Grant Awarding Process

(Version 3, December 2025)

The Grant Awarding (GA) Process aims to offer a valuable experience to Young Researchers, Innovators, and already-established researchers and support their career development by supporting their mobility. Networking activities organized through a Grant Awarding Process include ***Mobility Grants*** and ***Conference Grants*** for presentations at conferences organized by third parties. All these activities will be coordinated from the Grant Awarding Coordinator of the Action and their evaluation will be performed from the Grant Awarding Committee. The Core Group will approve/reject the selected applications for grants, the amounts and the submitted reports considering the proposal of the Grant Awarding Coordinator / Committee.

General eligibility Criteria for all networking activities

The Grant applicant(s) are Action participants (WG members or ad-hoc participation) with a primary affiliation to a legal entity located in a COST Full or Cooperating Member country, a COST Near Neighbour Country (NNC) or a European RTD Organisation (for more details see §4.1.1.1, §6.4 & Annex 2 in Annotated Rules for COST Actions). The institution/organization or legal entity where applicants pursue their main research strand is considered a Home Institution.
The Host Institution is the institution/organization that will host the approved applicant. The host institution can be located in the following locations: COST Full or Cooperating Member country, Partner member country, NNC, International Partner Countries (IPC) – Third States (see §6.3 in Annotated Rules for COST Actions).

1 Mobility Grants

The main purposes of researchers and innovators Mobility Grants (**Short-Term Scientific Missions** and **Virtual Mobility Grants**) are to support capacity building and knowledge transfer through bilateral/multilateral collaborations, to help the participants' career development and to support topics that help to achieve the CYANOACTION objectives and deliverables.

1.1 Short-term scientific missions (STSMs)

STSM grand funds a visit of a researcher or innovator to a host organization (e.g., institution, organization, company or research centre) located in a country different from the country of the applicant's affiliation (for affiliation, see §4.1.1.1 & for the location of host organizations, see §6.3) to carry out specific work during a determined period of time.

Other essential criteria for the STSM mobility are:

- The STSM needs to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and always within the Action's lifetime;
- The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered as being an STSM grantee's employer, i.e., the STSM Grant cannot be considered as a salary;
- STSM grantees should make their arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security and pension matters.

Funding

An STSM Grant is a fixed financial contribution that takes into consideration the applicant's budget request, the outcome of the evaluation of the STSM application and the available budget. Please note that STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission, only contributing to the Grantee's overall travel, accommodation, and subsistence expenses. Applicants are encouraged to evaluate their budget request based on a high benefit/cost ratio and justify it based on the perceived cost of living in the host country/city. The maximum requested amount per STSM grant is up to EUR 4000 and should reflect the duration and location of the STSM.

The application process is as follows:

Before the STSM:

- Interested partners can apply via the **e-COST** system following an open call for applications from the CYANOACTION Action. Registration for an e-COST profile at https://e-services.cost.eu/ is needed
- Applicants are encouraged to carefully read the rules detailed in Annotated rules for COST Actions, Annex 2 as well as §4.1.1.1, §6.3, and §6.4.

- We strongly encourage applicants **to contact respective working group leaders** before submitting their application to ensure that the proposed outcome of their STSM agrees with the objectives of this action and workgroup topics.

Documents to be uploaded to e-COST:

- The STSM grant application (based on e-COST template https://www.cost.eu/STSM_GrantApplication) describing: Goals, description of the work to be carried out by the applicant, expected outcomes and description of the contribution to the Action MoU objectives
- A **letter** of **confirmation** from the Host institution verifying that they can host the applicant on the given dates in order to carry out the proposed work is necessary
- An **applicant's CV**
- An **agreement letter** or a recommendation letter from the home institution
- In order to facilitate the evaluation process, we kindly ask applicants to **clearly state in which workgroup**(s) their STSM will contribute

To be filled in e-COST:

- Title
- Start and end date (within the active Grant Period, i.e. no overlap across two consecutive Grant Periods)
- Budget requested by the applicant;
- Information about the host institution and contact person. Location of host institution must be in a different country than the country of affiliation of the applicant

The application will then be assessed by the formally delegated Grant Awarding Coordinator and Grant Evaluation Committee, who provide a proposal of selected grants and amounts to the Action MC/Core Group for their approval. The Grant Awarding Coordinator notifies the Grant Holder (GH) of the approved STSMs/amounts, and the GH sends a Grant Letter to the Grantee stating the approved amount and the conditions for receiving the grant.

After the STSM:

- Once the activity has ended, the **grantee submits the report** on the main achievements of the STSM and planned future activities (based on report template http://www.cost.eu/STSM_report_template) with other relevant documentation in e-COST **within 30 days** after the end date of the activity or **15 days** after the end of the Grant Period, whichever date comes first.
- **Grantee should submit a poster** (using the Action template) presenting the STSM scope and main achievements, which will be available on the CYANOACTION website.
- **The host institution will provide written approval** of the STSM report.

- The Grant Awarding Coordinator will collect reports submitted by individual grantees and coordinate Grant Evaluation Committee approval and confirmation or rejection of the report
- Management Committee/Core Group: approves/rejects report
- The Grant Awarding Coordinator informs the Grant Holder about the approval/rejection of the report
- Grant Holder: pays the Grant once the report is approved and all necessary supporting documents are submitted

The report should clearly state the purpose of the STSM, describe the work carried out, describe the results and main achievements obtained during the STSM, plan future collaborations, and the impact of the conducted STSM on personal career development. Failure to submit the scientific report within the set timeframe may cancel the Grant.

Receiving payment of the grant:

- The Grant Holder pays the grants after the completion of the activity and approval of all required reports/documentation.

1.2 Virtual Mobility (VM)

Virtual Mobility grant consists of collaboration in an online setting among researchers or innovators within the COST Action to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, etc. It is a flexible tool for implementing online activities inside the network, achieving the MoU objectives and significantly increasing their impact and reach. For examples of possible VM activities, please see the Annotated Rules for COST Actions (Annex 2, §A2-1.1.2).

The maximum amount per VM grant is EUR 1500. The Action MC or Core Group decides the amount according to the duration, scope and complexity of the task.

The application process is as follows:

Before the VM:

- Interested partners can apply via the **e-COST** system following an open call for applications from the CYANOACTION Action. Registration for an e-COST profile at https://e-services.cost.eu/ is needed.
- Applicants are encouraged to carefully read the rules detailed in the Annotated rules for COST Actions, Annex 2 as well as §4.1.1.1, §6.3, and §6.4.
- We strongly encourage applicants **to contact respective working group leaders** prior to submitting their application to ensure that the proposed outcome of their VM agrees with the objectives of this action and working group topics.

Documents to be uploaded to e-COST:

- The virtual networking support grant application (based on e-COST template https://www.cost.eu/VM_GrantApplication) describing: Main Objective, description of the work to be carried out by the applicant, plan for participation, expected outcomes and description of the contribution to the Action MoU objectives;
- An **agreement letter** from the home institution's supervisor should be uploaded in the e-COST along with the application
- To facilitate the evaluation process, we kindly ask applicants to **clearly state in which workgroup**(s) their VM will contribute

To be filled in e-COST:

- Title
- Start and end date (within the active Grant Period, i.e.no overlap across two consecutive Grant Periods)
- Budget requested by the applicant

The application will then be assessed by the formally delegated Grant Awarding Coordinator and Grant Evaluation Committee, who will provide a proposal of selected grants and amounts

to the Action MC/Core Group for their approval. After the evaluation, the applicant will be formally notified of the outcome of their VM application by the Grant Awarding Coordinator.

After the VM:

- Once the activity has ended, the **grantee submits the report** on the work developed, main outcomes and achieved outputs of the Virtual Mobility, and description of the future follow up collaboration (based on report template https://www.cost.eu/VM_Report) with other relevant documentation in e-COST **within 30 days** after the end date of the activity or **15 days** after the end of the Grant Period, whichever date comes first.
- **Grantee should submit a poster** (using the Action template) presenting the VM scope and main achievements, which will be available on the CYANOACTION website.
- The Grant Awarding Coordinator will collect reports submitted by individual grantees and coordinate Grant Evaluation Committee approval and confirmation or rejection of the report
- Management Committee/Core Group: approves/rejects report;
- The Grant Awarding Coordinator informs the Grant Holder about the approval/rejection of the report
- Grant Holder: pays the Grant once the report is approved and all necessary supporting documents are submitted

The report should clearly state the purpose of the VM, describe the work carried out, describe the results and main achievements obtained during the VM, plan future collaborations and assess the impact of the conducted VM on personal career development. Failure to submit the scientific report within the set timeframe may cancel the Grant.

Receiving payment of the grant:

The Grant Holder pays grants after the completion of the activity and approval of all required reports/documentation;

2 Conference Grants

2.1 ITC Conference Grants

For each Grant Period, a specific budget is reserved for Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC) Conference Grants. ITC Conference grant funds an **oral presentation** of ***their own work*** within the scope of the CYANOACTION by an Action Participant affiliated with a legal entity located in an Inclusiveness Target Country / Near Neighbour Country (For more details about ITC/NNC, see the COST Country and Organisations table) in a high-level conference fully organized by a third party, i.e., not organized nor co-organized by the CYANOACTION.

The maximum amount per grant is EUR 2500 for face-to-face conferences and EUR 500 for virtual conferences. ITC Conference Grants contribute to travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses, registration fees, and overall effort.

The application process is as follows:

Before the conference:

- Interested partners can apply via the **e-COST** system following an open call for applications from the CYANOACTION Action. Registration for an e-COST profile at https://e-services.cost.eu/ is needed.
- Applicants are encouraged to carefully read the rules detailed in the Annotated rules for COST Actions, Annex 2 as well as §4.1.1.1, §6.3, and §6.4.

Documents to be uploaded to e-COST:

- The ITC conference grant application (based on e-COST template https://www.cost.eu/ITCG-application-template) describing: Relevance of the conference topic to the Action and Motivation describing the potential for impact on the applicant's career
- Copy of the abstract of the accepted **oral presentation**
- **Acceptance (or invitation) letter** from the conference organizers
- **A letter of motivation** to join the conference
- An **applicant's CV** and a **recommendation letter** from the home institution should be uploaded in the e-COST along with the application

To be filled in e-COST:

- Title of the presentation
- Conference title, date (within the active Grant Period, i.e.no overlap across two consecutive Grant Periods) and country;
- Budget requested;
- Attendance Type (face to face or online)

After the conference:

- Grantee reports (https://www.cost.eu/ITCG-report-template) to the Action MC on the outcome of the presentation of the accepted contribution in terms of the grantee's visibility, including the establishment of new contacts for future collaborations
- Grantee provides the **certificate of attendance**
- Grantee provides the **program of the conference or book of abstracts/proceedings** indicating the **oral presentation** of the grantee
- Grantee provides a **copy of the given oral presentation**
- The Grant Awarding Coordinator will collect reports submitted by individual grantees and coordinate Grant Evaluation Committee approval and confirmation or rejection of the report
- Management Committee/Core Group: approves/rejects report
- The Grant Awarding Coordinator informs the Grant Holder about the approval/rejection of the report
- Grant Holder: The grant is paid after the activity is completed and all required reports/documentation is approved.

Receiving payment of the grant:

The Grant Holder pays grants after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation.

2.2 Dissemination Conference Grants

This grant funds an **oral presentation** by an Action Participant of the ***Action's work*** in a high-level conference fully organized by a third party, i.e., not organized nor co-organized by the CYANOACTION. The Dissemination Conference Grantee receives support for attending and delivering an oral presentation of the Action, their activities, and results at a conference and for developing new contacts and potential future collaborations.

The maximum amount per grant is EUR 2500 for face-to-face conferences and EUR 500 for virtual conferences.

The application process is as follows:

Before the conference:

- Interested partners can apply via the **e-COST** system following an open call for applications from the CYANOACTION Action. Registration for an e-COST profile at https://e-services.cost.eu/ is needed.
- Applicants are encouraged to carefully read the rules detailed in the Annotated rules for COST Actions, Annex 2 as well as §4.1.1.1, §6.3, and §6.4.

Documents to be uploaded to e-COST:

- The dissemination conference grant application (based on e-COST template https://www.cost.eu/DisseminationConference_GrantApplication) describing: Alignment with the Science Communication Plan[1] adopted by the COST Action and Expected impact to the COST Action.
- Copy of the abstract of the accepted **oral presentation** focused on promoting the scientific achievements and activities being performed by the CYANOACTION
- **Acceptance (or invitation)** letter from the conference organizers
- Provide a description of the targeted audience and the potential impact of CYANOACTION
- **A letter of motivation** to join the conference

To be filled in e-COST:

- Title of the presentation
- Conference title, date (within the active Grant Period, i.e.no overlap across two consecutive Grant Periods) and venue
- Budget requested
- Attendance Type (face to face or online)

[1] Until the Science Communication Plan is adopted by the Action, Article 3.2.2 Plan for dissemination and/or exploitation and dialogue with the general public or policy, the section of the MoU related to the dissemination and communication of results is applied.

After the conference:

- Grantee delivers the report (https://www.cost.eu/DisseminationConference_Report) to the Action MC on the outcome of the presentation, contacts made and potential for future collaborations
- Grantee provides the **certificate of attendance**
- Grantee provides the **program of the conference** or **book of abstracts/proceedings** indicating the **oral presentation** of the grantee
- Grantee provides a **copy of the given presentation**
- The Grant Awarding Coordinator will collect reports submitted by individual grantees and coordinate Grant Evaluation Committee approval and confirmation or rejection of the report
- Management Committee/Core Group: approves/rejects report
- The Grant Awarding Coordinator informs the Grant Holder about the approval/rejection of the report
- Grant Holder: pays the Grant after the completion of the activity and approval of all required reports/documentation

Receiving payment of the grant:

Grants are paid by the Grant Holder after the activity is completed and all required reports/documentation is approved.

2.3 Young Researcher and Innovator Conference

The YRI Conference grant funds a **poster or oral presentation** of a young researcher and innovator (YRI) – aged below 40 years- **of their own work** in a high-level conference fully organized by a third party, i.e., not organized nor co-organized by the CYANOACTION.

YRI Conference grant:

• Serves COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy;

• Supports Young Researchers and Innovators to establish a strong network and increase their visibility in the research community through sharing their work and gaining knowledge;

• Can contribute to increasing the visibility of the Action.

YRI Conference grant benefits to:

• YRI Conference Grantee: receives support for attending and presenting their own work within the scope of the Action (poster/oral presentation) in a conference and can establish new contacts for future collaborations.

The maximum amount per grant is EUR 2500 for face-to-face conferences and EUR 500 for online conferences. The grant contributes to travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses, registration fees, the printing of scientific posters and overall effort.

The application process is as follows:

Before the conference:

- Interested partners can apply via the **e-COST** system following an open call for applications from the CYANOACTION Action. Registration for an e-COST profile at https://e-services.cost.eu/ is needed
- Applicants are encouraged to carefully read the rules detailed in the Annotated rules for COST Actions, Annex 2 as well as §4.1.1.1, §6.3, and §6.4.

Documents to be uploaded to e-COST:

- The YRI conference grant application (based on e-COST template https://www.cost.eu/YRICG-application-template) describing the relevance of the conference topic to the Action and Motivation describing the potential for impact on the applicant's career.
- Copy of the abstract of the accepted **poster or oral presentation**
- **Acceptance (or invitation) letter** from the conference organizers
- **A letter of motivation** to join the conference
- An **applicant's CV** and a **recommendation letter** from the home institution should be uploaded in the e-COST along with the application

To be filled in e-COST:

- Title of the presentation
- Conference title, date (within the active Grant Period, i.e.no overlap across two consecutive Grant Periods) and country;
- Budget requested;
- Attendance Type (face to face or online)

After the conference:

- Grantee delivers the report (https://www.cost.eu/YRICG-report-template) to the Action MC on the outcome of the presentation of the accepted contribution in terms of the grantee's visibility, including the establishment of new contacts for future collaborations
- Grantee provides **the certificate of attendance**
- Grantee provides **the program of the conference or book of abstracts/proceedings** indicating the presentation (oral or poster) of the grantee,
- Grantee provides a **copy of the given presentation** (oral or poster).
- The Grant Awarding Coordinator will collect reports submitted by individual grantees and coordinate Grant Evaluation Committee approval and confirmation or rejection of the report;
- Management Committee/Core Group: approves/rejects report;
- The Grant Awarding Coordinator informs the Grant Holder about the approval/rejection of the report;
- Grant Holder: pays the Grant after the completion of the activity and approval of all required reports/documentation;

Receiving payment of the grant:

Grants are paid by the Grant Holder after the activity is completed and all required reports/documentation is approved.

Important!

All the communication tools (e.g., oral/poster presentation) granted by the Action need to acknowledge COST as the funding source by using the logos of CYANOACTION, EU and COST. Grantees will be required to write a short report of their experience to be published in the newsletter and contribute content (posts, pictures, brief videos, etc.) for the Action's social media.

Annex

The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application, which must clearly complement the action's overall objectives.

STSM Evaluation criteria

The Grant Evaluation Committee will evaluate STSM applications according to the following criteria related to the proposed project:

Criteria	Evaluation - Scoring
The grant application meets the eligibility criteria	If not, application will be rejected
Connection to the objectives of CYANOACTION (see MoU) or to specific objectives as they are mentioned in the relative call and intensify the COST-Action's network	0 to 3 points
Realistic budget planning	0 to 3 points
Scientific quality of the proposed project	0 to 3 points
Expected outcome/chance for publication	0 to 3 points
Promote the involvement of inclusiveness target countries (ITCs)	0 to 3 points
Promote the involvement of young researchers and innovators	0 to 3 points
Career stage, gender balance	In comparison to other received applications
Only one STSM grant throughout the duration of the CYANOACTION Action per applicant. If there is an underspent budget after the sixth month of each grant period, Core Group can decide that this criterion will not apply to applicants who have already received an STSM grant. Priority will always be given to applicants who have not received any STSM grant.	

VM Evaluation criteria

The Grant Evaluation Committee will evaluate VM applications according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Evaluation - Scoring
The grant application meets the eligibility criteria	If not, application will be rejected
Connection to the objectives of CYANOACTION (see MoU) or to specific objectives as they are mentioned in the relative call	0 to 3 points
Support the implementation of research coordination-related activities that do not necessarily require in-person presence	0 to 3 points
Realistic budget planning	0 to 3 points
Scientific quality of the proposed project	0 to 3 points
Expected outcome/chance for publication	0 to 3 points
Promote the involvement of inclusiveness target countries (ITCs)	0 to 3 points
Promote the involvement of young researchers and innovators	0 to 3 points
Career stage, gender balance	In comparison to other received applications
Priority will be given to first-time applicants for a VM grant.	

ITC Conference Grants

The Grant Evaluation Committee will evaluate ITC Conference applications according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Evaluation - Scoring
The grant application meets the eligibility criteria	If not, application will be rejected
Involvement of young researchers and innovators from ITC / NNC	0 to 3 points
Increase visibility and awareness of the CYANOACTION	0 to 3 points
Scientific quality of the presentation	0 to 3 points
Career stage, gender balance	In comparison to other received applications
Priority will be given to first-time applicants for an ITC conference grant. Applicants to Conference Grants shall not apply for different types of Conference Grants within the same grant period.	

Dissemination Conference Grants

The Grant Evaluation Committee will evaluate Dissemination conference applications according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Evaluation - Scoring
The grant application meets the eligibility criteria	If not, application will be rejected
Visibility of the conference	0 to 3 points
Promote involvement of young researchers and innovators	0 to 3 points
Increase visibility and awareness of the CYANOACTION	0 to 3 points
Career stage, gender balance	In comparison to other received applications
Priority will be given to first-time applicants for a Dissemination conference grant, except of MC Chair / Vice Chair. Applicants to Conference Grants shall not apply for different types of Conference Grants within the same grant period.	

YRI Conference Grants

The Grant Evaluation Committee will evaluate YRI Conference applications according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Evaluation - Scoring
The grant application meets the eligibility criteria	If not, application will be rejected
Involvement of young researchers and innovators	0 to 3 points
Scientific quality of the presentation	0 to 3 points
Increase visibility and awareness of the CYANOACTION	0 to 3 points
Career stage, gender balance	In comparison to other received applications
Priority will be given to first-time applicants for a YRI conference grant. Applicants to Conference Grants shall not apply for different types of Conference Grants within the same grant period.	