

## **EPICATCH opens the Second Call for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)**

*This call is based upon the work performed within COST Action 19125 EPICATCH, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)*

[www.cost.eu](http://www.cost.eu)

<https://www.epicatch.eu/>

<https://www.cost.eu/cost-action/epigenetic-mechanisms-of-crop-adaptation-to-climate-change/>

**Short term scientific missions (STSMs)** consist in a visit of a host organization located in a different country than the country of affiliation by a Researcher or Innovator for the specific work to be carried out and for a determined period of time (according to the [COST Annotated Rules](#)).

The aim of STSMs shall be to **contribute to the scientific objectives of EPICATCH**. The objective of EPICATCH is to update, define and develop scientific knowledge and methodology on the study of plant epigenetic adaptation responses to climate change. Indeed, STSMs should deal with any aspects of plant epigenetics/epigenomics and/or integration of **epigenetic research** with other targeted/omic molecular approaches.

These Missions (Exchange Visits) are aimed at strengthening the existing networks 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. STSM grants cannot be spent on the preparation of proposals for funding from any source.

### **DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS:**

For EPICATCH second Grant Period, two application deadlines are foreseen:

- **April 30th** - the applicant can start the mobility from May 16<sup>th</sup>
- **June 30th** – the applicant can start the mobility from July 14<sup>th</sup>

Please note that the evaluation process of submitted applications takes some time and the applicant can never start his/her mobility period before having received the evaluation outcomes and relevant Grant Letter. Therefore, for applications presented under the first round, the **mobility cannot start before May 16<sup>th</sup>** and not before **July 14<sup>th</sup>** for the second round.

EPICATCH Grant Period 2 finishes on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022, so that the STSMs must be **completed at the latest by September 30th 2022**.

### ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS:

The STSMs are intended for any researcher affiliated to a legal entity based in:

- A COST Full/Cooperating Member
- An European RTD
- A NNC

Please consult the [COST Country and Organization Table](#) for a complete list of countries and organizations belonging to these categories.

The Applicant must visit an institution located in a different country than the country of its affiliation. The STSM can take place **anywhere in the world**, except for the Russian Federation. Visits to institutions based in the Russian Federation are not supported.

### DURATION:

The **duration** of a standard STSM is between **5-90 days**. The Evaluation Committee will verify that the duration proposed for the visit is in line with the proposed goals and activities.

### FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION:

STSM Grants do not necessarily cover all expenses related to undertaking a given mission. An STSM Grant is a contribution up to **maximum 4.000 EUR** to the overall travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Grantee. **Please note that STSMs don't support research costs.** Requested funds should be justified and adequate. The STSM committee will decide on the final financial contribution for each STSM, taking into consideration EPICATCH available resources, the budget requested, the scope, the duration and the location of the STSM.

### APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

STSM application procedure will be conducted on line **via the E-COST PLATFORM** and, in parallel, by **E-MAIL to the STSM Committee**.

Before the above mentioned deadlines the applicants should send an e-mail to the Grant Awarding Coordinator George Manganaris ([george.manganaris@cut.ac.cy](mailto:george.manganaris@cut.ac.cy)) and to Sophie Brunel Muguet ([sophie.brunel-muguet@unicaen.fr](mailto:sophie.brunel-muguet@unicaen.fr)) with cc. to Chair and Vicechair of EPICATCH (Federico Martinelli email: [federico.martinelli@unifi.it](mailto:federico.martinelli@unifi.it), and Eirini Kaiserli email: [Eirini.Kaiserli@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Eirini.Kaiserli@glasgow.ac.uk)), with the following documents:

- [STSM Application Form](#) filled in on e-cost and downloaded from the system (including STSM title, start and end date, information about the Host Institution and contact person, budget requested by the Applicant)
- [COST Application Template](#) (including STSM details, goals, workplan and expected outputs)
- **Home Institution Support Letter** (letter of support from the home institute, drafted on the organization headed paper and signed by its legal representative)

- **Host agreement Support Letter** (letter of support from the host institute, drafted on the organization headed paper and signed by its legal representative. The Letter must clearly show the organization acceptance of the proposed period for the visit and of the proposed work plan of the applicant)
- In case of PhD Students **Letter of support from the PI**
- **CV** (max. 2 pages)

ON LINE SUBMISSION VIA E-COST PLATFORM: In parallel to emails, the applicant must use the on-line registration tool and register the STSM application by logging into e-COST (<https://e-services.cost.eu/activity/grants/add> ). Applicants can consult the [COST Grant Awarding User Guide](#) for indications on how to fill in and submit their requests.

## EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

The STSM Applications are evaluated by the STSM Committee including:

- Grant Awarding Coordinator: George Manganaris
- Action Chair: Federico Martinelli
- Action Vice Chair: Eirini Kaiserli
- Core Group Member: Sophie Brunel Muguet

The STSM committee evaluates all STSM applications within approximately 2 weeks after the deadline. The selection of successful STSM applications is based on the scientific scope of the proposed mission, and how the mission supports EPICATCH in achieving its scientific objectives. Gender balance and the distribution of STSMs among different working groups (WGs) will be also considered. The STSM committee has the right to award less than the requested amount.

Once the selection process is complete the Applicant receives a formal notification through e-cost informing him/her about the outcomes of the selection and whether the request has been approved or not. If the Application is funded the Applicant receives a Grant Letter stating the approved amount and the conditions for receiving the grant. In no case the Applicant can start his/her mobility period before having received the Grant Letter.

## CRITERIA FOR AWARDING THE STSMs

STSM funding will be awarded according to the following criteria:

- The relevance of the proposed exchange towards the EPICATCH Action Objectives
- The quality and clarity of the proposed research
- The feasibility of the proposed activities
- The choice of Host institution that should be appropriate and coherent with the proposed STSM goals
- The profile of the researcher
- The publication/output potential of the research carried out

- The coherence among the proposed budget and the duration and destination of the visit. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider COST daily allowance rates when preparing their budget: [https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/10/Daily-Allowance-table\\_November\\_2021.pdf](https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/10/Daily-Allowance-table_November_2021.pdf)

Gender balance, the geographic coverage and distribution among different WGs of the proposed STSMs will be also considered.

### **CARRYING OUT THE MOBILITY PERIOD**

The STSM must take place as foreseen in the submitted Application. In duly justified cases a change of the mobility period may be authorized (for example for COVID related issues, etc.). In such cases the Applicant should get in touch with the Grant Awarding Coordinator, explain the reasons for the change, and provide an updated Host Institution Letter confirming the Host willingness to accept the new proposed period. If the Grant Awarding Coordinator approves the change, the Action Grant Manager is informed and provides the Applicant with an updated Grant Letter.

### **FINAL REPORTING AND GRANT PAYMENT**

After completion of the STSM, the grantee is required to submit a [scientific report](#) on e-cost and to send it by email to the Grant Awarding Coordinator within **30 days after** the STSM has been completed.

This **report** should contain the following information:

- Work carried out during the STSM
- Main achievements of the visit, with the description of the main results obtained and where relevant expected publications/articles
- Planned future follow up work and/or collaboration, if any

The Applicant is also required to upload on e-cost and send to the Grant Awarding Coordinator a **confirmation letter from the host institution** stating the successful achievement of the foreseen goals (with signature of the local supervisor and/or legal representative).

Upon approval of the scientific report by the STSM Committee the Grant will be processed and paid directly to the grantee within 30 days.

### **CONTACTS:**

In case of need, applicants can get in touch for assistance with:

1. Grant Awarding Coordinator - [george.manganaris@cut.ac.cy](mailto:george.manganaris@cut.ac.cy)
2. Action Grant Manager – [denise.cuccia@unifi.it](mailto:denise.cuccia@unifi.it)