COST TD1101:
Short term scientific missions (STSM)

Detailed description of the STSM rules is provided within

COST Vademecum (Part B) – Grant System
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4.1. Objectives

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

STSM (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 take measurements using instruments and/or methods not available in their own institution/laboratory**.

They are particularly intended for young scientists (less than PhD + 8 years).

4.2. The Applicant

The Applicant should normally be engaged in a programme of research as a postgraduate student or postdoctoral fellow or be employed in an institution of a COST Country having accepted the MoU of the Action.

This institution shall be actively participating in the COST Action.

4.3. Home and Host Institution

The home and the host institution can be public or private.
A STSM may only be approved:

- from **a home institution in a COST participating country to a host institution in another COST participating country** or to a formally approved host institution in a non-COST country.

- from a formally approved home institution in a Near Neighbour country to a host institution in a COST participating country.

4.4. Duration

Short-Term Scientific Missions, **minimum 5 working days - maximum 3 months**, **shall be made within the time frame of the operation identified in the proposal and** within the period of the respective Action.

4.5. Financial Support

The financial support **is a contribution to the costs of a ST**SM and **<u>may not necessarily cover all the costs</u>** in each case.

The grant should normally cover **only travel and subsistence**.

The financial contribution for a STSM will be a fixed grant based on the Applicant's budget request and the evaluation of the application by the STSM assessment committee. An amount of EUR 60 to 90 for the daily allowance in particular for longer stays and EUR 300 forvthe travel is recommended but not obligatory.

Fixed amount: - 2 months = 2000 €

                 - 45 days = 1500 €

                 - 1 month = 1000 €

                 - 15 days = 500 €

Number of Grants (missions/exchange visits):

At least 16 (4 each year) **Grants** with total annual budget of 10000 €.

The number of **Grants** is planned to be equalized among WGs (Working Groups) as each group is supposed to have at least 4 (**5 this year**) incoming and out-coming visits over the COST action period (4 years).

4.6. Registration and Deadlines

The Applicant must use the **on-line registration tool. (see 4.10 - How to submit an** application - VADEMECUM).

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 be sent to the Grant Holder and respect the deadline set by the Grant Holder (e.g., at least **4 weeks before the STSM starts**).

4.7. Assessment

a) **The MC of the Action will make the scientific and budgetary assessment and take the final decision**.

The MC may formally delegate these tasks to :

• the STSM coordinator or,

• a sub-group of its members (**assessment panel**), which may vary from time to time and from scheme to scheme, to assess proposals and to agree on those which may be funded.

It is recommended that this **assessment panel** consists of **more than two people** in order to avoid a conflict of interest, in addition to **one person who is authorized to take the decision (normally the Chair)**. External advice may be sought.

Member of **assessment panel** are:

➢ Gudrun Brockmann (vice coordinator),
➢ Ino Curik (Co-ordinator),
➢ Luca Fontanesi,
➢ Hervé Garreau
➢ WG leaders

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.

b) The MC should agree the criteria for assessing applications in line with the Action objectives. Wherever possible, these criteria should be made known in advance to potential applicants. It is expected that every care will be taken to avoid any bias on the grounds of gender, age or nationality.

Applications evaluated on the proposal according to grading system based on:

- does the application fits to the COST Action?
- what are the benefits for the COST Action?
- scientific quality of the proposed research
- quality (transparency/clearness) of the proposal
- **completeness** of the proposal

4.8. Approval

➢ The **MC Chair or the STSM coordinator is responsible for circulating the application for decision to the assessment panel**.

➢ **The MC Chair or the STSM coordinator has to inform the Grant Holder about the decision**.

➢ After checking the application for the compatibility with the existing rules and procedures the **Grant Holder 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.

➢ The decisions and assessments regarding all STSM applications shall be reported to the next MC meeting **and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.**

4.9. Deviation

Any deviations and exceptions from this procedure may be considered, provided that they contribute to the scientific objectives of the Action.

They require prior approval from the COST Office

4.10. How to Submit a STSM Application

4.10.1. Registration by the applicant

The Applicant must use the **on-line registration tool to register their request for an STSM** (see https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm). The following information has to be encoded with the registration:

1. the Action number;
2. the title of the planned STSM;
3. the start and end date;
4. the applicant's details, including key academic details and workplan;
5. the applicant's bank details;
6. the host institution's ;
7. financial data (amount for travel and subsistence).

4.10.2. Formal STSM application and annexes

After encoding the information via the on-line registration tool will issue a formal STSM application (see 4.12) which has to be downloaded and sent by the applicant electronically (by e-mail as attachment) together with any necessary document which the Applicant may regard as helpful in supporting the application at the evaluation process (such as CV, full workplan, list of publications, motivation letter, letter of support from the home institute etc.) to:

• the future Host institution of the STSM;
• the MC Chair or the STSM coordinator.

4.10.3. Assessment of the STSM

The MC Chair & the STSM coordinator will arrange the assessment of the STSM.

4.10.4. Approval from the MC

The MC Chair or the STSM coordinator informs the Grant Holder that the proposed STSM has been approved in the form of an e-mail stating:

"Subject: STSM Reference number, COST Action number, grantees name

On behalf of the Management Committee of the above COST Action I would like to inform you after evaluation that:

a) the attached request for an STSM has been approved and;

b) a grant of EUR x has been recommended and;

c) the host institute accepted the proposal."

4.10.5. The Grant letter (see 4.13 - sample)

The Grant Holder will send to the Applicant a **Grant letter in which he/she is informed about:**

a) the approval of the STSM and;
b) the level of the financial grant given.

The Applicant has to return this **Grant letter, after accepting the grant with his/her signature.**

4.11. After the STSM

4.11.1. STSM Scientific Report

After completion of the STSM the grantee is required to submit to the host institution and MC Chair (or the STSM coordinator) a short scientific report on the visit **within 4 weeks after his/her stay**.
It should contain the following information:
• purpose of the STSM;
• description of the work carried out during the STSM;
• description of the main results obtained;
• future collaboration with host institution (if applicable);
• foreseen publications/articles resulting or to result from the STSM (if applicable);
• confirmation by the host institution of the successful execution of the STSM;
• other comments (if any).

4.11.2. Approval and payment

The MC Chair or the STSM coordinator is responsible for:

• approving the scientific report

• informing the Grant Holder that the STSM has been successfully accomplished and that the grant can be paid.

The e-mail should include the scientific report and state:
"Subject: STSM Reference number, COST Action number, grantee's name

On behalf of the Management Committee of the above
COST Action I would like to inform you that:

1) The above STSM has been completed from
    <Start date> to <End date>

2) The scientific report has been approved by the MC and Host.

3) The amount of EUR X can be paid"

After reception of the approval mail and the scientific report, the Grant Holder will execute the payment of the fixed grant directly to the grantee or the host institution as requested in the application.

Our deadlines

2012

To spend the first 10,000 euro already allocated in the budget

Very soon (<15 days): Announcement

1st May: Deadline Application

15th May: Decision

1st June to 15th December: Missions

<30 days from mission: Reports

2012

Another application will be opened in case we have saved money from the budget allocated for the Bologna meeting (we will know after all reimbursements, but it is almost sure)

Our deadlines ?

2013, 2014, 2015

Budget plan (> 30 days in advance): Announcement

All procedures are still to be defined

The idea is to have highly flexible procedures in order to cover all needs and situations

Thank you !