

ConnectLAA's WG2 - Enhance the use of LA archives for research and practice by deepening the network announces an open call for 4 STSM grants on the topic:

Exploring best practice case studies on how archives can be used to enhance landscape architecture practice

Deadline for submission: 8 December 2025

Grant Period: between 5 January and 31 July 2026 (exact period and details to be decided by mutual agreement)

Funding: up to EUR 2500 per grant

Duration: between 5 and 30 days (minimum 5 days onsite) at the host institution

Number of STSM grants available: 4 (four)

COST Action 'Connecting Landscape Architecture Archives to Enhance European Landscape Practice, Research, and Education' (ConnectLAA) aims to establish a collaborative network of researchers, practitioners, and heritage professionals to explore, connect, and utilize landscape architecture (LA) archives across Europe. By fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and knowledge sharing, ConnectLAA seeks to unlock the rich potential of these archives to inform contemporary landscape practice, research, and education. Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) are a vital instrument within ConnectLAA, enabling researchers and innovators to collaborate on focused projects, exchange expertise, and contribute to the Action's overall objectives.

Working Group 2 (WG2) of the COST Action *ConnectLAA* focuses on strengthening European competitiveness in landscape architecture (LA) history research and design practice by improving the accessibility and usability of archival material/primary sources. In addition to mapping key topics in the current academic discourse on LA history and identifying related knowledge gaps, the group examines how archives and archival research can play a crucial role in furthering the quality of design and research projects in various European countries. This activity aims to generate new knowledge on how landscape practice can be advanced through the effective use of archival resources. Potential case studies will focus on design or redesign projects in which archives played a crucial role in improving the quality and depth of the project outcomes. Studies from ITC countries are also welcome.

Main tasks:

The selected 4 STSM grantees will work with WG2 leaders and STSM hosts to:

- Identify **best-practice examples** in which landscape architecture projects effectively used archives. *Suggested action:*
 - *contact directly archives such as CIVA (catalogue exploration and interviews with landscape design planning offices, site visits in Belgium); or Nieuwe Institute (to investigate using archives for developing landscape strategies and/or research);*
 - *check the results of important design competitions and search for the awarded and realized entries which were created with reference to the archives and explore the competition sites;*
 - *contact and interview members of a renowned landscape architecture practice (LATZ+PARTNER or any other chosen and enquired in advance by the applicant) about their archive and the way they use it and how they use other archives.*
- **Collect and analyse types of documentation and materials** related to at least 2 case studies per STSM, documenting strategies used to connect archival sources with design projects outcomes. While written text and photographs are central, a wider spectrum of archival sources is strongly encouraged, such as drawings, maps, models, oral histories, digital repositories, etc. The depth and variety of materials can greatly affect the value of the study.
- **Contribute to the preparation of a catalogue of best-practice** in LA projects that are related to and based on archival sources, a WG2 Deliverable D6 (to be published in 2027).

Main output:

- A **written report** summarizing investigated case studies highlighting how archives enrich design innovation, heritage awareness, and documenting transferable lessons that will increase the utility of the catalogue for practitioners.
- Input for a catalogue of best-practice landscape projects that are related to and based on archival sources to be published (WG2 Deliverable D6).

Benefits to the STSM grantee:

- A **study visit** (at least 1 week) at a LA office, archive or a host institution with access to LA archives and/or a chosen design practice that has been using archival material in their work;
- Work alongside **archivists, designers/practitioners or researchers;**

- Exploration of **case studies** in landscape design that are related to and based on archival sources;
- Opportunity to present findings at a COST conference/meeting;
- Potential contribution to a scientific paper.

Host institution is to be decided by mutual agreement.

Eligibility and applicant profile:

This STSM is particularly suited for early-career researchers or PhD students with a strong interest in design practice and/or research and the use of archival materials in these activities. Experienced researchers and designers may also feel invited with their expertise.

Applicants should:

- be capable of conducting academically sound research independently;
- preferably have some experience or interest in academic writing;
- have some familiarity with LA archives and their use in design practice;
- have good writing skills;
- be affiliated with a COST Full/Cooperating Member country or a COST Near Neighbour Country (For the latest list of countries and organisations see <https://www.cost.eu/funding/documents-guidelines/> under ‘Country and Organisations Table’).

What is an STSM?

A **Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM)** grant funds a visit to a host organization located in a country different from the country of affiliation by a researcher or innovator for specific work to be carried out for a determined period of time.

The scope of the STSM should contribute to the objectives of the COST Action CA23128 “Connecting Landscape Architecture Archives to enhance European landscape practice, research and education (ConnectLAA)”, defined in its Memorandum of Understanding:

https://e-services.cost.eu/files/domain_files/CA/Action_CA23128/mou/CA23128-e.pdf

Who can apply?

The STSM Grant offers valuable experience for Young Researchers and Innovators as well as for the already established researchers in supporting their career development, according to the COST key principles of excellence, inclusivity, and gender balance.

What can you apply for?

You can apply for an STSM lasting between 5 and 30 days. The STSM provides a contribution for travel, accommodation, and subsistence expenses, implementation of the project, delivery of the report to the **Grant Awarding Committee**, and overall effort.

How to apply?

The application process is as follows:

Applicant must carefully read the funding rules detailed in supporting documents (see: Main information, supported documents and links) Applicant must create an account and submit an application through an e-COST. Main information to be provided in the application:

To be filled in e-COST:

- Title
- Start and end date (within the active Grant Period of the Action)
- Budget requested by the applicant;
- Information about the host institution and contact person. The location of host institution must be in a different country than the country of affiliation of the applicant;

To be uploaded to e-COST:

- Application form (template available on e-COST) describing goals, description of the work to be carried out by the applicant (proposed work plan), expected outcomes and description of the contribution to the Action Memorandum of Understanding objectives;
- A short CV (maximum 2 pages) including recent publications, if applicable.
- The budget requested (in €) the STSM duration in days (with a minimum of 5 calendar days, including travel time) and a Budget Breakdown detailing justification for accommodation, travel expenses, and per diem allowance in a separate file. Each successful applicant is eligible for up to a maximum of €2000 in total funding, subject to the duration of the STSM and the location of the host institution.
- A written agreement from the host institution confirming the STSM applicant's ability to carry out the activities outlined in the STSM work plan on the approved dates.

Evaluation:

The **Grant Awarding Committee** will assess each application.

Main criteria for evaluation will be as follows:

The relevance and application of the research to the field of the Action and Working Groups Objectives and Deliverables (30%).

- Clarity in defining the relevant Working Group's topic and specific deliverable(s) addressed in the proposal.
- Demonstration of how the proposed work plan aligns with and supports the development of upcoming deliverables.
- Identification of participation in the development process of relevant deliverables during or after completing the STSM.

Scientific Excellence and Quality of the Proposed Work Plan (30%)

- The quality and clarity of the proposed research;
- Assessment of the proposed work plan's scientific rigor and innovative aspects.
- Feasibility and realism of the planned activities.

Promotion of Collaboration and Know-How Exchange (15%)

- Evaluation of the STSM's potential to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange within ConnectLAA.
- Consideration of consolidating existing collaborations and establishing new scientific contacts is particularly encouraged.

Realistic Budget Planning (10%)

- Justification of the financial aspects of the application.
- Reasonableness of the estimated expenses.

Other criteria (15%)

- The applicant's profile will be considered towards the potential of successfully completing the STSM based on her/his previous work and active participation and contribution to the activities of the Action's working groups.
- Geographical distribution of applicants within the same STSM call.
- Gender balance within the same STSM Call.

- Affiliation country; applicants from ITC (Inclusiveness Target Country) nations are given preference.
- Career development: Young Researchers and Innovators (YRI) are preferred over experienced ones.

Reporting and claim for payment of the grant:

- Once the activity has ended, the Grantee must submit a report and all necessary documentation through e-COST. Submission is required **within 30 days of the activity's end date, or 15 days after the end of the Grant Period**, whichever date comes first;
- The submission of the supporting documents is mandatory, or the Grant is cancelled. The required **Report** should be completed following the official **STSM Report template** (https://www.cost.eu/STSM_report_template) detailing: title, start and end dates of the STSM; purpose of the mission; description of work carried out; description of achievements and planned follow-up activities, and confirmation of successful STSM by the host.
- Payment is processed upon successful report submission via e-COST.

Reimbursement:

- The Grant Holder Institution pays grants after completing the activity and approving all required reports/documentation.
- STSM Grantee may request up to 50% pre-payment of the approved grant. This amount is subject to the availability of funds and approval by the Grant Holder Institution. The request for pre-payment shall be submitted to the Grant Holder Manager.
- STSM activities must occur within the dates specified in this call.
- Applicants shall not receive different overlapping grants during the same grant period.

For detailed rules regarding eligibility and financial support, please see the relevant sections of the following:

COST Annotated Rules: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/02/COST-094-21-V2.0-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C.pdf>

Grant Awarding User Guide: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/01/COST-Grant-Awarding-user-guide.pdf>

Main information, supported documents and links:

- CA23128 (ConnectLAA) Website: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA23128/>
- STSM Grant Application Form: https://www.cost.eu/STSM_GrantApplication
- STSM Report Template: https://www.cost.eu/STSM_report_template
- Grant Awarding user guide: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/01/COST-Grant-Awarding-user-guide.pdf>
- Annotated Rules for COST Actions: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/02/COST-094-21-V2.0-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C.pdf>
- Main contacts:
 - Grant Awarding Coordinator - Kinga Kimic: kinga_kimic@sggw.edu.pl
 - Grant Holder Manager - Heidi Manser: heidi.manser@boku.ac.at