



How to submit your Online Travel Reimbursement Request (OTRR) and sign it electronically using the Strong Authentication (SA) feature

User guide

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COST is supported by
the EU Framework Programme
Horizon 2020

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a step-by-step guide on how to submit and sign electronically an Online Travel Reimbursement Request (OTRR) by participants invited to COST Action events and deemed eligible for the reimbursement of their expenses.

The Online Travel Reimbursement Request (OTRR) feature allows each participant to directly encode into e-COST the accommodation and travel expenses incurred when attending a COST Action event, as well as to upload the supporting documents linked to their reimbursement request.

The eligible number of nights and the number of meals are based on a flat rate and calculated automatically based on the travel information (dates and hours) entered by the participants. Any potential meals provided by the Local Organiser are automatically deducted. It is the responsibility of the participant to deduct any additional meal(s) covered by other parties.

The Strong Authentication feature enables Action participants to identify themselves as unique individuals to the e-COST system in a secure way, and significantly improves the efficiency of the reimbursement procedure by reducing the processing times - not to mention its environmentally-friendly aspect, as it also minimises the need for printouts and paper in general.

The technical provider of the Strong Authentication solution is the French company InWebo (www.in-webo.com/en), a key provider of secure authentication solutions and fully certified by the French National Agency for the Security of Information Systems (ANSSI - see www.ssi.gouv.fr/fr/produits-et-prestataires/produits-certifies-cspn/certificat_cspn_2012_03.html).

For complete information on what expenses can be claimed on the OTRR, please refer to the COST Vademecum, at www.cost.eu/Vademecum.

For frequently asked questions, please consult our FAQ section available on the COST website at http://www.cost.eu/participate/networking/grant_holder_qa



2. RULES FOR SUBMITTING TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTS AND CLAIMING EXPENSES

Each eligible and entitled to be reimbursed participant must:

- Create an e-COST profile by accessing the web link / URL: <https://e-services.cost.eu> ensuring that their bank details have been added to their e-COST profile.
- Choose the most economical means of transportation by making their travel arrangements as early as possible following receipt of their official invitation.
- Submit a completed and electronically signed Online Travel Reimbursement Request (OTRR) within 30 calendar days from the end date of the COST Activity. The completed and electronically signed OTRR must be submitted along with supporting documents relevant to the eligible expenses that are being claimed. Each claimant must upload readable copies of invoices / receipts of eligible expenses onto the e-COST platform. Original invoices / receipts and other forms of supporting documentation must be kept and archived by each claimant up until April 30th 2020, unless original documentation is specifically requested by the Grant Holder Institution. By electronically signing the OTRR, each claimant is declaring that they will not be reimbursed by a third party for any of the expenses that are being claimed.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Accommodation allowance (which includes a provision for breakfast expenses) and meal allowance (covering up to 2 meals per day - lunch and dinner only)

- Accommodation expenses are paid in the form of an allowance against flat rates only. No invoices or receipts from the accommodation providers are required. Flat rates can never exceed EUR 120 per person per eligible night. The flat rate for accommodation includes a provision for breakfast expenses. The maximum number of nights that can be claimed by an eligible participant is calculated against the actual number of days the participant attends the approved activity (as confirmed against their signature on the official attendance list for each day of the event that they attend), plus 1 night, permitting, if applicable, the participant to arrive at the vicinity of the event on the evening before the activity commences.
- Accommodation expenses must be paid directly by each participant. It is not permissible for a Local Organiser to pay for and / or claim for any participants accommodation expenses.
- When a participant shares their accommodation with another participant, only one participant can claim for the accommodation allowance.
- Meals are paid against flat rates only. No invoices or receipts from the meal providers are required. Flat rates can never exceed EUR 20 per eligible meal. A maximum of up to two meals per day are eligible (two meals strictly concern lunch and dinner - breakfast expenses are not eligible expenses). Meals provided by other sources must be deducted from the number of meals that can be claimed by each participant.

LONG DISTANCE TRAVEL (CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL)

- Tickets / receipts / invoices related to air travel must in every instance detail the name of the passenger, the booking class, the full travel itinerary and the full price of the airfare. It is understood that in certain instances, tickets / receipts / invoices for train / bus / metro / tram and ferry journeys will not contain the name of passenger, nor will it detail the full travel itinerary. In such cases, supporting documents submitted by each eligible participant must clearly establish the mode of transport taken, the date of travel and the full price of the journey (s) in question.
- An eligible participant can claim for permissible long distance travel expenses incurred whilst travelling across national borders from the country where he / she is residing (as registered on their e-COST profile) to where the approved COST event is being held and back to the country where they reside irrespective of the dates of travel.
- Economy class air travel (strictly no business class air fares) for up to a maximum total amount of EUR 1 200 is eligible to be reimbursed. Travel reservation fees and charges resulting from checking in luggage are also eligible expenses. Air travel irrespective of the nature of the journey is always to be claimed under the category - long distance travel.
- For Train or Bus travel across national borders - first, second class (or economy) and business class tickets are eligible to be reimbursed. Supplements for fast trains and sleeper trains are also eligible to be reimbursed.
- Long distance Car travel concerning cross-border journeys is limited to a maximum distance of 2 000 km in total and can be reimbursed at EUR 0.20 per km when an eligible participant is travelling alone. When more than one eligible participants are travelling in the same car, the driver can claim EUR 0.30 per km. In this instance, the names of the additional passenger(s) must be specified on the remarks section of the TRR submitted by the claimant. Proof of distance showing the distance in KM of the traveled route has to be submitted along with the TRR by means of a print-out from Google Maps or another reputable route planner.

- An eligible participant travelling by Ferry from the country where he / she is residing to the country where the approved COST event is being held and back again can be reimbursed.

LOCAL TRANSPORT EXPENSES

- Public transport expenses are bus, train, metro and tram expenses incurred when travelling within one country – specifically not travelling across national borders. If the amount claimed for public transport is less than EUR 25, then no tickets, receipts or invoices are required to be submitted. In any case, the journey must be detailed on the TRR (for both the outbound and inbound journeys). If the amount claimed for public transport exceeds EUR 25, tickets / receipts justifying the total amount claimed must be submitted by the claimant. All submitted invoices / receipts must establish the name of the service provider, the full price of the ticket and the date of travel.
- Taxi expenses - eligible participants are permitted to claim taxi expenses up to a maximum of EUR 80 in total for the entire journey only when public transport is not available or if taxis are taken before 7 am for an early travel departure and / or are taken after 10 pm due to a late arrival. Taxi expenses are paid against the amounts detailed on receipts. All taxi receipts must display the amount paid for the journey and the date and time that the expenses were incurred.
- Local transport Car travel can be reimbursed in line with the conditions detailed above - see section: Long distance travel: Long distance Car travel. However, Local transport Car travel covers car journeys within one country - specifically journeys not travelling across national borders.
- Parking expenses are eligible to be reimbursed based on the submission of receipts / invoices and can only cover expenses incurred for the timeframe relevant to the approved activity.
- An eligible participant travelling by ferry for travel starting and finishing within one country's territorial waters can claim for local ferry expenses. The submitted invoice / receipt must clearly detail the name of the service provider, the full price of the ticket and the date of travel.

OTHER TRAVEL EXPENSES

- Visa fees relevant to attending approved COST Meetings and Training Schools are eligible to be reimbursed. All eligible claimants must justify the incurred amounts by producing supporting documents such as a receipt / stamp / invoice from the embassy / consulate issuing the visa which clearly shows the amount paid and the conditions of the acquired visa.

NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- Registration fees / lecture fees or honoraria - Accommodation, transportation and postage expenses associated with obtaining visas - Health related expenses - life, travel and medical insurance – Fees linked to a participant changing or having to rebook travel tickets - Fuel expenses, toll charges and car rental expenses linked to car travel - Wi-Fi, telephone, internet and minibar consumption expenses - Printing and postage expenses - Regional and /or national taxation fees and stamp duty expenses.

RULE DEROGATIONS

- The COST Association considers expenses that do not comply with the above mentioned rules to be rule derogations. Claimants must attain written approval from the COST Association prior to incurring expenses that do not comply with the reimbursement rules specified above. Requests for COST Association approvals with respect to rule derogations are considered on a case by case basis. The COST Association reserves the right to reject any such request.

3. How to submit and sign your OTRR electronically

The scenario used as an example in this guide concerns a COST Action Meeting, taking place on 14 April 2016, in Brussels, with 1 meal provided by the Local Organiser.

3.1 The invited participant who is deemed eligible for reimbursement receives the following automatic e-COST invitation:

OFFICIAL INVITATION

Dear,

You are invited to attend the following COST event as Meeting Participant:

- COST Action: BMXXX
- Meeting Title: Management Meeting
- Location: COST Association, Brussels, Belgium
- Meeting Type: Meeting Participant
- Meeting Dates: from 2016-04-14 09:00:00 to 2016-04-14 17:00:00

Please confirm or decline your participation in this event by clicking on the following link: <https://e-services.cost.eu/invitation/bff0d03b/> ←

If you are new to e-COST, you can register a new e-COST profile on the following link: <https://e-services.cost.eu>
By accepting this invitation, you confirm that you accept the set of COST Rules as approved by the COST CSO and described in the COST Vademecum. Any additional documents (user guide etc.) are provided for information purposes only and its contents are not intended to replace the set of COST Rules as approved by the COST CSO, or the COST Vademecum. Neither the COST Association, nor any person acting on its behalf can be held responsible for the use of these additional documents.

The following link provides instructions on how to fill in the Travel Reimbursement Request: [http://www.cost.eu/Travel Reimbursement Instructions](http://www.cost.eu/Travel_Reimbursement_Instructions)

Kind regards,

3.2 The participant clicks on the link provided in the invitation and logs into e-cost:

Invitation to COST Association Event

If you are the intended invitee to the following COST event and you wish to participate, please log in below to proceed.

Meeting Details

Meeting ID: ECOST-MEETING-140416-072346
 Title: Management Committee meeting
 Start Date: 2016/04/14
 End Date: 2016/04/14
 Location: COST Association, 149 Avenue Louise, B-1050, 15th Floor, Brussels, Belgium

Your Details

Name: **John Smith**
 Email: j.s.@cost.eu
 Organisation: University of

Username: Password: ←

To continue you need to login with a user account having the e-mail address JSmith@gmail.com. You will then be able to enter your bank details and download your personal Travel Reimbursement Form.
 If you forgot your login and password, click [here](#).
 If you do not have a user account click [here](#).
 If JSmith@gmail.com is your e-mail address but your account is linked to another one you should **contact** Ms Gabriela CRISTEA and request a change in your contact information.

3.3 The participant confirms or decline his/her participation before the event:

Invitation to COST Association Event

Dear Dr

You are invited to the following COST event. Please indicate below if you wish to participate.

Meeting Details

Meeting ID	ECOST-MEETING-140416-072346
Title	Management Committee meeting
Start Date	2016/04/14
End Date	2016/04/14
Location	COST Association, 149 Avenue Louise, B-1050, 15th Floor, Brussels, Belgium

Step 1 / 5 Invitation 

Please advise us if you intend to come to the event.

3.4 The participant confirms whether or not (s)he wishes to claim the reimbursement of the expenses.

Reimbursement : Yes 

If you decided to NOT submit a claim, please click the 'No' button above.

3.5 Once the participant confirms that (s)he intends to claim reimbursement, (s)he can already activate the browser in order to be able to sign the travel reimbursement request electronically using the Strong authentication feature:

Reimbursement : Yes

If you decided to NOT submit a claim, please click the 'No' button above.

To be able to electronically sign documents, your browser needs to be activated for strong authentication. This is a one time operation for every browser used. If later on you use a different browser, you will be prompted to activate that browser before it can be used to sign documents electronically.

Please click the button below to proceed. You will receive an e-mail containing an activation code which you will be prompted to enter in the next screen.



Note: Additional information of the Strong Authentication is available here.

3.6 The participant receives an e-mail notification containing the browser activation code which must be entered in the appropriate field in e-COST to complete the activation of the Strong Authentication feature:

From: e-cost@cost.eu [mailto:e-cost@cost.eu]
Sent: 11 January 2016 15:35
To: John.Smith@gmail.com
Subject: Strong Authentication : Activation code

Below is your e-COST Strong Authentication activation code.

Activation Code: 61 40: ←

Please enter the above code when prompted to activate your browser for e-COST Strong authentication.

This activation code is only valid for one hour from the time this message was sent.

Browser Activation for Strong Authentication – Step 1 / 2

A message containing an activation code has been sent to your JSmith@gmail.com mailbox. Please enter the activation code in the field below. Then click "Activate Browser" to proceed.

←

Please note that the message containing the activation code might take some time to arrive in your mailbox. You may also check your SPAM folder in case the message was inadvertently placed there.

If you did not receive the activation message in your mailbox and you have checked your spam folder,

to receive a new activation code.

If you encounter any other problems, please contact the e-COST help desk for assistance.

Browser Activation for Strong Authentication – Step 2 / 2

In case you encounter a "profile already exists" issue, please type a different name in the User profile field below. This may occur if your browser had been activated with a previous version of this module.

Activate COST Strong Authentication service

Site:

User profile *:

E.g.: your e-COST username

←

 Helium by inWebo © 2016

3.7 The participant can start completing online the request for reimbursement:

3.7.1 Travel Dates and Meeting Attendance

Travel start date and travel end date are automatically populated with the meeting dates and are editable. The drop-down menu allows the participant to select the departure time (from home/ starting location) and the arrival time (back home/arrival location).

The participant needs to complete the attendance to the meeting by selecting the date(s) for which the attendance list has been signed.

Travel and attendance information are necessary to automatically calculate the maximum number of nights and the maximum number of meals eligible to be reimbursed to the participant.

Travel information and expenses

Please note:

- Local organiser has paid 1 meal(s) for this meeting, which has/have been automatically deducted from the number of eligible meals that you can claim.

Please carefully read the [Travel Reimbursement Request \(TRR\) Rules](#) before you encode your expenses.

Travel dates (Door to Door)

Travel Start	Date	2016-04-13 	Time	10:00 - 10:59 ▾	←
Travel End	Date	2016-04-15 	Time	22:00 - 22:59 ▾	

Meeting Attendance

Please indicate by clicking on the check box below which days you attended the COST event as confirmed by you signing the attendance list.

14 Apr 16	←
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

3.7.2 Accommodation and Meals expenses

The applicable flat rate is specified by the Grant Holder while creating the meeting. Using the available drop-down menu, the participant selects the number of nights and meals to be reimbursed.

Meals provided by the Local Organiser are automatically deducted from the reimbursement to individual participants. It is the responsibility of the participant to deduct any additional meal(s) covered by other parties.

Accommodation expenses i

Number of nights	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text" value="2"/>	←	
Applicable rate per night	EUR 120.00		
Reimbursable amount	EUR 240.00		

Meals expenses i

Number of meals	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text" value="5"/>	←	
Applicable rate per meal	EUR 20.00		
Reimbursable amount	EUR 100.00		

3.7.3 Long distance travel expenses

The following items are considered means of long distance transportation: plane, train, bus, car, and ferry.

The participant may encode as many long distance travel and/or local transport expenses as necessary to attend the meeting. All tickets, receipts, invoices related to these expenses must contain the itinerary, price paid, e-ticket number, and name of the passenger, and must be uploaded in e-COST.

Long distance (Cross border) travel expenses i → add

Reimbursable amount	EUR 0.00
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LONG DISTANCE TRAVEL EXPENSES

Means of transportation	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="Plane"/>
From	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Country	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="--SELECT--"/>

	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">Plane ▾</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px; background-color: #007bff; color: white;">Plane</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">Train</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">Bus</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">Car</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">Ferry</div>
--	--

The participant can modify, delete, or add another leg of travel by clicking on one of the buttons shown below:

Long distance (Cross border) travel expenses edit delete add	
Means of transportation	Plane
From	Madrid, Spain
To	Brussels, Belgium
Journey	Outward and return
Justification	I travelled from Spain instead of UK because I am currently working at a Spanish institute.
Reimbursable amount	EUR 750.00

3.7.4 Local transport expenses

The following items are considered means of local transportation expenses: public transport, taxis, car, parking, and ferries.

LOCAL TRANSPORT EXPENSES

Each participant must encode their expenses related to Local transport in the section below:

Expense type

Public Transport Expenses ▾
 Please Select
 Public Transport Expenses
 Taxi Expenses
 Car Travel
 Parking Expenses
 Ferry Expenses

Public transport expenses are bus, train, metro and tram expenses incurred when travel starts and finishes within one country. Public transport (bus, train, metro and tram) are as follows: If the amount claimed for the entire journey is equal to or less than EUR 25, no supporting documents are required. In any case, the local transport options for your journey(s) must be detailed in the relevant section below. If the amount claimed is more than EUR 25, then supporting documents justifying the total amount claimed must be provided by the participant. All segments of the journey must be detailed in the relevant section below.

Amount:

Currency:

Please detail the nature and price of your local transport expense(s)

3.7.5 Other Expenses

The following items can be claimed as other expenses: entry visa processing cost, extra night(s) of accommodation, extra meal(s), and conference fees.

An approval must be obtained by the participants from the COST Association and the confirmation uploaded as supporting document in the relevant section further below. An extra night and extra meal will be automatically based on the flat rate encoded by the Grant Holder while creating the meeting.

Conference fees are reimbursable only if the participant attended a Dissemination meeting. Conference fees for any other types of meetings are not reimbursable and will be deleted from e-COST.

Edit expenses

OTHER TRAVEL EXPENSES

Expense type	Please Select ▼
Amount	Please Select
Currency	Visa Processing Costs Extra Night Of Accommodation Extra Meal Conference Fee

3.8 Upload Supporting Documents

Each participant must upload all the supporting documents (airplane ticket, transport receipt etc.) as well as any justification linked to the expenses claimed, by first clicking on the 'Browse' button at the bottom of the page and then on the 'Upload' button.

Supporting Documents

Attached Document 1	Plane ticket invoice	<input type="button" value="Download"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>
Title / Description		<i>(Example: plane ticket, receipts, etc.)</i>
File to upload		<input type="button" value="Browse"/> <input type="button" value="Upload"/>

*By clicking upload, the selected document / file will be saved online.
 You can upload files up to 2 MB each.
 Supported file types are: pdf, xps, png, jpg, jpeg, gif.*

3.9 Select/Add the bank account to which to receive the reimbursement

Once all the expenses had been entered and the supporting documents have been uploaded, the participant must select the bank account to which the payment should be transferred.

Any already encoded bank account would be available in the drop-down menu. Otherwise, or if wanted, the participant has the possibility to add a new bank account.

Bank Account

Select the Bank Account you would like to get reimbursed on above. To select a non-listed account, click "Add a new account".

After selecting your bank account, you will be able to preview a draft version of your TRR (Travel Reimbursement Request) Form to verify the details.

Once you have selected your bank account you will be able to review your TRR and submit your claim.

After completion of the step 4, the participant can save and preview the OTRR. This allows the participant to review the request before submitting it.

3.10 Submission

The participant confirms that the claimed expenses are not being reimbursed by any other sources by clicking on the box next to this declaration. As soon as the box is ticked, the button "Submit Claim" will be available to allow participants to authenticate him/herself by providing the e-COST profile password and submit the Online Request.

Submission

I declare that the above expenses are not being reimbursed from any other source.

The COST Association reserves the right to correct this document after signature by the participant to comply with COST Rules.

Click to submit your claim electronically. You will be prompted to enter your e-COST password to verify your identity.

Note: Additional information of the Strong Authentication is available here.

Step 5/5

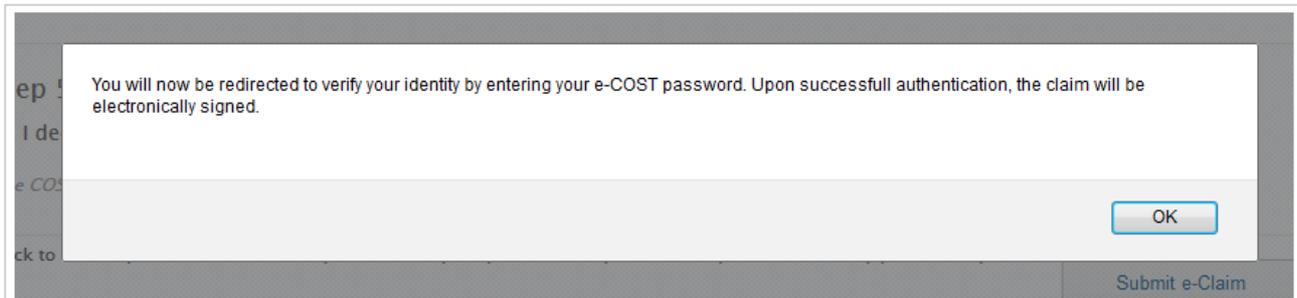
I declare that

The COST Associa

Click to submit your claim electronically. You will be prompted to enter your e-COST password to verify your identity.

Note: Additional information of the Strong Authentication is available here.

After submitting your reimbursement request, you will not be able to make any change. Are you sure you want to proceed?



Signature with Strong Authentication – Step 1 / 2

SIGNATURE OF "ECOST-MEETING-140416-072346"

Please enter your e-COST password to verify your identity :

Validate



If you encounter any problem, please contact the [e-COST help desk](#) for assistance.

Once submitted, the participant cannot modify the request anymore. The Grant Holder is notified that the claim is ready to be reviewed. When the Grant Holder confirms the payment the participant receives an automatic e-mail mentioning the amount paid as well as the payment details.

After the submission of the claim, the participant has the possibility to download the claim only for their own personal file.

Dr John Smith

Your online reimbursement request has been successfully submitted. You may download the Travel Reimbursement Request(TRR) in pdf format for personal filing. No further action is required from your side.

[Download TRR](#)

Meeting Details

Meeting ID	ECOST-MEETING -140416-072346
Title	Management Committee meeting
Start Date	2016/04/14
End Date	2016/04/14
Location	COST Association, 149 Avenue Louise, B-1050, 15th Floor, Brussels, Belgium

For any questions concerning problems with the Online Travel Reimbursement Request, please contact the Grant Holder, or the COST Association helpdesk at ecost@cost.eu .