

**Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Management Committee Meeting  
of COST Action CA18118  
“Implementation Research Network in Stroke Care Quality (IRENE)”  
September 16 2019, Chisinau, Moldova**

**1. Welcome to participants**

The participants were welcomed by the Action Chair, Prof Robert Mikulik, Action Vice-Chair, Prof Natan Bornstein and the Local Organiser, Prof Stanislav Groppa.

**2. Introduction of participants (Tour de Table)**

The participants of the COST Action CA18118 introduced themselves and presented their backgrounds.

**3. Verification of the presence of two-thirds of the participating COST countries**

The quorum (2/3 of COST countries participating in the Action) was reached: 24 out of 30 Participating COST Countries attended the meeting.

**4. Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Management Committee (MC) meeting was adopted by the Management Committee.

**5. Background presentation from the Action Chair**

The Action Chair presented the background information about the IRENE COST Action and explained the main motivation behind the proposal for this Action. He further stressed the need of active cooperation with the European Stroke Organisation (ESO) and the importance of RES-Q, the Registry of Stroke Care Quality, both of which are crucial for an efficient implementation of the Action’s objectives.

The Action Chair continued with the importance of the Stroke Action Plan for Europe (SAP-E), which is in many areas synergic with the IRENE COST Action. Therefore, both initiatives should be aligned where possible, in order to maximize the impact of both IRENE COST Action and SAP-E. Furthermore, the Action Chair stressed the need to strive for the fulfilment of the Action’s research and capacity building objectives and reminded that the overall output of the IRENE COST Action must be primarily scientific with an emphasis on publishing papers on the quality of stroke services in participating countries.

## 6. Approval of minutes and matters arising during the last MC meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

The following leadership positions were elected by the Management Committee:

### Working Group 3 – Registry Management

- Leader: Ms Andreea Grecu (CZ)
- Vice-Leader: Dr Michal Karlinski (PL)

### Science Communication Manager

- Dr Francesca Romana Pezzella (IT)

### Advisor for Cooperation with Industry

- Mr Axel Kohlmetz (AT)

## 7. Update from the Action Chair

### a. Status of the COST Action

Start of Action: 12/04/2019

End of Action: 11/04/2023

Total number of COST Full Member Countries: 30

Total number of COST Near Neighbour Countries: 3

### b. Establishment of the Core Group

The Management Committee unanimously voted to establish a Core Group, consisting of the main leadership positions: Action Chair, Action Vice-Chair, WG Leaders, WG Vice-Leaders, STSM Coordinator, ITC Conference Grants Coordinator, Science Communication Manager, Advisors for Cooperation with Industry.

Furthermore, The Management Committee delegated some decision-making to the Core Group – the Core Group can make amendments on behalf of the Management Committee in the Work and Budget Plan, which do not exceed EUR 5000.

## 8. Update from the Grant Holder

### a. Activities for the first Grant Period (05/19 – 04/20)

The IRENE COST Action Manager, Ms Veronika Svobodova, presented the planned activities for the first Grant Period according to the approved Work and Budget Plan:

Networking activities (COST tools)	Number
Meetings	2
Training Schools	1
Short Term Scientific Missions	11
ITC Conference Grants	8

## b. Budget for the first Grant Period (05/19 – 04/20)

Ms Veronika Svobodova introduced the budget for the first Grant Period according to the approved Work and Budget Plan:

<b>A. COST Networking Tools</b>	<b>EUR</b>
(1) Meetings: 2	51,360.00
(2) Training Schools: 1	23,760.00
(3) Short Term Scientific Missions: 11	14,102.00
(4) ITC Conference Grants: 8	12,320.00
(5) COST Action Dissemination	15,150.00
(6) Other Expenses Related to Scientific Activities (OERSA)	699.30
<b>B. Total Science Expenditure (sum of (1) to (6))</b>	<b>117,391.30</b>
<b>C. Financial and Scientific Administration and Coordination (15 % of B)</b>	<b>17,608.70</b>
<b>Total Grant (B+C)</b>	<b>135,000.00</b>

## 9. Update from the COST Association

The Action Science Officer, Dr Inga Dadeshidze, gave a presentation on the current state and updates of the IRENE COST Action and suggested to delegate some decision-making to the elected Core Group. The Action Science Officer further reminded that what is not approved in the Work and Budget Plan must be approved by the Science Officer and/or the Management Committee (or the Core Group if applicable). Finally, Dr Dadeshidze stated that the nomination of the European Stroke Organisation as an International Organisation into the IRENE COST Action will be removed from e-COST and replaced by a nomination as a Non-profit Organisation.

The IRENE COST Action Manager, Ms Veronika Svobodova, added that some changes in the distribution of budget to individual networking activities might occur due to the fact that the budget for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) and ITC Conference Grants might not be entirely spent. It is likely that a Core Group/Working Group Meeting will be added to the Work and Budget Plan for the first Grant Period, in order to use the budget as efficiently as possible.

## 10. Implementation of COST policies on gender balance and ITC

The Action is actively encouraging the participation of ITC's (Inclusiveness Target Countries), females and young researchers. Currently, the Action has a higher ratio of MC Members from ITC's (19 ITC's : 11 non-ITC'S) as well as a higher ratio of MC Members, who are females (27 Females : 21 Males). Therefore, the Action is already quite compliant with such policies.

## 11. Short Term Scientific Mission Guidelines

The STSM Coordinator, Ms Veronika Svobodova, introduced the Guidelines for the STSM and stressed that STSM's must specifically contribute to the research and coordination and capacity building objectives of the IRENE COST Action as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The Management Committee unanimously approved that the selection of applicants will be performed by the STSM Coordinator, Ms Veronika Svobodova, in cooperation with the Action Vice-Chair, Prof Natan Bornstein. In case the application is rejected, the applicant will receive an explanation on why it was rejected. The applicant can then adjust and re-submit the application according to the recommendations provided. If the applicant does not agree with the decision of the STSM Coordinator and Action Vice-Chair, the decision will be delegated to the Management Committee, who will decide whether to accept or reject the applicant. The Management Committee must be informed which applications have been approved and which have been rejected.

The Management Committee further approved that only one grantee per country will be supported in the first Grant Period in order to maintain the geographical inclusiveness.

The first call for STSM's will be announced soon to all Action's participants.

## **12. ITC Conference Grants Guidelines**

Ms Veronika Svobodova presented the guidelines for ITC Conference Grants and emphasized the eligibility rules: ITC CG are reserved for PhD students, PhD candidates and Early Career Investigators with a primary affiliation to an institution located in an ITC participating in the Action.

The Management Committee discussed the definition of the PhD title, as in some countries the PhD title does not exist (for example Armenia, Malta or Turkey). The Action Science Officer and Action Administrative Officer will get back to the Action Chair and explain whether it is possible to approve an equivalent/similar expertise like PhD. The e-COST system currently does not allow for applicants, who do not have a PhD title, to apply for ITC Conference Grants. In case there will be issues in the e-COST system and applicants with an equivalent expertise to PhD won't be able to apply for ITC CG Grants, the budget for the ITC CG will be decreased and surplus funds used to increase the number of STSM's.

The Management Committee agreed to consider as an equivalent to the PhD title all health care alliance specialists (MD's, physiotherapists, nurses, speech therapists, occupational therapists) and computer scientists affiliated to an institution located in an ITC participating in the Action with a proven research activity and with up to 8 years of professional experience.

The Management Committee further approved that the evaluation and selection of applicants will be performed by the ITC CG Coordinator, Prof Stanislav Groppa, in cooperation with the Action Vice-Chair.

## **13. Training School Guidelines, Training School for the first and second Grant Period**

Ms Veronika Svobodova presented the guidelines for the Training Schools and emphasized that the content of the Training School must be in accordance with the Action's focus.

The Management Committee unanimously approved that the Training School Organiser will be in charge of the selection process of applicants on behalf of the Management Committee. The outputs of the Training School must be discussed with the Action Chair and Action Vice-Chair in

advance and approved by the Management Committee. The Training School Organiser is responsible for the meeting outputs.

Dr Markus Wagner, the Organiser of the Training School for the first Grant Period, presented the content of the Training School planned for March 2020 in Germany. The open call for the Training School will be announced to all Action's participants.

Dr Maria Angeles de Miquel presented her proposal for a Training School for the second Grant Period – “Setting up urgent stroke treatment – Lessons from the Catalan Experience”. Dr de Miquel suggested that the Training School would consist of multiple (6-7) workshops focused on different stakeholders and areas of stroke care organization. The workshops should be more focused on seniors, who have a higher possibility to achieve changes in their countries, but young participants will be encouraged to apply as well.

The Action Chair had concerns that the presented Training School by Dr de Miquel is too broad and too difficult to organize. The Action Vice-Chair recommended to refocus the Training School on the topic of implementation and adherence using the example of Catalonia. Narrowing down the topic to implementation and adherence will also help significantly to reach some research outputs, i.e. scientific papers written by the trainees. As of now, the Action Chair and Vice-Chair recommended to redefine and narrow down the focus of the Training School and postponed the decision to the next meeting.

#### **14. Request to join the Action from an International Organisation**

The Action Chair announced that the European Stroke Organisation (ESO) requested to join the IRENE COST Action. The COST Science Officer announced that COST rules regarding the participation of International Organisations changed and that ESO will be listed as a Non-profit Organisation. The representatives of ESO, Dr Jennifer Thomsen and Ms Luzia Balmer, are eligible to attend meetings and to receive reimbursement for their travel expenses.

#### **15. Scientific planning**

The Action Chair moderated the discussion on the submitted research proposals. The Action's participants submitted 13 research proposals in total:

***Focus on multidisciplinary stroke rehabilitation. How can person-centred approach be implemented in patients with communication problems?***

*Proposer: Dr Dorien Vandenborre*

The Action Chair recommended to rephrase the research proposal to reflect less developed countries as well, as this proposal seems to be a step further than what the Action is looking for. Mr Axel Kohlmetz pointed out that certain structures do not even exist in some countries (such as rehabilitation), which means that not every country participating in this Action can benefit from this proposal - the heterogeneity in stroke standards is the core problem with such proposals. Prof Cristina Tiu asked the Proposer in which way the IRENE COST Action can contribute to this research proposal, to which Dr Vandenborre answered that funding would be needed for meetings to obtain important contacts relevant for this proposal. The Action Chair and the Proposer concluded this discussion and agreed that Dr Vandenborre will rephrase her research proposal, establish a task force within her Working Group and will be offered relevant contacts as well as space for discussion

in the next meeting. The deadline of submitting the modified proposal was not discussed, but will be decided with participants electronically.

***Determine how many percent of patients have atrial fibrillation and what kind of therapy (OAK, DOAK, AT or DAPT) was prescribed in primary and secondary prevention of stroke.***

*Proposer: Prof Amra Macić-Dzanković*

Prof Macić-Dzanković was not present at the MC Meeting. The Action Chair stated that this research proposal is not entirely in the scope of the IRENE COST Action and that the first step for Bosnia and Herzegovina should be the collection and submission of stroke care quality data. For this moment the research proposal should be postponed until its modification.

***Establishing an interest in writing an EU project proposal around stroke care and patient driven innovation. Better understanding of factors relating to care quality along the continuum of stroke care.***

*Proposer: Dr Hendrik Knoche*

Dr Knoche emphasized that understanding the needs of different stakeholders is crucial, to which Dr Pezzella agreed and offered to share relevant research with Dr Knoche. Dr Wagner pointed out that this topic is one of the contents of the planned Training School. The Management Committee agreed that Dr Knoche will establish a task force and discuss in cooperation with Dr Pezzella, Mr Pennacchi and Ms Grecu how to approach the proposal in the most efficient way. The deadline of submitting the modified proposal was not discussed, but will be decided with participants electronically.

***To evaluate features of stroke care in Hungary (including quality of care, adherence to guidelines, patient centered outcomes).***

*Proposer: Dr Dániel Bereczki*

The Management Committee agreed that this proposal is in scope of the IRENE COST Action and should be carried out.

***Investigating specific factors related to stroke/stroke care quality in different European countries.***

*Proposer: Prof Lilian Tzivian*

According to Prof Tzivian, the goal of this proposal is to see how this particular topic affects or is associated with stroke care. The Action Chair recommended to narrow the focus of the proposal down and look at only one stroke care quality measure (for example number of stroke units or number of thrombolysis). It was agreed that the Proposer will establish a task force, which will work on the methodology (what are the predictors, what is the outcome, how to reach the outcome) and on refining the idea. The interest to participate in this research proposal / task force was expressed by Dr Stylianou and Dr De Miquel. The deadline of submitting the modified methodology was not discussed, but will be decided with participants electronically.

***Evaluating the quality of secondary prevention in cardioembolic stroke patients in countries with different reimbursement system of anticoagulants.***

*Proposers: Dr Aleksandras Vilionskis, Dr Rytis Masiliūnas*

Dr Masiliūnas stated that the main research question is to compare different reimbursement strategies, as there is the suspicion that anticoagulants are not used accordingly because of the reimbursement, which might be not optimal in some countries. Dr Masiliūnas asked whether it is possible to add more data points into the registry form, for example if the patient was already on

anticoagulants when he or she suffered a stroke. Ms Grecu answered that adding data points into the registry form is technically possible. The Action Chair stressed that the main question is whether to do a retrospective study with already available data or whether to change the RES-Q form, which might be not acceptable for some countries. Nevertheless, this project should be carried out.

***Investigating stress as a risk factor related to stroke in different European countries.***

*Proposer: Dr Maria Mallia*

It was agreed that Dr Mallia will do a survey of the IRENE COST countries as a first step of this proposal. The Action Vice-Chair offered to help with designing such survey.

***Data-based program to develop cross-professional knowledge and skills with a focus on diagnosis, care, registration and follow-up of persons affected by stroke.***

*Proposer: Dr Zada Pajalic*

The Action Chair recommended that a collaboration with other participants would be helpful in this case and could be used to apply for an external grant, as the IRENE COST Action does not have enough resources for this kind of proposal.

***Developing a Clinical decision support system (CDSSs) for stroke.***

*Proposer: Dr Francisco Campos*

The Action Chair stated that this proposal is outside of the Action's scope, but the Action could assist in validating it. Dr Campos expressed his interest to present the product, which will be possible before or during the next meeting.

***Sensibilizing governments about future working options for Rankin 2 young patients after stroke.***

*Proposer: Dr M Angeles de Miquel*

Dr de Miquel explained that the main focus should be on patients whose disability is minimal and who are still able to work, but not on a full-time basis. Dr de Miquel agreed to establish a task force with participants interested in this proposal and will work on the methodology of the proposal. The deadline of submitting the modified methodology was not discussed, but will be decided with participants electronically.

***Promoting innovative initiatives to improve strategies in the diagnosis and prognosis of stroke.***

*Proposer: Dr Iraide Alloza*

As Dr Alloza was not attending the MC meeting, the Action Chair proposed to postpone the discussion on this research proposal.

***Better understanding stroke prognosis of patients with previous coronary artery disease***

*Proposer: Dr Manuel Jimenéz-Navarro*

As Dr Jimenez-Navarro was not attending the MC meeting, the Action Chair proposed to postpone the discussion on this research proposal.

***Carrying out a comparative analysis of the quality and availability of patient care in different regions of Ukraine and its influence on clinical outcomes and sustainability of rehabilitation.***

*Proposer: Dr Nataliia Chemer*

The Management Committee agreed that this proposal is in scope of the IRENE COST Action and should be carried out.

## 16. Location and date of next meeting

The Management Committee members are welcomed to suggest locations for the next MC meeting. The date of the 3<sup>rd</sup> MC meeting will be decided through an online voting tool. The meeting is expected to take place in autumn 2020.

## 17. Summary of MC decisions

- Election of Working Group 3 Leader – Ms Andreea Grecu
- Election of Working Group 3 Vice-Leader – Dr Michal Karlinski
- Election of Working Group 4 Leader – Dr Milan Vosko
- Election of Science Communication Manager – Dr Francesca Romana Pezzella.
- Election of the second Advisor for the Cooperation with Industry – Mr Axel Kohlmetz.
- Election of the Core Group and delegation of decisions to the Core Group on behalf of the MC – the Core Group can make amendments in the activities of the Work and Budget Plan, which do not exceed EUR 5000.
- STSM: The evaluation and selection of applicants will be performed by the STSM Coordinator in close cooperation with the Action Vice-Chair.
- STSM: Only one grantee per country is allowed to receive a STSM grant for the first Grant Period.
- ITC CG: The evaluation and selection of applicants will be performed by the ITC CG Coordinator in cooperation with the Action Vice-Chair.
- ITC CG: Definition of Early Career Investigators/PhD – the Management Committee decided to acknowledge equivalent experience to PhD titles. The definition of Early Career Investigators/PhD is currently unclear; the Science Officer will get back to the Action Chair with a clarification.
- TS: The Training School Organiser is in charge of the evaluation and selection of applicants on behalf of the Management Committee.

## 18. Closing

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Management Committee meeting concluded at 2 p.m.

### List of Annexes

Annex 1 – MC Agenda

Annex 2 – MC+WG Agenda

Annex 3 – Background presentation from the Action Chair

Annex 4 – Management Committee Meeting presentation

Annex 5 – Last meeting minutes

Annex 6 – Training School for the first Grant Period