

Summary assessment of progress (for publication):

Action Rapporteur enters 500 word summary monitoring the progress of the Action here.

This is a very large Action comprising of over 100 research groups and which covers a wide range of scientific specialities. The scientific area that is addressed lies in the field of natural products chemistry and the application of natural products to the important area of drug discovery.

One of the main advantages of this Action is the desire to implement scientific collaboration between diverse research groups, unified by a common goal. This has certainly been accomplished and there have been many new collaborations enabled by this Action. The resulting scientific output is recorded in the large (and diverse) number of publication that have emerged with co-authorship shared between members of the Action. The collaborations have been both at a high level (eg between PIs) and also at a lower level (eg between Early Career Investigators) and this inclusive nature of the collaborative process is impressive. In general, the collaborative atmosphere of the Action has been greatly assisted by the holding of Action meetings at which new contacts and collaborations were forged (and external experts invited to stimulate discussion). The constructive atmosphere generated by the Action has already resulted in the publication of >20 joint papers and the submission of 2 new research proposals.

The Rapporteur was impressed to see that the Action had established a library of compounds for screening and a set of guidelines for the deposition of compounds. The first round of biological screening has already been performed and some interesting hits observed already. This process is clearly an iterative one, and the Rapporteur expects that more detailed screening and analysis of the screening results will follow in the second part of the Action. Progress is anticipated with the identification of lead structures for the treatment of cancer, viral infections (multiple viruses have been studied) and tuberculosis; this is a very worthwhile goal in the area of healthcare.

In addition to the above, the Action has also established a training school for PhD students, so that they can learn the techniques required to screen compounds against cancer cell lines. This is an impressive and worthwhile achievement that should help to strengthen the goals and collaborative nature of the Action.

The Rapporteur found the progress of this Action to be very good indeed. Almost all of the objectives and deliverables have been addressed and those that have not are logically placed in the second part of the Action. Given the progress made to date the Rapporteur has no concerns about the future development of these important areas (eg the use of molecular modelling, chemoinformatics and to engage with SMEs.)

In summary, this is an ambitious and worthwhile Action that has set out to do exactly what it said it would in the MoU. The Rapporteur has no concerns about its progress, which has been excellent. The participants are to be congratulated on delivering a multitude of high quality collaborations and science in an area that is of undoubted importance for the health and wellbeing of the European economic area and beyond.