

BIG4 first business meeting at Copenhagen, January 21, 2015: summary and decisions

Attendees:

BIG4 Management team: Alexey Solodovnikov, Sree Selvantharan, Katrine Korsgaard Vendelboe (Univ. of Copenhagen EU office representative); **BIG4 Beneficiaries representatives:** Nesrine Akkari, Rolf Beutel, Margarita Grudova, Martin Fikacek, Tamas Jantvik, Agnes Johansson, Ximo Mengual, Lyubomir Penev, Fredrik Ronquist, Nikhlas Wahlberg, Benjamin Wipfler; **BIG4 Partners representative:** Brian Metscher. **Guests:** Adam Brunke (Alexey's current PhD), Mariana Chani-Posse (Alexey's guest researcher), Dave Cheung (SNM Biosystematics admin), Tom Gilbert (EUROTAST ITN coordinator), Line Kræmer (Alexey's BSc student), Thomas Pape (SNM Biosystematics head), Jadranka Rota (Niklas' colleague and wife), Nina Rønsted (MedPlant ITN coordinator), Andrea Schomann (Alexey's just graduated PhD), Dmitry Schigel (GBIF representative) Dagmara Zyla (Alexey's incoming post doc).

Beneficiaries Eduardo Pareja and Raquel Tobes (both ERA7) could not attend due to illness. But Alexey briefed them about the meeting by Skype on Jan 26, 2015.

Meeting content

Alexey shared the meeting agenda, all participants introduced themselves. Katrine gave a talk about EU ITN program and answered questions. BIG4 members gave short talks about their research, labs and role in the ITN. Other ITN coordinators, Tom and Nina, shared their best practices. Lyubomir on behalf of Pensoft shared a draft design of BIG4 web site and logo (few versions), his presentation followed by miscellaneous discussions and planning.

Conclusions, decisions and next steps:

1. Hiring ESRs is the top priority for everybody except Rolf and Benjamin who already selected a student. The goal is to **enroll all ESRs by September 2015, at the latest.**
2. PENSOFTE in collaboration with Sree and Alexey finalizes the BIG4 web-site structure and logo. All other BIG4 family members contribute minimum required information about themselves and their projects a.s.a.p. after the system for that is made available.
3. **BIG4 Kick-off meeting (with all newly hired ESRs) will be held in Denmark during September 14-18, 2015** (can be stretched for 1-2 days more through the weekend if needed). It will consist of: Introduction into ITN for everybody (1 day); Introduction to modern insect systematics as a super-exciting multidisciplinary science (few 30-45 min keynote lectures by main BIG4 training providers that altogether cover main BIG4 work packages and themes) (1 day); Practical workshop for ESRs with the focus on entomological collections, collections data management and associated computer literacy (for the latter Dmitry from GBIF kindly offered some teaching possibilities from his side in a message to Alexey soon after meeting). Alexey will make a more detailed draft of the kick-off meeting and solicit input from others in spring, to make the ball of preparations rolling.
4. The next BIG4-wide training event to be held for 1 week in late November – early December in the field. Exact dates and location to be decided. Martin and Alexey are already working on the options (suitable field stations in Central or South America are currently being explored). This training event will focus on diversity of the most speciose lineages of 'big four' insect groups and collecting and preservation techniques for various purposes.
5. It was decided that participation in all BIG4-wide training events is mandatory for all ESRs, and all expenses for those will be shared among BIG4 beneficiaries proportionally to their number of ESRs regardless of the amount actually spent by participants. Even if some ESRs do not participate in any of the training event for good reason (e.g., illness etc.) a respective Beneficiary will be billed anyway. This is a good way to handle 'money among friends' situation.

Alexey & Sree, January 27, 2015.