

ANTICIPATE CA24144

Guidelines for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) Grants

1. MISSION

Short-Term Scientific Missions are visits of a researcher or innovator to a host organization located in a different country than the country of affiliation for specific work to be carried out and for a determined period of time. STSMs are valuable:

- for the STSM grantee, who has the chance to receive funding for implementing a project with an international team, obtaining new knowledge or access to equipment or techniques not available in the home institution;
- for the STSM Host who can receive an international partner in their institution and extend or create a long-lasting collaboration. STSMs support specific / general topic(s) that can help achieve the Action MoU objectives and deliverables (research coordination). A STSM should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action, helping to achieve the Action MoU objectives and deliverables.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- Applications are accepted from Action participants with a primary affiliation to a legal entity located in a COST Full or Cooperating Member country, a COST Near Neighbor Country or a European RTD Organization;
- The grant applicant is a researcher or innovator who visits a host organization located in a different country than the country of affiliation for specific work to be carried out and for a determined period of time;
- The Host Institution should be in another participating COST Full Member/ COST Cooperating Member country, Participating COST Partner Member country, Approved International Partner Country (IPC) or be an NNC Institution;
- The STSM must have a minimum duration of 5 calendar days (excluding travel);
- STSMs should comply with the scope of the Action.

3. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

The evaluation of grant applications and the issuance of a formal decision regarding approval must be completed prior to the applicant's start date of the scientific mission. Applicants should ensure that their submission is made before the cut-off date preceding the start date of the planned scientific mission.

- Prepare the grant application and additional supporting documentation:
 - STSM Grant Application form based on e-COST template.
 - Invitation letter from the STSM Host Institution: a signed written invitation letter from the STSM Host institution stating that the applicant may perform the activities detailed in the STSM working plan on the agreed dates. The letter must be dated back not more than 3 months and must be signed by a permanent staff representative of the Host institution (e.g. head of the research group, PI, director of the department, head of the institute/division etc.).
 - Letter of support from the applicant's institution: a signed written letter from the applicant's employer institution stating that the applicant is authorized to perform the activities detailed in the STSM working plan on the agreed dates must be submitted.
 - Candidate's CV: Applicants must upload their CV in their e-COST profile (max. 3 pages).

- Submit the application in e-COST: The applicant encodes a grant application by logging into e-COST and clicking on the Grant Applications tab. The applicant can select the grant from the page 'Apply for new grant'. Applicants need to fill all requested sections and to upload all required documents before submitting the application.

4. EVALUATION COMMITTEE

As approved by the Core group, the evaluation will be performed by the Grant Awarding Board (GAB). Participants will be selected on the basis of an evaluation-criteria score (see below). The committee will also seek an acceptable gender balance in successful applicants.

4.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

- General
 - The STSM is within the scope of COST Action;
 - The STSM is taking place in a different country than the country of affiliation of the applicant;
 - The STSM is taking place within the current Grant Period.
- Specific (from 0 to 10 points):
 - *Relevance of the proposal*: the degree to which the work plan is detailed in its scientific goals of the work and how these goals are applicable to the Action's tasks (1-5 points).
 - *Feasibility of the mission*: the degree to which the time spend in the Host Institution will be effective to reach the scientific goals planned for the mission (1-5 points).

In case of decision making between candidates identical scores, applications will be prioritized as follows:

- Young Researchers and Innovators (under the age of 40)
- Gender balance
- Country balance

The Grant Holder will inform each approved applicant by sending a Grant Letter generated from e-COST.

5. STSM GRANTS FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A STSM Grant aims to provide a contribution for covering the costs for economy travel, accommodation, and subsistence expenses for the selected candidates. STSM grantees must make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security, travel insurance and pension matters.

The STSM must have a **minimum duration of 5 calendar days dedicated to hands-on work**. The days allocated for travel to and from the host organization are not considered as part of the STSM. While there is no upper limit on duration, we recommend a maximum duration of 90 days. The STSM must be completed by the annual deadline specified in the call.

The preapproved grantee must submit the following documents at the latest 30 days after the end date of the conference or 20 days before the end date of the Grant Period, whichever comes first:

- A *Grant Report*, the report is drafted by the applicant (max 4 pages). When preparing it, please consider the following:
 - The report for COST is a public document. Please take this into account in terms of Intellectual Property Rights.
 - The report does not need to contain specific and detailed results of the research. Rather, it should focus on the aspects that are the aim of STSM, in particular how the

collaborative research during STSM has strengthened the scientific relationship between Home and Hosting institutions within the framework of COST.

- It should include a *short summary for dissemination purposes*: A very short summary (maximum 280 characters, including spaces) including a photo with collaborators or a short video (uploaded separately in e-COST).
- *Confirmation from the Host institution*: A letter or an email from the senior researcher of the Host institution confirming that the applicant has successfully completed the mission.

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

The Grant Awarding Coordinator and the Grant Holder Scientific Representative are responsible for approving the scientific report and informing the Grant Holder Manager that the mission has been successfully completed.

Participants from ITCs can request a pre-payment of 50% of their STSM Grant when they complete the first day of their STSM. For that purpose, the representative of the Host Institution must confirm by e-mail to the Grant Holder that the first day of the mission has officially started, and then the Grant Holder can arrange the payment of 50% of the STSM Grant; the remaining 50% of the STSM Grant is payable once administrative requirements have been satisfied after the STSM.

STSM cancellation

If for any reason the applicant cannot or has not been able to complete the STSM, the applicant must inform the Grant Holder and Grant Awarding Coordinator providing an explanation in order to delete the grant request.

Additional documents

<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/01/COST-Grant-Awarding-user-guide.pdf>

<https://www.cost.eu/cost-actions-event/action-networking-tools/>

<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V3.0-25-IX-2025.pdf>