european Network on Extreme fiRe behaviOr
COST Action CA22164

Navigating the fire environment to ignite preparedness and readiness for extreme wildfires

GRANT AWARDING SYSTEM

Approved by the Action MC: 23.03.2024

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Revision History

Version	Date	Edited by	Description
0.1	12.02.2024	Valentina Bacciu, Theodore M. Giannaros	Draft version
0.2	24.02.2024	Valentina Bacciu, Ljiljana Seric, George Papavasileiou	Internal review
0.3	14.03.2024	Akli Benali, Valentina Bacciu, George Papavasileiou, Fabio Silva	Internal review
0.4	14.03.2024	Theodore M. Giannaros	Complete draft revision
0.5	15.03.2024	Theodore M. Giannaros	Final draft submitted to the Action MC for approval
1.0	26.03.2024	Theodore M. Giannaros	Final version approved by the Action MC

PREAMBLE

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Before applying for a grant, NERO participants must carefully read **Art. 6.4** and **Annex 2** of the **COST Annotated Rules**[1] and fully comprehend the working modalities of COST Action Grants, including processes and their rights and obligations. While this document repeats a certain amount of information from the COST Annotated Rules[1], it does **not** represent the complete guidelines. The official **COST Annotated Rules**[1] will always **take precedence** over the information provided in this document.

Background Information

Networking activities organized through a Grant Awarding Process include:

A. **Mobility of Researchers and Innovators**

A1. Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM): *Exchange visits aimed to support the mobility of researchers and innovators, strengthen the Action network, and promote collaborations between Action participants.*

A2. Virtual Mobility (VM): *Exchange visits in a virtual environment aimed to strengthen the Action network and promote collaborations between Action participants.*

B. **Presentation at Conferences organized by Third Parties**

B1. ITC Conference: *Grant aimed to support Young Researchers and Innovators (YRI) affiliated with an entity in an Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC)[2] or a Near Neighbor Country (NNC)[3] to attend and present their work (oral or poster presentation) at a high-level international conference organized by a third party (i.e., not organized, or co-organized by the Action).*

B2. Dissemination Conference: *Grant aimed to support Action participants to attend and present the work of the Action at a high-level international conference organized by a third party (i.e., not organized, or co-organized by the Action).*

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[1] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2023/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V1.4-Final-.pdf
[2] ITC: 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.
[3] NNC: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, The Faroe Islands, Jordan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

All grants shall serve the achievement of NERO's **research coordination** and **capacity-building objectives**, fitting within the scope of the work planned in each of NERO's **Working Groups** (WG). Before applying, we **strongly encourage** NERO candidate grantees to advise the Action's **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**[4] to obtain a good overview of the Action objectives and the work planned in each WG.

Grant Awarding Committee

The Action Management Committee (MC) has agreed to appoint a **Grant Awarding Committee**[5] to evaluate all NERO grant applications. The Grant Awarding Committee of NERO consists of the **Grant Awarding Coordinator** (Valentina Bacciu, valentina.bacciu@ibe.cnr.it), the **Action Vice Chair** (Akli Benali, aklibenali@gmail.com), and one (1) committee member (Action MC Member) appointed every year by the Action MC. In case of conflict of interest, the Action Chair is mandated to replace the Grant Awarding Committee members accordingly.

General Eligibility Requirements

Any NERO participant with a primary affiliation to a legal entity located in a **COST Full or Cooperating Member country**, a **COST NNC**, or a **European RTD Organization** can apply to receive a grant from the Action.

ITC conference grants are **restricted to** ITC[6]/NNC[7]-affiliated YRIs[8]. Other eligibility criteria may apply depending on the grant type (see Art. 1 – 4 of the present document).

An affiliation is **any form of recognized relationship** between the individual and the legal entity. Examples of affiliation may include (**non-exhaustive list**):

- A work contract.
- Enrollment in a research-performing study programme (e.g., MSc student, PhD candidate, Post-doc researcher).
- Voluntary service in an NGO.
- Emeritus professorship.

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[4] https://e-services.cost.eu/files/domain_files/CA/Action_CA22164/mou/CA22164-e.pdf
[5] Decision made through e-Vote on 22.03.2024
[6] https://www.cost.eu/about/strategy/excellence-and-inclusiveness/
[7] https://www.cost.eu/about/strategy/cost-global-networking/
[8] A researcher or innovator under the age of 40

In case of doubt, grant applicants shall contact the Action Science or Administrative Officer[9] to seek clarifications.

A legal entity can be (**non-exhaustive list**) a public entity (national, regional, local public authority or any other kind of public entity), a university, a research center, company, an association, a Specific Organization, or any other form of legal entity recognized under a national or international framework.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Applicants shall pay attention when filling in their e-COST profile. The legal entity of their affiliation shall be provided with an **accurate address**. **No personal address shall be provided for the affiliation**. Participants shall also pay attention to always keep their **e-COST profile up to date**. Where individuals have several affiliations, they are responsible for mentioning in their e-COST profile their primary affiliation (meaning the legal entity that they consider as their main affiliation).

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[9] https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA22164/#tabs+Name:Main%20Contacts%20and%20Leadership

1. Short-Term Scientific Missions

An STSM comprises the visit of a NERO grantee to a **Host Organization** located in a **different country** than the country of the affiliation of the grantee to conduct **specific collaborative work** for a **determined period**.

1.1. General Requirements

Any STSM shall explicitly contribute to the **objectives** of NERO. In particular, the implementation plan of any STSM shall **fit within the scope** of any of NERO's WGs:

- **WG1**: Historical Extreme Wildfires
- **WG2**: Process-based Analysis of Extreme Fire Behavior
- **WG3**: Capacity-building
- **WG4**: Communication and Outreach

In preparing an STSM Grant application, candidate grantees must obtain a **letter of support** signed by the contact person of the **Host Organization**. A template is available to download on the NERO website (https://nero-network.eu/resources). A list of available Host Organizations is provided on the NERO website (https://nero-network.eu/grants#nero-stsm).

3.2. Timing, Duration, and Financial Support

Any STSM must be conducted within the **Grant Period** (GP) of NERO that runs from **1 November** of one year until **31 October** of the following year (e.g., GP1 runs from 01.11.2023 through 31.10.2024).

IMPORTANT NOTICE

1. An STSM is considered finished upon payment of the grantee and **not** upon the end date of the mission (visit). Accounting for the time required to prepare and submit the STSM report (after the end of the mission), evaluate it, and process the payment of the grantee, **applicants must schedule their STSMs to end** (i.e., last day of visit) **no later than 2 months before the end date of the GP**.

2. Candidate STSM grantees must **submit their applications no later than 4 weeks before the proposed start date of the mission**.

Failure to comply with the above two rules will incur immediate rejection of the STSM Grant application.

There is no minimum or maximum duration of an STSM. Yet, we **strongly encourage** applicants to design STSMs lasting between **5 days – 4 weeks** (1 month). Most often, COST Action STSMs have a duration of **1 – 2 weeks**.

The STSM Grant provides a financial contribution for traveling, accommodation, and subsistence expenses. This financial support **does not necessarily cover all expenses** related to the mission. **Up to 4,000€** in total can be afforded per grant. Payment of the grant takes always place after the completion of the mission. **No pre-payments are possible**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

For any STSM, the proposed budget **shall be justified** on the **duration** and **location** of the mission, as well as on the **planned work** and **expected outcomes**. The **Grant Awarding Committee** reserves the right to **modify the funding level** (never to exceed the level proposed by the applicant) of an STSM Grant application before approving it. On this occasion, **the applicant shall be duly informed** and accept/reject the committee's proposed budgetary cut.

Failure to provide a sound budget justification shall incur rejection of the STSM grant application.

1.3. Application Procedures

NERO participants are advised to refer to **Art. 6.4** and **Annex 2** of the **COST Annotated Rules**[10] and the **COST Grant Awarding User Guide**[11] for a detailed description of the steps required for submitting an STSM Grant application. All applications are submitted **exclusively** through the **e-COST** platform. In case of any doubt, applicants shall contact NERO's Grant Awarding Coordinator (Valentina Bacciu, valentina.bacciu@ibe.cnr.it).

Candidate NERO STSM grantees are requested to prepare and submit the following documentation:

I. STSM Application Form (template available on e-COST)[12] describing the goals, work to be conducted, expected outcomes, and the overall contribution to NERO's objectives.
II. A letter of support from the Host Organization (https://nero-network.eu/resources).
III. A CV of the applicant (max. 3 pages).
IV. A budget justification report (max. 1 page) detailing the expected costs (e.g., traveling, accommodation, subsistence) and the amount of financial support received from other funding sources (if available).

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[10] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2023/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V1.4-Final-.pdf
[11] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/12/Grant-Awarding-userguide.pdf
[12] https://www.cost.eu/STSM_GrantApplication

1.4. Evaluation Procedures

Applications will be processed **all year round** (no deadline to apply for an STSM grant, except for limitations set out in Art. 1.2) on a **rolling monthly basis**. At the beginning of each month, the **Grant Awarding Committee** will perform the **scientific and budgetary evaluation** of the STSM grant applications submitted up to the **last day of the previous month**. The Grant Awarding Committee shall communicate evaluation results **until the 14th day of each month**[13]. **Evaluation** of the proposed missions shall be conducted on the following **quantitative grading scheme**:

Criterion	Awarded points
Alignment of the proposed work with the objectives of NERO. (*Does the proposed work contribute to the long-term research coordination and capacity-building objectives of NERO?*)	$1-5$
Expected outcomes and plan to maintain/expand the collaboration between the members engaged with the STSM. (*What is the impact of the expected outcomes relevant to the challenges of NERO? Is there a plan to maintain/expand the collaboration after the end of the mission?*)	$1-5$
Scientific soundness of the proposed work. (*Is the proposed plan feasible? Can the applicant and Host Organization support its implementation?*)	$1-5$
Budget justification. (*Is the proposed budget reasonable and sufficiently justified?*)	$1-5$
Researcher/Scientist practitioner exchange. (*Does the proposed mission involve collaboration between a researcher/scientist and a practitioner, including civil protection professionals?*)	4
YRI and ITC. (*Does the proposed mission involve at least 1 YRI from an ITC?*)	3

The **minimum points** an STSM grant application shall receive to be considered eligible for funding is **15** (the maximum points an application can receive is 27).

1.5. Reporting and Reimbursement Procedures

NERO participants are advised to refer to **Art. 6.4** and **Annex 2** of the **COST Annotated Rules**[14] and the **COST Grant Awarding User Guide**[15] for a detailed description of the steps required to be

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[13] Example: Grant applications submitted between 1 – 31 May will be evaluated and results will be communicated to the applicants by 14 June at the very latest.
[14] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2023/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V1.4-Final-.pdf
[15] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/12/Grant-Awarding-userguide.pdf

taken after the completion of an STSM. In case of any doubt, NERO STSM grantees shall contact NERO's Grant Awarding Coordinator (Valentina Bacciu, valentina.bacciu@ibe.cnr.it).

All STSM grant payments shall be exclusively claimed through the **e-COST** platform. To claim payment, NERO STSM grantees are requested to prepare and submit the following documentation:

I. STSM Report Form (template available on e-COST)[16], summarizing the work developed, the main achievements, and planned future follow-up activities.

II. A letter from the Host Organization confirming the completion of the STSM (https://nero-network.eu/resources).

III. A brief (max. half-page) summary of the conducted work and the main outcomes of the collaboration (ideally including some photos/graphics) to be used for public dissemination through the NERO website.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

After the completion of an STSM, grantees will have **30 calendar days** to submit the documentation required for the reimbursement of the mission.

Failure to submit the required documentation within 30 calendar days will incur immediate cancellation of the grant.

After the submission and admissibility check of the required documentation, payment of the grant shall be expected within **2 – 4 weeks**.

When outcomes of an STSM are published in an international **scientific journal** or presented at **a national or international conference**, all involved parties (NERO STSM grantee, contact of Host Organization, other co-authors) are requested to **acknowledge the support of NERO** as follows:

"*This paper/article/work/contribution is based upon work from COST Action NERO, CA22164, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).*"

For posters, the **COST logo** and **EU emblem** must be included. **All NERO participants are urged to follow the guidelines set out in COST Visual Identity**[17].

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[16] https://www.cost.eu/STSM_Report
[17] https://www.cost.eu/about/visual-identity/

2. Virtual Mobility

VM comprises the collaboration in a **virtual setting** between NERO participants, aimed at **exchanging knowledge** (e.g., via the implementation of a virtual mentoring scheme) and supporting **scientific activities** that do not require in-person presence (e.g., computational/modeling activities, data analysis for a specific report/activity).

2.1. General Requirements

Any VM activity shall explicitly contribute to the **objectives** of NERO. In particular, the implementation plan of any VM activity shall **fit within the scope** of any of the Action's Working Groups (WG):

- **WG1**: Historical Extreme Wildfires
- **WG2**: Process-based Analysis of Extreme Fire Behavior
- **WG3**: Capacity-building
- **WG4**: Communication and Outreach

2.2. Timing, Duration, and Financial Support

Any VM activity must be conducted within the **Grant Period** (GP) of NERO that runs from **1 November** of one year until **31 October** of the following year (e.g., GP1 runs from 01.11.2023 through 31.10.2024).

> **IMPORTANT NOTICE**
>
> **1**. A VM activity is considered finished upon payment of the grantee and **not** upon the end date of the activity. Accounting for the time required to prepare and submit the VM report (after the end of the activity), evaluate it, and process the payment of the grantee, **applicants must schedule their VM activities to end** (i.e., the last day of the activity) **no later than 2 months before the GP end date**.
>
> **2**. Further, candidate VM grantees must **submit their applications no later than 4 weeks before the proposed start date of the collaboration**.
>
> **Failure to comply with the above two rules will incur immediate rejection of the VM grant application**.

There is no minimum or maximum duration of a VM activity. Yet, we **strongly encourage** applicants to design VM activities lasting between **5 days – 2 weeks**. Most often, COST Action VM activities have a duration of **1 week**.

The VM Grant provides a financial contribution to the overall effort of a virtual collaboration. This financial support **does not necessarily cover all expenses** related to the collaboration. **Up to 1,500€** in total can be afforded per grant. Payment of the grant takes always place after the completion of the activity. **No pre-payments are possible**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

For any VM activity, the candidate grantee must ensure that he/she has access to the **required technical material/equipment**.

2.3. Application Procedures

NERO participants are advised to refer to **Art. 6.4** and **Annex 2** of the **COST Annotated Rules**[18] and the **COST Grant Awarding User Guide**[19] for a detailed description of the steps required for submitting a VM grant application. All applications are submitted **exclusively** through the **e-COST** platform. In case of any doubt, applicants shall contact NERO's Grant Awarding Coordinator (Valentina Bacciu, valentina.bacciu@ibe.cnr.it).

Candidate NERO VM grantees are requested to prepare and submit the following documentation:

I.   VM Application Form (template available on e-COST)[20], describing the main objectives of the virtual activity, the work to be carried out by the applicant, the plan for participation (other NERO participants), expected outcomes, and overall contribution to NERO's objectives.

II. CVs of the participants in the VM activity (max. 1 page per participant)

2.4. Evaluation Procedures

Applications will be processed **all year round** (no deadline to apply for a VM grant, except for limitations set out in Art. 1.2) on a **rolling monthly basis**. At the beginning of each month, the **Grant Awarding Committee** will perform the **scientific and budgetary evaluation** of the VM grant applications submitted up to the **last day of the previous month**. The Grant Awarding Committee shall communicate evaluation results **until the 14th day of each month**[21]. **Evaluation** of the proposed missions shall be conducted on the following **quantitative grading scheme**:

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[18] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2023/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V1.4-Final-.pdf
[19] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/12/Grant-Awarding-userguide.pdf
[20] https://www.cost.eu/VM_GrantApplication
[21] Example: Grant applications submitted between 1 – 31 May will be evaluated and results will be communicated to the applicants by 14 June at the very latest.

Criterion	Awarded points
Alignment of the proposed work with the objectives of NERO. (*Does the proposed work contribute to the long-term research coordination and capacity-building objectives of NERO?*)	$1-5$
Expected outcomes and plan to maintain/expand the collaboration between members participating in the VM activity. (*What is the impact of the expected outcomes relevant to the challenges of NERO? Is there a plan to maintain/expand the collaboration after the end of the mission?*)	$1-5$
Scientific soundness of the proposed work. (*Is the proposed plan feasible? Can the applicant and participants support its implementation?*)	$1-5$
Researcher/Scientist practitioner exchange. (*Does the proposed collaboration involve both researchers/scientists and practitioners, including civil protection professionals?*)	4
YRI and ITC. (*Is the applicant a YRI from an ITC?*)	3

The **minimum points** a VM grant application shall receive to be considered eligible for funding is **13** (the maximum points an application can receive is 22).

2.5. Reporting and Reimbursement Procedures

NERO participants are advised to refer to **Art. 6.4** and **Annex 2** of the **COST Annotated Rules**[22] and the **COST Grant Awarding User Guide**[23] for a detailed description of the steps required to be taken after the completion of a VM activity. In case of any doubt, VM grantees shall contact NERO's Grant Awarding Coordinator (Valentina Bacciu, valentina.bacciu@ibe.cnr.it).

All VM Grant payments shall be exclusively claimed through the **e-COST** platform. To claim payment, NERO VM grantees are requested to prepare and submit the following documentation:

I. VM Report Form (template available on e-COST)[24], summarizing the work developed, main outcomes, and future follow-up collaborations.

II. A brief (max. half-page) summary of the conducted work and the main outcomes of the collaboration (ideally including some photos/graphics) to be used for public dissemination through the NERO website.

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[22] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2023/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V1.4-Final-.pdf
[23] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/12/Grant-Awarding-userguide.pdf
[24] https://www.cost.eu/VM_Report

IMPORTANT NOTICE

After the completion of the VM activity, grantees will have **30 calendar days** to submit the documentation required for the reimbursement of the activity.

Failure to submit the required documentation within 30 calendar days will incur immediate cancellation of the grant.

Following submission and admissibility check of the required documentation, payment of the grant shall be expected within **2 – 4 weeks**.

When outcomes of a VM activity are published in an international **scientific journal** or presented at **a national or international conference**, all involved parties (NERO VM grantee, VM participants, other co-authors) are requested to **acknowledge the support of NERO** as follows:

"*This paper/article/work/contribution is based upon work from COST Action NERO, CA22164, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)*."

For posters, the **COST logo** and **EU emblem** must be included.

All NERO participants are urged to follow the guidelines set out in COST Visual Identity[25].

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[25] https://www.cost.eu/about/visual-identity/

3. ITC Conference

ITC Conference Grants aim at supporting **YRIs affiliated in an ITC or NNC** to attend and present (oral or poster presentation) their work in **high-level international conferences** fully organized by a third party (i.e., not organized, or co-organized by NERO).

3.1. General Requirements

The conference can take place **anywhere in the world**, **face-to-face** or **virtually**. The conference topic must align with the **objectives** of NERO. In particular, the conference topic shall **fit within the scope** of any of the Action's Working Groups (WG):

- **WG1**: Historical Extreme Wildfires
- **WG2**: Process-based Analysis of Extreme Fire Behavior
- **WG3**: Capacity-building
- **WG4**: Communication and Outreach

> **IMPORTANT NOTICE**
>
> ITC conference grants are **restricted to** ITC[26]/NNC[27]-affiliated YRIs[28].
>
> **Failure to comply with this requirement will incur immediate rejection of the ITC Conference Grant application**.

3.2. Timing and Financial Support

The conference must take place within the **Grant Period** (GP) of NERO that runs from **1 November** of one year until **31 October** of the following year (e.g., GP1 runs from 01.11.2023 through 31.10.2024).

> **IMPORTANT NOTICE**
>
> **1**. An ITC Conference grant is considered completed upon payment of the grantee and **not** upon the end date of the conference. Accounting for the time required to prepare and submit the ITC conference grant report (after the end of the conference), evaluate it, and process the payment of the grantee, **applicants must apply for conferences whose end date is 2 months before the GP end date.**
>
> **2**. Further, candidate ITC conference grantees must **submit their applications no later than 4 weeks before the start date of the conference**.

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[26] https://www.cost.eu/about/strategy/excellence-and-inclusiveness/
[27] https://www.cost.eu/about/strategy/cost-global-networking/
[28] A researcher or innovator under the age of 40

Failure to comply with the above two rules will incur immediate rejection of the ITC conference grant application.

The ITC conference grant provides a financial contribution for traveling, accommodation, registration fees, printing of scientific posters, and subsistence expenses. For **virtual** attendance, **only registration fees** can be reimbursed. The financial support provided shall reflect the **duration** and **location** of the conference and **actual** registration fees. **Up to 2,000€** in total can be afforded per grant for a face-to-face conference and up to **500€** for a virtual conference. Payment of the grant takes always place after the completion of the mission. **No pre-payments are possible**.

3.3. Application Procedures

NERO participants are advised to refer to **Art. 6.4** and **Annex 2** of the **COST Annotated Rules**[29] and the **COST Grant Awarding User Guide**[30] for a detailed description of the steps required for submitting an ITC Conference Grant application. All applications are submitted **exclusively** through the **e-COST** platform. In case of any doubt, applicants shall contact NERO's Grant Awarding Coordinator (Valentina Bacciu, valentina.bacciu@ibe.cnr.it).

Candidate NERO ITC Conference grantees are requested to prepare and submit the following documentation:

    I.   ITC Conference Grant Application Form (template available on e-COST)[31], describing the relevance of the conference to NERO's objectives and the applicant's motivation.
    II.   Copy of the abstract of the accepted oral or poster presentation.
    III.   Acceptance letter from the conference organizers.

3.4. Evaluation Procedures

Applications will be processed **all year round** (no deadline to apply for an ITC Conference grant, except for limitations set out in Art. 1.2) on a **rolling monthly basis**. At the beginning of each month, the **Grant Awarding Committee** will perform the **scientific and budgetary evaluation** of the ITC Conference grant applications submitted up to the **last day of the previous month**. The Grant Awarding Committee shall communicate evaluation results **until the 14th day of each**

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[29] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2023/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V1.4-Final-.pdf
[30] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/12/Grant-Awarding-userguide.pdf
[31] https://www.cost.eu/ITCConference_GrantApplication

month[32]. **Evaluation** of the proposed missions shall be conducted on the following **quantitative grading scheme**:

Criterion	Awarded points
Alignment of the work to be presented with the objectives of NERO. (*Does the presentation align with the research coordination and capacity-building objectives of NERO?*)	$1 - 5$
Trajectory of the applicant and involvement within the network. (*How much active is the applicant concerning activities of NERO?*)	$1 - 5$
Young practitioner from ITC/NNC. (*Is the applicant a practitioner under the age of 40 from an ITC/NNC?*)	2

The **minimum points** an ITC conference grant application shall receive to be considered eligible for funding is **8** (the maximum points an application can receive is 12).

3.5. Reporting and Reimbursement Procedures

NERO participants are advised to refer to **Art. 6.4** and **Annex 2** of the **COST Annotated Rules**[33] and the **COST Grant Awarding User Guide**[34] for a detailed description of the steps required to be taken for the completion of an ITC Conference Grant. In case of any doubt, ITC conference grantees shall contact NERO's Grant Awarding Coordinator (Valentina Bacciu, valentina.bacciu@ibe.cnr.it).

All ITC Conference Grant payments shall be exclusively claimed through the **e-COST** platform. To claim payment, NERO ITC Conference grantees are requested to prepare and submit the following documentation:

I. ITC Conference Report (template available on e-COST)[35], summarizing the outcome of the grantee's participation in the conference, including the establishment of new contacts or collaborations.

II. Certificate of attendance.

III. Conference programme or book of abstracts or proceedings.

IV. Copy of the given presentation (oral/poster).

V. A brief (max. half-page) summary of the presentation (ideally including some photos/graphics) to be used for public dissemination through the NERO website.

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[32] Example: Grant applications submitted between 1 – 31 May will be evaluated and results will be communicated to the applicants by 14 June at the very latest.
[33] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2023/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V1.4-Final-.pdf
[34] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/12/Grant-Awarding-userguide.pdf
[35] https://www.cost.eu/ITCConference_Report

IMPORTANT NOTICE

After the completion of a conference, ITC Conference grantees will have **30 calendar days** to submit the documentation required for the reimbursement of the mission.

Failure to submit the required documentation within 30 calendar days will incur immediate cancellation of the grant.

Following submission and admissibility check of required documentation, payment of the grant shall be expected within **2 – 4 weeks**.

ITC Conference grantees need to **acknowledge the support of NERO** as follows:

"*This paper/article/work/contribution/presentation is based upon work from COST Action NERO, CA22164, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).*"

For posters, the **COST logo** and **EU emblem** must be included.

All NERO participants are urged to follow the guidelines set out in COST Visual Identity[36].

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[36] https://www.cost.eu/about/visual-identity/

4. Dissemination Conference

Dissemination Conference Grants aim to support **Action participants** to attend and **orally present** the work of the Action in high-level **international conferences** fully organized by a third party (i.e., not organized or co-organized by NERO).

4.1. General Requirements

The conference can take place **anywhere in the world**, **face-to-face** or **virtually**. The conference topic must align with the **objectives** of NERO. In particular, the conference topic shall **fit within the scope** of any of the Action's Working Groups (WG):

- **WG1**: Historical Extreme Wildfires
- **WG2**: Process-based Analysis of Extreme Fire Behavior
- **WG3**: Capacity-building
- **WG4**: Communication and Outreach

4.2. Timing and Financial Support

The conference must take place within the **Grant Period** (GP) of NERO that runs from **1 November** of one year until **31 October** of the following year (e.g., GP1 runs from 01.11.2023 through 31.10.2024).

IMPORTANT NOTICE

1. A Dissemination Conference Grant is considered completed upon payment of the grantee and **not** upon the end date of the conference. Accounting for the time required to prepare and submit the Dissemination conference grant report (after the end of the conference), evaluate it, and process the payment of the grantee, **applicants must apply for conferences whose end date is 2 months before the GP end date**.

2. Further, candidate Dissemination Conference grantees must **submit their applications no later than 4 weeks before the start date of the conference**.

Failure to comply with the above two rules will incur immediate rejection of the Dissemination Conference grant applications.

The Dissemination Conference Grant provides a financial contribution for traveling, accommodation, registration fees, printing of scientific posters, and subsistence expenses. For **virtual** attendance, **only registration fees** can be reimbursed. The financial support provided shall reflect the **duration** and **location** of the conference and **actual** registration fees. **Up to 2,000€** in total can be afforded per grant for a face-to-face conference and up to **500€** for a virtual

conference. Payment of the grant takes always place after the completion of the mission. **No pre-payments are possible**.

4.3. Application Procedures

NERO participants are advised to refer to **Art. 6.4** and **Annex 2** of the **COST Annotated Rules**[37] and the **COST Grant Awarding User Guide**[38] for a detailed description of the steps required for submitting a Dissemination Conference Grant application. All applications are submitted **exclusively** through the **e-COST** platform. In case of any doubt, applicants shall contact NERO's Grant Awarding Coordinator (Valentina Bacciu, valentina.bacciu@ibe.cnr.it).

Candidate NERO Dissemination Conference grantees are requested to prepare and submit the following documentation:

I. Dissemination Conference Grant Application Form (template available on e-COST)[39], describing the relevance of the conference to NERO's objectives and the applicant's motivation.
II. Copy of the abstract of the accepted oral presentation.
III. Acceptance (or invitation) letter from the conference organizers.

4.4. Evaluation Procedures

Applications will be processed **all year round** (no deadline to apply for a Dissemination Conference grant, except for limitations set out in Art. 1.2) on a **rolling monthly basis**. At the beginning of each month, the **Grant Awarding Committee** will perform the **scientific and budgetary evaluation** of the Dissemination Conference grant applications submitted up to the **last day of the previous month**. The Grant Awarding Committee shall communicate evaluation results **until the 14th day of each month**[40]. **Evaluation** of the proposed missions shall be conducted on the following **quantitative grading scheme**:

Criterion	Awarded points
Alignment of the work to be presented with the objectives of NERO. (*Does the presentation align with the research coordination and capacity-building objectives of NERO?*)	1 – 5
Trajectory of the applicant and involvement within the network. (*How much active is the applicant concerning activities of NERO?*)	1 – 5
Practitioner.	2

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[37] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2023/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V1.4-Final-.pdf
[38] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/12/Grant-Awarding-userguide.pdf
[39] https://www.cost.eu/DisseminationConference_GrantApplication
[40] Example: Grant applications submitted between 1 – 31 May will be evaluated and results will be communicated to the applicants by 14 June at the very latest.

(Is the applicant a practitioner?)	

The **minimum points** an ITC conference grant application shall receive to be considered eligible for funding is **8** (the maximum points an application can receive is 12).

4.5. Reporting and Reimbursement Procedures

NERO participants are advised to refer to **Art. 6.4** and **Annex 2** of the **COST Annotated Rules**[41] and the **COST Grant Awarding User Guide**[42] for a detailed description of the steps required to be taken for the completion of a Dissemination Conference Grant. In case of any doubt, Dissemination conference grantees shall contact NERO's Grant Awarding Coordinator (Valentina Bacciu, valentina.bacciu@ibe.cnr.it).

All Dissemination Conference Grant payments shall be exclusively claimed through the **e-COST** platform. To claim payment, NERO Dissemination Conference grantees are requested to prepare and submit the following documentation:

   I.   Dissemination Conference Report (template available on e-COST)[43], summarizing the outcome of the grantee's participation in the conference, including the establishment of new contacts or collaborations.
   II. Certificate of attendance.
   III. Conference programme or book of abstracts or proceedings.
   IV. Copy of the given oral presentation.
   V.   A brief (max. half-page) summary of the presentation (ideally including some photos/graphics) to be used for public dissemination through the NERO website.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

After the completion of a conference, Dissemination Conference grantees will have **30 calendar days** to submit the documentation required for the reimbursement of the mission.

Failure to submit the required documentation within 30 calendar days will incur immediate cancellation of the grant.

Following submission and admissibility check of the required documentation, payment of the grant shall be expected within **2 – 4 weeks**.

Dissemination Conference grantees need to **acknowledge the support of NERO** as follows:

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[41] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2023/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V1.4-Final-.pdf
[42] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/12/Grant-Awarding-userguide.pdf
[43] https://www.cost.eu/DisseminationConference_Report

> "*This paper/article/work/contribution/presentation is based upon work from COST Action NERO, CA22164, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).*"
>
> For posters, the **COST logo** and **EU emblem** must be included.
>
> **All NERO participants are urged to follow the guidelines set out in COST Visual Identity**[44].

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[44] https://www.cost.eu/about/visual-identity/