

Suggestions for Covetlab development: (first draft Johan, Andre Jestin, Wim v.d. Poel;
revised after comments Kath Webster) May 15th 2014

Anno 2014, the core activity within Covetlab is the programme for joint research and activities related to forward planning of large research programme within the EU – Horizon 2020 programme (preparation of lobby documents; exploring art 185- thematic networks)

During the last few months, the contact persons for Covetlab have prepared the Annual Meeting and we would like to discuss the way forward for Covetlab. Therefor some scenario's :

1. Continuation as it is with small joint research projects and preparation of larger initiatives in the European arena
2. Extension of Covetlab
3. Intensification of Covetlab.

Ad 1: Continuation as it is with small joint research projects

- one viewpoint is that energy within Covetlab is going down; joint research successful, but for how long? Process of preparing lobby documents very slow and not very productive.
Suggestion for “improvement” of the existing joint research programme is to have more focus on possible outcome of proposals- added value for covetlab, more than stimulating the networking with the small projects.
- other viewpoint is that Covetlab still acts as a ‘core group’ that can play an important role by focussing on subjects that are not covered by other networks. Harmonisation, training as examples. Furthermore, Covetlab representatives play a major role in e.g. Eranet and SCAR. Pro-active interaction with the Commission / DG Research for large initiatives in Horizon 2020

Ad 2: Extension of Covetlab

With extra partners, it might give some extra impulse for a few years ; However, we agree that this is not a solution and therefor prefer to keep Covetlab at the present size.

Ad 3: intensification of Covetlab

overview of possible extra activities:

- A. creation of some working groups
- B. combine forces related to rapid risk assessment
- C. create a joint programme test development& validation
- D. develop a dedicated large joint research programme
- E. organisation of dedicated scientific meetings between Covetlab scientists

A: Setting up some working groups (examples)

- working group on Biosafety issues
- join forces with regard to proficiency testing .
- Joint consultancy towards outside Europe..
- Biological resources : share information on available biobanks and databases
- shared Quality Control for veterinary diagnostic reagents
- Reference Labs- can we undertake ref lab functions for each other? (therefore we don't all need to maintain all ref labs)
- Other functions that we could undertake on behalf of each other

B: Continuous joint rapid risk assessment, for both zoonosis and emerging livestock diseases.

C: Joint programme for (diagnostic) test development and exchange of routine diagnostics

D. Development of a major scientific programme between partners to be funded by national governments for at least 4 years, (incentive, but with intention of partners to work together at more areas at the same time; to be defined .)

E. Organising dedicated scientific meetings.

Important is to realise that this might overlap with meetings- focus of both MEDVETNET association as well as EPIZONE ERG. Could be focussed on cross cutting themes or bringing together similar groups from Covetlab partners.