

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) rules (GP4)

1. DEFINITION AND AIMS

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) consist 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.

STSM are exchange visits aimed at supporting individual mobility, strengthening existing networks and fostering collaboration between COST Action Participants. STSMs should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of AIM-COST Action, whilst at the same time allowing the Grantees to exchange knowledge, learn new techniques, disseminate the Action results, etc.

STSMs 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.

STSMs must respect the following criteria:

- The Applicant and the Host institution are in different countries;
- The minimum duration is 5 days (including travel);
- There is no maximum duration, but STSM must be carried out entirety within January 31st 2023

2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE AND WHERE TO GO

STSM applicants must be engaged in a research programme as a postgraduate student or postdoctoral fellow, or be officially affiliated to a public or private institution (Home institution).

Participation of Young Researchers/ Innovators (<40 year old) in STSM is encouraged.

The Table on the right (page 59 COST ANNOTATED RULES) describes all eligible scenarios.

Applicants may receive only one STSM per Grant Period, and may not receive more than one STSM for the same Host institution for the duration of the AIM-COST.

Note that, **in 2022 STSMs can be organised anywhere in the world**, provided budget availability and MC approval of the scientific justification of the specific benefit of visiting the proposed Host

6.4. Eligibility to receive financial support

Individuals invited as per Article 6.2 and, where applicable, legal entities participating in a COST Action networking activity shall be eligible to receive financial support to cover part or all of their expenses carried out to participate in or to organise a COST Action networking activity as defined in the table hereunder.

Affiliation to	Meetings		Training Schools			Other networking activities		
	Invited individual	Local Organiser	Trainer	Trainee	Local Organiser	ITC Conf Grant*	All others	
COST Members	Legal entity in COST F/C Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Legal entity CPM	At COST Partner Member's costs (dedicated budget line)						
Specific Organisations	EC/EU	At EC, EU body, office or agency cost (minimisation of cascade funding)						
	Eur. RTD Org.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
NNC	Once in the lifetime of the Action	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	
	Legal entity in a NNC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
IPC / Third States	Legal entity in IPC	Once in the lifetime of the Action	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

* ITC Conference Grants are limited to Young researchers and innovators from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries and NNC.

3. HOW TO APPLY

Eligible applicants should follow these steps

3.1 - Before submitting an application, obtain the agreement of the host institution on the work plan and proposed dates by means of an invitation letter signed by a senior researcher affiliated with the Host institution;

3.2 - Fill in e-COST (at: <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>):

- Title
- Start and end date (within January 31st 2023);
- Budget requested by the applicant;
- Information about the host institution and contact person

3.3 - Upload to e-COST:

- Application form (template available on e-COST) describing: Goals, description of the work to be carried out, expected outcomes and description of the contribution to AIM-COTS MoU objectives (3 pages maximum);
- Confirmation of the host on the agreement from the host institution in receiving the applicant;
- Short Curriculum vitae (3 pages maximum);
- 1-page motivation letter;
- Letter of support from the home institution.

Applicants are informed that their application can be accessed by the holders of leadership positions and any evaluation Committees in AIM-COST Action for evaluation purposes.

4. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

GP4 STSM budget is 30.000€. AIM-COST Core-Group will decide on the financial contribution for each STSM, taking into consideration the budget request of the applicant, the outcome of the evaluation of the STSM application, the duration of the mobility, the location of the Host and the total number of STSM approved.

In calculating the requested financial contribution, applicants should take the following criteria into account:

- A fixed daily rate for accommodation and meal expenses, calculated according to the country [daily rates](#) approved by the MC, up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day;
- A maximum of EUR 4,000 can be granted to for each successful applicant.
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5. EVALUATION PROCESS

The Grant Awarding Coordinator will analyse the applications and reject those that are incomplete or that do not meet the eligibility criteria. The evaluation, grading and ranking of eligible STSM applications will be the task of AIM-COST Core-Group according to COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy and Principles of Openness and Inclusiveness.

The AIM-COST-Core Group that will grade the work plan and the motivation letter, according to the following scale:

- 1 – Very poor: proposal illogical and not understandable.
- 2 – Poor: proposal with limited understanding, planning and no clear objectives.
- 3 – Fair: proposal with some understanding, planning and objectives.
- 4 – Good: good proposal but needs input to develop feasible outputs.
- 5 – Excellent: proposal well designed in terms of planning, feasibility and projected outputs.

In addition, up to 4 points will be attribute by WG-leaders to each application according to **its appropriateness within the objectives of the WG**.

WG leaders will return their results to the Grant Awarding Coordinator, who will add 1 point to applications submitted by **Young Researchers/Innovators** (<40 year old), rank all the proposals and, together with the Action (or Deputy) Chair and Grant Holder will suggest the specific grant amount and duration. A minimum grade of 6 points (out of 10) is required for STSM-grant attribution. The total number of STSM attributed depends on the budget available for the call and on the number and requested amount of approved grants. In the case of even scoring, the Core-Group will take in to account geographic and/or gender balance.

The final ranked list of applicants will be published on AIM-COST website and communicated by email to the applicants within two weeks after the submission deadline.

6. REPORTING AND PAYMENT

The STSM Grantee has 30 calendar days from the end date of the mission to submit a scientific report to the Grant Awarding Coordinator. Grants are paid by the Grant Holder after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation, which includes confirmation by the Host institution of the successful execution of the STSM and short (3 page-max) description of:

- purpose of the STSM;
- report of work carried out during the STSM;
- main achievements;
- planned follow-up activities;
- foreseen publications/articles resulting from the STSM (if applicable)

7. OTHERS

For a detailed description of the regulations and procedures, applicants should consult the *COST Annotated Rules*.