

Guidelines for Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) Grants

1. Introduction

As defined by the COST Association, a Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) Grant supports a research visit by a researcher or innovator to a host institution located in a country different from that of their primary affiliation. The visit is undertaken for a specific scientific purpose and for a defined period.

STSMs provide benefits to both the grantee and the host institution:

For the STSM Grantee:

- Funding to implement a research project with an international team;
- Access to new knowledge, methodologies, equipment, or techniques unavailable at the home institution;
- Opportunities to expand professional networks and develop future collaborations.

For the Host Institution:

- Engagement with an international researcher;
- Exchange of expertise and knowledge;
- Opportunities to establish long-term scientific collaborations.

2. Purpose of STSMs

STSMs are designed to support scientific collaboration and capacity building within the Action by:

a) Skill and Knowledge Transfer

Enabling researchers to acquire specific methods, techniques, skills, or theoretical knowledge not available at their home institution.

b) Access to Research Infrastructure

Providing access to unique datasets, specialised equipment, laboratories, and advanced research facilities.

c) Network Strengthening

Promoting sustainable collaborations between researchers and institutions, facilitating future joint projects and funding applications.

d) Contribution to Action Objectives

Supporting activities that directly contribute to the objectives, deliverables, and Working Group plans defined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of COST Action CA24162.

3. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Be an Action participant with a primary affiliation to a legal entity located in a COST Full Member, COST Cooperating Member, COST Near Neighbour Country (NNC), or European RTD Organisation.
- Be a researcher or innovator undertaking a scientific visit to a host institution located in a country different from their country of affiliation.
- Conduct the STSM at a host institution located in a participating COST Full Member, COST Cooperating Member, COST Partner Member country, Approved International Partner Country (IPC), or NNC institution.
- Undertake an STSM with a minimum duration of **five (5) calendar days**, excluding travel days.
- Ensure that the proposed activities are fully aligned with the scope and objectives of the Action.
- Receive no more than **one STSM Grant per Grant Period**.

4. Evaluation and Selection Procedure

As approved by the Management Committee (MC), applications will be evaluated by a **Selection Committee** consisting of five to seven members.

Committee members with a conflict of interest, including applicants themselves or members evaluating applications from their own institution or laboratory, will be excluded from the evaluation process for the relevant call.

Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

	Category	Points	Weight
1.	Quality and clarity of the STSM proposal	1-10	40 %
2.	Relevance to CA24162 objectives/WG plans	1-10	25 %
3.	Benefit to the applicant and applicants' profile	1-10	15 %
4.	Host suitability and added value for the Action	1-10	10 %
5.	Budget planning	1-10	10 %

Bonus Points

Additional points will be awarded as follows:

- Applicant from an Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC): **+2 points**
- Career stage:
 - PhD candidate: **+2 points**
 - Postdoctoral researcher: **+1 point**
 - Later career stages: **0 points**
- No previous support received from the Action: **+1 point**

Tie-Breaking Criteria

In the event of identical final scores, applications will be prioritised according to the following criteria:

1. Early-career researchers (under 40 years of age);
2. Gender balance;
3. Country balance.

Successful applicants will receive a Grant Letter generated through the e-COST platform.

5. Modification of Approved STSM Dates

If approved STSM dates need to be changed, the applicant must inform both the Grant Holder and the Grant Awarding Coordinator before the originally approved start date and provide a clear justification for the requested modification.

Requests submitted after the original start date will not be considered.

6. Financial Support

The STSM Grant is intended to contribute to the costs of:

- Economy-class travel;
- Accommodation;
- Daily subsistence expenses.

STSM grantees are responsible for making their own arrangements regarding personal security, health insurance, taxation, social security, travel insurance and visas (if applicable).

The STSM must include a minimum of five calendar days dedicated to scientific work. Travel days are not counted towards the duration of the mission. Although no formal maximum duration is imposed, a duration of up to **90 days** is generally recommended.

All STSM activities must be completed before the deadline specified in the relevant call.

The amount awarded will be determined by the Action Core Group, based on the recommendation of the evaluators, considering the requested budget, duration, and destination of the mission.

7. Reporting Requirements and Grant Payment

Required Documents

1. STSM Grant Report

The applicant must submit a Grant Report using the official STSM Grant Report template available through e-COST.

The report should not exceed four pages and should consider the following:

- The report is a public document; applicants should therefore take Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) considerations into account.
- The report is not intended to present detailed scientific results. Instead, it should describe how the mission contributed to the objectives of the STSM and strengthened collaboration between the home and host institutions within the framework of the Action.
- The report should include a short dissemination summary (maximum 280 characters, including spaces) suitable for publication on the AdResCanCER social media channels.
- Applicants should also provide a photograph with collaborators or a short video, uploaded separately through e-COST.

2. Host Institution Confirmation

A signed letter or email from the senior researcher at the host institution confirming the successful completion of the STSM.

3. Dissemination of STSM Results

In addition to the reporting requirements established by the COST Association, AdResCanCER STSM grantees are expected to actively disseminate the outcomes of their missions within the Action.

Following the successful completion of the STSM, grantees will be required to present their work either:

- During an AdResCanCER webinar; or
- At the first suitable AdResCanCER meeting following completion of the STSM.

Presentations should highlight the objectives of the mission, the activities undertaken, the collaboration established with the host institution, the results obtained and the contribution to the objectives of the Action.

Grantees will be invited to participate in these dissemination activities subject to the availability of funds within the relevant Grant Period.

Failure to Submit Documentation

Failure to submit the required documentation within the specified deadlines will result in cancellation of the grant.

The Grant Awarding Coordinator and the Grant Holder Scientific Representative will review and approve the submitted report and confirm successful completion of the mission. Grant payments will be processed by the Grant Holder Institution only after all required reports and supporting documents have been approved.

All documentation must be uploaded through the e-COST platform before payment can be requested.

8. STSM Cancellation

If an applicant is unable to undertake or complete the approved STSM, they must promptly inform the Grant Holder and the Grant Awarding Coordinator, providing an explanation for the cancellation. The grant request will then be withdrawn accordingly.