

COST

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR FUNDS TO NETWORK YOUR RESEARCH? JOIN COST!

0. HISTORY

COST is the **longest-running European framework supporting trans-national cooperation** among researchers, engineers and scholars across Europe. Based on a European intergovernmental framework, COST has been contributing - since its creation in 1971 - to closing the gap between science, policy makers and societal challenges throughout Europe and beyond. As a precursor of advanced multidisciplinary research, COST plays a very important role in building a [European Research Area](#) (ERA).

1. WHAT IS IT (ABOUT)?

COST - European cooperation in Science and Technology - is an intergovernmental European framework for international co-operation between nationally funded research activities.

Rather than funding research itself, COST brings together research teams from different countries working on specific topics and supports networking through conferences, short-term scientific exchanges and publications. **The research itself has to be funded by the Member States.**

The coordination activities - named **COST Actions** - are supported from the EU RTD Framework Programme, Horizon 2020. A COST Action is an open network of researchers, technologists and other interested parties, collaborating across borders.

[COST has 38 Full Member States and one Cooperating Member State.](#)

Researchers explain in a video what it is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdg5iovYR1I>

2. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Anybody can propose and anybody can join. The only constraints are to involve multiple countries, focus on scientific excellence, and deliver high impact.

The members of a COST Action are the countries. Participation to the management committee of an Action is open to researchers in universities, research centres, industry, public and private organizations from all 38 COST Member Countries and its Cooperating State, from any science and technology field, at any career stage. In 2018, there were about 291 different COST Actions ongoing, involving about 45.000 researchers.

On what level can I participate (Applicant/Programme/Project . . .)?

The [call for proposals](#) is constantly open; the proposals are collected and evaluated twice a year.

You can **write an Action proposal** as the main proposer or contribute to an Action proposal as a secondary proposer. You can initiate a network in any area - especially those excluded from other programmes as "risky" or outside the mainstream.

You can [join an Action, as a Belgian member in the Management Committee](#) of an existing Action AND/OR take part in an Action Working Group. You can join a COST Action at any time during its four-year run; you don't have to be in the starting team to participate.

You can [become an external expert](#) and evaluate Action proposals by joining the expert pool.

What is the number of participants needed? The participants in a COST Action are countries. Only seven member countries are required to participate, although in some Actions research teams from three to five times that number are involved ("à la carte" principle). Out of the seven, a minimum of 4 (> 50%) must be [Inclusiveness Target Countries](#).

3. WHY PARTICIPATE (return)?

What are the direct benefits? COST provides opportunities for researchers at any stage of their careers.

COST supports financially networking (meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops) and the organization of other activities (short-term scientific exchanges, training schools, publications and dissemination activities). The actual research is funded by COST Member States.

The **COST Action budget** depends on the number of COST Countries participating in the Action. On average a COST action consists of 22 participating countries and has an annual budget of 130.000 EUR. This funding is mainly used for the reimbursement of travel and lodging expenses, for the organisation of meetings and for short term scientific missions.

What are the indirect benefits?

COST provides **opportunities for less established researchers**.

COST is a unique European **bottom-up** collaborative instrument for Research and Innovation. COST contributes to the identification of **new emerging topics** that can eventually be addressed through the national research and European framework programmes. *COST Actions often evolve into collaborative networks for Horizon 2020.*

COST contributes to the priorities of the European Research Area (ERA), as well as **international** cooperation.

COST is an intergovernmental framework with a long experience of **managing research networks**.

COST contributes to increase the **uptakes of research results by industry** (including SMEs).

COST's international networking can provide a way for researchers to stay connected - and stay home, rather than to have to move abroad to advance your career.

What is the Success rate? In general, approximately 1 in 10 proposals becomes an Action.

4. HOW TO APPLY?

Go to <https://www.cost.eu/funding/how-to-get-funding/open-call/>

The screenshot shows the COST website's 'Open Call' page. The header includes the COST logo (EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY) and navigation menus for News, Events, Multimedia, Publications, Contact us, e-COST, and a search bar. The main heading is 'Open Call: A simple one-step application process'. Below this, the text states: 'Participants are invited to submit COST Action proposals contributing to the scientific, technological, economic, cultural or societal knowledge advancement and development of Europe. Multi- and interdisciplinary proposals are encouraged.' It further explains that the SEESA procedure is fully science and technology-driven and ensures a simple, transparent, and competitive proposal evaluation and selection process. A sidebar on the right contains a calendar icon with the text: 'The next collection date is 5 September 2019 at 12:00 noon (CET). Two collection dates will take place in 2020 (Spring and Autumn)'. Below this is a link to 'Find out how to join an existing COST Action' and an 'e-COST' link.

First of all, you need to register <https://e-services.cost.eu/user/registration/email>

New Account Registration

Step 1 / 5: Email Addresses

Notifications will only be sent to your Primary email address

Primary Email

Email *

Confirm email *

Tip: Adding a Secondary email address could allow you to regain access to your account when primary email is not valid (e.g. change of institution...)

Secondary Email (Optional)

Email

Confirm email

Continue

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If you want to:

- be the **Main Proposer** of an Action proposal: see 5. Where to find information and help.
- become a **member of an MC of an on-going Action**: find your contact person [here](#).
- become a **member of a Working Group of an on-going Action**: contact the Chair of the Action.

You can find your COST Action [here](#), by means of a text search or the Action.

5. WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION AND HELP?

Where can I find information on the Belgian level?

If you are the **main proposer** of an Action proposal and you work **at the federal level**, you can contact the Belgian COST National Coordinator pascale.vandinter@belspo.be for help with your application.

Other applicants can find their contact persons [here](#) this link

Where can I find information on the European/International level: For general enquiries and technical problems: send a message to opencall@cost.eu

6. WHERE CAN I FIND BELGIAN PARTICIPANTS AND INSPIRING EXAMPLES?

Where to find contact information of Belgian participants

There are over 700 Belgian participations in the Management Committee of a COST Action. All Actions with Belgian participants can be found [via this link](#) / More filters / Country / Belgium

Details on the Actions, the coordinates of the Chair and other information can be found [via this link](#)

Several COST running Actions have a [Belgian Chair or a Vice Chair](#)