TENET

Guidelines for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) Grants

This article/publication is based upon work from COST Action TENET, CA22170, supported 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.

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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

- 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 Neighbour Country or a European RTD Organisation;

- 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;

- Both the Grant applicant and the Host Institution shall be actively involved in TENET COST Action, i.e. listed as Working Group (WG) members on the website;

- The STSM must have a minimum duration of 5 calendar days (excluding travel);

- STSMs should comply with the scope of the Action.

Submission of applications

- Prepare the Grant application and additional supporting documentation:
    - *STSM Grant Application Form using TENET template:* document that can be downloaded from TENET website, based on e-COST template. Save as a PDF document once completed.
    - *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

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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). This information will be visible to the holders of leadership positions and any evaluation committee in the Action for evaluation purposes.
- 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.

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):
    - The STSM is within the scope of TENET 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.

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

- **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 prioritised as follows:

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- Young Researchers – researchers under the age of 40.
- Gender Balance.
- 1 applicant per centre.

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

Change of approved STSM dates:

If the approved dates for performing the STSM need to be modified, the applicant must inform the Grant Holder and the Grant Awarding Coordinator before the original start date and provide a clear explanation for the change. Modifications will not be accepted after the original start date.

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. While there is no upper limit on duration, we recommend a maximum duration of 90 days. Travel days are excluded from the STSM when calculating the financial contribution. The STSM must be completed by October 1st of each year.

Prepare your budget within the table provided in the TENET STSM Grant Application Form (see example below):

- *Subsistence and accommodation:* the maximum contributions are the following:
  - First 5 days (*X*) – 135 EUR per day
  - Days 6-15 (*Y*) – 55 EUR per day
  - From day 16 (*Z*) – 33 EUR per day
- *Travel:* a maximum of 300 EUR is recommended but not obligatory.
- **The requested financial contribution** for each STSM will be calculated according to the following formula up to a maximum of EUR 4000 in total:

$$\text{Final amount} = (X \times 135) + (Y \times 55) + (Z \times 33) + \text{Travel}$$

The financial support will be decided by the Action Core Group on proposal of the evaluators, based on the request of the applicant and should reflect the duration and location of the STSM.

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.

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Approving STSM 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 *Grant Report*, using TENET STSM Grant Report template, which can be found at the Action website. 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 (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.
    - It should include a *short summary for dissemination purposes*: A very short summary (maximum 280 characters, including spaces) for the TENET Social media accounts, including a photo with collaborators or a short video (uploaded separately in e-COST). Alternatively, a proof of the grantee own post tagging @TENET_COST on Twitter will also be sufficient.
- *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.

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.

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.

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Example

A Grant applicant plans to perform a research stay at a University in a different country of 3 months, from 1st of May to 31st of July.

Budget

Details and description of the budget.

Travel: 250 €

Subsistence and accommodation: 3766 €

Total: 4016 €

Requested: **4000 €**

The flight from Palma (Spain) to Porto (Portugal) has an approximate cost of 250 Eur, departing on the 30th of April and returning on the 1st of August. The stay lasts for 92 days. The subsistence and accommodation costs have been calculated using the following formula: (*5* x 135) + (*10* x 55) + (*77* x 33) = 675 + 550 + 2541 = 3766 EUR

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