

# **A GUIDE TO CA18213: INTERNAL RULES & PROCEDURES**

**Version 2.0  
July 2021**



## INTRODUCTION

The following document describes CA 18213 rules and procedures. By setting a common ground of rules and processes, this document is intended to facilitate the contributions of the Action's different members.

To develop attainable work and collaborative processes within CA 18213, the elaboration of this document had into account: (a) the Action research coordination and capacity-building objectives; (b) the theoretical background underlying the Action proposal and memorandum of understanding; (c) its deliverables; (d) the results of the discussions held during the Action first meeting, in Brussels, in October of 2019; (e) several revisions made between April and July 2021, when the Action decided to change its WG structure; and (g) COST guiding principles (e.g. Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) participation; promotion of ECI development; gender-balanced participation in the Action).

The document is structured in four sections. First, this guide presents a general overview of CA 18213. This overview is intended to answer a central question: how does the theoretical foundations of CA 18213 may be sustained by the implementation of COST networking tools and principles to fulfill the Action specific objectives and achieve the proposed deliverables?

A second section of the document describes the main rules and procedures for internal processes and decision-making of the Action, namely:

- Management of requests to join the action
- Planning international cooperation
- Internal communication
- Invitation and reimbursement for action meetings

A third section is dedicated to the management rules and procedures of networking tools, namely:

- Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)
- ITC Conference Grants
- Training Schools

A fourth section sets the rules and procedures for dissemination and communication. For each of the previous three sections, the key roles involved are indicated, the rules and procedures are described according to bullet questions and recommendations are made for additional information in COST documents about each of these specific areas of decision or tasks.

## Information about the updates of version 2.0

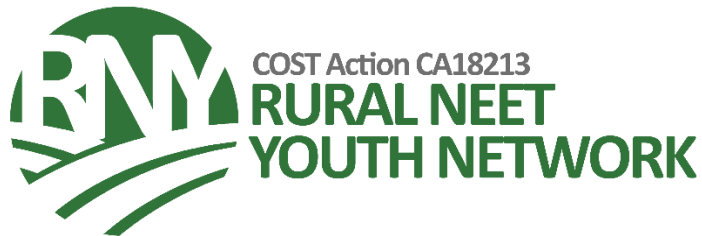
Section and subsection	Update
Throughout the document	Mentions to “annual thematic priorities” are replaced by the different WGs scope, to reflect the new Action structure.
Section I, Point 3	The new structure of the Action approved by the MC on 21.07.21 is briefly presented.
Section II, subsection 1 (membership)	New membership procedures approved by the MC on 06.04.21 were included in the Manual.
Section II, subsection 4 (invitations management)	Selection criteria for issuing invitations are presented by order of importance. Expertise and relevance (being actively involved in the Action’s tasks) prevail over other criteria.
Section III, subsection 1 (STSM)	STSM are now based on a permanent call during each grant period, based on budget availability. A minimum of 50 points (scale from 0 to 100 points) is set for approving a proposal. Assessment criteria associated to annual thematic priorities are now associated with WG scopes.
Section III, subsection 2 (ITC conference grants)	ITC conference grants are now based on a permanent call during each grant period, based on budget availability. A minimum of 50 points (scale from 0 to 100 points) is set for approving a proposal. Assessment criteria associated to annual thematic priorities are now associated with WG scopes.
Section III, subsection 3 (mentoring program)	Criteria for mentors and mentees are updated according to the ones presented in the calls.
Section IV, subsection 2 (engaging stakeholders)	Two national activities for the remaining period of the Action must be undertaken by national representatives: one national event; one parliament (regional/national) hearing.

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# **SECTION I**

## **CA 18213: AN OVERVIEW**



## ***1. What is CA 18213 main challenge?***

The main challenge of CA 18213 is **to reach to a meaningful model of the concurrent risks that may lead to rural NEETs' social exclusion**. This aim is an original, timely and socially-relevant one, because it tackles three gaps describing the current knowledge about rural NEETs. First, CA 18213 is original, as it addresses the lack of a specific line of inquiry on rural NEETs' social exclusion. This problem stems from entangled research trends: (a) most of the conducted research has characterized urban and suburban NEETs; (b) knowledge about rural NEETs is scattered across studies on vulnerable rural youths; and (c) most of the research produced about NEETs emphasizes their situation in Western and Northern countries - deeper analyses of differences between East-West or North-South EU Member States concerning features, such as the role and quality of youths' (in)formal support are missing. Second, this COST action is timely, because networks and platforms to organize findings, connect critical mass dealing with rural NEETs and create research capacity are, to date, inexistent. Therefore, this COST action is also socially relevant, because policies and on-the-ground practices are not being informed by tailored, multidisciplinary research, especially in countries more affected by high rural NEETs' rates.

## ***2. What is the theoretical background of CA 18213?***

Considering this challenge, the aim of CA 18213 is to share knowledge, ideas and best-practices that can be integrated according to an existing meta-model of social reality cutting across multiple scientific disciplines: the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 2006). The main assumption of the bioecological model is that protective and risk factors associated to personal development arise from permanent interactions occurring at four ecological layers: the microsystem, corresponding to individual characteristics and his



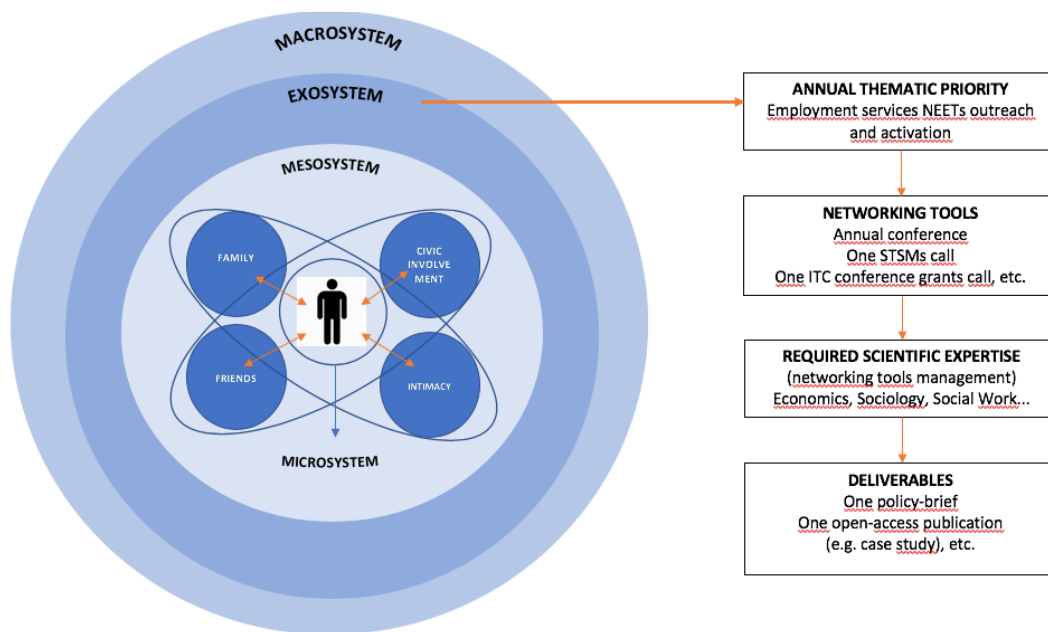
immediate relationships/interactions; the exosystem, which conveys all informal groups of support (e.g. with parents and friends); the mesosystem, covering the interactions with organizations providing formal support to individuals; and the macrosystem, dealing with dominant cultural values in a given space/time. Using this model as a framework will clarify how rural NEETs' profile and developmental trajectories (microsystem), informal support (exosystem) and formal support (mesosystem) contribute to (or prevent) their social exclusion, in the present socio-historical context (macro-system).

### ***3. How can different scientific backgrounds and expertise be brought forward in CA 18213?***

Considering that it is a meta-model of personal development cutting across different levels of reality, **the bioecological model facilitates the integration of very distinct scientific contributions**, whether they come from social sciences, economics or agriculture research, among others. To bring forward and aggregate these contributions into a conceptual model, the Action runs based on 5 WGs: WG1 - Rural NEETs social networks and social inclusion; WG 2 - Rural NEETs and formal and non-formal education; WG 3 - employment & employment services in rural areas; WG4 - Rural NEETs & sustainability; WG 5 - Metamodel of risks and protective factors for rural NEETs. The connections between the meta-model that drives CA 18213, the WGs, networking tools and required scientific expertise and deliverables are illustrated in an organic diagram of CA 18213, based on a potential thematic priority (Figure 1):

According to Figure 1 example, employment & employment services in rural areas was proposed and accepted as a WG priority (WG3). Networking tools are shaped by that priority. For instance, an annual conference was dedicated to that theme, as well as an STSM call and one ITC grant call. This theme requires that networking tools are managed by a certain kind of expertise (e.g. economics). The alignment between thematic priorities, networking tools and task management based on adequate expertise will result in certain deliverables (e.g. one policy-brief) which will reflect the Action work regarding this specific topic.

Another WG topic or priority would result in a specific organic diagram, aligning theory with networking tools, scientific expertise and deliverables once again. Thus, **WG topics and priorities are nodal points of CA 18213 action that reflect the different levels of the biocological model.**



**Figure 1. Organic diagram:** Connections between CA 18213 driving meta-model and WG priorities, networking tools, required scientific expertise and deliverables

**Notes:** Macrosystem: refers to culture, laws, values, customs, traditions; Exosystem: layer of larger institutions such as employment services, educational systems, economic systems and sectors, social services; Mesosystem: involves all informal systems with which the individual is involved (e.g. family, friends); Microsystem: includes the individuals characteristics and the interactions/relationships with systems at the mesosystem level.

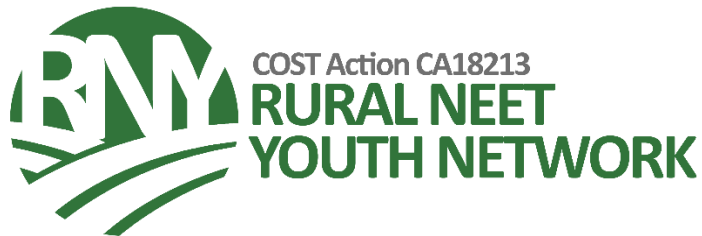
COST guiding principles are observed across the way for each WG set by the Action. The interactions between the theoretical background, WGs and the implementation of networking tools will generate different needs in terms of scientific expertise, stakeholders involvement, ECI contributions or geographical focuses (in aspects such as organization of activities or systematic analysis of intervention or research practices). Altogether, this means that all members will have the chance to be involved in different tasks, with a particular emphasis on

the involvement of ECI and ITC members in general management of the Action or managing different decisions and networking tools.

#### ***4. What are the guiding ethical standards in CA 18213?***

To address its main challenge CA 18213 adheres to four basic, fundamental ethical principles:

1. **Respect:** respect for colleagues, research participants, the ecosystem. All participants will adhere to national and EU legislation to ensure that studied groups of people are treated with full respect for their fundamental rights and dignity.
2. **Reliability:** in ensuring the quality of work, reflected in the design, the methodology used, the use and analysis of resources. That means that all the activities will meet the scientific standards and will be verifiable and reproducible by CA 18213 participants and other researches.
3. **Honesty:** in developing, undertaking, reviewing and communicating work in a fair way. CA 18213 partners will carry out their activities independently of pressure from commissioning parties and from political and economic interests. That means that CA 18213 participants may actively engage with different stakeholders but this collaboration will not have any direct or indirect influence on choices made within the Action.
4. **Accountability:** for the research work from the idea to publication, for its management and organization, for training, supervision and mentoring and for the Action wider impact.



# **SECTION II**

# **CA 18213 RULES & PROCEDURES FOR INTERNAL PROCESSES AND DECISION-MAKING**



## 1. MANAGEMENT OF REQUESTS TO JOIN THE ACTION

**1.1. Key roles:** Science Communication Officer; WG Leaders.

### 1.2. Background

COST Actions are open to everyone. COST Action's openness is a powerful feature allowing each Action to widen the expertise and profile of the current participants in a given network. This section CA 18213 covers membership requests management from countries that are not involved yet in the action, as well as requests for WG membership.

### 1.3. Who are CA 18213 participants?

Any person being an Action MC member, an Action MC substitute, an Action MC Observer, a WG member or an ad-hoc participant.

**MC members, substitutes and observers** are defined by COST (check COST Vademecum<sup>1</sup>, Subsection 1.2.).

**WG members** are those applying to the Action to participate in one of its WG. These can be MC members or other candidates who only wish to participate in a specific WG. In CA 18213 they are allocated to only one Working Group, according to their request, expertise and membership request procedures (see points 1.4. to 1.6).

**Ad-hoc participants** are those who are invited by CA 18213 to participate in one specific activity or event, or those registering for an event on their own (e.g. conference) while not having any kind of affiliation with the Action.

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<sup>1</sup> For the latest version of the Vademecum, please follow the link: <https://www.cost.eu/funding/how-to-get-funding/documents-guidelines/>

Ad-hoc members can be from any COST Full member country, COST Cooperating Member (Israel) or COST Partner Member that has accepted and signed the Action Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) where the Action objectives are described.

#### **1.4. Who can participate?**

Researchers, technicians, scholars or other stakeholders affiliated to universities, research centers, NGO's or public entities (at decision-making or service deliverance level) or companies relevant for the Action that are located in a COST Full or Cooperating Member may participate in CA 18213 once their respective country has accepted the MoU. They can equally participate coming from Action MC Observers, from Partner Country Members, from Approved Institutions of non-COST Countries, and from other Specific Organizations.

#### **1.5. How to participate?**

To express his/her interest in joining RNYN as a WG member, the candidate must fill in the RNYN participation form, expressing his/her motivations and ticking the WG which are is aligned with his/her expertise.

Each submitted form will generate an email that is sent to the correspondent WG Leader.

Afterwards, the WG management team (meaning the WG leader and vice-leader) assesses the proposal based on the agreed criteria for accepting or not accepting the candidate (see point 1.6. of this section).

The WG management team has a maximum of 10 days to vote for the membership proposal, in their section of the CA 18213 Forum.

A final decision on acceptance/non-acceptance is based on a simple majority of the votes.

The core group is monthly informed of new results in the WG report.

**Important note:** If a candidate is from a COST Full or Cooperating Member which is not participating in the CA 18213, then the interested potential participant should contact the COST National Coordinator (CNC). In the case of new entering countries, the MC will assess its inclusion through a voting procedure initiated by the Vice-Chair.

### **1.6. What are the criteria for accepting membership in CA 18213?**

- To be part of a COST Full or Cooperating member;
- To have an institutional background aligned with WG participant definition;
- To have a scientific background in one of the following areas: economics, sociology, psychology, public policies, geography, agriculture/rural development;
- To express a clear motivation regarding at least one of RNYNs WGs (in terms of goals, outcomes and deliverables in which the candidate wants to take part and what contributions he/she can make at this level).

### **1.7. How are the Action members informed of new memberships in CA 18213?**

New additions to the Action are announced through: (a) e-COST, through a message from the Chair of the Action; and (b) in the internal forum.

### **1.8. How is the withdrawal from members of CA 18213 managed?**

If for any reasons, one of the members decides to leave the project, he or she must inform the Chair by email. The Chair will inform the Core Group of members withdrawal, through the Action Forum. When informing the Core Group of that outcome, the Chair makes a recommendation on whether to search or not for new members from that particular country.

In addition, if any deviation from COST rules by one member is found by the Chair, the Vice-Chair or any other member, COST Association will be informed. All the necessary procedures will then be put in place, following a case-by-case approach, in coordination with COST Association and according to COST rules.

### **1.9. More info on membership rules and procedures**

- Please check COST Vademecum (Subsection 1.2., p. 9 and 10).

## **2. PLANNING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

### **2.1. Key roles: Chair, Vice-Chair, WG Leaders; Core Group.**

## **2.2. Background**

International cooperation in COST actions focuses on spreading collaboration between action members beyond the boundaries of COST member countries. This means that COST actions are encouraged to involve participants from NNC (Near Neighbor Countries) or IPC (International Partner Countries). Planning international cooperation can also be understood in terms of streamlining the Action's networking and deliverables, by identifying on-going research or networking projects or international scientific societies who might overlap CA 18213 main topics.

## **2.3. What is the strategy to uphold CA 18213 international cooperation?**

The Chair and Vice-chair present and update regularly a list of on-going international research and networking initiatives or institutions that might parallel or have connections with CA 18213. The overlapping points with CA 18213 should be diverse and cut across the levels of the theoretical meta-model inspiring the Action (check Section 1). This means that potential cooperation must be contextualized in terms of different scientific expertise. This list includes:

- Other running COST actions;
- On-going projects of Horizon 2020;
- On-going projects of the Erasmus + framework;
- Youth council initiatives;
- INTERREG;
- FEDER;
- Leader Program;
- International scientific societies activities;
- Other relevant initiatives or institutions.

## **2.4. How is the list of international research and networking initiatives managed and updated in CA 18213?**

The list of international research and networking initiatives is managed on an on-going basis. The list is permanently available in the external website of the CA 18213. All members can suggest additions to the list at any-time, by



contacting the Vice-Chair, as long as the proposals have an international scope and an added-value for the WGs. The list might also include external requests of collaboration made by international initiatives or organizations interested in collaborating with CA 18213 members. When the work and budget plan are discussed for a given grant period, the MC Chair and Vice-Chair: (a) propose to tasks managers (e.g. STSM coordinator) the most suitable initiatives or institutions to be involved in the development of a given COST networking tool; and (b) establish contacts to negotiate ways of collaboration with these initiatives to achieve the fulfillment of CA 18213 deliverables, using COST tools.

## **2.5. How to involve IPC/NNC?**

The involvement of IPC and NNC is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Requests of candidates from these countries to participate can be submitted at any time. The WG leaders receives these proposals. From then on, the same procedure described in point 1.3. for membership collection and assessment is followed. The members are informed of new IPC and NNC members according to the same procedures described in point 1.7.

## **3. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

**3.1. Key roles:** Science Communication Manager; WG communication managers; WG leaders; WG activities leaders.

### **3.2. Background**

This section describes how the main internal communication procedures are set up. Internal communication procedures must guarantee that all members have the same level of access to the most relevant information about the action progresses and needs. In general, internal communication offers a continuous update about: (a) the progress of the different WGs; (b) upcoming opportunities of the planned networking tools; (c) surveys, for discussions and exchange of

relevant news, like jobs, conferences, etc.; and (d) news about the Action deliverables and achievements.

### **3.3. What tools are used to facilitate CA 18213 internal communication?**

To fulfill internal communication goals mentioned in point 3.2., CA 18213 uses the following tools:

(1) Internal communication recommendations guide: An extended document developed by the core group with the recommendations of how to conduct all the internal communications is available to all members and Working Groups on the Action website.

(2) Internal website: an internal website where the results of the different Working Groups can be published and shared is available. All the tasks, documents and research outputs of the Action are made available in only one place, to ensure that all members participate in the objectives of the Action.

The Internal website structure includes:

- Members profiles (Extended version)
- Calls: for internal tasks
- Forum
- WG Tools
- Documentation
- Campus
- Album
- Surveys
- FAQ
- Newsletter

(3) Action public newsletter: a digest newsletter to make a summary of the Action progress will ensure the dissemination purposes are met. It will be send using a newsletter tool utility associated to the website, so that all members are duly informed.

### **3.4. How is information gathered to be spread by members of CA 18213 on a regular basis?**

The general idea of the internal communication process is to provide a unique place where a member can find all the internal communications that can be delivered. Below, the different tools and main procedures for CA 18213 communication are described.

- Internal WGs communications: the members should participate and post their opinions, conclusion, research, etc, in the internal forum of the WG. The leader of the WG must post a topic for discussion in the forum that needs to be addressed and all members will discuss it openly.
- WGs coordination and tracing: the leaders of WGs report the progresses of the tasks that are scheduled on a monthly-basis in the core group forum, using a pre-prepared Wiki form. The core group discusses in this forum all the issues related with, for example, overtake or delaying tasks, preparing new objectives and works, discussing the most suitable formats to make a public document with the research, etc.
- Dissemination of WG documents: when a task of a WG is prepared, a dissemination plan is also developed for the outputs. This plan is discussed between the WG leader and vice-leader and the core group. Altogether, they prepare the format of the documents, the spreading plan, etc.
- Core group communication: the core group has a specific forum only accessible to its members. This forum is used instead of the mail to ensure that the members of this group can find all the communications in one place.
- One to one communication: internal messaging system in the website that allows one to one communication between members is available. The communication is received in the email but the members are able to trace the conversation in the private member website, only accessible to the members.
- Ad-hoc WG Internet tools: specific tools can also be made available on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of each task. For example, to collect national data surveys into a common survey, a specific tool can be created to ensure the integrity of the data, the comparable measures,

etc. and to simplify as much as possible the treatment and collection data of all members.

### 3.5. What are the most appropriate tools for spreading each type of information?

	Internal forum	Mailing list (ad-hoc)	Website and social media	Other
Action conference or workshop	X	X	X	
WG meeting	X		X	
Call for STSM	X		X	
Call for ITC CG	X		X	
Call for trainees in training schools	X	X	X	
Jobs openings	X		X	
Writing joint documents	X			
Announcement of conferences	X	X	X	
Surveys	X		X	X
Progress of the action/News and deliverables	X		X	
Database with participants expertise			X	
Database of available infrastructure	X		X	

### 3.6. How is the process of internal communication continuously assessed in CA 18213?

Internal communication assessment is considered an on-going process. The process involves: (a) the assessment of internal communication quality, in general; and (b) the assessment of Working Groups and of the dissemination tools implementation (e.g. conferences).

Internal communication quality is assessed each 12 months. This survey is the basis to develop the communication facilitation plan to be delivered on month 48. This survey is created and maintained by the communication team.

Working Groups activities and all the dissemination tools (different types of meetings, STSMs) are surveyed at the end of each Grant Period.

All the survey models are available on the internal website of the action.

### **3.7. More info on internal communication**

- Please check COST Vademecum (Section 10, p. 40 to 44) and the manual “Guidelines for the communication, dissemination and exploitation of COST Action results and outcomes”, available at [https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/guidelines\\_communicating\\_exploiting\\_COSTAction\\_results\\_outcomes-1.pdf](https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/guidelines_communicating_exploiting_COSTAction_results_outcomes-1.pdf)
- Also check PPT “Communicating your action: How to kit” available at <https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Communicating-your-COST-Action-a-how-to-kit-web.pdf>

## **4. INVITATION AND REIMBURSEMENT FOR ACTION MEETINGS**

**4.1. Key-roles:** Chair, Vice-Chair; Core Group; WG leaders; Grant Holder Administrative Officer.

### **4.2. Background**

COST Actions are open to everyone. This means that there is no limitation to invite participants to any COST Action meeting. However, the possibility to fund different participants is limited by both the COST rules (*Vademecum*), budget constraints as well as by the relevance and level of involvement of members (namely in WG meetings).

In MC meetings, 2 MC members per country are entitled to reimbursement (according to the COST rules) and Core Group meetings are organized for participants in the key leadership positions to meet and coordinate the work to be put forward to the MC. However, for other meetings, the MC is responsible for

identifying the most appropriate participants to be reimbursed. This section sets rules and procedures for WG meetings as well as for dissemination meetings.

### **4.3. CA18213 Action meetings**

#### **4.3.1. WG meetings**

WG meetings will focus on learning, exchanging, planning and setting decisions and procedures to prepare the Action deliverables. These deliverables are defined in CA 18213 MoU. The deliverables content is shaped by WGs thematic scope approved by the MC.

#### **4.3.2. Conferences & Workshops**

Conferences or workshops (whether face-to-face or online) are dissemination and discussion driven meetings dedicated to the exploration of specific topics of relevance for the WGs. Conferences and workshops can include:

- calls for the presentation of papers on those topics; and/or the invitation of experts for talks; and/or
- the invitation of national or international stakeholders (decision-makers, public service deliverers, NGOs, etc.); and/or
- the invitation of PhD students and ECIs from the country where the conference or workshop takes place.

In the case of conferences, these are open to the wider public, according to room capacity limitations set up by the local organizer. However, the invitation and reimbursement of local/national participants within CA 18213 outside the rules presented in the following point (4.3) is not possible.

#### **4.3.3. Who will be invited? And what criteria shall be used for prioritizing who, from the invited participants, shall be reimbursed in CA 18213?**

For reimbursement purposes, the most appropriate criteria are put in place according to the needs associated to each meeting. These criteria are

selected from a list to ensure balanced participation. These are presented by level of importance, including:

- **Expertise and relevance:** the invited national members have the required background to prepare the deliverable/objectives of the meeting. Whenever needed, ad-hoc participants from both COST member countries (including the local organizer country), IPC or NNC inside or outside the Action might be invited by the WG leaders based on expertise and learning needs mentioned by the Action members or on relevance, defined here as active involvement in Action tasks. **This criteria prevails over all the remaining criteria.**
- **Country membership:** up to two members from each country are considered for invitation and reimbursement. In some cases, due to budget constraints or issues of relevance, such as those members who are actively involved in developing Action activities, the nature of the meeting, this number may be reduced to only one member, upon suggestion of the WG leaders. In the case of the country responsible for organizing the meeting, all the MC members as well as up to two additional ad-hoc participants may be invited and intitled to reimbursement, if needed;
- **Experience:** the invited members list upholds a good balance between more experienced researchers and ECI;
- **Rotation:** in the case of conferences and workshops, and whenever countries have three or more nominated national members, one given national representative cannot be invited more than two consecutive times, in order to allow all national members to be invited, during the Action duration. However, if a given national member is involved in tasks associated to the development of one Action deliverable, consecutive invitations may be issued.
- **Gender:** the invited members uphold a good gender balance representation;
- **Geographical background:** the invited members have a diverse background, properly ensuring ITC representation as well as East/West or North/South perspectives;

**Importantly, in the case of WG meetings, it is mandatory that members belong to the WG.**

#### **4.4. For each CA 18213 WG meeting, who implements the criteria? i.e. who prepares the list of participants to be reimbursed?**

The preparation of the invitations goes through the following steps:

1. The Chair informs the core group of the number of vacancies available for each country for a given meeting, based on budget availability and requests for validation.

2. Afterwards, the Vice-Chair contacts WG leaders to ask for the name of the national representatives for a given meeting, within the following 7 days. This list is prepared by the WG leaders checking if: (a) all members have a complete e.COST profile; (b) COST rules are met; and (c) the norms and procedures of the Action are met.

3. Afterwards, the list is sent to the Grant Holder Administrative Officer.

4. The Grant Holder Administrative Officer checks if all COST and the Action management rules and procedures have been correctly considered, as well as if the proposal is in line with the budget. If everything is according to the rules and procedures and the budget availability, the invitations are sent by the Grant Holder Administrative Officer through eCOST.

5. If the list does not comply with COST rules, CA 18213 internal rules and procedures for WG invitations or/and with the approved budget availability, the list is sent back to the WG leaders, with guidelines on changes that need to be made.

6. When the list complies with these procedural and budget rules after revisions, the Grant Holder Administrative Officer sends the invitations through eCOST.

#### **4.5. Dissemination meetings**

##### **4.5.1. Which specific conferences CA 18213 targets for disseminating the Action?**

CA 18213 dissemination through dissemination meetings (e.g. conferences) is aligned with the strategy for international cooperation, described



in point 2.3. of this section. This means that CA 18213 will target and fund Action members participation in international conferences of on-going research and networking projects and/or of international scientific societies which have strong connections with CA 18213 topics and deliverables within a given WG.

#### **4.5.2. Who shall be given priority to present the Action in the Conferences?**

Considering CA 18213 strategy for international cooperation, an annual call is set by the Chair, Vice-Chair and Science Communication Officer in Month 2 of Grant Periods 3 and 4. The call is open only to those members in key leadership positions of the Action, with especial attention given to WG leaders and vice-leaders. This criteria stems from CA 18213 organic flow presented in the first section of this document, always ensuring that ITC representatives, senior researchers, as well as ECI, men and women have equal opportunities to participate.

The Action members who wish to apply for a conference grant must fill in a form made available on the website. The form includes sections such as the conference name, authorship, country(ies) abstract, etc. The form also covers the following information to be provided which corresponds to the following assessment criteria to be made available during the call, in the Action website:

#### **Scientific and dissemination relevance of the conference (up to 20 points)**

- (1) the conference is selected from the list of international research and networking initiatives of international projects and networks (please check section 2, point 2.3.) **OR**
- (2) the conference is organized by a scientific society or stakeholder which is included in that same list

#### **Quality of the proposal (up to 80 points)**

- (1) the proposal involves the presentation of a Working Group output (30 points);

(2) the proposal is issued is submitted by a WG leader and/or vice-leader (20 points);

(3) the content of the proposal can be considered an added-value for the WG of the proponent member (20 points);

(4) the proposal includes the publication of an article in the proceedings book of the conference (10 points).

**Exclusion criteria:** Proposals that do not involve oral presentation (e.g. posters) are not considered admissible for funding.

### **Application of the evaluation criteria**

- The proposals assessment is made by a jury composed by 3 members of the core group through a survey in internal forum, within a period of 7 days after submission.
- The assessment procedure in the internal forum is open by the Chair.
- The number of points out of which each category will be evaluated are indicated in parenthesis (with each number indicated being the highest).
- For each application a single average score will be calculated. After that, for each application a single average score (dedicated by each reviewer) will be summed and divided by the number of reviewers to reach to a total average score. At the end, a ranking list will be organized based on the total average score.
- Starting with those with the highest points, the conference grants will be distributed until the available budget is used.
- For applications with an equal number of average points that fall on the threshold of being supported, a decision will be made to promote the representation of all working groups as equally as possible.
- If still no conclusive decision can be reached by the core group, the Chair will be consulted to make a decision.
- The name of the participants selected, the title of the paper, the conference in which they participate, the dates in which the

conference will take place and the budget allocated will be posted on the site at the end of the selection process.

### **Resolution of conflicts**

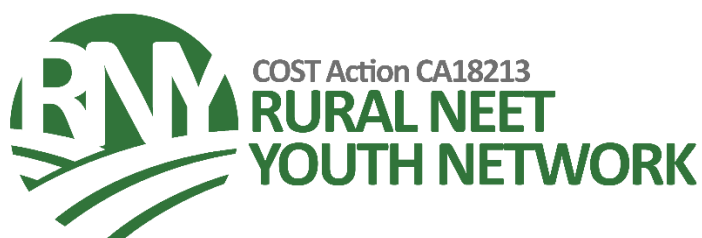
- In case of a conflict of interests, such as if the applicant or host is affiliated with one of the reviewers, the reviewer will be excluded from the reviewing processes for the application and substituted by one of the WG vice-leaders.

### **4.6. Final remarks on meetings organization**

The plan for each grant period will always take into account the need to put in place parallel meetings, in order to increase the return of the invested money. This means that conferences, WG meetings or workshops as well as MC meetings and Core Group meetings will, in general, be organized in parallel. Isolated meetings might occur, as an exception, based on well justified reasons (e.g. relevant increase of the Action's impact) and after approval by the MC.

### **4.7. More info on meetings**

Please check COST Vademecum (Section 4, p. 22 to 26).



## **SECTION III**

# **COST NETWORKING TOOLS**



## **1. SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS (STSM)**

**1.1. Key-roles:** STSM manager; STSM coordination team.

### **1.2. Background**

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM) allow researchers to visit an institution in another country, in order to network and develop scientific collaborations through different actions, such as collaborative researches, accessing specific equipment or learning new methodologies. The outcomes of a STSM are not exclusively limited to concrete scientific results but most of the times lead to the establishment of long-term successful collaborations.

### **1.3. How are STSMs calls organized in CA 18213?**

A permanent STSM call is open for each grant period. The call is organized and set up by the STSMs coordinator, based on a form approved by the MC. The call remains open in eCOST and in the Action website. The application will be organized on a "first come first served" basis. Submissions are, however, approved based on a minimum number of points. If all the budget is spent, the call is closed in that grant period. The call only remains open in the same grant period if the MC decides to allocate additional budget for STSMs.

### **1.4. What are STSM predefined topics in CA 18213?**

In CA 18213, STSM calls are based in predefined topics. These topics are based in the Action's WG themes.

### **1.5. What are the evaluation criteria to be implemented to selected STSM candidates?**

STSM proposals are assessed according to a system of 100 points, based on three types of criteria: scientific relevance criteria (80 points); additional criteria (20 points); and exclusion criteria.

#### **Scientific relevance criteria (up to 80 points)**

- (1) the STSM proposal complies with the specific focuses associated with at least one WG scope uphold by the call (20 points);
- (2) the STSM proposal includes deliverables out-reach potential that goes beyond CA 18213 enlisted members and activities (meaning that the proposed deliverables are strong enough and involve a dissemination plan beyond the scope of CA 18213 members and activities) (20 points);
- (3) the STSMs proposal includes deliverables with an added-value for CA 18213 (namely, the proposal demonstrates the added-value to at least one WG scope) (20 points);
- (4) the STSM proposal has a clear plan of connecting STSMs deliverables with other on-going networking tools and deliverables of the Action (e.g. meetings or policy-briefs) (20 points).

#### **Additional criteria (up to 20 points)**

- (1) the proponent is affiliated with an institution based on an ITC country (+ 10 points);
- (2) the proponent is an ECI (+ 10 points);

#### **Exclusion criteria**

- (1) none of the mandatory criteria is taken into consideration in the STSM proposal;
- (2) the STSM is proposed by an Action member who has already been awarded an STSM grant in the previous grant period;
- (3) Applications that do not reach a total average score of 50 points.

#### **Application of the evaluation criteria**

- The number of points out of which each category will be evaluated are indicated in parenthesis (with each number indicated being the highest).

- For additional criteria only 0 or 10 points are awarded.
- For each application a single average score will be calculated. After that, for each application a single average score (proposed by each reviewer) will be summed and divided by 3 (number of reviewers).
- To be considered eligible the proposal must reach at least 50 points.

#### **Resolution of conflicts**

- In case of a conflict of interests, such as if the applicant or host is affiliated with one of the reviewers, or if the reviewer would like to be a host or applicant, the reviewer will be excluded from the reviewing processes for the application, and will be replaced by the COST Action Chair or Vice-chair.

### **1.6. What kind of deliverables can each STSM provide in CA 18213?**

STSMs can propose one or more of the following deliverables:

- (1) talks/presentations included in the Action conferences, WG meetings or workshops;
- (2) talks/presentations during the mission, in the host country/institution;
- (3) talks/presentations outside the scope and program of CA 18213;
- (4) scientific extension activities during the mission, namely those that target service deliverers and/or NGOs involved in the area of expertise associated with the mission;
- (5) short-report on the Action website;
- (6) new research proposals developed with other members of the Action or researchers outside the CA 18213 network of members, on topics related to at least one WG scope of a given call;
- (7) open access peer-reviewed publications.

### **1.7. Who assesses STSM proposals in CA 18213?**

STSMs will be assessed by STSMs management team, including the STSM coordinator and two additional members without management tasks in the Action. Two substitutes members are nominated, in case one of the members of the team is not available to assess the submissions for a particular call.

### **1.8. What are the outcomes added by STSMs to CA 18213?**

When assessing the STSM proposals, the STSM management team must take into account the following required outcomes:

- (1) Empowerment of ITC researchers (meaning that two thirds of the STSMs must of have been awarded to members based on an ITC country);
- (2) Empowerment of ECI (meaning two thirds of the STSMs must of have been awarded to ECI);
- (3) Members of, at least, 50% of the countries participating in CA18213, must have been involved in STSMs;
- (4) At least a 40/60 distribution by gender of awarded STSMs must be achieved.

### **1.9. How is STSM implementation continuously assessed in CA 18213?**

The procedures as well as the fulfillment of CA 18213 STSM outcomes are monitored in a regular basis, namely at each of the Core Group meetings. Improvements in terms of selection criterium, evaluation or outcomes are proposed and sent for approval by the MC.

### **1.10. More info on STSM**

- Please check COST Vademecum (Section 8, STSM, p. 32 and 33).
- Also check COST STSM guide, available at <https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/STSM-userguide.pdf>



## **2. ITC CONFERENCE GRANTS**

**2.1. Key-roles:** ITC Conference Grants Coordinator; ITC conference grants committee.

### **2.2. Background**

Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) are European Countries that show lower scientific intensity. These countries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, the North Republic of Macedonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey. ITC Conference Grants are a recent networking tool in COST that are aimed at supporting young researchers in these countries to establish strong networks and increase their visibility in the research community. They are an excellent tool for capacity building and their implementation can significantly impact the career of these researchers.

### **2.3. How are ITC Conference Grants calls organized in CA 18213?**

An annual call is announced for ITC in CA 18213 in Month 3 of Grant Periods 3 to 4 in the Action Website. The call is organized and set up by the ITC Conference Grants Coordinator, based on a template approved by the MC. The call remains open in eCOST and in the website until the funding approved by the Action MC is spent.

### **2.4. What are the specific conferences ITC Conference Grants targeted by CA 18213?**

In CA 18213, each call for ITC Conference Grants will be aligned with WGs themes. This means that targeted conferences are preferably those that are related to these topics.

### **2.5. What are the evaluation criteria to select the ITC Conference Grantees in CA 18213?**



ITC Conference Grants proposals are assessed according to a system of 100 points, based on three types of criteria: scientific relevance of the conference (30 points); quality and relevance of the proposal (60 points); and additional criterium (10 points).

### **Scientific relevance of the conference (30 points)**

- (1) the conference includes the possibility of publishing an abstract in the proceedings of the conference **OR**
- (2) the conference is indexed by Scimago, through H Index **OR**
- (3) the conference is selected from the list of international research and networking initiatives of international projects and networks (please check section 2, point 2.3.) **OR**
- (4) the conference is organized by a scientific society which is included in that same list

### **Quality and relevance of the proposal (up to 60 points)**

- (1) the proposal clearly complies with the specific focuses associated with at least one WG scope uphold by the call (20 points);
- (2) the proposal addresses an innovative, under researched topic (20 points);
- (3) the content of the proposal can be considered an added-value for the WG of the proponent member or for at least one of the WG, in the case of and ad-hoc proponent (20 points).

### **Additional criteria (up to 10 points)**

- (1) the proposal combines at least two of the criteria of scientific relevance.

### **Exclusion criteria**

- (1) the proposal does not focus on the specific focus of the call;

- (2) the proposal is submitted by an Action member or an ad-hoc participant who has already been awarded an ITC Conference Grant in any of the previous grant periods;
- (3) the application does not reach a total average score of 50 points.

### **Application of the evaluation criteria**

- The number of points out of which each category will be evaluated are indicated in parenthesis (with each number indicated being the highest).
- For “scientific relevance of the conference criteria” only 0 or 30 points are awarded whenever one the criterium is fulfilled.
- For each application a single average score will be calculated. After that, for each application a single average score (proposed by each reviewer) will be summed and divided by 3 (number of reviewers). At the end, a ranking list will be organized based on the total average score.
- Starting with those with the highest points, the ITC conference grants will be distributed until the available budget is consumed.
- For applications with an equal number of average points that fall on the threshold of being supported, a decision will be made to promote the representation of all working groups as equally as possible.
- If still no conclusive decision can be reached by the ITC conference grants committee, the Vice Chair and Chair will be consulted to make a decision.
- In case the available budget is not sufficient to allow for the funding of the next highest ranking application, the ITC Conference Grants Coordinator maintains the right to approve immediately subsequent ranking application(s) which can be accommodated by the available budget.
- A minimum of 50 points must be reached by a proposal in order to be considered acceptable.

## **Resolution of conflicts**

- All participants applying for ITC CG will make sure to avoid any conflict of interests. The evaluation process will be transparent and in case of a conflict of interests, such as if the applicant or host is affiliated with one of the reviewers, the reviewer will be excluded from the reviewing processes for the application.

## **2.6. Who assesses ITC Conference Grants proposals in CA 18213?**

ITC Conference Grants proposals will be assessed by the ITC Conference Grants Team, including the ITC Conference Grants Coordinator and two additional members without management tasks in the Action. Two substitutes members are nominated, in case one of the members of the team is not available to assess the submissions for a particular call.

## **2.7. What are the outcomes added by ITC Conference Grants to CA 18213?**

The ITC Conference Grants management team must take into account the expected outcomes by the end of the Action, described below:

- (1) Members of, at least, 50% of the ITC countries participating in CA18213, must have been involved in ITC Conference Grants;
- (2) At least a 40/60 distribution by gender of awarded ITC Conference Grants must be achieved.

## **2.8. How is ITC Conference grants implementation continuously assessed in CA 18213?**

The procedures as well as the fulfillment of CA 18213 ITC Conference grants outcomes are monitored in a regular basis, namely at each of the Core Group meetings. Improvements in terms of selection criterium, evaluation or outcomes are proposed and sent for approval by the MC.

## **2.9. More info on ITC Conference Grants**

Please check COST Vademecum (Section 9, p. 34).

## **3. TRAINING SCHOOLS: RESEARCH MENTORING PROGRAM**

**3.1. Key-roles:** Core group; Mentoring Program Coordinator; mentors.

### **3.2. Background**

Training schools are organized by COST Actions and are excellent ways of disseminating knowledge developed within the Action to targeted groups and/or building capacity in highly innovative topic or method. The selection of trainees and grant awarding are crucial for its success.

CA 18213 has not proposed a traditional training school as part of the networking tools to be used during the Action, but two editions of a one-year mentoring program for ECI. Initially, the mentoring program editions were scheduled for years 2 and 3 of the Action. However, due to the pandemic, this schedule was revised, with the two editions co-occurring between January and December of 2022 (GPs 3 and 4).

### **3.3. How are mentoring programs calls organized in CA 18213?**

An online call is organized for a mentoring program to set up the mentoring scheme for the rescheduled period (January to December 2022). Two calls are set, one for teams of mentors and another one for mentees. The call is organized and set up by the Mentoring Program Team, based on a template approved by the MC. The call remains open on the Action website and remains open between April and mid-July 2021 for mentors and between mid-July and the end of September 2021 in the case of the mentees.

### **3.4. What is the general structure of the mentoring program for ECI organized in CA 18213?**

The mentoring scheme for ECI is an international 1-year mentoring scheme involving: one kick-off workshop; engagement with stakeholders; small group or peer-to-peer mentoring sessions focused on research project development (delivered through webinars on a Virtual Campus tool made available at the Action website); a final event for presenting proposals to a jury; and the

submission of a project proposal by each mentee, by the end of each of the grant periods, in which the program is developed.

### **3.5. What is the content of the mentoring program in CA 18213? Are there any predefined topics?**

The program will be dedicated to: (a) research project development in the broad field of rural NEETs social exclusion; and (b) the promotion of collaborations between senior researchers or researchers with expertise in the broad topic of rural NEETs with ECI or PhD Students willing to develop future research proposals in the area. Within these boundaries, any theme is considered of interest.

### **3.6. Who can apply to the CA 18213 mentoring program?**

Candidates applying for the CA 18213 mentoring program must comply with the following mandatory criteria:

- (1) to be an ECI researcher that completed their PhD in the 3 years previously to the call;
- (2) to be a PhD finishing his/her thesis in the subsequent 18 months;
- (3) to be affiliated with a research institution based in a COST member country or in a NNC;
- (4) to present a recommendation letter from a senior researcher from his/her institution.

### **3.7. How can candidates apply to be mentees in the CA 18213 mentoring program?**

An online annual call is organized between mid-July and the end of October of 2021. In this call, the candidates are invited to submit a proposal with two main fields: description of the manifestation of interest (topic of interest; goals; contribution to the field of rural NEETs social exclusion; expected contributions of the mentoring program to the development of research proposal); plan for future research development in the area (description of deliverables; timeline for these deliverables; potential collaborations within and outside CA 18213 network).

### **3.8. What are the evaluation criteria to select the mentees in CA 18213?**

Proposals are assessed according to a system of 100 points, based on three types of criteria: scientific soundness and excellence of the manifestation of interest (40 points); plan for future research development in the area (40 points); and additional criteria (20 points).

#### **Scientific soundness and excellence of the manifestation of interest (up to 40 points)**

- (1) the topic of interest is aligned with one of the mentoring programs focuses (10 points);
- (2) goals associated to the proposal are clear, attainable and defined in a smart way (10 points);
- (3) the contribution to the field of rural NEETs social exclusion is innovative, covering an under researched topic (10 points);
- (4) the expected contributions of the mentoring program to the development of a research proposal are clear (the candidate presents at least three clear arguments about how the participation in the mentoring program will enable he/she to develop his/her research idea) (10 points).

#### **Plan for future research development in the area (up to 40 points)**

- (1) deliverables: the candidate plans to submit a project proposal for international funding by the end of the mentoring program (15 points);
- OR
- (2) the candidate plans to submit a project proposal for national funding at the end of the mentoring program (7.5 points);
  - (3) timeline for the deliverables: the submission of the proposal occurs within 12 months after the conclusion of the mentoring program (15 points);
  - (4) the project proposal involves collaborations with members of RNYN network as well as with researchers outside RNYN (10 points)

OR

the project proposal involves collaborations within RNYN members only (7.5 points).

### **Additional criteria (20 points)**

- (1) the proponent is affiliated with an institution based on an ITC country (+ 10 points);
- (2) the proponent is a woman (+10 points).

### **Exclusion criteria**

- (1) the topic does not fit RNYN thematic focus;
- (2) applications that do not reach a total average score of 50 points.

### **Application of the evaluation criteria**

- The number of points out of which each category will be evaluated are indicated in parenthesis (with each number indicated being the highest).
- For additional criteria only 0 or 5/0 or 10 points are awarded whenever one the criterium is fulfilled.
- For each application a single average score will be calculated. After that, for each application a single average score (proposed by each reviewer) will be summed and divided by 3 (number of reviewers). At the end, a ranking list will be organized based on the total average score.
- Starting with those with the highest points, the grants for the mentoring scheme will be distributed until the available budget is consumed.
- For applications with an equal number of average points that fall on the threshold of being supported, a decision will be made to promote the representation of all working groups as equally as possible.



- If still no conclusive decision can be reached by the ITC conference grants committee, the Chair and Vice Chair will be consulted to make a decision.
- In case the available budget is not sufficient to allow for the funding of the next highest ranking application, the Coordinator maintains the right to approve immediately subsequent ranking application(s) which can be accommodated by the available budget.

### **Resolution of conflicts**

- In case of a conflict of interests, such as if the applicant or host is affiliated with one of the reviewers, the reviewer will be excluded from the reviewing processes for the application.

## **3.9. Who will be acting as a mentor in CA 18213?**

### **Scientific relevance of the research interest and activities (40 points)**

- (1) the topic of interest is aligned with CA 18213 focus (10 points);
- (2) goals associated to proposal are clear, attainable and defined in a SMART way (10 points);
- (3) the contribution to the field of rural NEETs social exclusion is innovative, covering under researched topic (10 points);
- (4) the expected contributions of the mentoring program to the development of a research proposal are clear (the candidate presents at least three clear arguments about how the participation in the mentoring program will enable he/she to develop his/her research idea) (10 points).

### **Record of the mentor as a project manager and researcher (40 points)**

- (1) Each mentor of the team has as record of approved research projects at an international level, as a main proposer (10 points; 2 points by each project, 10 points for 5 or more projects);
- (2) Each mentor of the team has as record of approved research projects at an international level, as a secondary proposer (5 points, 1 point by each project, 5 points for 5 or more projects);

(3) Each mentor of the team has as record of approved research projects at a national level, as a main proposer (10 points; 2 points by each project, 10 points for 5 or more projects);

(4) Each mentor of the team has as record of approved research projects at an international level, as a secondary proposer (5 points, 1 point by each project, 5 points for 5 or more projects);

(5) Each mentor of the team is experienced as master or PhD student's supervisor (10 points; 1 point for each master or PhD thesis supervised, 10 points for 10 or more supervisions).

### **Plan for delivering the mentoring program (20 points)**

(1) quality of the mentoring program content: the proposed mentoring program has a clear focus, clear goals and is supported by adequate methodologies (10 points);

(2) quality of the mentoring program structure: the proposal has an adequate structure to uphold the research project development by the mentees (assessed by the number and type of meetings, an adequate timeline, provision of opportunities to meet or interact with the mentor's fellow colleagues, clear commitment with deliverables – number of proposals submissions and indication of potential national and international funding programs for submission) (10 points).

### **Exclusion criteria**

(1) the topic does not fit CA 18213 thematic focus;

(2) applications that do not reach a total average score of 50 points.

### **Application of the evaluation criteria**

- The number of points out of which each category will be evaluated are indicated in parenthesis (with each number indicated being the highest).
- For each application a single average score will be calculated. After that, for each application a single average score (proposed by each reviewer)

will be summed and divided by 3 (number of reviewers). At the end, a ranking list will be organized based on the total average score.

- Starting with those with the highest points, the mentoring positions scheme will be distributed until the available budget is consumed.
- For applications with an equal number of average points that fall on the threshold of being supported, a decision will be made to promote the representation of all working groups as equally as possible.

### **Resolution of conflicts**

- In case of a conflict of interests, such as if the applicant or host is affiliated with one of the reviewers, the reviewer will be excluded from the reviewing processes for the application.

### **Additional notes**

If needed, a list of mentors outside the CA 18213 may be invited by the Mentoring Program Coordinator, after approval by the MC, to ensure that the necessary expertise to run the mentoring program is upheld.

Up to a maximum of four mentors are selected for each mentoring program, eight in total for two running years. This means that the same mentor cannot apply for two consecutive years.

### **3.10. What are the expected outcome of the mentoring program in CA 18213?**

- To train 24 ECI/PhD Students (12 each year);
- 70% from ITC countries;
- gender-balanced groups;
- 80-100% of the participants submitting proposals for national or international research funding schemes, until the end of Action;
- 30% proposals approved until the end of the Action.

### **3.11. Who will deliver the plan and workflow for the research mentoring program?**

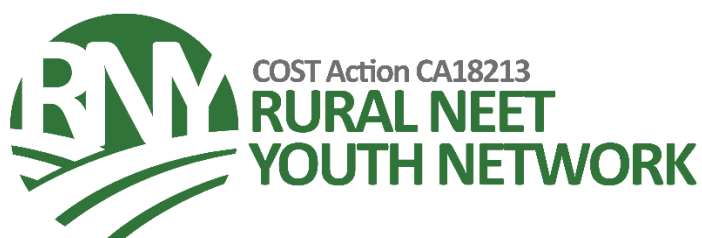
ECI mentoring program is a flexible tool, meaning that its plan and workflow will be delivered by the program teams of mentors selected for each running program, in coordination with the mentoring program coordinator. The program for each scheme must involve a general, common module, for all mentees in cutting edge issues (e.g. writing a winning project proposal; available grants; etc.) and small groups modules, focusing on the specific themes/topics of the program.

### **3.12. How is the mentoring program implementation continuously assessed in CA 18213?**

The procedures as well as the fulfillment of CA 18213 mentoring program outcomes are monitored in a regular basis, namely by the Program Coordination Team and at each of the Core Group meetings. Improvements in terms of selection criterium, evaluation or outcomes are proposed and sent for approval by the MC.

### **3.13. More info on training schools**

Please check COST Vademecum (Section 6, Training Schools p. 27 and 28).



# **SECTION IV**

# **DISSEMINATION AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION**



# **1. DEFINING A DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

**1.1. Key roles:** Science Communication Manager; WG communication managers; local activities leaders.

## **1.2. Background**

In every publicly funded science project, a part of the budget is dedicated to dissemination and communication to ensure that the results are shared with the relevant audiences to create a maximum of scientific and societal impact.

Dissemination refers in the EU jargon to scientific knowledge sharing through scientific publications, participation in scientific conferences, etc..

Communication refers to non-specialist audiences such as policy makers, civil society, patient groups, users of certain technologies, etc.

Even if this is sometimes perceived as an obligation from funding agencies, the opportunity to communicate and increase the visibility and impact of research is relevant and unique. It is key to plan for communication activities right at the start of the project, not at the end only. This implies strategic thinking and planning.

## **1.3. Why to communicate in CA 18213?**

Because there are a number of issues to be shared and brought forward with different stakeholders: (a) with respect to the scientific community, the lack of research on the situation of rural NEETs, despite the fact that the numbers of NEETs are higher in rural areas across Europe and within most of the Countries, especially in Southern and Eastern Europe; (b) with respect to policy-makers, the need to change and improve policies targeting rural NEETs at a regional/national/international level; and (c) with respect to NGOs and youths, the need to validate intervention good-practices and share them with other institutions operating at the same level as well as with a larger audience.

#### 1.4. What are the key messages to be communicated by CA 18213?

- There are interventions and programs across Europe that successfully address rural NEETs social exclusion.
- Innovative research efforts on rural NEETs situation inform better-decision making in areas such as rural education, employment in rural areas or the development of rural economic sectors.
- Rural areas may find in the valorization of rural NEETs a pathway to connect youths with the countryside.
- Rural NEETs represent a human capital opportunity to promising areas of the green economy.

#### 1.5. Who is the audience of CA 18213?

CA 18213 speaks to a large audience: researchers, policy-makers; NGOs operating on the field of youth work; private companies. This means that the tools and channels of communication must be adjusted to different publics.

#### 1.6. How does CA 18213 communicate? What are the tools to be used to better target different audiences?

General public and media	Young people	Policy-makers	Researchers	Organizations
Website	Social media	Participation in Action's events	Calls for conferences	Social media
Press releases	Vlog/Videos with testimonials	Auditions in regional & national parliaments to discuss policy-briefs	ITC grants	Videos with testimonials about best-practices
Direct contacts with journalists	Social events	Policy-briefs	Mentoring program	Calls for conferences
			STSM	
			Local organization of events	
			International cooperation	
			Publications	
			Website and RNYObservatory	

### **1.7. How can the use of different networking tools be aligned with external communication in CA 18213?**

As mentioned in point 1.1., each networking tool will be prepared according to a template and checklist. The template will include a field for dissemination & communication. The strategies for dissemination & communication are reviewed by the communication team to adjust tools and channels.

### **1.8. What are deliverables associated to external communication and dissemination in CA 18213? And how is it assessed?**

The communication team will have to deliver a booklet with a facilitation plan. The plan will include an evaluation of the lessons learned with the process.

### **1.9. More info on external communication**

- Please check COST Vademecum (Section 10, p. 40 to 44) and the manual “Guidelines for the communication, dissemination and exploitation of COST Action results and outcomes”, available at [https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/guidelines\\_communicating\\_exploiting\\_COSTAction\\_results\\_outcomes-1.pdf](https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/guidelines_communicating_exploiting_COSTAction_results_outcomes-1.pdf)
- Also check PPT “Communicating your action: How to kit” available at <https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Communicating-your-COST-Action-a-how-to-kit-web.pdf>

## **2. ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS**

**2.1. Key roles:** MC Chair; MC Vice-chair; WG Leaders; national MC members.

### **2.2. Background**

The openness of COST Actions make them the perfect tool for reaching out to different communities and organizations. By engaging with different stakeholders, the Action members may be more aware of current advances in policy making, business strategies and societal needs that may help you move forward your topic. This increases the potential for impact of the Action’s results.



### **2.3. Why is it important to reach-out to stakeholders in CA 18213?**

One of the specific research coordination goals of CA 18213 is to influence policy-making and services deliverance across the member countries. Namely, CA 18213 is intended to uphold the effective transfer of new insights arising from the Action into the scientific, public and private service providers and decision-making partners, measured by: (a) informing a new legislative package at regional or national levels in at least 50% of the participating countries; (b) the definition of specific programs targeting rural NEETs in at least 70% of the member countries, in a 4-year time frame.

### **2.4. What are the most relevant stakeholders to be targeted by CA 18213?**

There are relevant stakeholders for CA 18213 at a worldwide, European and national/regional level. At an international, worldwide level, relevant stakeholders are:

- United Nations and United Nations brands such as:
  - UNESCO
  - FAO
  - ILO
- OECD (Branches on youth, education and rural development).
- Other bodies involved in education, employment, work or regional development issues.

At and European level, the most relevant stakeholders are:

- European Commission, especially:
  - DG AGRI
  - DG for Education and Culture
  - DG for Employment and Social Affairs
- The European Parliament, especially:
  - AGRI committee;
  - Culture and Education committee;
  - Employment and Social Affairs committee.
- The Council of Europe, namely:

- The European Steering Committee for Youth;
- The Advisory Council on Youth;
- The Joint Council on Youth.
- European sectoral associations (e.g. COGECA).

At a national/regional level, key stakeholders are:

- The structure of power related with youth, education, employment and rural development issues (meaning, Ministries, Regions and Municipalities responsible for delivering national/regional policies on those matters);
- Managing Authorities planning Operational Programs (National and Cross Border/Transnational programs);
- Local Action Groups (LAGs) and Community-Led Local Development policies (local programs based on a bottom-up approach – e.g. the LEADER approach);
- Public services deliverers (e.g. employment services);
- Relevant NGOs working with and for vulnerable rural youths.

## **2.5. How will stakeholders be involved to achieve CA 18213 goals?**

The involvement of stakeholders is supported at regional, national and international levels. It also follows a double approach (bottom-up and top-down) in order to increase the impact of CA 18213 deliverables and results.

At a national regional/national levels, the key national MC members are responsible for upholding the following possible procedures: (a) creating and updating a (mailing) list of key regional/national stakeholders at various levels (employment, social welfare, education, farming/rural development, etc.); (b) targeting leaders that can be co-opted as spokesman/spokeswoman or advocacy leaders for the Action; (c) inviting stakeholders to fill in MC vacancies of countries who are already associated with the Action; (d) ensuring that new added countries include members at a decision-making level; (e) organizing working meetings with key advocacy groups/NGO to bring forward needs and possible

contributions of CA 18213; (f) soliciting and organizing parliamentary hearings to disseminate the Action deliverables and results; and/or (g) ensuring that local meetings include activities for stakeholders participation and networking.

Activities (e) and (f) are mandatory for national members, meaning that until the end of Action (October 2024), at least a national event dedicated to key-advocacy groups and NGOs as well as at least one parliamentary (regional or national levels apply are mandatory).

The conclusions and results of these two types of events are recorded in a report created specifically for this purpose.

At the European and worldwide levels, it is the MC Chair, the Vice-Chair and the WG Leaders duty to involve key stakeholders. They promote this by (a) creating and updating a (mailing) list of key international stakeholders at various levels (employment, social welfare, education, farming/rural development, etc.); (b) screening if new added countries include members at the decision-making level; (c) soliciting and organizing hearings at international bodies assemblies to disseminate the Action deliverables and results; (d) ensuring that local meetings include activities for international stakeholders participation and networking; (e) proposing to the MC that from year 2 a specific WG for outreaching stakeholders is created; and (f) putting in place COST tools for outreaching stakeholders.

The table below sets some of the measures to achieve CA 18213 goals.

Type of stakeholder	Why is it important to involve this stakeholder?	Type of engagement	What can be done to make it happen?
Employment services	They receive funding They apply national legislation, based on international legislative packages (e.g. Youth Guarantee)	Active employment office	Information about the action Involvement in CA 18213 conferences or other dissemination tools
NGO	Independence; development of potential best-practices in the field	Information	Invitations; Work meetings; Involvement in CA 18213 conferences or other dissemination tools
National Governments (ministries of employment, education and rural development/ agriculture)	They develop legislation; they fund policies; they also develop programs that can target the challenges of rural NEETs		Invitations; Working meetings; Hearings at the parliaments; Involvement in CA 18213 conferences or other dissemination tools
Social services	NEETs use of services		Involvement in CA 18213 conferences or other dissemination tools
Municipalities and regional governments	They develop legislation; they fund policies; they also develop programs that can target the challenges of rural NEETs		Invitations;  Hearings at the municipal or regional parliaments