Sustainable Thermoelectrics European Network

SUST&NET

COST Action CA24120

Document name:	**Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC) Conference Grant Call for Grant Period 1**
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SUSTENET COST Action CA24120 **launches a call for Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC) Conference grants for Grant Period 1**. These grants support the participation of **SUSTENET** members whose primary affiliation is in an ITC or Near Neighbour Country (NNC) to present their work at high-level international conferences organised by third parties.

Applicants are **strongly encouraged to consult the [COST Annotated Rules](#) for COST Actions** before submitting their application.

2　ACTION OBJECTIVES

SUSTENET aims to **establish a strong collaborative framework that enables sustainable advancements in thermoelectric (TE) technology**. The Action supports scientific excellence, cross-disciplinary research, and innovation through materials science, data-driven methodologies, applications development, and socio-economic analysis.

The Action is organized around four interconnected Working Groups (WG):

- **WG1 – Scaling Sustainability through Artificial Intelligence**: Focuses on the use of AI, machine-learning approaches, and advanced modelling to predict, design, and optimize sustainable TE materials; and on implementing standardised reporting platforms.

- **WG2 – Applications and User Cases**: Identifying promising TE applications, evaluating module performance requirements, conducting environmental life-cycle assessments, and developing an Application White Paper and a TE application database.

- **WG3 – Business Development and Supply Chain**: Addressing economic challenges and supply chain issues; understanding current and future growth paths of the TE business sector in Europe; developing roadmaps for a "European Thermoelectric Industrial Association" and identifying business opportunities.

- **WG4 – Dissemination, Communication and Training**: Promoting knowledge exchange through workshops, seminars, training schools, and Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs); engaging with diverse stakeholders including policy makers, industry, and the general public.

3　TARGET RESEARCH TOPICS

ITC Conference Grants support presentations aligned with SUSTENET objectives, including:

- **Sustainable TE Materials**

  ➤ TE materials based on abundant, non-toxic, and low-cost elements.
  ➤ Environmentally friendly synthesis and processing routes.
  ➤ High-throughput and materials acceleration platforms.

- **AI and Computational Methodologies**

  ➤ Machine learning-assisted materials prediction and optimisation.
  ➤ Data-driven modelling of TE properties.

➢ AI workflows for TE systems and performance optimisation.

- **TE Device and Module Development**

  ➢ Module architecture optimisation.
  ➢ Printed, flexible, or tandem TE modules.
  ➢ Thermal interface engineering and joining techniques.
  ➢ Standardised evaluation of module performance.

- **TE Applications and System Integration**

  ➢ Industrial waste-heat recovery.
  ➢ Heating, cooling, and hybrid TE systems.
  ➢ Life-cycle sustainability assessment.
  ➢ Integration into energy-efficient and circular-economy contexts.

- **Supply Chain and Business Development**

  ➢ Techno-economic analyses.
  ➢ Circular-economy strategies and recycling.
  ➢ Market and industry landscape analysis.
  ➢ Regulatory and standardisation challenges.

- **Capacity Building and Training**

  ➢ Skill development for Young Researchers and Innovators.
  ➢ Knowledge exchange across European and international TE communities.
  ➢ Strengthening academia–industry collaboration.

4   PURPOSE OF THE GRANT

The ITC Conference Grant supports **oral presentations** of original work by Action Participants with a primary affiliation in an **Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC)** or a **Near Neighbour Country (NNC)**. Grants fund participation in high-level international conferences fully organised by third parties (i.e., not organised or co-organised by **SUSTENET**).

The grant aims to:

- Increase the visibility of researchers from ITC/NNC countries.
- Strengthen scientific and professional networks.
- Support career development.
- Enhance dissemination and impact of **SUSTENET** research outcomes.
- Ensure broad visibility of Action-aligned scientific contributions.

5   IMPORTANT DATES

- **Call opens**: 20th March 2026
- **Deadline for applications**: 30th June 2026 (or until the budget is exhausted)
- **Notification of results**: normally within 3–4 weeks after application
- **Conferences must be completed by**: 20th September 2026.

6 INCLUSIVENESS TARGET COUNTRY CONFERENCE GRANT ELIGIBILITY RULES

Applicants must meet the following conditions:

- ✓ Be Action Participants in **SUSTENET** (no age limit).
- ✓ Have their **primary affiliation** in an **ITC or NNC** (see list of countries below).
- ✓ Present work directly linked to **SUSTENET** research topics.
- ✓ Preferably be first-time applicants (priority, not mandatory).

- X Applications submitted after the deadline will be automatically discarded.

Additionally, applicants must agree to include a **SUSTENET Action description**, provided by the Action, in their presentation or in any related proceedings.

ITC Countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

NNC: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Egypt, the Faroe Islands, Jordan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia.

7 HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted via the e-COST platform:

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

Required steps

1. Obtain an **Acceptance/Invitation Letter** from conference organisers.
2. Prepare your proposal including:
   - o Abstract of the accepted contribution.
   - o Requested budget and justification.
   - o Start and end dates of the conference attendance.
3. Complete the **ITC Conference Grant Application Template**.
4. Upload the following documents to e-COST:
   - o Completed **ITC Conference Grant Application**.
   - o **Curriculum Vitae** (max 2 pages).
   - o **Motivation letter** (max 1,000 words): explaining expected career impact and link to **SUSTENET** objectives.
   - o Accepted abstract.
   - o Acceptance/Invitation letter from organisers.
   - o **Estimated Budget Plan** (see Annex 1)

After submission, the applicant receives an automatic confirmation email from e-COST.

8 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support for networking activities organised through a Grant Awarding Process is provided to individuals in the form of a grant paid after completion of the activity. The ITC Conference Grants

are a contribution to cover expenses (not necessary all) related with travel, accommodation, meals, registration fees and others.

Maximum grant amount: up to €1,800 per grant

Applicants must justify their requested amount using the **Estimated Budget Template** (Annex I).

Applicants must **wait to receive the official Grant Letter** before booking travel or paying fees. Applying for other COST grants for the same period or same event is **not allowed**.

9   EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND SELECTION OF APPLICANTS

Applications will be evaluated by the **SUSTENET** Grant Awarding Committee according to the criteria below:

Criterion	Description	Weight
Quality and Scientific Excellence of the Conference	Relevance, prestige, and suitability of the selected conference	25%
Keynote Presentation	Excellence, strategic relevance, and added value of the keynote contribution	15%
Oral Presentation	Scientific clarity, methodological robustness, and contribution to SUSTENET dissemination	10%
Career Development & Diversity	Expected added value for the applicant's professional development and alignment with COST inclusiveness goals	15%
Curriculum Vitae of the Applicant	Applicant's academic track, research experience, and potential	20%
Relevance to SUSTENET Objectives	Level of alignment with **SUSTENET** research topics and goals	15%

Note: Please make sure to provide the required information for each of the evaluated items.

The ITC Coordinator is responsible for the coordination process, while the final approval of grants is made by the Grant Awarding Committee. The decision will be communicated to applicants through the e-COST system.

Applicants may be contacted during evaluation if clarifications or missing documents are required. If documents are missing, the application must be resubmitted, which may delay the final decision.

10 REPORTING AND REIMBURSEMENT

Reporting must be submitted **within 30 days** of

- the end of the conference, **or**

- the end of the Grant Period, whichever comes first.

Required documentation

Upload to e-COST:

- Completed **ITC Conference Report Template**.
- Acceptance (or invitation) letter from the conference organisers.
- Abstract of the accepted contribution.
- Certificate of attendance.
- Conference programme or proceedings page showing the applicant's presentation.
- Copy of the oral presentation (PDF version).

Email to the Grant Holder Manager: **Copy of ID card or Passport**

Reports are evaluated by the ITC Coordinator together with the Grant Awarding Committee. Approved reports trigger payment by the Grant Holder Institution.

Failure to submit documentation on time may result in grant cancellation and may negatively affect the grantee's eligibility for future funding opportunities.

Activities funded by **SUSTENET** will be highlighted on the website and social media; grantees will coordinate with WG4 for dissemination.

11 ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SUSTENET FUNDING

All outputs (publications, presentations, etc.) must include:

- The COST logo and the Horizon Europe logo (please check the guidelines here https://www.cost.eu/about/visual-identity/, in order to ensure you use the COST brand identity correctly).
- The acknowledgement text:

  *"This work/presentation is based upon work from COST Action Sustainable Thermoelectrics European Network (**SUSTENET**), CA24120, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)."*

12 GRANT AWARDING COMMITTEE AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT CONTACTS

For questions related to grant applications and evaluation procedures, please contact the corresponding coordinator/s listed here:

Grant Awarding Coordinator: Dr. Matej Baláž (balazm@saske.sk)

Grant Awarding Co-Coordinator: Dr. Jana Andžane (jana.andzane@lu.lv)

ITC Coordinator: Dr. Tamara Bajc (tbajc@mas.bg.ac.rs)

YRI Coordinator: Dr. Patricia Alegria (patricia.alegria@unavarra.es)

STSM Coordinator: Dr. Theodora Kyratsi (kyratsi.theodora@ucy.ac.cy)

Training School Coordinator: Dr. Vicente Pacheco (vicente.pacheco@ifam-dd.fraunhofer.de)

For technical issues with e-COST submission or account access, contact the COST helpdesk at https://e-services.cost.eu/.

For questions about **SUSTENET** activities and alignment with objectives, please reach out to the relevant **Working Group Leader** or the **Action Chair**.

13 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **SUSTENET Website**: https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA24120/

- **SUSTENET Memorandum of Understanding**: Available through the COST Action website above

- **e-COST Portal**: https://e-services.cost.eu/

- **COST Annotated Rules**: https://www.cost.eu/funding/documents-guidelines/

14 FINAL NOTE

SUSTENET is committed to fostering excellence, collaboration, and inclusiveness across the European TE community. The Action strongly encourages participation from Young Researchers and Innovators and from institutions in Inclusiveness Target Countries.

STSMs support individual career development while contributing to shared European scientific progress. All applicants are strongly encouraged to propose activities that will have a tangible impact on both their research trajectory and the broader **SUSTENET** network.

15 ANNEX I - ESTIMATED BUDGET PLAN

The applicant is requested to fill in the below table to justify the requested budget amount for the Grant.

Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC) Conference Grants Estimated Budget Plan	
	Euro €
Registration fee	
Travel costs	
Accommodation and Meals	
Total	

15 ANNEX I - ESTIMATED BUDGET PLAN