**First Call for Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) applications within the COST Action “Cognitive decline in Nephro-Neurology: European Cooperative Target (CONNECT)”**

**For Missions occurring until 30 October 2021.**

**Deadline for submission: 30 August**

Expected date of notification of application outcome: Up to two weeks from receiving the application

All STSM activities must occur in their entirety until the date specified above.

All submitted STSM **applications will be decided upon on a first-come-first-serve basis depending on available funds.**

Applications submitted after the deadline will be subject to individual assessment and will be taken into consideration depending on finances available.

**PURPOSE OF A SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM)**

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) are exchange visits aimed at supporting researchers’ individual mobility, strengthening existing networks and fostering collaboration. STSMs are intended especially, but not solely, for young researchers.

An STSM should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action “Cognitive decline in Nephro-Neurology: European Cooperative Target (CONNECT)”, while enabling those partaking in the missions to establish new partnerships, learn new techniques, gain access to specific data, instruments and / or methods not available in their own institutions / organisations.

**STSM - ELIGIBILITY RULES**

STSMs are open for PhDs, PostDocs, and advanced career researchers employed at institutions participating in “Cognitive decline in Nephro-Neurology: European Cooperative Target (CONNECT)”, or at approved institutions. STSMs must be performed between COST countries - researchers cannot apply for an STSM within their own country.

Priority will be given to Early Career Investigators (ECI) (maximum 8 years since obtaining their PhD at the time of application) and PhD students working on kidney and brain functions.

Particular consideration will also be given to candidates moving from/to COST Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs), which include Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia and Turkey.

International COST participants may host STSM researchers from European COST countries but may not apply for STSMs themselves.

Awards throughout the annual grant period (for the first year: 12 Dec 2020- 30th Oct 2021) will be made to support scientific excellence, and to support a variety of researchers in terms of gender, career stage, affiliation, and nationality.

**Specific information**

STSM will of the duration between 5 and 90 days (and up to 180 days if the applicant is an ECI). The STSM will be a fixed grant to cover part of the travel expenses and living allowance. The cost of research materials is not eligible for consideration as part of the grant.

Please note that the awarded grant will be paid only after the STSM has been completed – therefore the applicant must have approval and prior financial support e.g., from their own institution. ***Researchers/students from ECI may ask for a 50% payment of the grant on the first day of arrival at the host institution.***

The following funding conditions apply and must be respected:

up to a max of EUR2200 in total can be afforded to each successful STSM applicant;

up to a max of EUR160 per day can be afforded for accommodation & meal expenses;

STSM awards may be combined with other funding sources, but these must be acknowledged in the application.

Financial support is limited to cover travel, accommodation and meal expenses and is paid in the form of a Grant. The amounts granted for each individual STSM will be determined during the evaluation process by the STSM committee. The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application which must clearly compliment the overall objectives of the Action and be related to a specific Working Group.

In your application, you will have to describe the goal of the proposed STSM, how it contributes to the scientific remit of the COST Action “Cognitive decline in Nephro-Neurology: European Cooperative Target (CONNECT)”, the planned expenses and the outputs planned as result of the STSM. For ECIs, PostDoc and PhD students, two support letters by advanced career researchers will be required.

For detailed rules regarding eligibility and financial support, please see the relevant sections of the COST Vademecum (http://www.cost.eu/download/COSTVademecum).

**Deadline**

Interested researchers can submit their application and supporting documents by the deadline of **30 August 2021**

**How to apply**

This is a step-by-step guide to applying for an STSM and the criteria by which STSM applications will be assessed. More in-depth information can be found at the COST Vademecum.

1. Applicants must carefully read the funding rules detailed in Section 7 of the COST H2020 Vademecum, Section 7 (<http://www.cost.eu/download/COSTVademecum>)
2. Applicants must submit an application using e-COST https://e-services.cost.eu/user/login/STSM. If you do not already have an e-COST account you will first need to 'create an account' - which will include providing the details of the bank account where the grant will be lodged if your STSM application is approved and the STSM successfully completed.
3. Applicants must obtain a letter of invitation from the Host Institution confirming that they can undertake the STSM on the given dates should their application be approved.
4. Applicants must complete, submit and download their STSM application online at: <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>
5. Applicants must send their STSM application form submitted to e-COST (pdf) and the relevant supporting documents to prof. Ewout Hoorn (e.j.hoorn@erasmusmc.nl)

See the Annex 1 and 2 for a template of letter of support from home institution and host institution

**List of supporting documents to be submitted for the evaluation**

1. Letter of support to the applicant from Home institution (Annex 1)
2. Letter of invitation to the applicant from a senior Researcher at the Host institution (Annex 2)
3. The pdf of the STSM application form from the e-cost site
4. An overview of the proposed activities that will be performed, a workplan for the visit, a description of the proposed contributions to the scientific objectives of the “Cognitive decline in Nephro-Neurology: European Cooperative Target (CONNECT)” Action, an outline of the host's scientific expertise/resources in support of the STSM (maximum 8 pages, the font should correspond to Times New Roman size 12 pt with single line spacing and standard margins of 2 cm)
5. A Full C.V. (including a list of academic publications – if applicable)
6. A certificate demonstrating the position as PhD student, postdoc or other position eligible for STSM grants

**CONTACTS:**

**STSM Coordinator** - prof. Ewout Hoorn (e.j.hoorn@erasmusmc.nl)

Chair of the Management Committee of the Action - Prof. Giovambattista Capasso – gb.capasso@unicampania.it

Administrative Manager – Antonella Catuogno- antonella.catuogno@unicampania.it

**Evaluation**

The “Cognitive decline in Nephro-Neurology: European Cooperative Target (CONNECT)” STSM panel organises assessment of the STSM proposal: STSM selection team assess the proposal (see ‘STSM Selection Criteria’) – may seek expert but impartial advice to inform their decision. If approved, the STSM coordinator sends application and approval to Grant Holder & Action Chair for final check.

The Grant Holder sends the applicant a grant letter to sign and return. The STSM should not be started until this letter has been signed and returned.

After the STSM, the investigator submits a scientific report to the STSM Host and STSM coordinator within 30 days of completing the STSM. This must include: the purpose of the mission; description of work carried out; description of main results/outputs; plan of future collaborations with Host (if applicable); planned publications resulting from STSM (if applicable); confirmation of successful STSM by Host.

STSM Coordinator and Action Chair approve the final report. The Grant Holder executes payment to STSM Applicant.

**Evaluation Criteria for Awarding STSM**

STSM funding will be awarded according to the COST key principles of:

Excellence

Inclusivity

Balance (gender and nation)

**Criteria for evaluation will be as follows:**

The relevance and application of the research to the field of the Action – a detailed work plan will help determine if the scientific aims of the work will be relevant and applicable to the Action’s aims (1-5 points).

The quality and clarity of the proposed research - The STSM application should be of high quality, arguing clearly and cogently the importance and timeliness of the research (1-5 points).

The choice of Host institution – the applicant must give specific scientific reasons for visiting their chosen Host institution. We will also be tracking the geographical distribution of the Host institutions to ensure there is an evenly-spread network for knowledge transfer. Involvement of ITC countries will be a plus (1-5 points).

The home institution of the researcher – We will take into account the number of applications from each institution to ensure a fair spread of researches across the network. Involvement of ITC countries will be a plus (1-5 points)

The profile of the researcher – We will take into account the researcher’s potential of successfully completing the STSM on the basis of their previous work and achievements commensurate to their career stage. In line with COST policy, we will preferentially award STSMs to early career investigators (PhD + <8 years). This should not discourage more experienced researchers from applying (1-5 points).

For ECIs, the support provided by senior colleagues

The publication/output potential of the research carried out – Based on the STSM work plan and detailed publication/output plan (1-5 points).

**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 the eCOST system (Annex 3).

The scientific report should cover statement of achieving the project aims, description of the work carried out and the outcome/results, expected publications that may arise from the STSM (if applicable).

The applicant is also responsible for acquiring an official acceptance letter/e-mail confirmation of acceptance from a senior Researcher affiliated to the Host institution formally accepting the scientific report.

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).

Annex 1



**TEMPLATE – LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM HOME INSTITUTION**

* I, *\_\_\_\_\_\_ (The responsible person – typically a head of the lab - at HOME institution)*
* from *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (HOME Institution)*,
* support the application of *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(applicant’s name)*
* proposing to travel to *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (HOST Institution)*
* to realize a STSM for \_\_\_\_ day(s) to carry out
* the project \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(proposal title)*.

Name of the responsible person from the home institution (typically a head of the lab)

Signature

Stamp

At \_\_\_(city)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (country)\_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_(day)\_\_\_ of \_\_(month)\_\_\_\_\_ 20\_

Annex 2



**TEMPLATE – LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM HOST INSTITUTION**

* I *\_\_\_\_\_\_ (The responsible person – typically a head of the lab - at HOST institution)*
* from *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (HOST Institution)*
* support the application of *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (applicant’s name)*
* from *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (HOME Institution)*
* to realize a STSM for \_\_\_\_ day(s) to carry out
* the project \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(proposal title)*.

Name of the responsible person from the host institution (typically a head of the lab)

Signature

Stamp

At \_\_\_ (city)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (country)\_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_ (day) \_\_\_ of \_\_(month)\_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_.

Annex 3



**Scientific Report Short-Term Scientific Mission**

(max 4 pages long)

Applicant name (First, Last):

Home Institution:

Host Institution:

STSM date:

STSM title:

Explanation about how the STSM contribute to the Action CA19127:

Description of the work carried out during the STSM (Max 300 words):

Description of the main results obtained:

Mutual benefits for the Home and Host institutions:

Future collaboration with the Host institution (if applicable):

Foreseen publications/articles or conference presentations expected to result from the STSM (if applicable):

Other comments (if any):

Date: Signature of the grantee