

# External Experts for Open Call\_2025

## Job Profile

## 1) COST MISSION

COST – European CO-operation in Science and Technology – provides networking opportunities for researchers and innovators to strengthen Europe's capacity to address scientific, technological and societal challenges. There are three strategic priorities: promoting and spreading excellence, fostering interdisciplinary research for breakthrough science, and empowering and retaining young researchers and innovators. COST implements its mission by funding bottom-up, excellence-driven, open and inclusive networks for peaceful purposes in all areas of science and technology.

The COST Association is an international non-profit association based in Brussels with a membership of 43 European countries. It draws its funding from the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe, through Specific Grant Agreements signed under the umbrella of a Framework Partnership Agreement with the European Commission.

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## 2) POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary responsibility of the external expert is the implementation of the proposal evaluation step which is part of COST's open call procedure (part of COST [SESA procedure](#))

This position will involve:

- Organising and executing the submission, evaluation, selection and approval procedure for new COST Actions,
- Liaising with COST Review Panels while providing them administrative and scientific support;
- Liaising with the COST Scientific Committee while providing them administrative and scientific support

In the evaluation step of our Open call procedure, there are four main phases.

- The Eligibility Check phase. In this phase, the External expert in charge of the proposal reads the proposal (or parts of the proposal) on eligibility. There are four eligibility criteria:
  - Technical Annex format. The technical annex cannot be longer than 15 pages and the right template must be respected.
  - Language. The proposal must be written in English.
  - Peaceful purposes. The objective of the proposal can only be for peaceful purposes.
  - Anonymity. Our evaluation procedure is double blind. If the content of the Technical Annex directly or indirectly reveals the identity of the proposing network, it is not eligible.
- In practice, it is mainly the check on anonymity criterion requires considerable effort.
- The Individual Evaluation Report phase. In this phase, the External expert uses our database to select experts for the proposal. Our system (e-COST) suggests experts based on the research areas of the proposal - however these suggestions might be off the mark. In a first stage, the External experts identifies a number of experts who could be potential evaluators (around 20 per proposal), typically 50-60 per cent of these will respond to indicate that they are available (but it can vary between proposals). In a second step, of the available experts the External experts selects three to be actually assigned as an evaluator (a so-called IEE). In the third steps, these IEEs perform their evaluation, with some effort of the External experts in ensuring they submit their work by the deadline.
- The Consensus Evaluation Report phase. e-COST will automatically assign a rapporteur (in some cases, the External expert will change the rapporteur, for various reasons). The rapporteur drafts a consensus report out of the three individual reports. The work of the External

expert is to ensure that the rapporteur submits the consensus report and that the other IEEs vote on this report (they can either approve or reject).

- The Review Panel phase. In this phase Review Panels will review the Consensus Evaluation Reports. In a first stage, the Review Panel Members will have to be assigned to the different panels (typically there are 6 to 8 panels, clustered around broad fields or disciplines). In a second stage, the Review Panel Members will remotely review the consensus reports and perform a quality check on these (think of matters like ensuring appropriate wording, no misrepresentation of facts, no evaluation on non-pertinent criteria). The External experts support the Review Panel Members in this work and will perform a quality check on the reports themselves as well. In a third stage, the Review Panels (composed of around 8 to 12 members) have 2.5 days meeting where they finalise the reports and provide scientific insights on the portfolio of proposals in their panel. Typically, these panels are in-person in Brussels, with the External experts also providing support in-person. After these Review Panel Meetings, the External experts introduce the necessary changes to the evaluation reports and finalise the reports as issued by each panel.
- Our estimation of days required for an experienced external expert to perform these is as follows (based on a portfolio of 50 proposals): see Annex.

Added to this should be some days (around 3 potentially) of training and preparation per person.

#### Timing:

External experts will be needed to cover the evaluation procedure between October and March.

Experts may be needed through-out or during the peak periods of SESA. These peak periods are preparation for the Review Panel meetings including checking and ensuring quality consensus reports (Jan-Feb) and delivering RP meetings (up to 5 days in March).

## 3) PROFILE AND COMPETENCES REQUIRED

Candidates should demonstrate the following competencies:

### Education and experience

- Recognised 5 to 8 years of experience in project management and importantly **the evaluation of proposals**;
- PhD or at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience, and with a minimum of 5 additional years of experience in science and technology fields;
- Experience in academic or not-for-profit environment with setting up and implementing a call for proposal submission;
- High standard of spoken and written English.

### Specific Competencies

- Experience with working in a science or technology environment;
- Experience with setting up and implementing Calls for proposals;
- Experience with executing fair, transparent evaluation procedures;
- Good interpersonal and communication skills;
- High standard of working knowledge of MS Office systems, use of electronic data bases and Web sites;
- Team-oriented work ethic;
- Excellent organisational skills;

- Solution-oriented to increase efficiency within the organisation;
- Positive and constructive attitude in a changing environment;
- Commitment and accountability to deliver on allocated tasks as entrusted by the Head of Unit.

## ANNEX.

### ESTIMATION OF WORKING DAYS

Our estimation of days required for an experienced external expert to perform these is as follows (based on a portfolio of 50 proposals):

	Task	Working Days for an experienced Science Officer
Eligibility check	Eligibility check input by SOs (assessment and reporting to OCSM)	5,0
Individual evaluation phase	IEE availability check and assignment by SOs	6,7
	IEE Proposal eligibility check confirmation by SOs	0,3
	Ensuring delivery of IERs (IER chasing and IEE replacement)	3,9
Consensus evaluation phase	CER Rapporteur assignment (incl. re-assignments) (supported by OC Admin via Open Call inbox)	0,4
	Ensuring CER Delivery (CER chasing and rapporteur replacement)	1,6
Review Panel phase	Provision of title, description and relevant expertise for Review Panels by RP-SOs	0,3
	RP preparatory meeting(s) by RP-SOs (includes RPM assignment to proposals)	1,6
	Quality check of CERs in Word file by SOs	4,3
	RP meetings by RP-SOs	3,2
	Finalisation of CERs in e-COST (copy from Word to e-COST)	2,0
	Individual RP report finalisation (supported by RP rapporteur) - after RP meeting	0,5
Total number of days		29,8