



Brussels, 15/02/2007

COST Action C23
Low Carbon Urban Built Environments

MC Meeting No. 6 and WG Meeting

16-18 / April / 2007

Venue:

Haus der Forschung, Vienna, AT

Local host:

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News from COST OFFICE

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1. New Team in COST-TUD

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2. COST Website

The official COST web-site has been transferred to the ESF server and is now accessible under the following address: <http://www.cost.esf.org>.

3. Strategic Workshops

Strategic Workshops are an important new element in the positioning of COST. The aim is to bring researchers and decision makers together to discuss forefront topics, principally of an inter-disciplinary nature, which can be used in the future development of the topic and which may form the basis of future proposals, not only to COST, but also to the framework programme and to other European organisations responsible for research networking.

A previous strategic workshop has been held on “Environment and Health” and a number of new workshops, including partnership with ESF in its Forward Looks, are in an advanced planning stage. In 2006, Strategic Workshops on “Food and Health” and on Bioenergy have been held. A further one on “Nanosciences and Technologies” is under preparation.

New ideas of such satrategic workshop are welcome and can benefit for a significant grant.

Possibilities with ESF (Research Conferences), INTAS, EUREKA as well as NATO Research programme are also available.

4. COST Near Neighbour Policy

At its 160th meeting (1/2 December 2004), the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) approved support from the involvement of researchers from institutions in the Balkans and Europe’s “Near Neighbours” not already members of COST.

Countries qualifying for support:

- Balkans
- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Georgia

- Moldova
- Russian Federation
- Ukraine

Up to 100.000 € per annum has been set aside for the reimbursement of researchers from CSO approved participating institutions in COST Actions to attend Management Committee (MC) and Working Group/Workshop Meetings of such Actions. This support is available on a “first come, first served basis”. Actions budget will be “credited” by the appropriate amounts from central funds held by the COST Office.

The relevant official invitation has to be issued by the COST Office (currently preference will be given to the country in bold letters).

5. Open Call

The first general COST Open Call was published on 3 April 2006, with a first collection date on 31 May. After a two-stage assessment process (preliminary and full proposals) organised by domain, the nine DC Chairs on 13 October agreed on a cross-domain consensus list of 39 proposals.

At its meeting on 24-25 October the JAF Group agreed to recommend that the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) approve the 39 Action proposals and that the Actions be launched in two batches: the first 25 early 2007 (as soon as the funding will be available) and the remaining 14 at a later stage in 2007. The CSO has meet on 20-21 November 2006 and approved the 39 actions.

In the TUD domain, the External Evaluation Panel rated 6 invited full proposals above the required thresholds (Table 1). The successful proposers were invited to present their proposals orally to the DC Executive Group.

Rank	Ref	Acronym	Title	Proposer	
1	0073		Sustainable Water Management (Europe): A Future View	Gerald Jones	UK
2	0269	SUBHER	Improving the Quality of Suburban Building Heritage	Roberto Di Giulio	IT
3	0542		Robustness of Structures	M.H. Faber	CH
4	0544	MoSES	Mobility and Social Exclusion across European States	Kerry Hamilton & al.	UK NL
5	0663		Buses with a High Level of Service	Marc Ellenberg & al.	F
6	0743		Land Management for Urban Dynamics	François Golay	CH

Table 1: The six invited full proposals

Of the six proposals, the *top three ones* were included in the 39 Actions expected to be approved by the CSO :

- Action TU0601: Robustness of Structures
- Action TU0602: Land Management for Urban Dynamics
- Action TU0603: Buses with a high Level of Service-Fundamental Characteristics and Recommendation for decision-making and research

The first Actions should have the first MC meeting and be paid before end May and the second ones beginning of September. They will all apply the CGS after having identified a grant holder during the first MC meetings.

Furthermore, the JAF Group noted the need to monitor the Open Call procedures and to introduce improvements, based on the experience gained during this first exercise. The Group agreed to propose to the CSO to set up a Working Group on Guidelines (WGG) composed of the CSO President (Chair), three CSO members, three DC Chairs (ISCH, ESSEM, ICT), the COST Secretariat and the COST Office. The WGG met on 30-31 January 2007.

The Group's task would be to propose amendments to the Open Call and to the Guidelines (Assessment, Monitoring, Final Evaluation, Dissemination) with particular attention to the Assessment procedures of proposals for new Actions. The proposals is examined by JAF and JAF-DC Chairs meeting on 13-14 February 2007 and will be presented for final approval to the meeting of the CSO on 21-22 March 2007.

The preliminary time line is given for information in Appendix 1.

6. COST GRANT SYSTEM (CSG)

As you are likely aware, all COST actions must migrate to the COST Grant System (GS) before April, 2008. Actions ending before 31/03/2008 do not need to migrate. COST OFFICE is preparing a timetable for migration of TUD Actions, including yours.

In the timetable, the column entitled "Start of Contract Preparation" will show the date when the COST Office will begin communications with your Action's grant holder to draw up and sign the necessary contract. The column entitled "Start of Grant Operations" will show the date on which your grant holder should have the funds to begin managing the Action's budget.

By that the time receiving the timetable, your Action must have named a Grant Holding Institution and drawn up an Annual Budget Plan (for the year commencing with your Action's "Start of Grant Operations" date). If it has not already been addressed, this subject should be on the agenda for your next Management Committee meeting.

There is logic behind the date you will be assigned. No actions can begin migration until the new contract templates are available, in late March, 2007. The oldest actions and the newest ones will be the first to migrate. Thus older actions will have a minimum of 1.5 years during which they will run the GS system. New actions will quickly leave the pay-as-you-go system so they can concentrate on the GS system. New actions starting up in 2007 will move to the GS system immediately after their first MC meeting. Meanwhile, the 2 actions already running expiring grants must migrate with the second batch to ensure a smooth transition from their expiring grant to their new one.

If you have a truly convincing argument for why your Action should not migrate on the date we have assigned, we will try to accommodate a change. However, we do not foresee many circumstances that would prevent this orderly timetable from being implemented, especially when you are being given considerable advance notice.

What Steps Have to be Taken to Move to the COST Grant System?

The Action has to name a grant holding institution. This can be the Chair's institution, or can be the institution of another MC member. Note that in some COST member states, problems can arise for the grant-holding institution as regards VAT, bank fees, income tax and other issues. A list of COST member states where grant holders have experienced no significant problems can be found in Appendix 2. We recommend that you select a grant holding institution in one of these nations. If you wish to select an

institution in another country, please undertake careful research to ensure that costly problems will not arise.

The grant holder will use **management/accounting software** being developed by the COST office. Some training from the COST Office is required. A timetable for training will be drawn up based on the foreseen migration dates.

A legal contract of 4-year duration (ie: the length of the Action) will be drawn up by the COST Office, in discussion with the grant holder, and signed by both parties. The necessary Annexes (eg: terms & conditions) will be drawn up by the COST Office, with the exception of the Annex entitled “**Annual Budget Plan**” which will be drawn up by the grant holder in consultation with the Action MC.

The grant holder will sign a Payment Request Form for the first annual grant, and will then begin to receive funds from COST by bank transfer.

What is the COST Grant System (GS)?

Under the GS, each Action will directly manage its own budget, and, via the selected grant holder, will undertake all reimbursements and payments. The grant holder will be allocated the Action’s annual budget via an annual grant, under-pinned by a multi-year contract. Each year, the Action must submit an Annual Budget Plan. Based on this plan, the Action’s budget expenditures in the previous year, and the availability of funds at the COST office, the Action will be awarded a grant for the coming operational year. The amount of the annual grant can vary from year to year. When Actions do not spend their entire grant in a given year, they will receive a smaller grant in the next year.

The grant holder will receive 65% of the annual grant as an up-front payment. The remaining 35% will be paid upon submission of a satisfactory interim report. The grant holder must undertake the administration of the budget, making all necessary payments. In so doing, they must adhere to the COST financial rules. Regular reports must be tabled. There will be regular third-party audits of the grant holder.

The grant holder will provide secretariat services for the Action. They will be responsible for the necessary forms, letters, meeting invitations and other documents required for the organization of events and the reimbursement of funds. They will maintain the files for the Action, where all official documents, invoices, signed attendance sheets and reimbursement forms, minutes and reports will be held. They should also record and distribute the minutes.

To compensate the grant holder for the additional work, a maximum of 15% of the Action’s budget can be retained by the grant holder to cover administrative overheads. No receipts need be submitted to justify this overhead allocation.

The grant holder does not make the management decisions for the Action. That responsibility continues to rest with the MC. The grant holder simply takes over the COST Office’s role of daily administration of the budget, and provision of secretariat services.

Cardiff University was chosen by the MC to be the GrantHolder of the Action based on the minutes from the last MC meeting held in Athens, GR on 01-02 Feb. 2007.

7. Status of the Action

➤ Action details

- CSO approval: 15/03/2005
- Entry into force: 09/06/2005
- End of the Action: 12/10/2009

➤ Objectives

The main objective of this Action is to investigate how carbon reductions can be achieved through appropriate design and management of the urban built environment. This will involve:

- minimising energy use and associated emissions from buildings,
- examining the indirect energy impacts of infrastructure developments.

➤ Signatures

- Already signed: 19 countries

-

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom

- Chair: Prof. Philip John Jones
- Rapporteur: Luis Braganca
- Working Groups:2
- Non COST-Institutions: none
- Action Website: <http://www.lcube.eu.com>

8. Year Budget Status and Planning

The officeholders as well as all delegations are to be asked to assure that in the light of the limited financial means all future participants of activities organised by COST Action C23 will dedicate adequate attention to the principle of the most economical overall expenditure when asking for reimbursement.

The following table informs about spending and the commitments made in the run of the year 2006.

8.1. Year Budget Status and Planning: 2006

➤ Budget Status

The total Action Budget in 2006 was 70 000 €.

➤ Budget Allocation

The overview of activities and and expenditures is presented in Table 2

2006 Budget

Total Action Budget

70000.00

Remaining Action Commitment

7148.19

Meetings

Meeting Type	Date	Place	Paid part	Cost	Total
Joint Management Committee/Working Group	12/01/2006	Porto	21	19697.91	
Joint Management Committee/Working Group	19/06/2006	Trondheim	25	25503.34	
Working Group	14/09/2006	London	4	3338.71	
Working Group	04/12/2006	Trento	18	14311.85	
					62851.81

STSM

Beneficiary	Date	From	To	Cost	Total
					0

Workshops

Title	Date	Place		Cost	Total
					0

General Support Grants

Title	Date			Cost	Total
					0

Schools

Title	Date	Place		Cost	Total
					0

62851.81

Table 2: Budget activities in 2006

8.2. Year Budget Status and Planning: 2007

➤ Budget Allocation

The budget planning for 2007 is presented in Table 3.

2007 Budget

Total Action Budget

55000.00

Remaining Action Commitment

3127.00

Meetings

Meeting Type	Date	Place	Paid part	Cost	Total
Joint Management Committee/Working Group	01/02/2007	Athens (GR)	25	22092.75	
Joint Mangement Committee/Working Group	16/04/2007	Vienna (AT)		23680.00	
					45772.75

STSM

Beneficiary	Date	From	To	Cost	Total
Ms. Vesna Kosoric	01/04/2007	Begrade (RS)	CH	2500.00	
					2500.00

Workshops

Title	Date	Place		Cost	Total
MC + WG	01/02/2007	Athens		600.00	
MC + WG	16/04/2007	Vienna		3000.00	
					1849.00

General Support Grants

Title	Date			Cost	Total
					0

Schools

Title	Date	Place		Cost	Total
					0

28089.00

Table 3: Budget planning for 2007

9. STSM Status & applications

Since April 2005 STSMs have to be financed out of the Action budget. In this context it has to be underlined that applicants should only make binding bookings after having received the official letter of approval.

Researchers applying for STSMs have to use the relevant on-line registration tool (<http://www.cost.esf.org/stsm>).

(detail see http://www.cost.esf.org/fileadmin/cost_documents/guidelines/2-financial_instruments/2.3-STSM.pdf).

The Management Committee should be informed that the revised guidelines offer also the possibility of Group STSMs (two – three experts (each from a different signatory country) visiting one host institute at the same time).

In the year 2006 , there were no STSMs undertaken.

10. Publications & annual report

Each Action has to submit a Progress Report before the end of a calendar year. A template can be found in the annex of the COST Document 222/03 'Guidelines for assessment, monitoring and evaluation of COST Actions' approved by the CSO on 6-7 February 2003.

Quarterly Report (before the end of the quarter a brief report highlighting the outcomes of the Workshop has to be submitted).

A publication strategy should be elaborated; the emerging responsibilities should be allocated as well as the necessary deadlines should be determined.

The so far prepared draft of a folder as well as of a poster might be presented.

11. Evaluations

COST Document 271/05 contains information on the evaluation process implemented by Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) and adequately adapted by the Domain Committee on Transport and Urban Development..

The main objective of the evaluation is to assist the Management Committee (MC) of the Action to achieve their objectives and to allow the COST Administration to judge the effectiveness of the Action so far. The outcome of that process will also be used to evaluate the necessity of a prolongation of the Action or proposals to initiate follow-up Actions by the MC.

The mid-term evaluation will be held in conjunction with the Joint DC and MC Chairs meeting taking place 19-21 September 2007.

The evaluation will take the form of:

- the formation of an evaluation team by the relevant Technical Committee, usually two specialists not involved in the Action assisted by the COST Office
- initial evaluation by the team based on activity reports and annual reports of the Action
- discussions between the team and the co-ordinator
- informal discussions between the team and the MC members and participants
- a simple questionnaire to be completed by participants
- attendance by team at and participation in MC meetings and WG meetings
- discussion of Action by evaluation team
- completion of a checklist by the evaluation team
- short report sent by the evaluation team to COST FFP and to the Action Chairman.

The main points that will be evaluated during a mid-term evaluation are:

- achievement of the objectives stated in the MOU
- value added by the Action
- management of the Action
- dissemination of information by the Action
- level of participation in the Action
- economic impact of the Action.

The MC is invited to initiate the preparation process for the mid-term evaluation by compiling copies of all reports published in the frame of this Action.

Details of the process are under preparation by executive group of DC-TUD. They will be sent to the Action Chair as soon as available.

12. Request for new members

The period within which COST member states can join this Action without any conditions being imposed, has run for twelve months from the date of approval of the Committee of COST Senior Officials expired on 14/03/2005. Any request of a COST member state for accession to COST Action C23 which will be submitted after this date will have to be approved by its MC.

Since the last MC meeting the COST Office has accepted Lithuania..

13. Non-COST Participation

Since the last MC meeting the COST Office has not received any request from a Non COST institution.

14. Web News

The Management Committee is invited to discuss the necessary updates as well as further improvements.

15. Progress report of WGs

The MC should be informed by the WG Coordinators as well as the Task Force Leaders about activities so far carried resp. planned.

The MC is invited to complete the list of WG members.

16. Long-term planning

The establishment of Task Groups focusing at specific issues might be taken into consideration.

After the Work plan for the years 2006/2007/2008 has been discussed the meetings necessary to implement the work plan should be fixed (date (alternative date), venue, local organiser, meeting objectives, reports, questionnaires, country contributions, Steering Committee meetings, etc..)

All activities which have a financial implication have to be approved by the MC (meetings, subventions, trainings courses, publications) and recorded in the minutes.

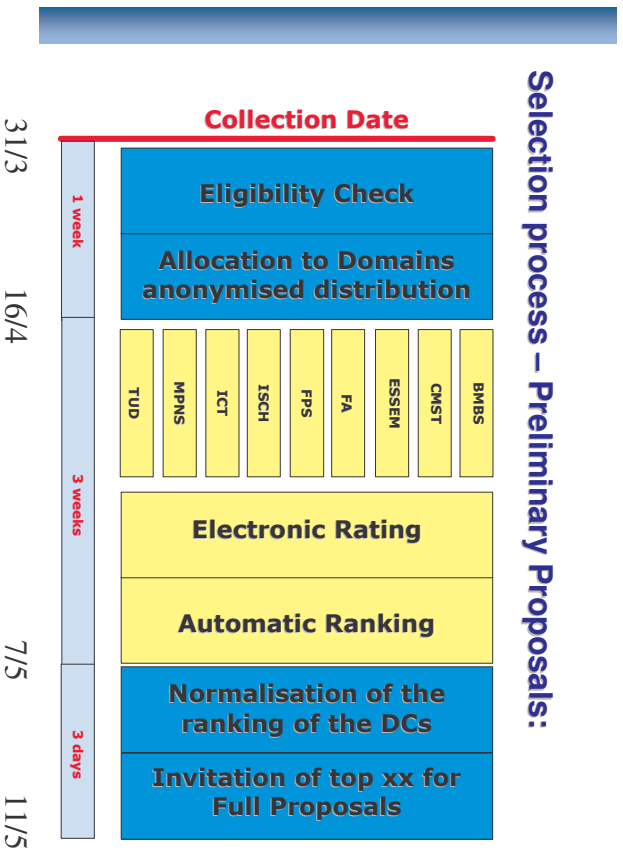
17. Date and place of the next meeting

The Management Committee might revise and update the meeting plan elaborated in the course of the first MC meetings, **the meetings planned for the year 2006/2007/2008 should be fixed** (under the assumption that one reimbursement amounts to 800 – 900 Euro).

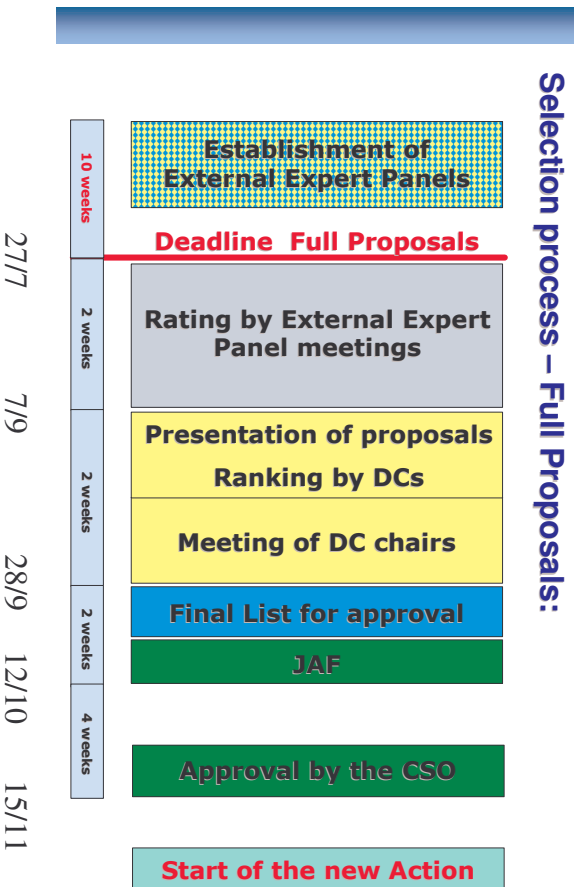
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Selection process – Preliminary Proposals:



Selection process – Full Proposals:



Appendix 2: Countries and Institutions with COST Grant experience

As of January 8, 2007.

Country	Institution	Action
BE	SCK-CEN, Mol	270
CH	EPFL Lausanne	219ter
	ETH Zurich	294 ; 295
DE	Forschungsgemeinschaft Funk e.V	281
	IEM	274
	Max-Planck-Institut fur Astrophysik	282
	Rhein-Westfalische Technische Hochschule	293
DK	Aalborg University	278
	ASC Antenna Systems Consultant Aps	284
	UF Data Analysis	280
ES	Universidad Carlos III de Madrid	276
	Universitat de Barcelona	A34
	Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya	277
FI	Liekki Oy	299
	Tampere University of Technology	290
FR	CNRS, Paris	A35
	INPT	272
GR	Athens Information Technology Centre	291
HU	Central European University, Budapest	A30
IT	Firenze Tecnologia	287
	Universita' di Pavia	288
PL	Institute of Meteorology and Water Management	726
PT	Instituto Superior Tecnico	273 ; 279
SI	University of Ljubljana	298
TR**	Hacettepe University	289
	TUBITAK	285
UK	NERC, Swindon	624
	Queen Mary's University of London	292
	Queen's University Belfast	283
	Rutherford Appleton Labs	296
	University of Hertfordshire	275
	University of York	286 ; 297

- eurozone-countries (13) :Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain.
- Non-eurozone countries may manage COST Grants when using in their country a foreign-currency account in Euros (example : CH ; DK ; HU ; PL ; UK).
- ** Possible that these grants were successful largely due to passage through personal bank accounts. This will not be possible under the expanded COST Grant System, which will operate from March 2007.