

Instructions for Preparation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

May 2024

TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	3
HOW TO PREPARE THE MOU	3
a) GENERAL FEATURES	4
b) OBJECTIVES	5
c) DELIVERABLES.....	6
d) WORKING GROUPS	7
e) TECHNICAL ANNEX.....	7

INTRODUCTION

The final decision on approval and funding for new COST Actions is taken by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO). After CSO approval, the text of a successful proposal will form the basis of the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU is a multilateral agreement between all COST Members undertaking joint activities of mutual interest and participating in the Action. It is a public document, published on the Action page on the COST website, which provides a formal framework for collaboration, clarity, and accountability, ultimately facilitating the successful implementation of the funded Action. It allows researchers and innovators to be informed about the objectives and proposed implementation of the Action. The MoU is prepared between the Main Proposer and the Science Officer (SO) assigned to the Action.


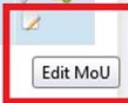
HOW TO PREPARE THE MOU

The preparation of the MoU is finalised in the e-COST platform. Note that the Technical Annex of the MoU is a MS Word document prepared outside e-COST. Its validated version is uploaded on e-COST by the Science Officer. For more details on the Technical Annex, please refer to the section E) below in this document.

Once the Main Proposer logs in the e-COST platform and selects "My Proposals for OC-20XX-X" it leads to the page listing the proposal.

By clicking the icon "Edit MoU", among the available "Options" on the right side of the screen, the Main Proposer can start preparing the MoU.

My Proposals

Select ▾ Export ▾					
Collection ID	Proposal ID	Proposal Title	My Role	Status	Options
OC- [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	Main Proposer	Selected	 

Create New Proposal

The Main Proposer will have access to the following sections:

- General Features
- Objectives
- Deliverables
- Working Groups
- Technical Annex

The following parts of this document provide detailed guidance on how to prepare the MoU and complete the above sections.

A) GENERAL FEATURES

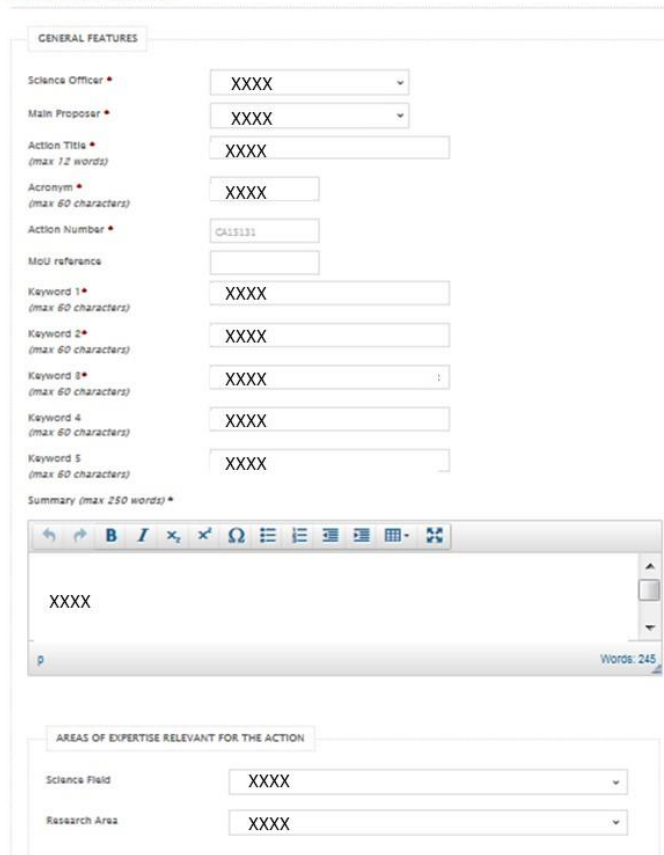
This section is pre-completed with the information provided at the proposal submission stage. Some fields cannot be edited (read-only mode)

The Main Proposer should check the following fields and make revisions if necessary. This information will not be modified throughout the lifetime of the Action.

- **Action Title, Acronym, Action Number:** information will appear in the MoU and on the Action page of the COST website. For the Action Title the Main Proposer is expected to check and correct typos / misspellings, if any. As for the Acronym, please make sure that it is an original one i.e., not in use by any other public or private entity or research group, even if they are part of the Network of Proposers.
- **Summary (max 250 words):** text will be included in the MoU (Technical Annex, Page 3) and will appear on the Action page of the COST website (see examples on: http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions)
- **Keywords:** at least 3 and up to 5 (max 60 characters each)
- **Areas of Expertise Relevant for the Action:** at least 1 and up to 5 Areas of Expertise. Please note that this information will be used by the COST Association for selecting the Action Rapporteur who will assess the Action progress and achievements.

NB: CLICK SAVE once the changes are made, otherwise they will be lost.

General Features



GENERAL FEATURES

Science Officer * XXXX

Main Proposer * XXXX

Action Title * (max 12 words) XXXX

Acronym * (max 60 characters) XXXX

Action Number * CA15131

MoU reference

Keyword 1 * (max 60 characters) XXXX

Keyword 2 * (max 60 characters) XXXX

Keyword 3 * (max 60 characters) XXXX

Keyword 4 (max 60 characters) XXXX

Keyword 5 (max 60 characters) XXXX

Summary (max 250 words) *

XXXX

Words: 245

AREAS OF EXPERTISE RELEVANT FOR THE ACTION

Science Field XXXX

Research Area XXXX

B) OBJECTIVES

This section must be completed by the Main Proposer based on the objectives described in the Technical Annex of the proposal.

Please ensure that the objectives are relevant to the identified challenge and SMART¹.

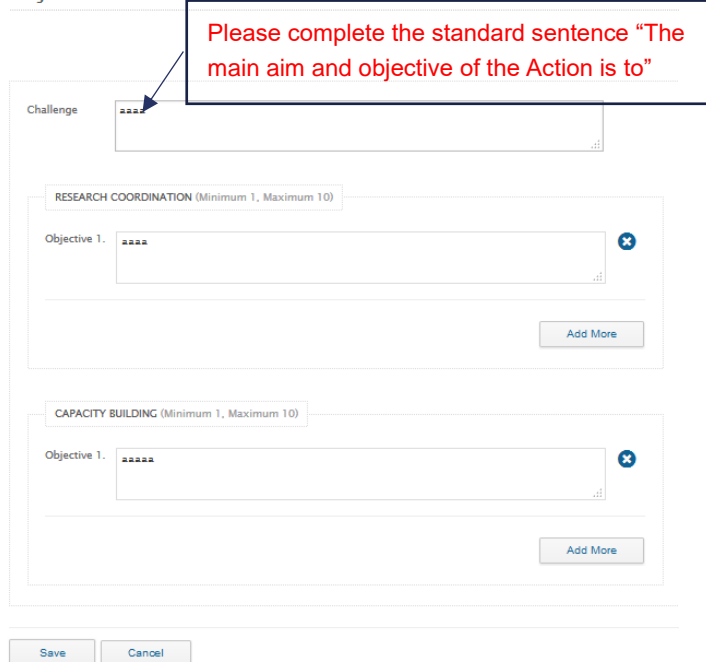
Objectives are neither COST Action networking activities (i.e. meetings, training schools, STSMs, conference grants and dissemination) nor milestones nor deliverables.

Moreover, **neither the Challenge nor the Objectives of an Action may contain any direct reference to the use of COST funding for non-eligible activities** (e.g. for drafting, writing or submitting proposals for the purpose of acquiring funding for national, European or internationally sourced research grants).

Please pay particular attention that the information is accurate and clear, as it will be included in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and used for the monitoring of the progress of the Action.

- **Challenge (max 50 words):** this is the research question addressed by the Action. Please refer to section 1.1. in the Technical Annex of the proposal and summarise the challenge described herein. Please note that the input provided in this section will be used to complete a standard sentence of the MoU (page 2) “The main aim and objective of the Action is to ...”.
- **Research Coordination Objectives:** at least one and up to ten (max 50 words per objective). These objectives entail the distribution of tasks, sharing of knowledge and know-how, and the creation of synergies among Action Participants to achieve specific outputs (for examples see section 2.6.3 of the COST Open Call Applicant's Guidelines – www.cost.eu/proposal_sesa_guidelines).
- **Capacity Building Objectives:** at least one and up to ten (max 50 words per

Objectives



Please complete the standard sentence “The main aim and objective of the Action is to”

Challenge: [text area]

RESEARCH COORDINATION (Minimum 1, Maximum 10)

Objective 1.: [text area] [X]

Add More

CAPACITY BUILDING (Minimum 1, Maximum 10)

Objective 1.: [text area] [X]

Add More

Save Cancel

- **Objectives are not:**

1) COST Action networking activities
(e.g. meetings, training schools)

2) milestones

or

3) deliverables

and

may not contain any direct reference to the use of COST funding for non-eligible activities.

¹ SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely

<p>objective). Achieving these objectives entails building critical mass to drive scientific progress, thereby strengthening the European Research Area (for examples see section 2.6.3 of the COST Open Call Applicant's Guidelines – www.cost.eu/proposal_sesa_guidelines).</p> <p>In case there are more than ten Research Coordination/Capacity Building Objectives in the proposal, please select the most relevant ones to encode on e-COST.</p> <p>The Science Officer in charge of the Action will check and validate this section.</p> <p>NB: CLICK SAVE once the changes are made, otherwise they will be lost.</p>	
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C) DELIVERABLES

<p>This section must be completed by the Main Proposer based on the deliverables described in the Technical Annex of the proposal.</p> <p>Deliverables are distinct, expected and tangible outputs of the Action, expected within the Action lifetime, meaningful in terms of the Action's overall objectives, such as: scientific and technical papers and contributions, reports, documents, SOPs / guidelines, technical diagrams, input to standards, best practices, white papers, etc. Additional deliverables supporting dissemination and exploitation of Action results (e.g., Science Communication plan, the Action website etc) can be included. Documents required by the COST rules and processes (e.g. Progress Reports, Final Achievement Report) are not to be listed under Action Deliverables.</p> <p>Deliverables are not COST Action networking activities such as meetings, training schools, STSMs, etc.</p> <p>Moreover, the Deliverables of an Action may not contain direct reference to the use of COST funding for non-eligible activities (e.g. for drafting, writing, or submitting proposals for the purpose of acquiring funding for national, European or internationally sourced research grants).</p>	<div data-bbox="788 1003 1375 1267"> <p>Deliverables</p> <div> <div>Deliverable 1. XXXXX XXXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX</div> <div> <div>Month</div> <div>14</div> </div> <div>Add More</div> </div> <div> <div>Save</div> <div>Cancel</div> </div> </div> <div data-bbox="804 1397 1452 1639"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliverables are not: COST Action networking activities (e.g. meetings, training schools) and • may not contain direct reference to the use of COST funding for non-eligible activities. </div> <div data-bbox="804 1702 1452 1836"> <p>Please note that the recommended number of Deliverables is 5-20 per Action for a realistic achievement of the objectives/timeframe within the resources.</p> </div>
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Action deliverables will be used for the monitoring to measure the Action progress and success.

To ensure that the **timeframe of deliverables** respects the 4-year plan.

This section can still be revised but needs to be finalised at the latest during the 1st Management Committee (MC) meeting. Please refer to the Science Officer for advice.

The Science Officer in charge of the Action will check and validate this section.

NB: CLICK SAVE once the changes are made, otherwise they will be lost.

D) WORKING GROUPS

This section must be completed by the Main Proposer based on the Working Groups described in the Technical Annex of the proposal.

Please note that the overall management of the Action is the role of the Management Committee. Therefore, **no 'Management' Working Group needs to be created** to perform this task.


The **number of recommended WGs is 3-6**. This is the recommended number of Working Groups to keep Actions manageable.

This section can still be revised but needs to be finalised at the latest during the 1st Management Committee (MC) meeting. Please refer to the Science Officer for advice.


The Science Officer in charge of the Action will check and validate this section.

NB: CLICK SAVE once the changes are made, otherwise they will be lost.

Working Groups

Title 

Number

Title 

Number

[Add More](#)

[Save](#)

[Cancel](#)

E) TECHNICAL ANNEX

The Technical Annex of the MoU is based on the Technical Annex of the proposal. The MoU Technical Annex template provided by the Science Officer in charge of the Action must be used. Please be aware that the content of the Technical Annex of the proposal should only be modified upon agreement with the COST Association. A final formatting and language check are required.

Below are the instructions for the preparation of the Technical Annex of the MoU. **Please send the revised word document of the Technical Annex with track changes to the Science Officer in charge of your proposal (by email), who will revise and validate the changes.**

1. CONTENT

Make sure that:

- The content is formed based on the submitted Technical Annex of the proposal;
- No information was lost/distorted during its preparation;
- Unnecessary details on the initial network of proposers are removed (ex. 'Our network consists of 34 proposers from 15 countries...'), as these were functional to the proposal evaluation but not necessary for Action implementation. Avoid mentioning specific countries, in section 2.2 Added Value of Networking in Impact (or in other parts of the MoU) since each COST Action shall be opened for participation from any COST Member.
- GANTT Diagram: to be revised based on the changes done in the work plan to assure coherence (WG, tasks, deliverables, timeframe).

2. LANGUAGE

- a) Language and spelling should be revised. The main proposer should make sure that the text is of good quality standard English.
- b) To use capital letters for COST-specific and Action-related expressions such as: Action, Action Chair, Management Committee, Working Group, STSM (Short-Term Scientific Mission), Core Group, etc. Please refer to the COST Glossary - Definitions and Abbreviations applicable throughout COST implementation rules (Level A - Annex II; <https://www.cost.eu/Glossary>)
- c) To Explain all acronyms (including those commonly used in the Framework Programme context).
- d) To use "Europe" or "COST Members" when referring to the overall geographical scope of COST. "European Union" or "EU Member States" should only be used to refer to the EU as a player ("EU legislation", "EU Programmes", "EU policies" etc) or when only EU Member State(s) need to be explicitly mentioned, excluding COST Members not in the EU.
- e) To use "framework" or "scheme" when referring to COST (COST is an intergovernmental framework, not an "EU instrument", although it is funded by the Framework Programme).
- f) To avoid pronouns such as "I", "we"; rather use "the Action".
- g) To avoid expressions such as "planned" or "proposed" when referring to the Action; rather use "this COST Action" "aims at", "will", etc.
- h) To avoid the use of hyperlinks in the MoU if possible (pages may change / expire).

3. REFERENCES

- The Main Proposer is welcome to add the references in the Technical Annex even if with this addition the page limit of 15 pages would be exceeded.