

COST Action CA24161

INDoS - Improving Neuroimaging Data for Sharing

Continuous call for applications for ITC conference grants

Funding period 2025/2026

1. About INDoS

Improving Neuroimaging Data for Sharing (INDoS) is a European COST Action focused on transforming how human neuroimaging data — such as MRI, MEG, and EEG — is shared and reused. By addressing key challenges in data quality control, metadata standardization, preprocessing pipelines, and ethical and legal frameworks, INDoS fosters cross-disciplinary collaboration, develops FAIR-aligned guidelines and tools, and trains researchers in open science practices to accelerate innovation and reproducibility in brain research.

Our mission is to make neuroimaging data truly FAIR — Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable — by developing shared standards, tools, and ethical guidelines for data sharing. INDoS connects experts across Europe to improve data quality, transparency, and legal clarity, enabling researchers to share and reuse neuroimaging data efficiently, responsibly, and reproducibly.

The objectives of INDoS are to:

- **Establish shared standards for data quality** Develop and promote guidelines for quality assessment and control (QA/QC) across neuroimaging modalities to ensure transparent, reliable, and reusable data.
- **Enhance metadata practices** Improve the description and annotation of neuroimaging data and experimental information to make datasets more findable, interoperable, and reusable.
- **Standardize preprocessing pipelines** Define and disseminate rational, well-documented preprocessing procedures to improve reproducibility and facilitate data integration across studies and sites.
- **Clarify ethical and legal frameworks** Develop practical guidelines and training to help researchers navigate privacy regulations and ethical considerations while sharing human neuroimaging data responsibly.
- **Build a pan-European network** Connect researchers, software developers, data stewards, and legal experts to foster collaboration, knowledge exchange, and the development of interoperable tools.
- **Promote training and capacity building** Create high-quality training materials, workshops, and opportunities for young researchers to strengthen skills in open science and neuroimaging data sharing.
- **Support dissemination and adoption** Ensure that the Action's outputs—guidelines, tools, and standards—are widely communicated, openly accessible, and adopted by the

neuroimaging community and beyond.

- **Advance FAIR and open science** Contribute to a shift toward more transparent, efficient, and ethical research practices in neuroimaging, aligning with European and international open science goals.

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

WG1. Quality Assessment and Quality Control

This Working Group focuses on improving the reliability and usability of neuroimaging data by developing shared standards and guidelines for quality assessment (QA) and quality control (QC) across different imaging modalities, including MRI, MEG, EEG, and fNIRS. By bringing together experts and existing initiatives, WG1 aims to establish clear, transparent, and interoperable QA/QC practices that make it easier for researchers to evaluate data quality before use. These efforts will reduce duplication of work, enhance reproducibility, and support the use of neuroimaging data in advanced applications such as AI.

WG2. Metadata

WG2 is dedicated to improving the way neuroimaging data and experimental information are described and annotated. Metadata plays a crucial role in making data findable, interoperable, and reusable, but current practices are often inconsistent or incomplete. This Working Group will extend and refine existing standards, such as BIDS, and foster collaboration between metadata developers, software tool creators, and researchers. By improving metadata practices, WG2 will make it easier to discover, understand, and reuse neuroimaging datasets across research groups and disciplines.

WG3. Automated Preprocessing Pipelines

Preprocessing is a critical step in preparing neuroimaging data for analysis, but current practices are often ad hoc and poorly documented. WG3 aims to standardize and rationalize preprocessing procedures to enhance transparency, reproducibility, and interoperability. Focusing initially on EEG and MEG, this Working Group will define best practices and documentation standards for preprocessing pipelines, drawing on successful examples from MRI. The outcome will be clearer, more reusable pipelines that support consistent and trustworthy analyses across research sites.

WG4. Ethics, Practices, and Regulations

Sharing human neuroimaging data raises important ethical and legal questions, particularly regarding privacy and compliance with regulations such as the GDPR. WG4 will clarify and address these challenges by developing guidelines, tools, and training that help researchers navigate legal frameworks while maximizing the scientific and societal benefits of data sharing. It will also foster ethical discussions within the community, balancing openness and transparency with respect for participants' rights and researchers' concerns, ultimately supporting responsible and sustainable data sharing practices.

WG5. Dissemination and Communication

WG5 ensures that the outcomes of the Action are visible, accessible, and impactful. This Working Group coordinates the communication and dissemination of guidelines, tools, training materials, and scientific results to the research community, stakeholders, and the public. By maintaining a strong online presence, engaging with key conferences and platforms, and supporting open access publication, WG5 plays a central role in building a vibrant network and encouraging the widespread adoption of the Action's outputs across Europe and beyond.

2. What is an ITC conference grant

An ITC conference grant supports a presentation of own work given by a researcher/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 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 at <https://www.cost.eu/about/strategy/excellence-and-inclusiveness/> , and the list of COST NNCs is available at <https://www.cost.eu/about/strategy/cost-global-networking/>.

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

3. Eligibility

Grant applications need to meet the following criteria:

- The applicant must be a participant of the INDoS COST Action.
- The applicant must be a researcher/innovator 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 oral/poster presentation at the approved conference must be relevant to INDoS and must acknowledge COST.

For more details regarding the regulations related to ITC conference grants, please refer to the COST Annotated Rules (<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V3.0-25-IX-2025.pdf>). Participants affiliated with Hungarian institutions found on this list <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2023/07/List-of-institutions-affected-by-Council-Implementing-Decision-2022-2056.pdf> are not eligible.

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 250 EUR for online conferences. The requested costs should be explained in the application.

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 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 be participants of INDoS and have an [e-COST profile](#). Applications must be submitted online in e-COST. The applicant starts by encoding an ITC conference grant application by logging 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 INDoS 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.
- List of expected expenses.

Any documents that cannot be uploaded via the e-COST interface should be sent directly to the Grant Awarding Coordinator (Michal Mikl michal.mikl@ceitec.muni.cz) and the Chair of COST action (Jochem Rieger indos-chair@uol.de).

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 30th September**. The template for the report is [here](#)

Notes:

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

Acknowledgement text:

“This publication is based on work supported by the COST Action CA24161: Improving Neuroimaging Data for Sharing (INDoS).”