

## **STSMs Rules of Cost Action CA15119 (NANOUP TAKE) for the 1<sup>st</sup> Grant Period (May 2016 – April 2017)**

### **Objectives:**

As defined in the COST glossary, Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) aim to strengthen the COST Action and the achievement of their scientific objectives by allowing scientists participating in the Action to go to an institution or laboratory in another COST country to foster collaboration, to share knowledge, to learn a new technique or to take measurements using instruments and/or methods not available in their own institution/laboratory.

### **STSM Funding Period**

The following table gives the deadlines for submission and the starting and ending dates of STSMs for the first Grant Period (from 01/05/2016 to 30/04/2017).

The total budget allocated for STSMs during the first year of the Action is 18.000 € (with 25 STSMs expected). This budget is distributed across the two calls and the budget allocated for the 1<sup>st</sup> call cannot exceed 60% of the total budget. Thus, a minimum of 40% of the total budget will remain for the 2<sup>nd</sup> call.

<b>MILESTONES</b>	<b>DATES</b>	
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Call</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Call</b>
Submission deadline	31/07/2016	15/11/2016
Notification of award	01/10/2016	30/12/2016
STMS starting	15/10/2016	15/01/2017
STMS ending	31/03/2017	31/03/2017

### **Applicants and eligibility criteria**

Based on COST eligibility criteria (see <http://www.cost.eu/download/COSTVademecum>), the Applicant should be engaged in a program of research as a PhD student or postdoctoral fellow or be employed by a public or private institution in a COST country having signed the MoU of the Action. Information about participation is available at [http://www.cost.eu/COST\\_Actions/ca/CA15119](http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/ca/CA15119).

Both Home (sending) and Host (receiving) Institutions can be public or private, and should be in a COST country having signed the MoU. In addition, they should be actively participating in the COST Action and its representatives have to be a member of at least one Working Group (WG).

In exceptional cases, an STSM may be approved from a home institution in a COST country to a Host Institution in a non-COST country but not the other way round. All the possible scenarios are described in the Cost Vademecum, section 7 - STSM.

### **Duration and financial support**

In general, STSMs have a minimum duration of one week (5 working days) and a maximum of 3 months, in accordance with the COST Vademecum, and they shall be carried out within the time frame of the year's schedule and within the period of the respective COST Action. STSMs of Early Career Investigators – ECI – (less than PhD + 8 years) can be extended to a duration beyond 3 months, but normally not to more than 6 months in total. In these cases, financial support can be increased to a maximum of EUR 3 500.

The amount of funding requested is in accordance with the COST Vademecum. The financial support is a contribution to the costs of an STSM and may not necessarily cover all the costs in each case. Except for ECIs, a maximum duration of 1 month for STSMs was decided by the Management Committee for the 1st Grant Period. Proposed and supported STSMs must end according to the time schedule described in the section “Funding period”.

The financial contribution for an STSM will be a fixed grant based on the Applicant's budget request and the evaluation of the application by the STSM Assessment Committee. An amount of EUR 60 to 90 for the daily allowance, in particular for longer stays, and a maximum of EUR 400 for traveling expenses is recommended. An average cost of EUR 720 per STSM is expected for the 1<sup>st</sup> Grant Period. The total amount for an STSM shall normally not exceed EUR 2 500 (EUR 3 500 for Early Career Investigators). Rates for accommodation and meal expenses could be differentiated according to the cost of living in the Host country. Any exception needs special justification. In any case, the costs associated with the STSM must not exceed the limits set in the Cost Vademecum.

## Submission of Proposals

Applicants must use the online portal <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm> to register their proposal. A formal summary is produced online, downloaded and sent by email to the STSM coordinator ([patrice.estelle@univ-rennes1.fr](mailto:patrice.estelle@univ-rennes1.fr)). During the submission process, the following information is required:

- Applicant's title, name, workplace, postal address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address.
- Name, postal address, telephone, fax and email of the prospective host at the receiving institute.
- The planned dates and length of stay.
- The title of the planned STSM.
- A short description of the proposed work plan (about 250 words).
- A short curriculum vitae.
- A budget request with breakdown of the costs of the STSM.
- Bank account details.

In addition to the previous information, additional evidence is needed to support the proposal and help in the decision round for STSM funding. The applicant must fill out and submit:

- 1) Proposal of the research during the expected STSM (3-5 pages), with the following structure:
  - Abstract (1/3 page)
  - Broader background and research questions of the current project (1/2 page)
  - Specific goals of STMS, methods used, time-line (1 page)
  - Relevance to the Action and WGs (1/3 page)
  - Dissemination plans (1/2 page)
- 2) Applicant's CV (max. 1 page).
- 3) Letter of support from Home and Host institutions.
- 4) A signed statement including the following aspects:
  - She/he must agree to present results at a WG meeting (when possible) and a written report.
  - She/he must agree to acknowledge funding in publications and conferences arising from the STSM Cost Action.

Once the starting date of an accepted STSM mission is known (e.g., travel booking), the STSM coordinator must be notified by email. The scholarship cannot be considered as employment and the grantee must make his/her own arrangements for all health, social, personal security and pension matters.

Only complete proposals received before the deadline and fulfilling eligibility of application will be considered in the respective decision round.

### **Assessment Panel**

For each STSM Call, the Assessment Panel consists of the chair, or vice-chair, the STSM Coordinator, and the WG leaders or WG Vice-Leaders. All the Assessment Panel members must find a substitute in case of conflict of interest (i.e., she/he belongs to the home/guest institution of the applicant) or time constraints that will not allow them to participate in the assessment.

The proposals collected by the STSM coordinator will be sent out to the chair or vice-chair and WG leaders or vice-leaders immediately after the deadline, together with an up-to-date summary of “the statistics”, i.e., the budget available, and a list of the STSMs funded in the Action.

Each member of the assessment panel shall prepare a list, in accordance with the following aspects, within three weeks:

- a) Applications to be funded (“priority list”),
- b) Applications not fundable (for reasons other than “no funds available”). Should an application be categorized “not fundable for other reasons”, then a reason must be indicated.

### **Decision criteria and procedures**

The decision sheet reported in Appendix 1 shall be used for the scientific assessment of the proposal. The decision criteria will be available to the applicants on the website ([www.nanouptake.eu](http://www.nanouptake.eu)) and will be based on the following criteria:

- The candidate’s personal and scientific development (max. 5 score points).

- The overall project (see background) (max. 5 score points).
- The goals of the STSM (max. 5 score points).
- Relevance of the STSM to the Action (max. 5 score points).
- Dissemination plans (max. 5 score points).

The STSM manager summarizes the 6 votes (chair/co-chair; STSM Coordinator and WG Leaders). This means that an excellent application will have:

5 criteria aspects x 5 score points x 6 votes = 150 score points.

Proposals which score below 80 score points cannot be funded without resubmission in the next call for proposals. The STSM Coordinator will notify the applicant of this decision.

If there are more fundable proposals than available funding, the STSM Coordinator will prepare a priority list ensuring a balance between WGs, and taking into account the priority given by the MC: gender balance, and promotion of proposals from ECI and ITC.

Applications that exceed current funds are moved to a waiting list. In addition, they will be considered for the next funding period (treated as new applications with the same score, unless the proposal is resubmitted). In the case that a Working Group has received more funding (nominal value) than others, it will be considered for the next calls.

The preliminary decision will be sent by the STSM to the Chair/Vice-Chair for final acceptance. Then, the STSM coordinator will inform the Grant Holder Manager. All applicants will be notified 6 to 8 weeks after the deadline of proposal submission (Grant letter) by the Grant Holder Manager. The Grantee accepts the grant by sending back a signed version of the grant letter to the Grant Holder Manager.

After their STSMs have been fulfilled (4 weeks latest), the grantees must submit a short online scientific report (accessible from [www.nanouptake.eu](http://www.nanouptake.eu)) to the host institution and the STSM coordinator, containing the following information:

- Purpose of the STSM.
- Description of the work carried out during the STSM.

- Description of the main results obtained.
- Future collaboration with host institution (if applicable); foreseeable publications/articles resulting or to result from the STSM (if applicable).
- Confirmation by the host institution of the successful execution of the STSM.
- Other comments (if any).

The STSM Coordinator will approve the scientific report and will inform the Grant Holder that the STSM has been successfully accomplished and the grant can be paid. The Grant Holder executes payment to the grantee.

### **Further information about applications**

Questions may be sent to the STSM coordinator (Prof. Patrice Estelle):

[patrice.estelle@univ-rennes1.fr](mailto:patrice.estelle@univ-rennes1.fr)