

Minutes
5th Management Committee Meeting
COST Action no. BM1204
Action Title: An integrated European platform for pancreas cancer research: from basic science to clinical and public health interventions for a rare disease
Venue: Toledo Congress Centre "El Greco" Paseo del Miradero s/n 45003 Toledo, Spain June 23, 2015, from 17h to 19h

Members and countries represented:

Greece (Maria GAZOULI), Italy (Carlo La VECCHIA), The Netherlands (Angela BRAND), Norway (Elin KURE and Sonja ERIKSSON STEIGEN), Romania (Traian Sorin BARBU), Slovenia (Vita DOLZAN), Spain (Esther Molina and Núria MALATS), United Kingdom (Eithne COSTELLO), Ireland (Fiona O'NEILL), Lithuania (Giedrius BARAUSKAS), Austria (Irene ESPOSITO)

Countries not represented:

France, Israel, Germany, Portugal, Turkey, Hungary, Bosnia Herzegovina, Belgium, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia

11 out of 22 countries are represented.

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- 1. Welcome to participants**
 - 2. The agenda of the meeting was adopted by all participants**
 - 3. The minutes of the last MC meeting**

The minutes of the 4th MC meeting have not been approved yet. They will be circulated in due time to proceed with its approval.

- 4. Update from the Action Chair**
 - a. Status of Action, including participating countries

The Chair presented an update of members by country, distinguishing by inclusiveness and non-inclusiveness country, non-COST country, gender, WGs and early career investigators (ECIs).

It was highlighted that the gender ratio is well balanced, as well as the inclusiveness countries participation. However, the participation of ECIs is rather low (n=28), especially with regard to inclusiveness countries.

			TOTAL COST- country			TOTAL ALL
	ITC	Non-ITC	(ITC+non-ITC)	ICP	non-COST	(ITC+non-ITC+ICP+non-COST)
EUPancreas partners	10 (45.5%)	12 (54.5%)	22	2	3	25
Numer of MC members	17 (45.9%)	20 (54.1%)	37	0	0	37
Number of Action members	26 (15.2%)	145 (84.8%)	171	3	11	185
Gender						
Men	17 (16.2%)	86 (83.8%)	105	1	9	115
Women	9 (13.6%)	57 (86.4%)	66	2	2	70
ECIs	0 (0%)	28 (100%)	28	0	0	28

NOTES:

ITC=inclusiveness country (BA, CZ, HU, LT, PL, PO, RO, SI, SK, TR)

non-ITC=non inclusiveness country (AT, BE, DE, EL, ES, FR, IE, IL, IT, NL, NO, UK)

ICP=International Partner Country (US and Canada)

COST country (AT, BA, BE, CZ, DE, EL, ES, FR, HU, IE, IL, IT, LT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, TR, UK)

non-COST=non COST country (Sweden=SE, Switzerland=CH, Croatia=HR)

TOTAL= including all COST, ICP and non-COST countries

- 1 additional country (Czech Republic) joint the Action in 2015 making a total of 22countries contributing to the Action.
- At present, there are over 185 multidisciplinary members participating in the Action.
- Private biotechnological companies participating in the Action are: INTEGROMICS (Spain), IDD Therapeutics (Israel), ALACRIS (Germany), and PHOTONICS (UK). Celgene (Spain) has also joined the Action.
- Efforts will be made to include non-COST countries in the Action.

b. Action budget status

Spends of the 2nd GP were presented, as well as the new budget for the 3rd GP (recently approved by the MC).

The total expenditure for the 2nd GP has been 65,245.98 EUR. This represents half of the budget available. Administrative issues of the Action (delays in reimbursement, lay-offs and short-time notices of activities, among other reasons) may explain the low participation rates of the members in the activities, and thus, this low expenditure.

CONCEPT	SPENT
GRANT TOTAL	74,706.65
1. MEETINGS	44,090.55
2. TRAINING SCHOOLS	6,345.43
3. SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS (STSMs)	14,810.00
4. DISSEMINATION, OUTREACH, WEBSITE	0,00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE	65,245.98
OVERHEADS&COORDINATION	9,460.67

The budget allocated for this 3rd GP (from 02/06/2015 till 01/06/2016) is EUR 127,937.20 EUR, including the maximum of 15% of overheads of the GH Institution. This budget has been recently approved by the MC. A detailed budget by type of networking tools was presented. The main difference with respect to earlier GPs is that the budget has been increased for training schools.

CONCEPT	BUDGET
GRANT TOTAL	127,937.20
1. MEETINGS	61,900
2. TRAINING SCHOOLS	34,320
3. SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS (STSMs)	12,500
4. DISSEMINATION, OUTREACH, WEBSITE	4,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	112,720
OVERHEADS&COORDINATION	15,217.20

c. STSM status and new applications

An update on the STSM status and new applications is presented.

- So far, four STSM calls have been publicized. A total number of 14 STSMs have been approved.
- The fifth STSM call will be launched in July 2015.

Although the number of STSM applications and awardees is satisfactory, it is discussed that young researchers and specially ICT countries should take advantage of this call. For this purpose, it is agreed that the call should be advertised in advance. After the call, the COST Office should be contacted to ask to speed up the reimbursement of travel expenses. Delays in the reimbursement of travel expenses might pose an obstacle for ECIs interested in applying for a STSM.

5. Promotion of gender balance and of Early Stage Researchers (ESR)

The male:female ratio is slightly unbalanced in terms of Action members, but well-balanced in terms of leadership and coordinators.

There are 28 ECIs involved in the Action. All of them belong to non-inclusiveness countries. It is agreed that a strategy to increase this number is asking COST inclusiveness members to involve young researchers in the Action.

6. Update from the Grant Holder

- Administrative tasks including meeting invitations, delegate registration, STSM management, conference organization.
- Some delays occurred in the last weeks due to administrative changes in the COST Office. A new eCOST informatics system has been implemented and several IT problems were raised. For instance, at the time of this MC meeting, the COST invitations were not sent.
- The Rapporteur and the Scientific officers changed during the period.

- MC members were requested to fulfil terms in presenting the reimbursement application and complete registries and profiles. Some MC members have not approved yet their MC invitation.

7. Update from the COST Office

Several changes have been accomplished in the COST portal and in the administrative procedures of the Action. The COST Science Officer sent an update of the Action in March 2015. In brief, some of the issues raised were:

1. The COST Association and its Policies: gender balance, geographical coverage, early career investigators. As stated, this should be revised and updated at every MC meeting and develop a strategy to attract researchers and stakeholders. A major aim should be to encourage and enable researchers from less research-intensive countries across the COST Member Countries to set up and/or join COST Actions and get more intensively involved in all COST activities.
2. Monitoring and Final Assessment: At month 18 (29 June 2015) the Action will undergo a monitoring process. The Chair will provide qualitative and quantitative data, input for work and dissemination, and the budget plans for the 3rd GP.
3. Mandatory use of e-CAMT by the members

8. Update from the DC Rapporteur

A new DC Rapporteur will be designated for the COST Action.

9. Annual Progress Conference (preparation and/or feedback from DC)

The annual progress conference will not be held.

10. Follow-up of MoU objectives

After the joint WGs meeting, each WG coordinator will report on the follow-up of MoU objectives and progress of their WG. Details will be found in the minutes of the 4 WGs.

11. Scientific planning

a. Scientific strategy
b. Action Budget Planning
c. Long-term planning (including anticipated locations and dates of future activities)
d. Dissemination planning (Publications and outreach activities)

The overall scientific strategy for the 3rd GP period is to foster multidisciplinary and collaborative pancreas cancer research in the European arena by initiating and strengthen the current platform. Dissemination of the Action activities is another key priority.

As highlighted during the joint WGs meeting, the following specific aims of each WG for the 3rd GP are:

WG1: Standardization of biological sample collection, processing and storage protocols. Establishment of criteria to assess the quality of existing biobanks for pancreas cancer research. Interconnection about biorepositories and databases.

WG2: (Integrated) Omics analysis after omics-related data standardization or optimization.

WG3: To set up two COST initiated registries: 1) European IPMN study group to develop and test risk prediction biomarkers for IPMN: 2) high-risk population of PDAC to identify potential diagnostic biomarkers of the disease

WG4: Establishing the framework for the development of evidence-based PDAC-best practice guidelines (HTA) and their translation into the healthcare systems in Europe by involving all relevant stakeholders (HIA)

3rd period activities (scheduled)

- New calls for STSMs
- WGs and MC meeting during the EPC meeting in June 2015
- WG2: Workshop on omics integration in July 2015
- WG4: Training School EUPancreas&CHIP Action and WG4 meeting in September 2015
- Annual Conference and WGs and MC meetings & EAPM “Burning issues in Pancreatology” Combined EFISDS & EPCPostgraduate Course in November 2015
- WG2: Training School on Statistical Interactions/Interactome & Belgian Society of Statistics in April 2016
- WG3: TRAINING SCHOOL on “GENOMIC MEDICINE – Bridging research and the clinic” jointly organized with ARTEMIDA, Golden Helix Institute of Biomedical Research Genomic Medicine Alliance in May 2016

The budget requested for this 3rd GP is EUR 127,937.20 EUR, including the maximum of 15% of overheads of the GH Institution.

The BM1204 Action will finish by the end of 2016. About 3-5 months of extension might be feasible, but other sources of funding to maintain the platform active will be needed afterwards. Several possibilities were discussed and will be valued:

- Structural funds
- H2020 (for specific projects)
- Marie Curie
- Eranet
- Charities and private sector

As regards dissemination activities of the Action:

- The Webpage EUPancreas has been up-dates and completed. Some structural changes have been performed and new features have been implemented, such as a visitor counter.
- Linkedin and twitter have been activated. The members are encouraged to make use of it.
- The members should add to their email signature:
EU Pancreas - BM1204 COST Action
www.eupancreas.com
- Several publications acknowledging the COST Action have been published: 6 articles and two book chapters. Publications planned for the future should acknowledge the Action too.
- Presentation (oral/poster) of the Action activities in scientific/stakeholder meetings are all displayed in the EUPancreas webpage.
- A podcats of the Action is being filmed, and will be posted in the webpage as a new dissemination material.
- New initiatives are: newsletters (to be circulated on a monthly basis) and webinars

12. Requests for new members

25 new members have been included during the 2nd GP. A new country, the Czech Republic (member=Professor Tomas Krechler), has become a country member of the Action.

The following non-COST associations have been approached and invited to either actively participate to or collaborate with the Action, but they are still not considered as COST beneficiaries:

- EUAPM – European Alliance for Personalised Medicine (<http://euapm.eu/>)

- IARC – International Agency for Research on Cancer (<http://www.iarc.fr/>)
- ICGC International Cancer Genome Consortium (<http://icgc.org/icgc/cgp/68/392/810>)
- PanC4 - Pancreas Cancer Case-Control Consortium (<http://panc4.org/>)
- EORTC – European Organization for Research and Treatment Cancer (<http://www.eortc.org/>)
- ELIXIR - European life-sciences Infrastructure for biological Information (<http://www.elixir-europe.org/>)
- SPIDIA - Standardisation and improvement of generic pre-analytical tools and procedures for invitro diagnostics (www.spidia.eu)
- m4 biobank alliance (www.m4.de)
- EPAAC - *European Partnership for Action Against Cancer* (<http://www.epaac.eu/>)
- RarecareNet – Information network on Rare Cancers (<http://www.rarecarenet.eu/rarecarenet/>)
- EUCERD - European Union Committee of Experts on Rare Diseases (<http://www.eucerd.eu/>)
- EUROCANplatform (<http://eurocanplatform.eu/>)
- OECI - Organisation of European Cancer Institutes (<http://www.oeci.eu/>)
- NCI - National Cancer Institutes (<http://www.cancer.gov/>)
- BBMRI ERIC - pan-European Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure / European Research Infrastructure Consortium (<http://bbmri-eric.eu/es>)

Efforts will be made to achieve their inclusion in the Action in the near future.

13. Non-COST applications to the Actions

Several non-COST countries have encountered some resistance by their COST National Coordinators to become official COST countries. This is the case of Sweden, Switzerland, and Croatia. The Action's Science Officer has been notified in order to support their inclusion in the Action on the basis of mutual benefit. Efforts will be made to achieve their inclusiveness in the near future.

14. AOB

No other business were raised

15. Location and date of next meeting

The next MC meeting will be held jointly with the Annual Conference and WGs meeting in Cluj-Napoca (Romania) during the 5-7th November 2015. Further details will be communicated in due time.

16. Summary of MC decisions

- To encourage the participation of young researchers, especially those from ICT countries, in the Action.
- To extend the Action with International Organizations/Foundations and to establish collaborations with other COST Actions.
- To facilitate/ encourage industry participation in the Action
- To announce more actively and in advance the Action activities

1st period activities

- Call for STSMs
- First EUPancreas Annual Conference, WGs Meetings, MC meeting in the Pancreas Cancer Forum 2013 in November 2013
- WG2 meeting and Integromics workshop in Heidelberg during February 2014.
- WG3 meeting and the London Pancreas Workshop 2014 in May 2014.
- WG1 meeting in Milan, May 20th 2014.

2nd period activities

- New calls for STSMs
- 3rd MC meeting + EU-Pancreas workshop during the EPC/IAMP meeting in Southampton in July 2014.
- WG1: Training school on pancreatic pathology, CNIO, Madrid, December 4-5 2014
- 2nd Annual Meeting + WG meetings during the CSCDA/2014 Annual Meeting days in Liège, November 24-26, 2014
- WG1: PDAC biobanking workshop in April 2015
- Stakeholder and dissemination meetings: EAPM in June 2015, Cystic tumours in October 2014

3rd period activities (scheduled)

- New calls for STSMs
- WGs and MC meeting during the EPC meeting in June 2015
- WG2: Workshop on omics integration in July 2015
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17. Closing

