

Brussels, 19 December 2016
COST 135/14
REV

CSO DECISION

Subject: **Amendment of document COST 135/14: COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation**

The document for “COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation” establishes the main principles and rules for the participation in COST Actions of researchers from COST Near Neighbour Countries and International Partner Countries as well as from Specific Organisations. These rules shall replace the document COST 135/14 and shall enter into force as of 19 December 2016.

The Committee of Senior Officials approved this document on 19 December 2016 by written procedure.



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RULES FOR PARTICIPATION OF NON-COST COUNTRIES AND SPECIFIC ORGANISATIONS

The COST Committee of Senior Officials (“CSO”) having regard to:

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

The Internal Rules of the COST Association;

The CSO Decision COST 132/14 REV, “Rules for the Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”,

In accordance with its role as General Assembly of the COST Association,

Whereas:

- (1) The “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” present the general principles applicable to the participation in and implementation of COST activities, in particular COST Actions, including the openness to countries other than the COST Members and the participation of Specific Organisations.
- (2) COST should reinforce and support the participation of Non-COST Countries in COST activities, in particular COST Actions underpinning its open and global scope.
- (3) COST should strengthen the cooperation with regard to R&D with neighbouring countries contributing to the creation of reliable networks, building mutual knowledge and trust to increase the collaboration for the achievement of common goals.
- (4) COST should be open to the participation of representatives from Specific Organisations¹ on the basis of ascertained mutual benefit.

Has adopted the present “Rules for Participation of Non-COST Countries and Specific Organisations” in accordance with the “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST activities”.

The present rules aim at further developing on the principles and rules contained in the “Rules for the Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” concerning the implementation of COST Activities. The rules shall be subordinated to and may not contravene the “Rules for the Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”. In case of any contradiction between those CSO Decisions, the “COST Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” shall prevail.

SUBJECT MATTER AND SCOPE

This decision lays down the rules for “Participation of Non-COST Countries and Specific Organisations” with the aim to facilitate the implementation of the COST global scope regarding its international cooperation and collaboration with organisations. These rules derive and align to the general principles and rules of “COST Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” and shall be complementary to the COST Rules on “COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection, and Approval” and “COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment”.

Beyond COST Members, COST allows, once mutual benefit has been ascertained, the involvement of participants from Non-COST Countries and Specific Organisations, such as EU bodies, offices and agencies, European RTD and International Organisations, in COST Actions and other activities.

¹ The definition of Specific Organisations may be found in the CSO Decision establishing the “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of the CSO Decision establishing the “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” shall apply to this Decision.

Further, for the purpose of the present Decision, the following definition shall apply:

Approved Institutions: means institutions located in Non-COST Countries (either Near-Neighbour Countries (NNC)² or International Partner Countries (IPC)³) which participation to a COST Action has been approved by the Action Management Committee (MC), the Head of Science Operations of the COST Administration and the Executive Board.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

The CSO has an open approach towards collaboration with Non-COST Countries and other organisations with the objective to allow for connection of European research communities involved in COST both worldwide and with key stakeholders. COST thus contributes through reliable networks to building trust among all actors involved in COST activities and helps to create the foundation for future cooperation in favour of a strong and open Europe.

1. BASIC PRINCIPLES

COST shall allow the participation from Non-COST Countries (either Near Neighbour Countries, or International Partner Countries), in COST Actions and other activities following the bottom-up principle and provided there is ascertained mutual benefit. The participation of Specific Organisations shall follow the same basic principles as appropriate.

2. CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION OF NON-COST COUNTRIES IN COST ACTIONS

NEAR NEIGHBOUR COUNTRIES (NNC)

The rules governing the participation of researchers, engineers and scholars or other stakeholders from NNC in COST Actions shall be as follows:

- When an individual located in a NNC is included in a COST Action proposal, the NNC institution to which s/he is affiliated shall be regarded as an Approved Institution upon the Actions’ approval by the CSO. However, their participation in the COST Action shall still subject to the consent of the Action MC once established;
- When an individual located in a NNC does not take part in a COST Action proposal, their participation in a COST Action requires the approval of the Action MC on the one hand and of the Head of Science Operations of the COST Administration and the Executive Board following a written procedure on the other hand; the Executive Board may invoke political or other criteria in the approval to join a COST Action; Following this procedure, the NNC institution to which s/he is affiliated shall be regarded as an Approved Institution;
- In the final year of a COST Action, no request to join a COST Action shall be possible;
- The Action MC may invite as a one-off measure scientific or technology specialists from non-approved institutions located in a NNC to a specific COST Action activity⁴.

The eligibility for reimbursement of Action Participants from NNC Approved Institutions shall be as follows:

² The list of COST Near Neighbour Countries may be found in Annex I of CSO Decision “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”.

³ International Partner Countries are Non-COST Countries not being a Near-Neighbour Country.

⁴ Further information on the limitation can be found in the COST Vademecum.

- Action Participants affiliated to NNC Approved Institutions may be invited by the Action MC to participate in Action MC meetings as MC Observers (no voting right). Up to two researchers per NNC, one per approved institution, shall be eligible for reimbursement;
- Action Participants affiliated to NNC Approved Institutions may participate in any activities organised in the COST Action.

In order to foster the cooperation between COST and NNC through COST Actions activities:

- Training schools may be allowed in NNC Approved Institutions on a case by case basis if relevant to the topic of the COST Action and proved that there shall be an added value to the COST Action;
- Subject to fund availability, a top-up to the Action budget may be provided to increase the NNC participation.

Action Participants from NNC shall agree on the objectives of the COST Action they are participating in and accomplish faithfully their tasks in that regard. They shall be asked by the Action Chair to sign a letter of confidentiality containing, inter alia, provisions about the non-disclosure of confidential information and IPR related matters.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNER COUNTRIES (IPC)

The rules governing the IPC participation of researchers, engineers and scholars and other stakeholders from IPC in COST Actions shall be as follows:

- When an individual located in an IPC is included in a COST Action proposal, the IPC institution to which s/he is affiliated shall be regarded as an Approved Institution upon the Actions' approval by the CSO. However, their participation in the COST Action shall still subject to the consent of the Action MC once established;
- When a an individual located in a IPC does not take part in a COST Action proposal, their participation in a COST Action requires the approval of the Action MC on the one hand and of the Head of Science Operations of the COST Administration and the Executive Board on the other hand; the Executive Board may invoke political or other criteria in the approval to join a COST Action; Following this procedure, the IPC institution to which s/he is affiliated shall be regarded as an Approved Institution;
- In the final year of a COST Action, no request to join an Action shall be possible;
- Action Participants affiliated to IPC Approved Institutions may be invited by the Action MC to participate in Action MC meetings as MC Observers (no voting right). Up to two researchers per IPC, one per approved institution may participate in Action MC meetings;
- Action Participants affiliated to IPC Approved Institutions may also participate in any activities organised in the COST Action; in the Working Groups they may only participate as WG members (not as WG leaders);
- The Action MC may invite scientific or technology specialists from non-approved institutions located in IPC to a specific COST Action activity;
- COST Action Participants affiliated to IPC Approved Institutions shall not be eligible for reimbursement, unless there shall be special provisions decided by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO);
- Researchers affiliated to IPC Approved Institutions invited as trainers to a COST Action Training School shall be eligible for reimbursement.

Action Participants from IPC shall agree on the objectives of the COST Action they are participating in and accomplish faithfully their tasks in that regard. They shall be asked by the Action Chair to sign a letter of confidentiality containing, inter alia, provisions about the non-disclosure of confidential information and IPR related matters.

3. CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION OF SPECIFIC ORGANISATIONS

In order to facilitate the dialogue and transfer of knowledge COST has always fostered the participation of science actors, policy makers and other relevant organisations and institutions in the COST Actions.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND EU BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

The general rules governing the participation of the European Commission (EC) and EU bodies, offices and agencies shall be as follows:

- The EC and EU bodies, offices and agencies may propose new Actions if associated with the minimum number (seven) of COST Members;
- When the EC or an EU body, office or agency takes part in a COST Action proposal its participation shall be approved upon the Actions' approval by the CSO without Action MC consent; within a period of 12 months after the Action's approval by the CSO the EC or an EU body, office or agency may join an Action without Action MC consent; after this 12 month period the participation shall require Action MC approval;
- The EC and EU bodies, offices and agencies may participate in the Action MC as MC Observer (no voting rights); and as WG Member (not as WG leader) upon Action MC decision;
- The EC or EU bodies, offices and agencies Action participants shall not be eligible for reimbursement, unless there shall be special provisions decided by the CSO.

EUROPEAN RTD ORGANISATIONS⁵

- European RTD Organisations may propose new Actions if associated with the minimum number (seven) of COST Members;
- European RTD Organisations may participate in a COST Action;
- When an European RTD Organisation takes part in a COST Action proposal, its participation shall be approved upon the Actions' approval by the CSO, without Action MC consent; within a period of 12 months after the Action's approval by the CSO, a European RTD Organisation may join an Action without Action MC consent; after this 12 month period, the participation shall require Action MC approval;
- European RTD Organisations may participate in the Action MC as MC Observers (no voting rights); and as WG Member (not as a WG leader) upon Action MC decision;
- If a representative of a European RTD Organisation being an Action Participant is nominated by a COST Member as Action MC member on behalf of that COST Member, he/she may participate as Action Chair, Action MC member or WG leader in their capacity of Action MC Member for that COST Member;
- Action Participants from European RTD Organisations shall be eligible for reimbursement, unless there shall be special provisions decided by the CSO.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- International organisations may not propose new Actions, even if the potential proposer is based in a COST Member; International organisations may however be invited by the network of proposers to take part in a COST Action proposal;
- International Organisations may participate in a COST Action on the basis of ascertained mutual benefit;
- When an International Organisation takes part in a COST Action proposal, its participation shall be approved upon the Actions' approval by the CSO. However, its participation in the COST Action shall still subject to the consent of the Action MC once established;

⁵ The list of European RTD Organisations may be found in Annex II of CSO Decision "Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities".

- When an International Organisation does not take part in a COST Action proposal, its Action participation requires the approval by the Action MC on the one hand and of the Head of Science Operations of the COST Administration and the Executive Board on the other hand;
- International Organisations may participate as MC Observers (no voting rights) and as WG Members (not as WG leaders), upon Action MC decision;
- Action Participants from International Organisations shall be not eligible for reimbursement, unless there shall be special provisions decided by the CSO.

Action Participants from Specific Organisations shall agree on the objectives of the COST Action they are participating in and accomplish faithfully their tasks in that regard. They shall be asked by the Action Chair to sign a letter of confidentiality containing, inter alia, provisions about the non-disclosure of confidential information and IPR related matters.

FINAL PROVISIONS

The present rules shall be binding in their entirety and shall be directly applicable to all COST Actions and participants.

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