

# ***COST – a flexible research networking tool to foster innovation and gender equality***

***GENDERA workshop, Bratislava; 18 May 2010***

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## The COST mission

**Strengthen Europe in scientific and technological research for peaceful purposes through the support of cooperation and interaction between European researchers**

**The COST programme, based on an inter-governmental agreement, is a long-running, economical and highly successful way to spread awareness and build networks between Europe's researchers.**

**It reflects the human dimension of science, helping researchers to share not only the results of their work but also their aims and methods.**

## What is funded by COST?

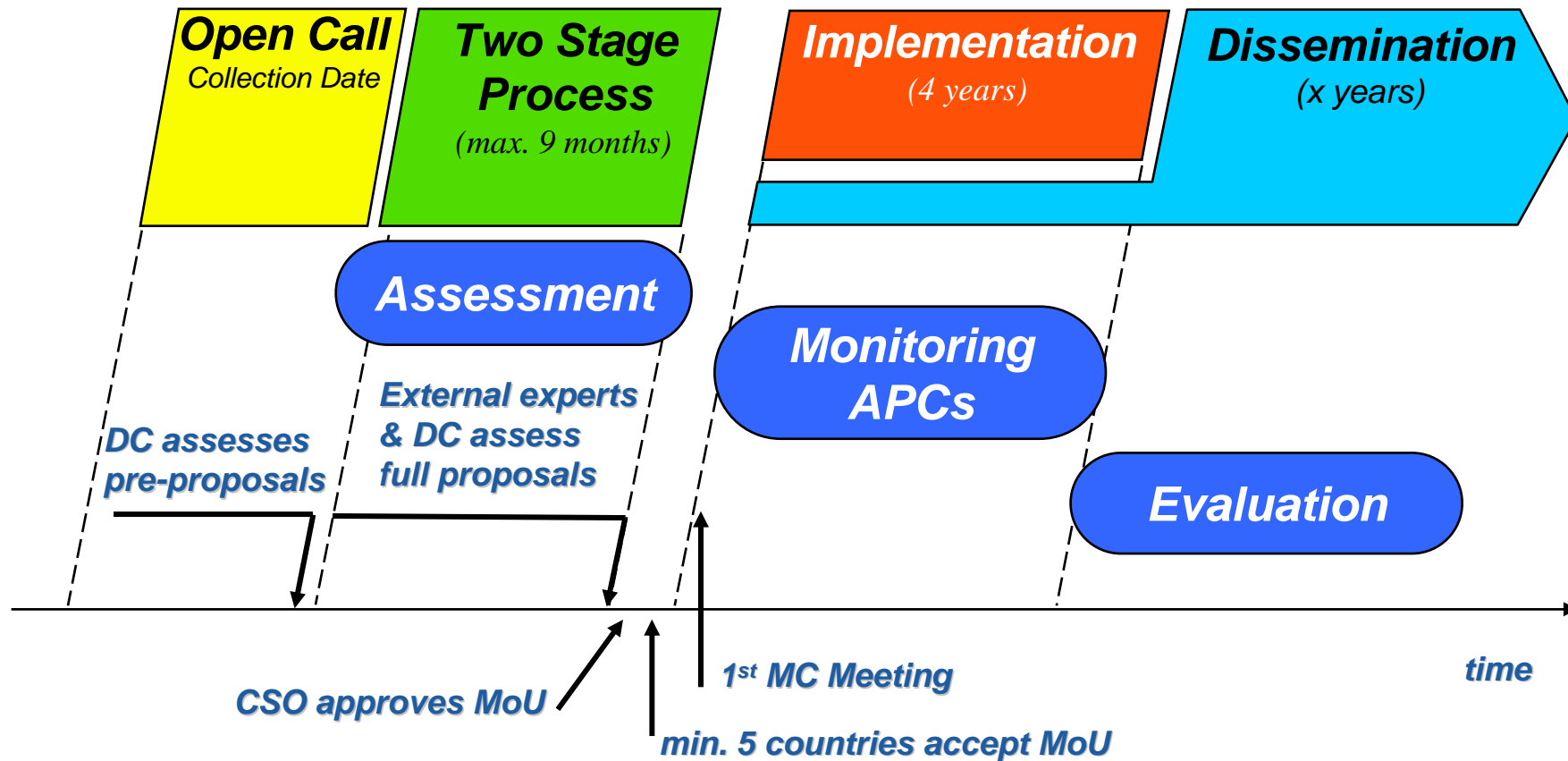
- **COST Actions:** A network of (nationally) funded projects (min. 5 participating COST countries) receive a financial contribution based on a **joint work programme** (4 years) for:
  - Science management / working group meetings
  - Scientific workshops and seminars
  - Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)
  - Training Schools and Research Conferences
  - Dissemination and Publications
- *Average funding +/- 100 000 € per year per Action*
- **Exploratory/Strategic Workshops:** to explore future scientific or societal needs, support policy developments or stimulate innovative activities

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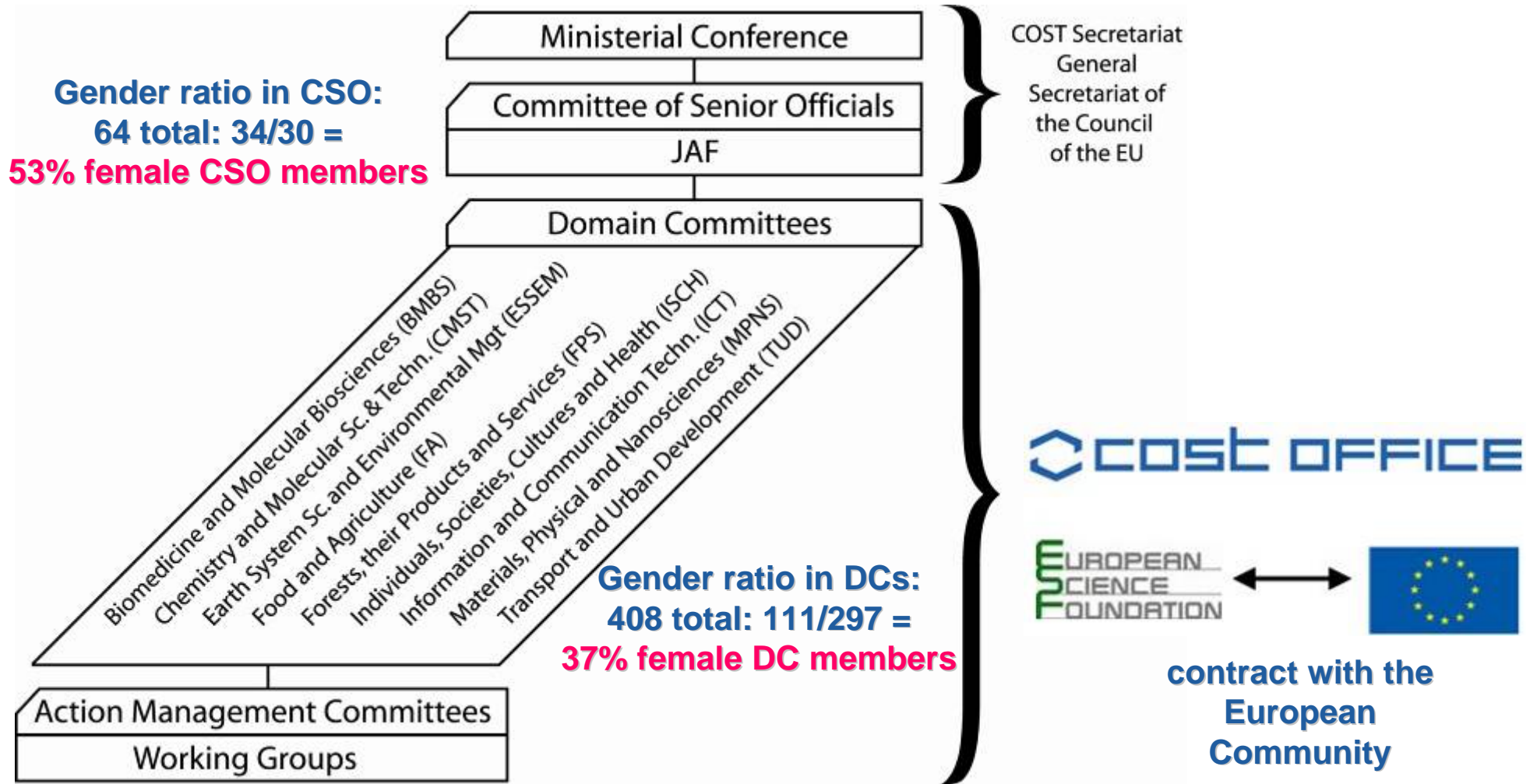
In the year 2009 COST supported:

- **242 COST Actions**
- **900 scientific workshops** and meetings (4.3 per working day over the year) with more than **29 500** participants
- **1200 STSMs** with an average duration of 3 weeks (5.6 STSMs starting every working day over the year)
- **90 Training Schools** with more than **2000** funded participants
- **101 high ranking publications**

# COST Action life cycle

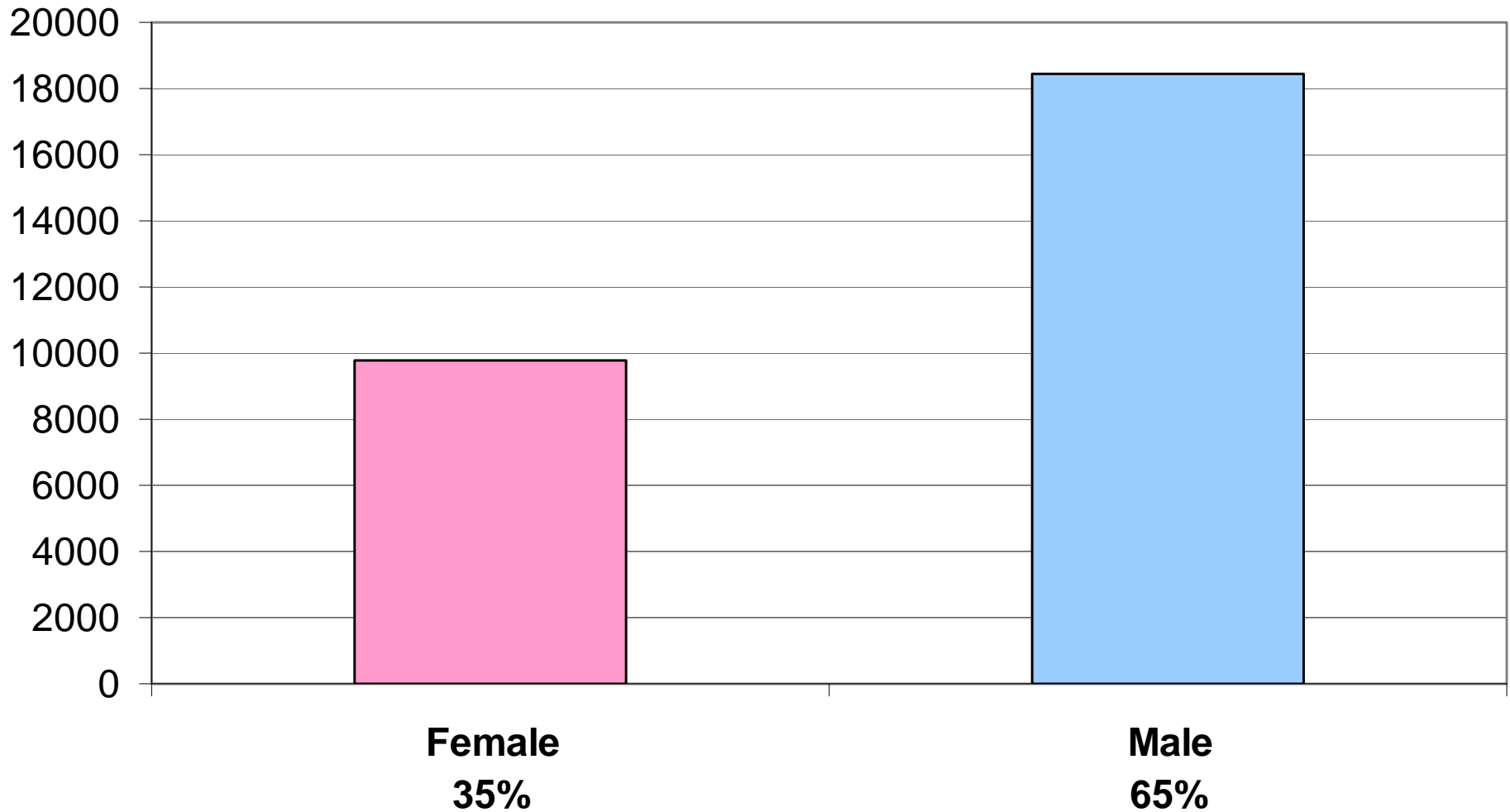


# COST governance and partnership



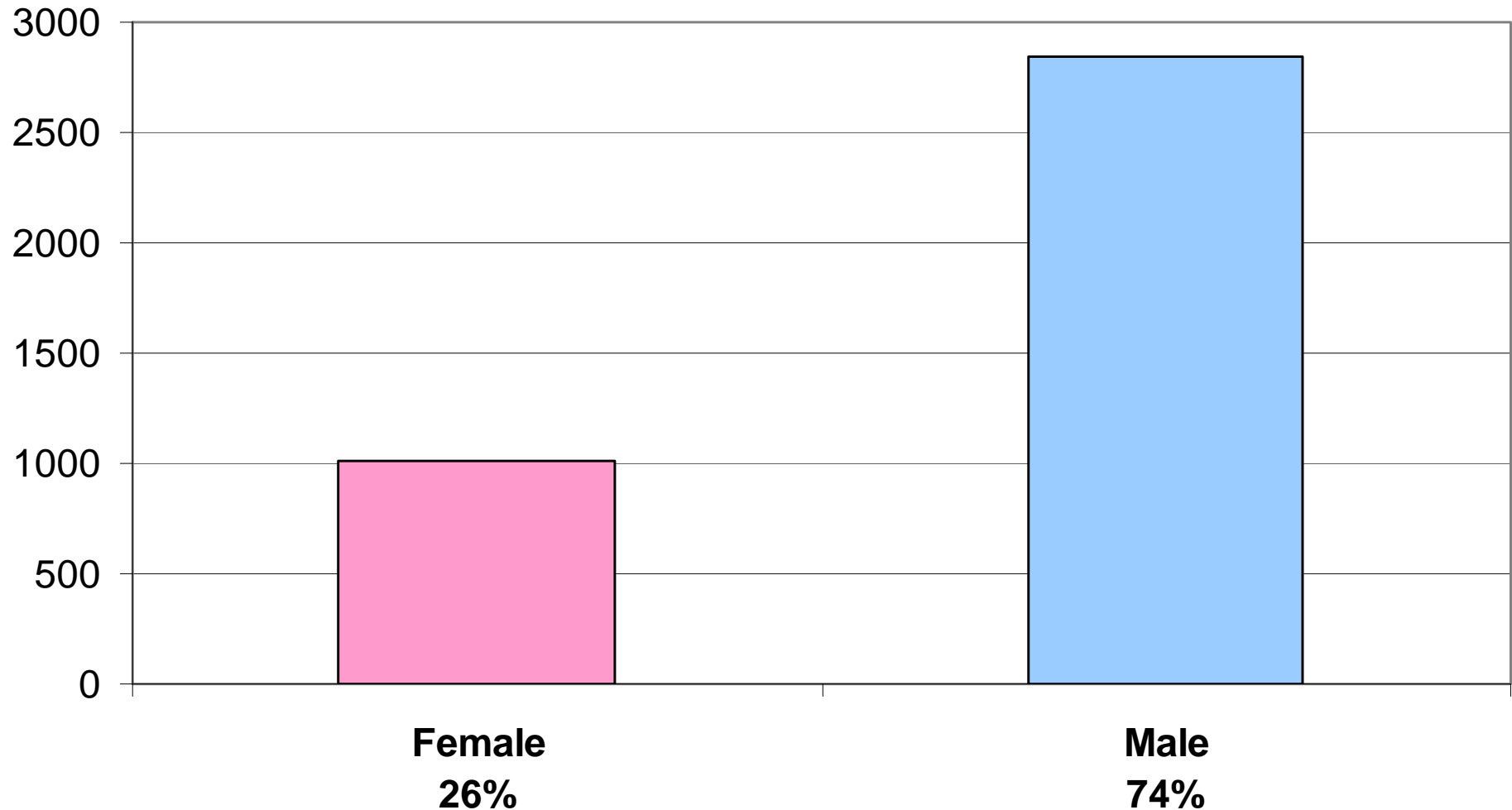
# Gender reality in COST

Gender distribution in the COST data base



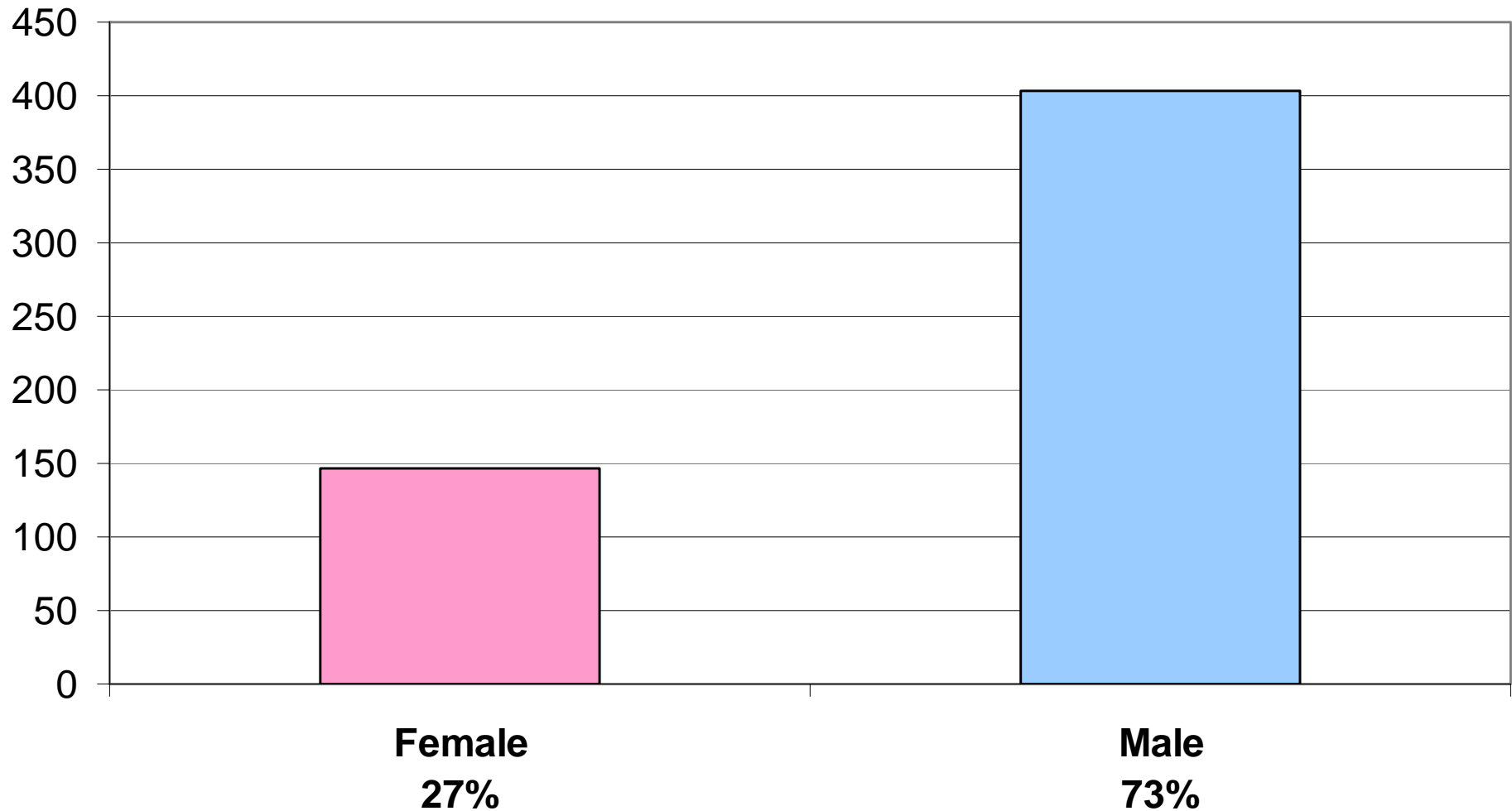
# Gender reality in COST

Gender distribution in the COST Open Call (**Pre-Proposals**) 2006-2010



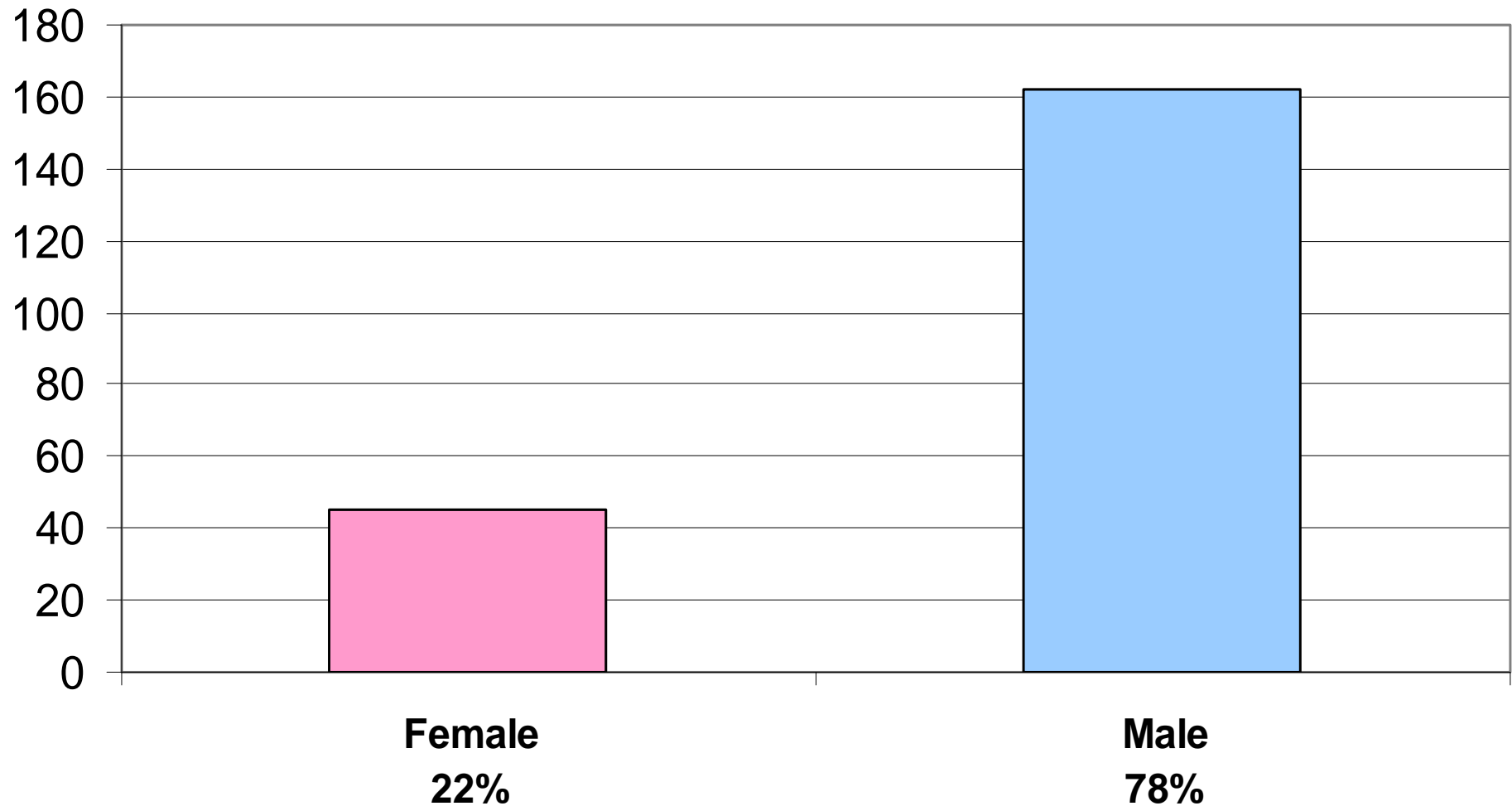
# Gender reality in COST

Gender distribution in the COST Open Call (**Full-Proposals**) 2006-2010



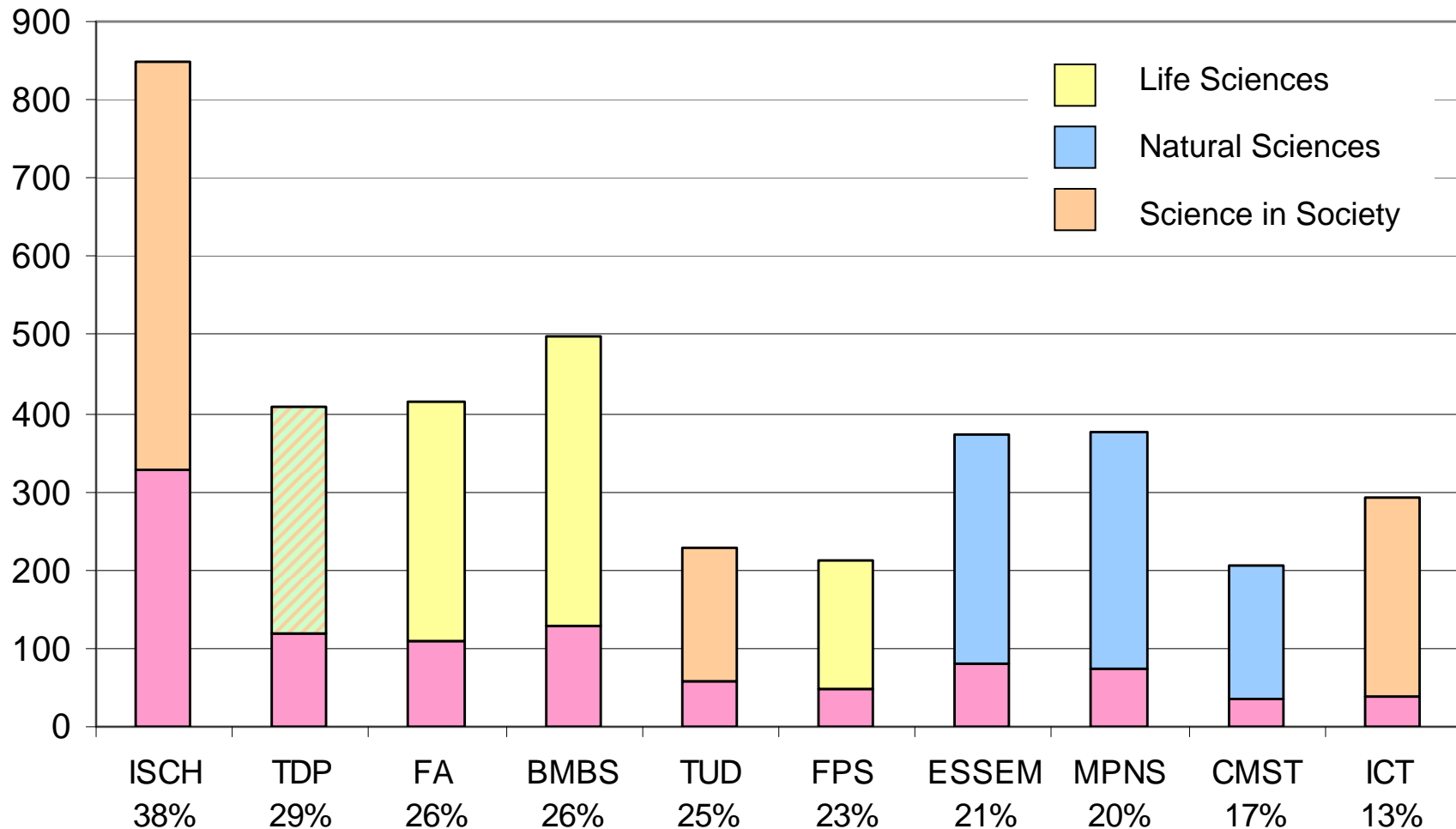
# Gender reality in COST

Gender distribution in the actual COST Actions (**Action Chairs**) May 2010



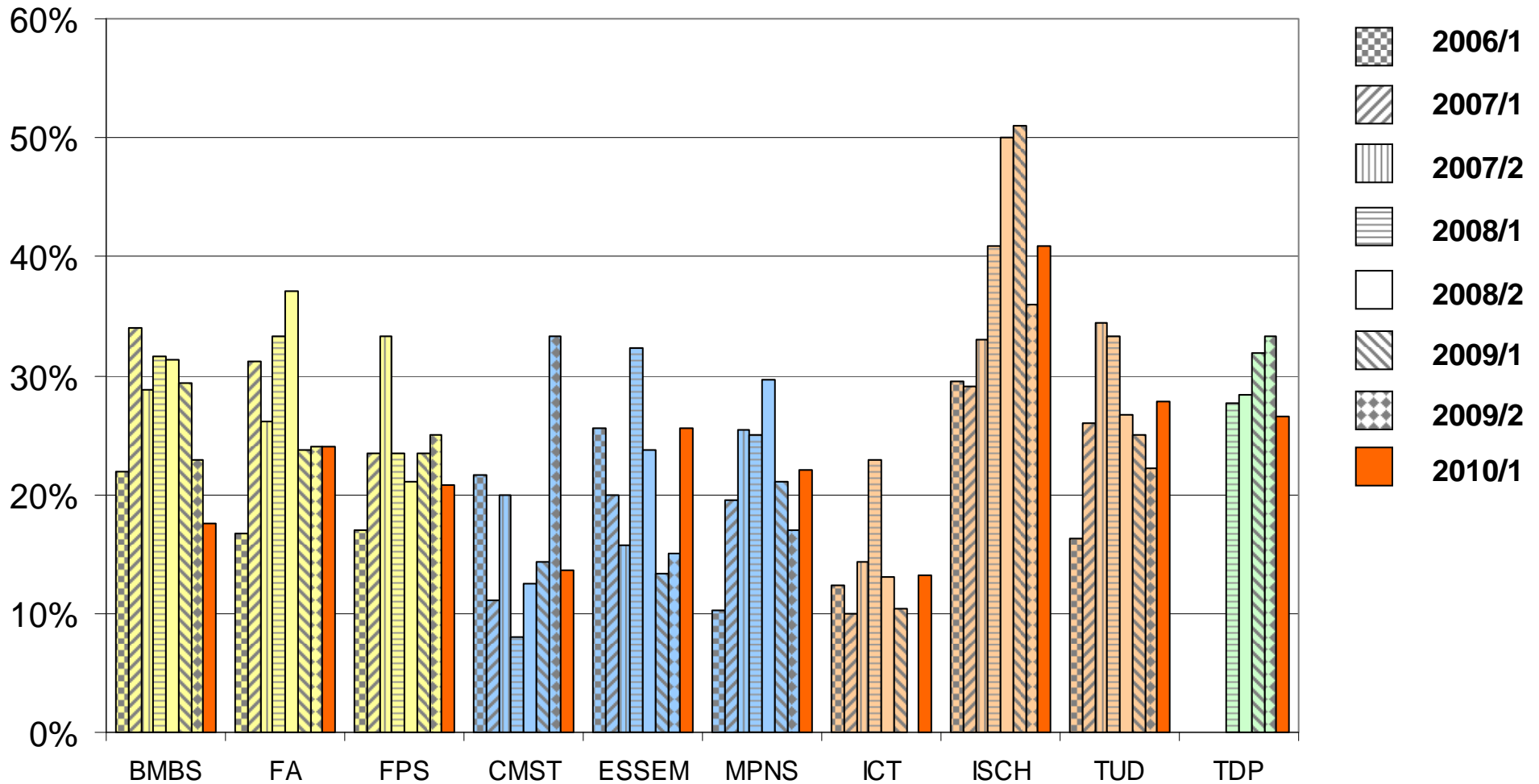
# Gender reality in COST

Female participation by COST Domain (**Pre-Proposals**) total 2006-2010



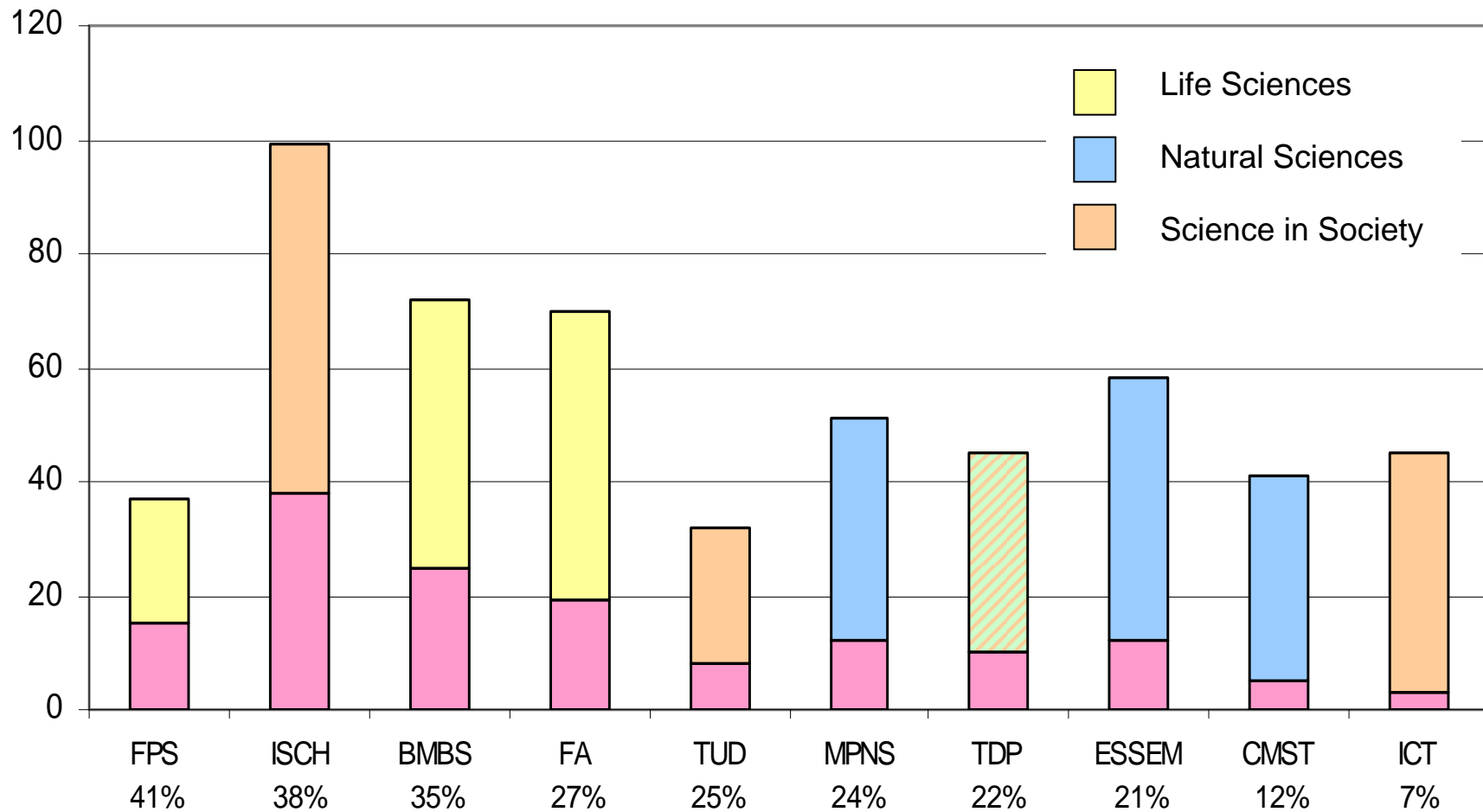
# Gender reality in COST

Female participation by COST Domain (**Pre-Proposals**) relative 2006-2010



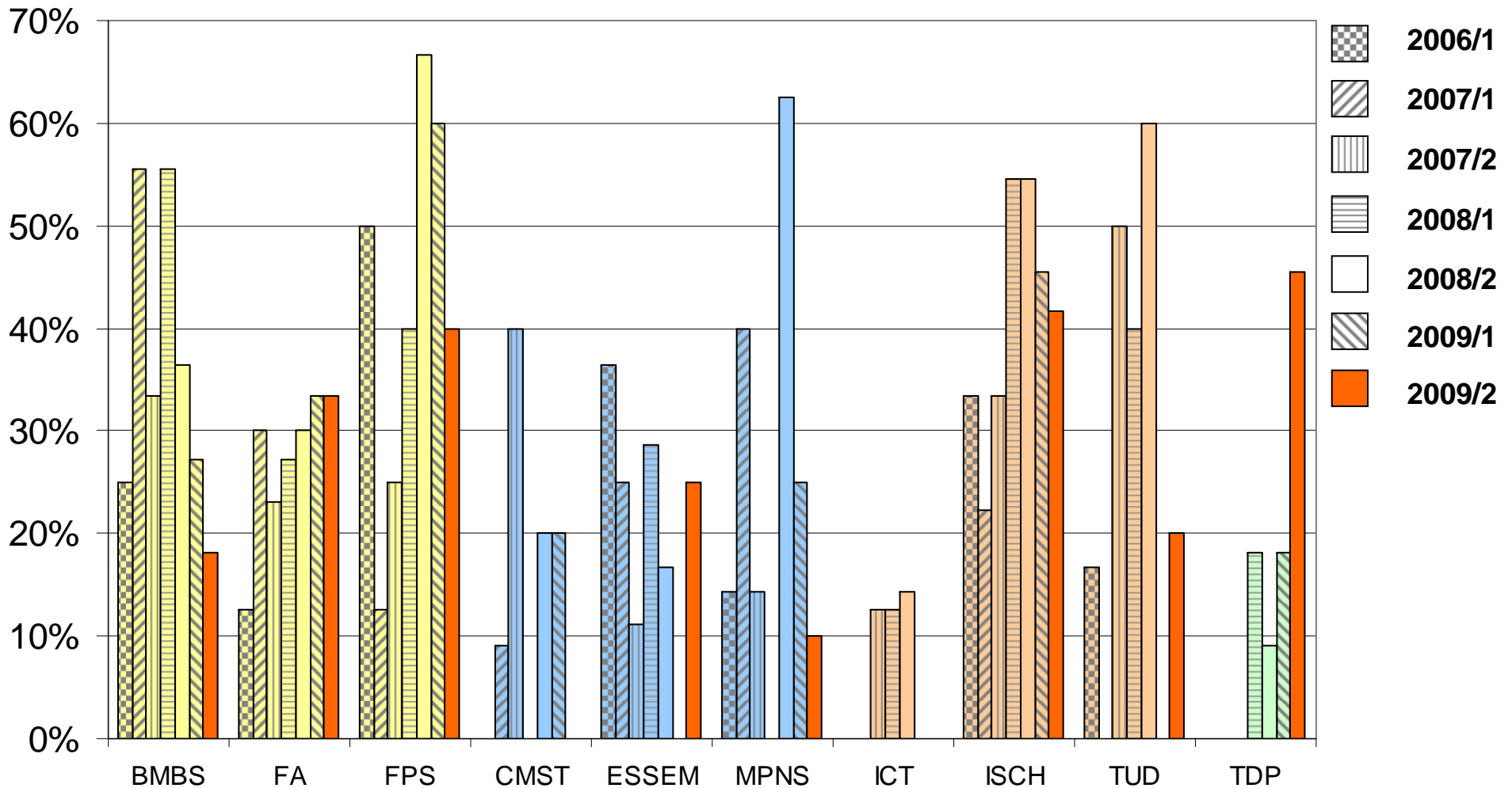
# Gender reality in COST

Female participation by COST Domain (**Full-Proposals**) total 2006-2010



# Gender reality in COST

Female participation by COST Domain (**Full-Proposals**) relative 2006-2010



## Gender balance in the COST assessment process

Concrete plans for improving gender balance and promoting Early Stage Researchers are an **important part of the Full Proposal evaluation criteria**. In having introduced this criterion, COST became a precursor in the ERA:

**“The COST Action will respect an appropriate gender balance in all its activities and the Management Committee will place this as a standard item on all its MC agendas. The Action will also be committed to considerably involve early-stage researchers. This item will also be placed as a standard item on all MC agendas.”**

***Please add any additional support the Action plans concerning gender balance and the involvement of early-stage researchers.***

# Examples of COST Actions

## Cyberbullying: Coping with Negative and Enhancing Positive uses of New Technologies, in Relationships in Educational Settings – COST Action IS0801

**MC gender ratio: 41F=71% / 17M=29%**

- Refers to bullying and harassment of others by means of new electronic technologies
- Share expertise on cyberbullying in educational settings, develop measurement techniques across researchers
- Also include expertise from outside the research community (legal experts, mobile phone companies, internet providers, etc.)
- Increase awareness of the issue and move towards a common set of guidelines applicable in Europe and other countries

<http://www.gold.ac.uk/is0801/>



# Examples of COST Actions

## Targeted Radionuclide Therapy - TRNT: COST Action BM0607

The main objective of the Action is to improve the potential of cancer therapy through the development and application of innovative vectors labeled with therapeutic radionuclides for 'targeted radionuclide therapy' of disseminated cancer

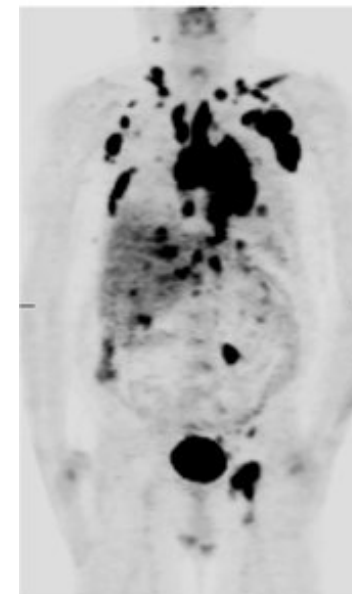
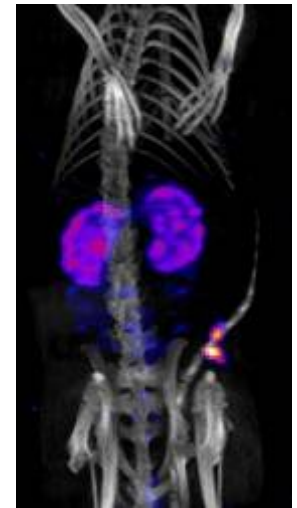
Advantage of TRNT over chemotherapy?  
We can easily - quickly see what we are doing  
- Crossfire effect

**MC gender ratio: 16F=40% / 24M=60%**

Radioimmunotherapy of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma 6th leading cause of cancer death in the United States



**Cancer Cell**



**Pre**



**Post**

# Examples of COST Actions

**Euroberry Research: from Genomics to Sustainable Production, Quality & Health – COST Action 863**

**MC gender ratio: 21F=38% / 34M=62%**

**Berry production is an economically significant part of agriculture in most European countries. However, until recently the scientific knowledge necessary to support this sector lagged behind the competition from non-European markets. COST helped berry growers to grow.**



**Thanks to this Action, a topic for this specific thematic area has been included in the EU 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme.**

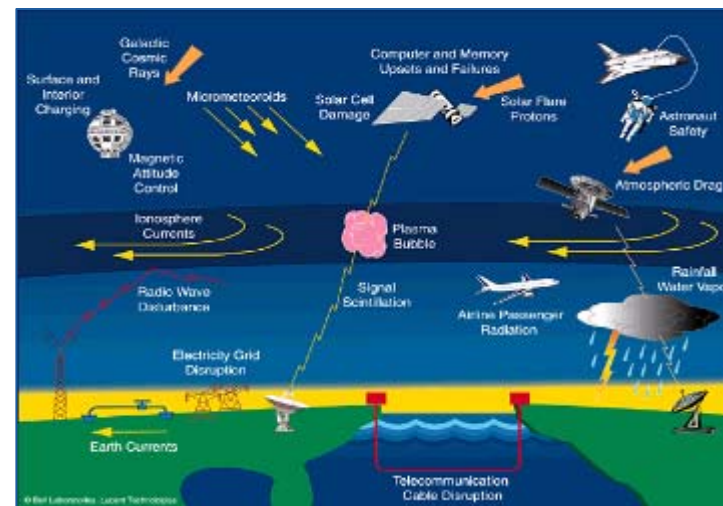
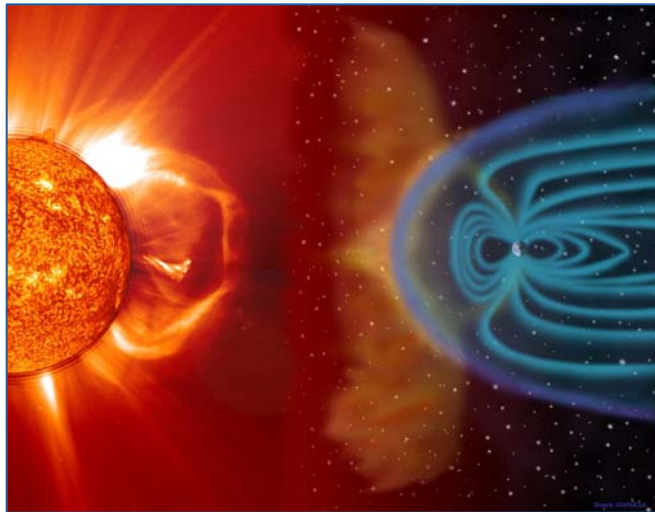
# Examples of COST Actions

Developing space weather products and services in Europe –  
COST Action ES0803

**MC gender ratio: 8F=20% / 33M=80%**

In Europe, a better coordination between the national research programmes, and warning system developers and operators is needed to develop European reliable Space Weather observational and forecasting products and services.

The Action will validate and demonstrate prototypes of near-real time Space Weather information services for operational use



# Examples of COST Actions

European procedures for flood frequency estimation (FloodFreq) – COST Action ES0901

**MC gender ratio: 6F=19% / 26M=81%**

**Pan-European comparison and evaluation of methods for flood frequency estimation under the various climatologic and geographic conditions found in Europe, and different levels of data availability.**



## Goals

- Compile dataset and inventories of existing data and methods
- Use of statistical methods for flood frequency estimation
- Flood frequency analysis using rainfall-runoff methods
- Flood frequency estimation methods and environmental change

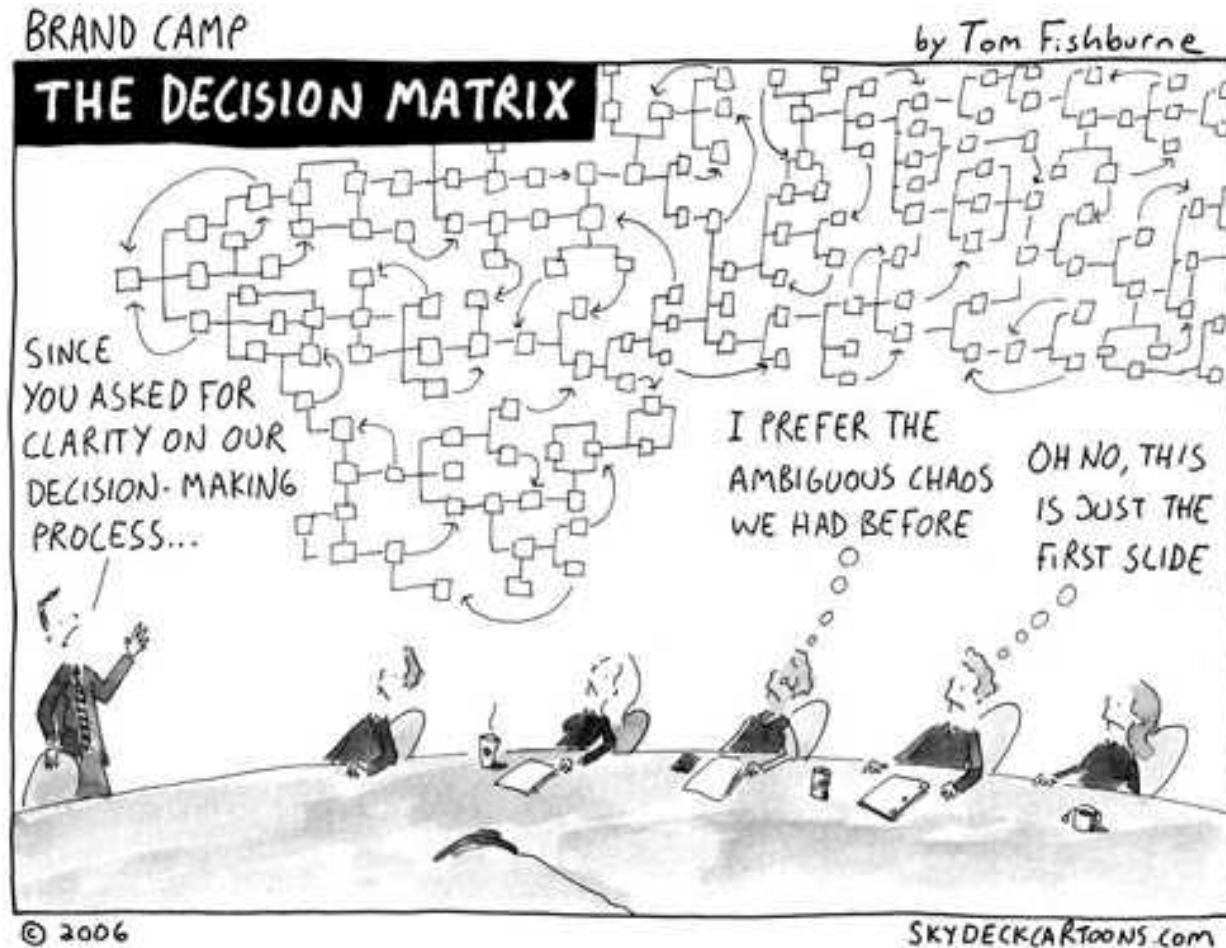
# Examples of COST Actions

Algorithmic Decision Theory:  
COST Action IC0602:

MC gender ratio: 6F=13% / 39M=87%

The main objective of the Action is twofold:

- propose new algorithmic solutions for hard decision theoretic problems arising from the use of large amounts of information, the presence of uncertainty as well as of complex structures of data;
- use results and concepts from decision theory in order to improve and advance in computer science and artificial intelligence.



# Benefits of the participation in COST Actions for female scientists: some examples 1/3

- **Stimulation of exchange, cooperation and new ideas:**

*“I have learned many academic tools through my participation in the project, knowledge that is not available among the national academics.”*

- **Promotion of research activities:**

*“I received a large national grant to do research related to COST.”*

- **Development of leadership skills and self-esteem:**

*“I developed some additional necessary skills for my leading role as the head of the institute.”*

*“I am enjoying very much to be a participant in a COST Action; it improves self-esteem which is of great importance to succeed professionally.”*

# Benefits of the participation in COST Actions for female scientists: some examples 2/3

- **Career advancement:**

*“COST-related publications certainly contribute to my CV and possibly to my career.”*

*“The COST project adds an international dimension to my academic career, which is appreciated.”*

*“Through the COST collaboration, I felt that I forged professional connections that could help advance my career in the future beyond the COST Action working context.”*

*“When I was a candidate for professorship, the fact that I have participated in a European programme like COST was a very positive thing.”*

# Benefits of the participation in COST Actions for female scientists: a summary 3/3

***The positive impacts of the participation in COST Action is best summarised in the quotation below, given by a female Action Chair whose Action was just launched:***

***“It will provide me with far wider access to intellectual ideas from across the European region than I could have achieved in any other way. This is likely to make a major contribution to my own research and the development of my own thinking. I expect this Action to provide the intellectual basis of future research for me over the next decade at least. It will identify possible collaborative teams for future research projects. It will identify possible collaborative teams for future publications. It will add to my career profile in the process of applying for promotion.”***

## How can we improve the gender situation in COST?

- The COST “Guidelines” **encourage** the nomination of female researchers into the Actions Management Committees.
- The COST Office has proposed a **family friendly policy**, e.g. child care during conferences/training schools. The related cost were declared ineligible by the Commission. Therefore we rely on the engaged support by the Member States.
- The COST National Coordinators have agreed to an initiative by the COST Office to offer **gender specific training** in proposal preparation on a national/regional level.
- The multi-disciplinary character of COST Actions provides many opportunities for Early Stage Researchers to improve the **self confidence** and establish “their” European networks.

## COST Vision 2020 [COST 248/09]

(1/2)

- COST continues to be a **flexible, fast, effective and efficient tool to network** and coordinate nationally funded research activities at project level, bringing motivated scientists together under light strategic guidance and letting them work out their ideas, thus contributing to overcome the fragmentation of research in the ERA.
- COST responds to future needs; it acts as an exploratorium for ideas and addresses emerging and unforeseen developments. COST Actions are **objective-driven** and often **multi-disciplinary**. Their objectives are clearly defined and information arising from COST Actions provides well-structured evidence-based input for policy making and they contribute to Europe's competitiveness and socio-economic development.

## COST Vision 2020 [COST 248/09]

(2/2)

- COST acts as a catalyst for long-term networking and in particular supports **early career scientists** and newly established research groups, **strengthening their future participation** in European and other international research initiatives.
- COST provides a framework for pre-normative cooperation leading to international **norms and standards**.
- COST is an inclusive and flexible **international framework** for the benefit of the European scientific community. COST has a worldwide geographical coverage which will be further extended in a pragmatic way by continuing to involve non-member countries in its Actions and through a more structured series of collaborative arrangements.

**ccost**

**[www.cost.eu](http://www.cost.eu)**