

## First Progress Report from Action

Submitted on: 2-11-2020

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-2018-2-23140	55	YES	YES	YES	55	21	52
SC Recommendation							
To comply with the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy, in the implementation of the Action: - the level of involvement of Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs) should be maintained and the plans described in the proposal for ensuring ITC involvement should be implemented; - the level of involvement of Early Career Investigators (ECIs) should be increased and a plan should be developed and implemented to ensure the full involvement of ECIs in all aspects of the Action's implementation (including in Action leadership positions); - the gender balance should be maintained and the plans described in the proposal for ensuring gender balance should be implemented.							

Action: Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs)				
	Participating countries % ITC	MC Members % ITC	Leadership roles % ITC	Relative representation of ITCs in leadership roles
Action CA18201	57	61	56	92
All Actions	52	50	29	58
The Action ConservePlants has an above average inclusiveness of participants from ITC countries. Over 50% of leadership roles are also represented by participants from ITC countries. The calculations take into account only leaders and not co-leaders (who are also members of the core group), but also the co-leading positions (WG co-leaders, STSM co-coordinator, Science Communication co-manager, ITC Conference Grant co-manager) involve above 50% of ITC members (5 from ITC countries, 3 from non-ITC countries).				

### Action: Early Career Investigators (ECIs)

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Action CA18201	20	22	110
All Actions	18	16	89

Although the % of ECI MC members is higher than average of COST Actions, these numbers are still relatively low. However, the ECI are quite well represented in leadership positions. Besides the ECIs in leading positions, one ECI is involved in the Action as WG co-leader.

<b>Action: Gender Balance</b>			
	MC Members % Female	Leadership roles % Female	Relative representation of females in leadership roles
Action CA18201	55	78	142
All Actions	43	46	107

Gender balance of MC members is satisfactory, although leadership roles are strongly skewed towards females. When taking into account the co-leading positions, the ratio is more balanced, as co-leading positions are distributed among 5 males and 3 females.

#### **Action comment on its implementation (achievement and/or effort) of SC Recommendation(s) to date**

We believe that the Action ConservePlants is successful in implementing the SC Recommendations. The Action encourages the involvement of ECIs and/or participants from ITC in STSM calls by including the statement: "In the case of many proposals, PhD students, Early-Careers Investigators and applicants from Inclusiveness Target Countries will be given priority."). In GP1, 6 STSMs were granted; unfortunately, only one from an ITC country. A new STSM call was opened in the 2nd Grant Period and 4 out of 6 successful applications are from ITC. However, the current situation makes it difficult to predict whether these STSMs will be performed. Several new participants who performed their STSMs in the 1st grant period have later on joined WGs. Some other new MC members / substitutes / WG members have also joined the Action and are now involved either as task leaders (Anastassia Stefanaki, Baiba Pruiše, Maja Lazarević) or involved in dissemination activities (Andrea Bellia). All of these are young researchers (students, PhD candidates or ECIs). The gender balance of this Action is skewed towards females. The Action supports the equal involvement of both genders in leading positions, but we have no control on who joins the Action as MC member / substitute.

#### **Action description of plans to implement SC Recommendations and COST policy in the future**

The Action plans related to the SC Recommendations are: 1. The level of involvement of ITCs: - Representatives from ITC will be motivated to take functions as task leaders. - STSM and training school calls will always promote a balanced involvement of participants from ITC countries. - Because many activities within this Action are planned over a large European scale, the involvement of members from ITC countries is crucial for achieving its deliverables. Participation of all countries, ITC included, is therefore strongly encouraged by WG leaders. 2. The level of involvement of ECIs: - All Early Career Investigators within the COST Action (both among MC members / substitutes and WG members) will be identified. They will be contacted separately by WG leaders and will be encouraged to take responsibility in leading tasks within the WGs or to be actively involved in the WG activities. - STSM and training school calls will always promote the involvement of ECIs by giving them priority in case of many applications. - ECIs will be motivated to promote their research by writing short popular science articles which will be distributed through the Action social media, website and other. 3. The gender balance should be maintained and the plans described in the proposal for ensuring gender balance should be implemented. - STSM and training school calls will always

promote the gender balance.

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