

What is it?

COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology, allowing the coordination of nationally-funded research on a European level. It also increases the mobility of researchers across Europe and fosters the establishment of scientific excellence in nine key science and technology fields:

- Biomedicine and Molecular Biosciences
- Food and Agriculture
- Forests, their Products and Services
- Materials, Physics and Nanosciences
- Chemistry and Molecular Sciences and Technologies
- Earth System Science and Environmental Management
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Transport and Urban Development
- Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health

In addition, trans-domain proposals allow for broad, multidisciplinary proposals to strike across the nine fields.

What is its mission?

COST has a very specific mission and goal: the programme contributes to reducing the fragmentation in European research investments and opening the European Research Area to cooperation worldwide.

What are COST Actions?

They are bottom-up science and technology networks, open to researchers and stakeholders with a duration of four years. They are active through a range of **networking tools**, such as **workshops, conference, training schools, short-term scientific missions, and dissemination activities**. **COST does not fund research itself.**

A COST action is also a science and technology network of minimum five COST Members, allowing researchers to jointly develop their ideas and initiatives in a given scientific field in accordance with the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The Action's activities are organised by a Management Committee (MC) through a range of networking tools.

COST activities are networks open to:

1. All fields of science & technology, fostering new, emerging interdisciplinary fields;
2. Any novel, original and innovative idea;
3. Researchers at all career stages – both young and senior investigators;
4. All stakeholders (researchers, engineers, practitioners, decision-makers, representatives of public authorities);
5. All partners (whether public or private, big and small);
6. Near neighbour countries and international partner countries;
7. Special organisations such as European RTD institutions and agencies or international organisations.

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What is the process?

COST invites researchers affiliated to institutions based in COST Member Countries and Cooperating State to submit proposals for new Actions, through continuous Open Calls for Proposals. Once the evaluation and selection procedure has been concluded, and the Action proposal has been formally approved, an Action Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is prepared by the Action proposer in conjunction with the COST Office. The MoU forms a multilateral agreement that must be accepted by at least five COST Member Countries and/or Cooperating State before the Action can come into effect.

Researchers can also apply to join an existing COST Action or become involved in various COST Action activities. In order to Portuguese scientists to be part of a COST Action and to lead one of the Portuguese Management Committees (MC), they have to express their interest to the Portuguese COST National Contact Point (NCP). Then, the NCP will nominate two researchers to head the MC. MC nomination procedure is defined at a national level. MCs are in charge of the coordination, implementation and management of an Action with a view to achieving the Action's scientific and technological objectives.

Who can participate?

Participation is open to researchers:

- In universities, researchers centres, large and small, public and private from all 35 COST Member Countries and its Cooperation State ¹;
- From any science and technology field;
- At any career stage;
- Having any original, innovative idea.

In a nutshell, COST Actions are:

Pan-European: Spanning 35 Member Countries and a Cooperation State;

Research-driven: In terms of proposed topics, objectives and work organisation; researchers choose their own topics; scientific management decisions are entrusted to the Action's Management Committees;

Open and Inclusive: Open to all researchers, irrespective of gender, field or career stage. Actions can expand beyond their lifetime, as researchers from new countries can join in;

Interdisciplinary: Building, bridging and expanding multidisciplinary research communities;

Future-oriented: Engaging the next generation of young researchers;

Lightweight: They are a platform to coordinate national research funding within a lightweight framework;

Globally connected: Researchers from Near Neighbour Countries are encouraged to participate and International Partners Countries may join in the basis of mutual interest.

¹ Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Israel is a Cooperating State. A Cooperating State implies non-voting rights in the COST CSO and in the Domain Committees. However, researchers from COST's Cooperating State enjoy member rights in COST Action participation.

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Financial Support

COST Actions are reimbursement-based. The default flat rate expense amounts are 120€ per person per night and 20€ per person per meal.

In order to be reimbursed, participants must submit as supporting documentation their travel tickets (original and legible copies) and/or the related invoices/receipts.

The Action funds its activities on an annual contract (Grant Agreement) in line with the work and budget plan approved by its own Management Committee. The Action Grant Holder is responsible for the administrative and financial management of the Action.

Participants eligible for reimbursement may vary according to the type of action: meetings, short term scientific missions, training schools, etc.