



COST Action CA-18124 EUROPEAN SEXUAL MEDICINE NETWORK (ESMN)

2nd round of Calls for STSM Applications for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM). Autumn 2020

Introduction: COST and COST Actions

COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology aimed at initiating and supporting networking and coordination of nationally funded research activities on a European level. It facilitates bringing scientists together under light strategic guidance based on networks, called COST Actions, centred on research projects in fields that are of interest to both COST and cooperating countries.

1. Purpose of a Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) under ESMN

The main objective of the COST Action **ESMN - European Sexual Medicine Network - (CA-18124)** is to establish an international multidisciplinary network consisting of researchers, specialists and professionals in sexual medicine. The fields include: medicine, psychology, sociology, pedagogy and other health sciences. The ESMN overarching goal is to introduce and advance sexual medicine at every level of education, and in clinical and public health research and practice. The Action aims to exchange research results produced by different disciplines in order to find commonalities in concepts and approaches to sexual medicine. This will serve as the foundation for identifying shared concepts and definitions, and the start of joint interdisciplinary research, with a particular focus on including young researchers. It will also form the conceptual groundwork for developing interdisciplinary outlines and curricula for further university education at a European standard of qualification and recognition. (see the [Memorandum of Understanding MoU](#)).

The focus on the current Call, which aims to be widely inclusive intersecting *gender, age and geography*, is on PhD students or Early Career Investigators (an individual who is within a time span of up to 8 years from the date they obtained their PhD/doctorate (full-time equivalent) in the field of sexual medicine and sexual health in a broader definition, open to the contribution of different disciplinary approaches (medical specialties, psychology, sexology, sociology, anthropology, demography, etc.).

Applications must be in line with two objectives of ESMN, research coordination and capacity building in scientific research, training and clinical practice concerning sexual medicine and sexual health.

2. Specific information concerning STSMs under ESMN

STSMs must have a duration of at least 5 full working days.

The financial support is a contribution to the overall expenses incurred during the STSM and may not necessarily cover all of the associated outgoings.

The following funding conditions apply and must be respected:

1. The amounts granted for each individual STSM will be determined during the evaluation process by the Management Committee of STSM, in cooperation with the Core Group of ESMN.
2. For this 2nd round of Call, the Management Committee of STSM has allocated a total budget of 6,600 €, for awarding a maximum of 4 STSMs.

The calculation of the financial contribution for each STSM shall respect the following criteria:

- Up to a maximum of EUR 3 500 in total can be afforded to each successful applicant.
- Up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses

If more applications will be received, there is the option that more than 4 STSMs can be awarded (subject to MC decision).

Financial support is paid in the form of a Grant after the submission of a STSM report, once the STSM is completed and in accordance to the provisions stated in Section 7 below. Researchers from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs) participating in the COST Action may request a pre-payment of 50% of their STSM Grant when they complete the first day of their STSM.

3. Deadline for Applications

Due to the Covid19 pandemic situation, the 2nd year of the Cost Action will schedule one STSM **Autumn 2020 Call**: the scientific mission should occur **between 1st January and latest 1st April 2021**

Interested individuals can apply by following the instructions provided below and submitting their application and supporting documents by the deadline of the Autumn 2020 Call: **30th November 2020**

4. Who can apply

The STSM applicant must be engaged in an official research programme as a PhD Student or Early Career Investigator (up to 8 years after PhD) or can be employed by, or affiliated to, an institution, organisation or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research, training or clinical practice in the field of sexual medicine and sexual health.

The applicants should come from any of the COST Full Member countries or from COST Near Neighbour countries which are members of the ESMN COST Action (for explanation of terms see *COST Vademecum*, available at: <https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Vademecum-V8-1-May-2020.pdf>). The institutions / organisations or legal entities, where applicants pursue their main professional activities, are considered as Home Institutions. The Host Institution is the institution / organisation that will host the successful applicant. The scenarios available to eligible STSM applicants are given in detail in Section 8 of the *COST Vademecum*.

Preference will be given to Early Career Investigators (ECI, for explanation see *COST Vademecum*) and to other scientists from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC, for explanation see *COST Vademecum*).

5. How to apply

The application process in details is as follows:

1. All applicants must carefully read the rules detailed in Section 8 of the *COST Vademecum* (<https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Vademecum-V8-1-May-2020.pdf>).
2. All applicants must register for an e-COST profile at <https://e-services.cost.eu/> adding their bank account details to their profile, as requested.
3. The applicant must obtain a letter of invitation from the Host Institution confirming that they can undertake the STSM on the given dates prior to submitting an application.
4. The applicant must complete, submit and download their STSM application online at: <https://e-services.cost.eu/STSM>. This will generate a PDF file that must be submitted by email (Dr. Heidi Wolfmeier buchhaltung@oeasm.at). The information required to fill out the form includes title, dates, applicant's details and bank details, financial data for travel and subsistence expenses and a Work plan Summary (including planned outcomes).
5. The applicant must send their STSM application form submitted to e-COST (pdf) and the relevant supporting documents (see below) to Prof. Raffaella Ferrero Camoletto, STSM Coordinator (contact person: Dr. Heidi Wolfmeier buchhaltung@oeasm.at) for evaluation before the application submission deadline expires.

The list of supporting documents to be submitted in pdf format for the evaluation are:

- (a) The submitted STSM application form (downloadable when the online application is submitted – see point 4 above);
- (b) A motivation letter including an overview of the proposed activities that will be performed, which must contain a plan of work for the visit, highlighting the proposed contribution to the scientific objectives of ESMN (proposed plan of work should be consulted with the Host Institution in advance), and the description of what exactly will be carried on and why it is important for the applicant and their scientific work;
- (c) A letter of support from the Home Institution;
- (d) Letter of invitation to the applicant from a senior researcher affiliated to the Host Institution;
- (e) A Full C.V. (including a list of academic publications – if applicable).

6. Evaluation

The applications will then be assessed by STSM Committee of the ESMN (Raffaella Ferrero Camoletto, Italy, coordinator; Goran Arbanas, Croatia; Katarina Klapilova, Czech Republic; Ksolt Kopa, Hungary), which will perform the scientific and budgetary assessment of the applications against the perceived contribution that the proposed visit will make against the scientific objectives outlined in Section 1 above.

Evaluation criteria:

- Scientific quality of the proposal (scientific level of the project and how it is correlated to the aims of the Action);
- Innovation in the networking connection (among countries/disciplines).

The applicant will be formally notified of the outcome of their STSM application by the STSM Committee after **15th December 2020**.

7. What is required after completing the STSM

Within 30 days from the end date of the STSM, the successful applicant must submit a scientific report to the Host institution and to Prof. Raffaella Ferrero Camoletto (contact person: Dr. Heidi Wolfmeier: buchhaltung@oeasm.at).

The scientific report should contain: STSM title; STSM Applicant name; Host institution and responsible host person; Period; Working group of the COST action; Purpose of the STSM; Description of the work carried out during the STSM; Description of the main research results obtained; An evaluation of the stay at the host institute; Future collaboration with the Host institution (if applicable); Foreseen publications/articles resulting from the STSM (if applicable); Other comments (if any).

The applicant is also responsible for acquiring an official acceptance letter / e-mail confirmation of acceptance from the Host Institution formally accepting the scientific report. This formal acceptance of the scientific report has to be sent within that same period of 30 days after STSM is over, to the Grant Holder Manager (Dr. Heidi Wolfmeier buchhaltung@oeasm.at) and Prof. Raffaella Ferrero Camoletto for archiving and dissemination purposes.

Failure to submit the scientific report within 30 days from the end date of the STSM will effectively cancel the Grant. *(Please note that the COST Association can request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by STSM applicants).*

8. Summary of the Timeframe for the two STSM Calls:

Autumn 2020 Call:

- Deadlines for applications to be submitted: **30th November 2020**
- Notification of applications outcomes: **15th December 2020**
- Period of STSM: **between 1st January and latest 1st April 2021**
- Report submitted: **30 days after STSM completion**