



**European Cooperation  
in the field of Scientific  
and Technical Research  
- COST -**

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**Brussels, 22 November 2013**

**COST 068/13**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

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Subject : Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as COST Action IS1307: New Materialism: Networking European Scholarship on 'How Matter Comes to Matter'

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Delegations will find attached the Memorandum of Understanding for COST Action IS1307 as approved by the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) at its 188th meeting on 14 November 2013.

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**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**For the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as**  
**COST Action IS1307**  
**NEW MATERIALISM: NETWORKING EUROPEAN SCHOLARSHIP ON 'HOW**  
**MATTER COMES TO MATTER'**

The Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding, declaring their common intention to participate in the concerted Action referred to above and described in the technical Annex to the Memorandum, have reached the following understanding:

1. The Action will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of document COST 4114/13 “COST Action Management” and document COST 4112/13 “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” , or in any new document amending or replacing them, the contents of which the Parties are fully aware of.
2. The main objective of the Action is to network European new materialisms. New materialist scholarship is both young and burgeoning. The COST Action will shape how European scholars take up the label of new materialism and work under its umbrella. The fundamental new materialist research is being done, and the resulting methodological restructurings are underway. Networking in order to streamline, and the building of capacity is what the field is in need of right now, especially in Europe.
3. The economic dimension of the activities carried out under the Action has been estimated, on the basis of information available during the planning of the Action, at EUR 60 million in 2013 prices.
4. The Memorandum of Understanding will take effect on being accepted by at least five Parties.
5. The Memorandum of Understanding will remain in force for a period of 4 years, calculated from the date of the first meeting of the Management Committee, unless the duration of the Action is modified according to the provisions of section 2. *Changes to a COST Action* in the document COST 4114/13.

## **A. ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS**

Scholars presently exploring ‘how matter comes to matter’ call themselves new or neo-materialists. They do radically interdisciplinary research based on the conviction that the current economic, ecological and political crises as well as technological advances and everyday practices do not allow a conception of ‘matter’ as (an) object(s) that could be captured along traditional disciplinary lines. Stock market crashes, earthquakes and the increasing complexity of political and social systems (and their breakdowns) demonstrate active interventions of materials previously regarded mute or socially constructed. Meaning-making (‘to matter’) does not occur only in the linguistic frameworks academic research applies to phenomena and crises in a retrograde move. The current European new materialist scene is vibrant but remains largely dispersed compared to the U.S.A., which dominates discussions at the moment. This COST Action networks European new materialisms: how do they look, and what can they innovate?

**Keywords:** New materialism, Neo-materialism, Interdisciplinarity, Europe, Materiality and Meaning-making

## **B. BACKGROUND**

### **B.1 General background**

The Action is framed by the following broad research questions:

- How to account for the metaphysical assumptions underlying our academic frameworks in order to better understand the processes of our knowledge production? How to create spaces in which the specific rules of different academic and non-academic practices of knowledge production can be made visible and thus negotiable?
- How to generate epistemologies that are equipped to do justice to the crises European (and non-European) societies face in the 21st century? How does a framework which is rigorous enough to be able to address economy and ecology, politics and technology, and the everyday look?
- How can practices of knowing be reconceptualised and refigured in order to avoid a retrograde assignment of concepts to ‘material things’? (How) should these practices be institutionalised in European universities and among academics, policy makers and other stakeholders in Europe (and beyond)?

With the changing of societies on local, national and international scales owing to economic, ecological, political and technological developments and crises, a reorganized academic landscape

can be observed to be emerging. Scholarship strives to become increasingly interdisciplinary in order to grasp and examine the unfolding complexity of ongoing ecological, socio-cultural and politico-economic changes. Additionally, academics forge connections with creative and artistic researchers that have a tradition of thinking radically ‘outside the box’ in order to make sense of the world. New or neo-materialism is a constitutive player on this burgeoning scholarly terrain. New materialist scholars use ‘matter’ as their focal point and searchlight. Zooming in on the matter of ecology, economy, politics, technology and art, these scholars move away from a framework of representation. The latter framework treats research topics from the outside, whereas new materialism demonstrates how scholars (from all disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields) are in fact *part* of the phenomena that they study (e.g. when a financial crisis hits a country or continent, academia is not left unchanged). The scholars choose to theorize this intertwinement by zooming in on matter, because matter has a peculiar conceptual ambiguity that these scholars find productive. ‘Matter’ signifies the subject matter of research and, more broadly, the material building blocks/forces of reality. It also points at (scholarly) processes of meaning-making (‘to matter’). The innovativeness of new materialist approaches lies in that they provide ways for signification to be simultaneously material and semiotic; the scholarship is ‘material-semiotic’ or ‘material-discursive’ (Haraway 1988, Barad 2007). In order to do justice to the active intervention of materialities into our daily and academic lives, experiences and signifying systems, new materialists ask, not only ‘how discourses come to matter,’ but also ‘how matter comes to matter’ (Barad 2003, 2007). The materialities on the move and the crises scholars and laypersons, in professional and private lives, face cannot be captured by existing academic frameworks. These frameworks are, especially in the human and social sciences, grounded on linguistic models that assume that researchers assign ‘words’ to ‘worlds’ in a retrograde move. Here, meaning-making is an affair of the mind that happens after the fact of an event in the ecological, socio-cultural or politico-economic sphere. These spheres are traditionally assigned to mono-disciplines from the human, social and natural sciences. But the present developments and crises do not let themselves be confined to disciplinary bounds (economic crashes have often political or ecological origins) or established frameworks (ecological upheavals have their own inventive language, stirring new concepts in journalistic, artistic and philosophical contexts).

New materialist scholarship is both young and burgeoning. A COST Action around new materialism will shape and further how European scholars take up the label of new materialism and work under its umbrella. The fundamental new materialist research is being done, and the resulting methodological restructurings are underway. Networking in order to streamline, and the building of capacity is what the field is in need of right now, and in especially Europe.

## B.2 Current state of knowledge

New materialism is a theoretical movement growing in popularity mainly in neo-disciplines such as Gender Studies, Science & Technology Studies, Media & Performance Studies, and Creative Arts Research. A subscription to a Google Scholar Alert on 'new materialism' generates daily article alerts. New materialism is also listed as a key concept in calls for papers for conferences, books or journal special issues. In other words, the work is also being recruited. Teachers at universities face a growing student body with an interest in new materialism. In sum, new materialism is a trending topic.

Working under the headings of 'new materialism' and 'neo-materialism', or sometimes 'matter-realism' and 'agential realism', the scholarship has close bonds with Continental philosophy and French feminist theory. These orientations have travelled to the USA (Cusset [2003] 2005) where the work of philosophers of May '68 (Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Guattari, de Beauvoir) as well as of earlier periods (Spinoza, Bergson, Merleau-Ponty) and the present day (Braidotti, Irigaray, Stengers) is employed so as to enable the thinking of the entangled state of word and world, matter and meaning. The attempt to avoid all dualisms, even the dualisms which counterintuitively exist within the scholarship of the linguistic turn, is only now - amongst new materialists - being brought to full fruition. Mullarkey (2006) has argued that today's philosophical moment is *post-Continental*. This implies how identity-based scholarship - in that it upholds a universalism based on the exclusion of other "Others" - is pushed to the limit. Post-Continental philosophy implies an 'immanence', which exchanges the still-dualist identity game of in- and exclusion for questions about *emerging* subjectivities and, in Barad's terms, the *agentiality* of *matter*.

New materialists agree that identity-political scholarship is prone to self-contradiction; it becomes exclusive by implication and more importantly, it proclaims a human exceptionalism that does not do justice to the very dynamic ontology of the world we live in. New materialists work along the lines of an 'onto-epistemology', to borrow another neologism from Barad. New materialists wish to highlight the proper place of the human agent in scholarship and philosophy, a place that is *not* the Cartesian *cogito* and does *not* lead to Kantian representationalism, but does justice to the ways in which mind and matter; body and text; researcher, instrument and researched are entangled in processes of knowledge production in academia, art and the sphere of policy-making.

The ways in which 'matter' intervenes in our scholarly imagination are mapped by a constituency that is at the moment by and large U.S.-based (Alaimo & Hekman eds. 2008, Bennett & Joyce eds. 2010, Coole & Frost eds. 2010, Crockett & Robbins 2012). American scholars define and canonize

the new materialism in anthologies. New materialisms have a broad and vibrant but presently dispersed European following (Bolt & Barrett eds. 2013; Carlile et al. eds. 2013; Dolphijn & Van der Tuin 2012; Houtman & Meyer eds. 2012). The question ‘how do contemporary European materialisms look, and what can they innovate?’ has so far been answered at a series of locally and nationally funded 'New Materialism' conferences (UK 2010; NL 2011; SE 2012; FI 2013). This Action wishes to advance new materialist research, collaborations and outcomes from a European perspective.

### **B.3 Reasons for the Action**

A COST Action around new materialism benefits European academia because it capitalizes on a burgeoning trend. *Practically*, European new materialisms are furthered at conferences (next to at the abovementioned conferences, at European Feminist Research Conferences; Deleuze Studies Conferences; Society for Social Study of Science Conferences; Society for Literature, Science and the Arts Conferences; Performance Studies international Conferences), in journal publications (such as in European Journal of Women’s Studies; Body & Society; Parallax) and the blogosphere. *Conceptually*, the epistemological backbone of much of the new materialist work is Continental Philosophy and French Feminist Theory. The European underpinnings of new materialist thought have not yet been capitalized on, which is why the other hybrid in the mix (next to concepts and practices: the *marketability* of this research) has not yet come to full fruition. A COST Action allows for the European rootedness of new materialism in Continental Philosophy and French Feminist Theory to be taken full advantage of in terms of research and training exchange, joint publications and dissemination of knowledge through conferences (including a kick-off conference), intra- and extra-academic collaborations. With regard to the specific challenges of increasing global interdependences, economical and ecological crises, as well as political, technological and demographic changes, the gathering of locally situated perspectives can be particularly productive in assessing and enhancing the perspectives opened up by European new materialisms.

Mapping the field in Europe, beyond local contexts, is the first innovation of the Action. It also aims to intervene in the development course of new materialisms by crossing the academia–art divide. This inclusion of academia–art collaboration is a unique trait of European new materialisms. The world we live in does not allow itself to be captured in strict academic terms; the creative arts foster a tradition of understanding the activity of matter and letting materials or materialities speak in affective, multi-media and post-human modes of communication. Other sites of possible

collaboration and innovation will come to the fore during the case-study based activities of the Action. Examples are: how does new materialism combine with Postcolonial theory? How does a new materialist policy-making practice look?

#### **B.4 Complementarity with other research programmes**

EU-funded new materialist scholarship or networking does not exist yet.

### **C. OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS**

#### **C.1 Aim**

The main objective of the Action is to network European new materialisms. New materialist scholarship is both young and burgeoning. The COST Action will shape and further how European scholars take up the label of new materialism and work under its umbrella. The fundamental new materialist research is being done, and the resulting methodological restructurings are underway. Networking in order to streamline, and the building of capacity is what the field is in need of right now, and in especially Europe. The Action will address how European new materialisms look, and what they can innovate.

#### **C.2 Objectives**

The Action interlinks the existing European networks and local/individual scholarly projects that are conducted from a new materialist perspective. The Action has practical and conceptual/methodological goals, next to the goal of giving European new materialisms a recognizable face and place (marketing of research). The Action will produce a set of relevant European case studies, selected and researched from a new materialist perspective, as well as an in-depth definition of European new materialisms (conceptually/ theoretically and methodologically/ pertaining to usefulness of the perspective for tackling ecological, socio-cultural and politico-economic changes in Europe).

First, this Action aims at mapping European research around new materialisms. An interactive database will be made available on the website [www.newmaterialism.eu](http://www.newmaterialism.eu). Second, Working Groups (WGs) are devised around four themes in order to generate, communicate and valorise the content of European new materialist scholarship. WG1 'Genealogies of New Materialism' examines and intervenes in canonization processes by compiling a web-based bibliography, coordinating the

themes of the Open Access (OA) peer-reviewed special journal issues and the themes/sections of an edited collection of essays on European new materialisms and coordinating all other publications coming out of the WGs and other events of this Action. Three additional WGs address the theme and practice of traversing the ‘Two Cultures’ gap (Snow [1959] 1965). WG2 ‘New Materialism on the Crossroads of the Natural and Human Sciences’ focuses on the development of new materialisms at the boundary of the human and natural sciences (e.g. Media studies & Neuroscience). WG3 ‘New Materialism Embracing the Creative Arts’ addresses new ways of embracing creative arts – from visual to performative, performance and sound art – at the intersections of artistic practice, art-as-research and academic analysis. WG4 ‘New Materialism Tackling Economical and Identity-Political Crises and Organizational Experiments’ focuses on the possibility of tackling on-going economical and identity-political crises as well as on new kinds of organizational experiments, both for academics, policy makers and activists. European new materialisms have attracted a significant amount of Early Stage Researchers (ESRs). All WGs convene at WG meetings, Conferences and Training Schools (TSs), publish, and apply for future research funding.

### **C.3 How networking within the Action will yield the objectives?**

WG1 oversees the new materialist work as it has been and will come out, within the Action as well as outside, within Europe as well as outside, and stores it on the website in the interactive database. In addition, the genealogical work of WG1 - the concrete making of the database, and the theoretical interventions in canonizations - feeds back into the other WGs, as the database makes visible where gaps in our knowledge are, hence, where the WGs may decide to work on, and how (in the light of canonization processes). The themes of the OA special journal issues, and of the over-all edited collection are agreed upon in a bottom-up manner, within and across the WGs and following an in-depth consultation of the database. Nevertheless, WG1 has a coordinating role. Individual members of the network will submit database entries throughout the Action period so as to make sure that the database is up-to-date when networking meetings are prepared/held. The website will contain a new materialist glossary of terms. The Action will work with paper presentations by the members during closed WG meetings in order to set the agenda and organize yearly conferences in order to communicate the research agenda and outcomes to broader audiences. Papers for WG meetings and conferences (where a larger group of new materialist scholars meets, and where new members of the Action are recruited), as well as reports of (reciprocal) short term scientific missions - (R)STSMs (how do colleagues practice and teach new



materialism?) and Training Schools will be published on the website.

#### **C.4 Potential impact of the Action**

*Practically*, the Action networks European new materialist scholars. This benefits the ways in which European new materialist scholarship is shaping up and enhances its capacity and effectiveness (what is needed for a European new materialism to consolidate itself?). *Conceptually*, the Action ensures the growth and depth of European new materialist research methodologies and makes sure the European roots of new materialism (Continental philosophy and French feminist theory) are taken advantage of. Combined expected results are: theoretical contributions regarding the conceptual development of new materialisms; building on the diversity and richness of local receptions and interpretations of philosophical and epistemological concepts and theories; theoretical contributions to a search for new frameworks of knowledge production better equipped to understand current social, political, economic and ecological crises; methodological contributions regarding the possibilities of transdisciplinary research and co-operation, in particular with regard to new possibilities of translation and synergy between the natural sciences and humanities/social sciences, and with artists and creative researchers; organizational contributions pertaining to ways of working together in complex societies and research contexts; developing institutionalisation strategies. In terms of the *marketing* of research, the Action makes sure that European new materialisms get a recognizable face and place. Scholars, artists and policy makers will be capable of locating and working with European new materialist scholarship; dissemination will be enhanced by the website [www.newmaterialism.eu](http://www.newmaterialism.eu).

#### **C.5 Target groups/end users**

The primary target group of this Action consists of new materialist scholars from Europe. These scholars, incl. ESRs, have not had the opportunity to work together on a sustainable basis, although a conference tradition - locally and/or nationally funded - has been in place since 2010. The results of the activities will be freely available on the website, which may also attract:

- university employees who are new to new materialism get ideas for syllabi and research projects;
- artists who need theoretical insights in working with materials;

- policy makers who want insights in how one can possibly deal with current-day complexities pertaining to ecology, political economy, socio-cultural conflict;
- exhibition curators and designers, conservators and restorers, document centre managers, educators and other museum staff who daily deal with complex material objects;
- journalists and the broader audience who may want to know what kind of scholarship happens in Europe today.

## **D. SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME**

### **D.1 Scientific focus**

The scientific focus of this Action is organized in a bottom-up manner. The Action works from what the European new materialist research orientations have produced and are in the process of producing in the light of the three broad research questions mentioned in B.1. The first step towards generating a conversation within the network of the Action about European new materialisms will consist of discussing position papers on the new materialism written by the individual members of the Action in the first year of its operation. In so doing, and in the continuing of the Action and its chosen working formats, a European canon and European methodologies will be constructed, suitable for the globalizing world at large. This is the *first* scientific focus. In addition, the Action will keep track of those events in Europe that have required or are requiring new materialist reflection. This allows the generation of a set of exemplary case studies. This is the *second* scientific focus. The Action produces a set of relevant European case studies selected and researched from a new materialist perspective. Examples of such work include (European) new materialist reflection on ageing (Irni 2010), fat (Colls 2007), electronic waste (Hertz & Parikka 2012) and global warming (Crockett & Robbins 2012).

The two scientific foci of this Action are defined as above, because the Action is closely connected with the avant-garde of interdisciplinary scholarly work and with current societal affairs that ask for immediate, materialist analysis. As such, the Action is *theory-driven and case-based*.

Each of the WGs combines theoretical reflection and case study research. In addition, the Action works in such a manner during Conferences, Training Schools, and in publications for dissemination. Combining the theoretical and the empirical is key to the new materialism. In terms

of epistemology (theory of knowledge), one can choose to apply theory to a case (prescriptive, top-down model) or to generate a theory while doing the case-based research (descriptive model of 'grounded theory', as done in social and cultural studies of science). New materialisms argue for 'the study of practices of knowing in being' (Barad 2007: 185). This approach argues that case studies are always/already theoretical *in themselves* and that scholars must not approach either theory or case materials from a distance or from the outside. Knowing and knowledge production take place in a 'mangle' (Pickering 1995, Hekman 2010) of researcher, researched, instrument and environment. Should two members of the network decide to work on one case study, or when both using it in teaching, the Action enables the usage of the tool of the STSM in order to work together. Should one member have a certain theoretical interest that asks for a certain case-based input, and knowledge of that case is represented in the network, the STSM will be used as well. ESRs will be trained in envisioning their research as a mangle or 'meshwork' (1997), too, and (R)STSMs are particularly beneficial for them.

By bringing together sets of human and natural scientists as well as artistic and academic researchers, the network functions in an interdisciplinary manner, which enhances its attractiveness among journalists and policy-makers.

The kick-off conference ensures that members of the Action get to speak to each other and with the broader (academic) audience. Yearly conferences ensure that progress is communicated.

WG meetings twice a year make sure that progress is made. One meeting is held in a specific local context provided by a member of the network; the other is held back-to-back with the yearly conference. The yearly conferences travel and are held in different European countries.

(R)STSMs enhance mutual and recursive learning. Within the context of this Action, the tool of the STSM will enhance the coupling of theory and case-based research. It allows scholars and ESRs from different local settings to work and learn together. And it allows a more theoretical scholar to work with and learn from a more empirical one. Intertwinement of theory and empirical case are instrumental for the development of a new materialism. (R)STSMs may vary in length.

Training Schools communicate European new materialisms to the next generation of academics. Training Schools, within the context of this Action, are set up for ESRs from within the network, and from outside. Therefore, the Training Schools will be broadly advertised through (inter)national academic mailing lists. ESRs from outside may want to become official members of the COST Action. The aim is to organize Training Schools for at least 20 ESRs each. The ESRs as well as the teachers will come from different disciplinary backgrounds, different national contexts, and the gender representation is balanced. The four Training Schools that are held in the context of this Action cover themes related to the four WGs. Every Training School will start on a Monday

afternoon and end on a Friday morning, allowing for the participants to travel on Monday morning and Friday afternoon.

Dissemination will be done through the website, and by publishing OA special journal issues and an over-arching edited book. The book will be scholarly; the editors of OA issues choose to address non-academic audiences (such as policy makers, artists, museum professionals, and activists). Only OA journals which are registered in DOAJ - Directory of Open Access Journals will be selected for publication within the framework of this Action.

## **D.2 Scientific work plan methods and means**

WG1 builds an interactive database (web-based bibliography) and fills this database with (hyperlinks to) scholarly texts, links to blogs, course syllabi and case-study materials. It makes a European new materialist glossary. The WG publishes one OA special journal issue on a specific topic that crosses the academic (theory) - non-academic (case study) divide and contributes to the edited collection which is broadly framed so as to provide preliminary answers to the broad research questions mentioned in B.1. Its theme is the genealogy of European new materialism, but it stretches beyond the strictly European in order to make a useful database that covers the young and growing trend of new or neo-materialism, and to address the theme of the (inter)national indexing of thought.

WG2 discusses and practices the development of new materialist perspectives on the boundary of the human and natural sciences in the multidisciplinary areas such as Archaeology and Bio-cultural Research on, for example, medication development, prescription and spread of use. Based on to-be-selected combinations of theory and case studies, this WG discusses how European new materialisms can innovate the “Two Cultures” gap in the strict sense of the term (humanists and scientists). The WG publishes one OA special journal issue that crosses the academic (theory) - non-academic (case study) divide and contributes to the edited collection which is broadly framed so as to provide preliminary answers to the broad research questions mentioned in B.1.

WG3 discusses and practices new ways of embracing creative arts at the intersections of artistic practice, art-as-research and academic analysis. Based on to-be-selected combinations of theory and case studies (e.g. art therapy & sound art; sewing circle activities; well-being & relational philosophy), this WG discusses how European new materialisms can innovate with the materialist tradition of the creative arts. The WG publishes one OA special journal issue that crosses the academic (theory) - non-academic (case study) divide and contributes to the edited collection which is broadly framed so as to provide preliminary answers to the broad research questions mentioned in

B.1.

WG4 discusses and practices possibilities for academics, policy makers and activists of tackling on-going economical and identity-political crises as well as new kinds of organizational experiments addressing phenomena such as cognitive capitalism. Based on to-be-selected combinations of theory and case studies, this WG discusses how European new materialisms can innovate productive ways of working together. The WG publishes one OA special journal issue that crosses the academic (theory) - non-academic (case study) divide and contributes to the edited collection which is broadly framed so as to provide preliminary answers to the broad research questions mentioned in B.1.

Each WG provides the theme of one Training School.

(R)STSMs provide for the rigorous undertaking of the theory and empirical case couplings suggested above. STSMs may be arranged amongst members of different WGs.

Yearly Conferences, Training Schools and Publications are used to communicate and disseminate the knowledge gained.

## **E. ORGANISATION**

### **E.1 Coordination and organisation**

**Management and organization** - The Action works with a *Management Committee (MC)* which supervises and coordinates the implementation of the Action. The MC will consist of min. 1, max. 2 *National Representatives* and a *MC Chair*. A representative of the *Grant Holder* will be part of the MC. A sub-committee is formed out of the MC; this is the *Steering Committee (SC)* of which at least the MC Chair and representative of the Grant Holder are a member. The SC is responsible for the daily management of the Action, including organization of kick-off conference, yearly conference, Training Schools, coordination of (R)STSMs. The MC is responsible for the over-all management and keeps track of the COST Action in general. Are the set goals being worked on productively? Do the WGs deliver what they have promised? Is the Action disseminated effectively? Do the ESRs get enough out of the Action? The *WG Coordinators* are responsible for the progress and planning of the WGs, esp. arranging meetings that are not back-to-back with the yearly conference and content issues. Each WG coordination team must communicate its plans, activities, outcomes and possible delays vis-à-vis the workplan to the SC four times per year and to the MC once a year (one month before the yearly MC meeting and otherwise in intervals of 3 months to the SC). Pertaining to the WG coordinators; a balanced representation along the axes of regional representation and age/generation/stage of academic career is ensured. Hence, WG

coordinators will come from all corners of Europe and ESRs will be encouraged to become WG coordinator. In relation to the latter, an *Action Think Tank* consisting of the ESRs involved in the Action is set up. This Think Tank gives advice to the MC. In addition, the SC may delegate specific tasks to specific sets of members: the local organizing team of a TS or Conference, the factual arrangement of a STSM. All activities are reported on in writing. The SC compiles these for *Management Reports*. The SC meets over e-mail/skype every three months and is to work proactively, should delegates not deliver (e.g. change the WG Coordination of a WG that does not deliver, be stand-in organizers for local events). The MC decides upon which *Invited Speakers* are part of Conferences and Training Schools. The MC also decides upon the *External Experts* that may be asked for WG meetings. Local conference organizers and WG Coordinators can suggest names, of course.

**Website [www.newmaterialism.eu](http://www.newmaterialism.eu)** - The website is the responsibility of WG1 (see under **E.2**). The website has three parts:

- News and Agenda section with information about the progress of the COST Action: this section contains announcements of activities of the Action (Conferences, Training Schools, Publications) in order to attract Conference and TS participants and new members of the Action plus a readership for our products.
- Database section which strives to become the 'hub' for European new materialist research: this section wants to document the genealogy of European new materialism, so it provides links to publications and past, present and future new materialist events. A new materialist glossary of terms will be included.
- Intra-net: this part is behind a password and contains materials that are *not yet* for the wider audience, i.e. draft articles for the special issues, draft chapters for the edited collection and draft applications for future research. Draft announcements for Training Schools and Conferences can also be worked on collectively and shared here, incl. communication within WGs and with/in the MC/SC.

**Milestones of this Action are:**

- Established Network of European new materialist scholars, including ESRs

- Establishment of the website [www.newmaterialism.eu](http://www.newmaterialism.eu) as a portal for European new materialism
- 4 Conferences (including a kick-off conference)
- 4 Training Schools
- Set of Position Papers (all WGs)
- Interactive database (WG1)
- Set of case studies (WGs 2, 3 and 4)
- 4 Open Access special journal issues based on theory-case study combinations
- Edited volume on European new materialisms

## **E.2 Working Groups**

See D.2

## **E.3 Liaison and interaction with other research programmes**

A network on European new materialisms is unique. Contacts within Europe and with Australian colleagues have been established. The members of the network have enough contacts for establishing contacts with Asian, North- and Latin-American scholars (who may be invited speakers at conferences) and for enlarging the network (number of members of the Action grows steadily and external experts from the arts, activism and policy making are invited).

## **E.4 Gender balance and involvement of early-stage researchers**

New materialism has a background in Continental philosophy and French Feminist Theory. For this reason, Gender Studies scholars or scholars working within a different (inter)discipline, yet with an interest in Gender Studies, have been key to the initial development of new materialism (in Europe). Hence, this Action, initially, works with more women than men; in spite of the fact that Gender Studies scholars includes research into masculinities, the field still attracts more women than men.

Some ESRs will become WG coordinators. An Action Think Tank consisting of ESRs will be set up so as to value their perspective on European new materialisms and the Action itself. 4 Training schools for ESRs will be organized.

## F. TIMETABLE

This Action has been set up to run for four years. Every year has a similar structure with regards to MC/SC meetings, half-yearly WG meetings, yearly conference and Training Schools. (R)STSMs are arranged on demand. Part II - C provides a detailed preliminary work programme. The table below highlights the themes per (half) year.

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
<b>Month 1</b>	Set-up of website and arrangement of MC/SC/WGs/Kick-off conference/Training Schools			
<b>Month 1-6</b>		WGs decide on theory-case study combinations for OA special journal issues	WGs finalize special journal issues and decide on parts of edited volume	WGs finalize articles for part of the edited volume and decide on applications for future funding
<b>Month 7-12</b>	Kick-off conference, first Training School, and WGs discuss Position Papers of members	Yearly conference, second Training School, and WGs discuss drafts of papers for OA special issues	Yearly conference, third Training School, and WGs discuss drafts of articles for edited volume	Fourth Training School
<b>Month 12</b>				Closing Conference 'European new materialisms', WGs finalize funding applications

## G. ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The following COST countries have actively participated in the preparation of the Action or otherwise indicated their interest: AT, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, HU, IL, IT, NL, PL, RO, SE, TR, UK. On the basis of national estimates, the economic dimension of the activities to be carried out under



the Action has been estimated at 60 Million € for the total duration of the Action. This estimate is valid under the assumption that all the countries mentioned above but no other countries will participate in the Action. Any departure from this will change the total cost accordingly.

## **H. DISSEMINATION PLAN**

### **H.1 Who?**

The target audience of this Action pertains first of all to European new materialist scholars and ESRs, and to European scholars who are interested in new materialisms. The other target group consists of artists, activists, museum professionals, policy makers and journalists in Europe who are interested or can be convinced of the necessity to become interested in the results of new materialist research. Scholars will familiarize themselves with a young scholarly tradition: new materialism. Artists, activists, museum professionals, and policy makers will find out how new materialist research is helpful for the world we live in. The contact between the two target groups follows the model of the feedback loop: artists gain theoretical knowledge and provide hands-on materialist input, activists have a history of experimentation with organizational renewal, museum professionals share their experience of working with material objects and gain new concepts and practices to work with, policy makers provide cases for research and gain policy recommendations based on the new materialist research done, and journalists and the broader audience who are interested in scholarly developments gain insights in a specific tradition and provide case materials.

### **H.2 What?**

Each target group will be addressed through a specific dissemination plan:

- The website [www.newmaterialism.eu](http://www.newmaterialism.eu) speaks to the broadest group possible by surveying new materialist research and events, while providing in-depth materials such as Position Papers.
- The OA peer-reviewed special journal issues and their articles speak to scholarly communities, but here choices will be made in relation to specific, professional target groups such as policy makers, museum professionals, or artists.

- The edited volume speaks strictly to scholarly audiences, albeit that specific professional groups may be interested in specific case-study-based theoretical reflections.
- The Training Schools are for ESRs; the (R)STSMs are for more advanced scholars or ESRs with a strong scholarly profile.
- The Conferences are gatherings of scholars with invited guests from other professional groups.

### **H.3 How?**

OA and web-publishing allow for reaching broad audiences. This Action works with both publishing strategies. These are primarily strategies for dissemination of research results, but Web 2.0 allows for databases to be, next to searchable, research materials themselves. Users of the web-based bibliography are able to add entries (to be checked by members of WG1) and to make combinations of existing entries on the basis of search- and tagging tools. The users of tools such as the ones on [www.newmaterialism.eu](http://www.newmaterialism.eu) can be predicted (artists, activists, policy makers, journalists) but the Action has to provide for other users (libraries, for example). WG1 is in charge of mapping this situation; the MC makes decisions on updating strategies based on the information provided by WG1. WG1 works in close cooperation with WGs 2, 3 and 4.

Considering the innovative nature of European new materialist research per se, the Action benefits from well-established forms of academic publishing and organizing: the Position Paper, the Special Journal Issue, the Edited Volume, the Scholarly Conference, the Training School.