



COST (European Cooperation in Science & Technology)

An Introduction to the COST Grant System

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What is the COST Grant System (CGS)?

- **Funding framework** which provides a fixed annual grant to Actions for the financial and administrative management of their activities.
- Actions **activities must be in line with a Work and Budget Plan**, which is approved by the Action Management Committee (MC).
- MC decisions on **funding activities are supported by the Grant Holder** (COST Document 4154/11, “*Rules and Procedures for implementing COST Actions*”), who acts as the Action Secretariat and executes the funding and reimbursement logistics.



Objectives of the CGS

- To allow Actions to **make a plan** for annual activities, which can be adjusted according to circumstances over the course of the year without direct involvement by the COST Office.
- To help **improve the turnaround time and transparency** for processing activity funding (e.g. issuing invitations, granting local organizer support, processing exchange visit applications etc.) and participant reimbursements.
- To **provide a transparent framework** for the European Commission, as required by the implementation of COST as a 7th FP instrument.



Implementation of the CGS

- **Kick-off meeting of the COST Action:** selection of the Grant Holder from one of the institutions of the MC members; appointment of two Action Financial Rapporteurs among the MC members
- **Annual Work Plan and Budget Plan** negotiated between and agreed by the Action Chair, acting on behalf of the MC, and the COST Office, based on MC decisions
- **COST Grant Agreement** prepared by the COST Office, as a contract to be signed by the Grant Holder
- **Implementation of the Action's activities** based on MC decisions

Reference Documents

- **Work and Budget Plan (W&B Plan):** Detail of the Action's activities for the upcoming year. It is negotiated between and agreed upon by the Action Chair and the COST Office Science Officer
- COST “**Vademecum (Part B) – Grant System**”: principles and reimbursement rules of COST financial instruments
- COST **Grant Agreement**
- **e-COST:** Grant Management Tool
- **European Commission regulations** : e.g. audits and controls

The Work and Budget Plan (W&B Plan)

- 1. Prepared by the Action Chair** three (3) months prior to the end of the current grant period. A standard template is used to enter Work and Budget Plan information for the upcoming year (“grant period”).
- 2. Communicated to the COST Office** and then refined to incorporate e.g. budgetary constraints, changes to the regulations for reimbursements, cross-grant-period activities, etc.
- 3. Approved by the COST Office.** The W&B Plan becomes part of the new Grant Agreement for the upcoming grant period.
- 4. The basis for the Action’s activities:** the W&B Plan is normally closely adhered to by the Action.

W&B Plan Content and Structure

Section I: Front Page

Section II: Detailed Budget

Section III: Detailed Work Plan



COST Grant workplan

I. ACTION PROFILE

Domain: ICT

Action no. and title: IC1103: Manufacturable and Dependable Multicore Architectures at Nanoscale (MEDIAN)

Chair: Marco Ottavi (University of Rome "Tor Vergata", Rome, ITALY)

START date: 1 December 2011
END date: 30 November 2015

Number of signatories: 15
Number of non-COST members: 1
Number of COST country entities (institutes, etc.) currently participating: 20
Number of non-COST entities (institutes, etc.) currently participating: 1

Number of MC Members: 23

Working Groups with numbers, titles and approximate number of members:

WG1: Methodologies and techniques for manufacturing reliable nanoscale devices 11
WG2: System level design, on-line testing/fault tolerance, 13
WG 3: Verification and Validation/Debug Methodologies, 7
WG 4: Fault tolerance for space applications, 14
WG 5: Fault tolerance for transportation systems, 6
WG 6: Fault tolerance for medical devices, 7



II. DETAILED BUDGET

(1) MEETINGS

Management Committee Meetings

Location: Annecy (France)
Date: 29/5/2012
Number of participants to be reimbursed: 23
Travel costs: € 18400

Location: Berlin
Date: 26/1/2013 (1 day)
Number of participants to be reimbursed: 23
Travel costs: € 18400

Workgroup Meetings

Location: Annecy (France)
Date: 30/5/2012
Number of participants to be reimbursed: 0
Travel costs: € 0
Organisational support: € 0
N.B. will meet at a special session during the Workshop

Location: Berlin
Date: 27/1/2013 (1 day) (exact date: To be confirmed)
Number of participants to be reimbursed: 11 (in addition to MC participants) + 2 invited speakers
Travel costs: € 10400
Organisational support: € 1500

Workshops and Conferences

Title: Median Workshop 2012
Location: Annecy (France)
Date: 30/5/2012
Number of participants to be reimbursed: 11 (in addition to MC participants) + 3 invited speakers
Travel costs: € 11200
Organisational support: € 1500



III. WORK PLAN

(1) OBJECTIVES

Please describe the objectives to be achieved during the grant period and their relationship to the goals of the Action as laid down in the MoU or as modified by the Management Committee
The objectives of the first year are the following:

- 1) Organization of a MC/WG meeting: this will allow us to revise the work done by the different WGs and to prepare the reports related to the first year of activity
- 2) Workshop Organization: this will allow exchange the backgrounds and expertise of the different members and to foster the work of the WGs.
- 3) Promotion and implementation of STSM, with particular attention to the involvement of ESR and women

(2) ACTIVITIES

Please describe the contents of the activities listed in the budget, their relationship to each other (if any) and to the objectives stated above.

- 1) Workshop to be held in conjunction with European Test Symposium: the program of the workshop will be defined within the scope of the WGs activated at the time of the workshop.
- 2) MC/WG Meetings: One MC meeting will be held in conjunction with the Workshop, the other will be at the end of the grant period in conjunction with the WG meeting. During the meetings the progress of the Action will be discussed and evaluated.
- 3) STSM: Two calls will be provided in order to identify at least 6 successful candidates.

(3) OUTPUTS PLANNED FOR YEAR

(Including final reports, technical documents, publications and other forms of output.)

- 1) Workshop proceedings: The proceedings of the Workshop will be publicly available on the website and will be printed for dissemination.
- 2) WG reports: each WG will generate a report, which will contain an extensive state-of-the-art review.
- 3) Report of the Action's activities: an overall summary of the achievement of the action will be generated at the end of the grant period.
- 4) STSM reports: Each STSM awardee will provide a report for the activities carried out during the mission.





The Grant Holder

The Grant Holder (cf. COST Document 4154/11):

- is the legal entity appointed by the MC;
- is from one of the institutions of the MC members;
- has appropriate competence in administrative and financial oversight of a funded project;
- ideally, is experienced in the management of transnational projects / in COST.

Financial support to the Grant Holder from the Grant Amount

- Financial Contribution of up to the maximum of 15% of the actual science expenditures of the COST Action

Role and Responsibilities of the Grant Holder

- Responsible for providing the **financial and scientific administration and coordination (FSAC) of the COST Action**, in accordance with the reporting, accounting and reimbursement rules as laid out in the COST Vademecum
- **Core tasks:**
 1. **managing** the grant for the funding of the activities of the COST Action, using the Grant Management Tool (e-COST)
 2. **providing** scientific, secretarial support to meetings
 3. **providing** support for publication & dissemination (incl. website)
 4. **scientific and financial accounting and reporting** (interim and final financial reporting, European Commission Report, Action Financial Rapporteur reports, Annual Monitoring Progress Report)



MC Members in the CGS

1. Action Chair & Vice-Chair

- Are elected by the MC (today!) from among its members, for the duration of the Action
- Action Chair is the executive representative of the COST Action, and directs and implements the decisions of the MC
- **NB:** If the institution of the Action Chair is the Grant Holder, the Action's financial oversight and representation falls to the Vice-Chair, to avoid conflict of interest (ref. COST Code of Conduct, COST Document 4160/10)



MC Members in the CGS

2. Action Financial Rapporteurs

- Two MC members appointed by the MC from among its members
- Responsible for drawing up a short statement on the annual financial review of the Action, submitted to the Grant Holder one month after the end of the grant period—forms part of the COST Office review of the Action (along with the Final Financial Report provided by the Grant Holder)
- Rapporteurs affirm that the nature, overall justification and level of expenditure are in line with the approved W&B Plan for the grant period.



COST Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct policy (COST Document 4160/10):

- **Any conflict of interest** shall be declared between the Action Chair, the 2 Financial Rapporteurs and the Grant Holder.
- The goal to ensure the objectivity and independence of any decision taken during the COST Action, particularly concerning financial activities.



COST Grant Agreement

The COST Grant Agreement:

- is a legal contract between COST and the Grant Holder;
- adheres to the requirements of both:
- the 2007 grant agreement between the European Commission and the European Science Foundation (ESF), defining ESF's role as implementing agent for COST during the Seventh Framework Programme; and
- the European Commission/European Communities Financial Regulations and Implementing Rules.



Grant Agreement Overview

- **Annual contract**, renewable for a maximum Action duration of four (4) years
- **On behalf of the Grant Holder:** signed by the representative of the Grant Holder institution as a legal entity (director, rector, president, etc.)
- **On behalf of the COST Office:** signed by either the Director of the COST Office, or the COST Office Head of Science Operations
- **Includes the approved Work and Budget Plan** for the upcoming grant period
- **Two annual payments:**
 - *Up to 65%* of the grant amount, at the start of the grant period.
 - *Up to 35%* of the grant amount, on request & if needed, upon approval of an interim/intermediate financial report.
- Requires the reimbursement of **eligible costs**

Reporting

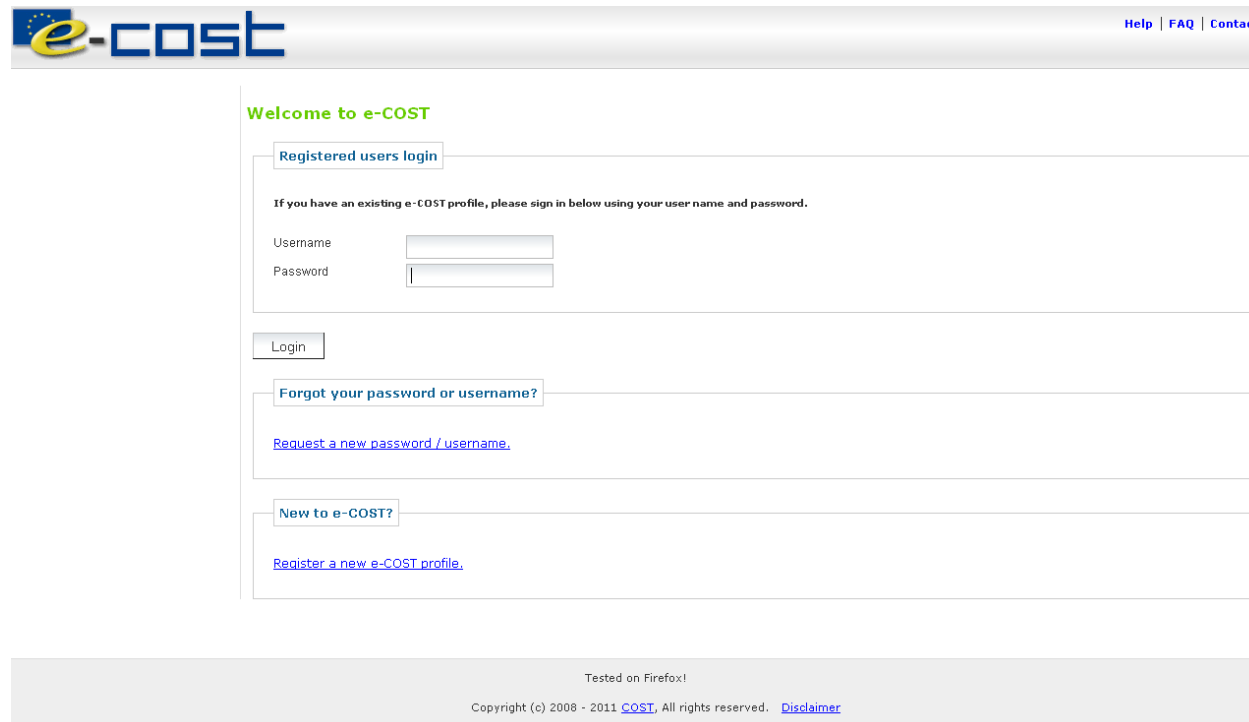
- The Grant Agreement requires the Grant Holder to submit interim/intermediate, European Commission and final financial reports, and Action Financial Rapporteur statements.
 1. **Interim/intermediate financial report** is submitted prior to the 35% payment request (6 – 9 months after the beginning of the grant period)
 2. **European Commission report** is submitted in January, and may be combined with the interim/final financial reporting if feasible
 3. **Final financial report** is submitted with Action Financial Rapporteur reports up to one month after the conclusion of the grant period.
- The Grant Holder must also submit **annual scientific reporting**, in the form of an **Annual Progress Report**.

Compliance

- Compliance is subject to the ‘four eye’ principle for controls:
 - **Grant Holder’s Financial Officer**, responsible for approving activity expenditure
 - **Action Financial Rapporteurs** appointed by the MC, verifying expenditure in line with the Action goals and approved W&B Plan
 - **The COST Office**, in its verification of the interim/intermediate and final financial reports
 - **External auditing** (ESF, EC, Court of Auditors) or COST Office Financial Controller auditing (usually sampled); external audits may occur up to 5 years after the end of the EC-ESF grant agreement

Grant Management: e-COST

e-COST is a mandatory web-based IT platform for the management of the COST Action (activities, grant duties, reporting, etc.)



The screenshot shows the e-COST login interface. At the top left is the e-COST logo, and at the top right are links for Help, FAQ, and Contact. The main content area is titled "Welcome to e-COST" and contains three sections: "Registered users login" with a login form (Username and Password fields and a Login button), "Forgot your password or username?" with a link to request a new password/username, and "New to e-COST?" with a link to register a new profile. The footer contains the text "Tested on Firefox!", "Copyright (c) 2008 - 2011 COST. All rights reserved.", and a link to the Disclaimer.

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



Grant Management: e-COST

Main functionalities

- Provides an **individual account for each Grant Holder** (username and password following registration)
- Automates **activity encoding, sending of invitations, building participant lists, issuing reimbursement forms, generating STSM applications, etc.**
- Presents an up-to-date **assessment of the current status of Action activities and financial position**
- Automates **interim/intermediate, EC and final financial reports**
- Allows the COST Office to **monitor the Action and provide advice when needed**

e-COST trainings are regularly organized at the COST Office

Support and Documentation

- **e-COST:** <https://e-services.cost.eu>
- **e-COST Support:**
 - Training sessions organised by the COST Office
 - IT Helpdesk via e-cost@cost.eu
- **“COST Vademecum Part B Grant System” and COST Grant Agreement Template:** <http://www.cost.eu/guidelines>
- **COST Structure:** http://www.cost.eu/about_cost/structure

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