COST Networking Tools
Open Call: Submit Your Proposal
Join an Existing COST Action
Call for COST Experts

Participate

Are you eager to participate in a pan-European science and technology network? Are you already in contact with other researchers and you would like to submit a COST Action proposal? Would you like to join an existing COST Action? This section tells you how.

Scientists and researchers in COST Member Countries can participate in COST-funded science and technology networks - known as COST Actions - in two ways:

- Submitting a proposals for a new COST Action
- Joining an existing COST Action of their interest.

What is a COST Action?

Ever since it was founded in 1971, COST has been operating one main instrument, the COST Action.

COST Actions are **science and technology networks open to researchers and stakeholders** with a duration of four years. COST Actions are active through a range of networking tools, such as workshops, conferences, training schools, short-term scientific missions (STSMs), and dissemination activities.

Many COST Actions pave the way towards successful projects in the EU Framework Programme. They engage in dissemination to policy-makers and the general public and contribute to addressing problems of global societal relevance. COST Actions also contribute to widening pan-European participation and reinforce cooperation with COST Near Neighbour Countries.

Who can participate?

Researchers can participate in COST Actions based on their affiliation to an institution or organisation and on geographic location.

Researchers affiliated to the following institutions can participate in COST Actions:

- 'Institutions' from COST Member Countries, Near Neighbour Countries and International Partner Countries, including:
  - Government Organisations, except Intergovernmental Organisations;
  - Universities and Associated Organisations;
  - Business Enterprises (ranging from SMEs to multinationals);
  - Private Non-Profit Organisations/NGOs (even if international);
  - Standards Organisations (even if international);
- European Commission and EU Agencies;
- European RTD Organisations, including: CERN, EMBL, ESA, ESO, ESRF, European XFEL, ILL, EFDA JET;
- International Organisations (i.e. intergovernmental organisations whose members are countries), excluding European RTD Organisations.

How does a COST Action work?

COST Actions are set up to achieve **specific objectives within their four-year duration**. These objectives define the collective creation, diffusion and application of knowledge in the frame of the COST Action, and form the basis of the Actions' Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs).

COST Actions are managed by a Management Committee (MC) which is composed of up to two representatives of each COST Country having accepted the MoU of the Action. MC Members are nominated by the COST National Coordinators (CNC) of the COST Countries they represent. The Action MC decides upon all budget-related questions,

COST Actions are...

Pan-European:
The COST intergovernmental framework spans 35 COST Countries and one cooperating State;

Bottom-up:
Both in terms of topics and objectives proposed, as well as work organisation. The topics are selected by proposers; scientific management decisions are entrusted to their own Management Committees;

Open - in terms of participation:
COST Actions can grow in size throughout their lifetime;

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

Interdisciplinary:
They bridge different research communities, help build and expand multidisciplinary communities;

Future-oriented:
COST Actions promote actively the participation of the next generation of researchers;

Globally connected:
Participants from Non COST countries may join on the basis of mutual interest.

COST Action funding

The average COST Action budget depends on the number of COST Countries participating in the Action. The funding is provided via yearly grant agreement.

COST is supported by the EU 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) and funds the networking activities carried out by COST Actions.

COST only funds networking activities by providing a set of COST-funded 'networking tools' allowing to share knowledge and resources towards common objectives. COST Actions do not fund research and require members to provide their own funding to achieve their research objectives. The majority of the activities needed for the achievement of Action objectives rely on nationally- or institutionally-funded research projects and resources (e.g. employee time, institutional infrastructures and equipment).This allows COST Actions to leverage national and institutional funding towards efficient trans-European research cooperation.

COST also funds the coordination and decision-making meetings needed to plan and perform the Actions scientific and technological activities (i.e. Management Committee Meetings).

devises the general Action strategy and manages the organisation of the Action's scientific and technological activities.

They are **open** throughout their lifetime to new members and are **adaptable** in terms of internal organisation and strategy. Thus, COST Actions are especially well suited to pursue **new ideas through collaborative efforts** and to build communities around science and technology topics that have previously failed to gather the necessary critical mass.

COST is supported by the EU RTD Framework Programme

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