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COST Office Classification of Research Areas – General Information

This classification of research areas is used for COST Office internal purposes, including expert selection, proposal evaluation, Action assessment, statistics and analysis. The COST Office bears no responsibility for any external use of this classification.

How do I use this Research Area classification?

You can select your areas of expertise and specify your level of confidence for each selected areas of expertise. By default, all experts are considered to have a core expertise with a high level of confidence. You are asked to specify this Core Expertise first.

You can then add further areas of expertise by clicking on “Add Expertise”.

When you select an unspecified ‘Other’ Research Area within a Science Field, a ‘Specify’ box will appear. You will be able to type a keyword of your choice in this box. This option should be used only after carefully considering all Research Areas already present in the list. This is because customised research areas cannot be used to match experts and proposals, and are mainly used as suggestions for future revisions of the list of Research Areas. For Core Expertise, the ‘Specify’ box also acts as a search box for existing Research Areas within the selected Science Field.

Secondly, for additional areas of expertise, you are asked to select your confidence level. The more up-to-date and extensive your knowledge is in a given area and the higher the confidence level should be set.

The level of confidence follows the following scale:

1. High confidence: extensive and up-to-date knowledge on the specific area of expertise (level assigned by default to the core area of expertise);
2. Medium confidence: up-to-date knowledge on a limited number of topics related to the specific area of expertise;
3. Low confidence: basic but not up-to-date knowledge (e.g. classic studies, theories, models) on a number of topics related to the specific area of expertise.



How are Science Fields and Research areas organised?

The classification is structured in three levels: Science Field, Science Sub-Field, Research Area.

Science Field and Science Sub-Field are selected at the same time, using the Science Field box.

Science Fields and Sub-Fields correspond to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Fields of Science used for international and European R&D statistics (source: OECD Document DSTI/EAS/STP/NESTI(2006)19/FINAL).

Research Areas are keywords used to populate the classification. They are based on and adapted from publicly available European Research Council (ERC) Panel Descriptors (2011). The COST Office reserves the right to periodically revise Research Areas based on suggestions from users.

Research Areas that are common to several Science Sub-Fields, but require field-specific expertise, are found under each concerned Sub-Field (e.g. Microbiology is found both under Clinical Medicine and Animal and Dairy Science).

The following Research Areas are found under a large number of Sub-Fields:

- Sustainability and/or sustainable design and production
- Databases, data mining, data curation, computational modelling
- Applied mathematics, statistics and non-computational modelling
- History and philosophy of a discipline
- Ethics of a discipline
- Preservation of cultural heritage

To choose any of these, please go through the appropriate Science Field selection.

For feedback, suggestions and information on the COST Office Science Fields classification, please contact tdp@cost.eu.

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