



COST

Evaluation Procedure

(Open Call for proposals)



Main features

- Introduced in **2006**
- Continuous call (submission any time of the year)
- 9 Domains + Trans-Domain Proposals (all areas covered)
- Everybody affiliated to an institution in a COST country can apply (applicant/ coordinator)
- **2 collections/year** (last Friday of September & March)
- 7 ½ Months process from collection date to approval
- Constant growth from 400 proposals (2007-1) to 600 (2012-1)
- 2 stage-process: preliminary (4p.) and full proposals (15-20p+ann.)
- 7% success rate
- On-line tool for applicants (login linked to one collection), assessors and monitors
- Guideline for Assessment of applications for COST Actions

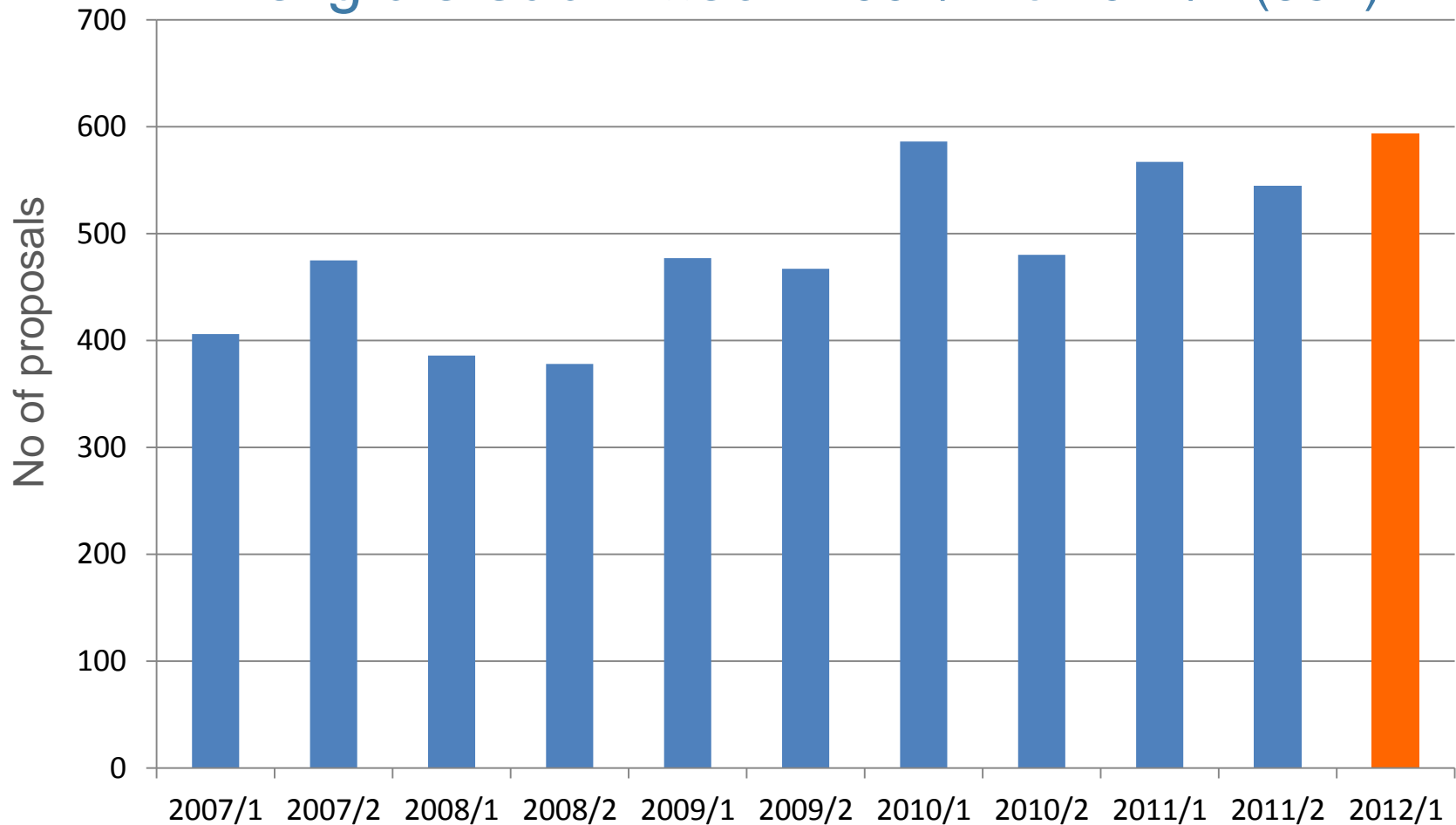
Evaluation Process

Collection 2012-1 (ex: n° proposals)



Preliminary proposal

eligible submitted - 2007/1 to 2012/1 (594)

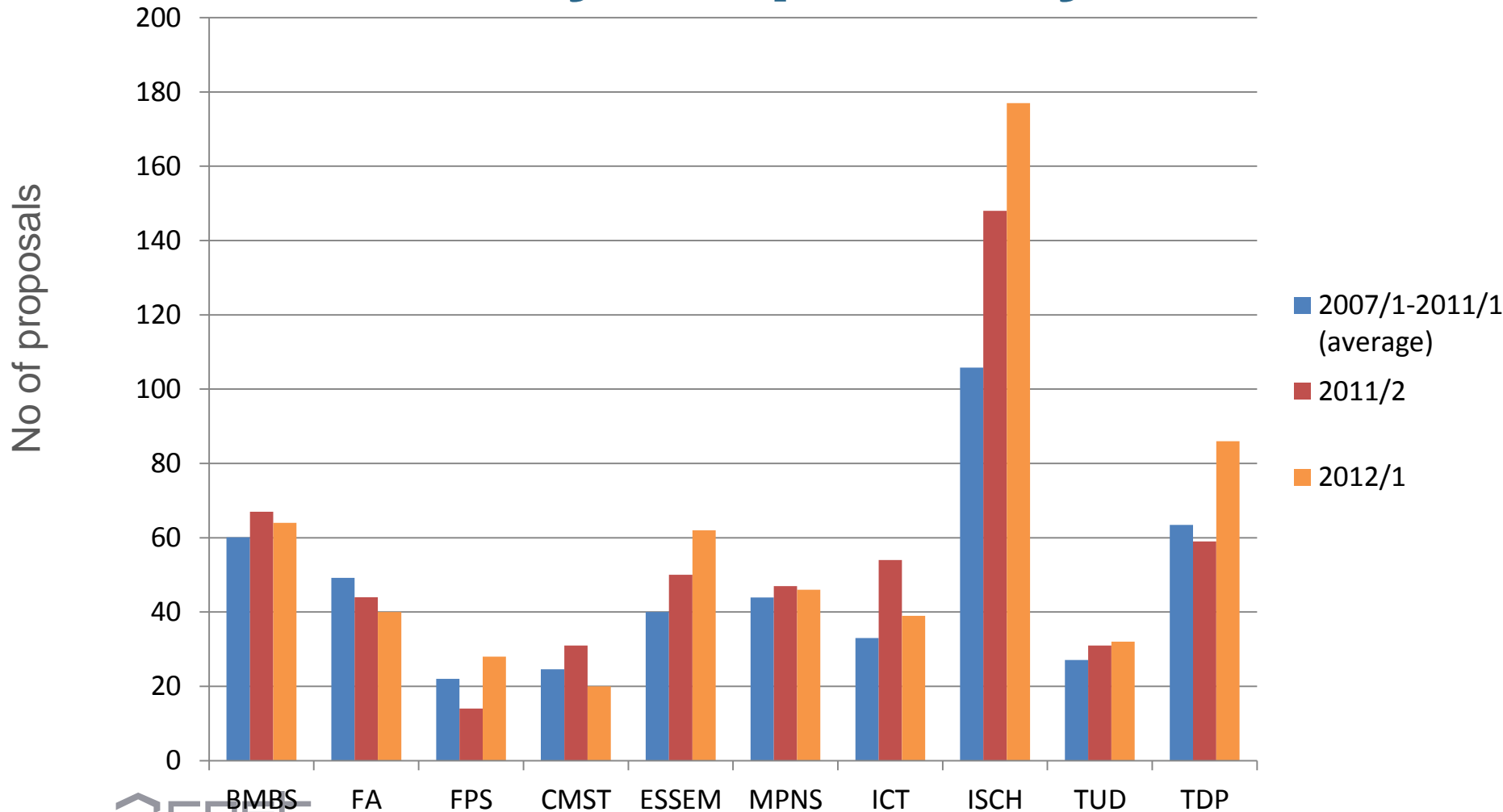




Preliminary Proposal (1)

- On-line form (applicant login linked to one collection)
- +/- 600 proposals (2012-1) submitted in 9 Domains + Trans-domain
- 4-5 pages
- Anonymous for the assessors

Preliminary Proposal by Domain



Preliminary Proposal (2)

- Content:
 - Applicant details + Gender, ESR, Resubmission
 - Proposal title
 - Abstract (max.1000 char)
 - Key words (max.400 char)
 - Selected Domain (if TDP, selection of many Domains + justification)
 - Text of proposal (max.10000 char) - open text, but must address the following points:
 - Background, problems addressed
 - Benefits
 - Objectives, deliverables and expected scientific impact
 - Scientific program and innovation
 - Organisation
 - List of participant (min.5 COST countries) – Name, Institution, Country

The screenshot shows a web form titled "COST Open Call Proposal 1st stage: Preliminary Proposal". It is divided into two main sections: "Applicant Details" and "Scientific Content".

Applicant Details: This section includes fields for Title, Family Name, Forename, Year of Birth, Email, Institution, Position, and Country. There are also dropdown menus for "title" and "country". A separate box for "For statistical purposes (mandatory)" contains dropdowns for "gender", "Early-stage researcher (less than PhD+8 years)" (with "Yes/No" options), and "Resubmission" (with "Yes/No" options).

Scientific Content: This section includes a "Proposal Title" field, an "Abstract" field (with a note "max 1000 characters, approx. 150 words"), and a "Key Words" field (with a note "open format, max 400 characters, approx. 50 words").

Selection Procedure

Stage 1.a: Preliminary Proposal – Domain Allocation and eligibility check

- Screening by COST Science Officers and Head of Sc. Operations
- 2-3 weeks
- ½ day wrap-up meeting (PPAM) at COST Office
- 3% eliminated, 6% reshuffled (2012-1)





Selection Procedure

Stage 1.a: Preliminary Proposal - Domain Allocation and eligibility check – rejection criteria

- Duplication with another proposal
- Overlap with existing Action (duplication of research) – but continuation is OK
- Research funding
- Out-of-scope: such as single activity (ex: conference)
- Does not follow the proposal template
- Contradiction with COST principles (ex: military purposes)
- Proposal text not anonymous
- Not 5 COST Countries
- Any new category of ineligibility

Selection Procedure



Stage 1.b: Preliminary Proposal – DC assessment

- Domain Committee members (4 year mandate - nominated by CNC)
- 5 weeks process
 - 1 week allocation: DC Chair/SO allocates proposals to assessor
 - 3 weeks remote evaluation (marks and comments)
 - 1 wk check: conflict of interest, outliers, phrasing of comments
- 6 questions – marks from 1 to 6 (max: 36) – 70% threshold
- min.3 assessments/proposal
- Allocation, monitoring & check by Science Officer & DC Chair
- Top ranked by Domain invited to submit Full Proposal (Domain distribution Formula/in relation with the final number of proposals)
- 85% eliminated

Selection Procedure



Stage 1.b: Preliminary Proposal – DC assessment

- Is COST the best mechanism for achieving the objectives?
- Public utility/Science: does the proposed Action address real current problems/ scientific issues?
- Innovation?
- Impact of the network: knowledge, capacity building, social impacts
- Are networking aspects well motivated and developed in the proposal?
- presented in a clear, rational and understandable way?



Full Proposal (1)

- On-line form (applicant login linked to one collection)
- 2 months preparation
- Text and tables only
- 88 full proposals submitted in 2011-2
- +/- 15-20 pages (draft technical annex) + additional information (no strict limit)
- Participants not anonymous for the assessors

Full Proposal (2)

- Content part I (Technical Annex) – in MoU:
 - Abstract (max.200 words)
 - Background (2-3 pages)
 - Objectives and benefits (max.2 pages)
 - Scientific programme (max.3-4 pages)
 - Organisation (max.2 pages)
 - Timetable
 - Economic Dimension
 - Dissemination plan (max.2 pages)
- Content part II (Additional Information) – out MoU:
 - List of experts
 - History
 - Preliminary Workplan
 - Publications/remarks

A. ABSTRACT

Maximum 200 words, maximum 5 keywords or very short phrases

General remark: Be very clear and precise as this section will form the basis for COST information – web site and booklets – and reporting. The Abstract should include the broader scientific context of the Action as well as the expected deliverables and benefits. It should also indicate the European added value of the Action and the reasons for undertaking it in the COST framework.

B. BACKGROUND

Maximum 2-3 pages

B.1 General background

- Define the research topic in such a way that it is clear that the network will address real current problems or scientific issues.
- Inform about the wider relevance of the Action (why is it desirable to launch it as COST Action).
- Explain why COST, which funds only networking and capacity-building activities and not research, is the best mechanism for support. State reasons why COST seems to offer the appropriate framework for the Action, compared to other research frameworks such as ESF, ESR, EUREKA or the EU Framework Programme.
- Describe the advantages or benefits which should arise from carrying out your project within the COST framework.

B.2 Current state of knowledge

- Summarise the previous research in the field of the proposal
- Describe the current state of the art, including relevant research within the EU Framework Programmes and other EU fora, comparison of EU research with that in other parts of the world
- Explain how the Action will be innovative in addressing either a new problem or a new approach to an existing problem.

B.3 Reasons for the Action

- **Reasons for launching the Action**, indicating the need for an experts network in the area and the added value of the Action networking. Emphasise immediate and future benefits and envisaged applications (understandable for non-specialists readers).
- Indicate whether the Action is mainly aimed at European economic/societal needs, or at scientific/technological advance, or both.
- Clearly distinguish between objectives, expected results and the means that are needed to achieve them. The impact of COST comes from concrete outcomes, not just activity, so indicate how the Action will aim for maximally productive outcomes.
- If this is a Trans-Domain proposal, clearly demonstrate the following:
 - o How the research topic includes two or more COST Domains
 - o How the research requires the reciprocal interaction between these Domains
 - o Why within the scientific approach, the reference to common theoretical concepts and methods as well as to their common evolution is needed for all involved Domains.

B.4 Complementarity with other research programmes (if appropriate)



Selection Procedure

Stage 2.a: Full Proposal - External expert assessment

- External Expert Panel (EEP) selected for each Domain by DC Chair and Science Officer
- 2-4 per proposal
- 3-5 weeks (depending on Domain)
- Remote individual evaluation (marks and comments)
- Threshold: 55/75
- 1 to 2 days consensus meeting (EEP-SO-DC Chair) at the end of the assessment: consensus marks and comments
- Invitation to DC hearing (30% eliminated)



Selection Procedure

Stage 2.a: Full Proposal - External expert assessment – evaluation criteria

- Science and Networking: 4 questions – marks from 1 to 4 (weight 2)
- Impact: 3 questions – marks from 1 to 4 (weight 2)
- Structure and organisation: 4 questions – marks from 1 to 4 (weight 1)
- Contribution to wider COST goals: 3 question – marks from 0 to 1 (weight 1)
- Overall recommendations (strength – weaknesses)
 - invitation or not to DC hearings

Selection Procedure

Stage 2.b: Full Proposal – DC Hearing

- Domain Committee members (or core group -ISCH-)
- 1-2 day(s) hearings per Domain
- spread over 3 weeks
- Ranking (within Domain) and comment (justification if change in EEP order)
- List of proposal supported for funding (+ reserve list) according to a Domain distribution Formula





Selection Procedure

Stage 2.c: Full Proposal – Final list submitted to JAF/CSO

- Selected proposals from each Domain compiled into a single list
- Submission to JAF (composed of CSO members – preparatory works of the CSO) who checks proposal against COST principles
- Official approval by CSO: the proposal becomes a COST Action, publication of the Memorandum of Understanding



Submission tracks (1/2)

The submission follows a different track whether the proposal is submitted to one of the 9 COST Domains or as a an interdisciplinary proposal, called Trans-Domain Proposal (TDP).

For the latter, a **TDP Pilot** has been set up for the collections 2013-1 and 2013-2. It features a new proposal template, revised evaluation criteria and a reviewed scoring system.

Submission tracks(2/2)

Submission to one of the 9 Domains	Trans-Domain Proposals (TDP) Pilot
2 Collection Dates/year (spring/autumn)	
2 proposals submission : - Preliminary Proposal (PP), ~3-4 pages - Full Proposal (FP), ~15-20 pages	Single proposal submission, ~10-15 pages
3 Steps evaluation: - Domain Committee (PP) - External Experts (FP) - Domain Committee Hearing (FP)	3 Steps evaluation: - External Experts (scientific and technological challenge only) - CNC-nominated delegates and experts (implementation plan only) - TDP Panel Hearings
Submission via Open Call webpage	Submission via e-COST

TDP Pilot - timeline

Submissions to Trans-Domain Proposals





COST

Thank you

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