

SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS (STSM)

What are they, why are they important, and how do
I access funding?

M.C.Fairhurst

Presentation to the IC1106 Management
Committee

16th June, 2012



"Any other references?"

The fundamental idea:

“COST strives to support European scientists in their networking activities. STSMs allow scientists to learn from an institution or laboratory in another COST country - a concept of particular interest to young scientists”

Some aims:

- Increase short-term collaborative opportunities
- Exchange ideas and knowledge across borders
- Lead to longer-term collaboration
- Eventually, strengthen markets and stimulate leading edge innovation

Some general requirements:

- Must contribute to the scientific objectives of the Action
- Should strengthen existing networks by allowing scientists to visit an institution in another COST country
 - Foster collaboration
 - Learn a new technique
 - Take measurements using instrument or technique not available in home institution
 - Aimed particularly, but not exclusively, at **Early Stage Researchers (ESR)**
(Up to eight years post-PhD)
- An Action should normally support at least 4 STSMs per year !

Specific requirements (1)

- Applicant must be engaged in a programme of research as a
 - Postgraduate student
 - Postdoctoral Fellow
 - Employee

MoU of an institution in a COST country which has accepted the of the Action

- This institution must be actively participating in the Action

Requirements (2)

- Host institution must also be in a COST participating country
- There are some exceptions/further options under certain conditions (see pointer below for more detail), some requiring specific approval by the COST Office
- Applicant must obtain agreement from Host institution before applying

Practical details:

- Duration: 1 week - 3 months
Exceptionally, MC can approve up to 3 months extension (but for ESRs only)
- Financial support: A contribution to costs incurred, and is normally limited to travel and subsistence expenses
- Amounts: Daily allowance 60-90 Euros per day and travel contribution of 300 Euros are typical.
- Total should typically not exceed 2,500 Euros (3,500 Euros for extended Missions (see above))
- Actual figures determined by STSM Committee (Case based)

Application, assessment, reporting

- Applicant registers using on-line registration tool (see below), downloads application and emails to Action STSM Committee
- Assessment is delegated to our STSM Committee
 - Professor Michael Fairhurst (Chair)
 - Professor Chang-Tsun Li
 - Professor Ioannis Pitas
- Approval is formally communicated by the Grant Holder, who agrees practical arrangements with (successful) applicant
- All decisions of the STSM Committee are reported to the next MC meeting

Responsibilities of successful applicant

- Must formally accept grant offer sent by Grant Holder
- Must submit scientific report, supplying all required details, within 4 weeks of the funded visit
- Then, STSM Coordinator will arrange for approval and inform Grant Holder that grant can be paid

Further, more detailed information:

Go to the COST Vademecum, obtainable
from:

<http://www.cost.eu/participate/guidelines>

The Vademecum gives full details of application procedure
and on-line registration tool

Page 30, Section 4.10

“How to submit a STSM application”

Some further observations:

- STSM funds are explicitly intended to be a contribution to costs, not to pay the full costs of a visit
- Not a mechanism to fund Conference attendance. However, it is within the spirit of the scheme that visits to other institutions at a time and place which could allow inclusion of Conference participation are permissible
- If demand is high we may need to prioritise applications
 - ESR's are a defined priority
 - But no-one is excluded
 - Need to consider many/small or fewer/larger contributions, gender balance, etc
 - Competition for places is a positive thing

Amounts of money available may not cover full costs. However, an award could:

- Make the difference between being able to undertake an important visit or not
- Make possible part of a desired activity, even if not everything ideally sought can be included
- Be used as a lever to obtain other (complementary) funding from other sources
- Make a significant impact for a young researcher aiming to broaden her/his experience

How can I support this important activity?

- Encourage and help your students, researchers, colleagues to make an application

But not all tomorrow please!

- Spread the word to others who might be interested or who might benefit
- Ask yourself whether you yourself may benefit from this
- But mainly - encourage and help your students, researchers

Further queries?

- Website to look at for Guidelines
<http://www.cost.eu/participate/guidelines>
- Committee members:
 - Mike Fairhurst (M.C.Fairhurst@kent.ac.uk)
 - Chang-Tsun Li
 - Ioannis Pitas

Get in touch with me at any time
If not sure about eligibility, just ask
- Action Chair and Grant Holder also have experience of STSM scheme

Also:

- Examples of

Applications

Host institution acceptance letters

Flier to promote STSM

Other useful documents

will shortly be available on request

What next?

- Confirm that STSM Committee acts on behalf of MC (already agreed)
- Applications should be sent to Chair of STSM Committee in the first instance
- Initiate major effort to stimulate good applications
- Aim to sustain a good programme of STSMs over the four years of the Action

But mainly, promote the STSM concept!

- Each compile an individual mailing list
 - Possible candidates
 - Individuals who might identify candidates
- Send names of possible participants to me, and I will make personal contact
- “STSM News” with information about collaborations already undertaken, and their impact
- Highlight information and link on Action Website
- **Actively think of other ideas – let me know**

QUESTIONS ?

COMMENTS?

DISCUSSION POINTS?