Guidelines for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) Grants

COST
EUROPEAN COOPERATION
IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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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:

   a. 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;

   b. 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.

Eligibility

- The Grant applicant(s) are Action participants with a primary affiliation (see Article 4.1.1.1.1 on COST Annotated Rules) to a legal entity located in a COST Full or Cooperating Member country, a COST Near Neighbour Country (NNC) 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 <u>minimum duration of 5 calendar days</u> (excluding travel);

- The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered as being an STSM grantee's employer, i.e. the STSM Grant cannot be considered as a salary;

- STSMs should comply with the scope of the Action.

Submission of applications

- 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'.

- After encoding the Grant application form by filling all requested sections, the applicant will need to upload additional supporting documentation:

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- o *STSM Grant Application Form:* document that can be downloaded from TENET website, based on e-COST template.
- o *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.).
- o *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.
- o *Candidate's CV*: Applicants must also upload their CV (max. 3 pages).

Evaluation Committee

As approved by the Management Committee (MC), the evaluation will be performed by the Grant Awarding Board (GAB). The committee will include the Grant Awarding Coordinator, the Chair, the Vice Chair, and the WG leaders.

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.

Evaluation Criteria Score

- **General** (to be rated as NO/YES by the Grant Awarding Coordinators on the e-COST
- system):
  - o The STSM is within the scope of TENET Action;
  - o The STSM is taking place in a different country than the country of affiliation of the applicant;
  - o The STSM is taking place within the current Grant Period.

If any of the previous is "NO" - do not proceed with the application assessment – decision is "NO".

- **Specific** (from 0 to 10 points):
  - o *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).
  - o *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 prioritised as follows:
- Young Researchers – researchers under the age of 40.

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- Gender Balance.
- 1 applicant per centre.

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

STSM Grants Financial Support

A STSM Grant will cover (but not necessary cover all) costs for economy travel, accommodation, and meal 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.

Prepare your budget within the table provided in the Grant Application Form - Annex I:
- The calculation of the financial contribution for each STSM will be up to a maximum of the daily allowance per day in the specific country and travel costs, up to a maximum of EUR 4000 in total.
- We recommend that the requested grant does not exceed EUR 1000 for 1 week and EUR 2000 for one month, otherwise it must be justified.

Further details can be consulted at the COST Annotated Rules.

Approving DC Conference Grants for Payment

The preapproved grantee must submit the following documents at the latest 30 days after the end date of the conference or 15 days after the end date of the Grant Period, whichever comes first:
- *A Scientific Report* (use STSM Grant Report template, which can be found at the Action website), describing the outcome of the presentation of the accepted contribution, in terms of grantee's visibility, including the establishment of new contacts for future collaborations. The scientific report is drafted by the applicant (max 4 pages). When preparing the scientific report please consider the following:
  - o The scientific report for COST is a public document. Please take this into account in terms of Intellectual Property Rights.
  - o The scientific 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 (see Purpose of a STSM, page 2 of this Call), in particular how the collaborative research during STSM has strengthen the scientific relationship between Home and Hosting institutions within the framework of 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.
- *Short summary for dissemination purposes*: A short summary (maximum 500 words) for the website page including: affiliation, field of research interest, a short summary of the research completed in STSM, benefits of the STSM for building skills to the

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participant, outputs, and possibly including a photo with collaborators, a short video and a short quote describing the experience.

The Grant Award 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.

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

Grants are paid by the Grant Holder Institution after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation. Within 30 days from the end date of the STSM, the successful applicant must submit the scientific report, the dissemination materials and the approval letter of the scientific report from the Host institution. These documents must be uploaded on e-COST to proceed with the request for payment.

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 Grant is payable once administrative requirements have been satisfied after the STSM.