

Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) Applications

3rd Call for STSM Applications

Application period: February 1st, 2025 – March 15th, 2025

Period of benefit: March 31st, 2025 – September 30th, 2025

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 here:
<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2024/11/COST-094-21-V2.0-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C.pdf>
(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 the 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:

- i) for the STSM grantee, who 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.
- ii) for the STSM host, who can receive an international partner in their institution and extend or create a long-lasting collaboration.

A 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. The Grant applicant(s) are 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 Grant applicant is a researcher or innovator who visits a host organization located in a different country than the country of affiliation (for Affiliation, see Article 4.1.1.1.1 of the *Annotated Rules for COST Actions*) for a specific project and for a determined period of time.
3. The STSM must have a minimum duration of 5 calendar days (including travel) and conclude before September 30th, 2025.
4. The COST Association and the Grant Holder of the Action cannot be considered as being an STSM grantee's employer, i.e., the STSM Grant cannot be considered as a salary.

4. Application deadlines

Applications will be welcomed between **February 1st – March 15th, 2025**. Additional STSM calls may be opened during the 2024-2025 Grant Period of the Precision-BTC-COST Action, contingent upon the full utilization of allocated funds in this call. Still, all STSMs must be completed by September 30th, 2025.

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 include: 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 include: 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.

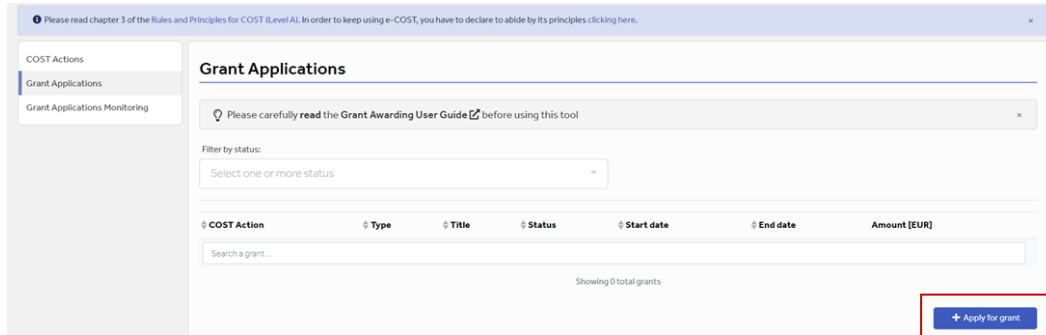
STSM grantees should make their own arrangements for all provisions related to personal security, health, taxation, social security and pension matters.

Grants are paid by the Grant Holder Institution after the completion of the activity and approval of all required report/documentation. However, 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.

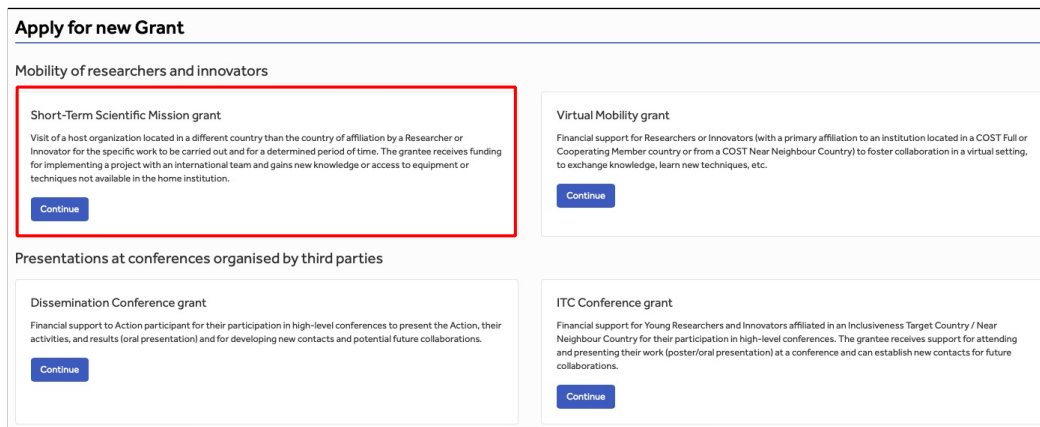
The request of pre-payment shall be submitted to the Grant Awarding Coordinator (Dr. Marta Afonso, mbafonso@ff.ulisboa.pt) and the Grant Holder Manager (Samuel Kocsis, samuel.kocsis21@gmail.com).

6. Application procedure

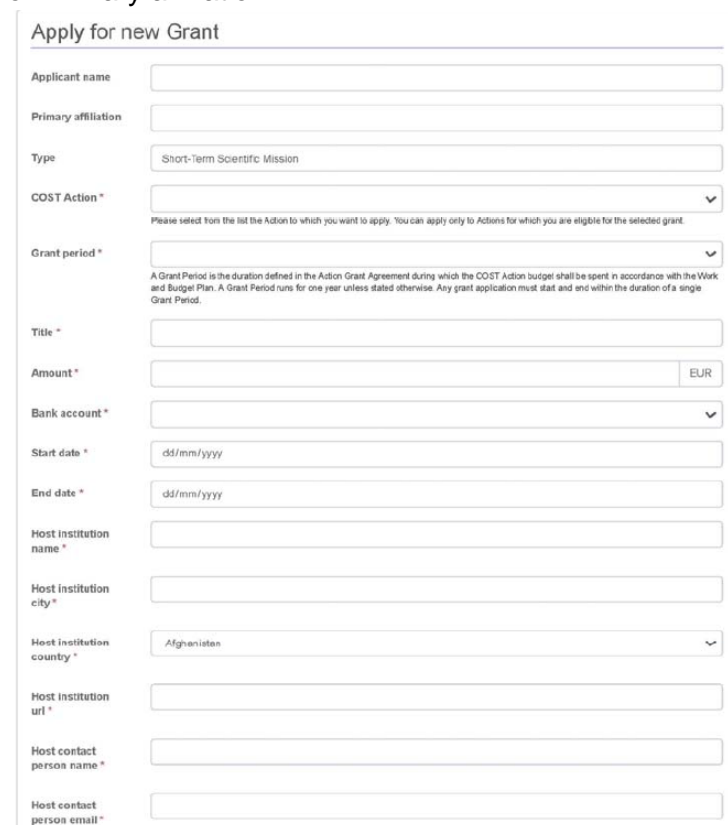
The application procedure is legally bound to the Rules for COST Actions. Eligible STSM applicants must submit their STSM applications online by logging into e-COST (<https://e-services.cost.eu>), going to “Grant Applications” and clicking on “Apply for a grant”.



The applicant may then select “Continue” on the “Short-Term Scientific Mission grant” section.



The application form contains different sections, some are pre-filled by e-COST, such as Application name or Primary affiliation.



After encoding the Grant application form by filling all above-mentioned sections, the applicant also needs to upload:

- the **Grant Application Template** (you can find it here: https://www.cost.eu/STSM_GrantApplication), which should be prepared beforehand.

- **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.

- National Identity Card for Spanish residents, while non-Spanish residents are required to provide a copy of their **passport**.¹

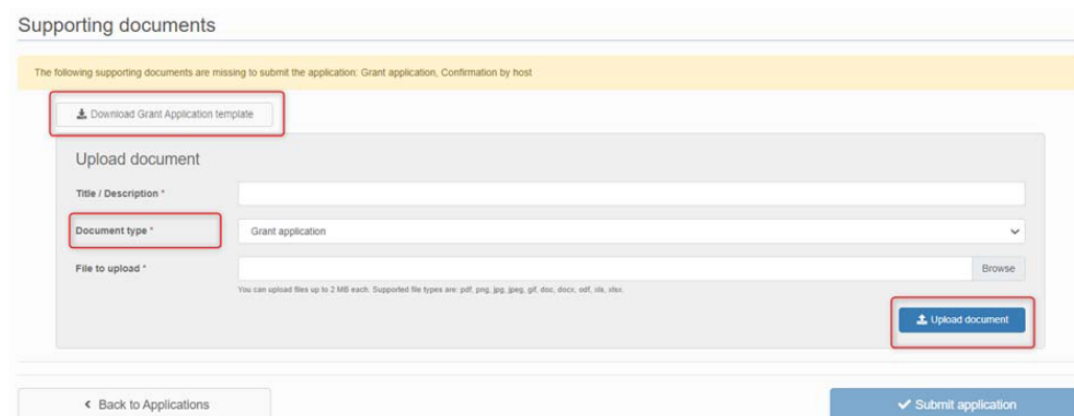
In the Application form field please briefly address the following points:

1. 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.

2. Please detail 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.

3. Please detail the steps you will take to achieve your proposed goals.

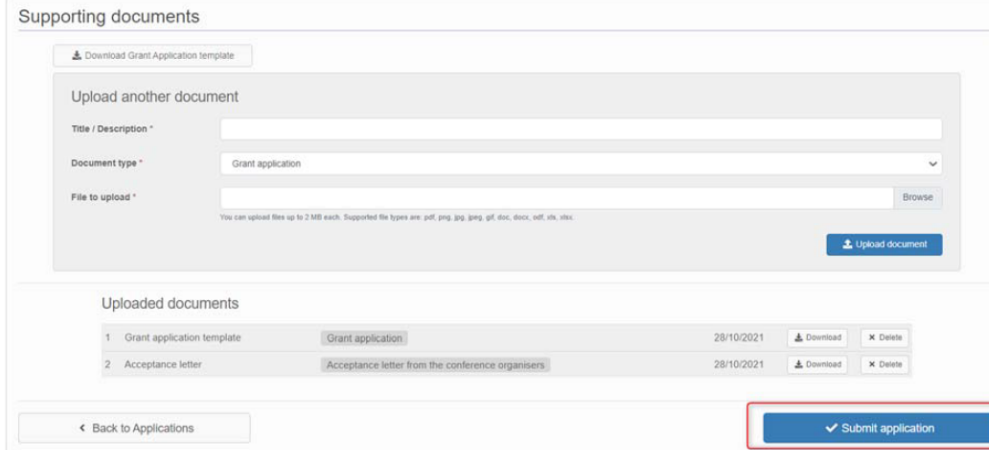
Applicants are requested to present a Working Plan that is reasonably feasible and coherent with the time slot requested in the application.



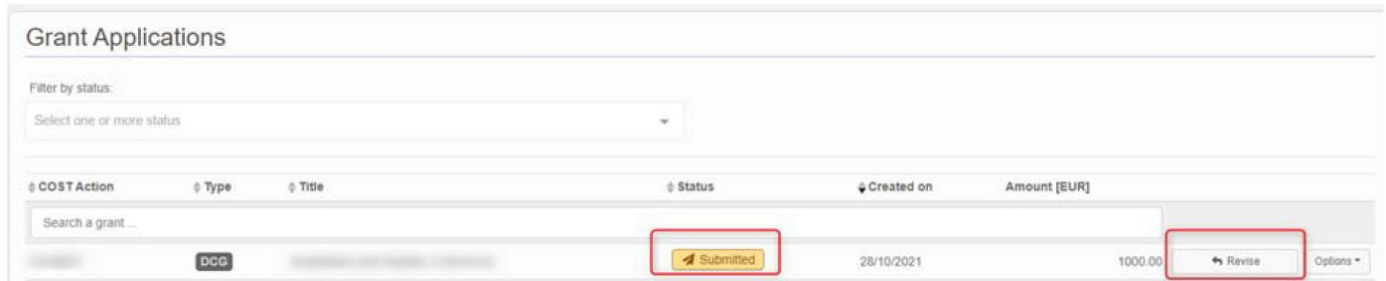
The screenshot shows a web interface for uploading supporting documents. At the top, a yellow banner states: "The following supporting documents are missing to submit the application: Grant application, Confirmation by host". Below this, there is a "Download Grant Application template" button. The main section is titled "Upload document" and contains a form with the following fields: "Title / Description *", "Document type *" (a dropdown menu currently showing "Grant application"), and "File to upload *" (with a "Browse" button). A "Upload document" button is located at the bottom right of the form. Below the form, there are two buttons: "Back to Applications" and "Submit application".

¹ This does not apply to those Action Participants who have submitted an ID for any previous Action Events or Grants

After adding the supporting documents, the applicant may submit the grant application.



The application status will change from draft to submitted. Before the application is approved, the applicant will be able to revise the application if needed.



COST Action	Type	Title	Status	Created on	Amount [EUR]
...	DCG	...	Submitted	28/10/2021	1000.00

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, Dr. Marta Afonso, (mbafonso@ff.ulisboa.pt), and the Action chair, Dr. 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) and the approval letter of the scientific report from the Host institution (C). 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 strengthened 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 your collaborative STSM activities.
- A strong, short advertising sentence summarizing your STSM experience that will be used for promotion of the above material.
- Your credentials in social media (if you have such) to tag you in the publication of your 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/info/participants>.

The materials should be uploaded in e-COST and sent directly to the Management Holder, Samuel Kocsis (samuel.v.kocsis@usal.es), adding in CC the Grant awarding coordinator, Dr. Marta Afonso (mbafonso@ff.ulisboa.pt) and the Science Communication Manager Dr. Constantinos Athanassopoulos (kath@upatras.gr).

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.

Failure to submit the scientific report & dissemination materials, and Host approval of report within the above 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

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