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# Subject │ Minutes of the Second Management Committee Meeting of COST Action CA16101 “MULTI-modal Imaging of FOREnsic SciEnce Evidence - tools for Forensic Science”

Krakow, Poland  
06/011/2017

1. **Welcome to participants**

The participants were welcomed by Dr Simona Francese (Sheffield Hallam University), Chair of the Action CA16101.

1. **Verification of the presence of two-thirds of the participating COST Countries**

The total number of voting Countries is 28. The Chair has counted the presence of 24 Countries thus confirming the presence of the 2/3 of the participating countries (COST doc. 134/14 REV 2 “COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment” Annex I, Article 9).

1. **Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda (**Annex 1**) for the 2nd Management Committee (MC) meeting was adopted.

1. **Approval of Minutes and matters arising from last minutes**

The Chair flagged up a correction to make to last minutes;

Prof. Eva Cuypers (Belgium) was mistakenly reported as part of the STSM committee in point 11 of the minutes. However Prof. Ron Heeren (The Netherlands) has reports that Eva she has been operating in the Committee unofficially therefore her formal role in the Committee has now been agreed.

Minutes of last meeting were approved unanimously by MC members.

The Chair reported on 3 matters arising from last minutes.

**a.** Outstanding Election of a MC member to undertake the Role of the Scientific Officer. The Chair reiterated that she could not take on that role because of her workload as Chair of the MC and therefore there was still need for an alternative. The role description has been reported by the Chair in her presentation (**Annex 2**) and bi-monthly reports were suggested.

*Japp Van Der Weerd* (The Netherlands) has volunteered to take on the role of Scientific Officer for 1 year. MC members approved unanimously.

**b.** Change in Work Group 1 Leader. Dr Manuel Algarra has resigned his position of WG1 leader due to work commitments. Prof. Martina Marchetti-Deschmann who has been acting ad interim was unanimously elected by the MC members to be the new WG1 leader.

**c.** Change in Action Dissemination Officer. Dr Zoltan Szekely (Hungary) has resigned from his role as dissemination officer but has offered his continued assistance with the maintenance of the website. Prof. Ivana Ognjanovic (Montenegro) volunteered to take up the position and the MC approved unanimously.

**d.** The Chair reported that since the start of the Action, there has been a budget increment (EUR 14 000) as the COST Association was granted extra budget (EUR 6.67 million) and decided to allocate this additional budget *to the new networking tool (ITC Conference Grant)* – TOTAL Action BUDGET EUR 129,977.51. The Chair was notified that the Action will have the possibility to re-allocate this budget, with changes, as usual, subject to the approval of the MC and the SO.

1. **Update from the Action Chair**

**a. Status of the Action: start and end dates of Action, participating COST countries, participating NNC/IPC Institutions and Specific Organisations.**

The Chair has reminded the MC of that 02/03/2017 and 01/03/2021 are the start and end dates of the Action respectively. The Chair has also reminded that the Action had originally started off with 14 proposer countries. To date, 27 COST Full Members and Israel as COST Cooperating Member have signed the MoU. Since the first MC meeting, there has been the addition of one IPC (Australia, Charlest Sturt University) and 1 NNC (Belarus, Scientific and Practical Centre of State Forensic Examination Committee (SPC)) institution, respectively. The Chair indicated that there were further request to join the Action from institutions from Albania (Epoka University) and USA (Elite Forensic Services) though the applications are incomplete. A further application from Belarus is going through the various stages of approval at the time of the II MC meeting (Information Systems and Technologies Department at YK State University of Grodno).

**b. Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) review of completed reports and new applications**

The STSM Manager Prof. Ron Heeren (RH) briefed the MC members about progress of STSMs as well as reminding of the procedure for application, evaluation and payment of the grants (presentation attached, **Annex 3**).

Five Members of the STSM Committee (including RH) help evaluate the STSMs. Submitted STSM applications are first screened by the Manager to check that all information is correctly included and that the STSM is relevant to the Action Objectives. The application is then distributed to the other 4 members who provide feedback on approval.

Ten STSMs were originally budgeted for. The Chair reminded the MC that upon launch of an e-vote on 28/08/2017, they voted in favor of an extra 3 STSM to be allocated from the budget provided by COST towards the new ITC Conference Grant networking tool (14 countries voted and 13/14 approved the immediate addition of 3 more STSM; the vote closed on 05/09/1017). The Chair has so far allocated an extra 2 STSM with the 3rd one on the way according to the monitoring on the uptake of these bursaries.

Current grant period runs until 30th April 2018. RH indicated that therefore funding are available for another 5+2/3 STSMs. STSMs must be completed before 30th April 2018. RH stresses that STSM final report must be sent 30 days after completion of the mission and approved in order to enable to payment. This procedure does not apply to ITC who can be granted 50% of the funding in advance.

LF suggested that in the second general meeting a session with presentations given by STSM grantee could be organised in order to give more visibility to young scientists and ECIs.

1. **Update from the Grant Holder:**

The Chair reported that the financial report was still being compiled at the time of the meeting though she was able to extract some key figures to present to the MC.

**(a)** 4,000 Euro were paid to Zoltan Szekelyfor the set-up and maintenance of the MULTIFORESEE website (https://multiforesee.com/ )

**(b)** The Porto WG1 & WG2 meetings occurred on 29/06/2017 were paid for but presented an underspent (Annex 2).

**(c)** The training school (Wakefield, UK) occurring between 21-25 Aug 2017 was paid for but presented an underspent (Annex 2).

**(d)** No information yet on the final costing of the I Multiforesee Conference co-localised with MC meeting, WG1 and WG2 meetings and WG1 and G2 workshops Meeting in Krakow (no information about under-spending yet)

**(e)** 8977 Euro conference grants (initial budget minus the 2 STSM funding supplementing the original 10 STSM) for inclusiveness target countries (ITC) grant conferences was not spent yet because no one applied for the grants.

SF stressed that under spending is an issue as it may mean cuts to next year's budget and that any remaining money should be re-routed into some other fund such as STSMs or other actvities.

RH and the Chair raised the question of what to do with unspent budget – STSMs, or another training school. Another MC meeting was also suggested together with the possibility to co-localise this with additional events.

RH has shown willingness to organize a training school in Maastricht in February 2018. The Chair agrees but first knowledge of the total Action's underspent needs to be obtained.

The MC voted in favor of the suggestion by the Chair that if by December 1st, there was no application for the ITC Conference Grant fund, the overall underspent budget should be re-allocated into another training school organised by RH back to back with the MC meeting and possibly WG1 and WG2 meetings in February. RH will produce the training school programme and will discuss this with WG1 and WG2 leaders via e-mail. The training school will need to be approved by MC members via e-vote.

1. **Update from the COST Association**

Presentations were given by Dr Lucia Forzi (LF), Science Officer of the Action and Mrs Nathalie Warenghien (NW), COST Administrative Officer.

To the benefit of the new members joining the Action LF briefs MC members on the key rules as prescribed by the COST Vademecum (Annex 4). LF suggested to the Action Chair and MC members to start identifying the scientific goals and planning next 12-month period using the first year’s budget estimate. LF reminded MC members that within COST they are representing their home countries and not themselves or their individual organisations. LF indicates that:

Co-organized activities and sessions are possible between the Action and other bodies (e.g. conferences) where at least 50% of the Action's members are involved in the event, including a good representation in the organising committee. All requirements are outlined in the Guidelines for COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment.

Part of the yearly budget can be used to produce peer-reviewed publications as a form of dissemination; LF reminded the importance of acknowledging COST in Action publications and when communicating the network’s achievements and provided relevant links. LF informed the MC on the revision of the Vademecum regarding publications and the fact that Action should focus on publications, preferably Open Access, in quality journals. It was reminded that an additional grant up to max. 10K Euro can be requested at least 6 months before the Action end date for Final Action Dissemination. LF reminded the Action Chair to send to the COST Association the minutes of MC meetings and to upload these minutes via COST e-portal.

NW reminds that no carryover of overspent funds is possible and talks the MC through the general rules for reimbursement (Annex 5). NW then progresses to give information on how the ITC conference grants work.

SF asks if grant holder can start processing reimbursements individually (those who fill in the on-line form) or if it should wait for everyone to finalize the on-line. NW indicates that grant holder can start processing the reimbursements immediately as they come in.

1. **Monitoring of the Action**

Regarding the internal monitoring the Chair reminds that this was done informally by her but that this can now be taken up by the Scientific Officer.

LF in her presentation reminded the procedure for the Action Monitoring and Final Assessment. In particular, she presented the different deadlines and in particular the content of PR1 that will have to be submitted next March. In view of PR2, the SO reminded also the importance of keeping good track of joint publications and projects produced by the Action in order to facilitate the preparation of future reports.

1. **Implementation of COST policies on**

**a. Promotion of gender balance and early career investigators**

The Chair reports of key figures of promotion of gender balance (Annex 2):

* 1/5 STSM recipient is a woman but only one woman applied
* 6/8 trainees at the 2017 training school were women
* 3/6 Core group members are women
* 4/5 STSM committee members are women

RH notes that we roughly have a 50-50 representation of women on the MC.

The Chair reports of key figures of promotion of ECI (Annex 2):

* 15% of MC members comprise ECI.
* 3/5 of STSMs have been awarded to ECIs.

Additional figures will be available after the meetings in Krakow.

RH suggests to MC members to promote STSMs at conferences, meetings etc. and that STSM awardees should be given a platform to present their work at MC meetings/workshops.

**b. Inclusiveness and excellence**

The Chair reports that to date there is a 48% representation from ITC members with two events taking place in ITC (WG1 and WG2 meetings in Portugal; MC meeting/Workshops/WG1 and WG2 meetings in Krakow). This percentage represents an increase compared with the previous 46% figure reported in the first MC meeting.

1. **Follow-up of the MoU objectives: progress report on working groups**

Dr Alessandro Trivillini presents an update as WG2 leader: Greek/Italian members will be presenting the results of the Round Robin Study (RRS) with the help of Prof. Zuba' s team. Not all MC members participating to WG2 have participated due to time/resource constraints but overall outcome is good.

Prof. Martina Marchetti-Deschmann presents an update as WG1 leader: She indicates that 50% of those participating actively in the two RRS have reported back on their results. Information will be disseminated and discussed during the Krakow workshop and WG1 meeting.

RH suggests having short presentations by WG leaders to give short presentations at future MC meetings. The Chair seconds the proposal.

1. **Scientific Planning**

**a. Scientific Strategy (MoU objectives, GP goals, WG tasks and deliverables)**

The Chair reports that the GP goals for year 1 aimed to survey the knowledge and imaging technologies currently available in the field as well as its implementation.

She reports that for GP1 Research Coordination 1 to 3 MoU objectives as well as Capacity Building 1 MoU objective will be broadly met. However industry has been poorly interacting and it needs the individual efforts of all the MC members to boost and include their participation.

In terms of the GP1 goals, all have been met apart from GP1-5 which is under way and GP1-10. The latter was proposed by Dr Zoltan Szekely (ZS) who could not make the Krakow meetings. Therefore an Action is put on the Chair to consult ZS and ask for a webinar to deliver GP1-10.

She reports the need to merge the two strands for some activities as for instance, there is no doubt that with respect to Software (and hardware) needs to support imaging technology, the analytical strand will need the expertise of the digital strand.

The Chair reports that at the UK training school both strands (digital and analytical) were represented. The Chair stresses that the trainees should disseminate information learnt to colleagues at their respective Institutions.

MC Estonia member also suggests more sharing between WG1 and WG2.

RH proposes MC members to pool in their resources/background (e.g. equipment, expertise) as well as those of other Institutions in their country in the form of a small clickable map to be uploaded on the Action website. The Chair reminds the MC that such document exists already in the form of an excel spreadsheet though a. not all the MC members have provided the information requested and b. no information exist presently on additional relevant Institutions in each country. LF added that it is very important to have detailed information on the expertise and equipment/facilities available in the labs in an easily accessible part of the Action website. This information is very useful in particular to boost STSM applications.

Prof. Dariusz Zuba indicated that submission of a list of institutions can be easy for some countries like the Netherlands but difficult for other counties like the Poland where there are over 100 universities offering Forensic courses.

Prof. Francesco Romolo indicated that the proposed idea of RH was fine but the map perhaps should boost the COST Network primarily.

The Chair agrees with this suggestion.

Michal Levin (Israel) stated that she will promote MULTIFORESEE COST Action at local analytical chemistry conference happening in Israel.

An Action is put on the Action's Chair to initiate circulation of the document discussed above for the members to populate.

Working Group Tasks and deliverables: The Chair raises the need to have a report by the WG Leaders as a record but also to demonstrate that the WG objectives of the group have been met and suggests 28th February 2018.

MC approved that the participating MC individuals should submit their final reports for the RRS to respective WG leaders by January 31st 2018

WG1 leader (MMD) will use an on-line repository (such as dropbox) for report submission by the RRS participant MC members. MMD will set up this repository in one week from the date of the MC meeting.

The Chair will distribute a link to an FTP server in order to upload raw data which also need to be submitted by January 31st 2018.

The Chair indicates that the Action is on track to deliver deliverable 1 by Month 18 (see Annex 2).

**b. Action budget planning**

The Chair indicates that she is not ready to discuss the budget planning for Year 2 and suggests another MC meeting early in 2018 to draft the plan. Since it is not clear if the underspent budget will be enough to organise a MC meeting, LF suggests that this could be done at a Core Group Level with submission of the WBP to the MC by e-vote.

**c. Long Term planning (including anticipated locations and dates of future activities)**

Prof. Massimo Tistarelli (Vice-Chair of the Action) has asked for 4K Euro that will cover travelling and accommodation for 2 CA16101 members to present within the digital strand at the 6th International Workshop on Biometrics and Forensics to be held in Italy in June 2018. A preliminary discussion at MC level found no objections to grant this money. LF reminded that for Dissemination Meetings for each Grant Period, a maximum of two Action MC members, limited to one per meeting, are eligible to be reimbursed. Exceptions to this rule should be duly justified and as usual, the participation of eligible Action Participants at Dissemination meetings must be pre-approved by both the Action MC and by the COST Action’s Science Officer. The main subject of the oral presentation at the approved event or conference must result in promoting the scientific activities of the COST Action.

A suggestion from Aldo Mattei (ENFSI) was reported by the Chair to co-organise a workshop on Facial recognition (digital strand) in partnership with the EU IAI to be held in Amsterdam in 2018. A preliminary discussion at MC level found no objections to grant this money. LF reminded that the requirements of the co-organisation of events detailed in the Guidelines must be fulfilled.

A tentative date for the upcoming COST Action conference is November 2018. The Republic of Macedonia has expressed interest to host the Conference. The MC has tentatively agreed to have co-localised MC meeting/WG meeting and Conference in November 2018 in Macedonia. RH reminds that spreading of the activities is always better from a geographical balance point of view. The Chair agrees but reminds that this is budget dependant.

RH has offered to organize the second training school during the 2nd grant period in Maastricht should this not be possible before the end of GP1

**d. Dissemination planning (publications and outreach activities)**

Publications: Manuel Algarra has reported that he has a peer-reviewed publication with other MC partners (collaborative research) in the pipeline.

RH explains that such publications could also come from STSM studies.

The Chair indicates that publications need to be flagged up to both the dissemination officer and the Chair. LF suggested to list joint publications on the Action website in order to facilitate the preparation of future reports (PR2 and Final Achievement Report).

The Chair suggests that if the RRS data is robust enough, a peer review publication may arise, aside publication of the document on the Action's website.

Outreach activities: The Chair informed the MC that she participated to the 4th EU conference in Copenhagen invited by COST on June 27th to disseminate the aims of the Action, though Journalist's participation was limited to 1..

The Chair, Janis Spigulis (Latvia) and Iwona Szynkowska (Poland) will be attending the 1st International Caparica Conference in Translational Forensics 20-23rd November 2017.

The Chair is invited to the Australia and New Zealand Forensic Science Society Conference, being held in Perth in 2018, where she will disseminate aims and work in progress of the Action too.

1. **Request to join the Action from:**

**a. COST countries**

The Chair reports no more applications to date.

**b. Institutions in NNC, IPC and/or specific organisations**

The Chair reminds the MC of the second application from a University in Belarus as already reported in point 5 of these minutes.

1. **AOB**

Depending on the Budget, core group meeting will take place in Brussels or via Skype. The Chair will arrange for this meeting.

Mimoza Ristova (Republic of Macedonia) has addressed the COST SO to feedback the COST governance that for ITC it would be very beneficial that the conference grants would not only be reserved to PhD students and ECI but also considered for senior members. LF will feedback the COST Association management.

1. **Location and date of next meeting**

TBC after the information on the budget underspent.

1. **Summary of the MC decisions**

The Chair summarised the MC main decisions concerning:

**a.** election of the Scientific Officer Dr *Japp Van Der Weerd* (The Netherlands), WG1 Leader Prof. Martina Marchetti-Deschmann (Austria) and Dissemination Officer Prof. Ivana Ognjanovic (Montenegro);

**b.** re-allocation of the additional budget (ITC conference grants) to additional 3 STSM as per e-vote closed on 05/09/1017 according to which 13/14 approved the immediate addition of 3 more STSM;

**c.** the re-allocation of underspent funds to additional activities including a training school organised by RH depending on the available funding;

**d.** promotion of STSMs at conferences, meetings etc and provision of a platform to STSM awardees for the presentation of their work at MC meetings/workshops;

**e.** WG leaders to deliver short presentations at future MC meetings;

**f.** an Action is put on the Chair to consult ZS and ask for a webinar to deliver GP1-10;

**g.** Finalisation/refinement of the document containing detailed information on the expertise and equipment/facilities available in Institutions/Countries taking part to the Action to be accessed on the Action website. An action is put on the Chair to circulate the template document;

**h.** WG tasks: MC individuals should submit their final reports for the RRS to respective WG leaders by January 31st 2018. WG leaders will submit a final report to the core group by 28th February 2018. WG1 leader (MMD) will use an on-line repository (such as dropbox) for report submission by the RRS participant MC members. MMD will set up this repository in one week from the date of the MC meeting. The Chair will distribute a link to an FTP server in order to upload raw data which also need to be submitted by January 31st 2018;

**i.** long term planning: MC has no objections in principle to dedicate some funding to a facial recognition workshop co-organised by the EU IAI and for sending Action members to the 6th International Workshop on Biometrics and Forensics Workshop organised by Prof. Tistarelli as long as the guidelines are complied with. A tentative date for the upcoming COST Action conference is November 2018. The Republic of Macedonia has expressed interest to host the Conference. The MC has tentatively agreed to have co-localised MC meeting/WG meeting and Conference in November 2018 in Macedonia;

**j.** The Action's chair will arranged for a group meeting in Brussels or via skype depending on the budget.

1. **Closing**

The Chair closes the meeting at 12:30.