



**European Cooperation
in the field of Scientific
and Technical Research
- COST -**

Secretariat

Brussels, 27 September 2006

COST 283/06

NOTE

To : COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)

Subject : Terms of Reference for a mandate of a COST Domain Committee in the field of Food and Agriculture¹

Delegations will find attached the "Terms of Reference for a mandate of a COST Domain Committee in the field of Food and Agriculture", as approved by the CSO at its 164th meeting on 29/30 March 2006, and the domain descriptor, as approved by the CSO at its 165th meeting on 27/28 June 2006 (in Annex 1).

¹ This document replaces previous version as set out in doc. COST 238/06.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE MANDATE
OF THE COST DOMAIN COMMITTEE
IN THE FIELD OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

1. The COST Domain Committee in the field of Food and Agriculture, hereinafter referred to as "the DC"¹, is established by the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) for a period of four years as of 1 June 2006.
2. At the end of this period, and on receipt of a report by the DC, the CSO shall decide whether to extend the mandate of the DC for an additional period of time and, in that case, review these Terms of Reference.
3. The CSO may at any time amend these Terms of Reference or terminate the mandate of this DC.
4. The DC will adopt its Rules of Procedure on the basis of the model set out in doc. COST 236/06 or in any new document amending or replacing it.
5. The DC is responsible for general oversight of COST activities within its domain, including the development of strategic initiatives, and, in particular, for the quality assurance of new Action proposals, for monitoring progress of ongoing Actions and for evaluating completed Actions.
6. Within the framework of the COST Continuous Open Call and the two stage submission process, the DC will assess proposals for new COST Actions assigned to its domain. This assessment will be in accordance with the "Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation of COST Actions" in the Vademecum (<http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=38>). The DC will be responsible for the assessment and selection of preliminary proposals and for implementing quality control, through external peer review, of full proposals and for making recommendations for new Actions to the CSO.

¹ The detailed descriptor of the domain is set out in Annex to this document.

7. COST Actions should:
 - a. have an innovative character and a high scientific/technological standard and contribute substantially to the coordination of research efforts;
 - b. give a strong and visible contribution to the European Society; through being of potential interest across Europe to scientific communities and research organisations; public environmental authorities; policy institutions; and to private companies and industry;
 - c. be based on careful considerations of interests, resources and budgetary consequences in the interested countries, as well as on assessments of the added value expected to be achieved through the coordination;
 - d. be broad and flexible enough to permit an interdisciplinary approach and later inclusion of activities not foreseen during the preparation, taking due consideration of point 10 below;
 - e. identify and take into account R&D efforts in other fora;
 - f. assist in the mobility of European young researchers.

8. When submitting a new Action to the CSO for approval:
 - a. the COST Office should ensure that the Technical Annex to the Memorandum of Understanding is structured as set out in the "Guide for Proposers of new COST Actions" in the Vademecum (<http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=38>).
 - b. the DC should provide the CSO with an Assessment Report and any additional information that the CSO may need for making a decision on the Action.

9. The DC will:
 - a. monitor the implementation of its COST Actions to ensure that the objectives as set out in their Memoranda of Understanding are met;
 - b. ensure coordination and exchange of information, as required, as well as complementarity and synergy between its Actions as well as with relevant activities in other Domain Committees in COST, the Community R&D programmes, EUREKA, the European Science Foundation, other European cooperative research frameworks and standardisation bodies and will appoint members of the DC as liaisons with these bodies, as appropriate;
 - c. take account of interdisciplinarity within its domain and with other domains and of new developments in its domain.

10. The DC should give an opinion to the CSO on any proposal pertaining to one of its COST Actions and concerning:
 - a. an extension or prolongation of an Action,
 - b. a change of the title or a modification of the objectives of an Action, or
 - c. participation of an international organisation or an institute from a non-COST country in an Action.

Such an opinion shall be given with full knowledge of the views of the Management Committee of the Action concerned; a decision on the proposal will then be taken by the CSO.

11. The DC advises the Actions assigned to its domain with regard to the scientific aspects within the objectives as laid down in the respective MoU.

12. The DC is responsible for the evaluation of its COST Actions on completion of each Action, according to the "Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation of COST Actions" in the Vademecum (<http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=38>).

13. The DC should take all the measures it considers necessary to ensure efficient dissemination and/or exploitation of the results of its COST Actions, in close cooperation with the relevant Management Committees and taking account of the COST Policy on Dissemination and Monitoring the Impact of COST Results as set out in doc. COST 327/05 or in any new document amending or replacing it.
 14. The DC will be represented by its Chair or by an appointed substitute at all meetings convened between the CSO President, the CSO or the JAF Group and the Chairs of the DCs.
 15. The DC will report on its activities, as requested, to the CSO and will provide an overview report to the CSO at the end of each mandate period.
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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (FA)**Domain descriptor**

The Domain FOOD AND AGRICULTURE covers all aspects of research in the field of agricultural and food sciences in its widest sense. This naturally encompasses a very wide number of subjects, and relates to a large number of areas of human activity. The primary aim of the Domain is to encourage networking of research in any field linked to these activities as well as the related demands and needs. The following examples illustrate aspects of actual research in this Domain. It is emphasized that they are examples, not a complete catalogue. The Domain actively seeks innovative and interesting proposals even if they may not at first sight fit neatly into a traditional category of research in food and agriculture.

The Biological Functions of Organisms: to advance understanding of the functions of organisms relevant to agriculture, food and nutrition, the domain will welcome proposals where fundamental science is an essential component of the topic. This will include biological science, animal science, veterinary science, plant science, microbiological science, soil science, genetics and breeding, agricultural system science or any other fundamental discipline related to food, agriculture & fisheries. Biotechnology - the use of the most recent techniques and applications that spring from their use - is also addressed.

Human Nutrition and the Food Chain covers the entire food chain leading to non-processed, semi-processed and processed foods and encompasses food and feed quality, food safety, functional foods, nutritional and consumer issues. It includes all the processes and techniques used in food technology that are needed to bring food to the consumer's fork.

Agriculture as a Human Activity: the domain addresses socio-economic aspects of food and agriculture and other relevant concerns, such as the relationships between agriculture, rural economy and rural development. Societal issues concerned with animal health (disease prevention in animals and people) and animal welfare are also included.

Agriculture and Environment: this relationship is also addressed by the domain. It includes issues such as sustainability, natural resources and conservation, biodiversity and genetic resources, biosafety, bioremediation, and bioenergy. Proposals may also address changes in European agriculture under the influence of major issues such as reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, global warming, world trade patterns and energy scarcity.

Since food and agriculture involve so many scientific disciplines, it is anticipated that successful proposals will vary widely in nature from closely focussed topics of a fundamental nature using the most innovative and up-to-date techniques (such as tools for genomics, proteomics and metabolomics) to multidisciplinary projects having a more holistic approach (such as new farming systems for the production of quality food).