

Brussels, 11 April 2019

COST 135/14
REV 2

CSO DECISION

Subject: **COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations
Participation rules**

The document for “COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation rules” establishes the main principles and rules for the participation in COST Actions of researchers from COST Near Neighbour Countries and International Partner Countries as well as from Specific Organisations.

The Committee of Senior Officials approved the simplification of the COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation rules at its 206th CSO meeting of 10-11 April 2019. These rules shall replace the document COST 135/14 REV and shall enter into force on 20 June 2019.

The main changes concern:

- Clarification of definitions for international organisations and European RTD Organisation (“Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”);
- EU Bodies, offices and agencies, and European RTD Organisations may access any key leadership position in COST Actions;
- Modification of the description used for international cooperation to apply to “individuals” instead of to “approved institutions”;
- Annex with summary table on the rules for participation has been added for clarification.



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RULES FOR PARTICIPATION OF NON-COST COUNTRIES AND SPECIFIC ORGANISATIONS

The COST Committee of Senior Officials (“CSO”) having regard to:

The Statutes of the COST Association as revised on 14 Sept 2016;

The Internal Rules of the COST Association;

The CSO Decision COST 132/14 REV, “Rules for the Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”,

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

Whereas:

- (1) The “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” present the general principles applicable to the participation in and implementation of COST activities, in particular COST Actions, including the openness to countries other than the COST Members and the participation of Specific Organisations.
- (2) COST should reinforce and support the participation of Non-COST Countries in COST activities, in particular COST Actions underpinning its open and global scope.
- (3) COST should strengthen the cooperation with regard to R&D with neighbouring countries contributing to the creation of reliable networks, building mutual knowledge and trust to increase the collaboration for the achievement of common goals.
- (4) COST should be open to the participation of representatives from Specific Organisations¹ on the basis of ascertained mutual benefit.

Has adopted the present “Rules for Participation of Non-COST Countries and Specific Organisations” in accordance with the “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST activities”.

The present rules aim at further developing on the principles and rules contained in the “Rules for the Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” concerning the implementation of COST Activities. The rules shall be subordinated to and may not contravene the “Rules for the Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”. In case of any contradiction between those CSO Decisions, the “COST Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” shall prevail.

SUBJECT MATTER AND SCOPE

This decision lays down the rules for “Participation of Non-COST Countries and Specific Organisations” with the aim to facilitate the implementation of the COST global scope regarding its international cooperation and collaboration with organisations. These rules derive and align to the general principles and rules of “COST Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” and shall be complementary to the COST Rules on “COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection, and Approval” and “COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment”.

¹ The definition of Specific Organisations may be found in the CSO Decision establishing the “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”

Beyond COST Members, COST allows, once mutual benefit has been ascertained, the involvement of participants from Non-COST Countries and Specific Organisations, such as EU bodies, offices and agencies, European RTD and International Organisations, in COST Actions and other activities.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of the CSO Decision establishing the “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities” shall apply to this Decision.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

The CSO has an open approach towards collaboration with Non-COST Countries and other organisations with the objective to allow for connection of European research communities involved in COST both worldwide and with key stakeholders. COST thus contributes through reliable networks to building trust among all actors involved in COST activities and helps to create the foundation for future cooperation in favour of a strong and open Europe.

1. BASIC PRINCIPLES

COST shall allow the participation from Non-COST Countries (either Near Neighbour Countries, or International Partner Countries), in COST Actions and other activities following the bottom-up principle and provided there is ascertained mutual benefit. The participation of Specific Organisations shall follow the same basic principles as appropriate.

2. PARTICIPATION OF NON-COST COUNTRIES IN COST ACTIONS

2.1. NEAR NEIGHBOUR COUNTRIES (NNC)

The rules governing the participation of researchers, engineers and scholars or other stakeholders from NNC in COST Actions shall be as follows:

- When individuals located in an NNC are part of the network of proposers their participation shall be considered as approved upon the Actions’ approval by the CSO;
- When individuals located in an NNC are not part of the network of proposers, their participation in a COST Action requires the approval of the Action Management Committee (MC) on the one hand and of the Head of Science Operations (HoSO) of the COST Administration on the other hand;
- NNC Action Participants may not access key leadership positions in COST Actions;
- In the final year of a COST Action, no request to join a COST Action shall be possible.

The eligibility for reimbursement of Action Participants from NNC shall be as follows:

- NNC Action Participants may be invited to participate in Action MC meetings as MC Observers (no voting right); up to two researchers per NNC shall be eligible for reimbursement;
- NNC Action Participants may participate in any activities organised by the COST Action and shall be eligible for reimbursement.

In order to foster the cooperation between COST and NNC through COST Actions activities, training schools may be allowed in NNC on a case by case basis if relevant to the topic of the COST Action and proved that there shall be an added value to the COST Action.

NNC Action Participants shall agree on the objectives of the COST Action they are participating in and faithfully accomplish their tasks in that regard.

The above-mentioned rules are summarised in table 1 in Annex.

2.2. INTERNATIONAL PARTNER COUNTRIES (IPC)

The rules governing the IPC participation of researchers, engineers and scholars and other stakeholders from IPC in COST Actions shall be as follows:

- When individuals located in an IPC are part of the network of proposers, their participation to the Action shall be regarded as approved upon the Actions' approval by the CSO;
- When individuals located in an IPC do not take part of the network of proposers, their participation in a COST Action requires the approval of the Action MC on the one hand and of the Head of Science Operations of the COST Administration on the other hand;
- In the final year of a COST Action, no request to join an Action shall be possible;
- IPC Action Participants may be invited to participate in Action MC meetings as MC Observers (no voting right); up to two researchers per IPC may participate in Action MC meetings;
- IPC Action Participants may also participate in any activities organised by the COST Action;
- IPC Action Participants may not access any key leadership positions in COST Actions;
- IPC Action Participants shall not be eligible for reimbursement;
- IPC Action Participants invited as trainers to a COST Action Training School shall be eligible for reimbursement.

IPC Action Participants shall agree on the objectives of the COST Action they are participating in and accomplish faithfully their tasks in that regard.

The above-mentioned rules are summarised in table 1 in Annex.

3. PARTICIPATION OF SPECIFIC ORGANISATIONS IN COST ACTIONS

3.1. EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND EU BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

The rules governing the participation of the European Commission (EC) and EU bodies, offices and agencies to COST Actions shall be as follows:

- The EC and EU bodies, offices and agencies may propose new Actions if associated with the minimum number (seven) of COST Members;
- When the EC or an EU body, office or agency takes part in the network of proposer, its participation in the Action shall be regarded as approved upon the Action's approval by the CSO;
- When the EC or an EU body, office or agency does not take part of the network of proposers, it may join an Action with the approval of the Action MC;
- The EC and EU bodies, offices and agencies may participate in any activities organised by the COST Action and may participate in the Action MC as MC Observer (no voting rights);
- The EC and EU bodies, offices and agencies may access any key leadership positions in COST Actions;
- The EC or EU bodies, offices and agencies Action participants shall not be eligible for reimbursement.

The above-mentioned rules are summarised in table 2 in Annex.

3.2. INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The rules governing the participation of the International Organisations to COST Actions shall be as follows:

- International Organisations may participate in any activities organised by the COST Action;
- International Organisations may not propose new Actions;
- International Organisations may be invited by the network of proposers to take part in a COST Action proposal;
- When an International Organisation takes part in the network of proposers, its participation shall be approved upon the Actions' approval by the CSO;
- When an International Organisation does not take part in the network of proposers, its Action participation requires the approval by the Action MC on the one hand and of the Head of Science Operations of the COST Administration on the other hand;
- International Organisations may participate as MC Observers (no voting rights);
- International Organisations may not access any key leadership positions in COST Actions;
- Action Participants from International Organisations shall be not eligible for reimbursement.

The above-mentioned rules are summarised in table 2 in Annex.

3.3. EUROPEAN RTD ORGANISATIONS

By derogation to the rules governing the participation of the International Organisations to COST Actions, the rules governing the participation of the European RTD Organisations to COST Actions shall be as follows:

- European RTD Organisations may propose new Actions if associated with the minimum number (seven) of COST Members;
- When a European RTD Organisation takes part in the network of proposers, its participation shall be approved upon the Actions' approval by the CSO;
- When a European RTD Organisation does not take part in the network of proposers, its Action participation requires the approval by the Action MC;
- European RTD Organisations may participate in any activities organised by the COST Action and may participate in the Action MC as MC Observer (no voting rights);
- European RTD Organisations may access any key leadership positions in COST Actions;
- Action Participants from European RTD Organisations shall be eligible for reimbursement.

The above-mentioned rules are summarised in table 2 in Annex.

Action Participants from Specific Organisations shall agree on the objectives of the COST Action they are participating in and faithfully accomplish their tasks in that regard. They shall be asked by the Action Chair to sign a letter of confidentiality containing, inter alia, provisions about the non-disclosure of confidential information and IPR related matters.

4. FINAL PROVISIONS

The present rules shall be binding in their entirety and shall be directly applicable to all COST Actions and participants.

Any change or derogation to the current Rules shall be subject to the approval of the CSO.

Table 1: Participation of NNCs and IPCs in COST Actions – Summary table

	Researchers from Near Neighbour Country	Researchers from International Partner Country
Propose COST Actions (as a main proposer)	✗	✗
Right to participate to a COST Action	✓	✓
Eligibility to funding	✓	✗
Need for Action MC approval for taking part of a COST Action if part of the proposal	✗	✗
Need for Action MC approval for taking part of a COST Action if not part of the proposal	✓	✓
Need for HoSO ² approval for taking part of a COST Action if not part of the proposal	✓	✓
Position in the MC	MC observer	MC observer
Participant in COST Action activities	✓	✓
Access to any key leadership positions	✗	✗

² Head of Science Operations of the COST Association

Table 2: Participation of Specific Organisations in COST Actions – Summary table

	EU bodies, offices and agencies	European RTD Organisations	International Organisations
Propose COST Actions (as a main proposer)	✓	✓	✗
Right to participate to a COST Action	✓	✓	✓
Eligibility to funding	✗	✓	✗
Need for Action MC approval for taking part of a COST Action if part of the proposal	✗	✗	✗
Need for Action MC approval for taking part of a COST Action if not part of the proposal	✓	✓	✓
Need for HoSO approval for taking part of a COST Action if not part of the proposal	✗	✗	✓
Position in the MC	MC observer	MC observer	MC observer
Participant in COST Action activities	✓	✓	✓
Access to any key leadership positions	✓	✓	✗