

**CA22111**  
**A European consortium to determine how complex, real-world environments influence brain development (ENVIRO-DEV)**

FAQs Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM)

*What are Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)?*

Short-Term Scientific Mission consists in a visit to a host organization (such as a lab) located in a different country than the country of affiliation by a researcher or innovator for specific work to be carried out and for a determined period of time. The duration is not fixed.

*Who can apply?*

PhD students or Postdocs at a University or some other Institution performing research in a COST full or cooperating member country, and their country of affiliation has to be different from the country of the placement. You do not have to be a member of the COST action CA2111 to apply.

*What is funded?*

Participants will receive a lump sum of 4000 €, which can be used to cover any expenses occurring as part of the stay. As part of the application, participants have to submit a work plan, detailing how long they want to stay and how that serves the mission, which will be part of the evaluation process.

It is up to the participant (and of course the host lab), how long they will stay in the host lab, but the duration of the stay has to be a minimum of 2 weeks. Typically, a stay will be something between a couple weeks and a couple months. It is also possible to go for several shorter stays rather than a longer duration.

The STSM needs to be carried out within a single grant period, as indicated in the call.

*What do I need to submit in order to apply?*

Please send your application as one pdf-document to the PI of the host-lab as indicated in the call and to the grant awarding coordinator. At this initial step, you do not have to go via the e-cost system. To apply, you need the following documents:

1. Work proposal using the provided form
2. A current CV (listing dates of degrees obtained, current position, past experience and a list of academic publications, if applicable, as well as any other information you deem relevant)

The successful applicant will be determined following the evaluation process detailed below. Only the successful applicant will then have to submit a formal application via the e-cost system.

*Evaluation process*

All applications fulfilling the formal criteria will be evaluated by the PI of the host lab and the Grant Awarding Coordinator. They will be ranked according to the following criteria:

1. Relevance of the proposal: the degree to which the work plan is detailed in its scientific goals, how they can be achieved, and how these goals are in line with the Action's tasks (1-10 points).
2. Feasibility of the mission: the degree to which the time spend in the Host Institution will be effective to reach the scientific goals planned for the mission (1-10 points).
3. Track record and suitability of the candidate for carrying out the stated aims of the STSM. (1-10 points)

In case of several applicants ranking first place, priority will be given to applicants coming from ITC countries. If this is the case for several applicants, the other members of the core group will be asked to also evaluate the applications. If still several applicants rank first place,

the PI of the host lab gets to decide among the applicants ranked first place. After this, the successful candidate will be informed and has to formally apply via the e-cost system.

#### *STSM financial support*

Successful applicants will be awarded 4000 €, which can be used to cover travel, accommodation, meal expenses etc..

Participants can request a pre-payment of 50% of their STSM Grant when they complete the first day of their STSM. For that purpose, the representative of the Host Institution must confirm by e-mail to the Grant Holder that the first day of the mission has officially started, and then the Grant Holder can arrange the payment of 50% of the STSM grant; the remaining 50% of the Grant is payable once administrative requirements have been satisfied after the STSM (see next point).

#### *Payment modalities*

Generally, all payment will occur after the STSM has been completed unless participants requested the above-mentioned pre-payment. To receive the payment, the grantee will need to submit the following documents via e-cost within 30 calendar days after completing the STSM (exception: all documents will have to be submitted within 15 days after the end of the grant period indicated in the call; so in case your STSM ends right at the end of a grant period, you might have less than 30 days to submit the documents!).

1. A short scientific report, including the following sections: (a) Aims/goals of the STSM; (b) Summary of the work activities and method(s); (c) The main results (what was expected and what turned out, the relevance of the results taken); (d) Future possible opportunities to collaborate with the host institution and future possible plans; and (e) Possible outputs (articles, policy briefs, summary reports, review papers, etcetera).
2. A letter or an email from the PI of the host lab confirming that the applicant has successfully completed the mission.
3. A short summary (maximum 500 words) for the webpage including: affiliation, field of research interest, a short summary of the research completed in STSM, benefits of the STSM for building skills to the participant, outputs, and possibly including a photo with collaborators, a short video and a short quote describing the experience. The intention here is public outreach, so it should be understandable and appealing to lay people.

The Grant Awarding Coordinator and the Vice Chair are responsible for approving the scientific report and informing the Grant Holder that the mission has been successfully completed.

#### *Can I apply for more than one STSM in the same call?*

Yes, you can also apply for multiple STSMs within one call. However, note that you can only be selected for one. You can put in an indication of your preference in your applications in case you rank first for more than one of the STSMs you applied for. If you do not indicate any preference, the core group will decide for which STSMs you will receive the grant.

#### *Need more information?*

For further details, please check the official COST guidelines (in particular the *Grant Awarding User Guide*):

<https://www.cost.eu/funding/documents-guidelines/>

If you still have any further questions, contact the Grant Awarding Coordinator, Sarah Jessen (sarah.jessen@uni-luebeck.de).