

First Call for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM)

This is a call for applications for STSM in the framework of the COST Action AGITHAR (CA19109), Grant Period 1:

- Open call: **31 January 2020**
- Deadline for applications: **15 February, 2020**
- Missions should **start from 20 February, 2020 and be completed by 20 April, 2020**
- The report must be sent to the STSM Coordinator within 30 days of the completion of the STSM and in any case by **30 April, 2020**
- Please note that interested applicants should familiarize themselves with the COST Action AGiTHAR aim and objectives and read Section 8 from the COST Vademecum (<https://www.cost.eu/vademecum/>) to establish whether they are eligible to apply for an STSM.
- Application and relevant documents have to be submitted through the e-cost portal system

What is a STSM?

A STSM facilitates Researchers from COST Countries participating in COST Action AGITHAR to go to an institution, organization or research center in another participating COST Country to foster collaboration and to perform empirical research.

A STSM Grant is a fixed financial contribution which takes into consideration the budget request of the applicant and the outcome of the evaluation of the STSM application.

STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission. A STSM Grant is a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Grantee. The calculation of the financial contribution for each STSM must respect the following criteria:

- Up to a maximum of EUR 3500 in total can be allocated to each successful applicant
- Up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be allocated for accommodation and meal expenses.
- Up to a maximum of EUR 300 can be allocated for travel costs.

Researchers from ITC participating in AGITHAR can request a pre-payment of 50% of their STSM Grant when they complete the first day of their STSM.

Who can apply?

Participation of “Early Career Investigators” (ECI) in STSM is particularly encouraged. An applicant can be considered as being an ECI when the time that has elapsed between the award date of the applicant’s PhD and the date of the applicant’s first involvement in the COST Action AGITHAR does not exceed 8 years. PhD students are also eligible to take part in STSM. The STSM must specifically contribute to the research coordination and capacity building objectives of COST Action AGITHAR.

How to apply?

Interested researchers must carefully read the funding rules detailed in Section 8 of the COST Vademecum (link at the end of the document). Applicants can apply by following the directions below. In addition, they are welcome to request more information or clarification on this procedure to our STSM Coordinator Dr Sebastiano D’Amico (email: sebastiano.damico@um.edu.mt).

All applicants must register for an e-COST profile and applications for STSM are managed ONLY through the e-COST management tool.

The application for a STSM requires the following information:

- Title of the planned STSM
- Planned dates and length of stay
- Motivation statement & description of the proposed work plan (1000 words maximum)
- Name, address & email of the prospective host at the receiving institute
- Budget request with a breakdown of the costs of the STSM
- Support letter from the Home Institution
- Support letter from the Host Institution (indicating that the STSM applicant can perform the activities detailed in the STSM work plan and on the agreed dates)
- Full CV of the applicant

After submitting the application, the online registration tool will issue a formal STSM application, which will be automatically sent to the STSM Coordinator.

Selection of the applicants

The applications will be pre-processed by the STSM Coordinator who will then distribute a list of applications to be ranked by the STSM Selection Committee (i.e. AGITHAR’s Core Group: Chair and Vice- chair, WG leaders, STSM Coordinator and other AGITHAR coordinators). To guarantee a fair and objective evaluation, evaluators should not hold an affiliation with neither the Home nor the Host institution of the STSM proposal in question. Evaluation will be based on the scientific excellence of the applicant, the research proposal, and the relevance of the work plan for the achievement of COST Action AGITHAR objectives. Successful applicants will receive a Grant letter/email confirmation from the Grant Holder, stating the official approval of the STSM application and the granted budget. The applicant has to notify acceptance of the Grant to the Grant Holder via email (AGITHAR’s Chair & STSM Coordinator should be cc’d).

Selection criteria

- Proposal needs to support goals of the AGITHAR COST Action
- Scientific excellence
- Consideration will be given to gender and inclusiveness targets

After the STSM

The grantee is required to upload into e-COST a scientific report and Host approval of the report within 30 days after the end date of the STSM (*for STSM ending close to the end of the Grant Period 1, the completion report must be returned by April 30, 2020 so that the reimbursement procedure can be completed within the budget period*). The scientific report will require the approval of the Core Group in order to effect the payment of the Grant. 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. Please note that the COST Association can request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by STSM applicants.

Successful applicants will be asked to submit a brief summary of the STSM outputs for the Action's website describing the scientific report which will also be made available online.