

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 EC / EU Agency / an approved European RTD Organisation or an approved International Organisation
From an approved NNC institution	To a Participating COST Country
From an approved European RTD Organisation	To a Participating COST Country

Eligible STSM applicants can submit their STSM applications online at: www.cost.eu/STSM.

The evaluation of each received STSM application is performed by the Action's 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 to all potential applicants.

The selection of successful STSM applicants must consider 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 made by the MC 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 enacted 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 are not to be considered as being an STSM Grantee's employer. STSM 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. STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission. A STSM 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) and / 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.

Once the STSM has been completed, the Grantee must submit a scientific report to the Action Chair (or Vice Chair if the Action Chair is affiliated to the Grant Holder Institution), the appointed STSM Coordinator / Committee and to the Host institution.

Payment of the Grant is subject to the scientific report being approved by the Action Chair (or Vice Chair if the Action Chair is affiliated to the Grant Holder Institution) and / or the appointed STSM Coordinator / Committee and a senior researcher affiliated to the Host institution. This formal acceptance of the scientific report has to be sent to the Grant Holder for archiving purposes.