

General presentation of COST

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1 - What is COST?

COST (*European **CO**operation in the field of **Scientific and Technical Research***) is an intergovernmental framework for the coordination of nationally-funded research at a European level, based on a flexible institutional structure. Established in 1971, COST has developed into one of the largest frameworks for research cooperation.

The 34 Member Countries of COST include the 27 EU member states, Croatia, Iceland, Norway, the Republic of Serbia, FYR of Macedonia, Switzerland and Turkey. In addition, Israel is a Cooperating State.

COST research networks are called **Actions**. Cooperation takes the form of concerted activities, i.e. the co-ordination of nationally funded research activities, between research institutions from member countries or cooperating states.

COST also welcomes Institutions from non-COST countries to join individual **Actions** where there is mutual benefit.

2 - The five principles of COST

The five principles of COST cooperation are:

1. COST Actions are flexible arrangements.
2. COST Actions can be initiated in any subject by individual scientists ("bottom-up" principle), from all COST countries or by the European Commission.
3. Participation in Actions is voluntary and "à la carte" (variable configuration), so only interested countries take part.
4. Coordination and related expenses only are covered by the COST budget; the research activities themselves are funded nationally.
5. Equality of access to researchers from all COST members countries.

3 - The nature of COST research

COST aims to network at a European level nationally financed research of a basic pre-competitive, pre-normative or policy-related nature. COST aims to address issues:

- which are international;
- where cooperation would be beneficial to a number of countries;
- that require harmonisation of regulations and policy making;
- which are of public concern and in which society has a particular interest;
- where cooperation on newly emerging or multidisciplinary scientific topics would be desirable.

4 - How can institutions participate?

Research institutions from signatory countries can take part in an Action in one or several of the following ways:

- by carrying out studies and research;
- by concluding contracts for studies and research with organisations (research contractors);
- by contributing to the provision of a secretariat and/or other coordinating services or activities necessary for the aims of the Action to be achieved;
- by making information on existing relevant research, including all necessary basic data, available to other participants;
- by arranging for Short-Term Scientific Mission, Training Schools or high level scientific meetings within the Action (*see 2 - Financial Instruments*).

5 - A productive co-existence with Community research programmes

COST was set up by a Ministerial Agreement in 1971. Some of its early Actions have helped pave the way for other European research programmes, such as the EU Framework Programmes (1983) and EUREKA (1985). COST continues to play an important role in scientific and technical cooperation in Europe - encouraging European synergy and networking and helping to further European integration – a crucial element in the European Research Area (ERA).

6 - Domains of research

COST covers a wide range of scientific and technological Domains:

1. Biomedicine and Molecular Biosciences (BMBS)
2. Food and Agriculture (FA)
3. Forests, their Products and Services (FPS)
4. Materials, Physical & Nanosciences (MPNS)
5. Chemistry and Molecular Sciences & Technologies (CMST)
6. Earth System Science & Environmental Management (ESSEM)
7. Information & Communication Technologies (ICT)
8. Transport & Urban Development (TUD)
9. Individuals, Society, Culture & Health (ISCH)

Topics falling outside these Domains are supported under a “Trans Domain Proposal (TDP)” heading.

7 - Legal aspects

1. Legal basis

Under international law, the formal basis for the COST cooperation was constituted by two letters sent by the President of the Council of the European Communities (on 4 November 1969 and 24 July 1970 respectively) to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States invited to take part in this venture, and the written replies from each of those States. This exchange of letters was supplemented by a general resolution adopted by the European Ministers for Research attending the Ministerial Conference in Brussels on 22 and 23 November 1971.

Subsequent COST Ministerial Conferences in Vienna on November 1991 and in Prague on May 1997 extended membership of COST to new

countries. This cooperation was reinforced by the COST Ministerial Conference in Dubrovnik (May 2003) which also endorsed the new administrative arrangements for COST through the European Science Foundation (ESF).

Members of COST countries are not obliged to take part in all COST Actions. For each COST Action, the countries wishing to take part indicate their commitment by signing the **Memorandum of Understanding**.

II. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

The Memorandum of Understanding is the basic document underlying a COST Action. It is a flexible legal instrument for research cooperation between partners in COST. A MoU does not, however, create any legally binding agreement in public international law.

The MoU governs the common aims, the type of activity to be pursued and the terms of participation.

The MoU is signed by the Governments of the COST countries wishing to participate in the Action in support of their research country through their permanent diplomatic representatives to the EU. The MoU enters into force when it has been signed by at least five COST countries.

The MoU consists of two parts:

- The Memorandum proper summarises the main features of the Action (*see Rules and procedures for implementing COST Actions*).
- The Technical Annex describes the Action in detail (*see Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions*).

MOU SAMPLE

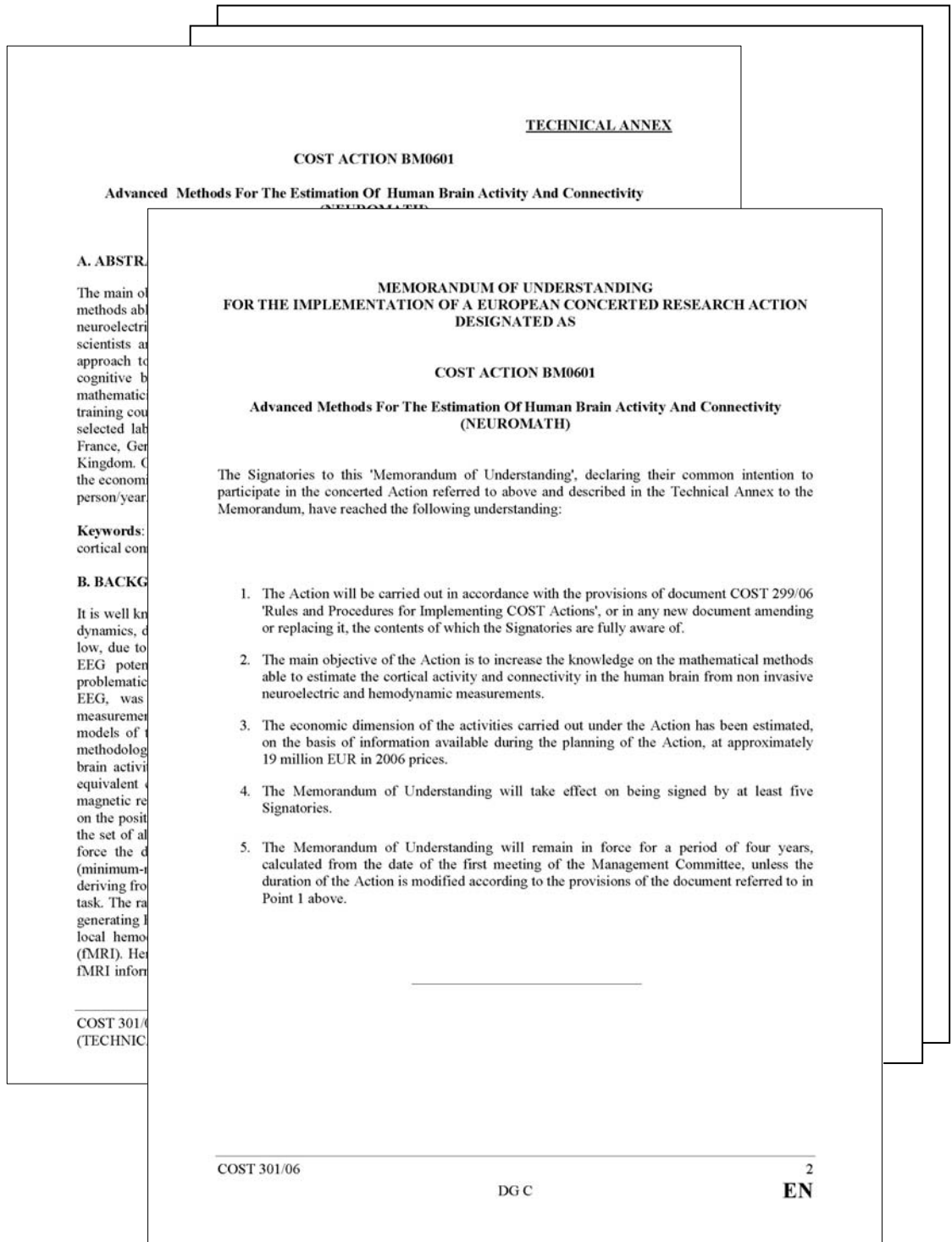


Fig. The Memorandum of Understanding for a COST Action consists of the single-page "Memorandum proper" and a Technical Annex describing the Action in detail.

8 - COST Structure

I. Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)

The Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) is the main decision-making body of COST structure, composed of two representatives from each COST countries.

It reports directly to the Ministerial Conferences, formulates the general strategy of COST, appoints the various Domain Committees, decides on their terms of reference, approves the COST Actions proposals to be launched and supervises their implementation.

The working methods of the CSO are given in *Annex 1 - Working Methods of the Committee of Senior Officials*.

II. JAF Group

JAF is an acronym from the French words for Legal, Administrative and Financial Affairs (Judiciaire, Administrative, Financière). The JAF Group consists of the President and the Vice-President of the CSO and five other delegates elected from the members of the CSO.

It prepares the work of the CSO and carries out tasks assigned to it by the CSO. The CSO may delegate decision-making to JAF Group on clearly defined items.

For working methods and rules for appointment of members of JAF. (see *Annex C - Working Methods for the JAF Group and Annex D - Procedure for appointing members of JAF*).

III. COST National Coordinator (CNC)

One CSO member from each country acts as a COST National Coordinator (CNC). The CNC liaises between the scientists and institutions in his/her country and the COST Secretariat and the COST Office.

IV. Domain Committees (DC)

The Domain Committees form the principal scientific level of COST and provide an expert interface between the CSO and scientists operating in the

various scientific fields (Domains). The DCs are composed of 1 expert per country nominated by the CNCs.

ROLE OF THE DOMAIN COMMITTEE:

- DCs are responsible for the quality control of Action proposals. They oversee the implementation of the Actions and provide the Assessment, Monitoring and Final Evaluation of Actions (*see COST doc. 203/07 - Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions*).
- DCs are also responsible for strategic science activities in their Domain.

The model terms of reference of DCs are given in *Annex E - Terms of Reference for the mandate of a Domain Committee*.

V. Management Committees (MC)

Each Action is supervised and coordinated by a Management Committee. It is composed of up to 2 experts nominated by each signatory country through the CNC.

The MC is responsible for the planning, implementation and coordination of the work to be carried out during the lifetime of the Action within its budget allocations. The scientific work of the Actions is organised through Working Groups (WGs).

VI. COST Secretariat and the COST Office

The Secretariat-General of the Council of the EU provides the secretarial services for the CSO and JAF Group. Under an agreement between the CSO and ESF, the latter operates the COST Office which provides the scientific secretariat for the Domain Committees and Actions' Management Committees.

9 - Financing of COST Activities

I. Financing of COST Activities from the EU Framework Programme

Most of the activities of COST are financed through a contract between the European Commission and ESF from a specific line within the EU Research Framework Programme. The COST budget is able to finance the activities of MCs, WGs and DCs, which can include the following items:

- travel expenses and daily allowances for delegates to meetings;
- workshops/conferences;
- short term scientific missions (STSMs) - inter-laboratory exchanges;
- training schools
- Action Grants
- publications and dissemination;
- high level research conferences organised jointly with ESF;
- studies, reviews, assessments, strategic activities
- special provision for research from “near neighbors” countries.

(For details, see Financial Instruments)

II. The COST Fund

The 1970 exchange of letters that led to the setting of the CSO also created the COST Fund. Every State that joined COST has to pay its share into the Fund. Constitutions are determined mainly in the light of the economic strength of the State concerned i.e. on the basis of its GDP. The fund is administrated by the COST Secretariat of the Council. Although the fund is used mainly to finance the facility for meetings of the CSO and its sub-committees interpretation costs and public relation activities, it may also be used to support specific CSO initiatives.

10 - Conflict of Interest, Gender Statements and status of researcher

COST complies fully with the ethical guidelines applicable in the EU Research Framework Programme. COST has also adopted the following Statement on Conflict of Interest:

In the case of the assessment of proposals for COST Actions, Domain Committee members and other assessors should not involve themselves in the assessment of proposals in which they have a personal or financial

interest. This also applies in the case of proposals involving colleagues from the same institute or university department. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. the uniqueness of expertise), such a bar may be waived with the agreement of the other members involved, if the interest is declared and considered not to compromise the potential decision.

Evidence of contravention of these guidelines with respect to bias or interest may result in notification to the appropriate COST National Coordinator and the possible removal of the member from the Domain Committee.

Similar rules apply to COST Action Management Committee especially in relation to decisions on awards within Actions budgets, especially STSMs (recognizing that STSMs are missions between institutions within an Action but good practice still needs to be observed).

These rules also apply for the monitoring of Actions and their Final Evaluations.

All participants in COST should follow good practice in terms of a code of conduct and should not plagiarise or copy or use material in any unauthorised manner and should respect the rights and confidentiality of their colleagues, including IPR.

COST encourages gender balance, i.e. the involvement of female participants at all levels of the COST system, especially in Domain Committees and Actions' Management Committees. The COST Office provides annual monitoring reports to CSO on genders representation.

COST also practices an *open door* policy. The activities the COST Office supports are open and Actions should pay particular attention to encourage the younger members of the research community to attend the meetings, workshops and conferences that they organize. To promote this *open door* policy, Actions can apply for meeting support to offset the normal costs of organizing an event. As a result, the COST Office does not expect any charge to be levied for attending the scientific sessions of a COST meeting. Note, however, that participants may be asked to pay a fee to cover the provision of refreshment and meals, and lodging, where these have to be provided on site.

For meeting participants, a distinction is made between **participants**, **eligible participants** and persons **entitled for reimbursement**. The **participants** are all of the people who attend a COST meeting. Among these participants, a certain number will be selected by the Management Committee from the **eligible participants** and approved by the MC Chair as **entitled for reimbursement**. This *entitlement* means that COST will coordinate travel, meals and accommodation necessary to attend a COST event.

The rates of reimbursement are strictly limited to the maxima laid down in the rules for reimbursement. This is to ensure that all entitled participants receive reimbursement for the costs of participation to a COST event.

COST dispenses public funds and it is expected to make good use of them. The COST Office is subject to regular audits and has to be prepared to fully justify the payments it makes. The COST Office, therefore, may ask for clarification or further justification on occasion. It reserves the right to make spot checks with institutions, universities and firms whose employees it reimburses to check possible double payments. A constant objective is to simplify the system, to minimize the amount of paperwork, and to reimburse people as quickly as possible. Regularly reviews are carried out on these procedures.

The members of the COST Actions are strongly encouraged to note and implement the *“Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”* (see <http://www.europa.eu.int/eracareers/europeancharter>).

Annex A: Working Methods of the Committee of Senior Officials

163rd CSO meeting on 23/24 November 2005
COST Document 326/05

Article 1

The Committee of Senior Officials (hereinafter referred to as the CSO)¹ consists of two delegates from each COST Member State designated by their Government, one of them generally being the COST National Coordinator.

Notice of appointments or replacements of delegates shall be sent to the Secretariat² who will notify the President³ as well as the Governments of the COST Member States.

Article 2

The Council of the European Union, represented by its General Secretariat, and the European Commission are also represented at meetings of the CSO.

The COST Office⁴ shall be in attendance at the meetings of the CSO.

The CSO may decide to hear any other person or organisation.

Article 3

The CSO shall be chaired by the President or, if necessary, by the Vice-President. The President and the Vice-President will be elected by a majority of all COST Member States for a period of three years.

The President is responsible for the overall guidance of the work of the CSO while the Secretariat ensures its day-to-day management.

¹ The Terms of Reference of the CSO, set out in two exchange of letters (4 November 1969 and 24 July 1970), were confirmed and extended by the Ministerial Conference of 22/23 November 1971.

² See Article 10.

³ See Article 3.

⁴ The main functions and responsibilities of the COST Office are set out in doc. COST 262/02.

Article 4

The CSO shall establish a core group called JAF⁵ from amongst its members. JAF shall be chaired by the President of the CSO and shall include the Vice-President and five other members of the CSO proposed by the President and appointed⁶ by the CSO for a maximum period of three years. The President, Vice-President and Members shall all be from different COST Member States. The mandates of the Members will be non renewable and scheduled so that at least two of the Members' mandates will expire every year.

The Council of the European Union, represented by its General Secretariat and the European Commission are also represented at meetings of JAF.

The COST Office shall be in attendance at the meetings of JAF.

The President may invite other delegations to participate in the meetings of JAF.

JAF shall prepare the work of the CSO and shall carry out tasks assigned to it by the CSO. All items on the agenda for a CSO meeting shall be examined in advance by JAF unless the CSO decides otherwise. JAF shall, with the assistance of the Secretariat and the COST Office, ensure optimal presentation of dossiers to the CSO.

All JAF documents concerning matters to be decided by the CSO shall normally be distributed to CSO delegations two weeks before they are discussed in JAF so that all delegations have the possibility to give advance comments to JAF.

JAF shall meet at least three weeks before each CSO meeting to prepare the CSO meetings and may hold other meetings as needed. JAF can hold its meetings as virtual meetings by electronic means.

Article 5

The CSO may, when necessary, nominate rapporteurs and establish ad hoc working groups of limited duration. The proceedings of these working groups may be informal and under the responsibility of the Chair of each working group.

⁵ Groupe des affaires juridiques, administratives et financières (Working Group on Legal, Administrative and Financial Affairs)

⁶ The procedure for appointing members of JAF is set out in document COST 341/04, Annex 3, p.22.

Article 6

The CSO normally meets three times a year. Each meeting is convened by the Secretariat on the initiative either of the President or of at least nine COST Member States. The CSO may hold additional meetings when necessary.

At least once a year, normally in connection with a regular CSO meeting, the CSO will meet with the Chairs of the COST Technical Committees⁷ or their representatives.

Article 7

The President shall draw up the provisional agenda of each meeting, which shall be submitted to delegations at least two weeks before the CSO meeting together with documents relating to items of the agenda.

Documentation to be submitted to the CSO shall include, where appropriate, a brief summary highlighting the key issues on which a decision of the CSO is required. Documentation will be submitted in English, French and German as a rule. Where documents in these three languages are not available, a decision can only be taken if no delegation objects.

The agenda will be approved by the CSO at the beginning of each meeting. Agenda items for which the essential documents have been submitted to the delegations later than two weeks before the meeting can only be decided upon in the meeting if no delegation objects.

Article 8

The presence of delegations of more than two-third of COST Member States is required to enable the CSO to take decisions. When a vote is taken, the President, assisted by the Secretariat, checks that there is a quorum.

A delegation which is prevented from attending the meeting may express its opinion in a written format to the Secretariat or arrange to be represented by another delegation. Where a vote is taken that delegation may act on behalf of the delegation it is representing.

Consensus^{8 9} is required for decisions regarding:

- the language regime in COST,
- admission of new COST Member States,

⁷ Domain Committees as from 1 June 2006 (doc. COST 325/05).

⁸ Doc. 6251/98 : Contribution from the Council Legal Service

⁹ No single member can alone block a decision by the CSO.

- any issue with financial implications for Member States' contributions to the COST Fund, as, for instance, launching calls for Funds or creation of a new Fund; and
- modification of the present Article.

For other decisions the CSO will normally seek consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the President may proceed to a voting procedure where every delegation present or represented shall have one vote. In this case a decision shall require that 3/4 of the COST Member States are in favour.

Decisions of the CSO may also be adopted by means of a written procedure, if the number of replies is sufficient to meet the quorum mentioned in the first paragraph of this article.

For this purpose, the text of the proposal for a decision shall be circulated in writing to all members of the CSO with a time limit within which members must give their agreement on the proposal in its entirety.

Any member of the CSO may, in the course of the written procedure, request that the proposal be discussed in a scheduled CSO meeting. In such a case, the matter shall be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the CSO, convened in accordance to Article 6.

A proposal on which no member of the CSO has made reservation and maintained it up to the time limit set for a written procedure and where the number of positive replies is sufficient to meet the quorum mentioned in the first paragraph of this article shall be deemed to be agreed by the CSO. The agreement shall be noted in the summary of conclusions of the next meeting.

The CSO may delegate decision-making to JAF and Technical Committees¹⁰ on clearly defined items. Decisions adopted by JAF or Technical Committees¹⁰ shall be communicated to the CSO and shall be noted in the summary of conclusions of the next meeting.

Article 9

A summary of conclusions of each meeting shall be prepared by the Secretariat and forwarded to the delegations of the CSO following the requirement of Article 7. It shall be submitted to the CSO for approval and shall be made public unless CSO decides otherwise¹¹.

¹⁰ Domain Committees as from 1 June 2006 (doc. COST 325/05).

¹¹ It is recalled that Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, published in OJ L145/43 of 31.05.2001, sets out provisions regarding public access to EU documents, which may serve as guidance to the CSO.

Article 10

The Secretariat of the CSO and JAF, as well as of ad hoc working groups referred to in Article 5, is provided by the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union.

Article 11

Correspondence to the CSO shall be sent to the Secretariat at the address of the Council of the European Union.

Documentation for delegations shall be made available to the delegates of the CSO by electronic means or as a hard copy, and upon request to the Permanent Representation or Mission of the COST Member States.

Article 12

These Working Methods shall be applied as from 25 November 2005 and supersede the document COST 245/04 approved by the CSO on 16/17 February 2004.

Annex B: Memorandum of the Status of the Cooperating State of Israel

Adopted by written procedure of 30 March 2000

- I. As from the 140th meeting of the COST Senior Officials Committee (hereinafter referred to as CSO), Israel will be a Cooperating State in the frame of COST.*
- II. Israel may participate fully in the CSO and its Subcommittees on the same basis as COST non-EU member states, without the right, however, to vote and will comply with the rules of procedure for the CSO.*
- III. In all other respects Israel will participate in COST on the same basis as COST non-EU member states associated to the Framework Programme, n.b:*
 - 1. Israel may participate fully in COST Domain Committees and will comply with the existing rules of procedure of each individual Domain Committee.*
 - 2. Israel participates in Management Committees with full rights.*
 - 3. Israel will pay a GDP-based contribution to the common COST Fund to begin with the establishment of the Fifth COST Fund.*
 - 4. Israel will nominate a COST National Coordinator.*
 - 5. Israel will have the right to forward initiatives for COST Actions to sign the MoUs for new actions and to participate in all ongoing COST Actions under the same conditions as COST Member States.*
 - 6. Israel has the right to host COST committee meetings according to current practice in COST.*

Annex C: Working Methods for the JAF Group

159th CSO meeting on 27/28 May 2004
COST Document 283/04

Article 1

JAF consists of the President and the Vice-President of the CSO and five other delegates from the CSO chosen so that all members of JAF come from different COST Member States. The Terms of Reference of JAF are set out in Article 4 in the Working Methods for the CSO and the procedure for the selection of its members is set out in a separate decision by the CSO.

Article 2

The Council of the EU, represented by its General Secretariat, and the European Commission are also represented at meetings of JAF.

The COST Office shall be in attendance at the meetings of JAF.

The President may invite other members of the CSO or other experts to participate in the meetings of JAF. JAF may decide to hear any other person or organisation. The CSO shall be informed of such participation.

Article 3

JAF shall be chaired by the President or, if necessary, by the Vice-President.

The President is responsible for the overall guidance of the work of JAF. The President may delegate preparatory work for meetings to individual members or groups of members of JAF.

Article 4

JAF shall prepare the work of the CSO and shall carry out tasks assigned to it by the CSO. All items on the agenda for a CSO meeting shall be examined in advance by JAF unless the CSO decides otherwise. JAF shall, with the assistance of the Secretariat and the COST Office, ensure optimal presentation of dossiers to the CSO.

A draft agenda of the JAF meeting as well as documents concerning matters to be decided by the CSO shall normally be distributed to CSO delegations two weeks before they are discussed in JAF so that all delegations have the possibility to give advance comments to JAF.

Article 5

When appropriate JAF makes recommendations to the CSO.

As a general rule JAF reaches decisions by consensus. However, no single member can alone block a decision by JAF.

The CSO may also delegate decision-making powers to JAF.

Article 6

JAF shall meet at least three weeks before each CSO meeting to prepare the CSO meetings and may hold other meetings as needed. JAF can hold its meetings as virtual meetings by electronic means.

Article 7

All recommendations by JAF to the CSO shall normally be sent to the CSO delegations no later than two weeks before the CSO meetings.

Decisions of JAF on items delegated to it by the CSO shall be entered in the Summary of Conclusions of the CSO meeting.

Article 8

The secretariat of JAF is provided by the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union.

Article 9

These Working Methods shall be applied as from 1 June 2004.

The Committee agreed on the 164th CSO held on 29-30 May 2006 that the following tasks are also assigned to the JAF:

- the decision on the provisional agendas for CSO meetings,
- the generation, evaluation and revision of documents relating to items on the provisional CSO agendas,
- the decision on prolongations of Actions and scrutiny of requests for participation of institutions from non-COST countries,
- monitoring the budget management and the COST Office activities (e.g. speeding up and simplifying administrative procedures; devolution to Actions through the grant system).

Annex D: Procedure for appointing members of JAF

160th CSO meeting on 1-2 December 2004
COST Document 309/04

1. *JAF consists of the President and the Vice-President of the CSO and five other delegates from the CSO appointed by the CSO so that all members of JAF come from different COST Member States.*
2. *The President and the Vice-President of the CSO are members of JAF for the duration of their terms in respective office.*
3. *When the new JAF was first constituted, two of the members were appointed for one year, two for two years and one for three years, to fulfil the requirements for rotation decided by the CSO. All new members are appointed in place of outgoing JAF members for a period of three years and cannot be re-appointed directly after the expiry of their term.*
4. *CSO members may propose candidates for membership of JAF. The President shall elaborate a list of candidates, after having ascertained that they are willing to join JAF. This list shall be communicated to CSO members at least two weeks before the meeting at which the appointment will take place. If the number of candidates equals the number of outgoing JAF members, the list of candidates must have the support of the majority of all COST Member States. Otherwise, new JAF members shall be elected by a majority of all COST Member States.*

Annex E: Terms of Reference for the mandate of a Domain Committee

164th CSO meeting on 29/30 March 2006

COST Document:
282/06 (BMBS),
284/06 (CMST),
285/06 (ESSEM),
283/06 (FA),
286/06 (FPS),
288/06 (ISCH),
287/06 (ICT),
297/06 (MPNS),
289/06 (TUD)

1. *The COST Domain Committee in the field of ".....", hereinafter referred to as "the DC", is established by the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) for a period of four years as of 1 June 2006.*
2. *At the end of this period, and on receipt of a report by the DC, the CSO shall decide whether to extend the mandate of the DC for an additional period of time and, in that case, review these Terms of Reference.*
3. *The CSO may at any time amend these Terms of Reference or terminate the mandate of this DC.*
4. *The DC will adopt its Rules of Procedure on the basis of the model set out in doc. COST 236/06 or in any new document amending or replacing it.*
5. *The DC is responsible for general oversight of COST activities within its Domain, including the development of strategic initiatives, and, in particular, for the quality assurance of new Action proposals, for monitoring progress of ongoing Actions and for evaluating completed Actions.*
6. *Within the framework of the COST Continuous Open Call and the two stage submission process, the DC will assess proposals for new COST Actions assigned to its Domain. This assessment will be in accordance with the "Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation of COST Actions" in the Vademecum. The DC will be responsible for the assessment and selection of preliminary proposals and for implementing quality control, through external peer review, of full proposals and for making recommendations for new Actions to the CSO.*

7. *COST Actions should:*
 - a. *have an innovative character and a high scientific/technological standard and contribute substantially to the coordination of research efforts;*
 - b. *give a strong and visible contribution to the European Society; through being of potential interest across Europe to scientific communities and research organisations; public environmental authorities; policy institutions; and to private companies and industry;*
 - c. *be based on careful considerations of interests, resources and budgetary consequences in the interested countries, as well as on assessments of the added value expected to be achieved through the coordination;*
 - d. *be broad and flexible enough to permit an interdisciplinary approach and later inclusion of activities not foreseen during the preparation, taking due consideration of point 10 below;*
 - e. *identify and take into account R&D efforts in other fora;*
 - f. *assist in the mobility of European young researchers.*

8. *When submitting a new Action to the CSO for approval:*
 - a. *the COST Office should ensure that the Technical Annex to the Memorandum of Understanding is structured as set out in the "Guide for Proposers of new COST Actions" in the Vademecum (<http://www.cost.esf.org/vademecum>);*
 - b. *the DC should provide the CSO with an Assessment Report and any additional information that the CSO may need for making a decision on the Action.*

9. *The DC will:*
 - a. *monitor the implementation of its COST Actions to ensure that the objectives as set out in their Memoranda of Understanding are met;*
 - b. *ensure coordination and exchange of information, as required, as well as complementarity and synergy between its Actions as well as with relevant activities in other Domain Committees in COST, the Community R&D programmes, EUREKA, the European Science Foundation, other European cooperative research frameworks and standardisation bodies and will appoint members of the DC as liaisons with these bodies, as appropriate;*
 - c. *take account of interdisciplinarity within its Domain and with other Domains and of new developments in its Domain.*

10. *The DC should give an opinion to the CSO on any proposal pertaining to one of its COST Actions and concerning:*
 - a. *an extension or prolongation of an Action;*

- b. *a change of the title or a modification of the objectives of an Action; or*
- c. *participation of an international organisation or an institute from a non-COST country in an Action.*

Such an opinion shall be given with full knowledge of the views of the Management Committee of the Action concerned; a decision on the proposal will then be taken by the CSO.

11. *The DC advises the Actions assigned to its Domain with regard to the scientific aspects within the objectives as laid down in the respective MoU.*
12. *The DC is responsible for the evaluation of its COST Actions on completion of each Action, according to the "Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation of COST Actions" in the Vademecum. (<http://www.cost.esf.org/vademecum>)*
13. *The DC should take all the measures it considers necessary to ensure efficient dissemination and/or exploitation of the results of its COST Actions, in close cooperation with the relevant Management Committees and taking account of the COST Policy on Dissemination and Monitoring the Impact of COST Results as set out in doc. COST 327/05 or in any new document amending or replacing it.*
14. *The DC will be represented by its Chair or by an appointed substitute at all meetings convened between the CSO President, the CSO or the JAF Group and the Chairs of the DCs.*
15. *The DC will report on its activities, as requested, to the CSO and will provide an overview report to the CSO at the end of each mandate period.*

Annex F: Rules of Procedure for a Domain Committee

164th CSO meeting on 29/30 March 2006
COST Document 236/06

Article 1

- 1.1 *The COST Domain Committee in the field of ".....", hereinafter referred to as "the DC", operates under the authority of the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), according to the Terms of Reference as set out by the CSO.*

Article 2

- 2.1 *The DC shall normally consist of one representative for each COST member country. Their appointment shall be notified by the National Coordinator of each COST member country to the COST Office by the electronic means provided.*
- 2.2 *In addition, the National Coordinator may nominate up to two additional experts with complementary expertise, taking into account the gender balance, who can replace the appointed member, if he/she is unable to attend the meeting, and who will form a 'pool' on which the DC can draw. Members of this pool may be invited to attend a DC meeting as invited experts, as appropriate and up to a limit as agreed with the COST Office, and may also serve as reviewers.*
- 2.3 *Membership of the DC should be for a period of up to four years and normally for a maximum of two full mandate periods (i.e. 8 years). The National Coordinator can substitute the appointed DC member at any time.*
- 2.4 *Nomination should take into account disciplinary balance and gender representation. The profile of a DC member as formulated in doc. COST 273/04 or in any new document amending or replacing it should be considered as guideline for nomination of DC members.*

Article 3

- 3.1 *A quorum of the majority of the member countries having nominated delegates should be present to enable the DC to adopt decisions. However, in the case of election of the Chair and the Vice-Chair, at least two-thirds of the member countries which have nominated delegates should be represented.*

- 3.2 *As a general rule, decisions are taken by consensus¹. In cases where voting becomes necessary, the decision is obtained on the basis of a simple majority of the member countries present. Each member country has one vote. If appropriate, a secret ballot may be carried out and the votes shall be counted by the DC Secretariat. In the event of a tie, the procedure may be repeated once and, if there is still a tie, the Chair will have the casting vote.*
- 3.3 *Any direct personal interest of DC members in Actions or other matters under discussion should be declared at the beginning of the meeting and minuted. DC members having such direct personal interest should absent themselves during the discussion of such Actions, should refrain from voting and should abide by the COST 'Code of Conduct'².*

Article 4

- 4.1 *The DC shall elect, from among its members, a Chair and a Vice-Chair for the four-year mandate of the DC. The appointment of the Chair and the Vice-Chair may be renewed once for a maximum period of four years. The member country of the Chair may nominate a new national representative to substitute the elected Chair.*
- 4.2 *Where a Chair or Vice-Chair is replaced part way through a mandate, the term of office will coincide with the current mandate of the DC. The appointment may be renewed once for a maximum period of four years.*
- 4.3 *If the Chair is unable to attend, his/her place shall be taken by the Vice-Chair.*
- 4.4 *The Chair, Vice-Chair and other members appointed by the DC will form an “executive group” to act on the DC’s behalf. Such a group will keep all members of the DC informed about its meetings and conclusions.*

Article 5

- 5.1 *The DC shall be convened by the Chair normally two times a year. A maximum of four meetings a year may be convened, if funding can be provided by the COST Office. The meetings shall be held sufficiently in advance of the two months deadline to submit new Action proposals to the CSO.*
- 5.2 *It may also be convened at the request of at least four members.*

¹ No single country can alone block a decision.

² Doc. COST 319/04, point 2, as approved by the 160th meeting of the CSO.

- 5.3 *At least one meeting each year shall be held in Brussels, where the COST Office shall undertake the organisation of the meeting. The cost of the organisation of meetings elsewhere, except for travel and subsistence costs, shall be borne by the host country.*
- 5.4 *When meeting outside Brussels the DC and the local organisers should endeavour to hold a COST Information Day in the DC Domain in association with the DC meeting.*

Article 6

- 6.1 *The Secretariat of the DC shall be provided by the COST Office.*

Article 7

- 7.1 *Attendance at the meetings shall be strictly limited to members as well as to the appointed representatives of the Commission and to experts invited in connection with specific items on the agenda. Members of the CSO, liaisons from other DCs and representatives in the CSO from the Council Secretariat, the COST Office and the Commission may attend.*
- 7.2 *The information supplied by each delegation shall not be published without its agreement.*

Article 8

- 8.1 *The working languages of the Committee are English, French and German. Documents may be issued in only one of these languages, provided that all participants agree.*

Article 9

- 9.1 *All correspondence shall be dealt with by the COST Office which shall be responsible for all contacts with the Chair, Vice-Chair and members of the DC. The COST Office will receive a copy of all correspondence.*
- 9.2 *The COST Office will provide within one month after each DC meeting draft minutes, copies of which will be sent to all DC members, CNCs, the COST Secretariat, the Commission Contact Point(s) involved in the DC and the relevant Commission sector and any interested parties.*
- 9.3 *Documents to be distributed by the COST Office at the meetings will normally be available electronically a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the meeting.*
- 9.4 *The COST Office will maintain master copies of all documents, both hard copy and electronic.*