

Implementation Plan

Involving ITC participants, supporting ECI, and balancing gender

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Document History

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Introduction and Scope

When the COST Action AGITHAR was implemented by decision of the COST Scientific Committee, it issued recommendations to raise the level of involvement of ITCs (Inclusiveness Target Countries), to develop a plan to involve ECIs (Early Career Investigator) and to improve gender balance. At the time of application among the network of proposers 36% were from ITCs, 12% were ECIs and 21% were female.

This document outlines the measures planned (and partly implemented) in AGITHAR to increase the involvement of ITCs, to involve ITC and ECI participants in management roles and to achieve a better gender balance.

Situation

The situation description is based on statistics taken from the list of participants registered in the e-COST system. At the time of writing, member state representation of ITC countries is at 56%, highly increased from the initial 36% and above COST average. The number of MC (Management Committee) members from ITC is at 51%, while the ITC representation in leadership roles is at 18%.

The percentage of ECI members in the MC is at 22%, again up from the 12% in the network of proposers and well above COST average. ECI participants are represented with 18% in leadership roles – well above COST average.

Finally, the percentage of female participants in the MC is at 27%, which is below COST average. However, the number has been raised from the 21% in the network of proposers. Female participation is at the same level in leadership roles (27%).

Measures

Working Group vice-chairs

As seen in the figures above, some improvement is needed in the involvement of individual groups. In fact, AGITHAR has already implemented a management system including vice-chairs in the working group leadership. So, for five of the working groups there are additional (unofficial) leadership positions filled by one more ITC and two more ECI participants.

Leadership Replacement Policy

Two of the current leadership positions will become vacant soon and it is planned to fill them with female ECI participants. Furthermore, an open call is planned to recruit ITC participants into leadership positions.

Female Representation

Achieving gender balance is more difficult, since most of the disciplines involved are dominated by male representatives – engineering, geosciences, natural sciences, computer sciences. The active exploration of qualified female scientists, as well as the development of participation models that allow participants with specific needs will be explored and applied in the second grant period to further improve the balance of gender.

Summary

The trajectory shown for inclusiveness and involvement of underrepresented groups in COST Action AGITHAR is very positive and in some categories (in particular, ECI involvement) the numbers are well above average. Where the numbers are not yet on par with other COST actions (as for female involvement) this can be explained by the disciplinary bias. However, we implemented a set of measures to improve the remaining inclusiveness and gender imbalances.