

Brussels, 23 April 2018

EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (COST)

OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS – COLLECTION OC-2018-1

COST aims to enable breakthrough scientific developments leading to new concepts and products. It thereby contributes to strengthening Europe's research and innovation capacities.

In order to achieve its mission and goal, COST has identified a set of objectives aiming at supporting high quality, collaborative networks in all fields of science and technology, while focusing on existing but less prevailing areas allowing to increase COST overall impact:

- Joining research efforts and developing common S&T programmes by coordinating nationally funded research activities led by pan-European, high quality, collaborative S&T networks.
- Building capacity by providing networking and leadership opportunities for emerging talents and thereby strengthening and building up excellent S&T communities.
- Addressing Societal Questions by promoting transdisciplinary, new approaches and topics and identifying early warning signals of unforeseen societal problems aiming to contribute to Societal Challenges.
- Strengthening COST Inclusiveness Policy by fostering better access and integration of less research intensive countries' researchers to the knowledge hubs of the European Research Area aiming at contributing to the Widening Pillar of Horizon 2020.

COST brings together European researchers, engineers and scholars from different COST countries to jointly develop their own ideas and new initiatives across all science and technology fields through trans-European cooperation. COST encourages and fosters trans-, multi- and interdisciplinary approaches by integrating researchers, engineers and scholars from different fields and horizons such as universities, research centers, companies, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as other relevant actors.

COST does NOT fund research itself, but supports networking via different tools such as meetings, short term scientific missions, training schools and dissemination activities part of COST Actions. COST invites proposals for Actions aiming at contributing to the scientific, technological, economic, cultural or societal knowledge advancement and development of Europe to close the gap between science, policy makers and society throughout Europe and beyond.

Proposals should reflect the main characteristics of COST Actions, namely providing for knowledge sharing, creation and application, being open and output-oriented while aiming at strengthening the scientific and technological basis of the proposed topic(s).

Proposals should also respond to the COST Excellence, Inclusiveness and Widening policy, which aims to provide collaboration opportunities to all researchers, engineers and scholars in COST countries, encourage participation among young talents and next generation leaders, in particular promoting working opportunities for early career investigators, and ensure gender balance, paving the way towards breakthrough developments and innovations.

Proposals will be evaluated against criteria of S&T excellence, impact and implementation.

Proposals for a COST Action must represent a network composed of proposers from at least seven (7) COST Members¹ amongst which a minimum number shall be from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC)².

Selected proposals for COST Actions will get a financial support in the range of EUR 129.000 p.a., normally for four years, subject to available budget.

Proposers are invited to consult the set of COST Implementation Rules, approved by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), the general assembly of the COST Association, into force as of 19 December 2016 (see www.cost.eu/opencall)³.

The COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) rules and procedure are based on the bottom-up, open and inclusive principles of COST and will ensure a simple, transparent and competitive evaluation and selection of proposals (see document COST 133/14 REV – COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval on www.cost.eu/opencall)

Proposers benefit from a one-stage submission based upon a proposal of up to 15 pages.

Submitted proposals will be checked against eligibility criteria and can be declared as non-eligible at any point of the process should any breach of those be identified during the evaluation as defined in the rules. Similarly, any attempt not to respect the conflict of interest rules can lead to the immediate exclusion of the proposal from the evaluation, selection and approval process.

Proposals will be evaluated remotely by a minimum of 3 independent External Experts in the S&T field(s), sub-field(s) and research area(s) chosen by the proposers. Ad-hoc Review Panels will carry out a quality check, convene how to manage differences in opinions, arbitrate and establish a ranked list of proposals having passed the overall threshold. The Scientific Committee Identifying, among the list of proposals presented by the Review Panels, those that respond best to COST mission and policies. The Scientific Committee will establish the shortlist of proposals that shall be presented to the CSO for approval.

The 2018-1 Collection Date is set to 27 April 2018 at 12:00 (CET) – Noon.

The final decision on approval and funding for new COST Actions is foreseen for November 2018. 40 new Actions are expected to be approved, subject to available budget.

The Proposal Template is available on www.cost.eu/opencall⁴. The Guidelines for submitting COST Action proposals are available on the same page. Proposals must be submitted electronically via e-COST. Proposers will be able to submit proposals anytime throughout the year via the e-COST new online submission tool.

The next Collection Date is envisaged for end of November 2018.

Proposers may wish to contact their COST National Coordinator (CNC) for information and guidance – see www.cost.eu/cnc.

COST receives financial support from the EU RTD framework programme, Horizon 2020. The COST Association, integrating governance, management and implementing functions, provides for the administrative, scientific and technical support in the operation of COST rules and procedures and the management of COST Actions.

¹ The full list of COST Members is available at http://www.cost.eu/about_cost/cost_countries

² See list of ITC countries at http://www.cost.eu/about_cost/strategy/excellence-inclusiveness and the minimum number of ITC in the network in the annex 2 (page 16) in the Document COST 133/14 REV: COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval.

³ Documents COST 132/14 REV2, 133/14 REV, 134/14 REV2, 135/14 REV

⁴ See under Key Documents: Technical_Annex.docx