



Third Call for Short-Term Scientific Missions

2025-12-21

COST Action CA22137 - Randomised Optimisation Algorithms Research Network (ROAR-NET) invites applications for Short-Term Scientific Missions. A Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) consists in a visit to a host organisation located in a different country than the country of affiliation by a researcher or innovator **for specific work to be carried out** and for a determined period of time.

Eligibility rules

You may apply for an STSM if:

- You conduct research in a legal entity in a COST Full/Cooperating Member, Near Neighbour Country (NNC) or a European RTD Organisation (see the [Country and Organisations Table](#)).
- You are engaged in an official research programme as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow or are employed by, or affiliated to, an institution, organisation or legal entity where you conduct research.

Duration

- There is no limitation on the duration of the STSMs to be awarded through this Call as long as the timeline given below is respected. Furthermore, the STSM grant amount is limited and may not cover the total costs incurred during the STSM.
- The STSM must have a minimum duration of five calendar days. However, STSMs of longer duration are encouraged.
- The application start and end dates must match the actual period to be spent at the host organisation.
- You may arrive one day before the STSM starts and/or leave one day after the STSM ends.

Location

- The host organisation of the STSM grantee must be located in a different country than the country of the grantee's affiliation.
- There is no limitation on the location of the STSM host. Again, although STSMs can take place anywhere in the world, the STSM grant amount is limited and might not cover the total costs incurred during the STSM.

Specific eligibility criteria

- The STSM must contribute to the objectives and deliverables of the Action (see the [Memorandum of Understanding, MoU](#)).
- The STSM must address one of the following themes of interest to the Action:
 - Problem modelling and user experience
 - Mixed continuous and discrete optimisation
 - Single- and multiobjective optimisation
 - Optimisation under uncertainty
 - Algorithm selection and configuration
 - Benchmarking
- The applicant must not have been awarded by ROAR-NET more than one STSM grant or more than two grants of any type in any Action Grant Period.

- The applicant must not have been awarded by ROAR-NET another STSM grant in the current Action Grant Period.
- The applicant must not submit more than one grant application (of any type) in each evaluation round.

Financial support rules

Financial support in the form of an STSM grant provides a contribution towards travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses. A maximum of 4.000,00 EUR can be awarded to each successful applicant. However, a typical value for a two-week STSM would be about 2.000,00 EUR.

The amount requested by the applicant should reflect the duration and location of the STSM. When determining the grant amount, the applicant should take into account an estimation of travel costs and actual accommodation, subsistence and local transport needs.

The final STSM grant amount will be determined during the evaluation process by the ROAR-NET Grant Awarding Committee. The awarded grant will be paid after the STSM has been completed and the required report and supporting documents have been submitted and approved.

Timeline

- The final deadline for the submission of applications is 15 July 2026 (Brussels time).
- Applications can be submitted at any time on a rolling basis.
- Applications submitted until the 15th day of each calendar month (Brussels time) are evaluated, and Grant Letters are normally issued to successful applicants by the end of the month.
- Applicants are advised to submit their applications at least one week before the deadline in order to allow for prescreening by the Action and implementation by the applicant of any required revisions.
- The STSM must start no earlier than the 1st day of the second calendar month after the application deadline.

- The STSM must end no later than 30 September 2026.
- The report and supporting documents must be submitted within 30 days after the end of the activity.

Application process

Applications have to be submitted via the COST [Grants Application page](#). The following documents must be submitted:

- The completed application form (see the [e-COST template](#)) with the working plan detailing the preparatory work for the STSM, the work to be carried out during the STSM, and the expected follow-up activities
- Confirmation of the host on the agreement from the host institution in receiving the applicant (see the [e-COST template](#))
- An up-to-date CV of the applicant as part of their e-COST profile
- A cover letter, signed by the applicant and the host,
 - specifying the (single) main theme to be addressed by the STSM (see [Specific eligibility criteria](#))
 - explaining the expected contribution of the STSM to the professional development of the applicant and/or the host and their team
 - indicating the hosting conditions to be provided by the host institution
 - providing a breakdown of the costs based on actual needs including types and costs of transportation, type and cost of accommodation (number of nights times the price per night), subsistence (number of days times the daily amount), and any other relevant expenses
- One-page CV of the host
- A short description (see the [guidelines](#)) of the goals and planned activities of the STSM to be used by the Action for communication and dissemination purposes

For the submission procedure see the COST [Grant Awarding User Guide](#).

Evaluation process

Applications are prechecked, and any incomplete or invalid applications are rejected. The ROAR-NET Grant Awarding Committee then performs the scientific and budgetary assessment of complete and valid applications. The evaluation criteria and the corresponding scoring scales are:

1. Contribution of the STSM to the objectives and deliverables of the Action
high - 2, medium - 1, low - 0
2. Alignment of the STSM with the selected theme
high - 2, medium - 1, low - 0
3. Expected contribution of the STSM to the professional development of the applicant and/or the host and their team
high - 2, medium - 1, low - 0
4. Quality of the planned preparatory work
high - 2, medium - 1, low - 0
5. Quality of the work planned to be carried out during the STSM
high - 2, medium - 1, low - 0
6. Quality of the expected outcomes and planned follow-up activities
high - 2, medium - 1, low - 0
7. Hosting conditions
very good - 2, good - 1, unsuitable - 0
8. Involvement of both industry (including RTD organisations) and academia in the STSM
yes - 2, no - 1
9. Participation of Young Researchers and Innovators (YRIs, under the age of 40) as applicant or host
yes - 2, no - 1
10. Participation of researchers from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries or Near Neighbour Countries as applicant or host
yes - 2, no - 1
11. Participation of female researchers as applicant or host
yes - 2, no - 1

The score of an application is the sum of its scores in all criteria.

The following selection procedure is applied in each round of evaluation:

1. Applications with a zero score in any of the criteria and **applications scoring less than 9 in criteria 1-6** are rejected.
2. Budgetary assessment of the remaining applications is performed and, for each application, the amount requested is either confirmed or revised to a lower amount.
3. Applications are sorted in descending order of their scores, and a threshold is defined as the highest score such that the total amount required by applications with scores down to that threshold matches or exceeds the current budget. Applications where the applicant has already been awarded another COST grant in any ROAR-NET Action Grant Period are not considered in this step.
4. Applications with a score *above* the threshold are approved for funding, provided that the applicant has not been awarded another COST grant in any ROAR-NET Action Grant Period. The remaining applications are considered in step 5.
5. Additional applications are selected for funding from all applications scoring at least one point below the threshold, including any applications not considered in steps 3 or 4, so as to improve the gender balance and institutional and geographical diversity of STSM grants in the current Action Grant Period, and promote the participation of YRIs. In particular, funding several applicants from the same institution or the same applicant within the current Action Grant Period should be avoided.

Reporting process

After the end of the STSM, the grantee will receive an e-notification to submit a report on e-COST. Please note that the awarded STSM grant will be paid only after the mission has been completed, and after the required report and supporting documents have been submitted and approved.

The following documents must be submitted:

- STSM report based on the [e-COST report template](#)

- A [letter](#) signed by the host confirming the content of the STSM report
- A summary (see the [guidelines](#)) of the main achievements of the STSM to be used by the Action for communication and dissemination purposes
- [Optionally](#), a photo showing the grantee and the hosting team during the STSM with [permission](#) to be shared by the Action for communication and dissemination purposes

Failure to submit the report and supporting documents within 30 days after the end date of the STSM will effectively cancel the STSM grant. Note that the COST Association or the Action's Grant Holder may request additional information to substantiate the information contained within the documents submitted by STSM grant applicants. In addition, according to COST, the grantee is responsible for archiving the activity-related documents, such as tickets, invoices and receipts, for a period up to 9 years after the end of activity and for making them available upon request when an authority checks source of funds, income or double funding.

Contact

For further information, please contact:
ROAR-NET Grant Awarding Coordinator
Bogdan Filipič <bogdan.filipic@ijs.si>

Useful documents

ROAR-NET Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

https://e-services.cost.eu/files/domain_files/CA/Action_CA22137/mou/CA22137-e.pdf

Country and Organisations Table

https://www.cost.eu/Country_Organisations_Table

COST Grant Awarding User Guide

https://www.cost.eu/grants_userguide

COST Grant Application page

<https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants>

STSM Grant application template

https://www.cost.eu/STSM_GrantApplication

STSM Host approval template

<https://www.cost.eu/STSM-Host-approval>

Guidelines for preparing a short description and a summary of the main achievements of the STSM

<https://www.roar-net.eu/calls/stsm-call-3/Guidelines-for-STSM-Description-and-Summary-of-Achievements.pdf>

STSM report template

https://www.cost.eu/STSM_Report

Report confirmation template

https://www.roar-net.eu/calls/stsm-call-3/STSM-Report-Confirmation_TEMPLATE.docx

Template for permission to share photos

https://www.roar-net.eu/calls/stsm-call-3/Permission-to-Share-Photos_TEMPLATE.docx



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COST Action CA22137

Action Chair: Dr. Carlos M. Fonseca

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End Date: 1 October 2027

www.cost.eu/actions/CA22137

[GitHub](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

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