

COST Innovators Grant (CIG) Guidelines

2021 - 2022

COST 060/19 REV

02/12/2020

COST Association AISBL

Avenue du Boulevard - Bolwerklaan 21, box 2 | 1210 Brussels, Belgium
T +32 (0)2 533 3800 | office@cost.eu | www.cost.eu



Funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme
of the European Union

Copyright Notice

© The COST Association

Reproduction of this document and its content, in part or in whole, is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged, save where otherwise stated.

Version: 2020.12
02 December 2020

Document Change History

Version	Release date	Summary of changes
CIG	02 December 2020	CIG Committee constitution Evaluation Report (feedback to the proposers) Confidentiality Honoraria
CIG Pilot	15 November 2019	First release of the document

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	5
<hr/>	
2. APPLYING FOR A COST INNOVATORS GRANT	5
2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR A COST INNOVATORS GRANT	5
2.2. PREPARING AND SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR A COST INNOVATORS GRANT	6
2.2.1. THE APPLICATION PROCESS	6
2.2.2. APPLICATION TEMPLATE - PART A AND PART B	6
2.2.2.1. CIG APPLICATION - PART A	6
2.2.2.2. CIG APPLICATION - PART B	7
2.2.2.3. WRITING STYLE GUIDE	10
2.2.3. APPROVAL BY THE ACTION MC	10
<hr/>	
3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF COST INNOVATORS GRANT APPLICATIONS	11
3.1. CIG COMMITTEE	11
3.2. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE OVERVIEW	11
3.2.1. EVALUATION OF THE ENTIRE APPLICATION	11
3.2.2. CIG APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING	11
3.2.3. REMOTE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION OF THE APPLICATION	12
3.2.4. INSTRUCTIONS FOR EVALUATION OF CIG APPLICATIONS	12
3.2.5. CIG HEARINGS AND FINAL RANKING	14
<hr/>	
4. APPROVAL BY THE CSO	14
<hr/>	
5. FEEDBACK TO APPLICANTS AND REDRESS	14
5.1. FEEDBACK TO APPLICANTS	14
5.2. REDRESS PROCEDURE	14
<hr/>	
6. IMPLEMENTATION OF COST INNOVATORS GRANTS	15
6.1. CIG TERMS OF REFERENCE	15
6.2. CIG TEAM AND ACTIVITIES	15
6.3. CIG REPORTING AND DISSEMINATION REQUIREMENTS	15
<hr/>	
7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST (COI) AND CONFIDENTIALITY	16
7.1. CONFIDENTIALITY	17
<hr/>	
8. HONORARIA	17

1.INTRODUCTION

The Committee of Senior Officials of the COST Association (CSO) has adopted on 11 April 2019 a CSO Decision providing for the Design of the COST Innovators Grant¹ (CIG).

The COST Innovators Grant aims at enhancing the pace and success of breakthrough innovations, building bridges between the scientific research performed in COST Actions and the real applications in the market and society. For those COST Actions which demonstrate innovation potential and are selected, an additional budget will be allocated. The funding will cover the activities required to turn the research network outcomes into either a commercial, a technical or a societal new outcome. The duration of the CIG is one year. The proposal will be prepared by a dedicated subgroup and approved by the Management Committee².

For the purposes of the CIG, in addition to those definitions presented in the “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”³, the following definition of innovation applies:

- Innovation means a new or improved product, process, service, organisational method or policy approach that constitutes a state-of-the-art change in the sector or policy area in which the actor operates⁴.

Those COST Actions that are selected for a CIG will be granted a budget (not exceeding 125.000 EUR) to carry out the approved CIG activities after the end of the Action. One mandatory output of a CIG is a Business Plan (see section 2.2.2.2). For the purposes of the CIG the following definition of Business Plan applies:

- Business Plan means a written document that describes in detail how an innovation is going to reach the users. A business plan defines 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.

This document provides a guide on the:

1. Submission, evaluation, selection and approval of CIG applications
2. Implementation of the CIG, including reporting, dissemination, and final COST Innovators Grant reports.

The COST Vademecum⁵ regulates the networking tools and reimbursement schemes under the CIG. All enquiries concerning the COST Innovators Grant can be addressed to CIG@cost.eu.

2.APPLYING FOR A COST INNOVATORS GRANT

2.1.ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR A COST INNOVATORS GRANT

In order to be eligible, CIG applications shall:

- Be submitted upon invitation by the COST Association⁶;
- Be submitted to CIG@cost.eu by the Action Chair or Vice-Chair⁷ on behalf of the Management Committee of the Action before the submission deadline;

¹ CSO Decision COST 007/19

² https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/COST_StrategicPlan.pdf

³ <https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/COST-132-14-REV-5-Rules-for-Participation-in-and-Implementation-of-COST-Activities.pdf>

⁴ European Parliament: “Mainstreaming Innovation Funding in the EU Budget” 18/4/2019

⁵ Vademecum

⁶ The invitation is issued to the pool of COST Actions that end in the appropriate time interval to allow an (almost) seamless continuation with the CIG add-on and that have fulfilled the mid-term reporting obligations (PR2).

⁷ The submission by the Chair takes precedence.

- Be approved by the MC by explicit (i.e. not tacit) simple majority vote (see Section 2.2.3);
- Respect fundamental ethical principles as described in the COST Code of Conduct⁸ and in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity⁹;
- Tackle Science and Technology challenges with peaceful purposes only;
- Address all sections of the templates and not change in any way the compulsory format of the “CIG application template” (COST standard style: Arial font, size 10, line spacing 1 - choose “Normal, Text” style option from the ribbon styles gallery, margins, line spacing, etc.);
- Be written in **English**, the working language of the COST Association.

Applications may be declared non-eligible at any step of the process, whenever a breach of the above eligibility criteria is identified. Applicants will be informed by the COST Association of the non-eligibility of their application.

2.2. PREPARING AND SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR A COST INNOVATORS GRANT

2.2.1. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The COST Association may formally invite COST Actions to apply for a CIG; an invitation is only possible for Actions that did submit an Action Progress Report 2, which has been checked by the COST Association. These Actions will be notified in due time on the submission deadline and evaluation schedule.

Applications shall be submitted to CIG@cost.eu by the Action Chair or by the Action Vice-Chair, on behalf of the Management Committee, regardless of whether or not the Action Chair or Vice Chair are members of the CIG Team. Applications that arrive after the deadline will not be considered.

Only one submission per COST Action, and only the last version submitted by the Action Chair or Vice-Chair before the deadline will be considered for evaluation; the submission by the Chair takes precedence.

The subject of the email shall be: *COST Innovators Grant Application for Action CAXXXXXX*¹⁰. The email shall have one attachment being the CIG application Part A and Part B.

2.2.2. APPLICATION TEMPLATE - PART A AND PART B

The template, available on the [COST website](#), shall be used and the instructions thereby provided shall be followed to prepare the CIG application. The CIG Application Part A and Part B shall be completed and submitted by the deadline, as attachment to a single email as described above.

2.2.2.1. CIG APPLICATION - PART A

Application title	
Application acronym	
Code of COST Action from which the CIG application originates	CA_____

⁸ COST 081/15 dated 18 Nov 2015 or any successor document, COST Code of Conduct, <https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/COST-081-15-COST-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>.

⁹ European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, Berlin, ALLEA – All European Academies, published on http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf.

¹⁰ CAXXXXXX shall be replaced by the Action code.

Submitter (must be Action Chair/ Vice Chair)	<i>name, email address</i>
Origin of CIG application in the Action	<i>Explain here how the solution proposed in this CIG application originates from the Action</i>
CIG Grant Holder	<i>Grant Holder name, Grant Holder Scientific Representative name & email address.</i> <i>It is advised that the Action Grant Holder continues. If this is not possible, the new Grant Holder institution shall be the affiliation of one of the CIG Team members.</i>
Summary (for publication if application is approved)	<i>Write here a summary of your application, explaining the problem or need and how you will address it, and highlighting the expected outcomes of the CIG. This description should be understandable for a non-specialist in your field and should not contain any confidential information.</i> <i>Word limit: between 100 and 500 words</i>
Composition of CIG Team	<i>In the table below list the members of the CIG Team, clearly specifying who will be the CIG Chair and Vice-Chair. There is no requirement for the Action Chair or the Vice-Chair to become the CIG Chair or Vice-Chair</i> <i>NOTE: The CIG Team members must be affiliated either in a participating COST Full Member, COST Cooperating Member or be an approved MC Observer.</i> <i>The composition of the CIG Team is specified in the CIG application. It is not possible to join a CIG Team after approval of the CIG application by the CSO.</i>

Name	Institution	Role in the CIG	Relevant expertise and expected contribution in the CIG
		CIG Chair	
		CIG Vice-Chair	
		CIG Team Member	

The CIG team members agree to commit to their contribution as described above and in Part B - Implementation.

2.2.2.2. CIG APPLICATION - PART B

The CIG Application part B has the following sections:

- **Innovation Potential**
- **Expected impact**
- **Plan for Implementing the CIG**

The length of the CIG application PART B must not exceed **six (6) pages**; the CIG Committee (see Section 3.1) will be instructed to not evaluate any additional pages. The first page of the template with the instructions and text in *italics* should be deleted when saving the application to PDF.

The instructions related to each section are given below.

1. INNOVATION POTENTIAL (RECOMMENDED 2 PAGES)

This section will be used by the CIG Committee to evaluate the Innovation Potential.

This section will be evaluated by a CIG Committee sub-group. If the mark does not reach the threshold¹¹ for Innovation Potential, the CIG application will not be invited to the Hearings and therefore not considered for funding.

1.1 WHAT IS THE PRACTICAL CHALLENGE AND TARGET GROUP THAT YOU WILL ADDRESS.

Describe clearly and concisely the problem or need that the CIG is aiming to solve or alleviate, and to whom this is addressed.

1.2 WHAT IS YOUR PROPOSED SOLUTION, WHAT WILL BE THE MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE CIG.

Describe the idea you would like to develop further to address the issue described under 1.1, stating clearly the outcomes that will be achieved and the end point that will be reached under this grant.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE CIG.

Describe clear objectives of the CIG. Please formulate the objectives in a “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely) way. These objectives will be annexed to the original MoU of the Action which is accessible via the COST website and shall therefore not contain any confidential information.

1.4 WHAT IS INNOVATIVE ABOUT YOUR SOLUTION.

Describe the novelty of the innovation you aim to achieve and how this advances the state of the art.

Applicants should state in their proposal the added value of the CIG compared to a mere continuation of the Action. Additionally, they should explain who the competitors or alternative solutions are and detail the competitive advantages of the CIG.

2. EXPECTED IMPACT (RECOMMENDED 2 PAGES)

This section will be used by the CIG Committee to evaluate the Expected Impact.

2.1 DESCRIBE WHO AND/ OR WHAT WILL BENEFIT, HOW, WHEN AND TO WHICH EXTENT.

Describe clearly and concisely who (end-users) or what (e.g. the environment, animal welfare, etc.) will benefit from it, and when and how this benefit will occur or will be realised.

The impacts and benefits can be societal or technological or economic. The impacts of a CIG must go beyond those arising from scientific publications.

2.2 PLAN FOR EXPLOITATION:

Describe clearly and concisely how you will ensure that the proposed ideas will be brought forward after the end of the CIG (users’ take-up, commercial exploitation, investment funding etc.). Plans

¹¹ Section **Error! Reference source not found.**

should be realistic and describe end-user take-up or hook-up to further innovation schemes or funding sources.

3. PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CIG (RECOMMENDED 2 PAGES)

This section will be used by the CIG Committee to evaluate the plan for implementing the CIG.

3.1 WORK PLAN

Describe which COST networking tools will be used to achieve the objectives set for the CIG. Please summarise in the table below the foreseen workplan, ensuring that it also contains the activities necessary to enable the delivery of a Business Plan at the end of the CIG. For each activity state which of the CIG Team Members have committed to contribute to this activity. Note: The Grant Period for the CIGs will run for 12 months.

What will be done	Which COST Networking Tool(s) will be used	Expertise required	CIG Team Members committed to this activity	Budget required
Subtotal				
FSAC				maximum 15% of Subtotal
Total				

Total budget requested may not exceed 125 000 EUR, including FSAC.

3.2 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

Identify whether Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) must be considered for the implementation of the CIG. If so, please identify a plan of mitigation and/or risk assessment.

Background:

Intellectual Property (IP) protection helps inventors create value from their ideas, turning inspiration into sustainable business success¹². Because of its mere nature, the likelihood of IPs deriving from the CIG is considered high. Experience shows that agreeing on IP rules is by far more complicated once IP issues arise than before.

The CIG application shall therefore contain a plan for dealing with Intellectual Property Rights that might arise out of the CIG. This aims at avoiding any possible IPR related conflicts and disputes among COST participants.

COST is required through its agreement with the European Commission to implement the principles set out in the Code of Practice annexed to the Commission's Recommendation on IP management¹³.

¹² Intellectual Property Office (IPO) <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/ip4b.htm>

¹³ Commission Recommendation C (2008) 1329 of 10.4.2008 on the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities and the Code of Practice for universities and other public research organisations https://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/ip_recommendation_en.pdf

Developing an IP policy is one of the main principles of this Code of Practice.

In order to develop this IPR Plan, CIG applicants are recommended to consult provisions on "Additional guidelines on how to manage IP" in the Guidelines for the communication, dissemination and exploitation of COST Action results and outcomes (see https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/guidelines_communicating_exploiting_COSTAction_results_outcomes-1.pdf) and consult the European IPR Helpdesk (www.iprhelpdesk.eu) for available materials.¹⁴.

2.2.2.3. WRITING STYLE GUIDE

The COST Association strongly recommends complying with the following requirements when preparing an application:

- Checking language and spelling;
- Presenting the text in a logical way, avoiding unnecessary repetition between the different sections;
- No footnotes;
- Use of capital letters for COST-specific and Action-related expressions;
- Explaining all acronyms, including those commonly used in the Framework Programme context;
- Use of "Europe" or "COST Member Countries" when referring to the overall geographical scope of COST. "European Union" or "EU Member States" should only be used to refer to the EU as a player ("EU legislation", "EU programmes", "EU policies" etc.) or when only EU Member State(s) need to be explicitly mentioned, excluding COST Members not being Member States of the EU;
- Use of "framework" or "scheme" when referring to COST (COST is an intergovernmental framework, not an "EU instrument", although it is funded by the EU Framework Programme);
- Avoiding pronouns such as "I", "we"; rather use "the CIG";
- Avoiding expressions such as "planned" or "proposed" when referring to the CIG; rather use "aims at", "will", etc.;
- Avoiding overstatements regarding the potential impact of the CIG.

2.2.3. APPROVAL BY THE ACTION MC

The COST Association will submit the CIG application to the approval of the COST Action MC. In order to be eligible, the application shall be approved by explicit (i.e. not tacit) simple majority vote of the Action MC. Each COST Full or Cooperating Member participating in the Action MC will have one vote. Antinomic votes by the Action MC Members of the same COST Full or Cooperating Member shall be considered void.

The Action MC will be asked to approve the CIG Application, including the composition of the CIG Team. No additional member of the CIG Team will be admitted after approval of the CIG application by the CSO.

The MC approval of the CIG application entails the granting by the Action MC of responsibilities to the CIG Team, for CIG activities.

In this regard, the Action MC members will be asked to sign up to the following statement:

"As MC member in COST Action CAXXXXX, I approve its CIG application and the proposed CIG Team. The CIG Team will exercise the MC responsibilities regarding the CIG activities as described in the CIG application."

¹⁴ See notably the fact sheet *Intellectual property management in open innovation* - <https://www.iprhelpdesk.eu/sites/default/files/newsdocuments/Fact-Sheet-IP-Management-in-Open-Innovation.pdf>

3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF COST INNOVATORS GRANT APPLICATIONS

The CIG evaluation and selection procedure fulfils three core principles: excellence, fairness and transparency. COST strives to avoid any Conflict of Interest (CoI) and all those involved in the process must commit to confidentiality.

COST expects an ethical behaviour from all the participants in COST activities. The rules regarding Confidentiality and avoidance of Conflict of Interest in the evaluation, selection and approval of CIGs are described in section 7.

The evaluation and selection of CIG applications are carried out by the CIG Committee as described in section 3.2. The CIG Committee may work remotely or meet as an evaluation panel.

Applicants shall not contact any of the CIG Committee Members regarding their application. Any attempt to do so may lead to immediate exclusion of the application from the process.

3.1. CIG COMMITTEE

CIG applications are evaluated and selected by the CIG Committee. The CIG Committee is composed of up to 10 members, of which approximately 40% are COST Scientific Committee (SC) Members. The CIG Committee is appointed by the COST Director. Each application is evaluated by a CIG Committee sub-group consisting of at least three members.

3.2. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

The evaluation and selection of CIG applications is composed of the following phases: remote individual evaluation of the application, followed by the Hearings.

3.2.1. EVALUATION OF THE ENTIRE APPLICATION

Applications reaching an average score above 2 for the Innovation Potential will be further evaluated by a CIG Committee sub-group using the evaluation criteria and scoring as described in section 3.2.2. An overall mark is prepared for each application based on the average of the individual evaluations.

The applications are ranked according to the overall average mark.

After the CSO approval (see section 4), all applicants will receive after the CSO approval (see section 4), an evaluation report showing the marks and comments of this phase. The reports of the CIG Committee sub-group may differ since a consensus is not imposed.

The evaluation outcome of each CIG application is communicated to the Submitter by email after the final decision by the CSO.

3.2.2. CIG APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING

The table below presents the evaluation criteria, as well as the respective scoring at this stage of the procedure. The overall threshold for access to the selection stage is also indicated.

INNOVATION POTENTIAL	EXPECTED IMPACT	IMPLEMENTATION
Total marks for the section = 6 points	Total marks for the section = 6 points	Total marks for the section = 3 points
TOTAL MAXIMUM MARKS AWARDED = 15 points OVERALL AVERAGE MARK THRESHOLD = 8 points		

Each evaluator can give a CIG application a maximum score of 15 points. The overall average mark will be calculated by averaging the total scores given by each evaluator. Applications not reaching the overall average mark of the threshold will not be considered for funding.

Applications are ranked according to the overall average mark.

3.2.3. REMOTE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION OF THE APPLICATION

Each eligible CIG application is evaluated by a CIG Committee sub-group using the evaluation criteria and scored as described in section 3.2.2.

Applications failing to reach an average score above 2 for the Innovation Potential will not be invited to the Hearings and therefore not considered for funding.

After the CSO approval (see section 4), all applicants will receive a short report synthesising the marks and comments of the evaluation. The reports of the CIG Committee sub-group may differ since a consensus is not imposed. The evaluation outcome of each CIG application is communicated to the Submitter by email after the final decision by the CSO.

3.2.4. INSTRUCTIONS FOR EVALUATION OF CIG APPLICATIONS

Below are the specific questions for evaluation to be considered by the CIG Committee on each of the criteria:

INNOVATION POTENTIAL
<p>Q1: To what extent does the application describe an innovation challenge, problem or need that is real, relevant, and timely?</p> <p><i>Evaluators should assess to what extent the problem or need described is highly relevant and timely, and addresses a real potential market, society, policy or technology change.</i></p>
<p>Q2: To what extent is the proposed solution innovative, feasible, and adequate in addressing the problem or need described above?</p> <p><i>Evaluators should assess to what extent the proposed solution is highly novel/ innovative, advances the state of the art, identifies the gaps and addresses them in a feasible and adequate manner to tackle the problem or need.</i></p>

EXPECTED IMPACT

Q3: To what extent does the application describe expected impacts that are both significant and credible (realistic)?

Evaluators should assess to what extent the envisaged impacts are significant and credible. The impacts of a CIG must go beyond those arising from scientific publications. Explanations on the timeline and nature of the expected impacts should be significant, measurable and convincing.

Q4: To what extent is the plan for exploitation both realistic and adequate?

Evaluators should assess to what extent the exploitation plan is realistic and adequate.

Evaluators should assess to what extent it is ensured that the proposed ideas will be brought forward after the end of the CIG. Plans should be realistic and describe end-user take-up or hook-up to further innovation schemes or funding sources.

PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CIG

Q5: To what extent are the work plan and the team appropriate for achieving the stated objectives of the CIG?

Evaluators should assess to what extent the role and skills of each CIG team member are clearly explained and match the requirements of the CIG. Additionally, the proposed CIG activities (COST tools) need to clearly describe how they will ensure that the CIG objectives will be reached.

Evaluators should also assess the credibility and feasibility of the proposed implementation and of the description of the IPR considerations.

Please note:

The CIG Team is led by the CIG Chair and the CIG Vice-Chair; the CIG Chair or Vice-Chair might or might not be the same person(s) as the Action Chair or Vice-Chair.

The composition of the CIG Team is specified in the CIG application. It is not possible to join a CIG Team after approval of the CIG application by the CSO.

The CIG Committee will use the following harmonised scale for all the evaluation criteria:

Description	Mark
The application fully addresses all relevant aspects of the questions. Any shortcomings are minor.	3 (High)
Although the application addresses the question well, improvements would be necessary.	2 (Medium)
The question is not addressed in an adequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses, or missing or incomplete information.	1 (Low)

3.2.5. CIG HEARINGS AND FINAL RANKING

The purpose of the Hearings is to establish a ranked shortlist of CIG applications to be recommended for funding to the CSO of the COST Association, taking into consideration the available budget for that CIG call.

The top ranked applications are invited to attend the Hearings; their number will depend on the available budget. Applications that do not reach the overall threshold will not be invited to the Hearings. If invited CIG applicants do not attend the Hearing, their application will not be considered for funding.

At the Hearings, the CIG Committee will refer to the written CIG application and to the presentation, but not to the scores of the previous evaluation phase. Hearings being part of the Evaluation and Selection procedure, the same evaluation criteria described in section 3.2.2 will apply. The CIG Committee will assess the feasibility of the CIG application (e.g. appropriateness of the proposed CIG team, CIG objectives and how COST Tools will be used to achieve these objectives) and will address any weakness identified in the remote evaluation phase.

The CIG Committee will rank the applications presented at the Hearings and will send their ranking to the CSO for approval.

The outcome of the Hearings will be communicated to the applicants after the CSO decision.

4. APPROVAL BY THE CSO

The final decision on approval and funding for CIGs is taken by the CSO, on the basis of the shortlist submitted by the CIG Committee, taking into account the available budget. The CSO may decide not to approve CIGs selected through the procedure described above.

5. FEEDBACK TO APPLICANTS AND REDRESS

5.1. FEEDBACK TO APPLICANTS

The evaluation outcome of each CIG application is communicated to the Submitter by email after the final decision by the CSO.

5.2. REDRESS PROCEDURE

In order to contribute to the fairness and transparency of the CIG application process, the COST Association has established a Redress Procedure. The Submitter has the possibility to submit a request for redress **within 15 calendar days** after notification of non-eligibility or following the communication of the final decision by the CSO.

Redress is allowed only in case of alleged procedural shortcomings and factual errors, i.e., whenever the applicants deem that:

- the evaluation has not been carried out in accordance with the CIG Evaluation and Selection procedure;
- the Evaluation Report bears factual errors.

Requests for redress dealing with the assessments by the CIG Committee shall not be admissible. The decisions from the Hearings by the CIG Committee (see section 3.2.5) shall not be open to redress.

The redress procedure may be initiated only by email sent to redress@cost.eu. In the email, the Submitter shall:

- Indicate the same subject of the email as in the application (see Section 2.2.1);
- Provide a detailed description of the alleged procedural shortcoming(s) or factual error(s).

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF COST INNOVATORS GRANTS

6.1. CIG TERMS OF REFERENCE

Following the approval by the CSO, the summary and the objectives described in a successful application will form the basis for the Terms of References of the CIG to be annexed to the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

A Work & Budget Plan will be agreed upon between the COST Association and the CIG Chair on behalf of the CIG Team.

6.2. CIG TEAM AND ACTIVITIES

The CIG Team is led by the CIG Chair and the CIG Vice-Chair as specified in the CIG application; the CIG Chair or Vice-Chair might or might not be the same person(s) as the Action Chair or Vice-Chair.

No additional members of the CIG Team will be admitted after approval of the CIG application by the CSO, and participating COST Members remain the same as those of the originating Action. The CIG Team is the decision-making body. Nevertheless, ad-hoc participants can attend the CIG activities in agreement with the Vademecum rules.

The CIG Networking Tools are the same that are eligible for COST Actions. For more information, see the Vademecum¹⁵.

The CIG Agreement is signed by the CIG Grant Holder.

The Grant Period for the CIGs will have a duration of 12 months starting at the date of signature by both Parties of the Grant Agreement. CIG Applicants are informed that the COST Association shall be able to sign such Grant Agreements only once funding for the COST Association under Horizon Europe will be secured.

6.3. CIG REPORTING AND DISSEMINATION REQUIREMENTS

Two months after the end of the Grant, the CIG Chair shall submit a Final Achievement Report using the template provided by COST and shall contain the Business Plan. The Intermediate and Final Financial Report shall be submitted by the Grant Holder in accordance with the Vademecum¹⁶ rules.

The CIG Chairs shall attend a final joint CIG meeting organised by the COST Administration.

Note: Actions whose application for a CIG is approved must still comply with the usual final assessment reporting requirements as described in the rules for "COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment"¹⁷ and in the Guidelines for Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment.

¹⁵ [Vademecum](#)

¹⁶ <http://www.cost.eu/Vademecum>

¹⁷ www.cost.eu/action_management

7.CONFLICT OF INTEREST (COI) AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The Col rules apply to all those concerned by the CIG application, evaluation, selection and approval process (CIG Committee Members and CSO members). Each individual involved in the evaluation, selection and approval of applications may not take any benefit from any CIG approved under the particular collection they participated in.

In particular:

- CIG Committee Members shall not participate in any CIG that was selected during their mandate.
- CNCs, SC and CSO members shall not be CIG Participants.

A Conflict of Interest can be real, potential or perceived.

Cases of Real Conflict of Interest

CIG Committee Members and CSO members

- Having been involved in the preparation of the application.

Cases of Potential Conflict of Interest

CIG Committee Members and CSO members

- having a professional or personal relationship with a CIG applicant;
- benefiting directly or indirectly if the application shall be accepted or rejected.

Cases of Perceived Conflict of Interest

CIG Committee Members and CSO members feeling for any reason unable to provide an impartial review of the application.

In case:

1. the Col is confirmed/identified **before** the evaluation starts, the person concerned will not be able to participate in the evaluation/selection/approval procedure in the ongoing CIG evaluation and is replaced, if applicable.
2. the Col is confirmed/identified **during** the evaluation/selection/approval:
 - The person must stop evaluating/selecting/approving in the ongoing CIG evaluation and is replaced, if applicable;
 - Any comments and marks already given shall be discarded.
3. the Col is confirmed/identified **after** the evaluation/selection/approval has taken place, the COST Association shall examine the potential impact and consequences of the Col and take appropriate measures.

The COST Association has the right to take the lead in any resolution process of a Col situation at any moment of the evaluation and selection.

All cases of Col must be recorded.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Any CIG Committee Member involved in the evaluation or selection procedures shall sign a declaration stating/accepting s/he:

- Is not aware of any conflict of interest regarding the application(s) to be evaluated/selected;
- Shall inform immediately the COST Association of any conflict of interest discovered during the evaluation process;
- Shall maintain the confidentiality of the procedure.

Failure to declare the Col may have the following consequences:

- Notification to the COST Association Director;
- Notification to the CSO for Scientific Committee Members;
- Removal of the CIG Committee Member from the COST Expert Database.

7.1. CONFIDENTIALITY

COST expects that each person involved in the CIG evaluation, selection and approval process (CIG Committee Member, and CSO member):

- Treats confidentially any information, including the Business Plan submitted in the application and the personal data of any natural person concerned by or involved in the submission, evaluation, selection and approval of applications process, and document, in any form (i.e. paper or electronic), disclosed in writing or orally in relation to the performance of the evaluation;
- Processes any confidential information or documents as described above only for the purposes and for the duration of the submission, evaluation, selection and approval of applications process;
- Does not, either directly or indirectly, disclose any confidential information or document related to applications or applicants, without prior written approval of the COST Association;
- Does not discuss any application with others, including other CIG Committee Members or staff not directly involved in evaluating the applications, except during formal discussions during the evaluation and selection phases;
- Does not disclose any detail of the evaluation process and its outcomes, nor of any application submitted, for any purpose other than fulfilling their tasks as CIG Committee Member;
- Does not disclose the names of other CIG Committee Members participating in the evaluation;
- Does not communicate with applicants on any application during or after the evaluation until the approval of CSO.

8. HONORARIA

An honorarium of 500 EUR shall be paid to each CIG Committee member in each collection for the remote work carried out. CIG Committee members will be reimbursed for attending the Hearings in accordance with the *Vademecum*¹⁸ and will receive an additional honorarium of EUR 500,00 per day of attendance or EUR 250,00 per half day of attendance.

¹⁸ [Vademecum](#)