

Brussels, 18 July 2019

COST 132/14  
REV 6

## CSO DECISION

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Subject: **Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities**

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The Committee of Senior Officials decided via written procedure on Friday 26 January 2018 to revise the "Rules for participation in and implementation of COST Activities" (COST 132/14 REV 2).

Following the approval of the European Commission Work Programme 2018-2020 COST must ensure that at proposal level at least half of the participating countries are from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries.

As a consequence, the table in Annex I: "Required minimum number of COST Inclusiveness Target Countries per number of COST Full or Cooperating Members represented in a proposal" has been modified.

The rules have also been amended to include the developments of the CSO meeting on 25-26 April 2018, where Albania was approved as a Full Member and Kosovo<sup>1</sup> as a Near Neighbour Country.

A minor revision was made when the Republic of Moldova was approved as a Full Member. In addition, a minor revision was made following the change in the denomination of the name 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' to 'Republic of North Macedonia'.

During the 206<sup>th</sup> CSO meeting of 10-11 April 2019 in Bucharest (RO) the CSO amended the present document and revised the definition of International Organisations and European RTD Organisations.

These rules shall replace the document COST 132/14 REV 4 and shall enter into force on 20 June 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



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## RULES FOR PARTICIPATION IN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COST ACTIVITIES

*COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a pan-European intergovernmental framework dedicated to networking activities for European researchers to jointly develop their own ideas and new initiatives across all scientific disciplines through trans-European coordination of nationally funded research activities. COST has been contributing to closing the gap between science, policy makers and society throughout Europe and beyond since its creation in 1971.*

The COST Members, respecting the recommendation of the CSO<sup>2</sup> to implement COST through a legal entity under the legal form of an International not-for-profit Association under Belgian Law, have established the COST Association AISBL (hereinafter "COST Association") on 19 September 2013, of which they became Full Members.

COST has traditionally drawn its funding from the EU Framework Programmes, at the request of the EU Member States and with the approval of the European Parliament. For the seven years period of the EU Framework Programme Horizon 2020, a **Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) was signed between the COST Association and the European Commission**. The agreement acknowledges the COST contribution to strengthening Europe's research and innovation capacities and the role that COST will play in Horizon 2020. In effect, the FPA addresses two major challenges of Horizon 2020, namely Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective Societies and Spreading Excellence and widening participation. In both cases, COST shall be referred to as a key contributor to the Programme strategic objectives, in particular given its support towards pan-European cooperation in science and technology.

The COST Association serves the COST mission according to principles of good governance and operates according to the principles of efficiency and effectiveness as well as assuring sound, lean and cost-effective management; it builds on the values of integrity, commitment and transparency and secures the management of public funds through high quality accountability and financial auditing measures; it allows for taking appropriate measures to prevent irregularities and fraud and does not entail any unnecessary costs to COST Members.

Against this background and

Considering the Statutes of the COST Association as revised on 14 Sept 2016;

Considering the Internal Rules of the COST Association;

the COST Committee of Senior Officials ("CSO") in accordance with its role as General Assembly of the COST Association,

Whereas:

- (1) The COST Intergovernmental Framework, hereafter referred to as "COST", was established at the first COST Ministerial Conference in 1971.
- (2) COST Full Members<sup>3</sup> have established an International not-for-profit Association, the COST Association, integrating the governance, management and implementation functions of COST.
- (3) COST contributes to the objective of strengthening the scientific and technological basis of the European Research Area by promoting European-based scientific and technological networking encouraging all stakeholders to share, create and apply knowledge, thereby encouraging Europe to become more competitive.

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<sup>2</sup> COST 4162/12 CSO recommendation on the COST New Implementing Structure during the next Framework Programme – Horizon 2020

<sup>3</sup> COST 4117/13 Resolution adopted by the European Ministers responsible for COST

- (4) COST shall be open to all fields in science and technology and wishes to foster multi- and interdisciplinary, aiming notably to enable breakthrough scientific developments leading to new concepts, services and products.
- (5) COST shall be supported by the European Union (EU) Framework Programme promoting research and innovation activities and fostering better exploitation of the industrial potential of policies of innovation, research and technological development in the European Research Area.
- (6) COST activities shall be implemented in accordance and in compliance, where applicable, with the EU Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council) and its Rules of Application (Commission Regulation (EU, Euratom) No1268/2012) or any subsequent regulation.
- (7) The set of “COST Implementation Rules” should provide a coherent, comprehensive and transparent frame to ensure efficient and harmonised implementation of activities, as well as ease access for all potential stakeholders, by promoting and facilitating participation from a wide range of researchers, engineers and scholars from universities, research centres, companies, as well as other relevant stakeholders (in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and legal entities.
- (8) For the benefit of Action Participants the COST Implementation Rules should be robust, stable and consistent and should focus on the best interest of research communities and foster mutual trust in their networking activities.
- (9) The overall challenge for COST should be to foster a common pan-European effort governed by the COST key principles of supporting excellence, being open and inclusive by fostering new ideas, sharing knowledge and being output orientated. This should enable COST to build capacity among high-quality scientific research communities by identifying excellent researchers all through Europe; leverage of national research investments; address issues of global relevance and increase the impact of science and technology on policy makers, regulatory bodies and national decision makers.
- (10) COST should promote participation of all COST Members in COST activities and should encourage European regions to develop their capacities and strengthen excellence.
- (11) COST should further encourage participation of young talents and next generation leaders in science and technology, promote working opportunities for early career investigators as well as younger researchers, and ensure gender balance.
- (12) COST should support integration of scientific research communities and increase the contribution of participants from identified Inclusiveness Target Countries in COST activities.
- (13) COST should allow international cooperation, on the basis of ascertained mutual benefit, through the participation of researchers or any relevant stakeholder from non-COST Countries (COST Near Neighbour Countries and from International Partner Countries) in COST activities.
- (14) COST should allow the participation of EU Institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, European RTD organisations and International Organisations in COST activities.
- (15) COST should implement Ethical Principles and Values as depicted in its Code of Conduct determining ethical working principles overreaching all actors and activities.
- (16) COST should provide funding for activities of relevance for fulfilling the COST mission and achieving COST objectives, more particularly for COST Actions, the COST networking instrument.
- (17) COST should fund networking activities in the field of science and technology destined only for peaceful purposes; any funding of activities related to sensitive technology development, armament or defence-oriented research should be avoided. COST should support activities carried out in compliance with fundamental ethical principles.

- (18) COST should establish rules and procedures to govern the submission, evaluation, selection and approval of proposals for COST Actions and other activities where appropriate.
- (19) COST should foresee appropriate scientific and technological monitoring and follow-up in view of assessing the results, outcomes and impacts of COST Actions and other activities.
- (20) COST should establish the frame for a proper impact analysis and comprehensive statistics of participation in COST Actions and other activities as well as results and outcomes.
- (21) COST should encourage the use, dissemination and exploitation of research results while, where appropriate, giving particular attention to confidential data and protection of intellectual property generated through COST activities, in particular through COST Actions. COST activities should not contribute to distortions in access to markets or development of monopolies.
- (22) COST should promote Open Access and encourage availability of results published thanks to COST funding and thereby contributing to boost worldwide visibility of European science and technology.
- (23) COST should define a Communication Plan to improve its branding, demonstrate a differentiated positioning of COST and promote strong awareness in the European Research Area.
- (24) COST should have the means to conduct strategic initiatives to enforce and reinforce its influence in chosen policy priorities aiming at concrete, structuring impact at the national and European decision-making environment.
- (25) COST should protect EU financial interests and ensure sound financial management. COST shall be aware that the EU auditing procedures apply.

The CSO has adopted the present “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST activities”, hereinafter referred to as the “COST Implementation Rules”.

## **SUBJECT MATTER AND SCOPE**

This decision lays down the basic principles and general rules for the participation, implementation and management of COST activities, in short, the “COST Implementation Rules”.

The COST Implementation Rules are composed of a main set of principles and rules for the operational, financial and administrative management of the COST networking instrument, the COST Action.

The COST Implementation Rules also lay down the main principles and rules concerning the other COST activities, including COST cooperation with non-COST Countries and Specific Organisations, as well as strategic initiatives and communication activities.

In addition to the framework conditions laid down in the present document, there are also specific rules that shall further define and govern the functioning and management of COST activities, as described below.

## **HIERARCHY OF THE SET OF COST IMPLEMENTATION RULES**

The set of COST Implementation Rules shall be divided into three levels:

The first level encompasses the present “COST Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”. They define the main principles applying to the participation in and implementation of COST activities and establish the main channels of articulation between the set of COST Implementation Rules. They take precedence over all other rules dealing with COST activities, including those related to COST Actions. They are CSO decisions.

The second level encompasses the rules that further develop on the principles and rules contained in the present COST Implementation Rules concerning the implementation of COST activities. They include the rules on the submission, evaluation, selection and approval of proposals for COST Actions, rules related to management, monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions, rules on participation of Non-COST countries and specific organisations, rules dealing with the implementation of Communication activities and strategic initiatives. Finally, they define the subject matter of the third level of the set of COST Implementation Rules. This second level of rules may not contravene the principles and rules defined in the present document. In case of any contradiction, the “COST Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” shall prevail. They are CSO decisions.

The third level of the rules encompasses the COST Vademecum describing the financial rules as well as Guidelines that have as function to further detail and explain in a user-friendly language the second level of rules. They aim at facilitating the implementation of COST activities by the broad range of COST actors. They regulate only on subject matters identified by the first and second level rules and may not contravene the principles and rules defined in the first and second levels of rules. In case of any contradiction, the “COST Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” and any second level rules shall prevail. They are approved by the Executive Board.

COST rules, approved before the present COST Implementation Rules, that do not contravene them or rule on matters not covered by the present set of COST Implementation Rules, shall continue to apply until new rules on the same subject matter are approved.

In exceptional circumstances, duly justified in the superior interest of COST, the CSO may adopt specific provisions deviating from the present rules.

## DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Decision, the following definitions shall apply:

1. COST Member: means the COST Full Members, the COST Cooperating Members and COST Partner Members.
2. COST Full Member: means any European State as depicted under article 6 of the Statutes of the COST Association having joined the COST Association by approval of the COST Association Statutes.
3. COST Cooperating Member: means any Non-European State fulfilling the conditions stated under article 7 of the Statutes of the COST Association admitted to the COST Association as a COST Cooperating Member.
4. COST Partner Member: means any State fulfilling the conditions stated under article 8 of the Statutes of the COST Association admitted to the COST Association as a COST Partner Member.
5. Non-COST Countries: means States that are not COST Members.
6. COST Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC): means COST Full or Cooperating Members that fulfil the Horizon 2020 widening eligibility conditions being either an EU Member State or an Associated Country to the EU Framework Programme.
7. EU bodies, offices and agencies: means any body so defined in accordance with the Treaties on 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.
8. European RTD Organisations: means the intergovernmental scientific research organisations whose members are States, the majority of which are COST Full Members.
9. International Organisation: means any Intergovernmental Organisation governed by international law. Organisations qualifying under the present Decision as European RTD Organisations or EU bodies, offices or agencies shall not be considered International Organisation in COST framework.

10. COST National Coordinator (CNC): means the individuals appointed by COST Full or Cooperating Members in charge of confirming the participation of their COST Member to a COST Action by means of the acceptance of the Action's Memorandum of Understanding 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.
11. Scientific Committee (SC): means the committee composed of independent, internationally renowned, high-level experts, one per COST Full or Cooperating Member, appointed by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO).
12. Open Call for proposals: means the official announcement/publication with the description of the objectives and criteria required for COST Action proposals to be evaluated and selected. The Open Call allows submitting proposals on a continuous basis; the publication indicates the Collection Dates.
13. Collection Date: means the final date when the proposals for new COST Actions submitted during a certain period are gathered and sent for evaluation.
14. Main Proposer: means the representative of a network of proposers who submit a proposal for a COST Action in response to the Open Call.
15. Funding Scheme: means the mechanism governing the administrative and financial management of a COST Action grant.
16. COST Action or Action: means the COST pan-European networking instrument allowing their participants to develop jointly their ideas and new initiatives in a field or topic of common interest.
17. Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): means the agreement accepted by a minimum of seven (7) different COST Full or Cooperating Members describing the Action objectives. This document has to be accepted by any additional COST Full or Cooperating Members joining the Action.
18. COST Action Grant Agreement (AGA): means the agreement between the COST Association and the Grant Holder that governs the administrative and financial implementation of the COST Action.
19. Grant Holder: means the legal entity responsible for the administrative and financial implementation of the COST Action.
20. Action Participant: means any person being an Action MC member, an Action MC substitute, an Action MC Observer, a Working Group member or an Ad hoc Participant.
21. Early Career Investigator (ECI): means a researcher in the time span of up to 8 years after the date of obtaining the PhD/doctorate (full-time equivalent).
22. Action Management Committee (Action MC): means the group of representatives of the COST Full or Cooperating Members having accepted the MoU. They are in charge of the coordination, implementation, and management of an Action's activities as well as supervising the appropriate allocation and use of the COST funding with a view to achieving the Action's scientific and technological objectives. They are nominated by the CNC.
23. Management Committee Observers (MC Observers): means representatives from COST Partner Members, Non-COST Countries or Specific Organisations present at the Action MC.
24. Working Group: means a group of Action Participants whose activity, composition and leadership shall be defined by the Action MC in order to achieve the Action objectives.
25. Ad hoc Participants: means individuals selected, as necessary, by the Action MC to contribute to the COST Action activities towards the achievement of the COST Action objectives.
26. Invited Speakers: means specialists who are not COST Action Participants but can partake in one COST Action meeting and one Training School throughout the lifetime of the COST Action.



27. Dissemination: means the public disclosure of COST Action's results and/or outcomes by any appropriate means (other than resulting from protecting or exploiting the results), including by scientific publications in any media.
28. Specific Organisations: The European Commission, EU bodies, offices and agencies, the European RTD Organisations and International Organisations.
29. Younger Researcher: means a researcher under the age of 40.

## 1. PRINCIPLES GOVERNING COST ACTIVITIES

All COST activities shall be properly implemented, closely monitored and appropriately assessed to ensure a proper execution and suitable dissemination. They include all those arising from COST Actions, as well as those related to international cooperation, communication activities and strategic initiatives.

Rigorous implementation shall guarantee proper execution, best performance and suitable completion of COST activities.

Fairness, transparency, openness, excellence and inclusiveness shall govern the rules for the submission, evaluation, selection and approval procedures of proposals for COST Actions and Activities.

Appropriate management and monitoring shall contribute to quality implementation and provide for regular follow-up, supervision and efficiency in the implementation of COST Actions and activities. Monitoring shall contribute to effective assessment during and at the end of COST Actions and contribute to guarantee the high-quality results and outcomes expected from COST activities.

COST shall make the best endeavours to avoid conflict of interest.

All individuals involved in COST activities, including COST Actions, shall commit to confidentiality of data identified as confidential.

COST shall endeavour to avoid any prejudice in respect of nationality, age and gender throughout all COST activities.

Mutual trust shall be promoted in interactions between the different actors of COST and between COST and the scientific and technological communities, what shall contribute to increased efficiency in the implementation of COST policies and activities.

Timely dissemination shall foster spreading of new knowledge, as well as increased outreach and visibility of COST activities.

COST may, in line with its aim and in order to reach its objectives, develop pilot projects to the benefit of the scientific community, in line with COST positioning in the European Research Area. Such projects shall follow specific rules and guidelines and shall receive appropriate dissemination.

COST activities should respect fundamental rights and observe the principles acknowledged in particular by the by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Such actions should be in conformity with any legal obligation including international law and with ethical principles, which include avoiding any breach of research integrity.

## **2. RULES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COST INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

The COST International Cooperation shall be implemented throughout COST activities and shall follow the dedicated rules and procedures under “Rules for Participation of Non-COST countries and Specific Organisations”<sup>4</sup>.

## **3. RULES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES**

The COST Communication Strategy shall define the communication objectives and the positioning of COST in its competitive frame of reference. It shall describe the key communication messages, main target groups, communication channels and tools, thus contributing to the visibility and credibility of COST activities.

The COST Communication Strategy shall be implemented through dedicated rules and procedures for their identification and operation.

## **4. RULES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

COST shall conduct strategic initiatives allowing for the implementation of concrete, structuring contributions on the most important Policy priorities for COST and supporting COST in achieving its vision and strategic goals.

The Strategic Initiatives shall be implemented through dedicated rules for their identification and operation.

## **5. RULES APPLYING TO COST ACTIONS**

The rules applying to COST Actions contain the conditions for participation in a COST Action, the procedures related to the submission, evaluation, selection and approval of proposals for COST Actions, the set of COST implementation rules for the management, monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions<sup>5 and 6</sup>.

### **5.1. PARTICIPATION IN A COST ACTION**

COST Action shall be a pan-European network instrument allowing its participants from COST Members to develop jointly their ideas and new initiatives in a given field or topic of common interest. They leverage nationally or otherwise funded research activities. They are open to researchers, engineers and scholars or other stakeholders from non-COST countries or Specific Organisations.

#### **PARTICIPATION OF COST FULL AND COOPERATING MEMBERS**

COST Actions shall be initiated by COST Full or Cooperating Members which, in order to participate in a COST Action, shall formally accept the Action’s Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Action MC members shall be affiliated to a university, research centre, company or other relevant legal entity and shall adhere to the set of COST Implementation Rules and COST Vademecum.

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<sup>4</sup> “Rules for Participation of Non-COST countries and Specific Organisations”

<sup>5</sup> “COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval”

<sup>6</sup> “COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment”

## **PARTICIPATION OF COST PARTNER MEMBERS**

In order to participate in COST Actions, COST Partner Members shall formally accept the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

## **PARTICIPATION OF NON-COST COUNTRIES**

Researchers, engineers and scholars or other stakeholders in non-COST Countries, affiliated to universities, research centres, companies or other relevant legal entities, may participate in a COST Action on the basis of ascertained mutual benefit.

COST shall encourage the cooperation with COST Near Neighbour Countries by supporting the participation of researchers, engineers and scholars and other stakeholders in the COST Actions.

## **PARTICIPATION OF SPECIFIC ORGANISATIONS**

COST shall allow and encourage the participation of European RTD Organisations in COST Actions when appropriate<sup>7</sup>.

The European Commission and EU bodies, offices and agencies may participate in COST Actions.

International Organisations may participate in a COST Action when specific added value is demonstrated.

## **5.2. SUBMISSION, EVALUATION, SELECTION, AND APPROVAL OF PROPOSALS FOR COST ACTIONS**

COST shall adopt and publish rules governing the submission of proposals for new COST Actions, as well as the related evaluation, selection and approval procedures according to international best practices. These procedures shall reflect the principles of trans-nationality, fairness, transparency, openness, excellence and inclusiveness. COST shall undertake appropriate measures in view of avoiding conflict of interest in the evaluation procedure.

Proposals for new COST Actions shall be submitted via the continuous COST Open Call. Proposals shall be submitted, evaluated, selected and approved based on the criteria set out in the "COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval"<sup>8</sup>.

Proposals for new COST Actions shall be prepared by a network of proposers, represented by a Main Proposer, from at least seven (7) COST Full or Cooperating Members amongst which a minimum number shall be from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries as detailed in Annex I.

Individuals from non-COST Countries may be part of a network of proposers for proposals for new COST Actions.

The European Commission, EU bodies, offices and agencies and European RTD Organisations may also be part of a network of proposers for proposals for new COST Actions.

COST shall appoint independent external experts to assist with the evaluation of proposals for COST Actions.

Proposals contravening fundamental ethical principles or not fulfilling the conditions described in the set of COST Implementation Rules shall be excluded from the evaluation.

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<sup>7</sup> The Director of the COST Administration or the staff member or group of staff members of the COST Administration that the Director designates to do so shall assess the qualification as European RTD Organisation on a case by case basis.

The COST Administration is free to require any documentation that might be considered useful in this regard.

The list of newly approved European RTD Organisations shall be reported to the CSO once a year.

<sup>8</sup> "COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval"

Selected proposals shall be approved by the CSO.

### **5.3. MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF COST ACTIONS**

#### **MANAGEMENT OF A COST ACTION**

The COST Action shall be governed by legal, ethical, contractual and administrative rules and principles in compliance with best scientific stewardship and the set of COST Rules.

For each new COST Action a multilateral agreement, the Action MoU, shall be prepared on the basis of the approved proposal describing the Action's scientific and technological objectives and the added value of networking.

The Action MoU shall be accepted by at least seven (7) different COST Full or Cooperating Members within the six months following the CSO approval of the Action. By accepting the MoU, a COST Member confirms that activities to be covered by the Action shall rely on research funding provided by national authorities or other sources. Accepting the MoU implies acceptance of the set of COST Implementation Rules.

An Action Management Committee (Action MC) shall be responsible for the coordination and management of the Action activities. The Action MC shall be composed of representatives of COST Members (maximum two MC Members per COST Full or Cooperating Member). The Action MC shall elect an Action Chair at its first meeting, who shall be responsible for coordinating the Action MC activities as well as an Action Vice-Chair. Other key leadership positions required for achievement of the Actions' objectives and the implementation of the networking tools shall be elected at the first possible opportunity.

One of the key leadership positions in the Action management (e.g. Action Chair, Vice-Chair, Working Group Leader, Grant Holder Scientific Representative, STSM Coordinator, Science Communication Manager) shall be reserved for a representative of a COST Inclusiveness Target Country. The present paragraph shall apply for COST Actions deriving from open calls starting at the open call 2017-1.

COST Actions shall be implemented through a set of networking tools such as meetings (Action MC meetings, Working Groups, workshops, conferences), Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs), Training Schools and Dissemination activities.

The reimbursement of expenses incurred by Action Participants, other than those incurred by the Action MC Members, depends on the fulfilment of the COST eligibility criteria for reimbursement<sup>9</sup> and shall be always subject to the availability of COST funds.

#### **MONITORING AND FINAL ASSESSMENT OF A COST ACTION**

COST Actions shall be monitored during implementation and shall be assessed at Action end. The objective of the monitoring and assessment shall be to identify and document the overall COST Action performance. This shall contribute to identify on a regular basis relevant results and outcomes and maximise the potential impact of COST Actions.

#### **DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS AND OUTCOMES, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND OPEN ACCESS<sup>10</sup>**

COST shall encourage the dissemination of any results and outcomes generated by COST Actions.

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<sup>9</sup> Detailed information may be found in the COST Vademecum

<sup>10</sup> Detailed information on dissemination may be found in the COST Vademecum and COST Guidelines for the Dissemination of COST Action Results and Outcomes

Each Action shall facilitate and promote the sharing of its results and outcomes to maximise the benefit that COST Actions may produce in terms of advancing scientific, technological or social knowledge as well as the added value generated by networking at pan-European level and beyond.

Dissemination activities related to COST Actions results and outcomes shall be compatible with the protection of Intellectual Property that may derive from activities, any confidentiality obligations and the legitimate interests of the owners of the knowledge that was used for the production of the Action results and outcomes.

COST Actions shall favour Open Access to results and outcomes published thanks to COST funding. Specific provisions linked to the management, sharing or exploitation of Intellectual Property that may rise from a COST Action shall be defined by the respective Action Participants, and lies within their sole discretion/responsibility.

COST shall encourage the protection of Intellectual Property when generated by a COST Action and recommend all stakeholders concerned to take necessary action at the earliest possible stage. Such provisions should take into consideration the need for protecting the Action Participants' legitimate interests.

## **6. FUNDING SCHEMES FOR MANAGEMENT OF COST ACTIONS**

COST Actions shall be funded notably through the COST Decentralised management scheme, the COST Grant System (CGS)<sup>11</sup>.

## **7. ELIGIBILITY AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES RELATED TO COST ACTIVITIES**

In order to be considered eligible, expenses incurred during the implementation of COST activities including COST Actions shall meet the following criteria:

- Exclusively related to COST activities, in particular COST Action networking tools or any other activity decided by the CSO; eligible activities to be funded by COST shall be defined in the related set of COST Implementation Rules;
- For COST Actions, used for the sole purpose of achieving the scientific and technological objectives of the Action as set out in the Action's MoU.

Reimbursement rules and procedures shall follow the applicable set of COST Implementation Rules<sup>12</sup>.

The COST funding shall not give rise to profit.

## **8. FINANCIAL REPORTING, CONTROLS AND AUDITS OF COST ACTIVITIES**

All COST activities, including COST Actions, shall be budgeted and financial reports shall be delivered according to the relevant set of COST Implementation Rules.

The COST Association, the European Commission or the European Court of Auditors may conduct controls and audits on COST activities.

Each COST Action needs to submit financial reports regarding eligible expenses linked to its activities, as defined by the COST rules and in the terms of the COST Action Grant Agreement and related rules.

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<sup>11</sup> "COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment", "COST Vademecum"

<sup>12</sup> Detailed information may be found in the COST Vademecum

## **FINAL AND TRANSITORY PROVISIONS**

The present Rules shall be binding in their entirety and directly applicable to all COST activities including COST Actions and Action Participants.

Any change or derogations to the present Rules shall be subject to the approval of the CSO.

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### COST FULL MEMBERS:

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, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Republic of North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom.

### COST INCLUSIVENESS TARGET COUNTRIES:

Inclusiveness Target Countries shall be defined in the Framework Partnership Agreement signed between the COST Association and the European Commission. COST Inclusiveness Target Countries shall be COST Full or Cooperating Members that fulfil the Horizon 2020 widening eligibility and admissibility conditions being either an EU Member State or an Associated Country to the EU Framework Programme.

The Horizon 2020 describes eligibility and admissibility conditions for a State as being below the 70% of the EU average of the EU Composite Indicator for Research Excellence<sup>13</sup>. It shall be used for the participation in Horizon 2020 Widening Actions and applies for “low RDI performing” EU Member States as well as for “low RDI performing” Associated Countries.

COST Inclusiveness Target Countries, ITC	COST Full Members	
	EU Member States	Associated Countries to Horizon 2020
	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxemburg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia	Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, Turkey

<sup>13</sup>See: EN Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018-2020 15. Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation (pg 5); [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018-2020/main/h2020-wp1820-sewp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018-2020/main/h2020-wp1820-sewp_en.pdf)

## REQUIRED MINIMUM NUMBER OF COST INCLUSIVENESS TARGET COUNTRIES PER NUMBER OF COST FULL OR COOPERATING MEMBERS REPRESENTED IN A PROPOSAL

Number of COST Full or Cooperating Members	Minimum number of ITC
7	4
8	4
9	5
10	5
11	6
12	6
13	7
14	7
15	8
16	8
17	9
18	9
19	10
20	10
21	11
22	11
23	12
24	12
25	13
26	13
27	14
28	14
29	15
30	15
31	16
32	16
33	17
34	17
35	18
36	18
37	19
38	19
39	20

### **COST COOPERATING MEMBER:**

Israel.

### **COST NEAR NEIGHBOUR COUNTRIES:**

Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Kosovo<sup>14</sup>, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine<sup>15</sup>, Russia, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

<sup>14</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>15</sup> This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.





**COST PARTNER MEMBERS:**

South Africa