Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) Applications

4th Call for STSM Applications

Application Period: November 20th, 2026 – December 20th, 2026

Period of benefit: January 15th, 2027 – September 20th, 2027

COST Action Precision-BTC-Network opens a call for applications for **Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)** to be **developed under the scope of the referred Action**, in the terms described in this document.

The main procedures/regulations concerning STSMs can be found in the *COST Annotated Rules,* here: COST Annotated Rules (see A2-1.1 MOBILITY OF RESEARCHERS AND INNOVATORS)

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1. Scope of Precision-BTC-Network COST Action

For details and specific objectives, please read the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA22125/

2. Purpose of STSMs

STSMs are stays of a researcher or innovator at a host organization located in a different country than their country of affiliation (for Affiliation, see Article 4.1.1.1.1 in the *Annotated Rules for COST Actions*) for a specific work and for a determined period of time. STSMs are worthwhile for:

- STSM Grantee has the chance to receive funding to help him/her to undertake a stay to participate in a project with an international team, to gain new knowledge or to access to equipment or techniques not available in the home institution.
- STSM Host receives an international partner in their institution and extend or create a long-lasting collaboration.

An STSM should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action, helping to achieve the Action MoU objectives and deliverables.

3. Eligibility criteria

1. STSM Grants are reserved for **Action participants** with a primary affiliation to a legal entity located in a COST Full or Cooperating Member country, a COST Near Neighbour Country or a European RTD Organization (see Article 4.1.1.1.1 in the *Annotated Rules for COST Actions*).

2. The host organization must be located in a different country than the grantee's country of affiliation (for Affiliation, see Article 4.1.1.1.1 of the *Annotated Rules for COST Actions*) and the visit must be for a specific project during determined period of time.

3. The STSM must have a minimum duration of 5 calendar days (including travel) and conclude before September 20th, 2027.

4. The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action are not considered an STSM grantee's employer, i.e. the STSM Grant cannot be considered a salary.

4. Application deadlines

Applications will be welcomed between **November 20th – December 20th, 2026**. Additional STSM calls may be opened during the 2026-2027 Grant Period of the Precision-BTC-Network COST Action depending on the availability of funds. In any case, all STSMs must be completed by September 20th, 2027.

5. Funding

Up to a **maximum of 4,000 € in total** will be allocated to each successful STSM applicant (subject to the total number of applicants): up to €850 per month and €600 for travel for applicants from a non-Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC), or up to €1,100 per month and €700 for travel for applicants from an ITC or Near Neighbour Countries (NNCs).

The current list of ITCs includes Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine.

The current list of NNCs includes Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Jordan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia.

An STSM Grant is a fixed financial contribution that takes into consideration the budget request of the applicant and the outcome of the evaluation of the STSM application. Please note that STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission, being only a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Grantee. Applicants are encouraged to assess their budget request based on a high benefit/cost ratio and to justify it based on the perceived cost of living in the host country/city.

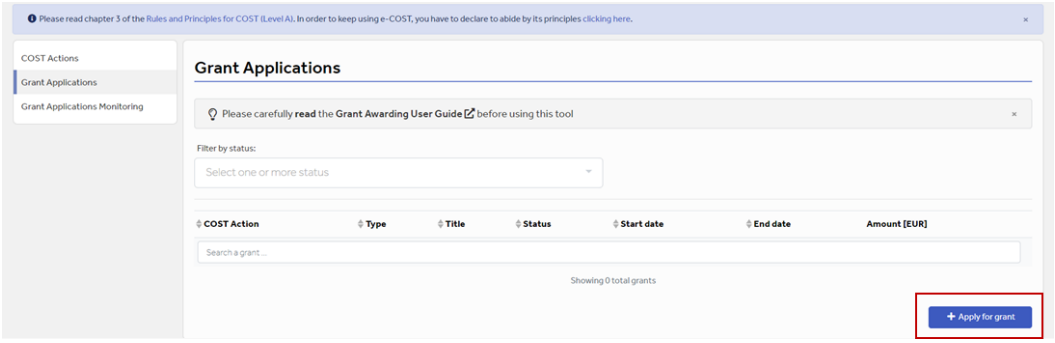
STSM grantees should make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security and pension matters.

Grants are paid by the Grant Holder Institution after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation. STSMs grantees may request up to 50% pre-payment of the approved grant. This amount is subject to availability of funds and approval by the Grant Holder Institution.

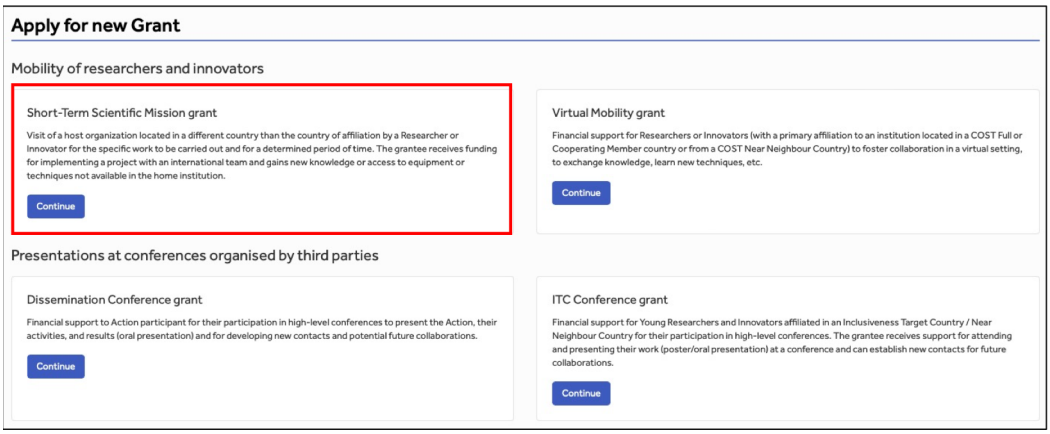
The request of pre-payment shall be submitted to the Grant Awarding Coordinator (Prof. Anca Zgura, medicanca@gmail.com) and Grant Holder Manager (Samuel Kocsis, samuel.v.kocsis@VictorAcCon.com).

6. Application procedure

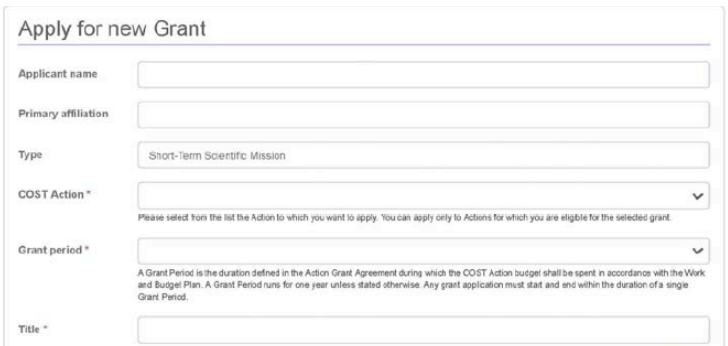
The application procedure is legally bound to the Rules for COST Actions. Eligible STSM applicants must submit their STSM applications online by logging into e-COST (https://e-services.cost.eu), navigating to "Grant Applications" and clicking on "Apply for a grant".



The applicant then selects "Continue" on the "Short-Term Scientific Mission grant" section.



The application form contains different sections, some are pre-filled by e-COST, such as the applicant's name and primary affiliation.



After encoding the Grant application form by filling all above-mentioned sections, the applicant uploads:

- the **Grant Application Template** (https://www.cost.eu/STSM_GrantApplication), which should be prepared beforehand. In the form, please briefly address the following points:

  a) Proposed contribution to the scientific objectives of the Action. Please include how the planned activities will contribute to the plan of one or more WG(s) of the Action.

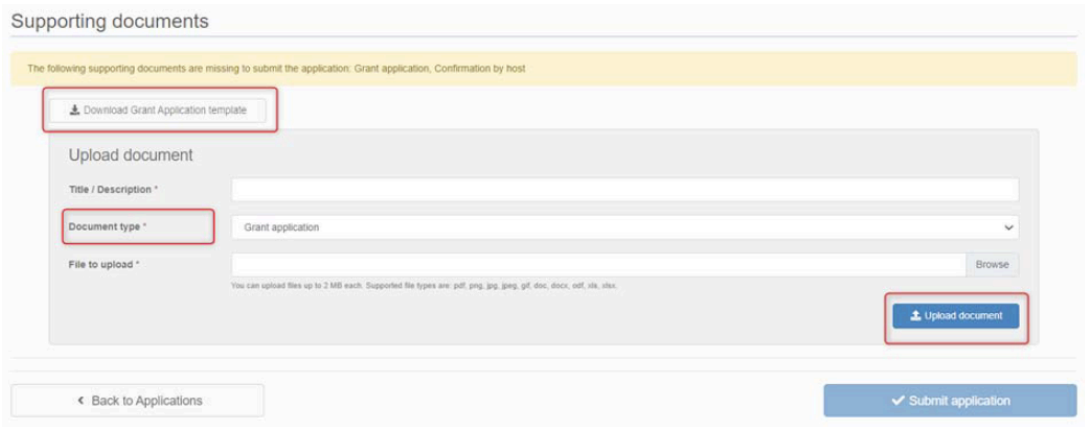
  b) Which techniques or equipment you would wish to learn to use, if applicable. Please. underline the aspects of complementarity between expertise and instrumentation of the home and hosting institution/research groups.

  c) The steps you will take to achieve your proposed goals.

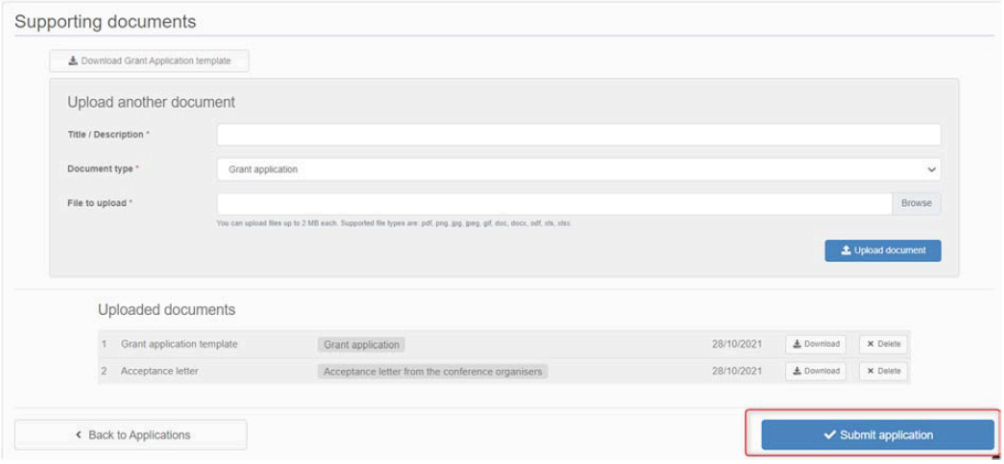
- **Acceptance/Invitation letter from the Host institution**: it is responsibility of the applicant to obtain a written agreement from the Host institution stating that the applicant may perform the activities detailed in the STSM working plan on the agreed dates. The letter must be dated back not more than 3 months and must be signed by a permanent staff representative of the Host institution (e.g., head of the research group, PI, director of the department, head of the institute/division etc.).

- **Candidate CV**: a short CV should be submitted (max. 3 pages). A list of academic publications can be added on separate pages.

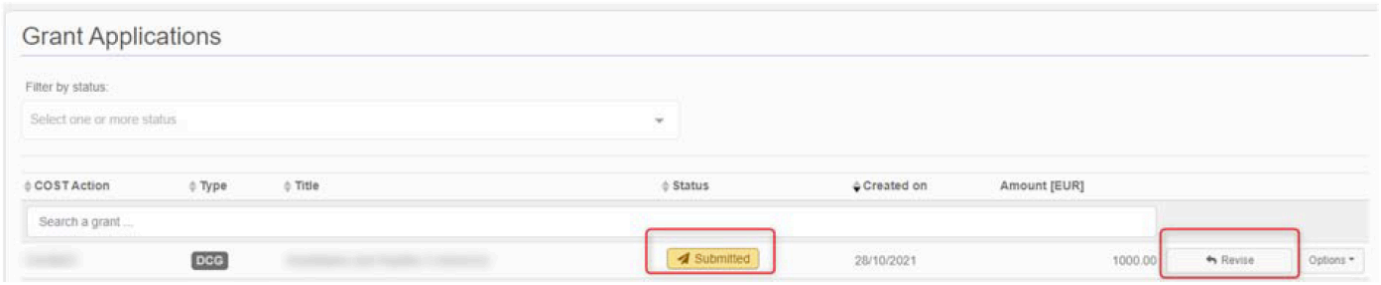
Applicants are requested to present a working plan that is feasible with regard to the stay duration requested in the application.



After adding the supporting documents, the applicant submits the grant application.



The application status changes from draft to submitted. The applicant may revise the application at any time between submission and approval.



For more information, please consult the Grant Awarding user guide: (https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2025/01/COST-Grant-Awarding-user-guide.pdf).

7. Intellectual Property Rights concerns

In case of potential intellectual property concern on the part of the host and/or sending institutions, this must be mentioned in the application and managed by IP teams from host and/or sending institutions. In this case, the reviewers of the application may be requested to sign a confidentiality agreement.

8. Selection committee

The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application, which must be coherent with the overall objectives of the Action. The STSM Committee will select the successful applications.

The STSM Selection Committee is composed of the Grant Awarding Coordinator, Prof. Anca Zgura, (medicanca@gmail.com), and the Action chair, Prof. Rocio IR Macias (rociorm@usal.es). In case of conflict of interest (e.g., applicant belonging to a representative's research group), the member will be replaced by representatives of the working groups related to the application.

9. Evaluation criteria and communication of the results

The STSM Committee will carry out the scientific evaluation of applications taking into account the scope and objectives of the Action Precision-BTC-Network, as well as the potential for enhancing the research interaction between the parties involved, measured by the impact of the exchange expected by the applicants and institutions involved.

General criteria for evaluation of STSM proposals are:

- Priority to PhD students/residents and post-docs until 2 years after the completion of the PhD.

- Priority to applicants from ITCs.

- Gender balance.

- Clarity of activity planning (Working plan) and complementarity of resources between home and host institutions/research groups (resources are understood as: technical expertise, infrastructure, or instrumentation).

- Main expected results and their contribution to the progress towards the Action objectives and deliverables.

- Curriculum Vitae (CV) of applicant.

Each applicant will be formally notified of the outcome of their STSM Grant application no later than 2 weeks after the application period ends.

The Grant Awarding Coordinator (or the Action Chair/Vice-Chair, in case of conflict of interest) will inform the Grant Holder of the approved STSMs. The Grant Holder will inform each approved applicant by sending a Grant Letter via e-COST.

10. STSM reporting and payment

Within 30 days from the end date of the STSM (or 15 days after the end of the Grant Period, whichever date comes first), the successful applicant must submit the scientific report (A), the dissemination materials (B), the approval letter of the scientific report from the Host institution (C), and documentation attesting to the dates of travel (D). These documents must be uploaded to e-COST to proceed with the request for payment.

A) **Scientific reports on e-COST**:

- A template for the report can be found in e-COST (https://www.cost.eu/STSM_Report) (max. 4 pages).

When preparing the scientific report please consider the following:

- The scientific report for COST is a **public document**. Please take this into account in terms of Intellectual Property Rights.
- The scientific report does not need to contain specific and detailed results of the research. Rather, it should focus on the aspects that are the aim of STSM, in particular how the collaborative research during STSM has strengthen the scientific relationship between Home and Hosting institutions within the framework of COST.

The STSM Coordinator will be responsible for approving the scientific report and informing the Action Chair and the Grant Holder that the STSM has been successfully accomplished. Please note that the COST Association can request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by STSM applicants.

B) **Dissemination materials to Science Communication Team**:

- A poster/short video/success story describing the subject of the collaborative STSM activities.
- A strong, short advertising sentence summarizing the STSM experience that will be used for promotion of the above material.
- The grantee's credentials on social media (if applicable) for the purpose of tagging them in the publication of their post.

Please remember to present Home and Host institutions and your passion for science. Use pictures showing you at work but also after work. Do not sound too abstract, avoid scientific jargon and use short sentences. The material is to advertise Precision-BTC-Network research, promote you, and will be shown in social media for public audience. You can find examples from previous applicants here: https://precision-btc.eu/repository/entry/mob3participation.

The materials should be uploaded in e-COST and sent directly to the Grant Holder Manager, Samuel Kocsis (samuel.v.kocsis@VictorAcCon.com), adding in CC the Grant awarding coordinator, Prof. Anca Zgura (medicanca@gmail.com).

C) **Host approval of scientific report**:

An official letter/email from a senior Researcher affiliated to the Host institution formally stating the acceptance of the scientific report with the actual start and end dates of the stay.

D) **Travel documentation:**

A boarding pass/ticket showing the grantees name, along with the dates & times of travel, both outbound and return.

Failure to submit the scientific report & dissemination materials, and Host approval of report within the specified timeframe will effectively cancel the Grant. The grantee shall be aware that the COST Association reserves the right to postpone or cancel all payments and to recover the amounts paid to the grantee in case the grantee does not fulfil their obligations.

11. STSM contacts

Prof. Anca Zgura
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Prof. Rocio Macias
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