Last call for STSM Applications (4th Grant Period)
(Application time: 1-Feb-2024 to 30-Apr-2024)

Short-term scientific missions (STSM) are exchange visits between researchers involved in a COST Action, allowing scientists to visit an institution or a laboratory in another COST Member state, COST Cooperating Member or COST Near-Neighbor Country that is part of the Action. The aim of a STSM is to foster collaboration in excellent research infrastructures and share new techniques that are not be available in a participant's home institution or laboratory.

An STSM Grant is a contribution to the overall travel, accommodation, and meal expenses of the applicant, which takes into consideration the requested budget and the outcome of the evaluation process. STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to the mission.

Requirements to apply for the STSM grant (Eligibility Rules):

- Applicants must be engaged in an official research program as PhD Student or Postdoc or can be employed by (or affiliated to) an institution, organization or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with the NEWFOCUS performing research tasks.

- The planned STSM must have a min. duration of 5 calendar days and its activities must be carried out entirely by **30-June-2024**, to finalize the post-STSM reporting on time.

- The maximum grant that can be allocated to a successful applicant is **EUR 1500 in total**, from which the costs of accommodation and meal expenses cannot exceed EUR 160 per day. All related expenses must be carefully justified (see "STSM Procedure" below).

- An STSM grant is a personal grant that is paid in the account of the applicant when the grant report is approved after the visit. The STSM applicant must make his/her own arrangements for all the provisions related to travelling costs (airplane/train/bus tickets, accommodation, meals) as well as other travelling-related costs (VISA, insurance, etc.)

Application procedure (1st round: 1-Feb to 28-Feb-2024; 2nd round: 1-Mar to 30-Apr-2024):

- Obtain the written agreement (invitation letter) of the Host Institution on the possibility to implement the STSM on a given title and dates. To be added in the STSM application.

- Complete the online STSM application form (https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm), including STSM title, dates, and personal details of the applicant. Include as attachment the applicant's CV, STSM workplan plan, a support letter from the home/sending institution, and the justification of the grant requested. Specify as well the NEWFOCUS WG connected to the STSM application.

Evaluation and Selection (within 30 days from the application date)

- All submitted applications will be evaluated and ranked by a panel composed of the STSM Coordinator, the Action Chair or Action Vice-Chair, and the involved WG Chairs.

- The aim will be to support all applications received. However, in the case of insufficient budget is identified during the first round of STSM applications (in Feb. 2024), the following criteria will be applied: 1) Participation of Institutions with active involvement in NEWFOCUS; 2) Resources available at the Host Institutions (Software & hardware); 3) Participation of applicant in previous STSM grants; 4) Involvement of ITC (Inclusiveness Target Countries) and ECI (Early Career Investigators); 5) Gender of the applicant.

- Second round STSM applications (in Mar.-Apr. 2024) will be processed in order of arrival.

Post-STSM Reporting and Payment of the Grant (Hard submission deadline: 2-July-2024)

- Following the completion of the STSM, a scientific report must be submitted within 30 calendar days from the STSM end or before 2-July-2024 (whichever comes first).

- After the approval of the STSM report, the Grant Holder will initiate the grant payment.

Further questions? Please, contact the STSM & ITC Conference Grant Coordinator, Dr. Alexis Dowhuszko (alexis.dowhuszko@aalto.fi), and/or the Grant Holder Manager, Mr Davide Cavalieri (davide.cavalieri@centrale-marseille.fr), of the COST Action.