

COST Action CA22146

“Harnessing the potential of underutilized crops to promote sustainable food production (DIVERSICROP)”

Continuous call for applications for ITC conference grants

1. About DIVERSICROP

With population growing rapidly and within the context of agro-climatic changes, there is an increased demand for sustainably produced nutritious food. In Europe, many foods that contribute to health are not widely grown and consumed despite their suitability to European climates and environments, and viability for sustainable production with lower inputs. Underutilised crops that are stress resilient, such as rye and legumes, have the potential to supply key nutrients and improve diets. Such crops have a long history of cultivation across the continent and are part of the historic food identity of different European countries but are underutilised due to several complex reasons. DIVERSICROP addresses these challenges using an innovative, cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach by analysing the deep history of underutilised crops in Europe, understanding the genetic diversity and adaptation to climate change of crop germplasm, analysing current regional trends in the consumption of food products and by involving national and EU policymakers and key stakeholders to revive diverse crop production and maximise the impact of Europe’s agricultural sustainability. DIVERSICROP aims to harmonise fragmented data and develop strategies for the sustainable cultivation of target crops, striking a balance between agricultural sustainability and human nutritional value. DIVERSICROP brings together a skilled and interdisciplinary network to identify climate-resilient crop lines, and potential nutritional and health benefits of their consumption to rethink our food systems. DIVERSICROP will strengthen the Farm to Fork and the Biodiversity strategies under the European Green Deal to contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The objectives of DIVERSICROP are to:

1. reveal the environmental, economic and sociocultural circumstances that led to modern underutilisation of the three target crops;
2. determine the traits and characteristics of these crops that make them viable for sustainable production in a modern context;
3. assess their nutritional value, their potential use in food products and their overall market potential in the future; and
4. to provide a pathway for re-engagement with these crops by facilitating interdisciplinary exchange.

Five working groups (WG) focus on work as follows:

WG1. Ancient History.

The ancient history WG maps the regional deep history for production and consumption of the three selected crops (7000 BC to early modern period) based upon evidence from archaeology, history and ethnobotany.

WG2. Crop Science.

The crop science WG identifies current regional environmental constraints that limit production of the three target crops, examining environmental adaptation of underutilised germplasm.

WG3. Nutrition.

The nutrition WG examines the current regional trends in food consumption for key products containing the three target crops.

WG4. Policy.

The policy WG reviews past policies and incentives, and facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue, with a view to supporting policy development.

WG5. Dissemination, training and events.

The dissemination WG disseminates project results to consolidate Europe as the nexus of promotion for underutilised crops cultivation.

2. What is an ITC conference grant

An ITC conference grant supports a presentation of own work given by a Young Researcher and Innovator affiliated in an Inclusiveness Target Country / Near Neighbour Country. The purpose is foster grantees' participation in high-level conferences fully organized by a third party, i.e. not organized or co-organized by the COST Action. An ITC Conference Grantee receives support for attending and presenting their work (poster/oral presentation) at a conference. This:

- Serves COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy.
- Supports Young Researchers and Innovators affiliated in a legal entity in an Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC)/Near Neighbour Countries (NNC) to establish a strong network and increase their visibility in the research community through sharing their work and to gain knowledge.
- Contributes to increasing visibility of the Action.

The list of COST ITCs is available [here](#), and the list of COST NNCs is available [here](#).

A supporting video is available [here](#).

3. Eligibility

Grant applications need to meet the following criteria:

- The applicant must be a Young Researcher and Innovator (i.e. anyone is less than 40 years old) with a primary affiliation in an institution located in a participating ITC or NNC.
- The applicant must make an oral/poster presentation at the conference.
- The applicant must be listed in the official event/conference programme.
- The application should be sent at least 45 days before the start date of the conference.
- The main subject of the presentation oral / poster presentation at the approved conference must be relevant to one Working Group and must acknowledge COST.

For more details regarding the regulations related to ITC conference grants, please refer to the [COST Annotated Rules](#).

4. Financial support

ITC grants are a contribution for travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses, registration fee, printing of scientific poster and overall effort. No invoices are required. The maximum grant amount is 2,000 EUR for face-to-face conferences, and 500 EUR for online conferences.

5. The grant awarding process

The supported activity, including reporting and payment, must be carried out entirely within one Grant Period. Each Grant Period runs from the 1 November until the 31 October of the following year.

Each application is reviewed by two (or three in case the outcome is not consistent) MC or WG members who are guided by the Grant Awarding Coordinator. The Grant Awarding Coordinator advises the Action Chair who acts on the advice if the budget allows. Successful grantees receive a grant letter.

The supported activity ends when the payment is recorded. Therefore, applicants should allow time for submitting the report, evaluating it, and processing the payment within the Grant Period. This means that the work of conference participations funded in this call should be complete by 30 September to give adequate time for reporting and grant payment by 31 October.

6. Application procedure

Applicants must have an [e-COST profile](#) and applications must be submitted online in e-COST. The applicant starts by encoding an ITC conference grant application by lodging into e-COST and clicking on the ITC Conference Grants tab.

Applications include:

- Title of the presentation
- Conference title, date (within the active Grant Period, i.e. no overlap across two consecutive Grant Periods) and country
- Budget requested
- Attendance type (face to face or virtual)

The following documents need to be uploaded:

- Application form describing relevance of the conference topic to the Action and motivation describing the potential for impact on the applicant's career, available [here](#).
- Copy of the abstract of the accepted oral or poster presentation.
- Acceptance letter from the conference organisers.

Documents that cannot be uploaded via the e-COST interface should be sent directly to the Grant Awarding Coordinator (Donal Murphy-Bokem donal@murphy-bokem.com) and the Chair of COST action (Sonia Negrao sonia.negrao@ucd.ie).

7. Submission of the report and payment

The applicant claims the payment of the grant via e-COST when the activity has ended, and the report is submitted and accepted. For this, the grantee submits the report using the ITC conference report template before 15 October. The template for the report is [here](#).

Notes:

Each publication produced with support of an ITC conference grant should acknowledge the support of the COST Action and whenever possible use the COST and DIVERSICROP logos (on slides and posters).

Acknowledgement text:

“This publication is based on work supported by the COST Action CA22146: Harnessing the potential of underutilized crops to promote sustainable food production (DIVERSICROP).”