ITC CONFERENCE GRANTS FOR EARLY CAREER INVESTIGATORS AND PHD STUDENTS (ITC Grants) Rules

1. Definition and aims

ITC Conference Grants (ITC Grants) aim at supporting PhD students and Early Career Investigators (ECI)[1] from participating Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC)[2] to attend international scientific meetings related to the topic of the AIM-COST, meetings that are not organised by this COST Action.

2. Who is eligible

- PhD students and ECIs with a primary affiliation in an institution located in an ITC;
- Applicants must make an oral communication or poster presentation at the conference and be listed in the official programme of the event;
- The main subject of the oral communication or poster must be on the topic of the AIM-COST and must acknowledge COST[3].
- Attendance at European conferences is preferred. However, conferences held elsewhere can also be considered. In addition, the Core Group of the Management Committee may indicate specific meetings considered strategic for AIM-COST for which representation from ITC countries will be encouraged.

Please visit http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/ca/CA17108 for the most up-to-date information about which ITCs are taking part in AIM-COST.

3. How to apply

Eligible applicants should follow these steps:

- Fill-in the online application form (available at: https://e-services.cost.eu/conferencegrant) to register your request for an ITC Grant;
- Upload the following supporting documents:
  - *Curriculum vitae* (3 pages maximum);
  - Short description of your involvement in AIM-COST;
  - Letter from the conference organisers, confirming acceptance of your abstract as oral communication or poster*;
  - A copy of the abstract submitted to the conference.
- The application should be submitted at least 45 days before the conference start date.
- Once the application is submitted, the applicant will receive a notification from e-COST confirming submission.

[1] Early Career Investigator: According to COST, within 8 years after completing a PhD/Doctorate degree.
[2] ITC currently participating in AIM-COST: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, fYR Macedonia, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey.
[3] See section 10 of the COST *Vademecum*.

* In case the letter of confirmation from the Conference organizers is not yet available at the time of submission, applicants may still apply by uploading a letter describing the state of submission (*e.g.* date when the conference will open the call for abstracts, or when results will be given) along with a draft of the abstract.

Two calls for submission of ITC Grant proposals (May and September) will be open per grant period. Under special circumstances, the ITC-Committee may select specific conferences that meet the criteria and objectives of the AIM-COST for application to ITC grants.

Applicants may receive only one ITC Grant for the duration of the AIM-COST.

5. Evaluation process

The MC has agreed that the evaluation of the ITC Grant applications will be the task of ITC Grant Committee, composed by:

- The ITC Grant Coordinator: João Pinto (jpinto@ihmt.unl.pt);
- The Action Chair: Alessandra della Torre (alessandra.dellatorre@uniroma1.it);
- The Action Deputy Chair: Dusan Petric (dusanp@polj.uns.ac.rs)

Criteria for evaluation include eligibility (*i.e.* PhD student or ECI), *Curriculum vitae* of the applicant and involvement in AIM-COST, suitability of the topic with respect to AIM-COST objectives, type of presentation (oral communication or poster), and impact of the conference with respect to AIM-COST objectives.

Applications will be graded as:
1 – Very poor: application clearly fails to meet the criteria for support by AIM-COST.
2 – Poor: application does not meet the criteria for support by AIM-COST.
3 – Fair: application partially meets the criteria for support by AIM-COST.
4 – Good: application meets the criteria for support by AIM-COST.
5 – Excellent: application largely meets the criteria for support by AIM-COST.

Applicants will be ranked according to the score obtained. Only applications scoring 4 or above will receive support. In the case of even scoring, the ITC Grant Committee will take in to account geographic and/or gender balance. The total number of ITC Grants attributed per grant period will depend on the budget available for the call.

5. Financial support

The financial contribution of the ITC Grant will take into account the budget request of the applicant, the outcome of the evaluation of the application, the duration of the conference, the location of the venue (local prices of accommodation, distance from Home institution), the budget available for ITC grants and the total number of ITC Grants approved.

Calculation of the financial contribution for ITC Grant will respect the following criteria:

- A fixed daily rate for accommodation and meal expenses, calculated according to the country daily rates approved by the MC, up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day;
- Up to a maximum of EUR 500 can be claimed for the conference fees;
- Up to a maximum of EUR 2,500 can be approved to for each successful applicant.

Documentary evidence of the conference fee amount must be provided by the applicant. When meal and accommodation expenses are supported by the hosting institution as part of the

provisions offered in their conference package, the amount for subsistence afforded to each eligible participant must be deducted from the Grant.

6. Reporting and payment

The ITC Grant grantee has 30 calendar days from the end date of the mission to submit a scientific report. A Template for the report is available at:

http://www.cost.eu/ITC_conference_grant_report_template

The applicant should include as an annex to the report the Certificate of Participation or a copy of the programme, showing the applicant's contribution.

Payment of the grant is subject to approval of the report by the ITC Grant Coordinator.

7. Others

For a detailed description of the regulations and procedures, applicants should consult the COST *Vademecum*.