

## STSM Call 2026 – TRANSPAN (CA21116)

### 1) Purpose and scope

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) support short periods of international mobility for activities that are directly aligned with the scientific objectives and deliverables of the Action.

COST rules: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V3.0-25-IX-2025.pdf>

STSM sections - (A2-1.1.1, A2-2.3, A2-3)

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### 2) Who can apply (eligibility)

Applicants must be affiliated with an institution in COST Full or Cooperating Members (<https://www.cost.eu/about/members/>), or Near Neighbour Countries (NNC) (<https://www.cost.eu/about/strategy/international-collaboration/>), and carry out the visit in a different country from their primary affiliation.

Minimum duration: **5 calendar days** (including travel days).

STSMs are **grants**, not salaries or fees. TRANSPAN has no obligation to cover the complete cost of an STSM. The COST rules define the scope of the STSM grant as providing a contribution for travelling, accommodation, and subsistence expenses, implementation of the project, delivery of the report to the COST Action MC, and overall effort.

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### 3) Funding – mobility-only support

TRANSPAN STSMs contribute only to mobility costs and **do not** cover research expenses.

**Eligible** examples: **travel** (intercity/long-distance), **local transfers** to/from main hubs, **accommodation, subsistence**.

**Not eligible:** consumables, reagents, analytical fees, laboratory/infrastructure access, equipment, hardware/software, or other project costs not directly related to mobility.

This contribution **is not a full cost coverage**; it is intended to facilitate mobility.

The final grant amount depends on the application request and the potential for adjustment by the Core Group, based on the proposal's value for money, period, and location of stay, as well as available funds. (The COST ceiling of up to €4,000 per STSM applies as a maximum, not a guarantee.) If justified and if funds permit, pre-payment of up to 50% may be granted at the discretion of the Grant Holder.

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### 4) Timeline, windows, and start periods (no first-come, first-served)

Selection is organised in **windows** with **cut-off deadlines** and **ranking** (no rolling evaluation):

- **Window 1 – Deadline 15/12/2025 → Results to be announced on 22/12/2025**
- **Window 2 – Deadline 25/01/2026 → Results to be announced on 01/02/2026**
- **Window 3 – Deadline 25/03/2026 → Results to be announced on 01/04/2026**

The available budget for STSMs will be spread among the three windows.

All STSMs **must be completed by 30/09/2026**.

Applications are evaluated and **ranked** within each window; funding is awarded from the top of the ranking until the window's budget is exhausted. Applications deemed fundable but not funded in a window may be resubmitted to the next window.

All proposals are evaluated by a Grant Awarding Panel composed of Core Group members. The Panel assesses proposals against the published evaluation criteria (Section 5) to confirm adherence to the Action's objectives and that the requested mobility budget is reasonable and proportionate. The Panel may request clarifications or budget revisions prior to approval. Applicants will receive an outcome within approximately one week after the deadline of submission. Final funding decisions are taken by the Core Group, subject to funding availability.

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## 5) Evaluation criteria (total 80 points)

1. **Scientific quality & alignment with TRANSPAN** (30)
2. **Work plan & feasibility** (15)
3. **Expected impact on the Action** (deliverables, networking, knowledge transfer) (15)
4. **Academic age & Inclusiveness** (10) – merits of **Young Researchers and Innovators** (defined by COST as researchers or innovators under the age of 40) and alignment with Inclusiveness Target Countries
5. **Host institution alignment & suitability** (10) – level and quality assessed **solely** by adherence to TRANSPAN objectives and the specific match to the proposed work (no generic prestige metrics)

**Tiebreakers:** (i) Inclusiveness Target Countries; (ii) Early-Career applicants (academic age); (iii) balanced topical and geographical distribution.

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## 6) How to apply (via e-COST)

Submit via **e-COST** (Grant applications → **STSM**), using the official forms. Upload:

- the STSM application form,

- **Host acceptance letter** (signed; issued within the last 3 months),
- **short CV** (max 2 pages),

#### Grant type Templates

- Short-term Scientific Mission (STSM) <https://www.cost.eu/STSM>
- GrantApplication [http://www.cost.eu/STSM\\_report\\_template](http://www.cost.eu/STSM_report_template)

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### 7) Decision, negotiation, and grant letters

Applications are reviewed and ranked against the published criteria. The **Core Group** agrees the final list and amounts. Where appropriate, the Grant Awarding Coordinator may request clarifications or minor **budget revisions** (mobility items only) prior to approval. The **Grant awarding coordinator** or **Grant Holder Manager** issues the **Grant Letter** via e-COST.

### 8) Reporting and payment

Within **30 days** of completing the STSM (or within **15 days** of the Grant Period end, whichever comes first), the grantee submits the required **report** and supporting documents in e-COST. Payments are executed **after approval** of the report. **Pre-payment up to 50%** may be considered when duly justified and if funds allow.

### 9) Contacts

Grant Awarding Coordinator: Manuel Gentiluomo - [manuel.gentiluomo@unipi.it](mailto:manuel.gentiluomo@unipi.it)

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### 10) Principles

The call follows COST principles of **open and transparent** selection and promotes **Excellence and Inclusiveness** across the Action.

COST rules: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V3.0-25-IX-2025.pdf>

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## STSM Budget Formula (COST-aligned)

Purpose. Ensure awards are fair and transparent–reasonable for short/intermediate stays, stricter on longer ones. The calculation provides a maximum allowable request; applicants can reallocate funds internally (e.g., spend more than the travel lump sum) as long as the total requested does not exceed this maximum. The COST global cap still applies.

### Inputs

Travel lump sum: €300 by default (may be increased if well-justified for unusually high travel costs, but still within the total cap).

Living support (three bands):

35% of daily allowance (DA) for days 1-7;

22% of DA for days 8-16;

18% of DA for each additional day (day 17+).

Rounding: round to the nearest €100.

Cap: €4,000 maximum (COST limit).

Nature: this is a maximum calculation; internal allocation is flexible. This formula provides the maximum amount that applicants are allowed to request. Applicants may request a lower amount.

Reference [Table STSM\\_2026.pdf](#)

2024 Daily allowance table

<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2024/11/2024-Daily-allowance-table.pdf>

The STSM Budget Formula defines the maximum amount that applicants are normally allowed to request. This ceiling ensures fairness, transparency, and proportionality across all applications. Requests above the calculated maximum may be considered only in exceptional and well-justified circumstances. Such requests must be explicitly submitted by the applicant and must include:

A written justification explaining why a higher budget is necessary,

A detailed budget plan listing all expected expenses (travel, accommodation, local transfers, subsistence, and any other mobility-related costs),

Documented evidence (screenshots, quotes, itineraries, etc.) supporting each cost item,

A clear explanation of why no more economical alternatives are reasonably available.

Submitting these documents does not guarantee that the request will be evaluated.

The Grant Awarding Panel retains full discretion to decide whether: to accept or reject the consideration of the exceptional request, and if accepted, to approve, reduce, or deny the requested amount.

Such cases must remain rare and exceptional, and applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the standard maximum defined by the formula.