



COST Innovators' Grant

Frequently Asked Questions

(FAQ)

Pilot Scheme

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TABLE OF CONTENT

APPLICATION	1
EVALUATION	4
APPROVAL	5
IMPLEMENTATION	6

Application

Is the CIG Team composed exclusively of MC members or can substitutes, observers, Working Group (WG) participants or even people outside of the Action also be in the team? Also, are these people all from COST Participating Countries or can they be also from NNC/IPC/IO?

The CIG Team can be composed of MC members, substitutes and any Action participants. MC Observers can be part of the CIG Team but will be reimbursed according to the rules applied to International Partner Country (IPC), Near Neighbour Country (NNC), International Organisations (IO), the EC and its Agencies as described in the [Vademecum](#).

What is the difference between a CIG Team member and a CIG participant?

A CIG Team member is defined during the application phase and his/her expertise needs to be relevant with the purpose of the CIG being proposed. Once the CIG application is approved by the CSO, the CIG Team composition cannot be changed. The CIG Team will be responsible for the management of the CIG budget and activities and its role will be similar to the of the Management Committee of an Action. A CIG participant is a person participating in any CIG activity. This person must be affiliated in one of the Countries participating in the Action having participated in the Action.

Can an SME affiliated participant be a CIG Chair or Grant Holder?

An SME affiliated Action participant can be CIG Chair and act as Grant Holder provided the SME fulfils the COST requirements to be Grant Holder (Section 3.1 of the [Vademecum](#)).

Is the CIG Chair the same person as the Action Chair?

The CIG Chair does not have to be the same person as the Action Chair.

What are the eligible activities and expenses?

CIG networking activities are the same as those available to COST Actions and the [Vademecum](#) rules for eligibility of reimbursements apply.

According to the Work Plan in the CIG Application Form, there is a budget associated to a CIG team member/s. The budget is associated to the specific person or their institution?

No, the budget is meant to be used to carry out the activity in the same way as in the Actions.

In case the maximum budget of 125.000 EUR is requested, how many CIG Team members are expected to be recruited?

The budget does not depend on the number of CIG Team members but relates to the activities proposed and the envisaged number of total participants, thus including CIG Team members and CIG participants. For each activity stated in the CIG application it shall be explained which of the CIG Team Members have committed to contribute to this activity. In this respect, there is no minimum or maximum number of CIG Team members.

How many proposals per Action can be submitted?

Only one proposal per Action, and only the last to be submitted according to the rules defined in the [CIG Guidelines](#) will be considered for evaluation.

What happens if the Action Grant Holder is not willing to continue with the CIG financial administration?

A new Grant Holder Institution should agree to take over the CIG Grant management. The GH will be the Institution receiving and managing the CIG Grant. The GH will also receive the FSAC to manage the activities. Please refer to the [Vademecum](#) for more details.

Is there any constraint about anonymity in the CIG application?

Anonymity is not an eligibility criterion.

Is there a minimum or maximum number of countries or participants for the CIG application?

The same COST Countries that are in the Action can also be part of the CIG. There is no maximum or minimum requirement.

Can we include different innovations in various areas, in the same application? If this is possible, has the business plan to be presented for all the innovation presented, or only for the best one?

Yes, you can include different innovations in various areas in the CIG application and the business plan should address all of them.

If the application gets rejected, can it be resubmitted? If so when?

Resubmissions of CIG's application are not allowed.

Is the Final Action Dissemination (FAD) considered as an extension of the Action?

No, the FAD is not considered as an extension of the Action, hence the FAD period, which ends one year after the end of the Action, can overlap with the CIG activities.

For fundamental research we can have a strong innovation potential but not marketable applications, can we still apply? Will we be disfavoured?

The definition of innovation and of the business plan allow for CIG applications to vert on all aspects of innovation, hence a marketable application is not the only possible outcome. If applications are on fundamental research or social innovation this will not be a ground for disfavouring them.

How detailed should the business plan be, do we need to give the names of companies that will develop/apply the innovations?

The business plan is the output at the end of the CIG activities. According to the definition given in the [CIG Guidelines](#), the business plan describes in detail how an innovation is going to reach the users. A business plan defines the overall strategy for bringing the innovation to the users and lays out an appropriate written plan from a marketing, advocacy, communication or promotion; financial and operational viewpoint, including the sustainability of each.

The guidelines (page 5) require a 'commercial or technical proposition'. Is this a strict criterion?

Our definition of innovation is broad enough to encompass all types of innovation and not only for commercial or technical ones.

“Innovation means a new or improved product, process, service, organisational method or policy approach that constitutes a state-of-the-art change in the sector or policy area in which the actor operates.”

How does the “explicit MC vote” work?

The explicit MC vote requested for the approval of the CIG submission will be launched and managed by the COST Association after the submission deadline of the 31st January 2020. This type of vote requires all the MC members to express whether they are in favour or not, hence there is no tacit approval by a “no-reply”.

The vote will be by simple majority vote by participating COST Full Member or COST Cooperating Member.

To summarise, if the two MC members from a participating COST Full Member / Cooperating Member:

- Agree, the vote will count as one;
- disagree, their vote will count as null;
- if one of the two MC members does not reply to the vote, it will count as abstention and the vote of the other MC member will be considered;
- if both MC members abstain it will be counted as an abstention.

Evaluation

When and where is the Hearing taking place?

The Hearings are taking place at the COST Association's premises in Brussels on 2nd March (from 12h00) until 3rd March (noon). If your application reaches this stage, you will receive in the last week of February an individual invitation for one of those two days.

Who and how many people can participate in the Hearing?

Only one person will be invited and by default it is the CIG Chair. If the CIG Chair cannot attend someone else from the CIG team can substitute him/her.

Does at least one of the three CIG Committee members have a scientific background?

The CIG Committee is composed of experts in research-based innovation, most of whom have a scientific background.

Approval

When will the results be communicated?

The outcome of the evaluation, selection and approval of CIG applications will be communicated after the CSO approval, at the end of March 2020.

What are the honoraria mentioned in the Guidelines about?

The Honoraria mentioned in the Guidelines (Chapter 8) refers to the honorarium each CIG Committee member is entitled to for taking part to the CIG applications' evaluation.

Implementation

Is the CIG Chair to be elected among the proposed CIG team?

The CIG Chair is the person identified as such in the application.

Are CIGs open as COST Actions?

No additional members of the CIG Team will be admitted after approval of the CIG application by the CSO, and participating COST Countries remain the same as those of the originating Action. Nevertheless, ad-hoc participants can attend the CIG activities in agreement with the [Vademecum](#).

Can unspent budget from the Action be used also in the CIG, if approved?

Although the CIG stems from an Action, these are considered different grants. Therefore, it will not be possible to transfer the underspent budget at the end of the Action to the CIG.

What will be the contents of the reporting at the end of the CIG period?

The Final achievement report will be an adaptation of the one in place for COST Actions.

Is there any impact on the eligibility of the costs linked to the CIG final achievement report?

The Final achievement report has no impact on the eligibility of costs incurred during the CIG. This will be the role of the final financial report in accordance with the [Vademecum](#).

Is there a final financial report and if yes, when is it due?

Both a final financial and final achievement reports are due 2 months after the end of the CIG pilot Grant Period (30/04/2021), i.e. by 30/06/2021.

Any recommendation on how to develop a business plan for the CIG? Can the CIG Team be supported with this task? Is there a template for it?

The COST Academy is envisaging a training module in the summer of 2020 that could be proposed to CIG Teams on how to prepare a business plan, further information will be sent in due time. The business plan is one mandatory output of the CIG, the CIG activities proposed should ensure its delivery. The CIG Team can organise a CIG activity for this purpose, provided it falls under the networking tools available to COST Actions.

The COST Association is not providing a template for the business plan because COST Actions – and the derived CIGs – have different backgrounds and objectives.

What happens if the Action is extended? Is an overlap in time possible?

If the Action is extended and it does not overlap with the CIG Grant Period (01/05/2020 – 30/04/2021) this is possible. However, overlap of Action and CIG activities is not allowed.

Can participants or countries join the CIG later if the application is successful?

CIG Team members cannot be changed after CSO approval of the CIG application. CIG participants can join any activity on an ad-hoc basis, provided they are based in a COST Country originally in the Action.

Where can the activities be organised: only in the CIG Team countries or also in the Action Participating Countries?

Networking activities can be organised in both the CIG Team countries as well as in the Action participating COST Countries, including approved NNC and IPC participants according to the [Vademecum](#).

Who would be eligible for the reimbursement: only the participants from the CIG Team countries or also from the Action Participating Countries?

Both the CIG Team members as well as participants from participating COST Countries are eligible for reimbursement, as well as approved NNC and IPC participants in accordance with the [Vademecum](#).

Can we focus on using only a subset of networking tools (not all types) if it matches well the objectives of the CIG?

Yes, you can choose the most appropriate tools to achieve the CIG objectives and deliver the business plan.

Can we invite external Speakers?

Yes, you can in accordance with the [Vademecum](#).

Do the CIG networking tools have to be specific to the "Innovation" or can they also be relevant to the objectives and deliverables of the originating Action?

The CIG networking tools need to be specific to the CIG objectives and contribute to the delivery of the business plan and other outputs mentioned in the application.

Can we combine CIG activities with the other funded events?

This is possible as long as no double funding of the activity is ensured.

Will it be necessary to assign a STSM and ITC coordinators and a Science Communication Manager for the CIG, if the application is successful? If yes, can the persons be different from the Action ones?

To ensure an optimal communication strategy and outreach the Science Communication Manager role should be assigned. Regarding other leadership roles such as STSM and ITC coordinators, these should be assigned if needed.

The successful CIGs would have a joint Final Meeting. Will this be funded by the COST Association or does this need to be taken into account in the CIG WBP? From the CIG Action, who will be eligible to attend the FM?

The Final event will take place in the summer 2021 and it would be organised and paid by COST.

The required rules for STSM, meeting participation, etc (and the rest of decisions) during the CIG, need to be approved only by the CIG Team? or by the MC of the Action?

The CIG Team will be the decision-making body, the Action activities will be ended when the CIG starts.

In case that the Action Chair is not the person as the CIG Chair, what will it imply from the CIG development from the administrative and financial point of view? will that imply any delay?

The CIG chair might not be the Action Chair. There normally should not be any delay directly due to that fact.

As UK is a participant in the present Action, will all the UK participants be reimbursed during the CIG independently of the Brexit result? are there any possible scenarios that will not recommend including UK participants with relevant roles in the CIG team?

In the case of a no-deal Brexit, the UK government has committed to provide funding for all successful eligible UK bids to Horizon 2020 that are submitted before the end of 2020. This applies to eligible UK participation in COST Actions until the end of 2020. The COST Innovator's Grant is an add-on to COST Actions, hence UK affiliated-participants will be able to claim costs incurred in the framework of the CIG, in case of a no-deal Brexit, from the UK (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-actions-after-brexit>).

Regarding the final output of the Business Plan, what happens if the CIG proposal is approved but the design activities in the CIG proposal cannot result in the expected Business Plan? Will the Grant Holder be required to reimburse the financed budget to COST?

The CIG Committee will evaluate the feasibility based on information in the CIG application (see guidelines section 3.2.4). The CIG Team commit to achieve the set objectives of the CIG and deliver all proposed outputs, one mandatory proposed output is a business plan. The proposed CIG activities in the application need to clearly describe how they will ensure that the CIG objectives will be reached. Should there be a critical problem encountered during the course of the CIG and the need to deviate from the plan arises, this would need to be discussed with the Science Officer and approved by COST (it is similar to Action). In this case, there should not be a reimbursement of the Grant.