

# **Advancing Early Career Investigators' Careers, Skills, and Networks through COST Action**

The COST Action initiative has significantly contributed to advancing the careers, skills, and networks of Early Career Investigators (ECIs). More specifically, the Action has acted on many different aspects of the ECIs and helped with:

## **1. Connecting with the Scientific Community and Experts**

The COST Action has been pivotal in helping researchers connect with the European scientific community and experts in their respective fields. These connections, which would have been challenging to establish otherwise, have facilitated professional growth and collaboration. This has been possible thanks to several periodic meetings, including journal clubs, monthly colloquia, and group meetings.

## **2. Broadening Knowledge and Research Scope**

The Action has provided numerous opportunities for ECIs to expand their knowledge and explore new areas within their fields. Notable events include monthly seminars and the Training Schools. The most recent Training School organized was held in Ljubljana, where ECIs expanded their understanding of axion physics and related topics from different perspectives, interacting with young researchers and leading experts.

## **3. Development of Organizational and Soft Skills**

ECIs involvement in organizing Action events such as colloquia, general meetings, and training schools has enabled researchers to develop valuable organizational and soft skills. Among them, notable ones include *public speaking*, *research outreach*, *organization of events* and *networking abilities*. All in all, organizing activities within the Action has developed organizational and leadership skills.

## **4. Enhancing International Visibility and Career Prospects**

The COST Action has considerably broadened the international visibility of the ECIs, enhancing their career prospects through increased exposure and networking opportunities. Participation in online and face-to-face events has led to the exchange of ideas with fellow researchers and the initiation of new research projects.

## **5. Research Exchanges and Collaborative Projects**

The Action has facilitated research exchanges and the initiation of collaborative projects, furthering the professional development of researchers. Besides online events and meetings, this was achieved by means of Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) which greatly improves the chances of starting a project with local researchers and enhancing collaborative efforts.

## **Summary of Activities and Benefits:**

In summary, ECIs within the Action had many opportunities which can be summarized in:

- **Research Exchanges:** Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSMs) and periodic online meetings funded by the Action have facilitated collaboration and skill enhancement.
- **Expansion of knowledge:** the Action has provided a stimulating environment for ECIs to discuss, learn and get in touch with world-leading experts in their subjects.
- **Collaborations:** Initiation of new projects and exchange of ideas among researchers.
- **Training Schools:** Participation in training schools has provided hands-on learning and networking opportunities.
- **Organizational Experience:** Involvement in organizing meetings and events has developed valuable organizational and soft skills.
- **Career Prospects:** Enhanced visibility, networking, and skill development have improved career prospects within academia.

Through these activities, the COST Action has played a crucial role in fostering collaboration, skill development, and network expansion, significantly contributing to the professional development and career advancement of researchers, especially ECIs. The number of activities is expected to grow in the next year to further strengthen the results obtained by the Action in its first half-life.