

**COST Action 23156 - European Network for Sigma-1 Receptor as a
Therapeutic Opportunity (SIGMA-1EUROPE)**

**2nd Open Call for Young Researcher and Innovator (YRI) Conference
Grants (YRICGs)**

for YRICG undertaken between 28 November 2025 – 30 September 2026

Important Dates

Call closes: 30 September 2026

Notification of Results: 20 working days after submission of complete application

Mission Period: 28 November 2025 – 30 September 2026

Please note: This is an open call. You can apply any time up to 15 September 2026 for your YRICG to start and end within the mission period (28 November 2025 to 30 September 2026). Please ensure there is at least one month between submitting your application and the start date of your YRICG.

About this Action

COST Action CA23156 - European Network for Sigma-1 Receptor as a Therapeutic Opportunity (SIGMA-1EUROPE) focuses on the Sigma-1 Receptor, a ligand-regulated endoplasmic reticulum chaperone protein and a promising target for innovative compounds used in the treatment of neurodegenerative and inflammatory diseases, cancers, and pain conditions.

The SIGMA-1 EUROPE network brings together experts and disciplines across Europe to advance the exploration and identification of the role of the Sigma-1 Receptor in physiology and pathologies, to design innovative Sigma-1 Receptor ligands for cellular biology and medicine, and ultimately to train young researchers and innovators to revise our views of the diseases, to think out-of-the-box and explore novel and innovative therapeutic opportunities.

For further information see:

www.cost.eu/actions/CA23156

www.sigma1europe.eu

General information

Are you a Young Researcher (under 40 years old)? Do you work in an area relevant to SIGMA-1 EUROPE project and would like to attend an international conference to present your work?

SIGMA-1 EUROPE is offering Young Researcher and Innovator (YRI) Conference Grants of up to €2,000 each) for young researchers* and innovators to attend a high-level conference and present their work as a poster or oral presentation. The work presented must be relevant to the scope of the Action. The grant can provide a contribution to travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses, registration fees and other relevant costs such as printing of scientific poster.

* The researcher/innovator should be under 40 years old and be affiliated to a legal entity in a COST Full/Cooperating Member Country, NNC or European RTD.

Eligibility Rules

To apply for an YRICG, the following criteria must be fulfilled:

- The Applicant must:
 - create an e-COST profile.
 - be affiliated with a research institution in a legal entity in a COST Full/Cooperating Member, Near Neighbour Country (NNC), or European RTD.
 - be engaged in an official research program as a PhD Student, postdoctoral fellow, or employee of an institution associated with research.
- The application needs to be submitted before 15 September 2026.

Financial Rules

- The maximum grant is €2,000 for a face-to-face meeting and €500 for virtual meetings.
- The YRI Conference Grant can be used to fund/refund costs for travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses, registration fee and other relevant costs such as printing of scientific poster.
- Virtual YRI Conference Grants will also be considered (with funding up to €500).
- Grants are paid by the Grant Holder after the end of Conference and approval of all required report/documentation.
- Note: the Action Management Committee (MC) can decide to approve the grant with a lower amount than requested.

Evaluation and awarding of YRICG

- The evaluation of YRI Conference Grant applications and selection of YRI Grantees is performed by the Action's Grant Awarding Coordinator and SIGMA-1 EUROPE's Grant Evaluation Committee, on behalf of the Management Committee (MC) of the SIGMA-1 EUROPE COST Action.
- The selection of applicants is based on the scientific relevance of the YRI Conference Grant application, which must clearly fit in the Action's scientific objectives.
- The selection also takes into account the COST policies on promoting gender balance, enabling Young Researchers (under 40 years old) and broadening geographical inclusiveness.

- A minimum total score of 75 is required for funding with a minimum threshold of 15 points required for the criterion “Relevance to SIGMA-1 EUROPE aims and objectives”
- Applicants will be notified of the application results within 20 working days after successful submission of their application.
- Applicants may be asked to provide additional information.
- Applicants may resubmit once in the same call if not successful.
- Applicants may apply for and be awarded more than one grant of any type during the call period, but in the case of restricted funds or applications of equal merit, the grant may be awarded in preference to an applicant that has not held a grant before.

Evaluation criteria	Max points
Relevance to SIGMA-1EUROPE aims and objectives: conference topic(s), audience and the proposed oral presentation	20*
Scientific quality of the presentation/poster: original research, clear presentation	20
Motivation: good motivation for attending and potential for impact on the applicant’s career	20
Suitability of the budget requested: a plausible and well-planned budget that is sufficient to cover expenses while demonstrating value for money	20
Relevance to COST policies: promoting gender balance, enabling Young Researchers and broadening geographical inclusiveness	20

**A minimum score of 15 points in this criterion is required to be eligible for funding*

Equal weighting is given to the scientific quality of the project and its relevance to the aims and objectives to SIGMA-1EUROPE, as the Action will only support YRICG that are clearly relevant to SIGMA-1EUROPE.

YRICG Application Procedure

For information and a guide on how to apply online see the “Grant Awarding user guide” in COST Documents & Guidelines in the section “Documents for running a COST Action”.

To start the application, you must have an e-COST profile or create one. Do this by logging into the e-COST platform (<https://e-services.cost.eu/>). You will also need to add your bank details and a CV to your profile before you can start the application.

The application must be completed via e-COST

Instructions and screen shots on how to do this are given in the “Grant Awarding user guide” in COST Documents & Guidelines in the section “Documents for running a COST Action”.

In summary: go to the COST website and select COST Actions and then “Grant applications” from the menu on the left. This will take you to <https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants/add>

Select the Action “CA231565 European Network for Sigma-1 Receptor as a Therapeutic Opportunity” by typing ‘CA23156’ in the search box under COST Action.

Then click on the blue box to “Apply for a Grant”, select YRI Conference grant by clicking “continue” and complete the information which includes:

- A title for your poster or oral presentation (limit 128 characters, including spaces)
- Start and end date (within the active Grant Period)
- Budget requested by the applicant
- Information about the Conference

DO NOT SUBMIT at this stage, just save the draft.

You will then return to the application page where you can select “upload documents” from the “options” drop-down box. This will take you to a page where you can download the COST template for the application form.

You will then need to complete this and upload the following documents:

- Application form (template available on e-COST) describing: Relevance of the conference topic to the Action and motivation including the potential for impact on the applicant’s career
- Copy of the abstract of the accepted oral presentation
- Acceptance letter from the conference organisers
- For PhD students only - letter of recommendation from your supervisor at your institution
- Budget plan (up to €2,000 in-person, €500 virtual) – Please upload an Excel table, which summarises the budget requested. Typical categories would be:
 - o Registration for the meeting
 - o Travel (to and from and during the Conference)
 - o Accommodation
 - o Subsistence
 - o Any other costs relevant to your application

Note: Please make the YRI Conference Grant request before the deadline of an YRI Conference Grant call.

Reporting required after attending the Conference

Within 30 days from the end date of the Conference, the grantee must submit via e-COST:

- Report on the outcome of the contribution in terms of grantee’s visibility, including the establishment of new contacts for future collaborations
- The certificate of attendance
- The programme of the conference or book of abstracts / proceedings documenting the contribution (oral presentation or poster) of the grantee
- Copy of the given contribution (oral presentation or poster)

Grants are paid by the Grant Holder after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation.

Failure to submit the scientific report within 30 days from the end date of the conference will cancel the Grant.

Contacting SIGMA-1 EUROPE

We look forward to receiving your application and are here to help with any questions you have.

Please send any questions to: michal.cagalinec@savba.sk

Acknowledgement

COST Action CA23156 SIGMA-1EUROPE and its YRICGs are funded by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation.

www.cost.eu