

65th meeting of the GARNet Advisory Board

Date: Thursday 20th September 2018. Meeting 9.00am-12.00pm, lunch at 12.00pm.

Location: Room BK157a, Main Biology building, Wentworth Way, University of York, York YO10 5DD

Host: Andrea Harper

Papers and URLs:

- > 1. Minutes of 64th AB Meeting
- > 2. Information on recent NI Arabidopsis grants
- > 3. Successful 2015 GARNet Responsive Mode Grant Application
- > 4. Results of survey on future GARNet activities
- > 5. Draft of GARNet grant plan
- > 6. Draft UKPSF Plant Science Vision document
- > 7. ICAR2021 draft budget
- > <http://www.earlham.ac.uk/cyverse-uk-rnaseq-workshop-2018>

Attendees: Rocio Gaudioso-Pedraza (RGP, UKRI-BBSRC), Daniel Gibbs (DG), Murray Grant (MG), Andrea Harper (AH), Sean May (SM), Sarah McKim (SMc), Jim Murray (JM by skype), Geraint Parry (GP), Steven Spoel (SS),

1. Welcome

- Meeting chaired by Steven Spoel. As this is RGP's first GARNet meeting each participant introduced themselves.

2. Apologies

- Ruth Bastow (RB), Jill Harrison (JH), Saskia Hogenhout (SH), Sabina Leonelli (SL), Christine Raines (CR), Colin Turnbull (CT)

3. Matters arising from minutes of last meetings

- Minutes of the 64th meeting

No comments on the last minutes

- Progress on New Phytologist special issue from GARNet-GE meeting

GP reports that this is ongoing. A meeting report authored by GP and JH has been submitted to New Phyt and they are considering the next step.

- Feedback from GARNet2018 meeting

GP reports that there were 57 paid delegates (40 postdoc/student, 17 faculty), 80 in total. This was a little disappointing as we were aiming for 100. Strangely there was no-one in attendance from Nottingham, JIC, Cambridge, Durham or Manchester. SM reported that it was an impossible week for Nottingham faculty and SMc mentioned that it wasn't a good week for Dundee as the autumn semester has already started. Therefore a date earlier in September might have worked better.

Overall the meeting was well received and GP will circulate a survey to canvas opinion from delegates. One suggestion was that the poster session could have been extended and just be included in one session. The second session was over lunch so didn't work as well. AH reported that meeting information was difficult to find online so more email notices should have been sent around.

ACTION: GP to prepare meeting survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WDMYRLF>).
Future September meetings might be better in the first week of the month.

- Award of two travel grants to Vector-Borne Diseases in the UK meeting (<http://www.hpruezi.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/news-and-events/vbd-uk-2018/>)

Two applications from University of Bristol and University of Cambridge secured £200 grants. These will be paid after receipt of a submission for the GARNet blog and newsletter.

- Feedback from GARNet consultation on BBSRC support for fundamental plant science and information about recently awarded Arabidopsis-focused NI Responsive mode grants.

SS and DG reported from a recent Gatsby meeting that the document was well received but that many people had not seen it. The take-home message from those discussions was that more people involved in fundamental plant science need to apply to sit on BBSRC grant panels. This needs to be communicated to the community. In addition another important message to circulate is that the BBSRC is open for business for fundamental plant science applications.

SM offered to include a single page summary of the document with all seed stocks sent from NASC to UK researchers.

Regarding the possible movement of grants between BBSRC panels: RGP reported that it is BBSRC policy to always inform applicants if their submissions will be moved and they are then provided the option to remove the application.

The GARNet committee looked at the small number of successful recent Arabidopsis-based New Investigator (NI) applications funded by BBSRC responsive mode panel B. This low number of grants might reflect a lack of available new faculty positions for fundamental plant scientists. JM, SS and MG suggested that the lack of opportunities might lead to a negative feedback loop wherein a lack of funding options leads to less new faculty opportunities for plant scientists, which would then lead to less grant applications. The committee strongly supports strategies to encourage new grant applications to the BBSRC that focus on fundamental plant science. This would be very important to maintain this successful part of the UK research portfolio.

ACTION: GP to add a link to the document on the GARNet front page and to also recirculate the document. GP to prepare a short summary of the report for SM. GP to further investigate the grants awarded to all NIs over the past four years.

4. GARNet post-2020: Discussion on grant plan

- Discussion of survey responses

55 people have responded to the survey. Committee didn't think there were large surprises in these responses. SM highlighted that 85% of respondents do NOT want a shift in GARNet activities toward applied plant science, which is a good indication of where the future activities should lie. It was pleasing to read that the more 'hidden' GARNet activities such as external committee membership and providing input to government calls for evidence was appreciated by the community.

- Introduction of Co-PIs

JM introduced the idea of including at least two Co-Is on the new grant submission. It is thought that this would demonstrate an evolution of the grant as well as ensuring that there is a consistent and varied opinion across the next grant period. JM suggested that Daniel Gibbs and Smita Kurup could be Co-Is have they have agreed to take on these roles.

Overall the committee agreed that this is a good idea.

MG suggested that a third Co-I could be included who has a focus on bioinformatics. The committee agreed this could be a good idea and over the coming weeks will consider who might be a good candidate for this.

- Overall aim: Add value to BBSRC-funded research in fundamental plant science

- 1. Add value to the UK and global research communities who work on fundamental

plant science

- 2. Providing training opportunities for support uptake of new technologies
- 3. Facilitate opportunities for translation of outputs from fundamental plant scientists
- 4. Promote UK plant science excellence in a changing global research environment

JM introduced the main themes of the grant as included above. SS stated the importance of providing evidence from previous activities to support future ideas. GP reminded the committee that a key component of GARNet activity is to leverage other sources of funding to support UK plant science, something that has been very successful during the last grant period.

RGP suggested that GARNet training activities could be also be relevant for EPSRC or NERC as well as BBSRC DTPs.

SS supports including a focus on single cell 'omic technologies. JM wondered if there is the opportunity to link with mathematical modelers. SM wonders if there was an opportunity for providing support for ECRs to guide their future interactions with important policy areas or in science communication.

SS highlighted that there are currently poor connections between the GARNet community and ISCF or GCRF funding. RGP said that fundamental plant science could be included in larger GCRF-proposals but this is a difficult fit as there needs to be clear benefit to ODA countries over the short or medium term. The committee thought it was better to focus on links between industry and basic plant scientists. Therefore during the grant period we will propose to investigate mechanisms to bring industry and plant science researchers together so that the valley of death is not so deep. GP to contact RB about this part of the grant as it is relevant to her new role with CHAP.

GP has contacted German and French colleagues about organisation of topic- or technology- focused bi-lateral workshops with UK researchers. This would support new collaborations across borders.

SM suggested developing links with China for workshop(s) to understand where opportunities might exist to support collaborations between UK and Chinese researchers. SM suggested Ming Chen or Paul Birch as good possible contacts. GP will investigate this possibility. SMC suggest contacting EPSO about forming more official links.

RGP advised to only obtain letters of support that have direct relevance to the grant proposal. In this regard 'less could be more' if each of the included letters is well focused.

ACTION: GP to prepare the grant for submission in January responsive mode round (confirmed by RGP with a deadline of January 16th). GP aims for a first draft by October 24th and this will be then circulated to the committee. GP will contact letter writers in the first week of October.

5. Update from upcoming GARNet organised events

- Cyverse RNAseq Workshop: December 2018

- GP to provide update on meeting arrangements.

After plenty of discussions the schedule has been set with a one-day data carpentry course added to the RNAseq workshop. A member of Cristobal Uauy's group at the JIC and two members of John Brown's group in Dundee will also participate in the workshop. MG asked for a flyer to be prepared as this workshop is well timed for new ECRs.

ACTION: GP to advertise the meeting and prepare a flyer for circulation.

- One-day workshop on Next Generation Imaging

- March 19th-20th 2019.
- Evening plenary (19th), evening event and full day of talks (20th).

- The committee discussed sessions and speakers in these possible areas:

- CryoEM:
- Genetically encoded reporters
- Label-free reporters
- microNMR analysis techniques
- ATP and calcium reporters

ACTION: GP to liaise with committee members to confirm schedule and contact speakers.

- Other suggestions for workshop for mid/late 2019

- GP mentioned that George Bassel suggested a workshop on Quantitative Imaging.
- SS suggested an introductory proteomic course that could be led by Frank Menke (JIC) who has been teaching in this area at UEA. The committee is in favour of both these ideas.

ACTION: GP to liaise with these potential workshop leaders before deciding on a final topic.

6. UKPSF Update:

- Discussion on latest 'Vision' document and update on launch and follow-up events. The attached document is currently being edited by both UKPSF committee members and the RSB. It includes GP edits to the introduction and to the section on '*Improved crops and Agricultural systems*'.
- GP and MG report that UKPSF committee members are preparing the final draft of their specific sections that will then be collated and edited by Jon Carruthers at RSB. This will be circulated for final comments before being signed off by RSB council by the end of October. The document will then go to design and printing before publication on November 28th at a parliamentary breakfast meeting.

7. Hosting ICAR2021

- GP provides update on budget, proposed schedule and recruitment of advisory board
- GP will be paying a deposit to the Belfast Waterfront venue at the end of September. The event will be organized by GP through Arabidopsis Events UK Limited. This will allow the meeting to proceed even if the GARNet grant isn't renewed.

8. GARNet Elections

- Term length for chairperson

Committee members agreed that there should be the provision for the chairperson to stay on the committee for four years in order to serve 2 years in that position. Despite already being the chairman for two years, SS agreed to stay on for another year given the uncertainty of the coming year regarding the GARNet grant renewal.

- Will GARNet continue 2017 selection method? UK faculty members will be invited to nominate UK PIs for election. The 8 people who will proceed to the election will be decided by the current GARNet advisory board, based on the following categories: Gender, location and area of expertise. We will retain the policy of only including one faculty member from a UK academic institution.

CR and SH will rotate off the committee at the end of 2018. The committee agreed to keep the same election process as in 2017. However in his email inviting nominations GP will make it clear that people should be aware what a successful nomination would entail and that they should be able to commit to attending at least 3 meetings/year where possible. This will ensure a maximally engaged advisory board.

ACTION: GP to start the election process at the start of October. Newly elected members will also be invited to attend the December meeting in London.

9. AOB

None

10. Dates of Upcoming Committee Meetings:

- Monday December 17th Imperial College hosted by CT
- March 19th or 21st 2019: Warwick hosted by MG
- June 2019: Dundee hosted by SMC
- September 2019
- December 2019

ACTION: GP to circulate a doodle form with possible dates for 2019 meetings.
<https://doodle.com/poll/5i5tmymbxdubhcad>