



Second Call for Young Researcher and Innovator Conference Grant Applications

2025-12-21

COST Action CA22137 - Randomised Optimisation Algorithms Research Network (ROAR-NET) invites applications for Young Researcher and Innovator (YRI) Conference Grants. YRI Conference Grants provide financial support to YRIs for presenting their own work within the scope of the Action in high-profile conferences fully organised by a third party, i.e., not organised nor co-organised by the COST Action. Target conferences include, but are not limited to, Evostar 2026, MCDM 2026, SIAM OP26, IEEE WCCI 2026, IFORS 2026, GECCO 2026 and PPSN 2026. Other high-profile conferences may be considered, particularly those in relevant application domains.

Eligibility rules

You may apply for a YRI Conference Grant if:

- You are a YRI, i.e., a researcher or innovator under the age of 40.

- You have been accepted to give an oral or poster presentation and your presentation is listed in the official conference program.
- Your primary affiliation is with a legal entity located in a COST Full/Cooperating Member or Near Neighbour Country (NNC) (see the [Country and Organisations Table](#)).

Duration

- The application start and end dates must match the conference start and end dates.
- You may arrive one day before the conference starts and/or leave one day after the conference ends.

Location

- There is no limitation on the location of conferences. They can take place anywhere in the world, including the country of the applicant. However, the grant amount is limited and might not cover the total costs incurred in connection with the conference.

Specific eligibility criteria

- The conference topic must be relevant to the ROAR-NET Action.
- The work to be presented must contribute to the objectives and deliverables of the Action (see the [Memorandum of Understanding, MoU](#)).
- The applicant must be the sole presenter of the work.
- The following acknowledgement must be included in the publication and presentation materials: “This publication is based upon work from COST Action Randomised Optimisation Algorithms Research Network (ROAR-NET), CA22137, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).” In the case of abstract-only publications, this acknowledgement should be included where possible.
- The applicant must not have been awarded by ROAR-NET more than one Conference grant or more than two grants of any type in any Action Grant Period.
- The applicant must not have been awarded by ROAR-NET another Conference grant in the current Action Grant Period.
- The applicant must not submit more than one grant application (of any type) in each evaluation round.

Financial support rules

Financial support in the form of a YRI Conference Grant provides a contribution towards travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses, as well as the conference registration fee and poster printing costs. A maximum of 2.500,00 EUR can be awarded to each successful applicant for on-site conference participation and a maximum of 500,00 EUR for online participation.

The amount requested by the applicant should reflect the duration and location of the YRI Conference. The final grant amount will be determined during the evaluation process by the ROAR-NET Grant Awarding Committee. The awarded grant will be paid after the YRI Conference has been completed and the required report and supporting documents have been submitted and approved.

Timeline

- The final deadline for the submission of applications is 15 July 2026 (Brussels time).
- Applications can be submitted at any time on a rolling basis.
- Applications submitted until the 15th day of each calendar month (Brussels time) are evaluated, and Grant Letters are normally issued to successful applicants by the end of the month.
- Applicants are advised to submit their applications at least one week before the deadline in order to allow for prescreening by the Action and implementation by the applicant of any required revisions.
- The conference must start no earlier than the 1st day of the second calendar month after the application deadline.
- The conference must end no later than 30 September 2026.
- The report and supporting documents must be submitted within 30 days after the end of the activity.

Application process

Applications have to be submitted via the COST [Grants Application page](#). The following documents must be submitted:

- The completed application form ([see the e-COST template](#))
- A copy of the final version of the paper, if applicable, or abstract of the accepted oral or poster presentation acknowledging the COST Action as stated under Specific eligibility criteria
- [An acceptance letter from the conference organisers](#)
- A cover letter
 - explaining the contribution of the work to be presented to the objectives and deliverables of the Action
 - providing a breakdown of the costs based on actual needs including [types and costs of transportation](#), [type and cost of accommodation \(number of nights times the price per night\)](#), [subsistence \(number of days times the daily amount\)](#), as well as the conference registration type and corresponding fee, poster printing costs (if applicable) and any other relevant expenses

For the submission procedure see the COST [Grant Awarding User Guide](#).

Evaluation process

Applications are prechecked, and any incomplete or invalid applications are rejected. The ROAR-NET Grant Awarding Committee then performs the scientific and budgetary assessment of complete and valid applications. The evaluation criteria and the corresponding scoring scales are:

1. Scientific or technical level of the conference or collocated event
very high - 2, high - 1, medium or low - 0
2. Relevance of the conference topic to the Action
high - 2, medium - 1, low - 0
3. Contribution of the work to the objectives and deliverables of the Action
high - 2, medium - 1, low - 0
4. Expected contribution to the professional development of the applicant
high - 2, medium - 1, low - 0
5. Type of publication
full paper - 2, abstract or extended abstract - 1
6. Primary affiliation of the applicant in a COST Inclusiveness Target Country or Near Neighbour Country
yes - 2, no - 1

The score of an application is the sum of its scores in all criteria.

The following selection procedure is applied in each round of evaluation:

1. Applications with a zero score in any of the criteria and applications **scoring less than 6 in criteria 1-4** are rejected.
2. Budgetary assessment of the remaining applications is performed and, for each application, the amount requested is either confirmed or revised to a lower amount.
3. Applications are sorted in descending order of their scores, and a threshold is defined as the highest score such that the total amount required by applications with scores down to that threshold matches or exceeds the current budget. Applications where the applicant has already been awarded another COST grant in any ROAR-NET Action Grant Period are not considered in this step.
4. Applications with a score *above* the threshold are approved for funding, provided that the applicant has not been awarded another COST grant in any ROAR-NET Action Grant Period. The remaining applications are considered in step 5.
5. Additional applications are selected for funding from all applications scoring at least one point below the threshold, including any applications not considered in steps 3 or 4, so as to improve the gender balance and institutional and geographical diversity of YRI Conference Grants in the current Action Grant Period. In particular, funding several applicants from the same institution or the same applicant within the current Action Grant Period should be avoided.

Reporting process

After the end of the Conference, the grantee will receive an e-notification to submit a report on e-COST. Please note that the awarded grant will be paid only after the Conference has been completed, and after the required report and supporting documents have been submitted and approved.

The following documents must be submitted:

- YRI Conference report based on [e-COST report template](#)
- Certificate of attendance
- Programme of the conference or book of abstracts / proceedings indicating the presentation (oral or poster)

- Copy of the given presentation (oral or poster) **acknowledging the COST Action as stated under Specific eligibility criteria**
- **Optionally**, a photo showing the grantee delivering the presentation at the conference with **permission** to be shared by the Action for communication and dissemination purposes

Failure to submit the report and supporting documents within 30 days after the end date of the Conference will effectively cancel the Grant. Note that the COST Association or the Action's Grant Holder may request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by YRI Conference Grant applicants. In addition, according to COST, the grantee is responsible for archiving the activity-related documents, such as tickets, invoices and receipts, for a period up to 9 years after the end of activity and for making them available upon request when an authority checks source of funds, income or double funding.

Contact

For further information, please contact:
ROAR-NET Grant Awarding Coordinator
Bogdan Filipič <bogdan.filipic@ijs.si>

Useful documents

ROAR-NET Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

https://e-services.cost.eu/files/domain_files/CA/Action_CA22137/mou/CA22137-e.pdf

Country and Organisations Table

https://www.cost.eu/Country_Organisations_Table

COST Grant Awarding User Guide

https://www.cost.eu/grants_userguide

COST Grant Application page

<https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>

YRI Conference Grant application template

<https://www.cost.eu/YRICG-application-template>

YRI Conference report template

<https://www.cost.eu/YRICG-report-template>

Template for permission to share photos

https://www.roar-net.eu/calls/yri-cg-call-2/Permission-to-Share-Photos_TEMPLATE.docx



**Funded by
the European Union**

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation.
www.cost.eu

COST Action CA22137
Action Chair: Dr. Carlos M. Fonseca
Start Date: 2 October 2023
End Date: 1 October 2027
www.cost.eu/actions/CA22137
[GitHub](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

University of Coimbra

Department of Informatics Engineering
Polo II, Pinhal de Marrocos
P-3030 290 Coimbra Portugal
E-mail: roar-net@dei.uc.pt
© 2024 University of Coimbra