

COST Action CA22146

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

Continuous call for applications for Young Researcher and Innovator Conference Grants

Rolling call

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 food crops that contribute to health are not widely grown and consumed despite their suitability to European climates and environments and their 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 a Young Researcher and Innovator Conference Grant

The COST Action CA22146 “Harnessing the potential of underutilized crops to promote sustainable food production” invites applications for the Young Researcher and Innovator (YRI) Grants to fund early-career researchers and innovators attending conferences. They may present a poster/oral presentation of their own work within the scope of the Action. YRI grants provide opportunities for professional development through networking, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. Grants cover up to EUR 2,500 per grant for face-to-face conferences or EUR 500.00 for online conferences.

YRI grants can cover:

- **Travel**
Covers transportation to and from conferences.
- **Accommodation**
Covers lodging during the approved activity.
- **Subsistence expenses**
Covers meals, local transport, and minor expenses.
- **Conference Fees (if applicable)**
Covers registration fees for relevant conferences and printing of scientific poster.

Young Researcher and Innovator Conference grant guidelines



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3. Eligibility criteria

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a doctoral candidate, postdoctoral researcher, or other researcher.
- Be under 40 years of age at the time of application.
- Be affiliated with an institution in a COST Full or Near Neighbour Country.
- Be an active participant in DIVERSICROP COST Action.
- Demonstrate relevance of their participation to the objectives and Working Groups of the COST Action.
- The high-level conference should be fully organized by a third party, i.e. not organized or co-organized by the COST Action.

4. Selection criteria

Applications will be evaluated by Working Group leaders or their representatives considering:

- **The contribution to the COST Action's objectives and deliverables.**
Presentation and participation must clearly support and contribute to the scientific goals and expected outcomes of the COST Action.
- **The scientific relevance of the proposed presentation.**
The plan to present (oral or poster) should be scientifically strong and highly relevant to the conference and to the Action's research theme.
- **Geographical inclusiveness**
Efforts are made to ensure broad geographic representation across COST countries. Some Actions explicitly consider *Inclusiveness Target Country* status when ranking applications.

5. Application procedure

Applicants must have an [e-COST profile](#) and applications must be submitted online in e-COST.

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

Applicants, needs to provide acceptance letter from conference, short CV and application form. The application can be downloaded using the links below:

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

Young Researcher and Innovator Conference grant guidelines



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6. Submission of the reports and payment

After the completion of the virtual activity, grantees are required to submit their presentations, tickets and accommodation booking and payments proofs within 15 days of the completion of the attendance using e-COST platform. The reporting forms can be downloaded using the links below:

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

Notes:

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

Acknowledgement text:

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