Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM)

User guide

July/2019
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1. PROCESS FLOW

This document describes the STSM process, from the moment an applicant submits an application for approval by the STSM coordinator to the payment and recording of the amount paid by the Grant Holder (GH) to the STSM grantee.

It is necessary to separate the process in 2 parts: one describes the step to be performed before the mission starts and another the steps to be performed after the mission ends.

STSM – process flow

STSM with a pre-payment request – process flow

2. KEY PLAYERS

- STSM applicant
STSM applicant

The STSM applicant can be any person with an e-COST profile. An STSM applicant must specifically contribute to the research coordination and capacity building objectives of the COST Action for which they are submitting a STSM application.

The STSM 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, organisation or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research.

Specific provisions have been made to encourage the application submission by researchers from ITC countries. STSM applicants with an affiliation in an institution in an ITC country can request a pre-payment of 50% of grant. This is payable under 2 conditions: that the GH has sufficient funds to cover 50% of the grant in advance and that the host confirms to the GH that the mission has started.

STSM coordinator

The STSM coordinator is the person elected by the MC, ideally during MC 1, to coordinate the STSM awarding process. The STSM coordinator can perform the evaluation of applications alone or by heading an STSM panel.

The STSM coordinator’s tasks include: evaluate applications, approve or reject these applications in e-cost, evaluate the scientific report after the mission, post-approve or reject the report.

Grant Holder

The GH monitors the incoming approved applications, determines the Grant amount in accordance with the request, but also with the budget available, sends the successful applicants their Grant Notification, makes the timely pre-payment of 50% of the grant (when applicable), and ensures that all grants are paid within the deadline of 30 days.

3. PROCESS OVERVIEW

3.1 Applicant creates an STSM request

The applicant encodes an STSM application by logging into e-COST and clicking on the STSM application tab.

If the applicant’s e-COST profile is incomplete, they will first have to fill in the missing information (affiliation, education details, CV).

Any already submitted applications are available for consultation in the applicant’s e-COST profile. To submit a new application, the applicant clicks on ‘Create a new STSM Request’.

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1 The following countries are considered ITC: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia and Turkey.
The application page contains the following sections:

- Applicant details
- STSM details (the application must start and end during the same Grant Period (GP). If a GP is not active, the applicant will not be able to submit an application.
- Bank details
- Host details (must be located in a different country than the country of the applicant)
- Financial support
- Supporting documents (2nd page of the application also reachable by clicking on button in the upper left corner)

STSM Application

Draft Submitted Pre-approved Imported Pending SR upload Pending SR approval SR approved

APPLICANT DETAILS

Home Institution: * -- Select Institution --

Add/Edit Affiliations

STSM Details

Action Number *

STSM Title *

Grant Period *

-- Choose an Action --

-- Choose a Grant Period --

- A Grant Period is the period of time that the Grant Holder of each Action has to complete their Action objectives.
- A Grant Period runs for one year unless stated otherwise.
- An STSM application must start and end during one single Grant Period.
- If a Grant Period containing your preferred start and/or end date of the STSM application is not available, please contact the MC chair of the Action following the link or update the start and end date to correspond to the Grant Period displayed in the drop-down menu.

Start Date *

End Date *

Duration

Duration should be minimum 5 days
If the applicant is affiliated with an institute from an Inclusiveness Target Country, (s)he can apply for a pre-payment of 50% of the Grant. The applicant must keep in mind that the transfer of the 50% of the...
Grant can only take place after the mission has started and as such, requesting a pre-payment is more effective for STSMs longer than 1 month.

Financial Support

- Amount for Travel in EUR *
- Amount for Subsistence in EUR *
- Total Amount in EUR

- Up to a maximum of EUR 300
- Up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day
- The total requested amount is limited to EUR 3500

Save Request

I wish to apply for a pre-payment for the Grant

Disclaimer: The pre-payment of 50% of your Grant is subject to the approval by the Grant Holder Institute. Should the request be approved, the first installment of the Grant will be processed upon receipt of the STSM host’s confirmation of your presence at the host institute.

Save Request

The request can be saved only if all fields have been completely on the page, otherwise the information is lost. After saving the request, the applicant must upload specific supporting documents in order to be able to submit the application.

Actions / STSM / Supporting Documents

The application is saved and is pending upload of the supporting documents.

Draft Submitted Pre-approved Imported Pending SR upload Pending SR approval SR approved

Supporting Documents

Please ensure that the following supporting documents are uploaded in order to be able to submit your STSM application:
- Letter of support from the Home Institution
- Written agreement from the Host Institution that the STSM applicant can perform the activities detailed in the STSM work plan on the agreed dates
- CV

- STSM Application in PDF
- CV (including a list of academic publications - if applicable)
- Letter of support from the Home Institution
- Written agreement from the Host Institution that the STSM applicant can perform the activities detailed in the STSM work plan on the agreed dates
- Scientific Report (to be submitted at the latest 30 days after the end date of the STSM)
- Host approval of the scientific report (to be submitted with the scientific report 30 days after the end date of the STSM)

Scientific Report Template available here.
3.2 STSM Coordinator approves/rejects the application

As soon as the application is submitted, the STSM coordinator is notified. The applicant also receives a copy of the notification.

Alternatively, the STSM Coordinator can check the status of applications via an STSM e-COST dashboard. The STSM Coordinator will be able to approve/reject only those applications whose status is ‘Submitted’.
For all other applications, the STSM coordinator will be able to see at which stage in the process they are.

Dear STSM coordinator,

Dr Elena Popovici has submitted an on-line STSM application request. Please verify the validity of this application and approve or reject it by clicking on the link below: [http://mirror.prod.cost.local/stsm/apply/37583](http://mirror.prod.cost.local/stsm/apply/37583)

We thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

e-cost

Ref: ST-1.SM

If the STSM coordinator wishes to approve the application, the STSM coordinator must confirm that the Workplan is in line with the Action’s objectives and confirm that the supporting documents are valid.

If the application is rejected, the STSM coordinator must provide a justification to guide the applicant in her/his resubmission.

In the cases when the STSM Coordinator wishes to share the application package with the STSM Panel, (s)he can download:

- The application itself
- The CV of the applicant from his/her e-COST profile
- The documents supporting the applicant’s request
3.3 The GH sends the applicant the Grant Notification Letter

As soon as the STSM coordinator approved the STSM application, the GH is notified and can send the Grant Letter notification.

Dear Grant Holder,

COST Action: CA15204  
STSM reference number: 37289  
STSM applicant name: Dr Elena Popovici  
Home institution: Universitatea de Medicina, Iasi, RO  
Host institution: Vienna University, Vienna, AT  
STSM start and end date: 2017-05-01 - 2017-05-30  

On behalf of the Management Committee of the COST CA15204, I would like to inform you that:

- The proposed STSM workplan is in line with the scientific objectives of the Action;

- The supporting documents are eligible and complete.

Please verify that funds are available to support this application and send the applicant the Grant Notification Letter.

Kind regards,

Dr Janet Smith  
STSM coordinator

Ref: ST-2 SM

The GH logs into e-cost and first activates the application in its current state.
The GH is able to modify the title, topic, dates, and institute name, should this be required, once the STSM application has been activated.

The GH must confirm if the applicant is an Early Career Investigator for statistical purposes.
The GH must confirm that the applicant is coming from an Inclusiveness Target country and, in cases when there is a request for a pre-payment of 50% of the Grant, that the GH has sufficient funds available.

In the screen 'Approved Grant amount', the GH can decide the level of the Grant to be awarded taking into account the funds available.

The Grant amount can be up to the level requested by the applicant or less.

### Breakdown of Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsistence</th>
<th>400</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cost per STSM</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Prepayment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-payment</th>
<th>450</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Payment</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Current Total**  EUR 900.00

### 3.3.1 The GH makes the payment of 50% of the Grant

When the STSM applicant from an ITC requests and is granted a pre-payment of 50% of the grant, the STSM host receives an notification requesting her/him to confirm to the GH that the STSM started on schedule. Without the host confirmation, the pre-payment will not be done.
The actual transfer of 50% of the grant can take several days after the receipt of the STSM host email confirmation.

Dear STSM Host,

Dr. Elena Popovici has requested a pre-payment of 50% of the Grant related to the following STSM application:

COST Action: CA15130  
STSM Reference number: 458723  
Home institution: University of Iasi, Romania  
Host Institution: Vienna University, AT  
STSM start and end date: 2017-04-20 - 2017-04-24

In order for the Grant Holder Institute to initiate the pre-payment, we kindly ask you to send an email to the Grant Holder (grantholder@sm), on the date when the applicant will have started the STSM.

Kind regards,

Grant Holder

Ref: ST-4.5M

The GH can consult the approved application by using the different options available for each STSM, as shown below.

![Table Example]

3.4 STSM grantees uploads the scientific report and host approval of the report

1 day and 15 days after the end of the STSM, the grantee receives a reminder to upload the scientific report and the host approval of the report. The deadline to submit the last supporting documents is 30 days from the end of the STSM.

The submission of the supporting documents is mandatory or the Grant is cancelled. Late submission, beyond the deadline, can also lead to the cancellation of the Grant and, in cases when a pre-payment was done, the obligatory reimbursement by the grantee of the amount received.

A scientific report template is available on the Supporting documents page or on-line here: [http://www.cost.eu/STSM_report_template](http://www.cost.eu/STSM_report_template)

The STSM grantee must complete this template and save it in pdf before uploading it in e-COST.

The host approval of the report can be an email confirming that the STSM took place and the goals outlined in the Work plan were reached.
Dear STSM applicant,

This is a reminder that you are required to submit for approval your scientific report within 30 days from the end date of your STSM. You are kindly requested to complete the following steps:

- Ensure that your scientific report is approved by a senior scientist at the host institute.
- Click on the link below before 2017-05-20 and upload your approved scientific report and the host approval: [http://branch.qa.cost.local/stsm/apply/37289](http://branch.qa.cost.local/stsm/apply/37289)
- Add the bank details on which you wish to receive the Grant to your e-cost profile, if you have not done so already.

Failure to submit your scientific report on time may result in the cancellation of the STSM grant.

The payment of your Grant is carried out by the Grant Holder following the receipt of the STSM coordinator approval of your scientific report.

Kind regards,

e-COST

Ref: ST-6 SM

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Actions / STSM / Supporting Documents

Supporting Documents

- Please ensure that the Scientific Report and the Host approval are uploaded in order to be able to submit it to the STSM Coordinator for approval.
- STSM Application in PDF
- CV (including a list of academic publications - if applicable)
- Letter of support from the Home Institution
- Written agreement from the Host Institution that the STSM applicant can perform the activities detailed in the STSM work plan on the agreed dates
- Scientific Report (to be submitted at the latest 30 days after the end date of the STSM)
- Host approval of the scientific report (to be submitted with the scientific report 30 days after the end date of the STSM)
- Download all files as ZIP (not including the CV, download separately above)

Scientific Report Template available here.

Confirm upload of Scientific Report

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3.5 STSM Coordinator approves/rejects the scientific report

The STSM coordinator is notified when the applicant submitted the scientific report and host approval and has to verify the validity of the report by clicking the link in the notification. Alternatively, the STSM Coordinator can access the application via the STSM e-COST dashboard.

Dear STSM coordinator,

Dr Elena Popovici has submitted the scientific report related to the following STSM application:

- COST Action: CA15204
- Home institution: University of Iasi, RO
- Host institution: Vienna University, AT
- STSM start and end date: 2017-05-10 - 2017-05-31

Please verify the validity of this scientific report and approve or reject it by clicking on the link below:

We thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

e-COST

Ref: ST-7 SM
If the application is rejected, the STSM coordinator must provide a justification to guide the STSM grantee in her/his resubmission.

If the STSM coordinator approves the report, the GH is notified that the grant can be paid.

Dear Grant Holder,

COST Action: CA15204
Home institution: University of Iasi, RO
Host institution: Vienna University, AT
STSM start and end date: 2017-05-10 - 2017-05-31

On behalf of the Management Committee of the COST, I would like to inform you that:

- This STSM has been completed in line with the proposed STSM Workplan
- The scientific report is approved
- The Grant can be paid.

Kind regards,

STSM Coordinator

Ref: ST-8.SM

3.6 The GH makes the payment of the Grant or, if applicable, of the 2nd instalment of the Grant

The GH can download an excel list of STSM grants that are ready to be paid. This list contains the necessary information for the GH financial and accounting department to process the Grant transfer.
Once the GH financial and accounting department processed the Grant transfer, the GH can record the payment and complete the STSM process.

In the cases when 50% of the Grant was pre-paid, the GH must complete the amount for the 2nd instalment before recording. By recording the payment, the status changes to Paid.

The process is complete.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Grant Amount in EUR</th>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Payment</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Elena Popescu</td>
<td>2017-02-06</td>
<td>2017-02-24</td>
<td>19 days</td>
<td>750.00</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>750.00</td>
<td>Record Edit View Delete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Sorin Cheval</td>
<td>2017-04-22</td>
<td>2017-04-26</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>2100.00</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Paid View Revert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>