

Ageing and Technology – a European Workshop

Joint Workshop of AAL / COST / MYBL

9-10 February 2017

COST Association, Avenue Louise 149, 15th floor, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

Background Paper

Context

The ageing of the European population is creating many new challenges and opportunities for individuals, organisations and Governments. Many of these challenges are being addressed by information and communication technologies, which form an integral part of everyday life for everyone. Sometimes the technologies are targeted at particular needs or age groups, but often they are generic, addressing many issues and kinds of people. These new technologies create new opportunities and sometimes challenges.

Three relevant European initiatives have agreed to collaborate and to jointly address some of the key issues in their fields which are of interest to the research and innovation community. They are the:

- **Active and Assisted Living (AAL) Programme**
- **Joint Programming Initiative on Demographic Change “More Years, Better Lives” (JPI MYBL)**
- **European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST)**

Each of these has its own particular focus, and ways of working, and brings a different range of expertise to bear on the issues.

The three initiatives are convening a joint invitation workshop to explore common interests and ideas, and ways of working more effectively together.

AAL and MYBL share an ambition to:

- Enable older people to remain active and living at home, on their own terms, as long as they wish and continue to contribute to society (on a paid or unpaid basis) as long as possible, and to;
- Improve the design of the living environment for older people, including both homes and communities and the integration of ICTs;
- Encourage older people to participate in learning (including learning with, from, and about technology);
- Encourage the integration of all services (including ICT-based ones) which can support older people;
- Understand the role which information and communication technologies (ICTs) can play in achieving these.

COST is a “bottom up” mechanism which supports collaboration between researchers and other stakeholders. It has the potential to support a network in this area.

Demographic change affects everybody, but the most dramatic change is the growth in numbers of older people, as people live longer and (generally) healthier lives. Our particular focus is therefore on “older people”. However, any definition of “older” is open to challenge: people do not become more alike as they age, and individuals age at different rates and in different ways. The “older” population therefore includes many healthy, active people, in employment or not, as well as many people who are experiencing disability and health challenges, and with a range of care needs.

It is important to note that people's aspirations and interests change as they age, and that the technologies also evolve over time. Thus an individual's interest in, and use of, ICTs may differ as they age, while someone who was very familiar with state of the art technology at the age of 60, may already be struggling to keep up ten years later.

Workshop Objectives

This workshop aims to:

- Inform participants about the objectives and funding opportunities in JPI MYBL and AAL Initiative, as well as the support which the COST Initiative could provide to fund large research networking activities on this topic.
- Boost the collaboration between the research community and developers of technology to provide better ICT-enriched living environments for older people and leading to technologies which are actually used by the target group.
- Identify gaps in current research and development work, and areas where issues are already being addressed.
- Bring researchers and others involved in the AAL and MYBL worlds/communities together with people involved in relevant COST networks to discuss possible collaboration and provide a platform where new forms of collaboration can start and new networks can form.

Workshop Outcomes

The workshop will:

- Stimulate debate and scientific exchange on specific questions and issues (see below: content).
- Report on the outcome of the discussions at the workshop and make suggestions for follow-up action to the JPI MYBL, the AAL and COST Initiatives.
- Encourage participating researchers to collaborate for the submission of proposals under the 2017 calls of AAL and/or MYBL.
- Encourage researchers to consider bidding for a new network under the COST process.
- Encourage other forms of collaboration between the "communities" and/or individual researchers (e.g. the development of a roadmap of common research interests or future activities).

Content

The key questions for the workshop are:

- How do ICTs already contribute to the lives of older people (including issues of appropriateness, usability and competence)?
- How might existing and emerging ICTs contribute to meeting the current and future aspirations and needs of older people?
- Which of these are currently being addressed?
- Which need attention, now or in the future?
- Identify ways in which the current and potential aspirations of older people are distinctive, and ways in which information and communication technologies address these.

Issues for exploration include:

- **Acceptance:** What makes new and evolving technologies acceptable to older people, and how can they best be engaged in development? Specifically, how do we ensure that and understand how new technologies are:
 - Meeting a real and perceived need or benefit in terms of its attractiveness and added value to the users lives and role in society
 - Bring added value in the elderly's lives and their active role in society
 - Easy to use (which will include issues of complexity)
 - Reliable
 - Affordable
 - Not compromising the privacy of the user
 - Not stigmatising users.
- **Accessibility:** How can we ensure that technologies are accessible to all those who might benefit? How can developers and policymaker's best secure sustainability as technologies change, and as people change across the life course? What is the role of:
 - Cost /affordability, and who pays
 - Distribution channels
 - The regulatory framework governing its use
 - The degree of interoperability with other systems
 - Ethics and liabilities.
- **Impact:** What makes technologies pervasive and sustainable, and what is the impact of changing technologies on?
 - Individuals and their friends and families
 - Carers and care services
 - The wider community
 - Public services and administrative organisation, from local to national.

Participation

This is a small (max. 60 people) invitation event, which aims to bring together experienced senior researchers and developers, mainly with a background in either the social sciences or the development and implementation of ICTs. Invitations are being sent to people actively involved in relevant programmes under one or more of the three initiatives taking part (AAL, MYBL, and COST).

Invitees are asked to complete a brief application outlining their relevant background and interest in the topic. The workshop planning group will select participants to ensure a balance of expertise and interests.

We expect that participants will benefit from the opportunity to engage with colleagues who they would not normally encounter; from the chance to influence the future work of the three programmes; and from the opportunity to form new alliances for bidding and project work.

The Three Initiatives

AAL

The AAL Programme (www.aal-europe.eu) is the funding activity that aims to create better conditions of life for the older adults and to strengthen the industrial opportunities in Europe through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). It carries out its mandate through the funding of cross-national projects (at least three countries involved) that involve small and medium enterprises (SME), research bodies and user's organisations (representing the older adults).

JPI MYBL

The Joint Programming Initiative "More Years, Better Lives – The Potential and challenges of Demographic Change" (www.jp-demographic.eu) seeks to enhance coordination and collaboration between European and National Research Programmes related to demographic change. It follows a transnational multi-disciplinary approach bringing together different research programmes and researchers from various disciplines in order to make use of the potential of societal change in Europe and provide solutions for the upcoming challenges. JPI MYBL is supported by the European project J-AGE II, which also carries out calls to fund transnational projects.

COST

European Cooperation in Science and Technology – COST (www.cost.eu), is a pan-European intergovernmental framework. Its mission is to enable breakthrough scientific and technological developments leading to new concepts and products and thereby contribute to strengthening Europe's research and innovation capacities.

It allows researchers, engineers and scholars to jointly develop their own ideas and take new initiatives across all fields of science and technology, while promoting multi- and interdisciplinary approaches. COST aims at fostering a better integration of less research-intensive countries to the knowledge hubs of the European Research Area. The COST Association, an international not-for profit association under Belgian law, integrates all management, governing and administrative functions necessary for the operation of the framework. The COST Association has currently 36 Member Countries.