

Short Term Scientific Missions COST IS1301

Updated version 2015 in accordance with the Vademecum 2015

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Aim and Criteria for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)

1. STSMs are primarily designed to support early career investigators (ECIs). ECIs are researchers who obtained their PhD degree no longer than eight years prior to joining the COST project. Senior researchers can also apply for STSM funding, but priority is given to early career researchers and researchers with a temporary position.
2. STSMs should stimulate cooperation within the COST network. They should also lead to the researcher obtaining expertise that is not available from his/her home institution. For example, we can imagine a situation in which an early career researcher obtains expertise from a senior researcher at a host institution in order to complete a research paper or project. All missions that aim at collaboration and obtaining expertise are eligible for funding.
3. A scientific mission may also involve the investigation of source material in libraries or archives. If this is the case, it is recommended that the applicant include some degree of cooperation with the host institution in his/her original work plan (i.e. the description of projected research as part of the application for the STSM). For example, we can imagine a situation in which the investigation of source material furthers cooperation through the classification and identification of material, which, in turn, improves the cataloguing system at the host institution.
4. A STSM can be awarded in connection with participation in a COST Training School.
5. During an STSM, neither the Management Committee (MC), the COST Office (CO) nor the Grant Holder (the University of Groningen) may be considered as an employer.

For further specifications, please see the Appendix.

Procedure¹

1. The applications are collected and assessed twice a year. The deadlines for applications are 1st June and 1st December of each year. The coordinators will publish the calls regularly.
2. First, the applicant must contact the host institution in order to obtain a written agreement of its willingness to take part in the STSM. Please remember that the host institution must be part of the COST network.
3. The applicant must then complete the online application form (<https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>).
4. The applicant must send the completed file as email attachment together with the necessary supporting documents (CV, full work plan, list of publications, motivation letter, letter of support from the home institution) to the STSM host institution and to the STSM coordinators (Joost Robbe <gerjr@dac.au.dk> and Suzan Folkerts <s.a.folkerts@rug.nl>).

¹ This description of the application procedure and a link to the official COST application form are available on the COST Action IS1301 website.

5. The coordinators make a selection and submit their selection to the MC for approval (via email). In the selection procedure, the coordinators assess whether the application meets the criteria.

6. Our total STSM budget for the first grant period is €2000,- .

Duration

The minimum duration of a STSM is 5 days and the maximum duration of a STSM is 90 days (180 days for early career investigators (PhD+8 years)). STSMs need to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and always within the Action's lifetime.

Financial Support

STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to performing a given mission. The Grant is a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Grantee.

The calculation of the financial contribution for each STSM must respect the following criteria:

- up to a maximum of EUR 2.500 in total can be afforded to each successful STSM applicant;
- up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses.

For ECIs, the calculation for an increased financial contribution must respect the following criteria:

- up to a maximum of EUR 3.500 in total can be afforded to ECIs for missions with a duration of between 91 and 180 days;
- up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses.

The Action Chair (or Vice Chair if the Action Chair is affiliated to the Grant Holder Institution) or the appointed STSM Coordinator / Committee can approve differentiated country rates to cover accommodation and meal expenses based on the perceived cost of living in the host country.

Appendix: General COST information and rules regarding STSMs

A. From: Minutes of the First Management Committee (“Kick-Off”) meeting of COST Action IS1301 New Communities of Interpretation: Contexts, Strategies and Processes of Religious Transformation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe

Short-term scientific missions (STSMs): Missions or exchange visits are aimed at strengthening the existing networks by allowing scientists to visit an institution in another COST country to foster collaboration or to learn a new technique and/or methods not available in their own institution. They are particularly intended for Early-Stage Researchers. The SO invited the members of the Management Committee to consider nominating a STSM coordinator/manager.

The duration of a STSM can vary between one week minimum (5 working days), and 3 months maximum (6 months for early-stage researchers (PhD+8 years)). The Applicant must be engaged in a research programme in an institution of a COST Member State having accepted the MoU of the Action concerned. Both home and host institution should be in a COST Member State having accepted the MoU and participating in the COST Action. Short-Term Scientific Missions between different Actions in the same field can be considered by the Management Committees involved.

The Management Committee (MC) of the Action is in charge of the selection of the applicant. The financial support is a contribution to the expenses of a STSM and may not necessarily cover all the costs in each case. The grant covers a contribution to travel, accommodation and subsistence. The average contribution for a STSM will be a fixed grant based on the applicant's budget request and decision of the relevant assessment committee. It will normally not exceed € 2,500 (€ 3,500 for early-stage researchers). Any exception needs special justification.

B. From: COST Action Vademecum 2015 - 7. Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM)

7.1. Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) - Eligibility Rules

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) are exchange visits aimed at supporting individual mobility, strengthening existing networks and fostering collaboration between researchers. A STSM should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action, whilst at the same time allowing those partaking in the missions to learn new techniques, gain access to specific data, instruments and / or methods not available in their own institutions / organisations.

STSM applicants must be engaged in an official research programme as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow or can be employed by, or affiliated to, an Institution or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research. The institutions / organisations where applicants pursue their main strand of research are considered as Home institutions. The Host institution is the institution / organisation that will host the successful applicant.

The following table shows the scenarios available to eligible STSM applicants:

Home Institution	Host Institution
From a Participating COST Country	To another Participating COST Country
	To an approved NNC institution
	To an approved IPC institution

	To an approved Specific Organisations (EC and EU Agencies, European RTD Organisations, International Organisations)
From an approved NNC	To a Participating COST Country
From an approved European RTD Organisation	To a Participating COST Country

The evaluation of STSM applications is performed by the MC. The Action Chair (or Vice Chair if the Action Chair is affiliated to the Grant Holder Institution) or the appointed STSM Coordinator / Committee can assume this responsibility if the MC formally gives them the mandate to act on their behalf. The evaluation criteria defined by the MC should be communicated in advance to all potential applicants.

The selection of successful STSM applicants considers the scientific scope of the proposed mission and how the mission can support the Action in achieving its scientific objectives. There should be special considerations with respect to supporting COST policies on promoting gender balance, enabling Early Career Investigators (ECI) and broadening geographical inclusiveness.

STSM must respect the following criteria:

1. They must have a minimum duration of 5 days.
2. They must have a maximum duration of 90 days.
3. STSM need to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and always within the Action's lifetime.

Specific additional provisions have been adopted by the CSO to encourage the participation of Early Career Investigators (ECI) in STSM.

To qualify for these specific provisions, the following conditions apply:

1. The mission must have a minimum duration of 91 days.
2. The mission must have a maximum duration of 180 days.
3. STSM performed by ECI need to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and always within the Action's lifetime.

The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered as being an STSM Grantee's employer. Grantees must make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security and pension matters.

7.2. STSM Financial Support

An STSM grant is a fixed financial contribution which takes into consideration the budget request of the applicant and the outcome of the evaluation of the STSM application as determined by the Action Chair (or Vice Chair if the Action Chair is affiliated to the Grant Holder Institution) and / or the STSM Coordinator / Committee. STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to performing a given mission. The Grant is a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Grantee.

The calculation of the financial contribution for each STSM must respect the following criteria:

- up to a maximum of EUR 2 500 in total can be afforded to each successful STSM applicant;
- up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses.

For ECIs, the calculation for an increased financial contribution must respect the following criteria:

- up to a maximum of EUR 3 500 in total can be afforded to ECIs for missions with a duration of between 91 and 180 days;

- up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses.

The Action Chair (or Vice Chair if the Action Chair is affiliated to the Grant Holder Institution) or the appointed STSM Coordinator / Committee can approve differentiated country rates to cover accommodation and meal expenses based on the perceived cost of living in the host country.