



# COST Action CA23138 - Port City Territories in Action: A Collaborative Laboratory for Inclusive Energy Transition (PACT)

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## Grant Awarding Strategy

This document outlines the **grant awarding strategy**<sup>1</sup> of the COST Action CA23138 - "*Port City Territories in Action: A Collaborative Laboratory for Inclusive Energy Transition*" (**PACT**).

The Grant Awarding Strategy may be amended by decision of the **Management Committee (MC)** as needed. The Action designates a **Grant Awarding Coordinator** and a **Grant Awarding Vice-Coordinator**. In this document, they are collectively referred to as **Grant Awarding Coordinators**.

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## 1. Types of Grants

This section describes the types of grants available in COST Actions, namely grants for Short-term Scientific Mission (STSM), Virtual Mobility (VM), participation in an ITC Conference or in a Dissemination Conference. The Action does not accept post-hoc applications for activities that have already taken place.

*Applicants should refer to the details of a particular call for applications to see which grants can be applied for in any particular call.*

Category	Grant Type
Mobility of Researchers and Innovators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Short-term Scientific Mission (STSM)</li></ul>
Presentations at Conferences organised by Third Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Young Researcher and Innovator Conference</li><li>• Inclusiveness Target Countries Conference</li><li>• Dissemination Conference</li></ul>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/01/COST-Grant-Awarding-user-guide.pdf>

## 2. Grant Awarding Process

Action participants registered in e-COST can apply for grants within the criteria and deadlines set by an Open Call for Applications. Grants are open to participants outside the Action as well.

### 2.1 - Application periods and call for applications.

The Core Group prepares Open Calls for Applications and publishes them on the on the PACT COST website: <https://www.pact-costaction.eu/calls-grants>.

The Core Group together with the MC define the content and timing of the Open Calls for Applications, sets the evaluation criteria, defines the mandatory and, if required by the Action MC, additional information/documentation that shall be provided by applicants in their application.

The Open Call for Applications contains information on the types of grants which are awarded through the call, the time period of events (e.g., conference, STSM) for which a grant award is sought, the deadlines for application submission and approval,, and the funds budgeted for the call.

Note: If the Core Group decides to specify additional and/or different evaluation criteria for particular calls, these will also be contained in the Open Call for Applications (otherwise applicants are requested to refer to the criteria listed in the Action's general Grant Awarding Strategy, see section 4 and 5).

**Application.** Applicants submit their applications via e-COST.

Templates for grant application and reporting Grant type Templates (Application, Report):

#### **Short-term Scientific Mission (STSM)**

[https://www.cost.eu/STSM\\_GrantApplication](https://www.cost.eu/STSM_GrantApplication)

[http://www.cost.eu/STSM\\_report\\_template](http://www.cost.eu/STSM_report_template)

#### **Young Researcher and Innovator Conference**

<https://www.cost.eu/YRICG-application-template>

<https://www.cost.eu/YRICG-report-template>

#### **Inclusiveness Target Countries Conference**

<https://www.cost.eu/ITCG-application-template>

<https://www.cost.eu/ITCG-report-template>

#### **Dissemination Conference**

[https://www.cost.eu/DisseminationConference\\_GrantApplication](https://www.cost.eu/DisseminationConference_GrantApplication)

[https://www.cost.eu/DisseminationConference\\_Report](https://www.cost.eu/DisseminationConference_Report)

## 2.2 - Review of Applications:

After the deadline set by the Open Call for Applications, the submitted applications will be subject to an initial screening by the Grant Awarding Coordinators, to verify that:

- the application concerns a type of grant award that is included in the call
- the application is complete, and all required documents are submitted
- the application is submitted within the deadline set by an Open Call for Applications
- the time period of the event falls within the time period specified in the call for applications

Applications that fail to meet these screening criteria will be rejected.

Applications that pass the initial screening will be evaluated by the PACT Action's Grant Awarding Committee (GAC) in accordance with the criteria set by the Action's Management Committee (see Sections 4 and 5 below). Each member of the must cast a vote on every application. An application is approved if a majority of GAC members vote in favour.

GAC members submit their votes in written form within the deadline specified in the Open Call for Applications to the Grant Awarding Coordinators. The two Grant Awarding Coordinators collect the votes and inform the applicant of the final decision via the e-COST platform by either accepting or rejecting the application.

In cases where an application is submitted by a GAC member, or where a Working Group (WG) Leader serves as the applicant's academic mentor, supervisor or head of department, the concerned evaluator will be recused from the decision-making process. The Grant Awarding Coordinators will appoint an alternative evaluator from another Working Group to ensure impartiality.

After the MC has approved the grant awards, applicants are notified of the decision through e-COST.

## 2.3 - Grant Awarding Committee (GAC)

**Tasks.** The PACT Action's Grant Awarding Committee (GAC) reviews grant applications received by the Action, in line with the criteria set by the Action's Management Committee.

**Members of the GAC.** The GAC consists of two of the Working Group Leaders, the Action Chair, the Action Vice-Chair, and the Science Communication Coordinator.

The places of the two Working Group Leaders in the GAC are rotated bases between all of the Working Group Leaders. For example, for the second year of PACT COST, WG1 and WG2

Group Leaders will be part of the committee. For the third year of PACT COST, WG3 and WG4 Group Leaders will be part of the committee, and for the fourth year of PACT COST, WG5 and WG1 Group Leaders will take on this role.

#### **2.4 - After the Activity (i.e. conference, STSM) for which the grant is sought.**

Once the activity has ended, the grantee submits the required reports and relevant documentation in e-COST within 30 days after the end date of the activity or 15 days after the end of the Grant Period, whichever date comes first. The timeframe may be shorter as per the Grant Holder / Grant Awarding Coordinator's request to meet reporting deadlines. The Grant Awarding Coordinator reviews the report to verify the validity and content of the reports, and coordinates the MC's rejection or approval of the reports. After the MC's decision, the Grant Awarding Coordinator records the approval or rejection of the report on behalf of the MC in e-COST. Only Action participants (i.e. individuals who are members in at least one of the PACT Action's WGs) can receive grant award payments. Once the report is approved by the MC and all supporting documents are submitted, the Grant Holder Manager processes and records the payment of the grant.

#### **2.5 - Payment of the Grant:**

Grants are paid by the Grant Holder Institution after the completion of the activity and the approval of all required report/documentation. STSMs grantees may request up to 50% prepayment of the approved grant. This amount is subject to availability of funds and approval by the Grant Holder Institution. The request of prepayment shall be submitted to the Grant Holder Manager. (See COST Level C Annotated Rules, section A22.3).

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### **3. Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM)**

According to the COST Level C Annotated Rules<sup>2</sup>, "Short-Term Scientific Mission consists in a visit to a host organization located in a different country than the country of affiliation (for Affiliation, see Article 4.1.1.1.1) by a researcher or innovator for specific work to be carried out and for a determined period of time." (section A2-1.1.1.)

A Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) consists in a visit by a researcher or innovator to a host organization for specific work to be carried out and for a determined period of time. The host organization must be located in a different country than the country of affiliation of the researcher or innovator. The grant provides a contribution towards traveling, accommodation and subsistence expenses, implementation of the project, delivery of the report to the COST Action MC and overall effort. The amount of the grant is determined by the Action's MC. The maximum amount is 4,000€ per grant (see COST C Level Annotated Rules, section A2-3).

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<sup>2</sup> COST Level C Annotated Rules:

[www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/02/COST-094-21-V2.0-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C.pdf](http://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/02/COST-094-21-V2.0-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C.pdf)

## 1.1 - Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM)

### **STSM – supporting documentation**

- STSM Grant Application (based on e-COST template)
- Confirmation of the host on the agreement from the host institution in receiving the applicant
- Other documents required by the Action

#### **4.1 - How to apply**

The applicant completes the grant application form in e-COST (on the “Grant applications” tab or <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants/add>) and uploads any additional documents that are required.

For STSM grants, the following documents are required:

1. The COST STSM application form, available at <https://eservices.cost.eu/activity/grants>. In the section “Expected outputs and contribution to the Action MoU objectives and deliverables” in this application form, applicants must specify how the proposed STSM links to the topic of at least one of the Action’s WGs and to the scientific goals of the Action.
2. A letter of motivation
3. The applicant’s CV
4. A letter of invitation to the applicant from the host (i.e. a researcher affiliated at the host institution)
5. For PhD students and postdocs: A letter of support from their supervisor or head of department
6. Recommended: A letter of support from the applicant’s WG leader/co-leader or a Core Group member that documents the applicant’s active participation in the Action’s WGs or other activities (e.g., task forces, organization of Action activities, etc.).

All required documents must be submitted before the deadline. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

#### **4.2 - Evaluation Criteria for STSM Grants**

The proposed STSM must contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action CA23138 - Port City Territories in Action: A Collaborative Laboratory for Inclusive Energy Transition (PACT), and fit within the scope of one or more of the PACT Action’s Working Groups. STSM proposals will be evaluated in two steps, according to the following criteria:

##### **Step 1: Initial screening**

Evaluation criteria:

- the application is complete, and all required documents are submitted
- the application is submitted prior to the deadline
- the time period of the STSM falls within the time period specified in the call for applications

Applications that fail to meet these criteria will be rejected. Applications that meet these criteria will be reviewed.

## **Step 2: Review**

Evaluation criteria:

- Relationship of the STSM with collaborative work between PACT Action participants, especially work on deliverables of the PACT Action (e.g., publications, policy briefs).
- Scientific quality of the project for which the STSM grant is sought
- Feasibility of the STSM / the work that is planned during the STSM
- Importance/necessity of the STSM for achieving the goals of the scientific project
- Connection of the STSM and of the project's scientific output to the aim of the PACT COST Action
- Connection of the STSM and of the project's scientific output with the theme of a specific working group of the Action

When several proposals meet the evaluation criteria outlined above, priority will be given to:

- applicants who actively participate in the PACT Action
- proposals by young researchers and innovators, women, researchers and innovators from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) and researchers and innovators with disabilities
- proposals from applicants who have not previously received an individual grant (STSM, VM, or conference grants) from the PACT Action
- ensuring a balance of grants awarded to members of different working groups

The Management Committee reserves the right to specify additional and/or different criteria for particular calls.

### **4.3- After the STSM**

The grantee submits the required reports and relevant documentation in e-COST within 30 days after the end date of the STSM or 15 days after the end of the Grant Period, whichever date comes first. The timeframe may be shorter as per the Grant Holder / Grant Awarding Coordinator's request to meet reporting deadlines.

The report is submitted on e-COST. The grantee completes the report template on e-COST, and uploads any additional documents that are required. For STSM grants, the following additional documents are required:

- The completed report template available on the e-COST platform.
- An official confirmation by a representative of the host institution (e.g. the researcher who hosted the grantee, or the head of department) of the successful execution of the STSM. The confirmation must state the dates of the grantee's stay at the host institution.

If results from the STSM are published (e.g. in a scientific journal) or presented at any national or international conference (oral or poster), it is mandatory to acknowledge the support of the COST Action CA23138 according to the COST guidelines on visual identity. Posters should also include the COST and EU logos as specified in the guidelines on visual identity.

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#### 4. Grants for presentations at Conferences organised by Third Parties

**ITC Conference Grant:** According to the COST Level C Annotated Rules, an “ITC Conference Grant funds an oral presentation of their own work within the scope of the Action by an Action Participant affiliated to a legal entity located in an Inclusiveness Target Country / Near Neighbour Country in a high-level conference fully organized by a third party, i.e. not organized nor co-organized by the COST Action.” (section A2-1.2.1.)

**Dissemination Conference Grant:** According to the COST Level C Annotated Rules, a “Dissemination Conference consists in an oral presentation by an Action Participant of the work of the Action in high level conferences fully organized by a third party, i.e. not organized nor co-organized by the COST Action.” (section A2-1.2.2.)

**Young Researcher and Innovator Conference Grant:** According to the COST Level C Annotated Rules, a “YRI Conference grant funds a presentation (poster/oral presentation) of their own work by a Young Researcher and Innovator (YRI) in a high-level conference fully organized by a third party, i.e. not organized nor co-organized by the COST Action..” (section A2-1.2.3.)

**Scope.** Grants for presentations at Conferences organised by Third Parties provide a contribution towards traveling, accommodation and subsistence expenses, registration fee, printing of scientific poster and overall effort. The amount of the grant is determined by the Action's MC. The maximum amount is 2,500€ per grant for face-to-face conferences or 500€ per grant for virtual conferences (see COST C Level Annotated Rules, section A2-3).

## 4.1 - How to apply

The applicant completes the grant application form in e-COST (on the “Grant applications” tab or <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants/add>) and uploads any additional documents that are required.

For conference grants, the following documents are required:

1. The appropriate COST conference grant application form (for ITC conference or dissemination conference), available at <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>.
2. A letter of motivation. This should include information on the relevance of the conference for the scientific aims of the PACT Action and for one or more of the WGs. In addition, applicants for ITC Conference grants should describe the importance of the conference with regard to the potential impact on the future research and career. Applicants for Dissemination Conference grants should explain how the conference presentation aligns with the PACT Action’s Science Communication Plan.
3. The applicant’s CV
4. Copy of the abstract of the accepted presentation (for ITC Conference grants: oral or poster presentation; for Dissemination Conference grant: oral presentation)
5. Acceptance letter from the conference organizers (e.g. email confirming that the presentation is accepted)
6. For PhD students and post docs: A letter of support from their supervisor or head of department
7. Recommended: A letter of support from the applicant’s WG leader/co-leader or a Core Group member that documents the applicant’s active participation in the Action’s WGs or other activities (e.g., task forces, organization of Action activities, etc.).

All required documents must be submitted before the deadline. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

## 4.2- Evaluation Criteria for conference grants.

The proposed conference presentation must contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action CA23138 - Port City Territories in Action: A Collaborative Laboratory for Inclusive Energy Transition (PACT), and fit within the scope of one or more of the PACT Action’s Working Groups. Proposals will be evaluated in two steps, according to the following criteria:

### Step 1: Initial screening

Evaluation criteria:

- the application is complete, and all required documents are submitted
- the application is submitted prior to the deadline

- the time period of the conference falls within the time period specified in the call for applications Applications that fail to meet these criteria will be rejected. Applications that meet these criteria will be reviewed.

## Step 2: Review

Evaluation criteria:

- Relationship of the conference presentation with collaborative work between PACT Action participants, especially work on deliverables of the PACT Action (e.g., publications, policy briefs).
- Scientific quality of the project that will be presented
- Connection of the presentation to the aim of the PACT Action
- Connection of the presentation with the theme of a specific working group of the Action
- For ITC Conference grants: potential for impact on the applicant's career
- For Dissemination Conference grants: alignment with the PACT Action's Science Communication Strategy When several proposals meet the evaluation criteria outlined above, priority will be given to
- Applicants who actively participate in the PACT Action
- Proposals by young researchers and innovators, women, researchers and innovators from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) and researchers and innovators with disabilities
- Proposals from applicants who have not previously received an individual grant (STSM, VM, or conference grants) from the PACT Action
- Ensuring a balance of grants awarded to members of different working groups

The Management Committee reserves the right to specify additional and/or different criteria for particular calls.

**The conference presentation.** It is mandatory to acknowledge the support of the PACT COST Action (CA23138) during the presentation, according to the COST guidelines on visual identity. Powerpoint presentations and posters should include the COST and EU logos as specified in the guidelines on visual identity.

### **4.3 - After the conference**

The grantee submits the required reports and relevant documentation in e-COST within 30 days after the end date of the conference or 15 days after the end of the Grant Period, whichever date comes first. The timeframe may be shorter as per the Grant Holder / Grant Awarding Coordinator's request to meet reporting deadlines. The report is submitted on e-COST. The grantee completes the report template on e-COST, and uploads any additional documents that are required. For conference grants, the following additional documents are required:

- Completed report template (available on e-COST)

- Certificate of attendance
- The programme of the conference or book of abstracts / proceedings indicating the presentation of the grantee (ITC Conference: oral presentation or poster; Dissemination Conference: oral presentation)
- Copy of the given presentation (ITC Conference: oral presentation or poster; Dissemination Conference: oral presentation)