



TOWARDS THE NEXT GENERATION OF STANDARDS FOR SERVICE
LIFE OF CEMENT-BASED MATERIALS AND STRUCTURES

Short Term Scientific Missions

STSM

Guide for Applicants
Version STSM.2015.01



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Short Term Scientific Missions

COST Action TU1404

Towards the next generation of standards for service life of cement-based materials and structures

Guide for Applicants

To be read in conjunction with COST Vademecum Part 1: COST Action

Call permanently* open from 15th of January 2015

Collection dates of applications – on 1st of each month from February 2015

Evaluation results and information of applicants – on 15th of each month from February 2015

* Number of STSMs granted per year is limited by available funds.

Action Contacts

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Explanation of terms used in this document – see [COST Glossary](#) for additional information

Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) means the agreement accepted by a minimum of five different COST Member Countries and/or Cooperating State describing the Action objectives and the added value of networking. This document has to be endorsed by any additional COST Member Country or Cooperating State joining the Action.

Researcher: is anyone engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and systems in the project concerned. For the purpose of participating in COST Actions, any individual, independently of their institutional affiliation shall be considered as a researcher.

Early Stage Researcher (ESR) is a researcher in the start phase of his/her career with at least the PhD and up to 8 years of experience after the PhD.

Participating COST Countries refer to COST Countries or Cooperating State which have accepted the Action's MoU.

COST Near Neighbours Countries (NNC) are countries approved by the CSO to benefit from dedicated support for the integration of their researchers in COST activities.

NNC approved institution is an institution located in a NNC whose participation to an Action has been approved in accordance with the relevant COST rules.

Specific Organisations refer to the European Commission, other EU Institutions and EU Agencies, European RTD Organisations and International Organisations.

Approved Specific Organisations refers to a Specific Organisation whose participation to an Action has been approved in accordance with the relevant COST rules.

International Partners Countries (IPC) means all those countries that are neither COST Member Countries, nor Cooperating State nor COST NNC.

IPC approved institution is an institution located in an IPC whose participation to an Action has been approved in accordance with the relevant COST rules.

Action Participants mean any researcher who participates actively in a COST Action (MC Members, Working Group members etc.); this can include researchers from Near Neighbour and International Partner Countries as well as other Specific Organisations, i.e. the European Commission, EU Agencies, etc.

All relevant documents (including this Guide for Applicants) can be downloaded from the Action website (www.tu1404.eu) or the COST website (www.cost.eu)

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1. GENERAL

COST Action TU1404 invites researchers to submit proposals for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM). Applications from [Early Stage Researchers](#) (ESR) are particularly encouraged.

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) are aimed at supporting individual mobility, at strengthening the existing networks and fostering collaborations by allowing scientists to visit an institution or laboratory in an eligible country, namely: another Participating COST Country, an approved COST Near Neighbour Country (NNC) institution or an approved International Partner Country (IPC) institution. A STSM should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action TU1404, while at the same time allowing applicants to learn new techniques or gain access to specific instruments and/or methods not available in their own institutions.

The selection of applicants is based on the scientific scope of the STSM application that must be in line with the Action objectives (see Section 5).

2. THE APPLICANT

STSM applicants must be engaged in a research programme as a postgraduate student or postdoctoral fellow, or be employed by or officially affiliated to an institution or legal entity. This institution is considered as the Home institution. Institutions may be public or private entities.

Possible STSM scenarios are:

Home Institution	Host Institution
From a Participating COST Country or Cooperation State	To another Participating COST Country or Cooperation State
	To an approved NNC institution
	To an approved IPC institution
	To an approved Specific organisation
From an approved NNC institution	To a Participating COST Country or Cooperation State
From an approved European RTD Organisation	To a Participating COST Country or Cooperation State

3. DURATION OF STSMS

Standard STSMs need to take place according to the following rules:

1. Have a minimum duration of 5 days
2. Have a maximum duration of 90 days
3. All travels must be completed by November 30 of each year of the Action TU1404
4. The Home and Host institution should be located in different countries. STSMs within the same country are not allowed

ESR may extend the duration of the STSM beyond 90 days; in this case, ESR STSM must take place according to the following rules:

1. Have a minimum duration of 91 days
2. have a maximum duration of 180 days
3. All travels must be completed by November 30 of each year of the Action TU1404
4. The Home and Host institution should be located in different countries. STSMs within the same country are not allowed

More detailed information can be found in the [COST Vademecum Part 1: COST Action](#).

4. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A STSM grant is a fixed contribution based on the budget requested by the applicant and the evaluation of the application by the STSM Committee. The aim of this grant is to support the costs associated with the exchange visit. This grant will not necessarily cover all expenses; it is intended only as a contribution to the travel and subsistence costs of the participant.

The calculation of this contribution for a STSM must be based on the following rules:

- The reimbursement rate per day is EUR 160 maximum
- Up to EUR 500 may be attributed for the travel expenses
- A maximum of EUR 2 500 in total can be awarded to the grantee

The calculation of this contribution for an ESR STSM (for duration of more than 91 days) must be based on the following rules:

- The reimbursement rate per day is EUR 160 maximum
- Up to EUR 500 may be attributed for the travel expenses
- A maximum of EUR 3 500 in total can be awarded to the grantee

In all cases the MC can approve differentiated country rates for subsistence per day, based on the cost of living in each respective country.

5. APPLICATION PROCESS, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

5.1. BEFORE THE STSM

In order to receive a STSM grant, the applicant must:

1. Obtain the written agreement of the host institution before submitting an application (see template in Annex I).
2. Complete the online application form (see <https://e-services.cost.eu/stsm>)
3. Send the completed file as e-mail attachment to the STSM Coordinator (violeta.bokan-bosiljkov@fgg.uni-lj.si) and to the Chair of Action TU1404 (miguel.azinha@civil.uminho.pt) together with the following supporting documents:
 - STSM Proposal (see Annex II)
 - CV (maximum two sides of A4)
 - List of publications (no page limit)
 - Letter of support from the home institution (no page limit)
 - Letter of support from the host institution (no page limit)

5.2. ASSESSMENT

The STSM Committee of Action TU1404, comprising the STSM Coordinator, two members and the Action Chair and the leader of the beneficiary Working Group, will perform the scientific and budgetary assessment of the applications considering the Action objectives and define an acceptable funding level.

Each proposal will be assessed against the criteria listed in the table below. Each criterion will be scored from 1 to 5 by the STSM Committee members. Decimal points can be given. Final score of the criterion is average of the five scores given by the STSM Committee members. In case any member of the STSM committee has direct/indirect participation, or conflict of interest with the STSM application under evaluation, such member will not participate in the evaluation.

Assessment Criteria	Score	Details	Weighting (%)
The Applicant (CV and publications)	1 to 5	The Applicant should possess the ability to successfully complete the proposed STSM and disseminate relevant outcomes.	30
Description of work	1 to 5	Should state clearly the proposed activities to be carried out during the STSM and how these are aligned to COST Action TU1404 strategic priorities as defined in the MoU. Feasibility of successfully completing the planned activities within the requested duration and clear deliverables.	30
Benefits to COST Action TU1404	1 to 5	Clear evidence of how the proposed STSM will benefit COST Action TU1404.	20
Benefits to the Applicant	1 to 5	Clear evidence of how the proposed STSM will benefit the applicant.	20

In case of rejection, the STSM Committee informs the applicant. Resubmissions are accepted. Once approved by the STSM Committee, the Grant Holder will notify the applicant. To accept the grant, the applicant has to return the Grant letter with his/her signature.

5.3. AFTER THE STSM

The grantee is required to submit a short scientific report to the host institution (for information) and to the STSM Committee for approval within 30 days after the end date of the STSM containing:

1. Purpose of the STSM
2. Description of the work carried out during the STSM
3. Description of the main results obtained
4. Future collaboration with the host institution (if applicable)
5. Foreseen publications/articles resulting from the STSM (if applicable)
6. Confirmation by the host institution of the successful execution of the STSM
7. Other comments (if any)

Failure to submit the scientific report within 30 days will effectively cancel the grant. After receipt of the approval that the STSM has been successfully accomplished, payment of the grant will be issued.

6. ANNEX I – EXPRESSION OF INTENTION TO HOST A SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION

Note: this is a suggested template for the expression of intention. You may devise your own.

Use Institutional letterhead

Expression of intention to host a Short-Term Scientific Mission

To the Grant Holder of the COST Action TU1404

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), with total duration of _____, within the framework of the TU1404 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: _____

7. ANNEX II – INSTRUCTIONS FOR DRAFTING A STSM PROPOSAL

The **maximum length of the STSM proposal is 5 pages** (excluding table of contents and title page). In addition there are page limits applied to the various sections as detailed below.

The minimum font size allowed is 11pt with single line spacing. The page size is A4, and all margins should be at least 15mm (not including any headers or footers).

Please make sure that:

- You use the correct format to prepare your proposal
- You include your name in the header of each page
- All pages are numbered in a single series on the footer of the page using the format “Page X of Y”
- You respect the maximum number of pages
- Your proposal is complete. Incomplete proposals are not eligible and will not be evaluated.

The main part of the proposal should include the following:

1. **Description of work** (maximum three pages)

This section should include:

- Background
- Aims and objectives
- Justification for choice of host institution
- Summary of the work to be carried out by the applicant at the host institution
- Foreseen results
- Dissemination of results

2. **Detailed Plan of Activities** (maximum one page)

This should include a diagrammatic work-plan (Gantt chart) for the full duration of the STSM.

3. **Benefits to COST Action TU1404** (maximum 1/2 page)

4. **Benefits to the Applicant** (maximum 1/2 page)

COST Action TU1404

**Towards the next generation of
standards for service life of cement-
based materials and structures**

Proposal for a Short Term Scientific Mission

STSM Applicant	Title and name of applicant
Home Institution	Home Institution name and address
Host Institution	Host Institution name and address
STSM proposed start date	dd/mm/yyyy
STSM proposed duration	Duration in days

Table of Contents

- 1. Description of work**
- 2. Detailed Plan of Activities**
- 3. Benefits to COST Action TU1404**
- 4. Benefits to the Applicant**

1. Description of work (maximum three pages)

This section should include:

- Background
- Aims and objectives
- Justification for choice of host institution
- Summary of the work to be carried out by the applicant at the host institution
- Foreseen results
- Dissemination of results

2. Detailed Plan of Activities (maximum one page)

This should include a diagrammatic work-plan (Gantt chart) for the full duration of the STSM.

3. Benefits to COST Action TU1404 (maximum 1/2 page)

4. Benefits to the Applicant (maximum 1/2 page)



WWW.TU1404.EU