

COST Impact Study and Customer Satisfaction Survey 2014

Final Report - Customer Satisfaction Survey

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1. Introduction

This report provides the findings of the customer satisfaction surveys that were run as part of the study ‘COST Impact Study and Customer Satisfaction Survey 2014’. The study was commissioned by the COST Office and undertaken by Technopolis between December 2013 and May 2014 under the guidance of COST’s Impact Analysis Expert Panel.

The study has dual objectives: the first concerns the added value of COST activities for the European Research Area in terms of the results and impacts achieved (impact assessment). The second concerns the relevance of COST endeavours and the degree of satisfaction with them among its various stakeholder groups (customer satisfaction). In addition, the study provides overall conclusions regarding the future potential role and added value of COST in the European Research Area.

This report provides an overview of the respondents’ profile to the online questionnaires and summarises the key findings regarding the customer satisfaction element of the study. The findings of the impact assessment are presented in a separate volume.

1.1 Scale and scope of the study

The scope of the study differs slightly between the impact assessment (IA) and the customer satisfaction study (CSS). The specification identifies the following COST.

- All Actions started between 2006 and 2010 that are completed or in the last year of implementation by today are covered by the impact part of the study
- All Actions running and completed between 2010 and 2013 are covered by the customer satisfaction component of the study

The figure below provides an overview of the different populations that were taken into account for the purposes of this combined study.

Figure 1 Overview of the number of COST Actions that belong to the IA and the CSS parts of the study per COST Domain

Domain		Both IA and CSS	CSS only	Total
Biomedicine and Molecular Biosciences	BMBS	36	25	61
Chemistry and Molecular Sciences and Technologies	CMST	34	19	53
Earth System Science and Environmental Management	ESSEM	31	19	50
Food and Agriculture	FA	36	22	58
Forests, their Products and Services	FPS	24	16	40
Information and Communication Technologies	ICT	29	20	49
Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health	ISCH	33	25	58
Materials, Physics and Nanosciences	MPNS	30	24	59
Transport and Urban Development	TUD	24	49	37
Total		277	188	465

Technopolis based on COST Office data

1.2 Methodology

Questionnaire surveys were used to seek the views of the customers of COST, building on a multiple survey design tailored to different stakeholder groups. The surveys were addressed to six main target groups, including COST Action Management Committee participants, unsuccessful applicants to COST Open Calls, COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) members and COST Country National Coordinators (CSO / CNC), COST Domain Committee (DC) members, participants in COST Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) and non-participants. The first two groups were further split based on when the individual participated in / applied for a COST Action that belonged to the customer satisfaction element or both the impact and customer satisfaction elements of the study, creating eight target groups in total (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Survey populations and response rates

Group	Individuals / Actions in scope	Individuals contacted	Number of responses	Response rate
MC Chairs / Participants	Participants in Actions started between 2006 and 2010 (combined questionnaire)	11,977	3,294	28%
	Participants in Actions running during 2010–13, if not included above (CS questionnaire)	7,962	2,817	35%
Unsuccessful Applicants	Unsuccessful applicants to open calls between 2006-1 and 2010-2 (combined questionnaire)	2,516	168	7%
	Unsuccessful applicants to open calls between 2011-1 and 2013-1 (CS questionnaire)	1,665	234	14%
CSO / CNC	All current CSOs / CNCs (combined questionnaire)	61	31	51%
DC Member	Members between 2006-13 (combined questionnaire)	414	136	33%
STSM	All participants in STSMs started between 2006-2010 (if not included in first group)	4,525	1,598	35%
Total		29,120	8,278	28%
Non-participants	Anyone who has not applied to COST during the 2006-13 period	n/a	185	n/a

1.3 Respondent profile to the online questionnaires

In total, 8,463 individuals responded to the COST impact and customer satisfaction surveys. Not all respondents answered all questions, and so the response rates vary throughout this report, and these are indicated in the relevant tables or text. In particular, a proportion of the MC Chairs and Participants and Unsuccessful Applicants – in line with the different time periods covered by the two elements of the study - were asked to complete a shorter version of the questionnaire, which focused only on customer satisfaction and not on the impacts of COST Actions. The response

rates reported in relation to impacts are therefore lower than those for customer satisfaction.

Respondents included people located in all COST member and associated countries, with the spread of responses broadly reflecting respective country populations. At least 40 other countries were also represented, most commonly Australia, the USA, New Zealand and the Ukraine. For most of the stakeholder groups, a majority of respondents were located in EU15 countries ('old Member States'). However, respondents from 'New Member States' were more common among DC members.

The majority of respondents were male (64%), although female respondents dominated the responses from CSO/CNCs and non-participants. The vast majority work in academia (70%), while smaller proportions come from other research institutes or laboratories (19%), Government (5%) or Industry (3%). Respondents were spread across all nine COST Domains, with between 5% and 14% of all participants and non-participants stating that their research and activities best fit into one of the Domains. Around one-quarter of both MC chairs and participants (at the time of participating) and non-participants (now) responding to the surveys can be classified as Early Stage Researchers (ESRs), being under 38 years of age.

The MC Participants and Chairs responding to the survey had (on average) been involved in the submission of two COST proposals each, with one on average being successful. Unsuccessful Applicants had also (on average) been involved in two proposals submitted to COST. Most STSM respondents had participated in a COST STSM once; however, a quarter (23%) had participated two or more times. Two-thirds (68%) of DC members responding had also previously participated in at least one COST Action, while one-third (35%) had participated in the submission of a COST proposal. Most (70%) Unsuccessful Applicants and Participants responding to the survey had participated in international research collaboration projects funded by other international bodies in the past six years. Finally, CSO/CNC respondents had (on average) been in post for 6 years.

2. Results of the Customer Satisfaction Surveys

All of the stakeholder surveys to varying degrees asked respondents about their satisfaction with COST operations and activities, including the application/selection process, tools, financial administration and the support provided by the COST office. The questions posed were based on those used for the 2009 CSS questionnaire, with changes, deletions and additions by the study team and COST Office to improve and simplify the questionnaire and to reflect changing priorities and realities. A number of questions have remained the same between the two surveys, and a detailed comparison of the two sets of results is presented in the appendix.

A methodological remark: The CSS 2009 used a 10-point scale for most questions (e.g. 1 = very dissatisfied to 10 = very satisfied), whereas the 2013 survey makes use of a 5-point scale. This change creates simpler questions that are easier to answer, with options that are more meaningful (1- very dissatisfied, 2 - dissatisfied, 3 - neither, 4 - satisfied, 5 - very satisfied) than just numbers, assisting and encouraging respondents to provide a more accurate reflection of their position. For the comparison presented below, the 10-point scale has been translated to a 5-point scale (e.g. 9+10 in CSS 2009 translates to 5 – very satisfied in CSS 2013).

2.1 Satisfaction with the COST application and selection process

Those who had been unsuccessful in their application to COST were asked for their views on various aspects of the application and selection process. Their feedback suggests that the call process is generally considered transparent and easy to understand, and that the online tool for applications is seen as effective. However, feedback was generally less positive in relation to the usefulness of support provided by National Coordinators in preparing proposals, the clarity of evaluation criteria used to assess proposals, and the appropriateness of the feedback then provided by COST on applications.

Figure 3 Satisfaction with the COST application and selection process – Unsuccessful Applicants

	Strongly/ disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly/ agree	Responses
The Open Call for proposals process is easy to understand	16%	19%	65%	367
The Open Call for proposals process is transparent	23%	28%	49%	354
The on-line tool used for applications is effective	11%	17%	71%	348
You got support from your National Coordinator in preparing your project	46%	31%	22%	299
The criteria used for evaluating COST proposals are appropriate	48%	28%	24%	359
The feedback you received from COST in relation to the outcome of your application was appropriate	57%	21%	22%	353

Surveys of Unsuccessful Applicants. 'Don't know' answers excluded.

The proportion of Unsuccessful Applicants agreeing with four of these statements has been recorded in both 2009 and 2013. As Figure 4 shows, in each case there has been a slight decline in the proportion agreeing with the statements between 2009 and 2013 – and particularly the proportion that felt that the feedback on their application was 'appropriate' (the word 'reasonable' was used in 2009).

Figure 4 Proportion of Unsuccessful Applicants who ‘strongly- / agreed’ that...

	2009	2013
The feedback you received from COST in relation to the outcome of your application was appropriate (/reasonable)	33%	22%
The on-line tool used for applications is effective	75%	71%
The Open Call for proposals process is easy to understand	68%	65%
You got support from your National Coordinator in preparing your project	23%	22%

Surveys of Unsuccessful Applicants, 2009 and 2013. ‘Don’t know’ answers excluded.

In 2013, Unsuccessful Applicants were also asked specifically about the extent to which they or a colleague experienced difficulties with the online submission system for COST Action proposals. On a scale of 1 (no problems at all) to 5 (significant problems), applicants provided an average score of 1.7 for ‘understanding instructions for steps in the submission process’, and 1.6 for technical aspects (such as the transfer of data). This suggests that most have had little difficulty with the system. Indeed, just 3% and 2% (respectively) reported significant problems with either of these issues.

As can be seen in Figure 5, the proportion of Unsuccessful Applicants reporting problems with the instructions or procedures is broadly the same in 2013 as it was in 2009.

Figure 5 Proportion of Unsuccessful Applicants who experienced ‘significant- / problems’ with...

	2009	2013
Understanding instructions for steps in the submission process	6%	9%
Technical procedures (e.g. transfer of data)	7%	8%

Surveys of Unsuccessful Applicants, 2009 and 2013. ‘Don’t know’ answers excluded.

DC members were also asked about a set of statements relating to the COST application process. The responses show a rather positive picture, regarding the following statements:

- The on-line tool used for applications is effective (90% strongly/agree)
- The open call for proposals process is transparent (86%)
- The time for application submission to start of the Action is appropriate (83%)

Some improvements seem to be needed in relation to the evaluation criteria and the external experts used, since the responses are less positive:

- The criteria used for evaluating COST proposals are appropriate (72%)
- External experts are relevant and appropriate (66%)

These suggestions are in line with the ongoing review process that is aimed at improving COST’s evaluation procedures and committee structure, and reinforced by the MC participants’ responses as elaborated below.

DC members were also asked whether they thought that trans-Domain proposals required a different evaluation process. Only one-third of respondents (35%) indicated that they did believe these applications required a different process.

The 2009 customer satisfaction survey overall highlighted five main areas for improvement relating to the application and selection process and to the clarity of COST’s procedures, objective and scope. As part of the current survey, most respondents were asked whether the situation in each of these areas had improved or not since 2009. The aggregated results are shown in Figure 6 below – disaggregated results by stakeholder group are presented in the appendix.

Of those responding, a majority felt that the clarity of COST’s procedures (57%), and its objectives and scope (55%) had improved over this period, with most of the remainder stating that the situation had not changed (neither improved or worsened) since 2009. In the other three ‘problem’ areas put to respondents (feedback on

applications, objectivity/transparency of evaluation criteria, and support for applicants from NCs) the situation is reversed, with more respondents saying the situation was unchanged than improved. These results would suggest that all five areas – and particularly the latter three – remain areas for improvement.

Figure 6 Changes in the ‘areas for improvement’ highlighted by CSS 2009

All respondents	Worsened	Unchanged	Improved	n
Clarity over COST’s procedures	5%	38%	57%	2,098
Clarity over COST’s objectives and scope	3%	42%	55%	2,108
The feedback received on applications	7%	48%	45%	1,713
The objectivity and transparency of evaluation criteria used to assess proposals	7%	51%	42%	1,720
The support applicants receive from their national coordinator	10%	57%	33%	1,834

Surveys of MC Chairs and Participants, Unsuccessful Applicants, CSO/CNCs and DC Members. ‘Don’t know’ answers excluded.

Looking across the different stakeholder groups, broadly the CSOs and CNCs and the DC member respondents were most likely to have seen an improvement in each of the areas, followed by MC chairs and participants. Unsuccessful Applicants were the most likely to say that the situation had worsened with regard to each of the problem areas put to them, which is unsurprising since applicants tend to provide less positive feedback on the schemes they applied for unsuccessfully.

2.2 Satisfaction with COST-funded activities and tools

MC chairs and participants were asked about their level of satisfaction with six different COST funded activities and tools (see Figure 7). For each, a majority of respondents (61%+) were satisfied or very satisfied. However, there was some variation. The highest levels of ‘non-satisfaction’ were for the Near Neighbours Scheme and for financial support for action publications, where ~40% of respondents said they were either ‘very-/ dissatisfied’ or ‘neither satisfied or dissatisfied’.

Figure 7 Satisfaction with activities and tools – MC chairs and participants

	Very/ dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Very/ satisfied	n
Action meetings (workshops, working groups, etc)	2%	5%	93%	5,393
Short-term scientific missions (STSMs), used to fund exchange visits to an institution or laboratory	5%	11%	84%	4,830
Local Organiser Support, for the preparation of meetings, workshops, conferences	3%	12%	85%	4,511
Training schools	3%	16%	81%	3,972
Near Neighbours Scheme (budget allowing involvement from Europe’s Near Neighbours)	9%	30%	61%	3,614
Financial support for Action publications	6%	32%	61%	3,060

Surveys of MC Chairs and Participants. ‘Don’t know’ answers excluded.

As the figure below shows, the proportion of MC chairs and participants who were satisfied or very satisfied with each of the activities and tools was lower in 2013 than in 2009, with the exception of training schools (where the proportion is the same). The largest drop in satisfaction levels from 2009 to 2013 relates to the financial support for Action publications. In 2009 75% were very- / satisfied with this element, while the same was true of only 61% of respondents in 2013.

Figure 8 Proportion of MC chairs and participants who were ‘very- / satisfied’ with...

	2009	2013
Short-term scientific missions (STSMs), used to fund exchange visits to an institution or laboratory	90%	86%
Local Organiser Support, for the preparation of meetings, workshops, conferences	87%	83%
Training schools	81%	81%
Financial support for Action publications	75%	61%
Near Neighbours Scheme, i.e. budget that allows involvement of researchers in Europe’s Near Neighbours	69%	62%

Surveys of MC Chairs and Participants, 2009 and 2013. ‘Don’t know’ answers excluded.

DC members were asked for their level of satisfaction with the same activities and tools, and gave a similar (though more positive) response to the MC chairs and participants. Even so, more than one-quarter of this group were still ‘non-satisfied’ with the financial support for publications and the Near Neighbours Scheme.

Figure 9 Satisfaction with activities and tools – DC members

	Very/ dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Very/ satisfied	n
Action meetings (workshops, working groups, etc)	0%	0%	100%	126
Short-term scientific missions (STSMs), used to fund exchange visits to an institution or laboratory	1%	13%	87%	120
Local Organiser Support, for the preparation of meetings, workshops, conferences	1%	4%	95%	123
Training schools	0%	3%	97%	121
Near Neighbours Scheme (budget allowing involvement from Europe’s Near Neighbours)	5%	25%	71%	106
Financial support for Action publications	0%	26%	73%	95

Surveys of DC Members. ‘Don’t know’ answers excluded.

Again, the DC member responses are slightly more negative than they were in 2009 for most of the activities and tools. The exception is training schools, with which a higher proportion of DC members were satisfied in 2013 than in 2009, and STSMs where DC members’ views both in 2009 and 2013 show very high levels of satisfaction with the tools (96% and 95% respectively).

Figure 10 Proportion of DC members who were ‘very- / satisfied’ with...

	2009	2013
Short-term scientific missions (STSMs), used to fund exchange visits to an institution or laboratory	96%	95%
Local Organiser Support, for the preparation of meetings, workshops, conferences	93%	87%
Training schools	88%	97%
Financial support for Action publications	84%	71%
Near Neighbours Scheme, i.e. budget that allows involvement of researchers in Europe’s Near Neighbours	83%	73%

Surveys of DC Members, 2009 and 2013. ‘Don’t know’ answers excluded.

MC chairs and participants were questioned about their experiences specifically of COST Action meetings, workshops and conferences that they had attended, and asked to agree or disagree with a series of positive statements. In most cases there was a very high level of agreement:

- 96% agreed that there were a sufficient number of countries involved (above the 92% agreeing in 2009)
- 92% agreed that the events contributed to COST Action objectives (similar to the 94% agreeing in 2009)

- 90% agreed that the level of participation by Action participants was adequate (similar to the 91% agreeing in 2009)
- 80% agreed that the inclusion of field trips was beneficial (not asked in 2009)

Only half (52%) agreed that there were a sufficient number of users (such as industry, regulatory bodies or government) involved. Nevertheless, this proportion is an improvement on the 44% who agreed with the statement in 2009.

2.3 Satisfaction with the support provided by COST

MC chairs and participants, CSO / CNCs and DC members were each asked about their level of satisfaction with three broad aspects of the support provided by the COST office: the speed of response; the quality of information and documentation provided; and the readiness of the COST office in addressing problems and issues. The feedback overall was positive, with at least 80% of all respondents being satisfied or very satisfied with each aspect, compared to just 4% who were dissatisfied. The levels of satisfaction reported by each stakeholder group are shown in the tables below.

Figure 11 Satisfaction with aspects of support provided by the COST Office, per cent of those who indicated ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’

	MC Chairs and Participants	CSOs and CNCs	DC Members	All respondents
Speed of response	83%	92%	85%	83%
Quality of information / documentation provided	84%	84%	83%	84%
Readiness in addressing problems / issues	81%	83%	74%	80%

Surveys of MC chairs/participants, DC members and CSO/CNCs. Excludes ‘don’t know’ answers

The high level of satisfaction with the support provided by the COST Office is even more positive, taking into account that the workload of the Science Officers in the COST Office has increased significantly during the past few years. While in 2009 a Science Officer was in charge of 16 Actions running throughout a year, nowadays the equivalent figure is 27, which is coupled by a large number of proposals (about 100 each) that need to be taken through the selection process.

For the 2009 survey, only DC members were asked about their level of satisfaction with these three aspects of the support provided by the COST office. A comparison of the levels of satisfaction between the two years is shown below. The proportion of DC members who were satisfied with the readiness and speed of response appears to have fallen slightly between the two years, while the proportion that are satisfied with the quality of information has risen slightly.

Figure 12 Proportion of DC members who where ‘very- / satisfied’ with...

	2009	2013
Speed of response	93%	85%
Quality of information / documentation provided	76%	83%
Readiness in addressing problems / issues	93%	74%

Surveys of DC Members, 2009 and 2013. ‘Don’t know’ answers excluded.

The decrease in the level of satisfaction regarding the ‘Readiness in addressing problems / issues’ of the COST Office might be explained, with the increased workload as described above. However, the COST Office should ensure that there is sufficient attention paid to these issues as well.

DC members were additionally asked how satisfied they were with COST support specifically with the organisation of DC meetings, APCs and DC hearings. The majority (88%) reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied, while only 7% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

2.4 Satisfaction with COST financial administration

MC participants and chairs were asked about their levels of satisfaction with various financial aspects of COST activities and tools. The feedback, presented in Figure 13 below, shows the group was most positive about the financial limits for travel reimbursements (nearly three quarters reported they were satisfied or very satisfied). The proportion that were satisfied with financial limits for STSM and FSAC and the 10% top up for near neighbour participation was slightly lower, but still represented a majority of the participants responding.

Figure 13 Satisfaction with financial aspects of COST activities and tools

MC Chairs and Participants	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	n
Financial limits for travel reimbursements	2%	9%	16%	55%	18%	5,253
Financial limits for STSM	2%	14%	26%	48%	10%	4,433
Financial limits for FSAC*	3%	10%	35%	43%	9%	2,982
Near Neighbour top up**	1%	5%	37%	48%	9%	2,806

Survey of MC Chairs and Participants ‘Don’t know’ answers excluded.

*Paid as support to the grant holder (15% of scientific expenses). **Up to 10% top up of Action budget if researchers from Near Neighbour Countries are MC Observers or active participants

DC members were asked the same question, and their feedback (shown below) very closely aligned with that from the MC participants and chairs.

Figure 14 Satisfaction with financial aspects of COST activities and tools

DC Members	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	n
Financial limits for travel reimbursements	2%	7%	20%	54%	18%	123
Financial limits for STSM	2%	11%	25%	54%	8%	111
Financial limits for FSAC*	3%	8%	34%	48%	7%	98
Near Neighbour top up**	0%	5%	31%	55%	10%	84

Surveys of MC Chairs and Participants, and DC Members. ‘Don’t know’ answers excluded.

Both the 2009 and 2013 customer satisfaction surveys asked MC chairs and participants and DC members about their satisfaction with financial limits for travel reimbursements. As Figure 15 shows, the proportion of both groups of stakeholders reporting they were satisfied declined markedly from 2009 to 2013.

Figure 15 Proportion who were ‘very- / satisfied’ with financial limits for travel

	2009	2013
MC Chairs and participants	91%	73%
DC Members	94%	72%

Surveys of MC Chairs and participants and DC Members, 2009 and 2013. ‘Don’t know’ answers excluded.

MC chairs and participants generally reported that they are positive about the change in the reimbursement process from a centrally managed ‘pay as you go’ system to a grant system. Nearly two thirds of participants (64%) felt that this had improved the process, while only 14% felt that it had worsened it. DC members gave a more mixed response, with 42% saying the process had improved and 26% saying it had worsened.

One third of MC chairs and participants, and an even higher proportion (40%) of DC members confirmed that they were aware of individuals experiencing difficulties

participating in networking activities because of financial issues. When asked to say more about the issues involved, a number of common themes emerged:

- Limits on the number of (reimbursable) participants per country or overall are restrictive. There is excess demand for places (funding), meaning participation is lower than it might be, and those that are present vary meeting-by-meeting
- The time delay (commonly 3 months) between expense and reimbursement can deter or stop participation – because institutions or individuals do not wish to (cannot) cover the costs in the interim. This problem appears particularly acute for certain countries (Southern/Eastern Europe, NNC) and for certain participants (ESRs, those without institutional support). Some cannot attend a second meeting in a year because they are waiting for reimbursement for the previous one.
- Linked to this, there is a lack of financial support available generally for some (again, particularly in Southern and Eastern Europe) – for research as a whole, and for participation in COST activities
- The true travel / accommodation costs faced (in different locations, for different distances, at different times of the year) can be insufficiently reflected in the set reimbursement rates
- Certain rules prevent participation (e.g. retirees or MC substitutes not being eligible for reimbursement, or Action-level reimbursement rates being set below COST standard rates)
- There are additional (non-reimbursed) costs involved (e.g. conference fees)

Anticipating concern about the reimbursement time, a question was included to the surveys of MC chairs and participants and DC members, which asked them to specify what they felt would be the most reasonable time between submitting a travel reimbursement form, and being reimbursed. A majority of both groups (73% and 77% respectively) suggested that 2-3 weeks would be appropriate, rather than the 2-3 months that respondents had suggested that it can currently take.

2.5 Satisfaction with other elements

CSOs and CNCs were asked to assess their level of agreement (and therefore satisfaction) with a series of statements about COST overall. A majority agreed with each statement, providing widespread endorsement for current approaches:

- COST is fulfilling the objectives for which it was designed (97% agreed or strongly agreed), much higher than the 73% achieved in 2009
- COST is an appropriate mechanism to achieve desired networking benefits (93%), similar to the 95% achieved in 2009
- COST is reaching the kind of customers it should be reaching (80%), slightly higher than the 78% achieved in 2009
- COST is effective in responding to the feedback from the COST Actions (50%), below the 65% achieved in 2009

CSOs and CNCs were also asked to assess three specific statements about the selection of MC members and the processes undertaken by DC members:

- A majority agreed that the appointment process results in high-quality MC member nominations (71%), slightly above the 68% in 2009
- A majority also agreed that DC members represent their Domains objectively and in consistency with COST policies (62%), though slightly below the 76% achieved in 2009
- Just under half (48%) agreed that DC members are effective in dealing with multi-disciplinary themes (well below the 62% achieved in 2009), with a further one-third of respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this statement.

DC members were asked about specific elements of COST’s operations as well. When asked how scientific committees should be organised, three quarters (73%) said that this should be by scientific discipline, while only 19% said that this should be by technological sector. A small number (8%) indicated an alternative system would be preferable. Most of the latter suggesting a system that combined both science and technology, while other individuals suggested basing the organisation of committees on European priorities, policy areas, issues / challenges, and applications.

The same group were asked whether APCs were an efficient tool for monitoring COST Actions (82% agreed that they were), and whether MPR and Final Action reports in their current state are the right tools for monitoring and assessment of COST Actions (74% agreed that they were).

2.6 Future participation in COST Actions

MC chairs and participants, STSM participants, Unsuccessful Applicants and Non-Participants were all asked (i) whether they would consider applying for COST network funding in the future, and (ii) whether they would recommend COST network funding to a colleague.

The feedback (the proportion saying ‘yes’ is shown below) suggests nearly all participants would both recommend COST funding to others and consider applying again. Unsuccessful Applicants were slightly less positive – just over two-thirds would recommend / consider applying. The non-participants were not asked about whether they would recommend COST (as they have not yet applied), but a majority (96%) said they would consider applying in the future.

Figure 16 Would you apply to COST in the future, and would you recommend COST

		MC chairs and participants	STSM participants	Unsuccessful Applicants	Non-participants
Would you consider applying for COST network funding at the next opportunity	%	92%	98%	68%	96%
	Total nr of respondents	4,606	1,363	278	108
Would you recommend COST network funding to a colleague	%	97%	99%	71%	-
	Total nr of respondents	2,765	1,526	295	-

Surveys of MC chairs and participants, STSM participants, Unsuccessful Applicants and non-participants.

The same questions were put to Unsuccessful Applicants in 2009. The figure below compares the response this year and previously, and shows a slight decline in both the proportion of applicants that would consider applying again, and the proportion that would recommend COST network funding.

Figure 17 Proportion of Unsuccessful Applicants who said ‘yes’ that...

	2009	2013
Would you consider applying for COST funding at the next opportunity	77%	68%
Would you recommend COST network funding to a colleague	79%	71%

Surveys of Unsuccessful Applicants, 2009 and 2013.

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