PROCEDURE TO APPLY FOR SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM) GRANTS

The Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) consists in a visit to a group involved in the Action located in a different country than that of affiliation to carry out specific work and for a determined period of time. The STSM Grants aim to help the grantees gain new knowledge, access to equipment or techniques not available in their home institution. STSM Grants aim also to support capacity building and transfer of knowledge by establishing new collaborations or reinforce existing collaborations, across disciplines and different sectors (e.g. academia and industry / SMEs).

The duration of a STSM for young researchers (PhD student, postdoc fellow) is typically between 2 weeks (10 working days) and 2 months. The duration of a STSM for independent researchers is typically between 2 working days and 2 weeks. Exceptions must be duly justified.

Eligibility rules

- The applicant must be engaged in an official research program either as a PhD student (at least in the second year of their doctoral program), a postdoctoral fellow or a research assistant.
- Independent researchers or innovators (either from academia or industry) may also apply. In this case, the applicant is required to give a seminar/talk at the host institution.
- The applicant or their research supervisor and the host must be a Working Group member of LUCES COST Action (CA22131).
- The STSM must start and end within the active Grant Period (01.11.26-15.10.27).
- The STSM must start after the date of the relevant call result specified on the web page.

Application

- Register on the e-COST platform.
- Complete the online application in e-COST (Grant applications tab), and upload the following supporting documents:
    a) application form (available on the LUCES website), highlighting the Action objectives that will be addressed;
    b) support letter from the supervisor, on headed paper and signed (if applicable),
    c) confirmation of the host agreeing in receiving the applicant for the determined period, on headed paper and signed;

d) Curriculum Vitae of the applicant;

e) a detailed estimation of the budget, with costs documented by screenshots (travel, accommodation);

f) a research project (max. 3 pages) reporting the scientific justification of the STSM at the partner laboratory/institution; a work plan and the expected results.

g) for independent researchers, an abstract of the seminar/talk planned at the host institution (max. 1 page).

Co-funding is encouraged, and other funding awarded or applied for to cover expenses related to the STSM must be detailed in the application. However, double funding is not permitted (the same expenditure cannot be claimed twice).

Funding

A STSM Grant is a financial contribution, which takes into consideration the budget request of the applicant and the outcome of the evaluation of the application by the Grant Evaluation Committee. Depending on the budget available and the number of eligible applications, STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all the expenses related to the stay.

A maximum of 3.000 euros contribution for travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses can be granted to each successful applicant.

The amount awarded will be decided by the Grant Evaluation Committee on the basis of the duration of the stay and its alignment with the STSM objectives, as well as the living costs in the destination.

STSM Grants do not cover operating costs, access to equipment or bench fees.

Evaluation criteria

The Grant Evaluation Committee manages the evaluation according to the COST rules and will take into consideration geographical spread, career stage and gender balance. All applications will be assessed at the same time after the call closed.

The Committee will also consider the scientific merit of the proposal based on the project submitted, and how it will support the Action in achieving its scientific objectives.

Priority will be given to

- PhD students and young researchers.
- Applicants who have not already received a STSM grant.

Commitments during/after the STSM

The young researcher is encouraged to give a seminar at the host institution, and this activity is required for a PI.

Acknowledge COST and the LUCES COST Action in any presentations and/or publications resulting from the visit and collaboration.

« *This communication/article is based upon the work from COST Action LUCES CA22131, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).* »

The official logos and visual identity must always be used. See LUCES website for further acknowledgement instructions and materials.

Any change in the dates or duration of the STSM must be immediately communicated to the Grant Holder Manager.

How to claim the grant

The STSM Grant will be paid once the STSM has taken place and the requested documents have been submitted and approved by the Grant Awarding Coordinator.

- The grantee must submit in e-cost:
  a) a scientific report;
  b) a confirmation letter from the host institution that the visit has been successful (including start and end dates).
  c) a one-slide report to be published on the LUCES website (optional for PIs' short visits).

  The templates for the scientific and the web report is available on the LUCES website; their use are mandatory.
- All listed documents must be submitted within 30 days after the STSM or by October 15th, whichever date comes first. Late submission leads to the grant cancellation.
- The grantee certifies that the expenses covered by the STSM grant have not been, or will not be, reimbursed or covered by any other source of funding.

The Grant Awarding Coordinator,

Giulia LICINI