

How to fill in a DESIGNAE Grant application form

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1. General Principles for Writing the required Sections

A grant proposal should be clear, coherent, and structured in a way that allows reviewers to easily understand its objectives, methodology, and potential impact. Applicants, particularly early-career researchers, are encouraged to focus on clarity, feasibility, and scientific relevance starting from the definition of the aim.

Applicants should aim to be concise and focused, clearly addressing each question without unnecessary detail. Prioritize key information, use simple and direct language, and avoid redundancy. Structuring responses clearly (e.g., short paragraphs or bullet points) helps ensure that the main message is easy to understand and quickly accessible to reviewers.

Applicants should write in a way that is accessible to interdisciplinary reviewers, avoiding overly technical language and clearly explaining field-specific concepts. Emphasize the broader relevance of the work, use clear and simple terminology, and highlight the impact beyond a single discipline so that non-specialists can easily understand its value.

Applicants should adopt a strategic approach by carefully reading each question, understanding what the reviewer is specifically looking for, and tailoring their answers accordingly (please refer to the section for your specific grant's questions below – section 2/3). Responses should directly address the evaluation criteria, using clear and structured arguments to ensure relevance and alignment with the expectations of the call.

Final recommendation:

- ✓ The title should be concise and informative.
- ✓ Write clearly and avoid unnecessary jargon.
- ✓ Ensure internal consistency across all sections.
- ✓ Seek feedback before submission.
- ✓ Carefully revise the text (typos), logical sequence of paragraphs; references organization, figure eventually included.

2. Conference grants

- a) Young Researchers and Innovator Conference Grants (**YRICG**) & Inclusiveness Target Countries Conference Grants (**ITCCG**)

Sections to be filled (each 250 words) – *please note: the abstract is available to the reviewer, so does not need to be repeated in the sections in detail.*

- **Relevance of the Conference topic to the Action:** Description of the relevance of the Conference to the Action (e.g. refer to a MoU Objective, deliverable or WG task) -



Applicants should explicitly link the Conference topic to specific MoU objectives, planned deliverables, or ongoing Working Group (WG) tasks, and explain how their participation contributes to advancing the goals of the Action. Also refer to reviewers' question 2.

- **Motivation and expected impact:** Description of the applicant's motivation to participate in the conference and potential impact on the applicant's career. Describe any additional benefit to the action, the WG or dissemination activities -



Applicants should briefly explain their motivation to attend the conference, the expected impact on their career, and any added value for the Action or Working Groups, including opportunities for dissemination, networking or collaboration. Also refer to reviewers' question 1 and 3.

What the reviewer is looking for:

- **Relevance of the congress/conference:** Is the congress/conference recognized within the academic/professional community as a forum for presenting and discussing topics that are relevant to the WG of the Action? -



The conference is a well-established international event in the field (e.g. long-running annual or biennial meeting). It is organized or endorsed by recognized scientific societies or professional associations relevant to the WG. It regularly attracts leading experts, keynote speakers, and high-level contributions in the Action's research area. The program includes sessions, symposia, or tracks directly aligned with WG topics. It serves as a major platform for dissemination and discussion of state-of-the-art research in the field. It brings together a relevant interdisciplinary or international community aligned with the Action's scope.

- **Relevance of the proposal:**

- Is the topic and content of the presentation relevant to the topic of the WG of the Action? –



The presentation addresses a core topic of the WG, directly linked to its objectives or tasks. It presents methods, data, or results relevant to ongoing WG activities. The content contributes to a current discussion or deliverable within the WG. The topic clearly fits within the scientific scope defined by the Action and WG description. It provides insights that can be shared and used by WG members in their work.

- Is the quality of the work and its novelty appropriate for representing DESIGNAE? -



The presentation introduces new findings or approaches that advance WG research priorities. The work presented is of high quality (e.g. has been/can be in future published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal) and can advance ongoing discussions in the respective scientific community.

- **Additional benefit to the Action:** Are there additional benefits to the WG/Action (e.g. by accumulating data for a database or knowledge to be distributed with the WG or Action) and/or additional Action Dissemination Activities at the conference to be considered? -



The activity contributes to shared resources, such as datasets, databases, protocols, or guidelines for the WG. It enables knowledge exchange that can be integrated into Action outputs or deliverables. It fosters new collaborations or partnerships within or beyond the Action network. It includes dissemination activities such as presentations, posters, or dedicated sessions representing the Action. It increases the visibility of the Action at the conference (e.g. mentioning COST affiliation or WG activities). It supports follow-up actions, such as joint publications, workshops, or future WG initiatives.

b) Dissemination Conference Grants (**DCG**)

Sections to be filled (*each 250 words*) – *please note: the abstract is available to the reviewer, so does not need to be repeated in the sections in detail.*

- **Alignment with the Action Science Communication Plan:** Description on how the presentation contributes to the Action Science Communication Plan and to meeting the Action challenge and objectives. Description of the targeted audience and potential stakeholders to engage. Describe any additional benefits to the action, the WG or dissemination activities. –



Applicants should explicitly link the Conference and presentation topic to specific MoU objectives, planned deliverables, or ongoing Working Group (WG) tasks, and explain how their participation contributes to advancing the goals of the Action. It should emphasize what audience can be reached at the event and how this audience is relevant for advancing the action and the WG. Also refer to reviewers' question 1 and 2.

- **Expected impact:** Description of the expected impacts to increase the Action visibility in the research community; to attract additional participants and stakeholders; and to disseminate Action results to relevant end-users. -



Applicants should explain how the activity increases the visibility of the Action (e.g. through presentations, posters, or formal representation) and why the conference can be considered relevant for the action/WG (e.g. wide scientific or professional audience). It could emphasize how the applicant reaches through the event relevant end-users and stakeholders, such as industry, clinicians, policymakers, or other practitioners, or contributes to attracting new participants to the Action/WGs. Further points might involve strengthening the Action's recognition within the research community as well as supporting its long-term impact, such as new collaborations, networking opportunities, or future joint activities. Also refer to reviewers' question 2.

What the reviewer is looking for:

- **Relevance of congress/conference:**
 - Is the congress/conference recognized within the academic/professional community as a forum for presenting and discussing topics that are relevant to the WG of the Action? -



The conference is well recognized in the field, with a strong academic/professional reputation, relevant thematic focus aligned with the WG, and active participation of experts and stakeholders in the Action's research area.

- Is it a suitable forum for dissemination activities reaching relevant end-users and/or attract participants? –



The conference provides access to a relevant and diverse audience, including end-users and stakeholders, and offer good opportunities to disseminate the Action's results and attract new participants to the network.

- **Relevance of the proposal:**

- Is the topic and content of the presentation relevant to the topic of the WG of the Action and lays a suitable basis for representing DESIGNAE? -



The presentation is clearly aligned with the WG's scientific focus and objectives, and relevant to the Action's scope. It effectively represents DESIGNAE by reflecting its goals and contributing to its visibility and scientific positioning. It provides a meaningful contribution to outreach and network expansion beyond the event itself.

- Does it have a potential to significantly increase the visibility of the COST Action and /or to attract additional participants and stakeholders? –



The presentation has the potential to clearly increase the visibility of the action, by e.g. presenting the Action/WG at a relevant event to a broad and relevant scientific audience. It strengthens the recognition of the COST Action in the field by reaching a targeted audience (incl. researchers and academics, industry or clinical/policy stakeholders). The presentation/event addresses and interdisciplinary and international community. The presentation type and topic have large dissemination impact, sharing Action results and activities, but also contributes to the scientific discussion in the field. It increases the awareness of Action objectives, attracts participants to become new members to the WG/Action. Stimulating collaboration or networking as well as engagement with new stakeholders can be expected.

3. Mobility grants

A) Short term scientific Missions (STSM)

Sections to be filled (100 words):

- **Goals of the STSM:** Purpose and summary of the STSM -



This section can be regarded as a concise abstract of the STSM. It should summarize the objectives, methodology, expected results, and impact in a clear and accessible manner. Also refer to reviewers' question 1,2 and 3.

Sections to be filled (each 250 words):

- **Working Plan:** Description of the work to be carried out by the applicant. -



The applicant should provide a clear and concise description of planned activities during the mission, by specifying what will be done, how, and with whom, avoiding unnecessary detail. The applicant should include a logical sequence of tasks or steps, showing feasibility and structure, as well as clarify the applicant's specific role and contribution. The section should indicate expected outputs or outcomes (e.g. presentation, data exchange, collaboration, report). The plan should be realistic within the available timeframe and resources. Any interactions with the host institution or WG members should be highlighted. The focus should be kept on key actions and objectives, not exhaustive descriptions. Also refer to reviewers' question 3.

- **Expected outputs and contribution to the Action MoU objectives and deliverables:**

Main expected results and their contribution to the progress towards the Action objectives (either research coordination and/or capacity building objectives) and deliverables. Describe any additional benefit to the action, the WG or dissemination activities. -



The applicant should clearly state the main expected outputs (e.g. presentation, report, dataset, collaboration, publication) and how these outputs contribute to the Action MoU objectives and deliverables. The section should specify whether the contribution supports research coordination (e.g. networking, joint activities, harmonization) and/or capacity building (e.g. training, skills development, early-career involvement). It should highlight the direct added value to the relevant Working Group(s) and describe any dissemination activities linked to the results (e.g. conference presentation, outreach, Action visibility). Any additional benefits, such as new collaborations, knowledge exchange, or follow-up initiatives within the Action should be highlighted. The applicant should keep the focus on clear, tangible, and realistic outcomes aligned with the Action goals. Also refer to reviewer's question 1&2.

What the reviewer is looking for:

- **Relevance of the proposal:** Does the application contribute to the objectives of the Action and (if applicable) to the goals specified in the call? -



The scientific mission clearly aligns with the Action's objectives and, where relevant, the call's goals. It explicitly states relevant contribution to Working Groups, deliverables, and the overall progress of the Action.

- **Interdisciplinarity:** Does the mission reflect the interdisciplinary approach of the action, by e.g. leading to the exchange of knowledge in an interdisciplinary setting or is the topic of the activity interdisciplinary in nature? -



The mission reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the Action, either by involving collaboration between different disciplines, methods, or sectors, or by addressing a topic that is inherently interdisciplinary. The activity promotes exchange of knowledge across fields and contributes to integrating different perspectives in line with the Action's objectives.

- **Planning:** Is the quality and feasibility of the work plan reasonable and satisfying and (if applicable) falls within the envisioned plan of the call? -



A clear, structured, and realistic work plan of the STSM is provided, showing that the proposed activities are well organized, feasible within the available time and resources, and supported by an appropriate methodology. The plan includes a logical sequence of tasks, well-defined roles, and expected outputs, demonstrating coherence and practicality. Where applicable, it should also clearly align with the scope, objectives, and priorities of the call, confirming that the proposed activities are suitable and effectively contribute to the intended goals.

B) Virtual Mobility (VM)

Sections to be filled (100 words):

- **Main objective of the VM:** Purpose and summary of the VM –



This section can be regarded as a concise abstract of the STSM. It should summarize the objectives, methodology, expected results, and impact in a clear and accessible manner. Also refer to reviewers' question 1, 2 and 3.

Sections to be filled (each 250 words):

- **Working Plan incl. time-plan:** Description of the collaborative initiative to be implemented with focus on the work to be carried out by the applicant –



The applicant should highlight that Identified collaborations are consistent with the application aim and experimental design and the applicants' contribution clearly stated. Collaborations should have aspects complementary to the applicants' expertise. Also refer to reviewers' question 3.

- **Plan for Participation:** Indicative list of participants in the collaborative initiative (short description of their expertise and envisioned contribution. –



The applicant should explain the “mobility” and “collaborative” nature of the mission. The applicant should identify a collaborative team, who can e.g. contribute to improving the applicant's expertise. It should include clear indication of the applicants' main contribution to the work with reference to the applicants' CV. Also refer to reviewers' question 2 and 3.

- **Expected outputs and contribution to MoU objectives and deliverables:** Main expected results and their contribution to the progress towards the Action objectives (either research coordination and/or capacity building objectives) and deliverables. -



The applicant should highlight the main expected results i.e. what will come out of the VM work (e.g. data, analysis, presentation, collaboration, training, publication, new methods) and how it contributes to the Action objectives i.e. how these results help the COST Action progress. This can e.g. be achieved by either improving research coordination (e.g. linking researchers, sharing methods, harmonising approaches), and/or supporting capacity building (e.g. training early-career researchers, developing skills, knowledge exchange). The applicant should list deliverables, i.e. any concrete outputs that can be shared within the Action (e.g. report, dataset, presentation, workshop contribution). In short: this section should explain what will be produced, how it helps the Action move forward, and what tangible outputs will be delivered. Also refer to reviewers' question 1.

- **Motivation and personal strength:** Explanation of the motivation to perform the task and how the applicant's specific profile is adequate to the development of the mentioned tasks/objectives. Brief description of the applicant's personal and professional experiences/skills to help conducting the proposed activities. – *please note: the applicants' CV is available to the reviewer, so does not need to be repeated in this section in detail.*



The applicant should clearly state his motivation, i.e. why he/she is interested in carrying out this task and what he/she aims to achieve. The applicant should indicate how his/her profile is suitable to carry out the tasks referring to background, expertise, and research interests matching the proposed activities and objectives. Relevant experience and skills should be highlighted, including key academic or professional experience supporting the applicants' ability to successfully complete the work (e.g. methods, techniques, previous projects, collaborations). In short: this section should explain the applicant's motivation, relevant experience, and why his/her skills make him/her suitable for the proposed activities. Also refer to reviewers' question 2.

What the reviewer is looking for:

- **Relevance:** Does the application contribute to the objectives of the Action and (if applicable) to the goals specified in the call? -



The activity clearly supports the objectives of the Action (MoU), linking it with specific Working Group topics, tasks, or deliverables. If applicable, the activity well aligns with the priorities and goals of the call. The added value of the applicant's contribution to the Action is highlighted (e.g. research progress, collaboration, dissemination, capacity building). In short: the proposal demonstrates clear alignment with the Action's goals or those specified in the call and meaningfully contribution to its progress and priorities.

- **Expertise:** Is the applicant expertise and contribution clear and relevant and (if applicable) in line with the criteria specified in the call?



The applicant scientific or professional expertise is clearly described, explaining the applicant's specific role and contribution to the proposed activity. The applicant's skills and experience are relevant to the topic and objectives, and align well with those specified in the call (if applicable), i.e. the applicant meets the eligibility or selection criteria of the call (e.g. career stage, affiliation, field). In short: the applicant's description demonstrates that his/her expertise is clear, relevant, and appropriate for carrying out the proposed tasks within the Action and the call framework.

- **Planning:** Is the quality and feasibility of the work plan reasonable and satisfying and (if applicable) falls within the envisioned plan of the call? –



A clear and structured plan of the VM activity is presented, show that the steps are logical and well organized and demonstrating that the work is feasible within the available time, resources, and setting. The application indicates what will be done, how, and with what expected outputs. If applicable, the plan aligns with the scope and priorities of the call. In short: the work plan is clear, realistic, and coherent, with activities that can be successfully completed and that fit the objectives of the call.