# Fibre Optic Nonlinear Technologies [FONTE]
## - A European Industrial Doctorate [GA766115]

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## Project Details

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| Project Acronym | FONTE |
| Project Title | Fibre Optic Nonlinear TEchnologies |
| Call Identifier | H2020-MSCA-ITN-2017 |
| Project Website | fonte.astonphotonics.uk |
| Start of the Project | 1 June 2018 |
| Project Duration | 48 months |

## Consortium



## EC Funding



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# Executive Summary

The **1ˢᵗ year FONTE meeting and Transferable Skills workshop (TSW I)** was held at FONTE's industrial partner **Nokia Bell Labs (Stuttgart; Germany)**. During this first annual gathering industrial and academic project partners, supervisors/co-supervisors and ESRs engaged in a 1 day long meeting, in which ESRs took a leading role throughout the day. All ESRs were present, with Aston funding (from external resources) the participation of V.N., who is expected to take up the position of ESR1 at Aston University in August 2019.

The event also had a practical **Transferable Skills Training** component, which took the form of ESRs writing and delivering effective and engaging **presentations**, thus giving them an important opportunity to improve their public speaking skills and defending their work in subsequent discussions.

Finally, the Network Event presented an opportunity for face-to-face **supervisory meetings** of the ESRs with their industrial and academic (co-) supervisor(s).

The one-day event took place **30 Jun to 1 Jul 2019** at **Nokia Bell Labs** in Stuttgart, Germany.

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AiPT        Aston Institute Of Photonic Technologies
EC          European Commission
EID         European Industrial Doctorates
ESR         Early Stage Researcher
FONTE       Fibre Optic Nonlinear Technologies

# 1  FIRST YEAR FONTE MEETING AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS WORKSHOP (TSW I)

The **1st year FONTE meeting and Transferable Skills workshop (TSW I)** was held at FONTE's industrial partner **Nokia Bell Labs (Stuttgart; Germany)** on 30 Jun and 1 Jul 2019. Originally scheduled for Feb 2019, this event was postponed due to the later than anticipated arrival of most of the ESRs at their prospective hosts.

In addition to being a **formal Management Meeting** of the consortium, this FONTE-wide event provided an important **personal networking opportunity** and a chance for all ESRs to have face-to-face meetings with their i**ndustrial and academic co-supervisors** and meet other project partners. All four ESRs had the chance to **present their work** and future plans. Aston University funded the participation of V.N., who is awaiting his UK Visa and is expected to take up the position as ESR1 at AST in August 2019.

**Sunday 30 June:  Social Activity**

On the evening before the formal FONTE Network event the consortium kicked off with an ice-breaker social get together in a local restaurant, with all ESRs and the industrial hosts present, alongside some of the co-/supervisors.



*Figure 1: FONTE consortium members; 1st year  Network Event*

**Monday 1 July 2019: Main FONTE Network Meeting**

The main network event had three chief aims:

1. **Formal Project Management** and forward planning: annual review of the management of FONTE; decision taking forum and Supervisory Board meeting;
2. **Practical Transferable Skills Training** of the ESRs in areas of *Presentation Writing*, *Presentation Delivery*, *Public Speaking* and *Scientific Debating*;
3. **Individual Supervisory Meetings**: One-to-one and small group meetings of ESRs with their industrial and academic supervisors

## 1.1  FORMAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The agenda of the main network meeting, a detailed copy of which is available on FONTE website at https://fonte.astonphotonics.uk in the *members area* – included:

- Welcome; Round table introductions
- Student presentation
- Review of WP progress and milestones
- Open discussion/Participation of all consortium members: Research strategies; Forward planning: incorporating recent scientific developments and technological advances into the training of the ESRs
- Management activities – overview of activities M1-12 and forward planning

- Training activities: Review and forward planning
- Contingency planning for late recruitments
- Election of ESR representative to Supervisory Board; Confirming Members of Supervisory Panels
- Formal Meeting of the Supervisory Board
- Industrial training at NBL – timing, visa update, joint supervision and other practicalities
- IPR issues
- Outreach : Review and forward planning
- Update: EC Progress Report; EC Mid Term Check Meeting (Dublin)

## 1.2  PRACTICAL TRANSFERABLE SKILLS TRAINING

During the network meeting ESRs were able to develop their **Presentation Skills** and improve on their **Public Speaking** competency.

Prior to the event, ESRs had been instructed to prepare a detailed presentation covering their scientific research progress; update on deliverables & milestones (achieved & outstanding); submissions to peer-reviewed journals/conference (actual & planned); training attended (at host & specific events), as well as outreach activities (done & planned).

The presentations given concluded with a questions-and-answer sessions about data, approaches and methodology, thus honing the ESRs **Scientific Reasoning and Debating Skills**, alongside improving their ability to build and defend a scientific argument.

ESRs acquired additional **Transferable Skills**: **Research Methodology and skill transfer** training gained via the thorough group discussion after each ESR's lecture and lecturer's detailed explanation of the approach to the ESRs from the partner institutions. **Interdisciplinary Knowledge Transfer** training achieved due to the presence of the hi-rated specialists in nonlinear mathematical physics (Prof. S. Turitsyn, Dr. Y. Prylepskiy) and advanced NFT algorithms (Dr. Sander Wahls), who actively participated in the discussion and
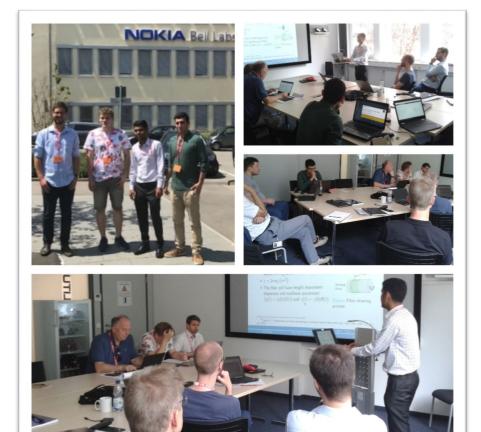


*Figure 2: FONTE ESRs honing their presentation skills during 1st year Network Event*

asked the questions and commented the progress from the point of view of adjacent disciplines. **Hands-on training for scientific skills: new techniques** as a natural result of the participation of the area-leading researchers and academics, and the interchange of ideas. **Research Integrity Skills** training achieved via the group discussion involving all participants, devoted specifically to how each ESR's research subject impacts on optical communications society and on the wider research community, together with each ESR's role and engagement in the wider dissemination and application of knowledge gained, with the elaboration of the possible impact.

In an effort to find an economical and time effective manner to cover additional *formal* **Presentation Skills** training, the Supervisory Board decided to utilise FONTE partners' local Graduate Schools, where courses such as '*Presentation Skills for new presenters*', '*Writing for Publications*', '*Communication Skills*' and '*Time Management*', are widely available and routinely offered throughout the year. In addition, the Management Team has registered _**all**_ FONTE ESRs with Aston email accounts, thereby allowing them to be enrolled in **Transferable Skills Courses** available through the *Aston University Virtual Learning Environment*. Where no appropriate course can be found locally, Aston will organise a bespoke training event covering these aspects in a joint workshop for ESRs in the three sister ITN projects coordinated by Aston University FONTE, REAL-NET and WON.

*VITAE.ac.uk* is a UK-based non-profit organisation supporting the **Professional Development of Researchers.** Aston has already organised *Vitae* membership for all FONTE ESRs, allow them access to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF), resources library and virtual interactive workshops in topics such as '*Research Integrity'* and *'IP for Research'.*

## 1.3   INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISORY MEETINGS

An important aspect of the **1st year FONTE meeting** was facilitating personal face-to-face supervisory meetings. Throughout the day, but in particular for the final 90 minutes of the network event, ESRs had ample opportunity for **individual and small group sessions with their industrial and academic supervisors/co-supervisors**.

Each ESR had a 10-15 minutes individual discussion with the project coordinator, Prof. S. Turitsyn. Such a coordination activity with the personal involvement of each ESR is important in view of developing the efficacious way to timely achieve each of the project objectives, as same as for routing the research efforts according to the most recent results and achievements in the field.

The ESRs also had individual discussions with the (co-)supervisors from the other partner institutions. This workshop action was intended to help each ESR/partner to account for the findings, elaborate the expertise and best practices, and deeply understand the obtained results of the rest of the project members, and to recognise the most potentially promising approach for each project's WP realisation.

While ESRs had been in contact with their industrial supervisors from the very beginning of their employment and are engaged in regular skype and email exchanges, these individual face-to-face meeting provided an important platform for personal meetings with their external industrial and academic co-supervisors, with shared whiteboards/laptops/notepads greatly facilitating conveying complex concepts, otherwise difficult to convey without shared graphic means.



*Figure 3: FONTE ESRs with their industrial and academic (co-) supervisors during 1st year Network Event*