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**POSITIVe calls for Short-Term Scientific Missions applications**

**Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM)** are exchange visits aimed at supporting individual mobility, strengthening the existing networks and fostering collaborations between Researchers.

**STSM Eligibility Rules**

1. A STSM **should specifically contribute** to the scientific objectives of the COST Action POSITIVe, while 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.
2. 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 or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research.

The institutions / organisations where applicants pursue their main strand of research are considered as Home institutions.

The Host institution is the institution / organisation that will host the successful applicant.

*Eligible candidates from a Participating COST Country institution (Home institution) can apply for STSM to a Host institution in another Participating COST Country.*

Both Home and Host institutions, public or private, must be partners of the POSITIVe network.

In general, eligible candidates from an approved COST Near Neighbour Country (NNC) institution or an approved European RTD Organisation can also apply for a STSM to a Participating COST Country. STSM can also be hosted by an approved NNC institution, an approved International Partner Country (IPC) institution or an approved Specific Organisation (EC and EU Agencies, European RTD Organisations, International Organisations). However, these scenarios are not applicable to the POSITIVe STSM at the moment.

**STSM Criteria and Evaluation**

**STSM must respect the following criteria:**

1. They must have a minimum duration of 5 days.
2. They must have a maximum duration of 90 days.
3. They need to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and always within the Action’s lifetime.

According to specific provisions, aimed at encouraging their participation in STSM, Early Career Investigators (ECI)\* may extend the duration of the STSM beyond the 90 days.

*\*ECI: young researchers within a time span of up to 8 years from the date they obtained their PhD/doctorate.*

**To qualify for these specific provisions, STSM applied / performed by ECI:**

1. Must have a minimum duration of 91 days.

2. Must have a maximum duration of 180 days.

3. Need to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and always within the Action’s lifetime.

The evaluation of STSM applications will be performed by the STSM Committee, who was given a mandate by the POSITIVe Managing Committee (MC) to act on their behalf.

**Main evaluation and selection criteria:**

* scientific scope of the STSM application and its potential to support the POSITIVe Action in achieving its scientific objectives

**Additional criteria:**

* priority given to the proposals highly relevant for the ongoing work within working groups of the Action
* priority given to the proposals submitted by Early Career Investigator (ECI).
* geographical and gender balance issues will be taken into consideration

**STSM Financial Support**

STSM grant is a fixed contribution based on the budget requested by the applicant and the evaluation of the application by the STSM Committee. The aim of this grant is to support the costs associated with the exchange visit. This grant will not necessarily cover all expenses; it is intended only as a contribution to the travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the participant.

The calculation of the financial contribution for each STSM must respect the following criteria:

1. Up to a maximum of EUR 2 500 in total can be afforded to each successful STSM applicant;
2. Up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses.

For ECIs, the calculation for an increased financial contribution must respect the following criteria:

1. Up to a maximum of EUR 3 500 in total can be afforded to ECIs for missions with a duration of between 91 and 180 days;
2. Up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses.

Important notices:

1. The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered as being an STSM Grantee’s employer. Grantees must make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security and pension matters.
2. In all cases, the STSMs Committee can approve different country rates for subsistence per day, based on the cost of living in each respective country.

**STSM Application Deadlines**

May 5th 2015 - for STSM to start after July 1st 2015 (and end before October 30th 2015)

October 30th 2015 - for STSM to start after January 1st 2016

March 31th 2016 -for STSM to start after July 1st 2016 (and end before October 30th2016)

October 30th2016 - for STSM to start after January 1st 2017

Important notice:

Scientific activities to be performed towards the objectives of the Action will be addressed also through STSMs. In such cases potential applicants will be informed about the scientific topics and host institutions identified in the working groups (WG) through the website of the Action and through emailing within the members of WG. In agreement with the budget, these special calls and potential STSMs will be prioritised and will not necessary follow the defined deadlines.

**STSM Application Process**

**Before the STSM**

In order to receive a STSM grant, the applicant must:

1. Obtain the written agreement of the Host institution before submitting the application (e.g Letter of invitation to the applicant from a senior Researcher affiliated to the Host institution)
2. Complete the online application form (see <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>);

The following information should be encoded with the registration:

* applicant's title, name, work place, postal address, telephone and fax numbers, and email;
* address;
* name, postal address, telephone, fax and email of the prospective host at the Host institute;
* the planned dates and length of stay;
* the title of the planned STSM;
* a short description of the proposed workplan (about 250 words);
* a short curriculum vitae;
* a budget request with breakdown for the costs of the STSM;
* bank details.

1. Send the completed file (a formal STSM application issued by the on-line registration tool and downloaded) as e-mail attachment together with the requested supporting documents to the STSM Host institution and to the POSITIVe STSM Coordinator (Dr Aleksandra KONIĆ RISTIĆ, [sandrakonic@gmail.com](mailto:sandrakonic@gmail.com))

Supporting documents are:

* CV
* Full work plan
* List of publications
* Motivation letter
* Letter of support from the Home institution
* Letter of invitation from the Host institution

Assessment and Grant Letter:

1. STSM Committee will perform the scientific and budgetary assessment of the applications considering the Action objectives and define an acceptable funding level;
2. STSM Coordinator will inform the POSITIVe Grant Holder that the proposed STSM has been approved (Pre-approval e-mail will be send to the Grant Manager) at least 4 weeks before the STSM starts and will arrange the necessary formalities for the issue of the grant.
3. Once STSM has been approved by the STSM Coordinator and the POSITIVe Grant Holder informed of the decision, the Grant Holder will send a grant letter generated from e-COST to the applicant in which he/she is informed about:

* the approval of the STSM and
* the level of the financial grant given

1. The Applicant has to return this Grant letter, after accepting the grant with his/her signature.

**After the STSM**

1. STSM grantee is required to submit a short scientific report to the Host institution (for information), to the STSM Coordinator and MC Chair for approval within 30 days after the end date of the STSM containing:

* Purpose of the STSM;
* Description of the work carried out during the STSM;
* Description of the main results obtained;
* Future collaboration with the host institution (if applicable);
* Foreseen publications/articles resulting from the STSM (if applicable);
* Confirmation by the host institution of the successful execution of the STSM;
* Other comments (if any).

**The failure to submit the scientific report within 30 days will effectively cancel the grant;**

1. An official letter / email confirmation from a Senior Researcher affiliated to the Host institution formally accepting the scientific report should be send to the STSM Coordinator and MC Chair;
2. The STSM Coordinator is responsible for approving the scientific report and informing the Grant Holder that the STSM has been successfully accomplished, that the administrative requirements have been satisfied and that the grant can be paid (Post-approval email will be send to the Grant Manager);
3. After receipt of the approval by email, in addition to the completed Payment request form and the summary of scientific report (maximum 1 page), the POSITIVe Grant Holder will execute the payment of the grant. Grant Holder will arrange the payment of the grant directly to the grantee or the Host institution as requested in the application.

Successful applicants will be invited to prepare a short report (with photos preferably) to be placed on the Action website after the completion of the STSM.

Important notice:

STSM need to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and always within the Action’s lifetime. The STSM applicant can however submit two separate STSM applications each falling within their respective Grant Periods. The entire procedure must, in effect, be done twice.

For more information about COST definitions and rules regarding STSMs, please see the COST Vademecum document at: <http://www6.inra.fr/cost-positive/Download/COST-documents>