

COST – European Cooperation in Science and Technology

Information for MC Members from/for Germany

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Introduction

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is an intergovernmental funding initiative to promote networking. Since its foundation in 1971, COST has developed into one of the largest initiatives for research co-operation in Europe and beyond. COST receives its funding from the EU's research framework programmes and promotes cooperation in large open networks on a wide range of research and innovation topics; the networking concept is at the forefront.

COST comprises 41 member states throughout Europe and one co-operating country (Israel). Furthermore, participation by researchers is possible without geographical restrictions, mostly at their own expense.

COST is steered by the governments of its member countries. The instruments are implemented by the COST Association (a not-for-profit organisation) based in Brussels. COST National Coordinators (CNC) in all member countries support applicants and participants in their respective countries.

COST Actions

At the heart of COST are the research networks, the so-called COST Actions. COST Actions are networks on a scientific topic chosen by the members. The aim is to create long-term cooperation on this topic and promote scientific breakthroughs and innovations as well as the research careers of the members. COST funding is granted over four years. Further information can be found on the [website of the COST Association](#).

Management Committee (MC): Tasks

The Management Committee controls the activities and budget planning of a COST Action. It has the task of coordinating and monitoring the COST Action and ensuring the overall implementation of the COST Action. COST being member state driven also reflects in the fact that members of each member state are allowed to join the MC. The national members guarantee the transfer of results into the different states as well as their publication and further networking. The MC also provides for more democratic decision-making than the so-called "closed shops" of smaller committees.

A detailed overview of the tasks of the MC can be found in the document "[Annotated Rules for COST Actions](#)" on the website of the COST Association.

Approximately four to five months after approval of the COST Action, the kick-off meeting usually takes place in Brussels at the invitation of the COST Association. All MC Members who have already been nominated are invited automatically. The MC then meets once or twice a year. These meetings

are organised by the MC itself. Travel expenses are reimbursed in accordance with the COST travel expenses guidelines. These can be found in the "Annotated Rules for COST Actions".

MC Rules of participation

By the kick-off meeting, a sufficient number of MC Members must have been nominated by the COST member states to fill key positions in the Action (Chair, Vice Chair, Grant Holder, etc.).

MC Substitutes, i.e. representatives of MC Members from a country, are appointed by the ongoing COST Actions themselves. They can be nominated for each meeting, for up to six months in total. This gives various Action participants the opportunity to participate in the MC for a limited period of time.

The nomination of up to two MC Members from a country is generally voluntary and not a prerequisite for participation in working groups.

Your role as MC Member

Membership of the MC presupposes your willingness to actively participate in the COST Action and to attend MC meetings. If you repeatedly fail to attend MC meetings, we may contact you to enquire about your willingness or ability to remain an MC Member. In the worst case, the CNC can denominate permanently passive MC Members and fill the position in consultation with the Action Chair.

At the end of the COST Action, we will ask you for a short report. On a maximum of one page, you can present the outcomes of the COST Action, in particular with regard to further implications for the topic, possible follow-up applications, partnerships or projects as well as your career.

Please note: Every MC membership includes an active membership in a Working Group of the respective COST Action!

If you wish or have to change institution or give up your role in the MC during the COST Action, please inform us in good time. If you remain based in Germany and continue to work in a thematically appropriate field, changing employer is not a problem and you may keep your position in the MC.

MC nominations

As a rule, the main proposer of a COST Action also seeks the position of Action Chair after approval. To this end, they must first be nominated as MC Member. As soon as the coordinating person is elected as Chair by the MC (usually at the kick-off meeting), the mandate as MC Member becomes vacant; another person can move up to the role of MC Member and be nominated. You should take this into account when planning proposals to the German CNC for nominations to the MC.

With the publication of the Memorandum of Understanding (which essentially corresponds to the Technical Annex of the COST application), the nomination of participants from the application consortium and any other interested parties to the MC can begin. Each COST member country (in this case Germany) can nominate up to two scientists participating in the COST Action as MC Members to represent their country in the MC of the COST Action. This is part of the joint steering of COST by its

member countries. In order to be actively involved in important decisions and development processes of COST Actions, Germany aims to appoint two MC Members in all Actions wherever possible.

In Germany, the German [COST National Coordinator](#) nominates the MC Members on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR). The BMFTR is interested in having researchers from different institutions represented in the MC of a COST Action. This contributes to a more diverse participation of participants based in Germany and promotes networking. For this reason, the German CNC generally appoints only one person per institution to the MC; this practice can be deviated from in well-founded cases.

Focus on young researchers

COST supports young researchers. If several people from one institution were involved in an application, please consider whether junior researchers can be given priority for participation in the MC.

Gender Equality Plan

COST strives for gender equality in COST Actions. In addition, COST Actions should adequately consider possible gender-sensitive content. In 2024, COST adopted a Gender Equality Plan. This is a living document and provides participants with orientation and guidance on both the promotion of gender balance and the topic of gender in research and innovation. The [Gender Equality Plan](#) is available at the website of the COST Association.

Procedure of the nomination process

For newly approved COST Actions, the German COST National Coordinator will write to applicants in Germany involved in the proposal with a request to liaise among German participants and with the (prospective) Chair and come up with up to two recommendations for the MC (copying all German secondary proposers in the message). These persons will then be asked to complete a short questionnaire on their institutional affiliation and their planned contribution to the COST Action.

Parallel to the nomination process, the German CNC informs BMFTR departments and other relevant departments about the new COST Actions: If no German participants were involved in a COST Action at the time of application, the CNC explicitly asks them to suggest names and also advertises the COST Actions.

Responsibility of the COST National Coordinator

The COST National Coordinator (in Germany located at DLR Project Management Agency) is your contact for questions regarding nominations and applications for other COST Actions during the application process. If you encounter serious problems in your current COST Action that cannot be solved in dialogue with other members and/or the contact persons at the COST Association (Scientific Officer, Administrative Officer), you can inform us and ask for intervention. In principle, we are in favour of

specific difficulties being addressed by and solutions sought jointly among those directly affected. In case of fundamental, e.g. structural or recurring problems, we can address these with the COST Association, if necessary also at the level of the CSO.

Working Groups

Each COST Action forms various Working Groups (WG). Scientists and researchers can work together in different constellations in the WGs. The organisation and content of these WGs is determined by the MC and the participants themselves.

Participation in a WG is also possible without an MC mandate. What you need to do is contact the Chair of the Action and apply in e-COST to participate in the COST Action or WG. This also opens up coordination roles such as Working Group Leader.