



Accelerating Innovation and Development of European Microbial Foods

1st Open Call for

Young Researcher and Innovator Conference Grants (YRICGs)

Important Dates

This is the first call for applications for Young Researcher and Innovator Conference Grants (YRICGs) in the framework of the COST Action **CA24132** ([Grant Period 1: 1st November 2025 – 31st October 2026](#)).

- **Call open from:** 1 April 2026 and will remain open until the available funding is exhausted.
- **Evaluation results:** Applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis and assessed against the established selection criteria. Applicants will be notified of the outcome within two weeks of submitting a complete application.
- Conferences must finish before 1st October 2026.

COST

The **European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST)** is a funding organisation that supports the creation of research networks, called COST Actions. These networks provide an open space for collaboration among scientists across Europe (and beyond), thereby fostering research advancement and innovation.

About CA24132

COST Action CA24132 - Accelerating Innovation and Development of European Microbial Foods (Mic2Food) main aim and objective of the Action is to facilitate the development of new microbial foods for the European market, by ensuring that discoveries are accelerated in a coordinated manner and translated into tangible products and by positively influencing the perception of the public and policymakers on microbial foods to allow this emerging industry to thrive in Europe. For further information see: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA24132/>

What is a Young Researcher and Innovator Conference Grant?

YRI Conference Grants funds a presentation (**poster/oral presentation**) of their own work within the scope of the Mic2Food Action by a **Young Researcher and Innovator**¹ in a high-level conference fully organized by a third party, i.e. **not organized nor co-organized by the Mic2Food COST Action**.

YRI Conference Grants aim to:

¹ COST defines a Young Researcher or Innovator as someone under the age of 40

- Serves COST [Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy](#);
- Supports Young Researchers and Innovators to establish a strong network and increase their visibility in the research community through sharing their work and to gain knowledge;
- Can contribute to increasing visibility of the Mic2Food COST Action.

The YRI Conference Grant in Mic2Food intends to contribute to the scientific objectives of the [COST Action CA24132](#).

Who can apply?

YRI Conference Grantee: receives support for attending and presenting their own work within the scope of the Action (poster/oral presentation) in a conference and can establish new contacts for future collaborations.

These opportunities are open to all Young Researchers and Innovators (YRIs) **under the age of 40** (at the time of the conference), member of Mic2Food COST Action CA24132 (PhD students, postdocs, or early-career researchers) affiliated² with a legal entity in a COST Full Member, Cooperating Member, or Near-Neighbour Country.

The applicant can make an **oral or poster presentation** at the conference in question and must be listed in the official event/conference programme. Attendance at European conferences is preferred, however, conferences held elsewhere can also be considered.

Eligibility for the YRI Conference Grant can be checked: <https://www.cost.eu/am-i-eligible/>; and the reimbursement scheme is described in the [Annotated Rules for COST Actions](#).

- The applicant must be member of the Action at the time of application.
- The applicant must have confirmation of an accepted **oral or poster presentation** at a conference held in a different country than the country of affiliation.
- Strong preference will be given to high-profile conferences held in Europe. Relevance to Mic2Food Action has to be justified.
- Applicants are required to deliver either an oral/poster presentation at the selected conference and must be listed in the official program of the event/conference. The subject matter of the approved presentation must align with the topics covered by COST Action Mic2Food and acknowledge COST.
- Repetitive applications: Applications by the same individual will be discarded unless properly justified.

Financial Support

YRI Conference Grant is a fixed financial contribution, providing a contribution for travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses, registration fee, printing of scientific poster and overall effort.

The funding scheme awards up to a maximum of €2,500 per grant for face-to-face conferences and EUR 500.00 for online conferences. For the first grant period Mic2Food Action will fund **up to a maximum of €1,000 per grant for face-to-face conferences**.

² The affiliation of an individual to a legal entity is determined as per Article 4.1.1.1.1.

Note: To optimize the use of the available budget, the Grant Awarding Coordinator and the grant-awarding committee reserves the right to adjust the grant amount based on its assessment of the proposed budget, reasonable costs, the duration and location of the conference, the actual conference fee, and the available funds.

Grantees must make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security, travel insurance and pension matters. Further details can be consulted at the [COST Annotated Rules](#).

Application procedure

Apply via the e-COST (<https://e-services.cost.eu/user/login>) and first-time users must create an account. The applicant encodes a grant application by logging into e-COST and clicking first on 'COST Actions' and then on the 'My Grant Applications' tab.

The applicant can select the grant type from the page 'Apply for new Grant'. Under "Young Researcher and Innovator Conference grant", choose "Apply".

Applications are submitted **online** through the e-COST platform using the dedicated forms available at: <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>

- Create or update your e-COST profile, ensuring that your CV and bank account information are uploaded.
- Carefully read the funding rules described in the [Annotated Rules for COST Actions](#).
- For guidance on the e-COST tool, applicants can consult the [Grant Awarding User guide](#).

YRI Conference Grant applications must be filled in e-COST providing:

- a. Applicant details
- b. COST Action number ([CA24132](#))
- c. Title of the presentation
- d. Conference title, **date**, (within the active Grant Period, i.e.no overlap across two consecutive Grant Periods), and country.
- e. Budget requested and its justification.
- f. Attendance Type (face-to-face)
- g. Information about the conference and contribution type (type of presentation and author(s).
- h. Bank details for payment (Bank address country, IBAN Account Number, Bank Name and SWIFT/BIC Code).

After encoding the Grant application form by filling in all the above-mentioned sections, the applicant also needs to upload the actual **application template completed**.

Upload the supporting documents

After adding the supporting document(s), the applicant can **submit** the grant application. The application status will change from draft to submitted. Prior to approval of the application, if need be, the applicant will be able to revise the application.

Supporting documents:

- i. **YRI Conference Grant Application Form** (based on e-COST template: <https://www.cost.eu/YRICG-application-template>), describing the relevance of the conference topic to the objectives of Mic2Food Action, and highlighting the quality and excellence of the conference; and motivation of the applicant with a detailed explanation about how the attendance to this conference will contribute to the Grantee's career.

- j. **Copy of the abstract** of the accepted oral or poster presentation
- k. **Acceptance (or invitation) letter** from the conference organiser (confirming your speaking slot).
- l. **Other documents** required by the Action:
 - CV of the applicant, including a list of academic publications if applicable.
 - Involvement in Mic2Food, provide a description of your involvement and contributions to Mic2Food thus far. Explain how your participation in and contribution to the selected conference would benefit the CA24132 by defining the relevant Working Group(s) and the specific deliverable(s) addressed in the contributions.
 - Conference Agenda if available at the time of application, and If available, the weblink(s) to the event and the programme.
 - Copy of the information sheet of the conference where the registration fees are listed.
 - Scanned copy of passport/ID card.
 - Letter of recommendation from the PhD supervisor or, for postdocs and early-career researchers, from their current supervisor or PI.

If the application overlaps (either partially or entirely) with an accepted invitation with reimbursement to a COST event (meeting or training school), whether within the Mic2Food Action or across different COST activities: **e-COST will not allow submission of the YRICGs application.**

It is recommended that an applicant, who has submitted **overlapping grant applications**, out of which one has been approved, deletes the other grant applications.

Evaluation process and result announcement

The Grant Awarding Coordinator will be able to review, edit the application amount and/or dates and approve/reject the Grant application on behalf of the Management Committee (MC). In case of ultimate rejection, a justification will be included in the e-notification to the applicant.

Evaluation will be based on the **quality and scientific excellence** of the conference, the relevance of the conference which must clearly fit in the Mic2Food Action's scientific objectives, the impact on the career of the grantee, and applicant motivation.

To guarantee a fair and objective evaluation, an evaluator should have no affiliation with the home institution of the YRICG proposal, and a positive decision requires approval by more than 50% of the grant evaluation committee members.

The criteria given in the table below shall be applied for evaluation and participants will be selected on the basis of an **evaluation-criteria score** (see below). Preference will be given to papers submitted to conferences with competitive **peer review**. Moreover, **geographical diversity** and **gender balance** will be taken in due consideration, according to the [COST excellence and inclusiveness policy](#).

Criterion	max. points
a) Before any further criteria are considered	
Application is complete and fulfils all formal requirements	pass/no pass
b) Evaluation of the grant application	
Relevance of the conference: The conference is well-recognized and its topics and audience align with the Action's Working Groups.	3
Scientific quality and excellence of the presentation: The presentation demonstrates novel, high-quality research clearly aligned with the Action's Working Groups.	3
Motivation: The applicant shows strong motivation to attend and clear potential for positive career impact.	3

Suitability of the budget requested: The proposed budget is realistic, well-justified, and represents good value for money.	3
Relevance to COST policies: The application supports COST priorities by promoting gender balance, empowerment of young researchers, geographical diversity, and previous funding through the COST Action.	3

If three points can be awarded, numbers mean the following:

- 0: no
- 1: somewhat
- 2: yes
- 3: very much

If one point can be awarded, numbers mean the following:

- 0: no
- 1: yes

Applicants must score at least 11 points to qualify for the grant. If scores are equal, preference will be given to those who have not previously received an YRI conference grant.

Within two weeks after the complete application submission, the Grant Awarding Coordinator reports the final result to the grant evaluation committee, to the leadership and Grant Holder Manager of CA24132, also is notified the applicant. The Grant Holder will then send to the applicant a “**Grant Letter**” confirming the proposal’s approval and the awarded grant amount.

After the Conference

From **1 day to 10 days** after the end of the grant, the grantee will receive a reminder to upload the report.

The deadline to submit the report is **30 days** from the end of the activity, within **15 days** from the end date of the Grant Period or within a shorter timeframe as per Grant Holder/ Grant Awarding Coordinator’s request to meet reporting deadlines.

The grantee must **download the [report template](https://www.cost.eu/YRICG-report-template)**, complete it, upload it along with other required supporting documents (if applicable) and submit it in e-COST. The **supporting documents** requested **after the conference** are:

- a. Scientific Report (use YRICG Report template: <https://www.cost.eu/YRICG-report-template>), describing the outcome of the presentation of the accepted contribution, in terms of grantee’s visibility, including the establishment of new contacts for future collaborations;
- b. The certificate of conference attendance;
- c. The programme of the conference or book of abstracts / proceedings indicating the presentation (oral or poster) of the grantee;
- d. Copy of the given oral or poster presentation.

In addition to the report, grantees are required to upload proof of their travel or accommodation in the conference hosting city, documentation of the conference fee and package, a brief testimonial about the attended conference experience and a photograph taken during their presentation at the conference.

The status of the application changes from “Grant letter” sent to “**Report submitted**”. Upon submission of the grant report, an e-notification is sent to the Grant Awarding Coordinator and a copy to the grantee, Action Chair and Vice Chair.

After review of the report by the procedures agreed, the Grant Awarding Coordinator needs to encode

their approval or rejection on behalf of MC. Upon the recording of the payment, an e-notification is sent to the grantee, with a copy to the Grant Holder manager.

Application approval and payment procedures are managed through the e-COST platform, with detailed explanations provided in the COST Annotated Rules. For comprehensive information on eligibility, evaluation and selection, financial support, and grant payment procedures, please refer to [Grant Awarding User Guide](#) and [Annotated Rules for COST Actions](#).

Failure to submit the requested documents within the established period from the end date of the YRI Conference Grant will effectively cancel the Grant.

Acknowledgement

The appropriate acknowledgement must be included in presentation (oral/poster) and abstract/proceedings, which publication must be sent by e-mail to the Grant Awarding Coordinator as soon as it is published.

The work is presented at conference, the [COST corporate logo](#), the [EU emblem](#) with accompanying text (“Funded by the European Union”), the Mic2Food logo, and the name, acronym, and reference number of the COST Action must be visible on all relevant materials that are on display or distributed at the conference.

All presentations and proceedings of conferences supported by the CA24132 YRI Conference Grant must contain the following acknowledgement: The attendance to this conference was supported by the *COST Action CA24132 “Mic2Food – Accelerating Innovation and Development of European Microbial Foods,” supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology); www.cost.eu.*

The grantee acknowledges and consents that, upon completion of the conference, information about the conference and the grantee, including the presentation and visual documentation (photos, videos), may be published on the **Mic2Food website**, in the **online newsletter**, and through other **official communication channels of the Action**. Posters and presentations should use the **official Mic2Food templates**, including the Mic2Food logo. For templates, please contact Science Communication Coordinator **Prof. Bojana Bajic** (baj@uns.ac.rs)

Further information

- **CA24132 (Mic2Food) website:** <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA24132/>
- **Annotated Rules for COST Actions** ([https://www.cost.eu/Annotated Rules for COST Actions C](https://www.cost.eu/Annotated_Rules_for_COST_Actions_C)).
- **YRI Conference Grant Awarding User guide** (<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/01/COST-Grant-Awarding-user-guide.pdf>).
- For general information on YRI Conference Grants, please contact the **Grant Awarding Coordinator of CA24132: Prof. Assoc. Dr. Luziana Hoxha** (lhoxha@ubt.edu.al).