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COST 089/21

RULES FOR COST ACTIONS

(Level B – COST Actions)

The COST Committee of Senior Officials (“CSO”) having regard to:

The CSO Decision “Rules and Principles for COST activities”,

In accordance with its role as General Assembly of the COST Association,

Whereas:

- The Rules and Principles for COST activities lay down the principles and general rules for COST activities,
- COST shall adopt a set of stable, minimal, and user-friendly rules to ensure efficient, effective and impactful implementation of COST Actions,

Adopts the present Rules for COST Actions in accordance with the Rules and Principles for COST activities, which shall apply to COST Members, COST Governance, COST Administration and to participants to COST Actions.

The present Rules for COST Actions shall be subordinated to and shall not contravene the “Rules and Principles for COST activities”. In case of any contradiction, the Rules and Principles for COST activities shall prevail.

The present Rules for COST Actions shall lay down the general rules applicable to COST Actions deriving from the Rules and Principles for COST activities and govern:

- The COST Action set-up,
- The COST Action start date and duration,
- The COST Action management,
- The Participation of individuals in COST Actions,
- The Communication, Dissemination and Valorisation of COST Actions results,
- The Financial support to COST Actions: networking activities and other expenses,
- The COST Action funding and administration,
- The COST Action monitoring and final assessment.

Throughout the present Rules for COST Actions, the term “shall” implies an obligation to comply with the set requirement whilst the term “may” implies an authorisation to act. Other terms used in the present rules are defined in the list of Definitions and abbreviations contained in the Annex II to the Rules and Principles for COST activities.

Non-compliance with the present rules may lead to the measures for Breach of COST Rules and Principles as per Rules and Principles for COST activities, Article 6.

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1. COST ACTION SET-UP

1.1. Approval of COST Actions

COST Actions are approved by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) as per Rules for Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) of COST Actions.

1.2. Aims and objectives of COST Actions

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) shall describe the aims and objectives of the Action as approved by the CSO.

The MoU shall be completed with a Technical Annex describing the networking project.

The MoU shall be published on COST Association website.

1.3. Membership of COST Actions

All COST Members are part of the COST Action through CSO approval.

After CSO approval, Specific Organisations may join a COST Action as follows:

- The European Commission (EC), EU bodies, offices, and agencies and European RTD Organisations: upon request of the Specific Organisation via the Responsible for nomination (see Article 3.1 –Nomination to the Management Committee),
- International Organisations: upon request of the International Organisation via the Responsible for nomination (see Article 3.1 – Nomination to the Management Committee) and based on mutual benefit checked by the COST Administration.

2. COST ACTION START DATE AND DURATION

A COST Action shall start at the date of the first Management Committee meeting (MC1) that shall take place not earlier than 4 months and not later than 9 months after CSO approval.

A COST Action shall have a duration of 4 years.

A COST Action may see its duration extended in following circumstances:

- The Management Committee (MC) submits to the COST Administration an extension request based on a Science and Technology or networking or both justification:
 - The extension request shall describe the specific reasons from a Science and Technology / networking perspective and show that the Action was not in the position to influence or foresee the delay in implementation of the Action aims and objectives,
 - The request shall be introduced during the last year of the Action and not later than the deadline set and communicated each year by the COST Administration,
 - If granted, the extension shall be:
 - Granted for a duration of 6 months (not variable),
 - Without additional budget.
- The Executive Board (EB) of the COST Association offers an extension to COST Actions affected by a case of force majeure which resulted in a delay in the implementation of the Action's aims and objectives.

The EB of the COST Association shall in such case determine the duration of the extension and possible budget support based on Rules of Procedures defined by the EB on proposal from the COST Administration. Those Rules of Procedures shall be published.

The CSO may terminate a COST Action in case of:

- Circumstances that from a Science and Technology or network activities point of view make the benefit of continuing the COST Action questionable. Those circumstances shall be duly justified,
- Breach of COST Action Rules and Principles by the Action MC as per Rules and Principles for COST activities, Article 6.

3. COST ACTION MANAGEMENT

COST Actions shall be managed by a Management Committee (MC) composed of MC Members and MC Observers, reflecting the intergovernmental character of COST.

3.1. Nomination to the Management Committee

COST Members and Specific Organisations who joined the COST Action may – but are not forced to – nominate or replace their representative(s) to the MC at any time, from the publication of the MoU until the Action end date.

After MC1, it is recommended for the Responsible for nomination of the relevant COST Member or Specific Organisation to consult the Action Chair before any nomination in order to determine the best candidate for the MC Member or Observer position(s).

Nomination process shall be as follows:

	Representation	Responsible for nomination	Nomination	
			Before MC1	After MC1
COST F/C Member	MC Member (up to 2)	CNC	Direct nomination by the responsible for nomination	The nomination needs tacit validation by the MC. The MC may refuse the nomination within 4 weeks of nomination based on a written Science and Technology/networks justification.
COST Partner Member	MC Observer (up to 2)	CNC		
Specific Organisations	MC Observer (max 1)	Future MC Observer (on behalf of the Organisation)		

3.2. Substitution of Management Committee Members and Observers

MC Members and Observers may – but are not forced to – nominate their substitute for a specific event or a specific period.

The substitute shall be appointed among the Working Group (WG) members affiliated in the same COST Member or Specific Organisation. The nomination shall take place through a proxy.

A proxy may not be provided for an unlimited duration and shall be limited to a maximum of 6 months.

The proxy shall be brought to the attention of the Responsible for nomination of the relevant COST Member or Specific Organisation and of the Action Chair.

3.3. Management Committee meetings

The MC shall meet at least once a year face to face, by virtual means or in hybrid mode.

MC Members and Observers shall be invited to the MC meetings by default.

The MC may invite to its meetings any other individual relevant for the progress of the Action in an advisory position.

3.4. Management Committee Role

The role of the MC shall be to:

- Take necessary actions to meet the aims and objectives of the COST Action by assuring all relevant aspects of the management of the network, stakeholder engagement and dissemination of results,
- Contribute to the [COST mission](#)¹ and [strategic priorities](#)².

The MC Members or Observers shall:

- Actively participate to the work of at least one WG,
- Serve and represent their COST Member or Specific Organisation's community in order to:
 - coordinate the input to the Action at national level or inside a Specific Organisation,
 - disseminate opportunities arising within the Action at national level or inside a Specific Organisation; and
 - report to the Responsible for nomination as required.

3.5. Management Committee Rights and Powers

The MC shall have all required decision powers for governing the COST Action in order to implement activities and manage the budget in view of achieving the MoU objectives.

Decisions shall be made in compliance with the Rules and Principles for COST activities and the present rules complemented by level C Rules.

Taking due account of the Management Committee Duties as per Article 3.7. hereunder, the MC rights and powers shall include but not be limited to:

- Within the applicable legal and financial framework, make any necessary decisions to meet the aims and objectives of the COST Action,
- Be informed of the progress in the Action and act accordingly,
- With regard to Action management:
 - Tacitly validate new MC Members and Observers or refuse them within 4 weeks of nomination; explicit refusal shall require a written Science and Technology /

¹ <https://www.cost.eu/who-we-are/mission-vision-and-values/>

² <https://www.cost.eu/who-we-are/cost-strategy/>

- networking justification in compliance with the rules for Nomination to the Management Committee as per Article 3.1.,
- Manage the WGs membership which shall include but not be limited to:
 - Defining criteria for WG composition and procedure for WG membership approval in line with the COST Principles as per Rules and Principles for COST activities, Article 3,
 - Approving, refusing or, where this power is delegated, supervising the decisions on the WG membership applications against set criteria: WG applications shall be reviewed on a regular basis, the maximum delay between two reviews shall be 3 months as per Article 3.7 - Management Committee Duties,
 - Terminating WG membership against set criteria,
 - Excluding a WG member where applicable as per the Rules and Principles for COST activities, Article 6 - Breach of COST Rules and Principles,
 - Elect or replace individuals for leadership positions in compliance with the rules on Access to leadership positions as per Article 3.9.,
 - Select or replace the Grant Holder in compliance with the rules for Grant Holder as per Article 7.4.,
 - Where required, delegate part of their powers and manage the delegation of powers in compliance with the rules for Delegation of powers as per Article 3.6.,
 - Supervise the work of the holders of mandatory and non-mandatory leadership positions and of the GH,
 - Decide on any confidentiality clause and Intellectual Property Rights Agreement as deemed required,
 - Take decision in case of Breach of COST Rules and Principles as per Rules and Principles for COST activities, Article 6.
 - Negotiate and approve the Work and Budget Plan and where required, reallocate budget within the frame of the approved Work and Budget Plan, in compliance with the rules for COST Action funding and administration as per Article 7,
 - With regard to financial support to COST Actions, implement the financial support to COST Actions in compliance with the rules for Implementation by the Management Committee of financial support to COST Actions as per Article 6.2.

3.6. Delegation of powers

The MC may delegate part of their powers to a Core Group to be designated by the MC.

The MC may withdraw the delegation of powers at any time.

The MC shall designate by majority vote the members of the Core Group among MC Members and Observers and holders of leadership positions. The Openness and Inclusiveness COST Principle shall be respected when designating the members of the Core Group. The Core Group shall as a minimum be composed of the Chair, Vice-Chair and the WG leaders.

The Core Group may carry on day-to-day management and urgency cases. The MC powers shall not be fully delegated.

The delegation of powers shall imply an obligation for the Core Group to swiftly report to the MC. The delay between two reports shall not exceed 3 months (see Article 3.7 - Management Committee Duties).

Decisions made in the framework of the delegation of powers are subject to MC control. The MC may invalidate those decisions in case they have overpassed the scope of the delegation of powers. Invalidated decisions shall be subject, where required, to a new decision of the MC.

3.7. Management Committee Duties

The MC shall:

- Use English as working language in all documents and correspondence with the COST Association,
- Abide by the COST Rules and Principles for COST activities,
- Avoid Conflicts of Interests and report them to the COST Administration if any (see Rules and Principles for COST activities, Article 5),
- Inform the COST Administration of the Action's progress upon request,
- Adopt a Communication, Dissemination and Valorisation strategy and implement it in compliance with the rules for Communication, Dissemination and Valorisation of the COST Action results as per Article 5.
- In case of conflict with the Grant Holder on implementation of decisions of the MC regarding financial support to COST Actions, report to the COST Administration for conflict resolution in compliance with the rules for
- Grant Holder as per Article 7.4
- Approve or refuse swiftly Working Group(s) membership applications. The maximum delay between application and decision shall not exceed 3 months,
- Adopt required reports in the frame of COST Action budget and administration in compliance with the rules for Reporting on the use of the COST Grant as per Article 7.5,
- Establish progress reports and actively participate in the process of COST Action monitoring and final assessment in compliance with the rules for COST Action monitoring and final assessment as per Article 8,
- In fulfilling their powers, take into consideration the findings, advice, and recommendations of the Action Rapporteur in the frame of the COST Action monitoring in compliance with the rules for COST Action monitoring and final assessment as per Article 8.

3.8. Management Committee decision making

Each COST Full and Cooperating Member represented in the MC has one vote in the MC.

COST Partner Members and Specific Organisations represented in the MC may not vote (advisory role).

Decisions shall be taken by simple majority:

- At MC meetings if a quorum of 2/3 of COST Full and Cooperating Members is present (including virtually) or represented; or
- By written silent procedure through the e-vote tool provided by the COST Administration.

3.9. Access to leadership positions

Leadership positions are positions in a COST Action held by individuals to guide and coordinate the tasks required for the implementation of the COST Action.

Some positions in the COST Action management are considered as mandatory leadership positions. The mandatory leadership positions are needed to assure the minimal needs of a COST Action, i.e.:

- Positions related to the MC and funding of the Action: Chair, Vice Chair and Grant Holder Scientific Representative (GH SR) – those positions shall be filled in by election of the MC as per article 3.5 at the first Management Committee (MC1) meeting,
- Positions related to the coordination of the WGs defined by the Action: Working Group Leaders,

- Position related to Grant awarding: Grant Awarding Coordinator,
- Position related to dissemination and communication: Science Communication Coordinator.

Mandatory leadership positions allocation shall reflect the diversity of the Action in terms of geographical diversity and Openness and Inclusiveness. Among mandatory leadership positions, at least one shall be reserved to an ITC affiliated individual.

COST Actions are furthermore free to establish any other leadership positions according to their own needs and include them in the evaluation of the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness policy.

Access to leadership positions shall be as follows:

Affiliation to	Mandatory positions		Other leadership positions (e.g. WG co-leaders, international advisor,)
	Chair/Vice Chair GH SR Grant Awarding Coordinator	WG Leader Science Communication Coordinator	
Legal entity in a COST F/C Member	✓	✓	✓
Legal entity in a COST Partner Member	✗	✓	✓
The EC, EU bodies, offices, and agencies (EC/EU)	✓	✓	✓
A European RTD Organisation	✓	✓	✓
An International Organisation	✗	✓	✓
Legal entity in an NNC	✗	✗	✓
Legal entity in an IPC/ Third State	✗	✗	✓

Further to the conditions of the table above,

- The **Chair and Vice Chair positions** shall be reserved to individuals who are MC Members or Observers at the time of their election,

The **Grant Holder Scientific Representative (GH SR)** position shall be reserved to an individual who is an MC Member or Observer in compliance with the rules for

- Grant Holder as per Article 7.4.

When a **Chair, Vice Chair, WG Leader, Grant Awarding Coordinator or Science Communication Coordinator** changes their country affiliation, the MC shall be informed. When allowed under the conditions specified in the table above, the MC may decide to keep the individual in the position if it is deemed beneficial to the Action.

When a **Grant Holder Scientific Representative** changes their affiliation, the Grant Holder Scientific Representative shall be replaced by a MC Member or Observer having an affiliation with the Grant Holder in place or the Grant Holder shall be replaced.

4. PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS IN COST ACTIONS

COST Actions shall be open and inclusive: Participation shall be open to all as from the date of approval of the COST Actions.

4.1. Participation modalities, rights, and duties

Participation to a COST Action may take the form of a long-term participation, in which case, the concerned individual participates as WG member to the COST Action.

Participation as WG member shall be open to any individual affiliated in a legal entity wherever in the world, except in cases of Incompatibilities as per Article 4.2.

Participation as WG member shall imply a duty to contribute to the realisation of the objectives of the WG and shall give rights of access to activities and information shared in the Action.

Participation as WG member shall be reflected on the COST website for visibility purposes.

Application to participate as WG member shall:

- Be open as of the date of the COST Action MoU publication on the COST website and remain possible for the whole duration of the Action,
- Be subject to Action MC approval as per article 3.5.

The Responsible for Nomination of COST Members or Observers shall have access to the applications for COST Actions. The Responsible for nomination shall be entitled but not forced to choose among applicants affiliated in legal entities of their country to nominate their MC Members.

Participation to a COST Action may also take the form of an ad-hoc participation, subject to invitation by the Action MC during the lifetime of the Action. Incompatibilities as per Article 4.2 shall also apply to ad-hoc participation.

Participation in a COST Action as WG member, including as MC Member, or via an ad-hoc contribution does not entitle the concerned individual to be reimbursed of their expenses for participating in COST Action activities. The reimbursement shall be subject to the decision of the MC regarding the Implementation by the Management Committee of financial support to COST Actions as per Article 6.2 and the rules for Eligibility to receive financial support as per Article 6.4.

Individuals participating in a COST Action shall be bound by the present rules as complemented by level C Rules and the COST Principles.

4.2. Incompatibilities

Some functions at COST or in an evaluation, selection or approval procedure of a COST Action proposal or in the monitoring and final assessment of a COST Action shall be incompatible with a participation in a COST Action. Those incompatibilities shall be as follows:

- Active CSO Delegates, COST National Coordinators and Scientific Committee Members and personnel of the COST Administration may not be MC Members, WG members, be invited for an ad-hoc participation nor be Action Rapporteur in any Action,

- A former CSO Delegate or Scientific Committee Member may not be MC Member, WG member, be invited for an ad-hoc contribution nor be Action Rapporteur in any Action selected or approved during their mandate,
- External Experts and Review Panel Members having been involved in the evaluation of a proposal may not be MC Member nor WG member in the Action deriving from that proposal, they however may be invited for an ad-hoc contribution or be Action Rapporteur for that Action,
- Action Rapporteurs may not be MC Member, WG member neither be invited for an ad-hoc contribution in the Action they are reviewing.

5. COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND VALORISATION OF THE COST ACTION RESULTS

The MC shall adopt an appropriate Communication, Dissemination and Valorisation strategy and implement it throughout the duration of a COST Action.

Strategic communication of COST Actions aims at informing all relevant stakeholders about the Action and results.

Dissemination of the COST Action results shall follow Open Science including Open Access as further defined in level C Rules.

COST Actions aim at the valorisation of their results by facilitating their uptake by the European research and innovation community and the society at large.

The MC shall be supported by the Science Communication Coordinator in those tasks.

The level C Rules shall describe the obligations of the COST Actions with regard to visibility of COST and acknowledgement of the support of EU funding in their communication and dissemination.

6. FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO COST ACTIONS: NETWORKING ACTIVITIES AND OTHER EXPENSES

COST shall fund networking activities and other expenses supporting the Action.

The financial support to COST Actions shall address the aims and objectives of the COST Action.

COST Actions may also conduct activities that are not funded by COST.

6.1. Scope of the financial support to COST Actions

Funding provided by COST supports networking activities, namely:

- Meetings (MC, WG or other meetings),
- Training Schools,
- Mobility of researchers and innovators,
- Presentation at conferences organised by third parties for:
 - Capacity building (limited to young researchers and innovators from ITC or NNC),
 - Dissemination of COST Actions' work and results.

Other expenses specifically supporting the Action shall include:

- Dissemination and communication products,
- Expenses incurred for the benefit of the network.

The level C Rules shall describe the scope of the funding schemes as well as their working and financial modalities.

The EB of the COST Association may adopt new funding schemes for supporting COST Actions whilst abiding by the present rules and COST Principles and by the legal and contractual framework applicable to COST and report accordingly to the CSO.

The Action networking activities shall be planned by the MC in compliance with the Rules and Principles for COST activities.

6.2. Implementation by the Management Committee of financial support to COST Actions

The MC shall implement the networking activities and make decisions regarding the other expenses specifically supporting the Action in compliance with COST Principles and within the frame of the present rules as complemented by level C rules.

This shall imply to:

- Invite relevant individuals to participate to the networking activity,
- Decide whether the invitation to a meeting or training school shall imply reimbursement of the expenses carried out to participate in the concerned COST Action networking activity,
- For MC meetings, decide whether reimbursement shall apply to all eligible MC Members or Observers or to one per COST Full or Cooperating Member or European RTD Organisation. In such case, the following shall apply:
 - the MC Members from each Full or Cooperating Member shall decide among themselves whom of them shall be the one benefiting from reimbursement,
 - the other MC Members shall be able to be present or represented via virtual means.
- Decide whether to cap to a certain amount the reimbursement of expenses for participating in a COST Action networking activity duly taking into account the COST Principles as per Rules and Principles for COST activities, Article 3,
- Award where applicable the grants for networking activities: Awarding the grants shall include but not be limited to opening calls for grant awarding, deciding on the criteria for evaluating applications to grants and evaluating grant applications. The MC shall be supported by the Grant Awarding Coordinator in those tasks.

6.3. Location of COST Action networking activities

COST Action networking activities may take place in following locations:

		Meetings	Training Schools and other networking activities
Virtual Environment		✓	✓
COST Members	Full or Cooperating Members	✓	✓
	Partner Member	✗	✓

NNC	✓	✓
IPC/Third State	✗	✓
Specific Organisations	Rule applicable to territory where it is vested	

6.4. Eligibility to receive financial support

Individuals invited as per Article 6.2 and, where applicable, legal entities, participating in a COST Action networking activity shall be eligible to receive financial support to cover part or all of their expenses carried out to participate in or to organise a COST Action networking activity as defined in the table hereunder:

Affiliation to		Meetings		Training Schools			Other networking activities	
		Invited individual	Local Organiser	Trainer	Trainee	Local Organiser	ITC Conf Grant*	All others
COST Members	Legal entity in COST F/C Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Legal entity in CPM	At COST Partner Member's costs (dedicated budget line)						
Specific Organisations	EC/EU	At EC, EU body, office or agency cost (minimisation of cascade funding)						
	Eur. RTD Org.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	IO	Once in the lifetime of the Action	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
NNC	Legal entity in a NNC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IPC / Third States	Legal entity in an IPC	Once in the lifetime of the Action	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

* ITC Conference Grants are limited to Young researchers and innovators from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries and NNC.

The level C Rules shall detail, if any, the expenses carried out to participate in or, where applicable, to organise a COST Action funded activity eligible for such reimbursement.

7. COST ACTION FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION

7.1. Funding of a COST Action – The COST Grant

COST Actions shall be funded and administered through the COST decentralised management scheme, the COST Grant System (CGS).

COST Actions are funded through the COST Grant provided by the COST Association.

The COST Grant shall only be used to support COST Action networking activities and other expenses specifically supporting the Action as per Article 6 during a specific Grant Period within the frame of the COST Grant budget defined in compliance with the rules for COST Grant budget as per 7.2.

The MC1 meeting of a COST Action shall be organised by COST and funded directly by COST.

7.2. COST Grant budget

The COST Administration shall, subject to available funds, in compliance with COST Principles and in strict abidance with the legal and contractual framework applicable to COST, attribute to each COST Action a budget per Grant Period, hereinafter referred to as COST Grant budget. The COST Grant budget shall be the maximum financial contribution of COST towards the COST Action during a Grant Period.

The COST Grant budget shall vary depending on:

- Budget available to the COST Association,
- Number of Actions to be funded,
- Size of the network,
- Past performance of the Action in terms of budget completion and abidance of the COST Action with the COST Principles and particularly the principle of Excellence and Inclusiveness as per Rules and Principles for COST activities, Article 3.

COST Grant budget shall be defined in the COST Action Grant Agreement (Article 7.3). Allocation of the COST Grant budget in COST Action networking activities and other expenses specifically supporting the Action shall be included in the Work and Budget Plan annexed to the COST Action Grant Agreement. Allocation of budget in the Work and Budget Plan shall maximise budget for networking activities.

As per Article 3.5, the Work and Budget Plan shall be negotiated by the MC with the COST Administration. Once agreed upon by the COST Administration, the MC shall approve the Work and Budget Plan.

During a Grant Period, the MC may reallocate budget within the frame of the approved Work and Budget Plan, subject, where applicable as described in level C Rules, to pre-approval of the COST Administration.

At the end of each Grant Period, unspent budget shall be either returned to or retained by the COST Association.

7.3. COST Action Grant Agreement

The COST Grant shall be formalised by an Action Grant Agreement concluded between the COST Association represented by its Director and the Grant Holder.

The Action Grant Agreement sets the contractual framework under which the COST Grant shall be used and administered for the benefit of the accomplishment of COST Action's aims and objectives. The Action Grant Agreement shall be compliant with the present rules and COST Principles.

The Action Grant Agreement shall detail the present Action Rules regarding:

- The COST Grant maximum budget,
- The grant period duration, start and end date,
- The rights and obligations, tasks and responsibilities of the parties in terms of financial management and administration of a COST Action, including financial reporting and their timelines, access to archived documents, controls and audits, rejection of expenses,
- The Work and Budget Plan,
- The payment modalities of the COST Grant and the return of unspent funds,
- The consequences of non-compliance with the Action Grant Agreement obligations,
- Any other provisions as required following the legal and contractual framework applicable to COST.

The Action Grant Agreement may be amended at any time.

7.4. Grant Holder

The Grant Holder shall be a legal entity vested in a COST Full or Cooperating Member or the EC, EU bodies, offices, and agencies (EC/EU) or a European RTD Organisation which have joined the COST Action.

The Grant Holder shall be selected by the MC at MC1 meeting and is subject to approval of the COST Administration.

The MC Member or Observer affiliated with that legal entity shall become the GH Scientific Representative. In compliance with the rules on Access to leadership positions as per Article 3.9, when a Grant Holder Scientific Representative changes their affiliation, the Grant Holder Scientific Representative shall be replaced with a MC Member or Observer having an affiliation with the Grant Holder in place or the Grant Holder shall be replaced.

When administering the COST Grant, the Grant Holder shall act under supervision of the Action MC. However, the Grant Holder shall oppose to any MC decision that would be taken against the present rules and the Rules and Principles for COST activities and report to the COST Administration in case of issue for seeking resolution.

7.5. Reporting on the use of the COST Grant

The Action Grant Agreement shall detail the reporting obligations of the COST Actions towards the COST Association with regard to the use of the COST Grant. The reporting shall occur in the timeframes mentioned in the Action Grant Agreement. The MC shall support the Grant Holder in the fulfilment of those obligations and adopt the established reports before their submission to the COST Association.

8. COST ACTION MONITORING AND FINAL ASSESSMENT

COST Actions shall be monitored during their implementation and be assessed at their completion with the aim to contribute to the best dissemination and exploitation of COST Action results and outcomes and to maximise the potential impact of COST Actions.

Each COST Action shall benefit from an independent external monitoring and final assessment, carried by an Action Rapporteur.

Action Rapporteurs shall provide to the Action MC, the COST Association and the Scientific Committee their progress and final assessment Reviews.

The Scientific Committee shall, on the basis of the progress and final assessment reports and reviews as well as any other relevant information that it may request and shall receive, be informed about:

- The overall monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions,
- Global analysis of the outcomes and impact of ended Actions.

On that basis, the Scientific Committee shall provide to the CSO scientific and technological advice.

The Scientific Committee shall also assess how the Actions have addressed the recommendations formulated by the Scientific Committee at the selection phase of the COST Open Call (Progress Report 1).

The monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions shall allow the Scientific Committee to foster the strategic orientation of COST activities and give advice and recommendation on Science and Technology strategies to the CSO.

8.1. COST Action monitoring

The monitoring of a COST Action shall consist in the regular follow-up and review of a running COST Action.

The objectives of the external monitoring shall be to:

- Provide an assessment on the progress of the COST Action with relation to the implementation of networking activities, the development of Science and Technology activities towards the Action's objectives and the putting into practice of the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy,
- Give advice to the Action MC where necessary, identifying and suggesting corrective measures or best practices,
- Contribute to the best dissemination and exploitation of COST Action results and outcomes and to maximise the potential impact of COST Actions.

Action monitoring shall take place at month 12 and 24 of the Action implementation based on reports of the Action MC.

The Action Rapporteur shall establish a Progress Review with recommendations to the Action MC concerning Action implementation.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Action MC shall take into consideration the findings, advice and recommendations of the Action Rapporteur.

8.2. COST Action final assessment

The COST Action final assessment shall consist in determining the degree of realisation of the COST Action towards its stated objectives and its potential impact after completion, including any follow-up initiatives or R&D activities in the area covered by the COST Action.

The objectives of the final assessment shall be to:

- Identify how well the Action has reached its defined objectives and goals,
- Identify expected immediate, mid-term and envisaged long-term impacts of the Action after its completion, including the initiation of any follow-up activities and its impact on R&D activities in the area covered by the Action,
- Collect data necessary to demonstrate COST's performance and impact.

Final assessment shall be carried out at the end of each COST Action, normally at month 48. The final assessment of COST Actions having benefited from an extension shall include a dedicated section assessing the extension period.

The Action Rapporteur shall prepare a Final Assessment Report highlighting the Action's achievements and impact, identifying potential success stories and indicating any emerging or potentially important future developments.