i-CONN

Management Board Meeting, 3rd July 2020, 3 pm (CEST)

Held by Zoom video-conference

Minutes

Attended by: Laura Turnbull-Lloyd (Chair, i-CONN Co-ordinator), Christian Kimmich, Andreas Ioannides, Vicky Papadopoulou Lesta, Christian Kerschner, Christina Prell, Marc Hütt, Tony Parsons (Chair of Supervisory Board), Jennifer King (Project Manager), John Wainwright (Training Manager, in attendance)

1. Apologies

   Apologies were received from Ronald Pöppl and Thomas Hein

2. Minutes of the last Management Board Meeting

   The minutes of the last meeting, held by video-conference on 4th May 2020 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising

   All Matters Arising from the Minutes will be covered in later agenda items.

4. Chair's Update

   Grant Amendment

   The Chair explained that the Grant Amendment, which alters the status of the Environment Agency to a Partner and adds the University of Groningen as a Beneficiary, had been approved by the Commission. As a result, we were able to conclude the recruitment of ESRs 14 and 15.

   Advisory Board

   The Chair reported that she had secured Professor Yamir Moreno as the fourth member for the Advisory Board.

   The final membership of the Advisory Board is:

   Professor Jacky Croke, University College, Dublin (Chair)

   Professor Ginestra Bianconi, Queen Mary University of London

Professor Martin Everett, Manchester University

Professor Yamir Moreno, University of Zaragoza

The Chair explained that she had also approached Dr Lorien Jasny from the University of Exeter. Dr Jasny is about to take maternity leave and therefore rejected the invitation, but expressed an interest in being involved in the network at a later stage.

The Chair explained that the Supervisory Board had approved the addition of the Chair of the Supervisory Board to the membership of the Management Board. This is because, according to the Consortium Agreement, the Supervisory Board reports to the Management Board. In future, the Chair of the Supervisory Board, Tony Parsons, will be present at Management Board meetings and the minutes of the previous Supervisory Board meeting will be included with the Management Board meeting papers.

5. Supervisory Board

The Chair of the Supervisory Board presented the minutes of the recent Supervisory Board meeting to the Management Board.

6. Recruitment

The Chair thanked everyone for contributing information about their recruitment processes along with the recruitment and selection reports. These will form part of the Progress Report. The Chair explained that the Project Manager might need to request some additional specific pieces of information from the beneficiaries in order to complete the Progress Report.

The Chair reminded the Beneficiaries that each ESR must receive the 'Information Note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows in Innovative Training Networks (ITN)' (link below) once they have signed their contracts.

Additionally each institution must complete the Researcher Declaration on the Portal within 20 days of the start date of each ESR's employment (i.e. the start date on the employment contract)

Action: All PIs to keep the Project Manager updated with recruitment details (e.g start dates, arrival of ESR)

Action: All Beneficiaries to make sure that ESRs receive the Information Note (https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/sites/mariecurie2/files/msca-itn-fellows-note_en_v2.pdf)

Action: All Beneficiaries to complete a Researcher Declaration for each ESR within 20 days of the start of their contract

7. Deliverables and Milestones

The Chair reported that as the Management Board is formally in charge of making sure that milestones and deliverables are reached, there will now always be an item on the Management Board Agenda to discuss them. We are currently up-to-date with Milestones and Deliverables.

- Several of the upcoming milestones and deliverables are in the planning stages or already nearly achieved (the September training, the recruitment of the ESRs, the website).
- Louise Bracken is leading the Transdisciplinary Management Group and is drafting a Transdisciplinary Protocol. These need to be in place by 1st December.

All PIs must consider how the early stages of the ESRs contracts might need to be adapted to coronavirus conditions – remote learning, rearrangement of secondments, remote training etc as these activities are contractual obligations. Any changes will need to be approved by the Supervisory Board and the Project Officer at the REA.

Action: All PIs to inform the Project Manager if changes need to be made to the ESR's local training or secondments as a result of COVID-19.

8. September Network Meeting and Training

The Training Manager reported that a decision about whether the September meetings go ahead as planned or are replaced by online delivery will be made before the end of July.

We are waiting to hear from Cumberland Lodge (planned venue for the week starting 22nd September) about their ability to host the meeting. Decisions about whether the September meetings should go ahead in the UK will be based on the World Health Organization guidelines.

If the events move online the timetable will be modified. The training day will be shortened and occur in the middle of the (UK) day to accommodate the time zones of the recipients. Instead of all the activities occurring during the two scheduled weeks in September a seminar series will be established over a course of months.

It would be useful to know if network members (including ESRs) would be happy/able to travel to the UK in September if WHO regulations allow. PIs can email the Project Manager in confidence with any information. This will then be anonymised before being used to inform the decision-making process

Action: Management Board Members have the option to email the Project Manager in confidence if they (or their ESRs) would be unwilling to travel to a meeting in the UK in September even if all regulations allow.

9. Network & Training Events 2021

The Training Manager reported that meeting dates for the network meetings and training events scheduled for Cyprus have been agreed:

Week starting March 8th 2020 for the Network Workshop (Theoretical underpinning of Connectivity Research) and the Advanced Course in Group Theory.

Week starting 15th March 2020 for the transferable skills training for the ESRs.

The Training Manager also requested that the hosts of the other 2021 training events start to consider their events in particular the need to finalise dates.

Action (for Project Manager and hosts of 2021 events): Dates for all 2021 network and training events to be finalised as soon as possible.

10. Progress Report and Mid-term Check

The Progress Report will need to be submitted in October. The Project Manager is drafting as much as she can in advance, but we will need input from the work package leaders in September/October.

The date of the Mid-term Check will not be agreed before September 2020 at the request of the Project Officer in Brussels.

11. Date of next meeting

A meeting will be held by video-conference in early September 2020. A Doodle Poll will be circulated by the Project Manager.

Action: Project Manager to arrange.

12. Any Other Business

Christina Prell reminded the Management Board that it would be useful for her ESR to receive CVs from all members of the network. This is just for data analysis and the CVs will not be shared more widely.

Action: All members of the network invited to submit their CVs. Email CVs to Jennifer King.

The financing of secondments and equipment for ESRs such as laptops was raised. The Management Board was reminded that expenses associated with secondments (e.g. travel and accommodation during the secondment) should be coved by the institutional research and training budget of the home institution. ESRs do not meet these costs personally. This budget should also be used to support the research needs of the ESR (e.g. laptops).