

Procedures and Selection Rules for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)

STSM and their main aim: STSMs are exchange visits aimed at supporting individual mobility, strengthening existing networks and fostering collaboration between researchers. STSMs are one of the key activities for making this COST action efficient.

STSM eligibility rules: Eligibility rules are described in the COST Vademecum, which can be found here (<http://www.cost.eu/participate>) and on eurelax.uwm.edu.pl

The most basic criteria are:

1. STSM must have a minimum duration of 5 days.
2. STSM 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.

The second Grant Period will expire on 30-04-2018.

For Early Career Investigators (ECI, investigators within 8 years from their PhD) STSM can extend up to 180 days, provided that it is carried out in its entirety within a single Grant Period and the Action's lifetime. See Vademecum for details.

STSM financial rules: 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:

1. The COST contribution for a STSM is fixed to a maximum of 160 €/day (accommodation and food, travel is excluded from this figure);
2. The maximum COST contribution is fixed to 2500€ for the whole STSM (this figure includes all accommodation, food and travel costs).

*Example: a 5 days STSM can receive a maximum of 800€ + travel costs calculated as 5 days * 160 €/day = 800€ + travel costs. A 30 days STSM can receive a maximum of 2500€ despite 30 days * 160 €/day = 4800€ and there will be some travel costs.*

For Early Career Investigators: The maximum COST contribution is fixed to 3500€ for the whole STSM providing the duration of the mission is between 91 and 180 days. If it is 90 days or less than the maximum is again fixed to 2500€.

How to Apply:

- Applications must be firstly entered online at <https://e-services.cost.eu/user/login/> (if you do not have an account you need to register first)
- After online submission, applicants must send an e-mail to the STSM coordinator (Dr. Giuseppe Pileio, g.pileio@soton.ac.uk) AND the Action Chair (Prof. Danuta Kruk eurelax@matman.uwm.edu.pl) which must include the following:
 1. Applicant's CV (2 pages max, min font: Arial 11; including up to 5 relevant and selected publications)

2. Case for Support (3 pages max, min font: Arial 11) constructed of the **exact** 5 sections below:
 - a. **The Candidate** (~1/2 page – *explain the aim of your research, your expertise in the field and how the STSM will benefit your research*)
 - b. **The Host** (~1/2 page – *explain what the host offers in terms of expertise and/or instrumentation that you don't have or cannot match in your lab; state whether or not a collaboration between the candidate and the host's research groups is new or already exists*)
 - c. **Scientific Problem** (~1/2 page – *introduce the problem to be addressed during the STSM*)
 - d. **The Work Programme** (≤1 pages – *describe exactly what you expect to do during the STSM and how you are going to do it by elaborating a work plan*)
 - e. **Justification of Resources** (≤1/2 page – *give all details of how much money you require for the whole visit and how much of this amount you are asking to be covered by COST. If the mission requires more than the maximum granted by COST, please indicate how you are going to cover for the rest of expenses - i.e. if you have other sources of funds to cover the mission*)
3. **Signed Letter of acceptance of the Host** (1 page max, min font: Arial 11).
4. **Signed Letter of support from Home Institution** (written by current supervisor, line manager or equivalent, 1 page max, min font: Arial 11).
5. **A PDF of the online application form**

- All applications have to follow all general rules found in the COST Vademecum.
- Applications are, in the first instance, invited through an open call publicised on the website of this COST action.
- Applications must be submitted by the call deadline that is indicated on the website (for grant period 2 this is set to **31/10/2017**). *Depending on funding we may be able to open other calls like this within the second grant period.*
- In case you are submitting after 31/10/2017 we will still accept and evaluate your application only if there are still funds available (check the action website at <http://eurelax.uwm.edu.pl/how-apply-stsm> to see if funds are still available) but please notice that we need you to submit your application **at least 10 days before** the planned start of the mission so that there is enough time for us to process your files.
- The mission has to start and end within the grant period.
- If successful, the candidate is required to acknowledge “COST Action CA15209” in any paper/poster/oral contributions that includes work done during the STSM.

Selection Criteria: The decision on whether the application for a STSM will be supported or not will be made according to the following criteria:

- The application serves the goal of fostering collaboration in the field of NMR Relaxometry
- The scientific quality of the STSM is high and the work plan for its realization is sound
- The application is financially justified i.e. the estimate of expenses is reasonable. Support from other sources will be evaluated positively.
- When other conditions are equal, preference will be given to non-affiliated researchers (PhD and PostDocs) and ECI although application from senior researchers that hold a

stable position are also accepted. STSMs of ECI and senior scientists that include teaching young scientists in other Institutions is also strongly encouraged

- When other conditions are equal, preference will be given to applications that are meant to establish new cooperation within groups that have no prior history of mutual collaboration
- When other conditions are equal, preference will be given to scientists from Institutions which did not get support from this COST action before
- When other conditions are equal, preference will be given in order to promote balance in gender, age and nationality
- When other conditions are equal, preference will be given to scientists that did not get support for a STSM earlier within this COST action.

Selection Procedure:

- *Open Call:* The received applications will be distributed to the rest of the committee members within 24 hours from the call deadline. The coordinator will associate each application with a specific member of the committee (including the coordinator) chosen according to closest expertise and workload balance criteria. The members of the committee will reply to the coordinator within 3-5 days with an indication of acceptance/rejection supported by a few sentences of justification. The committee will meet online to rank applications and decide on funding. The coordinator will notify the applicants about the decision (acceptance/rejection according to the majority of votes) via e-mail. The whole process will be completed **within 7-10 days**.
- *First come first served (for submission after the deadline of the open call):* The received applications will be distributed to the rest of the committee within 24 hours from reception. The coordinator will associate the application with a specific member of the committee (including the coordinator) chosen according to closest expertise and workload balance criteria. The member of the committee will reply to the coordinator within 3-5 days with an indication of acceptance/rejection supported by a few sentences of justification. The committee will meet online to decide about approval/rejection of the application. The coordinator will notify the applicant about the decision (acceptance/rejection according to the majority of votes) via e-mail. The whole process will be completed **within 7-10 days**. The procedure will be continued as long as funds are available.

Procedure for reimbursement:

If your mission has been approved and was successfully accomplished you have **30 days from the last day of your mission** to send to the coordinator (email to g.pileio@soton.ac.uk) these two files:

1. A **scientific report** (3 pages max) organised into these **exact** sections:
 - i. Title
 - ii. Cost reference number
 - iii. Introduction (briefly introduce the aim of the mission)
 - iv. Results (present some results - using tables and/or plots, etc)
 - v. Conclusion (summarise and conclude stating whether the mission was fruitful and can strengthen existing or open new collaborations with the host).
2. A **signed letter from the host** (1 page max) that states that they have read and approved your scientific report.

STSM Scientific Committee:

- Giuseppe Pileio (Coordinator)
- Norbert Müller
- Giacomo Parigi
- Mecit Halil Öztop
- Pedro J. Sebastião
- Carlos Platas-Iglesias