

research is correctly focused and provide oversight of direction and risk management. It will monitor the progress of the research undertaken, and suggest to the SB any adjustments needed to the overall work plan to ensure the project remains on target and optimises its research outputs. The Director of Research will report to the SB to keep it fully informed and allow it to exercise oversight over the research programme and have a view on the wider career development of the DCs. The RC will meet biannually, but ongoing contact, predominantly via e-mail, online communications or informal discussions, will be maintained throughout the project. Meetings will be timed flexibly to fit with international participants, or use will be made of video-conferencing tools.

(c) Training Committee (TC) will be chaired by the Director of Training (CS), assisted by a Deputy Director of Training (AH), who is also the CS training WP leader. The TC includes as well the outreach work package leader (ND), and the project manager along with representatives of the APs and DCs (both by rotation). The aim will be to ensure that we provide a broad and balanced spectrum of opportunities and training for the DCs involved so that they are adequately prepared for future career opportunities. The TC will coordinate all network-wide training activities and monitor all training undertaken by individual DCs including reviewing their Personal Career Development Plans and secondments. It will maintain a two-way communication with the SB to ensure the Board is both kept fully informed of, and can have a direct input into, the training and career development of the DCs. The TC will meet biannually under the same conditions as RC mentioned above.

(d) Dissemination and Impact Committee (DIC) will be chaired by MR, who is also a member of the MEG, with HZ, as deputy chair. It will also include the Director of Research, IAB Chair, the project manager, and representatives of the APs and DCs (both by rotation). It will co-opt other members as appropriate to the stage of the programme. This is to ensure that representatives from all different sectors are involved in dissemination and impact activities. DC representatives will attend each committee meeting to ensure they learn about the importance of all types and levels of dissemination activities from publication in scientific magazines to interacting with the general public through outreach activities. The DIC will also oversee the design and maintenance of the project's web site, planning and monitoring of outreach activities, monitoring IP issues, implementing publication policy and the DMP and updating it, and overseeing arrangements for network symposiums. It will meet biannually, possibly online, but will keep in regular ongoing e-mail contact and will establish outreach/conference subcommittees if required, particularly during the later stages of the network.

3.1.5 Recruitment strategy

Recruitment is overseen by the Recruitment Committee (RTC), chaired by the Coordinator (MC), and the deputy chair will be ED. Other committee members will be the other members of MEG (MR, CS and AS). The first action of the RTC will be to recruit the part time project manager and a web page developer, which should be complete by m3. RTC's key task is to oversee the recruitment of all DCs. There will be a centralised recruitment process to ensure timely competitive international recruitment and promote equal opportunities. As the recent EU "She Figures 2021" report highlights, women are particularly underrepresented in STEM fields, despite overall progress in the gender balance of research careers as a whole. As such, QSI recognises the importance of targeted advertising to women-in-science groups such as the European Platform of Women Scientists. Whilst QSI's recruitment policy will predominantly be based on merit, in the case of equal candidacy, priority will be given to the gender balance of the cohort. The DCs recruitment will be conducted in three phases: (1) Posts will be advertised and applications will be made; (2) The supervisory teams, in coordination with RTC, will go through all applications and do an initial short listing; and (3) Selected candidates will be interviewed and ranked by relevant supervisory teams. The successful candidates will be made an offer, and a reserve list will also be created.

DC posts will be advertised, as soon as and as widely as possible, including through EU employment sites, the European Researcher Mobility Portal (EURAXESS), the Marie Curie Fellowship Association web site, the European Platform of Women Scientists, the QSI web site, and the web sites of beneficiaries and academic partners. The DC advertisements will include the project description, its secondment opportunities and supervisory teams, the fellowship conditions and benefits within the DN framework, as well as strict entry requirements, e.g. first-grade degrees/qualifications, and the procedure for a fair selection of qualified candidates, including the list of documents required for application. The latter will be specified by RTC, and it will include QSI-specific and the general documents required by each recruiting partner. The DC posts will

be advertised for a specified period before applications can be returned. If no suitable candidate is found for a particular position, the post will be re-advertised.

The RTC will review all applications to ensure all DCs short-listed meet the mobility and experience criteria of the DN scheme. Candidates will be short-listed by accounting for their potential for generating high-impact results, the relevance of their experience/background to the advertised project, as well as communication skills, to ensure only the best quality candidates are accepted. The short-listed candidates will then be interviewed and ranked by the supervisory teams (possibly via online means) according to specific criteria for each project. In the case of equal candidacy, as mentioned earlier, we aim to recruit a gender balanced mix of DCs. The recruitment is anticipated to be complete by m4-6, with all DCs in post by m6-9.

The RTC will ensure recruitment and employment processes comply with the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and the European Charter for Researchers and is fully transparent. The UVIGO's Human Resources Office will provide advice to the RTC on all aspects of employment law throughout the project. All recruitment practices and procedures will comply with equal-opportunity principles and legislation and will ensure the gender equality regulations are met. For example, provision of flexible working hours to facilitate careers' responsibilities or to accommodate mobility or other relevant issues. All DCs will be employed on a full contract of employment, by their host organisation, for the duration of their fellowships.

3.1.6 Progress monitoring and evaluation of individual projects

At QSI we have envisaged a multi-layer progress monitoring system. The key person in direct charge of the DCs' progress is their main supervisor, who, in collaboration with other local and secondment co-supervisors, will oversee the progress of each project and report it, every 6 months, to the relevant WP leader, which will in turn report back to the relevant SB committees including IAB, RC, and DIC. Each of these committees will assess the progress of the DC with respect to their project objectives, and based on that will make recommendations to the SB. SB will then take necessary actions on a case-by-case basis. As deliverables, all DCs are required to submit two midterm (by m16 and m32) and final reports (by m48) to SB. These reports will be evaluated by the supervisory teams, and assessment reports will be sent to WP leaders, the Director of Research, and the SB.

3.1.7 Gender Aspects

The network will not tolerate discrimination against individuals on the basis of gender, gender identity or gender reassignment status, race, colour or ethnic or national origin, religion or equivalent belief system, disability, sexual orientation, social class, age (subject to the usual conventions on retirement), marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy/maternity or family responsibilities or as a result of any conditions or requirements that do not accord with the principles of fairness and natural justice. The QSI's **recruitment policy** is mainly on the basis of merit; in the case of equally qualified candidates, gender balance of the whole cohort will be pursued, as we explain in Sec. 3.1.7. The recruitment committee has members from both genders to make sure all relevant factors are taken into account. With a range of international supervisors on our Co-I list, with mixed genders, we expect to attract, and welcome, candidates from different ethnicities and genders. Despite the inherited gender imbalance in the various disciplines considered in QSI, half of the DC's supervisory teams include at least one woman. Altogether, we benefit from the contribution of 8 female supervisors. Our main **decision-making** body, the MEG, has members from both genders. Finally, the Director of Research is a female scientist, who also sits in the DIC as a member, and in the RTC as a member and Deputy Chair.

3.1.8 Environmental aspects in light of the MSCA Green Charter

While respecting the key feature of this programme, which is the physical mobility of researchers, we plan our activities in accordance with the general principles defined in the MSCA Green Charter: (i) promote teleconferencing whenever possible; (ii) use low-emission forms of transport; (iii) promote green purchasing for project-related materials; (iv) ensure the sustainability of project events; (v) whenever possible, use sustainable and renewable forms of energy; (vi) reduce, reuse and recycle; and (vii) share examples of best practices. All measures foreseen in that Charter implemented in QSI will be advertised in the web site.