COST

European Cooperation in Science and Technology

Introduction to the COST Framework Programme

Saka, 28.08.2015

COST is supported
by the EU Framework Programme

Outline

1. **What is COST and how does it work?**

   Christer Halen, Senior Science Officer COST Association

   - COST Overview
   - COST Structure
   - COST Policies

2. **What are the COST Actions and how to participate in them? COST Actions: the networking instrument**

   Christer Halen, Senior Science Officer COST Association

   - COST Countries
   - Structure and Decision Making
   - Strategy Work and Budget Plan
   - Networking Tools
   - How to Participate

3. **How to prepare a successful proposal?**

   Christer Halen, Senior Science Officer COST Association

   - New Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA)procedure
   - Proposal Preparation – Practical Aspects

1. What is COST and how does it work?



What is COST?

COST (CO-operation in Science and Technology) is a pan-European intergovernmental framework dedicated to networking activities for European researchers, enabling them to jointly develop their own ideas and new initiatives across all scientific disciplines through trans-European coordination of nationally funded research activities.

COST is supported by the EU Framework Programme Horizon 2020

What is COST?

- Founded in 1971, COST is the oldest and widest European intergovernmental framework for transnational Cooperation in Science and Technology.
- COST has been supporting networking of research activities across the 36 COST countries and beyond for more than 40 years (19 COST countries in 1971).
- One instrument: the COST Action (network of researchers). Only a few Actions at the beginning to more than 350 Actions running in 2014.

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COST Strengths and Key Features

- Bottom-up: original idea/not thematic.
- Pan-European,…
- Openness
- Capacity-building
- Provide equal opportunities – remove bottlenecks
- Spreading of knowledge – dissemination of results
- Output and impact oriented
- Leverage nationally funded research
- Light structure and administration

COST Strengths and Key Features

COST supports the networking of researchers through science and technology networks -'**COST Actions**'- open to:

- All fields of S&T (highlight on trans-, multi-, interdisciplinary, new and emergent fields)
- All partners (academia, public organisations, SME, industry, NGO, International Organisations)
- All career stages (young and experienced researchers)
  - Capacity building, Early Career Investigators
- All countries
  - COST Countries (COST Member Countries + Cooperating State (Israel)
  - Global cooperation on the basis of mutual interest (NNC, IPC)
  - Geographical balance

COST Mission Statement

COST enables breakthrough scientific and technological developments leading to new concepts and products.

It thereby contributes to strengthening Europe's research and innovation capacities.

Through trans-European networking of nationally funded research activities.



Agreements signed between the COST Association and the EC under Horizon 2020

Framework Partnership Agreement, FPA:

- Duration: 7 years
- Political commitment
- Strategy and Policy objectives
- Sets the Action Plan and secures long-term perspective

Specific Grant Agreement, SGA:

- Duration: 1 year
- Financial commitment
- Implementation objectives
- Describes the Work to be done and concrete tasks

COST at a turning point:

A unique framework for pan-European S&T cooperation as clear demonstration of European values

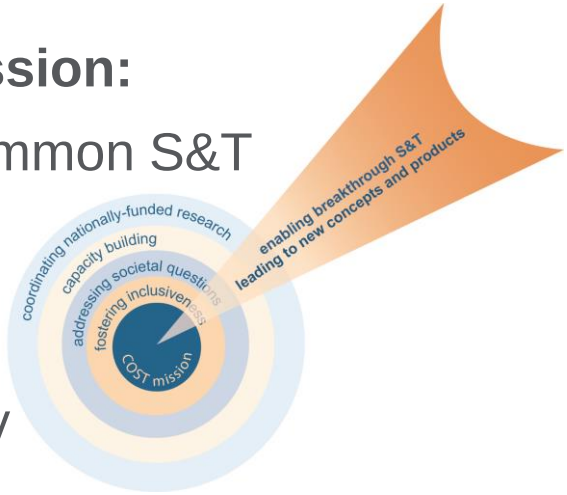
COST Budget and Objectives

EUR 300 million budget (constant prices) for 7 years drawn from two Horizon 2020 work programmes:

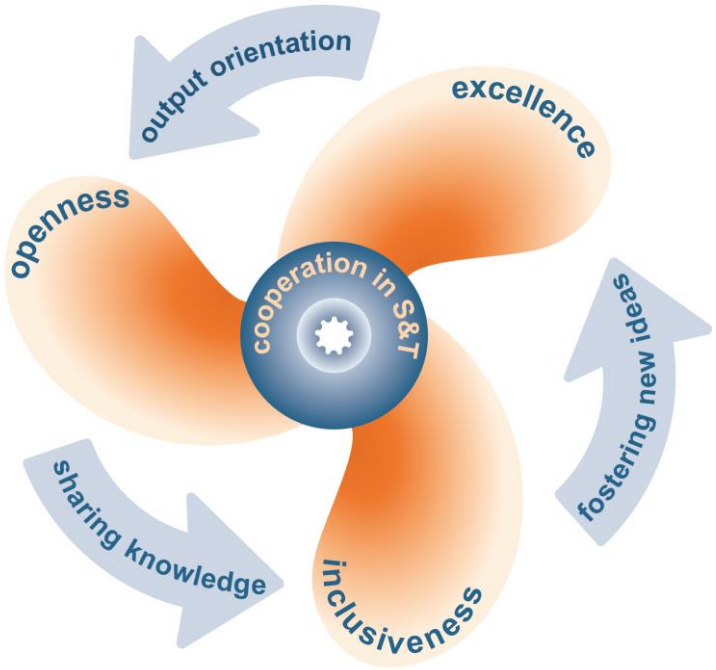
- Challenge 6 “Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective Societies”
- “Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation”

Four specific Objectives to fulfil COST mission:

- Joining research efforts and developing common S&T programmes
- Building capacity
- Addressing societal questions
- Strengthening COST’s Inclusiveness Policy



To achieve these Objectives



COST Key Principles

- Supporting excellence
- Being open
- Being inclusive

COST Driving Forces

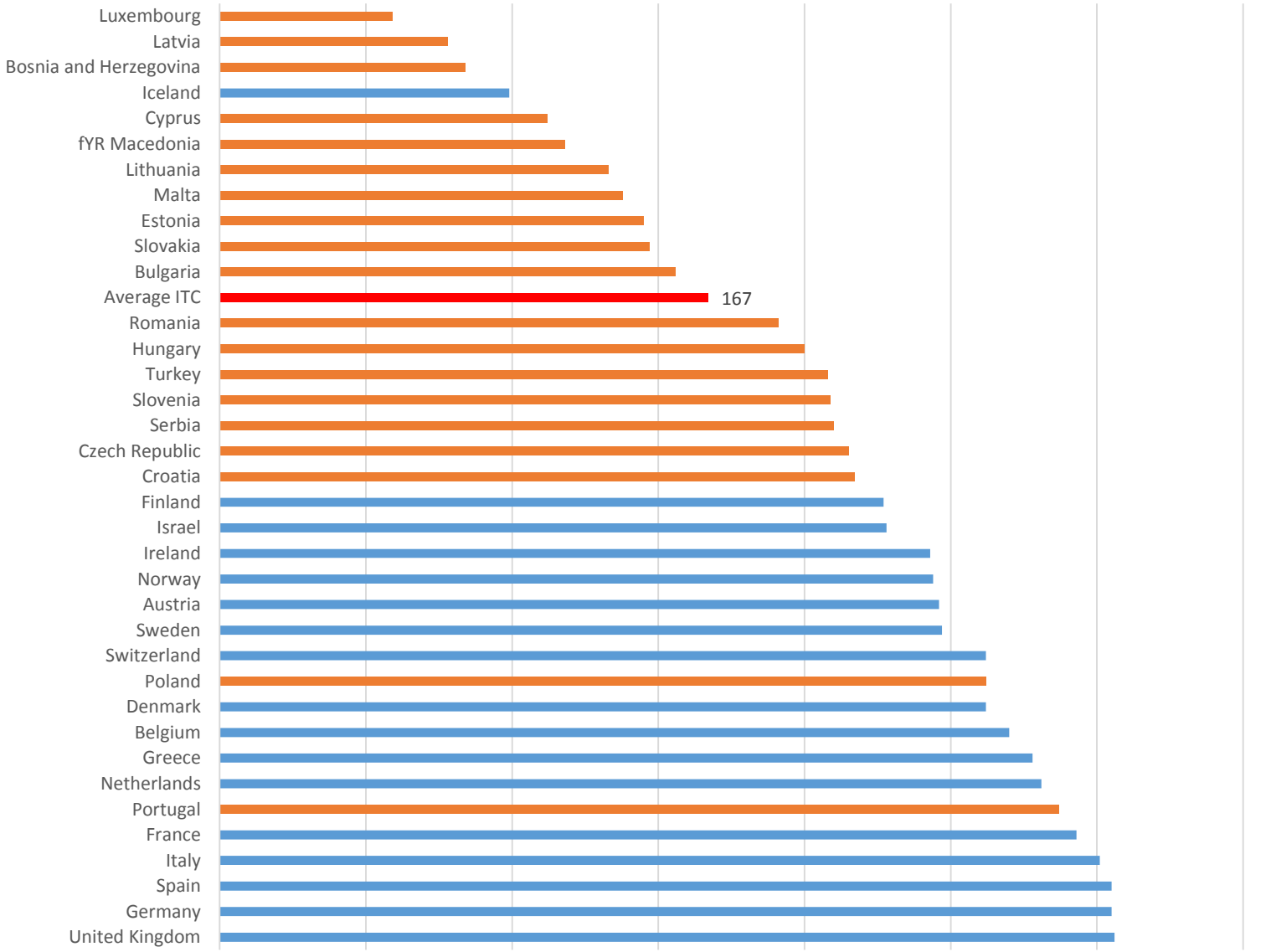
- Fostering new ideas
- Sharing knowledge
- Output orientation

COST in key figures (2014)

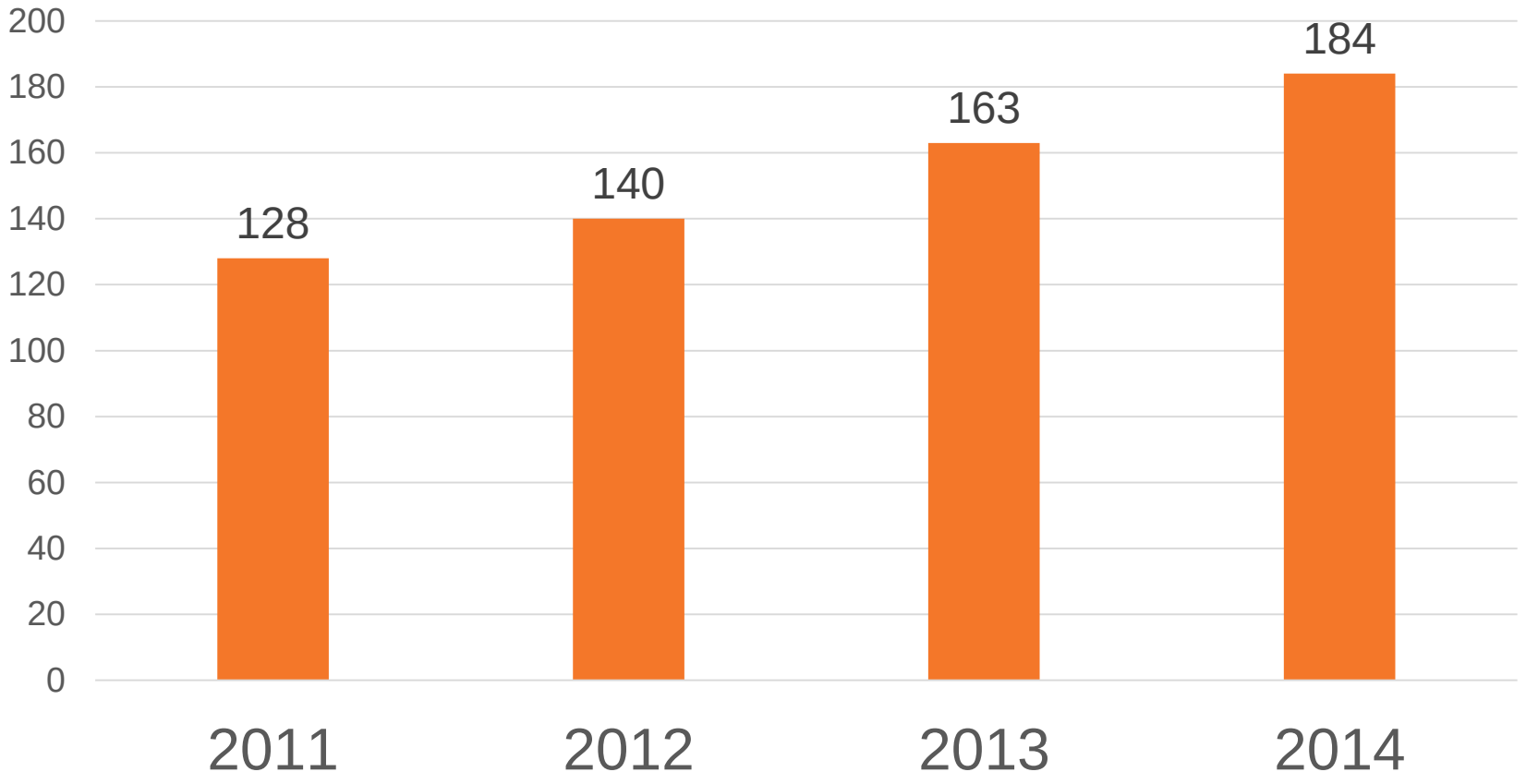
- >350 Running Actions
- 30.000 European researchers involved in COST Actions' activities
- 18.000 participations in COST activities involving Early-Career Investigators (<PhD 8 years)
- 2550 Short-term Scientific Missions
- 4000 Trainees involved in training schools
- 8600 researchers involved in proposal in the last collection 2014-1 (845 eligible proposals – 40 funded)

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COST Action participation

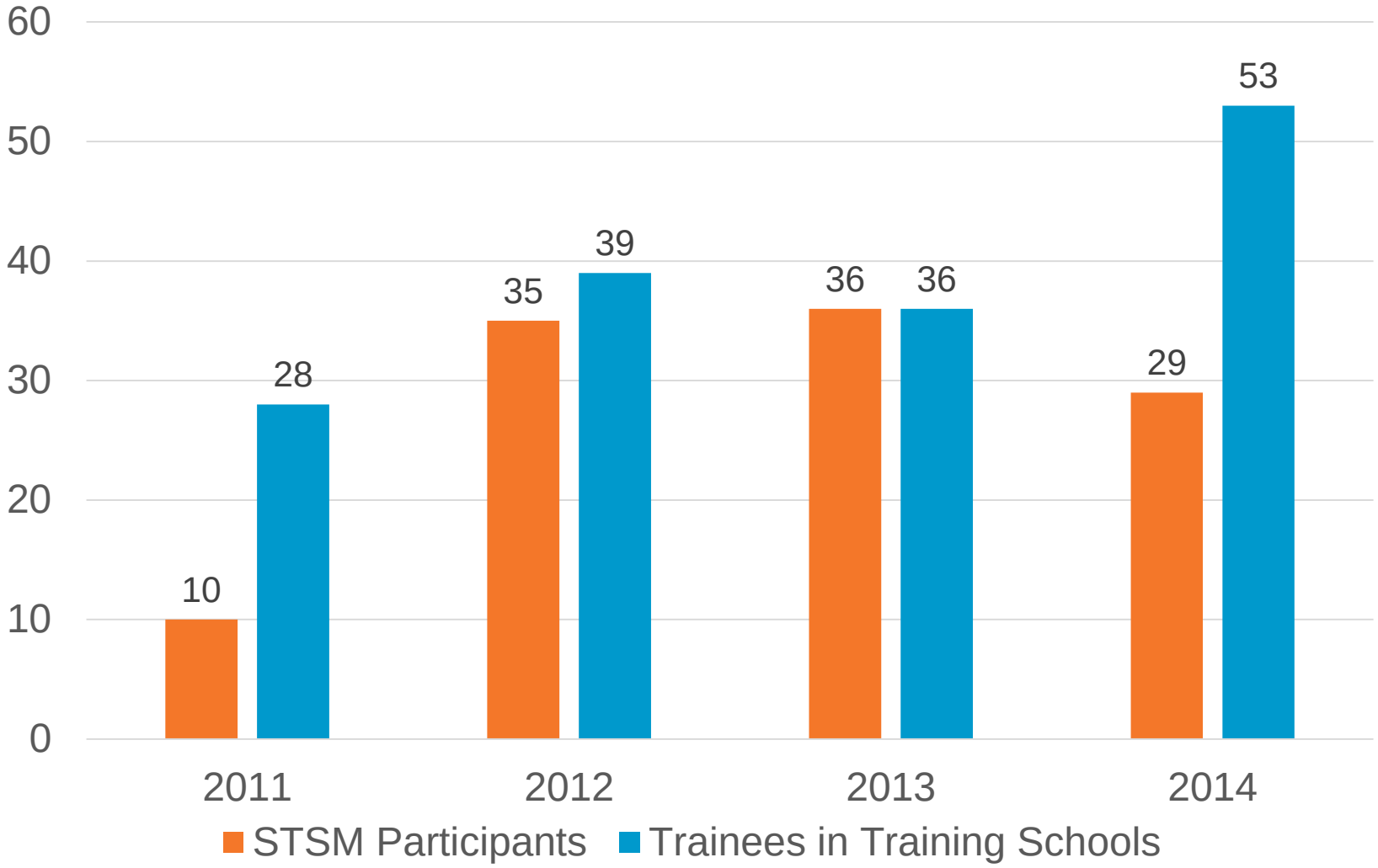


Bulgarian participation in Actions



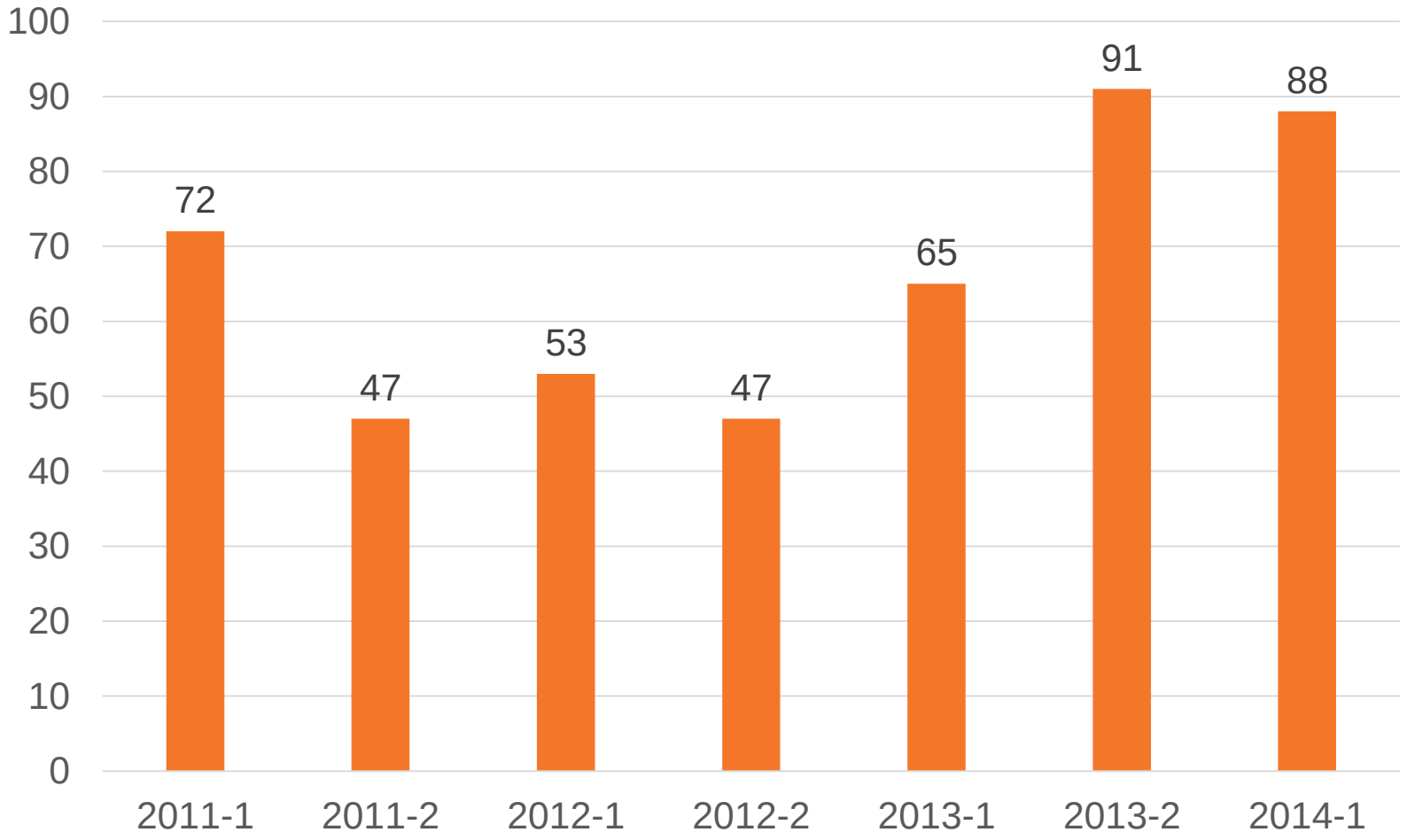
Number of COST Actions with Bulgarian participation in 2011 to 2014

Bulgarian participation in Actions



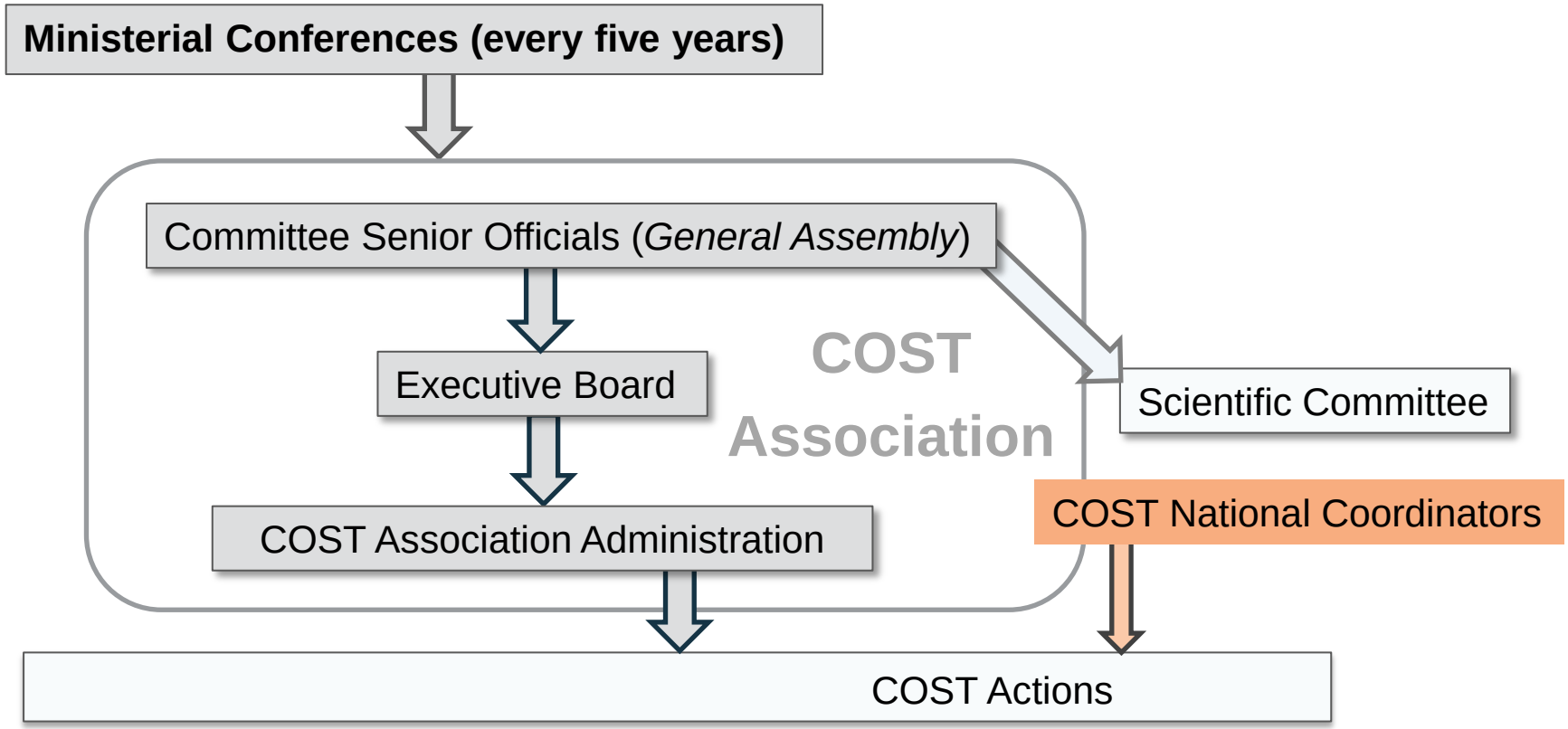
STSM and Training School participations from Bulgaria in 2011 to 2014

Bulgarian participation in Action proposals



Bulgarian researchers in Action proposals by collection

COST Association organisation and relation with other actors



See: http://www.cost.eu/about_cost/who

COST Policies

aiming at

Excellence & Inclusiveness

- Geographical coverage
- Early Career Investigators (ECR)
- Gender balance

Openness

- All fields of S&T
- All kind of participation
  - Academia, SME/Industry, …
- All countries



Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy

- Encouraging and enabling **excellent researchers** from less research-intensive countries across Europe to set up, lead or join COST Actions

- **Counterbalancing** research communities' unequal access to knowledge infrastructures, funding and resources distribution

- Contributing to the realization of Horizon 2020 Widening Pillar objectives trough **COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy**

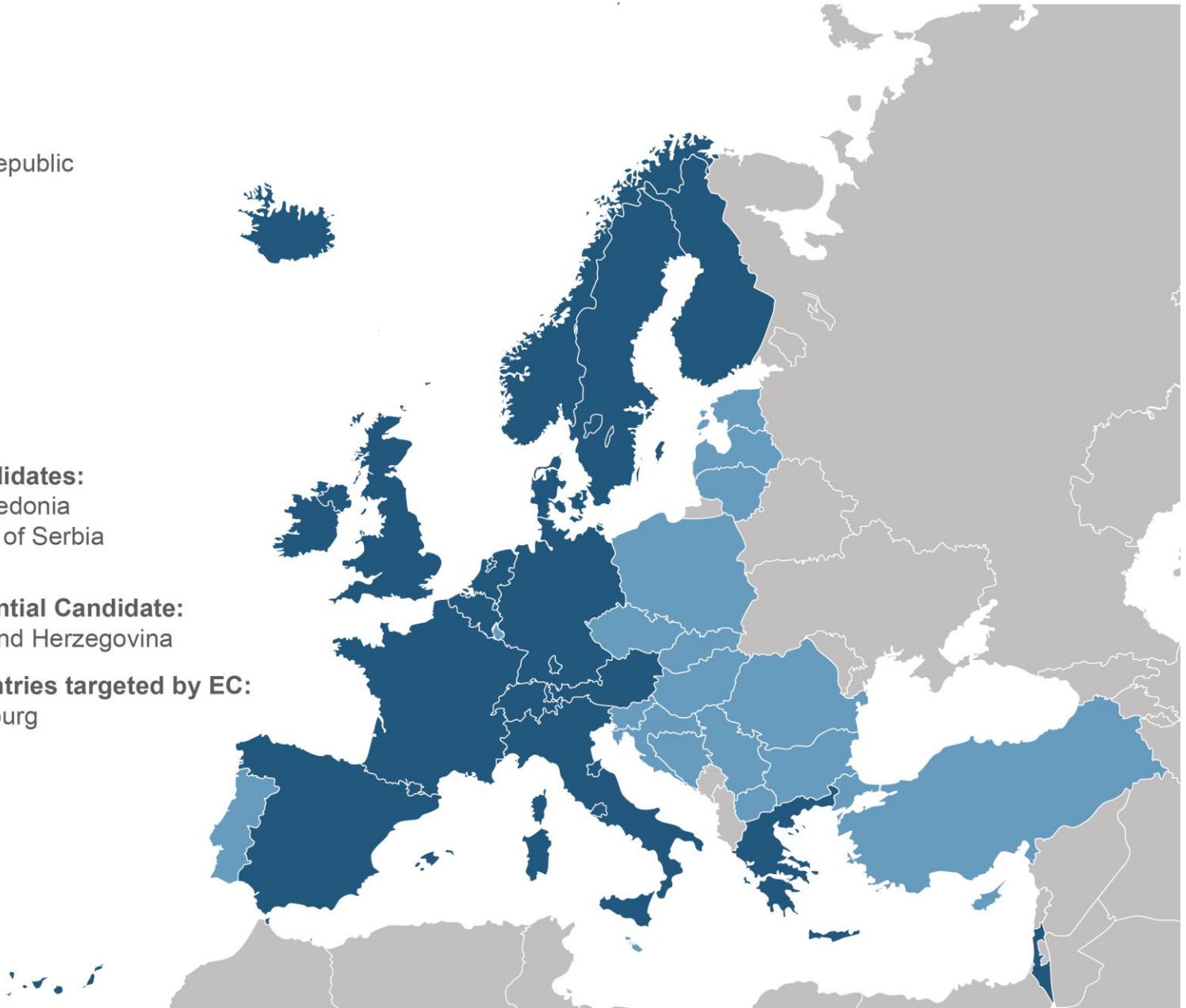
COST Inclusiveness Target Countries

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



COST Inclusiveness Target Countries

COST Member Countries	
EU Member States	Associated Countries to Horizon 2020
Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, Turkey, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Inclusiveness

Implementation Strategy by the Action

The Action should have a plan towards inclusiveness that is revised and updated at every MC meeting and develop a strategy to attract researchers and stakeholders.

SOME EXAMPLES:

- Leadership roles in the Action structure (ex: Grant Holders, WG leaders, …)
- Organising and locating Action meetings and events.
- Promoting STSM tool in these countries.
- Benefiting from COST networking tools.

Early Career Investigators

PhD* ≤ 8 years

- Address the difficulty in gaining visibility and recognition European-wide
- Entrusting young investigators with leader roles under their own responsibility



COST Inclusiveness Policy supports ECIs

***PhD or equivalent experience**

Gender Balance

male/female

- Encourage and enable under-represented gender to be intensively involved in all COST activities
- Networking the way to gender equality in science and technology



COST Inclusiveness
Policy supports
Gender balance

Early Career Investigators and Gender Balance

Implementation Strategy by the Action

Encourage and enable under represented gender to be intensively involved in all COST activities by the Action.

SOME EXAMPLES:

- Leadership roles in the Action structure (ex: Grant Holders, WG leaders, …)
- Benefiting from COST networking tools (STSM and Training Schools in particular).

ECI = PhD + up to 8 years

SMEs & Industry

Implementation Strategy by the Action

Aiming to facilitate/ encourage industry participation

SOME EXAMPLES:

- STSMs with industry acting as home/ host institution
- Participation in networking activities
- Session dedicated to industrial participation at Action events
- Roundtable discussions with industrial partners at Action events

International Cooperation

Implementation Strategy by the Action

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

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



COST ACTION

The COST pan-European networking instrument that allows researchers, engineers or scholars from COST Member Countries and Cooperating State to jointly develop their own ideas and new initiatives in a field or topic of common interest

COST Actions – characteristics (1/2)

- A network of researchers, engineers and scholars with nationally funded research
- Collaborating in S&T fields of common interest to at least five COST Countries
- Answering to the COST Open Call for proposals
- Selected via a procedure tailored to the purpose
- Based on a joint work programme for 4 years

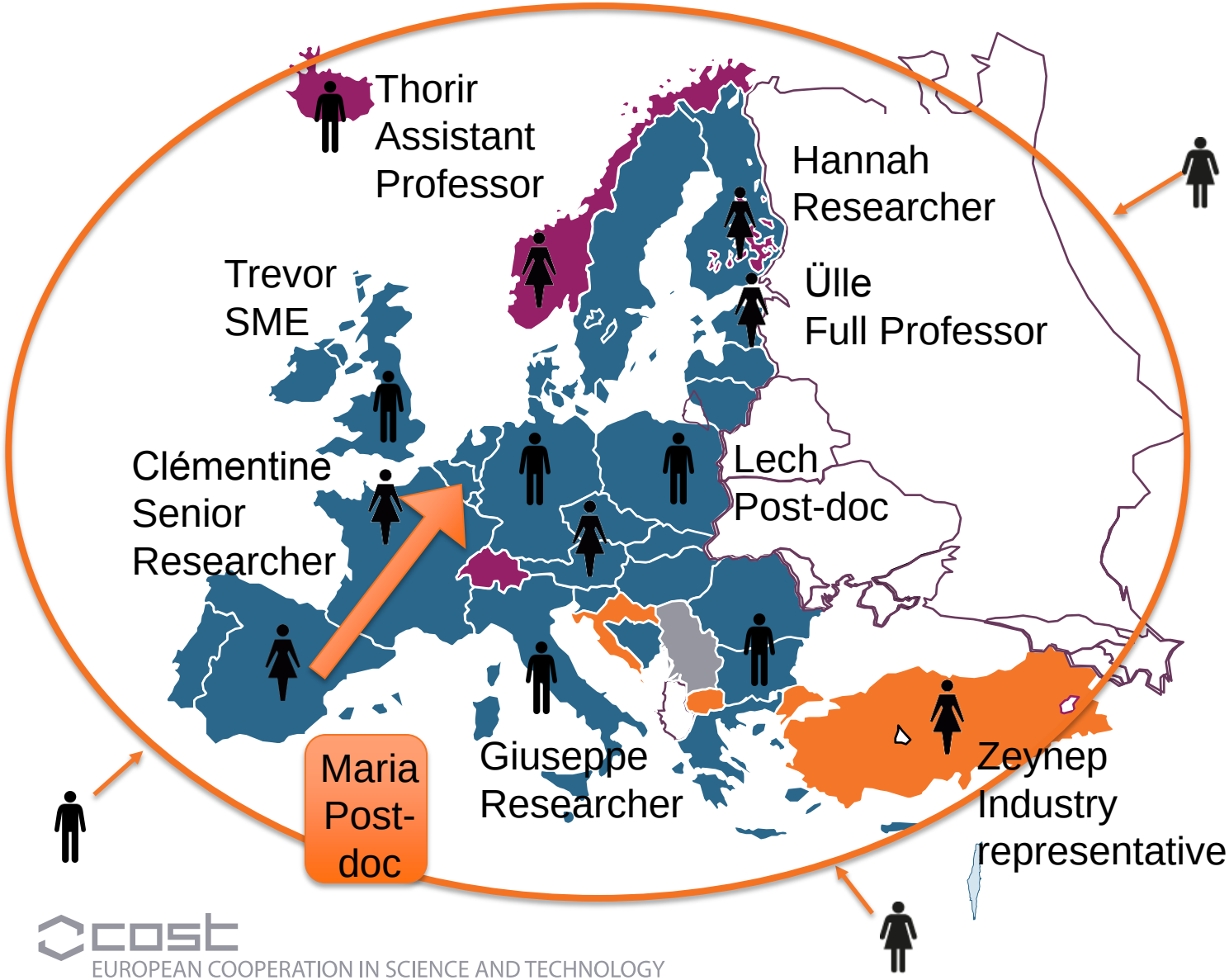
COST DOES NOT FUND RESEARCH

COST Action – characteristics (2/2)

- Expandable to new participants
- Implemented through networking activities: Meetings, Working Groups, Conferences, Workshops, Short Term Scientific Missions, Training Schools and Dissemination Activities
- Average Annual COST Budget EUR 130 000
- Pursuing the fulfilment of the objectives and deliverables described in the approved proposal (Memorandum of Understanding)

COST DOES NOT FUND RESEARCH

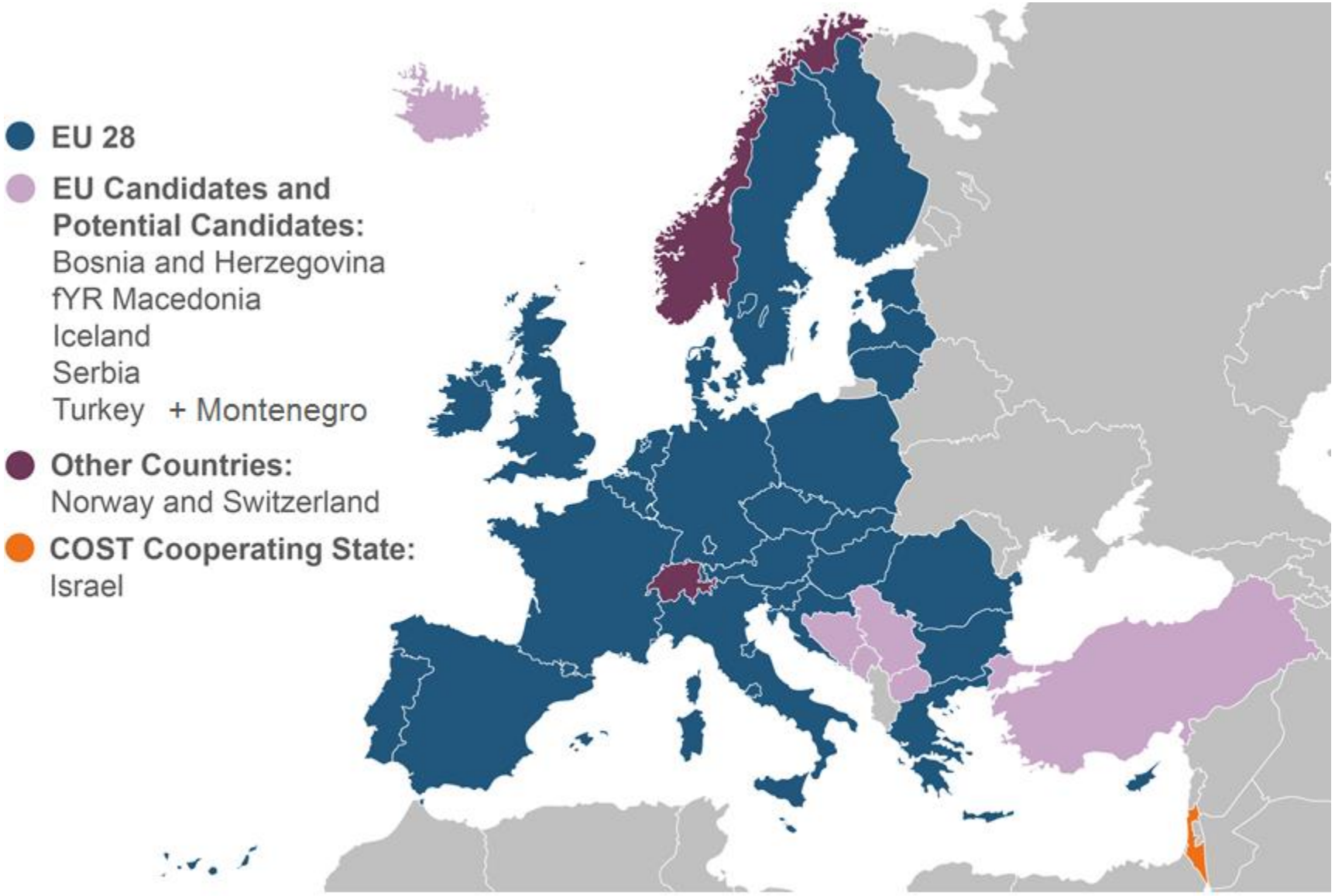
How an Action is established



WHICH COUNTRIES CAN PARTICIPATE?



37 COST countries



International dimension of COST

The participation of Institutions from Near Neighbour Countries (NNC) and International Partner Country (IPC) is welcome and is based on *mutual benefit*

- **Institutions in Near Neighbour Countries (NNC):**

  Balkan countries (Albania and Montenegro),

  Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan, Syria and Tunisia)

  Eastern European Countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine)

- **Institutions in all other International Partner Countries (IPC)**

COST Near Neighbour Countries

206 participations in running COST Actions accros 16 countries

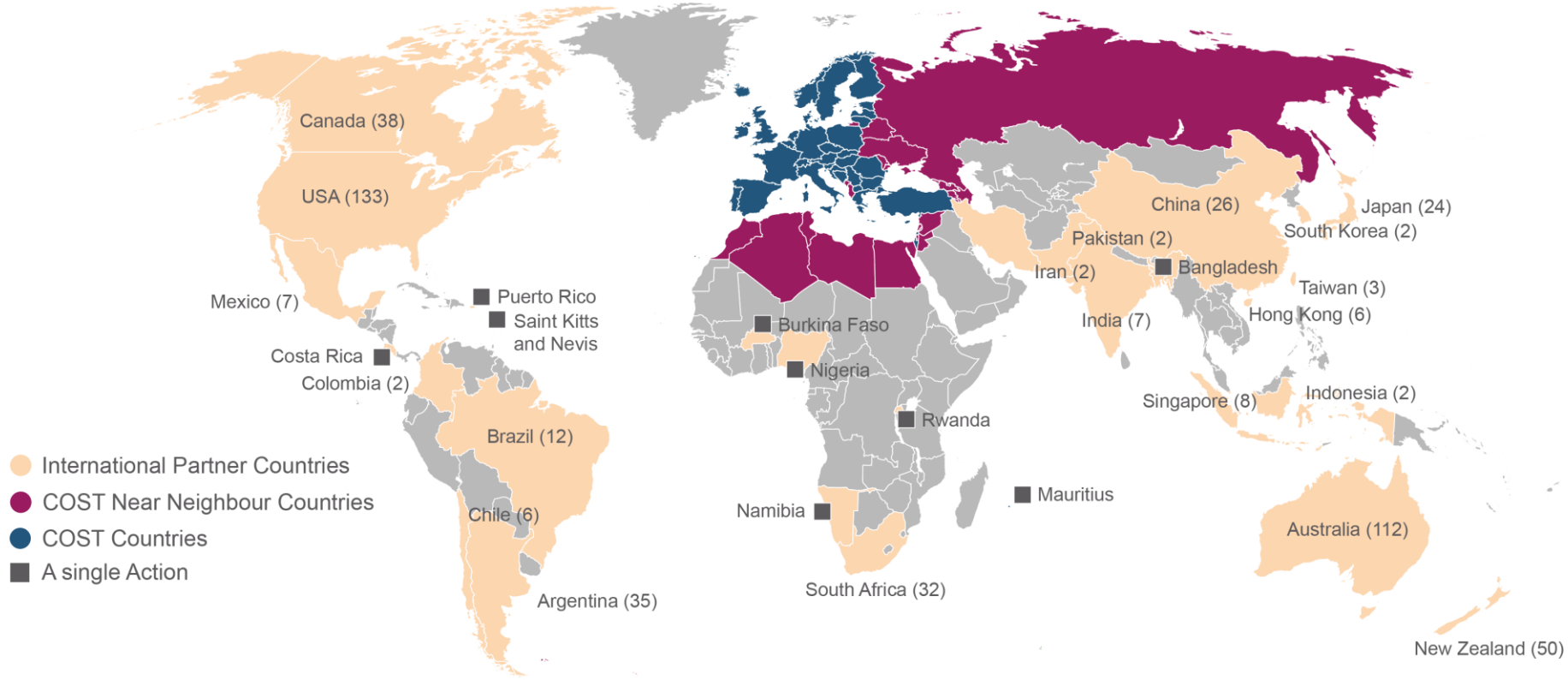
- Albania (18)
- Algeria (4)
- Armenia (11)
- Azerbaijan (2)
- Belarus (7)
- Egypt (7)
- Georgia (6)
- Jordan (3)
- Lebanon (2)
- Moldova (4)
- Morocco (17)
- Palestinian Authority (4)
- Syrian Arab Republic (1)
- Russia (54)
- Tunisia (14)
- Ukraine (52)

20 May 2015 data



International Partner Countries

519 participations in running Actions across 29 countries



October 2014 data

How NNCs, IPCs and Specific Organisations join an Action

OPTION 1: NNC & IPC (ALREADY INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSAL)

- Applicant in proposal
- CSO approval of the proposal
- MC consent at 1st Management Committee Meeting

OPTION 2: NEW NNC & IPC (NOT IN THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL)

- Chair launches the procedure in e-COST
- Applicant and Chair complete application form in e-COST
- Online approval by MC and Executive Board

Once the Institution is approved the applicant becomes MC Observer

COST Actions
How to Participate?



COST is supported
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How COST Countries join an Action

Less than one year after CSO Approval of the Action

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

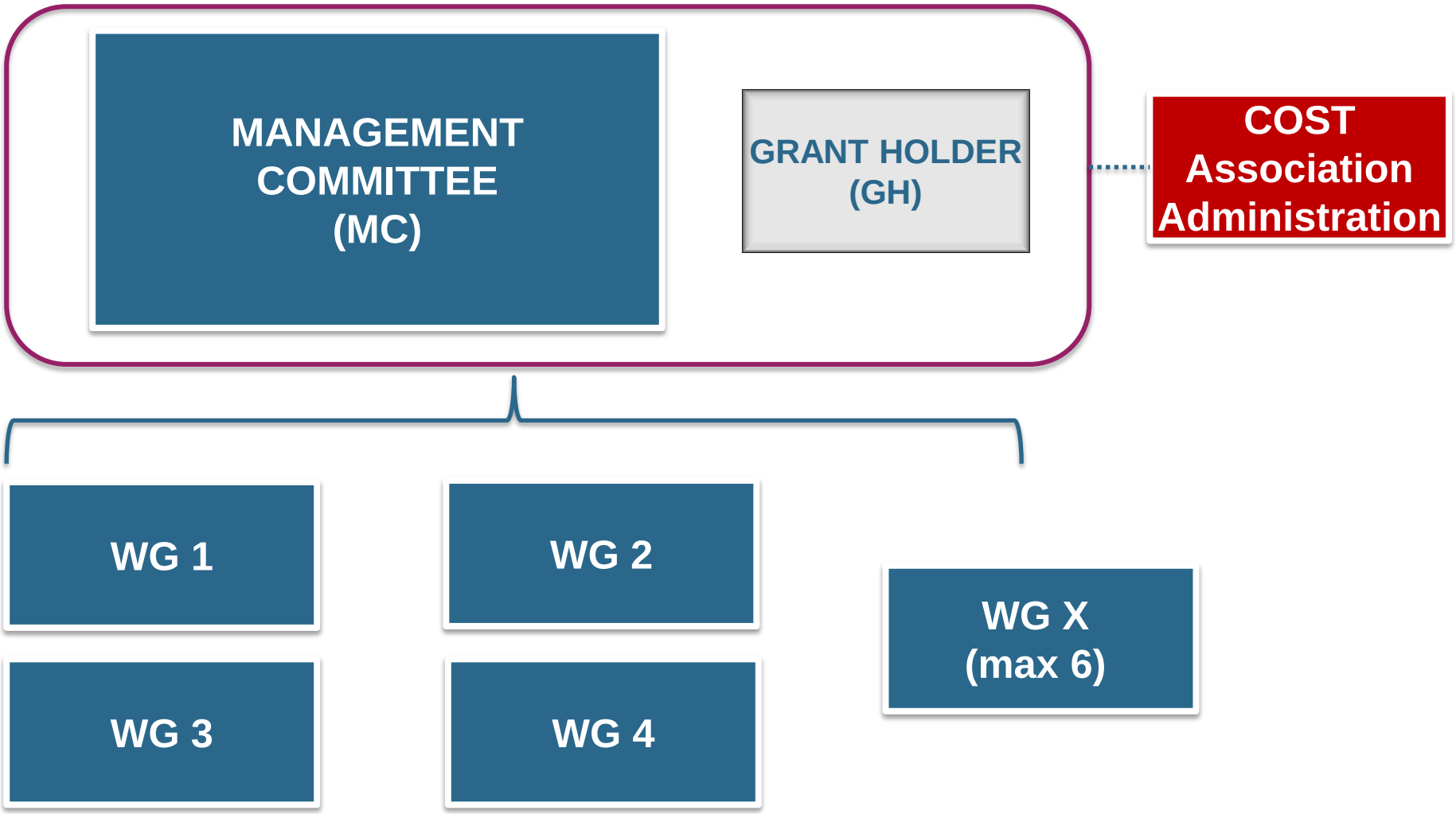
More than one year after the CSO approval of the Action

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

COST Action Structure and Decision Making



COST Action Structure



Management Committee

DECISION MAKING BODY

- Coordination, Implementation and Management of an Action
- Achievement of the Action's objectives (MoU)
- Define the Action Strategy
- Supervise the appropriate allocation and use of funds
- Implement COST mission and policies

Management Committee

COMPOSED OF

- Up to 2 members nominated by their respective COST National Coordinator (CNC)
- MC Chair(/Vice-Chair) – responsible for coordinating the MC activities
- WG leaders – reporting on WG activities
- Grant Holder (Scientific Repr.) – relay to the Grant Holder institution
- Other roles defined by MC (STSM, dissemination leader…)
- MC Observers (NNC, IPC, Eur. RTD Org., Internat.Org.)



CORE GROUP:

Prepare MC decisions (Core group meetings)

Management Committee

MAIN TASKS

- Set the Action Strategy (Science and Networking) as defined in the MoU
- Agree on the Action Structure
  - Election of the Action Chair, Vice-chair, Grant Holder and other relevant COST Action positions needed to achieve Actions Objectives.
  - Working Group structure and membership.
- Approval of the Annual Work & Budget Plan (COST Networking tools)
- Define Dissemination & Exploitation Strategy
- Approval of new Countries and Organizations
- Reporting

Management Committee

DECISION TAKING PROCEDURE

MC MEETINGS

Minimum once a year in a participating COST Country.

Typical duration ½ day.

Decisions only valid if at least 2/3 of the Participating COST Countries are represented.

Simple majority vote of MC Members with **one vote per Participating COST Country**.

MC decision must be minuted and minutes sent to COST Association.

E-VOTE

Initiated and managed by the MC Chair.

All MC members are in the e-mail list.

Vote open (7 days).

Simple majority vote of MC Members with **one vote per Participating COST Country**.

MC decision must be minuted and should be included in the official MC minutes of the following MC Meeting.

Working Groups

CHARACTERISTICS AND ROLE

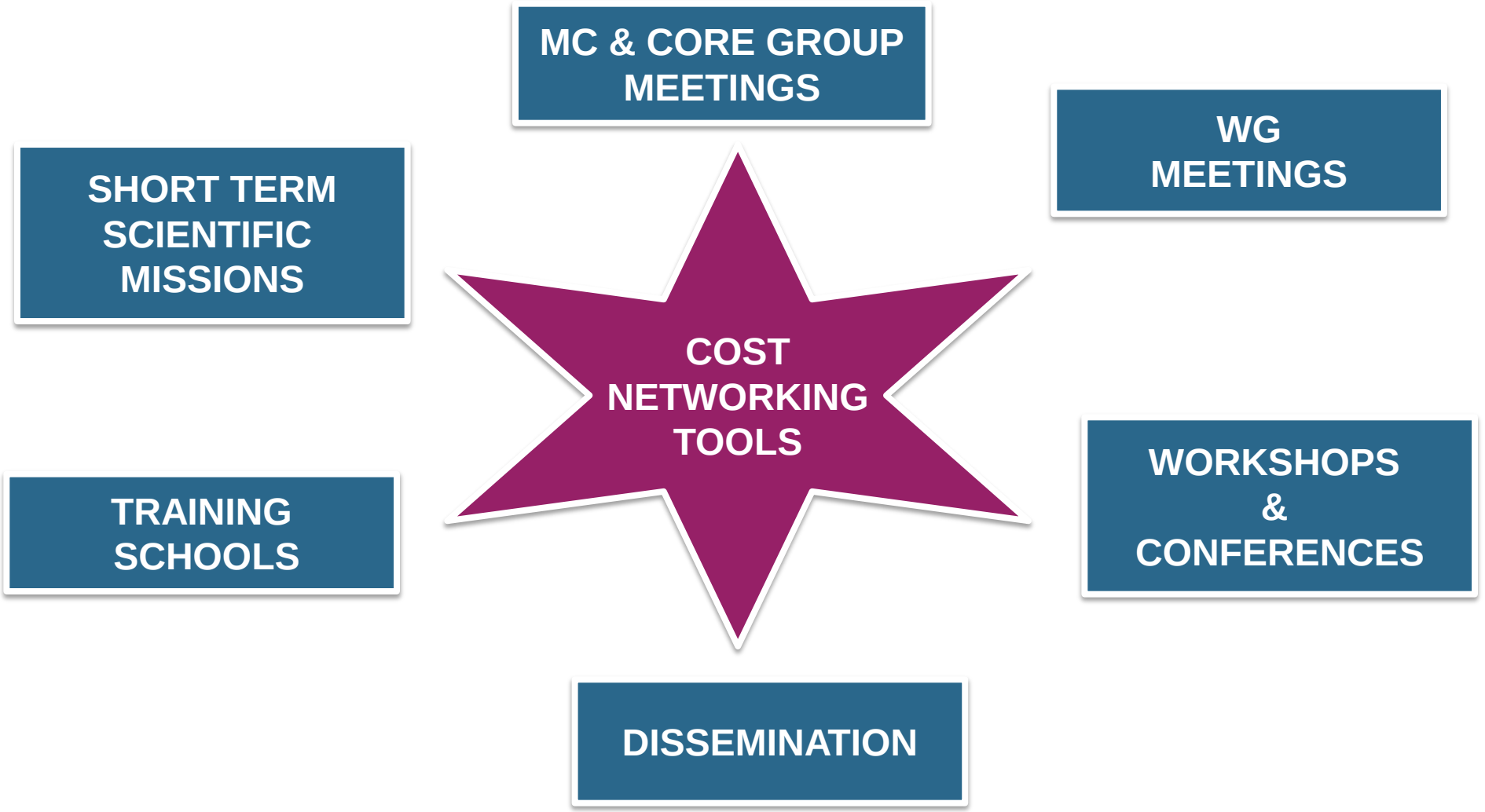
- Up to 6 WG – as set in the MoU
- Perform the necessary tasks required for the Action to fulfil its scientific objectives as defined in the MoU
- Coordinate the research work, production and exchange of research, prepare reports to MC (WG meetings)



COMPOSED OF

- All MC Members (WG Leaders must be MC Members)
- MC Observers (NNC, IPC, Eur. RTD Org., International Org.)
- Any researcher from Participating COST Member Countries

COST Networking Tools



COST Networking Tools: Meetings

TYPES

- **Internal Meetings:** Management Committee (MC), Core Group and Working Group (WG) Meetings
- **Workshops and Conference:** serve the scientific Action objectives and acts as a showcase for the activities of the Action

SPECIFIC

- Location: Participating COST country (except Dissemination meetings)
- Approved by the MC (in the Work and Budget plan)
- MC determines among participants who are entitled for reimbursement

COST Networking Tools: Meetings

COST SUPPORT

- Participant (1)
  - Eligible category: MC, WG, NNC, Eur.RTD Org, Invited Speakers (only Workshops/Conferences)
  - Prerequisite: invitation/confirmation via eCOST, signed attendance list and Travel Reimbursement request returned to Grant Holder
  - reimbursement of participations to COST activities (claim submitted <30 days after the activity, payment <30 days after submission of claim)
  - Accommodation: flat rate (max. EUR 120/night)
  - Meals: flat rate (max. EUR 20/meal) – lunch and dinner

COST Networking Tools: Meetings

COST SUPPORT

- Participant (2)
  - Long distance travel expenses: face value/receipts
    - air: economy, up to EUR 1200
    - Train/bus: all class
  - Local transport: up to EUR 25 (flat rate), > EUR 25 (receipts)
  - Taxi: before 7am (departure) or after 10pm (return), max EUR 80 (receipts)
- Local organiser: COST contribution
  - Lump sum of EUR 20/participant/day (max EUR 5000)
  - up to EUR 10000 (justifications)

COST Networking Tools: Dissemination Meeting

- showcase an Action at relevant conference in the field (oral presentation)

SPECIFIC

- Eligible: MC members
- 2 participations per Grant period

SUPPORT

- see meetings + up to EUR 500 conference fee

COST Networking Tools: Training Schools

- Provide intensive training on a subject that contributes to the aim of the Action (new or emerging subject)
- If applicable, offer familiarization with unique equipment or know-how in one of the laboratories of the Action

SPECIFIC

- Duration: 2 to 15 days
- Location: participating COST country or approved NNC institution
- Broadly advertised, it must respect a country balance among trainees and target Early-Career Investigators/PhD students
- Eligible: Trainees from all COST countries and approved NNC institutions/Eur. RTD Organisations
- Trainee Grant: max. EUR 1500

COST Networking Tools:
Short Term Scientific Missions

- Exchange visits fostering collaboration, contributing to the scientific objectives of the Actions and allowing participant to learn new techniques, to have access to data/instruments/methods not available in their own institution

SPECIFIC

- all researchers from participating countries, but preference for Early Career Investigator (PhD + 8 years), PhD students…
- From a participating COST Country to another participating COST Country or approved NNC/IPC institution/Organisation
- From an NNC country to a participating COST Country
- Duration: 5 to 90 days (180 days for ECI)
- Applications: www.cost.eu/stsm

COST Networking Tools:
Short Term Scientific Missions

SUPPORT

- Grant:
  - Up to EUR 2500 (for a period up to 90 days)
  - Up to EUR 3500 (for a period betweem 91 and 180 days) – Early Career Investigators only

COST Networking Tools:
Dissemination material

- Website, material for display or distribution (flyers, posters,…), publications (journal, books,…), Open access licenses, Multimedia content, distribution costs,…

SPECIFIC

- must reflect the Action's objective
- should be made available to the widest audience (Open access)

COST ACTION STRATEGY AND WORK AND BUDGET PLAN

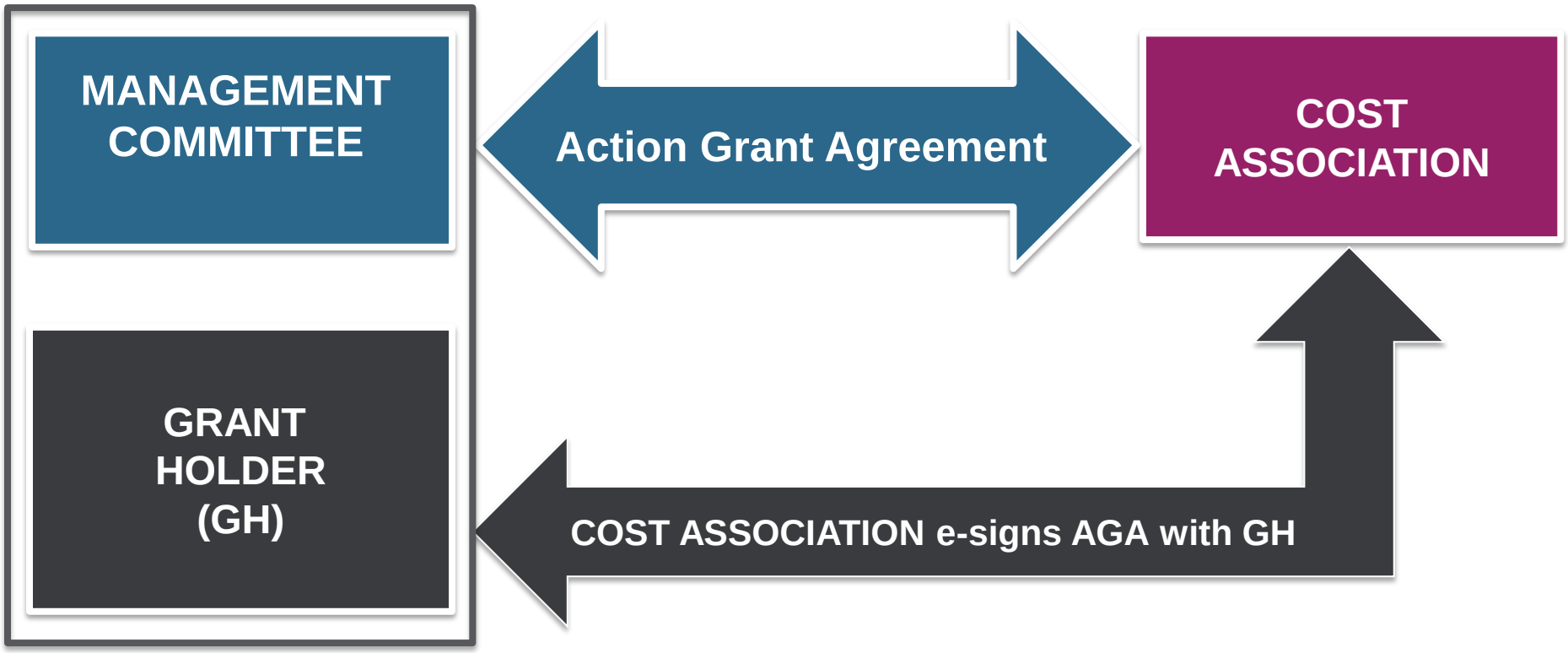
COST Action strategy

- The Memorandum of Understanding provides the Action's objectives, tasks, activities, milestones and deliverables over 4 years
- At the start of the Action and every year, the Management Committee will establishes a yearly Work and Budget Plans with the assistance of the COST Association administration within the available budget frame
- A Grant Agreement is signed yearly between the COST Association and the Grant Holder institution (one of the participating institutions in the Action)



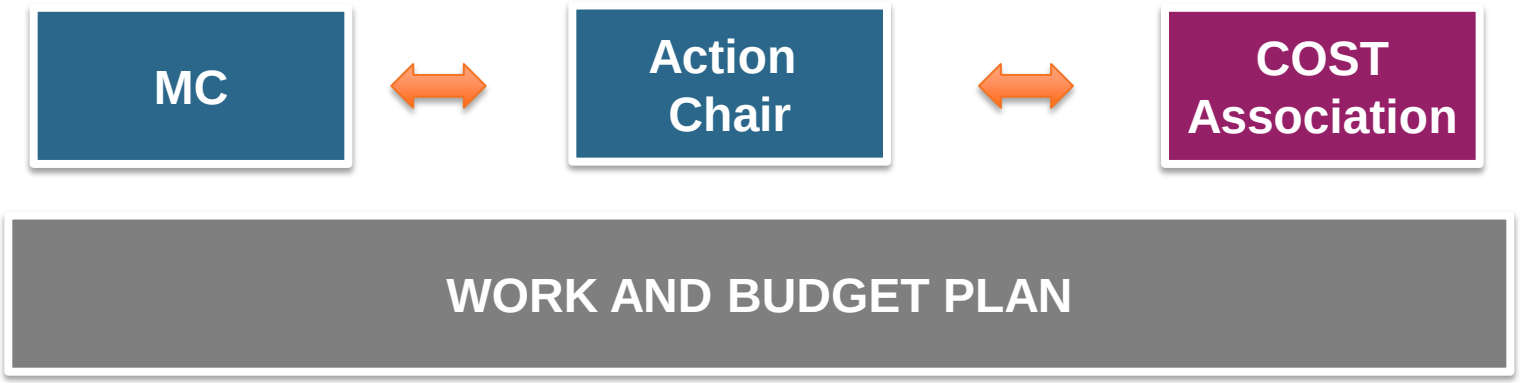
What is the Action Grant Agreement?

COST Actions are funded through an Action Grant Agreement (AGA) between the selected Grant Holder and the COST Association



What is the Work & Budget Plan?

- Based on the MoU objectives
- It is the document upon which the Action Grant Agreement is established
- It details the **COST Networking tools** to be used during the Grant Period in order to achieve the objectives including an estimate of the budget for each activity (following COST rules - Vademecum)
- **Needs to be approved by the MC and the COST Association**
- The budget level will primarily depend on the number of approved COST countries participating in the Action, based on current average (EUR 130.000) and subject to availability of funds



COST Grant System – key features

- Grant Holder institution elected at the first MC meeting
- Among the institutions represented at the MC
- GH signs a yearly Grant Agreement with the COST Association
- Receives the Grant in two instalments (65% after signature of the AGA and 35% after 6-8 month based on an intermediary report)
- GH administers the Grant according to the work and budget plan via eCOST/eCAMT
- Administration of activities
- Submits intermediate and yearly financial reports
- Administrative support (FSAC) to the GH: up to 15% of the yearly expenses
- Average Grant: EUR 130000
- More: see Vademecum www.cost.eu/participate/networking

How to estimate your Budget?

COST Networking Tools	
(1) MEETINGS	- €
(2) TRAINING SCHOOLS	- €
(3) SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS	- €
(4) DISSEMINATION, PUBLICATIONS	- €
(5) OERSA	- €
B - TOTAL SCIENCE EXPENDITURE (sum of (1) to (5)	- €
C - FSAC (max. of 15% of B.)	- €
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (B+C)	- €

How to estimate your Budget?

Budget Item	Average Amount (€)	Average Duration (days)
Meetings (average 42 participants)		
Reimbursement of Meeting Participant	701	2
Local Organiser Support	1891	2
Training Schools (average 29 participants)		
Trainee Grant	645	5
Reimbursement of Trainer	788	5
Training School Organiser	2464	4
STSM Grant	1634	26

How to estimate your Budget?

Science Expenditure vs FSAC

Budget for the Grant Period = 100.000 €

% FSAC agreed by the MC = 15% (max)

Science Expenditure = 100.000 /1,15 = 86 956,52€

FSAC amount = 86 956,52€ × 0,15 = 13 043,48€

Financial Scientific and Administrative Coordination tasks (FSAC)

How to Participate



COST is supported
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http://www.cost.eu/participate/join_action

COST Actions are Open!

You can join any Action that is running:

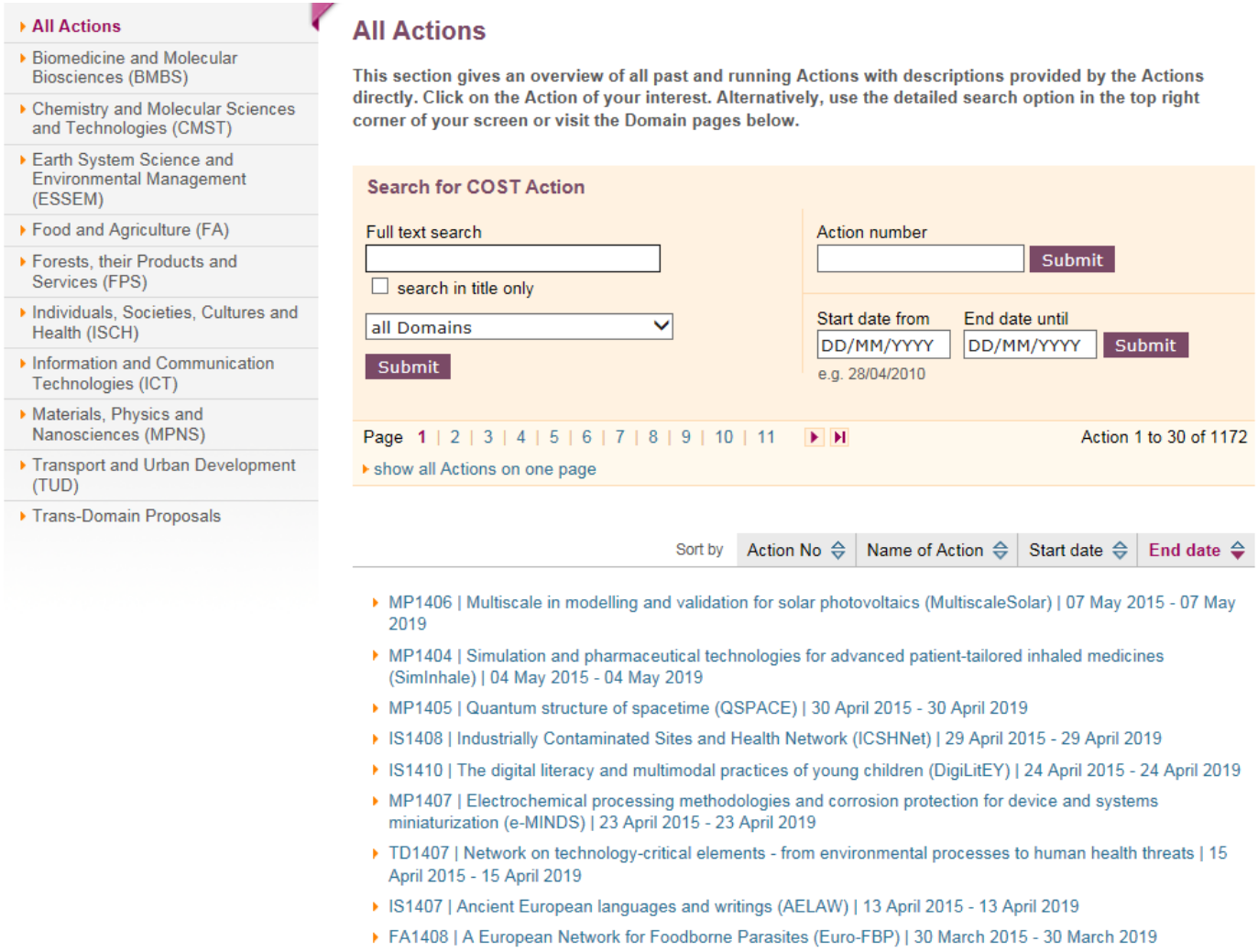
✓ **AS A MC MEMBER:**

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

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

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.



Collection Dates

- COST New Open Call for proposals – published on 15 December 2014
- As of mid-February 2015 researchers, engineers or scholars were able to submit 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 was on 24 March 2015
- **The next Collection Date is set mid-September 2015 - 12 noon (CET)**
- Approximately 40 new Actions will be approved in each OC, subject to budget availability

The new COST Open Call – why new?

- Establishment of the COST Association (September 2013)
  - significant step towards COST mission, policies and objectives
- New set of rules and procedures for COST
  - to best serve the **European research communities** and respect the **bottom-up approach**
- COST CSO decided upon the revision of
  - **scientific organisation**
  - **evaluation and selection procedure**
    - ensuring transparent mechanisms and openness for all science and technology fields

The new COST Open Call – for whom?

- Open to **all S&T fields**
- Those aiming at contributing to the **scientific, technological, economic, cultural or societal knowledge advancement and development of Europe**
- Closing the gap between **science, policy makers and society** throughout Europe and beyond
- Reflecting the main characteristics of COST Actions
  - providing for **knowledge share**
  - **knowledge creation and application**
  - being **open and output oriented** while aiming at strengthening the S&T basis of the proposed topic(s)
- Responding to **COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy**

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