Online COST Info Day Q&A document

24 May 2023

This document provides answers to the questions posted by attendees in the Zoom and the YouTube live chats or sent to events@cost.eu.

Event webpage: www.cost.eu/cost-events/online-cost-info-day-2023
Presentations: view/download the PDF
Recording: view on COST's YouTube channel (from minute 3:38)

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What information do evaluators of new Action proposals get, apart from the Technical Annex? Statistics of the network (gender balance, number of countries, number of people from individual countries)?
Evaluators have access to the proposal, its general features, and some information on the network of proposers (geographic - country level, expertise, and institutional distribution).

What is the usual size of a successful new Action proposal – in terms of number of countries, people, or balance of academia vs. non-academia?
More than the size of the network of proposers, what is important is the consistency between the composition of the network of proposers, and the claims made in the proposal.

The person that the national coordinator appoints to successful COST Actions, who is the person appointed? What is their status? Are they academics or not? What is their role in the COST Action?
The COST members have the prerogative to appoint whoever they think is best to represent their country. The big majority are academics. Once appointed they become Management Committee members of the Action. The Management Committee is responsible for the management of a COST Action.

Do national contact points in all countries help academics find the right academics/institutions in a particular field?
The person who is searching would need someone with a background on their scientific field. The MC member in a relevant Action to their research field would be the right contact, rather than the COST National Coordinator.

Can an individual from Egypt or Saudi Arabia apply through an NGO or a local organisation?
Egypt is a Near Neighbour Country in COST and participants affiliated to an organisation of this country can join an existing COST Action or they can be part of the secondary proposers. Main proposers is only reserved for COST Full Members. Egypt is eligible for reimbursement. Saudi Arabia is an International Partner Country in COST and those affiliated to an organisation of this country can participate, but they are not eligible for reimbursement, they need to find their own funding to participate in COST activities.

What is the success rate? 17 applications funded, I understood, but how many applications in total?
18.7% was the success rate in the last collection. Nearly 400 proposals were received. COST funds 70 Actions per year, not 17.

How do you define young researchers?
A researcher or innovator under the age of 40.

Can a chair person be from outside the EU? I realise they cannot receive funding in the same way as someone from the EU, but can they hold this position?
An Action Chair must come from a COST Full or Cooperating Member. Please find here the list of COST Full or Cooperating Members.

Is there an established timeline or calendar for proposal submission?
The next collection date will be 25 October 2023 at 12:00 (noon) CEST. Every year the collection date takes place in October.

Can we include PhD students (with formal employment status at their home institutions) as secondary proposers?
Yes as long as their affiliation is recognised by a legal entity. Please check the COST Annotated Rules for more details.

How are proposals graded/approved to be funded? In other words, what is the minimal and maximal grade?
Can we include a member from South Africa (partner country)?
Proposals go through an evaluation process called SESA procedure. You can see details of the process in the COST Open Call Applicant Guidelines.
Yes, colleagues from South Africa are most welcome.

What is the success rate for projects which are submitted for the first time, and also for the second time ?
The success rate was 18.4% in the last collection. No data is available for re-submissions as in each new collection we treat proposals on equal footing.

What can be funded by virtual networking grants?
Several examples are indicated in the COST Annotated Rules, available on the COST website.

What do the short-term scientific missions include?
The purpose of an STSM is for a researcher to collaborate with a colleague in another country for a certain amount of time. For details on the grant, you can refer to the COST Annotated Rules, available on the COST website.

Regarding the 39% success rate in H2020, do you mean that 39% of the proposals that were submitted as a result of an Action were successful?
Yes, if you are a participant of a COST Action you have much more chance of success when applying to Framework Programme projects.

Is there any opportunity for Asian countries' researchers to get funds?
International Partner Countries can participate in COST Actions, but they need to find their own funding. As an invited speaker they can get funding, but this is only one time in the lifetime of a COST Action (4 years duration of a COST Action), or as a trainer in Training Schools.

Could you provide more tailored online courses on how to put together a COST Action? It takes substantial amount of time to understand how to do it.
For the moment, the focus is on info days as well as on providing comprehensive Open Call Applicant Guidelines, available on the COST website.

Is a summer school funded?
Yes. In COST's jargon that is a training school. Participants of a training school are reimbursed for their accommodation, subsistence and travel expenses.

Is there any pre-funding scheme of preparatory actions before the submission of a COST Action proposal?
No, this does not exist. Nevertheless the COST National Coordinator of your country is at your disposal for further guidance. Please find here the list of COST National Coordinators.

As far as I understand, it is essential to involve the largest possible group of researchers in an Action, but what is the importance for the approval of a COST Action to include a large group of countries in comparison to a small number in the proposal?

As long as the minimum eligibility criteria is respected, the size of the network is not a determining factor for the approval of a COST Action.

What is the success rate of sociology science-oriented vs. science-oriented proposals?

COST does not have success rates per field as most of the proposals are interdisciplinary.

Can Switzerland be main proposer in an application for a new COST Action?

Yes, Switzerland can be main proposer. As a COST Full Member, Switzerland can fully participate in COST activities.

Why do researchers need to be nominated by the COST National Coordinator?

COST is an intergovernmental framework, and COST National Coordinators (1 per country) are the ones who nominate representatives of their country to the Management Committee of the COST Actions.

For third countries, can we use funds to invite speakers at COST Action-related meetings?

Yes, but only once in the lifetime of a COST Action, which lasts 4 years.

How can I join one of the 70 recently approved COST Actions?

As from 9 June 2023 you can visit the COST website and the Memorandum of Understanding of these Actions will be available. Go to browse COST Actions, select the Action you would like to join and click on becoming a Working Group member. If you want to become Management Committee member (manage the Action), then you need to contact the COST National Coordinator of your country. The full list can be found here. Please see here the news and the booklet with the 70 Actions. More information is available on www.cost.eu/cost-actions/what-are-cost-actions/.

How does the COST National Coordinator validate the step to become a Management Committee member?

COST National Coordinators can nominate at any moment up to 2 Management Committee members per Action. It is national prerogative to follow national strategy on their nominations. This varies between countries.

What is the success rate of COST applications? 39 or 17%?

18.7% was the success rate in the last collection. Nearly 400 proposals were received. Participation in COST Actions has led to significant results and follow-up in terms of the number of proposals submitted for collaborative research in Framework Programmes, with a success rate which more than triple the average success rates for these programmes (39% success rate). By funding networking, COST acts as a pre-portal for further research and innovation funding such as Horizon Europe.

Does the ICT/non-ICT ratio apply to the entire network of participants or only to the main proposer and secondary proposer subgroup?

The proposal must represent a Network of Proposers from at least 7 different COST Full or Cooperating Members among which at least 50% shall be from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries. More information can be found in the Open Call Applicant Guidelines, under section 2.2 on eligibility criteria.

How important is the innovation part in the evaluation of a COST Action proposal? Can you give some examples of innovation? Is the use of, for example, applied technology to address identified problems an innovation?

At the proposal stage, the focus is broad covering S&T and Networking excellence, Impact, and Implementation. Yet there is a specific section of the proposal covering potential Innovation stemming from the network (see applicant guidelines – section 3.1.). A related instrument is the COST Innovation Grant that benefit to some ending Actions. More details and examples can be found here https://www.cost.eu/cost-innovators-grant/

What is the usual size of a successful new Action proposal – in terms of number of countries, people, or balance of academia vs. non-academia? How big should the network be? How long should the proposal be? Is the non-academic group necessary for the proposal to be successful?

An Action reaches an average of 40 countries per Action. Nevertheless, the requirement for a proposal is only 7 countries. The majority comes from academia, but COST Actions include also SMEs, NGOs, European RTD, EC participants. The proposal is one stage, max. 15 pages long. There is no requirement for non-academic group.

Are master and PhD scholarships funded?

No, COST does fund master and scholarships. COST funds only networking activities.

Is the Memorandum of Understanding exactly the same as the grant proposal that is submitted?

Yes, very similar, COST Science Officers perform a consistency check before publishing the MoU, but it contains mainly all the information of the proposal.

Is it possible for a participant to change their affiliated institution or workplace during the final stages of a COST action, and is it permissible to transfer the allocated funds to the new institution?

Participants can changed their affiliation at any moment. The funds are allocated to one institution, the Grant Holder institution which in most of the cases is the institution of the Action Chair. Funds are not allocated to participants. Participants receive funding directly for their individual participation in COST activities distributed by the Grant Holder institution.

Is there any platform to network and interact with possible partners that are working on a COST Action

In the COST website you can find the Action and search by topic. names and emails of the composition of the Action are publicly available.

Israel is a COST Cooperating Member. Can we be a proposing member?

Yes, Israel can propose Actions, and be also main proposer and opt for chairing the Action in equal footing as a COST Full Member.

A COST Action needs a programme manager, whose salary comes from indirect costs that are 15% of the direct (so not already known and variable per year). How do you advice to organise the appointment of the programme manager with respect to weekly hours.

The Financial, Scientific Administration and Coordination (FSAC) is defined in the COST Annotated Rules as "*a contribution to the expenses incurred by the Grant Holder in the implementation of the Action Grant Agreement. The FSAC is granted to the Grant Holder Institution to support the execution of the financial, scientific, and administrative coordination tasks relating to managing and coordinating Action activities during a given Grant Period*".

The FSAC is payable to the Grant Holder Institution and agreed in the Action Grant Agreement signed between the Action's selected Grant Holder Institution and the COST Association. The calculation of the FSAC is made by applying a 15% rate to the total of the eligible expenses reported and approved by the COST Administration.

Therefore, the direct recipient of the FSAC contribution is the Grant Holder Institution. Action Chairs or Grant Holder Managers are not direct recipients of this contribution. Their efforts are not covered. The aim of the COST Grant is to enable networking, and not the coverage of salaries.

Is the Action Chair generally the Action's main proposer?
Yes, in the majority of the cases the main proposer becomes the Action Chair.

How to activate the MC membership ? I have written several times to COST Action for activation of my MC membership since long time, but have not got any response.
This is a technical question, please contact our IT helpdesk via helpdesk@cost.eu with the specific question of your case.

How can we connect with GH organisations?
In most of the cases the main proposer will become the Action Chair and his/her institution will be the Grant Holder of the COST Action. The Grant Holder representative of each Action is displayed in the COST website.

Is it mandatory to combine technology/scientific subjects to humanities or social research subjects?
No, it is not mandatory. COST Action proposals can focus on one field or can be interdisciplinary. The bottom-up approach provides freedom to the proposers.

How much overhead / indirect costs are allowed?
There are no overheads. COST Actions are provided with a Financial, Scientific Administration and Coordination (FSAC) which is 15% calculated over the total eligible expense. The definition of the FSAC is a *contribution to the expenses incurred by the Grant Holder in the implementation of the Action Grant Agreement. The FSAC is granted to the Grant Holder Institution to support the execution of the financial, scientific, and administrative coordination tasks relating to managing and coordinating Action activities during a given Grant Period*".
The aim of the COST Grant is to enable networking, and not the coverage of salaries.

Can we have some budget allocated to pay people, for example a specialised science communicator?
COST does not pay salaries/people. It is about networking. One of the leadership positions in COST Actions is the Science Communication Coordinator who helps the COST Action to disseminate, Under the COST Academy, trainings are offered in order to get the necessary skills to perform this role at their very best.

Past funded COST Actions are seeing favourable for re-application or not?
Re-submissions are welcome yet previous submissions are not taken into account for the running evaluation. Important to note that they should take into account the evolution of the state of the art as well as the comments of the reviewers from the previous collection. Note that the latest template as announced in every year's call must always be used.

What activities can be funded for Third Countries' participants?
Third Countries are not eligible for reimbursement in COST activities. Two exceptions are allowed. They can only be reimbursed as a Trainer in a Training School or as an invited speaker once in the lifetime of a COST Action (4 years).

What is the balance between Sciences and SSH (Social Sciences and Humanities) among the successful project proposals?
In every collection this balance may varied. In the last collection: Natural Sciences lead the way as the most represented field of science (represented in 49% of the Actions), followed by Social Sciences (27%), Engineering and Technology (27%), Agricultural Sciences (26%), Medical and Health Sciences (20%), and Humanities (19%).

On what terms can South Africa take part in the COST project? do they have their own pool of money to finance their own expenses?
Yes, South Africa is a COST Partner Member and has compromised to put budget aside to allow their researchers to participate in COST activities. Please see www.dst.gov.za or contact the National COST Coordinator Ntombi.Mchuba@dst.gov.za

Should the main proposer comes from a specific group of COST countries?
From one of the 41 COST Members https://www.cost.eu/about/members/

When Mickael says the details can be found online (with regards to the COST National Coordinator), where is this?
You can find the list of COST National Coordinators in the following link https://www.cost.eu/about/who-is-who/#tabs+Name:National%20Coordinators

Can you participate as a Management Committee member and also a working group participant?
Yes, participants can be in the Management Committee at the same time that holding leadership positions or being participant in a working group.

South Arabia, is a International Partner in COST and they can participate, but not eligible. I didn't understand this part.
Researchers coming South Arabia can participate in COST Actions, as one of the main characteristics of COST is the openness. This will allow these researchers to collaborate with COST members. But they will not get funding for accommodation and travel expenses when coming to meetings. They need to find their own funding to participate in COST Activities.

Who is National Coordinator from Poland?
Anna Awdiejewa,
Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki
Departament Współpracy Międzynarodowej
e-mail:anna.awdiejewa@mein.gov.pl
You can find here the list of COST National Coordinators.

Can the mobility be combined with other (travel) grant on the side of the visiting researcher?
Yes, it can be combined, but it is important to avoid double funding.

What is the difference between the main and second proposer?
The main proposer is the representative of a network of proposers who submit a proposal for a COST Action in response to the Open Call. The need to come from COST Full member/ Cooperating Member, from the EC/EU bodies or from an European RTD. The secondary proposers are a group of researchers

and innovators that help the main proposer to build up the proposal and they can come from anywhere in the world.

Is this annually the same date? Will the deadline of the next call also be in October 2024?
Yes, the collection date closure will be in October 2024.

I am secondary proposer of a recently accepted COST Action. I have no previous experience of COST Actions. Is there somewhere available a summary of info that I should know?
Please read the COST Annotated Rules for further reference.

What about funding for who would like to participate in an ongoing Action?
The Management Committee of a COST Action makes the decisions on how to spend the Action's budget. They make the selection based on the interest and also based on the availability of funds.

Why doesn't COST use the funding&tenders portal, are there plans to integrate COST in the F&T Portal?
COST is not part of the European Commission (EC). It is funded by the EC, but the owners of COST are COST members. The COST Association is an AISBL under Belgian law. The EC will never allow COST integration in the F&T Portal.

How interdisciplinary the COST Action has to be? How the experts are chosen in this case?
A proposal can be as interdisciplinary as the network of proposers think it should be. 3 experts are assigned per proposal, that are selected to cover the disciplines mentioned in the proposal general features. Tip: Main Proposers should carefully select in e-COST the relevant fields covered in the proposal.

Is COST open to participation of non-academic institutions, like NGOs or other civil society organisation, and private companies ?
Yes, COST is open to all type of organisations. COST Actions are typically made up of researchers from academia, SMEs, public institutions and other relevant organisations or interested parties.

Are training schools intended for action members or for non-members?
You need to participate in a COST Actions in order to benefit of the networking tools, such as Training Schools, Short-term Scientific Missions, etc.

How does the management structure mentioned before relate to the content of the submitted proposal. Why is there no management structure in the proposal? Is it because that is added later?
Proposals are anonymous. Once the Action is approved, in their first meeting, the first Management Committee meeting, leadership positions are elected.

Can a COST Expert also participate in an Action? If so, it what capacity? Can they be MC members or WG leaders?
A COST expert that has evaluated a proposal cannot become Action participant of that Action. 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, More detailed information can be found in Rules for COST Actions document page 10.

What would you say that is the optimum number of participating countries in an Action?
No ideal number, the bigger the network, the bigger the benefits of sharing the knowledge.

Is the rule referring to 50% countries from inclusiveness list or 50% of institutes in total?
The rule refers to 50% of researchers affiliated to institutions coming from Inclusiveness Target Countries at proposal level

Are the secondary proposers institutions or individual researchers?
They are individuals researchers affiliated to an institution.

Is there budget available for project management (non scientific)?
The grant provided to the COST Actions is meant for networking activities. The Financial, Scientific Administration and Coordination (FSAC) is defined in the COST Annotated Rules as "*a contribution to the expenses incurred by the Grant Holder in the implementation of the Action Grant Agreement. The FSAC is granted to the Grant Holder Institution to support the execution of the financial, scientific, and administrative coordination tasks relating to managing and coordinating Action activities during a given Grant Period*".
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Therefore, the direct recipient of the FSAC contribution is the Grant Holder Institution. Action Chairs or Grant Holder Managers are not direct recipients of this contribution. The aim of the COST Grant is to enable networking, and not the coverage of salaries.

Can private university apply for COST Action?
One of the main characteristics of COST Actions is the openness of their networks. Anyone with an affiliation can participate ,from academia, to SMEs, industry or NGOs.

Can a Main Proposer who changes affiliation during the evaluation process take the (eventually funded) COST Action with him/her to another affiliation or does it 'stick' to the original affiliation? In other words: is the Action then 'person-bound' or 'affiliation-bound'?
One of the MC members of the Action needs to belong to the Grant Holder institution. This only happens after the evaluation and once the Management Committee holds its first meeting to designate the Grant Holder Institution . In 90% of the cases the institution of the main proposer, who will become the Chair of the Action, is the Grant Holder institution. Thus, main proposers can change affiliation during the evaluation process.

How can you offer to join a COST funding proposal? Is there a list of 'available researchers'?
Proposals are anonymous and COST does not provide a list of researchers. You need to find your partners according to the topic of your interest.

How is the budget calculated for the Action? Is there a cost template?
The budget is calculated considering two main principles: the available budget to the COST Association and the size of the network. Every grant period the budget is negotiated between the chair of the Action and the assigned Science Officer. This negotiation is done via e-COST, our platform, where a template is provided.

Are there subsistence rates for us to use in developing the budget?
The budget is breakdown per eligible rules per networking tool. For example, reimbursement of participation are calculated based on daily allowance and long distance travel expenses. You can refer to the annotated rules available on the COST website.

Trainers can be external to the consortium/work grouping?
Yes, trainers do not need to be part of the Action.

Will the proposal have to include a list of the events the COST Action plan to organise? How detailed? Or focus only on the general topic and objectives?
In the implementation section of the proposal template, a description of the tasks, activities, their deliverable and timeframe is required. Yet, specifics on the list of events is only done once the Action is approved, as every grant period the budget is allocated to the Action. The Management Committee will then decide on the different networking tools, including the planning on the organisation of events/conferences.

When we will able to apply for 70 new COST Actions?
Via the COST website as from 9 of June. Under browse Actions, find the Action of your choice and apply for becoming Working Group member.

Is there any specific public data of countries that have participated in the COST Action networks, by countries, positions, disciplines and projects?
Yes, all the COST Actions participants (country, email, position, institution) are available in the COST website. You need to search by COST Action in the following link: Browse COST Actions - List of COST Actions past and ongoing | COST.

Are workshops, conferences and training schools mandatory for a COST Action or can you focus one format only, or on short-term scientific missions?
The Management Committee is the body deciding the type of networking activities that are going to be implemented to deliver the objectives of the COST Action.

What is the maximum budget per project? 600,000 Euros? Can you risk writing an application, being a Grant Holder, but not an Action chair - and then not influencing the implementation of the project?
EUR 600 000 is an average budget for a duration of COST Action of 4 years. Nevertheless, depending on the size of the network this amount may slightly change. Any researcher can put forward a proposal. The Action Chair and the Grant Holder are elected only after the approval of the COST Action in the first Management Committee meeting. Note that Main proposers are usually elected as Action Chairs.

Reimbursed expenses! This means that when I plan to participate in a conference, I have to pay my expenses, and then ask for the reimburse? How long it takes?
Yes, you have to advance your expenses and then you will be reimbursed in maximum 30 days.

Can a charity/foundation (for research) be the grant holder institution? And a society?
Yes.

Can a partner country member (from Israel or RSA) also be a WG leader or co-leader? Can they be secondary proposers and are they counted in same way as ITCs?
Israel is a Cooperating Member Country and they have the same rights for participation as a COST Full Member, it can be a Chair, a WG leader, a Grant Holder or any other leadership position within a COST Action. They can be main and secondary proposers.
On the other hand RSA is a COST Partner Member in COST can only be working group co-leaders (not other leadership position). The can be secondary proposers but not main proposers.
Nor Israel or RSA are Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC). Please find here the detailed list of ITCs.

What about the trainers do they get a grant for training? Do they have to be members of the Action or they could be also external?
Trainers do not get a grants, they are reimbursed for their travel and accommodation expenses (like the participants to the Training School). They can be both, members of the Action and externals.

Have Training Schools to fulfil minimum criteria to be admissible for funding?
Please refer to the COST Annotated Rules, page 77, for all the information on Training Schools.

For STSM, the researcher must be for a country that is a participant of the COST Action? or must involve participants of the COST Action?
Given the openness of the COST Actions, only the country of affiliation needs to be considered for assessing eligibility. For further reference see table on section 6.4 eligibility to receive financial support.

For the short-term scientific missions is there a minimum or maximum amount of time that this mission has to take place for?
A Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) should start and end within the Action's grant period. The maximum grant is of EUR 4000. The grant period run for 12 months. In average STSM takes between 5 days to 4 months. It all depends on the researcher's needs and on the amount on the grant.

Do Training Schools and STSMs have to sit within an existing network? Or, can be one-offs?
Training Schools and Short-term Scientific Missions are planned within an existing network.

If we had 2 institutions from the same countries in management team and as working group leaders, would this count once in terms of COST members or twice?
It counts as 1 participating COST Member country.

What is a Young Researcher in the context of ITC? (years after PhD? or actual age?)
Young researcher in COST is a researcher or innovator under 40 years of age.

Who is the national coordinator for UK?
Herbee Thomas, cost.uknc@beis.gov.uk
Please find here the full list of COST National Coordinators.

Can network members based in Nigeria and/or Bangladesh participate in COST Actions and be reimbursed for their expenses?
COST Actions are open and they can participate but they are not eligible for reimbursement. They can only be reimbursed as a Trainer in a Training School and also as an invited speaker once in the lifetime of a COST Actions (4 years).

For what kind of activities or Actions the Virtual Mobility Grant is supposed to be used or can be used?
As the title indicates, applicants for the Virtual Mobility Grants do not incur any travel expenses. The aim of these grants are to allow researchers foster collaboration in a virtual setting, exchanging knowledge, learning new techniques, or any specific activity defined by the Action. The grant amount awarded to an applicant is to cover for the work carried out, the technical material used, etc... Virtual meetings do not have a great impact on the Action budget. The only expenditure expected is on the technical equipment rented to support the organization of the virtual event. This expenditure will be reimbursed as the Local Organizer Support following the parameters explained in the COST Annotated rules, page 93.

The grant amount do cover the cost for the organization + the travels of the participants?
Any legal entity acting as a Local Organiser, to which one of the Action Participants is affiliated to, shall be eligible to receive financial support as a contribution to cover expenses carried out to organise an approved COST Action event. This financial support takes the form of a grant (Local Organiser Support). Travel of participants are covered, for further information please see section 6.4 eligibility to receive financial support of the [COST Annotated Rules](#).

How do we justify the virtual meetings budget wise in the annex?
For monitoring the dynamic of the Action, virtual meetings should be mentioned. Yet, they would only have a budgetary impact if e.g. licence for virtual meeting software would be requested.

What is the max length of stay within the Short term scientific mission?
A Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) should start and end within the Action's grant period. Grant periods run for 12 months. In average STSM takes between 5 days to 4 months. It all depends on the researcher's needs and the grant amount (up to EUR 4000).

Do I need to email potential secondary proposers inviting them and what information should I ask from them? Alternatively, can I just add their names without emailing them?
It is advisable that the network of proposers are fully informed on the proposal.

What can be funded? 3 - Dissemination / information materials, 4 - Multimedia; 5- Booth at a conference
For details, please see the [COST Annotated Rules](#), section in Annex 3 Dissemination and Communication Products on page 103-106.

I don't quite understand the role of National Coordinators --- Can I as a research propose the Action as main proposers, or do I have to go through my Norwegian National COST Coordinator?
Yes, you as a researcher can propose a COST Action as main proposer and create your own network of proposers. The COST National Coordinator only intervenes once the Action is approved in nominating the representatives to the Management Committee.

Which type of conferences we can apply with a budget of 2000€, in which we need to pay registration, accommodation, travel,,... ?
Two types of grants:
For ITC Conference grants, designated for young researchers affiliated to Inclusiveness Target countries or Near Neighbour Countries to facilitate their participation in high level conferences organized by 3rd parties to present a poster or give an oral presentation.
For the Dissemination Conference grant, any Action member can benefit from this grants for the same purpose.
The grant amount is up to EUR 2000 per grant for face to face conference or EUR 500 for virtual conferences.

There was a slide where the domain Languages and Literature had no connections with other domains. Does this influence the opportunities to apply for this domain?
No. COST is open and research coordination, capacity buildings initiatives from any scientific community is welcome.

The multimedia materials creation from professional experts not involved in the COST partnership can be funded? If yes, how?

Yes it can, multimedia content can be done by an expert and you will require a proof of delivery of the multimedia file or link to the publish file. The list of eligible expenses includes the design and production, the proof reading, editing, translation and layout expenses. This type of materials need to follow the visual identity guidelines.

The proposal is anonymous - This means that the names of grant holder and management committee will not be included? Only country and gender? What else?

Proposals must be anonymous, in order to comply with the double-blind principle of the evaluation: proposals may not contain any direct or indirect reference to people and/or their institutions participating in the Network of Proposers (Main or Secondary Proposers). This means that names of proposers or their institutions should neither be explicitly mentioned, nor be potentially identifiable through links to web pages or through references to their role and/or participation in existing or ended projects, grants, networks. For further details please consult the Open Call Applicants Guidelines and Open Call Applicants Guidelines SESA.

The overhead for COST Action management is 15% - So 90.000 Euros over 4 years max, correct? Can additional money be used to help with the day-to-day management (e.g. outsourcing webpage design and maintenance, events managements to pay admin staff etc.)?

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Therefore, the direct recipient of the FSAC contribution is the Grant Holder Institution. The aim of the COST Grant is to enable networking, and not the coverage of salaries.

The webpage design and maintenance is part of the Dissemination grant, and not part of the FSAC.

What is the website to see the funded cost actions?

Browse COST Actions - List of COST Actions past and ongoing | COST

Just to be clear : COST does not fund the hiring of communication coordinator / grant awarding coordinator, but COST insists on the relevance of these transversal functions in any given network?

COST does not pay salaries. The Science Communication Coordinator is a leadership position that is eligible for reimbursement when attending COST activities.

To submit a new COST Action, it has to be through the National Coordinators? And the main proposer of a successful proposal, can be in the management committee?

No, the main proposer can chose his/her network of proposers. Only once the Action is approved the COST National Coordinator will appoint representatives to the Management Committee.

COST Action can cover costs of IPC/EU participants. What are rules that apply for participants from other countries? Can they have costs covers to attend meetings/conferences/workshops? USA groups can participate? and Indian ones? Is Canada included in this group?
Participation is open, but USA and India researchers are not eligible for reimbursement, they need to find their own funding . International Partner Countries are not eligible for funding. Only two exceptions apply: they can only be reimbursed as a Trainer in a Training School and also as an invited speaker once in the lifetime of a COST Actions (4 years). Canada is included also in this category.

I heard some rumour that main proposer should not be from UK, Actions have greater chance to be funded if main proposer not from UK.
In COST, UK is a COST full Member and has the right to participate in all COST Activities, including leading proposals for COST Actions.

Does the COST pay for the person who is dealing with the finance of the COST Action or the main proposer's organisation has to provide this?
As already mentioned, COST does not pay salaries. The Grant Holder Institution takes care of their personnel. The FSAC is payable to the Grant Holder Institution and agreed in the Action Grant Agreement signed between the Action's selected Grant Holder Institution and the COST Association. The calculation of the FSAC is made by applying a 15% rate to the total of the eligible expenses reported and approved by the COST Administration.
Therefore, the direct recipient of the FSAC contribution is the Grant Holder Institution. Action Chairs or Grant Holder Managers are not direct recipients of this contribution. The aim of the COST Grant is to enable networking, and not the coverage of salaries.

How to become a science communication coordinator of an Action?
The Science Communication Coordinator is elected at the start of the Action during the 1st Management Committee meeting. You need to show your interest to the Action Chair of the meeting.

Can you clarify the maximum budget? Is it 600.000€ plus the grants for mobility and/or conferences, or should the initial budget of the project foresee such expenses?
EUR 600 000 is an average budget for a duration of COST Action of 4 years. Nevertheless, depending on the size of the network this amount may slightly change.

Is there a chance for non-European countries/researcher to apply for funding?
Yes, the Near Neighbour Countries (NNC) are eligible for funding, i.e Egypt. Please find here the list of NNC countries.

My understanding is that proposals do not include a budget (unlike for a research innovation Action) - The 600.000 is the max. that can be spent for the different activities you described. And 15% of this is the overhead for admin - Correct?
Yes, 15% of the annual budget incurred expenses of the COST Action is afforded to the Grant Holder Institution.

Which is the status of applicants? A single person on behalf of his/her institution or the institution itself?
A researcher or innovator affiliated to an institution.

Where can I find more details related to 'Other Expenses Related to Scientific Activities, for the acquisition of services and products needed for the optimal implementation of the networking activities and the achievement of the MoU objectives;'?
You can find this information in the COST Annotated rules, on page 107-108.

Are there specific grants for being part of a COST Action that allow financing the research activity?
COST does not fund research but networking activities.

Is there a space in COST for projects from humanities?
Yes, you can submit a proposal in any field.

Do we have to submit a budget? Is the GH managing the budget and reimbursing expenses? How to allocate the budget?
Once the Action is approved, the Action Management Committee need to establish an annual budget and action plan for every Grant Period (usually one year). This is a task which is coordinated by the Action Chair. The Grant Holder is in charge of reimbursing the expenses. For more information please visit How to apply - COST.

Is the list of secondary proposers assessed and by whom?
COST assesses if the COST Action proposal respects that Network of Proposers is coming from at least 7 different COST Full or Cooperating Members among which at least 50% shall be from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries. For further detail please consult the Open Call Applicant Guidelines (section 2.2 eligibility criteria).

Does COST only concern itself with research topics/areas related to Europe itself?
COST is bottom-up and the research topics are totally up to the researchers. They do not need to be related to Europe.

What is the effort of the coordinator (e.g. in person months), are the 15% indirect costs even enough to cover that and how can you plan at all with the amount of the 15% if the direct costs are variable? Are there any plans to change this?
The 15% is not a salary for the coordination of an Action. It is to support the Institution hosting the Action Grant, the Grant Holder. Please see above the reply on the FSAC.

How do I submit anonymously?
Please see for guidance the Open Call Applicant Guidelines, page 11 with examples.

Do you fund a salary for a PhD student? Can the funding be used to pay the fees of a MSc?
No, COST does not pay salaries.

Do the members of management receive any renumeration for their administrative work?
Please refer to the previous question on the FSAC.

Does COST support International conferences for researchers from developing countries?
If the developing countries are in the EU and fall in the category of Inclusiveness Target Countries or from the Near Neighbour Countries, then yes. If you are referring to researchers from Third State Countries, then no.

When submitting proposal do you need to already have the Management Committee contacted?
No, the proposal needs to be approved and only then the Management Committee will be nominated by the COST National Coordinator.

How and when is the budget of a COST Action determined and made final for all participants?
Once the Action is approved, every year at the beginning of the grant period the budget is negotiated with COST Association depending on the size of the network and the performance of the activities.

Can the COST-organised conference by co-funded from other entities?
Yes, COST conferences can be co-funded by other entities. It depends on the interest of that entity in the Action. However, this is not visible to COST

Members outside of IPC/EU countries can have support with costs as well?
International Partner Countries or Third States can be invited/reimbursed for an Action event only once in the Action's lifetime (4 years), or as a trainer for a Training School. For the other activities they can participate but need to find their own funding.

Are there any duration limits for the STSMs?
STSMs must only happen within the one year of the Action Grant Period, and must not cross over to the next Grant Period. A COST Action has a lifetime of 4 years, but broken down by yearly periods. As an exhibition to another conference to disseminate the COST Action, this can be done by securing a booth at the 3rd party conference.

Can we organise a science/artistic exhibition regarding the particular COST Action within the framework of Dissemination and Communication Products?
As an exhibition to another conference to disseminate the COST Action, this can be done by securing a booth at the 3rd party conference.

Our original proposal constructed last year is still in draft form on the platform. We did not pull the trigger on submission because our profile did not fulfil the geographic spread and gender distribution.
When we address the short fall in these metrics, can this cost action proposal be forwarded to the October deadline or do I have to set-up a new cost action file?
Every collection of proposals has its template, resubmission are encouraged, but you need to make sure the template is correct. Please resubmit this year again with a new COST Action file.

Regarding the preparations of our COST action application:
If our application is awarded, what would be the funding process? Will we receive the necessary budget per activity, per year, or for the entire duration of the proposed action? Additionally, will there be an evaluation period after a specific timeframe to determine whether the project can be extended?
A budget is allocated for each grant period. A grant period has a usual duration of 1 year. The amount is mainly based on available budget and the size of the network. The Management Committee is the one deciding on the networking activities to be funded. The average amount is estimated to EUR 150 000. COST Action may apply for an extension in time after the 4 year period.

Our Action aims to achieve a better understanding of new methods for evaluating complex integrated care interventions. To accomplish this, we plan to organize workshops, lectures, and webinars with experts in the field. In order to prepare for these activities, we need to identify the best and most innovative practices. Would the identification of these practices be funded under the COST Action?
Yes, if they fall within the frame of the fundable networking activities. You can refer to the COST Annotated Rules.

If we intend to sustain the network beyond the initial four-year period, would we be eligible to apply for a new COST Action?
Yes, as long as the new application is innovative. Note however that COST organises under the umbrella of the COST Academy a workshop on how to sustain the network beyond the 4 years lifetime

of the Action. Here some examples of the sustainability workshop, 1 and 2 or a success story of the BESTPRAC network.

We are hoping to submit a proposal this year on a topic mainly related to the field of law. When I search the current Actions with the key word LAW only one project is found. I am very interested if there is a known explanation for this.

Although it may seem that there is no Action on law, the representation of your discipline is well represented at the Working Group level due to the interdisciplinary nature of COST Actions. Yet, COST welcomes any community of practice to put forward a proposal in any field!