



Supervisory Board Meeting, 21st June 2022, 16.30 pm CEST

Jacobs University, Germany.

Minutes

The meeting was attended by

Board Members: Tony Parsons (Chair), Laura Turnbull-Lloyd (Coordinator and Chair of the Management Board), Vicky Papadopoulou Lesta, Christian Kimmich, Marc Hütt, Deborah Priß (ESR Representative), Brian Fath, Andy Ioannides, John Wainwright (Training Manager), Jennifer King (Project Manager).

Non-voting attendees: Shubham Tiwari, Sonia Recinos, Christian Kerschner, John Perez, Ronny Pöpl, Thomas Hein, Ioannis Michos.

Apologies: Damian Crilly, Louise Bracken, Martin Everett (Acting Chair of the Advisory Board).

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting (25th March 2022)

The minutes of the last meeting were noted.

2. Matters Arising

The following matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting were noted:

Action: *JK to obtain the grant proposals for the initial and follow-on ITNs led by Durham.*

Two 'follow-on' ITNs have been identified in Durham and the grant applications can be obtained if the i-CONN consortium prepares another ITN application(s). These proposals could provide insight into how to successfully apply for an ITN that clearly builds on an existing consortium/theme.

Action: *JK to approach Emma Bowen, or a similar trainer, to discuss training in grant application preparation.*

This action is partly a response to the recommendations from the Interim Review. A trainer will be approached once we agree a date for the 2023 Annual Workshop.

Action: *JK to check the training budget to assess capacity for additional training events.*

JK reported that there will probably be enough money in the retained RTN budget to fully fund both the January 2023 Annual Workshop and the Final Meeting (i.e. pay for all the accommodation as well

as the meeting costs), although this might depend on the calibre of the accommodation. If an additional training event is arranged then we might have to ask attendees to cover accommodation costs from their institutional i-CONN budget.

Although several early i-CONN events were delivered online, we have fully supported the accommodation costs for the recent in-person meetings (Brno, Vienna, Cyprus, Bremen) and this accounts for the lack of funds for additional meetings.

Action: JK to request approval for the secondment changes from the Project Officer.

JK reported that the Project Officer is on extended leave and the REA have not responded to emails or requests on the Portal in the last few months.

Action: JK to send clarification about expenses to the ESRs immediately.

This resulted from the report from the ESR Representative that there was some uncertainty among the ESRs about what subsistence costs would be paid centrally and what they were expected to cover themselves and then claim back. JK reported that she had sent a detailed email to the ESRs.

Action: JK to notify the ESRs about the 2023 Final Meeting as soon as information is available.

The date of the final meeting will not be agreed until we know the result of any extension request.

3. Chair's Update

AP welcomed everyone to the first in-person meeting of the Supervisory Board since the first meeting in Amsterdam at the start of the project. He thanked Marc Hütt for hosting the event.

4. To Approve any changes to the programme

a. Change to the level of Modul University's contribution to the retained Management (B2) Budget.

In the Grant Agreement it was agreed that the Austrian universities would contribute only 30% of their B2 Management Budget to the retained central budget. All other Beneficiaries contribute 50% of their B2 budget. This difference reflects a collective bargaining agreement in place in Austrian Universities which means that these institutions require additional funds to support their ESRs. However, it has since become clear that this does not apply to Modul University which is a private organisation.

The Board was asked to approve an amendment to the Consortium Agreement so that Modul University will contribute 50% of its B2 management budget to the retained budget in line with all other (non-Austrian) Beneficiaries.

€8640 will be added to the retained management budget.

The Supervisory Board approved this amendment to the Consortium Agreement.

b. Request to extend i-CONN beyond 30th September 2023.

The REA will allow us to apply for a no-cost extension. Prior to the pandemic, these were difficult to get approved but the REA has indicated that they have a quick process for awarding no-cost extensions of up to 6 months for COVID reasons. Requests for a longer extension will require more justification and will receive more scrutiny.

Most Beneficiaries have indicated that they will be able to use any remaining i-CONN funds after the project ends but some will only have access to unused funds during the duration of an extension.

The following points were noted:

Positive aspects of an extension:

- a) Access to i-CONN funds for a longer period will allow Beneficiaries to financially support ESRs if funds allow and if it would be beneficial.
- b) to give more time for preparing publications and other outputs from i-CONN and to provide funds for open access fees. This will give the consortium time to fulfil the grant agreement.

Negative aspects of an extension:

- a) Delay of the final payment, which will not be released until after the Final Report is approved.

It was noted that although it would be desirable to see ESRs treated equally across the network, additional financial support will be determined by local circumstances (funds left over at individual institutions, institutional policies and the needs of the individual ESR).

It was noted that adequate funds must be put aside at each Beneficiary to cover the costs of attending the final meeting as well as fulfilling any other commitments in the Grant Agreement.

The Supervisory Board approved the plan to request an extension of six months until March 31st, 2024.

Action: JK/LT to prepare a case for the extension and to distribute to the Board for approval.

c. Secondment Change

The Board noted a secondment alteration request concerning Michalis Papadopoulos' secondment to Durham.

The Supervisory Board approved the plan to alter the timing and content of Michalis' secondment.

Action: JK to request approval for the secondment change.

5. To Receive a report from the Management Board

LT reported on the following:

- a) There was a Management Board meeting on May 5th. A significant part of that meeting was dedicated to discussing a possible no-cost extension to i-CONN.
- b) The MB agreed to change the venue of the next annual workshop, scheduled for January 2023, to the UK (possibly London). The Doodle poll suggests that the week starting 9th January would be feasible. Alternatively, the meeting would be held in March or April 2023.
- c) The Management Board requested extensions to some of the work package deliverables. This follows directly from extensions to earlier WP deliverables and is a consequence of the ESRs' delayed and difficult starts due to the pandemic.
- d) LT reminded everyone to keep JK informed about publications and other activities e.g. outreach and engagement events.

Action: JK to prepare a Doodle poll to assess the feasibility of holding the 2023 Annual Workshop in the spring.

6. To Receive a report from the Training Board

JW reported the following:

- a) The TB met on March 5th, 2022.
- b) The Training Board discussed whether we should continue to encourage the ESRs to complete secondment reports. The issue was also discussed with the ESRs. Although many ESRs have not submitted secondment reports everyone agrees that this is a beneficial exercise and should be continued.

Secondment agreements should also be completed in advance of each secondment and it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that these are completed for their ESR.

- c) Formal thanks were recorded to those involved in organising the last three training courses: the 'connectivity in the environmental sciences' course in Vienna (RP, TH, John and Sonia); the 'high resolution measurements' course in Cyprus (AI, RH and Chris); and the Enterprise School (MH). The Training Board will assess the feedback from these courses at its next meeting.
- d) The TB discussed whether there should be a Datathon 2 but there are concerns about the ESRs' workload. The SB agreed that introducing a Datathon2 might put an unreasonable load on the ESRs. A course could be arranged at short notice if it becomes desirable.

- e) The only remaining training course is the 'dealing with the media' course that we hope to deliver adjacent to the 2023 Annual Workshop.
- f) Additionally, training in IPR will be organised and a session will be delivered at the next annual workshop that will cover grant writing and career management. A sub-group of i-CONN is currently arranging input-output analysis training for several ESRs.
- g) i-CONN training activities have been approved by Durham University which means that we can offer formal courses that will attract internationally recognised credits. These courses should be available on the Durham University website soon.

7. To Receive a report from the ESR Representative

DP reported the following:

- a) That the ESRs had enjoyed the 'high resolution measurements' advanced course, although it was hard work to cope with all the content. The social day in the middle of the course helped counteract this. Not all ESRs found the topics useful.
- b) It is a good idea for project teams for projects to be imposed so that the ESRs don't end up working with preferred colleagues.
- c) The ESRs appreciated the opportunity to have private discussions with LT and TP about their progress.
- d) The ESRs are appreciative of the support they are given.
- e) The ESRs are generally feeling overwhelmed although it is acknowledged that this is always likely to be the case at this stage of a PhD.
- f) Some ESRs would still benefit from training in specific methodologies.
- g) The ESRs would like some guidance about how to manage the presentation of the wide range of topics they have investigated at a more superficial level, e.g. when writing a CV.

AP reminded everyone that the invitation to talk to him/LT was an ongoing offer.

8. To Agree the date of next meeting

The next Board meeting will be held in January, probably at the 2023 Annual Workshop but online if that event is delayed until the spring.

9. Any Other Business?

There was no other business.