

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) Eligibility Criteria and Rules

Version 2.4 (15/10/2023)

Definition

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM) consists in a visit of a Host organization located in a different country than the country of affiliation by a Researcher or Innovator for the specific work to be carried out and for a determined period of time.

The scope of the STSM is to support individual mobility and foster 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.

STSM benefit to:

- STSM Grantee: receives funding for implementing a project with an international team and gains new knowledge or access to equipment or techniques not available in the home institution;
- STSM Host: receives an international partner in their institution and can develop long lasting collaboration.

Applicants

STSM applicants are open to all COST members, as part of the VascAgeNet COST Action.

Participation to the VascAgeNet COST Action may take the form of a long-term participation, in which case, the concerned individual participates as WG member. Participation as WG member shall be open to any individual affiliated in a legal entity wherever in the world.

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

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

Grantees can perform the mission anywhere in the world

STSM duration

There is no minimum or maximum number of days required to perform a STSM.

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.

STMS 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
- 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 210 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.

Country	Daily allowance
Albania	180
Austria	199
Belgium	220
Bosnia and Herzegovina	195
Bulgaria	191
Croatia	191
Cyprus	204
Czech Republic	191
Denmark	209
Estonia	192
Finland	207
France	195
Georgia	191
Germany	212
Greece	193
Hungary	191
Iceland	207
Ireland	211
Israel	195
Italy	201
Latvia	191
Lithuania	182
Luxembourg	205
Malta	193
Moldova	180
Montenegro	182
Netherlands	211
Norway	214
Poland	194
Portugal	195
Romania	187
Serbia	191
Slovakia	189
Slovenia	187
Spain	192
Sweden	199
Switzerland	209
Republic of North Macedonia	191
Turkey	191
Ukraine	191
United Kingdom	222
Any other country	222

Calls for application - Timetable

The call for STSM application submission is open at any time during the related grant period

Within 15 days from the end of each grant period, the selection process will be terminated and, if approved, the applicant will be notified.

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

STSM should be ended one month before the end of each grant period

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, to be published on the webpage, is also mandatory.

For any reproducible item (including articles, papers, books, presentations) resulting from a STSM, Open Access is strongly recommended.

In publications resulting from an STSM, an acknowledgment referring to COST and VascAgeNet is mandatory. (e.g. “This article is based upon work from COST Action CA18216 VascAgeNet, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology, www.cost.eu)”).

Any manuscript or scientific production coming out from scientific experiences and partnership originating within the COST Action activities, including STSMs, is subjected to the COST Action VascAgeNet Manuscript and Authorship policy, see https://vascagenet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/COST-Action-Authorship-policy_Final.pdf and https://vascagenet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/COST-Action_Proposed-mansuscript-form.docx.

Financial support and payment terms

The scopes of the STSM Grant are to provide a contribution for travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses implementation of the project, delivery of the report to the COST Action MC and overall effort.

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.

The required report/documentation for claiming a STSM Grant is a Report to the Action MC on the work development, main achievements of the STSM and planned future follow up activities.

Grantees may request a pre-payment of up to 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 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.
- Additional costs related to prolonged stay in the Host country due to new wave pandemic restrictions will not be reimbursed.