

COST Innovators Grant

Frequently Asked Questions

(FAQ)

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Document Change History

Version	Release date	Summary of changes
CIG	24 th November 2023	Updated information relative to CIGs 2024-2025
CIG	19 th December 2022	Updated information relative to CIGs 2023-2024
CIG	11 January 2022	Updated information relative to new <i>Rules for COST Innovators Grants and Annotated rules for COST Actions</i>
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CIG Pilot	12 December 2019	First release of the document

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This document provides additional information to the [**CIG Guidelines**](#).

Application

Is the CIG Team composed exclusively of MC members or can substitutes, Working Group (WG) members or even people outside of the Action also be in the CIG team?

The CIG Team can be composed of any researcher and innovator affiliated to a legal entity located in any COST Full or Cooperating Member regardless of their former contribution in the Action.

What is the difference between a CIG Team member and a CIG participant?

A CIG Team member is mentioned in the application as such and his/her expertise needs to be relevant with the purpose of the CIG being proposed. Once the CIG application is submitted, the CIG Team composition cannot be changed. The CIG Team will be responsible for the management of the CIG budget and activities and its role will be similar to that of the Management Committee of an Action.

A CIG participant is a person participating in any of the CIG activities, without being a member of the CIG Team.

CIG Team members and CIG participants will be reimbursed according to the Annotated Rules for COST Actions (COST 094/21; https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C).

Is there a minimum or maximum number of countries and/or participants for the CIG application?

There is no maximum or minimum requirement.

Can a SME affiliated participant be a CIG Chair or Grant Holder?

A SME affiliated Action participant can be CIG Chair. The SME can act as Grant Holder provided it fulfills the COST requirements to be Grant Holder (Annotated Rules for COST Actions (COST 094/21; https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C)).

Are the CIG Chair or Vice Chair the same person as the Action Chair or Vice Chair?

The CIG Chair or Vice Chair do not have to be the same person as the Action Chair or Vice Chair.

Must the Action chair and vice-chair of the CIG be affiliated to institutions in different countries or they can be affiliated to the same institution or two different institutions but in the same country?

The CIG Chair and Vice Chair can be from the same country. The reason for this approach needs to be justified in the CIG application.

Does the Grant Holder institution have to remain the same as in the COST Action?

It is preferable that the Action Grant Holder manages the CIG, but this is not compulsory.

What happens if the Action Grant Holder is not willing to continue with the CIG financial administration?

A new Grant Holder Institution should agree to take over the CIG Grant management. The GH will be the Institution receiving and managing the CIG Grant. The GH will also receive the FSAC to manage

the activities. Please refer to the Annotated Rules for COST Actions (COST 094/21; https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C) for more details.

What are the eligible activities and expenses?

CIG networking activities and eligible expenses are the same as those available to COST Actions and the Annotated Rules for COST Actions (COST 094/21; https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C) apply for eligibility of reimbursements.

Can CIG Team members be from the United Kingdom? Can partners be from UK?

CIG Team members and participants affiliated to an Institution in the UK can participate in CIGs and are eligible for reimbursements as described in the Annotated Rules for COST Actions (COST 094/21; https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C).

According to the Work Plan in the CIG Application Form, there is a budget associated to CIG Team member/s. The budget is associated to the specific person or their institution?

No, the budget is meant to be used to carry out the activities in the same way as in the Actions.

In case the maximum budget of 125.000 EUR is requested, how many CIG Team members are expected to be recruited?

The budget does not depend on the number of CIG Team members but relates to the activities proposed and the envisaged number of total participants, thus including CIG Team members and CIG participants. For each activity stated in the CIG application it shall be explained which of the CIG Team Members have committed to contribute to this activity. In this respect, there is no minimum or maximum number of CIG Team members.

Is there a FSAC included in the CIG funding?

The maximum funding that can be requested is of EUR 125.000. This amount includes 15% of Financial and Scientific Administration and Coordination (FSAC).

How many applications per Action can be submitted?

Only one application per Action, and according to the rules defined in the [CIG Guidelines](#), only the last one submitted will be considered for evaluation.

Is there any constraint about anonymity in the CIG application?

No, there is not. Anonymity is not an eligibility criterion.

Can we include different innovations in various areas, in the same application? If this is possible, has the business plan to be presented for all the innovation presented, or only for the best one?

Yes, you can include different innovations in various areas in the CIG application and the business plan should address all of them.

If the application gets rejected, can it be resubmitted? If so when?

Resubmissions of CIG's application are not allowed.

For fundamental research we can have a strong innovation potential but not marketable applications, can we still apply? Are novel scientific IDEAS, RESULTS or DISCOVERIES suitable for a CIG or will we be disfavoured?

The definitions of innovation and of the business plan allow for CIG applications to cover all aspects of innovation, hence a marketable application is not the only possible outcome. If applications are on fundamental research or social innovation this will not be a ground for disfavouring them.

How does the “explicit MC vote” work?

The explicit MC vote requested for the approval of the CIG submission will be launched and managed by the COST Association via e-COST after the submission deadline. This vote will be run one time. This type of vote requires the Management Committee members to actively express whether they are in favour or not, hence there is no tacit approval by a “no-reply”. The quorum of 2/3 of the countries represented in the MC must express their vote for the MC decision to be valid.

The decision will be by simple majority vote by participating COST Full Member and COST Cooperating Member.

To summarise, if the two MC members from a participating COST Full Member / Cooperating Member:

- Agree, the vote will count as one;
- disagree, their vote will count as null;
- if one of the two MC members does not reply to the vote, it will count as abstention and the vote of the other MC member will prevail;
- if both MC members do not reply to the vote it will not be counted for the quorum.

Evaluation

When and where is the Hearing taking place?

The Hearings are taking place on 23th and 24th May 2024. If your application reaches this stage, you will receive an individual invitation for one of those two days. The Hearings will take place face to face in Brussels at COST premises.

Who and how many people can participate in the Hearing?

Only one person will be invited and by default it is the CIG Chair. If the CIG Chair cannot attend, someone else from the CIG team can substitute them.

Does at least one of the three CIG Committee members evaluating the application have a scientific background?

The CIG Committee is composed of experts in research-based innovation, most of whom have a scientific background.

Approval

When will the results be communicated?

The outcome of the remote evaluation of CIG applications will be communicated by the end of April 2024. The final decision taken by the CSO will be communicated approximately one month after the Hearings.

What are the honoraria mentioned in the Guidelines about?

The Honoraria mentioned in the Guidelines (Chapter 7) refers to the honorarium each CIG Committee member is entitled to for taking part to the CIG applications' evaluation.

Implementation

Is the CIG Chair to be elected among the proposed CIG team?

The CIG Chair is the person identified as such in the application. Rules for CIG implementation are available under the **Rules for COST Innovators Grants (CIG)** available at www.cost.eu/rules_innovators_grant.

Are CIGs open as COST Actions?

Changes in the composition of the CIG Team are possible under certain circumstances as described in the Rules for COST Innovators Grant (COST 098/21; https://www.cost.eu/rules_innovators_grant). Participation to CIG activities is open to any individual affiliated to a legal entity wherever in the world, in agreement with the Annotated Rules for COST Actions (COST 094/21; https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C).

Can unspent budget from the Action be used also in the CIG, if approved?

Although the CIG stems from an Action, these are considered different grants. Therefore, it will not be possible to transfer the underspent budget at the end of the Action to the CIG.

Will the CIG be managed via e-COST?

Yes, once approved the CIG grant will be generated in e-COST and the financial management will be carried out in e-COST as for a COST Action.

When is the final achievement report due?

The final achievement report is due 45 days after the end of the CIG Grant Period.

What will be the contents of the reporting at the end of the CIG period?

The Final achievement report will be an adaptation of the one in place for COST Actions.

Is there any impact on the eligibility of the costs linked to the CIG final achievement report?

The Final achievement report has no impact on the eligibility of costs incurred during the CIG. This will be the role of the final financial report in accordance with the Annotated Rules for COST Actions (COST 094/21; https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C).

If the proposed CIG output is an innovative service, can it be trialed with users/customers during the CIG ?

Yes, it can. The purpose of the trial and the expected outcomes can be explained in the CIG application.

What happens if the Action is extended? Is an overlap in time possible?

If the Action is extended and it does not overlap with the CIG Grant Period (01/11/2024 – 31/10/2025) this is possible. However, overlap of Action and CIG activities is not allowed.

Where can the activities be organised: only in the CIG Team countries or also in the Action Participating Countries?

Please refer to section 6.3. of the Annotated Rules for COST Actions (COST 094/21; https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C) as CIGs follow the same rules as COST Actions.

Who would be eligible for the reimbursement: only the participants from the CIG Team countries or also from the Action Participating Countries?

Please refer to section 6.4. of the Annotated Rules for COST Actions (COST 094/21; https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C) as CIGs follow the same rules as COST Actions.

Can we focus on using only a subset of networking tools (not all types) if it matches well the objectives of the CIG?

The most appropriate tools to achieve the CIG objectives and deliver the business plan can be chosen.

Can we invite external Speakers?

Yes, you can in accordance with the [Annotated Rules for COST Actions \(COST 094/21; https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C\)](https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C).

Do the CIG networking tools have to be specific to the "Innovation" or can they also be relevant to the objectives and deliverables of the originating Action?

The CIG networking tools need to be specific to the CIG objectives and contribute to the delivery of the business plan and other outputs mentioned in the application.

Can we combine CIG activities with the other funded events?

This is possible as long as no double funding of the activity is ensured.

The successful CIGs would have a joint Final Meeting. Will this be funded by the COST Association or does this need to be taken into account in the CIG WBP? From the CIG Action, who will be eligible to attend the FM?

The final event is planned to take place in the months following the end of the grant and it would be organised and paid by COST.

The required rules for STSM, meeting participation, etc (and the rest of decisions) during the CIG, need to be approved only by the CIG Team? or by the MC of the Action?

The Action activities will be ended when the CIG starts. The CIG Team will be the decision-making body and shall formally establish their decision-making procedure.

In case that the Action Chair is not the same person as the CIG Chair, what will this imply for the CIG development from the administrative and financial point of view? Will that imply any delay?

The CIG chair might not be the Action Chair. There normally should not be any delay directly due to that fact.

How detailed should the business plan be, do we need to give the names of companies that will develop/apply the innovations?

The business plan is the output at the end of the CIG activities. According to the definition given in the **CIG Guidelines**, the business plan describes in detail the overall strategy for bringing the innovation to the users and lays out an appropriate written plan from a marketing, advocacy, communication or promotion; financial and operational viewpoint, including the sustainability of each.

The Business Plan is a final output of a CIG and shall therefore not be described in detail in the CIG application, but be mentioned as a compulsory output.

Any recommendation on how to develop a business plan for the CIG? Can the CIG Team be supported with this task? Is there a template for it?

The COST Association is envisaging a training module that could be proposed to CIG Teams on how to prepare a business plan, further information will be sent in due time. The business plan is one mandatory output of the CIG, the CIG activities proposed should ensure its delivery. The CIG Team can organise a CIG activity for this purpose, provided it falls under the networking tools available to COST Actions.

The COST Association is not providing a template for the business plan because COST Actions – and the derived CIGs – have different backgrounds and objectives.

Regarding the final output of the Business Plan, what happens if the CIG application is approved but the activities in the CIG application cannot result in the expected Business Plan? Will the Grant Holder be required to reimburse the financed budget to COST?

The CIG Committee will evaluate the feasibility based on information in the CIG application (see **CIG Guidelines**). The CIG Team commits to achieve the objectives of the CIG and deliver all proposed outputs, one mandatory proposed output being the business plan. The proposed CIG activities in the application need to clearly describe how they will ensure that the CIG objectives will be reached. Should there be a critical problem encountered during the course of the CIG and the need to deviate from the plan arises, this would need to be discussed with the Science Officer and approved by COST (it is similar to Action). In this case, there should not be a reimbursement of the Grant.

What is the procedure to apply for an extension?

CIG extensions are described in the Rules for COST Innovators Grant (COST 098/21; https://www.cost.eu/rules_innovators_grant). They are exclusively granted by the Executive Board of COST on the basis of Force Majeur. No other extension is admissible.