

Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC) Conference Grant Applications

1st Call for Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC) Conference Grants Applications

Application: November 15th, 2024 – July 15th, 2025

Period of benefit: November 15th, 2024 – September 30th, 2025

COST Action Precision-BTC-Network opens a call for applications for **ITC conference grants** to be developed **under the scope of the referred Action**, in the terms described in this document.

The main procedures/regulations concerning ITC conference Grants can be found here: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2024/11/COST-094-21-V2.0-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C.pdf> (see A2-1.1 MOBILITY OF RESEARCHERS AND INNOVATORS)

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1. Scope of Precision-BTC-Network COST Action

For details and specific objectives, please read the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA22125/>

2. Purpose of ITC Conference Grants

ITC Conference consists in an **oral** presentation of their own work given by an Action Participant affiliated to a legal entity located in an ITC / Near Neighbour Country (NNC) for their participation in high-level conferences fully organized by a third party, i.e. not organized nor co-organized by the COST Action.

ITC Conferences:

- Serve COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy;
- Support Action Participants affiliated in a legal entity in an ITC/ Near Neighbour Country (NNC) to establish a strong network and increase their visibility in the research community through sharing their work and to gain knowledge;
- Can contribute to increasing visibility of the Action.

ITC Conference benefit to:

- ITC Conference Grantee: receives support for attending and presenting their own work within the scope of the Action (oral presentation) at a conference and can establish new contacts for future collaborations.

3. Eligibility criteria

1. Conference Grants are exclusively reserved for Action Participants with a **primary affiliation in an institution located in an ITC or NNC** participating in the Action.

The current list of **ITCs** includes: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine.

The current list of **NNCs** includes: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Jordan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia.

2. ITC Conference Grants are aimed at supporting Action Participants in participating ITCs or NNCs in attending high-level, international science and technology related **conferences**, events or activities on the topic of the Action that are **not organised** nor co-organized **by the COST Action**.

3. The applicant must **make an oral presentation at the conference** in question and must be listed in the official event/conference programme. The main subject of the oral presentation at the approved conference must be on the topic of the Action and must include acknowledgement of COST.

4. The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered as being an ITC Conference grantee's employer, i.e. the ITC Conference Grants cannot be considered as a salary.

4. Application deadlines

Applications will be welcomed between **November 15th 2024** and **July 15th 2025**, or until funds are exhausted. ITC conference grants must be concluded by September 30th, 2025.

5. Funding

A Conference Grant is a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation, subsistence expenses and overall effort of the selected Grantee. Up to a maximum of **EUR 1500** in total for a face-to-face conference and up to **EUR 500** for online conference can be afforded to each successful applicant.

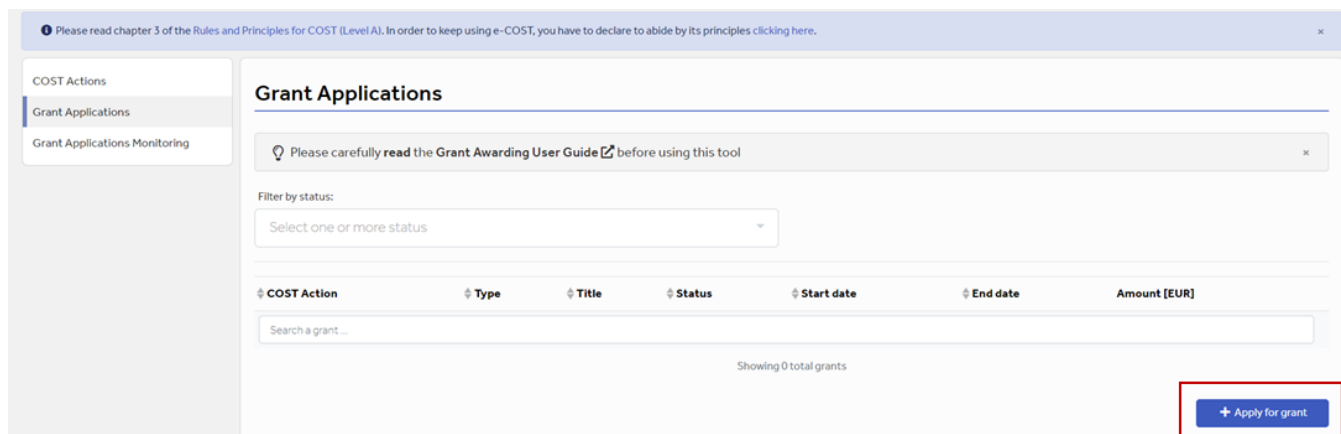
The **Grant Awarding Coordinator** or the **evaluation committee** shall define the exact amount of each **successful grant** based on the duration and location of the conference and the actual conference fee. Conference Grants do not necessarily cover all the expenses related to participating in a given conference and may be lower than requested.

The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered as being the grantee's employer.

Grants are paid by the Grant Holder Institution after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation.

6. Application Procedure

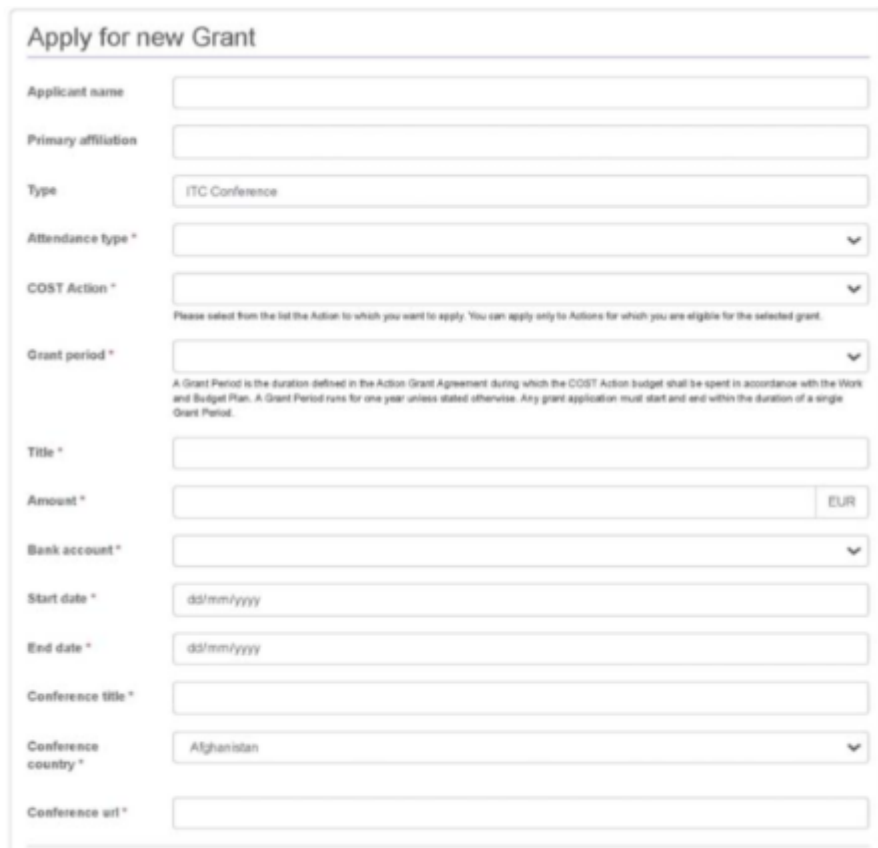
The application procedure is legally bound to the Rules for COST Actions Eligible ITC Conference Grant applicants must submit their applications online by logging into e-COST (<https://e-services.cost.eu>), going to “Grant Applications” and clicking on “Apply for a grant”.



The screenshot shows the e-COST Grant Applications interface. At the top, there is a notification bar stating: "Please read chapter 3 of the Rules and Principles for COST (Level A). In order to keep using e-COST, you have to declare to abide by its principles clicking here." Below this, a sidebar on the left contains links for "COST Actions", "Grant Applications" (which is highlighted), and "Grant Applications Monitoring". The main content area is titled "Grant Applications" and includes a message: "Please carefully read the Grant Awarding User Guide before using this tool". Below this, there is a "Filter by status:" dropdown menu with the text "Select one or more status". A table with columns "COST Action", "Type", "Title", "Status", "Start date", "End date", and "Amount [EUR]" is shown, with a search bar above it. The table currently displays "Showing 0 total grants". In the bottom right corner, there is a blue button labeled "+ Apply for grant" which is highlighted with a red rectangle.

The applicant may then select “Continue” on the “ITC Conference grant” section.

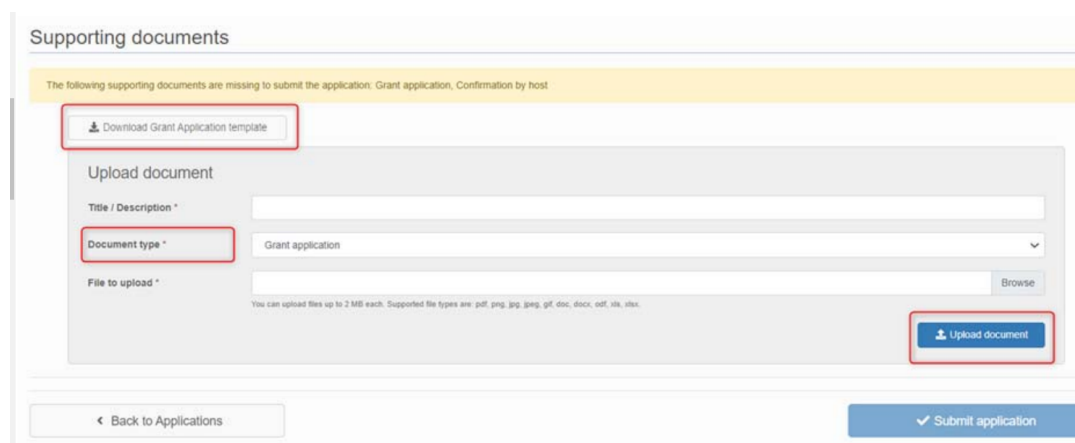
The application form contains different sections, some are pre-filled by e-COST, such as Application name or Primary affiliation. Other mandatory sections must be filled by the applicant, and include: “Title” of the presentation, “Start and end date” (within the active Grant Period, i.e., no overlap across two consecutive Grant Periods), “Amount” requested by the applicant, “Conference title”, “country” and “url”.



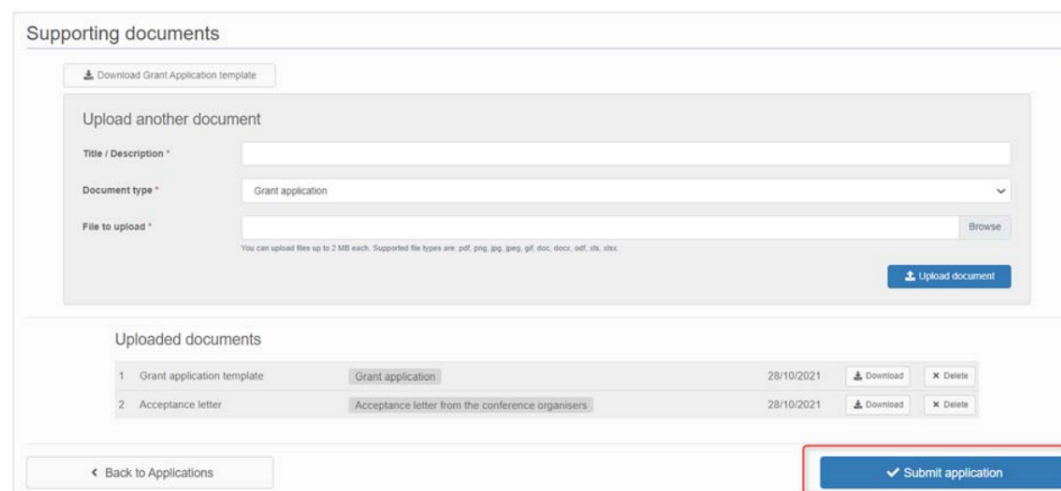
The screenshot shows the "Apply for new Grant" form. It contains the following fields: "Applicant name", "Primary affiliation", "Type" (pre-filled with "ITC Conference"), "Attendance type *" (dropdown), "COST Action *" (dropdown), "Grant period *" (dropdown), "Title *" (text), "Amount *" (text with a "EUR" button), "Bank account *" (dropdown), "Start date *" (text with a date format "dd/mm/yyyy"), "End date *" (text with a date format "dd/mm/yyyy"), "Conference title *" (text), "Conference country *" (dropdown with "Afghanistan" selected), and "Conference url *" (text). Below the "Grant period *" dropdown, there is a small text box explaining the grant period: "A Grant Period is the duration defined in the Action Grant Agreement during which the COST Action budget shall be spent in accordance with the Work and Budget Plan. A Grant Period runs for one year unless stated otherwise. Any grant application must start and end within the duration of a single Grant Period."

The applicant should also upload:

- The **ITC Conference Grant Application Template** (https://www.cost.eu/ITCConference_GrantApplication), which the applicant should prepare beforehand. This document describes the conference and accepted contribution details, relevance of the conference topic to the Action (max. 500 words), and motivation and expected impact (max. 500 words).
- Copy of the **abstract** of the accepted oral presentation.
- **Acceptance letter** from the conference organisers and/or conference programme with the name of the applicant.
- **Candidate CV**: a short CV should be submitted (max. 3 pages). A list of academic publications can be added on separate pages.
- National Identity Card for Spanish residents, while non-Spanish residents are required to provide a copy of their **passport**.¹

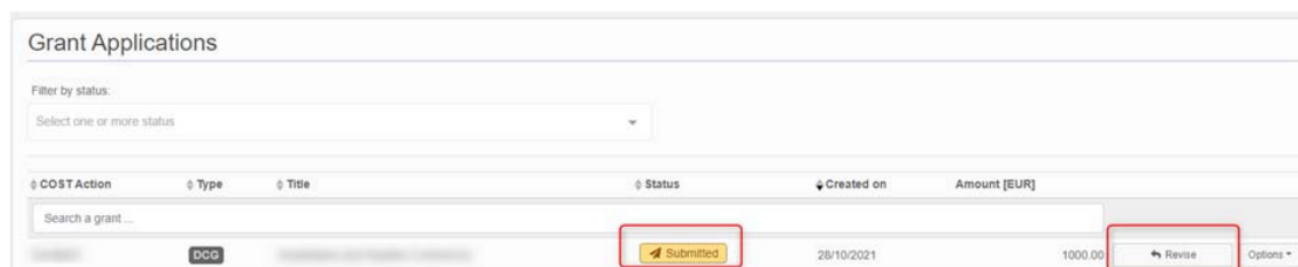


After adding the supporting documents, the applicant may submit the grant application.



¹ This does not apply to those Action Participants who have submitted an ID for any previous Action Events or Grants

The application status will change from draft to submitted. Before the application is approved, the applicant will be able to revise the application if needed.



COST Action	Type	Title	Status	Created on	Amount [EUR]	
	DGG		Submitted	28/10/2021	1000.00	Revise

For more information, please consult section 2.1. of the Grant Awarding user guide (<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/12/Grant-Awarding-userguide.pdf>).

7. Intellectual property rights concerns

In case of potential intellectual property concerns on the part of the participants, this must be mentioned in the application and managed by the applicant and the rest of participants. In this case, the reviewers of the application may be requested to sign a confidentiality agreement.

8. Selection committee

The ITC conference Grant Selection Committee is composed of the Grant Awarding Coordinator, Dr. Marta Afonso (mbafonso@ff.ulisboa.pt), and Dr. Rocio IR Macias (rociorm@usal.es). In case of conflict of interest (e.g., applicant belonging to a representative's research group), the member will be replaced by representatives of the working groups related to the application.

9. Evaluation criteria and communication of the results

The ITC Conference Grant Selection Committee will carry out the evaluation of applications taking into account: an efficient and cost-effective use of funds, focusing on activities and resources that directly contribute to the Precision-BTC-Network objectives, and the potential for enhancing the research interaction between the parties involved, measured by the impact of the exchange expected by the applicants and collaborators. Specifically, the evaluation of the application is based on the following criteria:

- **Relevance of the congress/conference:** The congress is recognized within the academic/professional community forum for presenting and discussing topics that are relevant to the WG of the Action. Examples of conferences typically considered include but are not limited to: European Association of Liver Disease (EASL) congress, EASL Liver Cancer Summit (LCS), European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Gastrointestinal Cancers Congress and AMMF conference.
- **Relevance of the proposal:** The topic and full content of the presentation is relevant to the topic of the WG of the Action, based on solid theoretical background in regard to the acknowledged theoretical framework of the Action; design and methodological grounds; the level of novelty of the material presented. Keywords in the abstract should include cholangiocarcinoma or biliary tract cancer.

- **Collaborative impact:** The potential to foster collaboration among members of the COST Action and beyond, and contribution to the BTC-Network strategy.
- **Merit of the applicant:** The experience and qualifications of the applicant.

Other general criteria for evaluation of ITC Conference Grants include gender balance.

Applications will be evaluated every two weeks, until the entire budget allocation is fully utilized. Each applicant will be formally notified of the outcome of their ITC Conference Grant application by the Grant Awarding Coordinator no more than 4 weeks after the application was received.

The Grant Awarding Coordinator (or the Action Chair/Vice-Chair, in case of conflict of interest) will inform the Grant Holder of the approved ITC Conference Grants. The Grant Holder will inform each approved applicant by sending a Grant Letter via e-COST.

10. ITC Conference Grant reporting and payment

Within 30 days from the end date of the Conference (or 15 days after the end of the Grant Period, whichever date comes first), the successful applicant must submit the ITC Conference grant report (A), Certificate of attendance and the programme/book of abstracts indicating the oral presentation of the mentee (B), copy the given presentation (C), dissemination materials (D). These documents must be uploaded to e-COST to proceed with the request for payment.

A) ITC Conference Grant report on e-COST:

- A template for the report can be found in e-COST (https://www.cost.eu/ITCConference_Report). This document contains a description of the conference and accepted contribution details, the outcome of the conference participation (max. 500 words), and an acknowledgement of the inclusion of all necessary supporting documents to claim the grant. The ITC conference Grant report for COST is a **public document**. Please take this into account in terms of Intellectual Property Rights.

The Grant Coordinator will be responsible for approving the report and informing the Action Chair and the Grant Holder that the ITC Conference Grant has been successfully accomplished. Please note that the COST Association can request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by ITC Conference Grant applicants.

B) **Certificate of attendance** and the programme/book of abstracts indicating the oral presentation of the mentee.

C) **Copy of the given presentation containing an acknowledgement of the COST Action**.

D) Dissemination materials to Science Communication Team:

- A short video/success story describing your participation in the conference or a strong, short advertising sentence summarizing your experience.
- The grantee's credentials on social media (if applicable) for tagging purposes in the publication of their post.
- A photo of the applicant giving their oral presentation at the Conference in question. (Recommended, but not mandatory)

It is recommended that the material introduce the participants and convey enthusiasm for the scientific topic of the Precision-BTC-Network, supported by attractive illustrations or pictures. Clarity and accessibility should be prioritized in the language used, with an emphasis on avoiding overly abstract concepts and scientific jargon and employing short sentences. The material is intended to promote the Precision-BTC-Network research, highlight contributions, and will be disseminated on social media for a public audience.

The materials should be uploaded in e-COST and sent directly to the Management Holder, Samuel Kocsis (samuel.v.kocsis@usal.es), adding in CC the Grant awarding coordinator, Dr. Marta Afonso (mbafonso@ff.ulisboa.pt) and the Science Communication Manager Dr. Constantinos Athanassopoulos (kath@upatras.gr).

Failure to submit the requested documentation with the above specified timeframe will effectively cancel the ITC Conference Grant. The grantee shall be aware that the COST Association reserves the right to postpone or cancel all payments and to recover the amounts paid to the grantee in the event that the grantee does not fulfil their obligations.

11. ITC Conference Grants contacts

Dr. Marta Afonso
CA22125 Grant Awarding Coordinator
Faculty of Pharmacy,
Universidade de Lisboa,
Av. Prof. Gama Pinto, CPM (edifício rosa)
1649 003-Lisbon (Portugal)
mbafonso@ff.ulisboa.pt

Dr. Rocio Macias
CA22125 Action Chair
Department of Physiology and Pharmacology
Campus Miguel Unamuno
Edificio Departamental, Lab. B-17
University of Salamanca,
37007-Salamanca (Spain)
rociorm@usal.es