



Use of COST networking tools to achieve the objectives of a COST Action, enhance its impact, and maximize the benefits of its Members – challenges and lessons learnt in COST Action TU1208

Aleksandar Ristic¹, Lara Pajewski², Miro Govedarica², and **Milan Vrtunski**²

¹University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technical Sciences, Novi Sad, Serbia (aristic@uns.ac.rs, miro@uns.ac.rs, milanv@uns.ac.rs)

²Sapienza University of Rome, Department of Information Engineering, Electronics and Telecommunications, Roma, Italy (lara.pajewski@uniroma1.it)

Scientists and experts participating in COST Actions can benefit from a wide range of COST networking tools. Meetings, workshops, conferences and training schools can be organized. Short-term scientific missions (STSM) can be funded: these are exchange visits where an Action Member spends five days up to six months abroad, in a host institution; the aim of STSMs is to foster collaboration between institutions and sharing of new techniques that may not be available in a participant's home institution. COST also funds dissemination and communication of Action's outcomes within research communities and beyond. Finally, conference grants for early-career researchers from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) aim at helping participants from ITC to attend international science and technology related conferences that are not organised by COST Actions.

In this presentation, we discuss the challenges and lessons learnt in COST Action TU1208 "Civil engineering applications of ground penetrating radar" [1] while using COST networking tools to fulfill the objectives of the Action, enhance its impact, and maximize the benefits of its Members. We consider one tool at a time focusing on the obstacles that we encountered and how we overcame them, as well as giving hints on how the Action and its Members made the most from the use of the tool. We describe how the use of the tools changed during the Action's lifetime.

COST networking tools can of course be used in a customary way and they are all extremely fruitful. More creative solutions can be implemented too, to keep Members engaged or achieve particular goals. Therefore, this presentation continues with examples of less-common exploitations of the tools in TU1208. For instance, we used the "Meeting" tool for the organization of a series of science communication initiatives aimed at increasing public awareness about ground penetrating radar capabilities and applications and at establishing a dialogue with policymakers, stakeholders and end-users of our research (TU1208 GPR RoadShow [2]); the Roadshow included non-scientific workshops, practical demonstrations, and a series of educational activities with children and citizens. We repeatedly exploited the "Meeting" tool also for one week gatherings with a small number of Members, where we worked full-time together at

bringing forward specific Action's activities, one of the challenges of COST Actions being the lack of funds to finance research and the difficulty to "make Members work" for the Action when they are at their home institutions.

We hope that recently started Actions can build upon our experience.

[1] L. Pajewski, A. Benedetto, X. Dérobert, A. Giannopoulos, A. Loizos, G. Manacorda, M. Marciniak, C. Plati, G. Schettini, I. Trinks, "Applications of Ground Penetrating Radar in Civil Engineering – COST Action TU1208," Proc. 7th IWAGPR, 2013, Nantes, France, pp. 1-6, doi.org/10.1109/IWAGPR.2013.6601528

[2] L. Pajewski, H. Tönisson, K. Orviku, M. Govedarica, A. Ristić, V. Borecky, S. S. Artagan, S. Fontul, and K. Dimitriadis, "TU1208 GPR Roadshow: Educational and promotional activities carried out by Members of COST Action TU1208 to increase public awareness on the potential and capabilities of the GPR technique," Ground Penetrating Radar, Volume 2(1), March 2019, pp. 67-109, doi.org/10.26376/GPR2019004