

Short Term Scientific Missions – CANTATA guidelines

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) are exchange visits aimed at supporting individual researchers' mobility, strengthening existing networks and fostering collaboration between researchers in different countries. Every STSM must contribute significantly to the objectives of the COST Action. STSM can only support visits to institutions in another participating COST country or an approved NNC institution or an approved IPC institution. Host institutions are expected to support one candidate only per STSM call.



Applicants should normally be employed at, or a student at, an institution of a COST participating country having accepted the MoU of CANTATA. Moreover, it is expected that this country has a record of active participation in CANTATA. In the following we outline some useful information for candidates who wish to apply for STSM funding.

- It order to allow for a larger number of STSM, the MC is of the opinion that most exchange visits should be limited to 5 funded days. According to the COST Action rule, this allows the applicant to claim for 6 nights of accommodation (arrival Sunday, work Monday to Friday, departure Saturday). Visits can be extended by other (i.e. external) sources of funding available to participants. This means recipients are allowed to stay longer than the number of days for which funding was approved.
- Some research projects might require a longer than 5 working days exchange visits. The CANTATA network is open to such proposals, provided they can be fully justified.
- Candidates have to justify how their proposed visit assists the CANTATA network referring in particular to the MoU, strategic plan, and its scientific aims.
- Candidates should have a quick look at the rules for submitting travel expenses as they contain some specifics. Applicants are encouraged to get familiar with the travel reimbursement instructions <http://www.cost.eu/module/download/43361>
 1. Accommodation expenses are paid against a flat per-diem rate of €120 irrespective of the actual cost, this flat rate includes breakfast. No copies of receipts are required. This means recipients can extend their visit by using less expensive accommodation should they wish to do so.
 2. Meals are paid against flat rates only. No invoices or receipts from the meal providers are required. Flat rates can never exceed EUR 20 per eligible meal. A maximum of up to two meals per day are eligible (two meals strictly concern lunch and dinner – breakfast expenses are not eligible expenses). Meals provided by other sources must be deducted from the number of meals that can be claimed by each participant.
 3. Economy class air travel only, even if business class happens to be less expensive.
- All candidate must apply via <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm> after which they will be informed to submit the following documentation
 1. letter of invitation from a senior researcher affiliated to the Host institution [1 page]
 2. STSM application form (attached to this email as a pdf document)
 3. motivation letter including a work plan detailing the proposed activities [1 page]
 4. support letter / email from the Home Institution [1 page]
 5. full CV [up to 3 pages]
 6. list of academic publications (if applicable) [no page limit]

- Candidates are advised to choose a sensible starting date for their visit after the deadline which gives the network enough time to evaluate all applications. It is expected that we require about 15 working days, or 3 calendar weeks, to inform candidates of the outcome of their applications.
- The main selection criteria for successful STSM candidates are strategic fit to the CANTATA network and scientific excellence. We are committed to a proactive approach to excellence and inclusiveness (http://www.cost.eu/about_cost/strategy/excellence-inclusiveness). We aim to promote geographical spread, involvement of early career investigators, and gender balance.
- Some notes on the evaluation process:
 1. The Chair appoints panel members to assess the applications. The panel members are the Vice-chair, WG leaders, two randomly selected MC members which change every round, and the STSM coordinator. The Chair is to act as an observer.
 2. All applications will be evaluated against the criteria outlined in this document and a ranking of the candidates will be established. We are using the Marie Curie marking scheme as a template. http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/call_ptef/ef/2016-2017/h2020-call-ef-msca-if-2016-17_en.pdf
 3. The panel will also take into account that funding should be spread across the three WGs. Moreover, the panel will also take into account that funding should be spread across all participating countries. According to COST guidelines funding for ITCs is particularly encouraged.
 4. The full MC will then vote on each ranked candidate, starting from the top. The ranking will either be approved, or the MC proceeds to re-rank the candidate. This process terminates when a final ranking has been obtained. Funding is then allocated, starting from the top of the revised list.
 5. Depending on the specific financial support requested by each applicant, it will then be decided how many STSM will be funded. The final decision on STSM funding is with the Vice-Chair.
- Any informal requests about STSM can be sent to the STSM coordinator (Christian G Boehmer, UCL, c.boehmer@ucl.ac.uk).