

COST

What is COST?

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) enables the establishment and expansion of research networks, so-called COST Actions. These are open-topic, interdisciplinary, intersectoral, transnational and inclusive. This enables the exchange of knowledge between researchers, improved coordination of research activities and the dissemination of their results. COST also offers young researchers an ideal opportunity for further training and to lay the foundations for a research career. Funded by the European Research Framework Program, COST is one of the most important intergovernmental initiatives for promoting research cooperation in Europe and thus an essential building block of the European Research Area (ERA). Currently, 41 European countries are members of COST. In addition to the 27 EU member states, these include Albania, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, the Republic of North Macedonia, Switzerland, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, as well as Israel as a cooperating state and South Africa as a partner state.

How does COST differ from other (European) forms of research funding?

Only networking activities (e.g. working group meetings, workshops, conferences; training schools; short scientific guest stays; joint publications; website etc.) are funded. Financial resources for staff and/or research must come from other sources. COST Actions can be described as “living networks”, which is why the opportunities for participation, including in already existing networks, are very low-threshold. COST aims to strengthen cooperation within research in Europe, particularly between the traditionally more research-intensive countries and the previously less research-intensive countries in Central and Eastern Europe, for example. For example, there is a mandatory quota of at least 50 percent for the participation of research-weaker countries in every COST Action. COST Actions often result in strong partnerships, which then initiate joint collaborative projects. For many institutions as well as individual researchers, COST thus serves as a gateway to far-reaching European and international collaborations.

When and how often are these calls published?

Applications for the 2026 call must be submitted via the online platform e-COST. It will open for submission on 31 July 2026 (12:00 noon CEST) and close on **28 October 2026** (12:00 noon CET). COST will fund up to 80 COST Actions in its 2026 call, an increase on the 70 networks that were funded in 2025. The duration of COST Actions is four years. In the first year, each COST Action receives a budget of EUR 125,000. After that, the annual budget depends on various factors. As a guideline, a COST Action with participants from 30 member states has an annual budget of EUR 150,000. This is possible because, unlike typical EU projects, no budget planning is required to apply for COST Actions. More information can be accessed here: <https://www.cost.eu/funding/open-call-a-simple-one-step-application-process/>

Who supports applicants?

The **EU Academic Network of Saxony-Anhalt** offers advice and support both for the application phase and during project implementation. If you have any questions about research funding, please get in touch with your contact person at your university's EU office.

You can also contact the “German Coordination Office for COST” at the DLR Project Management Agency. They work in close cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the COST Association. You can find contact details for the German COST Coordination Office at <https://www.cost.dlr.de/service.php>