



**European Cooperation
in Science and Technology
- COST -**

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Secretariat

COST 4112/11

NOTE

From :	COST Secretariat
To :	COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)
Subject :	Guidelines for Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions

Delegations will find attached the "Guidelines for Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions" as approved by the CSO by written procedure on 24 March 2011.

These Guidelines will enter into force as from the next Collection date on 25 March 2011 and replace the previous version set out in COST 4115/10.

Guidelines for Monitoring, Evaluation & Dissemination of Results of COST Actions

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1 - Introduction

The main tasks assigned to a COST Domain Committee (DC) in pursuit of a successful Action are:

a. Quality Control

- Assessment of proposals for new Actions¹
- Monitoring of Actions in progress
- Evaluation of completed Actions

b. Dissemination and exploitation of the results of a COST Action.

Quality control is the prime responsibility of a DC, in accordance with its Terms of Reference approved by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) (see COST Docs 4161/10 - 4169/10 or any new document amending or replacing them to be found in www.consilium.europa.eu/cost). The quality control tasks aim to maintain the excellence of COST Actions, by combining best practices used in the scientific community with the bottom up approach, equality of access and flexibility traditional to COST. Best practices adopted by the CSO as mandatory include consistent use of external peer review, both in assessing full proposals for new Actions and in the final evaluation of a completed Action.

A DC normally meets three times a year in order to perform its quality control tasks: once for the Annual Progress Conference (see Chapter 3) and twice at the occasion of the Open Call DC Hearings.

The COST Office provides secretarial support to the DC. It has a central role in the management of the open call process, and also has a prime responsibility for disseminating the results of COST Actions and encouraging their exploitation. But dissemination and exploitation are also important tasks for the Action Management Committee (MC) and the DC.

Funding for quality control and for the dissemination and exploitation of results is provided by the COST Office, using funds from the RTD Framework Programmes allocated to COST.

2 - Conflict of Interest

COST strives to avoid any kind of conflicts of interest in its framework. Standard good practice in science funding schemes requires that any individual with an interest in a proposal for funding should not take part in the selection process. Executing the COST quality control tasks may give rise to a conflict of interest, for example if a DC member is at the same time a participant in a current Action, or is involved in a new Action proposal. No CSO member should be in a position to nominate him/herself as a member of another COST Committee.

To ensure the 'bottom-up' characteristics of an Action, the proposition and execution of an Action shall not normally be performed by any member of a body that has executive or advisory power over its assessment, management or evaluation.

¹ "Guidelines for Assessment of applications for COST Actions", doc. COST 4111/11.

The same principle applies to any other person who may be approached to assist with any COST quality control task. It is mandatory that any potential conflict of interest be declared. A declaration that there is no potential conflict of interest must be made by every assessor of preliminary proposals. The responsibility to solve a possible conflict of interest is in the hands of the relevant Committee. Details addressing the conflict of interest issue for all players involved are given in COST Code of Conduct, doc. COST 4160/10 or in any new document amending or replacing it (to be found in www.consilium.europa.eu/cost).

3 - Monitoring of Actions in progress

Monitoring of Actions in progress is the second important task of the COST DC's.

The DC's Terms of Reference state that the DC will:

- monitor the implementation of its COST Actions to ensure that the objectives as set out in their Memoranda of Understanding are met;
- ensure coordination and exchange of information, as required, as well as complementarity and synergy between its Actions as well as with relevant activities in other Domain Committees in COST, the Community R&D programmes, EUREKA, the European Science Foundation (ESF), other European cooperative research frameworks and standardisation bodies and will appoint members of the DC as liaisons with these bodies, as appropriate;
- take account of interdisciplinarity within its domain and with other domains and of new developments in its domain;

and that the DC will give an opinion to the CSO on any proposal pertaining to one of its COST Actions and concerning:

- an extension or prolongation of an Action,
- a change of the title or a modification of the objectives of an Action, or
- contributions of other participants to an Action.

Such an opinion shall be given with full knowledge of the views of the Management Committee of the Action concerned; a decision on the proposal will then be taken by the CSO.

The DC advises the Actions assigned to its Domain with regard to the scientific and strategic aspects within the objectives as laid down in the respective MoU. During the course of the Action, the DC will encourage the MCs to enter into dialogue with international organisations or bodies such as EUREKA and CEN in order to link to industry and standardisation activities.

As soon as a new Action is approved by the CSO, the relevant DC nominates one of its members as Rapporteur. The Rapporteur of an Action is encouraged to attend MC meetings of the Action whenever it is considered necessary. He/she should not be actively involved in the Action. The Rapporteur will be on the mailing list covering all Actions activities. He/she also receives and reads MC minutes. He/she reports to the DC about progress and problems.

In the monitoring process, the DC and its Rapporteur are assisted by the corresponding Science Officer and Grant Holder of the Action.

The Monitoring of an Action in progress by the Domain Committee is based on the annual "Monitoring Progress Report" which each Action is required to provide, following the layout in Annex A, and to forward to the DC's Science Officer. The report is a "cumulative" report, i.e. it is updated annually and covers the period from the start date of the Action to the end of the current year. The entire set of progress reports of all current Actions in a given Domain is made available every year to the members of the DC. It will be listed on the COST website along with other Action documents.

The monitoring of Actions in progress by the Domain Committee is performed annually by each Domain during a dedicated joint meeting between the DC members and the MC Chairs of the Domain, namely the "Annual Progress Conference (APC)". The guidelines for the APC are described in a separate COST document². This meeting could be combined with an event presenting the scientific achievements to the scientific community and interested parties, in particular potential users of results.

At the end of the APC, the DC shall conclude on the most important achievements of their Domain. The DC members shall inform their corresponding CNCs accordingly.

If the progress of an Action is found to be unsatisfactory, or requires a revision to the original description of the activities, the DC will inform the MC Chair who will be asked to respond to the comments and take appropriate measures. Should the monitoring produce an unacceptable result, the DC will inform the CSO and recommend appropriate remedial measures, or the termination of the Action.

4 - Evaluation of completed Actions

At the latest four months after the end of an Action, the MC must submit a final report composed of the last updated version of the progress report covering the entire period of the Action and an extended scientific report. The MC is encouraged to produce also an extended version that can be published and circulated as widely as possible, with the aim of reaching the target scientific community and the end users of the results.

The evaluation of completed Actions is the third important duty of a DC, which according to the DC's Terms of Reference "is responsible for the evaluation of its COST Actions on completion of each Action".

² Doc. COST 4113/11 or in any new document amending or replacing it.

The basic objective of the final evaluation is to identify and describe how well the Action has reached its stated objectives, including the initiation of any follow-up activities and its impact on R&D activities in the area covered by the Action. The Action is evaluated as a whole examining the scientific results, any added value, and the co-ordination and management aspects. Issues relating to possible future activities should be considered in the evaluation.

The final evaluation of the Action is performed by the DC through an Evaluation Panel, which is supported by the COST Office. The Panel is typically composed of three members, namely the corresponding Science Officer, who will act as coordinator of the Panel, the DC Rapporteur and one external expert who is appointed by the COST Office in consultation with the DC Rapporteur. The final evaluation of the Action must be completed normally within six months after the end of the Action.

If appropriate, a representative of the European Commission may be invited to participate. The views of the European Commission, through its Contact Points involved in DCs and those of other bodies are normally taken into account by the Panel. In those cases, when it is impossible or difficult to convene a meeting of the Evaluation Panel, the final evaluation may be carried out through a written process.

The evaluation process includes:

- Establishing an Evaluation Panel;
- Arrangement of a final workshop or conference where the Rapporteur and preferably the external evaluators participate.
- Submission by the MC Chair of the final report. This report and any other additional document considered useful including book of abstracts/proceedings of the final workshop or conference will be made available to the members of the Evaluation Panel, at the latest four months after the end of the Action.
- Evaluation Report, prepared by the Evaluation Panel according to the layout shown in Annex B. The DC Rapporteur will act as Editor of the report and will submit it to the DC at the first DC meeting after the preparation of the report.
- Final evaluation by the DC. The DC will complete the “Final Evaluation Report” by adding remarks, if applicable, and approve it. The approved Final Evaluation Report will then be made available on the COST website and the CNCs notified accordingly.
- A summary of the main results obtained in the Action will be prepared by the COST Office for inclusion in the COST Annual Report.

In case an Action fails to comply with this evaluation procedure the COST Office will inform the CNCs accordingly.

5 - Dissemination of results

At the end of the penultimate year of operations, the MC of the Action will produce a revised dissemination plan as part of its annual report and present it to the DC for approval.

The Final Evaluation Report shall also cover the dissemination and exploitation of the results in line with the DC's Terms of Reference:

“The DC should take all the measures it considers necessary to ensure efficient dissemination and/or exploitation of the results of its COST Actions, in close cooperation with the relevant Management Committees.”

The DC may consider the possibility of publishing its final evaluation reports and of giving them a wide circulation. Similarly, any document prepared by the DC about the activities and the results obtained in its domain, may be published and disseminated to a wider audience in order to substantially increase the visibility of COST.

The COST Office routinely publishes reports highlighting outcomes and impacts of all Actions, and other documents highlighting noteworthy achievements of COST Actions as part of its general publicity and dissemination policy.

A general COST condition is that subject to copyright and licensing arrangements, a copy of publications arising from and supported by COST (including journal articles, books and conference and workshop proceedings) are deposited in an appropriate e-print repository of the COST Office.

MONITORING PROGRESS REPORT

COST

Domain Committee " "

COST Action (number)**Start Date (start date of the Action)**

<i>Title</i>

**MONITORING
PROGRESS REPORT**

Reporting Period: *from (previous report date or start date of the Action)
to (last update)*

This Report is presented to the relevant Domain Committee.
It contains three parts:

- I. Management Report prepared by the COST Office/Grant Holder***
- II. Scientific Report prepared by the Chair of the Management Committee of the Action***
- III. Previous versions of the Scientific Report; i.e., part II of past reporting periods***

The report is a "cumulative" report, i.e. it is updated annually and covers the entire period of the Action.

Confidentiality: the documents will be made available to the public via the COST Action web page except for chapter *II.D. Self evaluation*.

Based on the monitoring results, the COST Office will decide on the following year's budget allocation.

<u>Executive summary (max.250 words):</u>
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I. Management Report prepared by the COST Office/Grant Holder



I.A. COST Action Fact Sheet

- **COST Action** number - title
- **Domain** name

- **Action details:**

CSO Approval: (day/month/year) **End date:** (day/month/year)
Entry into force: (day/month/year) **Extension:** (day/month/year)

- **Objectives** (from DB as in About COST)
- **Parties:** list of countries and date of acceptance

Austria (date)	Germany (date)	Norway (date)
Belgium (date)	Greece (date)	Poland (date)
Bosnia and Herzegovina (date)	Hungary (date)	Portugal (date)
Bulgaria (date)	Iceland (date)	Romania (date)
Croatia (date)	Ireland (date)	Serbia (date)
Cyprus (date)	Israel (date)	Slovakia (date)
Czech Rep. (date)	Italy (date)	Slovenia (date)
Denmark (date)	Latvia (date)	Spain (date)
Estonia (date)	Lithuania (date)	Sweden (date)
Finland (date)	Luxembourg (date)	Switzerland (date)
FYR of Macedonia (date)	Malta (date)	Turkey (date)
France (date)	Netherlands (date)	United Kingdom (date)

- **Intentions to accept:** list of countries and date

- **Other participants:**

(Institution Name, Country, Town)

Chair: (name, institution, address, phone, e-mail)

DC Rapporteur: (name, institution, address, phone, e-mail)

Science Officer: (name, e-mail)

Administrative Officer: (name, e-mail)

- **Action Web site:** <http://www>.
- **Grant Holder Representative**(name, e-mail)
- **Working Groups** (list of WGs and names and affiliations of participants)



I.B. Management Committee member list

Name	Country	E-mail



I.C. Overview activities and expenditure

(year) Budget

Total Action Budget:

Remaining Action Commitment:

Meetings

Meeting Type	Date	Place							Cost	Total
										0

STSM

Beneficiary	Date	Place							Cost	Total
										0

Workshops

Title	Date		Place						Cost	Total
	From	To	From	To						
										0

General Support Grants

Beneficiary	Date								Cost	Total
										0

Schools

Title	Date	Place							Cost	Total
										0

Dissemination

Title	Date	Place							Cost	Total
										0

Others

Action Total : 0

II. Scientific Report prepared by the Chair of the Management Committee of the Action, describing results achieved during the Action operation in this period, in no more than 3 pages (the report is “cumulative”). All items listed in Sections A, B, and C, below, must be addressed.

Additional documentation such as extended scientific reports, proceedings of workshops, seminars or conferences may be provided separately as an annex to this report, and should be referenced in the report.

II.A. Innovative networking

- *Innovative knowledge resulting from COST networking through the Action. (Specific examples of Results vs. Objectives)*
- *Significant scientific breakthroughs as part of the COST Action. (Specific examples)*
- *Tangible medium term socio-economic impacts achieved or expected. (Specific examples)*
- *Spin off of new EC RTD Framework Programme proposals/projects. (List)*
- *Spin off of new National Programme proposals/projects. (List)*

II.B. Inter-disciplinary networking

- *Additional knowledge obtained from working with other disciplines within the COST framework. (Specific examples)*
- *Evaluation of whether the level of inter-disciplinarity is sufficient to potentially provide scientific impacts. (Specific examples)*
- *Evaluation of whether the level of inter-disciplinarity is sufficient to potentially provide socio-economic impacts. (Specific examples)*

II.C. New networking

- *Additional new members joining the Action during its life.*
- *Total number of individual participants involved in the Action work. (Number of participants. Give % of female and of Early Stage Researcher participants)*
- *Involvement of Early Stage Researchers in the Action, in particular with respect to STSMs, networking activities, and Training Schools. In addition, justification should be provided if less than 4 STSMs were carried out during the year.*
- *Involvement of researchers from outside of COST Countries. (Number of participants from non-COST Countries approved by the CSO. Give % of such participants from countries with reciprocal agreements. Specify their contribution)*
- *Advancement and promotion of scientific knowledge through publications and other outreach activities. (Number of publications and other outreach activities that resulted from COST networking through the Action. Complete list should be given in an annex)*
- *Activities and projects with COST network colleagues.*
- *The capacity of the Action members to raise research funds.*

II.D. Self evaluation

Indicate in no more than 1 page what, in the opinion of the MC, were the main successes, drawbacks (if any) and the key difficulties encountered (if any).

III. Previous scientific report(s)

Part II of past periods' reports are to be found here.

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

COST

Domain Committee " "

COST Action (*number*)**Start Date** (*start date of the Action*)**End Date** (*end date of the Action*)

<i>Title</i>

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

This Report stems from the relevant Domain Committee.
It contains four parts:

- I. Management Report*** prepared by the COST Office/Grant Holder
- II. Scientific Report*** prepared by the Chair of the Management Committee of the Action.
- III. Evaluation Report*** prepared by the "ad hoc" Evaluation Panel, established by the Domain Committee, and edited by the COST Office.
- IV. DC General Assessment*** prepared by the Domain Committee

Appendices:

Confidentiality: the documents will be made available to the public via the COST Action web page except for chapter *II.D. Self evaluation* and *IV. DC General Assessment*.

<u>Executive summary of the Scientific Report (max.250 words):</u>

I. Management Report prepared by the COST Office/Grant Holder
(same layout as in the Monitoring Progress Report)

II. Scientific Report prepared by the Chair of the Management Committee of the Action (same layout as in the Monitoring Progress Report)

III. Evaluation Report prepared by the “ad hoc” Evaluation Panel established by the Domain Committee and edited by the COST Office (approximately 2 pages)

1. *Evaluation panel and evaluation procedures*

List the members of the panel: *Title, name, affiliation, Tel., Fax, E-mail.*

Describe briefly the Action’s activities and documents used by the members of the panel and the procedures followed for the evaluation.

2. *Results versus objectives*

Describe how and to what extent the results obtained match the objectives.

3. *Innovative networking*

Describe the outcome and achievements in terms of :

- innovative knowledge which resulted from COST networking through the Action,
- significant scientific breakthroughs as part of the COST Action,
- tangible and important socio-economic impacts,
- spin off of new EC RTD FP and/or National Programme proposals.

4. *Inter-disciplinary networking*

Describe the level of inter-disciplinarity, its benefits and impacts :

- additional knowledge obtained from working with other disciplines within the COST framework,
- evaluation of whether the level of inter-disciplinarity was sufficient to potentially provide scientific and/or socio-economic impacts.

5. *New networking*

Describe the main outcome and achievements in terms of :

- evolution of members joining the Action,
- total number of individual participants involved in the Action work,
- involvement and contribution of Early Stage Researchers (ESR), female researchers, and researchers from outside of COST Countries,
- advancement, promotion, and dissemination of scientific knowledge through publications (by Action members that resulted from COST networking through the Action) and other outreach activities,
- activities and projects with COST colleagues, including from other Actions,
- capacity of the Action members to raise research funds.

6. *Coordination and management*

Describe the effectiveness of coordination and management.

7. *Strengths and weaknesses*

Describe the main strengths and weaknesses shown by the Action.

IV. DC General Assessment prepared by the Domain Committee

DC comments on the quality of the Action in no more than one page. It should illustrate the “success story” (if applicable) of the Action, with concrete examples and names of persons who can be contacted for further details.

List of acronyms

APC	Annual Progress Conference
BMBS	Biomedicine and Molecular Biosciences
CEN	European Committee for Standardization
CMST	Chemistry and Molecular Sciences and Technologies
COST	European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research
CNC	COST National Co-ordinator
CSO	Committee of Senior Officials
DC	Domain Committee
ESR	Early Stage Researchers
ESSEM	Earth System Science and Environmental Management
EEP	External Expert Panel
ERA	European Research Area
ESF	European Science Foundation
ESA	European Space Agency
EU	European Union
FA	Food and Agriculture
FP	Framework Programme
FPS	Forests, their Products and Services
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ISCH	Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health
JAF	COST Working Group on Legal, Administrative and Financial Affairs
MC	Management Committee
MPNS	Materials, Physics and Nanosciences
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
R&D	Research and Development
RTD	Research and Technological Development
TDP	Trans Domain Proposal
TDP-SAB	Trans Domain Proposal Standing Assessment Board
TUD	Transport and Urban Development