COST Info Day Belgium 2023

Min Reuchamps

Insights from the Belgian representative in the COST Scientific Committee

24/04/2023, Brussels

cost
EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

“COST and me”

- Unsuccessful secondary proposer a couple of times
- Unsucessful main proposer twice
- Succesful main proposer once
- Chair of the proposed Action
- External expert for proposals
- Member of the scientific committee

The COST Scientific Committee

- "The COST Scientific Committee (SC) advises the COST Association about the Open Call, its quality and procedures"
- Evaluation criteria
- Selection criteria
- Proposals → Eligibility → External Experts → Consenus report → Review Panels → Short list → Scientific Committee → Committee of Senior Officials

Evaluation criteria

- What your proposal should have
  - S&T Excellence (15 points)
  - Networking Excellence (15 points)
  - Impact (15 points)
  - Implementation (5 points)
- Total: 0 - 50 points
- Overall threshold: 34 points
  - Below threshold = not funded
  - Above threshold = not necessarily funded

Selection criteria

- Retained proposals (based on available budgets)
  - If above the cut-off mark, only evaluation criteria:
    - S&T Excellence (15 points)
    - Networking Excellence (15 points)
    - Impact (15 points)
    - Implementation (5 points)
  - Equal to cut-off mark or below, check for alignment with COST policies:
    - Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC)
    - Early Career Investigators (ECI) / Young Researchers and Innovators (YRI)
    - Gender balance

And then…

- Proposal approval by CSO
- Feedback to proposers
- Redress procedure

Evaluation criteria

- 10 Q:
  - Q1: Does the proposal demonstrate a comprehensive command of the state of the art in the field(s) and present a relevant and timely challenge?
  - Q2: Does the proposal describe an innovative approach to the challenge that advances the state of the art in the field(s)?
  - Q3: Are the objectives presented relevant to the challenge, clear and ambitious?
  - Q4: Does networking bring added value in tackling the challenge in relation to existing efforts at the European and/or international level?
  - Q5: Does the proposed network contain, or present a credible plan for securing, the critical mass and range of expertise for achieving the objectives and thus addressing the challenge?
  - Q6: Does the proposal identify the most relevant stakeholders and present a clear plan to involve them as Action participants?
  - Q7: Does the proposal clearly identify relevant and realistic impacts for science, society and/or competitiveness (including potential innovations and/or breakthroughs)?
  - Q8: Does the proposed networking clearly contribute to knowledge creation, transfer of knowledge and career development?
  - Q9: Is the plan for dissemination and/or exploitation of results clear and attainable and does it contribute to the dialogue between science and the general public or policy?
  - Q10: Is the work plan (WGs, tasks, activities, timeframe, deliverables and risk analysis) appropriate to ensure the achievement of the objectives?

Selection criteria I

In order to do so, the Scientific Committee shall:

1. Adopt the list of proposals which are of sufficiently high quality to be retained for possible funding based on the available budget for the call (the retained proposals);
2. Select among the retained proposals the ones for the final list on the basis of the following criteria applied sequentially:
    a. S&T Excellence, Networking Excellence, Impact and Implementation as described in 6.3.
    b. Compliance with COST Excellence and Inclusiveness policy with regard to Inclusiveness issue. A high degree of compliance with it shall be achieved by proposals that build the capacity of COST Inclusiveness Target Countries to engage in the European Research Area by:
        i. Having very well-defined plans for including COST Inclusiveness Target Countries participants in the implementation of the Action; and/or
        ii. Being led by a Main Proposer from an ITC.
    c. Applied with equal weight:
        i. Compliance with COST Excellence and Inclusiveness policy with regard to Young Researchers and Innovators (YRI). A high degree of compliance with it shall be achieved by proposals:
            1. Presenting a high proportion of Young Researchers and Innovators in the Network of Proposers; and/or
            2. Having very well-defined plans for including Young Researchers and Innovators in the implementation of the Action; and/or
            3. Led by a Main Proposer being a Young Researcher and Innovator.
        ii. Compliance with COST Excellence and Inclusiveness policy with regard to Gender balance. A high degree of compliance with it shall be achieved by proposals:

Selection criteria II

1. Presenting a good gender balance; and/ or
2. Having very well-defined plans for achieving gender balance in the implementation of the Action; and/or
3. Led by a Main Proposer of the underrepresented gender.

d. For proposals that shall be deemed equivalent after application of criteria under 2. a to c, achieving a balanced COST Actions' portfolio and promoting interdisciplinarity. This shall be done by selecting proposals addressing Research Areas and/ or Science Sub-Fields that are less extensively covered among the existing COST Actions' portfolio and those that are of a more interdisciplinary nature.

Detailed procedure shall be described in the COST Open Call Applicants' Guidelines - Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA)[7]. The Scientific Committee (SC) shall submit the final ranked list of selected proposals to the CSO for approval.

The SC shall adopt a SC recommendation per selected proposal and a SC comment per non-selected proposal among the retained proposals.