



STSM Grants WG3 “Genes to ecosystem”

CA23121 GENOA

The Third Call for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) Grants

Work on STSM taking place between **1st June - 15 September 2026**

CALL DEADLINE: May 10th, 23:59 CEST

ANNOUNCEMENT DATE: ten working days upon receipt of the applications or May 22, 17:00 CEST at the latest

BACKGROUND

Working group 3's main objective is to improve conservation management of populations, species and ecosystems using genetic diversity knowledge. We assess the degree to which species and habitat assessments and management plans/actions have incorporated genetic diversity concepts. WG3 is also concerned with linking genetic diversity in species with other levels of biodiversity and connected metrics in (socio-) ecosystems, developing its work through a series of thematic subprojects. **The Short-Term Scientific Mission in this call aims to support progress in the work plan of WG3 through contribution to the subproject on Genetic diversity in area-based approaches**, led by Henri Thomassen (henri.thomassen@uni-tuebingen.de) in view of achieving the WG3's objectives, tasks and deliverables.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STSM GRANT FOR WG3

The STSM Grant will focus on contributing to WG3's sub-project on genetic diversity in area-based approaches. The STSM will focus on reviewing, analysing or modelling genetic diversity in spatially explicit contexts and/or on spatially explicit management solutions for genetic diversity. Contributions may pertain to landscape genetics, species distribution modelling, spatial conservation prioritisation, connectivity assessments etc.

Eligibility

Individuals affiliated to a legal entity in a COST Full/Cooperating Member, in a European RTD, or in a Near Neighbour Country (NNC) institution can apply for a STSM.

The table below illustrates the possible scenarios for eligible STSM applicants:

Applicant's Home institution	STSM Host Institution
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Located in a Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member· Located in a Near Neighbour Country· Located in a recognised European RTD Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Located in another Participating COST Full Member / COST Cooperating Member / Partner Member· Located in an IPC / Third State· Located in a Near Neighbour Country· Specific Organisations: only if the rule applies to the territory where it is vested

Non-eligible activities

All activities that are covered by other networking tools, licenses of programmes or online tools, conference fees, translations, purchase of any software and technical equipment.

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- Applicant(s) are **Action participants** with a primary affiliation to an institution located in a [COST Full or Cooperating Member country](#) or **MC Observers** from a [COST Near Neighbour Country](#).
- The successful applicant(s) shall:
 - inform the MC and the Core Group about the aim of the STSM Grant and how its outcomes will generate benefits to the Action,
 - actively contribute to the activities and overall objectives of the Action,
 - submit a report at the end, to be approved by the Grant Awarding Coordinator on behalf of the MC.

FUNDING

The maximum amount for one STSM grant is **€ 2,500**. However, please note that the requested amount can be decreased or increased as Core Group will define the exact amount for each grant reflecting the scope and complexity of the task and activities.

No in advance payments are foreseen. Approved STSM Grant will be paid to the grantee after the Core Group has approved the grantee's report and no later than 15 days from the end of Grant Period. In exceptional well-justified cases, STSMs grantees may request up to 50% pre-payment of the approved grant. This amount is subject to availability of funds and approval by the Grant Holder Institution. The request of pre-payment shall be submitted to the Grant Holder Manager.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

STSM Grant applications must be submitted using [the e-COST system](#). The applicants should use STSM templates provided by e-COST in [the User Guide of STSM](#) (page 4). STSM Grant applications submitted in any other way (email, post etc.) will not be evaluated. Details of application procedure are described in the [User Guide of STSM](#).

1. Applicants are encouraged to contact respective WG3 leaders Myriam Heuertz and Ivan Paz Vinas, as well as subproject leader Henri Thomassen, prior to submitting their application to ensure that the proposed outcome of their STSM agrees with the objectives of this action.
2. All applicants must complete, submit and download their STSM applications online within their e-COST profile at: <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm/apply/new>.
3. All applicants must send their submitted STSM application form and the relevant supporting documents through the e-COST platform <https://e-services.cost.eu/user/login> for evaluation by the STSM Committee. The list of supporting documents to be submitted for the evaluation are (see also [Annotated Rules](#), pp. 100):
 - Letter of invitation to the applicant from a senior researcher affiliated to the Host institution.
 - A letter of support from the Home Institution.
 - The submitted STSM application form (downloadable when the online application is submitted - see point 4 above). Applicants are kindly asked to clearly state which workgroup(s) will their STSM contribute to, in order to facilitate the evaluation process.
 - A motivation letter including an overview of the proposed activities that will be performed which must contain a plan of work for the visit highlighting the proposed contribution to the scientific objectives of the respective COST Action.
 - A Full C.V. (including a list of academic publications – if applicable).
4. The application will then be assessed by the formally delegated **STSM Committee** against the perceived contribution that the proposed visit will make against the scientific objectives outlined in the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of GENOA (but see also Annex to this document).

5. STSM Committee members: STSM Coordinator Joachim Mergeay, WG1: Miroslav Urosevic, WG2: Sven Winter, WG3: Maria Kachamakova, WG4: Roberta Gargiulo, WG5: Lada Lukic Bilela, Action Chair Ancuta Fedorca, Vice-Chair Isa-Rita Russo
6. The applicant will be formally notified of the outcome of their STSM application by the STSM Coordinator Joachim Mergeay **after 10 working days after the application arrives**.

Report

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 STSM Coordinator (**through the e-COST platform**) including:

- Description of the outcomes and achieved outputs (including any specific [MoU](#) deliverables, or publications resulting from the STSM Mobility).
- Description of the benefits to the COST Action Strategy (what and how).
- Description of the STSM collaboration (including constructive reflection on activities undertaken, identified successful practices and lessons learned). The template of the report is provided in the e-COST and in [the User Guide of STSM](#) (page 4).

* Due to administrative tasks related to the approval of the report, it is strongly recommended that reports of the STSM grants are completed as soon as possible after the completion of the grant.

(Please note that the COST Association can request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by STSM applicants)

Application content

Each STSM Grant Application must include following information that are also provided in the application template:

- Main objective of the STSM Grant in direct relation with Action deliverables.
- Working Plan: Description of the collaborative initiative to be implemented.
- Plan for Participation: List of participants in the collaborative initiative (short description of their expertise and contribution).
- Main expected outputs: Results and contribution to the progress towards the [MoU](#) deliverables (either research coordination and/or capacity building objectives can be tackled) and delivery of the MoU objectives.
- Contribution to [the COST Action Strategy](#): How will the STSM contribute to the e-COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy and plans for stakeholder engagement and promoting

participation of researchers from Near neighbouring countries and International partner countries and to the approved virtual networking strategy, if available.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each STSM proposal will be evaluated according to the following five criteria:

- Connection to the objectives of GENOA (as per the topical call) (40%)
- Scientific quality (25%)
- Output (potential publications) (20%)
- Involvement of inclusiveness target countries (ITCs) (5%)
- Gender balance (5%)
- Young Researcher (5%)

Notification about the call's results

Successful STSM Grant Applicants will be informed by an email automatically generated by the e-COST platform. **The results of the evaluation are expected to be known ten working days upon receipt of the applications or May 22, 17:00 CEST at the latest.**

If you have any questions related to the STSM Grant and the application procedure, please contact GENOA Grant Awarding Coordinator Joachim Mergeay (email: joachim.mergeay@inbo.be) or WG3 leaders Myriam Heuertz (myriam.heuertz@inrae.fr) and Ivan Paz Vinas (ivan.paz-vinas@univ-lyon1.fr).

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation.
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