



CONNECTED Newsletter

Number 1 October 2017

A successful GCRF bid

We were delighted to be told that our CONNECTED - COMMUNITY NETWORK FOR AFRICAN VECTOR BORNE PLANT VIRUSES - application to the GCRF NETWORKS IN VECTOR BORNE DISEASE RESEARCH call had been successful. Huge thanks to all of you who helped contribute to our application. It was a gargantuan effort.

Initial Directors' meeting

The GCRF grant award was made in May. Network Director, Gary Foster and Network Co-Director, Neil Boonham met up with Sue Seal and one of the Network Managers Diane Hird at the end of May to discuss the project. Sue Seal's input was pivotal to the grant application and her ongoing high-level involvement in all aspects of the project merits her the informal title of Impact Director. Gary, Neil and Sue discussed several aspects the project in detail and outlined the initial tasks.

Network event in London

BBSRC and MRC hosted a GCRF Vaccines and Vector Borne Disease Network event in London to which Network Directors, co-Directors and Network Managers were invited to attend. The Network Directors presented a brief outline of their Network and the people involved. There were also presentations from previous Network teams on the challenges of creating and maintaining a successful Network. There was a strong emphasis on facilitating discussions and interactions between the Networks throughout. Network Managers met and agreed to share emails and develop joint working practices. Gary and Neil made a short video on the day – link here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVKd_blbQ_o

The CONNECTED logo

One of the first tasks was to create an identity, a brand, for the CONNECTED Network. Here in the Life Sciences Building at the University of Bristol we are very lucky to have PhD student Alastair Tanner who, when not studying cephalopod molluscs, creates unique and striking logo designs. Diane worked with Alastair to create the CONNECTED logo which will be used on the website, on documents and in other grant outputs. BBSRC and MRC have developed a GCRF logo which will also be used.

The CONNECTED website

The CONNECTED website has been designed by a small IT company in York, who designed a previous Network website and have experience of the range of features required. Diane has been working closely with them to create both an initial launch website and the full website. The website is here www.connectedvirus.net.

Twitter

Gary wasted no time in setting up a Twitter account for the project. Follow us at @CONNECTED_Virus. Twitter does get some very bad press, but it can be a very useful way to communicate science and science-related news with a wide range of people and to learn about what is happening in relevant scientific areas worldwide. Twitter will be used throughout the project.

Press Release

The Network was officially launched on Thursday 5th October via press release at the University of Bristol - <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2017/october/african-vector-borne-plant-diseases.html>. This was picked up by a local news outlet and by the Biosciences for Farming in Africa's (B4FA) weekly newsletter which is sent to around 1,500 decision-makers, opinion formers and academics working in Africa and the rest of the world.

This is the beginning of a new and hugely exciting project. There is lots to do and we're not sure exactly where it will all take us. New connections, new opportunities, new collaborations, new scientific discoveries.

Watch this space, and welcome to CONNECTED!

Diane Hird
Network Manager
Bristol