

COST Vademecum

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COST Association AISBL

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SCOPE OF THIS DOCUMENT

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology – see www.cost.eu), the longest running European framework, is a unique platform where European researchers can jointly develop their ideas and initiatives across all scientific disciplines through the trans-European networking of nationally funded research. It is funded by the European Union (EU) Horizon 2020 Programme whereby the European Commission (EC) has entered into a Framework Partnership Agreement with the COST Association which itself operates under direct instruction from the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) - see “explanation of terms used in this document”.

COST activities are largely arranged as COST Actions. The rules and principles governing all COST activities are established in a series of documents approved by the CSO. These documents can be found on the COST website at <https://www.cost.eu/cost-actions/how-to-participate/>The administrative provisions detailed in this document: COST Vademecum direct the implementation of COST Actions and are aligned to the aforementioned rules and principles.

EXPLANATION OF THE TERMS USED THROUGHOUT THIS DOCUMENT

Action Management Committee (Action MC) members and substitutes	National representatives of each COST Full or Cooperating Member nominated by COST National Coordinators (CNC) to take charge of the coordination, implementation and management of an Action's activities as well as supervising the appropriate allocation and use of the COST funds with a view to achieving the Action's research coordination objectives and capacity building objectives.
Action Chair and Action Vice-Chair	Elected during an Action MC meeting by the Action MC from amongst the Action's MC members. The Action Chair is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the Action. The Action Vice-Chair assists in these activities when requested to do so by the Action Chair and can substitute for the Action Chair when required or mandated to do so.
Action MC Observers	An individual observing at the Action MC a COST Action's coordination and decision-making processes and monitors its activities - namely individuals from COST Partner Members, Near Neighbour Countries or International Partner Countries or Specific Organisations.
Action Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	The agreement accepted by a minimum of seven different COST Full Members and / or COST Cooperating Member which describes the Action's objectives. This agreement has to be accepted by any COST Full Member and / or COST Cooperating Member who is to join the Action. The MoU contains, in the form of a technical annex, core elements of the proposal submitted in the frame of the Open Call.
Action Participant	Any person being an Action MC member, an Action MC substitute, an Action MC Observer, a Working Group member or an ad-hoc participant.
Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)	The main decision-making body of COST, responsible for the strategic development of the COST framework. Each COST Full Member can appoint up to two Delegates to the CSO.
COST Action Grant Agreement	The agreement between the COST Association and the Grant Holder that governs the administrative and financial implementation of the COST Action.

COST Cooperating Member	<p>Is any Non-European State as depicted under Article 7 of the Statutes of the COST Association that has been admitted to the COST Association as a COST Cooperating Member.</p> <p>The COST Cooperating Member is Israel.</p>
COST Full Member	<p>Is any European State as depicted under Article 6 of the Statutes¹ of the COST Association that has been admitted to the COST Association as a COST Full Member.</p> <p>The 38 COST Full Members are: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, The Netherlands, the North Republic of Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, The Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom.</p> <p>The above COST Full Members govern the COST framework via their Delegates in the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) - the General Assembly of the COST Association.</p>
COST Members	<p>The COST Full Members, the COST Cooperating Member(s) and COST Partner Member(s).</p>
COST National Coordinators (CNC)	<p>The individuals appointed by COST Members in charge of confirming the acceptance of the Action's Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of their COST Member and nominating the Action Management Committee members of their COST Member as well as the experts from their COST Member to be part of the pool of Experts for the Review Panels.</p>
COST Near Neighbour Countries (NNC)	<p>States that can benefit from dedicated support that enables participation in COST Action activities.</p> <p>The full list of NNC is as follows: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Kosovo², Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Russia, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine.</p>
COST Partner Member	<p>Is any State as depicted under Article 8 of the Statutes of the COST Association which has been admitted to the COST Association as a COST Partner Member. South Africa is currently a COST Partner Member.</p>
Early Career Investigator (ECI)	<p>An individual who is within a time span of up to 8 years from the date they obtained their PhD/doctorate (full-time equivalent).</p>
EU Institutions, Bodies, Offices and Agencies	<p>Any body defined in accordance with the Treaties on the European Union and on the Functioning of the European Union established in the EU to accomplish specific tasks of a legal, technical and/or scientific nature in a given policy field and to support the EU member States.</p> <p>A list of the EU Bodies, Offices and Agencies may be found at</p>

¹ See the COST Statutes at http://www.cost.eu/about_cost/organisation

² This designation is without prejudice to position on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

	http://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/agencies_en
European RTD Organisations	The intergovernmental scientific research organisations whose members are States, the majority of which are COST members.
Grant Holder	The legal entity responsible for the administrative and financial implementation of the COST Action.
Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC)	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, the North Republic of Macedonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey
International Organisation	Any Intergovernmental Organisation governed by international law. Organisations qualifying under the present Decision as European RTD organisations or EU bodies, officer, or agencies shall not be considered International Organisation in the COST framework.
International Partner Countries (IPC)	States that are neither COST Members nor COST Near Neighbour Countries.
Invited Speakers	Specialists who are not COST Action Participants but can partake in one COST Action meeting and/ or one Training School throughout the lifetime of the COST Action.
Participating COST Full, Cooperating or Partner Member	COST Full, Cooperating or Partner Member that has accepted the Action's MoU.

SECTION 8. SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS (STSM)

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) are institutional visits aiming to support individual mobility, fostering collaboration between individuals. The Guidelines for Action Management, Monitoring and Assessment should be followed to ensure the proper implementation of this networking instrument (see www.cost.eu/guidelines_Action_management_monitoring_assessment).

8.1. STSM – ELIGIBILITY RULES

STSM applicants shall be engaged in an official research programme as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow or can be employed by, or affiliated to, an institution, organisation or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research. The institutions / organisation or legal entity where applicants pursue their main strand of research are considered as Home Institutions. The Host Institution is the institution / organisation that will host the successful applicant.

The following table shows the scenarios available to eligible STSM applicants:

Applicant's Home Institution	STSM Host Institution
Located in a Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member	Located in another Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member
	Located in a Participating COST Partner Member
	Action MC Observer from IPC
	Action MC Observer from NNC
	The EU Commission or an EU Body, Office or Agency
	An Approved European RTD Organisation
	An Approved International Organisation
Action MC Observer from NNC	Located in a Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member
Located in an Approved European RTD Organisation	Located in a Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member

Eligible STSM applicants shall submit their STSM applications online at the following web address: <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>.

8.2. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICANTS

The evaluation of each received STSM application is performed by the Action MC. The Action Chair (or Vice-Chair if the Action Chair is affiliated to the Grant Holder Institution) or the appointed STSM Coordinator / Committee can assume this responsibility if the Action MC gives them the mandate to perform this task on their behalf. The person responsible for performing the related tasks into e-COST is referred to as STSM coordinator. The evaluation criteria defined by the Action MC should be communicated to all potential applicants.

The selection of successful STSM applicants shall be done so in consideration of the scientific scope of the proposed mission and how the mission can support the Action in achieving its scientific objectives. There should be special considerations made by the Action MC with respect to supporting COST policies on promoting gender balance, enabling Early Career Investigators (ECI), broadening geographical inclusiveness.

8.3. CRITERIA FOR STSM

STSM shall respect the following criteria:

- They shall have a minimum duration of 5 calendar days that includes travel.
- STSM need to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and always within the Action's lifetime.

The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered as being an STSM grantee's employer. STSM grantees shall make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security and pension matters.

8.4. STSM – FINANCIAL SUPPORT

An STSM Grant is a fixed financial contribution which takes into consideration the budget request of the applicant and the outcome of the evaluation of the STSM application. STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission. A STSM Grant is a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Grantee.

The calculation of the financial contribution for each STSM shall respect the following criteria:

- Up to a maximum of EUR 3 500 in total can be afforded to each successful applicant.
- Up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses.

The Action Chair (or Vice-Chair if the Action Chair is affiliated to the Grant Holder Institution) and / or the appointed STSM Coordinator / Committee should consider and can approve differentiated country rates to cover accommodation and meal expenses based on the perceived cost of living in the host country.

Specific provisions have been introduced to enable researchers from ITC participating in the COST Action to request a pre-payment of 50% of their STSM Grant when they complete the first day of their STSM. In such case, the representative of the Host Institution shall confirm by e-mail to the Grant Holder that the STSM applicant has officially started the mission on day 1. Only then the Grant Holder can arrange the payment of 50% of the STSM grant. The remaining 50% of the Grant is payable once the administrative requirements have been satisfied after the STSM.

8.4.1. APPROVING STSM FOR PAYMENT

The STSM Grantee has 30 calendar days from the end date of the mission to submit a scientific report to the Action Chair (or to the Vice-Chair if the Action Chair is affiliated to the Grant Holder Institution) / the appointed STSM Coordinator / Committee and to a senior researcher affiliated to the Host Institution. Payment of the Grant is subject to a STSM scientific report being approved on behalf of the Action's MC by the delegated person(s) responsible and by a senior researcher affiliated to the Host Institution. Written approval of the STSM scientific report by the aforementioned persons shall be uploaded in e-COST for archiving purposes.

13. ELIGIBILITY TABLE (ANNEX I)

Participant has an affiliation ¹ in a...	And Participant is a...	Eligible to be reimbursed for their participation in a...						
		Meetings			Training School		STSM	ITC Conference Grant
		MC meeting	Other type of meeting	Dissemination Meeting	Trainer	Trainee	Grantee	Grantee
COST Full Member or Cooperating Member Country that joined the Action	MC member/ substitute	Yes ²	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁷
	WG member Ad-hoc participant	NO	Yes	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁷
COST Full Member or Cooperating Member Country that did NOT join the Action	Ad-hoc participant	NO	Once ⁶	NO	Once ⁶	Yes	NO	NO
Near Neighbour Country	MC Observer (joined the Action)	Yes ²	Yes	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	NO
	Ad-hoc participant (did not join the Action)	NO	Once ⁶	NO	Once ⁶	NO	NO	NO
COST Partner Member or International Partner Country	MC Observer (joined the Action)	NO ³	NO ³	NO ³	Yes	NO ³	NO ³	NO ³
	Ad-hoc participant (did not join the Action)	NO	Once ⁶	NO	Once ⁶	NO	NO	NO

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EU RTD: that joined the Action	MC Observer	Yes ⁴	Yes	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	NO
	WG member Ad-hoc Participant	NO	Yes	NO	Yes	Yes	Yes	NO
EU RTD: that did NOT join the Action	Ad-hoc participant	NO	Once ⁶	NO	Once ⁶	NO	NO	NO
EU Body, office or agency: that joined the Action	MC Observer							
	WG member	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Ad-hoc Participant							
EU Body, office or agency: that did NOT join the Action	Ad-hoc participant	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
International Organisation: that joined the Action	MC Observer							
	WG member	NO ⁵	NO ⁵	NO ⁵	NO ⁵	NO ⁵	NO ⁵	NO ⁵
	Ad-hoc Participant							
International Organisation: that did NOT join the Action	Ad-hoc participant	NO ⁵	Once ⁶	NO ⁵	Once ⁶	NO ⁵	NO ⁵	NO ⁵

1. Or enrolled in a PhD programme. 2. Max 2 per country. 3. COST Partner Member have at national level a dedicated budget to support participation to COST Action activities. 4. Max 1 per organisation. 5. Even if located in a COST country. 6. In the lifetime of the Action. 7. Only for ECI or participants enrolled in a PhD programme in a COST Inclusiveness Target Country.