

STSM Procedure for COST Action IS1307 New Materialism

Objectives

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 take measurements and gain access to specific data, instruments and/or methods not available in their own institution/organisation. They are particularly intended for early stage scientists.

The COST Action IS1307 New Materialism sets up 4 STSMs per year of action, at least 2 STSM for early stage researchers and a maximum of 2 STSM for senior scholars.

The Applicant

The selection of the applicant is the responsibility of the Management Committee (MC) of the Action. The **Applicant must be** engaged in an official research programme as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow or can be employed by, or affiliated to, an Institution or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research. The institutions / organisations where applicants pursue their main strand of research are considered as Home institutions. The Host institution is the institution / organisation that will host the successful applicant.

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

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

In exceptional cases, the COST Office reserves the right to analyse the possibility of reimbursement of any person designated by itself or by the Management Committee.

The Applicant is responsible for obtaining the agreement of the host institution before submitting his/her application.

Duration and Funding

- An STSM may last between a minimum of 5 working days (=1 week) and a maximum of 3 months (with a possible extension to up to 6 months for Early Stage Researchers).
- The financial support is a contribution towards the costs of an STSM and may not necessarily cover all expenses in each case. The grant should normally cover only travel and subsistence. An amount up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day and a maximum of EUR 300 for the travel is recommended but not obligatory. The total of an STSM shall normally not exceed EUR 2 500 up to 3 months (or EUR 3 500 for Early Career Investigators – above 3 months).
- **Any exception needs special justification and prior approval from the COST Office.**
- In any case the costs associated with the STSM must not exceed the limits set in the rules of reimbursement by COST of expenses for experts eligible for reimbursement.
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Application procedure for an STSM

1. Applicants¹ for STSMs should get in touch with the host institution they want to join

2. After having ensured that the host institution is happy to host the applicant, the applicant makes an online application.

The Applicant must use the on-line registration tool to register their request for an STSM.

This can be found following this URL: <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>

The encoding of the information via the on-line registration tool, will issue a formal STSM application.

- the Action number;
- the title of the planned STSM;
- the start and end date;
- the applicant's details, including key academic details and workplan;
- the applicant's bank details;
- the host institutions;
- financial data (amount for travel and subsistence).

This formal application has to be downloaded by the applicant and sent electronically (by e-mails as attachment) together with a **CV**, a **letter of intent**, which specifies the relationship of the STSM to the Action and its objectives, and a **confirmation of the host institution to the STSM coordinator**.

3. The STSM Coordinator circulates the application to the MC.

4. Assessment

The MC of the Action will make the scientific and budgetary assessment. The MC has delegated these tasks to the STSM coordinators, who administer the selection process, and propose those applicants which may be funded to the MC board. The MC board will take the final decision.

It STSM coordinator board consists of at least three people in order to avoid a conflict of interest and to manage applications at least with two coordinators. In addition the Chair of the action is authorised to take the decision. External advice may be sought.

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.

The MC has agreed on the following the criteria for assessing applications in line with the Action objectives as described in the Memorandum of Understanding:

1. The relation of the applicant's previous work to the framework (main criterion).
2. The likelihood of the applicant's benefitting from the STSM.
3. The likelihood of the STSM's contributing to the final outcome of the COST Action.

Please be aware that the STSM has to benefit the NM Cost-Action and the field at large with contributions; finishing work of the own PhD is not sufficient. Considerations involving non-inclusiveness countries will also be taken into account.

It is expected that every care will be taken to avoid any bias on the grounds of gender, age or nationality.

5. STSM Coordinator informs the Grant Holder about this decision in the form of an e-mail stating:

"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 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."*

6. The Grant Holder informs the Applicant about the decision and makes the necessary arrangements. 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.

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

After the STSM

8. After completion of the STSM, the grantee is required to submit to the host institution, the MC Chair and 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).

9. 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"*

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

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