

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) within the NutRedOx (CA16112) network

5th CALL for applications 2020

Call opening: 21/09/2020

Call closure: 28/02/2021

Decision and notification: Rolling Calls, Decisions expected every month by the end of the month.

TO BE CAREFUL OF:

- *The STSM Applicant must obtain the agreement of the host institution before submitting a STSM application.*
- *The Applicant must use the online eCOST portal (<https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>) to register its proposal.*
- *Along the selection of the STSMs, a fair balance will be established between all areas covered within this Action, nationality, gender and geography to cite a few.*
- *International cooperations involving at least 2 different countries (participation of an intensive Inclusiveness targets Country – ITC - will be encouraged) involved in this COST Action.*
- *Early Career Investigators (ECI) are strongly encouraged to submit application for STSMs.*
- *The STSM grantees must make their own arrangements for all health, social, personal security, pension matters and visa process (if applicable).*
- *DO NOT START a STSM before sending a scan of the signed grant letter to Prof. Mustapha CHERKOUI-MALKI (Action Chair) and to the Grant Holder (GH).*
- *The submission of the scientific report and the host approval of the report on the eCOST portal (<https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>) is mandatory or the Grant is cancelled. The deadline to submit the last supporting documents is 30 days from the end of the STSM.*
- *It is the responsibility of the host and guest institutions to ensure that all measures and recommendations between the two countries (institutions) enable this exchange to take place under satisfactory sanitary and welcome conditions. The Board of the COST Action CA16112 cannot be held responsible in case of failure to meet these essential criteria and may refuse the application if all health and safety conditions are not met.*
- *We recommend all individuals purchase travel cancellation insurance, which is an eligible expense.*
- *Medical expenses of any type (PCR tests, medical consultations, etc) are not eligible.*

Glossary:

STSM: Short-Term Scientific Missions. These Missions (Inter-laboratory Exchange Visits) aim at strengthening the existing COST Actions by allowing scientists to go to an institution or laboratory in another COST country to foster collaboration, to learn a new technique or to take measurements using instruments and/or methods not available in their own institution/laboratory. They are particularly intended for Early Stage Investigators (ECI).

STMS Coordinator: person elected by the MC that coordinates the STSM awarding process

STSM panel: scientific committee that evaluates the applications

Regular STSM: STSM that lasts between 5 and 90 days and the Grant amount is up to 2500 EUR paid in one instalment after the approval of the scientific report.

Grant Holder (GH): person that monitors the incoming approved applications, sends the successful Applicants their Grant Notification, makes the timely pre-payment of 50% of the grant (only for Applicants with an affiliation in an ITC Country), and ensures that all grants are paid within the deadline of 30 days.

eCOST: online COST web portal for registration and submission of STSM applications.

ECI: Early Career Investigator defines a researcher whose career span less than 8 years between the date of the PhD/doctorate (or similar experience) and the date of involvement in the COST Action. Periods of career leave have to be added to this time span.

ITC: Inclusiveness targets Country (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)

MC: Management Committee - For each Action a Management Committee, formed by national experts of the signatory COST Member States, is in charge of implementing, supervising and coordinating the activities of the Action.

Open Call: A one-stage submission process where proposals can be submitted at any time using a dedicated secured online tool (eCOST). There is no deadline, as the Call never closes, but works around two collection dates per year.

WG: Working Groups - The scientific work of the Actions is organised through Working Groups.

The aims of a Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) of the NutRedOx Action are:

- Contribute to the scientific objectives of a COST Action (see Memorandum of Understanding, http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/ca/CA16112).
- Help creating a platform for joint research
- Strengthen the existing network by allowing scientists to go to an institution or laboratory of any Action member in either another COST or a non-COST country member of the Action
- Foster new or existing cooperations and collaborative work between the partners of the Action within a WG or between different WGs
- Learn a new technique and/or ensure access to new technique instruments to produce high level research.
- Take measurements using instruments and/or methods not available in their own institution/laboratory.
- Allow young researcher to present their collaborative research activities (seminar, oral communications, scientific discussions...). Priority will be given to ECIs that are willing to contribute to the scheduled COST meetings of this present Action.
- Ensure high level short term training of young researchers such as PhD students or postdoctoral research fellows (PhD + 8 years max). ECIs will be indeed strongly encouraged to apply and their mobility prioritized.
- Promote exchanges and subsequent cooperations and researchers exchange from and to less research intensive Inclusiveness Targets Countries (ITCs).

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Specific information concerning STSM

The APPLICANT

All NutRedOx members and their students/colleagues involved in WG activities are invited to submit one (or more) STSM application(s). The Applicant could be a PhD student, a Post-Doc or a staff member in an institution located in a COST Country of our Action which has been formally accepted to be part of our Action. The STSM Applicant must be engaged in an official research programme as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow or can be employed by, or affiliated to, an institution, organisation or legal entity which has within its remit a clear association with performing research. (see <http://www.cost.eu/COST Actions/ca/CA16112?parties>).

The HOME and HOST INSTITUTIONS

A STSM may only be approved:

- From a home institution in a COST participating country to a host institution in another COST participating country or to a formally approved host institution in a non-COST country.
- From a formally approved home institution in a Near Neighbour Country (NNC) to a host institution in a COST participating country.

The Home and Host institution should be located in different countries. STSMs within the same country are not allowed. Attention will be paid to STSM exchange with an intensive Inclusiveness targets Country

DURATION

The mission “regular STSM” should last minimum one week (5 calendar days) up to a maximum of 3 months (90 calendar days) and shall be made within the time frame of the operation identified in the proposal and within the period of the respective Action. For ECIs, the Management Committee may approve an extension up to 3 months, but not more than 6 months in total. The mission must have a minimum duration of 91 calendar days and a maximum of 180 calendar days.

For the 5th Call, all travels must be completed by **March 31, 2021**.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The financial support on offer is a contribution to the overall expenses incurred during the STSM (cover travel and subsistence expenses and is paid as a grant) and may not necessarily cover all of the associated outgoings. 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 assessment panel. The grant should cover only travel and subsistence (lodging and meals). The total of a STSM shall normally not exceed EUR 2 500 up to 3 months (or EUR 3 500 for ECI – above 3 months). The amounts granted for each individual STSM will be determined during the evaluation process by the nominally appointed persons (see below). The selection of Applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application which must clearly compliment the overall objectives of the Action (see below).

Any exception needs special justification and prior approval from the COST Office. **Until 31th of March 2020 (5th STSM Call), we are expecting to offer 10 STSMs with an average of 2500 EUR each.**

STSM Applicants with an affiliation in an institution in an ITC country can request a pre-payment of 50% of grant. This is payable under 2 conditions: (i) that the Grant Holder has sufficient funds to

cover 50% of the grant in advance and (ii) that the host confirms to the Grant Holder that the mission has started.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. Before planning the mission, the **Applicant obtains the agreement from the Host institution and provides a signed letter/certification from the Host Institution that the Applicant is welcome to the Host institution for the mission** (use template 1 at the end of this document).
2. **The Applicant registers online at eCOST (<https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>) and fills the STSM registration forms.** For already registered Applicants, if the profile is incomplete, the missing information has to be filled. The application page contains the following sections:
 - **STSM details** (the application must start and end during the same Grant Period (GP). If a GP is not active, the Applicant will not be able to submit an application.
 - **Bank details**
 - **Host details** (must be located in a different country than the country of the Applicant)
 - **Financial support**
 - **Motivation and Work Plan summary (2000 words maximum)**
 - **Supporting documents** (see below)
3. The Applicant uploads the following supporting documents:
 - **Letter of support from the Home Institution** (renamed using the following format: [Letter Support-COST-STSM-CA16112-NutRedOx FirstName LastName.pdf](#))
 - **Agreement from the Host Institution** that the STSM Applicant can perform the activities detailed in the STSM work plan on the agreed dates (renamed using the following format: [Agreement-COST-STSM-CA16112-NutRedOx FirstName LastName.pdf](#))
 - **CV** (maximum 1 page), including:
 - **A list of academic publications** – if applicable;
 - The **date of birth**; the **number of years since obtaining PhD Degree** – if applicable;
 - **Current position**: e.g. PhD student, Post Doc (date of PhD), Assistant Professor, Employee, Research fellow...;
 - **A Proposal of the research during the expected STSM (3 pages maximum)**, 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); 3 references from the Applicant or Home Institution and 3 references from the Host Institution that are relevant to the proposed project.
 - **A Signed Statement including the following aspects**: She/he must agree to present results at a scheduled WG meeting and to provide a written report; - She/he must agree to acknowledge funding in publications and conferences arising from the STSM Cost Action (according to the acknowledgment rules of COST dissemination available on <http://blog.u-bourgogne.fr/cost-nutredox/dissemination/>).
 - **An Estimated Budget**

CV, Proposal of the research during the expected STSM, Signed Statement and Estimated Budget should be gathered in a single file and uploaded as the CV.

(Renamed using the following format: [Proposal-COST-STSM-CA16112-NutRedOx FirstName LastName.pdf](#))

4. If the application is complete, the Applicant submits its request
5. **The STSM Coordinators, Dr. Mourad Elhabiri (elhabiri@unistra.fr) and Dr. Caroline Gaucher (caroline.gaucher@univ-lorraine.fr) are notified of the submission. The Applicant also receives a copy of the notification.**
6. **The STSM Coordinators send the applications to the STSM panel for the evaluation process.**
7. After the evaluation process:

- **If the application is rejected, the STSM coordinator informs the Applicant and provides a justification.** The STSM coordinators will guide the Applicant in her/his resubmission. It will be considered for the next funding period and will be treated as a new application.
- **If the application is accepted, the GH is notified to send the Grant Letter notification to the Applicant.**

8. If the STSM Applicant from an ITC requests is granted a pre-payment of 50% of the grant, the STSM host receives a notification requesting to confirm to the GH that the STSM started on schedule. Without the STSM host confirmation, the pre-payment will not be done. The actual transfer of 50% of the grant can take several days after the receipt of the STSM Host email confirmation.

EVALUATION PROCESS

To ensure **fairness and impartiality** of the evaluation process, the **proposals for STSMs will be evaluated by an Assessment Panel that involves the two STSMs coordinators, the chair, the vice-chair, and the WG leaders** (or WG Vice-Leaders).

STSM Coordinators

Dr Mourad ELHABIRI, Univ. Strasbourg, France

E-mail: elhabiri@unistra.fr

Tel: +3 (0)68852685

Dr Caroline Gaucher, Univ. Lorraine, France

E-mail: caroline.gaucher@univ-lorraine.fr

Tel: +3 (0)72747349

STSM Committee Members

1. Prof. Mustapha CHERKOUI-MALKI, Univ. Burgundy – France, NutRedOx Action Chair
2. Prof. Agnieszka BARTOSZEK, Gdansk Univ. of Technology – Poland, NutRedOx Action Vice Chair
3. Prof. Nina HERMANS, Univ. Antwerp – Belgium, NutRedOx WG Leader
4. Prof. Josep A. Tur, Univ. Balearic Islands – Spain, NutRedOx WG Leader
5. Prof. Claus JACOB, Univ. Saarland – Germany, NutRedOx WG Leader
6. Prof. Marc Diederich, LBMCC Hopital Kirchberg – Luxembourg, NutRedOx WG Leader

The proposals collected by the STSM coordinators will be sent out to the Evaluation Committee after the deadline (*i.e.* at least two reviewers per proposal chosen within the Evaluation Committee with respect to their expertise), 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 respond, 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.

To elaborate a list of the STSM proposals that have to be funded in the Action, the STSM Committee has established **a set of criteria** to be applied in the evaluation of STSM proposals. These criteria are defined to respond to the main aim of the COST Action STSMs, namely: “to specifically **contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action**, whilst at the same time allowing those partaking in the missions to **learn new techniques, gain access to specific data, instruments and/or methods** not available in their own institutions / organisations”. To enable **transparency** of the process, this following section describes the criteria used for the evaluation. It provides **guidance** to the Applicants in structuring their proposals for STSM and may help them to make a **self-evaluation** prior to final submission.

Evaluation criteria depend on the type of STSM. **According to MC decision in Strasbourg, from September 2017, NutRedOx Action recognises two different types of short-term scientific missions (STSMs): “regular” and “special”.**

“Regular” STSMs

Proposals will be evaluated using the **following criteria** (Each criterion will be scored out of 4 and they will all be weighted equally. The maximum overall score is therefore 20):

I Research

1. Research/technological quality (*objectives of the proposed research clearly defined; timeliness and relevance*)
2. Appropriateness of research methodology and approach (*for the goals of the project as well as for the objectives of the action (state of the art; see MoA)*)
3. Host scientific expertise in the field

II Training

1. Clarity and quality of the research training objectives for the researcher

III Researcher

1. Research experience (priority will be given to ECI and proposals involving at least 1 ITC)
2. Potential to acquire new skills and knowledge during the mission

IV Implementation

1. Feasibility and credibility of the proposed work, including work plan
2. Quality of infrastructures/facilities of host (*on-site training and support*)

V Impact

1. Contribution to Actions objectives (*successful implementation and the outputs of the mission would likely contribute to produce knowledge that can be used to underpin the future work within the Action*)
2. Impact of competencies acquired (*in line with the Actions objectives, see MoA of CA16112*)
3. Contribution to the scientific career of the Applicant
4. Proposals in terms of dissemination of results or skills transfer

TO BE CAREFUL OF:

Submitted material (supporting documents containing the CV and the project/work plan) should therefore contain information that enables evaluation against the defined criteria and aspects described above.

Additional criteria applied:

- ✓ **Priority given to the proposals submitted by ECI.**

This additional criterion will be applied as part of the evaluation by scores given to the Researcher (criterion III) without an influence on scoring against other criteria

- ✓ **Priority given to the proposals involving ITC.**

This additional criterion will be applied as part of the evaluation by scores given to the Researcher (criterion III) without an influence on scoring against other criteria

- ✓ **Geographical and gender balance issues will be taken into consideration**

If more than one proposal comes from the same country, all of them will be evaluated (scored) and included in the final rank list. However, if the budget for the call does not allow all submitted proposals to be granted, geographical balance will be obtained by selecting one proposal from each country with the highest final score.

Gender and geographical balance will be evaluated periodically (at the end of each granting period) and if appropriate should be considered for the following calls.

The STSM coordinators then summarize the votes. An excellent application will have an average 20 points score.

Proposals which score below 10 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 WG 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 coordinators to the Chair/Vice-Chair for final acceptance. Then, the STSM coordinators will inform the GH. All Applicants will be notified 6 to 8 weeks after the deadline of proposal submission (Grant letter) by the GH. The Grantee accepts the grant by sending back a signed version of the grant letter to the Grant Holder Manager and to Prof. Mustapha Cherkaoui-Malki (NutRedOx Action chair)

Applications for “regular” STSMs must follow the pre-defined deadlines.

NutRedOx STSM Application Deadlines:

CALL 5 September 21st 2020	For STSM to start after October 2020 (and before March 31th 2021)
--	---

“Special” STSMs

Applications for “special” STSMs are evaluated mostly based on critical needs and research as well as interests, experience and expertise of the candidates, and taking into account gender and geographical balance.

Evaluation for “special” STSMs is performed by the host scientist (as an expert in the field) and the corresponding WG leader.

The STSM committee will peer review the application, soliciting opinions where necessary.

These selection criteria must be addressed in the application:

- Scientific quality
- Training benefit for the Applicant
- Benefit for the NutRedOx Network
- ECI

Failing to properly address these will lead to rejection of the application.

The application procedure is the same than for “regular STSM” but with an evaluation process and an activation delay reduced as much as possible.

DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED AFTER THE STSM IS COMPLETED

1 day and 15 days after the end of the STSM, the grantee receives a reminder to upload the scientific report and the host approval of the report. The deadline to submit the last supporting documents is 30 days from the end of the STSM.

The submission of the supporting documents (on the eCOST portal - <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>) is mandatory otherwise the Grant is cancelled. Late submission, beyond the deadline, can lead to the cancellation of the Grant and, in cases when a pre-payment was done, the obligatory reimbursement by the grantee of the amount received.

A scientific report template is available herein (Template 2) or on-line (http://www.cost.eu/STSM_report_template). The STSM grantee must complete this template and save it in pdf before uploading it in the e-COST portal (<https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>).

Note

The scientific report file should be renamed using the following format:

[Report-COST-STSM-CA16112-NutRedOx FirstName LastName.pdf](#)

The grantee is also responsible for acquiring a host approval of the report (official acceptance letter or Email confirmation of acceptance from a senior Researcher affiliated to the Host institution formally accepting the scientific report). This formal acceptance of the scientific report has to be uploaded in the e-COST portal (<https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>) and sent as well to the Action Chair (malki@u-bourgogne.fr) and the STSM coordinators (elhabiri@unistra.fr and caroline.gaucher@univ-lorraine.fr) for archiving purposes.

Note

The Host Acceptance file should be renamed using the following format:

[Host Acceptance-COST-STSM-CA16112-NutRedOx FirstName LastName.pdf](#)

The grantee is also asked to fill and send by Email to the STSM coordinators (elhabiri@unistra.fr and caroline.gaucher@univ-lorraine.fr) an STSM outcome (see Template 3 in this document) as a doc file.

Note

The STSM outcome file should be renamed using the following format:

[Outcome-COST-STSM-CA16112-NutRedOx FirstName LastName.doc](#)

The STSM coordinators have to verify the validity of the report (completeness of the information and files and good quality scientific report). The STSM coordinators refer to the WG leaders in case they do not possess the appropriate expertise to evaluate the report. In case of the Applicant fails to provide the requested documents, the report might be rejected. To sum up, the following documents are mandatory required:

1. The STSM scientific report.
2. A signed confirmation letter from the Host Institution, stating the successful execution of the STSM (free format either as an official acceptance letter or an Email confirmation of acceptance from a senior Researcher).
3. The STSM outcome form.

Submission deadline

within 30 days after completion of the mission

Please note that successful Applicants will be invited to prepare, in the month following the completion of the STSM, a short cover story (with photos preferably) for dissemination (including the COST Action Website). This short cover story has to be sent to the Focus Group of the NutRedOx COST Action (Pierre.Andreoletti@u-bourgogne.fr).

NOTICE OF COMPLETION

The STSM coordinators are notified when the Applicant submitted the scientific report and host approval and have to verify the validity of the report. **If the report is rejected, the STSM coordinator must provide a justification to guide the STSM grantee in her/his resubmission.**

If the STSM coordinator approves the report, a "notice of completion" of the STSM, together with the short scientific report is sent to the Grant Holder. The Grant Holder will then execute the payment of the fixed grant directly to the grantee or the host institute, as requested in the application.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Finally, if the results from a STSM visit are publishable in a journal, please add the following acknowledgement in your manuscript:

Part of this work was supported by the COST Action CA16112 "NutRedOx: Personalized Nutrition in aging society: redox control of major age-related diseases".

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT STSM APPLICATIONS

Questions may be sent to the STSM coordinators

Dr. Mourad Elhabiri: elhabiri@unistra.fr

Dr. Caroline Gaucher: caroline.gaucher@univ-lorraine.fr

TEMPLATE 1*Use Institutional letterhead*

Expression of intention to host a Short-Term Scientific Mission

To the Grant Holder of the COST Action CA16112 – NUTRedOx

Place, date: _____

STSM Applicant (first name and last name): _____

Home Institution: _____

Host Institution: _____

I hereby inform that we welcome the visit that Mr/Ms/Dr _____ plans to perform in our lab at _____ in _____ (month) _____ (year), within the framework of the NutREdOx Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) programme.

The STSM will be scientifically based on the work plan described by Mr/Ms/Dr _____ in the STSM Application. The STSM will have a mutual benefit for the Applicant and our group, in consideration of both the specific activities to be performed and the expected strengthening of cooperation between the Home and Host institutions.

Yours sincerely,

First name and last name: _____

Signature: _____

TEMPLATE 2**STSM REPORT****STSM Application number:****STSM Grantee Name:****Early Career Investigator ? (Yes or No - ECI=PhD Student or within 8 years of PhD)****STSM title:****Home Institution:****Host Institution:****STSM start and end date: DD/MM/YYYY to DD/MM/YYYY****Working Group: (Within which Working Group WG1-4) does this research fit best?)****Purposes of the STSM (max 200 words):****Description of the work carried out during the STSM (max 500 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 or conference presentations expected to result from the STSM (if applicable):**

TEMPLATE 3**STSM outcome form**

STSM application number	Home institution & country	Host institution & country	NutRedOx WG	Objective of the collaboration	Results of the collaboration and related GAPG
COST-STSM-CA16112			WG n°X		

Notes:

- **NutRedOx WG:** please write the number of the WG within which the cooperation is meant to be established.
- **Objective of the collaboration:** you can report even the STSM title and maybe expand it a little bit to make it clearer, if necessary.
- **Results of the collaboration:** please write a very concise synthesis. We need just a few lines that convey the essence of the outcomes. You can write one or two sentences (no more), or make a list of key outcomes (just a few words for each item). Be aware that this information is meant to be presented as a record of a big table for the whole STSM programme: we don't need extended descriptions (as they are already reported in your STSM scientific report). GAPG = Grant Agreement Period Goals