

Guidelines for the dissemination of COST Action results and outcomes



Guidelines for the Dissemination of COST Action Results and Outcomes

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Introduction

The objective of the COST Framework is to strengthen Europe's research and innovation capacities by providing networking opportunities for researchers, engineers and scholars aiming at leveraging national public and private research investments. Given the public financing, it is important to ensure that the scientific and technology related results, outcomes and impacts are widely shared with the respective research and innovation community, including industry, as well as with EU and national policy makers setting the research agendas of the future.

1. By consequence, knowledge sharing, communication and dissemination should be placed at the heart of every COST Action and this from an early stage of the project on.
2. Dissemination activities are not only intending to deepen the impact of research results and outcomes and thereby to strengthen the respective Science & Technology fields, dissemination also helps raising the profile of the COST framework as a whole.

In an era of strong pressure on budgets and increased budget control, it is important to actively 'promote' the COST Actions' results and to make them tangible for a broad range of audiences.

There are a variety of dissemination options and communication opportunities, from scientific publications to more interactive forms of communications, such as social media. Independently from the tools and channels chosen, it is highly important to systematically create synergies between COST Actions and communication about the COST framework. Any success story in context of a COST Action will not only promote the Action itself and thereby each Action participant, but also the COST framework.

These *Guidelines for the Dissemination of COST Action Results and Outcomes* are intended to encourage, guide and support COST Actions, when appropriate, to share their research results and outcomes with the relevant audiences. These audiences are most likely the European research community (public and/or private organisations), national and European policy makers and/or, if relevant, the general public or other specific stakeholder groups (e.g. civil societies, industry and interest groups).

This document complements the COST Implementation Rules and the COST Vademecum.



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Tips and tricks for communicating COST Action activities, results and outcomes

Components of a dissemination plan

There are four key questions setting up the basis for an effective dissemination plan:

1. What are the final communication objectives? What do you want to achieve?
 - Share research results and outcomes
 - Stimulate new research or projects
 - Change views
 - Influence decision-making
 - Raise awareness

2. Who are the target groups?
 - Research communities across Europe in various science and technology fields
 - Policy makers (EU or national level, regional institutions and government authorities)
 - Enterprises (industry and SMEs)
 - General public

Media will always be a lever to reaching specific target groups. It is not a target group per se.

3. What is the key message?

Adapting your message to the audience is vital for efficient communication.

4. What are the appropriate channels? How do you want to communicate your messages?

Audience	Channel	Channels & Tools
Scientific communities, industry stakeholders	Online	Websites (COST Action, university, conferences, etc.), social media, blogs, e-newsletters, e-books, online scientific journals, university newspapers/internal newsletters, scientific libraries.
	Events	Exhibitions, conferences, workshops, seminars, etc.
	Media	Articles in scientific magazines/blogs
	Print	Scientific publications
Policy makers	Online	Articles in targeted EU-media,
	Events	Workshops, conferences
	Media	EU-media (e.g. EurActiv, research.eu, the Parliament, Science Business, Financial Times), science magazines, etc. Articles in national and/or regional media. Interviews, success stories, press releases, fact sheets
General public	1-2-1	Briefings and targeted workshops
	Online	Social media, videos, educational material
	Events	Info days, lectures
	Media	Interviews, success stories, press releases, articles for national and/or regional press: dailies, weeklies, television

The above overview gives indications only. It is not complete;

When appropriate, a copy of COST branded scientific publications should always be shared with the respective EU and national policy makers responsible for this area of research. In some cases it could be useful to make a dedicated summary, understandable for non-specialist audiences.

It is important to consider short versions of longer document, such as summaries, fact sheets, infographics.

It is recommended to send a copy of COST branded scientific publications to renowned scientific libraries such as the Public Library of Science (PLOS) or others. Ideally, scientific publications (books) should have an ISSN number.

Dissemination via partners and multipliers

It is highly interesting to rely on partners and leverage multipliers who can help spread your messages across their channels:

- Your universities, public and private institutes
- Industry and other associations, not-for-profit organisations
- COST (website, newsletter, social media accounts)
- EU science communication channels, such as EU research.eu
- Etc.

Media relations

Media play an important part in communicating the COST Action's objectives and results to a large array of audiences. In the case of mainstream media, COST Actions should frame the content of their story by first defining what is newsworthy about their activities and research: the societal issue(s) or challenge(s) that the COST Action is addressing: supplemented by facts and figures, the main results, objectives, risks or benefits in a clear, in a simple manner, avoiding scientific jargon outcomes.

Press releases need to reflect the "news" factor. Press releases are written in the style of an "inversed pyramid", containing the most relevant information in the top paragraphs.

COST Actions should involve their respective press or communications offices, in universities, private or public research institutes, etc. in order to help them draft their press releases and to provide advice on additional dissemination channels.

Open Access

Open Access refers to making research outcomes available in a digital format, free of charge, and increasingly free of most copyright and licensing restrictions and of technical or other barriers to access, such as digital rights management or requirements to register to access.

Open Access is vital for research and innovation communities around the world, which is why COST encourages freely available research results and knowledge, for the benefit of the research community and citizens.

COST acknowledges that different disciplinary fields of research have different publishing traditions and the implementation of Open Access requirements should not be done in haste or in an overly directive manner. COST also acknowledges that Editors can play a key role as "gatekeepers", ensuring quality and prestige to a publication. However, whenever possible and relevant, COST encourages Open Access in order to promote the availability of results published thanks to COST funding, as a way to boost the visibility and accessibility of publicly funded European science and technology worldwide. More specifically, COST facilitates Open Access



publishing strategies by COST Actions and participates in their funding, according to COST rules and principles on dissemination activities.

Specific provisions linked to the management, sharing or exploitation of Intellectual Property that may rise from a COST Action shall be defined by the respective COST Action participants, and lies within their sole discretion/responsibility.

COST corporate identity

In order to ensure a clear and uniform presence of the COST brand and to acknowledge COST as a funding framework, all material (be it print, digital, audiovisual) produced by a COST Action, needs to respect the COST corporate identity outlined below and comply with the requirements in this section. Scientific, peer-reviewed articles do not fall in this category. Here COST needs simply to be acknowledged.

Reminder: Communication material not in line with the corporate identity requirements and/or not acknowledging COST funding, will not be eligible for payment.

At the end of this section (cf. “Branding overview: applications”), it is indicated which corporate identity elements have to feature on what type of dissemination material. Please consider this section before entering production.

The main elements of the COST visual identity are its logo, the EU emblem and the corporate colours.

COST Logo

The COST logo consist of the acronym for European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST), the symbol reflecting the idea of network or community and the full name. The logo needs to contain all three parts. No other designs or elements can replace or accompany this logo.

There are two versions of the logo. A blue version for reproductions on white or light backgrounds and a white version for reproduction on dark backgrounds. The reference version is the blue version.

Blue version:

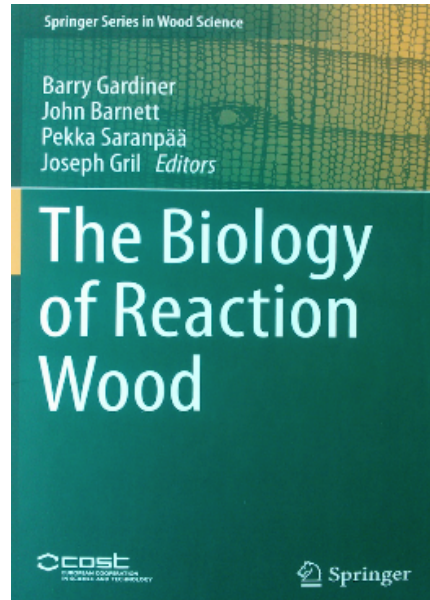
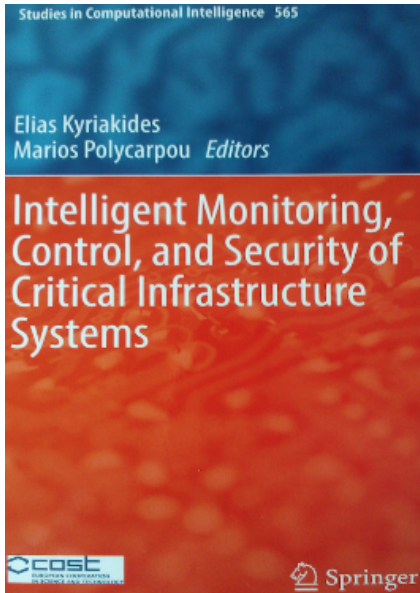


A white version:





Both logos, the blue and white version should not be represented in a frame as shown below (left side). Please reproduce the COST logo as shown in the example on **the right side**.



The logo is downloadable in all formats (.ai, .jpg), for both print and online material: www.cost.eu/visualidentity.

Reproduction quality and visibility

Please use the logos downloadable from the COST website (high resolution) and do not copy them from any other place. Reproduction quality needs to be ensured.

In order to ensure the logo's visibility, the minimum logo size for print is 5 cm in length. Online, the logo must not be smaller than 36 pixels at 72 ppi.

Logo colour codes

- blue C87 M55 Y28 K8 | R42 G103 B139 | Pantone: 3025PC (for light backgrounds)
- white for dark backgrounds (C0; M0; Y0; K0)

Logo use and positioning on the page

A minimum reproduction size of the COST logo and EU emblem needs to be guaranteed ensuring visibility and readability. The logo should be positioned on the left side of the cover or page.

Protected area - space around the logo

Always leave the logo some space to 'breath'. Ideally use white or neutral backgrounds. The COST logo must always stand apart from other visual elements, which is why it needs to have a protected area for both print and web use. An area equal to the height of the letter "C" will ensure readability.





Incorrect examples

The following **examples of incorrect logo use** are intended to indicate a proper use of the COST logo:

1. Do **not** recreate the logo image in any way, including changing the original fonts:



2. Do **not** distort the image or change its proportions



3. Do **not** reprint images from scans or add any dark or white backgrounds to the logo:



4. Do **not** modify the logo element configuration in any way



5. Do **not** print the logo too close to other elements.

6. Do **not** print on “busy” backgrounds:





- 7. Do **not** add accompanying text to the logo.
- 8. Do **not** reproduce the logo in a way that impedes readability:



- 9. Do **not** enlarge images from existing files - only vector images can be extended beyond 100%:



- 10. Do **not** reposition the logo at a different angle:



- 11. Do **not** add any special effects to the logo.
- 12. Do **not** use the logo as a decorative element (tiling):



- 13. Do **not** separate logo elements:



- 14. Do **not** change the logo colours:










EU Emblem

Downloadable in all formats, for both print and online material: www.cost.eu/visualidentity.
Instructions **on the use of the EU emblem are available on [this page](#)**.

The following sentence must accompany the EU emblem: “COST is supported by the EU Framework Programme Horizon 2020”

Corporate Colours

The main COST colours are as follows:

blue		C87 M55 Y28 K8 R42 G103 B139 Hex 2A678B Pantone 3025 PC	purple		C57 M84 Y37 K26 R105 G57 B93 Hex 69395D Pantone 518 PC	orange		C0 M66 Y95 K0 R244 G119 B41 Hex F47729 Pantone 158 PC
grey		C65 M56 Y52 K28 R86 G88 B91 Hex 56585B Pantone 425 PC	pink		C40 M100 Y30 K10 R150 G32 B103 Hex 962067 Pantone 683 PC			

The main colours can be used for the production of websites and other communication material created by COST Actions. Using this colour set ensures the COST brand recognition by creating a specific look and feel.

Boilerplates

Either of the two COST boilerplates (corporate descriptions) will be used, depending on the material it is meant for (see **Section Branding overview** below).

Short boilerplate

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a pan-European intergovernmental framework. Its mission is to enable break-through scientific and technological developments leading to new concepts and products and thereby contribute to strengthening Europe’s research and innovation capacities. www.cost.eu

Long boilerplate

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a pan-European intergovernmental framework. Its mission is to enable break-through scientific and technological developments leading to new concepts and products and thereby contribute to strengthening Europe’s research and innovation capacities.

It allows researchers, engineers and scholars to jointly develop their own ideas and take new initiatives across all fields of science and technology, while promoting multi- and interdisciplinary approaches. COST aims at fostering a better integration of less research intensive countries to the knowledge hubs of the European Research Area. The COST Association, an International not-for-profit Association under Belgian Law, integrates all management, governing and administrative



functions necessary for the operation of the framework. The COST Association has currently 36 Member Countries. www.cost.eu

Acknowledgement

The following sentence ensures a standard acknowledgement of COST funding:

“This article is based upon work from COST Action (name and/or initials), supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)”.

COST must also orally be acknowledged during all news media interviews, conferences and events where COST Action representatives give a public presentation or participate to a session or panel.

Branding requirements

Use the checklist below in order to profile the corresponding COST branding elements, depending on the dissemination material.

	COST Logo	EU emblem & text	Acknowledgement	Boilerplate	Link to COST website
Brochures	✓	✓	✓	✓ (short version)	✓
Flyers	✓	✓	✓	✓ (short version)	✓
Postcards	✓	✓	-	-	✓
Posters	✓	✓	-	-	✓
Websites	✓	✓	✓	✓ (long version)	✓
Videos	✓	✓		✓	✓
Papers or articles in scientific journals	-	-	✓	-	✓
Hardcover print material	✓	✓	✓	✓ (long version)	✓
Final Action dissemination online material	✓	✓	✓	✓ (long version)	✓

COST Action websites

COST Actions need to launch their websites within their first 6 months of existence and must be maintained for 2 years after the end date of the Action. Actions must provide their Science Officer with a functional link within their first year of activity. It is important that these websites – budgeted for up to EUR 9000 – are in line with market standards in terms of user-friendliness, design and content.

There must be only one website per COST Action, and one single URL and domain registered it (i.e. no multiple domain registrations).



In order to be eligible for funding (cf. COST Vademecum, link), COST Action websites must feature the following:

1. The COST logo, highly visible and present on all pages (preferably in the top-left corner of each page)
2. The EU emblem and corresponding text
3. The COST boilerplate and a link to the COST corporate website and Action page on COST website
4. A downloadable version of the Action's Memorandum of Understanding
5. Contact information and names of: Management Committee Chair and Vice Chair, COST Science Officer in charge of the Action. Content requires regular updates, at least every 3 months.
6. Clearly indicate the possibility and rules for joining the Action
7. A link to the relevant COST rules and guidelines on the COST website

Please do not post any official documents/templates/guidelines directly on the Action website as such documents are subject to change. Live links should be used pointing readers to official versions of COST documents always hosted on the COST website at www.cost.eu.

Other recommendations:

8. The homepage should clearly communicate the aim of the Action and ensure good cross-linking between web pages and other relevant sites
9. Link to similar COST Action websites
10. Link to the COST Action social media accounts
11. Consider the use of the ".eu" domain
12. Add keywords to webpage metadata and tools that search engines provide to optimise the site's visibility

Here are some examples of good practice: [IS1202](#) [BM1105](#) [TD1302](#).

COST Action websites will be monitored by the COST Association for their compliance with COST dissemination and branding guidelines.

Social media

Social media have a notable impact on how researchers work and communicate their findings. Blogging and social networking help researchers stay informed and enable trust, collaboration and critical thinking. This is why every Action could greatly benefit from developing their own social media presence and engage with peers, organisations as well as with COST. Designing an Action logo can help create a visual identity communicated via social media as well.

Scientific publications and articles

Scientific books and publications developed by COST Actions must be featuring all required branding elements. This is the case as well for publications published by scientific publishing houses such as Springer, Elsevier, etc.

In the case of hard cover and online publications, the COST logo must appear on the bottom left corner of the front cover. Please consider the protected area for readability and minimum sizes (see logo use in section about corporate identity elements). Please do not place the logo in a white frame, but use the appropriate blue or white version of the logo to ensure readability.



The logo must appear at least equal in size to all other logos on the front cover.

The main visual identity elements (COST logo, EU emblem and its text), the COST acknowledgement, website link and long boilerplate must show in a dedicated section in the beginning of the publication.

Peer reviewed, scientific articles published in scientific journals must only provide an acknowledgement of COST and do not require specific branding. “This article is based upon work from COST Action (name and/or initials), supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)”.

All COST Action publications and articles must comply with the national copyright law for all contents displayed (photography, graphs, images etc.). There is no need for a specific author’s declaration.

Audio-visual

Depending on the content, results and outcomes of a COST Action, short videos can be a very interesting communication tool to reach a broader audience. Just like all dissemination and promotional materials COST audio-visual productions need to be of high quality, and succeed in properly communicating the COST Action content and messages as well as provide some background on the COST framework programme.

There are many opportunities to present audio-visual productions. They can be posted on the COST corporate website, on the respective COST Action website and integrated to social media or presented at conferences, training schools and other internal or external policy or scientific / technology events. The target groups need to be well defined before the production to make sure the level of information is appropriate.

Videos productions involve generally a high budget. Please ensure the objectives are well aligned with the available budget, targets and messages.

Videos can be used to communicate COST Action contents or as a documentation of, for example, short-term scientific missions or sometimes events. If their purpose is to be a testimonial of events, there should be a mix of interviews and extracts from presentations and sessions.

The video accentuate topics, ideas, concepts, and not focus on mood images of food, drinks nor on any other unrelated situation.

Disclaimer:

Should the video focus on policy issues and integrate political elements, the following disclaimer should be inserted in the video credits: “Any opinion, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s)”.

For a proper profiling of the COST brand, please refer to the **Branding requirements** section.

Written permission:

COST Actions must ensure that interviewees and other individuals sign a document (see Authorisation of Use) permitting the COST Action to use their image and voice in video and/or audio recordings.



Music requirements:

The video end credits must feature a statement attesting either that royalty-free stock music was chosen or that the soundtrack is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License.

Video Technical Standards:

Preferred file types to upload on YouTube: Quicktime (.mov) or MPEG (.mp4)

Resolution: High Definition video

Events

(Science and technology related conferences, Exploratory Workshops and COST Action showcases)

Whenever COST Action members participate to conferences and events to promote their COST Action and share results and outcomes, for example as a speaker or panel participant, they must relate to the COST framework and use the COST branding for all the related dissemination materials.

They need to include:

- COST logo
- EU emblem and text
- COST Action number and title

However, as the COST Action representatives do not represent the COST Association, they should not use the COST Association (or corporate) PowerPoint template nor COST stationery such as Word templates (e.g. for documents or correspondence). Exceptions are dedicated corporate COST sessions and COST organised workshops. At external conferences and events, COST Action members should use the templates of their employer, affiliated institute, university or company.

Creating synergies with COST Corporate communication

In context of potential media and public relations activities, COST Actions should inform the COST Association about their media contacts and media coverage. This will allow the COST Association to eventually use the material for corporate communication purposes, thereby create synergies and increase the outreach. Success stories can be widely shared through our corporate website, the e-Newsletter, social media platforms and, as the case may be, reaching out to several thousands of members of the European research and policy community.

Please inform your Science Officer and the [communication officer](#) about:

- Media contacts, including interviews, articles, etc.
- High level science conferences where COST Actions are represented (speaking opportunity or specific session)
- Workshops with policy makers or other relevant stakeholders





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