

# Call for Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) Applications

The COST Action [CA21116](#) “*Identification of biological markers for prevention and translational medicine in pancreatic cancer (TRANSPAN)*” opens a call for applications for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) to be developed under the scope of the referred Action, in the terms described in this document.

The main procedures/regulations concerning STSMs can be found here:

[Annotated-Rules V1.4](#) (see A2-1.1 MOBILITY OF RESEARCHERS AND INNOVATORS)

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## 1. Scope of TRANSPAN COST Action

For details and specific objectives, please read the Memorandum of Understanding ([MoU](#)).

## 2. Purpose of STSMs

STSMs are stays of a researcher or innovator to a host organization located in a different country than the country of affiliation (for Affiliation, see Article 4.1.1.1.1 on Annotated Rules for COST Actions document) for a specific work and for a determined period. STSMs are worthwhile:

- I. for the STSM grantee, who has the chance to receive funding to help him/her to undertake a stay to participate in a project with an international team, to gain new knowledge or to access to equipment or techniques not available in the home institution.
- II. for the STSM host, who can receive an international partner in their institution and extend or create a long-lasting collaboration.

An STSM should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action, helping to achieve the Action MoU objectives and deliverables.

### 3. Eligibility criteria

- a. The Grant applicant(s) are Action participants with a primary affiliation to a legal entity located in a COST Full or Cooperating Member country, a COST Near Neighbour Country or a European RTD Organization (see Article 4.1.1.1.1 on Annotated Rules for COST Actions).
- b. The Grant applicant is a researcher or innovator who visits a host organization located in a different country than the country of affiliation (for Affiliation, see Article 4.1.1.1.1 on Annotated Rules for COST Actions document) for a specific work and for a determined period of time.
- c. The STSM must have a minimum duration of 5 calendar days (including travel) and **end by September 30th, 2024.**
- d. The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered as being an STSM grantee's employer, i.e., the STSM Grant cannot be considered as a salary.

### 4. Application deadlines

Applications will be welcomed during two periods (see below). Please note that the STSMs need to be concluded by **September 30, 2024.**

#1 First call: The deadline for application is **February 15**, at 11:59 a.m. (Central European Standard Time). The first call results will be published on **February 22.**

#2 Second call (to be issued if funds are still available after the first call): The deadline for application is **May 1**, at 11:59 a.m. (Central European Standard Time). The second call results will be published on **May 8**.

A third call may be issued if residual or additional funds will be available after the TRANSPAN general meeting.

Please note that applicants of the first call may select to spend a period abroad also after May 1<sup>st</sup>, but it must end by September 30.

## 5. Funding

In compliance with the Annotated rules the maximum amount that can be reimbursed is up to 4,000 €. However, under this call the maximum amount that may be granted to each applicant will be evaluated before approval by the TRANSPAN Core Group and on the basis of the reasons provided during the submission of the application. If the requested budget is not approved, the proponent may be asked to submit a new application with a reduced budget.

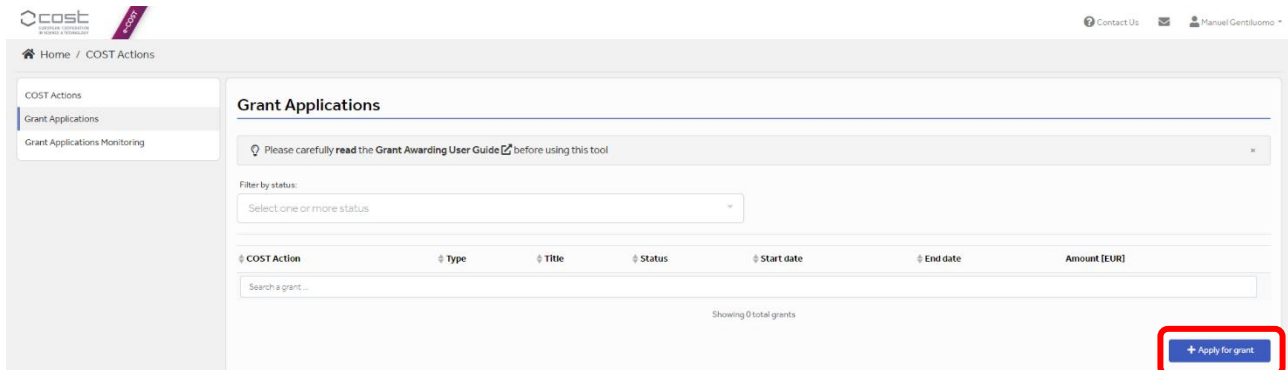
An STSM Grant is a lump financial contribution that takes into consideration the budget request of the applicant and the outcome of the evaluation of the STSM application. Please note that STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission, being only a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Grantee. Applicants are encouraged to assess their budget request based on a high benefit/cost ratio and to justify it based on the perceived cost of living in the host country/city. STSM grantees should make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security and pension matters.

The Grant Holder Institution pays grants after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation. However, STSMs grantees may request up to 50% pre-payment of the approved grant. This amount is subject to availability of funds and approval by the Grant Holder Institution. The request of pre-payment shall be submitted to the Grant Awarding Coordinator and the Grant Holder Manager.

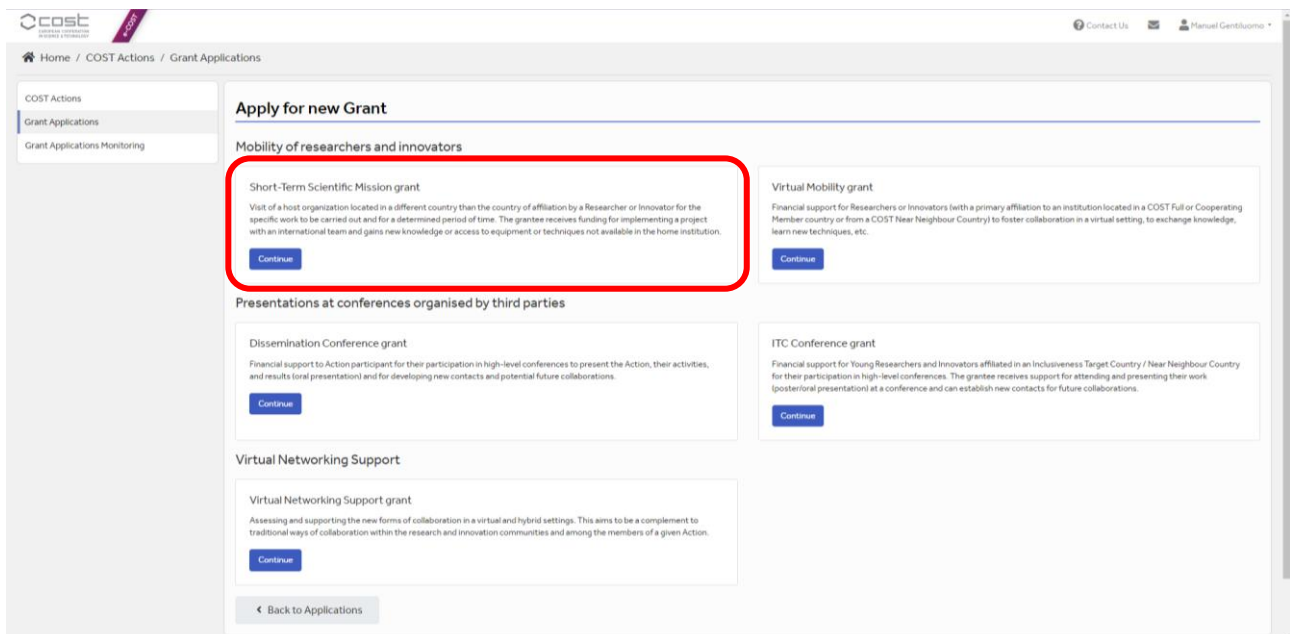
To be considered concluded, an STSM will require, in addition to the mandatory documentation imposed by the [COST rules](#) (section A2-2.3), a letter signed by the host manager to be sent within one week of the end date set for the grant.

## 6. Application procedure

The application procedure is legally bound to the Rules for COST Actions. Eligible STSM applicants must submit their STSM applications online by logging into e-COST (<https://e-services.cost.eu>) and go to “Grant applications and click on “Apply for a grant””.



The applicant can select “Continue” on the “Short-Term Scientific Mission grant” section.



The application form will contain different sections, some are pre-filled by e-COST, such as Application name or Primary affiliation.

After encoding the Grant application form by filling all above-mentioned sections, the applicant also needs to upload:

- I. the Grant Application Template (you can find it here: [https://www.cost.eu/STSM\\_GrantApplication](https://www.cost.eu/STSM_GrantApplication)).

- II. Acceptance/Invitation letter from the Host institution: it is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain a written agreement from the Host institution stating that the applicant will perform the activities detailed in the STSM working plan on the agreed dates. The letter must be dated back not more than 3 months and must be signed by a permanent staff representative of the Host institution (e.g., head of the research group, PI, director of the department, head of the institute/division etc.).
- III. Candidate CV: a short (**max. 2 pages**) CV should be submitted. A list of academic publications can be added on separate pages.

In the Application template please briefly address the following points:

- a. Proposed contribution to the scientific objectives of the Action. Include how the planned activities will contribute to the plan of one or more WG(s) of the Action.
- b. Detail which techniques or equipment you would wish to learn to use, if applicable.
- c. Underline the aspects of complementarity between expertise and instrumentation of the home and hosting institution/research groups.
- d. Detail the steps you will take to achieve your proposed goals.
- e. Provide an itemized justification of the requested budget.

Applicants are requested to present a Working Plan that is reasonably feasible and coherent with the time slot requested in the application.

After adding the supporting documents, the applicant can submit the grant application.

**Non-compliance with the above listed points will result in exclusion from the proposal evaluation.**

## 7. Intellectual Property Rights concerns

In case of potential intellectual property concern requested by the host and/or sending institutions, this must be mentioned in the application and managed by IP teams from host and/or sending institutions. In this case, the reviewers of the application may be requested to sign a confidential agreement.

## 8. Selection committee

The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application, which must be coherent with the overall objectives of the Action. The STSM evaluation and selection will be carried out by TRANSPAN Core Group.

## 9. Evaluation criteria and communication of the results

The general criteria for the evaluation of STSM proposals are:

- Priority to PhD students/residents and post-docs until 2 years after the completion of the PhD.
- Priority to applicants from inclusiveness target countries (ITCs).
- Clarity of activity planning (working plan) and complementarity of resources between home and host institutions/research groups (resources are intended as: technical expertise, infrastructure, or instrumentation).
- Main expected results and their contribution to the progress towards the Action objectives and deliverables.
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the applicant.

The Grant Awarding Coordinator (or the Action Chair/Vice-Chair, in case of conflict of interest) will inform the Grant Holder of the approved STSMs. The Grant Holder 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.

## 10. STSM reporting and payment

Within 30 days from the end date of the STSM (or 15 days after the end of the Grant Period, whichever date comes first), the successful applicant must submit (A) the scientific report, (B) the dissemination materials and (C) the approval letter of the scientific report from the Host institution. These documents must be uploaded on e-COST to proceed with the request for payment.

### A) Scientific reports on e-COST:

- A template for the report can be found in e-COST ([https://www.cost.eu/STSM\\_Report](https://www.cost.eu/STSM_Report)) (max 4 pages).

When preparing the scientific report please consider the following:

- The scientific report for COST is a public document. Please take this into account in terms of Intellectual Property Rights.
- The scientific report does not need to contain specific and detailed results of the research. Rather, it should focus on the aspects that are the aim of STSM, in particular how the collaborative research during STSM has strengthened the scientific relationship between Home and Hosting institutions within the framework of COST.

A copy of the scientific report in PDF format must be sent, by email, to the Grant Awarding Coordinator.

The Grant Awarding Coordinator and representatives of the working groups will be responsible for approving the scientific report and informing the Action Chair and the Grant Holder that the STSM has been successfully accomplished.

(Please note that the COST Association can request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by STSM applicants).

**B) Dissemination materials to Science Communication Team:**

- A poster/short video/success story describing the subject of your collaborative STSM activities.
  - A strong, short advertising sentence summarizing your STSM experience that will be used for promotion of the above material.
  - Your credentials in social media (if you have such) to tag you in publication of your post.
- Please remember to present Home and Host institutions and your passion for science. Use pictures showing you at work but also after-work. Do not sound too abstract, avoid scientific jargon, use short sentences. The material is to advertise TRANSPAN research, promote you, and will be shown in social media for public audience.

The materials have to be sent directly to the Science Communication Manager.

**C) Host approval of scientific report:**

An official letter/email from a senior Researcher affiliated to the Host institution formally stating the acceptance of the scientific report.

Failure to submit the scientific report and dissemination materials, and Host approval of report within the above specified timeframe will effectively cancel the Grant. The grantee shall be aware that the COST Association reserves the right to postpone or cancel all payments and to recover the amounts paid to the grantee in case the grantee does not fulfil their obligations.

**All STSM grantees are required to give an oral presentation during the TRANSPAN general assembly or a webinar, where they must present the main points of their activity and/or the results they obtained during their STSM.**

## **11. STSM contacts**

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