

SOUND control

COST Action CA17110

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Standardizing
output-based surveillance
to control non-regulated
diseases of cattle in the EU

NEWSLETTER

August 2021

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Dear reader,

This is already the third newsletter of our SOUND control project and the second one that is published during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Since the pandemic, COST Actions have faced many challenges in the continuance of the foreseen activities. Face-to-face meetings were first postponed and then held online. I believe that we, in SOUND control, did really well in reacting to the changed situation. We were able to organise an online training school with lots of interactive assignments and started to organise webinars on topics that are of interest for our members. Additionally, our members submitted more than 25 papers for a special issue in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* dedicated to the topic of endemic cattle diseases. All these papers will become part of the handbook and will be available through our website www.sound-control.eu as well as lots of materials of the past events and the training school. Another highlight, in the past half year was that we even managed to create our own [SOUND control YouTube channel](#) on which the presented webinars can be looked back.*

In this newsletter you can find more information on the organised activities in the past period and the upcoming activities such as for example the planning of more very interesting webinars in the summer and autumn months. At this moment we are in the summer holidays, but the SOUND control work continues with short term scientific missions and several virtual grants in which a number of our members dedicate their time to work on our SOUND control objectives. I hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter and get an overview of the activities we are working on in our Action. Have a nice summer.

Best wishes,

*Inge Santman-Berends, Royal GD, the Netherlands
Chair COST Action SOUND control CA17110*



A short update



Reimbursement of travel expenses under COVID-19

COST Association recommends that all individuals purchase travel cancellation insurance, which is an eligible expense. Life and medical insurance and expenses related to treatment of health problems (COVID/ PCR/ antigen tests, medical consultations, etc.) are not eligible expenses. In case of cancellation or positive test, the costs are not eligible. Cancellation insurance must be claimed. All COST rules for reimbursement are stated in the [COST Vademecum](#).

YouTube channel

A SOUND control YouTube channel has been created that contains both publicly available videos and videos that only members of the SOUND control consortium can access through provided links. Video content has been recorded during trainings, webinars and meetings and will be developed further in the future.



Virtual mobility grants

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are travel restrictions that prevent face-to-face meetings and exchange visits which are very important to achieving the goals of SOUND control. COST now offers virtual mobility grants that allow researchers and students to contribute to the objectives of the action without having to travel.



SOUND control Annual online meeting on 22 June 2021
with more than 50 participants from all over Europe and Canada.

Past events

29 October 2018	Management Committee (MC) meeting	Brussels, Belgium
21 January 2019	MC, WG1 and WG5 meetings	Porto, Portugal
25-26 March 2019	MC and meetings of all WGs	Utrecht, The Netherlands
5 September 2019	WG1 meeting	Inverness, United Kingdom
4-5 November 2019	MC and meetings of all WGs	Zurich, Switzerland
23 January 2020	WG4 workshop and CG meeting	Warsaw, Poland
6 March 2020	WG1 meeting	London, United Kingdom
9-10 November 2020	MC and meetings of all WGs	Online
1-2 February 2021	1 st training school	Online
3 February 2021	Webinar Evaluation of surveillance systems by Marisa Peyre	
30 April 2021	Webinar Storytelling by Tanja Knific, Eglé Rapaliuté and Jörn Gethmann	
18 June 2021	Webinar The STOC free model by Aurélien Madouasse	
22-23 June 2021	MC and meetings of all WGs	Online

Planned events

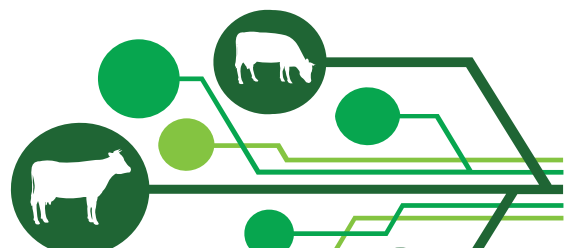
9-10 September 2021	WG4 and WG5 meetings	Online
14 September 2021	Webinar <i>Animal health economics</i> by Wilma Steeneveld	

New co-leaders present themselves

Jaka Jakob Hodnik, Slovenia

Working group 1 co-leader

Since the beginning of our action, I have conducted two short term scientific missions and have been heavily involved in the work and production of the deliverables of WG1. My work is focused on collecting information on the existence of control programmes and disease statuses for EU non-regulated infectious cattle diseases in SOUND control member countries. Collecting of the information and coordinating the work was a great challenge. We are working on publishing the results of our work in a Frontier Research Topic: Global Control and Eradication Programmes for Cattle Diseases, which is gaining worldwide recognition. Based on my work and accumulated experience with control programmes in Europe, I have been appointed co-leader of WG1. This position means a lot to me as it allows me to participate more actively in the action and learn from the more experienced members of SOUND control. As I am a young researcher (at the Clinic for Reproduction and Farm Animals - Section for Ruminants, Veterinary Faculty, University of Ljubljana), I believe that I bring a different perspective on things and thus contribute to diversity in the leadership of the action. The experience, knowledge and contacts I have gained as part of this action will undoubtedly help me greatly on my career path.

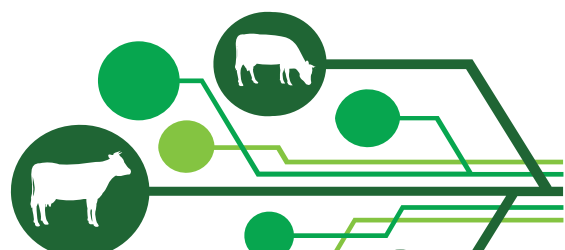


New co-leaders present themselves

Madeleine Henry, United Kingdom

Working group 1 co-leader

I qualified as a veterinarian in Dublin, Ireland in 2008 and spent five years in mixed livestock and companion practice in the UK, during which I completed an MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health before moving to work in epidemiology research. I have worked on projects concerning zoonoses such as *E. coli* O157 and *Fasciola hepatica* in cattle, as well as on antimicrobial usage and resistance. I initially joined the SRUC SOUND control team to provide support to George Gunn and Carla Gomes within Working Group 1. I have recently become one of the WG1 co-leaders, which has enabled me to feel greater ownership of the work we do in the consortium. The SOUND control project has been an excellent opportunity to network with international colleagues in the fields of animal health and epidemiology and to educate myself further on the widely varying contexts to which control of animal disease must adapt.



New co-leaders present themselves

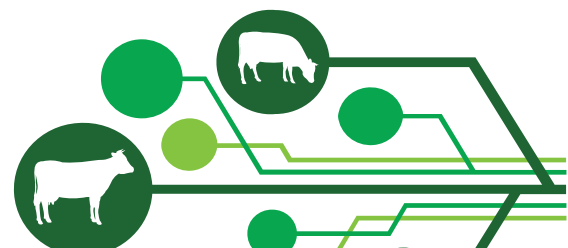
Eleftherios Meletis, Greece

Working group 3 co-leader

I am a PhD candidate in Epidemiology, Faculty of Public and One Health, University of Thessaly, Karditsa, Greece. As co-leader of WG3, I feel as a more active member of the SOUND control consortium, participating in the Action's Core group and interacting with the other WGs (co-)leaders towards addressing the Action's objectives.

The main objective of WG3 is to gather all the information from the STSMs I have conducted into a scientific paper summarizing the current statistical methods used for the estimation of a probability of freedom from infection.

Further, WG3 has an important role in modelling data. Therefore, close collaboration with WG2 (input data) is important. For this reason, I was happy to host a WG2|STSM in July 2021 and help utilize the data collection tool that will be used to collect country-level data potential for statistical analysis.



New co-leaders present themselves

Luís Pedro Carmo, Switzerland

Working group 4 co-leader

I am a post-doc at the Veterinary Public Health Institute, Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Bern in Switzerland. My research interests include animal health surveillance, antimicrobial use and resistance, integrated approaches to health (e.g. One Health) and transdisciplinary methods.

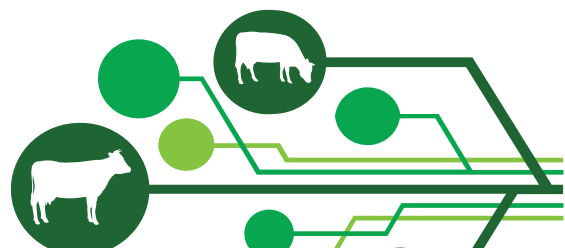
It is great for a young researcher to have the opportunity to play a leadership role in a COST Action such as SOUND control. It is an excellent learning experience, not only for the technical or research aspects, but also for the networking opportunities and the project management/organization that the position entails. Being involved in the coordination of such a large project is an important experience and will certainly be relevant for future activities in my research career.

Earlier this year, I was promoted to co-leader of working group (WG) 4. Together with Dr John Berezowski and Dr Maria Guelbenzu, I have been planning and coordinating the activities of the group. The main goal of WG4 is to develop a research agenda for the development and implementation of output-based surveillance for cattle diseases. With this in mind, we are using a theory of change model that will allow us to identify gaps and propose solutions to successfully establish output-based surveillance in Europe.

COVID-19 created some difficult challenges. It affected our strategy given that our initial plan involved multiple in-



person activities; but we were able to find alternative solutions to conduct our participatory exercises. We run several workshops and we are planning a few more. I look forward to our next activities, in particular to the exercises where we will engage relevant stakeholders outside the consortium; I believe these activities will provide valuable information for an effective implementation of output-based surveillance.



New co-leaders present themselves

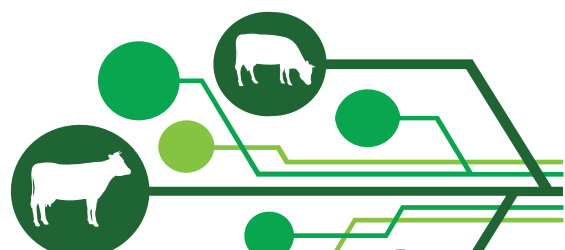
Eglė Rapaliutė, Lithuania

Working group 5 co-leader

I am a 2nd year veterinary epidemiology residency student from Lithuania. I have joined COST Action SOUND control as a Management Committee substitute from Lithuania in October 2020.

Since the start I am involved in the activities of Working group 2 (WG2) "Data requirements and availability". Until now, I have done two short term scientific missions (STSMs) of WG2: 1st with Dr Céline Faverjon at Ausvet Europe in Lyon and 2nd with Dr Lena-Mari Tamminen at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Uppsala, Sweden. The work during both STSMs was linked and focused on the data availability and quality evaluation that is required as an input for an output-based framework, using a designed data collection matrix (WG2 questionnaire).

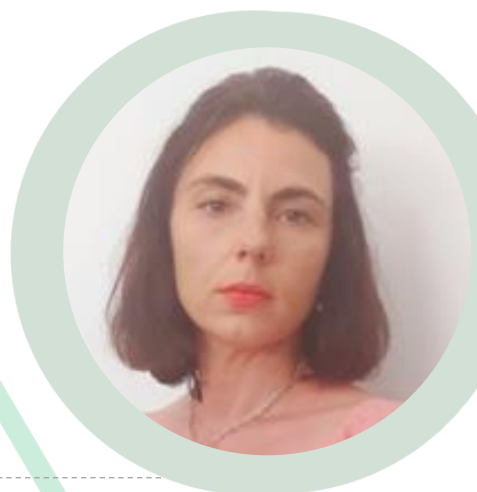
Recently, I was also invited to join WG5 as a co-leader. This is a very exciting opportunity to engage in interesting discussions with other leaders and gain more experience as a core group member in leading the project.



Members and STSM participant and their experiences

"COST actions are great opportunity for researchers especially early career scientists to expand their perspectives in relevant field of research interest through networking and working together with colleagues around the Europe and beyond. My participation in SOUND provided me with opportunity for continuance of professional contact with colleagues from previous projects as well as meeting new people and learning about new developments in this area. The action supported joint academic and research publications, activities, broaden dissemination on importance of this specific topic, while enabling inclusive and stimulating environment for exchange of ideas, contributions and experiences."

Sabina Šerić-Haračić, Bosnia and Herzegovina (ECI)



"I have the pleasure to represent Poland as a MC member in this COST Action. In this project we aim to coordinate, stimulate and assist with the cost-effective approach to current surveillance, control or eradication programs. There are several cattle diseases with a significant economic impact on cattle industry which are not included in EU law in terms of voluntary or obligatory control and monitoring schemes (like IBR or BVD). Therefore, it is very beneficial to have the opportunity to exchange views with COST action members from countries where such programs are in advanced stages of implementation to gain more experience on how to do it right from the start."

Miroslaw Polak, Poland

"The STSM gave me an excellent chance to be mobile again and exchange ideas with like-minded colleagues abroad. It was ideal in giving me the opportunity to enhance my education, skills and research background and allowing me to network with relevant scientist within EU countries. Given such a favourable working environment, I immediately started working on the main aims. In short, my impressions of my stay at the School of Health Sciences in Greece could not be more favourable and I am sure that this was the most productive and fruitful research experience!"

Madalina MINCU, Romania (NNC)



Selected topic

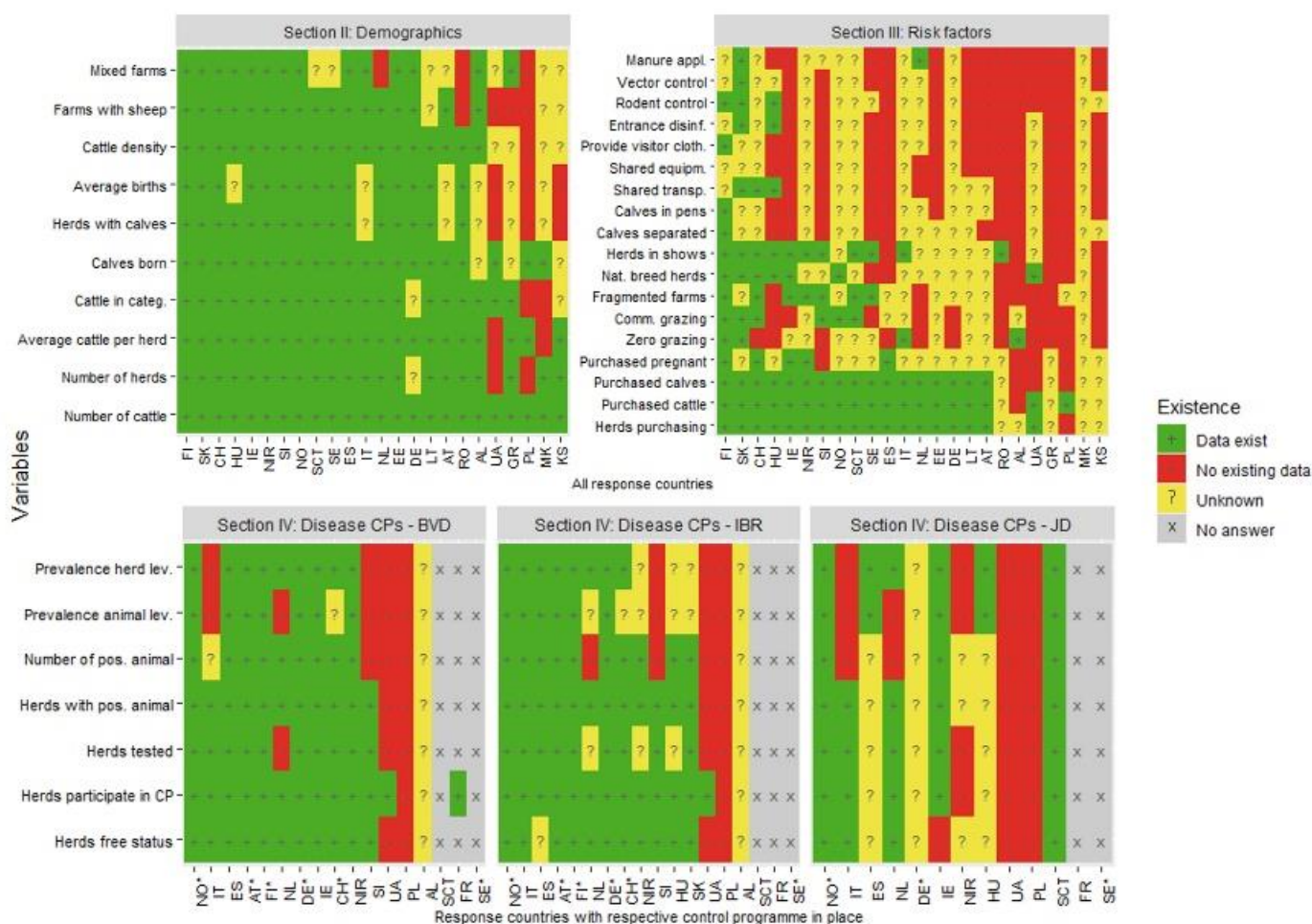
Analysis of data collected on the existence and quality of data on the cattle industry and control programmes

Eglė Rapaliūtė, Lithuania

Following the results of the second and third STSM, namely after the development of a tool for data quality evaluation and the Limesurvey questionnaire, Working group 2 organised the fourth STSM at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), hosted by Dr Lena-Mari Tamminen. The main purpose of this STSM was to analyse the data collected through the questionnaire and to provide an overview of the existence and quality of data on the cattle industry and control programmes (CPs) that could be used to estimate disease freedom in the different partner countries of SOUND control for a number of infectious diseases in cattle. The online data collection tool was sent to 32 countries participating in the SOUND control COST Action and was completed by 24

countries. Data on cattle demographics and data from CPs for IBR and BVD are available in more than 50% of the countries that responded. However, data describing the risk factors and CP of JD were reported as available in less than 25% of the countries. The overall quality of data in the sections on demographics and CPs of IBR and BVD were evaluated as "good", but data on risk factors and JD were mostly rated as "fair". The STSM results showed that the quantity and quality of data on cattle populations and CPs are relatively similar in many of the countries studied.

I have had a great time in Uppsala and am very thankful for the opportunity to work with Lena and the entire team.



Availability of data on cattle demographics, risk factors and control programmes in the countries studied.

Selected topic

Finalizing a data collection tool for input data to model the freedom of controlled cattle diseases

Madalina Mincu, Research and Development Institute for Bovine Balotesti, Romania

Eleftherios Meletis, University of Thessaly, Greece

The aims of WG2 | STSM5 were to (i) finalize the data collection tool to deduce existence of data about control programmes (CPs), (ii) improve the current version of the questionnaire, (iii) check quality and data availability and (iv) develop guidelines to use the tool. Overall, the goal was to (i) "clean" and (ii) improve the tool in a way to facilitate good data collection quality acquirement that will help the modelling work in WG3.

The main results of this STSM were:

1. Updated "cleaned" version of the data collection tool, that can be implemented to acquire good quality data for non-regulated cattle diseases; The acquired data can be used by WG3 to estimate the probability of freedom from disease.
2. Improved tool embedded in a Google form: accessible here: [SOUND control CA17110 - Data](#)

collection tool ([google.com](https://www.google.com)). The data collection tool was implemented in a Google form as a way to represent how the tool should work.

3. Guidelines document with information on how one can use the tool.

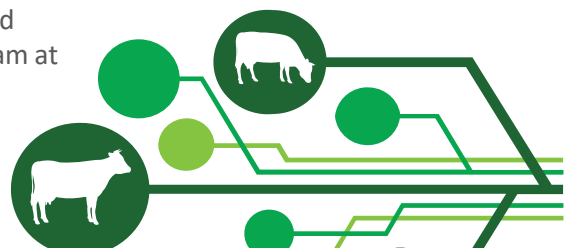
4. Developed country "X": A template (ideal country).

5. Overview of the sources: The old version of the tool was disseminated among SOUND control members, therefore information on data quality and sources were available.

In the future, we should find better means to ask for this information from users and explore efficient ways to collect the data both in a user-friendly way (i.e. the user can easily enter it) and with data extraction friendly techniques (the analysis of the data to be done easily), e.g. a tool embedded in a SQL database.



Madalina Mincu (first from left) during her STSM in Greece and **Eleftherios Meletis** (second from left) and a member of his team at joint dinner.



Selected topic

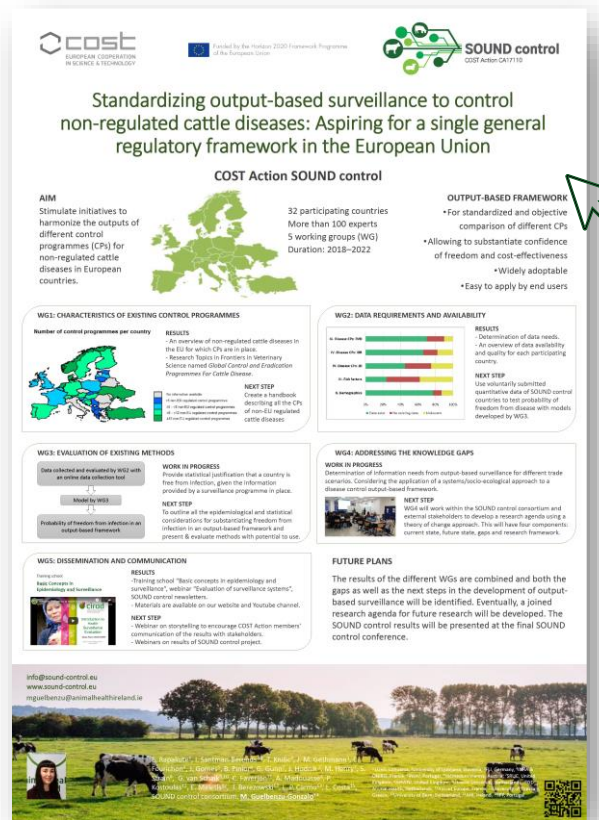
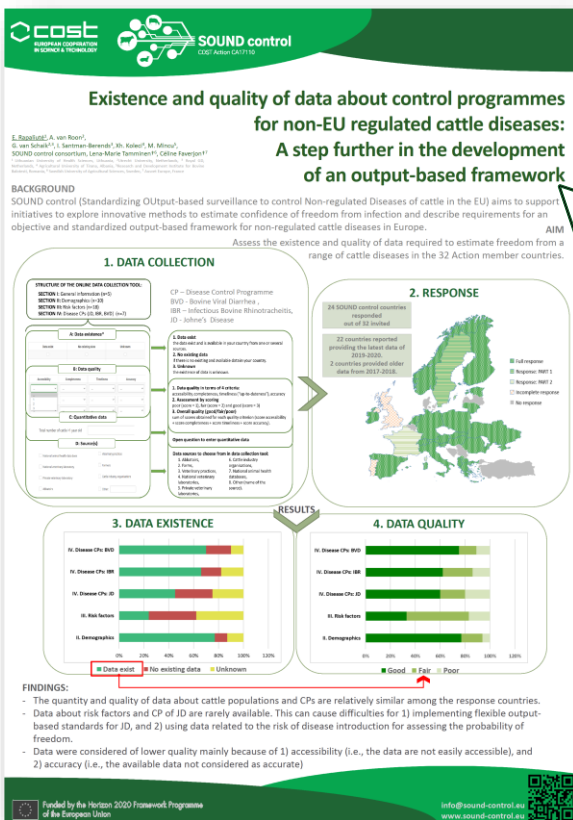
ITC (Inclusiveness Target Country) grant

Eglė Rapaliutė, Lithuania

From 24th to 26th March 2021, the Society for Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine (SVEPM) hosted a virtual annual conference. Thanks to a successful ITC grant, I had the opportunity to participate at the SVEPM and present the progress of WG2. Together with all the participants, we were able to engage in interactive workshops, live scientific sessions, poster viewing rooms and discuss any topic of interest in the presenters' video conference room or through a chat portal.

I believe that the ITC grant gives an amazing opportunity for young specialists to gain very valuable experience at international conferences.

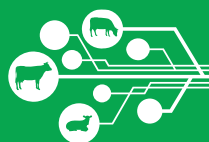
Two posters exhibited at the virtual SVEPM'21 conference presenting SOUND control can be accessed via the links below.



Abbreviations and useful information

<u>COST</u>	European Cooperation in Science and Technology – Funding organisation for research and innovation networks. Networks are called COST Actions , last for 4 years and bring together researchers from European countries as well as other countries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>COST Member countries</u>: 38 full member countries and 1 Cooperating Member and 1 Partner Member • <u>Non-COST Members</u>: COST Near Neighbour Countries (NNC), COST International Partner Countries (IPC)
<u>COST Vademecum</u>	Key document which provides the terms and conditions for the financing of Actions and other activities. Other important documents and useful material can be found here .
<u>SOUND control</u>	Standardizing OUtput-based surveillance to control Non-regulated Diseases of cattle in the EU <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>CA17110</u> – COST Action number
<u>MoU</u>	Memorandum of Understanding – The agreement which describes the Action's objectives accepted by participating countries
<u>MC</u>	Management Committee – National representatives of each COST country nominated by <u>COST National Coordinators</u> (CNC) in charge of the coordination, implementation and management of an Action's activities. Each country has up to 2 MC members and 3 MC substitutes.
<u>CG</u>	Core Group – Action's leadership
<u>WG</u>	Working Group – our Action has 5 working groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>WG1</u> – Characteristics of existing control programmes • <u>WG2</u> – Data requirements and availability • <u>WG3</u> – Evaluation of existing methods • <u>WG4</u> – Addressing the knowledge gaps • <u>WG5</u> – Dissemination and communication
<u>STSM</u>	Short Term Scientific Mission - financially supported mobility of researcher from one institution participating in SOUND control COST Action to the participating institution in another country.
<u>ITC</u>	Inclusiveness Target Country – less research-intensive COST Member country
<u>ECI</u>	Early Career Investigator – An individual who is within a time span of up to 8 years from the date they obtained their PhD/doctorate
<u>CP/CPs</u>	Control Programme/s





SOUND control
COST Action CA17110

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SOUND control in numbers



1 training school



>100 experts
from different fields



32 participating
European countries
and Canada



7 face-to-face
meetings



12 STSMs



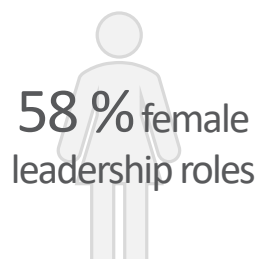
3 webinars



6 approved
virtual mobility
grants



2 annual
online events



58 % female
leadership roles



Project duration:
Oct 2018 - Oct 2022