

# 6. Short Term Scientific Missions

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## 6.1 STSM - rules

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) are aimed at supporting individual mobility and at strengthening the existing networks and fostering collaborations by allowing scientists to visit an institution or laboratory in another Participating COST Country or an approved NNC institution or an approved IPC institution. A STSM should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action, while at the same time allowing applicants to learn new techniques or gain access to specific instruments and/or methods not available in their own institutions;

The evaluation of STSM applications is performed by the MC and must avoid any potential conflict of interest. The MC may formally delegate the evaluation of STSM applications to an STSM coordinator or committee (refer to section 1.3.8). The assessment criteria defined by the MC should be communicated in advance to all potential applicants.

The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application that must be in line with the Action objectives. Necessary geographical and gender balance issues are to be taken into consideration and applications from ESR should be privileged.

STSM applicants must be engaged in a research programme as a postgraduate student or postdoctoral fellow, or be employed by or officially affiliated to an institution or legal entity. This institution is considered as the Home institution. Institutions may be public or private entities.

Possible STSM scenarios are:

Home Institution	Host Institution
From a Participating COST Country or Cooperation State	To another Participating COST Country or Cooperation State
	To an approved NNC institution
	To an approved IPC institution
	To an approved Specific organisation
From an approved NNC institution	To a Participating COST Country or Cooperation State
From an approved European RTD Organisation	To a Participating COST Country or Cooperation State

During an STSM neither the MC, nor the COST Office nor the Grant Holder may be considered as an employer. Grantees must make their own arrangements for all health, social, personal security and pension matters.

Standard STSMs need to take place according to the following rules:

1. Be a minimum duration of 5 days;
2. Be a maximum duration of 90 days;
3. Needs to be carried out in their entirety within a single grant period and within the Action's lifetime.

Specific provisions had been adopted by the CSO to foster the participation of ESR (COST 295/09). ESR may extend the duration of the STSM beyond the 90 days; in this case, ESR STSM must take place according to the following rules:

1. Be a minimum duration of 91 days;
2. Be a maximum duration of 180 days;
3. Needs to be carried out within their entirety within a single grant period and within the Action's lifetime.

## 6.2 STSM - financial support

A STSM grant is a fixed contribution based on the budget requested by the applicant and the evaluation of the application by the MC Chair /STSM Coordinator or 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 and subsistence costs of the participant.

The calculation of this contribution for a STSM must be based on the following rules:

- The reimbursement rate per day is EUR 160 maximum;
- Up to EUR 500 may be attributed for the travel expenses;
- A maximum EUR 2 500 in total can be afforded to the grantee.

The calculation of this contribution for an ESR STSM (for a duration of more than 91 days) must be based on the following rules:

- The reimbursement rate per day is EUR 160 maximum;
- Up to EUR 500 may be attributed for the travel expenses;
- A maximum EUR 3 500 in total can be afforded to the grantee.

In all cases the MC can approve differentiated country rates for subsistence per day, based on the cost of living in each respective country.

## 6.3 STSM - process

### 1. Before the STSM

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

- Obtain the written agreement of the host institution, before submitting an application;
- Complete the online application form (see <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>);
- Send the completed file as e-mail attachment together with the necessary supporting documents (CV, full work plan, list of publications, motivation letter, letter of support from the home institution etc.) to the STSM host institution and to the MC Chair or the STSM coordinator.

Assessment and Grant Letter:

- The MC (or STSM Coordinator or Committee) will perform the scientific and budgetary assessment of the applications considering the Action objectives and define an acceptable funding level;
- Once approved by the MC (or STSM Coordinator or Committee), the Grant Holder needs to receive the approval and then send a grant letter generated from e-COST to the applicant.

### 2. After the STSM

The grantee is required to submit a short scientific report to the host institution (for information) and MC Chair (or to the STSM coordinator) 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;

The MC Chair (or the STSM coordinator) is responsible for approving the scientific report and informing the Grant Holder that the STSM has been successfully accomplished;

After receipt of the approval by email, the Grant Holder will execute the payment of the grant.

## 6.4 Reciprocal STSM (RSTSM) – rules

The aim of the RSTSM is to enhance the potential impact of global networking and foster knowledge creation and exchange between scientists in COST Actions with host institutions in IPC that benefiting from a reciprocal agreement with COST (Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa). The reciprocal agreement (COST 4115/13) is based on the ascertained mutual benefit to network (in

particular to the benefit of ESRs). Each institution, with the signature of a reciprocal agreement with the COST Office, has allocated dedicated funds to support the participation of researchers from their countries in COST Actions.

For Actions with an approved IPC Institution in a country benefiting from a reciprocal agreement, the following scenarios are possible:

Home Institution	Host Institution	Financial Support
From a Participating COST Country	To an approved IPC Institution in country benefiting from a reciprocal agreement	Supported by the COST Office directly
From an approved IPC Institution in a country benefiting from a reciprocal agreement	To an institution in a Participating COST country	Supported by the implementing agent in the IPC benefiting from a reciprocal agreement

RSTSM are implemented by the COST Office as a special kind of STSM funded in addition to the Action's Budget and managed centrally by the COST Office.

## 6.5 RSTSM - financial support

A RSTSM grant is a fixed contribution based on the budget requested by the Applicant and on the evaluation of the application by the COST Office. This grant will not necessarily cover all expenses and only contribute towards travel and subsistence.

Financial contributions calculation rules for RSTSM in Australia and New Zealand:

- The reimbursement rate per day is EUR 160 maximum;
- Up to EUR 1 900 may be attributed for the travel expenses;
- A Maximum EUR 3 000 can be afforded to the grantee.

Financial contributions calculation rules for RSTSM in South Africa:

- The reimbursement rate per day is EUR 160 maximum;
- Up to EUR 1 400 may be attributed for the travel expenses;
- Maximum EUR 2 500 can be afforded to the grantee.

Financial contributions calculation rules for RSTSM in Argentina:

- The reimbursement rate per day is EUR 160 maximum;
- Up to EUR 1 000 may be attributed for the travel expenses;
- Maximum EUR 2 500 can be afforded to the grantee.

## 6.6 RSTSM - process

The application process for the applicant from a Participating COST Country is as follow:

### 1. Before the RSTSM

- Obtain written agreement from the host institution, before submitting an application;
- Complete the online application form (see <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>);
- Send the completed file as e-mail attachment together with the necessary supporting documents (CV, full work plan, list of publications, motivation letter, letter of support from the home institution etc.) to the MC Chair;
- The MC Chair (or the MC Vice Chair in case the application is made by the MC Chair) must forward the application and the supporting document to the COST SO along with a statement of support indicating the benefit to the Action;
- Once approved by the COST SO, the applicant will received a Grant Letter specifying the amount granted for the RSTSM;

## 2. After the RSTSM

The grantee is required to submit a short scientific report to the host institution, to MC Chair and to the COST Office SO within 30 days after the end date of the RSTSM containing:

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

The failure to submit or a submission exceeding 30 days will effectively cancel the grant.

The MC Chair is responsible for approving the scientific report. MC Chair approval and the scientific report must be sent by the MC Chair to the COST Office SO.

After reception of the approval by email, the COST Office will execute the payment of the grant.