Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) Call for STSM Applications

Second Grant Period, 1 November 2021 – 31 October 2022

What is a Short Test Scientific Mission (STSM)

Short-Term Scientific Mission 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. Typically, this will be between 5 and 15 days. This mobility is open to PhD students, post-doctoral fellows and researchers from countries that are full COST members or Near Neighbour Country (NNC)[1].

Short-Term Scientific Missions 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.

How to apply in brief:

1. Communicate with your planned host institution on planning to apply for a STSM
2. Calculate your needed budget according to rules (travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses up to a total maximum of 4000€)
3. Collect the documents for the application:
    a. CV
    b. Your workplan for STSM describing: Goals, description of the work to be carried out, expected outcomes and description of the contribution to Euro-CAN objectives (3 pages maximum)
    c. Written agreement from the HOST institution
    d. Letter of approval from HOME institution
4. Create an account on e-COST (https://e-services.cost.eu/user/login)

[1] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/10/Annex-I-level-A-Country-and-Organisations-Table-REVISION.pdf

5. Go to https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm and fill the application
6. Wait for the evaluation results

If you think you can benefit from this opportunity, please read this document in detail.

List of abbreviations

COST - A COST Action

e-COST – electronic system for management of COST actions

Euro-CAN - Multi-Sectoral Responses to Child Abuse and Neglect in Europe: Incidence and

Trends

ITC – inclusiveness target country

IPC - International Partner Countries (Third States that are neither COST Members nor NNC).

MC – COST action Management Committee

MoU – Memorandum of understanding

NNC – near neighbour country

RTD - research and technological development and demonstration activities

STSM – Short Term Scientific Mission

Introduction

COST Action Euro-CAN opens call per operating year for applicants to STSM to be developed under the scope of the referred Action, in terms described in this document.

The main procedures/regulations concerning STSM are governed by the Annotated Rules for COST Actions[2].

Euro-CAN Action

In Europe, millions of children experience abuse or neglect at the hands of those who should care for them. Yet, how many of these children get help, which services they receive by which agency remains largely unknown. Moreover, countries are hardly aware which maltreatment turns fatal. This constitutes a major knowledge gap that is likely due to inconsistent ways of surveying and reporting on child maltreatment services across Europe. Without this information, we cannot know how the systems work,

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[2] https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/10/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-2021-11-01-1.pdf

what additional preventive efforts are required, if the interventions fit the victims' needs or if the most vulnerable groups are properly identified.

The proposed project addresses this gap by creating a network of experts in child maltreatment and relevant stakeholders and links them in working groups, in order to promote the development of a rigorous, consistent, and comparable methodology for the collection of surveillance data on child maltreatment and maltreatment-related fatalities. Researchers, policymakers, administrators and practitioners will identify best-practice methods of surveillance and recommend efficient ways of implementing them across Europe.

For further details and specific objectives, please read the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of Euro-CAN COST Action at https://e-services.cost.eu/files/domain_files/CA/Action_CA19106/mou/CA19106-e.pdf

Purpose of a STSM

STSM are exchange visits to support individual mobility, strengthen existing networks and foster collaboration between COST Action Participants. A STSM should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action, whilst simultaneously 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.

Eligibility criteria

The institution/organisation or legal entity where applicants pursue their main strand of research are considered here as Home Institutions. The Host Institution has to be in a different country.

The following eligibility criteria apply for the definition of the possible applicants and the host institutions.

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, organisation or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with research and belongs to a Euro-CAN Action Member Country or is an approved Near Neighbour Country (NNC) Institution or an approved European RTD Organisation.

For a list of countries please refer to https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/10/Annex-I-level-A-Country-and-Organisations-Table-REVISION.pdf.

Other important criteria for the STSM mobility are:

1. The STSM need to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and always within the Action's lifetime;
2. The STSM must have a minimum duration of 5 calendar days that includes travel;
3. The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot to be considered as being an STSM grantee's employer, i.e. the STSM Grant cannot be considered as a salary;

4. STSM grantees should make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security and pension matters.

Period of STSM and application deadlines

The period of STSM should be completely framed inside the Grant Period and yet reserve some margin for presenting the scientific report for approval and final payment. Therefore, the STSM should be finished the latest by **30 September 2022**. The following two cut-off dates for the submission and notification of results of STSM proposals will apply:

Cut-off moment	Applications deadline	Notification of results
1st	10 April 2022	25 April 2022
2nd	15 June 2022	30 June 2022

Funding

The total budget for STSM in the current Grant Period is €16.000 (Cca. 2000€ per STSM) and the number of STSM grants that will be funded is 8. The grants will be distributed by the two cut-off dates given previously, as follows: 4 for the first cut-off date and 4 for the second date. Changes to the distribution are possible if needed.

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. Please note that STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission, being only a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Grantee. Applicants are encouraged to evaluate their budget request based on a high benefit/cost ratio and justify it based on the perceived cost of living in the host country/city.

Annotated rules define the criteria for the financial contribution for each STSM, which should not be disregarded in any circumstance:

1. Up to a maximum of EUR 4 000 in total can be afforded to each successful applicant;
2. Up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses. See https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/10/Daily-Allowance-table_November_2021.pdf.

Grants are paid to the applicant <u>after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation</u>. STSM grantees may <u>request up to 50% pre-payment</u> of the approved grant. This amount is subject to availability of funds and approval.

Application Procedure

The application procedure is legally bound to the Annotated Rules. Eligible STSM applicants must submit their STSM applications online at the following web address: https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm

Prior to this submission, it is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain a written agreement from the Host institution stating that the applicant may perform the activities detailed in the STSM work plan on the agreed dates.

The following information is needed for the on-line application form:

i.   Action number (CA19106);
ii.   Title of the planned STSM;
iii.   Start and end dates of the STSM;
iv.   Applicant's details, including academic profile and workplan;
v.   Applicant's bank details;
vi.   Host institution details
vii.   Requested budget.

Selection committee

A scientific committee – STSM Committee – composed by the STSM Coordinator, the Action Chair and the relevant Work Group leader will evaluate all the STSM proposals and define a seriation for the attribution of the grants. In case of conflict of interest, the member that is constrained in his duties should designate a substitute (the Action Vice-Chair or the respective Work Group vice-leader).

Applications assessment and communication of results

The STSM Committee will perform the scientific assessment of the applications considering the Euro-CAN Action scope and objectives, as well as the potential for enhancement of the research interaction between the involved parts, measured by the impact of the exchange expected by the applicants and involved institutions. STSM Committee will promote gender balance, enabling ECIs (researchers with PhD + up to 8 years of research experience) and PhD students, and broadening geographical inclusiveness.

The following more specific criteria will be considered for the Grant Period. The evaluation will return a value between 0 and a maximum of 15 points. These points will be divided between the assessment of the work plan quality and STSM framework (10 points) and the applicant's CV (5 points). The CV template that should be followed can be downloaded from the site of the Action.

1. STSM workplan: max. of 10 points

- **1.1** Scientific quality, alignment with Action objectives, expected impact: up to 5 points
- **1.2**. ITC participant outgoing: 1 point
- **1.3**. Guest is COST-participant: 1 point

- **1.4**. Mission connects more than one Work Group: 1 point
- **1.5**. Work linked to topics of Work Group 5: 1 point
- **1.6**. Academia - non-academic sector STSM: 1 point

2. Curriculum Vitæ of the applicant: max. of 5 points

- **2.1** Young researcher or non-academic sector collaborator: 2 points
- **2.2** Co-author of at least 3 articles: 1 point
- **2.3** Co-author of at least 10 articles: 1 point
- **2.4** No research stay abroad before: 1 point

Once approved by the STSM Coordinator (or the Action Chair, in case of conflict of interest), he will inform the Grant Holder of the approved STSM, who will inform each approved applicant by sending a Grant Letter generated from e-COST. The applicant must return this letter of acceptance with his/her signature.

STSM reporting and Payment

The STSM Grantee has 30 calendar days from the end date of the mission to submit a scientific report to the STSM Coordinator along with a proof of evidence of the stay (*i.e.* some pictures of the trainee working at the host institution facilities). Moreover, a written confirmation by a senior researcher affiliated to the Host Institution regarding the successful achievement of the objectives of the STSM and approval of the scientific report is also necessary. **Please note that failure to submit the scientific report, the proof of evidence of the stay and the Host Approval of the scientific report within 30 days will effectively cancel the grant.**

The template of the scientific report can be downloaded at http://www.cost.eu/STSM_report_template; it includes:

1. Purpose of the STSM and framing in the Euro-CAN Action;
    2. Description of the activities carried out during the mission;
    3. Summary of relevant results;
    4. Future collaborations, including forthcoming publications resulting from the developed work and/or joint project proposals agreed during the stay.

The payment of the Grant is subject to the approval of the STSM scientific report by the STSM Committee, on behalf of the Action's MC, and the final decision is uploaded in e-COST by the STSM Coordinator. Based on this, the Grant Holder will execute the payment of the grant directly to the grantee or the host institution as requested in the application.

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