



GROWING **IDEAS**  
THROUGH **NETWORKS**

# What is the COST Programme?

COST (the European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is an EU-funded programme which enables researchers and innovators to set up interdisciplinary research networks in Europe and beyond. We provide funds for organising conferences, meetings, training schools, short scientific missions and other networking activities on a wide range of scientific topics. By creating open spaces where people and ideas can grow, we are unlocking the full potential of science.

COST does not fund research itself but provides support for networking activities carried out within COST Actions. COST invites researchers in Europe and beyond to submit proposals for Actions through a continuous open call, no matter what their field of interest.

**“I would advise all young researchers to participate in COST. It’s a great opportunity to connect with scientists at all levels of expertise, from Europe and beyond.”**

**Dr Goran Tmušić**

Research Assistant, Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia



# What is a COST Action ?

Since its creation, COST has operated according to one main instrument, the COST Action.

## A COST ACTION IS A NETWORK:

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- welcoming researchers and innovators;
- collaborating in fields of science and technology of common interest to at least seven COST Members/ Cooperating Member\*;
- based on a joint work programme lasting four years;
- answering to the COST open call for proposals.

## A COST ACTION IS A OPEN TO:

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- all fields of science and technology (including interdisciplinary and new and emerging fields);
- all types of institutions (academia, public institutions, SME/industry, NGO, European/ international organisations, etc.);
- all career stages (both young and experienced researchers and innovators);
- all COST Members, as well as Near Neighbour Countries\* and Third States (International Partner Countries)\*. Participants in those countries can take part in all networking activities.

## YEARLY FUNDING

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The average budget of a COST Action is indicatively EUR 150,000/year for a network with participants from around 30 COST Full/Cooperating Members. The funds are provided via an annual grant agreement over a four-year period.

\*See pages 6 and 7.



# Networking tools

## MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES



These are organised by Management Committees (MC) in any COST Member participating in the network. They may be open to the wider community and provide opportunities to enhance the COST Action's visibility.

## TRAINING SCHOOLS



They offer intensive training on an Action topic at the premises of one of the participating institutions.

## SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS (STSMs)



These are exchange visits between researchers in the network which enable scientists to visit an institution or laboratory in any country in the world.

## DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES



COST encourages and supports Action participants to disseminate the outcome of their research to other COST networks, the wider scientific community, policymakers, the media, and society at large, through publications, online media, news releases, events, success stories, etc.

## VIRTUAL NETWORKING GRANTS



These are two types of grants:

- Virtual Networking Support (VNS) Grants: aimed at promoting virtual collaboration to complement traditional ways of collaboration within the research and innovation communities;
- Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants: aimed at strengthening the existing networks by allowing researchers to foster collaboration in a virtual setting, to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, disseminate, and share Action results.



## Who can participate?

Researchers and innovators from universities, public and private institutions, NGOs, industry and SMEs. Particular emphasis is placed on activities involving researchers from less-research intensive COST countries (also known as Inclusiveness Target Countries – ITCs) with a view to increasing their participation.

Researchers from Near Neighbour Countries and International Partner Countries are also welcome to participate in COST Actions.

For more information on international cooperation, please see: [COST Global Networking | COST](#)

## How do I participate?

There are two ways to take part in a COST Action:

- Participate in an existing Action. Download our COST Action's booklet [here](#) to find the network that best matches your scientific expertise and visit the [COST Action webpage](#).

- Create your own network. Submit a COST Action proposal at any time of the year. Proposals are collected once a year. The submission, evaluation, selection and approval (SESA) procedure ensures a simple, transparent and competitive evaluation and selection process, in line with COST's bottom-up, open and inclusive principles.

Proposers benefit from a one-stage submission via the online [e-COST](#) tool. The COST Open Call Applicants' Guidelines for the Submission, Evaluation, Selection Approval (SESA) as well as the technical annex template, are available on the open call page: [Open Call: A Simple One-Step Application Process | COST](#).

### Steps in the evaluation procedure:

- a remote peer-review evaluation by three independent external experts;
- a review and validation of the evaluation reports by ad-hoc review panels. Their composition is tailored to the topics and aims of the proposals received during the open calls. Their members are selected from a pool of experienced researchers from COST Members.
- the Scientific Committee, composed of independent, internationally renowned, high-level experts selects the final proposals to be submitted to the CSO for approval.

# How to become an external expert?

Experts from all scientific areas can participate in the evaluation of proposals for COST Actions collected once a year through the COST Open Call. Learn more about becoming an external expert on [our website](#).

## Programme outreach

### 40 COST Members

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

The countries in green are the less-research intensive COST Members, also known as Inclusiveness Targeted Countries (ITCs).

**1 Cooperating Member:** Israel

**1 International Partner Member:** South Africa

### COST Near Neighbour Countries

Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Jordan, Kosovo\*, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine\*\*, Russia, Syria, Tunisia.

### Third States (International Partner Countries)

Any other country (worldwide) that it is not included in the previous lists.

### Excellence and Inclusiveness policy

This policy is tailored to foster scientific excellence throughout Europe by providing cooperation opportunities for researchers and innovators from Inclusiveness Target Countries. COST helps to connect to knowledge hubs in the European Research Area.

\* Measures are taken to suspend cooperation with Russia and Belarus as of 6 May 2022 and as of 2 March 2023 respectively and until further notice. Among these measures, participation and eligibility of COST Action participants affiliated to a legal entity established in Belarus or in Russia are suspended for all COST Actions and COST activities.

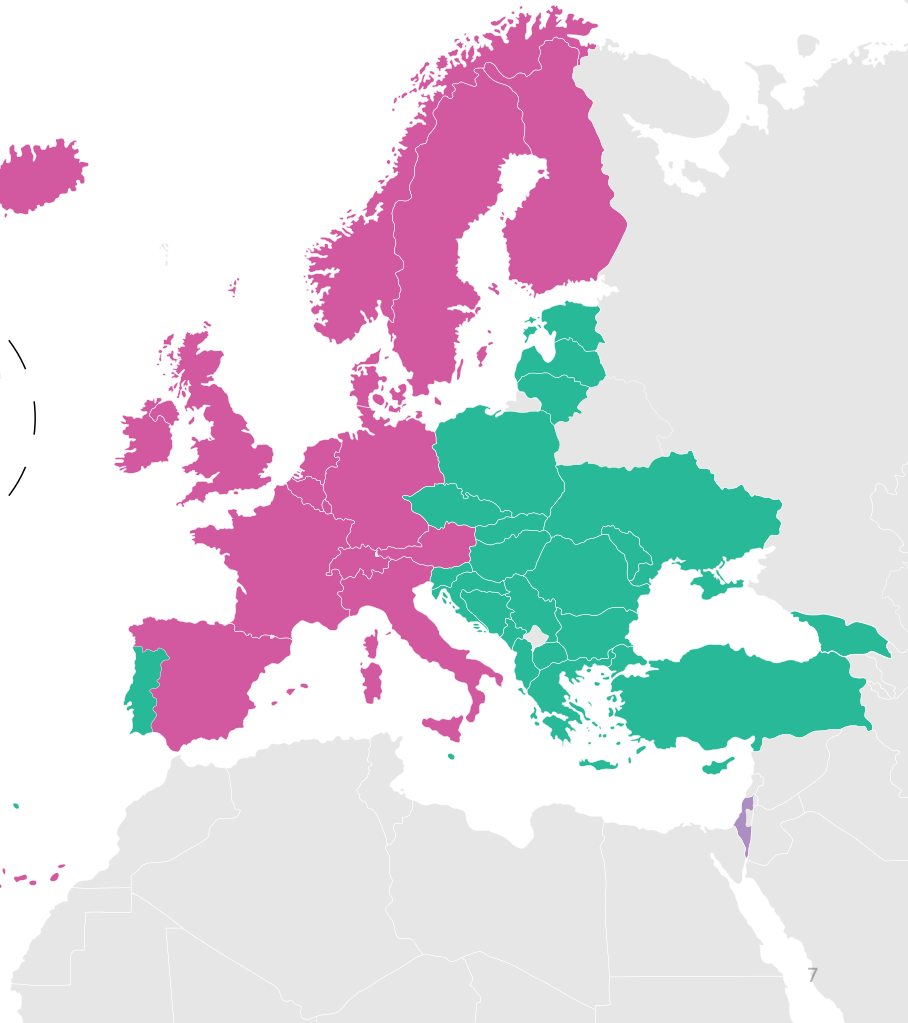
\*\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

\*\*\* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the EU Member States on this issue.

**"I am the first person to have received an ERC Grant in Poland, and COST really helped me to get to that point."**

**Dr Urszula Stachewicz**

AGH University of Science and Technology, Krakow, Poland





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