



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

Brussels, 29 June 2011

Secretariat

COST 4157/11

NOTE

To : COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)

Subject : COST Strategy

Delegations will find attached the COST Strategy approved by the CSO by written procedure on 28 June 2011.

COST STRATEGY

renewing our strengths...
...shaping our future

Strategy to achieve Vision 2020

COST MISSION

COST enables break-through scientific developments leading to new concepts and products and thereby contributes to strengthen Europe's research and innovation capacities.

COST is a unique means for European researchers to jointly develop their own ideas and new initiatives across all scientific disciplines through trans-European networking of nationally funded research activities.

COST key features are:

- **building capacity by connecting high-quality scientific communities throughout Europe and worldwide;**
- **providing networking opportunities for early career investigators;**
- **increasing the impact of research on policy makers, regulatory bodies and national decision makers as well as the private sector.**

Through its inclusiveness COST supports integration of research communities, leverages national research investments and addresses issues of global relevance.

COST is a building block of the European Research Area, instrumental for successful innovation strategies and global cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

COST - European CO-operation in Science and Technology - is the longest running European intergovernmental network for cooperation in research and technology. With a successful history of implementing scientific cooperation and networking in Europe over the last 40 years, COST now needs to look forward and take steps to respond to new demands.

The COST mission articulates the type of framework that European research and innovation requires. COST's Actions, activities and procedures must evolve to fit it. This will be achieved by 2014, allowing the fulfilment of COST's mission within the Europe 2020 strategy¹.

COST must optimise all its procedures, to achieve the best quality performance including assessment of proposals, evaluation and monitoring of COST Actions, reducing the time from application to start of the activities, and focusing still more on their results and impact.

COST strategy promotes integration of the best researchers in Europe, maximising social and territorial inclusiveness and linking them within COST countries and beyond. Specific actions for early stage researchers and supporting skills development for innovation and competitiveness are provided for.

Individuals are fundamental to apply the strategy and meet the challenges. COST - researchers in COST Actions; Domain Committee members, COST Office personnel, and any member of the COST structure - will respect the established common European values and ethical behaviours through the COST Code of Conduct², which allows an adaptable and consistent application of its procedures.

COST STRATEGIC GOALS

COST strategy concentrates on four strategic goals: *best performance in its implementation; orienting COST Actions on output; improving cooperation within COST countries and beyond; and ensuring good governance.*

1) BEST PERFORMANCE

GOAL: COST is the most efficient and user-friendly research networking tool for scientists in the European Research Area.

Under the direction and responsibility of the Domain Committees, monitored by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) and coordinated by the COST Office, COST continuously supports and enhances the efficient and effective management of COST Actions and strives to improve and implement transparent and cost-efficient Action assessment, evaluation and monitoring processes.

¹ Doc. COST 252/09.
COM(2010)2020.

² Doc. COST 4160/10 (or any new document amending or replacing it).

Measures to be implemented:

COST will

- Agree easy and clear common guidelines for applicants;
- Adapt Action objectives and evaluation criteria to its mission;
- Ensure adequate financial support of Actions;
- Have user-friendly software tools guiding its entire process;
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of COST's decision-making bodies;
- Annually evaluate its processes to scope further improvements.

2) OUTPUT ORIENTATION

GOAL: COST provides a framework for pre-normative cooperation leading to international standards and contributes to Europe's competitiveness and innovation strategies.

Open to any emerging ideas and unforeseen developments COST fully exploits its Actions' outputs by delivering results to the appropriate target audiences (such as scientists, policy makers, regulatory bodies, national decision makers and the private sector). COST guarantees increased impact and dissemination of its research and technology results.

Measures to be implemented:

COST will

- Have key performance indicators linked to objectives;
- Follow-up completed Actions, with regular impact analysis;
- Design an ambitious dissemination strategy;
- Develop concepts and criteria for strategic activities;
- Strongly interact with other fora.

3) BETTER COOPERATION

GOAL: COST uses research potential from all COST countries building on strengths while facilitating access to complementary specific knowledge and capacities.

Within COST countries COST seeds opportunities to establish long-lasting networks, in particular for early career researchers and newly established research groups, allowing them to strengthen effectively their capacity to be globally competitive. The intergovernmental organisation of COST supports coordinated and mutually consistent approaches among COST countries to respond to major societal challenges.

Measures to be implemented:

COST will

- Link research excellence in Europe;
- Provide networking opportunities for early career researchers;
- Enhance training prospects for innovative minds;
- Deliver support for further coordination of COST countries' national research and innovation policies.

Beyond COST countries COST allows, once mutual benefit has been ascertained, easy connection of research communities both with European neighbouring countries and worldwide. COST thus contributes through reliable networks to building trust with partner countries.

Measures to be implemented:

COST will

- Be open to scientists from all over the world;
- Develop tailored activities for neighbouring countries;
- Maintain a dialogue with international organisations (such as the OECD, UN, WHO and UNESCO) on topics of mutual interest;
- Ensure its strategy complements the strategic European framework for international science and technology cooperation³.

4) GOOD GOVERNANCE

GOAL: COST governance will adapt to fulfil COST mission strategy.

The roles of the different levels involved in its decision-making processes will be reviewed. COST's working methods will be of the highest quality and efficiency. The values integrated in the COST Code of Conduct, including excellence, integrity, commitment, trust and teamwork are a common feature in all COST activities and decisions.

Measures to be implemented:

COST will:

- Simplify its rules and procedures to support researchers' needs;
- Implement light-touch and more efficient mechanisms for management and monitoring of COST Actions;
- Clarify responsibilities to ensure a proper sense of ownership of its activities and Actions;
- Enforce clear commitment to the COST Code of Conduct and the values it expresses.

CONCLUSION

Fully committed to encouraging science-based innovation and to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy, COST will seek synergies and complementarities with the Framework Programme and other European fora.

COST will use its intergovernmental framework as a forum to support the required coordination and mutually consistent approach among COST countries to respond to major societal questions and to react promptly and competently to future challenges.

³ Doc. 13498/08 (COM(2008) 588 final).