COST
European Cooperation in Science and Technology

Introduction to the COST Framework Programme

Outline
1. What is COST and how does it work?
   - COST Overview
   - COST Structure
   - COST Policies

2. What are the COST Actions and how to participate in them? COST Actions: the networking instrument
   - COST Countries
   - Structure and Decision Making
   - Strategy Work and Budget Plan
   - Networking Tools
   - How to Participate

3. How to prepare a successful proposal?
   - New Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) procedure
   - Proposal Preparation – Practical Aspects
1. What is COST and how does it work?

What is COST?

COST (CO-operation in Science and Technology) is a pan-European intergovernmental framework dedicated to networking activities for European researchers, enabling them to jointly develop their own ideas and new initiatives across all scientific disciplines through trans-European coordination of nationally funded research activities.
COST Features

- Easy funding scheme: one instrument (COST Action*)
- Bottom-up (researcher driven, any topic/multiple topics)
- Flexible (adaptable research and activities)
- Open participation (involve all stakeholders, type of institutions, career levels, countries, any time)
- Output oriented (open science, wide/free dissemination of knowledge and results, open access, open innovation)
- Efficient and cost-effective (high leverage of national research, sharing resources/infrastructure)

* 300 running Networks of researchers: from min 5 COST countries, responding to an Open Call for proposals, based on a MoU, 4 years duration, implemented via networking activities

Recent changes

- The COST Association was established in 2013 as an international non-profit organisation. The governance and the operations are now integrated under the CA who is now the recipient of the Commission’s grant.
- A new Scientific advisory body was put in place: the Scientific Committee
Recent changes

- New set of rules, in particular: a new process for submission, evaluation, selection and approval of proposals, put in place following an expert review, with the objective of streamlining the procedures and answering the demand to cover new & multiple topics.
- The previous scientific structuring in 9 Domains was consequently replaced by a new classification based on the OECD S&T classification (Main Fields/Subfields/research areas aiming at covering the whole spectrum of research topics).

New scientific classification

Three level classification

- 6 Main Fields of Science:
  - Natural Sciences,
  - Engineering and Technology,
  - Medical and Health Sciences,
  - Agricultural Sciences,
  - Social Sciences,
  - Humanities
- 41 Sub-fields of Science…
- 719 areas of expertise (research areas)
New scientific classification

- Widely implemented at COST (expert, proposal, Action level)
  - Proposers can specify up to 5 areas of expertise
  - Evaluators will be selected on the basis on the areas of expertise they entered in their profile
- Flexible approach: no permanent bodies (ad-hoc Review Panels per collection as clustering changes for each collection - depending on the proposals)
- But: a clustering of Actions is needed (possibly also on an ad-hoc basis) a.o. to allow them to meet and share their experience

### New scientific classification: Supporting multi-disciplinarity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Fields of research (MF)</th>
<th>oc-2015-1</th>
<th>oc-2015-2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposals</td>
<td>Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 MF</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 MF</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 MF</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 MF</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number</td>
<td><strong>345</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Recent changes

- A new COST member joined COST in 2015: Montenegro (COST has now 36 Full Member States and one Cooperating State).

Core policies

- in line with the challenges COST has undertaken in Horizon 2020
  1. Excellence and inclusiveness (widening the European research base)
     - Geographic pillar (pockets of excellence, Inclusiveness Target Countries)
     - Career pillar (ECI – Capacity building – leading roles, access to STSM/TS)
     - Gender pillar
  2. International cooperation (mutual benefit, NNC, …)
  3. Industrial dimension (open innovation)
COST Inclusiveness Target Countries

- EU 13:
  - Bulgaria
  - Croatia
  - Cyprus
  - Czech Republic
  - Estonia
  - Hungary
  - Latvia
  - Lithuania
  - Malta
  - Poland
  - Romania
  - Slovakia
  - Slovenia

- EU Candidates:
  - FYR Macedonia
  - Montenegro
  - Serbia
  - Turkey

- EU Potential Candidate:
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina

- EU Countries targeted by EC
  - Luxembourg
  - Portugal

Early Career Investigators and Gender Balance

Implementation Strategy by the Action

Encourage and enable under represented gender to be intensively involved in all COST activities by the Action.

SOME EXAMPLES:

- Leadership roles in the Action structure (ex: Grant Holders, WG leaders, ...)
- Benefiting from COST networking tools (STSM and Training Schools in particular).

ECI = PhD + up to 8 years
Key figures 2015

- More than 25000 supported researchers

Number of reimbursed participants in networking activities (meetings, workshops, STSM, Training Schools)

- 37% ECI* participating in networking activities

Number of reimbursed Early Career Investigators participating in networking activities (meetings, workshops, STSM, Training Schools)

* ECI = Researchers between PhD and PhD+8 years
Number of reimbursed women participating in networking activities (meetings, workshops, STSM, Training Schools)

Key figures 2015

- 41% women participating in networking activities
- Almost 3000 Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM)
- 96% percent participants indicated improved career opportunities as a consequence of their participation
Key figures 2015

- 269 Training Schools (more than 4300 supported Trainees and 1200 Trainers)

COST Near Neighbour Countries

273 participations in running COST Actions across 16 countries

- Albania (31)
- Algeria (8)
- Armenia (15)
- Azerbaijan (1)
- Belarus (8)
- Egypt (9)
- Georgia (8)
- Jordan (4)
- Lebanon (5)
- Moldova (8)
- Morocco (16)
- Palestinian Authority (6)
- Syrian Arab Republic (2)
- Russia (68)
- Tunisia (22)
- Ukraine (62)

Status January 2016
International Partner Countries
546 participations in running Actions across 37 countries

Type of Institution among Action Management Committee participants
Recent changes: cooperation with Joint Research Centre (JRC)

- A Memorandum of Understanding with the Joint Research Centre has been signed in 2015
- A increased participation of the JRC is expected in COST Actions in areas of common interest
- COST is expected to increase its impact on the Commission’s Rtd Agenda

COST positioning
(Research maturity vs Integration)
Complementarity: ERC Grants and MSCA

- COST as stepping stone for young researchers
- Following the COST Impact Assessment dating back to 2014, 22 COST participants had received an ERC grant

Synergies: public partnerships/joint programming (member-state initiatives)

- Expertise of COST as Intergovernmental framework with a long experience in managing research networks (business model) at the service of joint programming initiatives/ transnational projects
- Young networks in emerging topics can inspire future member-state networks. (Importance of our communication with the member-states)
Summary: Strategic goals – contribution to the ERA

- COST supports Inclusive research (geography, age, gender): provide opportunities for less established researchers to the benefit of a wider European research base
- Contribute to find emerging topics that can eventually be addressed through national research and European framework programmes
- Promote S&T cooperation with other countries
- Promote open innovation in COST Actions and contribute to increase the uptakes of research results by SMEs/industry

2. What are the COST Actions and how to participate in them?
COST Actions – characteristics (1/2)

- A network of researchers, engineers and scholars with nationally funded research
- Collaborating in S&T fields of common interest to at least five COST Countries
- Submission to the COST Open Call for proposals
- Evaluated and selected via a tailored procedure
- Based on a 4 years joint work programme

COST DOES NOT FUND RESEARCH

COST Action – characteristics (2/2)

- Expandable to new participants
- Implemented through networking activities: Meetings, Working Groups, Conferences, Workshops, Short Term Scientific Missions, Training Schools and Dissemination Activities
- Average Annual COST Budget EUR 130 000
- Pursuing the fulfilment of the objectives and deliverables described in the approved proposal (Memorandum of Understanding)

COST DOES NOT FUND RESEARCH
COST Actions
How to Participate?

Join an Action

✓ As a Management Committee (MC) member
  Contact your CNC
✓ As a Working Group (WG) participant
  Contact the Action Chair and/or the national MC member representative
✓ Short Term Scientific Mission...
✓ Training school...
✓ Workshops...
  …Contact the Action Chair/check the Action website
Which countries can participate?

37 COST countries

- EU 28
- EU Candidates and EU Potential Candidates:
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - FYR Macedonia
  - Montenegro
  - Serbia
  - Turkey
- Other Countries:
  - Norway
  - Switzerland
- COST Cooperating State:
  - Israel
COST Near Neighbour Countries
273 participations in running COST Actions across 16 countries

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Status January 2016

International Partner Countries
546 participations in running Actions across 37 countries

- International Partner Countries
- COST Near Neighbour Countries
- COST Countries
- International Partner Countries participating in 1 Action

Status January 2016
COST Action Structure and Decision Making

COST Action Structure

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (MC)

GRANT HOLDER (GH)

COST Association Administration

WG 1

WG 2

WG 3

WG 4

WG X (max 6)
Management Committee

DECISION MAKING BODY

- Coordination, Implementation and Management of an Action
- Achievement of the Action’s objectives (MoU)
- Define the Action Strategy
- Supervise the appropriate allocation and use of funds
- Implement COST mission and policies

Management Committee

COMPOSED OF

- Up to 2 members nominated by their respective COST National Coordinator (CNC)
- MC Chair/(Vice-Chair) – responsible for coordinating the MC activities
- WG leaders – reporting on WG activities
- Grant Holder (Scientific Repr.) – relay to the Grant Holder institution
- Other roles defined by MC (STSM, dissemination leader…)
- MC Observers (NNC, IPC, Eur. RTD Org., Internat.Org.)

CORE GROUP:
Prepare MC decisions (Core group meetings)
Management Committee

MAIN TASKS

- Set the Action Strategy (Science and Networking) as defined in the MoU
- Agree on the Action Structure
  - Election of the Action Chair, Vice-chair, Grant Holder and other relevant COST Action positions needed to achieve Actions Objectives.
  - Working Group structure and membership.
- Approval of the Annual Work & Budget Plan (COST Networking tools)
- Define Dissemination & Exploitation Strategy
- Approval of new Countries and Organizations
- Reporting

DECISION TAKING PROCEDURE

MC MEETINGS

Minimum once a year in a participating COST Country.
Typical duration 1/2 day.
Decisions only valid if at least 2/3 of the Participating COST Countries are represented.
Simple majority vote of MC Members with one vote per Participating COST Country.
MC decision must be minuted and minutes sent to COST Association.

E-VOTE

Initiated and managed by the MC Chair.
All MC members are in the e-mail list.
Vote open (7 days).
Simple majority vote of MC Members with one vote per Participating COST Country.
MC decision must be minuted and should be included in the official MC minutes of the following MC Meeting.
Working Groups

CHARACTERISTICS AND ROLE

- From 3 to 6 WG – as set in the MoU
- Perform the necessary tasks required for the Action to fulfil its scientific objectives as defined in the MoU
- Coordinate the research work, production and exchange of research, prepare reports to MC (WG meetings)

COMPOSED OF

- All MC Members (WG Leaders must be MC Members)
- MC Observers (NNC, IPC, Eur. RTD Org., International Org.)
- Any researcher from Participating COST Member Countries

COST Networking Tools

- MC & CORE GROUP MEETINGS
- WG MEETINGS
- SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS
- TRAINING SCHOOLS
- COST NETWORKING TOOLS
- WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES
- DISSEMINATION
COST Networking Tools: **Meetings**

### TYPES
- **Internal Meetings**: Management Committee (MC), Core Group and Working Group (WG) Meetings
- **Workshops and Conference**: serve the scientific Action objectives and acts as a showcase for the activities of the Action

### SPECIFIC
- Location: Participating COST country (except Dissemination meetings)
- Approved by the MC (in the Work and Budget plan)
- MC determines among participants who are entitled for reimbursement

### COST SUPPORT
- Participant (1)
  - Eligible category: MC, WG, NNC, Eur.RTD Org, Invited Speakers (only Workshops/Conferences)
  - Prerequisite: invitation/confirmation via eCOST, signed attendance list and Travel Reimbursement request returned to Grant Holder
  - Reimbursement of participations to COST activities (claim submitted <30 days after the activity, payment <30 days after submission of claim)
  - Accommodation: flat rate (max. EUR 120/night)
  - Meals: flat rate (max. EUR 20/meal) – lunch and dinner
COST Networking Tools: Meetings

COST SUPPORT

- Participant (2)
  - Long distance travel expenses: face value/receipts
    - air: economy, up to EUR 1200
    - Train/bus: all class
  - Local transport: up to EUR 25 (flat rate), > EUR 25 (receipts)
  - Taxi: before 7am (departure) or after 10pm (return), max EUR 80 (receipts)
- Local organiser: COST contribution
  - Lump sum of EUR 20/participant/day (max EUR 5000)
  - up to EUR 10000 (justifications)

COST Networking Tools: Dissemination Meeting

- showcase an Action at relevant conference in the field (oral presentation)

SPECIFIC

- Eligible: MC members
- 2 participations per Grant period

SUPPORT

- see meetings + up to EUR 500 conference fee
COST Networking Tools:
Short Term Scientific Missions

- Exchange visits fostering collaboration, contributing to the scientific objectives of the Actions and allowing participant to learn new techniques, to have access to data/instruments/methods not available in their own institution.

**SPECIFIC**

- all researchers from participating countries, but preference for Early Career Investigator (PhD + up to 8 years), PhD students…
- From a participating COST Country to another participating COST Country or approved NNC/IPC institution/Organisation
- From an NNC country to a participating COST Country
- Duration: 5 to 90 days (180 days for ECI)
- Applications: www.cost.eu/stsm

**SUPPORT**

- Grant:
  - Up to EUR 2500 (for a period up to 90 days)
  - Up to EUR 3500 (for a period between 91 and 180 days) – Early Career Investigators only
**COST Networking Tools:**

**Training Schools**

- Provide intensive training on a subject that contributes to the aim of the Action (new or emerging subject)
- If applicable, offer familiarization with unique equipment or know-how in one of the laboratories of the Action

**SPECIFIC**

- Duration: 2 to 15 days
- Location: participating COST country or approved NNC institution
- Broadly advertised, it must respect a country balance among trainees and target Early-Career Investigators/PhD students
- Eligible: Trainees from all COST countries and approved NNC institutions/Eur. RTD Organisations
- Trainee Grant: max. EUR 1500

**COST Networking Tools:**

**Dissemination material**

- Website, material for display or distribution (flyers, posters,…), publications (journal, books,…), Open access licenses, Multimedia content, distribution costs,…

**SPECIFIC**

- must reflect the Action’s objective
- should be made available to the widest audience (Open access)
COST ACTION STRATEGY AND WORK AND BUDGET PLAN

COST Action strategy (activity plan)

- The Memorandum of Understanding provides the Action's objectives, tasks, activities, milestones and deliverables over 4 years.
- At the start of the Action and every year, the Management Committee will establish a yearly Work and Budget Plan with the assistance of the COST Association administration within the available budget frame.
- A Grant Agreement is signed yearly between the COST Association and the Grant Holder institution (one of the participating institutions in the Action).
What is the Action Grant Agreement?

COST Actions are funded through an Action Grant Agreement (AGA) between the selected Grant Holder and the COST Association.

1. Action Work and Budget Plan
2. COST ASSOCIATION e-signs AGA with GH

COST Grant System – key features

- Grant Holder institution elected at the first MC meeting
- Among the institutions represented at the MC
- GH signs a yearly Grant Agreement with the COST Association
- Receives the Grant in two instalments (65% after signature of the AGA and 35% after 6-8 month based on an intermediary report)
- GH administers the Grant according to the work and budget plan via eCOST/eCAMT
- Administration of activities
- Submits intermediate and yearly financial reports
- Administrative support (FSAC) to the GH: up to 15% of the yearly expenses
- Average Grant: EUR 130000
- More: see Vademecum www.cost.eu/participate/networking
### How to estimate your Budget?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COST Networking Tools</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) MEETINGS</td>
<td>- €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) TRAINING SCHOOLS</td>
<td>- €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS</td>
<td>- €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) DISSEMINATION, PUBLICATIONS</td>
<td>- €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) OERSA</td>
<td>- €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - TOTAL SCIENCE EXPENDITURE (sum of (1) to (5))</td>
<td>- €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - FSAC (max. of 15% of B.)</td>
<td>- €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (B+C)</td>
<td>- €</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### How to estimate your Budget?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Item</th>
<th>Average Amount (€)</th>
<th>Average Duration (days)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meetings (average 42 participants)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reimbursement of Meeting Participant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Organiser Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Schools (average 29 participants)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trainee Grant</td>
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<td>Reimbursement of Trainer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training School Organiser</td>
<td>2464</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>STSM Grant</td>
<td>1634</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Participate in an Action

http://www.cost.eu/participate

OPTION 1

Would you like to join an existing COST Action?

http://www.cost.eu/participate/join_action
COST Actions are Open!

You can join any Action that is running:

- **As a Management Committee (MC) member taking part in the management of the Action:**
  Contact your CNC and apply to become a MC member representing your Country.

- **As a Working Group (WG) participant taking part in the Scientific activities of the Action:**
  Contact the Action Chair and/or the national MC member

- **As an STSM, Training School, workshop participant…**
  Contact the Chair/Check the website

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How to Find a running Action?

[Link](http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/all_actions)
How to Find a running Action?

Advanced fibre laser and coherent source as tools for society, manufacturing and life science

Descriptions are provided by the Actions directly via COST.

Among the different types of lasers, fibre lasers are, both as research and commercially, the youngest, yet the most promising type of laser due to several factors. This Action will be the first platform which supports a fundamental material science, established laser and component group, fibre laser manufacturers and end-users will be able to actively interact to develop know-how and focus on common goals. We expect to boost a series of innovations in the field. Among them are aiming to cover the 3-μm wavelength domain, and beyond, to support end-user applications and to enhance fibre performance to cover more efficiently the short and ultra-short wavelength generation for biophotonics and healthcare. The Action will also investigate glass material and fibre design to optimize the active laser medium in output power. The improvements will mainly boost healthcare to benefit in society and EU manufacturing to maintain and increase manufacturing worldwide within EU. The Action will monitor a new generation of researchers by providing Early Stage Researchers an opportunity to develop both scientific and management skills. At the same time the Action will actively promote gender balance and women researchers in management positions.

OPTION 2

Become a COST EXPERT
Become a COST Expert!

As a COST Expert, you will have the opportunity to:
• Contribute to the evaluation of COST Open Call proposals;
• Participate in the assessment of Action results and outcomes;
• Be invited to take part in the assessment of COST strategic activities.

New experts can express their interest via their eCOST Profile / menu “Expertise” (www.cost.eu/ecost).

An updated Curriculum Vitae with a list of publications is required to demonstrate competence in specific areas of expertise.


OPTION 3

Are you already in contact with other researchers and you would like to submit a COST Action proposal?
Collection Dates

- COST New Open Call for proposals – published on 15 December 2014
- As of mid-February 2015 researchers, engineers or scholars were able to submit proposals anytime throughout the year via the new e-COST online submission tool
- The COST Open Call will normally continue having the spring and autumn Collection Dates, when all submitted proposals are gathered and evaluated
- The first Collection Date was on 24 March 2015
- The next Collection Date will be 7 December 2016 – 12:00 noon (CET)
- Some 25 to 40 new Actions are approved in each collection, subject to budget availability

The new COST Open Call – why new?

- Establishment of the COST Association (September 2013)
  - significant step towards COST mission, policies and objectives
- New set of rules and procedures for COST
  - to best serve the European research communities and respect the bottom-up approach
- COST CSO decided upon the revision of
  - scientific organisation
  - evaluation and selection procedure
  - ensuring transparent mechanisms and openness for all science and technology fields
The new COST Open Call – for whom?

- Open to all S&T fields
- Those aiming at contributing to the scientific, technological, economic, cultural or societal knowledge advancement and development of Europe
- Closing the gap between science, policy makers and society throughout Europe and beyond
- Reflecting the main characteristics of COST Actions
  - providing for knowledge share
  - knowledge creation and application
  - being open and output oriented while aiming at strengthening the S&T basis of the proposed topic(s)
- Responding to COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy

3. How to prepare a successful proposal?
COST Open Call

- Official publication (incl. the collection date)
- Online submission tool (e-COST)
- COST Open Call: Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) guidelines
- COST Action Technical Annex Template

Stay tuned for COST updates:
http://www.cost.eu/opencall

COST OPEN CALL

One-stage submission process (on line tool)

New Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) procedure follows the subsequent phases:

- **SUBMISSION:** by a Main Proposer on behalf of a network of proposers
- **EVALUATION:**
  - External Remote Evaluation by Individual External Experts
  - Revision and Quality Check by Ad hoc Review Panels
- **SELECTION:** COST Scientific Committee (SC)
- **APPROVAL:** COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)
Step 1: External Remote Evaluation

- **3 Independent External Experts**
  - COST Expert database
  - Fields and sub-fields of Science and Technology and, if needed, Key Words
  - Validated by Scientific Committee

- **Remote peer-review evaluation**

- **Remote consensus** shall be sought between the independent External Experts

- **The consensus shall not be imposed**: independent External Experts may maintain their views on the proposal

- Eventual differences in opinion of the experts resulting in a non-consensual decision will be handled and arbitrated by the Review Panel

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Step 1: External Remote Evaluation

- Propositions are evaluated **only** on the basis of the **evaluation criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S&amp;T EXCELLENCE</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Soundness of the challenge</td>
<td>• Scientific, technological and/or socio-economic impact</td>
<td>• Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Progress beyond the state-of-the-art and innovation potential</td>
<td>• Measures to maximise impact</td>
<td>• Appropriateness of management structures and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Added value of networking</td>
<td>• Level of risk and level of potential innovation/breakthroughs</td>
<td>• Network as a whole</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Mark for the section:** 25 points

**Total Mark for the section:** 20 points

**Total Marks for the section:** 20 points

**TOTAL MARK AWARDED:** 65 points

**OVERALL THRESHOLD:** 45 points
Step 2: Revision and Quality check

- **By ad hoc Review Panels**
  - Review Panels - active researchers, engineers or scholars
  - Appointed by COST National Coordinators
    - Up to 3 per OECD field of S&T
  - Ad hoc Review Panels set by the COST Association
    - Depending on number and S&T topics of proposals submitted by the Collection Date
  - Validated by the COST Scientific Committee

- **Reviewing and validating** all the Consensus Reports and marks

- **Resolving the differences** in opinions among the Independent External Experts

- After validation of consensus reports and marks, **rank the proposals above the threshold**

- For the proposals above the threshold, identify those that indicate emerging issues or potentially important future developments

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Step 3 - Selection by the Scientific Committee

- **Scientific Committee**
  - 37 high-level experts representing the 36 COST Member Country and 1 Cooperating state
  - Appointed by and reports to CSO

- Shall select among the ranked list of proposals received from the Review Panels by discriminating among proposals with the same marks, taking into account the **COST mission and policies**

- **Balanced COST Action portfolio**, by ensuring the coverage of all S&T fields

- Shall submit the final ranked list of selected proposals to the CSO for approval.
Eligibility Criteria

- Represent a network of proposers from at least 5 COST Member Countries or Cooperating State with researchers, engineers or scholars having a registered e-COST profile
- Be coordinated by a Main Proposer in a COST Member Country or Cooperating State
- Be anonymous, hence not contain any reference to the names and/or institutions of the participants in the network of proposers
- Address science and technology challenges destined only for peaceful purposes
- Respect word or page limits as described in the SESA Guidelines (in preparation)
- Be written in English, the working language of the COST Association
- Not be identical with another submitted proposal in the same collection
Network of Proposers

- **At least 5 proposers** (one Main Proposer plus at least 4 Secondary Proposers)
  - affiliated to legal entities based in at least 5 different COST Countries and/or Cooperating State

- Main Proposer acts as **coordinator and contact point** for the COST Association
  - also in charge of inviting and accepting Secondary Proposers to the Network

- All proposers must have a registered and updated **e-COST profile** and specify their scientific expertise
  - [http://www.cost.eu/ecost](http://www.cost.eu/ecost)

Proposal Sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>Mandatory/Optional</th>
<th>Key Expertise needed for Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENERAL FEATURES</strong></td>
<td>Online tool</td>
<td><strong>Key Expertise needed for Evaluation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>▪ OECD Fields / subfields of Science and Technology plus Research Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TECHNICAL ANNEX</strong></td>
<td>PDF</td>
<td>▪ MAX 15 Pages</td>
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<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>▪ Anonymity</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>▪ Figures and Pictures - Copyright</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>REFERENCES</strong></td>
<td>Online tool</td>
<td>▪ 500 words</td>
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<td>Optional</td>
<td>▪ Anonymity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COST MISSION &amp; POLICIES</strong></td>
<td>Online tool</td>
<td>▪ 500 words</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>▪ Excellence and Inclusiveness</td>
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<td>▪ International Cooperation</td>
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<td>▪ Industrial Dimension</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NETWORK of PROPOSERS</strong></td>
<td>Online tool</td>
<td>▪ Minimum 5 researchers from 5 COST Member Countries and/or Cooperating State</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>▪ Statistical Information that will be used for evaluation</td>
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### S&T Excellence

#### 1.1 Challenge

- **1.1.1 Description of the Challenge (Main Aim)**
- **1.1.2 Relevance and timeliness**

Describe the research question(s) your proposal aims to address. You should make a case for the relevance and timeliness of the proposed challenge(s).

**KEY CONCEPT: Challenges of COST Actions**

Challenges are the research questions addressed by a COST Action, targeting S&T and/or socio-economic problems.
1 S&T Excellence

1.2 Objectives

- 1.2.1 Research Coordination Objectives
- 1.2.2 Capacity-building Objectives

Provide a clear and specific description of the project objectives against the background of the state-of-the-art, showing their pertinence to tackle the proposed challenge. Make sure the proposed objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely).

KEY CONCEPTS: Objectives in COST Actions are the results that an Action needs to achieve in order to respond to its challenge.

Research Coordination Objectives: distribution of tasks, sharing of knowledge and know-how, and the creation of synergies among Action participants to achieve specific outputs.

Capacity-building Objectives: building critical mass to drive scientific progress, thereby strengthening the European Research Area. They can be achieved by the delivery of specific outputs and/or through network features or types and levels of participation.

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1.3 Progress beyond the state-of-the-art and Innovation Potential

- 1.3.1 Description of the state-of-the-art
- 1.3.2 Progress beyond the state-of-the-art
- 1.3.3 Innovation in tackling the challenge

Describe briefly the state-of-the-art in the field related to the challenge, as well as the advance that the COST Action will bring about.

Highlight the innovation potential anticipated by the proposed COST Action in order to tackle the challenge. Innovation is to be intended as the creation and/or development of new or improved concepts, products, processes, services, and/or technologies that are made available to markets, governments and society.
1 S&T Excellence

1.4 Added value of networking

- 1.4.1 In relation to the Challenge
- 1.4.2 In relation to existing efforts at European and/or international level

Describe the added value of networking in relation to the challenge by highlighting why networking is the best approach to tackle the challenge.

Describe the added value of the proposed COST Action in relation to former and existing efforts (research projects, other networks, etc.) at the European and/or international level.

2 Impact

2.1 Expected Impact

- 2.1.1 Short-term and long-term scientific, technological, and/or socio-economic impacts

Describe in a clear and realistic way the S&T and socio-economic impact envisaged by the proposed COST Action in the short- and long-term perspective.

KEY CONCEPT: COST Action impact

Impact is the effect or influence on short-term to long-term scientific, technological, and/or socio-economic changes produced by a COST Action, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
2 Impact

2.2 Measures to Maximise Impact

- 2.2.1 Plan for involving the most relevant stakeholders
- 2.2.2 Dissemination and/or Exploitation Plan

Identify the most relevant stakeholders and present a clear plan to involve them as Action’s participants

Present a clear and attainable plan for dissemination and/or exploitation of results, including IPR, if relevant

2.3 Potential for Innovation versus Risk Level

- 2.3.1 Potential for scientific, technological and/or socioeconomic breakthroughs

Make a case on how well the proposal succeeds in putting forward potential innovation/breakthroughs with a convincing risk/return trade-off

3 Implementation

3.1 Description of the Work Plan

- 3.1.1 Description of Working Groups

Provide a detailed description of the different Working Groups. For each WG provide objectives, tasks, activities, milestones and list of major deliverables

- 3.1.2 GANTT Chart

Provide a graphical illustration of a schedule offering the project management overview of the different WGs, tasks, activities, and deliverables of your proposal

- 3.1.3 PERT - Program (Project) Evaluation and Review Technique (optional)

Provide a graphical representation of the different WGs showing their inter-relation. If needed, the same can be provide to show the inter-relation among the different tasks within each WG

- 3.1.4 Risk and Contingency Plans

Identify the main risks related to the Work Plan and present a credible contingency plan.
3 Implementation

3.2 Management Structures and Procedures

Describe the Action organisation in terms of management structure that would help the Action meet the proposed challenge. It is required that the proposed Action organisation and management structure respect COST rules.

More detailed information at:

COST Implementation Rules - B.2 COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment (134/14)
http://www.cost.eu/participate

3 Implementation

3.3 Network as a whole

Describe how well the features of your Network of Proposers can achieve the objectives of the proposed COST Action. Make a case for the critical mass, expertise and geographical distribution needed for addressing the challenge and the objectives.

If your Network misses any of these features, present a clear plan for overcoming the identified gaps. Note that COST Policies should not be addressed here.

If you plan to include International Partner Countries (IPCs) or Near Neighbour Countries (NNCs) institutions in your proposal, give a brief description of the mutual benefits deriving from their participation.

More detailed information concerning IPCs and NNCs at:

COST Implementation Rules - B.3 COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisation Participation (135/14)
http://www.cost.eu/participate
LAST RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strong competition: be ambitious
- Start: start early – a proposal needs time and evolution
- Become acquainted with the COST Open Call: Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) guidelines (in preparation)
- Have a clear view over the Action structure and 4 year strategy (WG)
- Present a clear strategy on the integration of researchers from inclusiveness countries (ex: Grant Holder, STSM, …)
- If you have the chance, have a native speaker check the English
- BUT - Perfect English is not necessary, it is the clarity + consistency which counts and increases your chances
- ………….