (Danish Veterinary Institute,
Technical University of Denmark)

French Mirror Group

[Jean-Louis Hunault](#) (SIMV)

German & Austrian Mirror Groups

[Dieter Schillinger](#) (Merial)
[Martin Schneidereit](#) (BfT)

Italian Mirror Group

[Alessandra Scagliarini](#)/Università di Bologna

Spanish Mirror Group

[Santiago De Andrés](#) (Veterindustria)
[Pablo Hervás](#) (Secretariat Vet+i)

UK Mirror Group

[Phil Sketchley](#)/NOAH

ETPGAH

[Jim Scudamore](#)

CNA representatives & invited guests

[Brendan Barnes](#) (APHA – Ireland)

Apologies

Austrian Mirror Group

[Hermann Schobesberger](#) (Austrian
Agency for Health and Food Safety)

Dutch Mirror Group

Ministry Landbow/[Huibert Maurice](#)

IFAH-Europe

[Morgane Delavergne](#)
[Declan O'Brien](#)
[Florentina Pardo](#) (reporting)

Discussions and Conclusions

1. Welcome and introduction

Declan O'Brien welcomed the participants and noted the apologies received from the Austrian and Dutch Mirror Groups (MGs) representatives. He mentioned that an update of the Austrian Mirror Group would be given by Dieter Schillinger. He invited the participants to introduce themselves.

2. Update on the ETPGAH and DISCONTOLS

Declan gave a brief update on the ETPGAH. He reported that at its last meeting the Executive Board had agreed to rewrite its action plan and has also reviewed its TORs in order to enlarge the Board and disband the Steering Council. EMIDA has been invited to join the Board and Med Vet Net and Epizone have accepted to participate. The ETPGAH Board had agreed to explore collaboration with [EADGENE](#) (European Animal Disease Network of Excellence for Animal Health and Food Safety) as appropriate. Declan O'Brien indicated that Copa/Cogeca and FVE had agreed to support the work of the MGs at national level.

He mentioned that the ETPGAH would explore collaboration with the Animal Task Force and the ASTER project aimed at building collaboration by sharing best practice on research, knowledge transfer and innovation in farm animal sciences.

As far as extending the ETPGAH project at the global level (IAHTP – International Animal Health Technical Platform), Declan O’Brien mentioned that this may be possible via a call under FP7 aimed at the creation of a global ERA-Net equivalent. It is anticipated that some members of the EMIDA ERA-Net will submit a proposal.

Morgane Delavergne reported on the developments of DISCONTTOOLS. She recalled the main objectives of the project and structure and gave a detailed update of the last meetings of the Project Management Board, Stakeholders Forum and WP2 (diseases prioritisation), WP3 (gap analysis) and WP4 (technology evaluation) meetings. She mentioned that WP4 would organise a conference on 8 December 2009 to identify and evaluate new technologies that could be applied to animal health. Speakers from a range of industries would be invited (human medicine, space technologies, food industry, mobile technology, nanotechnology, diagnostics, etc.).

3. Presentation of the National Mirror Groups

Austrian Mirror Group

Dieter Schillinger presented the activities of the Austrian Mirror Group on behalf of Dr Schobesberger. He recalled the objectives of the first meeting of the group which included the main drivers (CVO, Ministry of Health, Universities and Ministry of Agriculture) and resulted in the decision to participate in the EMIDA ERA-net project. The Austrian and Swiss authorities are currently discussing the foundation of a joint Mirror Group with mutual goals, strategies and activities. The group is currently defining its strategy and once this is finalised the joint group will be created. The further step will be to identify the projects and sources of funding with a strong focus on public/private partnerships.

Danish Mirror Group

Anne Birgitte Lundholt presented the Danish MG [website](#) and mentioned the Blog created in August 2009 and open for public comments on the 3 proposals (creation of a European academic Network for vaccine research, coordination of veterinary epidemiological research on infectious diseases in Europe, focus on endemic diseases). The MG objectives are to have the projects accepted on the EU Commission working program for 2010, getting one or more projects accepted for FP7 in 2011 and get an agreement on an international cooperation on these projects. She reported that at its meeting in September which was attended by all stakeholders the MG discussed the proposals and milestones and whether these should be submitted to FP7 or to other programs as well. Anne Birgitte Lundholt asked the MGs’ feedback on these projects and support to move them forward. Kristian Möller mentioned that research funding was difficult to access in a small country such as Denmark. He suggested that a mapping of all countries research funding systems could be done.

French Mirror Group

Jean-Louis Hunault presented the status of work of the RSFA on behalf of B. Charley. He recalled the steps that led to the creation of the French MG, its objectives and structure with 4 WGs created to deal with “orphan drugs” (anthrax, botulism, etc), BTV (EUR 1.5 m funding in France), FP7 and the implementation of the action plan in public/private cooperation (focus on vector borne disease and mastitis). He reviewed the achievements of each group and their next steps. To the question raised, Jean-Louis Hunault replied that the proposals that would be identified by WG 3 (FP7) would be channelled to the Commission by the leader of the group who is part of EMIDA and through direct discussions between the Commission and the French MG. He indicated that the MG would probably organise its next conference in 1Q2010. Jean-Louis Hunault confirmed that as opposed to other MGs (Spanish, Danish), the French MG was not funded.

German Mirror Group

Dieter Schillinger briefly recalled the history and structure of the German MG created in December 2007. The Mirror Group had 2 meetings in 2009. In March it received several presentations on CAHS and on viral (AI, BT, AHS, WNF, RVF, ASF) and parasitological diseases (vector focus - culicoides & acarids). The Ministry of Agriculture also presented the research projects including animal health initiatives focussing on innovation. At the July meeting the DISCONTTOOLS scoring model was presented and a presentation on bacterial diseases (Para tuberculosis, Salmonella, Campylobacter, Q fever & MRSA) was given. The group reviewed the 3 proposals developed by the Danish Mirror Group and fully supported them. The next MG in November 2009 will review the priorities established for viral, bacterial and parasitological diseases using the scoring model and the group will try to establish a link between these 3 areas to have a balanced involvement of all stakeholders. He mentioned that Germany had contributed 4 Mio EUR to the EMIDA. The MD will also review the Delphi study to see whether it can contribute to it.

Jim Scudamore asked the German MG to provide the prioritisation scoring model results so that DISCONTTOOLS can identify the variability in the countries.

Italian Mirror Group

Alessandra Scagliarini mentioned that the Italian MG Vision document had been endorsed and was being implemented. She noted a positive development in the decision by the Ministry of Research to support the MG and an increase in the support of the Ministry of Agriculture. There is increasing interest in coordinating initiatives across the Knowledge Base Bio-economy platform (KBBE) in Italy. This is a major breakthrough. The philosophy behind the action plan 2010 is to target national funding to implement the EU priorities and increase national research. She mentioned that APRE (Agency for the promotion of European Research) was collecting the action plan contributions from the platform. The action plan focuses on prioritisation and gap analysis keeping in mind the typicality and safety of food products, endemic diseases and minor species in Italy. She highlighted a specific network on innovative research dealing with investigations on active principles in plant species used in ethno-veterinary medicine to cure animals. She recalled that the IUPAC congress would be held on 15-19 September 2010 in Rimini and would include a session on animal health. She suggested that this congress may be an opportunity to present DISCONTTOOLS and could be the venue for the next Mirror Groups meeting.

Spanish Mirror Group

Pablo Hervas, coordinator of the Spanish Mirror Group (Vet+i) briefly presented the MG's organisation chart, structure and membership. He reviewed the achievements of the 4 WGs created. Group 1, dealing with gap analysis & disease prioritization will develop a scoring model based on the DISCONTTOOLS one to identify the diseases and gaps and will then prioritise them. Group 2 looking at research areas necessary to develop tools to control priority animal diseases in Spain has started to explore ideas/actions on how to improve the coordination between research centres/Universities and the industry and to promote research within industry. Group 3 aimed at identifying critical points and enabling factors for an efficient transfer of technology has started identifying the patents in the field of animal health in Spain and is currently compiling exploitable research results in the field of animal health and also identifying areas of interest to industry. Group 4 looking at optimising with the Regulatory Authorities the access to market of developed tools is identifying research themes in the areas of quality, safety and efficacy and has started identifying the regulatory requirements that need to be taken into account in the R&D of medicines. Pablo Hervas mentioned that the Vision document 2015 had been approved and would be published soon. He reviewed the activities of the MG's secretariat and future milestones and concluded by presenting the programme of the conference that the MG will organise on 3 November 2009 in Madrid. The Spanish MG is also exploring opportunities to work with the innovative medicines initiative (equivalent human medicine platform).

Declan O'Brien mentioned that it would be of interest to the DISCONTTOOLS to get feedback from the MGs on the scoring models that they develop to try as much as possible to align the model. Pablo Hervás mentioned that the MG was reviewing whether the DISCONTTOOLS model needed to be adapted to the Spanish situation. He undertook to provide feedback to DISCONTTOOLS. The initiative by the Spanish MG to look at ways to improve registration was of particular interest in relation to the 1-1-1 concept promoted by IFAH-Europe.

UK Mirror Group

Phil Sketchley presented a progress report of the UK MG and briefly reviewed its structure and functioning (stakeholders, chair, secretariat, meetings, etc.). He explained the work achieved since the first meeting of the UK MG with the prioritisation of exotic, endemic and zoonotic diseases and establishing gaps for prioritisation of future research (AI, FMD, Newcastle, Mastitis, TB, PGE, Lameness, VTEC, Campylobacter, Salmonella, Antibiotic resistance). The MG had met during the previous week to review the analysis of the data and has agreed to submit it to the ETPGAH and DISCONTTOOLS. Based on the feedback received it will decide if it will use the DISCONTTOOLS scoring system to establish its priorities. The MG has agreed to extend the group to a wider audience of interested stakeholders.

Declan O'Brien mentioned that the DISCONTTOOLS model was still in its testing phase but was considered reasonably robust. A discussion took place on the next actions that the MG would take after having identified its priority diseases. Phil Sketchley mentioned that it would be interesting to have a centralisation of scoring to avoid overlap and identify areas of possible collaboration. The UK MG will review at its next meeting the request from the Danish MG and confirm whether it supports their projects.

Jim Scudamore cautioned on the quantity of projects that should be submitted to DG Research as there is a lot of competition. Anne Birgitte Lundhold mentioned that the Danish proposal for a central platform would be more aimed at coordinating efforts as opposed to deciding on research projects.

4. Sources of finance – FP 7, COST, EMIDA, National?

Jim Scudamore presented the possible sources of finance for the projects linked to the ETPGAH and to the MGs. He started by recalling the objectives of the vision, process and action plan of the ETPGAH. He reviewed the sources of finance of the projects linked to the platform which could be either through EC funding (FP7, COST, DGs), national research programmes (EMIDA), public/private funding, or charities. He then presented the potential sources of funding for the projects of the MGs and described in detail each of these options and the various projects that had passed through these structures. He concluded by highlighting the criteria that would make a project successful.

5. Discussion and questions

Declan O'Brien opened the floor for discussion and invited the participants to reflect on possible projects that could be supported by all. The Danish proposals were put forward. Jim Scudamore suggested that DG Research might not be the best framework for these proposals and he proposed that these could be channelled through COST or for possible FP7 funding in 2012.

With regard to the first proposal on the creation of a European academic Network for vaccine research, Jim Scudamore suggested that to ensure maximum chances of success, in addition to the support of the project by other MGs, the Danish MG should link the project on a specific disease such as Swine Influenza which could link people working on this disease. Alessandra Scagliarini suggested that basic immunology reagents could be included as a potential project. The participants supported the idea of combining specific diseases with specific areas of immunology.

With regard to the second proposal regarding the coordination of veterinary epidemiological research on infectious diseases in Europe, Jim Scudamore mentioned that this was very similar to that of the ETPGAH

action plan and could be submitted as such to FP7. He recommended that all MGs should lobby their representative to ensure that this is accepted at MS level. An alternative approach would be to seek DG Sanco funding.

As far as the third proposal was concerned (focus on endemic diseases), it was recalled that the basic idea was to have a kind of blueprint on how to handle endemic diseases with an emphasis on the welfare aspect. The participants agreed that Denmark should develop the project further with the support of other interested MGs.

Dieter Schillinger reflected on the various presentations given during the meeting and noted that each MG had specific national activities. He sought clarifications from the ETPGAH representatives on the role expected from the MGs. Jim Scudamore and Declan O'Brien confirmed that the main aims of the MGs was to communicate the ETPGAH action plan at the national level and build collaboration with the national stakeholders to ensure that national funding is used to fund part of the ETGPAH action plan. The MGs are expected to develop some methodology to identify issues (funded either at national or EU level) of importance to their country and at possible common issues. The objective is to improve the research efficiency and ensure a faster availability of products.

Jim Scudamore invited the MGs to propose additional projects. He referred to current projects that would end in 2010 and asked whether these should be kept running. He noted from the UK MG the issue of antimicrobials resistance.

Alessandra Scagliarini mentioned that the Italian action plan included the development of antivirals. The Spanish mirror group will meet shortly to look at possible projects that could be submitted. Alessandra Scagliarini suggested that several research proposals can be of relevance also for other Mediterranean countries such as Spain and France. Declan O'Brien recalled that the dossiers for the projects to be submitted to FP7 should be ready by the summer 2010. Morgane Delavergne mentioned that the Commission had expressed a strong interest in a surveillance project on companion animals diseases such as Leishmoniasis and Echinococcus. Alessandra Scagliarini agreed to circulate some project proposals from the Italian action plan.

6. Closure

Declan O'Brien closed the meeting by thanking the participants for their active participation and confirmed that all the presentations would be placed on the website.