

## Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) Eligibility Criteria and Rules

### Definition

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) are institutional visits aimed at supporting individual mobility, fostering collaboration between individuals. STMS are within the cohort of COST Action’s networking activities, supporting the COST Action to address the main aim, answer to the research questions and achieve the overall objectives of the COST Action itself.

### Applicants

STSM applicants must be engaged in an official research programme as a PhD student or postdoctoral fellow or may be employed by, or affiliated to, an institution or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research.

Home institution is defined as the institution/organisation or legal entity where the applicant pursues their main strand of research.

Host institution is the institution/organisation or legal entity that will host the STSM grantee

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

Applicant in a Home Institution	To perform a STSM in a Host Institution
Located in a Participating COST Full or Cooperating Member	In another Participating COST Full or Cooperating Member
	In a Participating COST Partner Member
	Action MC Observer from IPC
	Action MC Observer from NNC
	In EU Commission, Bodies, Offices and Agencies
	In an Approved European RTD Organisation
	In an Approved International Organisation
An NNC Action MC Observer	In a Participating COST Full / COST Cooperating Member
Located in an Approved European RTD Organisation	In a Participating COST Full / COST Cooperating Member

*Action MC Observer: Action Participants originating from COST Partner Members, Non-COST Countries or Specific Organisations present at the Action Management Committee.*

*NNC: Near Neighbour Countries: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Russia, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.*

*RTD: The intergovernmental scientific research organisations whose members are States, the majority of which are COST Full Members.*

*IPC: International partner countries participating in COST action. For other information, please see the “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”.*

### ***STSM duration***

A STSM has a minimum duration of 5 calendar days

The maximum duration of a STSM is 90 calendar days for non-early career investigators, and 180 days for early career investigators.

Early career investigators are defined as researchers within a time span of up to 8 years from the date they obtained the PhD/doctorate.

### ***Evaluation criteria***

A STSM **should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the VascAgeNet 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.

STSMs must be based on the **scientific scope of the application** and how it can support the COST Action in achieving its scientific objectives and take into account the COST Policy and Rules with particular attention on Inclusiveness and Excellence.

This policy aims to provide collaboration opportunities to all researchers, engineers, scholars and other stakeholders and to overcome the bottlenecks that prevent the use of all talented and creative human resources available for European science.

Special considerations will be made with respect to supporting **COST policies and rules** on:

- strengthening the excellence through the creation of cross-border networking of researchers.
- counterbalancing research communities' unequal access to knowledge, infrastructures, funding and resources;
- promoting geographical, age and gender balance;
- enabling Early Career Investigators;

### ***Application submission***

Before submitting the application, the applicant should obtain a **written agreement from the Host institution** (senior researcher who will take care of certifying the mission) and a **letter of support from the Home institution**

STSM applications must be submitted online at the following web address: <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>

Each online submission should include details about:

- 1- The Home institution
- 2- STSM Title
- 3- Grant period: the period of time that the Grant Holder of each Action has to complete their Action objectives. A Grant Period runs for one year unless stated otherwise. An STSM application must start and end during one single Grant Period.
- 4- Start Date of STSM
- 5- End Date of STSM
- 6- Duration of STSM (minimum duration: 5 calendar days)

- 7- Aim & motivation - The scientific and/or other motivation for the STSM and what scientific and/or other outcomes is aimed to accomplish with the STSM and steps to take to achieve them
- 8- Proposed contribution to the scientific objectives of the Action.
- 9- Detail what techniques or equipment will be learned to use, if applicable.
- 10- The steps to take to achieve the proposed aim.
- 11- The Senior Research of the Host institution
- 12- Host Details of the Senior research (First name, last name, email, institution, institution address, institution city, institution country)
- 13- Bank account of the applicant
- 14- The calculation of the financial contribution for each STSM must respect the following criteria:
  - a. Up to a maximum of EUR 2500 in total can be afforded to each successful applicant;
  - b. Up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses. The daily amount will be balanced based on the perceived cost of living in the host country, according to the following table
  - c. Up to a maximum of EUR 300 can be afforded for travel costs.

<b>Country of the Host institution</b>	<b>Daily allowance</b>
United Kingdom	160
Norway	154
Belgium	153
Germany	153
Ireland	152
Netherlands	152
Denmark	150
Switzerland	150
Iceland	149
Finland	149
Luxembourg	147
Cyprus	146
Italy	144
Austria	142
Sweden	142
France	140
Israel	140
Portugal	140
Bosnia and Herzegovina	140
Poland	139

Greece	138
Malta	138
Estonia	138
Spain	138
Latvia	137
Bulgaria	137
Czech Republic	137
Hungary	137
Serbia	137
the Republic of North Macedonia	137
Turkey	137
Slovakia	135
Romania	134
Croatia	130
Lithuania	130
Montenegro	130
Albania	128
Moldova	128
Any other country	160

### ***Calls for application - Timetable***

The call for STSM application submission will be open until budget is finished. Applicants are informed within 15 days after application.

If the application is rejected, the STSM coordinator will provide a justification to guide the applicant in her/his resubmission

STSM should be ended before 30/03/2021

### ***Grant selection***

Eligibility will be based on:

- Outcome of the evaluation process
- Appropriateness of budget request

The evaluation of STSM applications and the selection of the successful candidates are in charge of the of the Action Management Committee (MC). The Action MC formally delegates the evaluation of STSM applications to an STSM Coordinator and STSM Committee.

The STSM Committee is constituted by one member per each working group plus the STSM Coordinator (double vote). Potential conflict of interest that may involve participants to the STSM Committee are not allowed.

Selected STSM grantees, allocated grants and related Home and Host Institutions will be communicated during each Action MC meeting and will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

Within 30 calendar days from the end date of the mission, The STSM grantee undertakes to submit a scientific report to the STSM Coordinator AND to the senior researcher affiliated to the Host Institution. A Written approval should be obtained by the aforementioned persons.

A one-page short report (including a photo) is also requested to be published on the webpage

### ***Financial support and payment terms***

A STSM Grant is a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Grantee.

STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission.

The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot 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.

Payment of the Grant is subject to a STSM scientific report (to be delivered within 30 calendar days from the end date of the mission) being approved on behalf of the Action's MC by the STSM Coordinator and by a senior researcher affiliated to the Host Institution. Written approval of the STSM scientific report by the aforementioned persons must be uploaded in e-COST for archiving purposes.

Grantees from ITC participating in the COST Action may request a pre-payment of 50% of their STSM Grant when they complete the first day of their STSM. In such case, the representative of the Host Institution must confirm by e-mail to the Grant Holder that the STSM applicant has officially started the mission on day 1. The remaining 50% of the Grant is payable once the administrative requirements have been satisfied after the STSM.

### ***Additional rules related to coronavirus pandemic***

- The STSMs management committee is not responsible for STSM cancellation due to travel restriction, border shutdowns or other transport limitations related to possible evolutions of the coronavirus pandemic
- It is at personal responsibility of each applicant to check for restriction rules and reopening timetables regulating travels between home and host countries.
- An approved STSM that is cancelled due to coronavirus pandemic restrictions could be postponed, provided that the STSM should be completed one month before the end of the Grant period (within 30/03/2021).
- Beyond that date, the STSM will be cancelled and it should be resubmitted for the next grant period.

- Additional costs related to prolonged stay in the Host country due to new wave pandemic restrictions will not be reimbursed.