



COST Action(s): Added value and benefits

A personal journey

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COST Action(s): A personal journey



- COST Actions: different from the „usual” research grants. Do not finance research *per se*, emphasis is on networking
- very good platform for exchange of ideas and creation of strong partnerships around a common theme
- bottom up – you can create your own network and program
- very adaptive – you can change and add various tools and ways to achieve goals during the course of the Action
- COST Actions are a growing organism
- great for personal growth and scientific career
- extremely important for young career researchers
- bridging the gap between science and non-scientific sector
- benefits to economy and other interested parties

COST Action(s): A personal journey



First things first: becoming involved in an ongoing COST Action

- April 2019. MC Members for Croatia in the CA18110 Underground Built Heritage as catalyser for Community Valorisation: Sanjin Mihelić, Ivor Janković
- the experience gained from being a MC member of the COST Action was crucial for decision to apply for our own CA



CA 19141: Integrating Neandertal legacy: From Past to Present (iNEAL)

Step 1: defining a common theme for the Action that:

- we are familiar with
- can be of interest to wider audience (both scientific and non-scientific)
- Is of pan-European (not just national or local) interest

Our reasoning:

- Neandertals are a pan-European phenomenon. Their heritage is not linked to national interests only.
- they do not need introduction (everyone familiar with the term)
- novel interest in Neandertals and new sets of data (e.g. genomic research, which can benefit us directly – (e.g. personal medicine)
- benefits to non-scientific sector (e.g. tourism, local communities, small business etc.)

Therefore: A good common theme and a good starting point



News > Politics

Football fans not "neanderthals" - Jim Murphy

THE SCOTSMAN

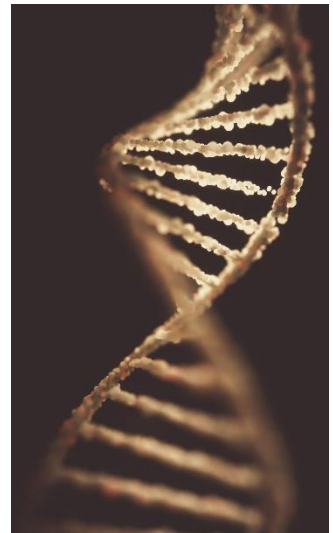
Scotland.

By SCOTT MACNAB
 Friday, 20th February 2015, 12:47 pm



Jim Murphy. Picture: John Devlin

Labour leader Jim Murphy said football fans in Scotland are not "knuckle dragging neanderthals" and should be trusted to have a drink after hosting a summit with clubs and fans today.



CA 19141: Integrating Neandertal legacy: From Past to Present (iNEAL)

Step 2: defining the questions/goals/issues etc.

- a great deal of information (cultural, biological data etc) is available on Neandertals
- yet there are many biases and gaps (and not just for scientific reasons)

This is related (but not limited) to:

- availability of technical and monetary resources for scientific research,
- missing expertises (or people trained in specific types of analysis),
- lack of communication between different disciplines,
- lack of communication with foreign scientists (especially in the past – e.g. „behind the iron curtain”),
- different development of disciplines in different countries,
- language barriers (especially underrepresentation of „non-western” scholars, or in local languages not cited in „western” publications),
- different legal rules and regulations related to study of cultural/biological heritage,
- and so on.





Recognizing problems and potentials for Neandertal research, we wanted to adress the major issues outlined above in order to:

- overcome biases created by language, geography, traditions of different disciplines...
- create a pan-European, inter and multidisciplinary network of scholars interested in Neandertal heritage
- create an open and growing database(s) and sharing platforms related to Neandertal heritage
- use the Neandertal heritage as a fertile ground and starting point for development/growth of various trades (e.g tourism, SME, etc.)
- create a solid basis for the development of „The Neandertal Trail” European cultural route



Step 3: coping with issues (or how to do what we set out to do):

- Working groups, dedicated to various aspects of Neandertal heritage (WG1: the fossil data; WG 2: the cultural data; WG3: genetic data)
- Evaluation of Neandertal heritage and inclusion into the present (making Neandertals relevant for everyone – WG4)
- Regular MC and WG meetings (in person and on line)
- Training schools (e.g. 4 TS per GP times 4 = 16 TS, with between 15-20 trainees – over 200 people will acquire new skill sets) also targeting specific biases (e.g. economic/lack of expertise etc).
- STSM's focusing on early career scientists (we had 6 during the 1st GP, we will have 12 calls from the 2nd GP). Valuable experience that will help the Action goals and make a huge advantage in the young researcher's career
- Dissemination grants for attendance of various professional meetings (presentations), publications and so on
- Expanding the network (at the start, our Action at the time of approval: 12 countries and 28 proposers involved. At the end of the 1st GP, we had 28 countries and 69 people involved (MC/substitute MC's and WG members)
- testifying to the high importance of the COST Actions: not only number of top scholars (e.g. there are several grantees of ERC project in our Action – one of them is a three time grantee of ERC project grants), but involvement and interest from young researchers and non-scientific sector



Problems and opportunities:

- one of major problems related to COVID -19 and travel restrictions
- good thing: COST is staying on top of things and allows changes and adaptations to be made
- as long as the goals are being met, it is easy to change and adapt the process
- re-evaluating the Action and targeting the issues (not as strict as research grants)
- rules and regulations are clear and available (Vademecum)
- the COST personnel very helpful and is working for and with you

Apply!

Find the ongoing Action that you can be beneficial to and can benefit from.

Get involved and then apply for your own!



<http://inealcost.inantro.hr/>

<https://www.cost.eu/cost-action/integrating-neandertal-legacy-from-past-to-present/>