

PR1: CA15216

First Progress Report from Action

Submitted on: 3-11-2017

This report was submitted by the Action Chair, on behalf of the Management Committee of the Action, in fulfilment of the requirements of the rules for COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment. The first Progress Review (PR1) enables the monitoring of the Action's implementation of the SC Recommendations from the proposal stage and the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy.

Throughout this document Early Career Investigators and Inclusiveness Target Countries, as defined in the "Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities" (COST 132/14 REV), are referred to using the acronyms "ECIs" and "ITCs".

Proposal							
	Participating countries	Main Proposer			% in Network of Proposers		
	% ITC	ITC	ECI	Female	ITC	ECI	Female
Proposal OC-2015-2-20165	28	NO	NO	NO	26	13	52
SC Recommendation							
<p>The proposed Action should develop and implement a plan to enhance the participation of Inclusiveness Target Countries and Early Career Investigators and to ensure that the good gender balance is maintained and industrial engagement realised. In order to realise its full potential to contribute to the COST Mission the proposed Action should be more specific and include more medical scientists. The proposed Action must also develop and implement a plan for achieving industrial engagement.</p>							

Action: Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs)				
	Participating countries % ITC	MC Members % ITC	Leadership roles % ITC	Relative representation of ITCs in leadership roles
Action CA15216	50	48	40	83
All Actions	45	42	24	57
<p>Following the SC recommendation an increase of ITC countries, from the initial 27% at the proposal stage, to the current 50%, was reached within a one year Action period. Also a large number of members from ITC countries have leading roles in our COST Action, including the Vice Chair, Working Group and Task leaders. Still, some ITC countries are missing (eg. Cyprus, Luxembourg, Motenegro). The respective National Contact Points in these countries were informed on March 2017 about our Action aim and scope so that they could identify suitable network partners and candidates, by this widening our network.</p>				

Action: Early Career Investigators (ECIs)			
	MC Members % ECI	Leadership roles % ECI	Relative representation of ECIs in leadership roles
Action CA15216	21	0	0
All Actions	26	7	27

We acknowledge to perform below our initial projections. Reasons for this include the late recruitment of young researchers in the first year for administrative reasons (challenges in defining which of our members are ECIs) and, thus, numbers presented are probably underestimated. Additionally, the National COST Officers have failed in many cases to consider ECI candidates. To assist Actions in identifying ECI members, a specific e-cost "tool" would be a helpful addition. In ENBA, particularly, it has been difficult to convince young researchers to commit to a 4-year MC or Task-Leader position. We are unsure of the reasons for this, perhaps relating to the instability of their employment. We do have ECIs that are task leaders in our Action, but do not have a ECI representation on the EB. Following the SC recommendations, we plan to focus on this weakness and target more ECIs from ITC countries to become MC members.

Action: Gender Balance			
	MC Members % Female	Leadership roles % Female	Relative representation of females in leadership roles
Action CA15216	48	60	124
All Actions	39	11	28

While at the proposal stage we had a female MC contribution of 52%, a small decline to 48% for MC members occurred with the inclusion of new MC members from ITC countries. However, as listed above we still perform well in relation to other Actions in view of the total number of females in MC and leadership roles, with one female Vice Chair and two female Working group leaders out of three . We aim at maintaining this gender balance as positively recommended by the SC.

Action comment on its implementation (achievement and/or effort) of SC Recommendation(s) to date
It was recommended by the SC that industrial engagement should be envisaged and more medical scientists should be included. Currently, more than five SMEs and two larger companies are active in in our COST Action, some of them as MC members since the proposal submission and others joining more recently. We also announced our COST Action during large industrial roadshows, including the Annual Meeting of the European association of the adhesive and sealant industry (FEICA). Together with the Board of the German Adhesives Association, meetings and activities have been agreed to encourage interaction and mutual learning. Within our Action there are approximately eight physicians from the dentistry sector and a large number of MC members also work in clinical medicine, including the Action Chair. As for industry, specific interactions and meetings with physicians took place in the first grant period, through personal contacts, common grant proposals and participation in conferences.

Action description of plans to implement SC Recommendations and COST policy in the future
We aim to increase our visibility and presence in social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, and by this to draw the attention of early career investigators working in this field. In the forthcoming International Conference on Biological and Biomimetic Adhesives that will take place in March 2018 in Spain, ECI and female researches will be preferred if applications of equal quality must be differentiated. By this mechanism we will increase their visibility to a wider audience and allow them to raise their international profiles. During candidate selection for training schools and STSMs, a strong focus is placed upon COST policies and those candidates are again provided support if applications must be separated by criteria other than scientific quality. Participation of more ITC partners is favoured and will be accelerated by the Executive Board. However, this will require the National Contact Points to support us and consider these criteria during candidate nomination. Stronger participation of medical scientists and industry partners in our network is encouraged, i.e. by invitation of physicians and industry board members as speakers at the forthcoming International Conference, as partners in Training schools and hosts of STSMs. The initial contact with FEICA and the

German Adhesives Association will be continued and the other national MCs pushed to get in touch with their National Adhesives Association and other industry representatives. Furthermore, participation in roadshows and industrial meetings will be maintained to keep in touch, communicate and discuss common activities and projects.