



Brussels, 13 May 2015

**COST 132/14**

## **DECISION**

**Subject: “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”**

The “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” is the document establishing the main principles and rules for the participation in and implementation of COST activities, including COST Actions. These rules replace the document 4112/13 and the entry into force is 1 January 2015.

The Committee of Senior Officials approved this document through written procedure on 9 December 2014. This document was amended on 13 May 2015 following the adhesion of Montenegro to the COST Association.

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COST is supported by  
the EU Framework Programme  
Horizon 2020

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## Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities

*COST (CO-operation in Science and Technology) is a pan-European intergovernmental framework dedicated to networking activities for European researchers to jointly develop their own ideas and new initiatives across all scientific disciplines through trans-European coordination of nationally funded research activities. COST has been contributing since its creation in 1971 to closing the gap between science, policy makers and society throughout Europe and beyond.*

The COST Member Countries, having regard to the recommendation of the CSO<sup>1</sup> to implement COST through a legal entity under the legal form of an International not-for-profit Association under Belgian Law, have established the COST Association AISBL (hereinafter "COST Association") on 19 September 2013, of which they became full members.

COST has traditionally drawn its funding from the EU Framework Programmes, at the request of the EU Member States and with the approval of the European Parliament. For the seven years period of the EU Framework Programme Horizon 2020, a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) was signed between the COST Association and the European Commission. The agreement acknowledges the COST contribution to strengthening Europe's research and innovation capacities and the role that COST will play in Horizon 2020. In effect, the FPA addresses two major challenges of Horizon 2020, namely Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective Societies and Spreading Excellence and widening participation. In both cases, COST is referred to as a key contributor to the Programme strategic objectives, given its support particularly towards pan-European cooperation in science and technology.

The COST Association serves the COST mission according to principles of good governance and operates according to the principles of efficiency, effectiveness as well as assure sound, lean and cost-effective management; it builds on the values of integrity, commitment and transparency and secures the management of public funds through high quality accountability and financial auditing measures; it allows for taking appropriate measures to prevent irregularities and fraud and not entail any unnecessary costs to COST Member Countries.

Against this background, the COST Committee of Senior Officials ("CSO")

in accordance with its role as General Assembly of the COST Association,

Whereas:

- (1) The COST Intergovernmental Framework, hereafter referred to as "COST", was established at the first COST Ministerial Conference in 1971.
- (2) COST Member Countries<sup>2</sup> have established an International not-for-profit Association, the COST Association, integrating the governance, management and implementation functions of COST.
- (3) COST contributes to the objective of strengthening the scientific and technological basis of the European Research Area by promoting the networking of researchers, engineers or scholars encouraging them to share, create and apply knowledge, thereby encouraging Europe to become more competitive.

<sup>1</sup> COST 4162/12 CSO recommendation on the COST New Implementing Structure during the next Framework Programme – Horizon 2020

<sup>2</sup> COST 4117/13 Resolution adopted by the European Ministers responsible for COST

- (4) COST is open to all fields in science and technology and wishes to foster multi- and interdisciplinary, aiming to enable breakthrough scientific developments leading to new concepts and products.
- (5) COST is supported by the European Union (EU) Framework Programme promoting research and innovation activities and fostering better exploitation of the industrial potential of policies of innovation, research and technological development in the European Research Area.
- (6) COST is implemented in accordance and compliance, where applicable, with the EU Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council) and its Rules of Application (Commission Regulation (EU, Euratom) No1268/2012).
- (7) The set of “COST Implementation Rules” should provide a coherent, comprehensive and transparent frame to ensure efficient and harmonised implementation of activities, as well as ease access for all potential stakeholders, by promoting and facilitating participation from a wide range of researchers, engineers and scholars from universities, research centres, companies, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as other relevant legal entities.
- (8) For the benefit of participants the COST Implementation Rules should be robust, stable and consistent and should focus on best interest of research communities and foster mutual trust in their networking activities.
- (9) The overall challenge for COST should be to foster a common pan-European effort governed by the COST key principles of supporting excellence, being open and inclusive by fostering new ideas, sharing knowledge and being output orientated. This should enable COST to build capacity among high-quality scientific research communities by identifying excellent researchers all through Europe; leverage national research investments; address issues of global relevance and increase the impact of science and technology on policy makers, regulatory bodies and national decision makers.
- (10) COST should promote participation of all COST Members Countries in COST activities and should encourage European regions to develop their capacities and strengthen excellence.
- (11) COST should further encourage participation of young talents and next generation leaders in science and technology, promote working opportunities for early career investigators, and ensure gender balance.
- (12) COST should reinforce its Inclusiveness Policy with the aim to identify and strengthen scientific excellence, to support integration of scientific research communities and increase the participation of researchers, engineers and scholars from identified Inclusiveness Target Countries in COST activities.
- (13) COST should allow international cooperation, on the basis of ascertained mutual benefit, the participation of researchers from COST Near Neighbour Countries and from International Partner Countries in COST activities.
- (14) COST should allow the participation of EU Institutions and Agencies, European RTD organisations and International Organisations in COST activities.

- (15) COST should implement a Code of Conduct by determining ethical working principles overreaching all actors and activities.
- (16) COST should provide funding for activities of relevance for fulfilling COST mission and achieving COST objectives, more particularly for COST Actions, the COST networking instrument.
- (17) COST should fund networking activities in the field of science and technology destined only for peaceful purposes; any funding of activities related to sensitive technology development, armament or defence oriented research should be avoided. COST should support activities carried out in compliance with fundamental ethical principles.
- (18) COST should establish rules and procedures to govern the submission, evaluation, selection and approval of proposals for COST Actions and other activities where appropriate.
- (19) COST should foresee appropriate scientific and technological monitoring and follow-up in view of assessing the results, outcomes and impacts of COST Actions and other activities.
- (20) COST should establish the frame for a proper impact analysis and comprehensive statistics of participation in COST Actions and other activities as well as results and outcomes.
- (21) COST should encourage the use, dissemination and exploitation of research results while, where appropriate, giving particular attention to confidential data and protection of intellectual property generated through COST activities, in particular through COST Actions. COST activities should not contribute to distortions in access to markets or development of monopolies.
- (22) COST should promote Open Access and encourage availability of results published thanks to COST funding and thereby contributing to boost worldwide visibility of European science and technology.
- (23) COST should define a Communication Plan to improve its branding, demonstrate a differentiated positioning of COST and promote strong awareness in the European Research Area.
- (24) COST should have the means to conduct Strategic Initiatives to enforce and reinforce its influence in chosen policy priorities aiming at concrete, structuring impact at the national and European decision-making environment.
- (25) COST should protect EU financial interests and ensure sound financial management. COST is aware that the EU auditing procedures apply.

Has adopted the present “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST activities”, hereinafter referred to as the “COST Implementation Rules. This decision enters into force on 1 January 2015.

## Subject Matter and Scope

This decision lays down the basic principles and general rules for the participation, implementation and management of COST activities, in short, the “COST Implementation Rules”.

The COST Implementation Rules comprise a main set of principles and rules for the operational, financial and administrative management of the COST networking instrument, the COST Action.

The COST Implementation Rules also lay down the main principles and rules concerning the other COST activities, including COST cooperation with Near Neighbour Countries, International Partner Countries and Specific Organisations, as well as strategic initiatives and communication activities.

In addition to the framework conditions laid down in the present document, there are also specific rules that shall further define and govern the functioning and management of COST activities, as described below.

## Hierarchy of the set of COST Implementation Rules

The set of COST Implementation Rules are divided into three levels:

The first level is composed of the present “COST Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”. They take precedence over all other rules dealing with COST activities, including those related to COST Actions, define the main principles applying to the participation in and implementation of COST activities and establish the main channels of articulation between the set of COST Implementation Rules. They are CSO decisions.

The second level concerns the rules that further develop on the principles and rules contained in the present COST Implementation Rules concerning the implementation of COST Activities. They include the rules on the submission, evaluation, selection and approval of proposals for COST Actions, rules related to management, monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions, rules on COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations participation, rules dealing with the implementation of Communication activities and strategic initiatives. This second level of rules must not contravene the principles and rules defined in the present document. Finally, they define the subject matters of the third level of the set of COST Implementation Rules. They are CSO decisions.

The third level of the rules comprise the COST Vademecum describing the financial rules as well as guidelines that have as function to further detail and explain in a userfriendly language the second level of rules. They aim at facilitating the implementation of COST activities by the broad range of COST actors. They regulate only on subject matters identified by the first and second level rules and cannot rule in a contrary way to these. They are approved by the Director of the COST Association.

The present “COST Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” take precedence over all other COST implementation rules of general or specific nature.

Other COST rules, approved before the present COST Implementation Rules, that do not contravene them or rule on matters not covered by the present set of COST Implementation Rules, will continue to apply until new rules on the same subject matter are approved.

In exceptional circumstances, duly justified in the superior interest of COST, the CSO may decide in a different way.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this Decision, the following definitions shall apply:

1. COST Member Country: means any country that joined the COST Association as a Full Member following the approval of the COST Association Statutes.
2. COST Cooperating State: means any State that was admitted to the COST Association as Cooperating Member.
3. COST Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC): means COST Member Countries that fulfil the Horizon 2020 widening eligibility conditions being either an EU Member State or an Associated Country to the EU Framework Programme.
4. COST Near Neighbour Countries: means countries approved by the Committee of Senior Officials to benefit from dedicated support for the integration of their researchers, engineers or scholars in COST activities.
5. International Partner Countries (IPC): means all those countries that are neither COST Member Countries, nor Cooperating State nor COST Near Neighbour Countries.
6. EU Agencies: means any organisation governed by European public law, with its own legal personality, established in the EU to accomplish specific tasks of a legal, technical and/or scientific nature in a given policy field and to support the EU Member States but distinct from the EU institutions.
7. European RTD Organisation: means any intergovernmental scientific research organisation that is responsible for infrastructures and laboratories whose members are countries, and the majority of which are COST Member Countries or Cooperating State.
8. International Organisation: means any organisation with an European or international membership, scope or presence, with its own legal personality, governed by international public law or recognised as of general interest, in particular promoting scientific and technological cooperation, which should have an added value in the fulfilment of COST Mission.
9. COST National Coordinator (CNC): means the individuals appointed by the COST Member Countries and Cooperating State in charge of confirming the acceptance of the Action Memorandum of Understanding and responsible for nominating the Management Committee members of their country and the evaluators for the Review Panels pool of Experts.
10. Scientific Committee (SC): means the committee composed of independent, internationally renowned, high-level experts, one per COST Member Country and Cooperating State, appointed by the CSO.
11. Open Call for proposals: means the official announcement/publication with the description of the objectives and criteria required for COST Action proposals to be evaluated and selected. The Open Call allows submitting proposals on a continuous basis; the publication indicates the Collection Dates.
12. Collection Date: means the date when the proposals for new COST Actions submitted during a certain period are gathered and sent for evaluation.



13. Main Proposer: means the coordinator of the network of proposers who submit a proposal for a COST Action in response to the Open Call.
14. Funding Scheme: means the mechanism governing the administrative and financial management of a COST Action grant.
15. COST Action: means the COST pan-European networking instrument allowing researchers, engineers or scholars from COST Member Countries and Cooperating State to develop jointly their ideas and new initiatives in a field or topic of common interest.
16. Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): means the agreement accepted by a minimum of five different COST Member Countries and/or Cooperating State describing the Action objectives. This document has to be accepted by any additional COST Member Country or Cooperating State joining the Action.
17. COST Action Grant Agreement (AGA): means the agreement between the COST Association and the Grant Holder that governs the administrative and financial implementation of the COST Action.
18. Grant Holder: means the legal entity responsible for the administrative and financial implementation of the COST Action.
19. Action Participant: means any researcher, engineer or scholar who participates actively in a COST Action.
20. Early Career Investigator (ECI): means a researcher in the time span of up to 8 years after the date of obtaining the PhD/doctorate (full-time equivalent).
21. Management Committee (MC): means the group of researchers, engineers or scholars representing COST Member Countries and Cooperating State that have accepted the MoU. They are in charge of the coordination, implementation, and management of an Action's activities as well as supervising the appropriate allocation and use of the COST funding with a view to achieving the Action's scientific and technological objectives. They are nominated by the CNC.
22. Dissemination: means the public disclosure of COST Action's results and/or outcomes by any appropriate means (other than resulting from protecting or exploiting the results), including by scientific publications in any media.

## **1. Principles governing COST Activities**

All COST activities shall be properly implemented, closely monitored and appropriately assessed to ensure a proper execution and suitable dissemination. They include all those arising from COST Actions, as well as those related to international cooperation, communication activities and strategic initiatives.

Rigorous implementation shall guarantee proper execution, best performance and suitable completion of COST activities.

Fairness, transparency, openness, excellence and inclusiveness shall govern the rules for the submission, evaluation, selection and approval procedures of proposals for COST Actions and Activities.

Appropriate management and monitoring shall contribute to quality implementation and provide for regular follow-up, supervision and efficiency in the implementation of COST Actions and activities. Monitoring shall contribute to effective assessment during and at the end of COST Actions and contribute to guarantee the high quality results and outcomes expected from COST activities.

COST will make the best endeavours to avoid conflict of interest.

All individuals involved in COST activities, including COST Actions, must commit to confidentiality of data identified as confidential.

COST shall endeavour to avoid any prejudice in respect of nationality, age and gender throughout all COST activities.

Mutual trust shall be promoted in interactions between the different actors of COST and between COST and the scientific and technological communities, what shall contribute to increased efficiency in the implementation of COST policies and activities.

Timely dissemination shall foster spreading of new knowledge, as well as increased outreach and visibility of COST activities.

COST may, in line with its mission and in order to reach its objectives, develop pilot projects to the benefit of the scientific community, in line with COST positioning in the European Research Area. Such projects shall follow specific rules and guidelines and shall receive appropriate dissemination.

COST activities should respect fundamental rights and observe the principles acknowledged in particular by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Such actions should be in conformity with any legal obligation including international law and with ethical principles, which include avoiding any breach of research integrity.

## **2. Rules related to the implementation of COST International Cooperation**

The general objective of the COST strategies for International Cooperation<sup>3</sup> shall define the positioning and priorities of COST in the international arena. It shall describe the frame conditions for a worldwide cooperation, establish the criteria for ascertained mutual interest and contribute to the international recognition of COST.

The COST International Cooperation shall be implemented throughout COST activities and shall follow the "COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation"<sup>4</sup> with regards to the financial and administrative management of COST Actions.

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<sup>3</sup> COST 290/09 COST Strategy for cooperation with institutions from non-COST countries', COST 222/07 'COST Strategy for Cooperation with non-COST countries' and COST 329/05 'Strengthening R&D Cooperation with Neighbouring countries'

<sup>4</sup> COST 135/14 "COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation"



### **3. Rules related to the implementation of Communication activities**

The COST Communication Plan shall define the communication objectives and the positioning of COST in its competitive frame of reference. It shall describe the key communication messages, main target groups, communication channels and tools, thus contributing to the visibility and credibility of COST activities. It shall be key to the successful implementation of the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy actively involving Inclusiveness Target Countries and addressing their specific needs.

The COST Communication Plan shall be implemented through dedicated rules and procedures for their identification and operation.

### **4. Rules related to the implementation of the Strategic Initiatives**

COST shall conduct Strategic Initiatives allowing for the implementation of concrete, structuring contributions on the most important Policy priorities for COST. Strategic Initiatives are key to create a platform for debate among policy makers and key stakeholders, in particular involving those from Inclusiveness Target Countries and addressing their specific needs.

The Strategic Initiatives shall be implemented through dedicated rules for their identification and operation.

### **5. Rules applying to COST Actions**

The rules applying to COST Actions comprise the conditions for participation in a COST Action, the procedures related to the submission, evaluation, selection and approval of proposals for COST Actions, the set of COST implementation rules for the management, monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions <sup>5 and 6</sup>.

#### **5.1. Participation in a COST Action**

The COST Action is a pan-European network instrument allowing researchers from COST Member Countries and Cooperating State to develop jointly their ideas and new initiatives in a given field or topic of common interest on the basis of mutual benefit. They are open to researchers, engineers and scholars from other countries and leverage nationally funded research activities.

#### **Participation of COST Member Countries or Cooperating State**

COST Actions shall be initiated by COST Member Countries and/or the Cooperating State must formally agree to participate in a COST Action through the acceptance of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Action MC Members shall be affiliated to a university, research centre, company or other relevant legal entity, and adhere to the set of COST Implementation Rules and COST Vademecum.

In order to give global visibility to researchers and research institutions, particular attention shall be given to Inclusiveness Target Countries.

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<sup>5</sup> COST 133/14 “COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval”

<sup>6</sup> COST 134/14 “COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment”

## **Participation of COST Near Neighbour Countries**

COST shall support and encourage the participation of researchers, engineers and scholars in Near Neighbour Countries from universities, research centres, companies or other relevant legal entities in a COST Action on the basis of ascertained mutual benefit.

## **Participation of International Partner Countries**

Researchers, engineers and scholars in International Partner Countries, affiliated to universities, research centres, companies or other relevant legal entities, may participate in a COST Action on the basis of ascertained mutual benefit.

## **Participation of Specific Organisations**

COST shall support and encourage the participation of European RTD Organisations in COST Actions when appropriate.

The European Commission and European Union Agencies may participate in COST Actions.

International Organisations may participate in a COST Action when specific added value is demonstrated. For the purposes of participating in COST Actions, researchers affiliated with International Organisations shall fall under the category of International Partner Countries.

### ***5.2. Submission, Evaluation, Selection, and Approval of proposals for COST Actions***

COST shall adopt and publish rules governing the submission of proposals for new COST Actions, as well as the related evaluation, selection and approval procedures according to international best practices. These procedures shall reflect the principles of trans-nationality, fairness, transparency, openness, excellence and inclusiveness. COST shall undertake appropriate measures in view of avoiding conflict of interest in the evaluation procedure.

Proposals for new COST Actions shall be submitted via the continuous COST Open Call. Proposals shall be submitted, evaluated, selected and approved based on the criteria set out in the “COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval”<sup>7</sup>.

Proposals for new COST Actions shall be prepared by a network of proposers, represented by a Main Proposer, from at least five (5) COST Member Countries and/or Cooperating State.<sup>8</sup>

COST shall appoint independent external experts to assist with the evaluation of proposals for COST Actions.

Proposals contravening fundamental ethical principles or not fulfilling the conditions described in the set of COST Implementation Rules shall be excluded from the evaluation.

Selected proposals must be approved by the CSO.

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<sup>7</sup> COST 133/14 “COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval”

<sup>8</sup> The European Commission, European Agencies and European RTD Organisations can also be part of a network of proposers for proposals for new COST Actions.

### **5.3. Management, Monitoring and Assessment of COST Actions**

#### **Management of a COST Action**

The COST Action is governed by legal, ethical, contractual and administrative rules and principles in compliance with best scientific stewardship and the set of COST Rules.

For each new COST Action a multilateral agreement, the Action MoU, shall be prepared on the basis of the approved proposal describing the Action's scientific and technological objectives and the added value of networking.

The Action MoU shall be accepted by at least five (5) different COST Member Countries and/or Cooperating State within the six months following the CSO approval of the Action. By accepting the MoU COST Member Countries and Cooperating State confirm that activities to be covered by the Action shall rely on research funding provided by national authorities. The adherence to the MoU implies the acceptance the set of COST Implementation Rules.

A Management Committee (MC) composed of representatives (maximum two MC Members per country) of COST Member Countries or the Cooperating State is responsible for the coordination and management of the Action activities. The MC shall elect an Action Chair at its first meeting, which is responsible for coordinating the MC activities.

COST Actions are implemented through a set of networking tools such as meetings (MC meetings, Working Groups, workshops, conferences), Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs), Training Schools and Dissemination activities.

The reimbursement of expenses incurred by participants, other than those incurred by the MC Members, depends on the fulfilment of the COST eligibility criteria for reimbursement<sup>9</sup> and is always subject to the availability of COST funds.

#### **Monitoring and Final Assessment of a COST Action**

COST Actions shall be monitored during implementation and shall be assessed at Action end. The objective of the monitoring and assessment is to identify and document the overall COST Action performance. This shall contribute to identify on a regular basis relevant results and outcomes and maximise the potential impact of COST Actions.

#### **Dissemination of Results and Outcomes, Intellectual Property and Open Access<sup>10</sup>**

COST encourages the dissemination of any results and outcomes generated by COST Actions.

Each Action shall facilitate and promote the sharing of its results and outcomes to maximize the benefit that COST Actions may produce in terms of advancing scientific, technological or social knowledge as well as the added value generated by networking at pan-European level and beyond.

Dissemination activities related to COST Actions results and outcomes shall be compatible with the protection of Intellectual Property that may derive from activities, any confidentiality obligations and the legitimate interests of the owners of the knowledge that was used for the production of the Action results and outcomes.

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<sup>9</sup> Detailed information can be found in the COST Vademecum

<sup>10</sup> Detailed information on dissemination can be found in the COST Vademecum

COST Actions shall favour Open Access to results and outcomes published thanks to COST funding. Specific provisions linked to the management, sharing or exploitation of Intellectual Property that may rise from a COST Action shall be defined by the respective Action participants, and lies within their sole discretion/responsibility.

COST shall encourage the protection of Intellectual Property when generated by a COST Action and recommend researchers, engineers and scholars concerned to take necessary action at the earliest possible stage. Such provisions should take into consideration the need for protecting the participants' legitimate interests.

COST shall release "Guidelines to dissemination and exploitation" defining recommendations for the dissemination and exploitation of COST Actions' results and outcomes including Intellectual Property Right management and Open Access publishing.

## **6. Funding Schemes for Management of COST Actions**

COST Actions shall be funded through the COST Decentralised management scheme, the COST Grant System (CGS)<sup>11</sup>.

## **7. Eligibility and Reimbursement of expenses related to COST Activities**

In order to be considered eligible, expenses incurred during the implementation of COST activities including COST Actions shall meet the following criteria:

- Exclusively related to COST activities, in particular COST Action networking tools or any other activity decided by the CSO; eligible activities to be funded by COST shall be defined in the related set of COST Implementation Rules;
- For COST Actions, used for the sole purpose of achieving the scientific and technological objectives of the Action as set out in the Action's MoU.

Reimbursement rules and procedures shall follow the applicable set of COST Implementation Rules<sup>12</sup>.

The COST funding shall not give rise to profit.

## **8. Financial Reporting, Controls and Audits of COST Activities**

All COST activities, including COST Actions, must be budgeted and financial reports shall be delivered according to the relevant set of COST Implementation Rules.

The COST Association, the European Commission or the European Court of Auditors may conduct controls and audits on COST activities.

Each COST Action needs to submit financial reports regarding eligible expenses linked to its activities, as defined by the COST rules and in the terms of the COST Action Grant Agreement and related rules.

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<sup>11</sup> COST 134/14 "COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment", "COST Vademecum"

<sup>12</sup> Detailed information can be found in the COST Vademecum



### **Final and transitory Provisions**

The present Rules shall be binding in their entirety and directly applicable to all COST activities including COST Actions and Action participants.

Any change or derogations to the current Rules are subject to the approval of the CSO.

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**COST Member Countries:**

Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom.

**COST Inclusiveness Target Countries:**

Inclusiveness Target Countries are defined in the Framework Partnership Agreement signed between the COST Association and the European Commission. COST Inclusiveness Target Countries are COST Member Countries that fulfil the Horizon 2020 widening eligibility and admissibility conditions being either an EU Member State or an Associated Country to the EU Framework Programme.

The Horizon 2020 describes eligibility and admissibility conditions for a country as being below the 70% of the EU average of the EU Composite Indicator for Research Excellence<sup>13</sup>. It is used for the participation in Horizon 2020 Widening Actions and applies for “low RDI performing” EU Member States as well as for “low RDI performing” Associated Countries.

COST Inclusiveness Target Countries, ITC	COST Member Countries	
	EU Member States	Associated Countries to Horizon 2020
	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxemburg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia	Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, Turkey

**COST Cooperating State:**

Israel

**COST Near Neighbour Countries:**

Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Russia, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine

<sup>13</sup>See: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/doc/call/h2020/common/1617618part\\_15\\_spreading\\_excellence\\_v2.0\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/doc/call/h2020/common/1617618part_15_spreading_excellence_v2.0_en.pdf)



**EU Agencies<sup>14</sup>:**

- Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)
- Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)
- Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO)
- European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)
- European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (FRONTEX)
- European Asylum Support Office (at planning stage) (EASO)
- European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)
- European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)
- European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)
- European Environment Agency (EEA)
- European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)
- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND)
- European GNSS Agency (GSA)
- European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
- European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)
- European Medicines Agency (EMA)
- European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)
- European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA)
- European Railway Agency – promoting safe and compatible rail systems (ERA)
- European Training Foundation (ETF)
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs) (OHIM)
- Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (CdT)
- European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)
- European Defence Agency (EDA)
- European Union Institute for Security Studies (ISS)
- European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC)
- European Police College (CEPOL)
- European Police Office (EUROPOL)
- The European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit (EUROJUST)
- EURATOM Supply Agency (ESA)
- European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy (Fusion for Energy)
- European Banking Authority (EBA)
- European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA)
- European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA)
- European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB)

<sup>14</sup> [http://europa.eu/agencies/regulatory\\_agencies\\_bodies/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/agencies/regulatory_agencies_bodies/index_en.htm)

### European RTD Organisations<sup>15</sup>:

- CERN - European Organization for Nuclear Research
- EFDA JET - European Fusion Development Agreement
- EMBL - European Molecular Biology Laboratory
- ESA - European Space Agency
- ESO - European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere
- ESRF - European Synchrotron Radiation Facility
- European XFEL - European XFEL Free-Electron Laser Facility
- ILL - Institut Laue Langevin

### International Organisations (non exhaustive list):

- European Centre for Nature Conservation
- European Salt Producers' Association
- International Organisation for Chemistry and Development (IOCD)
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- World Organisation for Animal Health (Office International des Epizooties)
- UNSECO World Heritage Center
- UNESCO Biotechnology Educational and Training Center (BETCEN)
- UNESCO Training and Research Center on Ocean Dynamics and Climate
- International Telecommunications Union (ITU)
- European Forest Institute
- ICP Forests, Institute for World Forestry

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.euroforum.org/about/organisations/index.html>