

Brussels, 1 November 2021

COST 125/14 REV4

CSO DECISION

Subject: **Revision of Terms of reference for the SC mandate**

During the CSO meeting of 25-26 April 2018 on the mandate of the SC members and the need to assure continuity of the Committee, there was a general agreement on the important role of the SC and on the consequences on how the current short mandate could undermine the effectiveness of the SC. It was requested to the SC Chair to provide a short Memo summarising the main points discussed on the SC Mandates, the role of the SC, and how to identify breakthroughs which arise as the result of COST Action networks.

During the 17th EB meeting (27-28 June 2018), and following the proposal from the SC Chair, the EB recommended for CSO decision to extend the SC mandate of the individual SC members to 6 years in total.

At the 204th CSO meeting of 7-8 November 2018 In Vienna, the Committee of Senior Officials approved the revision “Terms of Reference for the Scientific Committee mandate”, allowing for a 6 year mandate of SC members. The CSO decision is attached below.

The present revision of the Terms of Reference for the Scientific Committee mandate enters into force on the date of the CSO decision.

This document was revised in November 2021 with the introduction of the new COST Rules.

Terms of reference for the Scientific Committee mandate

The COST Committee of Senior Officials (“CSO”) having regard to the Statutes of the COST Association;
the Implementation Rules¹ in their current version or any subsequent rules;
in accordance with its role as General Assembly of the COST Association,

Whereas:

The COST Association has established a scientific organisation, driven by the COST key principles of supporting excellence, being open and inclusive by fostering new ideas, sharing knowledge and being output orientated, aimed at securing a robust scientific structure ensuring time and cost-efficiency and enabling a strategic approach to COST’s scientific activity, hence supporting COST in fulfilling its vision and strategic goals. The CSO has adopted the present Terms of reference for the Scientific Committee mandate.

1. PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Scientific Committee (SC) shall give advice to the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) on the scientific and technological orientation of COST. It shall serve in the fulfilment of COST’s objectives, supporting COST in its S&T activities, contributing to secure recognition of COST as a key organisation driving scientific excellence in Europe and beyond underpinning the fulfilment of the European Research Area within a globalised world.

The SC shall have the following main responsibilities:

- Adoption of a list of proposals: Identification of proposals that respond best to the COST mission and Policy and the needs of the different research communities;
- Overall supervision and quality control of procedures for:
 - evaluation of proposals;
 - monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions;
- Global analysis of the outcomes and impact of ended Actions;
- Scientific and technological advice for COST.

The SC reports directly to the CSO.

2. TASKS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The SC shall fulfil the following tasks:

2.1. Adoption of a list of proposals to be approved by the Committee of Senior Officials

¹CSO Decision Level A - [“Rules and principles for COST Actions”](#), Level B documents - CSO Decisions, [“COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection And Approval”](#) and [“Rules for COST Actions”](#).

- During the selection of proposals for COST Actions: Identification, among the list of proposals presented by the Review Panels, of those that respond best to the COST Policy and the needs of the different research communities in accordance with the provisions of CSO Decision “COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval”;
- Establishment of the short list of proposals that shall be submitted for approval to the CSO.

2.2. Overall supervision and quality control of procedures

2.2.1 With respect to the **evaluation and selection of proposals** for COST Actions, the Scientific Committee shall fulfil the following tasks:

- Analyse the statistical features of each Open Call collection;
- Support the implementation of the COST Code of Conduct as described in 2.2.3 hereunder;
- Identify the emerging challenges and trends arising out of proposals for one or several collection dates.

2.2.2 With respect to the **monitoring and the final assessment of COST Actions**, the Scientific Committee shall fulfil the following tasks:

- Analysis, during the first Progress Review, of the Actions’ implementation of the SC recommendations and the COST Policy for Excellence and Inclusiveness;
- Oversight and analysis of the second Progress Review of COST Actions;
- Analysis of the outcomes and impact of the ended Actions.

2.2.3 With respect to ensuring the **respect of fundamental ethical principles** as described in the Rules and principles for COST Actions and in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity², with particular emphasis on **originality** of findings and ideas, and on **peaceful** purposes of the addressed S&T challenge the Scientific Committee shall fulfil the following tasks:

- Assess the eligibility of proposals that have been identified by the COST Administration, the External Experts or the Review Panels as potentially breaching the COST Code of Conduct, and
- Make a recommendation to the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) in cases where an Action is identified as potentially breaching the COST Code of Conduct.

2.3. Recommendations to the development of the COST Science and Technology strategy.

2.4. Giving advice to the CSO on the matters of its remit.

3. COMPOSITION OF THE SC, SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT AND REPLACEMENT OF SC MEMBERS

3.1. COMPOSITION

The Scientific Committee shall be composed of one high-level expert per COST Full and Cooperating Member with internationally renowned expertise and recognised merit in their professional career (science, technology, research management, innovation, industry or other).

Scientific Committee members shall meet at least one the following profiles and competences:

- Active scientists with a broader view about the European and international research landscape;
- Experienced with evaluation procedures and/or evaluation of research programmes, preferably at European but also global level;
- Broad comprehension of S&T strategies and/or foresight at national or European level;

² European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, Berlin, ALLEA – All European Academies, published on [european-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity_horizon_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://www.allea.eu/en/european-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity_horizon_en.pdf)

- Knowledge in impact analysis.

3.2. SELECTION

Each COST Full and Cooperating Member may propose up to 3 candidates. Where a COST Full or Cooperating Member proposes more than one candidate, they should come from different S&T fields³ and have different profiles and competencies (as described above).

The Executive Board, acting as a Selection Panel, shall select one candidate per COST Full or Cooperating Member, based on the following criteria:

- A balanced coverage of all S&T fields and/or profiles and competences described above shall be ensured within the SC;
- Gender balance and openness to Young Researchers shall be ensured within the SC;
- Representation of different sectors within the SC (innovation hubs, technical/applied universities or research institutions, industry) should be sought.

3.3. APPOINTMENT

Based on the recommendation of the EB, the CSO shall appoint Scientific Committee members at the next CSO meeting or by written procedure. Once appointed by the CSO, the Scientific Committee members act independently and do not represent national positions.

4. MANDATE

The mandate of SC members shall be of three years renewable once.

As a transition measure, the mandate of the SC members nominated for two (2) years before the entry into force of this Decision COST 125/14 REV 4 shall be renewable twice.

The position of the SC is honorary. Travel, meals and accommodation expenses shall be reimbursed by COST according to the applicable COST Implementation Rules and the [COST Annotated Rules for COST Actions](#). Honoraria shall be paid to the Scientific Committee members as follows:

- Chair: EUR 2000/year;
- Vice-Chair: EUR 1500/year; and
- Members: EUR 1000/year.

The above-mentioned amounts shall be prorated when the SC member has not served for the full 12 months period concerned (1 May – 30 April). In cases described hereunder, the CSO herewith grants to the Director the power to decide to withhold part or all of the SC members' honoraria. Further, in the same cases, the CSO may decide to replace any of the SC members for the remainder of their term of office:

- the member resigns;
- the member cannot contribute effectively to the SC any longer;
- the member attends less than half of the meetings during the course of one calendar year without justification;
- the member fails to fulfil the tasks or contribute to the activities defined in the present Terms of Reference;
- the member does not comply with the rules applicable to conflict of interest under the [Rules and principles for COST Actions](#);
- the member failed to inform the COST Association and the Chairmanship in good time of a real Conflict of Interest.

³ Taking into account the Organisation for Economic and Co-operation and Development scientific fields.

5. WORKING APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The SC shall elect among its members the Chair and the Vice-Chair. The mandate of the SC Chairmanship shall be of two years irrespective of the date of appointment or renewal as SC member. The CSO may, in exceptional cases, revoke the Chair and/or Vice-Chair. The CSO issues a written justification of the decision to the Scientific Committee.

The SC may set up Sub-Groups to examine specific questions under terms defined by the SC. The Sub-Groups shall be dissolved once they have fulfilled their mandate. Experts with specific competences relevant to a subject on the agenda may be invited by the COST Association to deliver a presentation or submit a written document.

Where necessary, the SC may recommend to the CSO the establishment of ad-hoc Working Groups in order to assist COST in specific topics.

Rules of Procedures of the Scientific Committee, subject to CSO consultation and approval, shall complement the present Terms of Reference and be hierarchically subordinated to it. In case of any contradiction between the present CSO Decision and the Rules of Procedures, the present Terms of Reference shall prevail.

5.1. DISTRIBUTION OF WORK AMONG THEIR MEMBERS

The Chair will serve for a minimum of 15 working days and up to 45 days/year and shall:

- fix the plenary agendas;
- direct the plenaries;
- organise the work of the members of the Scientific Committee;
- summarise the main conclusions and actions arising before closing each meeting;
- represent the SC at the EB, CSO or any other CSO, EB related meetings.

The Vice-Chair will serve for a minimum of 15 working days and up to 45 working days/year, and shall support the Chair in his/her tasks and replace him/her in case of absence. In case of absence of both the Chair and the Vice-Chair, the Scientific Committee shall elect an acting Chair for the meeting.

Each SC Member will serve for up to 15 working days/year and shall contribute to the work of the Scientific Committee by:

- taking an active part in the meetings of the Scientific Committee;
- fulfilling the tasks and contribute to the activities defined in Section 2 above;
- participating in other meetings and events⁴ as agreed with the Chairmanship.

5.2. MEETINGS

The SC shall meet as often as required for the performance of its tasks, preferably in accordance with the Open Call Calendar considering the related workload.

The SC shall meet in accordance with their procedures and schedule, in the COST Association premises or if duly justified in any COST Member.

The COST Administration shall provide support to the SC and shall participate in all SC meetings. The Head of Science Operations is the primary contact in the office.

⁴ Any additional meeting or event with budgetary implications is subject to the approval of the Director of the COST Association

6. AMENDMENT OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The COST Association shall welcome suggestions to amend the Terms of Reference in order to improve the functioning of the SC by the SC or individual members at any time. On this basis or at its own discretion, the CSO may choose to amend the Terms of Reference.