

# SPREADING AND PROMOTING EXCELLENCE – THE COST PROGRAM



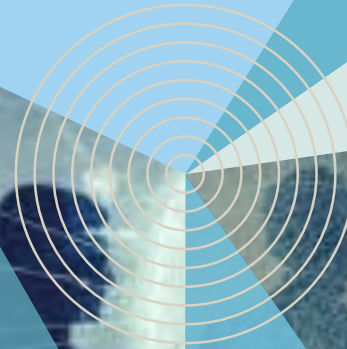
Katalin Alföldi

Dr Fatime Barbara Hegyi

27 May 2024



# About COST & Strategic Priorities



# European Cooperation in Science & Technology



## MISSION

COST provides networking opportunities for researchers and innovators in order to strengthen Europe's capacity to address scientific, technological and societal challenges

## VISION

*Europe's most empowering research programme*

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Promoting and spreading excellence

Fostering interdisciplinary research for breakthrough science

Empowering and retaining young researchers

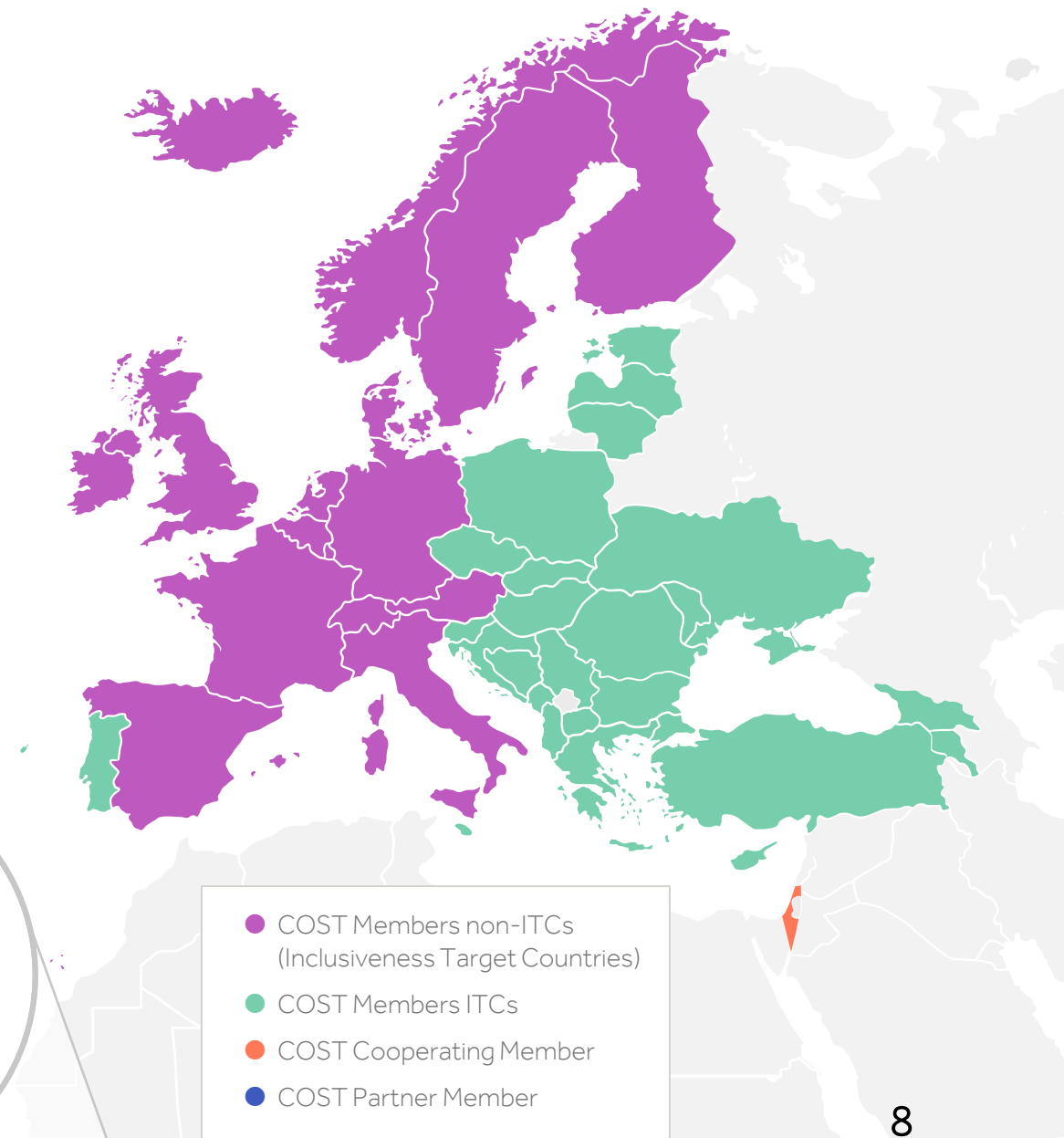
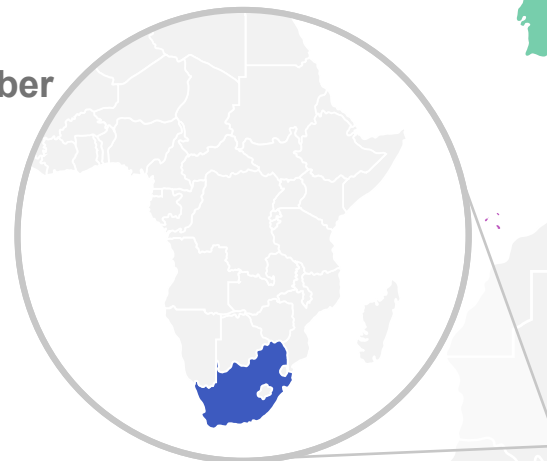
# COST Association

## 41 COST Members

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

**1** Cooperating Member  
● Israel

**1** Partner Member  
● South Africa



- COST Members non-ITCs (Inclusiveness Target Countries)
- COST Members ITCs
- COST Cooperating Member
- COST Partner Member



# COST in Horizon Europe



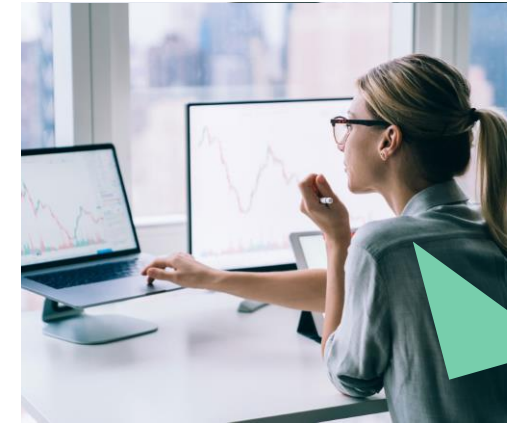
## Horizon Europe =

Widening participation  
and strengthening the European  
Research  
Area pillar



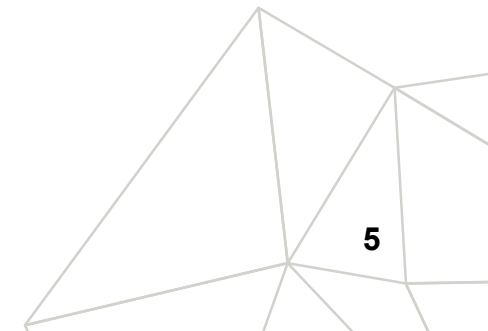
## COST activities

are implemented by the  
COST Association, under a  
Framework Partnership  
Agreement and Specific  
Grant Agreements with  
the European Commission



## COST Actions

receive budget under  
Third Party Funding





# COST Program



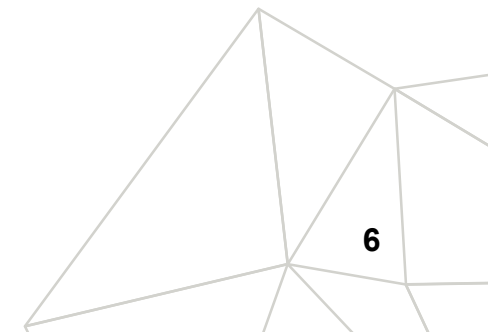
Open call with annual cut off date – 12:00 noon (CET) 23 October 2024



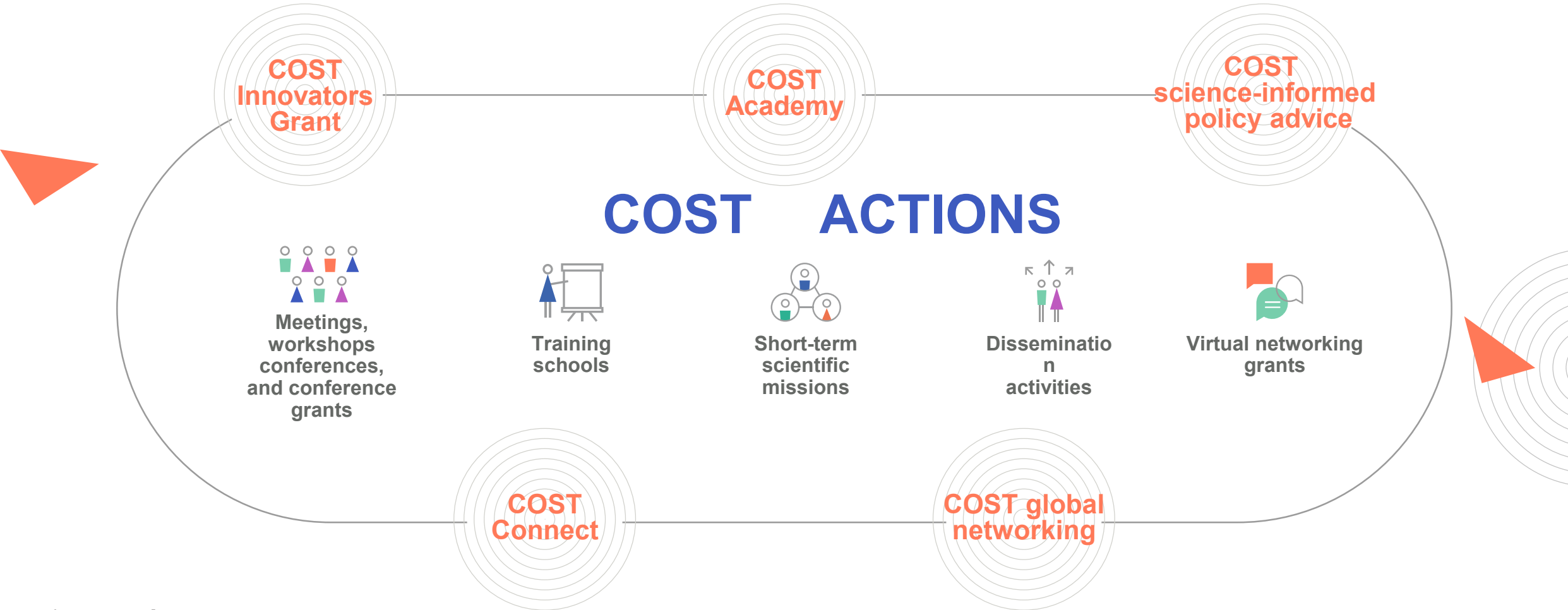
COST Actions – currently almost 300 running Actions open to welcome new partners



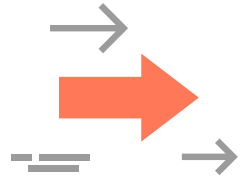
Ad-hoc activities – organized and announced individually by the COST Actions, open to participation following successful application directly to the Action



# Implementing the COST Programme

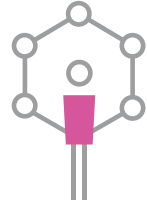


# Key figures



**292**

Running Actions



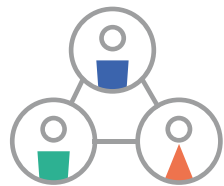
**50,000**

Researchers involved  
in COST Actions



**200+**

Average number of  
researchers per Action



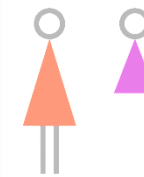
**42%**

Share of young  
researchers in COST  
Actions



**19**

Average number of widening  
countries per COST Action



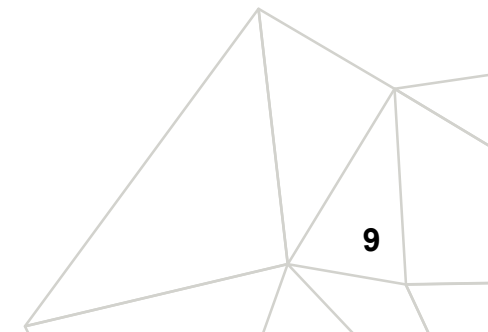
**52%**

Leadership positions  
occupied by female  
researchers



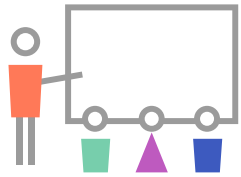
**€134,500**

Average annual budget  
of a COST Action





# Dedicated measures for active ITC participation



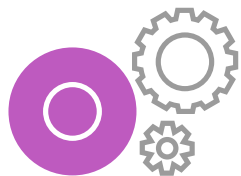
## COST Info Days

- Targeted to ITC
- Combined with high-level meeting ITC government, including CNC



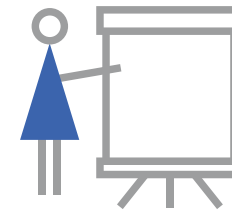
## Proposals

- Eligibility
- External experts
- Inclusiveness policy



## COST Actions

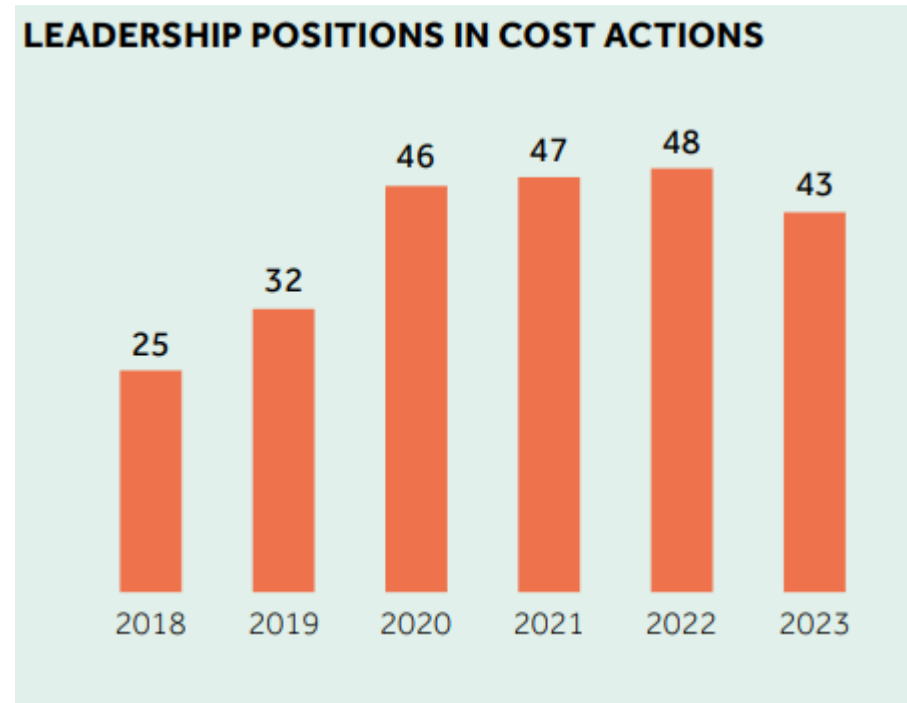
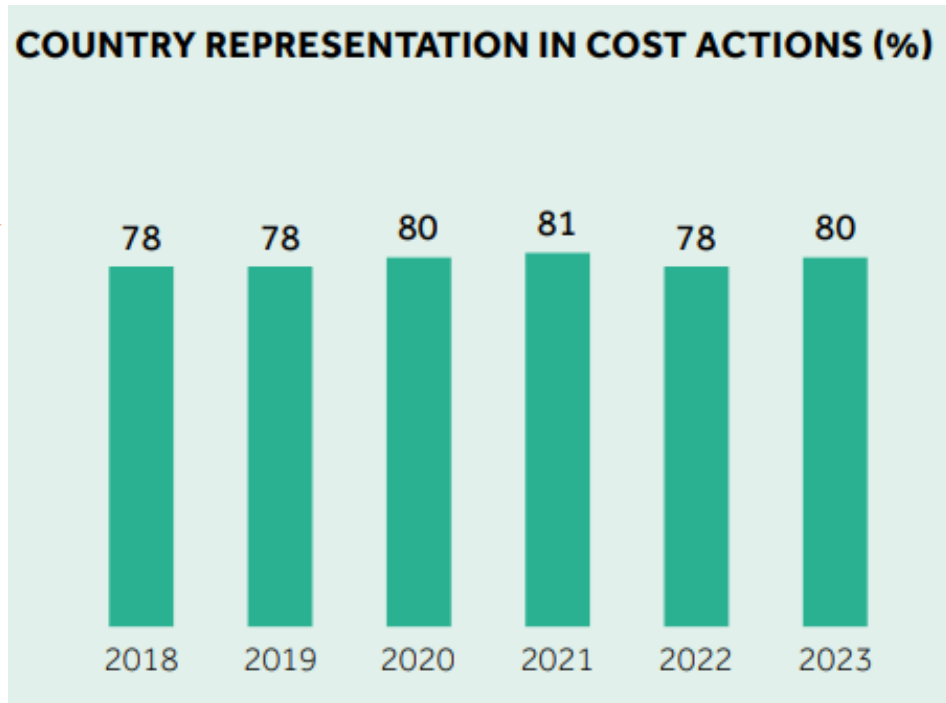
- COST Action leadership
- Conference grant for PhD students and young researchers
- Pre-payment for STSM



## COST Academy

- Leadership programme
- COST Action Chairs' forum
- Science communication workshops and trainings
- Grant holder workshop, seminar, and forum

# Hungary's engagement to COST, 2023



[COST Hungary Factsheet 2023.pdf](#)



# Benefits of COST Action participation



Scientific

- In the course of the Actions, **co-publications** between active COST Action participants see an increase of about **55%** compared to general co-publications (data from Actions which ended 2015-2018)



Networking

- Initial data indicate that the "Action productivity bonus" last **at least 5 years beyond the duration of the Action**, but this might even be longer



Career opportunities

- **88%** of researchers in COST Actions say that, in hindsight, participation to the Action led to **new professional opportunities**



Financial support

- Spin-off research proposals to EU Framework Programmes have a **success rate of about 39%**, beating the general success rate almost threefold

## TESTIMONIAL

“ Participation in a COST Action COSY (Confined Molecular Systems: from the new generation of materials to the stars) provides wonderful opportunities for enhanced collaboration and helps to train the next generation of scientists and innovators across the EU. Those looking for collaboration in a friendly environment should join a COST Action of their interest, the list of Actions is very long. This may open up new directions in your career and help you to advance in your field. ”

Prof. Császár Attila  
ELTE Eötvös Loránd University

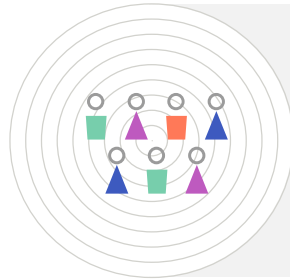


# Impact



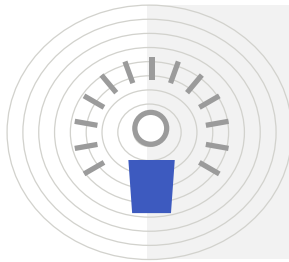
## Scientific and societal impact

- Scientific discoveries and breakthroughs, development of new research infrastructures, adoption of common standards, technological applications in the form of products and services, etc.



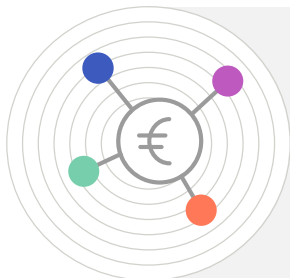
## Co-Publications

- Co-publications between active COST Action participants see an increase of about 55% compared to general co-publications



## Research careers

- 85% of researchers participating in COST Actions indicate that participation has led to career advancement



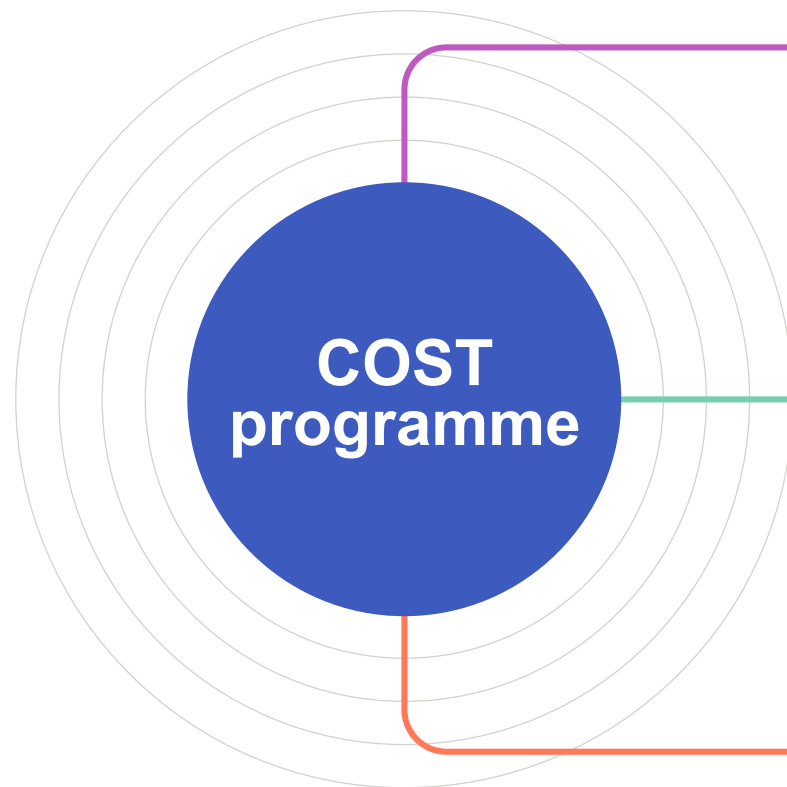
## Follow-up funding

- Horizon 2020 reported success rate: 39% (on a yearly basis, around €450 million of approved common research projects spin off from ending Actions)

# The value of networking

## Participation in COST Actions

Follow-up proposals have a success rate of more than **39%**



**60 Actions**  
end every year  
(on average)



**€5.8 million spin-off**  
funding per Action  
(on average)



**€2.6 billion across**  
Horizon 2020

COST Actions

# An efficient networking tool

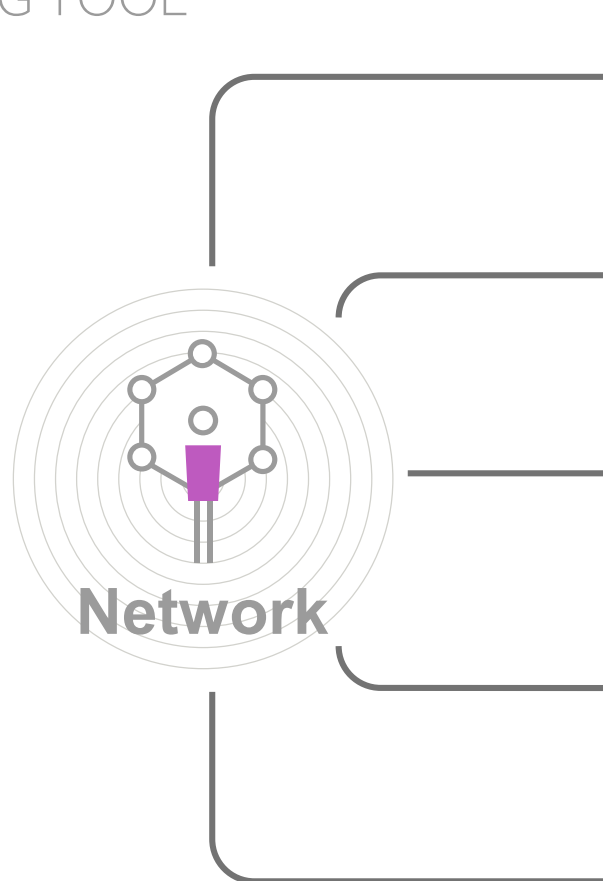


# COST Actions

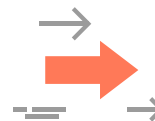
AN EFFICIENT NETWORKING TOOL

**COST provides funding** for research coordination and capacity building activities

COST is not funding research itself, but pooling resources and research results by networking



Memorandum of Understanding



4 years



Min 7 countries, average participation 30 countries



Research coordination and capacity building activities

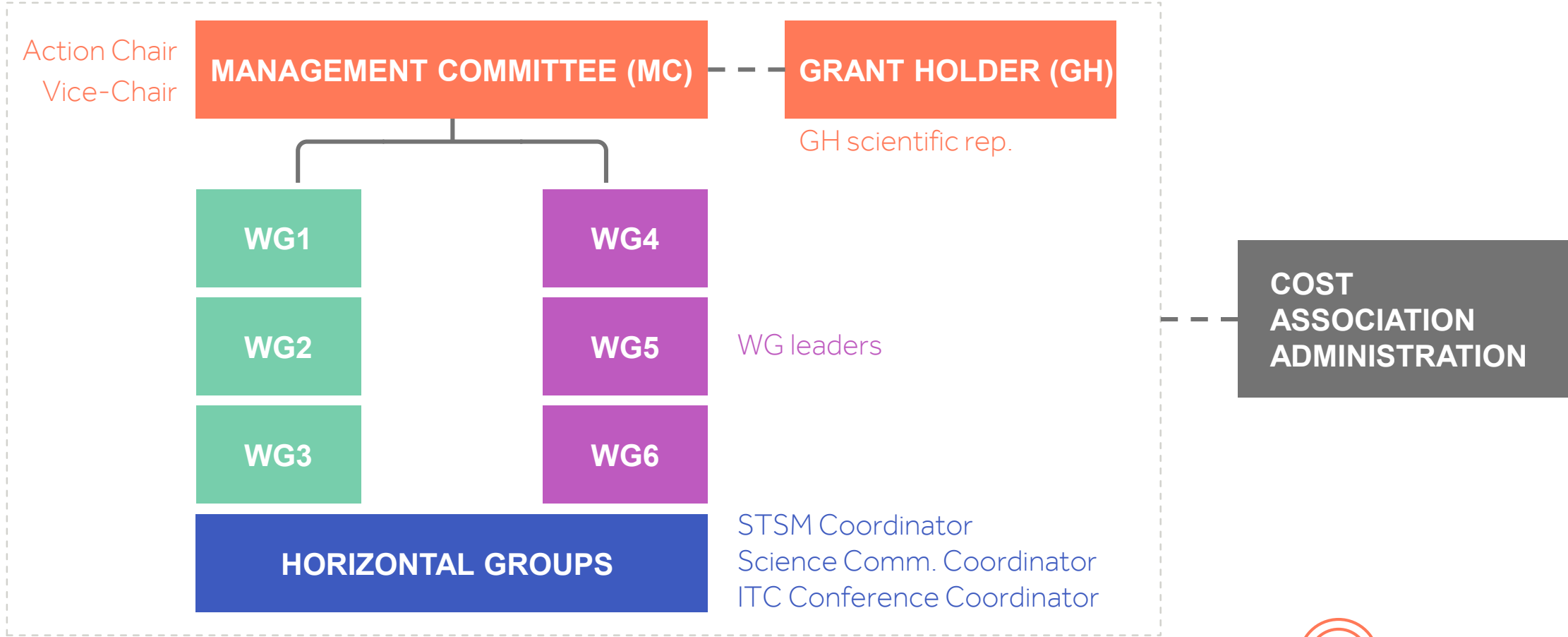


~ €600,000 over lifetime

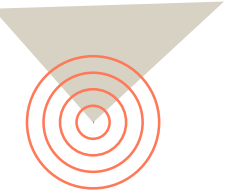


# COST Action structure

## LEADERSHIP POSITIONS



# Access to leadership positions

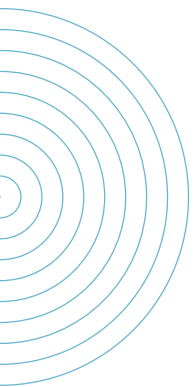


Access to leadership positions shall be as follows:

Affiliation to	Mandatory positions		Other leadership positions (e.g. WG co-leaders, international advisor, ....)
	Chair/Vice Chair GH SR Grant Awarding Coordinator	WG Leader Science Communication Coordinator	
Legal entity in a COST F/C Member	✓	✓	✓
Legal entity in a COST Partner Member	✗	✓	✓
The EC, EU bodies, offices, and agencies (EC/EU)	✓	✓	✓
A European RTD Organisation	✓	✓	✓
An International Organisation	✗	✓	✓
Legal entity in an NNC	✗	✗	✓
Legal entity in an IPC/ Third State	✗	✗	✓

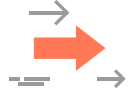
Mandatory leadership positions allocation shall reflect the diversity of the Action in terms of geographical diversity and Openness and Inclusiveness.

Among mandatory leadership positions, at least one shall be reserved to an ITC affiliated individual.



# COST Networking tools

Research coordination & capacity building activities



Management committee meetings



Working group meetings



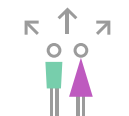
Conferences/ workshops



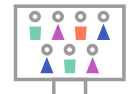
Training schools



Short-term scientific missions



Dissemination



Virtual networking grants



# Funding offered by COST

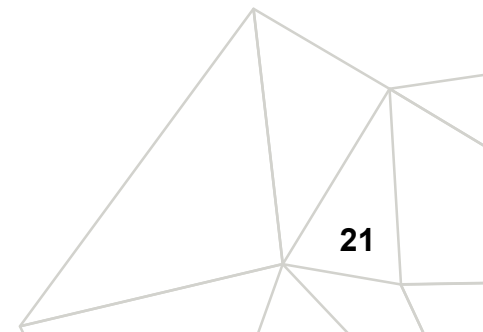
- **Meetings**

Travel reimbursement of the meeting participants

- ✓ Daily allowance (accommodation, meals, local transport)
- ✓ Long distance travel expenses (on face value)

- **Local Organiser Support**

- ✓ Face to face or virtual events





# Funding offered by COST

- ✓ **Dissemination of research activities**
  - ✓ ITC Conference Grants
  - ✓ Up to 2000 EUR (500 EUR for virtual events)
  
- **Dissemination Conference Grants**
  - ✓ Up to 2000 EUR (500 EUR for virtual events)
  
- **Dissemination activities**
  - ✓ Open Access publications, books, websites, etc.



# Funding offered by COST

- **Mobility of researchers**
  - ✓ Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM)
  - ✓ Up to 4000 EUR
  
- **Virtual Mobility Grants**
  - ✓ Up to 1500 EUR

# Location of Activities

		Meetings	Training Schools and other networking activities
Virtual Environment		✓	✓
COST Members	Full or Cooperating Members	✓	✓
	Partner Member	✗	✓
NNC		✓	✓
IPC/Third State		✗	✓
Specific Organisations		Rule applicable to territory where it is vested	

# Eligibility to receive funding

Affiliation to		Meetings		Training Schools			Other networking activities	
		Invited individual	Local Organiser	Trainer	Trainee	Local Organiser	ITC Conf Grant*	All others
COST Members	Legal entity in COST F/C Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Legal entity in CPM	At COST Partner Member's costs (dedicated budget line)						
Specific Organisations	EC/EU	At EC, EU body, office or agency cost (minimisation of cascade funding)						
	Eur. RTD Org.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	IO	Once in the lifetime of the Action	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
NNC	Legal entity in a NNC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IPC / Third States	Legal entity in an IPC	Once in the lifetime of the Action	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

\* ITC Conference Grants are limited to Young researchers and innovators from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries and NNC.

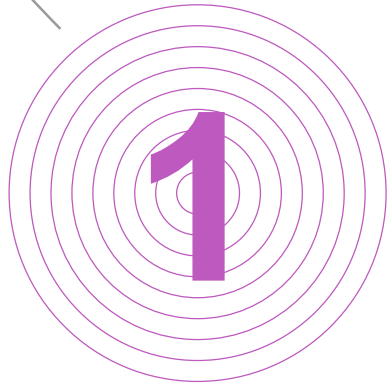


# How to engage with COST?





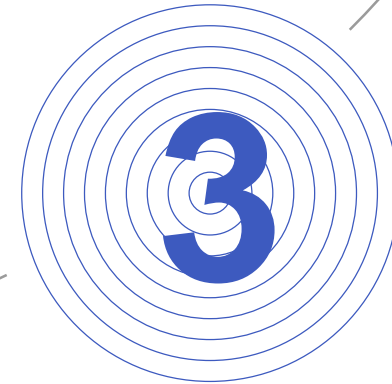
# How to engage with COST?



As a **participant**  
of a running Action



As a **proposer**  
of a new COST Action



As **expert** to evaluate  
submitted proposals

# 1. As a participant in a running Action



**AS A MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (MC) MEMBER** (contact the COST National Coordinator)



**AS A WORKING GROUP (WG) PARTICIPANT**  
(through Action website)



**AS A PARTICIPANT IN ACTION ACTIVITIES**  
short-term scientific mission, ITC conference grant, training school, workshop/conference, ...  
(check the Action's website, contact the chair or the national MC member)

# 2. As proposer of a new COST Action

COST OPEN CALL

One-stage **online submission** of proposals (e-COST)

**Proposal should focus on** S&T Excellence, Networking Excellence, Impact and Implementation

**Up to 70 COST Actions** approved per collection

**Main** proposer + **secondary** proposer

**Collection date:**  
23 October  
2024 12:00 CET

[www.COST.eu](http://www.COST.eu)  
[opencall@cost.eu](mailto:opencall@cost.eu)



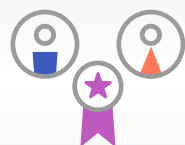
# Tips for submitting a winning COST Action proposal

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# Evaluation

SESA



## ELIGIBILITY!

- Anonymous
- Minimum 50% ITC
- Peaceful purpose
- Format
- English

### STEP



#### EXTERNAL REMOTE EVALUATION

- 3 Independent External Experts
- Technical Annex

### STEP



#### REVISION AND QUALITY CHECK BY REVIEW PANELS

### STEP



#### SELECTION BY THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

COST policy  
and objectives

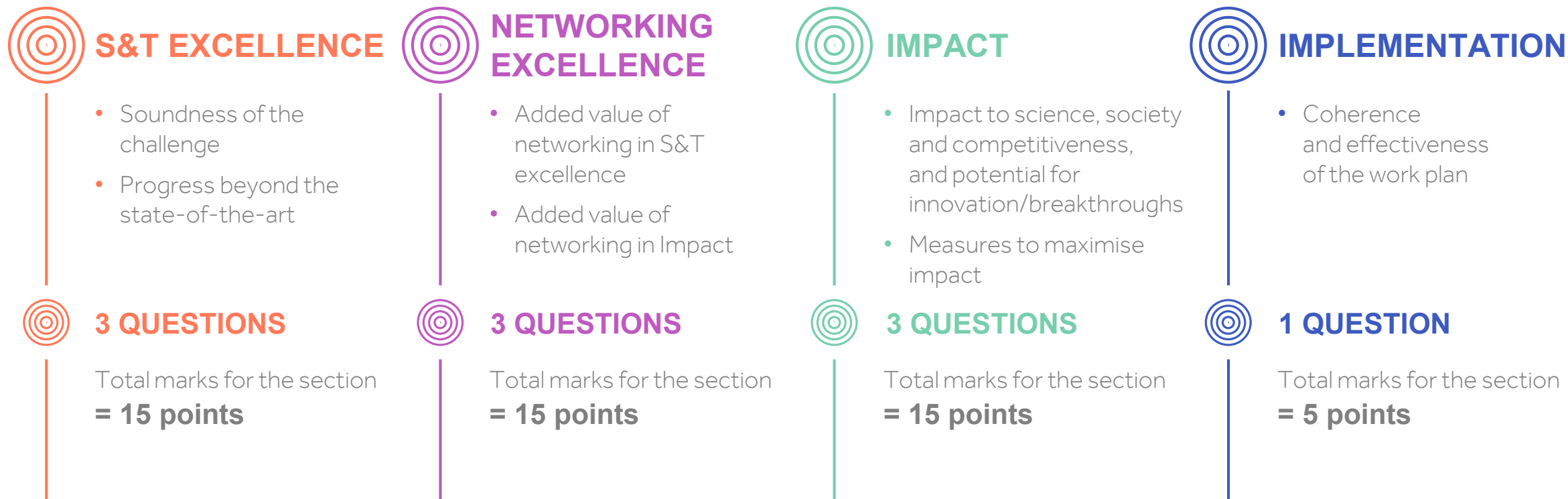
### STEP



#### APPROVAL BY COST COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS

Results 7-8 months  
after submission

# Evaluation criteria



**TOTAL MARKS AWARDED = 50 points - OVERALL THRESHOLD = 34 points**

# Open Call for new COST Actions

Collaborative science and technology networks  
steering the circulation of knowledge worldwide

## 1. Idea & Team

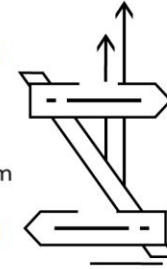
Bottom-up approach:  
propose your innovative idea  
on a specific challenge  
leading to an S&T breakthrough

You must be at least seven peers  
from seven COST Members,  
of which half are Inclusiveness  
Target Countries



## 2. Proposal & Submission

Submit online your  
anonymous proposal  
via the e-COST platform  
Info and guidelines:  
[www.cost.eu/opencall](http://www.cost.eu/opencall)



Collection  
date 2024



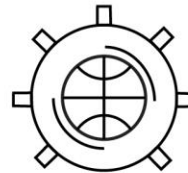
Watch our video 'Tips  
for submitting a winning  
COST Action proposal'

[https://youtu.be/IRWq\\_JagZTA](https://youtu.be/IRWq_JagZTA)

## 3. Evaluation & Selection

Independent External Experts  
and ad-hoc Review Panels carry  
out the evaluations of proposals

The COST Scientific Committee  
makes the selection of proposals  
based on the evaluations



## 4. Approval & Launch

The decision of approval and  
four-year funding for new  
Actions relies on the COST  
Committee of Senior Officials

New COST Actions kick off  
in the autumn of 2025 with  
the first meeting of the  
Management Committee

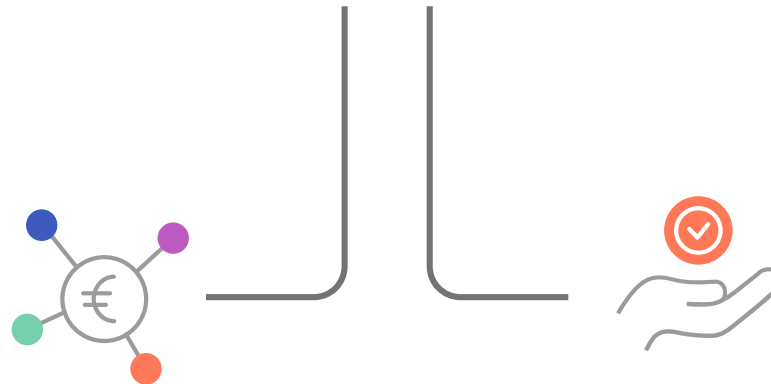




# 3. As external expert

**As a COST Expert,**  
you will have the opportunity to

**Contribute** to the  
evaluation of COST  
Open Call proposals



**Participate** in the  
assessment of Action  
results and outcomes

A stylized world map composed of many small, colorful triangles in shades of purple, blue, green, and yellow, set against a light blue background.

 **cost**  
EUROPEAN COOPERATION  
IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

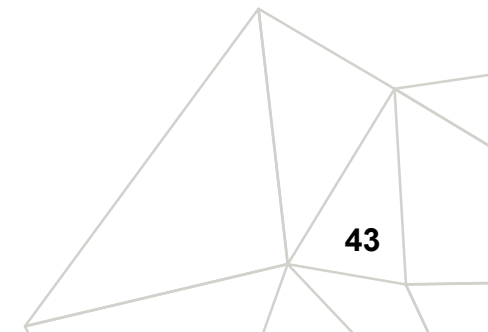
# Online COST Info Day

27 March 2024  
10:00-11:30 CET



**Watch it on  
YouTube**

[Online COST Info Session  
2024 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



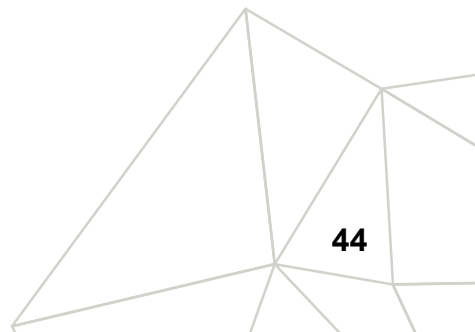


# FP10 POSITION PAPER

**COST: the leading  
networking tool in the  
European Research  
Area**



[COST FP10 Position Paper](#)





# Relevant COST information materials

## COST Actions booklet



Pocket guide including all running actions & info on COST.

## COST corporate brochure



General presentation of the COST Programme

## COST annual report 2023



2022 highlights & COST Actions success stories.

## COST corporate videos

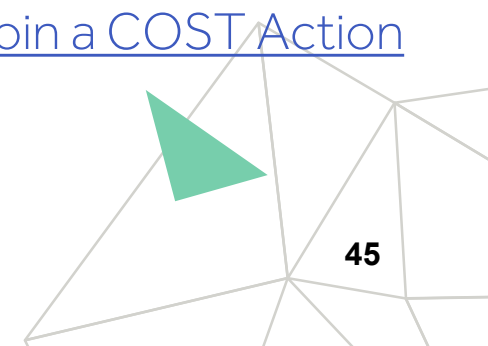


[Tips to submit a winning COST proposal](#)

[Why join a COST Action](#)



All available via: <https://www.cost.eu/publications/>



# THANK YOU!

