COST Info day
European Cooperation in Science and Technology

University of Belgrade
25 March 2015, Belgrade

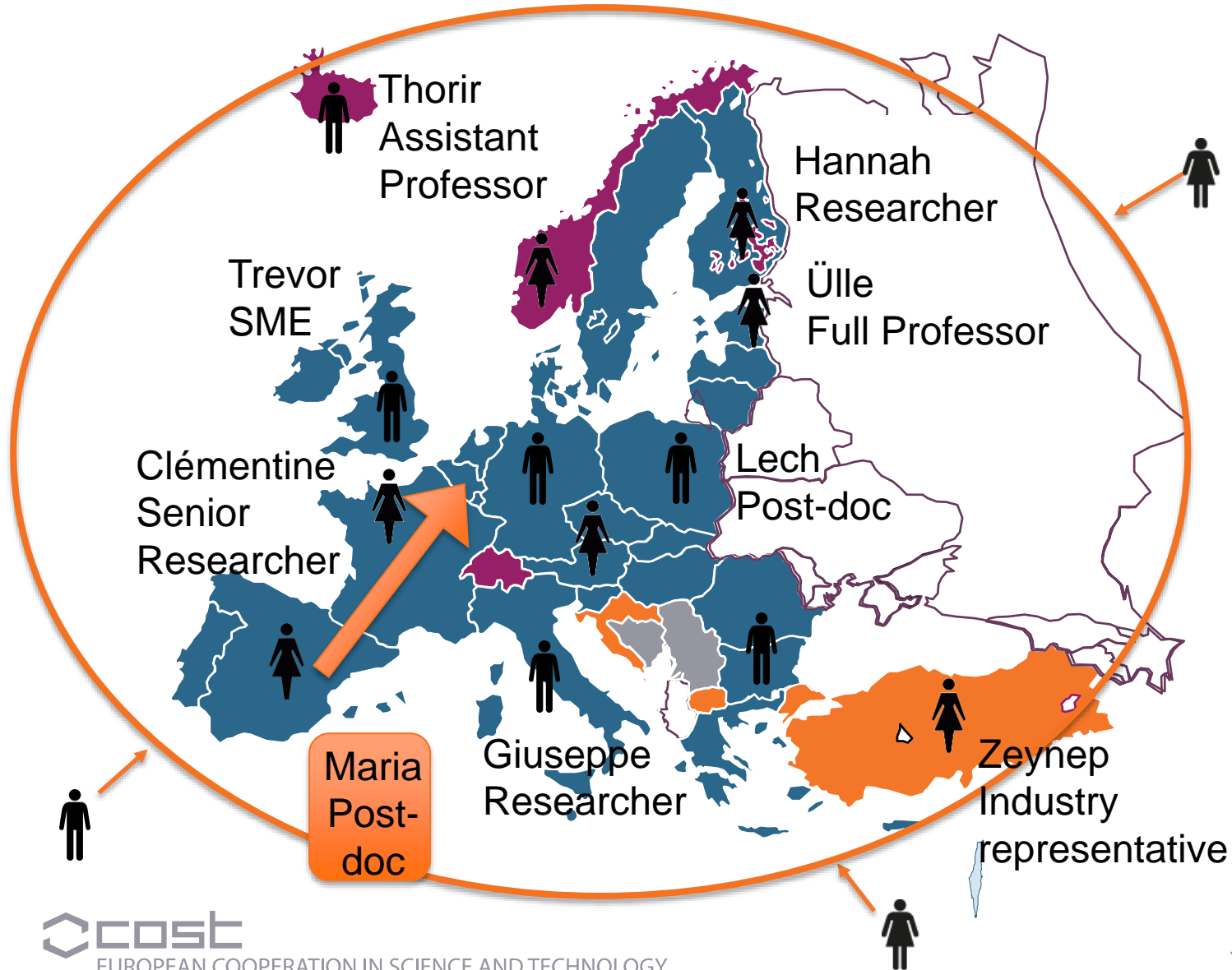# What are the COST Actions and how to participate in them?

COST Action - Characteristics

Network of researchers

- Collaborating in research fields of interest to at least 5 COST Countries

- Selected via the COST Open Call for proposals

- Objectives and deliverables defined in the Action's Memorandum of Understanding

- Duration of 4 years

- Expandable to new participants

- Average Annual COST Budget EUR 130 000 to perform networking activities (Meetings, Conferences, Workshops, Short-term scientific exchanges, Training schools and Dissemination Activities)
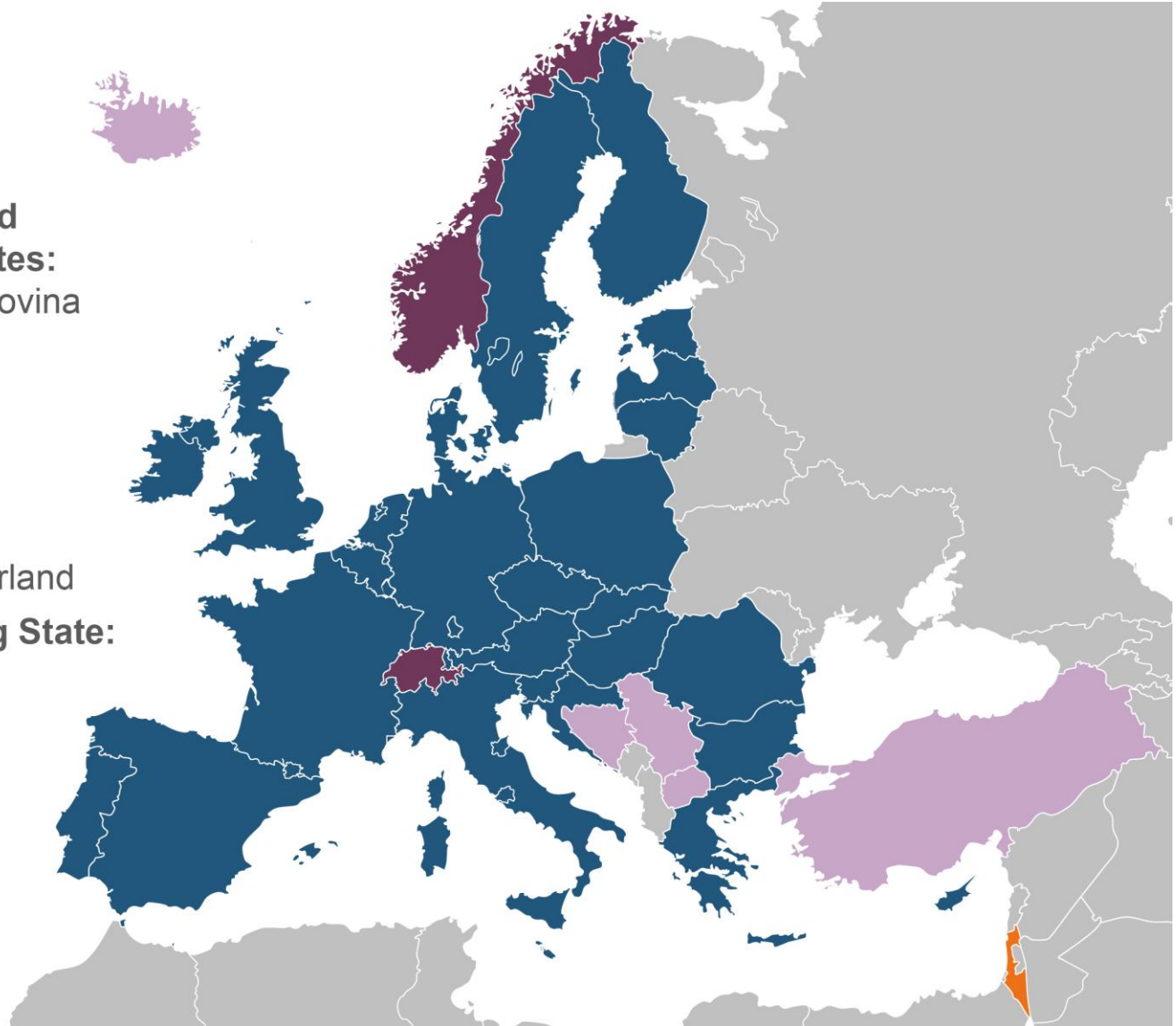
COST DOES NOT FUND RESEARCH

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How an Action is established

COST Countries

- **EU 28**

- **EU Candidates and Potential Candidates:**
  Bosnia and Herzegovina
  fYR Macedonia
  Iceland
  Serbia
  Turkey

- **Other Countries:**
  Norway and Switzerland
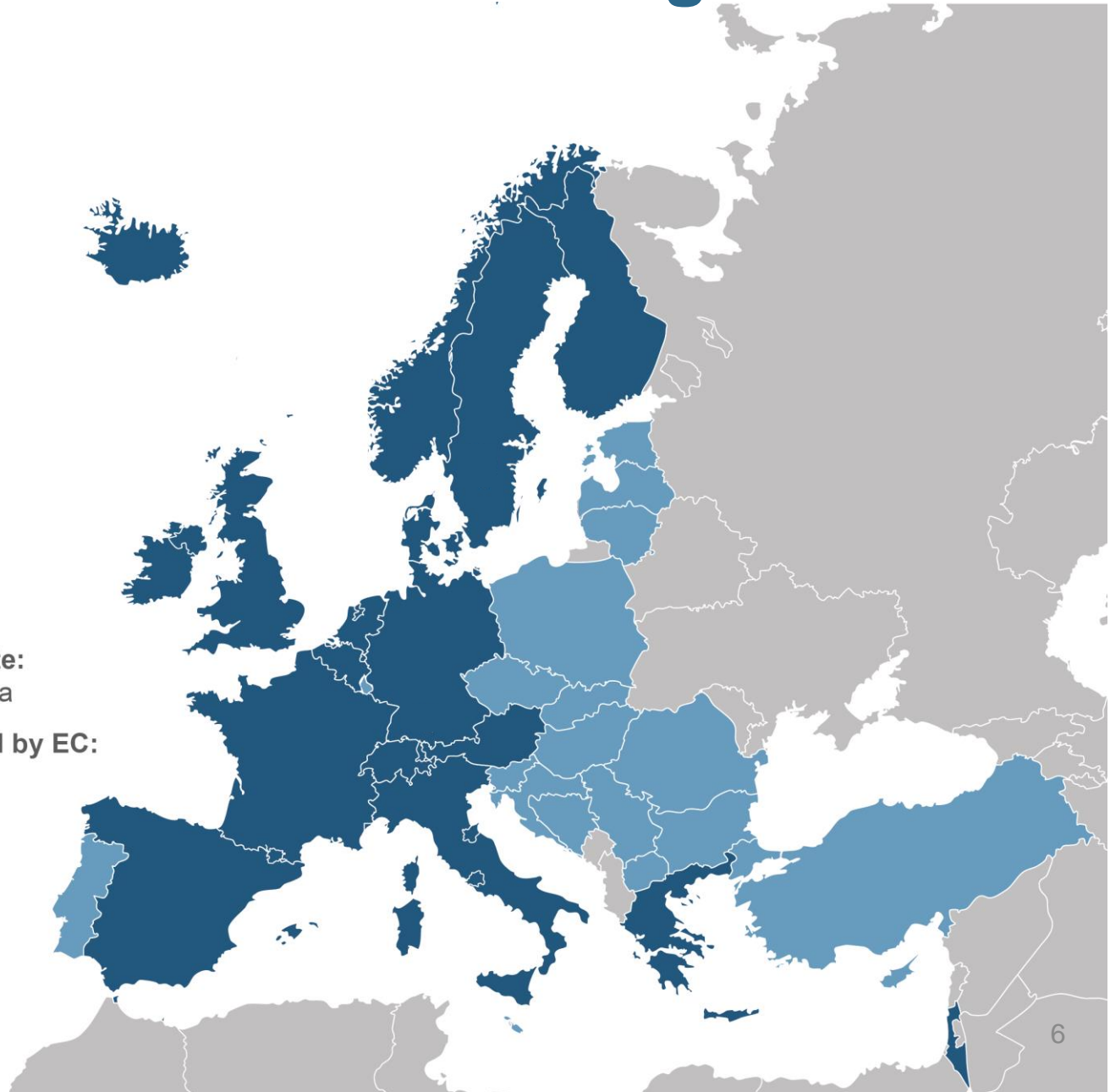
- **COST Cooperating State:**
  Israel

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COST Inclusiveness Target Countries

EU 13:
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Estonia
Hungary
Latvia
Lithuania
Malta
Poland
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia

EU Candidates:
fYR Macedonia
Republic of Serbia
Turkey

EU Potential Candidate:
Bosnia and Herzegovina

EU Countries targeted by EC:
Luxembourg
Portugal

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How to Participate
http://www.cost.eu/participate

OPTION 1

Would you like to join an existing COST Action?

http://www.cost.eu/participate/join_action

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COST Actions are Open!

You can join any Action that is running:

✓ **AS A MC MEMBER:**

By contacting your CNC in order to be one (of the maximum two) MC members representing your Country

✓ **AS A WG PARTICIPANT:**

By contacting you respective MC member and or the Action Chair and participate in the Working Groups

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How to Find a running Action?

http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/all_actions

How to Find a running Action?

MPNS COST Action MP1401

Advanced fibre laser and coherent source as tools for society, manufacturing and lifescience

Descriptions are provided by the Actions directly via e-COST.

Among the different types of Lasers, fibre lasers are, both as research and commercially, the youngest, yet the fast growing type of laser due to several factors. This Action will be the first arena where experts in fundamental material science, established laser and component groups, fibre laser manufacturers and end-users will be able to actively interact, share know-how and focus on common goals. We do expect to boost a series of innovations in the field. Among them we aim to cover the 3-6 micron wavelength interval, and beyond, to support mid-infrared applications and to enhance fibre performance to cover more efficiently visible and ultra-violet wavelength generation for biophotonics and healthcare. The Action will also investigate glass material and fibre design to overcome the actual limitation in output power. The improvements will mainly boost healthcare to benefit wide society and EU manufacturing to retain and increase manufacturing workforce within EU. The Action will mentor a new generation of researchers by providing Early Stage Researchers an opportunity to develop both scientific and management skills. At the same time the Action will actively promote gender balance and women researchers to management positions.

Materials, Physical and Nanosciences COST Action MP1401

▸ Description
▸ Parties
▸ Management Committee

General Information*

Chair of the Action:
Prof Stefano TACCHEO (UK)

Vice Chair of the Action:
Prof Roberta RAMPONI (IT)

Science officer of the Action:
Dr Fatima BOUCHAMA

Administrative officer of the Action:
Ms Milena STOYANOVA

Downloads*

Action Fact Sheet
Download AFS as .RTF

Memorandum of Understanding
Download MoU as PDF

Websites*

Domain website:
http://www.cost.eu/mpns

* content provided by e-COST.
Data is synchronised once per night.

Description of the Action, Participants, MoU, MC Chair, Science Officer, Administrative Officer

How COST Countries join an Action

Before an Action Starts and less than one year after CSO Approval

| Researcher Contacts CNC | → | CNC nominates MC Member | → | CNC accepts the MoU |

If new COST Countries join the Action

| CSO Approval (13/11/2014) | **NO** MC Approval → | 1 year after CSO approval (12/11/2015) | MC Approval → | END ACTION |

How IPCs, NNCs and Specific Organisations join an Action

OPTION 1: NNC & IPC already included in the proposal = FOUNDERS

- Applicant encodes a new application
- Needs MC approval

OPTION 2: NEW NNC & IPC

- Chair encodes applicant details in e-COST
- Applicant and Chair complete application form in e-COST
- Online approval by MC and COST Association

Once the Institution is approved the applicant becomes MC Observer

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OPTION 2

Are you already in contact with other researchers and you would like to submit a COST Action proposal?

COST Open Call - background doc.

- **Webpage: www.cost.eu/opencall**

- **Rules & procedure for the submission, evaluation, selection and approval of COST Action proposals. (COST 133/14 B.1.)**

- **COST Open Call Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) guidelines**

- **COST Action proposal template (Technical Annex .docx)**

Stay tuned for COST updates:
http://www.cost.eu/participate/open_call

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Collection Dates

- Submission of proposals anytime throughout the year via the **new e-COST online submission tool**

- The COST Open Call will continue having the **spring and autumn Collection dates**, when all submitted proposals are gathered and evaluated

- The first Collection Date 24 March 2015 at 12 noon (CET)

- **next collection date is Tuesday, 8 September 2015 at noon, Brussels time**

OPTION 3

Become a COST EXPERT

Become a COST 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;**
>
> - **Be invited to take part in the assessment of COST strategic activities**

New experts can express their interest via the COST Expert online registration form (www.cost.eu/experts)

An updated Curriculum Vitae with a list of publications is required to demonstrate competence in specific areas of expertise.

More on COST Experts:
www.cost.eu/participate/experts.

Express your interest:

www.cost.eu/experts

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How to prepare a successful proposal?

COST 133/14

B.1. "COST ACTION PROPOSAL SUBMISSION, EVALUATION, SELECTION and APPROVAL"

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COST Open Call

One-stage submission process (on line tool)

New **S**ubmission, **E**valuation, **S**election and **A**pproval (SESA) procedure follows the subsequent phases:

- **S**UBMISSION: by a **Main Proposer** on behalf of a network of proposers

- **E**VALUATION :
  - External Remote Evaluation by **Individual External Experts**
  - Revision and Quality Check by *ad hoc* **Review Panels**

- **S**ELECTION: **COST Scientific Committee (SC)**

- **A**PPROVAL: **COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)**

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Step1: External Remote Evaluation

- **3 Independent External Experts**
  - COST Expert data base
  - CV + expertise
    - OECD Fields and sub-fields of Science and Technology and specific Research Areas
    - from a pre-defined multi-layered list
  - Validated by the COST SC

- **Remote peer-review evaluation**

- **Remote consensus** shall be sought between the Independent External Experts

- **The consensus shall not be imposed**; independent External Experts may maintain their views on the proposal

- **Eventual differences in opinion of the experts resulting in a non-consensual decision will be handled and arbitrated by the Review Panel**

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Step 1: External Remote Evaluation

- Proposals are evaluated **only** on the basis of the **evaluation criteria**

S&T EXCELLENCE	IMPACT	IMPLEMENTATION
▪ Soundness of the challenge	▪ Scientific, technological and/or socio-economic impact	▪ Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan
▪ Progress beyond the state-of the-art and innovation potential	▪ Measures to maximise impact	▪ Appropriateness of management structures and procedures
▪ Added value of networking	▪ Level of risk and level of potential innovation/breakthroughs	▪ Network as a whole
Total Mark for the section: 25 points	Total Mark for the section: 20 points	Total Marks for the section: 20 points
TOTAL MARK AWARDED: 65 points **OVERALL THRESHOLD: 45 points**		

Step 2: Revision and Quality check

- **By *ad hoc* Review Panels**
    - Active researchers, engineers or scholars
    - Members of Review Panels appointed by COST National Coordinators
    - *Ad hoc* Review Panels set by the COST Association
    - Validated by the COST Scientific Committee

- **Reviewing and validating** all the Consensus Reports and marks

- **Resolving the differences** in opinions among the Independent External Experts

- After validation of consensus reports and marks, **rank the proposals above the threshold**

- For the proposals above the threshold, identify those that indicate **emerging issues or potentially important future developments**

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Selection

- **By the COST Scientific Committee**
  - 36 high-level experts representing the 35 COST Member Country and 1 Cooperating state (Israel)
  - Appointed by and reports to CSO

- Shall select among the ranked list of proposals received from the Review Panels by discriminating among proposals with the same marks, taking into account the **COST mission and policies**
  - Focus on **Excellence and Inclusiveness**
- **Balanced COST Action portfolio**, by ensuring the coverage of all S&T fields
- Shall submit the final ranked list of selected proposals to the CSO for approval.

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PROPOSAL PREPARATION - PRACTICAL ASPECTS –

Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) Guidelines
and
COST New Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval Procedure (presentation)

http://www.cost.eu/participate/open_call

Eligibility Criteria

- Represent a network of proposers from at **least 5** COST Member Countries and/or Cooperating State (Israel) with researchers, engineers or scholars having a **registered e-COST profile**

- **Be coordinated by a Main Proposer in a COST Member Country and/or Cooperating State**

- Be **anonymous**, hence not contain any reference to the names and/or institutions of the participants in the network of proposers

- Address science and technology challenges destined only for **peaceful purposes**

- **Respect word or page limits** as described in the SESA Guidelines (in preparation)

- Be written in **English**, the working language of the COST Association

- **Not be identical with another submitted proposal**

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Network of Proposers

- **At least 5 proposers** (one Main Proposer plus at least 4 Secondary Proposers)

  - affiliated to legal entities based in at least 5 different COST Member Countries and/or Cooperating State

- Main Proposer acts as **coordinator and contact point** for the COST Association

  - also in charge of inviting and accepting Secondary Proposers to the Network

- All proposers must have a registered and updated **e-COST profile** and specify their scientific expertise

  - https://e-services.cost.eu

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Proposal Sections - Highlights

SECTION		
GENERAL FEATURES	Online tool Mandatory	- Key Expertise needed for Evaluation - OECD Fields / Subfields of Science and Technology plus Research Areas
TECHNICAL ANNEX	PDF Mandatory	- MAX 15 Pages - Anonymity - Figures and Pictures - Copyright
REFERENCES	Online tool Optional	500 words - Anonymity
COST MISSION & POLICIES	Online tool Mandatory	500 words - Excellence and Inclusiveness - International Cooperation - Industrial Dimension
NETWORK of PROPOSERS	Online tool Mandatory	- Minimum 5 researchers from 5 COST Member Countries and/or Cooperating State - Statistical Information that will be used for evaluation

Technical Annex

SECTIONS	SUB-SECTIONS
S&T EXCELLENCE	▪ **Challenge** ▪ **Objectives** ▪ **Progress beyond the State-of-the-art and Innovation Potential** ▪ **Added value of networking**
IMPACT	▪ **Expected Impact** ▪ **Measures to Maximise Impact** ▪ **Potential for Innovation versus Risk Level**
IMPLEMENTATION	▪ **Description of the Work Plan** ▪ **Management Structures & Procedures** ▪ **Network as a whole**

1) S&T Excellence

1.1 Challenge

- 1.1.1 Description of the Challenge (Main Aim)
- 1.1.2 Relevance and timeliness

Describe the research question(s) your proposal aims to address. You should make a case for the relevance and timeliness of the proposed challenge(s)

KEY CONCEPT: Challenges of COST Actions

*Challenges are the **research questions** addressed by a COST Action, targeting S&T and / or socio-economic problems*

1) S&T Excellence

1.2 Objectives

- 1.2.1 Research Coordination Objectives
- 1.2.2 Capacity-building Objectives

*Provide a clear and specific description of the **project objectives** against the background of the state-of the-art, **showing their pertinence to tackle the proposed challenge**. Make sure the proposed objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)*

KEY CONCEPTS: Objectives in COST Actions *are the results that an Action needs to achieve in order to respond to its challenge*

Research Coordination Objectives: distribution of tasks, sharing of knowledge and know-how, and the creation of synergies among Action participants to achieve specific outputs.

Capacity-building Objectives: building critical mass to drive scientific progress, thereby strengthening the European Research Area. They can be achieved by the delivery of specific outputs and/or through network features or types and levels of participation.

1) S&T Excellence

1.3 Progress beyond the state-of-the-art and Innovation Potential

- 1.3.1 Description of the state-of-the-art
- 1.3.2 Progress beyond the state-of-the-art
- 1.3.3 Innovation in tackling the challenge

Describe briefly the state-of-the art in the field related to the challenge, as well as the advance that the COST Action will bring about

*Highlight the **innovation potential** anticipated by the proposed COST Action in order to tackle the challenge. **Innovation is to be intended as the creation and / or development of new or improved concepts, products, processes, services, and / or technologies that are made available to markets, governments and society***

1) S&T Excellence

1.4 Added value of networking

- 1.4.1 In relation to the Challenge
- 1.4.2 In relation to existing efforts at European and/or international level

Describe the added value of networking in relation to the challenge by highlighting why networking is the best approach to tackle the challenge

Describe the added value of the proposed COST Action in relation to former and existing efforts (research projects, other networks, etc.) at the European and/or international level

2) Impact

2.1 Expected Impact

- 2.1.1 Short-term and long-term scientific, technological, and/or socio economic impacts

Describe in a clear and realistic way the S&T and socio-economic impact envisaged by the proposed COST Action in the short- and long-term perspective

KEY CONCEPT: COST Action impact

Impact is the effect or influence on short-term to long-term scientific, technological, and/or socio-economic changes produced by a COST Action, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

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2) Impact

2.2 Measures to Maximise Impact

- 2.2.1 Plan for involving the most relevant stakeholders
- 2.2.2 Dissemination and/or Exploitation Plan

Identify the most relevant stakeholders and present a clear plan to involve them as Action's participants

Present a clear and attainable plan for dissemination and/or exploitation of results, including IPR, if relevant

2.3 Potential for Innovation versus Risk Level

- 2.3.1 Potential for scientific, technological and/or socioeconomic breakthroughs

Make a case on how well the proposal succeeds in putting forward potential innovation/ breakthroughs with a convincing risk/return trade-off

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3) Implementation

3.1 Description of the Work Plan

- ### 3.1.1 Description of Working Groups

Provide a detailed description of the different Working Groups. For each WG provide objectives, tasks, activities, milestones and list of major deliverables

- ### 3.1.2 GANTT Chart

Provide a graphical illustration of a schedule offering the project management overview of the different WGs, tasks, activities, and deliverables of your proposal

- ### 3.1.3 PERT - Program (Project) Evaluation and Review Technique (optional)

Provide a graphical representation of the different WGs showing their inter-relation. If needed, the same can be provide to show the inter-relation among the different tasks within each WG

- ### 3.1.4 Risk and Contingency Plans

Identify the main risks related to the Work Plan and present a credible contingency plan.

3)Implementation

3.2 Management Structures and Procedures

Describe the Action organisation in terms of management structure that would help the Action meet the proposed challenge. It is required that the proposed Action organisation and management structure respect COST rules

More detailed information at:

COST Implementation Rules - B.2 COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment (134/14)
http://www.cost.eu/participate

3) Implementation

3.3 Network as a whole

Describe how well the features of your Network of Proposers can achieve the objectives of the proposed COST Action. Make a case for the critical mass, expertise and geographical distribution needed for addressing the challenge and the objectives

If your Network misses any of these features, present a clear plan for overcoming the identified gaps. Note that COST Policies should not be addressed here

If you plan to include International Partner Countries (IPCs) or Near Neighbour Countries (NNCs) institutions in your proposal, give a brief description of the mutual benefits deriving from their participation

More detailed information concerning IPCs and NNCs at:

COST Implementation Rules - B.3 COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisation Participation (135/14)
http://www.cost.eu/participate

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Final Considerations

❑ Strong competition: be ambitious

❑ Start: start early – a proposal preparation needs time

❑ Become acquainted with the **COST Open Call: Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) guidelines** (in preparation)

❑ Have a clear view over the Action structure and 4 year strategy (WG)

❑ Present a clear strategy on the integration of researchers from inclusiveness countries (ex: Grant Holder, STSM,…)

❑ If you have the chance, have a **native speaker check the English**

❑ BUT - Perfect English is not necessary, it is the **clarity** + **consistency** which counts and increases your chances

❑ …………

Excellence and Inclusiveness

Implementation Strategy by the MC

The Action should have a plan towards inclusiveness **(Geographical Coverage, Early Career Investigator involvement and Gender Balance)** that is revised and updated at every MC meeting and develop a strategy to attract researchers and stakeholders

SOME EXAMPLES:

❑ Leadership roles

❑ Organising and locating Action meetings and events

❑ Benefiting from COST networking tools

❑ Promoting STSMs

❑ Action Think Tank for Early Career Investigators

ECI = PhD + up to 8 years

International Cooperation

Implementation Strategy by the MC

Aiming to support the involvement of researchers from **Near Neighbour** and **International Partner Countries** in COST Actions on the basis of mutual benefit.

SOME EXAMPLES:

- Approved IPC and NNC Institutions can host STSMs
- Researchers from approved NNC Institutions can:
    - Apply for STSMs
    - Attend Training Schools
- Researchers from approved IPC and NNC Institutions can be Trainers when Training Schools are organised

SME & Industry Cooperation

Implementation Strategy by the MC

Aiming to facilitate/ encourage industry participation

SOME EXAMPLES:

- Session dedicated to industrial participation at Action events

- Roundtable discussions with industrial partners at Action events

- STSMs with industry acting as home/ host institution

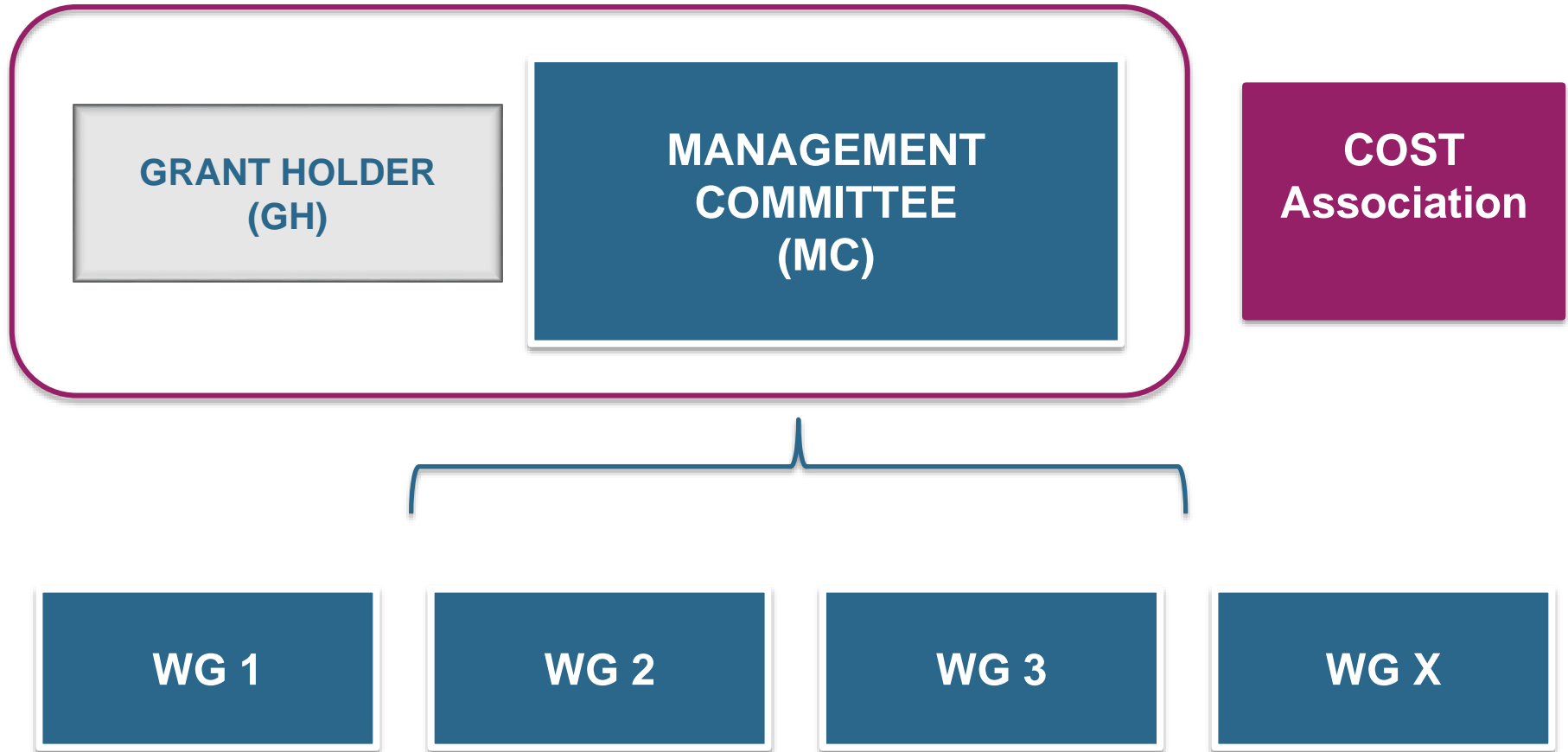# COST Action Structure and Decision Making

COST Actions

- A network of researchers with nationally funded research pursuing the fulfilment of the objectives and deliverables described in the approved proposal (MoU)

- Based on a joint work programme for 4 years

- In fields that are of interest to at least five COST Countries

- Selected via a COST Open Call

Action Structure

GRANT HOLDER
(GH)

MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE
(MC)

COST
Association

WG 1

WG 2

WG 3

WG X

Management Committee

DECISION MAKING BODY

Coordination, Implementation and Management of an Action.

Supervising the appropriate allocation and use of funds.

Achieving the Action's MoU objectives.

COMPOSED OF:

Delegates nominated by their respective COST National Coordinator (CNC).

Up to 2 representatives per Participating COST Country.

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Management Committee

KEY ROLES in order to ORGANISE THE WORK

ACTION CHAIR

ACTION VICE-CHAIR

WG LEADERS

GRANT HOLDER

And other horizontal activities

CORE GROUP:

Prepare MC decisions

CORE GROUP MEETINGS

Management Committee

MAIN TASKS TO BE PERFORMED by the MC

Action Strategy

Work & Budget Plan

Dissemination & Exploitation Strategy

Memberships

Implementation of COST Policies

Approval of new Countries and Organizations

Reporting

Supervising the appropriate use of funds

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Working Groups

PRODUCTION & EXCHANGE OF RESEARCH

Achieving the scientific objectives as defined in the MoU

WG Leaders must be MC Members

COMPOSED OF:

Any researchers from Participating COST Member Countries, **every MC member,** MC Observers from approved NNC, IPC, Specific Organisations

How are COST Actions funded?

Grant Agreement
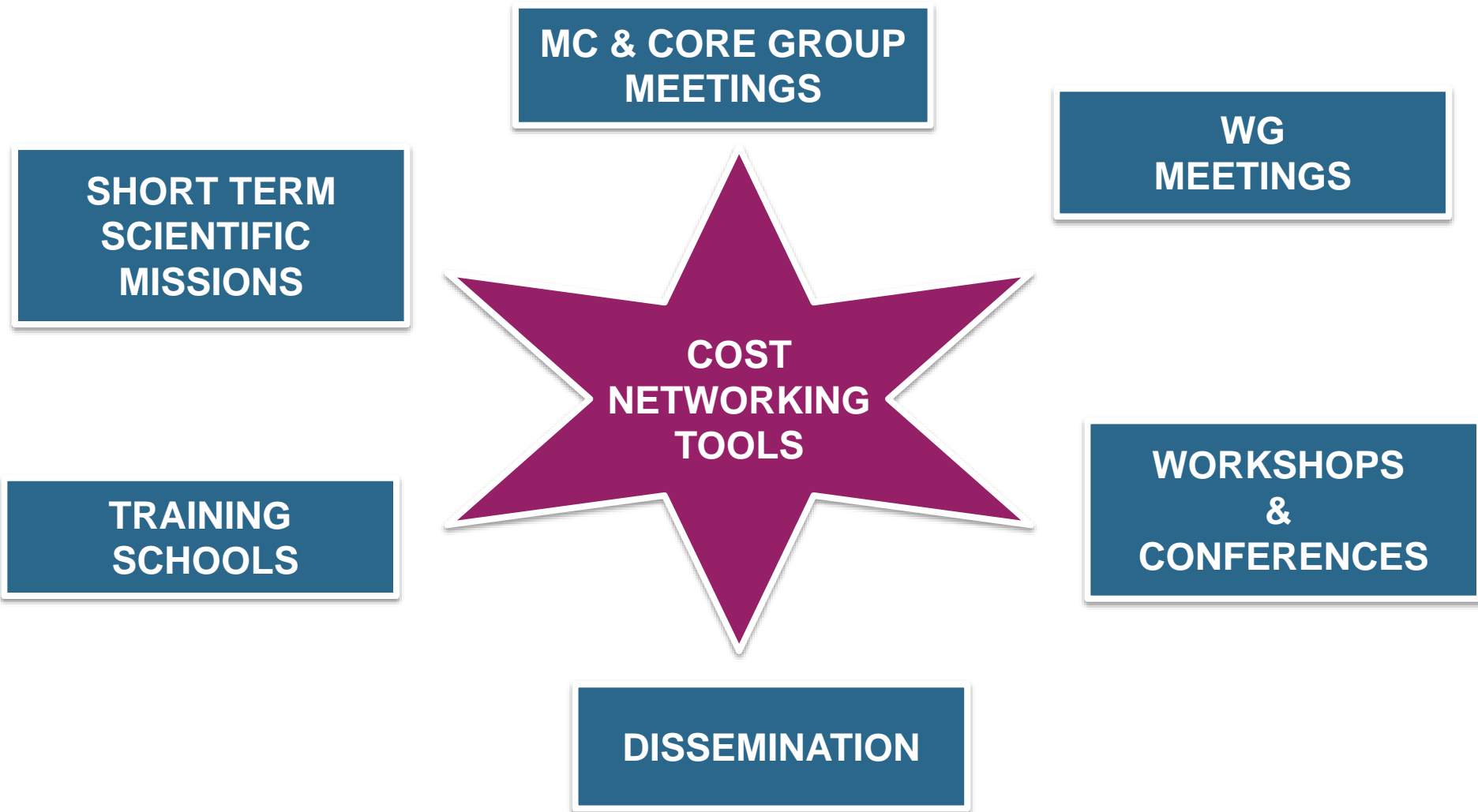
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (MC)

SO negotiates and approves W&B

COST ASSOCIATION

GRANT HOLDER (GH)

COST ASSOCIATION e-signs GA with GH

COST Networking Tools

COST NETWORKING TOOLS

- MC & CORE GROUP MEETINGS
- WG MEETINGS
- WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES
- DISSEMINATION
- TRAINING SCHOOLS
- SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS

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COST – European Cooperation
in Science and Technology

Avenue Louise 149

1050 Brussels, Belgium

T: +32 (0)2 533 3800

F: +32 (0)2 533 3890

office@cost.eu

www.cost.eu

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