COST Info day
European Cooperation in Science and Technology

6 November 2015, Prague Czech Republic

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

- Evaluated and selected via a tailored procedure

- Based on a joint work programme for 4 years

COST DOES NOT FUND RESEARCH

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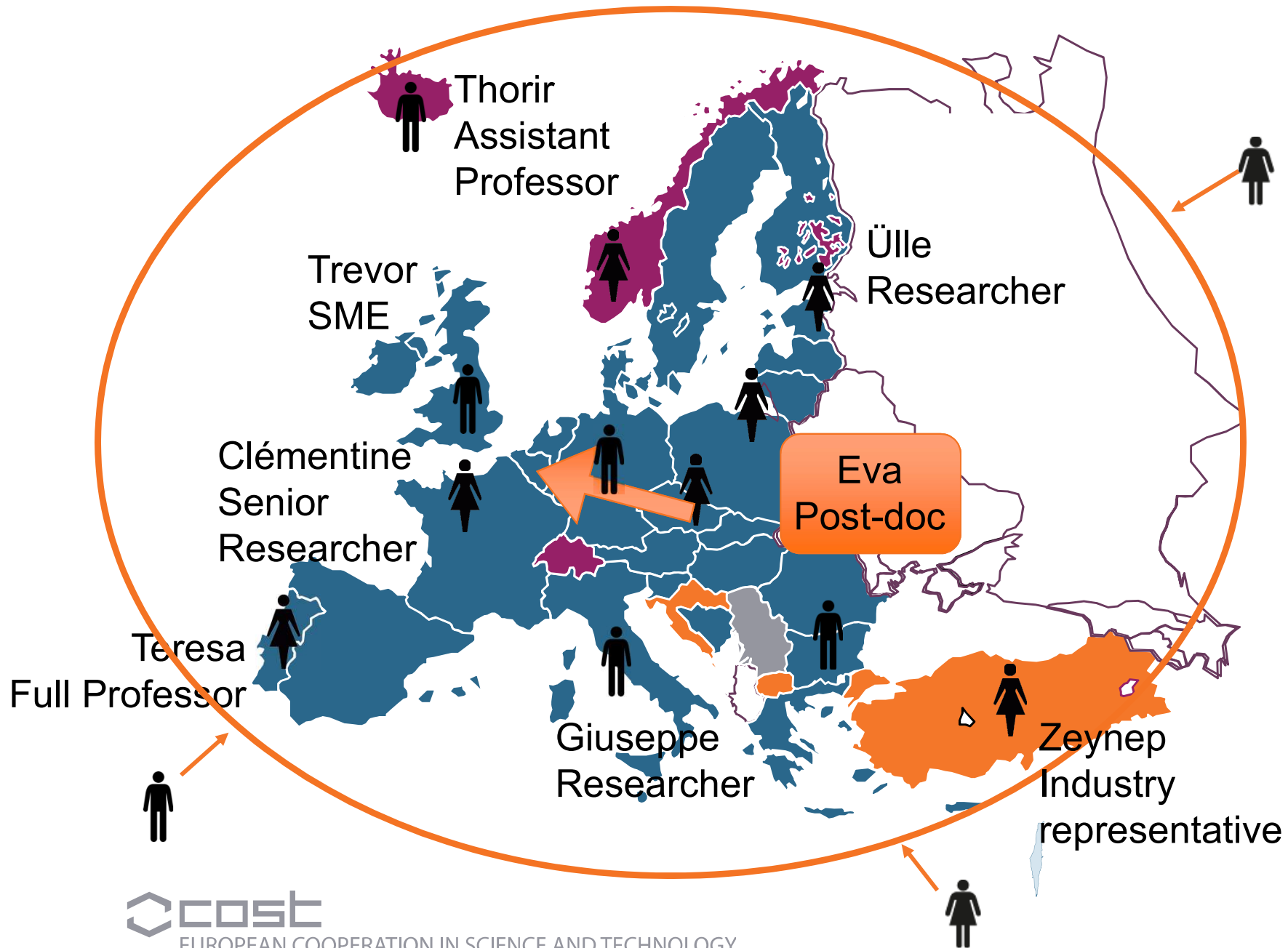
COST Action – characteristics (2/2)

- 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

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How an Action is established

Thorir
Assistant
Professor

Trevor
SME

Ülle
Researcher

Clémentine
Senior
Researcher

Eva
Post-doc

Teresa
Full Professor

Giuseppe
Researcher

Zeynep
Industry
representative

COST
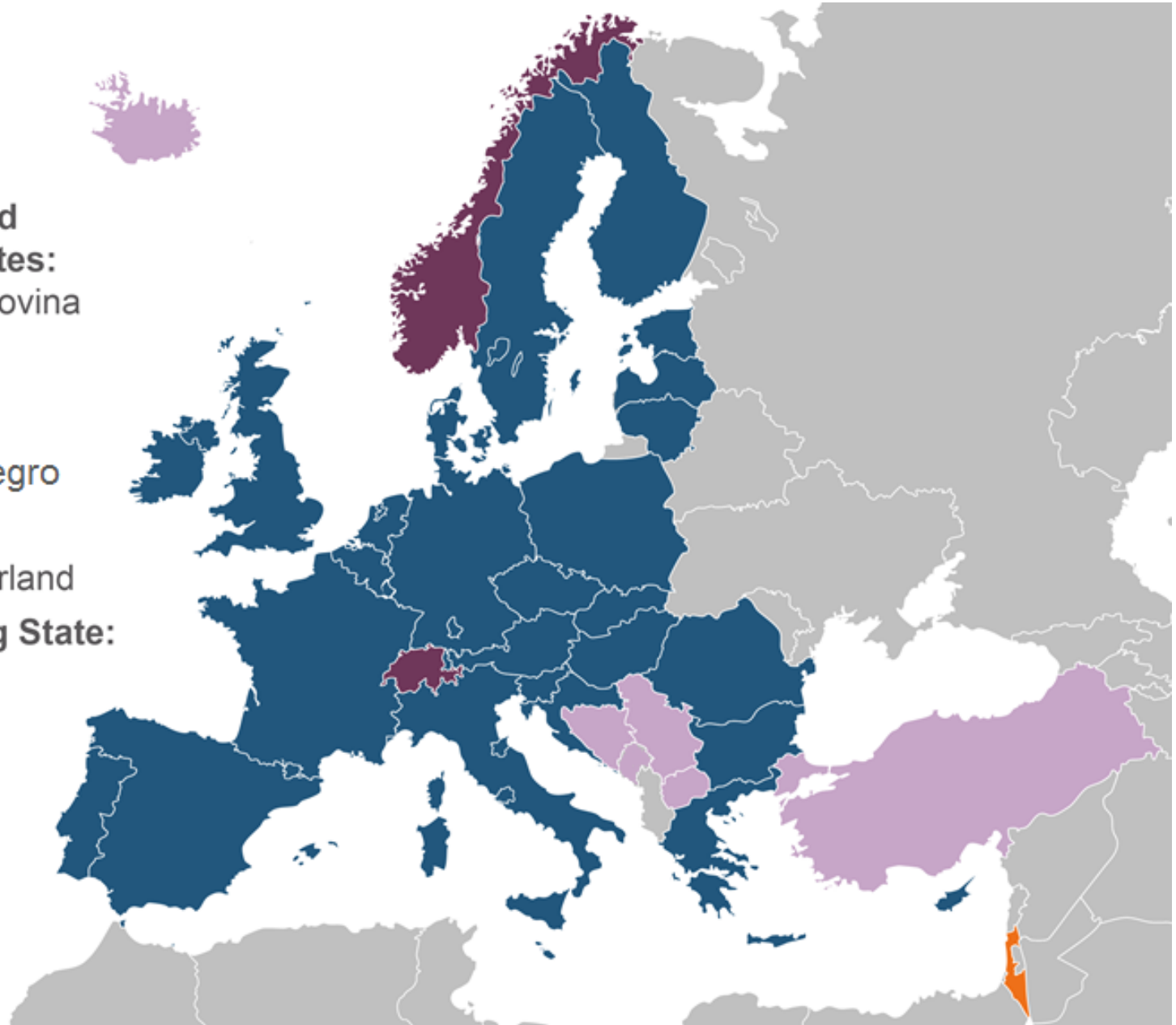EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

WHICH COUNTRIES CAN PARTICIPATE?

37 COST countries

EU 28

EU Candidates and Potential Candidates:
Bosnia and Herzegovina
fYR Macedonia
Iceland
Serbia
Turkey + Montenegro

Other Countries:
Norway and Switzerland

COST Cooperating State:
Israel

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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)**

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COST is supported by the
EU Framework Programme
Horizon 2020

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)
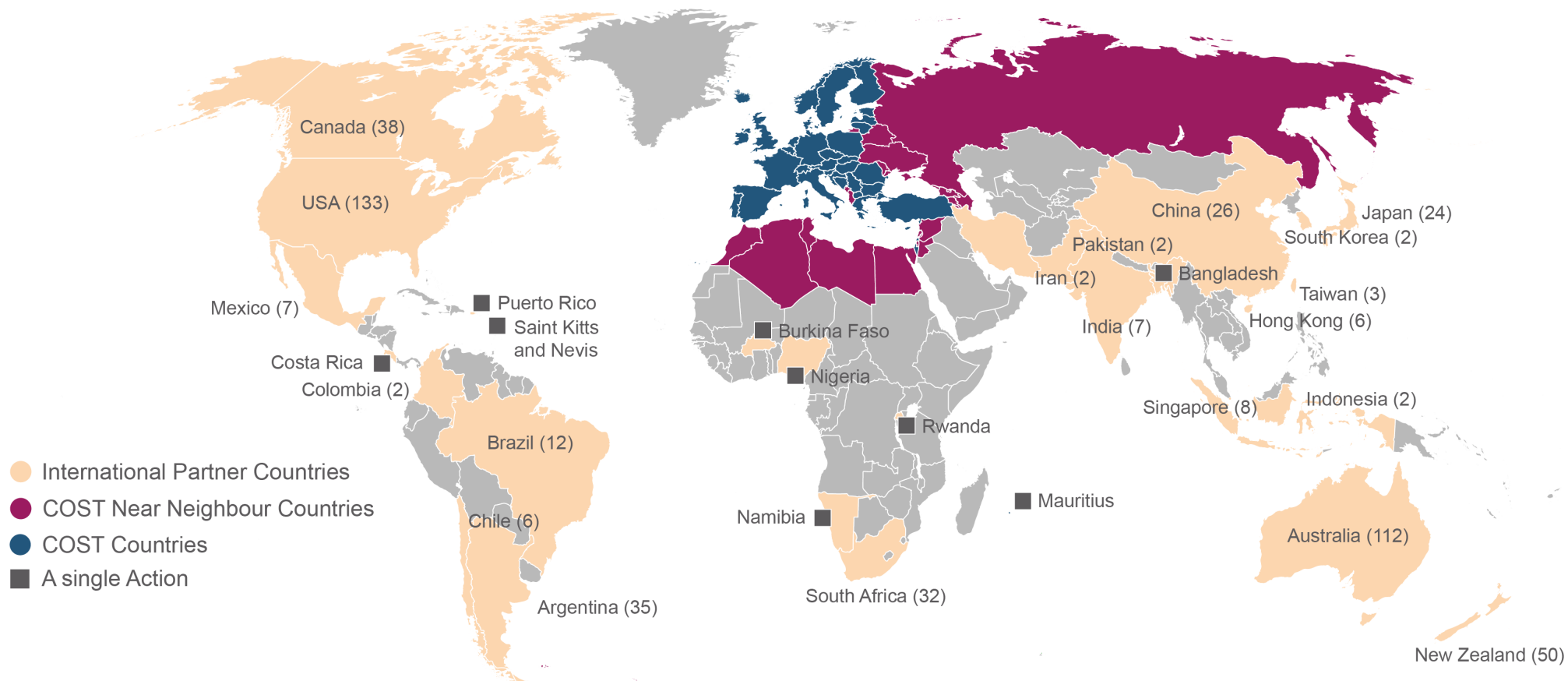- Tunisia (14)
- Ukraine (52)

20 May 2015 data

● COST Countries
● Near Neighbour Countries

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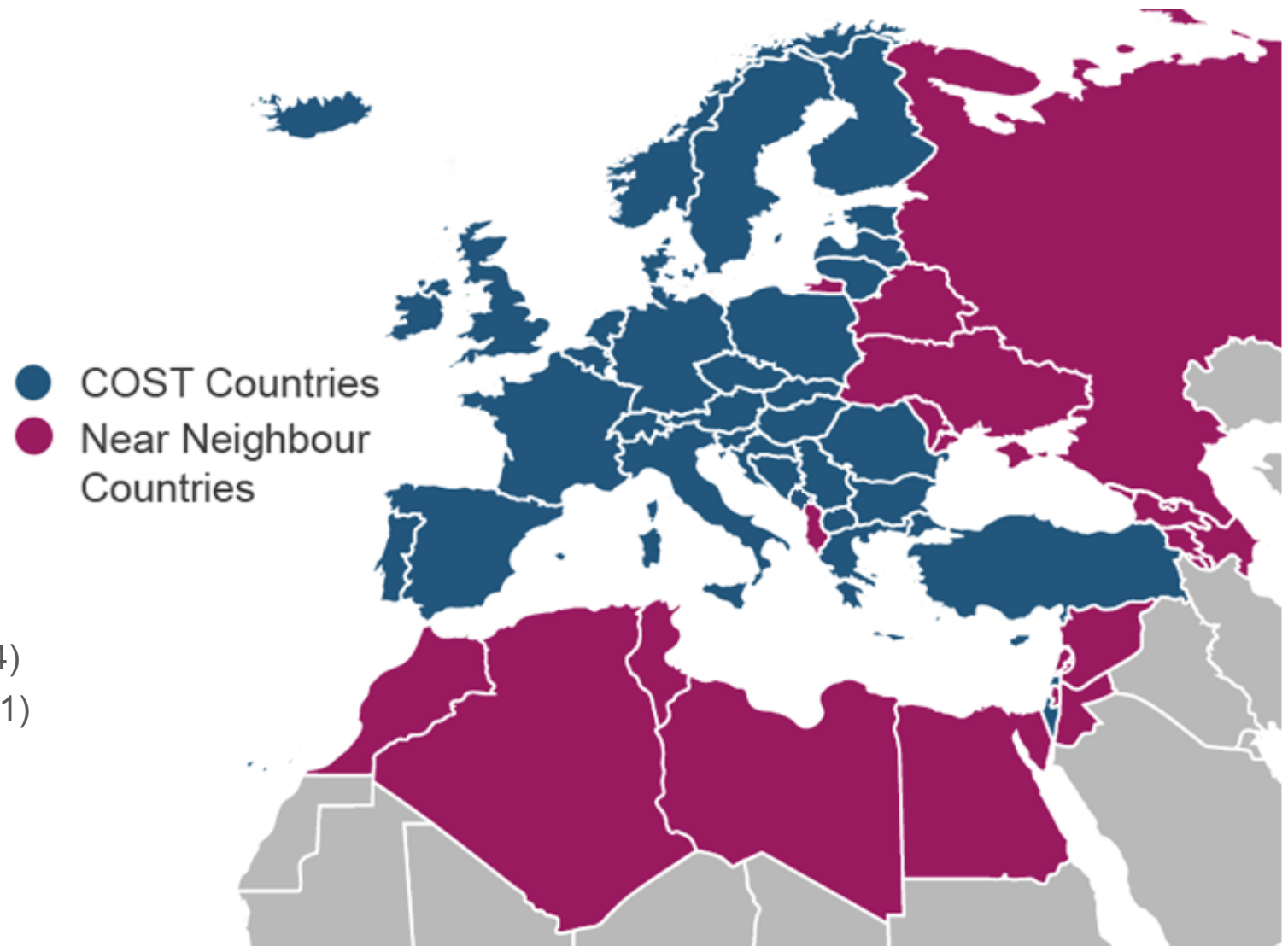
International Partner Countries

519 participations in running Actions across 29 countries

Canada (38)

USA (133)

Mexico (7)

■ Puerto Rico
■ Saint Kitts and Nevis

Costa Rica ■
Colombia (2)

Brazil (12)

Chile (6)

Argentina (35)

Burkina Faso
■ Nigeria
Namibia ■

South Africa (32)

Rwanda ■

■ Mauritius

China (26)
Pakistan (2)
Iran (2)
Bangladesh ■
India (7)

Japan (24)
South Korea (2)
Taiwan (3)
Hong Kong (6)

Singapore (8)

Indonesia (2)

Australia (112)

New Zealand (50)

Legend
- International Partner Countries
- COST Near Neighbour Countries
- COST Countries
- ■ A single Action

October 2014 data

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COST Actions
How to Participate?

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

! **Management Committee approval required when a new country joins later than one year after the Action was approved**

COST Action Structure and Decision Making
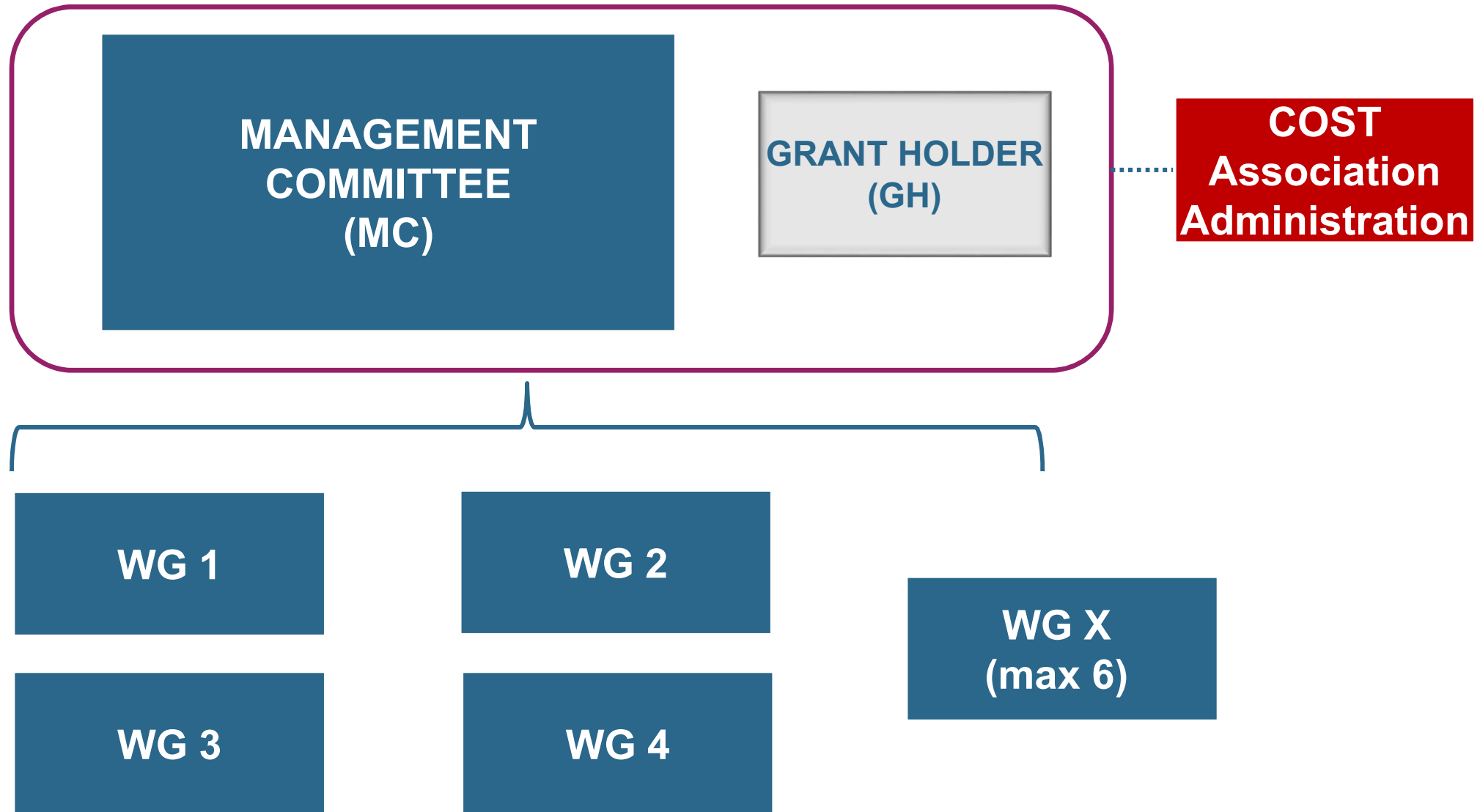
COST Action Structure

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                            │     ┌─────────────────┐
│  ┌──────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐           │     │      COST       │
│  │     MANAGEMENT       │   │  GRANT HOLDER    │ ········· │·····│  Association    │
│  │     COMMITTEE        │   │      (GH)        │           │     │ Administration  │
│  │       (MC)           │   └──────────────────┘           │     └─────────────────┘
│  │                      │                                  │
│  └──────────────────────┘                                  │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐
   │   WG 1   │   │   WG 2   │              ┌──────────┐
   └──────────┘   └──────────┘              │   WG X   │
                                            │ (max 6)  │
   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐              └──────────┘
   │   WG 3   │   │   WG 4   │
   └──────────┘   └──────────┘
```

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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

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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

- From 3 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

MC & CORE GROUP MEETINGS

WG MEETINGS

SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS

COST NETWORKING TOOLS

WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

TRAINING SCHOOLS

DISSEMINATION

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

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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

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COST Networking Tools: Meetings

- 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)

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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

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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

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COST Networking Tools:
Short Term Scientific Missions

- 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

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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

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. Action Work and Budget Plan

COST ASSOCIATION

GRANT HOLDER (GH)

2. COST ASSOCIATION e-signs AGA with GH

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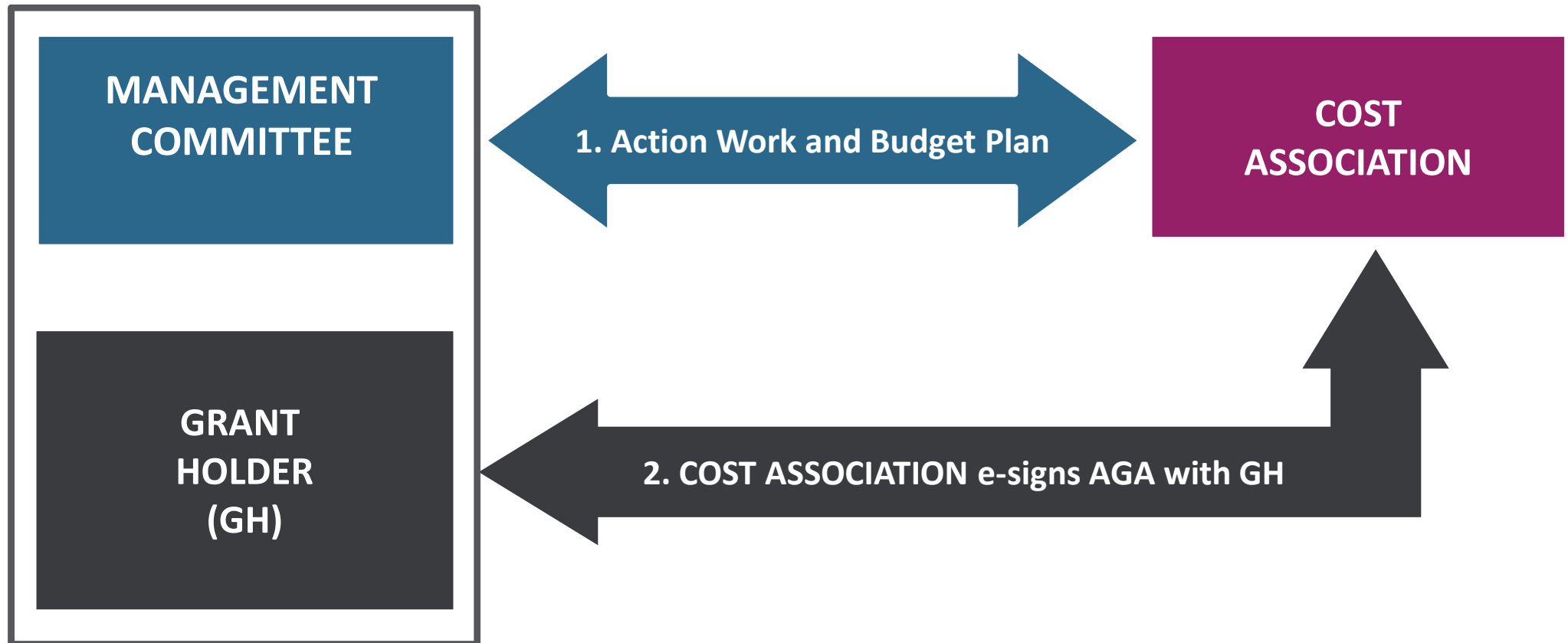
What is the Work & Budget Plan?

❑ 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

| MC | ⟷ | Action Chair | ⟷ | COST Association |

WORK AND BUDGET PLAN

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

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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)

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How to Participate

http://www.cost.eu/participate

OPTION 1

Would you like to join an existing COST Action?

http://www.cost.eu/participate/join_action

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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

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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

OPTION 2

Become a COST EXPERT

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.

Express your interest:

www.cost.eu/experts

OPTION 3

Are you already in contact with other researchers and you would like to submit a COST Action proposal?

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 will be 9 February 2016 - 12 noon (CET)**

- Some 30 to 40 new Actions are approved in each collection, subject to budget availability

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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

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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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3 Implementation

3.1 Description of the Work Plan

- ### 3.1.1 Description of Working Groups

Provide a detailed description of the different Working Groups. For each WG provide objectives, tasks, activities, milestones and list of major deliverables

- ### 3.1.2 GANTT Chart

Provide a graphical illustration of a schedule offering the project management overview of the different WGs, tasks, activities, and deliverables of your proposal

- ### 3.1.3 PERT - Program (Project) Evaluation and Review Technique (optional)

Provide a graphical representation of the different WGs showing their inter-relation. If needed, the same can be provide to show the inter-relation among the different tasks within each WG

- ### 3.1.4 Risk and Contingency Plans

Identify the main risks related to the Work Plan and present a credible contingency plan.

3 Implementation

3.2 Management Structures and Procedures

Describe the Action organisation in terms of management structure that would help the Action meet the proposed challenge. It is required that the proposed Action organisation and management structure respect COST rules

More detailed information at:

COST Implementation Rules - B.2 COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment (134/14)
http://www.cost.eu/participate

3 Implementation

3.3 Network as a whole

Describe how well the features of your Network of Proposers can achieve the objectives of the proposed COST Action. Make a case for the critical mass, expertise and geographical distribution needed for addressing the challenge and the objectives

If your Network misses any of these features, present a clear plan for overcoming the identified gaps. Note that COST Policies should not be addressed here

If you plan to include International Partner Countries (IPCs) or Near Neighbour Countries (NNCs) institutions in your proposal, give a brief description of the mutual benefits deriving from their participation

More detailed information concerning IPCs and NNCs at:

COST Implementation Rules - B.3 COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisation Participation (135/14)
http://www.cost.eu/participate

LAST RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strong competition: be ambitious

- Start: start early – a proposal needs time and evolution

- Become acquainted with the **COST Open Call: Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) guidelines** (in preparation)

- Have a clear view over the Action structure and 4 year strategy (WG)

- Present a clear strategy on the integration of researchers from inclusiveness countries (ex: Grant Holder, STSM,…)

- If you have the chance, have a **native speaker check the English**

- BUT - Perfect English is not necessary, it is the **clarity** + **consistency** which counts and increases your chances

- …………

COST – European Cooperation
in Science and Technology

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