Brussels, 28 July 2016

Subject | Minutes of the First Management Committee Meeting of COST Action CA15121 "Advancing marine conservation in the European and contiguous seas (MarCons)"

Brussels, Belgium
01/06/2016

1. Welcome to participants

The participants were welcomed by Dr Deniz Karaca, Science Officer and by Mr Christophe Peeters, Administrative Officer of the Action. Dr Deniz Karaca chaired the first part of the meeting, including the election of the Action Chair, Vice Chair, and Grant Holder that was carried out under agenda item 8.

2. Adoption of the agenda

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

3. Status of the COST Action

CSO Approval:	30/10/2015
Start of the Action:	01/06/2016
End of the Action:	31/05/2020
Total number of COST Countries having accepted the MoU:	22
Total number of COST Countries intending to accept the MoU:	-

4. Tour de table/ introduction of the MC Members

The list of officially nominated delegates and the participants of the meeting with their contact information is presented in **Annex 3**.

5. Establishment of quorum

The quorum (2/3 of COST Countries participating in the Action) was reached: 18 Participating COST Countries out of 22 were represented at the meeting (COST doc. 134/14 "COST Action Management Monitoring and Final Assessment" Annex I, Article 8).

6. General information on COST mechanism and the funding and reporting of coordination activities

Dr Deniz Karaca gave a presentation on the COST mechanism, Actions, networking instruments and policies of the COST Association (**Annex 4**). Relevant information can be found on the COST website at: http://www.cost.eu.

Mr Christophe Peeters continued with an introduction to the COST Grant System **(Annex 4**). Relevant information is on the COST website at http://www.cost.eu/participate/networking, including the following reference documents:

- Rules of Procedure for COST Action Management Committees (COST doc. 134/14, Annex I)

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- COST Action Management
- COST Vademecum
- Grant Agreement Template

7. Information on the Rules of Procedure for COST Action Management Committees (MC)

The Rules of Procedure for the Management Committee (**Annex 5**) were presented to the MC.

8. Election of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Grant Holder Institution and its Scientific Representative

Professor Stelios Katsanevakis (EL) was unanimously elected as the Chair.

Dr Peter Mackelworth (HR) was unanimously elected as the Vice-Chair.

University of the Aegean (EL) was unanimously elected as the Grant Holder Institution.

Professor Stelios Katsanevakis (EL) was unanimously elected as the Scientific Representetive of the Grant Holder Institution.

9. Workplan for the implementation of the COST Action (based on the Memorandum of Understanding – Presentation of the Action by the elected Action Chair)

The afternoon session started with the comprehensive presentation of MarCons. The Action Chair (AC) initially presented the history of the Action's proposal. The idea of the proposal came up from the group that participated in the International Workshop "Advancing marine conservation planning in the Mediterranean Sea". That workshop was organized three times, the first in Santorini, Greece (2012), the second in Nasholim, Israel (2013) and the third in Lecce, Italy (2015). The participants to this series of workshops, wishing to continue and expand a successful collaboration, decided to submit a proposal for a COST action expanding the geographical scope of the network, from the Mediterranean to the European and contiguous Sea, and also the overall objective from 'advancing conservation planning' to 'advancing marine conservation'. The proposal was successful and led to COST Action CA 15121.

Then, AC presented the overall goal and the specific objectives of the Action, as well as all WGs. AC highlighted the importance of concurrent reaching of two specific groups of objectives, i.e. research coordination objectives and capacity –building objectives, which lie at the heart of the MarCons Action. In short, MarCons has 6 Working Groups (WGs), 19 tasks, 17 deliverables, and will conduct at least 3 training schools. SK presented the objectives, tasks and deliverables of each working group as well as the 'promoters' of each WG. The 'promoters' of the WGs were defined as experts who were highly involved in the creation and coordination of each specific WG during the drafting phase of the MarCons proposal, and were candidates as leaders of the specific WGs. WG promoters that were present in the meeting (Simonetta Fraschetti for WG2, Stelios Katsanevakis for WG3, Peter Mackelworth for WG5, Peter Jones for WG6) were given the opportunity to give a more detailed insight in the specific objectives, tasks, and milestones of the WGs they promoted, and to stress the background and novelty of the work scheduled for each WG.

Subsequently, the current status of the Action was presented (number of participating COST countries, NCCs and IPCs) as well as the current achievement of COST policies such as the Excellence and Inclusiveness policy and the Gender Balance policy. Currently, 11 ITC are included in the Action, and the Gender Balance of MC members is 56% males and 44% females. Following, the time table of the Action was discussed as well as the first year's tasks and deliverables of each WG. The presentation by the AC is provided in **Annex 6**.

10. Appointment of horizontal roles

MC unanimously elected the following WG leaders:

- Marta Coll (Spain) was elected as the leader of the WG 1 related to the prediction of cumulative human impacts on marine ecosystems;

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- Simonetta Fraschetti (Italy) was elected as the leader of the WG2 related to the present challenges and limitations in marine conservation;
- Vesna Mačić (Montenegro) was elected as the leader of the WG3 related to marine conservation and biological invasions;
- Sylvaine Giakoumi (France) was elected as the leader of the WG4 related to the integrated conservation planning across terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems;
- Peter Mackelworth (Croatia) was elected as the leader of the WG5 related to the regional and transboundary conservation;
- Peter Jones (UK) was elected as the leader of the WG6 related to the governance of marine protected areas;

After the selection of the WG leaders and upon the advice of the Action Chair that each WG leader should have a substitute for the purpose of the better coordination of the Action but also to better support the COST policy on ITC, the following vice-leaders have been unanimously elected:

- WG2: Valentina Todorova (Bulgaria)
- WG3: Paolo Albano (Austria)
- WG5: Catarina Grilo (Portugal)
- WG6: Joanna Piwowarczyk (Poland)

The election of the WG1 and WG4 Vice Leaders will follow at a later stage through e-vote.

Furthermore:

- Noam Levin (Israel) was unanimously elected STSM manager. A vice STSM manager will be elected at a later stage.
- Marina Fusco (Bosnia and Herzegovina) was unanimously elected Dissemination manager, responsible for the coordination of the dissemination efforts of the Action. A vice Dissemination manager will be elected at a later stage.

Even though the establishment of a core group is not obligatory according to the COST rules, the suggestion of the Chair was to establish a core group for the purposes of more efficient management and monitoring of the Action. The core group consists of the Action Chair, the Vice-Chair, WG leaders (to be substituted by Vice Leaders in case of absence), STSM manager, and Dissemination manager. All the participants of the meeting have approved this decision. Subsequently, the responsibilities of the Core group were agreed to be the following:

- Taking of decisions regarding the membership in working groups of all the members besides MC members, to whom the membership in working groups is open according to their interests and expertise;
- Approvals of STSMs, following the guidelines and criteria that will be decided by the MC; and
- Preparation of decision proposals, which will be then given for the approval to the MC members for all the other issues.

11. Draft Work and Budget (W&B) Plan for the first Grant Period (GP)

AC presented the 1st Grant period goals, the related WG tasks and Deliverables, the proposed Activity and Budget Planning, and the Dissemination strategy/planning of the 1st Grant Period.
The suggested Grant period goals, suggested by AC and approved by the MC, are:

- to kick-off the work in all WGs
- 7 WG-related goals (corresponding to the 7 Tasks that will initiate during the Grant period)
- to produce dissemination material (launch the website, and produce the Action's flyer)
- to initiate and complete a first round of STSMs

The main elements of the Activity and Budget planning, suggested by AC, were:

- 1 'big' meeting (MC and WGs meetings)
- 1 Training School for WG6
- 6 or more STSMs
- Dissemination (website, social networks, flier)

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The MC agreed on the above overall plan but the possibility of conducting a second meeting for one or more WGs will be also examined in relation to the available budget.

The first draft of the budget presented by AC follows:

Budget analysis for the 1st Grant Period

MC & WGs meetings		**52200**
Number of participants	60	
Cost per participant	830	
local organizer support	2400	
Training School		**18520**
number of trainers	2	
cost per trainer	800	
number of trainees	20	
cost per trainee	780	
local organizer support	1320	
STSMs		**16200**
number of STSMs	6	
average cost per STSM	2700	
Dissemination		**5254**
website and social networks	3754	
flier production	1500	
FSAC (15%)		**13826**
TOTAL		**106000**

AC explained that FSAC will include the part-time work by two persons responsible for the administrative support of the Action, preparation of documents for meetings, issuing invitations, distributing agendas, drafting minutes, ensuring that payments are done according to the COST rules, monitoring the implementation and maintenance of the Action's website and social network pages in collaboration with the Dissemination manager. MC approved a FSAC of 15%.

The SO commented that the average cost per participant could be reduced as well as the average cost per STSM (at ~1500 Euros). Furthermore, bank expenses should be included in the budget. It was decided that AC will revise the budget based on the above comments and if possible the number of participants or the number of meetings during the first grant period will be increased. The revised budget and Action Plan will be sent to the MC for approval within the following one week and it should be urgently finalized so that the COST Office may proceed with the signature of the 1st Grant Period Agreement with the Grant Holder.

It was decided that in the next meeting 0.5 day will devoted to an MC meeting and 1.5 days to the WGs kick-off meetings. Croatia kindly offered to host the next meeting, and the MC agreed to organize the 2nd Management Committee meeting and WG meetings of MarCons in Zagreb. Furthermore, it was agreed that the tentative dates would be in September/October 2016, whereas the more precise tentative date will be given through a Doodle Pool by the Chair in due time via e-mail upon the conclusion of the meeting and after

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discussions with all the WG leaders. It is important that all WG leaders will be present in that meeting and thus the proposed dates will reflect the availability of the WG leaders.

12. Any Other Business (AOB)

After the final session on Action implementation planning, a discussion on general issues was initiated (organizational issues, participation in WGs, etc). It was decided that the Chair will initiate a Doodle poll among the MC members to decide on the participation of WG members in the various WGs.
Peter Jones gave some additional information on the needs of WG6 and the approach that will be followed to achieve WG6 deliverables.

13. Closing

The meeting was closed at 16.05.

Annexes 1-6:

Annex 1 – Agenda

Action_CA15121_MC_Agenda.rtf

Annex 2 - Action Fact Sheet

CA15121_Action_Fact_Sheet.rtf

Annex 3 - Attendance list

CA15121 signed Attendance List.pdf

Annex 4 - COST Association presentation

1st_MCM_CA15121.pptx

Annex 5 - The Rules of Procedure for COST Action Management Committees (COST doc. 134/14, Annex I)

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Annex 6 - Action Chair presentation

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