

**COST OFFICE**  
***SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS (STSM)***



STSMguide COST ESF.doc

.12.02.04.

**COST OFFICE**

**Guideline for the implementation of Short-Term Scientific Missions (Exchange visits) in the COST framework**

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**A. General**

The aim of a Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) shall be to contribute to the scientific objectives of a COST Action.

These Missions (Exchange Visits) are aimed at strengthening the existing networks by allowing scientists to go to an institution or laboratory in another COST country to foster collaboration, to learn a new technique or to make measurements using instruments and/or methods not available in their own institution/laboratory. They are particularly intended for young scientists.

The Applicant must be engaged in a programme of research as a post graduate student or postdoctoral fellow or be employed in an institution of a COST Member State having signed the MoU of the Action concerned. This institution should be actively participating in the COST Action.

The host institution can be public or private, and should be in a COST Member State having signed the MoU and participating in the COST Action.

The STSM should be not in the country where the Applicant is normally resident.

The power of selecting the candidates is delegated to the Management Committee (MC) of the Action.

Short-term Scientific Missions between different Actions of the same field might be considered by the Management Committees involved in exceptional and fully justified cases.

For the period of the mission neither the MC of the COST Action nor the COST Office may be considered as the employer and grantees must make their own arrangements for all health, social, personal security and pension matters.

Applications may be submitted according to the schedules stipulated by the MC of the relevant Action, bearing in mind that delays must be taken into account for the assessment and administrative procedures. The application together with the MC approval should arrive at least 4 weeks before the mission at the COST Office.

## **B. Finance and Duration**

The financial support is a contribution to the costs of a STSM and may not necessarily cover all the costs in each case. The grant should normally cover only travel and subsistence.

The average contribution for a STSM will be a fixed grant based on the Applicants budget request and decision of the assessment committee. It will not normally exceed € 2000. Any exceptions need special justification.

The cost associated with the STSM must not exceed the limits set in the general rules for the reimbursement by COST of travel by experts.

Payments will be made after completion of the STSM and submission of the scientific report duly refereed by the **host institution** (see below).

An advance payment may be made in exceptional circumstances, which will require additional special justification.

## **C. Duration**

Short-Term Scientific Missions, minimum one week (5 working days), maximum 1 month, shall be made within the duration of the operation identified in the proposal and within the duration of the respective COST Action.

## **D. The Applicant**

1. Eligibility: see under item "General"
- 2 The Applicant must send a STSM application with a supporting document by his/her Institution, together with a budget request, to the MC chair or the MC member responsible for the STSM with a copy to the relevant Science Officer of the Action.  
This application must be accompanied by an **acceptance form** completed by the host institution.
- 3 Applications must contain the following information:
  - Applicant's title, name, postal address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address
  - name, postal address, telephone, fax and email of the prospective host at the receiving institute, title of the research project
  - the planned dates and length of stay
  - a short description of the proposed work plan (about 250 words)
  - a curriculum vitae of maximum two A4 pages
  - a budget request for the cost of the STSM
  - confirmation to acknowledge COST in future publications resulting from the grantee's work in relation with the grant

#### 4 STSM Scientific report

The grantee must send a STSM Scientific report endorsed by the host institution within 4 weeks of the end of the STSM (see below)

#### 5. Host institution

The grantee is responsible for obtaining the agreement of the host institution, before applying.

### **E. The Assessment**

1. The MC of the Action will make the assessment and decision of the application.
2. The MC may formally delegate these tasks to a sub-groups of its members (assessment panel), which may vary from time to time and from scheme to scheme, to assess proposals and to agree to those which may be funded
3. It is recommended that this assessment panel consists of more than two persons in order to avoid a conflict of interest, plus one person authorized to take the decision (typically the Committee Chair). External advice may be sought.
4. The MC should agree the criteria for assessing applications in line with the Actions objectives. Wherever possible, these criteria should be made known to potential applicants in advance.
5. The MC Chair or the MC member responsible for the STSM is responsible for circulating the application for decision to the assessment panel.
6. It is expected that every care will be taken to avoid any bias on the grounds of gender, age or nationality.
7. The decisions and any related assessments or rationale, should be reported to the next MC meeting and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
8. MC members and other assessors should not involve themselves in the assessment of proposals in which they have a personal or financial interest. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. uniqueness of expertise), such a bar may be waived with the agreement of the other members involved, if the interest is declared and considered not to compromise the potential decision.
9. The MC chair or the MC member responsible for the STSM has to inform the COST-Office Science Officer or Administrating institute (in case of an annual grant holder such as in the TIST domain) about the decision. After checking the application for the compatibility with the existing rules and procedures the Science Officer will inform the Applicant about the outcome of the assessment and will arrange the necessary formalities for the issue of the grant in case of a positive result and availability of funding.

### **F Scientific Report**

The grantee is required to submit to the MC chair or the MC member responsible for the STSM a short scientific report on the visit within 4 weeks after his stay. No payment can be made without this report.

It should contain the following information:

- Purpose of the visit
- Description of the work carried out during the visit
- Description of the main results obtained

- Future collaboration with host institution (*if applicable*)
- Projected publications/articles resulting or to result from the STSM
- Confirmation by the host institute of the successful execution of the mission
- Other comments (*if any*)

The MC Chair or the MC member responsible for the STSM is responsible for approving the final report and the relaying of the approval to the COST Office or the Administrating institute.

The COST office or the administrating institute will execute the payment of the fixed grant directly to the grantee or the organizing institute as requested in the application after receipt of the following documents:

- Approved STSM Scientific report
- Host report
- Completed Payment request form .

#### **Enclosure**

- STSM Application Form
- STSM Evaluation Form
- STSM Acceptance by the Host Institution
- STSM Payment request form

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# STSM      F O R M S

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**STSM APPLICATION FORM**

Please complete electronically and send via e-mail

REFERENCE: Short Term Scientific Mission,  
COST **Action Number**  
Beneficiary/Applicant: **Beneficiary Name, Beneficiary Institution**  
Host: **Host Name, Host Institution**  
Period: from **start date** to **end date** Place: **STSM place**

**For the attention of the chairperson of the Management Committee (cc to the relevant Science Officer)**

**1. APPLICANT**

**Family Name** .....

**Forename**

**Gender (for statistical purposes)**

**Academic qualifications (Title, Degrees) :**

**Nationality**

**Address**

**e-mail**

**Telephone**

**Fax**

**2. HOME ORGANISATION :**  
**Full address**

**3. HOST**  
**Family name**  
**Forename**  
**ORGANISATION**  
**Full address**

4. **STSM PERIOD:** from            to

**5. DETAILED WORKING PLAN** (to be attached)

**6. DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF THE GRANT REQUEST** (to be attached)

- Amounts in EUR and national currency
- Amount requested from Cost office : - travel costs, - subsistence allowance
- Indication of contribution from other sources (national and/or private)

**7. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY APPLICANT INSTITUTION**

**8. ACCEPTANCE BY THE HOST INSTITUTION** (enclosed)

**I declare that the information provided is accurate and complete.**

*Date :* .....

*Signature :* .....

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**STSM Acceptance by the Host Institution**

REFERENCE: Short Term Scientific Mission,  
COST **Action Number**  
Beneficiary: **Beneficiary Name, Beneficiary Institution**  
Host: **Host Name, Host Institution**  
Period: from **start date** to **end date** Place: **stsm place**

This declaration is to be completed by the head of the host research group and returned to the grant applicant.

Please complete electronically (host details) and send by e-mail:

**Family Name** :

**Foreames** :

**Organisation** :

**Street** :

**Town and Postcode** :

**Country** :

**Telephone** :

**Telefax** :

**E-mail Address** :

I am willing to host \_\_\_\_\_, in my institution on a short-term scientific mission in the frame of the COST Action \_\_\_\_\_ to undertake the work described in the attached work plan during the period . from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Date** : .....

**Signature** : .....

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**STSM EVALUATION FORM**

COST Action : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Working Group : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Proposing Applicant : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Host Institute : \_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL CRITERIA**

CRITERIA	MARK *	COMMENT
➤ <b>Scientific quality of the application</b> . originality . feasibility of approach		
➤ <b>Compatibility with the COST Action</b> . compatibility with the MoU . added value to Action . extended network of contacts . timeframe of application . timeframe of Action		
➤ <b>Realism of the Application</b> . feasibility within timeframe proposed . justification of the finance requested		
➤ <b>Qualifications of the Applicant</b> . research being undertaken . research already undertaken . publications . participation in international research cooperation		
➤ <b>Application of Results</b> . impact for Action . dissemination of result		
<b>Overall Evaluation</b>		

Recommend to Accept	
Recommend to Reject	
Recommend to Modify	

\* Please indicate one of the following : (NA = not applicable, 1 = poor, 2 = average, 3 = good). The subdivisions of the criteria only indicate examples of the factors to be considered and do not require an individual evaluation. If your recommendation is "modify" then please explain how.