

COST Action CA19120

“WATer isotopeS in the critical zONe: from groundwater recharge to plant transpiration” (WATSON)

SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION - Application procedure

Objectives / description

Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) provide an opportunity to visit a participating research institute or stakeholder and to benefit from the technology, datasets, expertise and methods used by the host that are not available at the home institution. A STSM should directly contribute to the objectives of at least one of the Working Groups (WG) within the WATSON Action. The aim of the missions is to facilitate collaborations among research groups involved in the WATSON Action that provide mutual benefits, such as joint publications (acknowledging WATSON and the COST program) and the possibility of attracting additional funding.

Applicants are encouraged to contact WG leaders prior to their application to discuss their mission and to familiarize themselves with the priorities of the WG. We encourage Stakeholders to contact the WG leaders to advertise potential host STSMs within the network.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for reimbursement, the applicant must be engaged in an official research program as a PhD Student or postdoctoral fellow, or be employed by, or affiliated to, an institution, organization or legal entity which performs research related to WATSON and actively contributes to fulfilment of its main objectives. STSMs funding is not available for exchanges between institutes within the same country. STSM grants (i.e., as all COST funds) cannot be spent on the preparation of proposals for funding from any source.

Number of supported applicants

For the third granting period, up to four applicants can be supported. The deadline for applications is **February 1st, 2023**.

All STSM applications will be evaluated within one month following the deadline of the respective call. The first starting date for STSMs supported in the first call is **March 1st, 2023**. All STSMs supported in the third call **have to be completed by October 1st, 2023**.

Duration and financial support

A STSM must last for a minimum of five days and can last up to a maximum of 30 days. The maximum financial support is €3,500 for the supported period.

The grant will be paid after approval of the final report that needs to be submitted by the scientist supported by STSM.

Application process

A STSM applicant is required to prepare and submit:

- Application form including:
 - Short description and motivation for the mission (max 1 page)
 - Mission schedule (table)
 - Budget
 - Relevance to overall WATSON COST objectives and WG activities (~1/2 page)
 - Expected outcome (~1/2 page)
- Support letter from the host institute.
- Support letter of the home institute if the applicant is a PhD student or post-doctoral fellow.
- Short Curriculum Vitae.

All documents must be sent by email to the STSM coordinator Dr Tamara Jakovljević (tamaraj@sumins.hr) and vice coordinator Dr Pilar Llorens (pilar.llorens@idaea.csic.es) before the deadline. The applicant should also **upload all necessary documentation via the e-Cost system**. As stated above, preliminary

contact with the appropriate WG leader is strongly recommended.

Selection of applicants

The selection of successful STSM applications is based on the scientific scope of the proposed mission, and how the mission supports WATSON in achieving its scientific objectives. Priority will be given to projects supporting the development of new collaborations between the applicant and host and to young Researchers (i.e., less than 40 years old) and/or researchers in less research-intensive COST Member Countries and Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs; see countries in green here: <https://www.cost.eu/who-we-are/members/>). Gender balance and the distribution of STSMs among the different working groups (WGs) will be also considered. Priority will be given to applicants who have not received an STSM grant before.

Reporting and grant payment

After selection, the grantee will receive an acceptance letter with information about the level of financial support. The grantee has to return this acceptance letter with his/her signature prior to the start of the mission. The grantee will receive a payment request form at the same time.

After completion of the STSM, the grantee is required to submit a short scientific report to the STSM coordinators within **30 days after** STSM has been completed or by October 15, if that is earlier.

This report should contain the following information:

- Schedule or timeline of the visit (table)
- Work carried out during the STSM
- Main achievements of the visit, with the description of the main results obtained and expected publications/articles
- Planned future follow up (future work and/or collaboration if any)
- Confirmation by the host institute of the successful execution of the mission (with signature of the local supervisor and/or head of the Department).

Grantees are also requested to send a picture and a short description of the visit to be published in the WATSON Web page.

Upon approval of the scientific report by the STSM coordinators and the Action Chair, the grant will be paid to the grantee.

Please see the Annotated Rules for COST Actions for more information:

<https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2022/12/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V1.3.pdf>