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Sixth Call for STSM Applications

CA COST Action CA15121

Advancing marine conservation in the European and contiguous seas (MarCons)

<http://www.marcons-cost.eu/>

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) Applications

What is the purpose of a STSM?

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) are exchange visits aimed at supporting individual mobility, strengthening existing networks and fostering collaboration between researchers. A STSM should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action, whilst at the same time allowing those partaking in the missions to learn new techniques, gain access to specific data, instruments and/or methods not available in their own institutions / organisations.

Who is eligible to partake in a STSM?

A STSM applicant must be engaged in a research programme as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow or can be employed by, or affiliated to, an Institution or legal entity which has within its mission a clear association with performing scientific research.

Always satisfying the above requirement, whether an applicant is eligible to receive a STSM grant depends on which country their primary affiliation is held. Once this has been established, eligibility can be determined by adhering to the stipulations in the following two categories:

1. Applicants holding their primary affiliation at an institution located in a Participating COST Country are eligible to perform a STSM in another Participating COST Country. A list of Participating COST Countries can be found on the respective COST Action Webpage at <http://www.marcons-cost.eu/about/participants/participating-countries>
2. For applicants holding their primary affiliation in a Near Neighbour Country (NNC), the consideration for being eligible to receive a STSM grant is linked to whether their institution has been formally approved onto the Action or not – The eligibility status of Researchers located in a NNC is restricted to those affiliated to approved NNC institutions.

The complete list of eligible NNC can be found at

<http://www.marcons-cost.eu/about/participants/participating-countries>

STSM - from where to where?

The Home institution is the institution where applicants hold their primary affiliation as registered on their e-COST profile/STSM application/C.V. and where they are currently performing their main strand of research. The table below (see category A) details the possible STSM scenarios available to the respective Researcher. The Host institution (category B) concerns the institution/organisation that will host the successful applicant.

The following table shows the STSM scenarios available to eligible applicants:

A) Applicant in a Home Institution	B) To Perform a STSM in a Host Institution
Located in an institution in a Participating COST Country or Cooperating State	In another Participating COST Country or Cooperating State
	In an approved NNC institution
	In an approved IPC (International Partner Country) institution
	In an approved Specific organisation
Located in an approved NNC institution	In a Participating COST Country or Cooperating State

Sixth Call for STSM Applications for missions occurring between 01/09/2020 and 09/10/2020

All STSM activities must occur in their entirety within the dates specified above

Purpose of a Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM)

STSM facilitate Researchers from COST Countries participating in COST Action **CA15121** to go to an institution or research centre in another participating COST Country to foster collaboration and to perform empirical research. Participation of “Early-Career Investigators” (ECI) in STSMs is particularly encouraged. An applicant can be considered an “Early-Career Investigator” 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 **CA15121** does not exceed 8 years. PhD students are also eligible to partake in STSMs.

Specific information concerning STSMs

STSMs can have a duration between 5 days and 90 days (and up to 180 days if the applicant is an ECI – see definition of ECI above).

The financial support on offer 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 calculation of the financial contribution for each STSM must respect the following criteria:
 - up to a maximum of EUR 2 500 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.
2. For ECIs, the calculation for an increased financial contribution must respect the following criteria:
 - up to a maximum of EUR 3 500 in total can be afforded to ECIs for missions with a duration between 91 and 180 days;
 - up to a maximum of EUR 160 per day can be afforded for accommodation and meal expenses.
3. STSM activities must occur in their entirety within the dates specified in this call.

Financial support is limited to partial coverage of travel and subsistence (accommodation and meal) expenses and is paid as a grant. Grants will be paid to the applicants upon successful completion of their STSM, after submitting their approved report and poster to the STSM manager and online.

For this financial year, the Management Committee of COST Action **CA15121** has allocated a total budget of EUR 7,500 for STSMs, which may allow for between 3 to 5 successful applicants.

The amounts granted for each individual STSM will be determined during the evaluation process by the nominally appointed person(s). The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application which must clearly compliment the overall objectives of the Action. In accordance with COST policies, the selection process is also guided by a principle of gender balance. The selection process also aims to benefit ECIs and to encourage applicants and host institutions from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC): Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, and Turkey.

How to apply for an STSM:

Interested researchers are advised to follow the directions provided below and submit their application and supporting documents to Noam Levin (noamlevin@mail.huji.ac.il, STSM Manager for CA15121) by the deadline of the 15/8/2020.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS IS AS FOLLOWS:

1. All applicants must carefully read the funding rules detailed in section 8 of the *COST Vademecum (version June 2019): Short Term Scientific Missions (pages 35-36)*. This document is available at: https://www.cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Vademecum_June2019.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.
3. All applicants 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. All applicants must complete, submit and download their STSM application online at: <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>.
5. All applicants must send their submitted STSM application form and the relevant supporting documents to Noam Levin (noamlevin@mail.huji.ac.il, STSM Manager for CA15121) for evaluation before the application submission deadline expires.

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

- Letter of invitation to the applicant from a senior Researcher affiliated to the Host institution;
- The submitted STSM application form (downloadable when the online application is submitted - see point 4 above);
- 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 the respective COST Action;
- The application should contribute to one of the following working groups:
 - WG1: From description to prediction of cumulative human impacts on marine ecosystems to inform conservation planning
 - WG2: Present challenges and limitations in marine conservation
 - WG3: Marine conservation and biological invasions
 - WG4: Integrated conservation planning across terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems
 - WG5: Regional coordination and transboundary conservation

- WG6: Governance of marine protected areas
- A letter of support from the Home Institution;
- A full C.V. (including a list of academic publications – if applicable). The C.V. must include the award date of the applicant's PhD and his/her current position.

6. The application will then be assessed by the Core Group of the Action against the perceived contribution that the proposed visit will make to the scientific objectives outlined in the Action Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):

https://e-services.cost.eu/files/domain_files/CA/Action_CA15121/mou/CA15121-e.pdf -

7. The applicant will be formally notified of the outcome of their STSM application by Noam Levin by 28/08/2020.

8. Given that the MarCons action will end on the 31/10/2020, within 5 days from the end date of the STSM, the successful applicant must submit a scientific report to the Host institution and to Noam Levin. The applicant is also responsible for acquiring an official letter / Email confirmation of acceptance from a senior Researcher affiliated to the Host institution formally accepting the scientific report. This formal acceptance of the scientific report has to be sent to the Grant Holder and to Noam Levin for archiving purposes. Finally, the applicant should submit a poster (in electronic form, as a single PowerPoint slide) describing his/her experience from the STSM and the relevant scientific outputs; the poster will be used by the Action for dissemination purposes (e.g. uploaded in the Action's website). The template that should be used for the poster is available in the MarCons web site, at: <http://www.marcons-cost.eu/dissemination/templates>

Failure to submit the scientific report and the poster within 5 days from the end date of the STSM will effectively cancel the grant.

Examples of posters from previous STSM grantees can be viewed here:

<http://www.marcons-cost.eu/research-outputs/stsm-posters>

(Please note that COST can request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by STSM applicants).

Deadline for applications to be submitted: 15/08/2020

Notification of application outcome: 28/08/2020

Period of STSM: between 01/09/2020 and 09/10/2020

STSM reports should be submitted within 5 days from the end date of the STSM