

## Newsletter # 2

### Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM)

The knowledge exchange between laboratories and between research institutions and companies, is a key target for the COST Action FA1401 (PiGutNet). Until today, PiGutNet granted 7 researchers to spent a period in another institution to learn and/or develop, new techniques useful for their researches. In addition to this important role, the STSMs offer the opportunity to bridge the gap of knowledge between institutions of different countries, increasing the opportunities to develop collaborative projects in the fields of the Action. During each Grant Period, the STSMs Committee published at least one call to grant new STSMs in accordance with the budget allocated from the Management Committee. Below are listed key information about this very useful tool, aiming to stimulate the widest number of researchers, working in institutions of a COST Action country that already signed the MoU of the Action FA1401, to apply for a grant.

#### ***What STSMs are?***

STSM are intended as exchange visits aimed at supporting individual mobility, strengthening existing networks and fostering collaboration between researchers, by allowing scientists to visit an institution in another participating COST country.

#### ***What are STSM objectives?***

A fundamental prerequisite of STSM is to specifically contribute to the achievement of scientific objectives of the COST Action, whilst at the same time allowing participants to learn new techniques, gain access to specific data, instruments and/or methods not available in their own institutions/organisations.

### ***Who can be eligible for STSMs?***

STSMs are particularly intended for young scientists, as undergraduate students, PhD-students, postdoctoral fellows and early career investigators (ECIs). ECI are generally a researcher within a time span of up to 8 years from the date they obtained their PhD/doctorate (full-time equivalent). This is calculated from the date they obtained the degree (masters or equivalent) which would formally entitle them to embark on a doctorate, either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the research training is provided". Participation of ECIs is particularly encouraged. Anyway, the STSM tool is not exclusively reserved for the ECIs.

### ***What are STSMs rules?***

STSMs must respect strict rules. A specific call must be launched, with clear deadlines for application submissions and time periods for mission executions, that always need to be within a single Grant Period. The application requests must contain a series of documents, including a short CV of the applicant, a detailed research workplan, a support letter from the home institution and an invitation letter from the host institution. The evaluation of STSM applications is performed by the STSM Committee, composed of a coordinator (leader) and a vice-coordinator, under the supervision of the COST Action Chair.

### ***What is the STSM duration?***

The STSM duration must respect the following criteria: minimum 5 working days, maximum 90 days. STSMs of ECIs should have a minimum duration of 91 days and a maximum duration of 180 days.

### ***What are the budget and financial support for STSMs?***

There is a dedicated budget for STSMs within a COST Action, allocated for each Grant Period. The financial support is a contribution to the costs of a STSM and may not necessarily cover all the costs, normally only travel and subsistence should be covered. The financial contribution for a STSM will be a fixed grant based on the Applicant's budget request and the evaluation of the application by the STSM Committee.

### ***How applicants are selected?***

The STSM Committee will perform the scientific and budgetary assessment of the applications considering the Action objectives and define an acceptable funding level. The selection of successful STSM applicants will consider the scientific scope of the proposed mission and how the mission can support the Action in achieving its scientific objectives. There should be special considerations with respect to supporting COST policies on promoting gender balance and broadening geographical inclusiveness.

### ***And after the STSM?***

The grantee is required to submit a short scientific report to the STSM Committee for approval within 30 days after the end date of the STSM. The STSM Committee is responsible for approving the scientific report and informing the Grant Holder that the STSM has been successfully accomplished.

After receipt of the approval by email, the Grant Holder will execute the payment of the grant within a period of 30 days.

You can find more information about the STSM rules and call visiting the specific links listed below:

- <http://www.cost.eu/participate> (COST Vademecum)
- <http://www.pigutnet.eu/> (see the folder “Activities”)