

SYMPOSIUM REPORT

**Contingencies of genomics –
Finding roads into the future**

Utrecht, 13 December 2007, de Witte Vosch



**Authors:
Roel Nahuis
Roy Kloet
Tilo Propp**

Amsterdam/Utrecht, January/February 2008

Contents

Preface	03
Program	04
List of participants	05
Sponsors	06
Program highlights	06
Picture gallery	08
Evaluation of the 2007 Winter Meeting and suggestions for the 2008 Winter Meeting	09
Summary: Evaluation of the 2007 Winter Meeting	09
Summary: Suggestions for the 2008 Winter Meeting	10
Extended evaluation (question-by-question)	10
Finances	18

Preface

On Thursday 13th December 2007 the 3rd Corsage Winter Meeting (C3) '*Contingencies of genomics: finding roads into the future*' took place. It was once again organized in Utrecht (for true veterans: the first Corsage meeting of 2005 was in Utrecht as well, though at another location) after a very successful Corsage 2 in Wageningen.

People, who know Corsage, know that the main aim is to create a platform for young researchers to exchange ideas with peers in a friendly, cooperative environment. Therefore, for the largest part of the day PhD students and post-docs were presenting their (ongoing) research and there was plenty of time for discussion. After all, Corsage is the place where minds are sharpened, ideas discussed, potential problems identified and shared and solutions found. New this year was the opportunity to 'psychologically cross the Dutch borders': two UK researchers were present to share their thoughts.



This year's theme was 'Contingencies of genomics - finding roads into the future'. Contingencies are part and parcel of human life. With the organisation of this event we have tried to provide the conditions for an interesting exchange of ideas. But we have been realizing all the time that the success of this day was ultimately contingent upon participants' contributions. People do not control the initiatives they take and the activities they partake in; people have to deal with the contingencies of life, especially when they depend on others for realising the goals they set for themselves.

What we have tried to emphasise with the theme of this year's Corsage is that this also holds true for the research by which the future of genomics is shaped. This future is contingent upon many factors and issues. Contingency also means that it is impossible to devise a future on beforehand. To find a road into a desirable future, one can at best try to contribute to ongoing developments and address the issues that need to be addressed. Yet, here many new questions arise. What are the issues and dilemmas that need to be addressed? And how do we get them on the agenda? And on whose agenda, also on the genomics research agenda? Why would genomics researchers be interested, then? Or should ELSA researchers rather take a reflexive stance instead of trying to intervene directly in genomics research? Questions like these are raised, and sometimes even partially answered, in the keynote speech, different presentations, as well as in the panel discussion at the end of the day.

Program

9:00-9:30	Registration and coffee	
9:30-9:40	Opening by organizing committee	
9:40-10:20	Opening lecture (Werfzaal) Prof Dr Abraham (Bram) Brouwer, Director of the Ecogenomics Consortium	
10:20-10:30	Coffee break	
	Werfzaal	Middenzaal
10:30-12:15 parallel sessions	Theme: 'New dilemmas' Rixt Komduur - The role of genes in discussions about overweight: An analysis of talk on genetics, overweight and health risks Roeland Huijgen - Agreement in the Netherlands to minimize the consequences for life and disability insurance of diagnosing Familial Hypercholesterolemia Arno Müller (chair) - Ethical aspects of the therapeutical application of gene technology in sports – or 'What about the good side of Frankenstein's Monster?'	Theme: 'Large and small production systems' Rens Vandenberg - Interactive learning in emerging technologies. The case of the German Competence Network Metabolic Syndrome Bart Penders - Norms and politics in contemporary 'Big Nutrition' Daniel Puente Rodríguez (chair) - Engaging genomics and bio-fuels with sustainable developments
12:15-13:10	Lunch	
13:10-14:20 parallel sessions	Theme: 'Interactive research' (1) Wouter Boon - Demand articulation in emerging pharmaceutical technologies: A comparison of two intermediary organizations Conor Douglas - Patient participation in pharmacogenetics research: A new paradigm for innovation systems	Theme: 'Genetic ownership' (1) Jerzy Koopman – Navigating between legal regimes: The patentability of inventions derived from human bodily materials Jessica Wright – Privacy and the use of genetic databases
14:20-14:35	Tea break	
14:35-15:45 parallel sessions	Theme: 'Interactive research' (2) Maud Radstake – A is for agenda: Redefining ELSA's problem Roel Nahuis (chair) – User producer interaction in context. The case of functional food innovation	Theme: 'Genetic ownership' (2) Eric Vermeulen – Consent regimes for research with 'leftover human tissue' Bram de Jonge (chair) – The why, how and what of benefit-sharing: Plant genetic resources and the sharing of their benefits
15:45-16:00	Tea break	
16:00-17:00	Panel discussion (Werfzaal) Dr Ellen Moors (chair) is assistant professor in innovation studies Marjan Slob is an independent writer and journalist Prof Huub Schellekens is a specialist in medical applications of gene technology	
17:00-17:15	Closing by organizing committee; short round of evaluation	
17:15- ...	Drinks	

List of participants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Email</i>
Wouter Boon	Department of Innovation Studies, Utrecht University	w.boon@geo.uu.nl
Conor Douglas	Science and Technology Studies Unit, University of York, UK	cd512@york.ac.uk
Roeland Huijgen	Department of Vascular Medicine, Amsterdam Medical Centre	R.Huijgen@amc.uva.nl
Bram de Jonge	Applied Philosophy, Wageningen University	Bram.dejonge@wur.nl
Jerzy Koopman	Centre for Intellectual Property Law, Utrecht University	j.koopman@law.uu.nl
Rixt Komduur	Applied Philosophy, Wageningen University	Rixt.Komduur@wur.nl
Arno Müller	Department of Health, Ethics & Society, Maastricht University	A.Mueller@ZW.unimaas.nl
Roel Nahuis	Department of Innovation Studies, Utrecht University (organisation)	r.nahuis@geo.uu.nl
Bart Penders	Department of Health Care Studies, Maastricht University	b.penders@zw.unimaas.nl
Daniel Puente Rodríguez	Critical Technology Construction, Wageningen University	Daniel.Puente@wur.nl
Maud Radstake	Centre for Society and Genomics	radstake@society-genomics.nl
Rens Vandeberg	Department of Innovation Studies, Utrecht University	r.vandeberg@geo.uu.nl
Eric Vermeulen	Netherlands Cancer Institute – Antoni van Leeuwenhoek Hospital	e.vermeulen@nki.nl
Jessica Wright	Sheffield Institute of Biotechnological Law and Ethics, University of Sheffield, UK	Jessica.Wright@sheffield.ac.uk
Roy Kloet	Athena Institute, VU University Amsterdam (organisation)	roy.kloet@falw.vu.nl
Tilo Propp	Department of Innovation Studies, Utrecht University (organisation)	t.propp@geo.uu.nl
Bram Brouwer	BioDetection Systems/ Ecogenomics Consortium	bram.brouwer@bds.nl
Ellen Moors	Department of Innovation Studies, Utrecht University	moors@geo.uu.nl
Marjan Slob	Journalist	info@marjanslob.nl
Huub Schellekens	Department of Biopharmacy and Pharmaceutical Technology, Utrecht University	h.schellekens@uu.nl

Sponsors

We are very grateful to a number of sponsors that made this event possible:

- The **Center for Society and Genomics** (CSG, Nijmegen) sponsored the venue and the lunch.
- Travel and accommodation grants for UK participants were co-sponsored by the **ESRC Genomics Policy and Research** (via the Postgraduate Forum for Genomics and Society (PFGS, York)) and the **Netherlands Graduate School of Science, Technology and Modern Culture** (WTMC, Maastricht).

Program highlights

The day started with a keynote speech about how to organise and manage a consortium, c.q. the Ecogenomics Consortium.

Researchers in this consortium currently develop tools to assess environmental conditions using gene expression profiles of organisms living in that environment. So by looking at the organisms' genomes they hope to discover whether a soil is polluted, what specific pollution is present, and if this poses a threat to the local ecosystem.

The keynote speaker of C3, Prof Dr A. Brouwer, explained ecogenomics as a discipline, and talked about managing a genomics consortium in its different stages of maturity and 'finding roads into the future'.



The morning program furthermore consisted of two parallel sessions.



People in the Werfzaal (below level) discussed 'new dilemmas' coming along with research into genomics: it became clearer why human responsibilities, insurance conditions and Frankenstein's monster need to be rethought in the face of new knowledge about human genes.

Meanwhile, in the Middenzaal (ground floor), an interesting contrast emerged between research in the west and in the south, not only in terms of size and complexity but also in terms of the issues of concern.

Whereas social research into western labs and consortia is devoted to communicative and symbolic aspects like interaction, learning and meaning articulation, development oriented research addressed the question how local actors could possibly get things to work and make a promise reality.

After a tasteful lunch two sessions about ‘interactive research’ took place in the Werfzaal and elaborated to what extent users can and should be involved. This raised questions about how mediators from social sciences are able to define the aspects that are open for discussion. Should, then, not the determination of the aspects also become part of the interaction? In other words: the primary object of interaction is the agenda.

In the Middenzaal, meanwhile, the topic was ‘genetic ownership’: who owns the knowledge of tissues and genes that are derived from human bodies? And who has the right to benefit from this knowledge? In general, how can one conceptualise benefit sharing and what would this mean in the context of privacy protection, informed consent, and patentability?

The last part of the day was reserved for a panel discussion that triggered participants with much food for thought. Together with the audience, Marjan Slob, Huub Schellekens and Ellen Moors reflected on expectations, trends, and hypes, on possible futures of genomics, on the role of social and ethical researchers therein, and on the most important issues to be tackled.



Throughout the day a slideshow was running about people, pipettes and practices in the genomics research laboratory of the VU in Amsterdam. Thanks to Roy Kloet, who composed the slide show. At the end of the day, finally, another type of activity took place that stimulated ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking even further.



Picture gallery



For more pictures go to this website maintained by Roel:
<http://picasaweb.google.com/roelnahuis/CorsageWinterMeeting2007/photo#s5164614990302850146>

Evaluation of the 2007 Winter Meeting and suggestions for the 2008 Winter Meeting

We disseminated a preliminary evaluation form among workshop participants at the workshop itself, and later circulated a slightly revised form via emails, on 17 December 2007 and again 7 January 2008, respectively. Eventually we received ten responses – more than half of all participants and more than half of all presenters. The evaluation form comprised 18 questions, many of which were open-ended. About half of these questions were about the 2007 winter workshop and the rest about the planned 2008 meeting. There was also an ‘Additional Remarks’ section at the end.

We start with a summary of the responses in order to allow for a quick overview, and then proceed to a question-by-question analysis. This is not only interesting, in retrospect, for the participants but also contains a lot of valuable information for the organizers of the next event about which elements to keep, improve, or discard. We indicate where our thoughts and views go beyond analysis of the responses (*‘thoughts of the organizers’/italics*); these are of course not binding. The full responses to each question as well as a key to respondents can be made available from the 2007 workshop organizers (T Propp).

Summary: Evaluation of the 2007 winter meeting

Many participants had already agreed at the workshop that this had been a nice and instructive opportunity.

Overall workshop organization: In the evaluation they cited as reasons for attending this meeting, networking, presenting one’s work at whatever stage of maturity in an informal atmosphere, and discussion and exchanging of ideas (question 1). In the ‘Additional Remarks’ section respondents expressed their pleasure of having attended the workshop, and valued concrete activities. Many did meet new people they hadn’t known or seen before (question 3). Overall the respondents were satisfied with many aspects of the organization but there was also criticism and there were suggestions what to improve (question 2, aspects a-i). The calls were confusing (aspect 2a) and the website needs to be improved (aspect 2b).

Entrance fee: At all three Corsage meetings entrance fees had been charged (2007 meeting: €20). The fee was used to cover administrative overhead. In terms of future preferences that respondents indicated, ceilings were set at between €5 and €25 (question 10). These fees could also be paid for by the attendees’ organizations.

Keynote speech: While not all respondents seemed to like the subject of the speech people would have liked the opportunity to discuss the speech afterwards.

Presentations: Presentation time was generally considered sufficient, discussion time not – a well-known issue. Average preferred size of the audience should be in the 10-15 persons region (question 4).

Panel: The organizers themselves had been concerned about the panel size, which originally was to be four; the respondents reflected these concerns, some thought the panel was too small (aspect 2i). A number of panel issues were mentioned as interesting and the need was emphasized to deal with issues that concern a number of stakeholders likewise, and to have a multiplicity of viewpoints, even opposing ones (question 6). What was less interesting were discussions using non-specific entities such ‘the public’ (question 7).

Summary: Suggestions for the 2008 Winter Meeting

At the end of the workshop some participants from Nijmegen had decided to take over the responsibilities of organizing the 2008 event. Nevertheless it will be useful to know in general about location preferences of the participants.

Location preferences: We asked for the participants' preferences of workshop venues, and the opinions were split between a rotating scheme involving 3 and more different places all over the country (option 9a) and a permanent meeting place (option 9c), with the suggestion being Utrecht. *Thoughts of the organizers: The challenge concerning the Corsage meetings is that there is no permanent organizing committee that could in some way decide upon a place. The identification process is open-ended and the old workshop and subsequent evaluation are opportunities for the old organizers to search for willing candidates. The moment new organizers are found the question is reduced to where exactly the meeting should be held, especially if it is the case that organizers are from different cities. Thus, while there may be consensus for a rotating scheme (option 9a) this in itself does not solve the issue.*

Nature of future Corsage meetings: All 10 respondents were in favor of the 'low-threshold' option (12a)

Future entrance fee: Some respondents could tolerate the idea of raising fees to invite international presenters, others didn't. *Thoughts of the organizers: It seems reasonable to separate as far as possible the presence of invited international presenters and the entrance fee. Given that Corsage is a low-threshold event the fee should not be raised unless for purposes immediate to the organization of the workshop (venue, expenses) (question 11).*

Future topics and presentations mix: Most respondents supported a 'broad range of topics' profile (option 13a) and preferred a mix of interactive projects (with workshops) and more descriptive/analytical projects, which has indeed been a characteristic of all three Corsage meetings (option 14b).

Strategies to attract researchers from other fields: There was admission that this is a difficult issue (question 15) and a number of general and specific strategies were suggested. This issue is one that in general a lot of time and discussion should be devoted to. Networking can be done through existing organizations involved in our type of research, but a good strategy is also to use existing trans-disciplinary networks at each department (for instance, Huub Schellekens in Utrecht is embedded as a pharmacologist in innovation studies).

Future panel and topics: A majority of respondents were in favor of a smaller panel (of 3) but it was also remarked that interaction is also a function of panel composition, rather than size (option 16a). A number of topics were suggested (question 17), ranging from issues dealt with in sociological/ELSA research to the realities and constraints of PhD research itself: A number of participants (and combinations thereof) were suggested (question 18).

Extended evaluation (question-by-question)

Question 1: What were your reasons to attend this meeting?

All reasons cited relate to networking; presenting one's work (including preliminary thoughts) in a 'nice, informal and constructive atmosphere' (R04); discussion, exchanging ideas and sharing one's 'own 'message' (R05)

Question 2: With respect to the organization of this meeting, how do you evaluate the following aspects? For each aspect please use one pair of terms from the following sets: satisfied/not satisfied, efficient/not efficient, in time/too late, too short/adequate/too long. You can add suggestions how things could be improved

Here we asked to evaluate several aspects of the 2007 meeting. In retrospect it seems that one set of terms (satisfied/not satisfied) may also have sufficed as people were sometimes adding their reasons for how they evaluated these aspects.

Aspect 2a: Announcements via calls

9 respondents expressed their satisfaction and approval with content and timing of the calls. For R09 the calls were 'at least a bit confusing'. *This is because we released and repeated different calls at the same time via the Eurograd website, ie one call for participants based in the Netherlands and one for participants based in the UK. Such confusion should be avoided in future calls.*

Aspect 2b: Website information

Most respondents were satisfied but there were some critical remarks. The website was not up-to-date (R04) and should be kept updated 'with results from former workshops' (R01). R10 answered: 'Not really satisfied, and generally too long. I think this info needs to be short, well organized, and easily understood. I think generally there was too much info on the main page and the site not that easy to navigate.' *This is a possible outline of future website design. The problem is that website needs people, who can work with it, and in Corsage's case, the website is maintained by GeneYous and the 2007 organizers weren't in continuous contact with the GeneYous people.*

Aspect 2c: Additional contact between you and the organizers

By this we meant additional communication on workshop goals, organization, etc as it sometimes happens when people have questions, for instance, whether their topic would fit into the workshop. 9 respondents expressed their satisfaction, for one this additional contact was 'not necessary' (R06).

Aspect 2d: Choice of city

All 10 respondents expressed their satisfaction. The choice of city – for 2007, Utrecht – resulted from the fact that previous organizers asked their colleagues whether they were interested to organize this occasion. Utrecht and Amsterdam were possible candidates but eventually, Amsterdam was ruled out for a number of reasons. Thus there are always constraints on choices. R01 (who was satisfied) remarked that 'Corsage should not get the image of being a "Utrecht thing"'. This is because Utrecht hosted the meeting for the second time.

Aspect 2e: Choice of venue

The venue was the conference center 'De Witte Vosch' in central Utrecht. All 10 respondents expressed their satisfaction.

Aspect 2f: Length of workshop

The workshop went from about 9 am (registration) till 5.15 pm, with drinks afterwards. All 10 respondents expressed their satisfaction.

Aspect 2g: Time for presentation

The time planned for each presentation was 20 minutes, with an additional 10 minutes for discussion of the presentation and a further 10 to 15 minutes at the end of each session for more general discussion. 8 respondents expressed their satisfaction. For R04 the time was 'too short' while R08 remarked that 'sometimes speakers took too long, should be more strict'. *Evaluation of the time available is probably always dependent on what speakers think about the time they must have available for themselves. Seeing that in other conferences presentation time can be as little as 10-15 minutes, 20 minutes seemed for the 2007 organizers a good choice. More time would probably interrupt the flow of the session and tire the participants. Future organisers should perhaps even more explicitly delegate time control to the participants in the session, e.g. by appointing the last presenter session chair.*

Aspect 2h: Time for discussion of a presentation

Official time for discussion of a presentation was 10-15 minutes; actual time was dependent on session management. 6 respondents expressed their satisfaction. For 2 respondents (R04, R09) this time was too short; R10 was satisfied but still wished that 'both this and presentation times could have been a little longer'. R08 also expressed his satisfaction but remarked that 'sometimes speakers took too long, should be more strict'. Discussion time is very important but is probably always considered to short. This is why longer breaks (15-20 minutes) and after-workshop meetings are important.

Aspect 2i: Panel size

The panel consisted of three people, Ellen Moors (chair; innovation researcher, Utrecht University), Huub Schellekens (pharmacology) and Marjan Slob (health journalist). A fourth person (involved in genomics valorization) could not attend. 6 respondents expressed their satisfaction with panel size. For 3 respondents (R01, R04, R10) the size was too small, 'at least 4 people [could have been] in a panel' (R04). For R02 size was 'irrelevant', what counted was 'the discussion, two interesting or even controversial persons can be enough'. Also R01 thought that 'Schellekens was excellent but it would have been interesting to pole him against an ethicist.' *With panel composition there is always the question if one can get all the people one wants, and if the discussion turns out to be interesting. In our case, two of the organizers knew all three panel members, so existing networks may be considered a safe strategy when it comes to putting together a panel.*

Question 3: Did you meet people (presenters/participants) you haven't met before?

All respondents said that they did meet people they didn't know before

Question 4: If you have presented at this meeting, what approximately was the size of the audience? Question 5: What size would you have preferred in order to have an interesting discussion?

The lower ceiling of participants as indicated by R02 is 7 participants (the size was 'ok, preferably not less'). R03 (8 participants) said the 'discussion was interesting but always nice to have a large number of people in your audience'. The upper ceiling as indicated by R08 and R09 is 20 participants. 5 respondents indicated a preferred window between 10 and 15 participants. Size may sometimes be not as important as the interaction; R10 (13 participants) said the size 'was sufficient. We had good discussion that could have gone on longer if time permitted.' *The number of participants cannot be controlled in some way; it is dependent on overall participation and choice which of the simultaneous sessions to attend. But with a number of people indicating 10-15 people as preferred size of the audience, this may help the 2008 organizers in selecting the right space: taking care that at least 15 people would fit into a room.*

Question 6: Which topics/issues of this meeting's panel discussion did you find interesting/exciting, and why?

The respondents mentioned a number of different issues:

- problems that occur in pharma; the Future of pharma (R01)
- view on 'genomics ivory tower hype' (R03); the most urgent questions genomics needs to address (R05), and linked to this, the future of social science research (R06)
- innovation policy in general (R01)

Issues that concern a number of stakeholders likewise (but this is not to be confused with a discussion at superficial level using general terms) are considered:

- 'The role of non-directed funding as compared to application/valorization strategies. It is something both scholars and scientists can discuss at length.' (R04)

Common ground and language is important because among the 2007 participants were some not familiar with ELSA research:

- ‘Sociological aspects were completely new to me’ (R08)

Multiplicity of viewpoints is also valued:

- ‘The general reflection on ‘genomics’ and ‘genomics and society’ is by time useful and interesting, but I think the speakers (not all) could have been chosen better to evoke a more lively discussion.’ (R02)
- ‘Huub Schelleken’s presentation was really good. He has significant expert and insider knowledge with regards to pharmaceuticals and is not afraid to be honest and ‘tell it like it is’. (R10)
- ‘...This time it could have included one more person, e.g. from (science) policy or industry.’ (R05 in response to question 16)

Question 7: Which topics/issues were not interesting, and why?

Some respondents rejected superficial characteristics of the panel discussion when use was made of general terms: ‘Discussions about ‘what genomics is’ and other general stuff. Everybody has heard of it many times, read articles, discussed it with other people, etc. It gets boring after 5 years.’ (R04) ‘The idea of ‘the public’ is hardly helpful to understand genomics-society relations.’ (R05) This question was about the panel discussion but a few respondents also offered their opinions on the keynote speech. For R10 said ‘Bram Brouwer’s presentation just wasn’t that relevant. Also, I felt it was a pretty linear explanation of how science, scientific knowledge and scientific networks function. Would have been good to be able to ask some questions, or even unpack his presentation on consortiums.’ This raises the question whether a keynote speech should not also be followed by some discussion time.

The next set of questions is about the organization of the 2008 meeting.

Question 9: There are (mostly) organizational reasons for rotating the places the Corsage meetings are held in but there is also an advantage in keeping a permanent meeting place in the centre of the Netherlands. What would you prefer:

Option 9a: A rotating scheme involving 3 and more different places all over the country?

5 respondents favored this option, with another respondent ‘not really minding’. Some respondents gave their reasons: ‘I’d prefer this one. If a fixed number of sites is chosen, this would shift the organizational burden to a smaller number of people. This, in turn, may result in other people taking no active role which increases the chances of a silent death of the initiative.’ (R04) ‘But if there are no good suggestions for places you could still go to one place two or three years in a row.’ (R09)

Option 9b: An alternating scheme involving 2 places? Which places would you prefer?

There were no responses here.

Option 9c: A permanent meeting place? Which place would you prefer?

3 respondents voted for this option, 2 of them specifically for Utrecht as it is ‘very central’ (R02). *The challenge concerning the Corsage meetings is that there is no permanent organizing committee that could in some way decide upon a place. The identification process is open-ended and the old workshop and subsequent evaluation are opportunities for the old organizers to search for willing candidates. The moment new organizers are found the question is reduced to where exactly the meeting should be held, especially if it is the case that*

organizers are from different cities. Thus, while there may be consensus for a rotating scheme (option 9a) this in itself does not solve the issue.

Question 10: Are you willing to pay an entrance fee for this type of event and if so, how much?

All three Corsage meetings have had entrance fees, at the 2007 meeting this amounted to €20. The fee was used to cover administrative overhead. In terms of the preferences that respondents indicate, the lowest fee mentioned was €5 (R09) and the highest, mentioned once, ‘up to €25’ (R04). 6 respondents indicated their satisfaction with the €20 fee, with R10 adding ‘generally though, I think these PhD events should be paid for by institutions rather than the PhD students themselves.’ This is probably already the case.

Question 11: This was the first meeting with international presenters. Would you want to have international participants also in future meetings, even if this could imply a higher entrance fee?

For the 2007 Corsage winter meeting funding came for the venue from CSG and for the travel and accommodation expenses of the two UK based participants from WTMC and PFGS, jointly. This funding cannot be taken for granted, especially if you consider that CSG was so kind as to help out on the unexpected costs of the venue. The reasoning behind the question was that if Corsage wanted to continue inviting participants based in other countries, costs would have to be shared by the Dutch participants.

Two respondents indicated that the entrance fees should not be raised to cover the expenses in question (R09), or that funding be found by the participants themselves: This was not the first meeting with international presenters. It is worth the while though. However, fees shouldn’t rise too much. It is important to spread the word internationally and people will come.’ (R04)

Three respondents agreed with raising the entrance fee (R01, R02, R08). 3 respondents pointed at constraints or showed reservations: ‘That depends on the increase of the fee. I personally have a very small budget for conferences and if the fee is too high then I need to spend the money for conferences.’ (R03) ‘International participation was definitely an asset. However, I would not go beyond let’s say 40 euros for the entrance fee.’ (R05) ‘The international presenters were interesting but not really necessary’ (R06)

It seems reasonable to separate as far as possible the presence of invited international presenters and the entrance fee. Given that Corsage is a low-threshold event the fee should not be raised unless for purposes immediate to the organization of the workshop (venue, expenses).

Question 12: The Corsage meetings were organized as low entrance threshold events where research in all phases (early – mature) can be presented. With respect to advancement of insight, do you want the next Corsage meeting to

Option 12a: Remain a low entrance threshold meeting?

All 10 respondents were in favor of this option, voicing their approval in the positive or indirectly. R05 said that ‘there are quite some other occasions’ to present more advanced research (option 12b: limiting Corsage meetings to more advanced research (ie at least one publication must have come out of this project already), as did R02. R04 said: ‘I think it is important to stay this way. Discuss early work – there are plenty of conferences to discuss completed projects, or those that are well under way.’ And R03: ‘No. It is nice to have discussion about your project with peers from other universities, also in early stages of parts of your project. That is for me the added value of the whole event. For more advanced stages of projects other events are available.’

Question 13: Being a low threshold event also means that the meeting is open to any presentation covering any topic of ELSA. With respect to topics, do you want to see at the next Corsage meeting

Option 13a: a broad range of topics (ethical, legal, societal)?

9 respondents supported this option. R04 said: ‘Not too fixed on a topic – create a general program for all to enjoy, and to facilitate contact between the ‘legs’ of ELSA (as well as outside of ELSA: philosophy, anthropology, etc.).’ R10: ‘I think trying to think of ethical, legal and/or societal as separate entities is perhaps inaccurate. If these are indeed interconnected topics then the range should be covered at the meeting.’ R02 answered by saying ‘sessions topics can be organized more specifically as happened now already’.

Option 13b: a focus on specific topics (ethical or legal or societal), to the exclusion of others?

1 respondent (R09) preferred a focus on specific topics, in this case ethical.

Question 14: ‘ELSA’ is (at least currently in the Netherlands) conceived as interactionist sociology, with a strong emphasis on activities linking science, technology, regulation and society via workshops etc. With respect to methodologies, do you want to see at the next Corsage meeting

Option 14a: Presentations of projects where such interactive workshops play a major role?

1 respondent (R10) favored this option.

Option 14b: A mix of interactive projects and more descriptive/analytical projects?

8 respondents preferred the mix, which has indeed been a characteristic of all three Corsage meetings. The respondents gave several reasons for their preference: ‘A mix is more interesting for me personally because my project is a mix.’ (R03) ‘This is the way to go. However, this is the way it is at the moment. It isn’t new: most projects are descriptive. There is nothing wrong with either description, or intervention/interaction. To do the latter, one has to have done the former.’ (R04) ‘I would prefer to have a mix, to avoid ‘preken voor eigen parochie.’ (R05) *The reasoning behind this question was the observation of the trend in the Netherlands to more and more conceptualize sociological research on genomics as interactionist ‘ELSA’, with workshop components.*

Question 15: So far mainly social science and humanities scholars (in the broadest sense) have given presentations at Corsage meetings, although in spirit it is a gathering of ELSA scholars working on links between stakeholders in science, society, and regulation. What sort of strategy/strategies would you suggest to attract researchers from other fields?

There was admission that this is a difficult issue (R10). A number of general and specific strategies have been suggested:

- Linking up with e-mail lists of other networks (R01)
- Networking (R01) and advertising Corsage meetings at events relevant for stakeholders (R09); network with the Young European Biotech Network; recruit outside of the social sciences http://www.yebn.org/main/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1 (R10)
- Lobby graduate schools that PhD students should get PhD-education credit points for attending (R04)
- Invite the human ‘object of [the PhD] study’ (R04)
- Invite policy scientists and stakeholders as keynote speaker and panel members (R05)

- Have presenters framing their presentations as policy agendas and have invited policy makers reacting to these agendas (R05)

1 respondent looked at the challenge from a perspective that had implications for the workshop itself: 'I think that if you would like to do that the whole idea should be different. Now the workshop was about methodological issues etc. That is not very interesting for stakeholders I think. If you would like to make it interesting for stakeholder, one could for example organize a discussion meeting in which social scientist and stakeholders confront each other with their "elsa" issues' (R03) This issue is one that in general a lot of time and discussion should be devoted to. Networking can be done through existing organizations involved in our type of research, but a good strategy is also to use existing trans-disciplinary networks at each department (for instance, Huub Schellekens in Utrecht is embedded as a pharmacologist in innovation studies).

Question 16: With a smaller panel (three, as we did) you can have more interaction with the audience, whereas with a larger panel (four...) you can represent a greater number of differing viewpoints. Which would you prefer:

Option 16a: A small panel (3)

6 respondents were in favor of this option but it was also remarked that interaction is also a function of panel composition, rather than size: 'Interesting people and a good chair, then 3 is definitely enough' (R02)

Option 16b: A larger panel (4...)

R04 was in favor of a larger panel, for the dynamics it allows: 'A larger panel can create a momentum in the discussion by disagreeing. A smaller panel lacks such a dynamics.'

R06 was against both panel and parallel sessions: 'no panel, use the time to present research and skip parallel sessions'.

Question 17: What topic/topics for a future panel discussion would you find interesting?

A number of possible topics were suggested, ranging from issues dealt with sociological/ELSA research to the realities and constraints of PhD research itself:

- Justice and equity
- Agenda setting
- Social scientists and genetic activism.
- Policy implementation of elsa research
- Strategies of getting sociological/ELSA type research accepted in outlets of scientists (study objects)
- Getting a post-doc position/job after the PhD.
- topics as discussed in presented papers.
- Technology/genomics criticism (public and philosophical)
- R10 said: 'I guess controversial stuff is the best as it gets people debating, which is always good. There was some discussion taking place over drinks regarding the extent to which ELSA research is being monopolized by the CSG and what implications that this may have on research per say. That is interesting and controversial. Not sure if your funders would approve, but that is the kind of reflexivity we need to exhibit within STS and the social sciences.'

Question 18: What (kinds of) participants could be in that future panel? (You can mention names, or refer to professions or areas of expertise, such as ‘journalist’, ‘genomicist’, ‘ELSA researcher’)

A number of participants (and combinations thereof) were suggested:

- Genomicist - elsa researcher - NGO representative ‘working on one topic, for example golden rice’ (R02)
- Publisher - job-recruiter - journal editor - presentation coach (R04)
- Policy maker - (health care) professional - politician (R05)
- Philosophers - spokesperson of a citizens’ initiative (R09)
- Industry people (R10)

Additional remarks

In the ‘Additional Remarks’ section respondents expressed their pleasure of having attended the workshop (R02, R07) and sometimes valued concrete activities: ‘I liked the event a lot, especially to constructively discuss research’ (R01) ‘I thank the organization for the opportunity to present preliminary results of my research. The discussion about my research was interesting, as were discussions in other sessions. I met several persons researching the same topic; I’m also pleased with that. The panel discussion was very interesting but I would prefer to use that time for research presentations. The same for the key note speech. I would prefer a meeting without parallel sessions, so that participants can be present at all presentations and audiences are larger. A model with two or three senior scientists (or other persons with specific knowledge) present would make the meeting more like a ‘master class’, explicitly meant for presentation of research.’ (R06)

Finances

Corsage III Wintermeeting, De Witte Vosch, 13 december 2007

Uitgaven		Inkomsten	
Zaalhuur (incl. lunch)*	1525,5	Bijdrage CSG	1525,5
Internationale sessie**	456,96	Bijdrage PFGS	228,48
		Bijdrage WTMC	228,48
Reiskosten genodigden	0	Fees	220
Reiskosten UK participants	0	Fee Jerzy Koopman (deb)	20
Presentjes	41,84		
Borrel	150		
Overhead organisatie	52,6		
Totaal	2226,9	Totaal	2222,46

Saldo 2006	132,27	
Inkomsten -/- uitgaven	-4,44	
Saldo 2007	127,83	(On Roy's bank account)