

## COST Action BM1006 (SeqAhead) closing conference “Next Generation Sequencing: a look into the future”



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The closing conference and final Management Committee (MC) meeting of COST Action BM1006 (SeqAhead) took place over two days, 16-17 March 2015, in Bratislava (SK). Fifty participants from 20 European countries gathered at the event to discuss and share experiences, know-how related to new technologies, and key developments in the field of Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) research.

During the conference, keynote and selected speakers presented the latest NGS technologies and their applications, discussed storage and analysis systems, and presented the training available and still required to enable researchers to utilise these technologies in new fields of research. The event opened with a short welcome from the local organiser, Dr. Lubos Klucar (IMB SAS, Bratislava (SK)), followed by an introduction by the SeqAhead Chair, Prof. Erik Bongcam-Rudloff (SLU, Uppsala (SE)). Fourteen speakers presented their work and discussed new technology highlights in the field, including the latest minION device presented by Ola Wallerman (SLU, Uppsala (SE)).

The final SeqAhead MC meeting took place during the second day, where the principal achievements from the four years of the Action were presented and discussed. The impact of the project has been multi-faceted, ranging from the very abstract ‘improved healthcare’, owing to better trained NGS researchers in medical diagnostic facilities, to the very concrete, in terms of the research described in the nearly 100 peer-reviewed journal articles that acknowledge SeqAhead.

Doubtless, the most tangible result of SeqAhead is the large number of students/scientists who gained access to high-quality training in the emerging field of NGS, training that is not yet part of most formal university curricula, and was



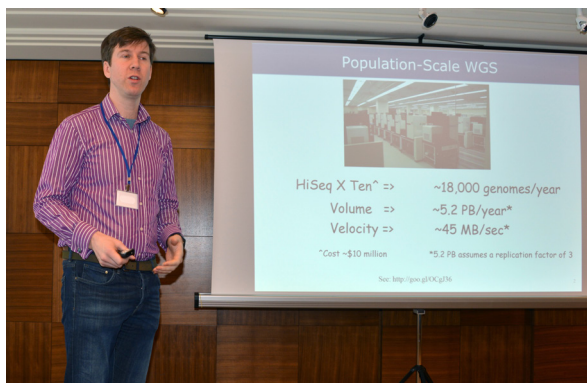
SeqAhead COST conference participants.

certainly not available to scientists who completed their studies a few years ago.

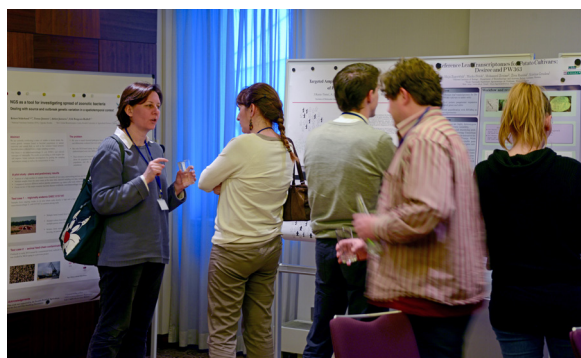
SeqAhead organised more than 30 workshops, four conferences with more than 150 participants each, and several schools, each with 25-60 students. In total, almost 2,000 scientists participated in these activities, the impact of which has been immediate for NGS research in Europe, and will continue to be felt for many years.

As already mentioned, SeqAhead partners have published about 100 articles on NGS and related topics, and many more publications are expected beyond the end of the project. Such articles help disseminate the scientific activities catalysed by SeqAhead and, we hope, will have a lasting impact: healthcare is a major financial burden in most European countries, so better NGS science in hospitals is likely to have both societal and economic benefits.

SeqAhead brought together researchers from across Europe, allowing them to discuss their sci-



Jim Dowling (KTH - Royal Institute of Technology) having talk on the biobankcloud project ([www.biobankcloud.com](http://www.biobankcloud.com)).



Poster session.

entific interests in formal and informal settings, and in physical and virtual (video) meetings. These meetings led to the formation of several large European collaborations, such as the (now complete) [AIBio project](#)<sup>1</sup> and the newly awarded [COST Action CHARME](#)<sup>2</sup>, which is to kick-off in 2016. AIBio, in turn, triggered the establishment of the recently initiated EU project [PROLIFIC](#)<sup>3</sup>. Members of SeqAhead also won an IRSES Marie Curie project aiming to create [an NGS network between the Americas and Europe](#)<sup>4</sup>.

We expect these new projects to have a lasting impact in many areas of life-science research, we are proud to have been part of the successful network that seeded them, and we wish them success in the years ahead. Finally, our thanks go out to all who made SeqAhead such a warmly collaborative and productive project!

Lubos Klucar (Local Organiser), Teresa K. Attwood (Action Vice Chair) and Erik Bongcam-Rudloff (Action Chair)



- 1 [www.allbioinformatics.eu/doku.php](http://www.allbioinformatics.eu/doku.php)
- 2 [www.cost.eu/COST\\_Actions/ca/CA15110](http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/ca/CA15110)
- 3 [euprolific.eu/index.php/the-project](http://euprolific.eu/index.php/the-project)
- 4 [www.deann.eu](http://www.deann.eu)