COST

European Cooperation in Science and Technology

Introduction to the COST Framework Programme

Outline

1. **What is COST and how does it work?**
    - COST Overview
    - COST Structure
    - COST Policies

2. **What are the COST Actions and how to participate in them? COST Actions: the networking instrument**
    - COST Countries
    - Action structure
    - Networking Tools
    - How to Participate

3. **How to prepare a successful proposal?**
    - New Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) procedure
    - Proposal Preparation – Practical Aspects

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What is COST and how does it work?

What is COST?

COST (CO-operation in Science and Technology) is a pan-European intergovernmental framework dedicated to networking activities for European researchers, enabling them to jointly develop their own ideas and new initiatives across all scientific disciplines through trans-European coordination of nationally funded research activities.

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COST Features

- One funding scheme: the Action

- Bottom-up (researcher driven, any topic/ multiple topics)

- Flexible (adaptable research and activities)

- Open participation (involve all stakeholders, type of institutions, career levels, countries, at any time)

COST Features

- Output oriented (open science, wide sharing of knowledge and results, open access, open innovation)

- Efficient and cost-effective (high leverage of national research, sharing resources/ infra-structure)

Recent changes

- The COST Association was established in 2013 as an international non-profit organisation. The governance and the operations are integrated under the CA who is now the recipient of the Commission's grant

- A new Scientific advisory body was put in place: the Scientific Committee
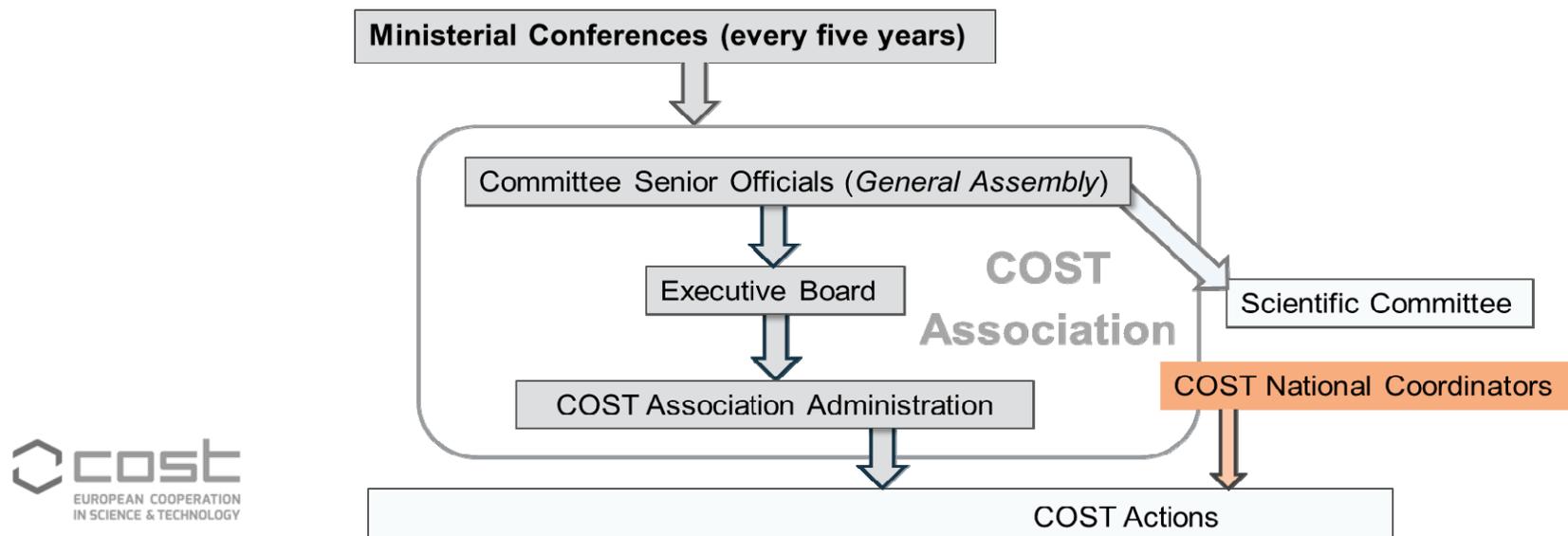
Recent changes

- New set of rules for participation and implementation of COST activities such as the Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval of proposals, the Action management and the international cooperation

- New scientific classification based on the OECD S&T classification (Main Fields/Subfields/ research areas aiming at covering the whole spectrum of research topics)

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Recent changes: 3 level scientific classification

6 Main Fields of Science:

- Natural Sciences,

- Engineering and Technology,

- Medical and Health Sciences,

- Agricultural Sciences,

- Social Sciences,

- Humanities

  - *41 Sub-fields of Science…*

    - *719 areas of expertise (research areas)*
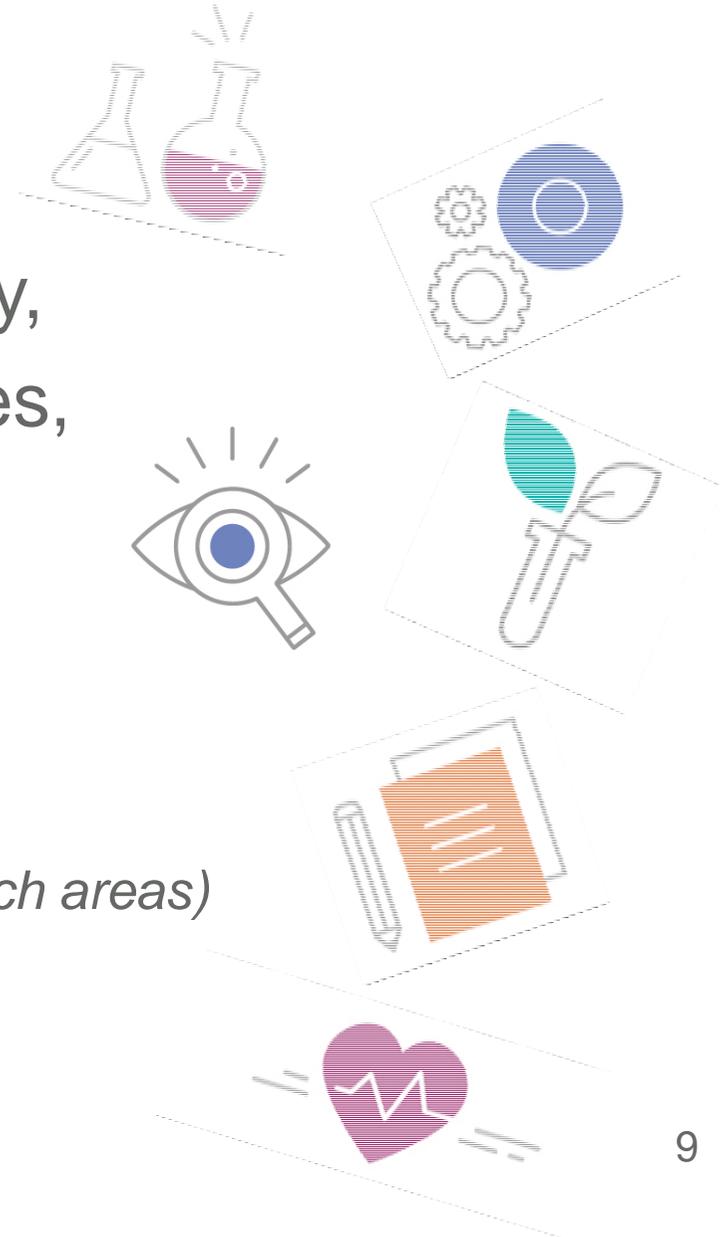
Recent changes

- A new COST member joined COST in 2015: Montenegro (COST has now 36 Full Member States and one Cooperating State).

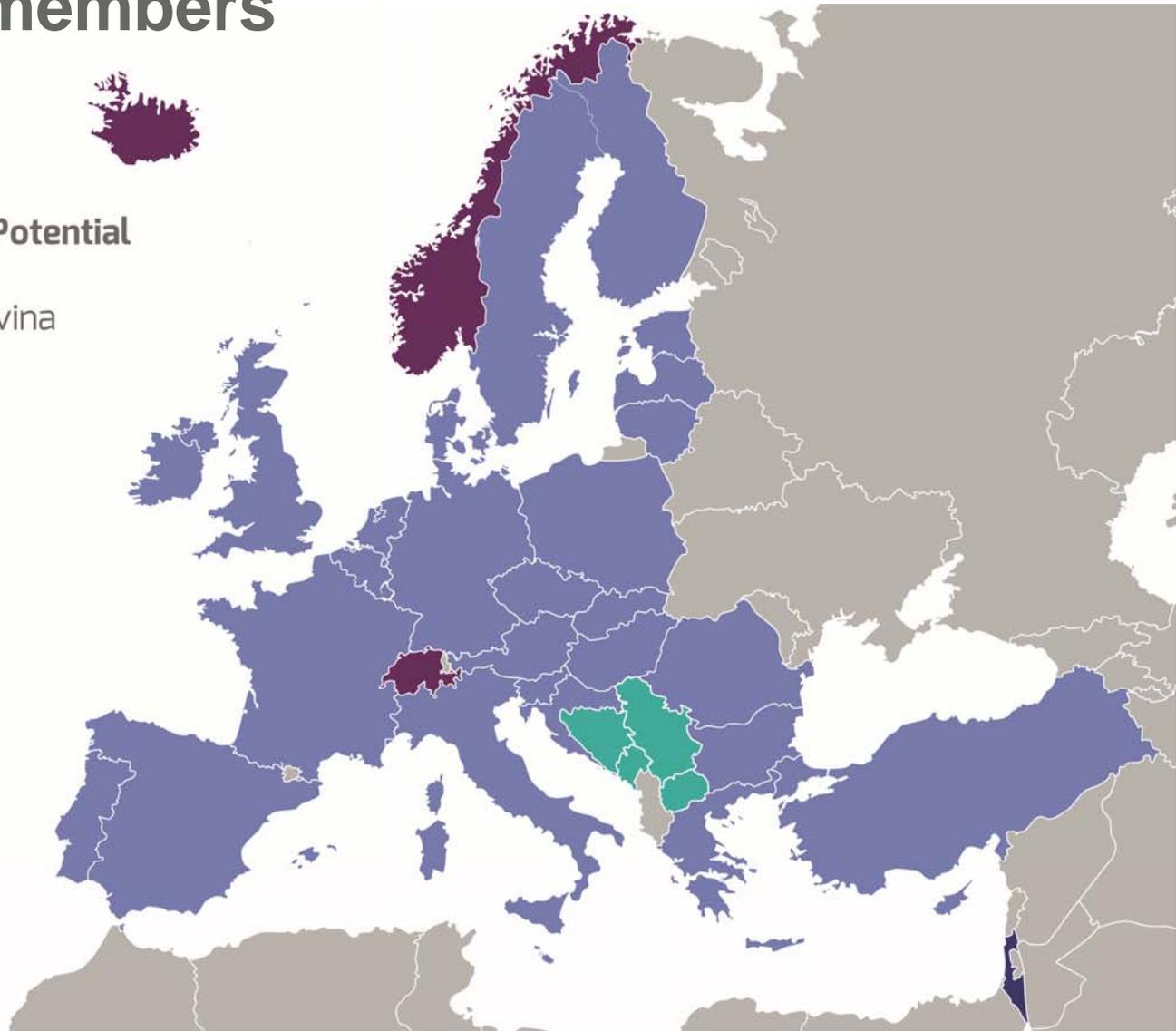# 37 COST members

EU 28

EU Candidates and Potential Candidates
Bosnia and Herzegovina
fYR Macedonia
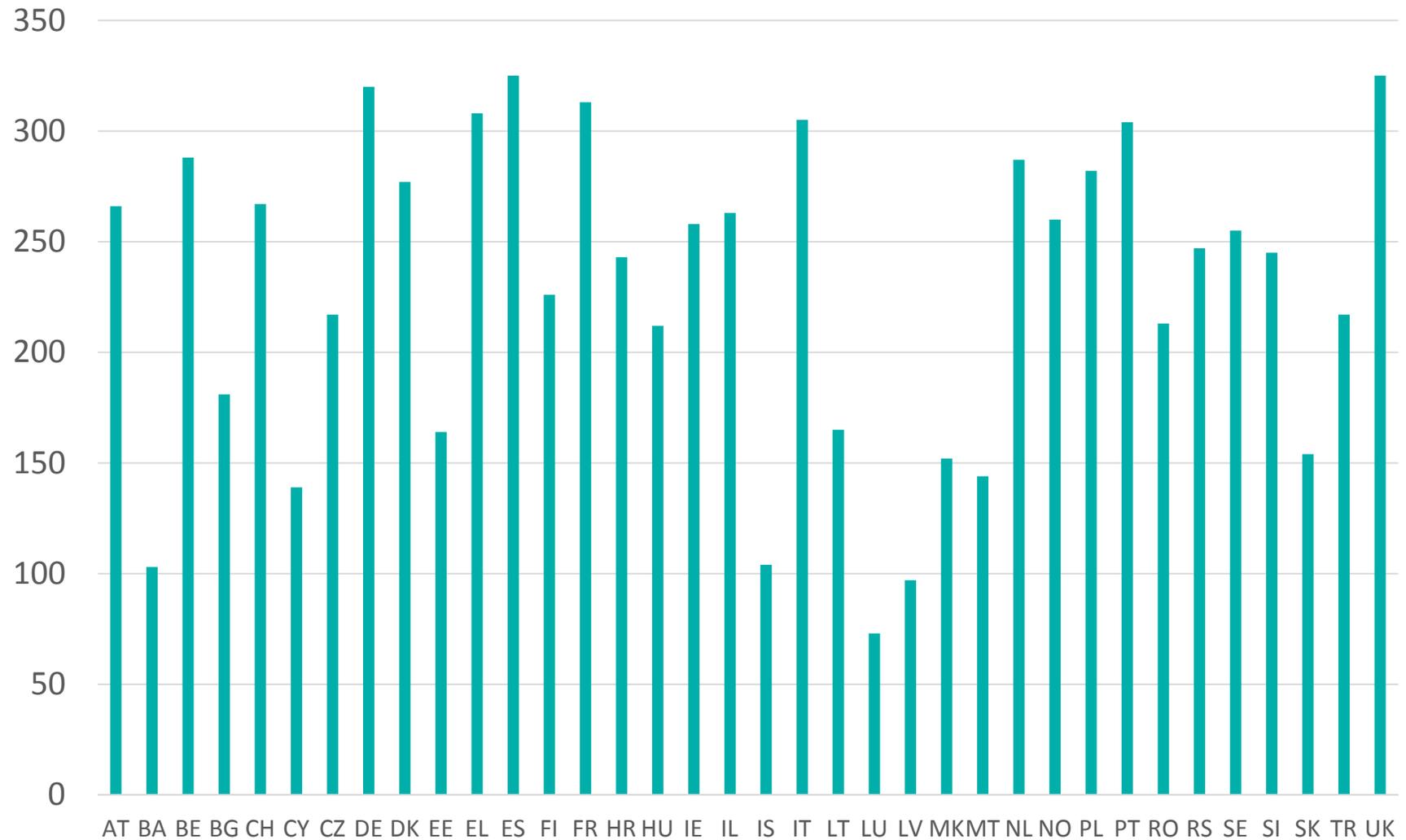Montenegro
Republic of Serbia
Turkey

Other countries
Iceland
Norway
Switzerland

COST Cooperating Member
Israel

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COST members' Action participation in 2016

Core policies

1. Excellence and inclusiveness (widening the European research base)

   - Geographic pillar (support to less research intensive countries, connecting pockets of excellence,…)
   - Career pillar (support to young researchers: leading roles, access to STSM/TS)
   - Gender pillar

2. International cooperation (mutual benefit, NNC,…)

3. Industrial dimension (SME, open innovation)
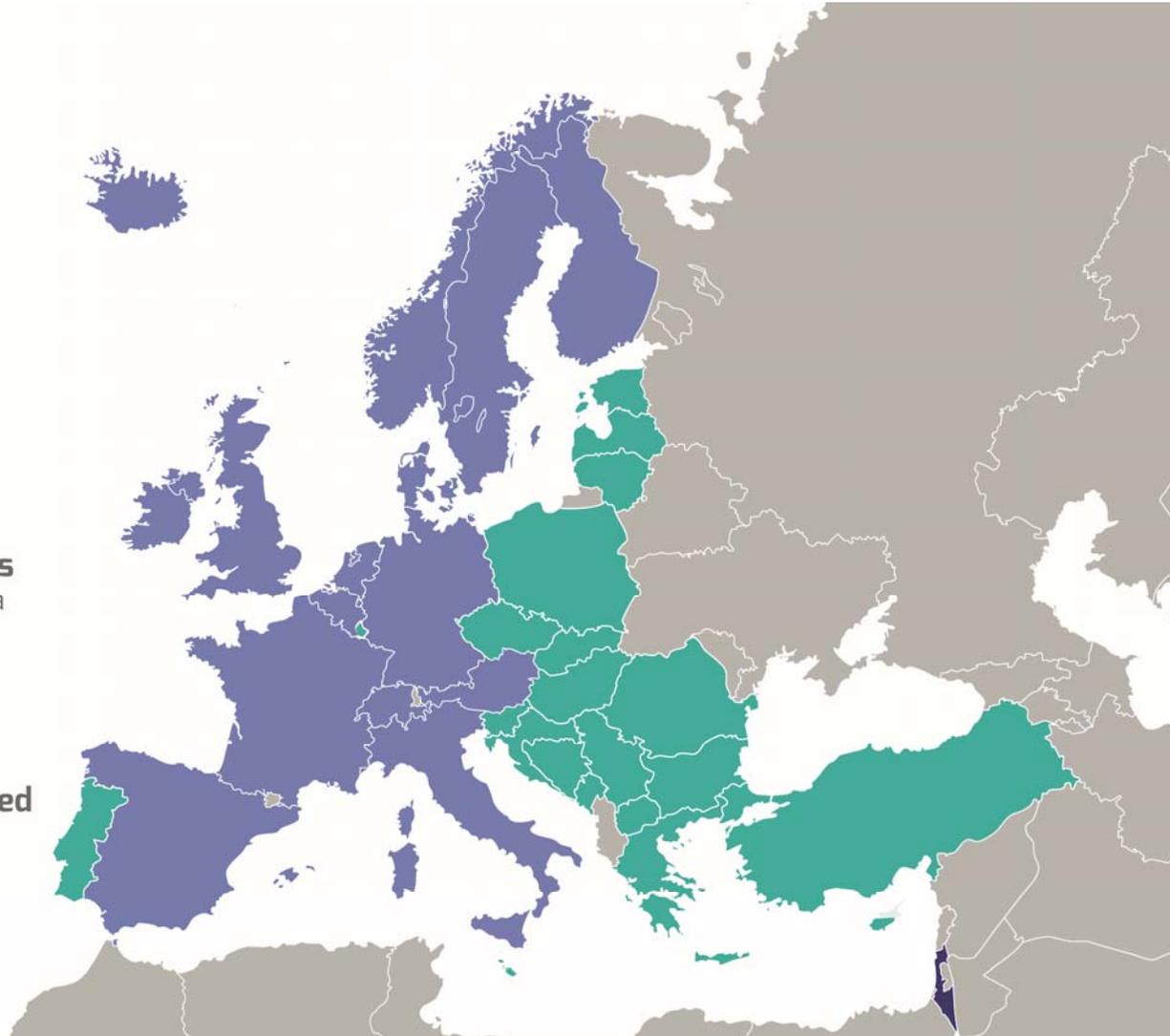
COST Inclusiveness Target Countries

EU 13
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Estonia
Hungary
Latvia
Lithuania
Malta
Poland
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia

EU Candidates and Potential Candidates
Bosnia and Herzegovina
fYR Macedonia
Montenegro
Republic of Serbia
Turkey

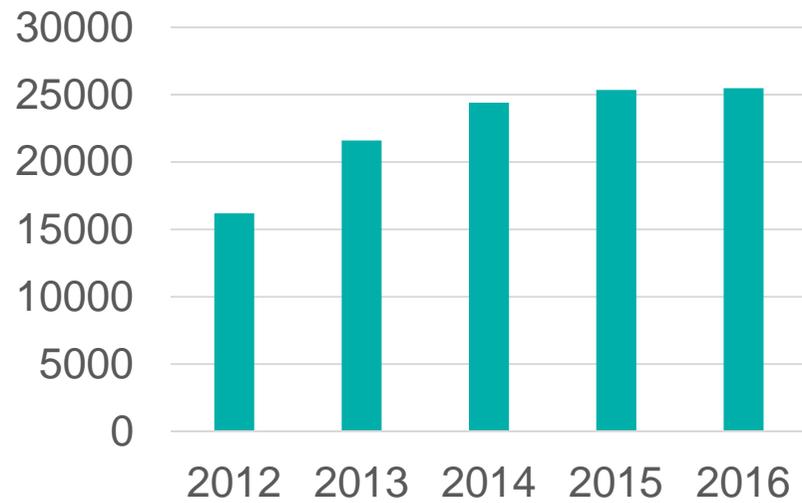**EU countries targeted by the European Commission:**
Luxembourg
Portugal

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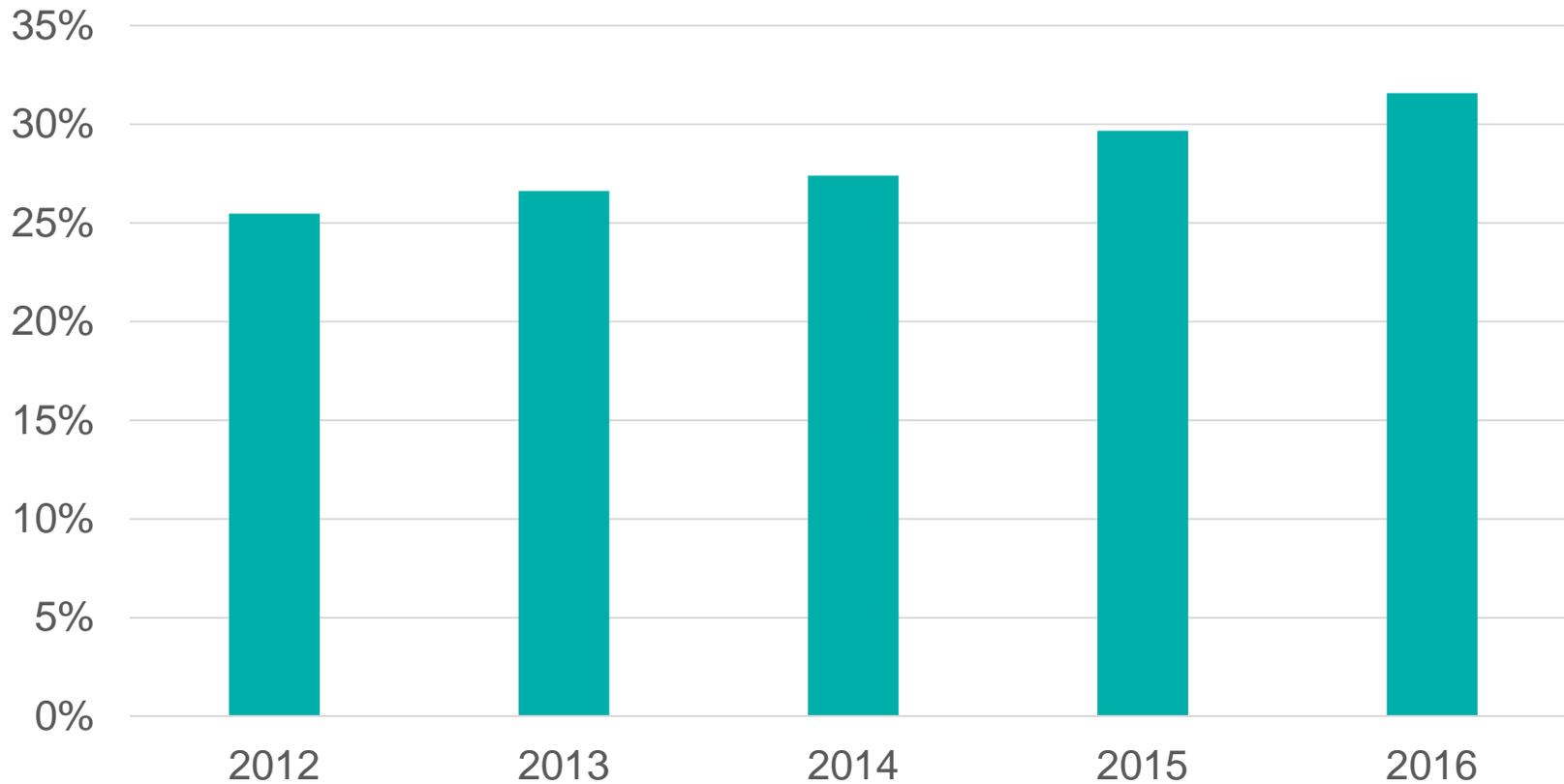EUROPEAN COOPERATION
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Key figures 2016
1) >25000 supported researchers

Bar chart values by year:
- 2012: ~16000
- 2013: ~21500
- 2014: ~24300
- 2015: ~25300
- 2016: ~25400

Y-axis: 0, 5000, 10000, 15000, 20000, 25000, 30000

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Key figures 2016
2) >30% researchers from ITC

Near Neighbour Countries

COST Full & Cooperating Members
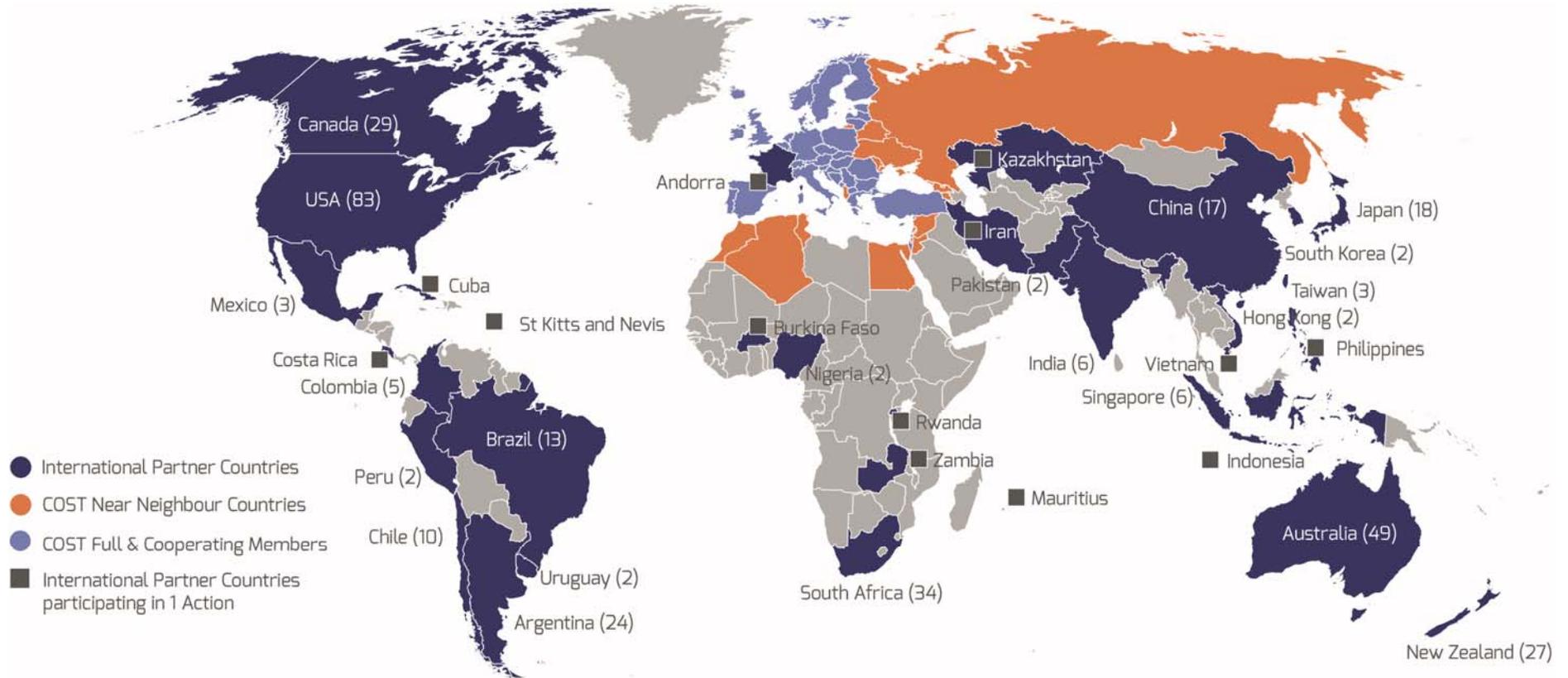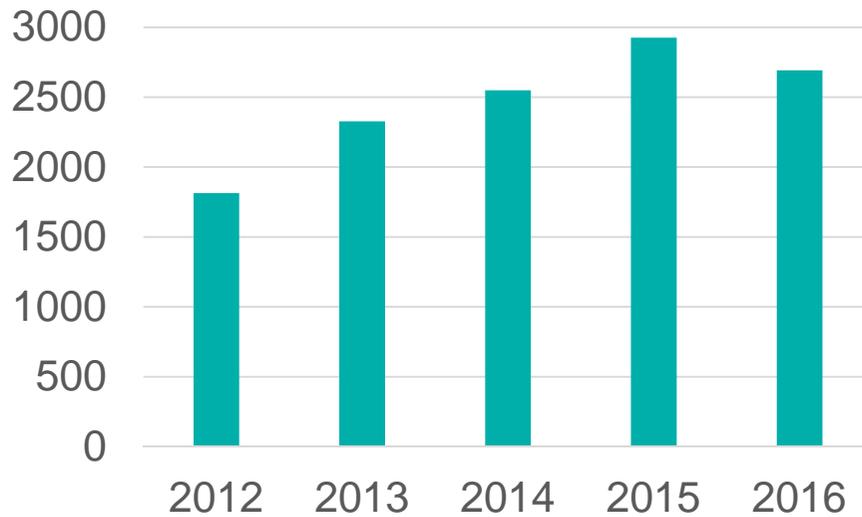
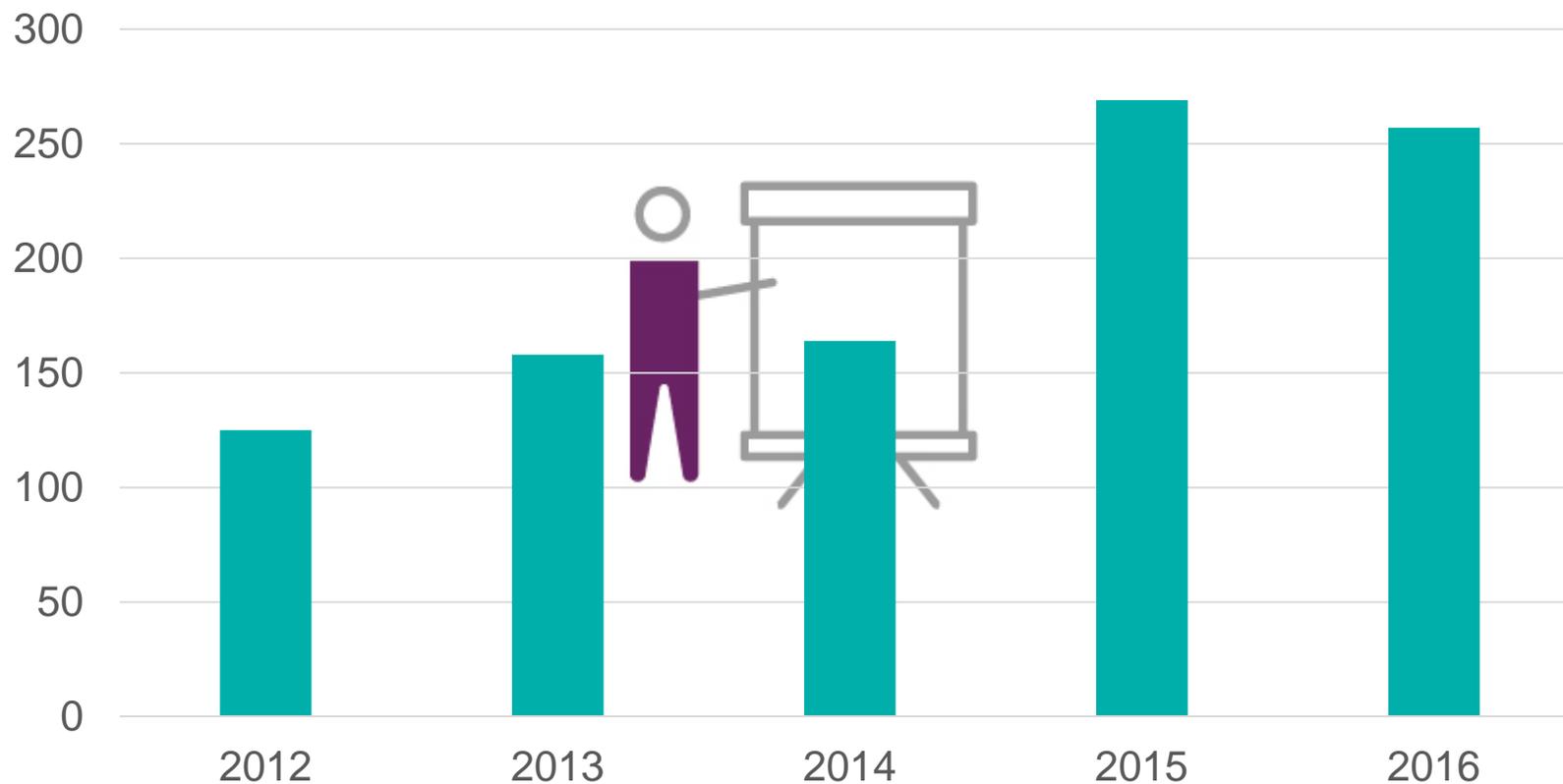Near Neighbour Countries
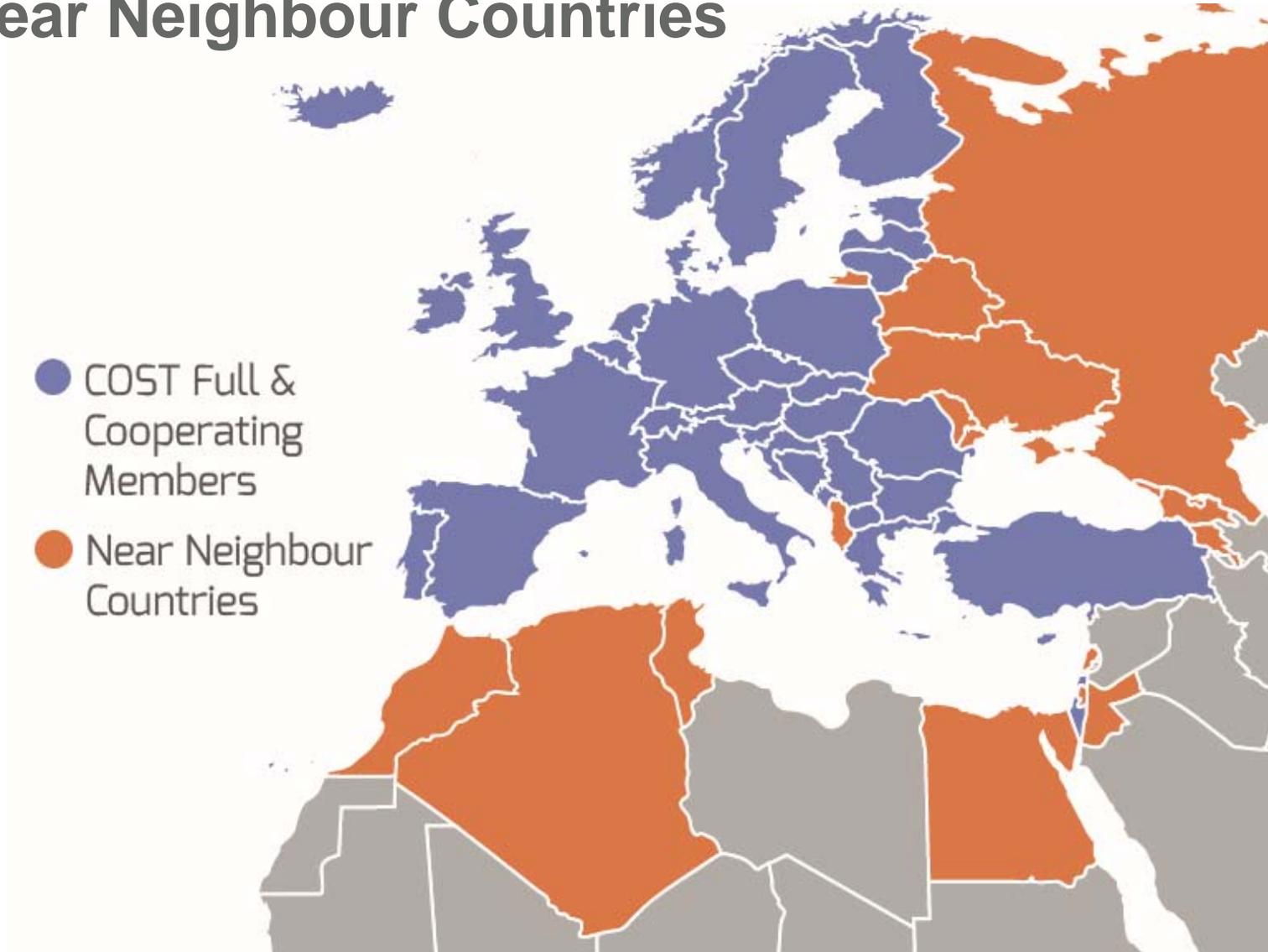
International Partner Countries

Key figures 2016
3) 2700 Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM)

Key figures 2016
4) 260 Training Schools (4500 Trainees/1200 Trainers)

Stepping stone for young researchers

- 96% percent STSM participants indicated improved career opportunities as a consequence of their participation

- Complementarity with ERC Grants and MSCA

Strategic goals – contribution to the ERA

- COST supports Inclusive research (geography, age, gender): provide opportunities for less established researchers to the benefit of a wider European research base

- Contribute to find emerging topics that can eventually be addressed through national research and European framework programmes

- Promote S&T cooperation with other countries

- Promote open innovation in COST Actions and contribute to increase the uptakes of research results by SMEs/industry

What are the COST Actions and how to participate in them?

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Funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme
of the European Union

COST Actions – characteristics

- A network of researchers, engineers and scholars with nationally funded research

- Collaborating in S&T fields of common interest

- From at least seven COST member Countries

- Expandable to new participants

COST Actions – characteristics

- Based on a 4 years joint work programme (MoU)

- Submitted, evaluated and selected through an Open Call for proposals

- Implemented through a range of networking activities (Meetings, Workshops, Short Term Scientific Missions, Training Schools, etc.)

- Average annual support of EUR 120 000

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Join an Action

- Search existing Actions in your topic from the COST website

- Browse the Action's own website – check their activities

- Find if your country participates and, if yes, who is/are the national representatives
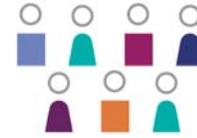
- Contact the relevant person

Join an Action

- As a Management Committee (MC) member
  - Contact: CNC (and MC Chair)
- As a Working Group (WG) participant
  - Contact: national MC representative or WG leader
- Short Term Scientific Missions
- Training school
- Workshop
- …
  - Contact: National MC member, MC Chair, see Action website

COST Action Structure
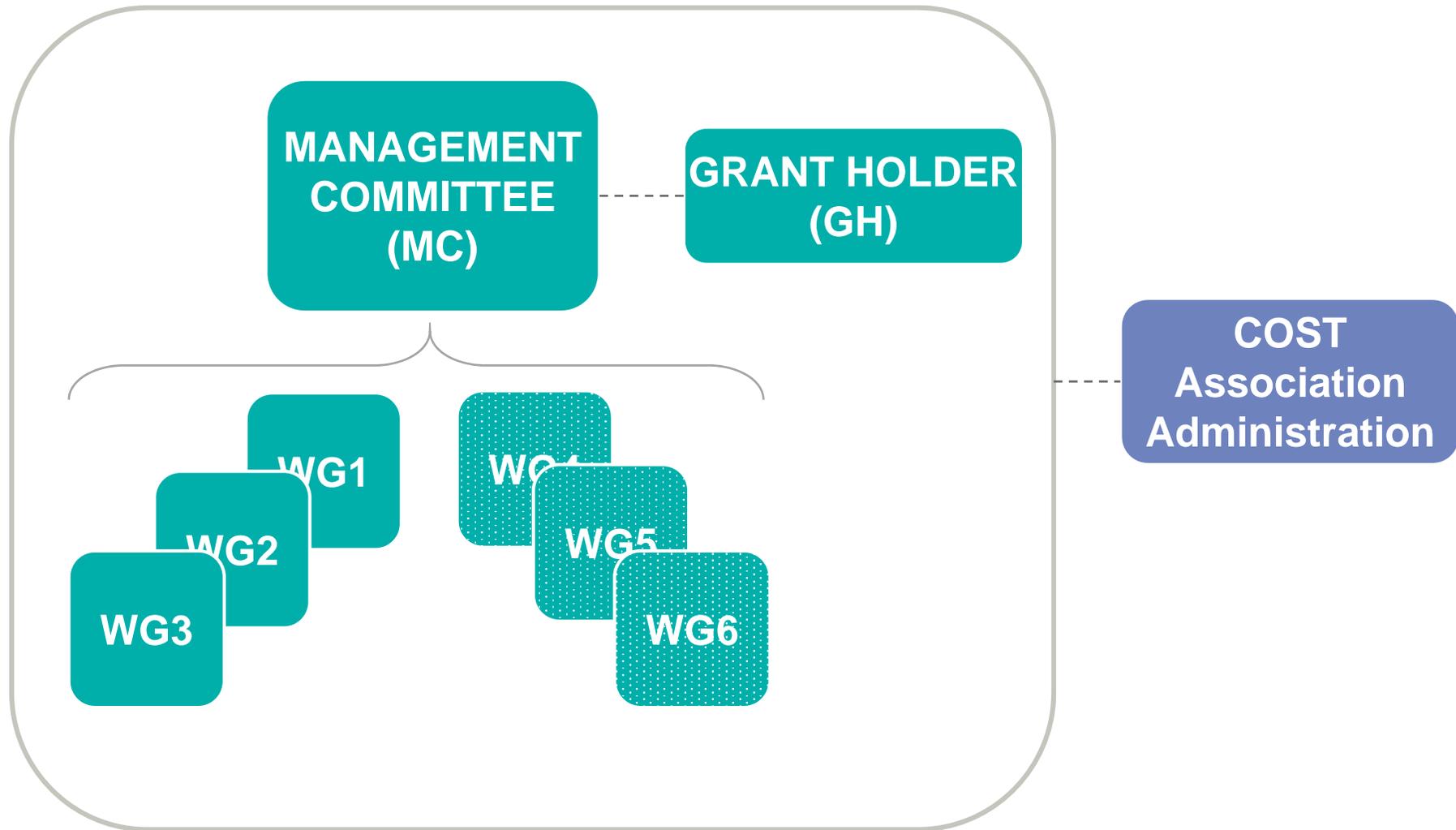
Action Management Committee

- Nominated by the COST National Coordinator
- Decides and coordinates scientific & networking activities
- Elects the key roles
- Supervises the appropriate allocation and use of funds
- Decides on international cooperation and dissemination strategy
- Implements COST mission and policies
- Scientific reporting
- Yearly meeting
- …

Action Working Groups

- 3 to 6 WG as set in the proposal
- Perform specific research tasks
- Open to participating COST member countries and approved international participations
- Composition approved by the MC
- Report to MC
- Ad hoc meetings
- …

Grant Holder

- Elected by the Management Committee
- Signs the yearly Grant Agreement with the COST Association
- Receives and administers the Grant according to the Work and Budget plan (2 instalments)
- Average Grant: EUR 120.000/year
- May retain up to 15% of the yearly expenses
- Financial reporting to COST
- Reimburse the individual participants according to the Financial Vademecum

Supported activities

- Meetings (participation and organisation)
- Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM)
- Training Schools
- Dissemination activities and meeting
- Reviewing (proposals/Actions)

Reimbursement rules: see Vademecum

Growing
ideas
through
networks

How to prepare an Action proposal

Open Call for proposals

- Anytime submission

- Next collection: 7 Sept.2017 - 12:00 noon (CET)

- 25 to 40 Actions approved in each collection, subject to budget availability

- One-stage online submission

- By a Main Proposer (on behalf of a network)

- 7~8 months evaluation period

- Guidelines and template on cost.eu/opencall

Open Call for proposals

- In all S&T fields
- 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
- Providing for knowledge share and creation
- Being open and output oriented
- Responding to COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy