

VIRTUAL MOBILITY (VM) GRANT REPORT TEMPLATE

This report is submitted by the VM grantee to VNS Manager, who will coordinate the approval on behalf of the Action MC.

Action number: CA17110

VM grant title: Development of theory of change model

VM grant start and end date: 06/08/2021 to 06/10/2021

Grantee name: Luís Pedro Carmo

Description of the outcomes and achieved outputs (including any specific Action objective and deliverables, or publications resulting from the Virtual Mobility).

(max. 500 words)

This Virtual Mobility (VM) grant aimed at advancing several activities conducted by Working Group (WG) 4. The outcomes of such activities shall be used to populate a Theory of Change model that will inform a research agenda for the implementation and use of output based surveillance for cattle in Europe. A description of the various activities and most relevant outcomes can be found below:

- a) Scoping review on scenario tree modelling – this is activity run in collaboration between WG3 and WG4. I have been providing methodological guidance on the review process. During this VM, the title and abstract screening was completed. This process must be completed by two independent reviewers (for each paper). Gary Delalay screened 100% of the identified abstract during his Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM); during this VM, I screened 210/350 abstracts. The other 140 abstracts were screened by Petter Hopp, Aurélien Madouasse, Maria Guelbenzu and Eleftherios Meletis. It was important to screen the abstracts within a time frame similar to the one used by Gary Delalay so that potential divergences could be addressed. The title and abstract screening is completed and the full text screening and data extraction will follow.
- b) Analysis of workshop with SOUND Control Core Group – this workshop was conducted in mid-July. The participants agreed on the purpose of output based surveillance: "To create sufficient information about the probability of freedom from a defined disease (animals that could be a cause of infection after the trading process) for animals presented for trade, that allows traders/buyers to make an informed decision about whether or not to purchase the animals". Information requirements were discussed. Some gaps of relevance for the research agenda were also identified: data quality and accessibility might need to be improved; difficulties in the design and evaluation of control programmes were reported; best communication strategies with various stakeholders will need to be explored; reporting guidelines might be required.
- c) Organization, coordination and analysis of workshop to plan stakeholder engagement – I contributed to the organization of the online workshop and conducted the participatory exercise using the app Miro. We aimed at answering three main questions: 1) Which stakeholders in your country should be included in the study?; 2) What information or other needs should be gathered from the stakeholders in your country?; and 3) What format would work best in your country to gather this information? Results were summarized in Miro and informed subsequent activities (see d)).

- d) Stakeholder engagement studies – following the workshop described in c) a strategy for engaging stakeholders was drafted. This includes a top-down (aimed at understanding the trade processes and the mechanisms used to facilitate or discourage trade) and a bottom-up study (focused on farmers motivation regarding trade decisions). This activity was coordinated with other VM grant holders.
- e) Preparation of workshop on research gaps – I contributed to the planning and preparation of a workshop on the research gaps identified by the different WGs. The workshop will take place on the 18th October.

Description of the benefits to the COST Action Strategy (what and how).

(max. 500 words)

The set of activities conducted within the scope of this VM grant are in line with the WG4 plan. In particular, the outputs of these activities will inform the creation of a Theory of Change model; this will be the basis for the development of the main output from WG4: a research agenda for the implementation and use of output based surveillance for cattle in Europe.

A couple of activities deserve particular attention regarding their benefit to the progress of WG4 activities:

- a) the organization (2 workshops) and coordination (1 workshop) of the workshops on the strategy for stakeholder engagement and identification of research gaps from the various SOUND Control WGs. The development of a plan for stakeholder engagement was crucial for the project activities and addressed one of the main gaps identified by the project assessors in the last project report.
- b) Following the development of a plan to engage stakeholders a series of activities were drafted (in collaboration with other VM holders). The enrolment of stakeholders in the Theory of Change model is of crucial importance for a successful implementation of output based methods in the cattle industry. Surveys, interviews or focus groups will be conducted in various countries in the upcoming months. This shall produce valuable information for the development of WG4's research agenda.

Description of the virtual collaboration (including constructive reflection on activities undertaken, identified successful practices and lessons learned).

(max. 500 words)

The activities run within the scope of this VM required extensive collaboration that was conducted in an online setting. Several tools were used for this purpose, such as teleconference software, document sharing repositories and collaborative boards.

The virtual collaboration encompassed frequent contact (online meetings) with the leaders of WG4 and some of its members, as well as occasional contact (organization and execution of the abovementioned workshops) with members from other groups of SOUND Control.

Frequent meetings with the WG leaders and other group participants are key to make sure the activities are steered in the right direction. This is crucial considering the limited time in which VMs are conducted. The app Miro was used for collaborative boards and proved to be very useful for participatory exercises and for capturing ideas during workshops. It offers a visual canvas to the workshop participants that enhances discussion during the exercises.

I believe it would be useful that each COST Action has a centralized document sharing system to facilitate collaboration between members.