IRENE COST Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM)

• Guidelines for COST Action CA18118 •

Note: These guidelines are prepared in accordance with the COST Association rules and/or the decisions of the Management Committee of the COST Action CA18118. For more information please go to the COST Vademecum (version June 2019): https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Vademecum_June2019.pdf

1) Definitions and objectives

- Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) are institutional visits aimed at supporting individual mobility, strengthening existing networks and fostering collaboration between individuals.
- STSM allow 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.
- A STSM should specifically contribute to the research coordination and capacity building objectives of the IRENE COST Action CA18118 outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) available at: https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA18118/

2) Eligibility rules

The STSM applicants are selected with regards to the scientific scope of the STSM application, which must be in line with the IRENE COST Action CA18118 objectives.
- STSM applicants must be:
    o a PhD student or
    o a postdoctoral fellow or
    o employed by (or affiliated to) to an institution, organisation or legal entity, which has a clear association with performing research.

3) Application

- All eligible applicants must register for an e-COST profile at: https://e-services.cost.eu/ and fill out their personal profile (affiliation, education, CV).
- After filling out the profile, applicants must submit their application through the STSM application tab on e-COST (https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm) according to the user guide available here.
- Applications from Early Career Investigators (ECI) and from Eastern European Countries are strongly encouraged.

Please note that the STSM Coordinator may request additional information to substantiate the information contained in the application documents submitted by the applicant.

4) Home and Host Institutions

The following table shows the scenarios available to eligible STSM applicants:

Applicant's Home Institution	STSM Host Institution
Located in a Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member	Located in another Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member
	Located in a Participating COST Partner Member
	Action MC Observer from IPC
	Action MC Observer from NNC
	The EU Commission or an EU Body, Office or Agency
	An approved European RTD Organisation
	An approved International Organisation
Action MC Observer from NNC	Located in a Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member
Located in an Approved European RTD Organisation	Located in a Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member

5) Evaluation and selection of applicants

- The evaluation and selection of applicants will be performed by the STSM Coordinator in cooperation with the Action Vice-Chair.
- In case the application is rejected, the applicant will receive an explanation on why it was rejected. The applicant can then adjust and re-submit the application according to the recommendations provided. If the applicant does not agree with the decision of the STSM Coordinator and Action Vice-Chair, the decision will be delegated to the Management Committee, who will decide whether to accept or reject the applicant.
- The Management Committee must be informed by the STSM Coordinator which applications have been approved and which have been rejected.
- The STSM Coordinator's tasks include: evaluating applications, submitting them to Vice Chair with recommendations, approving/rejecting applications in e-COST based on Vice Chair's statement, evaluating the scientific report after the STSM, post-approving/rejecting the report.
- Vice Chair's tasks include: approving/rejecting applications based on documents and recommendations provided by the STSM Coordinator.
- The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application, which must be related to the IRENE COST Action objectives.
- For the first Grant Period, only one Grantee per country is eligible to receive a STSM Grant in order to respect the geographical balance of the Action.
- Special considerations: gender balance, Early Career Investigators[1], geographical inclusiveness.

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[1] An individual who is within a time span of up to 8 years from the date they received their PhD/doctorate.

6) Duration

- STSM must have a minimum duration of 5 days and a maximum duration of 90 days (including travel).
- For Early Career Investigators (ECI) the maximum duration can be extended up to 180 days.
- All STSM need to be carried out in their entirety within a single Grant Period and within the Action's lifetime.
- For the period of the STSM neither the MC, nor the COST Office nor the Grant Holder may be considered as an employer. The grantees must make their own arrangements for all health, social, personal security, taxation and pension matters.

7) Financial support

- STSM Grants are only a contribution to the grantee and do not necessarily cover all expenses.
- The foreseen contribution for each STSM for the first Grant Period is **1.282 EUR** (according to the Work and Budget Plan).
- Researchers from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC)[2] can request a pre-payment of 50% of their STSM Grant when they complete the first day of their STSM.

8) STSM process and topics

STSM's offer the following possibilities:

- Applicants can either follow their own research ideas related to the objectives of the IRENE COST Action CA18118 and work on the topic in a host institution of their choice (according to the rules described in section 4 of this document) or
- Applicants can follow one of the topics proposed by the MC and Working Groups and work in a host institution of their choice or
- Applicants can apply for one of the STSM research opportunities proposed by the Action Chair/Management Committee/Working Groups published as Open Calls.
- The topics must be connected to the main focus of the IRENE COST Action CA18118.
- Example of suitable topic areas:

    o Stroke care quality measurement and improvement (e.g. descriptive studies on the level of stroke care in relevant countries),
    o Stroke care quality audit and feedback,
    o Registries: data collection; data analysis; programming; GDPR etc.,
    o Implementation study design, data analysis and data interpretation,
    o Leadership in stroke care.

- STSM Grantees are welcomed to use the topics specified above. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to propose their own topics, as long as the scientific scope of the proposed STSM supports the Action in achieving its objectives.

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[2] ITCs: *Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Serbia and Turkey.*

9) After the STSM

- The Grantee is obliged to submit a short scientific report to the host institution and to the STSM Coordinator for approval within 30 days from the end of the STSM.
- The submission of the supporting documents is mandatory, otherwise the Grant gets cancelled. Late submission beyond the deadline can also lead to the cancellation of the Grant.
- A scientific report template is available on the Supporting documents page or on-line here: http://www.cost.eu/STSM_report_template
- The scientific report must contain:
    - Purpose of the STSM
    - Description of work carried out during the STSM
    - Description of the main results obtained
    - Future collaborations
- After the report submission, the STSM either approves or rejects the report.
- The grant can be paid after the STSM Coordinator and a senior researcher affiliated to the host institution approve the STSM scientific report.

For further information about the STSM application process, please read the **COST Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) User guide** available here or contact the STSM Coordinator Ms Veronika Svobodova (svobodova.stroke@gmail.com).