

COST Action TD0902: SPLASHCOS
Scientific Report on the Meeting of 23rd–27th September 2013, Szczecin, Poland

Aims

This was the eighth and final major meeting, serving as the final ‘showcase’ conference, with six aims: (1) An open conference with participation and presentations by SPLASHCOS members and others; (2) A workshop on the final results of the CoPaF project (Coastline Changes of the Southern Baltic Sea – Past and Future Projection), a spin off project of SPLASHCOS; (3) Final meetings of the Working Groups; (4) A meeting of the COST Evaluation Panel; (5) A Management Committee meeting; (6) A meeting of the Deukalion Planning Group (DPG).

Organisation

The meeting took place over five days with some 150 participants including 65 SPLASHCOS members: three days for open conference sessions and parallel CoPaF workshops, including informal and formal discussion, a press conference with the Polish media, and other events. Day four was a full-day field excursion to the Baltic coast, while some members took part in the kick-off meeting of SUBLAND, an outcome of the COST Action, but a separately constituted and newly established Working Group of the ESF Marine Board, with SPLASHCOS and non-SPLASHCOS membership. Day five was devoted to SPLASHCOS meetings (items 3–6).

Results

The open conference comprised six Plenary Sessions, with 53 oral presentations, covering the themes of: Sea level, climate and palaeoenvironment; Submerged landscapes and archaeology; Submerged landscapes and human dispersal; Underwater archaeological sites; Survey strategies, techniques and collaboration with industry; and Management and Outreach. CoPaF added 11 oral presentations on Baltic sea-level change. Twenty-one posters were displayed, and book prizes were given for the best four posters, all the winners being Early Stage Researchers.

Other events included a public lecture by Professor Kurt Lambeck on ‘Atlantis: is there a physical basis for the myth?’, showings of the Alph-Zoulou film on underwater excavations at the prehistoric site of Atlit Yam (Israel), flint-knapping demonstrations, and ship events on the Szczecin quayside open to the general public, involving special visits by the R/V Elisabeth Mann Borgese (Leibniz Institute of Coastal Research, Warnemünde, Germany), and the R/V Brabander (Klaipeda University, Lithuania), both ships used in underwater research.

The Working Group meetings noted that their major deliverables in terms of reports, coordination of information, and publications had either been completed, or were on course for completion in the case of book publications. The Evaluation Panel highlighted the achievements of SPLASHCOS in terms of meetings, workshops, training of ESRs, successful achievement of new research funding, reports and publications. The MC meeting finalised arrangements for the use of the remaining budget and the completion of all deliverables, and both the MC and the DPG meetings devoted discussion to how the international network created by SPLASHCOS can be perpetuated in the future, and to strategies for continued promotion of submerged landscape research at the European and world scale, and for raising large-scale research funding.

Summary

The consensus was that the conference was very successful in conveying the achievements of the COST Action, and that SPLASHCOS has been notably successful in achieving all its original objectives, acting as a major force for new collaborations, new research funding, publications, and wider dissemination, much of which would not otherwise have happened, as emphasised by many presenters in their conference presentations.

23 October 2013

Andrzej Witkowski,
Local Organiser and Chair of Organising Committee

Geoff Bailey
Chair of SPLASHCOS