

**MARSAFENET
COST Action IS1105**

Short Term Scientific Missions

SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) are an instrument to promote scientific collaboration between the Countries participating in the MARSAFENET Action.

These missions (exchange visits) are aimed at strengthening the network by allowing scientists to go to an institution in a COST country participating to MARSAFENET Action or an approved Near Neighbour Countries (NNC) institution or an approved International Partner Countries (IPC) institution, to foster collaboration, share knowledge and undertake research activities.

The aim of a STSM shall be to contribute to the scientific objectives of the MARSAFENET Action.

STSMs are particularly intended for young scientists.

ELIGIBILITY

STSM applicants must be engaged in a research programme as a postgraduate student or postdoctoral fellow, or be employed by or officially affiliated to an institution or legal entity (Home Institution). The home and the host institutions can be public or private.

Possible STSM scenarios are:

HOME Institution		HOST Institutions	
from	A Participating COST Country	to	Another Participating COST Country An approved NNC institution An approved International Partner Country (IPC) institution An approved Specific organization
	An approved Near Neighbour Country (NNC) institution		A Participating COST Country

The list of participating COST Countries, approved Near Neighbour Countries institutions and approved International Partner Countries institutions is available at

http://www.cost.eu/domains_actions/isch/Actions/IS1105?management

DURATION

STSMs can vary from 5 days to 90 days (and up to 180 days for Early Stage Researchers - less than PhD + 8 years).

STSMs need to be carried out in their entirety within a single grant period.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The financial support offered for a STSM is a contribution to the costs of the mission and may not necessarily cover all the costs in each case.

The financial contribution will be a fixed grant to be determined on the basis of the Action's Workplan and Budget for each Grant Period, the applicant's budget request and the evaluation of the application by the Assessment Panel. The grant should normally cover travel and subsistence and it will be paid out by the Grant Holder after the successful completion of the STSM.

According to the rules set out in the Cost Vademecum, the reimbursement rate per day is EUR 160 maximum.

STSMs ASSESSMENT PANEL

The STSMs Assessment Panel, composed by the Core Group of the Action (Chair, Vice-Chair and WGs Leaders) and the STSMs Coordinator, makes the scientific and budgetary assessment of the STSM proposals and takes the final decision based on the criteria endorsed by the Management Committee.

The Members of the Panel shall not involve themselves in the assessment of proposals which they have a personal or financial interest in.

The final decision shall always be taken by at least two members of the Assessment Panel in addition to the Chair. The Chair is authorized to take the final decision if two or more applications are acknowledged to be equivalent.

STSMs COORDINATOR

The Management Committee nominates a STSMs Coordinator.

The tasks of the STSMs Coordinator are to:

- Schedule the STSMs for each grant period, according to the budget and subject to approval by the MC;
- Collect the STSM formal applications;
- Circulate the applications for decision to the Assessment Panel and arrange the assessment of STSM proposals by the Panel;
- Inform the Grant Holder about the decision, when a STSM proposal has been approved;

- Receive and collect the scientific reports that the grantees are required to submit after the completion of the mission, for approval by the Chair;
- Send the notice of the successful completion of the STSM, allowing the grant to be paid;
- Report the results of STSM activities to the Management Committee.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING STSM PROPOSALS

The following criteria will be used to assess applications:

- Applicant's eligibility according to the requirements set out in Cost Vademecum;
- Contribution of the proposed STSM to the goals of the MARSAFENET Action (as described in the applicant's reasoning);
- Applicant's involvement in MARSAFENET Action;
- Prioritization of proposals submitted by Early-Stage researchers (PhD+8 years) for up to 50% of the applications;
- Respect of gender balance.

More detailed criteria may be established by the Management Committee with reference to each call for STSMs.

STSM - PROCESS

The application process consists of the following steps:

1. *Host institution agreement*: The Applicant is responsible for obtaining the written agreement of the host institution, before submitting his/her application.
2. *On-line Registration*: The Applicant must then use the on-line registration tool to register his/her request for an STSM www.cost.eu/STSM. The tool will produce a STSM Formal Application.
3. *Submission*: The STSM Formal Application has to be downloaded and sent by the Applicant electronically (by e-mail as attachment) to the future host institution of the STSM and to the STSMs Coordinator, together with the following supporting documents in electronic format:
 - Project: text up to 2 pages describing the context and the scientific objectives of the visit and justifying the chosen duration;
 - Budget requested: with details for the travel costs and stay expenses.
 - Reasoning for contribution of the STSM to the goals of the MARSAFENET Action (including MARSAFENET working group the project fits in).
 - CV (Europass CV template)
 - Written endorsement of the host institution

Applications shall be submitted according to the schedules stipulated by the Management Committee.

ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL

The STSM Coordinator collects the applications and arranges the evaluation of the STSM proposals by the Assessment Panel.

The STSM Assessment Panel makes the scientific and budgetary assessment. The STSM proposals are ranked on the basis of the criteria approved by the Management Committee and the additional criteria set out in the call for proposal, if any. The STSM proposals are approved by the Assessment Panel on the basis of this ranking.

The STSMs Coordinator informs the Grant Holder about the decision.

After checking the application for the compatibility with the existing rules and procedures, the Grant Holder send to the applicant a Grant letter in which he/she is informed about:

- the approval of the STSM
- the level of the financial grant given.

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

The decisions regarding STSM applications shall be reported to the next Management Committee meeting and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

REPORTING AND PAYMENT

After completion of the STSM, the grantee is required to submit to the host institution and the STSMs Coordinator a short scientific report on the visit, within 30 days after the end date of the STSM. This report needs to include: purpose of the STSM; description of the work carried out and main results obtained during the STSM; future collaboration with the host institution (if applicable); foreseen publications resulting or to result from the STSM (if applicable); confirmation by the host institution of the successful execution of the STSM.

The scientific report is submitted to MC Chair approval.

The STSM Coordinator informs the Grant Holder that the STSM has been successfully accomplished and that the grant can be paid.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The COST VADEMECUM containing guidelines for STSMs is available at <http://www.cost.eu/download/COSTVademecum>

In case of any question, please contact the MARSAFENET STSMs Coordinator, Dr. Valentina Rossi, by email valentina.rossi@cnr.it.