COST
European Cooperation in Science and Technology

www.cost.eu

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Outline

1. What is COST and how does it work?

2. How COST contributes to the Widening objectives?

3. What are the COST Actions (the networking instrument) and how to take part in them?
What is COST?

COST is the oldest and widest European intergovernmental framework for Cooperation in Science and Technology.

COST has been supporting the networking of research activities across all 36 Member Countries and beyond for over 44 years.

COST is based on networks called COST Actions. Currently there are 306 running Actions networking over 45,000 researchers per year, worldwide.
COST Member Countries

- **EU 28**
- **EU Candidates and Potential Candidates:**
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - fYR Macedonia
  - Montenegro
  - Iceland
  - Republic of Serbia
  - Turkey
- **Other Countries:**
  - Norway and Switzerland
- **COST Cooperating State:**
  - Israel
COST - European Cooperation in Science and Technology

- **Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA)**: strategic Action Plan with the European Commission for the seven years under Horizon 2020 and successive Specific Grant Agreements for its implementation.

- **EUR 300 million budget** (constant prices) for 7 years drawn from two Horizon 2020 work programmes, Challenge 6 “Europe in a changing world - inclusive, innovative and reflective Societies” and “Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation”
COST Key Principles and Features

- Supporting highest quality in science and technology (S&T)
- COST Actions are S&T-driven (bottom-up) - Open to all science and technology fields. Transdisciplinarity particularly valued
- Providing for **knowledge creation, share and application**
- Being **open** - Easy procedures for joining running COST Actions
- **Output oriented**, answering to the COST mission
- **COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy** with special focus on its Inclusiveness Target Countries, giving more visibility to:
  - Geographical balance
  - Young talents and next generation leaders
  - Gender balance
- **COST International Cooperation** and **Industrial Dimension** policies
- COST leverages funding from nationally and regionally funded projects
## COST Inclusiveness Target Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COST Member Countries</th>
<th>Associated Countries to Horizon 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU Member States</strong></td>
<td><strong>Associated Countries to Horizon 2020</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulgaria, Croatia,</td>
<td>Bosnia-Herzegovina the former Yugoslav</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyprus, Czech</td>
<td>Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro,</td>
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<td>Republic, Estonia,</td>
<td>Republic of Serbia, Turkey,</td>
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<td>Hungary, Latvia,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lithuania, Luxembourg,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malta, Poland, Portugal,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia</td>
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Proportion of researchers in COST Member Countries (based on FTE, EUROSTAT data)

- 82%
- 18%

Proportion of individual researchers in COST Actions (COST Association data)

- [VALUE]%

- ITC
- Other COST Member Country
Accessing knowledge hubs and building trust

- strong success record for integrating researchers, engineers and scholars from less connected locations into leading knowledge hubs
- support the integration of researchers not developing closed shops serving exclusively widening

ACTIVITIES

- Communication and Awareness raising and reinforced communication within COST Info Days/ CPST Roadshow organised in Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs)
- Promotion of meeting locations in ITCs also for meeting locations for events under Strategic Initiatives
- Data gathering on COST Actions’ outputs and outcomes to assess the impact of the networking activities
- Industry-focused events aimed at increasing the visibility and impact of COST and of COST Actions
- Final Action Publications (compendia detailing Actions' overall results published and/or disseminated after the Action has ended)
Empowering new research leaders

ACTIVITIES

- Encouragement of researchers targeted of this policy to leadership role in the Action: **Action Chair, Vice-Chair, Working Group leader**
- Encouragement of institutions from ITC countries gaining experience in management of international research projects enabled and trained (**Acting as grant holders**)
- **Customised networking tools**, such as STMSs and Training schools dedicated to Inclusiveness Target Countries’ researchers
- **Balanced representation of COST Action rapporteurs** from each COST Country ensured
- **COST Actions Monitoring/Final Assessment** adapted to help follow-up how COST Actions fulfilling COST Policies
- **Proposal evaluation:**
  - motivating researchers to undertake scientific evaluator role.
  - monitoring the geographical balance, as well as age and gender dimensions of Independent External Experts selected for evaluating proposals
COST Implementation

- Main instrument: **COST Action**

- **Open Call** with **two Collection Dates per year** (Spring and Autumn)

- Open to all fields in Science and Technology and all types of participants

- **More info:**
  [http://www.cost.eu/participate/open_call](http://www.cost.eu/participate/open_call)
What is a COST Action?

COST Actions are pan-European, bottom-up **science and technology expanding networks** open to researchers from academia and industry or to policy stakeholders.

COST Actions build teams that jointly create new initiatives/products/technology while reinforcing the innovation eco-system and strengthening European research and innovation capacity.

Every COST Action lasts for up to **four years** and requires the participation of researchers from at least **5 COST Member Countries**.
How to participate?

- Joining a running COST Action
- Submitting a proposal for implementing a COST Action
- Becoming an expert
How to Find a running Action?

http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/all_actions
How a COST Action is established
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 data base
  - Fields and sub-fields of Science and Technology and, if needed, Key Words

- Remote peer-review evaluation and consensus
  - Consensus is not imposed; differences will be handled and arbitrated by the Review Panel

- Proposals are evaluated only on the basis of the evaluation criteria

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<tr>
<th>S&amp;T EXCELLENCE</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION</th>
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<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>
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<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>
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<td>Added value of networking</td>
<td>Level of risk and level of potential innovation/breakthroughs</td>
<td>Network as a whole</td>
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Step 2: Revision and Quality check

- **ad hoc Review Panels**
  - active researchers, engineers or scholars
  - Appointed by COST National Coordinators
  - *Ad hoc* Review Panels set by the COST Association
    - Depending on number and S&T topics of proposals submitted by the Collection Date

- **Review and validate** all the Consensus Reports and marks

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

- Prepare a report to the Scientific Committee with the overview of the scientific content of proposals in the panel and identify potential early signals
The *ad hoc* Review Panels in oc-2015-1

- RP 1 - Smart, inclusive living in a changing world
- RP 2 - From Frontier Science to Future Technologies, propelling Europe’s Innovation
- RP 3 - Caring for the Individual - Building Healthy Societies
- RP 4 - Biomedical Networks for a healthier Population
- RP 5 - Earth, agriculture and environmental sustainability
- RP 6 - Advancing ICT for society
Step 3 - Selection by the Scientific Committee

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

- 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

- 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
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)
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 the COST Expert online registration form:
www.cost.eu/experts

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

More on COST Experts:
www.cost.eu/participate/experts
Why is COST a success?

- **Building trust** with and within the scientific communities in Europe and beyond

- Combining **stability with adaptability** while preserving its core mission

- Creating **knowledge** and facilitating its spreading and application

- **Transdisciplinarity**
Knowledge sharing leads to...

- a common understanding of problems at hand
- coordinated activities
- reduced risk
- synthesis and re-combination of spread pieces of knowledge
- innovation
- synergies (1 + 1 > 2)
THANK YOU!

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