

Introduction to the COST Grant System

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Magali POINOT – Grant Agreement Manager



Preliminary remarks

As today

- Micro centralized management (“pay-as-you-go”) system

What is the COST Grant System (CGS)?

- Devolution of scientific and financial coordination / administration to COST Actions
- COST Actions will be enabled to actually fund their activities directly in line with the work plan and the related budget approved by the Action Management Committee (MC)
- Support for the MC will be provided by the Grant Holder (COST doc 270/07)

Brief history

- Satisfactorily used by the ICT domain for a number of years (and some volunteer Actions in 3 other COST Domains)
- Reform recommended both by the Bush Report (2002) and by the High Level Panel for the mid-term review of the ESF-EC contract for COST (2005)
- Agreed by the CSO in June 2006 to endorse the introduction of a grant system for all COST Actions

Objectives

- To provide more flexibility within the COST Actions
- To strengthen the role of the MC and the Action Chair
- To speed decisions / reimbursements
- To provide a better overview on the financial situation for each COST Action

Boundary conditions

Process

Approval of COST Action by the CSO



Kick-off meeting of the COST Action



Selection of a Grant Holder from the institutions of the MC members



Annual Work Plan and Budget Plan (negotiated and agreed by the MC Chair on behalf of the MC and the COST Office)



Preparation and Signature of the COST Grant Agreement (signed by the COST Office and the Grant Holder)



Implementation of the COST Action based on MC decisions

Terms of references

- Detailed annual work and budget plans of the COST Action
- Reimbursement rules of COST financial instruments (COST Vademecum)
- COST Grant Agreement
- EC rules (e.g. audits and controls)
- Web-based IT platform (e-COST) and the Users manuals

The Grant Holder

Boundary conditions (COST doc 270/07)

- Legal entity appointed by the MC ...
- ... from the institutions of the MC members ...
- ... with appropriate competence in administrative and financial matters ...
- ... ideally experienced in management of transnational projects / in COST

Role and responsibilities

- Responsible for providing the financial and scientific administration and coordination of the COST Action
- Practically speaking, the core tasks are:
 - managing the grant for the funding of the activities of the COST Action
 - providing scientific and administrative secretarial support to meetings (e.g. MC, WG)
 - ensuring scientific coordination & liaison vis-à-vis the COST Office
 - providing support for publication & dissemination (including website)
 - scientific and financial reporting
 - any scientific coordination activities as decided by the MC

Financial support

- Contribution of up to 15% of the actual science expenditures of the COST Action

The Work Plan and Budget Plan

Boundary conditions and Process

- Detailed annual plans (see templates)
- Prepared by the MC Chair following MC decisions
- To be approved by the COST Office (-> negotiation within budget constraints)
- Basis for the COST Grant Agreement and the implementation of the COST Action

Content and Structure

- Summary of the COST Action profile -> Domain, Action's name, Chair, Start and End Dates, Signatories countries, non-COST states, MC members, Working groups, etc.
- Budget Plan
 - Meetings (MC, Working Groups, Workshops, Conferences, others meetings) -> title, location, date, number of participants to be reimbursed, travel costs, organisational support
 - Short-Term Scientific Missions -> number, costs
 - Training Schools -> location, date, number of trainees/trainers to be reimbursed, trainees grants, travel costs, organisational support
 - GASG
 - Dissemination, Publications, Outreach -> title, cost
 - Financial and scientific administration and coordination (i.e. contribution to the Grant Holder)
- Work Plan -> Objectives, Activities, Annual outputs planned

The Grant Agreement

Preliminary remarks

- Revision of the COST Grant Agreement (version of Autumn 2007)
- Taking into consideration of comments and questions raised by Grant Holders
- With the involvement of all COST users:
 - additional feedback requested
 - working group
- Taking into account the new requirements of:
 - the ESF-EC grant agreement (June 2007) concluded under the Seventh Framework Programme, and
 - the Financial Regulation (last revised in December 2007) and its Implementing Rules (last revised in February 2008) applicable to the general budget of the European Communitieswhich COST is obliged to respect

The Grant Agreement

Main Highlights

- Four years rolling contract
- Signed by the Grant Holder => representative of the legal entity!
- Annual work and budget plans
- Annual instalments
 - 65% at the start of the annual period
 - up to 35%
- Reimbursement of eligible costs (e.g. VAT excluded)
- Intermediate and final financial reporting, including financial and scientific administration / coordination tasks
 - 31 December
 - end of the annual period
- Application of the 'four eyes' principle
 - Grant Holder's Financial Officer
 - Action Financial Rapporteurs appointed by the MC
 - COST Office
 - ESF
- Possible controls and audits
 - COST/ESF, EC, Court of Auditors
 - 5 years after the end of the ESF-EC grant agreement
- Annual scientific reporting

e-COST

What is it?

- Web-based IT platform / tools ...
- ... for the management of COST grants
- Including all COST instruments (meetings/workshops/conferences, STSM, training schools,...)

Main functionalities

- Constitutes a secured data basis (easy way to build list of participants and send invitations)
- Ensures follow-up of deviations and updates of the financial status for each COST Action
- Provides for individual account for each Grant Holder
- Allows COST staff to monitor the COST Action on a day-to-day basis
- Contains a contextual help page per each form

Timetable for implementation

- Phase 1 is already operational (-> meetings instrument, mailing lists)
- Phase 2 fixed on end September 2009 (-> all instruments)
- Phase 3 fixed on end October 2009 (-> work plan, budget plan, COST grant agreement, reporting)
- The entire migration process is expected to be accomplished by the end of 2010
 - new Actions will apply the CGS
 - on-going Actions will apply the CGS according to a transition plan
 - ending Actions (by 2010) will not be obliged to move to the CGS

e-COST

Options

- Home
- My Actions
- My Profile
- Logbook
- My Participations

Welcome to e-COST

Login and identification area

Dear e-Cost TESTER,

You will be able to manage your personal information as well as your e-COST password if you choose the "My Profile" menu option.

Please remember to always exit the system by clicking on the exit icon at the top right corner of a page. Please note that the system will automatically log you off after a period of inactivity (30 minutes).

If you have questions or you are experiencing problems with the e-COST system you can either consult the HELP page or alternatively you can contact the COST Office at ecost@cost.esf.org or at +32-2-533-30-XX.

Regards,
e-COST

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Manage CGA

[Action] IC0806 - Intelligent Monitoring, Control and Security of Critical Infrastructure Systems

Financial Period: IC0806-20090519

From:	2009-06-01
To:	2009-09-30

Instrument	Budget	Rolling workplan			
		Forecasts	Estimations	Claims	Payments
>> Meetings	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00
>> Training Schools	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00
>> General Action Support Grants	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00
>> Short Term Scientific Missions	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00
>> Publications	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00
>> Honoraria	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00	EUR 0.00

The COST Grant Agreement

October 2008

Magali POINOT – Grant Agreement Manager



Structure and Content

Identification of the Parties

- COST Office:
 - through its implementing agent ESF
 - following completion of an internal 'check list'
- Grant Holder:
 - Institution name => legal entity
 - Official address
 - Legal Representative and Position => person entitled to sign the Grant Agreement

Preamble

- Objective to state how and when the Grant Holder has been selected => "legal basis"

Subject matter

- Definition of the general role and responsibilities of the Grant Holder:
 - solely responsible => no subcontracting
 - for providing the necessary support to the activities of the COST Actions (i.e. the Operation)
- Application of the COST Vademecum rules
- Mandatory use of e-COST (only when operational)

Structure and Content

Duration

- Duration of the Operation => Action
- Duration of the Grant Period => annual period

Financial issues

- Detailed budget of the Operation, including Grant Holder support of a maximum of 15% of the actual science expenditures
- Maximum COST financial contribution for the on-going Grant Period
- Flexibility within the budget, except Grant Holder support

Payment modalities

- Bank account details of the Grant Holder:
 - name of the account holder => shall be identical to the Institution name
 - name of the bank and account number (preferably in euro)
 - VAT or national registration number
- Legal status of the Grant Holder
- First instalment of 65%; second instalment of maximum of 35%
- Payment subject of the availability of EC funds
- No automatic transfer of unspent budget between Grant Periods
- No transfer of funds between COST Actions => recovery
- Eligible and non-eligible costs => e.g. exclusion of VAT (see COST Vademecum - Section 6)

Structure and Content

Deliverables and Reports

- Payments by the Grant Holders to the final beneficiaries:
 - within 30 working days of receiving a complete claim
 - subject to the availability of EC funds
- Financial reporting
- Intermediate and Final Financial reports:
 - on the basis of the COST template
 - including costs incurred during the reporting periods => on accruals
 - approved by the person having financial authority to commit the Grant Holder
- Scientific reporting:
 - scientific progress report
 - to be approved by the Action Management Committee
 - approved 6 weeks before the Annual Progress Conference

Structure and Content

Controls and Audits

- Application of the 'four eyes' principle, i.e. request and approval cannot be executed by the same person:
 - Approval of expenditure statement by the Grant Holder Finance Officer officially authorized to commit the organisation
 - Control of the appropriate use of funds performed by 2 MC members appointed as Action Financial Rapporteurs
 - Verification of Intermediate and Final Financial Reports by the COST Office
 - Possible audits on a sample basis by an ESF Finance Officer and/or an external auditor
- Action Financial Rapporteurs:
 - appointed by the Action Management Committee
 - shall verify that the nature, overall justification and level of expenditure are in line with the agreed Work Plan
 - shall provide the Grant Holder with a financial assessment
 - to be submitted one month after the end of the on-going Grant Period
- Possible additional controls and audits:
 - by the Commission services or the Court of Auditors at any time during the COST Grant Agreement
 - for up to five years after the end of the ESF-EC grant agreement
- All relevant documents have to be kept for the above mentioned period.

Structure and Content

Penalties and Damages

- Suspension or recovery in case of non-performance of the contractual obligations by the Grant Holder
- Penalties in case of gross negligence, and/or disregard of COST reimbursement rules and procedures
- Penalties in case of late reporting:
 - less than 15 days: cutting of up to 50% of the contribution awarded to the Grant Holder
 - more than 15 days: cancellation of the contribution awarded to the Grant Holder
- Force majeure:
 - i.e. event or circumstance beyond its reasonable control and occurring without its fault or negligence, including, without limitation, failure of suppliers, etc
 - immediate notification required
 - to be discussed between the COST Office and the Grant Holder
 - Grant Agreement may be suspended if force majeure is not overcome within 6 weeks after notification
- Damages in case of prejudices to COST image and interests

Structure and Content

Confidentiality

- Confidentiality of contractual and financial elements relating to the Grant Agreement
- For up to 5 years after the end of the COST Action
- Documents shall be identified as confidential
- Not applicable when communicated, for the proper carrying out of the COST Action, to:
 - the Action Management Committee, the Domain Committee and the CSO
 - the final beneficiaries
 - third parties for dissemination and publication purposes

Data Protection

- Personal data are processed in accordance with Directive 95/46/EC:
 - treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality
 - direct access to personal data restricted to the COST Office and ESF staff, the Grant Holders, and where relevant the European Commission
 - processed only for the purposes of operating the COST activities
 - right of access to and right to rectify the data

Structure and Content

Communication

- Contact details:
 - Scientific or Administrative Officer of the COST Office
 - Scientific or Administrative Representative of the Grant Holder
- Immediate notification in case of any changes
- Mandatory mention of the Community financial support on any documents relating to the COST Action

Annexes

- Are part of the Grant Agreement:
 - Work plan (on an annual basis)
 - Budget Plan (on an annual basis)
 - Template for Financial Reporting
 - COST Vademecum
 - COST doc. 205/08 (Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results)
- In the event of conflict, the provisions of the Grant Agreement prevail.

Applicable law and Jurisdiction

- Belgian law
- Courts of Strasbourg

Supporting tools and documents

e-COST

COST Vademecum

<http://www.cost.esf.org/participate/guidelines>

COST Grant Agreement

<http://www.cost.esf.org/participate/guidelines> (section 6.13)

ESF-EC Grant Agreement

http://www.cost.esf.org/about_cost/structure

Thank you !